

**A RECONCEPTUALISATION OF THE CONCEPT OF *SOCIAL CAPITAL*:  
A STUDY OF RESOURCES FOR NEED SATISFACTION AMONGST  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS IN VHEMBE, LIMPOPO**

**by**

**NICOLAAS JAKOBUS VERMAAK**

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## ABSTRACT

*Social capital*, in broad terms, refers to norms, networks, trust and forms of social connections in societies that allows people to gain access to resources. This study involves a reconceptualisation of the concept of social capital. An overview of social capital literature reveals that economic needs are still dominant in both the theory and practice of development efforts that make use of social capital. It would therefore appear that the social capital paradigm is not balanced in that it does not clearly provide for the satisfaction of the diverse range of needs that people, particularly those in the rural communities, often experience. A resource-orientated approach is suggested in broadening the concept *social capital* to include the satisfaction of a wider variety of needs.

An effort is made in the literature study, to capture the manifestations of social capital in different societies globally, with particular emphasis on community life in developing communities of the world. In addition, the discussion of social capital is deepened to include need satisfaction. A matrix of needs, as proposed by Max-Neef (1991), is used to argue that social capital would better be seen as a synergetic resource for the satisfaction of various needs. Instead of understanding social capital as a need, single satisfier, or as a 'factor of production', an argument is put forward that such a conception of social capital is incomplete and inaccurate and that, instead, social capital should be understood as a multi-dimensional resource that can be used to service various needs of communities.

Extensive fieldwork amongst agricultural producers in the Vhembe district of Limpopo provided ample evidence of social capital, although a precise fit with the mainstream theoretical perspectives was not found. The unusual profile of social capital reaffirmed the argument that social capital is present in different forms in rural developing communities and that social capital can best be seen as multi-dimensional because it has the ability to satisfy a wide variety of needs at different levels. Better use can be made of the concept of social capital by viewing it as multi-dimensional and linked to resources relevant to a wide variety of needs. Further research is needed if social capital is to be used by development planners.

## OPSOMMING

*Sosiale kapitaal* verwys breedweg na norme, netwerke, vertroue en verskillende vorme van sosiale skakeling. 'n Oorsig oor sosiale literatuur toon dat ekonomiese behoeftes die sosiale kapitaal teorie en praktyk domineer, veral tydens ontwikkelingspogings wat gebruik maak van sosiale kapitaal. Hierdie studie behels 'n heroorweging van die konsep *sosiale kapitaal*. Die sosialekapitaal – paradigma blyk ongeballanseerd te wees aangesien dit nie volkome voorsiening maak vir die verskeidenheid van behoeftes wat mense in landelike gemeenskappe dikwels ondervind nie. Deur die sosiale kapitaal konsep te verbreed, naamlik volgens die bevrediging van 'n verskeidenheid van behoeftes, word 'n hulpbrongebasseerde benadering tot sosiale kapitaal voorgestel.

Tydens die literatuurstudie is gepoog om die manifestasies van sosiale kapitaal in verskillende samelewings van die wêreld vas te lê, met besondere verwysing na ontwikkelende gemeenskappe van die wêreld. Daarbenewens word die bespreking oor sosiale kapitaal spesifiek gekoppel aan behoeftebevrediging. 'n Behoeftematriks, soos voorgestel deur Max-Neef (1991), is gebruik om te betoog dat sosiale kapitaal eerder as 'n medewerkende hulpbron gesien behoort te word vir die bevrediging van verskillende behoeftes. Volgens hierdie siening word sosiale kapitaal nie beperk tot die bevrediging van enkele ekonomiese behoeftes nie.

Hoewel uitgebreide veldwerk genoegsame bewyse van sosiale kapitaal opgelewer het, kon 'n presiese ooreenstemming met die hoofstroom sosiaal teoretiese perspektiewe nie gevind word nie. Die ongewone profiel van sosiale kapitaal het die argument bevestig dat sosiale kapitaal as 'n multidimensionele hulpbron verstaan behoort te word. Dit het die vermoë om 'n wye verskeidenheid behoeftes op verskillende vlakke te bevredig. Die konsep sosiale kapitaal kan beter gebruik word mits dit as multidimensioneel gesien word, asook gekoppel word aan hulpbronne wat relevant is aan 'n wye verskeidenheid behoeftes. Verdere navorsing is nodig vir sosiale kapitaal om deur ontwikkelingsbeplanners gebruik te word.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Throughout history, humans have used many means to satisfy their needs. Since different people encounter various needs at different times, they use different methods to satisfy those needs. In their efforts to address individual and collective needs, people often collaborate and work together to produce a sort of mutual capital which has come to be known in contemporary academic literature, as 'social capital'. The idea of using social capital to satisfy human needs seems particularly relevant in respect of people in rural communities where resources of poorer societies are often ill-developed or totally absent. Despite being a relatively new addition to development theory and the many possible applications thereof, social capital is a promising alternative for inclusion in the theory of human-centred development.

Before discussing the intellectual origins of the concept social capital in Chapter 2, attention will be given to some aspects which formed the basis of the motivation of this study.

#### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Developing communities of the world are often regarded as communities with severe shortages of human and financial capitals. Academic debate has recently placed much emphasis on social capital and writers such as Devine-Wright, Flemming and Chadwick (2001, 161-167), as well as Bridger and Luloff (2001 : 464 – 467) regard social capital as critical for sustainable development. Accordingly, whilst many researchers agree on the importance of social capital for development (Brown and Ashman, 1996 : 1473; Emmett, 2000 : 501; Evans, 1996 : 1119; Fox and Gershman, 2000 : 399), a conceptual problem has emerged in the sense that social capital is being seen as a means by which communities can prosper economically. By seeing social capital

in this way, namely only as a satisfier of economic needs of communities, contemporary economists oversee many non-economic uses of social capital in communities. The problem is exacerbated by the use of discourse about social capital for political needs and objectives. Bebbington, Guggenheim, Olson and Woolcock (2004 : 37) describe this economic and political domination of the understanding of social capital as 'further colonising the social sciences'. On the contrary, a better use can be made of social capital by understanding social capital as a multidimensional resource for the satisfaction various needs.

The indigenous forms of social capital displayed by poor communities in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo province in South Africa show that a one - sided view of social capital (as an economic or political good) is indeed problematic. If social capital is understood multidimensionally, it allows considerable leverage to add value to the content of the social capital concept. Such an understanding will also allow interdisciplinary access to the concept of social capital, thereby adding value to the existing social resources found amongst rural communities in different contexts.

The effective mobilisation of social resources in development efforts is a significant practical issue in world-wide development problematics. Considerable academic contributions about social resources and development vary from sociological, psychological and anthropological disciplines to other development-related disciplines such as Local and Regional Development Planning, Philosophy, Politics and Law. With these and other contributions, development is said to be given a 'human face'.

One such contribution comes from Max-Neef<sup>1</sup>'s book '*Human Scale Development*' (1991) in which the writer suggest that the assumption that human needs are infinite, that they change all the time, and that they are different in each culture or environment in each historical period, is *inaccurate* and that this traditional belief is the product of a conceptual shortcoming. The author

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<sup>1</sup>Respectively: economist, sociologist and philosopher

add that a prevalent shortcoming in the existing literature and discussions about human needs is that ‘... the fundamental difference between *needs* and *satisfiers* of those needs is either not made explicit or is overlooked altogether’ (1991 : 16). These conclusions are broadly consistent with research in the developing world and will be discussed in the subsections that follow.

### **1.2.1 Economic needs at the centre of development**

The needs in communities are often expressed as economic shortcomings. Fundamental in understanding the social needs in communities, is the critical examination of the consequences of economic-centred development. Economic criticism poses a serious limitation for community development interventions which aim to be comprehensive (Holdcroft, 1978 : 11) and holistic (Swanepoel, 1997 : 3). Powerful macro economic structures, such as multinationals, the World Bank, governments and the Internet exist globally, and in this regard, Fine (1999 : 4) mentions that, at the micro economic level, household economics has become an uncritical unit for analysis.

A strong focus on, and preoccupation with, economic needs has led to a misinterpretation of human needs in societies and an ignorance of the broader picture that constitutes causes and consequences of social pathologies. Ramphele (1991) analysed the causes and consequences of social disintegration in South African communities and listed the following as ‘symptoms’ of disintegration:

- Family breakdowns with increasing divorce rates, separation, single parenthood and teenage pregnancy
- Breakdown of the authority of parents and teachers
- High unemployment rates
- High alcohol and drug abuse
- Low performance in all spheres of life including school and skills training
- High crime rates and endemic violence at all levels of social interaction

- Despair and acceptance of the victim image
- Flight of skills and positive role models from the townships into higher-income areas.

In reaction to the shortcomings in communities, such as those listed above, development efforts often depend on economic objectives as quick fixes and to measure development successes. In the technological age, in which the speed of production has dramatic effects on developing communities, it is doubted whether real human needs are indeed satisfied in certain contexts. Instead, as can be seen from Ramphela's (1991) analysis, social disintegration in communities can be attributed to the erosion and neglect of existing social assets which are available as resources for community development efforts.

### **1.2.2 Social capital is available in the developing world**

Investigation reveals practical evidence in the developing world, which indicates that impoverished people mobilise their individual and collective social abilities in remarkable ways to satisfy a variety of their needs. For example, research conducted in South Africa, on women's micro enterprises and rural savings clubs (Buijs, 1998 : 63 - 64; Vermaak, 2000 : 38 - 48) reveal that members of these ventures benefit in concrete ways (money, food and work) and that abstract needs (security, identity and status) are often satisfied as a result of being a member of these ventures. The savings clubs are made up of members of a community, normally women, and thus act as a social mechanism for the satisfaction of individual and collective needs. Needs are often of a very qualitative nature and, as such, savings clubs appear to be one of the many manifestations of social capital.

Not all forms of social organisation in civil society are the same (Skidmore, 2001, 54). The social 'capabilities' of poor, rural communities become essential for economic and institutional

development (Temple, 1998 : 322) and the different cultures of the world often possess unique forms of social capital. Social capital appears to be an important buffer for the rural poor and the family, and as a small but significant unit, it acts as a means of satisfying the concrete and abstract needs of dependants, that is, infants, youths and the elderly.

The above are only some of the many social strategies used in the developing world to satisfy needs and to alleviate resource pressures. Efforts by rural people to satisfy their needs often include combinations of social strategies but, as the next subsection also shows, such strategies are not sufficiently covered or debated in social capital literature.

### **1.2.3 Social capital is frequently overlooked**

The value of social capital has long been recognized by leaders such as Ghandi, who, according to Ekins and Max-Neef (1992 : 100) saw economics as meaningful only if they pursued the welfare of society in a manner that respected human dignity, non-violence and creative labour. Much contemporary development theory has been produced on the topic of social capital, and large international conferences have been convened in recent years to discuss 'civil society'.

Despite these levels of academic debate and the large-scale economic development efforts of the past, the extent of poverty in the world has ironically never been so great. Evidence in the developing world reveals that economic considerations still dominate in the analyses of poverty. Furthermore, many development organisations need to realise profits to be successful (Schoombee, 1998 : 390) and in practice, quantitative criteria are predominantly used to 'measure' development (Vermaak, 2000 : 38). Wales (1990 : 180) argues that 'there is always a degree of self-interest in people's behaviour' and that self-preservation is so important that '... in many circumstances decision making is far from altruistic'. This can be seen in the debt crises of developing countries where unfavourable terms of trade often prevail (White and Woestman, 1995 : 542; Tjonneland, 1998 : 187). Furthermore, Pretty and Ward (2001 : 210) mention the exploitation of natural resources, which is a direct result of peoples' desire to satisfy short-term

economic needs.

Compared to economic development research in rural areas, scant research has been produced to date on the topic of social capital use in rural areas. Consequently, despite the occurrence of social capital in poor rural communities, relatively little attention has been given by development theorists (particularly by positivistic thinkers), to the existing social *assets* of rural communities. Economic motives may deny certain facets of the social development of communities. On a political level, social denial can be quite blatant, for example Margaret Thatcher's words in the 1980s that 'there is no such thing as society' (Craig, 2000 : 2; Taylor, 1999 : 4).

These are just some of the ways in which the social potential of the rural poor is neglected and under-utilised.

If indigenous knowledge systems of rural communities are taken into account, then it appears that the social capital literature only scrapes the surface when it comes to recognising the value of social capital for need satisfaction. What appears to be missing from such literature is an understanding of the structure and functioning of the social world of rural communities; particularly those in the developing world. Strategies which mobilize available and existing social capital in rural areas of the developing world are therefore an urgent priority for development planners, not only for the sake of need satisfaction in these communities, but also for the purposes of conducting successful (and purposeful) community development initiatives.

#### **1.2.4 Communities are often unaware of their potential social assets**

In reaction to economic-centred developments after the Second World War and the failure of such developments to 'trickle down' to the social spheres of society, the ability of many impoverished communities to maintain and, in some instances, even improve their existing forms of social capital is academically significant and appears to be attractive when it comes to human-centred development strategies.

Economic exchanges in the developing world frequently take place in forms other than money; for example in the exchange of cattle, rice and fruit (Watson, 1989 : vii). Traditional healers in the Limpopo Province often rely on social evidence to give their diagnosis, and in some circumstances accept non-monetary forms of payment such as a rooster or “bush” meat. Because of these (and other) social processes, social capital obviously has a number of meaningful implications for the satisfaction of a rural community’s needs. Social resources seem to be available in rural communities (and elsewhere), but there is little understanding of their dimensions and manifestations.

Where available social capital is not utilised by communities, broader society may experience severe deprivation in respect of socio-economic needs. This is particularly relevant for the social, economic and political needs of Southern African people. Ramphele (1991 : 15) warned that South African families are experiencing great difficulties as a result of social disintegration in South Africa. The symptoms of social disintegration (1.2.1) that prevail in the South African society, are affecting households economically, socially and politically.

Presently, the available social capital of South African people is being neglected and great pressure is being placed on individuals, families, communities and all levels of government to meet the needs of society. Communities are frequently unaware of their own potential social resources, and may see all resources as external (Abrahams, 1992 : 9; Oosthuizen and Van der Worm, 1991 : 9; Esman and Uphoff, 1984 : 77). This dependency syndrome (1.2.1) denies communities the opportunity to learn how to mobilise their social actions so as to improve their communities (Smith; Littlejohns and Thompson, 2001 : 36).

Emmett (2000 : 510 - 511) notes that processes of social disintegration in [Black] communities are complex and diverse. Where rural communities themselves are not always aware of their potential social assets, community development could be used as a strategy to transform potential

social capital into resources for need satisfaction. In a multicultural society like South Africa, the development of existing and potential social capital has great relevance with regard to remedying the negative effects of social disintegration.

Against the background of the above, the general hypothetical viewpoint postulated in this study is *that the conception of social capital as a satisfier of economic needs during development efforts is simplistic and incomplete. Social capital is a highly functional component of a community's resources and hence important for the satisfaction of various economic and non-economic needs. It is accordingly argued that social capital should be seen through a "resource" lens instead of a "needs" lens during the application of community development models.*

Social capital, as an underdeveloped (though much needed) resource, especially in rural areas of the Vhembe district of South Africa's Limpopo Province, is the framework within which the problem will be investigated. By using a selection of cases from Limpopo, but mainly from the Vhembe district, and within the context of the needs of agricultural producers, the concept of *social capital* will be reconceptualised. This research therefore aims to reassess the relationship between human needs and different forms and levels of social action, while reflecting on social capital as an important resource for need satisfaction.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

The study has the following objectives:

- a) *To reconceptualise the concept of social capital.* As the title of this thesis indicates, this reconceptualisation will be done by means of a study of the resources used by agricultural producers in the Vhembe district to satisfy their various needs.
- b) *To review appropriate literature on the topic of social capital.* The literature study will

concentrate on theoretical perspectives of defining and describing social capital and will seek and interrogate existing evidence of social capital from documented research in rural areas of the developing world. This theoretical basis aims to be critical of the social capital concept and to deepen the discussion of social capital as a resource for fulfilling needs and satisfiers as presented by the work of Max-Neef (1991).

- c) *To examine if the variety of resources found in Limpopo constitute social capital.* A study will be done of the broader context in which the Vhembe district is situated in to describe the context in which the research was carried out. This will also be done to examine the variety of resources and to ascertain the need satisfying properties of different forms of social capital.
- d) *To determine whether the existing body of theory on social capital makes provision for the inclusion of local resources during development efforts.* In addition to the critique of social capital as derived from literature, the concept will be critically evaluated against the needs of the people in the Limpopo Province, particularly agricultural producers in the Vhembe region.
- e) *To seek additional evidence of social capital that will serve as a resource for broadly-defined need satisfaction.* This will be done to ascertain how social capital could be used to mobilise resources for need satisfaction. The search for social capital will be done by mapping existing social resources, as well as needs of individuals, households and networks in local rural villages in the Limpopo Province.
- f) *To compare the occurrence of social capital in Limpopo with the theory of social capital and need satisfaction.* This last objective will serve to investigate the possibility of relating the concept of social capital to that of need satisfaction.

During the research both qualitative as well as quantitative data will be collected, interpreted and presented. This data could contribute to the body of knowledge on social capital. The aim of this dissertation will therefore be to contribute to the knowledge of development phenomena, and not to 'develop' the targeted communities.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH AREA AND RESEARCH GROUP**

The Vhembe district is located in the northern part of the Limpopo Province (see Annexure C). Since agriculture is the dominant economic activity in the broader Limpopo Province, the majority of rural households of the Vhembe district depend on agriculture for their incomes. Both commercial as well as subsistence farming are being practised in the Vhembe district. Together with high poverty levels, poor institutional service delivery is also characteristic of the socio-economic profile of the Vhembe district.

The Vhembe district has its own district council, although the administrative functions and powers are mainly dictated by the Limpopo's provincial government. In addition, a strong presence of traditional practices prevails in Vhembe. Rural villages, consisting of a few hundred people to a few thousand are scattered throughout the Vhembe district.

In view of the above, the Vhembe district can not be discussed in isolation of the Limpopo province. Nevertheless, the main focus of the study is directed at the Vhembe district due to the evidence of social capital that can be found in this region. A study group, consisted of a selection of cases from the Limpopo Province, was specifically selected from within the Vhembe district's geographical boundaries (see Annexure C). The target group which was selected from the Vhembe district and used in this study consisted of the following:

- ordinary persons living in rural communities and villages
- farmers and non-farmers, but particularly rural subsistence farmers

- members of rural households
- farm managers and farm workers
- local businesses and agricultural role players
- regional and provincial administrators, staff of NGO's, hospitals and schools
- workers at agricultural projects, traditional healers, agricultural extension officers, union members, elderly people and owners and managers of agricultural small businesses and micro enterprises.

Collectively, the above persons were selected as *agricultural producers* of the Vhembe district. They were especially selected because of the roles they played in agricultural production in the Vhembe district.

Data on the Vhembe district is scant since the district was officially demarcated in 2000. However, the cultural traits, social connections and socio-economic status of the Limpopo province, hence the inhabitants of the Vhembe district, will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

## **1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS**

The study is introduced, and the research hypothesis, main aim and objectives of this study are stated in this introductory chapter (Chapter 1). In Chapter 2 concepts and terminology used in the study are discussed and a literature study predominantly focuses on the theory of social capital. The theoretical discussion relates social capital theory to needs satisfaction, focusing on how this might operate in particularly rural communities in the developing world. Chapter 3 introduces the pilot study and provides an understanding of the socio-economic profile of South Africa, as well as the Limpopo and the Vhembe regions. Chapter 3 also lays a general contextual foundation for Chapter 4 in which the results of the fieldwork are presented. An interpretation of the results of the field research follows in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 a summary of the findings of the thesis is presented and some implications and recommendations for the development of the existing theory of social capital are proposed before the final conclusions are presented.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE STUDY: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND NEED SATISFACTION

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to clarify the theoretical foundations of the notion of social capital and to compare the theory of social capital with actual need satisfaction in communities. After the clarification of some of the central concepts used in the study, a literature study will follow, which will provide a review of the concept of social capital. This theoretical discussion will be compared to community life, and social capital will be critically evaluated in the light of important community processes in developing countries of the world. Two opposing strategic orientations in respect of social capital are discussed to support the main argument in this Chapter, namely that the social capital paradigm favours economic shortcomings, as opposed to social capital being viewed as a resource for the fulfilment of non-economic needs. In so doing, the theoretical discussion of social capital aims to provide an insight into the role of social capital in needs satisfaction and how social capital fits into the broader theoretical and methodological orientation of community resources.

#### 2.2 TERMINOLOGY

The social sciences (particularly the sub discipline Development Studies) are characterized by various abstract terminologies. In the following subsections some development related concepts and constructs central to this study of social capital and need satisfaction, will be briefly clarified.

##### 2.2.1 Development

A historical overview of the term 'development' reveals that the content and meaning of development has changed with time. The term *development* has been a topic of debate in

most disciplines and has evoked criticism in many sub fields of the social sciences in particular. This criticism can be understood in light of the earlier development attempts to pursue economic goals, such as growth in terms of Gross National Product (G N P); particularly after the Second World War, when the Marshall Plan was introduced to deal with the consequences of the war in Europe (Higgott, 1989 : 1) (1.2.1). It was realised by theorists, particularly economists and sociologists that the ‘trickle down’ effect (which was supposed to happen) did not occur as was originally anticipated. In general, people’s social lives were neglected.

Hettne (1995 : 15) stresses an important point: ‘There can be no fixed and final definition of development, only suggestions of what development should imply in particular contexts’. Korten (1990 : 67) describes development 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’. Similarly, this investigation will keep in mind that development is a product of situational settings and that development should incorporate concrete as well as abstract (invisible) human needs (see Swanepoel, 1997 : 13, 112).

It is furthermore widely acknowledged that the theoretical emphasis of development in the last Century was on aspects of development other than the social assets of people in communities. The Basic Needs Approach in development is said to be a direct result of the failure of economic-centred development approaches. The failures of economic-centred development have impacted on the formation of newer, more appropriate forms of people-centred development approaches such as ‘human scale development’ (Max-Neef, 1991) and ‘another development’ (Hettne, 1995 : 160 - 204).

True development can therefore be perceived as a blend of social *and* economic factors. Balanced development thus requires a ‘just right’ mix or integration of social and economic aspects in peoples’ lives, accounting for many different processes in society. In the socio-economic paradigm of development, *community* development has gained much support and will

be used as a point of reference in this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Community Development**

There appears to be disagreement in academic circles as to the history of community development. Holdcroft (1978 : 5) states that the term ‘community development’ was introduced in the 1930's in the United States, whereas Van Willigen (1993 : 92) attributes the use of community development to the British Colonial Office in 1948. There is, however, substantial agreement on the characteristics or features of community development. Community development is a process which entails collective action, is need oriented, objective oriented and action based (Holdcroft, 1978 : 9-11, 13; Swanepoel, 1997 : 13 - 15, 108; Van Willigen, 1993 : 92 - 93). Holdcroft (1978 : 1) notes that the interest in community development during the 1970s came as a result of attention being focused on the needs of the rural poor.

The term ‘community’, as Cary (1979 : 2) has noted, refers to ‘... people who live in spatial relationships to one another and who share interests and values’. The scope of these spatial relationships may be extensive. An earlier distinction in this regard was made by Tönnies in 1887. According to Riggs (1964 : 166) Tönnies referred to *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* in describing the community and society respectively. The former translates to ‘imaginary and mechanical structure’ which predominates in the city, in business, politics and Law; and the latter refers to ‘real and organic life’ which predominates in rural life, in family, religion and tradition. Social capital, in different guises, can be related to both community and the broader society, in other words, geographically and by people’s interests. Hayden (1997 : 13) warns however that civil society tends to be analysed in terms of a single country or as the ‘... realm of organized social life standing between the individual and the state’.

Community development is a frequently debated topic. A vast amount of literature relating

to community development has been published and is receiving increasing attention from academics and practitioners all over the world. It also seems to enjoy popular support amongst students at South African universities.

Available research published on the topic of community development suggests important considerations for development planners and policy makers whereas the contemporary theoretical focus of community development clearly incorporates a human-centred dimension: a so - called '*human face*'. In terms of rural development, the aims and objectives of community development with regard to improving the lives of the rural poor are promising, both economically (for example in stimulating entrepreneurship) and socially (for example in the focus on families and households).

As a development strategy, community development aims to be a multidimensional integrated process, in which all aspects of community life (social, economic, political and cultural) are gradually improved in a balanced way. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the Republic of South Africa aims to be a national community development strategy based on people-centredness (RDP, 1994 : 8).

### **2.2.3 Paradigm**

The concept 'paradigm' is widely used in academic literature across all disciplines of Science. The concept *paradigm* was proposed by Thomas S. Kuhn (1970) in his book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn enjoyed wide support in academic circles for his theories of scientific progress. According to Kuhn's interpretation of 'Normal Science' and 'Revolutionary Science', paradigms dramatically affect the discourse and practice of Science. A paradigm evolves as new information on a topic or phenomenon emerges.

Kuhn's use of the concept *paradigm* was also criticised. Shapere (1964) and Buchdahl

(1965) in Losee (1993 : 226) criticised Kuhn for shifting back and forth between a broad sense and a narrow sense of 'paradigm'. A paradigm, in the broad sense, is a 'disciplinary matrix' or an 'entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on, shared by members of a given community'. In the narrow sense a paradigm is an 'exemplar' or 'an influential presentation of a scientific theory'. It is this latter sense that will apply in the discussions that follow.

It is argued in this chapter that the contemporary social capital paradigm is reasonably sufficient for use during local community development, but that this paradigm is skewed towards economic development.

#### **2.2.4 Social capital**

Paxton (1999 : 91) suggests that the idea of social capital forms a specific part of broader perceptions on different forms of capital. Similarly, social capital holds potential for other forms of capital such as physical capital, used for economic productivity in the forms of machines, tools and power lines. Social capital has the potential to affect dramatically, or alter social, economic, political and cultural processes in communities. As will be seen later in this Chapter, social capital has a wide range of implications for communities, which are not always clear to development planners, practitioners and academics.

Social capital will be operationally perceived in this study as manifestations of cooperation between individuals, groups and networks of people, as well as those social assets that bind, 'glue' or 'connect' humans in resourceful and productive ways to satisfy a range of needs and to achieve particular goals. The theoretical content of social capital will receive further attention later in this chapter.

#### **2.2.5 Socio-economic resources**

Socio-economic resources can be subdivided in two categories, namely social resources

and economic resources. These are two distinct sets of categories of resources which affect each other profoundly. The former refers to resources such as the family, indigenous knowledge, institutions, social networks and individual abilities. Social resources also refer to resources which contain abstract, invisible and qualitative attributes. Economic resources include finances (such as household income), roads, buildings, environments, skilled labour, budgets, food, facilities and infrastructural assets in a community or region. Economic resources therefore contain visible, material and quantitative attributes.

Together, social and economic resources (or 'socio-economic' resources) tend to influence and reinforce each other due to their delicate and often complicated relations. In rural communities in Africa socio-economic resources are frequently poorly developed despite their relevance and importance for community development. This study will, as the title indicates, mainly focus on social capital as a social resource and as a satisfier for a broad range of human needs.

#### **2.2.6 Needs**

The concept 'needs' may evoke a variety of interpretations. Needs may indicate deprivations but also individual and collective human potential (Max - Neef, 1991 : 30). Seen from this perspective, needs will (in this study) include aspects such as freedom, subsistence and self-esteem, as well as people's desire to be, to have, to do and to interact.

Since needs is an important concept in this thesis, a fuller account will be given of the concept later on in this chapter. Because concepts are used together to make sense of the world, this study will similarly include a number of concepts which act as pointers to existing and potential social assets in the Limpopo Province. In the following section, a theoretical basis for social capital is presented.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL VIEWS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The influential origins of social capital can be traced to Bourdieu (1983, 1986), Coleman (1988, 1990) and Putnam (1992, 1993) (see Evans, 1996 : 1124; Foley and Edwards, 1998 : 12; Fukuyama, 2001 : 8; McClenaghan, 2000 : 567; Midgley and Livermore, 1998 : 30 - 31; Fine, 1999 : 5; Emmett, 2000 : 508; Skidmore, 2001 : 68; Schafft and Brown, 2000 : 203 - 204 and Portes, 1998 : 3, 5, 18).

Although the idea of social capital is said to have originated from Bourdieu (1983, 1986), some authors acknowledge that Coleman (1988) further developed the idea of social capital and that Putnam (1993) popularised it (Midgley and Livermore, 1998 : 30 - 31; Fedderke, De Kadt and Luiz, 1999 : 737; Wall, Ferrazzi and Schryer, 1998 : 300). Traces of the idea of social capital can also be found in early influential writers. The writers Foley and Edwards (1998 : 5 - 20) and Whittington (1998 : 21 - 32) acknowledge De Tocqueville's (1969) idea that a strong civil society is crucial for the performance of institutions. Fedderke, *et al* (1999 : 711) refer to Durkheim and Parson's 'value introjection', Simmel's 'reciprocity transactions' and Weber's 'enforceable trust'<sup>2</sup>. Social capital can also be related to Durkheim (1897, 1951)<sup>3</sup>, and Marx ([1984] 1967). The ability of historical figures like Napoleon, Ghandi, Chaka Zulu (1.2.3) and Hitler to install trust and support amongst entire nations, makes social capital, as a historically rooted idea, all the more significant and inspiring.

Since the recent introduction of the concept 'social capital' to development literature during the 1990s (Van der Waal, 2001 : 49, Small, 2002 : 8), considerable theoretical attention has been given to the idea. Key word searches done between 1981 and 1995 for journal articles and theses written show a dramatic increase in the academic use of the concept social capital (Wall,

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<sup>2</sup>Weber distinguished between formal and substantive rationality in which motivation is instrumental (Wall *et al*, 1998 : 306).

<sup>3</sup>Portes notes Durkheim's ([1893] 1984) theory of social integration. Durkheim demonstrated (for example) that social integration was inversely related to the suicide rate in societies (Lochner, Kawachi and Kennedy, 1999 : 260).

*et al*, 1998 : 301)<sup>4</sup>. During the early 1990s social capital became relatively new to economists, but well grounded in sociology literature (Maluccio; Haddad and May, 2000 : 54 - 55; Wall, *et al*, 1998 : 301).

The body of literature relating to social capital has thus been produced over a relatively short period. As a fairly new concept some authors have embraced the social capital idea and others, as will be seen later, have criticised it. On the whole, the concept, social capital may be seen as controversial, a situation which, according to Portes and Landolt (2000 : 531), has to do with the application of social capital to ‘... problems at different levels of abstraction and its use in theories involving different units of analysis’.

Before discussing the critique of social capital, attention will be given to pioneers of social capital thinking and their influence on academic literature, namely Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam.

### **2.3.1 Pierre Bourdieu’s view: Relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition**

One of the first systematic contemporary analyses of social capital was produced by Pierre Bourdieu (Portes, 1998 : 3). Bourdieu, a French sociologist, identifies and describes a number of different kinds of capital: cultural, economic, functional, linguistic, personal, political, professional, social and symbolic (1991 : 230 - 251). Social capital is only one of the forms of capital which Bourdieu (1986 : 242) identifies (2.2.4). Bourdieu asserts that economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital (1991 : 252). For Bourdieu (1986 : 252 - 255; 2.3.4), capital can be converted or transformed from one form to the other. Capital is thus produced and reproduced.

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<sup>4</sup>According to Wall, *et al* (1998 : 301) social capital is not to be found in any of the following early encyclopaedia references: *Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* and *Survey of Social Sciences*.

Bourdieu suggests (1986 : 248 - 249) that the volume of social capital possessed by a person or agent is important for the understanding of the structure and functioning of the social world. Social capital, in Bourdieu's view, is defined as '... the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less

institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition ...'.

Central to the understanding of Bourdieu's definition of social capital appears to be that a social network 'works' for its members. In Bourdieu's (1986 : 249) words: '... the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term, i.e., at transforming contingent relations, such as those of neighbourhood, the workplace, or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.)'.

Bourdieu (1996 : 243, 253) also suggests that social capital is made up of social obligations ('connections') which, in certain conditions, are convertible, into economic capital. With connections of this nature it becomes possible for the whole group, and for individuals, to have access to certain benefits. Belonging to an elite group, for example, may be materially beneficial to the individuals of such a group. Economic capital can be transformed into social capital and social capital can be used to obtain economic capital. These conversions can be seen in the personification of a gift, or when people gratuitously spend time, attention, care and concern in exchange for monetary rewards. Such actions may be seen in economic terms as wastage. On the other hand, they may also be seen as 'solid investments', in terms of the logic of social exchange, because profits will appear in the long run; in either monetary or other forms.

Smart (1993 : 392 - 393) criticises Bourdieu's views of social capital by stating that social capital

overlaps greatly with Bourdieu's view of *symbolic* capital. Smart (1993 : 393) also asserts that social capital is the most tentative and least secure of all the categories of capital presented by Bourdieu. Bourdieu's view may also be criticised in terms of his focus on only small groups and his failure to recognise implicitly, the value of social capital in the context of the developing world.

Bourdieu's key insight was that the three forms of capital are convertible or fungible, that they can be traded and negotiated with each other and actually require such trades for their development (Portes and Landolt, 2000 : 531).

### **2.3.2 James Coleman's view: Social capital as resourceful relationships**

Coleman (1990 : 302) describes social capital as a 'social structural resource' that serves as 'a capital asset for the individual'. Coleman, an American sociologist, introduced social capital to the social sciences by claiming that the relationships formed between human beings are responsible for the harmonisation of healthy social institutions. Well developed social networks and institutions, in Colemans' view, are products of social systems with a high degree of social capital. Coleman also suggested that there is a direct relationship between the volume of social capital and economic development (Midgley and Livermore, 1998 : 31). Social capital can thus be compared to physical capital in the sense that, like physical capital, social capital is productive, and economic development has a better chance to flourish in social systems with strong social networks, well developed associations and a high degree of civil engagement.

Coleman's view of social capital also focuses on the interaction between individuals. Some forms of social capital are not possessed by individuals. As a result of the interaction between individuals, social capital emerges in the form of trust, expectations, obligations, norms and shared information. As such, not only the interaction of individuals, but also the consequent appearances

of social capital can be seen as an ongoing resource for the group and for the individual.

The original development of social capital by Bourdieu and Coleman centred on individuals or small groups as the units of analysis (Portes and Landolt, 2000 : 531). Whereas Bourdieu and Coleman's views may be useful for social capital theorists, Putnam offered more useful, practical and empirically grounded views of social capital.

### **2.3.3 Robert Putnam's view: Social organisations and connections**

The evolution in the views on social capital as evidenced in the passage from Coleman to Putnam presented a major step (Fine, 1999 : 7). Putnam (1993, 1995) thought of social capital as a resource that resulted from peoples' social connections. Besides realising some resourceful qualities of social capital, Putnam also believed that social capital had a severe impact on the apparent decline of American democracy.

Putnam (1993, 1995) has indeed contributed substantially to the debate in social capital literature. His ideas of social capital as features or aspects of social organisations (for example networks, norms and trust), have been widely accepted and supported. In a review of Putnam's book '*Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*' Ehrenhalt (2000 : 61) describes Putnam's work as '... a substantial achievement'. Putnam argued that horizontal networks of reciprocity are fundamental to civil society and that these networks can be seen in horizontal (as opposed to authoritarian) community organisations. Practical applications of Putnam's ideas have emerged, such as Putnam's view of the American democracy, which was also widely debated and written about. In Italy, public participation in local government was explained in terms of social capital (Putnam 1995 : 14). Likewise, Fernandez, Castilla and Moore (2000) assess the instrumental advantages to a firm by analysing social networks amongst employees of a phone centre. Svendsen and Svendsen (2000 : 72 - 86) used Putnam's approach to measure cooperation and participation in a Danish dairy movement. On the other hand,

Lehning (1998 : 239) suggests that Putnam's idea of the lack of social capital in America, namely that of social needs or deprivations, could be an alternative means of determining a nation's stock of social capital.

Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1998) and Putnam (1993, 1995) were pioneers in terms of designing and introducing the social capital paradigm to the social sciences and applying their views in western and European societies. Based on these and further practical and

theoretical observations, other views on social capital have also emerged.

#### **2.3.4 Other theoretical viewpoints**

Despite the main theoretical origins and influences of social capital, social capital has also received a number of further definitions. Rudd (2000 : 135) quotes theoretical definitions of social capital from the literature: (1) '... those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the economic goals and goal-seeking behaviour of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere' (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1988); (2) '... the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992); (3) '... as one's sympathy (antipathy) for others, idealized self, and things' (Robison and Siles, 1997); (4) '... a culture of trust and tolerance, in which extensive networks of voluntary associations emerge' (Inglehart, 1997); (5) '... obligations and expectations, which depend on trustworthiness of the social environment, information-flow capability of the social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions' (Coleman, 1988); (6) '... features of social life - networks, norms and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (Putnam, 1995); (7) '... a capability that arises from the prevalence of trust in a society or certain parts of it' (Fukuyama, 1995); (8) '... the quantity and quality of associational life and the related social norms' (Narayan and Prichart, 1997); and (9)

‘The social capital of a society includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development... It includes the shared values and rules for social conduct expressed in personal relationships, trust, and a commonsense or ‘civic’ responsibility that makes society more than a collection of individuals’ (World Bank, 1998). In addition, the World Bank has recognized social capital as a reflection of the value of cooperative social activity (Skidmore, 2001 : 57). Fukuyama (2001 : 7) also refers to social capital as ‘... an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals’.

Fernandez, *et al* (2000 : 1289) use the term social capital to reflect the ‘... instrumental value of social relationships’. Paxton (1999 : 93), in similar vein to Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam and other views expressed so far, sees social capital as *objective associations* between people by which individuals are tied to one another in social space and as a *subject* type of *tie* in which trust, reciprocity and positive emotion are embedded. Barr (2000 : 539) defines social capital in terms of the network of relationships between the agents within an economy.

A useful view of the content and character of social capital is offered by Paxton (1999). Paxton (1999 : 93) regards social capital as present, active and latent. The presence of social capital does not necessarily mean that social capital is being productive. It merely, in Paxton’s view, increases the capacity for action and ‘... facilitates the production of certain goods’. When social capital is active, it facilitates various possibilities for both individuals in the group, as well as the group as a whole. By social capital being latent, social capital can be viewed as potential energy. Social capital activities, according to Hall (1999) are formed by means of ‘... regular contact with others, beyond the sphere of the family or the market ... the kind of face-to-face relations of relative equality associated with participation in common endeavours’ (in Lowndes, 2000 : 534). Szreter and Woolcock (2002) in Thomas (2003 : 20 - 21) suggest bonding and bridging concepts: the former refer to social cohesion and the latter refer to the ability of an individual to access resources outside his/her homogeneous group.

Based on the views on social capital expressed thus far, social capital appears to have a wide range of applications in community life. Elements of trust, reciprocity and cooperation appear to be fundamental to the understanding of social capital. A proper understanding of social capital can help development planners to better design rural development interventions, with increased success rates. On the one hand, these applications of social capital may be thought of as admirable and on the other hand, they may also be regarded as idealistic and perhaps never fully comprehensible.

A substantial amount of theory on the topic of social capital focuses on economic productivity and social relations between individuals (1.2.3). Small (2002 : 10) describes social capital as an umbrella term for a number of ideas about the relationship between social resources and economic success. These ideas show that social capital is seen as a need, problem or something that is *absent* in rural communities. Instead, social capital has ample resource potential and, as will be shown later, is being used by rural people in various ways.

Exactly how social capital can be useful in African communities, remains an open-ended question. Developing countries face a number of common problems: low levels of living and productivity, high rates of population growth and dependency burdens, high and rising levels of unemployment and underemployment, substantial dependence on agricultural production and primary-product exports, prevalence of imperfect markets and incomplete information and dominance and dependence and vulnerability in international relations (Todaro, 1997: 38 - 56). It is within the context of these problems (or needs) experienced in developing countries, specifically small rural communities, that the need satisfaction properties of social capital are considered as useful.

From the theoretical perspectives in the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the functioning of social capital, despite its many appearances, is not fully understood - particularly not within the context of the needs of rural people in the developing world. Theorists seem mainly

to describe social capital, and limit the use of social capital to economic aspects of societies. How social capital is produced, distributed and maintained in rural communities may help to understand our own, *and* various other social worlds better and shed light on viable development alternatives for consideration by decision and policy makers.

The next section will focus on the appearance of social capital in different economic, political and cultural processes in community life. Since the empirical study in Chapters 4

and 5 focuses on rural villages in Limpopo, relevant theoretical views and practical applications of social capital presented in the next section are calculated to highlight the manifestation of social capital in predominantly rural settings of the world.

## **2.4 SOCIAL CAPITAL IN COMMUNITY LIFE: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

How does social capital affect the life and development of communities? The debate on social capital indicates a wide variety of possibilities. By looking at a number of different contexts, including the northern industrialised contexts, I will show that social capital is manifested in many processes in different contexts. My conclusions in the discussions that follow are meant to be both an aid for community development strategies as well as a platform to raise questions regarding the role of social capital in rural community development.

The value of social capital for local development can be understood if one examines the various processes and contexts that influence life in communities. In order to gain such an understanding, the subsections that follow will reflect on these processes and contexts and give an account of the significance of social capital as a resource for communities. In subsections 2.4.1 to 2.4.3 different processes and contexts are used as parameters for the social capital debate. The subsections were selected from a review of a broad range of social capital literature in order to amplify the various manifestations of social capital in different contexts.

### **2.4.1 Socio-economic community processes**

The first parameter to consider, one which is an important part of this study, is the parameter of socio-economic processes and phenomena in communities. The close association that social and economic processes have with each other can be seen in the numerous and often complicated networks formed in communities (2.2.5).

The following subheadings are collectively presented as a list of evidence which highlights not only the processes and contexts, but also the roles and different appearances of social capital in important socio-economic processes of communities.

#### **2.4.1.1 The family**

The family can be regarded as a source of social capital in its own right (Mayoux, 2001 :450). Considering Putnam's (1993) view of social capital as *mutual obligations and trust*, and Coleman's (1988) view of social capital as a *social structural resource* (see section 2.3), the family seems to fit perfectly into the theoretical paradigm of social capital. Studies conducted on family structures and education agree that the family is a social resource (Lichter, Cornwell and Eggebeen, 1993 : 53 - 75; Lehning, 1998 : 221 - 242). Lichter, *et al* (1993 : 54 - 55) refer to Coleman (1988) who regards social capital within families as mutual obligations and interpersonal relationships between parents and their offspring. Putnam (1993 : 175) notes that '... kinship ties have a special role in the resolution of collective action' and, in a later publication (1995 : 73), Putnam describes the family as '... the most fundamental form of social capital'.

Putnam (1995 : 68) suggests that the declining educational achievement of American children can be traced to growing deficits in family social capital. Much like the South African situation, which will be frequently referred to during this discussion, American families are increasingly experiencing the physical absence of adults in the household (due to divorce), limited time spent

together (due to the rise in two-earner families) and parental inattention to children's activities (like monitoring school performance or instilling educational values). Rubio (1997 : 806 - 807) similarly found that juvenile delinquency in Columbia is a result of deficiency of social capital in the family. Some families are therefore dysfunctional and destructive and may, instead of contributing to strong or healthy social ties, contribute to social disintegration of communities.

Still, from a structural point of view, the family has several important implications for social capital and rural development. Rural families tend to be larger than families in metro areas, and this may have some beneficial effects for the members of rural households. Rural people mostly work for themselves, sustaining their livelihoods and satisfying their needs. In addition, Barbarin and Khomo (1997 : 218) found that a large number of adults in poor rural households in South Africa pool resources in order to acquire durable consumer goods for the family. Lichter, *et al* (1993 : 57) mention in their research that aspects of the family structure may be contributing to rural-urban differentials in educational achievements.

The positive effects of social capital in rural communities are also evident in and between families. However, Putzel (1997 : 944) expresses concern over social capital literature that idealises the family '... as the most productive site of social capital and therefore a pillar of civic virtue and democracy'. Putzel (1997 : 945) mentions that a predictable trust is associated with the intimacy of the family but that this trust, contrary to civic society, is by no means democratic (*sic*).

Parents can, however, contribute to the economic welfare of their children by means of helping them to assimilate within the broader community and cultural framework (Gradstein and Justman, 2000 : 880). Fukuyama (1995 : 4 - 5) argues that the family provides valuable skills to people to adapt to their culture and society, and that values and knowledge are transmitted from generation to generation<sup>5</sup>. Hagan; Macmillan and Wheeton (1996 : 370) mention that the links between

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<sup>5</sup>This process is known as *acculturation*. Bourdieu (1973 : 487) refers to this as *cultural reproduction*.

parents and their children constitute inter-generational connectedness or ‘cross-generational’ closure. Therefore, within the context of the family and its structure, function and importance for rural development, it is possible to see how family ties can be active as a social capital resource in sustaining need satisfaction.

#### **2.4.1.2 Norms and values**

For community development efforts to be successful, community members must have a norm which embodies a positive view of their own potential (Van Willigen, 1993 : 95).

Besides the norms found in families and communities, whether small tribal groups such as those found in rural Africa or complex modern societies, the existing social capital found in communities seemingly displays unique sets of norms and values. Weede (1992 : 393) describes these regulatory norms and values as *codified laws* which encompass the large areas of social life. According to Putnam (1993 : 172), the norm of general reciprocity is a highly productive component of social capital. He adds that in communities where reciprocity exist, opportunities can be efficiently restrained and collective problems can be solved. Putzel ( : 946) asserts that it is difficult, to ‘... effect a transformation ... of norms and values ... because they are constantly reproduced within the intimacy of the family’.

Norms and values may determine the nature of ties that persons may have towards each other. Pye (1999 : 766) notes that southeastern Asians display a norm controlling human aggression. Yet, at the same time, rudeness is acceptable toward those foreigners who are seen as ‘barbarians’. Lyon (2000 : 676) also acknowledges that norms vary in different localities and adds that tomato farmers in Ghana, for example, use articulated norms (in terms of cooperation, trust and consensus) to establish strong social bonds with traders. Banks (1997 : 32) states that a network of norms (and trust) says something about the strength of social bonds.

Portes and Landolt (2000 : 531) state that Coleman (1988) paid particular attention to social capital as a source of social control and that Coleman was preoccupied by the disintegration of what he (Coleman) called 'primordial' social ties. Given the complicated ways social ties in communities are formed, norms and values - as features of social capital - certainly play a role in the establishment and preservation of strong and meaningful social ties in communities. Similarly, Putnam (1995 : 76) mentions that the changes in American social capital may be related in complex ways to the erosion of 'traditional' social capital. Any community's socio-economic ties, as well as cultural and political ties, will improve with the production, mobilisation and activation of its social capital potential (Lehning, 1998 : 224 - 225). Schafft and Brown (2000 : 204) mention in this regard that the 'weak' ties of individuals to larger communities enable entry into larger social networks and protect the community against predatory claims of members whose claims threaten the communities' economic outcome. In addition, Granovetter (1973 in Frank and Yasumoto, 1998 : 644) argues that weak ties provide access to unique influence and '... information that can give an actor important advantages in the pursuit of resources ...'. Contrary to the expectation that strong social ties amongst community members will promote social capital, weak ties may therefore allow people to move between subgroups. Frank and Yasumoto (1998 : 644) found that, where social ties are weak (like outside the subgroups), actors generally pursue social capital by relying on reciprocity instead of trust.

In terms of the social ties found in communities, democratic values have an integrative function to strengthen ties of social unity (Lehning, 1998 : 226) and to provide a platform from which local and national development projects can be launched. Seen from another resourceful view, the successful utilisation of collectively owned resources in local communities largely depends on the strength of social ties (Sun, 1999 : 405). For Lin (1999 : 482 - 483) it is the extent of social ties that matters: 'both strong and weak ties enhance the extensiveness of networks, and extensive ties afford better opportunities for individuals to locate the resources useful for instrumental actions'.

Based on the views of Bourdieu (1991, 1986), Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993; 1995),

which all focus on peoples' interactions and associations with each other, it can therefore be expected that certain norms and values in a community may influence the potential production and mobilisation of social capital.

#### **2.4.1.3 Trust**

There appears to be widespread consensus in literature that trust is an important indicator for social capital (Coleman, 1990 : 91 - 103; Lowndes, 2000 : 535 - 536; Kaase, 1999 : 2 - 14; Marske, 1996 : 113; Putnam, 1993; Lehning, 1998 : 237; Onyx and Bullen, 2000 : 24; Pye, 1999 : 765; Fukuyama, 1995a; Weede, 1992 : 392).

Kaase (1999 : 4 - 8) distinguishes between political trust and interpersonal trust. When trust is absent in a community, whether political or interpersonal, the potential for dysfunctional conflict may increase. All over the world, but particularly in rural Africa, wars and ethnic conflict between countries and between communities can be traced to a lack of trust between ethnic groups. Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993, 1995) capture trust in their definitions of social capital (see section 2.3).

Trust is difficult to measure (Marske 1996 : 113). Pye (1999 : 770) suggests that trust emanates from two sources. The first relates to the basic personality of the individual and the second source of trust comes during the socialization process of children when a child learns to distinguish between friends and enemies. Trust (and distrust) may also be shaped by religion as can be seen in the African context where the spiritual world plays a shaping force of people's social world and ethnic identity (Ebaugh and Curry, 2000 : 200 - 201). One may therefore expect that different types of trust can be found in communities. Coleman's concept of social capital includes the trustworthiness of institutions (Schmid and Robinson, 1995 : 59). Working together, according to Pye (1999 : 770), is an art that requires a significant degree of trust in others. Putnam's observations on the declining American democracy (1993a, 1995) may be linked to a lack of

trust in the American society. The paradox of modern democratic society, as postulated by Lehning (1998 : 236), is that its cohesiveness can be rooted in impersonal and generalized trust. Trust, therefore, needs to be recognised as an important indication of the existing and potential social capital which can be found in societies.

In cases where high degrees of distrust prevail, social capital may be expected to be under-utilised and community development may have limited potential to succeed. After all, if community development is to become sustainable and real benefits of community

development are to be achieved, basic patterns of trust should be established between role players. This is confirmed by prominent writers. Fukuyama (1996) for example, has argued the social virtues of trust and Lehning (1998 : 237) mentions that trust lubricates aspects of social capital, like cooperation.

#### **2.4.1.4 Cooperation and participation**

Chetkov - Yanoov (1986 : 26) notes that the term 'cooperation' originates from Latin and means operating or working jointly with another person or group in order to promote a common objective (or purpose), produce the same result, or achieve a desired result more efficiently. From the theoretical views presented earlier (2.3), cooperation and participatory actions appear to be essential for the establishment of social capital in communities. Levi (1986 : 14) distinguishes between a 'community' and 'cooperatives' and asserts that these two social systems are potentially complementary. With regard to rural communities, the geographical boundaries provide a sense of security, but, internally, as Oosthuizen and Van der Worm (1991 : 15) also observe, cooperative behaviour exists as a result of subsystems in interaction with each other (2.2.2).

As socio-economic processes, cooperation and participation have important implications for rural community development. Whereas many participative strategies have been generated so far,

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is often used in the theory and practice of rural institutional development (Van der Waal, 2001 : 52). PRA strategies will probably only work with a good stock of social capital present in the form of cooperation and an interest and desire on the part of targeted communities to cooperate and participate in their own development.

As a result of a successful cooperative effort, social capital may be mobilised and an important platform can be created, from which potential community development efforts can be launched and social ties strengthened. However, people may participate in development processes for different reasons. Besides economic reasons, the enhancement of social bonds could explain peoples' cooperative behaviour.

#### **2.4.1.5 Partnerships**

The theoretical views presented earlier (2.3) relate social capital to the individual although the presence of partnerships in this study is regarded as potential social capital in a community. Partnerships provide opportunities for the attainment of economic benefits. In addition, there are economic and social ways in which partnerships can be defined. Both are used in this discussion, although socio-economic partnership formation may occur between people, organisations, communities and between countries.

The formation and functioning of partnerships seem to be closely associated with social capital (Lovrich, 1999 : 177; 178). Whether partnerships are formed between two or more individuals, or between individuals and groups, or between groups, even limited social capital can usually be detected. From a rational choice perspective (see Somerville and Steele, 1999), there is normally some sort of gain for the individual or group: economic or social.

Sometimes, however, partnerships may be formed for social reasons, like Frank and Yasumoto's study of the social structure of the French ruling elite reveals. (1998 : 650 - 651). According to these authors ( : 645) social capital is the 'common commodity' between the subgroups of the

French ruling elite and may appear in the form of 'bounded solidarity' in, for example, a French political party ( : 649).

Bounded solidarity, as mentioned in Frank and Yasumoto's study, is also applicable to rural communities in the developing world. Partnerships between governmental organisations and an informal settlement in Buenos Aires (Barrio San Jorge) resulted in a development process which helped to improve living conditions, to change community members' relationship with society and to reduce low income deprivations (Schusterman and Hardoy, 1997 : 91). In this case, the authors report that an organisation was introduced in the Barrio San Jorge informal community through which negotiations could be pursued with other partners such as donors and the Government (93; 99 - 101). The tangible benefits achieved - for example improved roads and houses - were significantly influenced by limitations such as scarcities in qualified technical personnel as partners and a lack of political will amongst decision makers ( : 116). Where such scarcities exist, as commonly found in rural areas, scarce resource personnel are required to work together to produce social capital in the form of partnerships within communities in which they operate.

Partnerships may also be seen as a means of creating cooperative and participative behaviour and as an avenue for facilitating other forms and applications of social capital. Lovrich (1999) shares with Putnam (2.3) (and others) the belief that social capital promotes functional partnership. Whereas Putnam (1993 : 181) further argues that social capital facilitates spontaneous cooperation, Lovrich (1999 : 177 - 191) suggests good reasons to draw on existing stocks of social capital from public partnerships.

Economically, the partnership formed between a recipient country and a donor agent may be defined in financial terms. Local rural development in Africa is often supported by partnerships between local, national and international role players but may clearly be neglected because of implementation and management problems.

#### **2.4.1.6 Mutual aid**

In most communities mutual aid is given and accepted by individuals as well as groups. Individuals may offer aid to each other in several forms: material (as in finances or remittances) or non-material (as in support and guidance). Mutual aid groups, according to Banks (1997 : 31), represent a considerable civic phenomenon and successful voluntary associations that attract 'joiners' for two reasons. Firstly, members are more interested in the collective benefits produced by the group than in any commodity that they can enjoy alone and, secondly, the collective benefits are not divisible into individual units - in other words - these benefits can only be enjoyed in common. Banks (1997 : 30) also mentions that social capital affords individuals within the web of favours and obligations a greater locus of control than they would otherwise have with fewer, less well arranged connections.

Whereas resources for sustainable development include skills, financial support and policy commitments (Brown and Ashman, 1996 : 1470), rural communities may lack many of these resources and may draw upon social capital practices in the form of mutual aid to sustain their lives and to satisfy a range of needs. In instances where resources are scarce, mutual aid seems to supplement rural people's efforts to survive. One example in this regard is the agricultural farmers and traders in Ghana who established close mutual trade groups to obtain access to information and to counterbalance the effects of crop scarcity (Lyon, 2000 : 668).

For Putnam (1993 : 169, 174) mutual aid practices represent investments in social capital. Existing social practices are therefore strengthened in societies where mutual aid is the norm.

#### **2.4.1.7 Environmental practices as social capital**

Humans have interacted with their environments since recorded history. People's actions were often related to happenings in the natural environments. In terms of causation, human behaviour was thought to have a causal connection with the natural environment. In Egypt, the coronation of a new Pharaoh was often postponed until the Nile's water cycle started in the early summer

season and the fertilized fields were ready to be sown (Whithrow, 1989 : 24 in Lemmer, 1999 : 29).

Likewise, a close relationship can be identified between social capital and the natural world. For rural areas the natural environment is an important consideration for social events relating to certain farming practices. Van der Merwe (1989 : 30, 55) mentions that the natural environment plays a determining role in the structure of farms and the [social] activities that are carried out in rural areas. Drawing on the theoretical views of Coleman, Putnam and Bourdieu (2.3), indigenous environmental knowledge often serves as social capital. Chambers (1983 : 87 - 89) powerfully illustrates this resourceful value of social relationships by referring to the Somalis in Northern Kenya who use the soil colour to distinguish soil - vegetation associations. Chambers refers to the authors Heinz and Maguire (undated) who recorded that a *Ko* bushwoman ‘... who was considered to have an average knowledge of plant lore for an adult member of her community ...’ could recognise, identify and name 206 out of 211 plants in spite of the effects of drought on the specimens presented to her. Another example found in rural areas of Africa is that of rain dances, which are believed to bring rain and a good harvest (Barrow, 1990 : 28).

Pretty and Ward (2001 : 213) report that farmers participating in a Kenyan government group-based soil conservation programme showed that the farmers who participated in groups outperformed non-group based farmers: a greater diversity of crops were grown, fewer trees were destroyed the groundwater in targeted area increased. Considering the need for survival, rural families could use their social capital in resourceful ways to interact with their environments. This need for people to cooperate in resourceful ways becomes particularly clear if it is considered that available natural resources for rural families should be used in sustainable ways (Pretty and Ward, 2001 : 209). As a resource, the rural household acts as a distinct unit affecting the discourse of their own rural development. Todaro (1997 : 312 - 313) mentions that ‘... the basic variable input in African agriculture is farm, family and village labour ...’ and that additional labour is often employed during the growing season, planting and weeding times.

Rural people, then, have close relationship with their environments. A degree of reciprocity appears to characterise this 'relationship'. Todaro (1997 : 346) mentions in this regard that environmental problems (like soil degradation, deforestation and pollution) have a negative effect on the health and productivity of both rural and urban poor people.

Sampson, Morenoff and Earls (1999 : 633) found in their study of neighbourhood effects on children, that spatial aspects in urban communities have an influence on reciprocal exchange between children. Bebbington (1997 : 190) argues that the existence of local institutions and the social capital available to local people in their interactions with their environment are similarly important factors in understanding [complicated] patterns of intensification, disintensification and degradation in rural areas. Bebbington's argument is supported by Rudd (2000 : 133) who asserts that institutions help people to interact effectively with the environment, to predict their actions and to reinforce the norms and rules within the institution.

#### **2.4.1.8 Health and nutrition**

Health and nutrition relate to this social capital debate in at least two possible ways. The first is that certain measures of health can be used as indicators for social capital. Secondly, strategies of health can be seen as social capital in their own right.

With regard to health measures that can be used as indicators for social capital, Chambers (1983 : 144) notes that food and health are important determinants of survival. Smith, Littlejohns and Thompson (2001 : 36, 37) state that communities with strong capacity (like communities with 'a good reservoir of knowledge') are likely to be healthier communities. For these researchers, increased social solidarity, enhanced mutual support and more empowered, competent, self-confident people do contribute to the greater achievement of health.

Health problems are particularly acute in the developing world and income differentials are not only increasing in developed and developing countries, but also between communities and

between individuals (Hyde, 1999 : 50). Infant mortality rates and malnutrition are indicators of the lack of access to health services and can in most cases be attributed to poverty (Todaro, 1997 : 44). Health indicators can therefore reveal social capital that exists in developing communities; not only in terms of the availability and limitations of social capital, but also how social capital formation can benefit from the improvement in health services in communities.

Secondly, and following on the above, strategies of health can be seen as social capital because people form social connections to fulfil various health needs (Thomas, 1993 : 25). As our understanding of the determinants of health has increased and deepened, the pressures for reform in the health systems of developing countries have reached a critical stage (Hyde, 1999 : 49). In consideration of indigenous knowledge found amongst rural communities, particularly those in Africa, understanding social capital as community capacity is important for health promotion practice (Thomas, 1993 : 25). Many reasons exist for modern health systems to incorporate indigenous knowledge but, considering the professional knowledge of western medical practitioners, known examples can indeed potentially benefit rural people: oral rehydration for small children with diarrhoeas, inoculations against human and animal diseases and staple food crop variety (Chambers, 1983 : 97 - 98).

A number of studies which focus on the role of the social environment in health have also recently been conducted. Lochner, *et al* (1999 : 259) cite some studies which have attempted to establish aspects of social life as determinants of health. These include: the effects of income inequality on mortality, the links between residential segregation and black infant mortality, the impact of neighbourhood deprivation on coronary risk factors, homicide, and low birth weight and morbidity. In another study, Lovrich (1999 : 182) presents evidence from a study done by Grott (1999) to illustrate that social capital can be used to integrate client services and to develop access for uninsured persons to health clinics, services and also, education. Kahn (1999 : 2) reports that the World Bank has found correlations across countries among indices of social capital, health status and economic performance.

From the ideas of Putnam (1993) and Coleman (1988) (2.3); hospitals, health centres and clinics are expected to reveal something about a communities' social capacity or competence to provide health services in society. In this way social capital is utilised for the satisfaction of collective and individual needs. Merging traditional healing and western healing systems will require ample social capital in the sense that, in line with Putnam's (1993) theoretical views of social capital (2.3.3), mutual obligations, networks, norms and trust are needed. Smith, *et al* (2001 : 37) quote Goodman, *et al* (1998 : 259) who describe social capital as '... a necessary condition for the development, implementation, and maintenance of effective community-based health promotion and disease prevention programmes'. Health programmes in rural communities should therefore consider available

social assets during such development attempts and take into account the indigenous environment of communities.

#### **2.4.1.9 Immigrants and specific forms of social capital**

Immigrants have become a reality of social life and, worldwide, countries and communities hope to develop 'desirable' migration patterns. The author's study area in the northern part of the Limpopo Province has a high number of immigrants. The networks they sustain and the forms of social capital they produce need some clarification.

Mutual obligations and expectations are often found amongst immigrants who reveal kinship, friendship and ethnic group ties as basic forms of social capital. This corresponds with Coleman's view of social capital (see 2.3.2). Liang (1994 : 413) asserts that social capital exists amongst immigrants, not only in their relationships within their communities of destiny, but also within their families<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>Immigrants may have friends and family members already in the immigrant country from which information can be acquired (such as procedures and benefits) about naturalization more easily (Liang, 1994 : 412).

Ebaugh and Curry (2000 : 189 - 209) identify and define 'fictive kin' as family-type relationships based on friendship and religious ties rather than on blood or marriage. For Ebaugh and Curry ( : 199) fictive kin serves at least two functions for immigrant communities. Firstly, cultural continuity is provided for immigrants children through social control and material support (2.4.1.1). Secondly, new immigrants, who often face economic difficulties and value conflicts in society, are provided with social and material support from their fictive kin. Important similarities can be drawn with rural families in this regard: social and material support are made available to develop and maintain human capital (Portes, 2000 : 5 - 6; Hagan, MacMillan, and Wheaton, 1996 : 372 - 373; Hofferth and Iceland, 1998 : 577 - 578).

Ebaugh and Curry observed a 'very strong' sense of responsibility amongst Hispanic and Asian immigrants in America to routinely send money to their relatives in the home country (2000 : 203). In terms of social capital, both the family and fictive kin therefore serve as an important buffer and resource for newcomers in societies. However, besides being a productive resource for immigrant communities, the social capital generated in diverse communities with a presence of immigrants may also be problematic. In communities where incoming groups<sup>7</sup> are very powerful in relation to the established residents, the danger exists that the former may become '*encapsulated*' (Crow and Allan, 1994 : 81, Somerville and Steele, 2000 : 8). Encapsulation refers to the formation of '*a community within a community*' (Somerville and Steele, 2000 : 8) and may occur in diverse communities. With regard to Africa, Temple (1998 : 339) comments that ethnic diversity appears to be part of the root problem of Africa's instability and bad policy outcomes.

Summing up the discussion thus far; social capital, as proposed by the theoretical views in section

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<sup>7</sup>Incoming groups may, besides immigrants, refer to groups entering an existing community, like fortune seekers in the case of newly discovered minerals in the area or the establishment of a large manufacturing firm.

2.3, requires the establishment of norms and trust which are essential for people to interact, connect and cooperate functionally with each other and as socio-economic networks within communities. Important socio-economic resources are created by the socialisation processes that occur in the family and the educational system of a community and country. Furthermore, for social capital to become a productive resource, it is essential that people participate in their own development and cooperate in innovative and resourceful ways to promote functional institutional formation (2.4.1.4). Compared to a family, a local community has a much larger pool of resources. Sun (1999 : 405) mentions that local communities have a greater pool of material, cultural, and especially human resources, which, when fully activated, may benefit the education of young persons in the community. In this way, health and educational services can become accessible and social problems like crime and violence can be alleviated. In brief, social capital appears in communities as a result of peoples' interactions which, in turn, arises from social capital already existing in communities.

From the above discussion (section 2.4.1) it can be concluded that social capital is important for communities, especially given the clear presence of social capital in community life. The inclusion of social capital during development efforts seems promising, although some indications in the discussion, for example the discussions on the family (2.4.1.1), norms (2.4.1.2) and trust (2.4.1.3) suggest that certain forms of development interventions will generate limited success.

It can be seen that the views of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam on social capital (2.3) are reconcilable with socio-economic processes in communities of the world. Besides the clear value of social capital for households, other important socio-economic processes of interest to communities (like health and education) appear to depend on a strong supply of social capital being available to communities. The mutual acquaintance and recognition commonly found in families, strong bonds of trust, norms and deep seated values of cultures, clearly define pure social qualities. Similarly, if people cooperate functionally, strong social ties could potentially increase the chances of successful community intervention. As intergroup relationships, rural communities of developing countries seem to draw from the advantages of their group's

interactions to satisfy health and educational needs. In order to deal with socio-economic complexities, people organise and connect, and such actions comply with Putnam's understanding of social capital (2.3.3). The formation of resourceful relationships, as Coleman defines social capital (2.3.2), can be found in the socio-economic processes discussed above, whereas Bourdieu's assertion that social capital consists of mutual acquaintance and recognition (2.3.1) also contributes to the understanding of socio-economic behaviour of people and institutions.

In terms of sustainable rural development efforts, local knowledge of the natural environment appears to have underutilised potential resources which could form part of rural community development interventions. Managing environments in rural areas is complex. Humans have an impact on the environment, and institutions, as human artefacts, also help humans to cope with environmental complexity.

The World Bank (2002) quotes Fukuyama (1995): 'It is clear that both the need for an industrial policy and the ability to implement one effectively are dependent on cultural factors'. As will be seen in the forthcoming sections, the value of social capital for the development process is also highlighted by indigenous cultures and different institutions.

Subsections 2.4.1.1 to 2.4.1.9 focussed on some fundamental aspects of communities in which social capital is instrumental in resource utilisation. The following subsections will elaborate on how many of these aspects are functional in terms of peoples' socio-economic orientations towards each other, as well as their cultural and institutional environments.

#### **2.4.2 Socio-cultural community processes**

A second parameter for social capital relates to the socio-cultural processes in communities. By broadening the discussion in this way, the analysis of the resource value of social capital is able to include aspects of symbolism, gender considerations and art, which are of fundamental cultural

importance to rural communities in the developing world, and to an understanding of the functioning of social capital.

Different cultures tend to have elaborate rules and norms. Pye (1999 : 767) notes that cultures differ in terms of their interpersonal relationships: ‘cultures differ in how people are expected to show respect ... and in how those in power should treat the weak’. Because of these cultural differences in rules and norms, the detection of social capital in rural areas may be complicated (Pye, 1999 : 766; also see section 2.4.1.2). It is therefore cautioned that socio-cultural processes in rural areas of the world are seldom fully understood; also because considerable cultural differences prevail throughout rural regions.

#### **2.4.2.1 Social symbolism and social capital**

Symbolic capital, according to Bourdieu, consists of the ‘... prestige and renown attached to a family and a name’ (1977 : 179). Bourdieu is referring to the prestige of being *above* other people: it is relational and intrinsically competitive. Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1985) provides a more general explanation of symbolic capital as resources that agents utilise in struggles for control of ‘legitimate naming, that is to say, official imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world’ (in Smart, 1993 : 390). A community’s symbolic construction may be useful for rural community workers who may seek to build on the people’s wish to believe in their community (Schucksmith, 2000).

In rural Africa symbolism forms an important part of cultures. Shipton (1989 : 5) quotes Kenyatta (1965 : 66) who suggested that in central Kenya sheep and goats have been ‘the standard currency of the Gikuyu people’. Kenyatta also argues that money is subject to inflation and that ‘... money is not a good investment, for one shilling does not bear another shilling, whereas a sheep or goat does. This, of course, is due to the ignorance of money speculation, and so they say it is better to buy a sheep or goat instead of shillings which, if buried in the ground (the only form of saving money the majority of people in Kenya know), would rot and lose their value’

(1965 : 66).

Further African symbolic phenomena, relevant for an understanding of social capital in the developing world, can be drawn from the life and world views of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. According to Drewal, Pemberton and Abiodun (1989 : 70) the Yoruba view of the cosmos entails two separate aspects namely *aye* (the concrete and visible world) and *orun* (the invisible and spiritual world of forefathers, gods and spirits). Also, the Yoruba interpret the phenomenon of newly born twins as a blessing and symbolic gifts from their perceived two worlds (Conner, 1995). Ben - Amos (1995 : 64) reports a basic dichotomy in the Benin people's cosmology: the tangible visible world (*agbon*) and the invisible spiritual world (*erinmwin*). The Yoruba and Benin people have therefore established trust and norms in the cosmic world which, in turn, influence their social interactions.

In addition, the utilisation of symbolism can become a powerful instrument of social capital to enhance power over resources. Coleman (1990 : 132) notes in this regard that persons with interest in each others' resources will seek to control those resources. Cohen (1985 : 12) agrees that members of a group of people have something in common with each other and that a community represents an *arena* in which an individual gains the fundamental and most substantial experience outside the confines of the home. These common interests controlled by different actors in rural communities, which might be symbolic and abstract in nature, evoke social actions between people and people may use these relationships resourcefully. Important symbolic actions are demonstrated in religious processes found in communities and will be discussed shortly.

#### **2.4.2.2 Art**

This section describes art forms as important socio-cultural processes which may lead to social capital in local communities. The significance for social capital is that different art forms provide a means for people to communicate and socially connect with each other, as well as with other cultures and communities.

Art is an important part of human cultural heritage. Paintings and drawings of a particular culture may reveal much about the social circumstances at different times. In many churches across the world different art forms (such as music, poetry and drawings) are used and building constructions often display peoples' desires and needs (Vansina, 1984 : 199). Drawings found in Egypt explain cultural aspects of these ancient civilisations and Bushman rock paintings in southern Africa reveal something of the life and worldview of the Bushman. When the art forms of past civilisations are examined, people's needs can be interpreted. Art seems to be a need in itself; one that provides opportunities for people and communities to express their needs. For example, graffiti art has been used by communities to express their political, social, economic and cultural needs.

Arnold (1996 : 5) notes that certain forms of art practiced in a particular area are often disseminated by travellers abroad. Art of the developing world, particularly African art, is often highly valued by western societies and reflects the creativity and talents of local cultures. Depending on a particular art form, art may reveal people's interaction with each other as well as with their environments (2.4.1.7).

Some art works are considered prestige items by ruling groups in some African countries like Gabon, Zaire and Benin (Vansina, 1984 : 161). In some African countries artists were expected to play special roles in communities, which indicated their status as *special* persons, like mediators ( : 139). According to Arnold (1996 : 19) art never merely imitates life but also interprets life from specific viewpoints. In Africa, art provides a means of understanding the social qualities of communities. Many forms of African art are found in the informal sector.

Different art forms can be distinguished. The following subsections highlight music, poetry and prose as art forms which can be associated with social capital.

### *Music*

Music is perhaps the best illustration of a traditional cultural art form. Music is considered a social capital resource because it forms an important part of peoples' social lives. Because music is pleasant and often satisfying to listen to and because music is often listened to during peoples' leisure time, music is useful in the social sense. Music is useful for social capital formation as it helps to form bonds and enhance social interaction.

Although it has long been noted that the difference in appreciation of music is due to cultural conditioning (Krige, 1965 : 526), the availability of modern technologies has become increasingly specialised and directed at certain markets. This stands in sharp contrast to the traditional function of music. In rural areas, music has throughout the years been a dominant feature and an important artistic expression for indigenous cultures. Blues music, for example, is particularly popular amongst many black people in America.

Music may be used to bridge social differences between cultures and to reach certain targeted groups (like the youth) in communities. This value of music is strongly supported by the fact that many radio stations' airtime is occupied by playing music. As will be seen later in this chapter, radio broadcasting does have ample resource potential for rural community development projects in which social capital could be mobilised.

#### *Poetry and prose*

Poetry is often expressed in song. Like music, poetry and prose are found amongst all nations and are common in Africa. Any discussion of poetry, according to Beals and Hoijer (1971 : 529) is hampered by its figurative and illusive language, often coupled with qualities difficult to translate.

Prose is usually expressed in myths and legends. The former are usually stories laid down in another world whereas the latter recount events that took place in this world (Beals and Hoijer, 1971 : 531). The significance of poetry and prose for social capital is that, by analysing the poetry and prose of people, one may become aware of how people symbolise value, meaning and enjoyment. In rural Africa, where many cultures have close ties with nature and supernatural

forces (2.4.2.1), poetry and prose have numerous functions in terms of people's spiritual needs.

For Makhavu (1987 : 15) poetry and prose express symbolism. As symbolism is an important aspect in many cultures, social relationships may be strengthened or alternatively, eroded, by means of symbolic gestures.

Collectively, different art forms therefore have important functions in community life. Firstly, they explain human's social behaviour in past and present. Secondly, different art forms are used during social activities (like gatherings) and, thirdly, art is a source of employment for many people. Since art plays an important part in society, art can be used as a medium to facilitate, mobilise and interpret social capital in communities. An example in this regard is a study done by Hagg (2001) in which a community art centre's contribution to social capital building was observed. In summary, art often expresses social capital. Social capital may be both the result of art, and art may also be the result of mobilised social capital.

Further important socio-cultural process in which social capital manifests itself, can be found in religion.

### **2.4.2.3 Religion**

Social capital can be detected in religious processes in communities. As a collective asset, Marske (1996 : 104) notes Durkheim ([1915] 1965) who regards religion as existing in the collective mind of society.

While concurring with contemporary theorists like Schneider (1999 : 270) that religious - based organisations are resources for communities and that they draw on social capital to accommodate outsiders and to expand existing social capital networks, such (and other) similar assertions may be contested on the bases that militant religious organisations use social capital in radical ways. In South Africa the activities of People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (P A G A D), a group that

seeks to hunt down gangsters and drug dealers, is a pro - Islamic movement that uses radical means to obtain their objectives. Moreover, religion has often been a cause of bloody conflicts, as seen in the war between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East. Clearly then, given the potential for social conflict, community development attempts aimed at integrating different religious groups in a community must take care in designing such community programmes.

Good possibilities exist with regard to activating social capital in development programmes, using religious means. Liebenberg (1997 : 7) hypothesises that the Christian Church can function as an agent in participatory sustainable development. He notes ( : 13) that for the Christian Church ‘ ... development consists of a spiritual dimension which forms the basis of its commitment to serving the poor’. Religious events are mostly social events and religion everywhere includes patterns of social organisation designed to regulate the social interactions of individuals (Beals and Hoijer, 1971 : 435). For Candland (2000 : 144) faith can be a form of social capital. He ( : 133 - 143) analysed four religious associations and notes ( : 131) that religious associations can have a strong influence on the ability of organisations to produce social capital for community development. One of the religious associations used in Candlands’ study (*Shramadana Sangamaya* of Sri Lanka) will be discussed later in this Chapter.

Religious organisations appear to represent an important means by which social capital can be distributed amongst the broader community. Although Putnam (1993 : 107) found that vertical authoritative relations are characteristic of the Italian Church and therefore not indicative of civic engagement, he also acknowledged that churchgoers in Italy express greater contentment with life and political ideologies than other Italians. Based on the perspectives of Putnam and the other theorists discussed (2.3.4), religion could be supportive of social capital formation and mobilisation in other, more specific needs in communities, such as family support, policy formulation and peoples’ orientations towards each other.

Symbolism, racial and gender processes, art and religion provide some understanding of social settings of the abstract and invisible socio - cultural world of rural communities. Socio - cultural

processes have significant influences on social capital formation in the developing world. The theoretical views of social capital, as earlier discussed (2.3) and described by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993), can be associated with these socio - cultural processes and activities in rural communities because of the way people interact with each other and the resulting norms, relationships and resources. Communities consist of groupings of people and institutions which, whether at a traditional rural village level or a modern urban level, have distinct needs and interests in the broader civil society. A key indicator of civic sociability thus appears to be the vibrancy of associational life. Based on a census of all associations in Italy, Putnam (1993 : 91) specified precisely the number of amateur soccer clubs, choral societies, hiking clubs, bird - watching groups, literary circles, hunters' associations, etc. in each region of Italy.

### **2.4.3 Institutional contexts affecting and constraining social capital**

A third parameter to consider is the contexts set by institutions within which social capital functions. It is not sufficient for social capital to be mobilised only in terms of economic relations or relations of kinship. If it is considered that institutions are normally designed to fulfil specific needs in societies, and that different institutional contexts may both affect and constrain social capital, then institutions are significant with regard to social capital and rural community development. Van der Waal (2001 : 50) quotes Brinkerhoff (1994 : 137) who defines the idea of an institution as 'a set of enduring rules or patterns of behaviour supported by societal norms and values' and 'systemised patterns or roles, in short, as organisations, that are formal collectivities that coordinate the actions of groups of individuals to achieve specified goals'.

Putnam is sceptical about the designers of institutions.<sup>8</sup> Based on his classic Italian experiment (1993) (see 2.3.3 and 2.4), Putnam ( : 17) comments that, despite substantive reforms in areas such as urban planning, environmental protection and health services, regional institutions in Italy

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<sup>8</sup>Putnam (1993 :17) states that '... the designers of institutions are often writing on water'.

often lack the administrative infrastructure and often even legal authority that would be needed to have a significant impact on social reforms.

It therefore becomes necessary to question the real value of rural institutions. To what extent, for example, are institutions *real* resources in rural communities? Most Non - Governmental Organisations (NGOs) need resources in order to be successful, such as profits (Schoombee, 1998 : 390) *and* social capital (Mondal, 2000 : 240). Unfortunately NGOs are not always initiated at a local level (Van der Waal, 2001 : 48 - 62). Abom (2004 : 342) found that NGOs in Guatemala were external, top- down, non-participatory and not community-based and consequently, they ‘... curbed broad-based social capital by fostering dependency’. This analysis further highlights the importance of institutions in rural areas of the developing world. Institutions are particularly relevant to developing countries (and communities) where capacity is limited and where socio- economic systems have to be created (Hagg, 2001 : 73). Rwelamira and Kleynhans (1998 : 228) *cite* Rukuni (1995) who notes that the South African Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Training (SACCAR ) has indicated that the limited supply of trained experienced professionals ‘... severely restricts the effectiveness of public and private sector institutions in agriculture’. Yet, economically, Africa has abundant resources but limited prosperity (Hadingham, 2000 : 117).

#### **2.4.3.1 Education**

Education provides an institutional context for the production and development of social capital. There are different forms of education, although formal educational needs seem most problematic for developing countries. Kellerman (1997 : 88) remarks that the [formal] educational systems of Africa ‘... need much to be desired’. As seen in the discussion thus far, social capital appears to be essential and relevant for important socio - economic processes of communities (2.4.1). Formal school education is no exception.

Lehning (1998 : 230) states that education is fundamental to building necessary preconditions for

social cohesiveness, even across multicultural diversity in a plural and diverse civil society. Coleman pays particular attention to the link between social and human capital (1990 : 304). Midgley and Livermore (1998 : 31) mention that economists have long argued that educational attainment is a great contributor to economic development and that education is an investment in human capital. Both Wales (1990 : 35 - 36) and Sun (1999 : 405) see education as a form of investment in human capital.

While education thus seems to lead to forms of social capital, it also needs to draw on other types of social capital for its success. With regard to the economic attributes of education, a number of convincing arguments point to the way in which finances, infrastructure and poverty influence a societies' ability to produce skilled people and *vice versa*. On the other hand, social evidence is weaker. It is not easy to predict the way in which social processes will influence the structure, nature and direction of an educational system. Todaro (1997 : 393) mentions that the structure of the educational system is linked to the economic *and* social character of the society in which it is contained.

Social capital can be beneficial to education in a community if the families of that community support their children's' academic performance (Sun, 1999 : 405). Lichter, *et al* (1993 : 54 - 55) mention that the family should be critically looked at and that erosion in the quantity and quality of parent/ child relationships can be associated with poor academic performance (like drop - outs). Similarly, Friedman and Krackhardt (1997 : 320) argue that it is the obligations, information and norms present in a community that affect the ability of students to succeed in school and to move to higher levels of education. Teachman, Paasch and Carver (1997 : 1343 - 1359) have also demonstrated that parent-school interaction is related to dropping out of high school. Sun (1999 : 403) found that measures of social capital are consistently related to academic performance, particularly during early educational and development stages. Schools alone can therefore not be blamed for poor academic performance.

McClenaghan (2000 : 566) relates social capital enhancement to adult education. For

development attempts to succeed, it is essential that adults must be able to read and write. In communities where adults can read and write, the chances for development efforts to succeed will improve. This can also be seen in the community development context where community development is defined as a learning process (Swanepoel, 1997 : 9; 2.2.2).

Therefore, in a very fundamental way, social capital does have a major contextual role to play in the discourse of the educational system of rural communities. The transfer of human resources to serve educational purposes (Sun, 1999 : 406) is a practical reflection of Bourdieu's view that social capital can be transformed into other forms of capital (2.3.1).

#### **2.4.3.2 Governments and the State**

Political institutions are important determinants of the different contexts in which the community development process takes place. According to Rudd (2000 :136) social capital, in the narrowest view, is the most prevalent in the discipline of political science. In opposition to the binary view of government versus private sector, Lehning (1998 : 223) suggests a *three-celled model* that focuses on civil society, which fulfils an intermediate role between the State and the individual. It seems that this relationship between civil

society, the State and the individual is 'social' in nature and dictated by the policies formulated by governments of the State.

Governments have a role to play in creating 'desirable' forms of social capital (World Bank, 1997 : 90; Shafft and Brown, 2000 : 204). Fedderke, *et al* (1999 : 732 - 734) suggest that good reasons exist to believe that society and political culture are systemically related. The State may play a role in forming and maintaining social capital and, through the application of sanctions, the formulation of laws and the use of specialised State functions, the State can act as a 'last resort'. Other authors, like Fukuyama (1995 : 326) and Lehning (1998 : 239) are of the opinion that social capital may be disrupted by governments faster than governments can build it up again.

Social capital provides insights into understanding important political processes. According to Ball (1988 : 122) voting behaviour studies, for example, concentrate on three broad approaches: identification and loyalty towards a political party, rational choice in decision making and sociological approaches. In addition, the theoretical views of social capital, like those mentioned earlier (2.3), could offer explanations for trends and tendencies of governments.

Governments and bureaucratic support are essential for the functioning of local cooperative efforts because, as Shafft and Brown (2000 : 204) also confirm, local social relations are embedded within macro-level contexts. For those involved in rural community development, it is important to take note of the nature of government support. *How* governments' linkages with local organisations are managed appears to be more significant than *how much* involvement there is (Esman and Uphoff, 1984 : 154). Government support for social network formation is likely to be seen in policy formulation.

### **2.4.3.3 Policies**

Citizenship in civic communities entails equal rights and as such, a community is bound

together '... by *horizontal* relations of reciprocity and cooperation' and not by the vertical relations implied by beurocracies (Putnam, 1993 : 88; 1.2.1).

Some of the most profound aspects of rural community development are the effects of internal and external politics on the lives of people in communities. A historical perspective could provide an indication of the influences of political policies on social capital. Leftwich (1994 : 363– 364) notes in this regard, the destabilizing effects of structural adjustment policies of the past: 'structural adjustment in the economies of developing countries certainly involved profound change in the use, production and distribution of resources' (1994 : 367). Tjonneland (1998 : 186) mentions that foreign governments and international organisations used policies, when granting development

aid, particularly in the late 1980s. This was done to foster their own interests.

For both Kaase (1999 : 11 - 12) and Schmid (2000 : 9) democracy is a process of accommodating conflicting interests and affinity, which facilitates the rise and sustainability of democracy. An enabling policy environment, according to the World Bank (1997 : 90) ‘... is characterised by good governance, enforcement of property rights, an independent judicial system, a competent and transparent bureaucracy, and mechanisms to promote dialogue and resolve conflict among economic agents’. The promise of establishing democratic policies in developing countries appears to lie in the ability of such policies to protect people and to prevent the *unsocial* or negative consequences of certain social processes (see 1.2.3 and 2.4.2). Lehning (1998 : 224) states that the basic structure of society should be designed as a constitutional democratic society, with respect for the rule of law, the protection of fundamental freedoms (like the right to form independent associations) and secure property rights. Correspondingly, Temple (1998 : 310) comments that ‘... today’s policy outcomes are tomorrow’s initial conditions...’. In addition, the World Bank’s social capital website asserts that social capital either facilitates or hinders economic reforms through economic policy formulation. (The World Bank, 2002)

The extent to which certain forms of social capital can be sufficiently mobilised and used productively may therefore depend on the broader policy environment. Rwelamira and Kleynhans (1998 : 221) assert that although some Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have liberalised their economies through improved policies relating to the money supply, interest and exchange rates, the macro economic policies of these countries still remain obstacles for the agricultural sector. With the right policies people can be encouraged or even discouraged to take initiatives, to participate and to form associations.

It is therefore clear that policies explain, at least partially, social organisation in communities,<sup>9</sup> as

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<sup>9</sup>Bealls and Hoijer (1971 : 410) mention that the political organisation of some societies may be lacking and that this may be attributed to a number of aspects: simple technology, lack of food and small human

well as the structure of many community networks. Important structural resources of communities include NGO and private sector role players which, according to Bebbington, *et al* (2004 : 53), are recruited ‘... to break state administrators’ monopoly on access to development resources’. The last mentioned authors add (2004 : 53) that NGOs create opportunities for collective action and to combat the disarticulating effects of state institutions and practices on local organisations.

#### **2.4.3.4 Crime and violence as influences on social capital**

Crime and violence are social problems that have severe socio-economic effects on both urban as well as rural communities. An examination of the destructive functioning of social capital reveals ripple effects on important social structures. Rubio (1997 : 807) has found for example that literature on gangsterism amongst the urban youth in Columbia frequently refers to family crisis, single mothers and the absence of a father figure. Schmid (2000 : 9) notes that the implications of thievery may see community members with resources adopting avoidance tactics and moving away from high crime areas. As such, these negative social interactions threaten the socio-economic resources of communities. Given such thievery, gangsterism and conflicts, social capital can therefore appear in destructive forms within communities.

Social capital resources are needed to *protect* the functioning of economic and social structures. Correia (1998 in Lovrich, 1999 : 183) investigated connections between social capital and community policing and found that social capital is an important determinant in successful community policing in five cities in the United States. Norms against criminal activity provide a

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populations. The authors use the example of the Eskimos of Greenland where the population is thinly scattered.

resource that enables communities to operate effectively (Friedman and Krackhardt, 1997 : 319) and to feel secure. In South Africa numerous privately owned security companies are being employed by citizens for protection against the high crime rate. These companies can be found in rural areas in the developing world and, despite the nature of their functioning within communities they are also susceptible. Crime also entails corruption and ‘white collar’ crime. Because there are so many different kinds of crime and violence, and because there are so many causes of crime and violence, negative societal processes are complex and difficult to fully understand (RSA, 1996 : 9).

#### **2.4.3.5 Trade**

Social capital seems to be relevant for the different trade processes that take place in communities. According to Bourdieu’s views of social capital (2.3.1), some forms of social capital can be traded; either for other forms of social capital, or for economic capital. Coleman (1990 : 131) states that exchanges in a social system take place in a particular setting in which the actors each have resources. As a result of the interest that each actor has for the other’s resources, competition evolves over these resources. From a social capital perspective trade can be described as the outcome of functional economic cooperation between people or countries. Delgado, San Martin and Torrico (1998 : 28) found that reciprocity is important during trading processes in small towns in the Andes region.

Trade has significant implications for developing countries (Todaro, 1997 : 459 - 460).

The World Bank (2002) acknowledges that there is ‘increasing evidence’ that social capital influences trade at the macro level: ‘while most work on social capital is microeconomic<sup>10</sup>, social capital has implications with regard to trade and migration, economic reform, regional integration and new technologies, which affect how people interact [with each other and with their

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<sup>10</sup>Microeconomics is described by Todaro (1997 : 705) as a branch of economics which focus on individual decision units (like households and firms) and the way in which these decisions interact with each other to determine the relative prices of goods and factors of production and how much of these will be bought and sold. Central to microeconomics is the market.

environments], as well as security and more'. Moreover, Schmid (2000 : 8) rightfully notes that people may refuse to trade when social capital is negative.

#### **2.4.3.6 Institutional contexts relating to race and gender**

Racial and gender issues appear to be receiving increasing attention from social capital scholars. These issues are frequently 'overlooked' (Mcneal, 1999 : 123 - 124; Molyneux, 2002 : 177) despite their importance for rural community development in general and social capital in particular.

Different racial and gender social groups have different access to social capital (Lin, 1999 : 483). The needs experienced by different groups may be similar, but the methods and resources employed to satisfy their needs can vary. As discussed earlier (2.4.1.9), socially cohesive forces may be so strong that for example, immigrants may form smaller communities within existing communities. These encapsulated communities often form along racial lines, as evident in Grasmuck and Grosfoguel's study of Caribbean immigrants in New York shows (1997 : 339 - 363). In a country like South Africa, with many migrants, eleven official languages and a history of racial segregation, social capital studies of racial processes remain a promising, though challenging task.

Likewise, social capital is also manifested in gender processes (Mayoux, 2001 : 437 – 457). Hall (1999) states that social capital has been sustained in Britain, largely by virtue of the increasing participation of women in the community. Hall's view is based on the statistical observation that women's participation in associations almost doubled in Britain between 1959 and 1990. Lowndes (2000 : 534) uses Hall's illustration (1999) and notes that women in Britain (in 1994) undertook more voluntary work related to health education and social services. Men, by contrast, were more active (more than twice as many) in sports and recreation during 1994. Accordingly, Silverman's (2000 : 249) social capital study found that seventy five percent of the staff of charitable community development corporations in Jackson (in Mississippi, U S A) was female,

Two of the corporations that Silverman studied were staffed entirely by women.

Yet, the way in which women participate in community matters is often completely different in developing countries. For example, women's participation in rural communities of Africa has frequently been hampered by traditional life views and changing economic circumstances. This has obvious implications for the study of social capital formation in rural communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Rural women in Africa have been long known for their inputs into community development, although these are not always well researched or given sufficient credit. The assumption that 'farmers' are male and rural women mere 'housekeepers' has been criticised by local institutional development literature (Uphoff, 1986 : 152). The empowerment of women and the enhancement of women's social status contributes significantly to the improvement of rural households (Todaro, 1997 : 315; Uphoff, 1986 : 153). In spite of Putnam's view that America's stock of social capital is declining (2.3.3), evidence in the rural world suggests that women are increasingly taking part in social networks (Molyneux, 2002 : 177; Fox and Gershman, 2000 : 182; Gittell, Ortega - Bustamante and Steffy, 2000 : 125). Accordingly, Lowndes (2000 : 533) raises questions relating to gender dynamics, particular with regard to women's political engagement as opposed to men's.

Gender and racial issues illustrate the unfortunate fact that social capital is often mobilised for the purpose of domination. The inclusion of racial and gender processes in rural community development programmes is thus seen as an important consideration for potential social capital formation by means of human-centred development and the satisfaction of human needs.

In view of the theoretical views and practical examples expressed so far, it can be concluded that social capital is an active component in communities, providing both understanding and explanations for important processes and contexts that affect communities. Social capital

functions at the different levels and considering the dynamics, complexities and extremes of modern society, social capital is indeed more than just an asset for economic production. The socio-economic, cultural and institutional processes and contexts of developing communities also reveals the ways in which social capital is active, distributed and preserved in rural communities. Social capital may be a result of these processes, but it may also be a cause of these processes in communities.

The idea of social capital has clearly received much support because of its prevalence in communities across the globe and its popularity amongst economic theorists. The next section will focus on critique of the social capital theory.

## **2.5 CRITIQUE OF THE SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY**

Like many other social concepts, the original heuristic meaning of social capital is being put to the test by an increasingly diverse applications (Portes, 1998 : 2). Social capital has been subjected to numerous critiques. In the following subsections social capital will be critically evaluated in terms of the needs of rural communities in the developing world and with regard to the economic direction in which social capital appears to be growing.

### **2.5.1 The economisation of social life**

Social cohesion is increasingly being seen by development and growth specialists as an important component for the economic prosperity of societies. According to Kahn (1999), World Bank economists have identified social capital as the ‘missing link in explaining economic growth’. Different elements of the concept “social capital” have been present for a long time in economic literature but, according to the World Bank (1997 : 78), under different names. Becoming a ‘modern’ community may be appealing to some, but, as noted by Giddens (1991 in Shucksmith, 2000: 8), modernity ‘produces difference, exclusion and marginalization’.

The definitions of social capital according to Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam (2.3) imply economic outcomes such as poverty alleviation, growth and production. The World Bank (1997 : 77, 89) states in this regard that certain forms of social capital can have strong positive effects on economic growth and can contribute significantly to sustainable development. Putnam's original hypothesis is basically attributed to numeric indicators (Small, 2000 : 12), although, in Putnam's 2000 book, the potential limitations of his original conceptualisation of social capital was substantiated ( : 13). Similarly, in economic terms, Fedderke, *et al* (1999 : 709) suggest that social capital should be recognised as an asset or factor of production in the development process.

Social capital, therefore, appears to be seen by many as a mere 'production factor'. This can also be seen in the conclusions of Barr (2000 : 556) who asserts that social networks affect enterprise performance by facilitating flows of knowledge and that these information flows, which are determined by the structure of social networks, may lead to sustained economic growth.

Considering the potential of social capital to satisfy a wide range of human needs in rural communities, available social capital assets in rural communities need to be protected from profit hunters for a number of valid reasons. As contributors to economic development, the success of collaborative efforts like mutual aid, rural institutions and associations depends largely on different forms of social capital. Despite many of these efforts being informal, particularly in developing countries, a framework is created whereby collective decisions can be made, activities can be coordinated and information can be shared. Robinson and Siles (1997 in Rudd, 2000 : 136) share, with other writers, a mainly economic view of social capital, namely that a change in the level of social capital can cause an alteration in trade terms, individuals internalising externalities, the risk of unsuccessful collective action, a decline in the number of opportunities for specialization and trade gains, changes in personal income levels and a redistribution in income and social welfare.

Fedderke, *et al* (1999 : 737 - 739) recognise that there are many mechanisms by which social

capital can be formed. Social institutions can serve as generators of human capital for development purposes instead of generating human capital for economic purposes.

### **2.5.2 Social capital in poor areas exists within the constraints of new forms of impoverishment**

While the commitment of many social capital theorists to bottom-up development (Svendsen and Svendsen, 2000 : 2 - 5) is appealing, the concept remains insecure considering the consequences of new forms of interconnectedness that are taking place in the world. This interconnectedness between societies has many aspects, some of which may be perceived as positive, such as cooperation and regional integration; but if these aspects are evaluated within the context of poor areas of the developing world, the application of social capital might account for new forms of impoverishment.

#### **2.5.2.1 The globalisation of societies**

The concept globalisation, as used here, refers to two aspects, namely the globalisation of civil society (as in social and political interactions and relations) and the globalisation of economic relations (like finance, manufacturing and trade) (Van Aardt, 1997 : 254 - 255). Important global influences indicate that social capital can be seen in both these aspects. With regard to the globalisation of civil society, transnational social movements such as organisations working for environmental protection, human rights and international disarmament have been important constructive forces in shaping the structures of international political institutions, influencing the operation of those institutions and democratizing international policy (Smith, 1998 : 95).

Economic decisions resulting from economic relations have a dramatic influence across regions of the globe. Global warming is said to be partially responsible for the melting of the polar ice caps which lead to a steady rise in sea levels. The destructive side of globalisation can therefore be seen in the physical environment. It is also said that global warming is the major cause of the *el*

*niño* and *la niña*, the weather phenomena associated with excessive rain and droughts and responsible for the floods in Mozambique during 2000. What happens in one part of the world in terms of weather patterns, has been shown to have an influence in another, seemingly unrelated part of the world. Technological innovations and developments also affect consumer spending patterns. The drop in consumer spending patterns has meant less emphasis on demand for various primary commodities<sup>11</sup> (Temple, 1998 : 310; Todaro, 1997 : 465; Van Aardt, 1997 : 255, Portes and Landolt, 2000 : 542). Zambia, a country once regarded as a middle-income country with an average GDP amongst the highest of the African countries, has experienced a per capita income fall of 50 % (World Bank in Buijs, 2000 : 110). A dramatic decline in consumer spending also became evident in Zambia (between 1974 and 1991) and can be attributed to at least two causes: a decline in value on world markets, of raw materials, as well as structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund.

The decline in demand for raw materials (like copper in Zambia's case) is largely due to technological advances. These advances are evident in satellite technology and the use of fibre optic cable, which is changing the demand for telephone copper wire. Synthetic materials are increasingly being used as substitutes for consumer products, and this is affecting socio-economic development in rural areas of Africa. This means that African countries, which are dependent on primary product export markets (2.3.4), will have to consider alternative ways, not only to compete in a global economy, but also to satisfy their social needs. Although not adequately addressed by large economic organisations, for example the World Bank, social capital mobilisation could be useful for developing countries in terms of combating the negative socio-

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<sup>11</sup>The shift away from primary products can be attributed to synthetic substitutes and the reduced raw - material content of many products (Van Aardt, 1997 : 255).

economic effects of globalisation.

The globalisation of services, manufacturing and trade, is clearly impacting on the developing world. Whereas farmers in the developed world are supported by large government subsidies, farmers in the developing world are mostly excluded from participating in global markets because developing countries can not compete with the large subsidies granted by developed countries. As a consequence, poverty in the developing world is perpetuated. Developing countries have to some extent, shared land and, as Buijs (2000 : 109) puts it, ‘... on generally *unequal terms...*’ the advantages of globalisation.

### **2.5.2.2 Foreign aid and social restructuring**

Developing countries make use of international aid to sustain their socio-economic development (Tjonneland, 1998 :185). The existence of large international economic organisations (like multinationals and donors), operating in different countries, poses the question of whether the intentions of such organisations are really aimed at enhancing the social life of communities (1.2.3). The structural adjustment programmes of the past offered no guarantee that economic prosperity and development would occur, particularly in Africa (Leftwich, 1994 : 363 – 364). Todaro (1997 : 550 - 552; 555) states that donors may have political and economic intentions in granting aid to developing countries. In turn, developing countries might accept aid because of ‘... a belief that rich nations owe the poor nations conscience money for past exploitation ...’. Based on this view, it is possible that the existing social capital in a country might be exploited, manipulated and used by large organisations and foreign countries to strengthen their own economic power.

However, international donors appear to be more aware of the social components of development than what they were in the past. Hyden (1997 : 18), for example, notes that both bilateral and multilateral donors have increasingly stated that ‘... development aid will be tied to the readiness of developing countries to accept democratic norms of governance’. The

assumption is that ‘democracies don’t go to war with each other’ (Rudd, 2000 : 135). There is thus pressure from within and outside developing countries to build social capital through the strengthening of civil society. This is also echoed in the view of the World Bank that global integration will require adjustments from nations and communities in their values and practices. Abolishing child labour, for example, may improve or degrade cultural practices in societies, depending on the judging criteria (World Bank, 2002).

Donor agencies have become a prominent feature in the economies of developing countries and it is not unrealistic to question whether donors truly create social capital. Rural stagnation across Africa illustrates this concern.

Multinationals use their economic power to influence government policies in directions unfavourable to development (Todaro, 1997 : 540) and grass roots interventions. The World Bank has questioned its own potential role (World Bank, 1997 : 90), concluding that it needs to take more into account with regards to social relationships and local and national networks and institutions when giving policy advice and designing projects. Aspects to be taken into account include the creation of enabling environments, in which the wider political environment is considered, the promotion of research and learning and direct investment in social capital in which support is given to emerging organisations like Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and local governments. Schmid (2000 : 6) notes that foreign aid administrators are now changing their procedures to emphasize local participation in project planning, design and management. In this way social capital becomes instrumental in enhancing community ownership (Schmid, 2000 : 6; Swanepoel, 1997 : 7 - 8) instead of community dependency (1.2.1; 1.2.4). Many foreign aid programmes are described as ‘conditional grants’ (Schmid, 2000 : 6; Todaro, 1997 : 545, 550, 554). The donor offers aid provided that the recipient contributes something resourceful to the project. By doing so, and by virtue of this form of socio-economic partnership (2.4.1.5), the principle of ownership (Swanepoel, 1997 : 7) is encouraged.

### **2.5.2.3 Technological innovation**

The requirements for social change in communities are mostly dictated by economic realities, as can also be seen in the previous section (2.5.1). The dynamic nature of global society places severe demands on people in communities to adapt to a fast and ever-changing world (2.5.2.1). Often, rural communities do not have access to electricity and financial capital which would enable them to gain access to technological innovations like the World Wide Web (WWW), faxes and other aspects of community infrastructure. For rural communities the demands of a changing world may require significant alterations in lifestyles so as to be able to make use of the opportunities for social capital formation (and mobilisation) offered by technological innovation. For example, Blanchard and Horan (1998 : 293) observe that 'communities' are developing as a result of computer-mediated communication, such as electronic mail (e - mail), interactive chatrooms, computer conferences and bulletin boards. Although it is not clear how the emergence of such 'virtual' communities affects social capital, authors agree on the potential for social capital formation, for example, writing letters (Morrow, 2002). Faxes, radio and television also affect major dimensions in civil society such as health, education, sport and trade.

Despite the opportunities for social capital Putnam (1995 : 75) sees these entrenched technological trends as radically 'privatising' or 'individualising' our use of leisure time and thus preventing opportunities for social capital formation. Putnam makes particular reference to television as a powerful technological instrument.

Based on the progress of technological innovation in recent years, several major points of criticism can thus be raised against the theoretical views of social capital presented earlier (2.3). The existing body of literature on social capital does not offer any clarification of the adaptability or the sustainability of social capital in the technological age. Fedderke, *et al* (1999 : 737) accordingly mention that the formation of social capital is subject to the nature of technological progress over time. Rural communities (for example those in rural Africa), due to their situation of poverty, are often excluded from benefiting from technological advances and it can therefore be expected that this exclusion will have a dramatic impact on not only the economic opportunities, but also the formation of new networks of social capital in these communities.

Globalisation, aid and technology is likely to foster vertical authoritative relations rather than horizontal linkages, effectively creating the mentality among poor people that development problems are the responsibility of the State (Small, 2002 :18). The works of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam (2.3) do not address social capital in the context of the new forms of impoverishment discussed above. If social capital is only considered as an economic mechanism, social capital may in itself be seen a constraining factor in development. The dysfunctional qualities of social capital will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.5.3 Social capital in a dysfunctional sense**

Schafft and Brown (2000 : 204) refer to Portes and Landolt (1996) who criticise Putnam's views of social capital as '... making conceptualisations of social relationships which miss the complexity of the phenomena they describe'. Accordingly, Portes (1998 : 15) identifies four negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward levelling norms. In communities where a high degree of inequality exists and corruption and violence occur frequently,<sup>12</sup> high degrees of distrust may also be visible. This particular observation is consistent with the way in which Coleman (1988 : 98) regards social capital, namely that certain forms of social capital may inhibit desired actions like innovation and '... a given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others'. Fukuyama (2001 : 7) refers to Marx who regarded the traditional social relations of countries like India to be obstacles to development. Rubio (1997 : 808) refers to two different kinds of capital. The first can be described as productive social capital (like trust) and the other can be described as a destructive form of social capital whereby certain groups (like gangsters) are responsible for dysfunctional social processes. Crime and violence (2.4.3.4) are not merely a result of dysfunctional families, but also, according to Rubio (1997 : 815, 808) a result of the established legal system, informal

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<sup>12</sup>The effects of corruption and violence on community development is highlighted by Ramphela (1995) and Maluccio, Haddad and May (2000 : 55).

norms of behaviour, political activities, networks, power relations and contacts. He refers to this as *perverse* social capital (2.4.3.4). Personal relationships may be useful in sustaining and perpetuating class structures, but strong relationships may also be counterproductive because they may limit mobility (Hofferth and Iceland, 1998 : 574).

Dysfunctional social capital is thus fairly common; in probably all communities, but as can also be seen in donor/ recipient relationships (2.5.2.2), social capital can, in some settings, be problematic for countries because it may actually hinder development. Maluccio, *et al* (2000 : 58) note that economies in transition may be especially prone to negative social capital (or '*the dark side* of social capital'). For example, South Africa's political transition has had far reaching effects on foreign policy (Du Plessis, 1997 : 25, 28) and for the re - establishment of relationships with neighbouring states (Geldenhuys, 1997 :35 - 36). The re - establishment of socio-economic relations, especially with western countries, entails a sort of social vulnerability in terms of knowledge, experience and mutual cooperation.

The conception of social capital as having a negative connotation has also been described by researchers like Schmid (2000 : 5) and Schucksmith (2000: available online) as internal bonds which are strengthened by emphasising the group's distance from others. Besides gangsters, the Mafia and families of predatory dictators are social capital factories used for

evil. Implications of *negative* social capital include racism, sexism and discrimination.

As shown from the above discussion, social capital also manifests itself in negative processes in communities, notably crime and violence (2.4.3.4) and technological exclusion (2.5.2.3). These negative community processes point to the vulnerability of social capital theory, particularly with regard to needs satisfaction.

#### **2.5.4 Other critiques**

A large amount of critique of social capital found in literature is broadly directed at the conceptual use of the concept. Banks (1997 : 32) asserts that 'social capital' is often used vaguely, although it has a more precise meaning in social science. Fine (1999 : 8) describes social capital as being a '... totally chaotic concept.' Fine (1999 : 5, 8) also criticize social capital because of the construct's wide range of application: '... it can never be clear where the capital ends and the social begins ...'. The present state of confusion about the precise meaning of social capital, according to Portes (2000 : 3), can be attributed to the lack of theory on how social capital can serve as a resource for the community or broader society. In Portes' (2000 : 3) own words: '... social capital is an asset of children in intact families; in the next, it is an attribute of networks of traders; and in the following, it becomes the explanation of why entire cities are well-governed and economically flourishing while others are not'.

The conceptual critique can be understood against the complex and invisible processes in communities. Peoples' actions, according to Coleman (1990 : 32, 33, 43), are often dictated by interest and resource control and the social relations between two (or more) people can, in turn, result from social organisation. Portes and Landolt (2000 : 535) mention that the transition of social capital from an individual asset to a community or national characteristic has never been explicitly theorised and that this contributes to the state of confusion about the meaning of social capital. By implication, collective efforts of this nature are not always reflected in economic development efforts. Van der Waal (2001 : 50) criticises social capital as posing the danger of overlooking existing and vibrant organisations and relationships. Whilst the social networks in rural communities often exist outside the boundaries of the formal sector and that of the State, rural institutional development is often attempted by outsiders. Chambers (1983 : 75 - 78) warns that this phenomenon of outsider intervention may lead to distortions in the understanding of knowledge, power and prejudice. Consequently, and as a result of such distortions, social capital may be overlooked in rural areas. Lowndes (2000 : 535) argues that the influence of the 'public/private split' may be so strong that certain networks are excluded, such as child care groups and women's informal activities.

Maluccio, *et al* (2000 : 58) refer to Fine (1999) who warns that it may be easier for governments to become less accountable if social capital becomes a *catchall* view in some community circles. Accordingly, Fukuyama describes social capital as a 'ratchet' (1995 : 326). Critique has also been uttered with regards to 'trust', which, as has been shown (2.4.1.3) appears to be important for the existence of social capital. For Lehning (1998 : 236 - 238) the *type* of trust generated in private and public circles respectively, is different: 'individual' versus 'universal' trust. Also, poor social relations and trust in the structures of society (like unions) and those of the State and private sectors may erode in certain circles.

As can be seen in section 2.3, much has been said about social capital although substantial disagreements still exist on how it should be measured. The World Bank (1997 : 77) notes that little progress has been made with regard to measuring social capital and determining empirically how social capital influences economic growth and development. Paxton (1999 : 90) is concerned about the connection between attempts to measure social capital and the theory of social capital; a situation which Paxton attributes to the lack of consensus regarding the meaning of the term. Rudd (2000 : 136) mentions that social capital research confuses causality. Lin (1999 : 471) notes that social resources fall within the broader theoretical discussion of social capital '... and sharpens the definition and operationalisation of social capital as a research concept'. Hence, Small (2002 : 10) confirms that accurate definition, evaluation and utilisation have been major subjects for discussion in social capital literature. Fukuyama (2001 : 7) states that different perspectives of the manifestations of social capital may overlook social capital in itself. Those using social capital in their empirical research should thus be aware of the various viewpoints of social capital and what is implied by each of them (also: Wall, Ferrazzi and Schryer, 1998 : 301).

Social capital is clearly a concept which has a wide application potential and, despite being subject to a variety of interpretations, social capital '... while not all things to all people, is many things to many people' (Narayan and Pritchett, 1996 : 2 in Fine, 1999 : 5). For practitioners involved in rural development efforts, these varying interpretations of social capital may be

problematic. Within the context of the rural developing world, the methodological approaches to the study of social capital pose a shortcoming. As will be discussed later in this chapter, indicators of social capital may be quite different in the varying aspects of society.

A reassessment of social capital is thus urgently needed, particularly in the context of rural community development, and, more specifically, in the ways in which social capital is employed to satisfy the needs of rural people. The success of development attempts depends to a large measure on their ability to satisfy human needs and, as shown in the discussion so far, rural people show remarkable innovativeness in their attempts to satisfy their needs. Whereas the resources employed by the developed world to satisfy their social needs may be well-known and perhaps deemed simplistic in many contexts, individual and social needs found in most rural communities of Africa, Asia and Latin America might seem far more unknown and complex to western thinkers. Chambers (1983 :49) notes in this regard the problem of “miss-fit” between the methods and practice of research.

In section 2.4 it was shown that social capital is manifested in the different socio, economic, political and cultural processes of communities (with some negative processes) and that social capital can be both cause and result in these processes. Section (2.5) highlighted critique of the social capital theory, in terms of which social capital formation in the context of rural communities in the developing world seems to be neglected in favour of economic pursuits, globalisation, technological demands and ignorance towards negative forms of social capital. Based on these points of critique, the ways in which social capital is evaluated (in terms of economic need satisfaction) can clearly be questioned.

In view of the shortcomings of the social capital construct, it is further argued that the existence of social capital in rural communities is mostly potential in nature but that *active* social capital provides both insight and explanation into how peoples’ needs are satisfied in rural contexts. This specific content and direction appears to be missing from social capital theory.

## 2.6 THE SATISFACTION OF HUMAN NEEDS

This section aims to inflate, broaden and expand the existing social capital paradigm to include human needs, many of which are often ignored by social capital theorists and economically-minded developers.

Human needs have become an important part of development thinking and have gained much support since the inception of the Basic Needs Approach in the 1970's (2.2.1). The Basic Needs approach grew out of the increasing frustration amongst development theorists with earlier development approaches which posited the 'trickle down' of the benefits of economic growth to other segments of society (2.2.1).

Hettne (1995 : 178) states that discussions of basic needs were accompanied by attempts to define poverty in relative and absolute terms. Relative poverty becomes visible when the economic wellbeing of the world's poorest countries is compared with the economies of the world's richest countries. Huge income disparities are also evident between communities and even small encapsulated groups within communities. Todaro (1997 : 43, 151, 676) defines absolute poverty as a situation where a specific minimum level of income is needed to satisfy the basic physical needs of food, clothing, and shelter. According to Todaro (1997 : 150 - 155) poverty ranges in extent and magnitude across the world with the developing countries (including Africa, Asia and Latin America) experiencing the heaviest burden of poverty. The neglect of human needs is probably the most obvious result of large-scale poverty in developing countries.

Financial security and material resources are insufficient for complete human development. Barbarin and Khomo (1997 : 197) state that: '... although food, shelter and certain material goods are essential to life and physical growth, much more is needed'. The mere presence of social behaviour between people indicates that people experience a variety of unseen needs which may be complex and difficult to fully comprehend.

Given the importance of human needs for society, and the inclusion of human needs in development thinking, numerous attempts have been made in the past to classify universally applicable human needs. Two models of human needs, namely that of Maslow (1954) and Max-Neef (1991) are discussed in the following two subsections.

### **2.6.1 Maslow's Need Hierarchy**

In the classical Need Hierarchy Model of Maslow (1954) (in Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1991 : 102) a range of human needs is proposed. Maslow defined needs as:

1. *Physiological* - the need for food, shelter and drink.
2. *Safety and security* - the need for freedom from threat, in other words security from threatening events or surroundings.
3. *Belongingness, social, and love* - the need for affiliation, friendship, interaction and love
4. *Esteem* - the need for self-esteem and for esteem from others.
5. *Self-actualisation* - the need to fulfil oneself by maximising the use of abilities, skills and potential.

Gibson *et al* (1991 : 103) state that Maslow's theory assumes that a person attempts to satisfy the more basic needs (physiological) before directing behaviour towards satisfying upper-level needs (self-actualisation). Maslow's model of need classification is both useful and relevant for this study because Maslow's ideas allow human needs to be understood in terms of priorities of importance. By comparison, people in rural communities of Africa,

for example, may perceive their needs in terms of different priorities than those of western communities.

In view of the social complexity of rural communities in the developing world, it is questioned whether Maslow's ideas are applicable to all settings. For a better understanding of human needs,

Max-Neef (1991) suggests a matrix-based classification of human needs.

### 2.6.2 Max-Neef's matrix of needs and satisfiers

Max-Neef's (1991) views on human needs go beyond those of Maslow in a more subtle way. Max-Neef (1991 : 29) states that there are many ways to classify human needs, but also warns that '... any categorization must be regarded as provisional and subject to modification as new evidence arises and calls for changes.' Max-Neef makes an important distinction between *needs* and *satisfiers* - a distinction which, according to Hettne (1995 : 179), bridges the universal and the specific in the human needs debate.

**TABLE 2.1: MAX-NEEF'S MATRIX OF NEEDS AND SATISFIERS**

Needs accor- ding to axio-	Needs accor- ding to existen-	<b>BEING</b>	<b>HAVING</b>	<b>DOING</b>	<b>INTERACTING</b>
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logical categories (vertical)	tial categories (horizontal)				
<b>SUBSISTENCE</b>	1/ Physical health, mental health, equilibrium, sense of humour, adaptability	2/ Food, shelter, work	3/ Feed, procreate, rest, work	4/ Living, environment, social setting	
<b>PROTECTION</b>	5/ Care, adaptability, autonomy, equilibrium, solidarity	6/ Insurance systems, savings, social security, health systems, rights, family, work	7/ Cooperate, prevent, plan, take care of, cure, help	8/ Living space, social environment, dwelling	
<b>UNDER-STANDING</b>	13/ Critical conscience, receptiveness, curiosity, astonishment, discipline, intuition, rationality	14/ Literature, teachers, method, educational policies, communication policies	15/ Investigate, study, experiment, educate, analyse, mediate	16/ Settings of formative interaction, schools, universities, academies, groups, communities, family	
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	17/ Adaptability, receptiveness, solidarity, willingness, determination, dedication, respect, passion, sense of humour	18/ Rights, responsibilities, duties, privileges, work	19/ Become affiliated, cooperate, propose, share, dissent, obey, interact, agree on, express opinions	20/ Settings of participative interaction, parties, associations, churches, communities, neighbourhoods, family	

<b>IDLENESS</b>	21/ Curiosity, receptiveness, imagination, recklessness, sense of humour, tranquillity, sensuality	22/ Games, spectacles, clubs, parties, peace of mind	23/ Daydream, brood, dream, recall old times, give way to fantasies, remember, relax, have fun, play	24/ Privacy, intimacy, spaces of closeness, free time, surroundings, landscapes
<b>CREATION</b>	25/ Passion, determination, intuition, imagination, boldness, rationality, autonomy, inventiveness, curiosity	26/ Abilities, skills, method, work	27/ Work, invent, build, design, compose, interpret	28/ Productive and feedback settings, workshops, cultural groups, audiences, spaces for expression, temporal freedom
<b>IDENTITY</b>	29/ Sense of belonging, consistency, differentiation, self esteem, assertiveness	30/ Symbols, language, religion, habits, customs, reference groups, sexuality, values, norms, historical memory, work	31/ Commit oneself, integrate oneself, confront, decide on get to know oneself, recognize oneself, actualise oneself, grow	32/ Social rhythms, every day settings, settings which one belongs to, maturation stages
<b>FREEDOM</b>	33/ Autonomy, self- esteem, determination, passion, assertiveness, open-mindedness, boldness,	34/ Equal rights	35/ Dissent, choose, be different from, run risks, develop awareness, commit oneself, disobey	Temporal/ spatial plasticity

	rebelliousness, tolerance			
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(Max-Neef, 1991 : 33).

‘The column “BEING” registers attributes, personal or collective, that are expressed as nouns. The column of “HAVING” registers *institutions, norms, mechanisms, tools* (not in a material sense), *laws*, etc. that can be expressed in one or more words. The column “DOING” registers *actions*, personal or collective, that can be expressed as verbs. The column “INTERACTING” registers *locations and milieus* (as times and spaces), which stand for the Spanish ESTAR or the German BEFINDEN, in the sense of time and space. Since there is no corresponding word in English, INTERACTING was chosen as *a faut de mieux*’ (Max-Neef, 1991 : 33).

Max-Neef’s matrix of needs (Table 1) provides a different way of looking at human needs: instead of understanding human needs merely as a list (or one - dimensional), they should rather be seen as interconnected, related and three dimensional need satisfiers (in the dimensions of Being, Having, Doing and Interacting) clearly can be separated from needs; something apparently often overseen by development theorists and practitioners alike. For Max-Neef (1991 : 30) economic goods ‘... are objects or artefacts which affect the efficiency of a satisfier, thus altering the threshold of actualisation of a need, either in a positive or negative sense’.

From the discussion so far it can be concluded that the different social, economic and political processes in communities are many, and that the available and potential social capital in rural communities, although complicated, is used to satisfy a range of human needs. Examples in rural communities of the developing world show that rural people use social strategies as resources to satisfy individual and collective needs and that not only material needs are satisfied, but that a range of non - material needs are also satisfied. Max -Neef’s matrix of needs (Table 1) allows for an understanding of the complex relationship between needs, satisfiers and economic goods. This relationship, according to Max-Neef (1991 : 30), is dialectic, permanent and dynamic.

Besides the vagueness of the social capital construct and the dysfunctional, destructive and negative social processes which can also be associated with social capital (2.4.3.4), a further limitation can be associated with the social capital paradigm: is social capital sufficient to explain the satisfaction of the variety and range of needs in rural communities? The evidence presented thus far suggest that social capital could indeed be resourceful with regard to need satisfaction, but that caution should be exercised when development interventions are designed for the needs of people in the rural developing world.

It is significant that the global economy is influencing social actions; contributing to the widespread poverty in the developing world and requiring a range of socio-economic responses to needs from people, associations and organisations (2.5). This raises further questions with regard to the appropriateness of the ways in which needs are satisfied in the developing world. Max-Neef (1991 : 31 - 35) suggests, for analytical purposes, five types of satisfiers that may be identified:

- *Violators or destroyers.* Violators or destroyers annihilate (or reverse) the possibility of satisfaction of a given need over time and impair the adequate satisfaction of other needs. Max-Neef (21 - 34) refers to political, economic and cultural pathologies in society as “destroyers” or “violators”. A bureaucracy is supposed to satisfy the need for protection but at the same time it impairs other needs like freedom, identity and creation.
- *Pseudo Satisfiers.* Pseudo satisfiers create a false impression of need satisfaction. For example, the exploitation of natural resources may seemingly satisfy the need for protection and stereotypes might give a false impression of satisfying the need for understanding.
- *Inhibiting Satisfiers.* Inhibiting satisfiers are satisfiers that over-satisfy a particular need. An overprotective family may satisfy the need of protection, but, on the other hand,

inhibit the needs of participation, identity and freedom.

- *Singular Satisfiers.* Singular satisfiers satisfy only one particular need and remain neutral in regard to the satisfaction of other needs. Programmes of assistance, cooperation and development satisfy, for example, the need for subsistence only.
- *Synergetic Satisfiers.* Synergetic satisfiers satisfy a given need but simultaneously either fulfil another need, or contribute to the partial fulfilment of another need. Democratic community organisation satisfies the need for participation, but also contributes to the fulfilment of other needs like freedom, creation, protection and identity ( : 36).

In terms of the above five need satisfiers, and keeping the theoretical perspectives discussed in 2.3 in mind, social capital can be perceived in different ways when it comes to need satisfaction. Firstly, since social capital is active in the economic, political, cultural and institutional processes of communities, social capital can be considered a satisfier of needs in itself. Secondly, as seen earlier (2.5.3), social capital can be employed in the negative sense, which corresponds to inhibiting satisfiers and destroyers. Thirdly, if social capital is mobilised effectively, existing social capital may function as a resource with regard to gaining access to the above satisfiers. Based on the criticism against the theory of social capital, as well as Max-Neef's (1991) ideas on the satisfaction of human needs, any community intervention which sees social capital only as a factor means of satisfying economic needs is mechanistic, oversimplistic and unlikely to succeed, not only because of the different satisfiers for needs, but also because of the intricate interrelatedness of human needs. Obviously there is a need for a better understanding of the functioning of social capital in the developing world.

It therefore becomes necessary to understand peoples' needs in conjunction with their unique circumstances. Bearing in mind that social capital is a vague construct (2.3.4, 2.5.4) social capital may be perceived a need in itself. In the next section a needs concept of social capital is discussed and narrowed down to South Africa, which is presented as a society where a wide variety of unmet social and economic needs prevail.

## 2.7 A NEEDS-BASED CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

As seen from the discussion so far, humans experience a wide range of needs. Maslow and Max-Neef (see section 2.6.1) seem to differ in their conceptualisations of human needs. In the case of South Africa, at least two considerations and perceptions of needs-driven community development approaches influence social capital.

The first consideration relates to the implementation of rural community development attempts to satisfy needs which are clearly lacking in rural communities. Human needs are the main impetus behind development approaches such as the Basic Needs Approach (2.2.1, 2.6) and community development (2.2.2). The latter, as earlier mentioned, is a 'needs-driven' approach and is being implemented as such in South Africa, as well as in many other countries, precisely because of a perceived lack in communities. Accordingly, development strategies are formulated around the *deficiencies* of communities. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) in Emmett (2000 : 511) maintain that a need-orientated development approach creates a situation in which people may think of themselves as powerless and victims of their circumstances. They ( : 511 - 512) further state that in the South African setting (and those of other similar transforming countries), this image of deficiency of communities can be attributed to the following:

- Instead of focussing on the strengths of communities, needs-based approaches emphasise problems and deficiencies of communities. This leads to the creation of a negative image of communities.
- Since the needs, shortcomings and deficiencies of poor communities are often overwhelming, the needs-based approach, instead of encouraging and empowering communities, serves to discourage and disempower them.
- The needs-based approach encourages community leaders to continuously re-think and exaggerate their needs because in many cases, donor aid and assistance is given to communities who appear to be most needy. In this way dependency patterns (1.2.1) are

strengthened with the outside world to which communities look for assistance, and perceptions of disempowerment are perpetuated.

- In turn, powerlessness and dependence leads to attitudes of hopelessness and entitlement that may hinder already scarce resources such as service delivery. Instead of becoming producers of resources, communities become consumers.
- The needs-based approach also tends to fragment efforts to find solutions to often interrelated problems of poor communities.
- Because research and funding agencies are predominantly needs and problem-orientated, the knowledge and perceptions of poor communities are skewed towards their weaknesses and problems instead of their capacities and strengths.

The strong focus of needs, centres around obtaining economic satisfiers in terms of material assets, which worsens the inferiority complexes that some communities appear to have. In view of the ‘mental map’ created by needs-based approaches, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) in Emmett (2000 : 512) mention an alternative, namely, to focus on the capacities, skills and social resources of poor communities.

Needs-driven approaches therefore seem to differentiate between communities which possess a rich stock of material wealth (so-called ‘haves’) and those who are materially poor (‘have-nots’).

A second consideration for community development efforts is that human needs could be satisfied with an increase in the production of economic assets. The attraction of asset-based approaches could be understood in the light of the wide range of needs that could simultaneously be satisfied. Hence, many politicians in the world are proposing asset-based approaches as a route to freedom. In much the same way that Putnam (1993) conducted his American research (noted in 2.3.3), Small (2002 : 7 – 25) suggests that a nation’s stock of social capital can be measured by means of measuring the *absence* of social capital, using traditional methods of social deviance. These measures, according to Lehning, (1998 : 239) include crime rates, drug use, family

breakdown, litigation, suicide, tax evasion and other deficits, as well as the lack of trust (2.4.1.3).

By contrast, Max-Neef (1991 : 49) mentions that needs should be understood as a system and not as a linear approach, which often determines a development style. Since the range of needs in developing countries is complex and interrelated, it could be stated that asset-based approaches, despite their ability to satisfy simultaneously, or fulfil a range of needs, could also inhibit the satisfaction of other important needs within the need systems of communities, such as people's ability to do (for example, taking initiatives), to interact (for example, isolation) to be (for example, fear) and to have (for example, employment).

Based on the strong emphasis of some social capital literature on quantitative research methodologies (see: Giusta, 1999 : 921 - 934; Schmidt and Robison, 1995 : 59 - 66 and Sampson, Morenoff and Earls, 1999: 633 - 660) and the emergence of social capital in economic literature, it would appear that the theoretical views of social capital (2.3) are being used by many as justification for satisfying economic needs and obtaining economic assets. By doing so, the resourceful qualities of social capital are obscured, particularly those resourceful attributes relating to the satisfaction of human needs (as contained in Table 1). This critique is useful for understanding the reasons for community development efforts in developing countries. Social capital can be used to achieve economic objectives, but, in view of human-centred community development (2.2.1), people's needs appear to be more than mere quantitative objects. Ox and O'Neil state that 'if a need is not correctly identified and clearly formulated, the members of the community will not participate, or they will participate for the wrong reasons' (2002 : 65). Certainly, economic motives are important, but, as will be seen in the empirical research (in the next two Chapters), economic resources should be seen only as *part* of the social capital paradigm.

Max-Neef's matrix of needs and satisfiers (Table 1) compels a re-think of the needs-oriented application of social capital. Instead of only understanding needs in a horizontal, linear sense (to be, have, do and to interact), it needs to be acknowledged that additional needs (subsistence, protection, affection, participation, idleness, creation, identity and freedom) form part of human

needs in society. It will be argued in the next section that these needs can be satisfied by mobilising social capital resourcefully as synergetic satisfiers as opposed to only a singular satisfier (2.6.2) such as the fulfilment of economic needs. It is not enough to accept economic satisfiers only, or as being the objectives of a community development attempt. Economic satisfiers may not be sufficient and sustainable for rural communities. Economic assets, in view of Maslow's matrix (2.6.2), may only fulfil singular needs, and may inhibit the fulfilment of other needs and create false impressions of need fulfilment (pseudo-satisfiers). At worst, economic satisfiers (assets) destroy synergetic satisfiers by means of depressing underlying qualities in local communities. Applying social capital in rural contexts therefore requires a shift from asset-driven community development approaches to resource-oriented development approaches.

Max-Neef's matrix of need satisfiers (2.6.2) clearly accounts for a wide variety of needs and satisfiers. The proposed resource approach to social capital builds on the idea that social capital can act as a potential satisfier for a wide range of needs, particularly for developing communities.

## **2.8 A RESOURCE-BASED CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The preoccupation of development academics, practitioners and policy makers with the needs, deprivations and shortcomings of communities, has led to ignorance of the qualities of people's social interactions. This has resulted in limited success for community development attempts. In contrast, I propose a new model; namely a resource-centred perspective on social capital, which provides an alternative, that is, to contribute to development by building on the existing strengths of communities. The discussion so far has illustrated not only that social capital is manifested in various ways in community life, but also that a resource perspective on social capital makes visible needs beyond those only quantitatively expressed.

The following are ways in which social capital can hopefully be useful for need satisfaction during community development interventions. Subsections 2.9.1 to 2.9.11 refute a sole economic need perspective on social capital and aim to replace such a perspective with a more balanced

approach; one that is useful for sustainable community development.

Before the empirical study, I present below an argument for this new conceptualisation of social capital to the literature.

### **2.8.1 Resources for the transformation and functioning of rural institutions**

Social capital has a range of need-satisfying possibilities for rural institutions and the communities these institutions must serve. The existence of effective institutions is a good indication of the resource value they may have for the broader society and *vice versa* (see section 2.4.3). Civic institutions can be important development actors in their own right, but other institutions can also be used in the context of resource management and rural intensification (Bebbington, 1997 : 194).

Since many micro-enterprises exist in the rural areas of Africa and elsewhere in the developing world, micro-enterprises may give some indication of the type of community development efforts which are likely to succeed. The State's role becomes important in securing the development and continuity of micro-enterprises, because, according to Max - Neef (1991 : 73), the State can undermine the existence of these enterprises either by neglect or by repression (also see 2.4.3.2). A strategy for institutional development would be to transform well-rooted rural organisations into institutions which are viable and effective in rural regions (Uphoff, 1986 : in Van der Waal, 2001 : 51). Such a transformation, according to a Bourdieunian perspective, (2.3.1), is possible and could be achieved by mobilising social capital within a community.

Large institutions are often not present in rural areas and consequently local organisations appears to be attractive and relevant with regard to community development efforts in rural communities and villages. In contrast to institutions, organisations can be established through cooperation between only a few people (Hagg, 2001 : 78). Esman and Uphoff (1984 : 24 - 26) mention the following ways in which local organisations can be resourceful:

- Public service provision can be facilitated by more accurate and representative information. This information can be about the needs, priorities and capabilities of local people, as well as feedback on the impact of government initiatives and services.
- If resources are to be used efficiently, a great need exists for the adaptation of programmes to local conditions, since rural areas may vary naturally and socially.
- Local organisations can also be resourceful in terms of group communication. Reaching rural people may be costly because of the structure and dispersion of rural populations. Examples of such communication benefits include agricultural extension advice, nutritional education, immunizations, supervised credit, and family planning. Communication on HIV/ AIDS can be added to this list.
- The resources contributed by governments to rural improvements can be stretched by means of resource mobilisation on a self-help or matching grant basis.
- Rural people's intimate practical knowledge of their environment is commonly quite appropriate, even though their technical knowledge may be relatively unsophisticated. This knowledge can be tapped and utilised by local organisations to produce desired results and '... to avoid costly technical mistakes in government investments'.
- The utilisation and maintenance of facilities and services can be improved by using programmes based on local organisations and participation.
- Cooperation in new economic, social or technical programmes is more likely to occur when local organisations are trusted.

Esman and Uphoff (1984 : 243) describe social capital as representative of local organisations. Similarly, strong institutions can be beneficial for the community development process in many ways: infrastructural support, formal employment, coordination of activities, etc. The strengths of institutions may be directly related to the amount of social capital generated by the people working in an institution. The creation of formal institutions as well as smaller informal networks is thus much needed in rural areas since this will make the satisfaction of a number of needs possible; for example, subsistence and protection (2.6).

### 2.8.2 Resources for socialisation and assimilation in the broader community

Social capital can be a synergetic satisfier for integrating communities into broader society. Since civil society is understood in different ways (Lehning, 1998 : 222) social capital can be used by communities to counterbalance the negative effects of modernity (2.5.1) through capacity building and social inclusion.

The synergetic value of social capital is attributable to the socialising of individuals in communities, the functioning of the family and the role that families fulfil in civil society (2.4.1.1). As a resource, the needs for subsistence, affection and protection are satisfied through the provision of food, shelter, care, understanding, etc. With the help of social capital satisfiers, youngsters are provided with backup allowing them to experiment with socialisation with other people in society. The discussion in subsection 2.4.1.1 strongly suggests that the family's role in child support (particularly during the educational years) is of vital importance for the operation of the educational system in society. As a resource, the family strongly complies with the definitions of social capital presented in 2.3 and Max-Neef's matrix of needs and satisfiers (2.6.2).

Apart from individual needs, social capital can be used as a resource in the integration of a social network in the broader community, not only *via* families, but also by means of other existing social networks in communities. For example, Pye (1999 : 774) mentions the Indonesian customs of *gotong-rojong* and *Musjawarah*, which are used to achieve consensus amongst community members. Basically, these customs see decision being made after the consideration of young participants' bold interactions, cautious wisdom from the middle-aged and the final 'consensus' of the senior figures. Liang (1994 : 407) also make mention of an 'assimilation paradigm'<sup>13</sup> which focuses on consensus-building among immigrants and the convergence of behavioural, cultural and attitudinal differences among ethnic groups.

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<sup>13</sup>The assimilation paradigm was introduced by American sociologists and assumes that immigrants will become fully assimilated in communities of destiny once they become more educated, more familiar with the culture and language and more successful in socio-economic terms (Liang, 1994 : 409).

### **2.8.3 Resources for the reductions of costs**

Social capital is a synergetic satisfier for the reduction of costs. Through the collaborative efforts of people, certain economic transactions become possible, and this can save time and money for the individual. Many studies have illustrated that by using social capital, transaction costs can be lowered (Barr, 2000 : 539; Dekker and Van Lingen, 1996 : 13; Fedderke, et al 1999 : 711, 738; Rudd, 2000 : 135, World Bank, 2002; Schmid and Robinson, 1995 : 59). These studies show that bank transaction costs can be lowered through internal screening and purchasing goods in bulk. Although economic in nature, these financial benefits are a resource for communities and can be deemed to be benefits arising from the available social capital, generated in institutions, groups and communities.

In research done in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa, Buijs (1999 : 58 - 59) found that compared to the formal banking sector, savings and loan groups do not have the transaction and administrative costs associated with formal banks; that there are low overheads; that the officials are unpaid and that no facilities are specially built or rented. Loan recovery or processing costs are similarly low. Criteria for membership of rotating credit and savings associations are based on personal characteristics, mutual trustworthiness and proximity to one another ( : 61).

Rudd (2000 : 137) mentions that 'if humans fully trusted each other, there would be no need for monitoring and enforcement of agreements'. The more distrust there is between contracting parties, the more resources must be spent on the monitoring, contract specification and enforcement mechanisms that comprise much of transaction costs. Accordingly, as Weede (1992 : 392) puts it, if one can rely on people to conform to social norms, then the cost of coordinating human actions is much reduced.

### **2.8.4 Resources for information flows**

Information is a resource for social capital and social capital is resourceful with regard to the flow of information. Information and communications technologies have opened new possibilities for social capital formation and mobilisation in rural development. According to Morrow (2002 : 9) people are ‘ ... forming new social networks, learning together and sharing knowledge across geographic and cultural boundaries’. In the rural areas of the developing world, a number of creative means have been devised to encourage information flows.

Besides the existing communication methods in rural areas, for example newspapers and magazines, radio broadcasting provide a means by which information can reach targeted groups. By using radios, social capital benefits can be shared with other community members. Community radio broadcasting, according to Keene -Young (1996 : 6 - 7), is an ideal medium to foster participatory community development, and participation in community broadcasting can form a basis for the empowerment of disadvantaged people. Rural communities have also responded positively to radio broadcasting. The Kothmale community radio station in Sri Lanka broadcasts a daily two-hour programme during which resource personnel assist broadcasters to *browse* or *surf* the Internet on-air. This is done in response to the listeners who direct questions to the resource persons in the studio (such as doctors and agricultural officers). This radio-Internet initiative has increased the participation of the people in the social and economic development of the community. Visible benefits of this initiative include a local farmer who has obtained information on organic tomato farming and a health worker who was able to find information on mosquito-borne diseases (Jayaweera, 2002 : 25).

As regards the agricultural sector, the flow of information is an important resource in itself. Radio is a particularly useful tool, not only because of rural people’s lack of access to technological innovation (2.5.2.3), but also because information sources such as newspapers are relatively scarce, whereas battery operated radios are a feasible option in areas where there is no power supply.

Practical evidence shows that social capital can be used to communicate information. Barr (2000

: 557, 539) mentions that social capital is important for the manufacturing sector in Ghana because social networks facilitate flows of information between enterprises about technological innovations and improvements, as well as the evolution of best practice. Social capital is also resourceful for the distribution of knowledge in formal institutions (2.4.3). However, the resource value of social capital in terms of the flow of information in rural social groups exceeds a mainly economic view, if the ways in which indigenous knowledge is preserved is considered. Important needs such as sharing, understanding and interacting (Table 2.1) are satisfied by information flows, which can lead to further forms of social capital mobilisation.

### **2.8.5 Resources for the preservation of indigenous local knowledge**

Social capital is useful in preserving the indigenous knowledge of local communities.

*Indigenous*, according to Chambers (1983 : 83) implies ‘... originating from and naturally produced in an area’ whereas *knowledge* refers to ‘... the whole system of knowledge, including concepts, beliefs and perceptions, the stock of knowledge, and the processes whereby it is acquired, augmented, stored, and transmitted’.

As noted earlier (2.4.1.7), rural communities live in close relation to their environments. Similarly, Gabriel (1991 : 117) asserts that rural people usually have a large stock of knowledge, as well as insight into their environment. This includes knowledge of soils, climate, plants, livestock, seasons, farming techniques and practices, diet, child care, health, curative practices and medicines, as well as social relationships.

Existing social resources (such as those mentioned by Gabriel above), support people in the rural areas and, as a countermeasure against social disintegration, satisfy both material and non-material needs. Poor communities, particularly those in the rural areas of South Africa, have developed innovative ways, along indigenous lines, to adapt to their environments and to satisfy their daily needs. For example, whereas developed communities have museums to capture and preserve the indigenous character and nature of their communities, the indigenous knowledge-

base of some rural communities has to draw on social capital for preservation.

Because of the large illiteracy and unemployment rates amongst black South Africans, many turn to the informal sector, selling goods on the streets and informal markets ('flea markets') and trading and crafting. By constantly using social capital to survive in the informal sector, the indigenous knowledge of people is continuously being produced and re – produced, thus satisfying needs such as subsistence and creation (2.6.2).

### **2.8.6 Resources for community boundary maintenance**

Social capital serves as a synergetic satisfier in the protection of communities. The existence of a community involves the creation of boundaries between insiders and outsiders (Somerville and Steele, 2000 : 18). Since the resources which are available to rural communities are often limited, community members (the insiders), sometimes unknowingly, protect their resource pool from 'free riders' ( : 15, 13) by creating group norms and regulations ( : 2) and the enforcement of social laws (Weede, 1992 : 393). Social capital can be used as a resource to solve the free riding problem that is common in many communities (Schmid, 2000 : 5). The free riding effect can be seen in local organisations in rural communities: members may not be fully committed to the community and may invade or 'illegally' draw upon the available resources. Also, people may fail to repay their loans or to contribute their share of labour (Esman and Uphoff, 1984 : 200). The last mentioned authors also mention that trees may be cut in community forests or a disproportionate share of water may be diverted to their own land; both instances of free riding.

The concept 'boundary', as used here, refers to the social qualities that define a community. Besides the social boundaries of communities (2.4.1.9), boundary maintenance, using social capital, is commonly found in most kinds of communities. Chambers (1983 : 83) comments that rural people's existing knowledge is added to, influenced by, and destroyed, by knowledge from outside the area (1.2.1,1.2.4). Moreover; scientific, technical and professional knowledge is mostly privately held and mostly jealously guarded in order to gain market advantages (Weede,

1992 : 385).

By drawing on the available social capital, established by virtue of people's social connections, community boundaries are preserved. Hence, protection, identity and freedom needs are satisfied.

### **2.8.7 Resources for the creation of human capital**

Social capital can function as a synergistic satisfier for the creation of human capital. Human capital, seen as skilled and educated persons in research conducted by Teachman; *et al* (1997 : 1343), tends to form close relationships with social capital in households and the broader community (Schrieder and Sharma, 1999 : 71). The convergence of social capital into human capital has been confirmed throughout the discussion so far (particularly during subsections 2.4.1.1 - 2.4.1.6). It is further emphasised here because human resources often determines the success or failure of community development projects.

Barbarin and Khomo (1997 : 198) refer to human capital as personal, non-material resources that a family provides to the needs of family members. The fundamental theories presented in 2.3 indicate that social capital can explain human social actions and that social

capital in families could be taken to a different level, namely to community level.

The satisfaction of human needs, as presented in Max-Neef's analyses (2.6.2), is complicated by the socio - economic strata which are characteristic of societies. Research of social capital's role in human capital formation finds acknowledgment of the middle-class or elite backgrounds of people (Sanders and Nee, 1996 : 237), inter - societal differences (Putterman, 1995 : 17) and urban underclasses or ghettos (Lighter, *et al*, 1993 : 52). These social classes are clearly influential in determining the type of development interventions.

Given the traditional strengths of the rural family (2.4.1.1) and the nature of kinship ties (2.4.1.9), the social landscapes of rural areas of the developing world are clearly different to urban areas and at least two specific important adult transitions can, according to Lichter, *et al* (1993 : 56) be distinguished, namely, marriage and childbearing. A large percentage of rural women marry and have their first child by age 18. This observation is consistent with other research findings. Lin (1999 : 472 - 475) as well as Barbarin and Khomo (1997 : 218) suggest that it is possible through social contacts by females with men, to move between social networks and statuses. The same could also be expected for men's contact with women, but in many rural areas of Africa women's social roles are reduced (2.4.3.6) and this is significant in terms of local rural development interventions. This could be seen as a 'modern' expression of Bourdieu's understanding (2.3.1) of the transformation of different kinds of capital, as well as a resource to satisfy a number of social needs as contained in Max-Neef's matrix (Table 2.1). These include creation, identity, freedom and protection.

### **2.8.8 Resources for community and individual healing**

Social capital is a synergistic satisfier for healing. Social healing is an urgent imperative in developing countries and it needs further elaboration because it could play a role in the social functioning of communities, despite the limitations imposed by global economic and political trends. In South Africa's National Crime Prevention Strategy released in 1991, it is acknowledged that the 'destruction of social control' has had a severe impact on the South African society ( : 14) and, as noted in section 2.8, the need to heal (or repair) broken and disrupted segments of the South African society is an important task. The theory of social capital (2.3) has application potential and promise with regard to the social healing of communities.

A distinction can be made between national and individual healing. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa (and elsewhere) is a social initiative aimed at fostering national healing. The prime motivation of the TRC, according to Bradshaw (2002 : 82), was to hear the truth. Bradshaw (2002 : 86) quotes Nelson Mandela as saying: 'Only the truth can put

the past to rest'. However, from a social capital perspective, national healing becomes possible when the collective psyche becomes committed to peace and stability, and efficient social structures are established to deal with social disintegration and control. With the majority of a national population committed to the norm of peace and reconstruction, social capital can be generated and an important social resource, namely that of national healing, is produced.

Equally important, social capital can serve as a resource for individual healing. From a Western perspective, medical science saw remarkable growth and specialisation during the last century and most societies set strict standards in the training of medical personnel. Despite impressive advancements in the field of medicine, many people in Africa's rural areas still rely on traditional medicine. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 70-80 per cent of Third World populations make use of traditional medicine (Botha, 1998 : 621)<sup>14</sup>. Cheetham and Griffiths (1982 : 954) comment that from an African perspective, the so-called 'traditional healer' in Africa incorporates the world view of the culture within which she (or he) works: 'the traditional healer regards the human organism as a whole which is integrated with the total ecology of the environment and with the interrelated spiritual, magical and mystical forces surrounding him/her' (1.2.4).

Belonging to social groups is also beneficial for a person's mental health. People who have good friends and a family are better able to cope with stress than those who do not (Papalia and Olds, 1988 : 503; 510; 573). In many African communities, particularly those in rural areas, the social support received by a person is highly valued and can be regarded as a resource for the satisfaction of an individual's physical and mental health.

By mobilising social capital as an instrument for healing, important needs which could be satisfied include subsistence, participation, protection, and important for national healing - understanding (Table 2.1).

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<sup>14</sup>Botha (1998 : 623) *cite* Mander (1997) and Mander, *et al* (1977) who state that in KwaZulu-Natal alone, the total annual volume of plants traded for medicinal purposes has been estimated at 4 400 tons.

### **2.8.9 Resources for the distribution of existing resources**

The phenomenon of sharing resources in communities can be perceived in a number of ways, each with significant implications for rural people. Firstly, at the household level, Barbarin and Khomo (1997 : 219) mention that the sharing of resources is common in South African households. In rural communities for example, urban township grandmothers help to meet the needs of their grand and great-grandchildren with their pension income. Due to the close ties that exist among household members (2.4.1.1; 2.4.1.5), members of the household can thus assist each other with material, as well as many non-material needs as contained in Max - Neef's matrix of needs (2.6.2); specifically, protection, affection and understanding (Table 2.1). For the family, the close ties that exist amongst family members may explain why income is shared in many instances. Moreover, the sharing of wealth is expected in some cultures (Schmid, 2000 :7).

Bourdieu's definition of social capital (2.3.1) implies a limitation in the use of a communities' resources or, as Wall *et al* (1998 : 305) note, an exclusion of others from access to resources (2.9.6). Barr (2000 : 539) stresses the importance of social capital for collective action that is aimed at the provision of public goods or the efficient sharing of privately owned resources. Such actions are applicable in the developing world where remittances of earnings often occurs in subsistence households.

Coleman's view of social capital, that is, as a structural resource that serves as a capital asset for the individual (2.3.2), is therefore supported because the social capital produced by sharing resources is a resource in itself. Community and local development is thought to occur in situations where *combinations* of social capital exist (Schafft and Brown, 2000 : 204) and where the benefits of these complicated social networks enables people to overcome dilemmas and problems. According to the World Bank (2002) social capital may be used by the poor by means of pooling their resources, for example establishing small family enterprises. Further benefits from the pooling of resources include child care, food and credit, which satisfies needs such as protection, interaction and subsistence.

### **2.8.10 Resources for collective saving and access to credit**

Following on the above, social capital may be used as resource to save and/ or obtain credit. By utilising and mobilising existing and potential social capital, people are able to use their collective social strategies to fulfil a variety of needs. Belonging to a savings club, or being involved in a rotating credit and/or saving scheme, has concrete and abstract benefits for people.

The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and the *Susu* collectors in Ghana serve as two examples in the developing world, of remarkable forms of social capital in rural communities. The Grameen Bank ('Grameen' means rural) is a bank which has initiated a mechanism that enables the rural poor to have access to credit. This is made possible through granting credit on a group liability, rather than collateral, basis (Wahid, 1994 : 1 - 14). Small groups of people qualify for loans and, after demonstrating a weekly pattern of savings, small loans are granted. The impressive expansion of the Grameen Bank since 1976, to 250 000 people in over 5 400 villages across Bangladesh suggests that the Grameen Bank is very popular amongst its members. Recent estimates confirm the rapid expansion and popularity of the Grameen Bank. Pretty and Ward (2001 : 216) report that the Grameen Bank horizontally expanded to more than two million members in 34 000 villages. Of interest is the fact that the repayment rate is excellent: 97% of all Grameen loans are repaid within one year and 99% within two years (Todaro, 1997 : 616). The members of the Grameen Bank, despite belonging to small groups, thus produce social capital in the form of loyalty, trust and dedication to each other (1.2.2). Wahid (1994 : 12) also confirms that loyalty and dedication amongst field workers contribute to the success of the Grameen Bank. In other words, one may say that the bank takes social capital in the form of interaction, participation and trust as security, and quantitative benefits (such as monetary value) are obtained as an end result. Corresponding with Bourdieu's view of the convergence of capital (2.3.1), the Grameen Bank enables rural communities in Bangladesh to transform their social assets into economic benefits.

In areas where banks are ill equipped or non - existent, such as in Ghana's rural areas, individual

mobile bankers, (known as '*Susu*' collectors) fulfil a particularly useful function (Spio, Groenewald and Coetzee, 1995 : 257). The *Susu* collectors collect money from their clients on a daily basis. After a pre-set period, savings are returned to the depositors after the commission cost of the *Susu* intermediate has been deducted. Social capital in this example is based on trust, cooperation and partnership and clients of *Susu* collectors are given opportunities to participate in financial activities beyond those found in their own community. A relative stability has been observed in the monthly average real deposits collected by the *Susu* collectors over a three-year period (1990 - 1992) (Aryeety, 1996 : 129).

In both the above indigenous financial activities, peoples' individual as well as collective needs are satisfied. Schrieder and Sharma (1999 : 71) emphasise that both short and long-term human needs may be satisfied via access to financial services. The debate on social capital could gain much from the understanding of women's participation in these activities. Informal groups, such as the rotating savings clubs described here, are not only a means of obtaining social and economic mobility, but also status and political engagement.

Putnam (1993 : 167 - 170) notes the existence of rotating credit associations and states that these organisations '... clearly violate the logic of collective action ... because a person can drop out of the club once he had received the pot'. Although the risk of default is widely recognised by participants of indigenous financial schemes, social capital could explain why the social networks formed amongst rotating savings and credit schemes become so strong and defaulters are rare. Putnam (1993 : 169) mentions that rotating credit associations illustrate how dilemmas of collective action are avoided by using social capital as a kind of leverage to expand the credit facilities [potentially] available to communities and to improve the efficiency with which markets operate.

### **2.8.11 Resources for irrigation management**

Many small-scale farmers in the developing world depend on the local supply of water to sustain

their livelihoods. Water is an important element of people's ability to sustain their lives and is therefore an essential natural resource. Even in the most remote rural areas of the developing world where water is available for farming, irrigation networks can be found, although sometimes primitive and poorly developed.

Pretty and Ward (2001 : 25) state that ' ... if social capital is well - developed, then local water-user groups with locally developed rules and sanctions are able to make more of existing resources than individuals working alone or in competition'. Subsistence needs can therefore be satisfied with such rules and sanctions. If water is available, well distributed and used efficiently; the potential benefits for farming communities may be great in terms of good crop harvests. Unfortunately, the geographical location of some rural communities allows certain farmers upstream to have better access to water supplies than farmers lower downstream. In some rural areas water may be very scarce and one may expect that conflicts between farmers competing for water may occur.

This was certainly the case in Gal Oya (in Sri Lanka). Uphoff and Wijayarathna (2000) demonstrated that cooperative actions amongst Gal Oya rice farmers can get more water to farmers' fields by means of utilising existing and potential social capital. A tradition exists in Gal Oya, known as *shramadana* (meaning donation or gift of labour) which, according to Uphoff and Wijayarathna (2000 : 1878), is an important form of social capital. Many Hindus and Buddhists throughout South Asia recognize and approve of *shramadana*. Whenever *shramadana* is organized in a community, it is expected from all the community members to participate. If a person cannot participate (for whatever reason), that person is expected to contribute either by means of a donation; or by means of preparing refreshments for the others who do the work. The last mentioned researchers recognised the *shramadana* practice as a well established tradition ( : 1879).

With new settlers arriving in Gal Oya (in the 1950s), newly formed settler communities lacked the former sense of solidarity and cohesiveness and conflicts between farmers over water use erupted

on occasions. Organizers of an irrigation project appealed to farmers to take part in a water management effort based on a *shramadana* model. Using this form of social capital, voluntary labour could be mobilised to maintain the water infrastructure (bridges, irrigation canals and gates). With this new 'moral climate' the available water supply was rotated in turn among the water users and silt, stones and weeds that impeded the flow of water were cleared. Besides using water more efficiently, the area cultivated/ irrigated could be increased, thereby increasing crop yield and profits ( : 1883 - 1884). The economic effects of this example are dramatic. Uphoff and Wijayaratna (2000 : 1876) suggest that *mutually beneficial collective action* is the benefit associated with social capital in this case. Also evident are the norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that enable people to cooperate and satisfy their needs for an environment in which collective action, peace and resource efficiency could prevail.

This case not only demonstrates the fulfilment of needs (such as participation and understanding), but also emphasises the synergistic value of social capital.

The preceding discussion (2.9) reveals that social interactions accumulated and developed by an individual and a community over time represent valuable resources for them. As a non conventional resource, social capital could become an *instrument for transformation* when 'stored' in a culture and tradition (Max-Neef, 1991 : 80). Ntsime (1993 : 48) acknowledges Garrity and Picard (1996 : 64) who state that a reform process is mainly a capacity building process whereby resources and competencies are mobilised to solve local problems. These interactions are construed as capital when transformation, which is based on incorporating social resources (Wall *et al*, 1998 : 312) takes place. Needs that could be satisfied include protection, subsistence and understanding (Table 2.1). In the South African context, transforming communities need protection from social disintegration (2.8).

The discussion thus far has also revealed the richness of the concept, suggesting that social capital can provide both questions and answers for analysing, understanding and building resourceful relations. Furthermore, social capital provides a rational explanation for cooperative behaviour

and it helps us to understand the dynamics underlying conflict and trust (see Emmett, 2000 : 509). Social capital, as portrayed by the above theoretical and practical perspectives, is a resource for development in general, but an important ingredient for need satisfaction in particular. Seen from the South African perspective (2.8), specifically a *rural poverty* perspective, economic development is clearly only part of the social capital paradigm. Although economic prosperity is without doubt vital for rural community development, social capital can be a resource for capacity building and social inclusion. The social capital paradigm should therefore embrace peoples' social *resources*, rather than focussing strongly (and sometimes exclusively) on the economic *needs* of rural communities.

It can therefore be concluded that the production of social capital can happen in a number of ways for communities. For most people, particularly those in impoverished rural areas, their own time and effort are resources for them and, according to Weede (1992 : 394), are '... essential in order to optimise incentives, then freedom, or a liberal order'. The efforts of individuals, collectively become social capital in its own right, and this in turn acts as a satisfier of social needs.

## **2.9 MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The increase of social capital in academic literature, mentioned in section 2.3 and 2.4, is aligned with dramatic growth in empirical research featuring social capital (see Wall *et al*, 1998 : 314). According to Fukuyama (2001 : 12), one of the weaknesses of the concept "social capital" is the absence of consensus on how to measure it (see section 2.5). Maluccio, *et al* (2000 : 77) similarly conclude that social capital cannot be measured directly. Since the definitions of social capital reveal different aspects of rural communities, social capital should be seen as being multidimensional. Correspondingly, it may be difficult to measure the different processes in community development and it is doubted whether it is desirable to attempt to construct a uniform measurement for social capital at all.

Considering the potential use of social capital to satisfy a wide variety of needs in communities, it can be stated that a non-exhaustive list of indicators for social capital could be constructed. The following sets of indicators, adopted from the World Bank (1997 : 84), have all been used in empirical studies of social capital:

*Horizontal associations*

- Number and type of associations or local institutions
- Extent of membership
- Extent of participatory decision making
- Extent of kin homogeneity within the association
- Extent of income and occupation homogeneity within the association
- Extent of trust in other village members and households
- Extent of trust in trade unions
- Perception of extent of community organisation
- Reliance on networks of support
- Percentage of household income from remittances
- Percentage of household expenditure for gifts and transfers
- Old age dependency ratio in governments

*Civil and political society*

- Index of civil liberties
- Percentage of population facing political discrimination
- Index of intensity of political discrimination
- Percentage of population facing economic discrimination
- Index of intensity of economic discrimination
- Percentage of population involved in separatist movements
- Political rights and freedoms

- Index of democracy
- Index of corruption
- Index of government inefficiency
- Strength of democratic institutions
- Measure of 'human liberty'
- Measure of political stability
- Degree of decentralization of government
- Voter turnout
- Political associations
- Constitutional government changes
- Coups

#### *Social integration*

- Indicators of social mobility
- Measure of strength of 'social tensions'
- Ethno linguistic fragmentation
- Riots and protest demonstrations
- Strikes
- Homicide rates
- Suicide rates
- Other crime rates
- Prisoners per 100 000 people
- Illegitimacy rates
- Percentage of single-parent homes
- Divorce rate
- Youth unemployment rate

#### *Legal and governance aspects*

- Quality of bureaucracy
- Independence of court system
- Expropriation of nationalisation risk
- Repudiation of contracts by government
- Contract enforceability
- Contract-intensive money

As could be seen in section 2.3, writers agree on certain attributes of social capital, such as trust and membership of institutions (Putnam, 1995). Social capital is a broad term (see subsection 2.2.4) which, due to situational differences, is very difficult to detect directly. An attempt to measure the abstract processes in rural community life (such as indigenous knowledge) therefore requires that a range of participative methodologies is employed. Furthermore, because of the rural, isolated and underdeveloped nature of some communities, some data (like statistics) may be hard to obtain, or may not be reliable or available.

*Indicators* of social capital should therefore be considered for measurement although different measurement options and styles can of course be used. Some research uses numerical formulations (see 2.4) whilst other research relies on formulations of a non - numerical nature. By using specific indicators to portray social capital it may be possible to operationalise social capital in terms of the specific level of analysis. Conventional economic indicators (2.2.1, 1.2.4) do not appear to be completely sufficient with regard to the measurement of welfare or the quality of life (also: Miles, 1992 : 284). Consequently, qualitative social indicators have gained increasing attention in the quest to explain adequately the quality of life.

If we consider the close relationship between social and economic indicators then it may be observed that these two sets of indicators interact with each other in complicated ways and that it is not always clear how they are related (2.2.5). This interaction is often missing from theory. It is therefore argued that social capital consists of a further dimension that is partly *qualitative* and

partly *quantitative*.

Three broad categories of indicators can thus be used to measure social capital, namely quantitative, qualitative and partly quantitative indicators. In positivistic circles social capital is often expressed in purely *quantitative* terms (like housing, finances, health, education and water supply). Hence, numerical expressible indicators of social capital are the main criteria for measuring the benefits of social capital. Possible methods of obtaining quantitative data include using correlations, averages, medians and other statistical measurements. Apart from quantitative indicators, *qualitative* indicators are highly abstract in nature and include indicators such as perceptions, aspirations and attitudes. Due to the 'invisible' nature of qualitative indicators, abstract criteria to measure social resources may not be taken into consideration, or may even be completely overlooked. Personal contact between interviewer(s) and respondent(s) is essential in obtaining information that cannot ordinarily be obtained through formal questionnaires. A third category of indicators may be described as *partly quantifiable*. Partly quantifiable indicators (which can also be described as 'grey areas' or 'intermediate' indicators) are indicators that contain influences of both a quantitative as well as a qualitative nature. Paxton (1999 : 93) acknowledges that social capital has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The World Bank uses quantitative studies, qualitative studies and *comparative* studies; each with unique sets of indicators (World Bank, 2002).

The measurement strategies for social capital may be expected to range in both theory and in practice. A number of methodological implications emanate from the measurement of social capital. Research into partly quantifiable indicators may be complicated and several methodologies are often called for.

With regard to comparative studies, a number of research articles on social capital have included different indicators for comparison. Small (2002 : 12) suggests that Putnam's hypotheses are based on numeric indicators whereas Temple (1998 : 326, 328 and 341) uses economic data to understand the policy choices and outcomes of political decision making. Comparative studies appear to be particularly

useful for studies relating to the social capital found amongst immigrant groups (Portes, 2000 : 1 - 12; Sanders and Nee, 1996 : 231 - 249; Liang, 1994 : 407 - 437; Grasmuck and Grosvogel, 1997 : 339-363; Ebaugh and Curry, 189 - 209). The World Bank (2002) notes a study by Massey and Espionosa (1997) who used survey and interview data to show that the theory of social capital is accurate in predicting why people will migrate, when they will migrate, for what reasons they will migrate and in what numbers, and also, where they will migrate to. Results of such studies could then be used for proposing policy measures to manage the flow of people, like for example, Mexican immigration to the United States and migration processes in Southern Africa. The regions that are investigated in the next Chapter (Chapter 3) are major destinations for immigrants from Zimbabwe and Mozambique and it is therefore appropriate to include comparative strategies during the investigation.

From the discussion so far it can clearly be seen that not all the indicators of social capital can be quantified. Together with quantitative indicators, I will discuss the qualities of people and communities as social capital resources.

## **2.10 SUMMARY**

This thesis aims to investigate how needs of rural communities, both social and economic, concrete and abstract are satisfied by using social capital. In consideration of the extent of the abstract social needs of people in communities (as shown in section 2.6) it can be concluded that the social capital paradigm provides insights into understanding the strategies employed by rural people to satisfy their perceived needs. The social strategies employed by rural people in the developing world powerfully demonstrate that the argument stated in the beginning of this Chapter (2.2.3), namely that economic criteria dominate the social capital paradigm, can be supported. As an alternative to needs-orientated approaches to community development, the social capital resource paradigm can be expanded to include a wider range of qualitative

satisfiers for human needs, and, based on evidence in the rural world, community development strategies could benefit substantially from the existing social capital available in rural communities. Social capital, as argued in 2.3 provides more answers (that is, potentials and strengths) (2.4) than questions and weaknesses (2.5) and, therefore, the argument that social

capital is reasonably sufficient as a resource for local community development (2.2.3), is reaffirmed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXTS OF RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Having concluded the literature study on social capital and need satisfaction in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the broad context in which the research was carried out. The socio-economic context of South Africa and the Limpopo Province will therefore be described and results from relevant role players will be included to facilitate a consideration of the broad social needs in which the Vhembe context is embedded. This discussion will be done to ascertain the extent to which indicators for social capital exist as portrayed by the contextual realities of Vhembe and whether broad indicators for social capital indeed succeed in need satisfaction for rural people in communities of Limpopo.

#### **3.2 THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Before relating social capital to the socio-economic situation in Limpopo and Vhembe, it is necessary to briefly describe the South African context. The sections that follow not only show that South Africa's political economy has a complicated past, but also that the current socio-economic situation in South Africa is greatly influenced by this past.

##### **3.2.1 Past social, political and economic context**

South Africa's roots as a divided society lie in the late nineteenth century, after the beginning of diamond mining in 1867 and gold mining in 1886, which accelerated capitalism in the country (Marais, 2001 : 8). As a British colony, South Africa was beginning to be seen as an economic asset, both by the colonial powers, as well as the Boer *trekkers*, and these parties often came into conflicts with each other. For the next 50 years mining became the centre of attention (2001 : 8), while the agricultural activities

practised by peasants received little support.

The rise of the working class in South Africa was facilitated by strikes and the formation of trade unions (Marais, 2001 : 11). Marais notes for example, that during 1927 the Black Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICU) claimed a membership of 100 000 ( : 11). Further social networks became prominent in the years to come. During the mid-1940s the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) was formed and in 1959 the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) was formed (2001 : 15). Magubane, Banner, Sithole, Delius, Cherry, Gibbs, and April (2004 : 57) mention that rural communities could contemplate violent action because these communities were connected via [social] networks with the wider community.

South Africa introduced so-called 'homelands' under the Lands Acts of 1913 and 1936 and as a consequence, small and subsistence farmers are mostly found in the former homeland areas which make up 13 percent of South Africa's agricultural land (Vink and Kirsten, 2003 : 3). These areas are still characterised by traditional forms of land ownership which were regulated by a series of laws and regulations as contained in the Black Administration Act of 1927 (2003 : 3). This Act, also known as the *Native Administration Act of 1927*, was a major reason for the outbreak of rural resistance (Zondi, 2004 : 147). According to Zondi ( : 147) the Act revived tribalism as a cordon against African nationalism and sought to isolate traditional leaders; turning them into instruments of oppression of their own people.

Historically, the causes of social disintegration include colonial expansion, racial subordination and repression, dispossession and impoverishment, rapid urbanisation as a result of the lifting of restrictions on movement, inadequate social services and maintenance of infrastructure, forced removals and other disruptions of communities, the conditions in the hostels and the disruption of family life by migrant labour, the disruption of schools and a hostile formal sector (Emmet, 2000 : 510; Ramphele, 1991 : 15). Industrialisation in the past generally excluded the former Venda (where Vhembe is situated), although agricultural production was affected by the introduction and expansion of mechanisation. Due to rising costs, maintenance and the shortage of technical skills, rural subsistence households became more and more economically isolated.

Despite the many sharp social, economic, political and cultural divisions, South Africa has risen

to become a regional industrial power in Southern Africa.

In brief, South Africa's political economy shows that social relations have been set up through white rule and racial oppression. Under white rule systematic racial discrimination took place, accompanied by distorted social relations. The establishment and entrenchment of such social relations provides further evidence that it is possible to exclude large segments of society from taking part in national development.

### **3.2.2 Current social, political and economic context**

Despite South Africa's move to a democracy in 1994, it remains a divided society. The following section will give an indication of some important social, political and economic aspects to be considered in the development of South Africa in general, and for consideration of the use of social capital in particular.

#### **3.2.2.1 Demography**

During the national census count in 2000, the population was estimated at 46,8 million (SSK: available online) with an annual growth rate of 1,56 per cent in the year 2000 (Fényes and Meyer, 2003 : 26). Recent figures relating to the South African population estimate the national population to be closer to 48 million (CSS : National Census - 2001). About half of South Africa's population is currently urbanized (CSS, 2003; Linden, 1993 : 27).

One striking characteristic of South Africa's demography is the large percentage (almost 38%) of youngsters in the 0 - 15 age bracket (Barbarin and Khomo, 1997 : 194; DBSA : Operational Statistics). Authors like Fukuyama (1999 : 74) have warned that because of this large percentage of youngsters, South Africa's social problems may become worse in the years to come. Current indications confirm this fragile socio-economic situation, which is becoming increasingly evident in the extent and

nature of crime and increasing pressure on the South African Government to provide, amongst others, housing, healthcare and education for both rural and urban households.

The weak economic conditions in neighbouring countries, particularly Zimbabwe and Mozambique, has contributed to a large number of immigrants entering South Africa.

The following Tables (Table 3.1 and Table 3.2) illustrate the population distribution by province:

**TABLE 3.1: THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY PROVINCE**

<i>Province</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>% Distribution</i>
Western Cape	88.85	11.15	9.40
Northern Cape	71.27	28.73	2.00
Free State	69.75	30.25	6.28
Eastern Cape	36.45	63.55	15.06
KwaZulu – Natal	42.27	57.73	19.83
Mpumalanga	61.78	38.22	10.68
Limpopo	10.42	89.58	11.36
Gauteng	96.42	3.58	17.43
North West	37.09	62.91	7.96

(Statistics South Africa, 1996)

**TABLE 3.2: THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION DENSITY BY PROVINCE**

<i>Province</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Area per square km</i>	<i>Population per square km</i>
Western Cape	3 974 542	4 205 555	129 386	32.50
Northern Cape	837 828	874 818	363 389	2.41
Free State	2 740 788	2 902 176	129 437	22.42
Eastern Cape	6 475 780	6 892 058	170 616	40.40
KwaZulu-Natal	8 774 924	9 349 905	91 481	102.21
Mpumalanga	2 906 308	3 108 835	82 333	37.76
Limpopo	5 089 220	5 456 963	116 824	46.71
Gauteng	7 748 572	8 217 992	21 025	390.87
North West	3 475 848	3 696 308	118 710	31.14
<b>Total</b>	42 023 810	44 704 610	1 223 201	36.55

(Statistics South Africa, 2002)

In addition, Southern Africa is known to have a comparative large HIV/AIDS infection rate (Karim, 2000 : 10; Crewe, 2000 : 23) which places even more strain on the dependency burden and, according to Ortmann and Machethe (2003 : 52), contributes to the destruction of social capital within the agricultural sector.

### 3.2.2.2 Economic context

South Africa occupies an area of 122 million hectares (Directorate: Agricultural Statistics, 2002 : 5). A large mining and manufacturing sector characterises the South African economy. In addition, South Africa has well developed transport facilities: roads, air and sea ports as well as

railway routes (Barbarin and Khomo, 1997 : 194). As a semi-industrialised country, South Africa is attractive for tourists and capital-intensive projects. South Africa's Gross National Product (GNP) is more than three times that of the other 11 members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) combined (Cornwell, 2002 : 45).

Compared to other African countries, South Africa has obtained a high level of economic development. However, seen from a global perspective, South Africa is an average ranking economy with 51 per cent of annual income going to 10 per cent of the richest households and less than 4 per cent annual income going to the poorest 40 per cent of households (Cornwell, 2002 : 45). Cornwell (2002 : 45) also notes that these statistics reveal that South Africa has one of the most skewed patterns of income distribution in the world. Similarly, Marais (1991 : 7) describes South Africa as '... one of the most unequal societies in the world'.

In the rural areas of South Africa, a number of socio-economic needs are prominent. Todaro (1997 : 182) reported that almost 40% of South African rural Black children are experiencing malnutrition and 33% of these children are illiterate. As the selection of cases will show in the next Chapter, a number of subsistence farmers are found in South Africa's rural areas; most of them poor, unskilled and vulnerable to risks and the effects of natural disasters. The National Department of Agriculture (2001, *in* Ortmann and Machethe, 2003 : 47) reports that the agricultural sector in South Africa has about 240 000 small-scale farmers who provide a livelihood for more than a million dependants, and about 3 million subsistence farmers who operate mainly in the communal areas of the former homelands. As a result of the poverty situation in many rural areas, a large portion of rural households are excluded from the formal sector.

### 3.2.3 Social disintegration and collective needs in South Africa

Emmett (2000 : 510) quotes from a prophetic article of Ramphela published in 1991 ( : 15) that the institution of a democratically elected government will not automatically cause social disintegration to disappear (1.2.4). The South African government has the task of responding to

social challenges such as acute rural poverty, unemployment, poor education and visible gross inequality. As a direct result of these challenges, the South African government also needs to deal with lawlessness, criminality and irresponsibility, all of which are indicative of social disintegration. In both South Africa's rural and urban settings, this evidence of social disintegration is visible.

According to Ramphela (1991 : 16), a number of social and political developments have helped or accelerated the process of disintegration in South Africa's political past. These include the progressive alienation of young people from adult leaders and parents, the involvement of people in the front-line of resistance, the desire of people to disable the ability of the government, school boycotts, people's courts, widespread brutalisation and political violence. Skilled people, mostly young adults, have left South Africa in hundreds of thousands, thereby contributing to the 'brain drain' effect.

The causes and symptoms of social disintegration are diverse, but also systemically related. Social relations have taken much strain, and in many cases violence was used to settle disputes. Ramphela (1991 : 13) in Emmet (2000 : 511) warns that 'crime as a means for survival may become a way of life'. Maluccio, *et al* (2000 : 57) report that almost all types of crime rose dramatically in South Africa between 1990 and 1994 and that serious crimes increased by 18 to 42 per cent for the same period. Nevertheless, in the context of sub Saharan Africa, South Africa is attractive in terms of international, as well as regional migration; both legal and illegal (Fourie, 1997 : 284). Dekker and Van Lingen (1996 : 14) confirm that crime, violence and corruption showed a dramatic and unexpected increase prior to their publication. Of particular concern is the large number of farmers being violently murdered and robbed on their farms (Tempelhoff, 2003 : 9). Ramphela concludes her article by warning against a downward spiral, asserting that social disintegration in the black community is a threat to all South

Africans.

With the many different cultural groups in South Africa, and the different affected communities in both urban and rural areas, one may indeed expect that the nature of social disintegration in South Africa is complex and that much research still needs to be done to fully understand exactly

how South African rural communities and their concomitant social capital are affected.

### **3.2.4 National community development**

As a plural, multi-cultural society, South Africa is, for the first time, trying to build an inclusive society; one that is based on sound democratic principles and the protection of minority groups and the rural poor. This is a difficult task, South Africa having as it does, a complex ethnical composition and political past.

In the light of the close association that has been established between social capital and economic development (2.4.1), Emmett (2000 : 511) recommends that social capital should be incorporated as an integral facet of South Africa's economic development strategy. The South African Government has, in response to persistent poverty and inequality, committed itself to social, political and economic transformation through its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Maluccio; *et al*, 2000: 56).

In consideration of the above mentioned ideal of national inclusive community development, the mobilisation of social capital in both rural, as well as urban communities is clearly much needed. As a resource, social capital can serve as a basis for improving the socio-economic wellbeing of South Africans. Focussed research about social capital in South Africa appears to be limited and insufficient reference is made in studies conducted in South Africa to the need-satisfying properties of social capital in South African communities.

### **3.2.5 Social capital at a broad national level**

Several social, economic, institutional and political needs tend to pose challenges for the design and implementation of community development projects in South Africa. Because of these social *and* economic needs, which visibly prevail South Africa's rural areas, the ideal of inclusivity (3.2.4) may not be accomplished in the near future and poverty will remain the lot of the rural poor for many years to come.

Nevertheless, despite the limitations that are evident in South African literature on social capital, Dekker and Van Lingen (1996 : 13) report that South Africa is well positioned to ensure that the legally endorsed constitutional framework generates social capital. The last mentioned authors ( : 13) are of the opinion that social capital amongst the South African workforce is limited since most cases are specific to single companies (*sic*). Maluccio, *et al* (2000 : 56) is of the opinion that social capital is an important resource for South African households. They also found that social capital played a bigger role in household welfare in 1998 than it did in 1993.

It can be stated with reasonable certainty that important similarities exist between South Africa's social situation and the observations made by Putnam (1995) in respect of the social situation in America (2.3.3). Both countries are experiencing similar problems: undesirable migration patterns, certain forms of socio-economic pressures on households and a general disruption of participation in social life. Such problems, as seen in the South African context, are exacerbated by the strong emphasis that is placed on material needs (2.7).

It is not surprising then that community development in South Africa often centres on economic needs which, as will be seen in the next section, is certainly the case in Limpopo. Alongside the many needs, social capital does in fact exist in various forms in the many local villages in Limpopo. One of the aims of this thesis is to highlight these instances of social capital (1.3). It needs to be recognised, however, that the availability and mobilisation of social capital in local villages of Limpopo depends greatly on the regional context of the Limpopo Province.

### **3.3 A PROFILE OF LIMPOPO**

The profile of Limpopo presented here will be useful in understanding a number of issues that affect social capital and need satisfaction at a village level. Within the framework of South Africa's current social, political and economic context (3.2.2), and as a direct result of South Africa's political past (3.2.1), the Limpopo Province is currently experiencing unequal industrial development. Racial polarisation between cultures prevails, with distinct divisions of rural and urban communities. Of particular interest is the coexistence of formal and informal power structures which, as the following discussion will show, has a profound effect on local social processes.

### **3.3.1 Background**

The Limpopo Province is one of nine provinces in South Africa. According to a document released by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS, 2001), the Limpopo Province occupies 9,5% of the total surface area of South Africa and is home to 12,36% of the total national population (see Table 3.1).

Polokwane<sup>15</sup>, a major administrative and commercial centre, is the capital of the Limpopo Province and is geographically located in the middle of the Province. Further north of Polokwane is Makhado<sup>16</sup> and Mussina, which are major towns (see Annexure B and Annexure C).

### **3.3.2 The institutional situation**

Like the other eight provinces, the Limpopo Province has a provincial administration with departments and local authorities, subject to and governed by the South African Constitution.

However, government service provision cannot always keep track of the pace and change in population

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<sup>15</sup>Formerly known as Pietersburg.

<sup>16</sup>Formerly known as Louis Trichardt.

patterns. The rural nature and geographical isolation of rural households impacts on the cost associated with institutional service delivery by government. Many respondents interviewed during the fieldwork described institutional service provision in the Limpopo Province as inadequate and disappointing.

### **3.3.2.1 Formal power structures**

Formal institutional formations in the Limpopo Province have been greatly influenced by the

historical situation in South Africa (3.2.1). After 1994, the former homelands in the Limpopo Province (Bophuthatswana, Ndebele and Venda), were integrated into the broader administration of the Province. During the local government transitional period (1995 - 2000), transitional local authorities were established. At least one study done (Van der Waal, 2001 : 56) notes that, because these local authorities were not institutionally viable, and because they lacked organisational and financial capacity, the task of service provision in the rural, areas by local governments, was mostly administered by a few district councils.

A number of non governmental organisations (NGOs) are active in the Limpopo Province, but a limited number of NGOs is found in the isolated rural areas in the Vhembe district. One prominent formal agricultural organisation, namely Agriven, existed in Venda in the 1990s. Agricultural extension services were provided by Agriven but since its closure by the new national government, it is clear that a considerable demand remains for pilot and extension rural projects.

### **3.3.2.2 Informal power structures**

Since the democratic transition, the new South African government has made remarkable progress in acknowledging traditional leaders. The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (in Section 1) recognises certain concepts in relation to traditional leaders:

- **King** means a traditional leader to whom other chiefs or chieftainesses pay allegiance in

accordance with customary law and who is commonly referred to as *ingonyama, ikumkani, morena e moholo* or *kgosikgolo* in terms of customary law (include queen).

- **Chief** means a traditional leader of a specific traditional community and commonly referred to as *morena, inkosi, hosi, khosi, kgosi* or *ikosi* in terms of customary law (includes a chieftainess).
- **Headman** means a traditional leader that pays allegiance to a chief or chieftainess in accordance with customary law and who is commonly referred to as *morenana, ramotse, kgosana, gota, ndhuna, isibonda, sikhulu, ikosana, indvuna, ntona, rammoto* and *induna* in terms of customary law (include head woman).
- **Traditional Leader** means any person who, in terms of customary law of the traditional community concerned, holds a traditional leadership position in that community.

The above clarification is applicable to the whole South African situation. Reddy (2004 : 43) notes that the above Act ‘... merely provides an enabling framework...’ and ‘... that the Provinces will have to introduce their own legislation’. Clearly, because recognition is given with this Act, to traditional councils, communities and leaders, Provinces can use their leadership structures as resources that can impact on local development. The following table illustrates positions and levels of authority of a typical Venda tribe in the Vhembe region of Limpopo:

**TABLE 3.3: THE STRUCTURE OF THE INDIGENOUS VENDA LEADERSHIP**

<b>POSITION</b>	<b>AUTHORITY OVER</b>
King	Tribal area
Headman	Districts

Sub – headmen ( <i>'Mukoma'</i> )	Wards
Village Head	Tribal Village
Senior family member	Village Division
Family Head	Residential Unit
Head official of Head Village	Head: Tribal Village

(Ralushai, 2003 : personal interview)

An important informal power structure amongst the Venda people is indigenous leadership. In terms of this structure (compare Table 3.3 above), additional social structures, not explicitly stated in the South African Constitution (such as the family head), were identified during this research as important for rural villages in the Vhembe district of Limpopo and for the mobilisation of social capital at grass roots level.

The South African Constitution, specifically Section 211, recognises traditional leaders in terms of customary law. Besides the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act mentioned above, two further Acts serve as examples of the official National Government's recognition of traditional leadership:

- Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)

It is important to note that customary laws are subject to, and must comply with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

The chiefs and headmen have well defined symbolic and ceremonial leadership roles. As role players in the community development process, they divide and allocate land, settle disputes and collect tribal levies and taxes. Traditional leaders also approve customary marriages and cultural values. By doing so,

people are organised and a forum is created for the people of the local villages to discuss their needs and concerns. Disputes are settled by means of tribal courts, which are regulated by customary law. Traditional authorities in the Vhembe district are the Gijana, Khakhu Tribal Council, Lwamondo, Madonsi, Mhinga, Mphaphuli, Mtiti, Mulamula, Mulenzhe, Shigalo, Shikundu, Shririndi, Tshikonelo and Tshivase tribes (personal interviews: Khaku, 2000 and Ralushai, 2003.).

Local people are well aware of their traditional leadership. This is quite evident from the turnout when traditional leaders call mass meetings. Once a month, traditional leaders in villages organise mass meetings, generally known as *Imbiso*<sup>17</sup>. Some respondents commented that a traditional leader 'is born, not made'. This suggests that kinship is important to an understanding of the informal power structures that serve certain social needs.

Traditional leaders regulate important social resources. The traditional leaders represent people in the legislative process by means of a provincial House of Traditional Leaders and in this way, they provide a participative and representative function for local people in shaping and informing the government policies and programmes that affect local people's needs.

The existence of traditional authorities and the future role of kings and headmen seem to challenge the existence of democratically elected local governments in Limpopo. Furthermore, traditional leaders are not necessarily a force for social solidarity. Since previous traditional leaders were suspected by their followers of fostering White interests, an important element of social capital, namely trust, has deteriorated. Meyer and Manson (2001 : 17) report that significant tension exists between Traditional Authorities and local councillors. The South African Government has appointed a commission (the so-called *Ralushai* Commission) to report on possible solutions for disputes that may arise between

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<sup>17</sup>Also known as '*Lekgotla*'.

government managers and the traditional leadership. Government managers may have access to the financial resources of public origin whereas traditional leaders have to generate funds elsewhere. In addition to the conflicts between government managers and the traditional authorities, tribal conflicts have also occurred, notably, between the Mphedu and the Tshivase tribes (Ralushai, personal interview, 2003).

In addition to the traditional power structures of the Venda people, which appear to be a social resource, a number of further informal associations exist amongst the rural settlements in Limpopo which seem equally resourceful for local rural people. Popular local associations in

Limpopo include burial societies, football clubs and voluntary interest groups. Of these, informal saving schemes are common and women subsistence farmers interviewed during the pilot study were found to participate in informal saving schemes. These saving schemes will receive further attention later.

### **3.3.2.3 Unions**

It is important to note that subsistence farmers in the Vhembe district do not have any significant union representation. Ralushai (personal interview, 2003) rightfully notes that subsistence farmers in the region, are not well organised. The only subsistence farmers who were found in this study to cooperate semi-formally are known as *orchard* farmers although these farmers do not have union representation either. Aerial photos 1, 2 and 3 (attached as Annexures D, E and F) show the agricultural activities of these orchard farmers.

In the broader Limpopo region, various unions can however be found. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which serves as an umbrella organisation for unions, is present and active in the Limpopo region. Other unions present in Limpopo include the following:

- The National Education and Health Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU)
- The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)

- The South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU)
- The African Rural Farmers Union (ARFU)

Whereas farm workers at private and commercial farms belong to the above unions, generally speaking, subsistence farmers are not union members, simply because they work for themselves. There are farmer's associations that advocate for farmers and their specific needs. Most of these associations are informal with limited memberships amongst subsistence farmers.

#### **3.3.2.4 Civic Associations (Civics)**

Civic associations are many and collectively they play an important role in the social structure of communities and villages in the Limpopo Province. Based on the responses from agricultural producers, including responses from the subsistence farmers interviewed, the following functions are fulfilled by civic organisations:

- They promote the political, economic, social and cultural welfare of communities
- They promote active participation and horizontal communication
- Civic organisations promote friendship and peace

Civic organisations in Limpopo seem to have particularly useful and distinctive functions for the satisfaction of needs and community development. Their functions promote democratic participation and civic organisations initiate community building at grass roots level. At least two examples illustrate this. In the village of *Hamangilasi* the civics established a community policing forum that comprises volunteers who initiate crime prevention measures, such as issuing warnings to alcohol abusers and assisting crime victims to report serious crimes to the police. Elsewhere, the *Itsani* civics forum organised clean-ups whereby school children are organised into small groups that collect cans, plastic and rubbish in their communities.

Because the civic organisations represent local people, members of these organisations speak the same language of the people they represent. It can therefore be assumed that people's needs can be better communicated to civic members, as opposed to more heterogeneous leadership and management. However, from a critical point of view, although civic organisations can be viewed as 'watchdog' organisations for the rural poor in the Limpopo Province, interviews conducted amongst agricultural producers revealed that these organisations are seen by some locals as political instruments, used for campaigning for votes during election times. This is understandable in view of the close relationships civic organisations have with local government structures.

### **3.3.2.5 Involvement of the Government and international agencies**

Following the end of the *Apartheid* era in 1994, the new South African government became involved with development in Limpopo Province through its Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP), research activities, policy making and economic development initiatives. Government support mainly focuses on the educational, health, public works and welfare structures of local governments. No subsidies are given to subsistence farmers, although Ralushai (personal interview, 2003) mentioned that *orchard* farmers do receive limited subsidies from the South African Government. The South African Local Government Transformation Programme (LGTP) outlines strategies and requirements for the transformation of local governments, including those in the Limpopo Province (Meyer and Manson, 2001 : 10). In addition, the Municipal Demarcation Board is responsible for demarcating and merging municipal areas. Further programmes of the national government include voter education (for example through NGOs and the Independent Electoral Commission), the Working for Water Programme (by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry) and an extensive land reform programme (Lyne and Darroch, 2003 : 65 – 66), which most notably affects most mixed and commercial farmers in Limpopo (McDougall, personal interview).

Through legislation, the South African Government has, since the 1990s, formulated restrictive labour policies which affect social capital both positively and negatively. Ortmann and Machethe (2003 : 51) note the following legislation:

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993
- The Public Holidays Act of 1994
- The Labour Relations Act of 1995
- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997
- The Employment Equity Act of 1998

Recent labour policies include policies on minimum loans and unemployment benefits for farm workers.

International agencies' involvement appears to be limited in the northern Limpopo region. The DBSA and international donors like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union, support development in Limpopo through loans, projects, training and research initiatives. Scholarships and exchange programmes for agricultural students, offered mainly by European and American universities, are available at universities and colleges in Limpopo.

### **3.3.3 The geographic, demographic and infrastructural situation in Limpopo**

Thus far, it can be asserted that rural communities in the Limpopo Province have identifiable social structures that can be described both *quantitatively* and *qualitatively*. At least three further significant factors also define the context within which agriculture is practised in the Limpopo Province:

#### **3.3.3.1 Geography**

The Limpopo Province is situated in the far northern part of South Africa. Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana border on the Limpopo Province (see location map: Annexure B).

The Kruger National Park is situated along the eastern part of the Limpopo Province with the Soutpansberg mountain range stretching from the east to the west, in the north.

Natural environments and physical conditions vary. Dry bushveld is predominant north of the Soutpansberg, while the vegetation around the Soutpansberg mountains still includes indigenous

rainforests. According to a geologist in the area (Schreiber, personal interview) various mining activities are increasing in Limpopo.

The villages which formed part of this study are situated in the Vhembe municipal district and were coded NP341, NP342, NP343 and NP344 by the Municipal Demarcation Board at the time during which this research was undertaken. Some of the rural villages may appear to be small and some households are at times only accessible on foot.

### **3.3.3.2 Demography**

According to the 2000 census, the Limpopo Province has a population of 5 456 963 people (Statistics South Africa, 2002). This could be questioned in view of many people who live in informal housing, isolated areas, and along the many rivers found in the Limpopo Province. Cognisance also needs to be taken of the large number of immigrants in the rural parts of Limpopo. Accurate statistics are problematic and most farmers can only give estimates of the people in their villages.

The gender distribution of Limpopo, according to a United Nations estimate (2000 : 2) is 57% female and 43% male whilst the gender distribution amongst the youth appears even. Statistics South Africa (1999 : 10) reports that Limpopo was the only province with a sex ratio of less than 85 men per 100 women. Because many men work as migrant workers, women can be expected to outnumber men; a situation which is characteristic of the former homelands of South Africa (Fényes and Meyer, 2003 : 29).

Table 3.1 shows that of all South Africa's provinces, Limpopo Province has the highest percentage of people living in its rural areas (89.58) compared to Gauteng Province, for example, where only 3.58 per cent people live in rural areas. Annexes G - K show a moderate population growth rate for Limpopo Province between 1996 and 2000. Annexure L show that a slight decrease can be expected in the life expectancy of people living in Limpopo, particularly Limpopo's male population (also refer to Annexure M).

A senior demographer of the DBSA confirmed that the AIDS epidemic, which is most prevalent in Southern Africa, has already had a dramatic effect on the population growth curve in the Limpopo Province (Calitz, personal interview). All indications show that the population pattern of local rural villages in the Vhembe municipal district has been similarly affected.

### **3.3.3.3 Infrastructure**

Transport, electricity, waste disposal and public safety were reported by the agricultural producers interviewed during the pilot study as problematic, and will be elaborated on in the following subparagraphs.

#### *Transport*

In the urban areas within the Province, like Polokwane, Makhado and Tzaneen, roads are easily accessible. Main traffic routes are tarred, but most rural settlements are only accessible by gravel and dirt roads. The tar roads are often poorly maintained. Mini bus taxis are popular mode of transport in Limpopo. Besides the several airfields, Limpopo also has an international airport, the Gateway International Airport<sup>18</sup>. Although there is a railway line in use in Limpopo, only one functional railway line (on route to Zimbabwe) is to be found in Vhembe.

#### *Electricity*

All the municipalities of the Limpopo Province rely on ESKOM to provide electricity. Streetlights are almost non-existent in rural villages of the Limpopo Province and traffic lights are frequently out of

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<sup>18</sup>The Gateway International Airport is situated in Polokwane and provides the main airlink with Johannesburg.

order. One example is that of the electrification of *Tshikonelo* which, according to Van der Waal (2001 : 57) caused substantial frustration and unhappiness amongst the rural people in *Tshikonelo*, a rural village in Vhembe. Because of debt owed to the electrification company and the loss of an electrical transformer due to a flood, other agricultural projects, like the *Tshikonelo* irrigation project also failed (Malan, 1999 : 508).

### *Waste disposal*

Solid waste disposal mechanisms are poorly developed. In addition, in the Vhembe district, people often dump garbage at non-designated areas. Glass and plastic material can be observed in and around public areas.

### *Public safety*

Correctional service facilities (jails) are found in the Limpopo Province and there are major jails in Thulamela (in Makwarella), Polokwane and Makhado.

Rural areas in South Africa have experienced high levels of crime (Groenewald and Niewoudt, 2003 : 279). In terms of the history of crime prevention in South Africa (National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996 ; 7 - 8) the Limpopo Province has a relatively low crime rate although farm attacks, theft and robberies were confirmed by rural farmers as major risks to sustainable production on their farms.

Emergency services in rural areas are rare and mostly confined to the major towns and surrounds in Limpopo. Police are seldom visible in rural areas.

The geological, demographical and infrastructural position of the Limpopo Province indicates that the Limpopo Province has a variety of resources to offer in terms of agricultural production, but that the above average high numbers of people concentrated in rural areas (compare Table 3.1) makes the provision of infrastructure difficult. The following subsection will include further important factors that influence agricultural production in Limpopo.

### 3.3.4 Socio, economic and cultural attributes

Languages spoken in Limpopo are Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Afrikaans and English. During the 18th century, a number of *VhaVenda* people crossed the Limpopo river to settle around the Soutpansberg. They eventually united under *Thohoyandou*<sup>19</sup>, a Venda tribal leader. Venda was granted independence as an independent homeland under South Africa's former *Apartheid*

system. In terms of the demographic transition, which officially started in 1994, Venda became included in the broader Limpopo Province.

#### 3.3.4.1 Age distribution

The attached annexes (Annexes G - J) show detailed compositions of the South African population in different age brackets, as well as male/ female age compositions. The table that follows (Table 3.4) is meant to be a summarised merged version of the last mentioned annexes, showing the current situation in the respective age brackets.

**TABLE 3.4: CURRENT AGE COMPOSITION OF LIMPOPO: 2005**

<i>Age</i>	<i>2005 ('000)</i>
0 – 4	852
5 – 9	738
10 – 14	636
15 – 19	728

<sup>19</sup>Thohoyandou means 'head of the elephant'.

20 – 24	679
25 – 29	551
30 – 34	407
35 – 39	296
40 – 44	253
45 – 49	206
50 – 54	161
55 – 59	122
60 – 64	89
65 – 69	80
70 – 74	64
75 – 79	55
80+	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 082</b>

(DBSA, 2000)

Table 3.4 shows that a relatively large number of Limpopo's population is younger than 15 years. A main feature of the demographic profile of the former homelands (like Venda, in which this study was undertaken), is high population growth and migration from former commercial farming areas. Likewise, the DBSA (2000 *in* Fényes and Meyer, 2003 : 29) highlights the unequal age/ sex distribution in the productive age category (20 - 50) as well as a high dependency ratio (Table 3.4).

#### **3.3.4.2 Formal qualifications and training**

There are 4 500 public schools in the Limpopo Province (Sunday Times Business Times: 26 January 2003 : 14). Fifty-eight thousand (58 000) educators are responsible for the formal schooling of 1.8 million learners. In many rural schools the learners exceed national government's objective of 40 learners per class (RDP, 1994 : 64). In addition, four tertiary institutions are located in Limpopo

(Limpopo Provincial Government, in Sunday Times Business Times: 26 January 2003 : 14) and these are currently in a process of being merged with other tertiary institutions in the Province.

A teacher at the Tshamavhudzi Primary School in Vhembe complained about the lack of parental involvement and another teacher at the Fuyatha Primary School stated that education would only improve in his school if parents had more money to spend on food, books and uniforms for their children.

Of the rural farmers interviewed, less than half had received any formal education outside the secondary school level. Those who had received formal education reported that the education was of short duration for example, diploma courses in metal and woodworking, agriculture and

cookery. Of the farmers who attended training courses expressed concern that their qualifications were not relevant to their farming practices and would consequently not benefit them and their families. This raised further questions and concerns regarding the fulfilment of quantitative needs (like finances) and qualitative needs (like subsistence).

### **3.3.4.3 Income and expenditure**

Agriculture is a major rural employer in the Limpopo Province. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA, 1995 : 15) reported that the Limpopo Province is amongst the poorest of the provinces in South Africa with a personal income per capita of only 27 percent of the total South African average. Its economy also has the lowest labour absorption capacity despite the large number of males absent from the province. Low absorption of labour is particularly acute in the majority of rural areas in the Vhembe district, a situation that has resulted in the highest unemployment rate in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 1999 : 27).

Local business activities are present in urban as well as rural areas in the Vhembe district and provide limited employment for local rural people. In exceptional cases large commercial farms make significant contributions both to employment and agricultural production in Limpopo. The Sapekoe tea farms in

Limpopo, which produce 70% - 80% of South Africa's tea (De Bruin, 2005 : 18), provide employment for thousands of workers. Similarly, the co-operation efforts of large groups of tomato farmers (ZZ2 and ZZ3 farmers) have been successful and these farmers are now providing employment for thousands of local people as well as contributing significantly to agricultural production. Apart from farming, members of subsistence farming households are involved in informal small micro enterprises like bread making, brick making and the processing of farming products.

Besides the provision of incomes, local businesses supply a range of goods and services to communities in Limpopo and contribute to the tax base of the local, provincial and national economies. Local businesses are instrumental in local income generation through the provision of

donations and sponsorships for sport events, particularly soccer and boxing events in the Vhembe district. Further benefits which local rural communities receive from local businesses in the region include fresh products, the provision of training and expertise and, importantly, the proximity of goods and services.

The presence of local businesses appears to pose problems for rural communities in the province. Strong regional alliances are formed by local businesses which, due to their profit orientation and competition for market share, prohibit many local people from generating their own incomes. Because of fierce competition amongst strong local businesses, small businesses stay small and can mostly only enter larger markets with great difficulty. The incomes of rural people are increased via many small, medium and micro businesses (SMMEs) which, although limited, provide important sources of support and capacity building for rural communities in the Limpopo Province. By participating in SMMEs, rural people, particularly rural farmers, are given the opportunity to generate income within their villages and communities.

It seems that the majority of people who are self-employed feel to a certain extent that they are in some way a part of their community. Many of them enjoy some status. In some cases, respondents did not always know their exact household incomes because they did not always monitor and calculate each

household member's income. Therefore only estimates were provided.

A major source of income for poor rural households in the Vhembe district is the South African national social welfare system. The majority of unemployed people in the Vhembe district, and elsewhere in Limpopo, depend on welfare money. The disabled, the very young, the unemployed and pensioners receive grants from the national government. Pensioners are paid monthly at banks, the closest of which are mostly located far away from neighbouring towns.<sup>20</sup> On pension pay out days, pensioners sometimes queue for hours in very long queues.

#### **3.3.4.4 Informal sector activities**

The informal sector in the Limpopo Province attracts large numbers of people and is largely supported by rural households. Traders and street vendors operate in and around nearby towns. The products and services they produce are diverse and vary from locality to locality. I observed candle makers, brick makers, tailors, hairdressers, bakers, food surveyors, photographers, artists, money lenders, debt collectors, prostitutes, gardeners, house workers, carpenters, car washers and painters.

Certain agricultural producers, particularly subsistence farmers and micro-businesses, sometimes require short-term loans to purchase items such as equipment, seeds and fertilisers. Frequently, but particularly during the dry season, funds are needed to bridge seasonal fluctuations in income and the money has to be obtained either from friends or informal money lenders because banks are not prepared to accept loans without collateral security. Local rural agricultural producers, therefore, take part in informal financial activities to sustain their activities.

#### **3.3.4.5 Immigration of people**

There is a large number of migrant workers who can be categorised as a sector of the Venda

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<sup>20</sup> As a result of the isolated nature of the rural communities included in this investigation, the nearest post offices and banks are located too far away for these rural dwellers who are obliged to make use of private transport.

workforce, who live in the rural areas but work in urban environments. Louis Trichardt, Thohoyandou and Giyani are urban-type towns in rural settings. A number of *VhaVendas* live and work in these areas. In addition, a substantial number of the *VhaVenda* people interviewed indicated that they or their relatives live and work as far away as Polokwane, Pretoria and Johannesburg. This category of the *Venda* workforce can be classified as migrant workers who are only present in their villages on a temporary basis, but who still contribute to the local economy by means of their sharing their incomes with their families in the Limpopo Province.

Immigrants from Mozambique and Zimbabwe are also found in the Vhembe district. Many of these immigrants work illegally on private farms in the region. Not much is known about the social cohesion of immigrants in the Vhembe district, although it could be confirmed that these

immigrants are mainly in search of jobs. Whenever local farmers employ immigrants, particularly illegal immigrants, such immigrant workers seem mostly poorly remunerated.

#### **3.3.4.6 Religious activities**

A large number of churches are visible in the Limpopo Province. Various religious activities can be identified in major towns. In Louis Trichardt alone (which can be regarded as a relatively small but strategically situated town), at least 22 churches of varying religions, are active (Nedohe: personal interview).

Many religious differences were also observed. Whereas Christianity appears to be the main religion practised in the Limpopo Province, Hinduism and Islam can also be found. Christian churches prevail and represent the most common religion practised by the people of the Limpopo Province. The majority of respondents in this investigation indicated their affiliation with Christianity (see Annexure N).

##### **3.3.4.6.1 Christian churches**

Available examples in the Limpopo Province lend strong support to the assumption that Christian

churches have various latent need-satisfying properties in the Vhembe district. Besides fulfilling the spiritual needs of people, Christian churches in the Vhembe district raise funds and volunteers frequently assist the poor. A major soup kitchen in Thohoyandou, sponsored by Christian churches, feeds hundreds, possibly thousands of impoverished children in the mornings.

The Christian churches are also able to organise masses of people. A large number of people belong to the Zionist Christian Church movement (ZCC) which is based in Polokwane. The ZCC attracts people from the whole Southern African region and, based on the masses of people who gather at the ZCC festival once a year, it can be concluded that this church has the largest single

gathering of people in South Africa. Hundreds of thousands of Zionist supporters, the majority of whom are South African, attend the annual Easter service.

The respondents interviewed stated that members of the Christian churches collect money for the poor, the disabled, the elderly, orphans and others in need. Kriel (Personal interview) mentioned that at least one school in the Vhembe region was built with funds raised from a Christian church. A number of volunteers work for Christian churches and besides raising funds and feeding the poor, they also assist in counselling. Christian churches assist in conflict mediation and instil moral values and norms amongst the broader Christian community of the Limpopo Province.

#### **3.3.4.6.2 Traditional religion**

Although a vast amount of literature warns against the posing of ‘sensitive’ questions to respondents, informal discussions conducted during the survey indicated that religious questions could be included and that most respondents were prepared to answer religious questions. During this qualitative study, the traditional religion of the *VhaVenda* speaking people became difficult to overlook and ignore. This is because Venda people have a close spiritual relationship with their ancestors. In one case a rock, which was used to sit on by a senior tribe member, was considered to be spiritual. Prayers are frequently made to ancestors, even during communal meetings.

The traditional religion of Venda people is often expressed in dancing. Dances like *tshikona*, *malende*, and *domba* form part of the traditional religious ceremonies. The *domba* dance, also known as the python dance, involves the dancing of young girls with their arms and hands clasped together, to the slow beat of a *domba* drum. Burnett - van Tonder (1987 : 24), who acknowledges Ralushai (1982), states that Venda mothers sometimes carry their babies on their backs when performing dances. In so doing, a child is integrated with the songs, music and rhythm<sup>21</sup>.

In short, the traditional belief of the *VhaVenda* is one of the most profound facets of the lives of people in the northern region of the Limpopo Province. More insights on social connectivity and personal relations can be seen in the life and world view of the *TshiVenda* rural people and will receive further attention in the next section.

### 3.3.4.6.3 Life and world view

The *VhaVenda* consider several forests and lakes in the northern region of the Limpopo Province to be sacred. The sacred Lake Funduduzi is believed by many *VhaVendas* to be all that is left of the water that covered the earth before the Creation. Many believe that a great white python lives below the surface of the Lake. Water spirits, called *Zwidutwane*<sup>22</sup>, live in the lake. The *VhaVenda* people often leave offerings of food, pottery and beer to the spirits and it is believed that such offerings will protect them and enable them to cross the river safely. According to the traditional *VhaVenda* religion (Van Warmelo, 1932 in Burnett - van Tonder, 1986 : 8), the lake may be visited only with the permission of the chief of the lake.

The *Thathe-Vondo* forests are considered sacred by the *VhaVenda* people (Stayt, 1931 in Burnett - van Tonder, 1986 : 2). This (holy) forest contains the burial places of chiefs from the *Thathe* clan,

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<sup>21</sup>Burnett - van Tonder (1987 : 24) notes that specific songs are sung and danced at: *Gumbu li a nndemela* ('my head feels heavy') and *Nangwe ndo funa ndi a la* ('I receive food, even though I had enough'). The last song is performed while babies are fed.

<sup>22</sup>*Zwidutwane* are small creatures with only one eye, arm and leg.

including the great chief, *Nethathe*, who was allegedly able to turn himself into a variety of animals to watch over his people. It is believed that when Chief *Thathe* died, he turned himself into a white lion that guards the forest.

Another traditional believe of the *VhaVenda* is that a bird of lightning, known as *Ndadzi*, flies during storms with wings of thunder, eyes which flash lightning and a beak which carries rain. It is believed that this lightning bird drops eggs of fire that can burn out trees (Mphapuli, personal interview: 16 June 2001).

The symbolism attached to legends has longstanding historical roots (for example, the Rain Queen<sup>23</sup>) that are said to go back a long way. The above beliefs of the *VhaVenda* people are important for understanding the life and world view of local people in the Vhembe district where a high concentration of *VhaVenda* people live and has therefore particular relevance for understanding social capital in Limpopo.

### **3.3.4.7 Sports and entertainment**

Most of the 22 sport stadiums found in the Limpopo Province need to be renovated and of the 15 sports grounds, many are without ablution facilities. Two indoor sports centres are located in the Limpopo Province and, collectively, the sports facilities cater for 32 different sports (Limpopo Provincial Government, in Sunday Times Business Times: 26 January 2003 : 14).

Besides cultural activities such as dancing (noted in section 3.3.4.6.2), the people in the Limpopo Province are enthusiastic about sport, although Venda people are selective and their sport preferences tend to range. Soccer and boxing are popular sporting activities.

Entertainment facilities and activities are mainly found in the major towns. Large, modern cinemas, for example, are only found in Polokwane. Entertainment in subsistence farming villages is mostly confined

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<sup>23</sup>*Modjadji*

to activities such as storytelling, informal sport activities and social functions. Some rural people regard the undertaking of trips to family members as social entertainment and some regard tourist destinations in the region like the Kruger National Park as good entertainment.

Rural subsistence farmers seldom use televisions. Instead, they appear to listen to the radio as a form of entertainment. Many of the rural men drink beer on weekends whilst socialising together.

### 3.3.5 Social connections

Indigenous social connections can be observed when gatherings are organised between traditional leaders and the commons (“commoners”). These meetings of local people are called regularly<sup>24</sup> by means of messengers of the headmen known as ‘*Vhakoma*’ who inform people of the place and purpose of the meeting.

Indigenous connections between people are also revealed with the *Vhuthu* norm. By virtue of people’s friendships, trust is strengthened, and this seems to be a form of security for local people.

The national government support rural infrastructure in Limpopo by means of the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP), the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP) and the Poverty Relief and Infrastructure Investment Fund (PRIIF) (Vink and Kirsten, 2003 : 7). According to the last mentioned authors, a range of basic services has also been provided in the rural areas of South Africa. These are likely to strengthen the vertical relationship of the rural poor of Limpopo with the State:

- The introduction of a free basic water policy
- A substantial number of new electricity connections have been made in Limpopo
- An increased formal schooling pass rate
- Increasing numbers of people benefiting from the National Child Support Grant (adopted from

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<sup>24</sup>These meetings are known as ‘*Khoro*’.

Vink and Kirsten, 2003 : 7).

### 3.3.5.1 Marriages

Customary marriages are a common phenomenon in the Limpopo Province. These marriages take place according to customary laws. *Lobola*<sup>25</sup> is still paid in the form of cattle, but during field visits both men and woman respondents confirmed that payments by prospective grooms are increasingly being made in the form of instalment of money to the bride's family.

Polygamous marriages also take place although these marriages, according to the *VhaVenda* tradition, must comply with certain prerequisites, like financial surety and the full consent of all of the families involved. Burnett - van Tonder (1987 : 20) note that in polygamous marriages of the *VhaVenda*, the head woman of the house is responsible for the division of labour amongst household members and serves as an intermediary between her husband and the other members of the family.

Besides those mothers divorced and widowed, a number of single mothers indicated that they had never been married.

### 3.3.5.2 Family ties

As can be expected, family ties are strong within both the immediate as well as the extended family structures. It was shown in section 2.4.1.1 rural families are resources for their communities. Accordingly, family social structures are discussed within the context of subsistence farming in the Vhembe district and in the broader Limpopo Province.

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<sup>25</sup>*Lobola* refers to a payment (either money or gifts) made to the family of the bride.

### **3.3.5.3 Immediate family**

The immediate families of the subsistence rural farmers (man, woman and children) are small, though socially self-supporting units. The families observed in the Vhembe district 'employ' family members for farming activities. Due to migrant labour and the loss of family members due to HIV/AIDS, a large number of single-parent households can be found in the Vhembe district.

### **3.3.5.4 Extended family**

Fundamental to understanding the behaviour of the agricultural production of poor farmers is an acknowledgement of the existence of large families. Given the functioning of the rural extended family in the Limpopo Province, the social connections found amongst members of the extended family can be regarded as a resource for the survival of rural households. In Limpopo large families provide a form of insurance for parents in old age<sup>26</sup>.

Subsistence farmers utilise existing social capital, which the extended family offers, in resourceful ways, to satisfy the needs of their families. The support provided by subsistence farmers to their rural families, and the support received in turn by these farmers from their families, provides further evidence of the resource value of the social capital within the rural families of the Limpopo. The majority of subsistence farmers use the money they earn (and this includes all activities carried out in the informal sector), to pay for the education of their children. The farmers interviewed during the pilot study indicated that they hoped that their children would find well-paying jobs and that their children would support them when they, the parents, became old. Family members' labour is used, particularly during certain times of the year when the planting and harvesting of crops requires more labour than at off-peak times. The formal

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<sup>26</sup>As also correctly pointed out by Chambers (1993 : 142) and Todaro (1997 : 210).

employment of additional labour outside the extended family is exceptional.

In addition to the redistribution of money, food, wood, and other resources; extended families were found to provide protection for their family members. During a meeting with the *Simba* family (in *Simba Village*), the value of the extended family became particular clear. Most of the extended family members live in close proximity. Relatives of the *Simba* family resided in all of the residential units of the street block. All eleven sons of Mr *Simba*, with the exception of one son who took up formal employment elsewhere, resided on the same street block. This phenomenon of proximity of relatives is also found in other villages of the Limpopo Province and sometimes a whole village mainly comprises relatives of an extended family<sup>27</sup> and persons with close social connections.

### 3.3.6 Housing

Formal housing remains problematic in the rural areas of the Limpopo Province. The construction of informal settlements in some rural villages (like *Bafuri*, *Lwamondo*, and *Tsakhuma*) tends to be different from the informal settlements found in urban areas of the Province. The informal structures in these villages are mostly made from wood whereas the urban informal building constructions are mostly constructed from harder materials (for example concrete, bricks and iron). The reason for this phenomenon might be traced to the fact that villages located in close proximity to the large forestries can obtain wood easily and cheaply in contrast to informal settlement constructions in and around towns which are generally made from other materials.

The South African Government has built many low cost houses in Limpopo. An important component of the infrastructure, housing in the Limpopo Province shows why the RDP places so much emphasis on housing construction schemes. However, the quality and quantity of housing in the Limpopo Province remains problematic in the rural areas, although some inadequate housing is being replaced by solid structures such as the RDP houses (Malatji, 2002 : 7). A

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<sup>27</sup>Burnett - van Tonder (1987 : 4) confirms that the sons of the immediate family tend to live in close proximity to their parents.

number of newly erected RDP houses can be observed in rural villages of Limpopo and specifically, Vhembe.

### **3.3.6.1 Types of housing and distribution**

A range of different housing constructions can be observed in the Limpopo Province. One observation relates to the shape of the buildings. The traditional Venda huts situated in the rural areas are mostly round, whilst most building constructions in the urban areas of the Limpopo Province tend to be square shaped. Frequently, RDP houses with square designs are erected next to the traditional round huts.

The physical environment of Limpopo and South Africa's historical circumstances, as outlined in sections 3.3.3 and 3.2.1 above have exerted an influence on the size and shape of the rural settlements in the Limpopo district. Since the Limpopo Province covers a vast geographical area (3.3.3.1), houses are in some instances linearly situated in villages and communities, alongside main traffic routes. Important to note, however, is the fact that rural villages in the Vhembe district existed long before the invention of motor cars (Corbett, personal interview). Environmental factors that need to be considered in the planning of housing settlements in Vhembe include the Soutpansberg mountain range as well as the many rivers found in the Province. A second and important factor that has influenced the spread of houses in the Limpopo Province is historical circumstance. In particular, the restrictions placed on the movements of people prior to 1994 resulted in unnatural housing concentrations. In terms of negative social capital, past conflicts with other cultures could explain certain concentrations of rural villages. On the other hand, according to an anthropologist and archaeologist who has had a long standing relationship with the *VhaVenda* people, (Hanish, personal interview), past inter-tribal wars involving *VhaVenda* people were uncommon in Limpopo.

### **3.3.6.2 Occupation of houses and informal settlements**

Low cost housing, amongst other forms of housing, is evident outside major towns like Louis Trichardt, whereas informal settlements are found, not only in and around the major cities, but also in the

rural areas of the broader Limpopo Province. Outsiders may wrongfully perceive the huts in some Venda villages in the Vhembe district as unorganised and as informal settlements whilst, on the contrary, the huts form part of the prestige and cultural status of the Venda people. Informal settlements are found, although these settlements seem more common amongst migrant workers on farms.

### **3.3.6.3 Respondents' views on old age homes**

During the field work an unexpected fragment of information surfaced. This information has relevance for many sections of this thesis, but will be discussed here, since it comprises 'good' evidence of social capital and will therefore also support the thesis as a whole.

The majority responses received during the survey confirmed that the elderly in rural villages are well respected. Unexpectedly, old age homes were seen by some respondents as not being important. Elderly subsistence farmers showed little interest in residing in old age homes. These farmers live in close proximity to their families (see section 3.3.5.2) and, since such family members are expected to reveal helpful, caring and altruistic behaviour, old age homes, according to most rural farmers interviewed, are not necessary. During an interview with the mayor of Vhembe (Moeti, personal interview), it was confirmed that the building of old age homes was '...a waste of money'.

A high number of elderly people can be found in the rural areas of the Vhembe district. This reflects a large dependency burden, especially given the high level of rural unemployment.

### **3.3.7 Health**

As in the case of the provision of housing, the provision of adequate health services poses great challenges for authorities and is a particularly acute shortcoming the rural areas of the Limpopo

Province. The perception created by the extent of health problems in the Limpopo Province is that health issues tend to be underestimated by communities as well as important role players, in particular,

National Government. Most of the health personnel interviewed at clinics showed little understanding of preventative health strategies.

Within the context of health promotion, the effective and efficient use of water sources (or lack thereof) deserves further attention.

### **3.3.7.1 Water supply**

Water is an important (although scarce) resource for agricultural production in the Limpopo Province. Both the quantity and quality of water supply affects agricultural production and health practice in Limpopo. In most isolated villages, the water distribution systems are rudimentary, with boreholes sometimes being the only source of clean water.

Although natural water resources (like dams and rivers) are plentiful, they are not always suitable for consumption. Water-borne diseases like cholera, typhoid and diarrhoea are treated by local clinics. These diseases especially affect children. Of particular concern is rural households' access to clean water. It is not uncommon to find rural households completely dependent on river water in their area. A report from Statistics South Africa (2003 : 46) states that 8.6 per cent of households in Limpopo depend on borehole water compared to 1.8 per cent of South African households. In numerous cases observed during the fieldwork done in Vhembe, water is collected from nearby rivers for cooking, cleaning and drinking purposes and in addition, households frequently use unsafe containers to collect water from rivers. Due to high temperatures in the northern region of the Limpopo Province, storage of large quantities of water is a further point of concern. Reservoirs are available in most towns, but rural households are mostly forced to collect their water on a daily basis. Some rural households also do their washing in the rivers.

Although potentially promising water projects have been initiated (like irrigation projects, water purification projects and the 'Working for Water Project'), increased water usage by local

residents, particularly during dry seasons, is expected to place growing pressure on traditional sources of water.

The rural farmers cherish their water channels which are an important source of irrigation for farmers, particularly those who plant vegetables for personal consumption.

### **3.3.7.2 Hospitals, clinics and general health situation**

There are 447 clinics (mostly spread throughout the rural areas), 43 public hospitals and one private hospital in the Limpopo Province. 23 291 health and welfare personnel are reported to serve these facilities (Limpopo Provincial Government in Sunday Times Business Times: 26 January 2003 : 14).

Despite being valuable resources, not all rural communities and villages in the Limpopo Province have equal access to health facilities. This can be ascribed to at least two reasons that surfaced during the pilot study:

- Most major health facilities and resources (such as pharmacies) are concentrated in urban areas and major towns like Polokwane and Louis Trichardt. Medical clinics are available in rural villages, but are hampered by a number of logistical and medical limitations. People frequently have to travel long distances to reach these facilities.
- The extent of poverty in the Limpopo Province is a constraint and the majority of rural people depend on state subsidised hospitals. Poor rural families are unable to afford expensive medication and private health care.

Discussions with staff from several hospitals and clinics revealed concerns about corruption, unqualified medical personnel, non availability of medical equipment and poor working conditions. The medical personnel revealed low morale and were particularly concerned about the lack of funds and doctors. Given these views, the hospitals situated in the Vhembe district appear to be underdeveloped resources.

The health problems of rural communities in the Limpopo Province show certain tendencies. 100 to 300 cases of malaria are treated each a month in the Limpopo Province (Yende, 2003), and in the Vhembe district, which is situated in a high-risk malaria area the need for protection against malaria is particularly acute.

Due to circumstances mentioned above, thousands of rural persons make use of an alternative resource, namely traditional healers, which as already been mentioned, is a particularly strong source of social capital.

### **3.3.7.3 Traditional healers**

During the fieldwork done (reported on in the next chapter) respondents interviewed during the pilot study indicated that they preferred traditional healers to rural clinics. When asked why traditional healers were preferred, many respondents answered that traditional healers were effective and that they were more affordable than medical doctors. Depending on the type of illness, it appears that persons sometimes prefer traditional healers for specific illnesses. Informal discussions with a group of local university students suggested that young people mostly sought the help of traditional doctors when dealing with sexual diseases.

Traditional healers themselves were also questioned. All the traditional healers interviewed during this study displayed close connections to the natural environment as well as the spiritual world of their patients. Traditional healers often consider social circumstances like the restrictions placed on an individual by the community. Illness is sometimes considered a result of breaking spiritual and traditional rules. Baldness, for example, is believed to be the result of the breaking of taboos (also: Cheetham and Griffiths, 1982 : 955).

Most traditional healers expressed similar, yet distinct problems of their own. In a study conducted on the problems of traditional healers living on the western border of the Kruger

National Park, Botha (1998 : 626 - 628) found that a number of problems are experienced by these healers:

- Payment-related problems
- Lack of recognition by clinics, government and general public
- Lack of infrastructure
- Scarcity of medicinal plants outside conservation areas
- Scarcity of medicinal animals outside conservation areas
- Improvement of skills
- Poor relationships with doctors
- No markets close by to buy medical products
- Conflicts in communities.

Botha reports (1998 : 627) that these healers indeed desire to cooperate with medical practitioners but that several hospitals revealed concerns about the toxicity levels of plants used by traditional healers, the use of unsterilised instruments and inappropriate treatment of certain diseases.

The need for recognition amongst traditional healers is present in the villages in which they operate. Some appear to function under stressful circumstances. Traditional healers are at times accused by their villagers of practising witchcraft. Some of these healers, carrying the label of *witches*, have actually been expelled by their home villages. Over the years a small village known as Helena, situated about 35 kilometres west of Polokwane city, has formed, and comprises of a high number of these so-called 'witches' and, as Davis, Mphago and Maupye (2002 : 7) reports, Helena is also known as the 'witchcraft zone' because in most households in Helena there is a traditional healer.

### **3.3.8 Arts and crafts**

Various forms of arts and crafts are practised in the Limpopo Province and this seems to support the idea that symbolism constitutes social capital because of the intrinsic value these may hold for local people (2.4.2.1; 2.4.2.2). For example, distinctive art can be observed on traditional clothing which

Venda people closely associate with status.

Since South Africa's national park is situated in the Limpopo Province, many travellers and tourists who visit the Kruger National Park purchase local arts and crafts from road stalls. The Venda women are particularly proud of their crafted clay pots, which is an art form that is carried over from generation to generation, and which provides clear evidence of social capital.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

Summing up: the social capital identified in Limpopo thus far reveals the presence of formal and informal power structures. These power structures seem counterproductive in the sense that their views are frequently in opposition. Opposing views and overlapping functions between municipal leaders and traditional leaders (3.3.2.2) as well as the ideologies of the traditional and western doctors (3.3.7.3), leads to the conclusion that social capital, although present, is not sufficiently utilised to achieve need satisfaction through social connectivity (2.3.3) amongst local communities. The above discussion gives an indication of the socio-economic context of Limpopo. Given the socio-economic limitations outlined above, the Vhembe district in Limpopo, due to its *ruralness*, seems particularly appropriate as the subject of an investigation into social capital; both to confront the theoretical paradigm of social capital and to test the hypothetical viewpoint that social capital is indeed used resourcefully by poor rural communities to satisfy their needs. The nature of the traditional social structures found in Limpopo and the limitations of the broader institutional structures, like those outlined above, supports the expectation that available social capital amongst poor rural communities in Vhembe are mobilised to satisfy peoples needs.

With the discussion of the literature on social capital and human needs in mind, and against the theoretical background of the socio-economic context of the people living in rural communities of Limpopo, the reader is invited to join me on a journey which, from a personal point of view, resulted in a tremendous amount of self-discovery. What initially started as a mere discussion with a group of rural woman turned into an intellectual curiosity of the 'different' world, namely that of a economically poor, but socially rich world. This is a world that co-exists beyond the limitations imposed

by the material world. What I share with you in the next Chapter is a rediscovery of the social lives of the rural people in the Vhembe region of the Limpopo Province.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **EMPIRICAL STUDY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 2 different manifestations of social capital were discussed in terms of theory, critique and human needs in societies. The nature of socio-economic problems and opportunities in South Africa (Chapter 3), and elsewhere in the rural regions of the developing world justifies a closer look at the availability and productive potential of social capital in these regions. This chapter will present focussed evidence of social capital in localities of the Vhembe district in the Limpopo Province.

The research process was originally planned with structured questionnaires and interviews as research instruments. These instruments were 'tested' during a pilot study and will be discussed shortly. Initially, gathering data with formal questionnaires and interviews created problems in the sense that language, gender and level of education (to be commented on later in this chapter) contributed to many practical frustrations. This was because a large number of people in the Vhembe district cannot read and write. It was also dangerous to enter certain areas because of climatological conditions and the lack of detailed geographical maps. Meaningful results could however be obtained with respondents during informal conversations and with the help of translators. Indicators for social capital, with respect to the previous two chapters and which are mostly qualitative in nature, were used to detect the presence of social capital in local villages in the Vhembe district of Limpopo. Four case studies and individual personal interviews with a group of farmers are reported on in this chapter. Visits to the research sites generated ample information about the social world of rural villages in Limpopo. Extracts from stories and significant incidents were recorded and are presented in this Chapter. The research presented in this chapter therefore provides an in-depth and comprehensive qualitative study of social capital amongst mainly agricultural producers as was found in the north-eastern part of the Limpopo Province.

#### **4.2 AIMS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

The main purpose of this thesis, as stated in section 1.2, is to explore how social capital is used amongst agricultural producers to satisfy their needs. To accomplish the first objective (1.3), the literature study of Chapter 2 described theoretical views of social capital in relation to need satisfaction of people worldwide, but with particular reference to rural communities and their social resources in the developing world. These theoretical views did make reference to local resources (objective two), although there appear to be a lack of clarity on precisely how social capital act as need satisfiers. Corresponding to the third objective of this thesis as stated in section 1.3, a relationship was shown to exist between social capital and need satisfaction (2.8; 3.3). To accomplish the fourth and fifth objectives (1.3), this research chapter attempts to use the new, broader concept of social capital to reveal social capital in Vhembe. This chapter aims to achieve the following specific aims:

1. To identify the extent and variety of social capital amongst agricultural producers, specifically, poor rural communities of the Vhembe district.
2. To seek evidence of social capital amongst rural communities in Vhembe in support of a resource-orientated perspective of social capital.
3. To investigate the occurrence of the relationship between available social capital to needs satisfaction in the Vhembe district.

The sixth and seventh objectives of this thesis are addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **4.3 HYPOTHESES**

Based on the problem statement discussed in Chapter One, from which the general hypothesis was deduced, namely that the social capital paradigm is biased towards economic development, the following sub-hypotheses are presented as a basis for this research chapter:

- *A broad range of social capital can be found amongst agricultural producers in Vhembe.*
- *Social capital, seen as resources, is mobilised by agricultural producers in the Vhembe district to satisfy both economic as well as non-economic needs encountered by rural households and communities in Vhembe.*
- *Specific cases in the rural context of Vhembe will reveal need-satisfying qualities of social capital beyond the theoretical perspectives.*

In order to obtain quantitative, partly quantitative and qualitative data, various methods were used. Using a singular method to obtain research data gave disappointing results and proved to be unpopular with respondents during the pilot study. A structured questionnaire, for example, tended to be frustrating in the sense that the questionnaire became long and boring for both the interviewer as well as the respondents. Once open-ended questions were asked to respondents, the respondents provided deeper insights into the qualitative dimension of social capital in Vhembe (4.1). A more colourful picture of social capital in Vhembe emerged when a combination of structured and unstructured questions was asked. Besides open-ended questions, interviews were also conducted with people in sample groups. A description of these sample groups will be provided in a later discussion (4.4.4).

#### **4.4 DATA ASSEMBLING**

The data presented in this chapter were mainly acquired by means of fieldwork and questionnaires. The fieldwork entailed the use of practical observations, semi-structured questionnaires and, as I have noted, interviews. Different, yet specific, indicators of social resources were identified. These indicators included *general* aspects relating to socio-economic development on local and regional levels and *specific* local aspects which directly and indirectly influence agricultural production in the Vhembe municipal district. Quantitative, qualitative and

partly quantitative indicators were therefore selected for inclusion in this research effort (2.9).

#### **4.4.1 The pilot study**

Converse and Presser (1986 : 51 - 75) assert that pre-testing can pave the way for a research project and that the absence of pilot studies has been a frequent error in large studies. Accordingly, in this study the need for a pilot study was important for three reasons. Firstly, if any problems were to arise during the fieldwork, particularly during the application of the questionnaires, these would be highlighted during the pilot study. The questions asked to each respondent could then be reconsidered and rephrased in a more understandable and/ or in a less sensitive way. Open-ended questions asked to farmers and members of rural households during a second wave of questionnaires showed whether the questions asked would initiate natural responses. The second reason relates to the costs associated with travelling in these rural areas. Due to the conditions of the roads, the mountainous terrain in which many rural villages are located and the unanticipated costs associated with research in rural areas, it was necessary to have a thorough understanding of the locations visited and the accessibility of the targeted respondents. In the third instance, the sample group for the pilot study revealed whether the indicators for social capital, deduced from the literature study, were relevant for rural communities in Limpopo.

The pilot study involved consultations, discussions and interviews with different role players in Limpopo over a three-year period. Agricultural producers in Limpopo were targeted for interviewing, and these persons were selected from large farms (farm managers and farm workers), local businesses and agricultural role players in the province. As part of the pilot study, interviews were conducted with regional and provincial administrators, staff of N G Os, hospitals and schools, workers at agricultural projects, traditional healers, agricultural extension officers, union members, elderly people and owners and managers of agricultural small businesses and micro enterprises (1.4). A sample group of at least 25 individual subsistence farmers was

included as part of the pilot study.

Three key informants were used and conversations with ordinary citizens were done to gain additional data during the pilot study. The data used for the pilot study relate to the broader regional and provincial contexts, but specific social capital indicators were probed to investigate the occurrence of social capital amongst agricultural producers in Vhembe.

The pilot study, then, fulfilled an important role in the final planning of the fieldwork. Important information was gathered which gives a fuller account of the broader picture of Vhembe. Farmers and non-farmers were approached. The pilot study confirmed that social capital amongst agricultural producers in Vhembe can only be understood if an account is given of the broader social and political contexts in which rural people operate.

In order to identify social capital amongst the agricultural producers in the Vhembe district, the pilot study was done as reported above. This study, together with the socio-economic profile of Limpopo Province outlined in the previous chapter, provides a foundation for the rest of the study. Regional and provincial administrators, staff of N G O s, hospitals and schools as well as farmers and farm managers were consulted. Data was also obtained from interviews with small businesses, heads of households and subsistence farmers. Collectively, the data was included to describe available and potential social resources to be found in Limpopo. Data obtained from these sources supports aim 1 (4.2).

Sample groups were selected to ensure sufficient data to test for social capital amongst rural communities, specifically, rural subsistence farmers (aim 2). To accomplish the third aim, social processes mentioned during the interviews with subsistence farmers were examined and evaluated against the needs of the farmers, rural households and rural villages. A conceptualisation of these processes is provided in section 4.6.

Because of the scarcity of documented local research, particularly at a grass-roots village level,

research data was verified by cross-referencing sample responses with key informants. These informants were necessary for at least three further reasons. In the first instance the selected key informants were connected socially with the local farming communities and thus possessed ample first-hand information about their local environment. Secondly, key informants were useful in providing details of local situations and phenomena, particularly as pertaining to sensitive issues such as personal beliefs. Besides acting as key informants, these assistants were therefore used as translators during the fieldwork. A third and major reason for using these key informants was to overcome research restrictions resulting from the researcher's own ignorance of the language spoken by the Venda farmers. In short, the key informants are *TsiVenda* speaking, resided in the targeted region at the time of the investigation and are known to local residents.

A lack of accurate quantitative statistics about rural villages in the Limpopo Province was problematic. There were no exclusions amongst the villages used in this study. I resided in Limpopo during the time of the investigation, which allowed for systematic fieldwork during my stay in the region.

Detailed descriptions of the questionnaires and interviews are provided in subsections that follow.

#### **4.4.2 Formulation of questions**

Two sets of questionnaires were used. In the first set of questions a partly quantitative assessment of the region was done. These questions attempted to gather information on aspects relating to the physical as well as social infrastructure of the targeted villages. Because the agricultural producers were selected on the basis of the different roles they play in agricultural production, and the questions therefore had to be modified to find reliable answers, none of the first set of questions in the pilot study appeared in a formal questionnaire. The second wave of questionnaires contained qualitative questions and were aimed at stimulating in-depth interviews

with subsistence farmers. With the second questionnaires it was hoped that 'features of social organisations' like networks, social trust and norms could be detected amongst subsistence farmers (see section 2.3). Specific items indicated in the previous chapter and which will be elaborated on shortly, were selected and included in this qualitative survey for 'testing'. Also, with the help of the qualitative data obtained during the pilot study done amongst agricultural producers, it was hoped that the formulation of questions could uncover social capital resources and that these resources could then be identified and observed.

#### **4.4.3 The inclusion of social resource indicators in questionnaires**

A number of social resource indicators were used in this study. With the literature study being done (Chapter 2), it was possible to select preliminary indicators. Questions pertaining to these indicators could be further refined with the help of personal observations made during my time of residence in the targeted region.

The inclusion of social resource indicators in this study revealed important forms of social capital and linkages to need satisfiers. After realising that social resources constituting social capital indeed exist and satisfy various needs of rural people, and that needs exist that are neither defined nor explicitly stated in the mainstream theoretical views of social capital, the questionnaire (Annexure A) was modified to investigate further appearances of social capital which serve as need satisfiers.

Table 4.1 reflects the indicators for social resources used in this study.

**TABLE 4.1: INDICATORS OF SOCIAL RESOURCES**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Item numbers in questionnaire</b>
Trust	1.1 - 1.5, 2.3, 2.7, 5.2, 6.4, 11.4, 12.4, 12.5, 15.4
Social connections:	2.1 - 2.7, 1.1 - 1.5, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2, 6.5, 7.3, 8.2, 9.1, 10.2, 11.4, 12.1, 12.2, 13.3, 14.1, 14.2, 15.2, 15.4
Governmental support	3.1 - 3.3, 1.2, 1.3, 2.5, 4.2, 5.3, 6.1 - 6.5, 8.4, 10.1, 10.4, 11.1, 11.4, 12.3, 13.1 - 13.6, 14.1, 14.3, 15.3, 15.4
Past and present community development efforts:	4.1 - 4.2, 1.4, 3.1, 3.3, 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 7.2, 8.3, 8.4, 9.2, 10.1, 10.4, 11.3, 12.3, 12.5, 13.1 - 13.7, 14.1 - 14.3, 15.4
Household coping strategies:	5.1 - 5.3, 2.5, 2.7, 3.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 8.3, 8.4, 9.2, 11.5, 12.3, 12.5, 13.5, 14.1 - 14.3
Formal co-operation	6.1 - 6.5, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1 - 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3, 8.3, 8.4, 9.1, 9.2, 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 12.3, 13.1 - 13.3, 14.1 - 14.3
Informal co-operation	7.1 - 7.3, 1.1, 2.1 - 2.7, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1 - 5.3, 8.3, 8.4, 9.2, 10.4, 11.4, 11.5, 12.2 - 12.5, 13.1 - 13.7, 14.1 - 14.3, 15.4

Needs	8.1 - 8.4, 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 7.2, 7.3, 9.2, 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 11.3, 13.1, 14.2, 15.4
Religious activities	9.1, 9.2, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 6.5, 12.5, 13.2, 15.1
Information	10.1 – 10.4, 2.6, 3.2, 6.3, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2, 14.1, 15.4
Dysfunctionality	11.1 – 11.5, 1.1 – 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 3.2, 6.4, 8.4, 12.2, 12.4
Social norms	12.1 – 12.5, 1.1, 2.5, 7.3, 8.3, 9.1, 11.5, 12.1, 12.2, 2.4, 12.5, 13.3, 14.1, 15.1, 15.4
Participation	13.1 – 13.7, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 - 2.4, 5.3, 6.4, 6.5, 7.2, 7.3, 9.1, 11.5, 12.2, 14.1, 14.3, 15.4
Group interaction	14.1 – 14.3, 1.4, 2.2 - 2.6, 5.1, 5.3, 6.5, 7.3, 8.2 – 8.4, 9.2, 11.4, 11.5, 12.1 - 12.5, 13.3, 15.4
Confidence, optimism and vision	15.1 – 15.4, 1.1 – 1.5, 2.2, 2.7, 3.3, 4.2

Because many of the questions contained in the questionnaire were open-ended, they provided insights outside of the specific indicators under which they were listed. These can be seen by comparing the above table (Table 4.1) with the questionnaire attached as Annexure A. Attributes of the indicator trust, for example (the first item in the questionnaire), could be signalled by questions 1.1 - 1.5, as well as other questions contained in the questionnaire (in this case, items 2.3, 2.7, 5.2, 6.4, 11.4, 12.4, 12.5 and 15.4). Yet, by asking follow-up questions like “why” (or “why not”) during the interviews, more qualities emerged that were relevant and worthy of inclusion as results of the investigation.

#### 4.4.4 Interviews

Initial interviews with 22 agricultural producers were conducted between February 2001 and July 2002 to seek specific information relating to the roles these people play at local and provincial levels (4.4). Only relevant questions were asked to agricultural producers because the various role players affect agricultural production in Vhembe in different ways.

Interviews were conducted with a group of 68 farmers over a one-year period (May 2003 to May 2004) but, unlike the initial interviews done with different agricultural producers noted above, the second set of interviews were done by means of questionnaires. (Annexure A). Welman and Kruger (1999 : 165) state that previously compiled structured questionnaires are referred to as interview schedules. Interview schedules also describe the way in which the interviews were conducted with this group of subsistence farmers and will be reported on later on in this chapter.

The questions asked during the first set of questions were therefore not exactly the same and not conducted according to any interview schedule whilst, by contrast, the same set of questions was posed, using an interview schedule, to all the subsistence farmers. The nature of the questions asked to all the respondents, including questions asked to the group of 68 subsistence farmers, allowed the interviewers to ask follow-up questions.

All the respondents were physically approached, put at ease and asked a number of questions. The key informants were used to translate questions to farmers who did not speak and understand English and to translate the answers and responses from the respondents. Rough notes were taken during the fieldwork, after which the respondents' feedback was consolidated on blank summarised answer sheets.

Many questions asked to the subsistence farmers were semi structured (Annexure A). Not all the

questions were asked in the same order and the questions were mostly open-ended. Respondents were given enough time to answer the questions and were encouraged to speak out about their

experiences. On occasion the respondents replied to questions with unrelated responses. Due to the nature of the open-ended questions and the follow-up questions asked during the interviews, not all respondents replied to all the questions and not all questions were answered in the same way.

Interviews were also done during field visits to four additional localities in the Vhembe municipal district. In Levhuvhu, both men and women were approached to investigate rural saving schemes. After determining that women mostly dominate these schemes and that they are not popular activities amongst the men in Levhuvhu, only women were sought for interviewing. The second, third and fourth localities were Nzhelele, Vuwani and Thohoyandou respectively and persons were approached for interviewing at these sites.

At least 188 interviews were done during the field visits over a four year period (2001 - 2004), and included 50 men and women in Levhuvhu, 18 farmers in Nzhelele, 27 agricultural traders in Thohoyandou, 33 heads of subsistence households in Vuwani and the group of 68 subsistence farmers. Notes were taken during all field visits and, after several of these visits, the answer sheets were counted, compared and re-written on the summarised answer sheets. With the help of computer programmes, the data were further prepared for inclusion in this thesis.

Very little hostility was experienced and all of the respondents approached and who agreed to participate in the survey did so voluntarily. The body language of the respondents was observed, recorded and included in the final presentation of the results.

#### **4.4.5 Sample groups and criteria**

Six sample groups were involved in this study: one for the pilot study, four that were drawn from four rural villages and used as case studies and one sample group of 68 subsistence farmers who were given

semi-structured open interviews.

The four villages in Vhembe that were used as case studies formed part of the broader research in

the region. These villages, notably Levhuvhu, Nzhelele, Vuwani and Thohoyandou were especially selected for inclusion in this study because the social processes found in these villages indicated the existence of social capital. People on these sites were selected to take part in the case study according to the following criteria:

- Case Study A, conducted in Levhuvhu. Only men and woman who participate in informal saving schemes were selected and interviewed.
- Case Study B, conducted in Nzhelele. Only farmers affected by a particular flooding disaster were selected and interviewed .
- Case Study C, conducted in Vuwani. Only poor rural households were selected and interviewed.
- Case study D, conducted in Thohoyandou, involved the selection and interviewing of micro – enterprises and traders.

The above case studies had the following sampling in common:

- Persons were randomly selected and interviewed
- The case studies involved men and women
- All the persons interviewed were involved in agricultural production at the times of the investigations
- Open-ended interviews were done with respondents from rural villages and towns situated in Vhembe
- The persons that were interviewed were approached in their natural surroundings.

The sixth group of respondents comprised of 68 farmers in the Vhembe district who were engaged in subsistence farming. Clusters of subsistence farmers can be found in Vhembe and random sampling was

therefore done within these clusters (see Annexes D, E and F). Since subsistence farmers also farm individually, this sample of subsistence farmers included farmers

who farm on their own. Only subsistence farmers (both men and women) formed part of this sample.

Subsistence farmers, according to Todaro (1997 : 308, 318), can be identified by the following characteristics:

- Most output is produced for personal consumption
- Staple foods are the chief sources of food intake
- The use of simple and often traditional technologies
- Technological limitations
- Rigid social institutions
- Fragmented markets
- Underemployed labour
- low output and productivity
- Minimal capital investment
- Absence of technologies, particularly poor communication networks
- Vulnerability to risk and moneylenders
- Vulnerability to harsh and static climates

The above characteristics were applied as criteria in this study and were considered before the subsistence farmers were selected for interviewing. A multi – stage approach therefore needed to be adopted: farmers had to firstly be located, secondly selected and then, thirdly, interviewed.

The results of the interviews and the questionnaires were processed in similar ways. Both methods of data collection involved interviews during field visits, interpretation of data and practical observations. However, the majority of interviews were conducted informally during the field work. Whereas the semi

structured questionnaires accompanied all the interviews with the subsistence farmers, only data significant for inclusion in this study were selected during the field visits.

#### 4.5 VARIABLES

Equally important to the criteria noted above, variables were identified in order to enhance the validity of the research results. Since the study was carried out in a rural region, participants were mostly selected to fit the criteria and to eliminate variables as far as possible.

The following variables were utilised:

*Language:* Most of the respondents used in the study were TsiVenda speaking. Although some respondents could speak English, English was not their mother tongue. As noted above, translators were used to explain the questions in the questionnaires.

*Level of academic qualification:* Since the majority of subsistence farmers did not have any formal post-school training, they were interviewed separately from other agricultural producers, for example, commercial farmers who, in most cases, have obtained tertiary education and post primary school training relevant to their agricultural practices.

*Household income:* The household incomes of the respondents varied although high poverty levels characterised all of the respondents selected for the case studies and the sample of the subsistence farmers.

*Gender:* It is not clear what percentage of subsistence farmers in Vhembe consists of women. This complicated the sample design and both men and women were included by means of selection.

*Timing:* The interviews with the subsistence farmers were conducted over a period of one year, which made it possible to observe agricultural innovations amongst Vhembe farmers during the wet season (summer) as well as the dry season (winter). In addition, the persons who took part in

the survey were approached during various times of the day to include those working elsewhere.

In an effort to counterbalance the negative effects of further extraneous variables, conditions were kept as constant as possible.

## **4.6 RESULTS**

Ample evidence of social capital could be found during the fieldwork. Firstly, four villages are presented as case studies in subsection 4.6.1 to show that rural people in the Vhembe district use the available social capital amongst themselves to satisfy various needs. Likewise, the results of the questionnaires (presented in subsection 4.6.2) demonstrate that indigenous forms of social capital are found in the Vhembe district, and that subsistence farmers, in particular, use various forms of social capital as synergetic satisfiers to satisfy various needs that these farmers encounter.

### **4.6.1 Results of the case studies**

Fieldwork relating to the case studies revealed social processes that comply with the theoretical perspectives of social capital as stated in section 2.3. In addition to the forms of social capital specified in chapter 2, indigenous forms of social capital were found to exist in the area in which the research was carried out. The results discussed below are presented in conjunction with descriptions of the national and regional context described in Chapter 3.

#### **4.6.1.1 Case study A: Saving schemes in Levhuvhu**

Levhuvhu is situated in the Makhado municipal area. Two worlds prevail in Levhuvhu: affluent white commercial farmers and, relative to these farmers, a large population of black rural subsistence farmers and workers. In addition to small-scale vegetable farming, seasonal fruits such as mangoes, litchis,

macadamia nuts, avocados and bananas are commercially cultivated in

Levhuvhu. Many of the black farmers and workers stay on the farms where they work, but a large portion of them commute from nearby villages (see section 3.3.4.5 above).

Economically, the people in Levhuvhu, particularly the black workers are very poor. Low salaries (resulting from the over supply of labour), poor drinking, cooking and washing facilities and generally low levels of living prevail in most of the poor households. Due to their economic situation, rural subsistence farmers frequently borrow money to sustain their living. Independent moneylenders, who charge extremely high interest rates and who are not always legally registered, can be found in the adjacent villages.

Despite all these undesirable conditions, financial activities in the form of informal savings and credit are very well known and, with investigation, prove to be popular activities, especially among women. The apparent interest in savings clubs in Levhuvhu amongst poor rural households uncovered important need satisfiers relevant to this thesis and therefore warranted further investigation.

Semi formal interviews were conducted in the Levhuvhu district. Fifty (50) men and women who belonged to saving schemes agreed to be interviewed. All the respondents interviewed during this investigation belonged to a savings club. After being selected on the basis of being a member of a savings club, open interviews were conducted. The respondents were very open and willing to talk about their membership of savings clubs and often displayed an enthusiastic and proud attitude towards their particular savings and/ or credit scheme. Women clearly play a dominant role in terms of these clubs.

A rotating credit and savings association (ROSCA) refers to a social mechanism used as a financial saving scheme and also a form of insurance. ROSCAs are well known to the local people in Levhuvhu although the advantages of membership of *stokvels* (as ROSCAs are commonly described by local people) may vary and may not be the same for all members.

*Stokvel* meetings take place regularly, mostly on a monthly basis. The lively discussions during *stokvel* meetings show that members participate in these associations to satisfy needs beyond those expressed only in material terms. *Stokvel* members also revealed consistent knowledge about the structure and functioning of savings and credit schemes.

Members of ROSCAs are required to specify their household members in the event that funerals should suddenly arise. Funerals are covered by a monthly premium of R20 - R50 which is paid by ROSCAs members every month. In addition, ROSCAs pay individual members on a rotating basis.

Many rural households in the Vhembe district use *Stokvels* as a savings methods for times in need, like during the Christmas period. *Stokvels* could be considered as a safety net because numerous dramatic cases of financial ‘rescues’ were reported during the interviews. *Stokvels* seem to be most useful for their members in times of financial need, such as funerals and weddings. In one instance, a funeral was needed for the child of a *stokvel* member. This member was given the financial support needed to cover the funeral costs without much administrative effort and delay. During the interview this member became emotional and stated that her feelings was because of gratitude towards the support she received from the other members of her *stokvel*. In another case, a woman belonging to a *stokvel* and who sold tomatoes for a living, reported that the money she saved up during the year contributed to the sustainability of her small business during the post Christmas/ New Year period when sales are not good. Her place on the pavement could stay occupied and other hawkers could therefore not invade her trading space.

Becoming a *stokvel* member depends on a number of qualitative factors. Important in this regard is the personal credentials of the potential member. The personal credentials entail the credit- worthiness and relation to an existing group member. Group norms, like honesty, reliability and discipline are strictly enforced and, because *stokvel* or ROSCA members are keen to keep their status as members of such schemes, they are likely to conform to the underlying norms of the group.

An important group norm is that the money received from a *stokvel* is used ‘appropriately’. The money can not be used to, for example, gamble or to buy liquor. *Stokvel* members spend their money on clothes, food, school books and household utensils. The processes which underlie the functioning of the *Stokvels* in Levhuvhu thus filter through to other facets of community life. It is therefore possible to conclude that social capital is available and active amongst the members of ROSCAs in Levhuvhu.

The structure and functioning of *Stokvels* in Levhuvhu uncovers some of the partly visible processes which also appear to be part of the everyday lives of the people in Levhuvhu. During *Stokvel* meetings information is rapidly distributed amongst the community members. This ‘bush telegraph’ may be somewhat old-fashioned, but it is still highly effective in terms of distributing and exchanging information and experience (1.2.2). Verbal exchange of information is actually speeded up during the savings clubs’ social meetings. All the *stokvel* meetings observed during the field work in Levhuvhu (and elsewhere in Limpopo) have a social and entertainment character where talk is not only about money, but also about personal and communal experiences.

From the interviews conducted with the respondents, it seems that the membership of a *stokvel* association contributes to need satisfaction and enhances the quality of life of participants in various ways. Many *stokvel* members reported to more feel secure when thinking about their futures than did non members. A number of relatively small *stokvels* mostly comprising 3 – 8 members, exist in Levhuvhu.

The savings schemes usually are ‘social’ events in that there is considerable camaraderie among participants. People enjoy refreshments, singing and socialising. During these meetings food and drinks are provided.

From a social capital perspective, informal saving schemes seem to be instrumental for simultaneous satisfaction of various needs. However, an important distinction emerges. As can be seen from the Levhuvhu case, quantifiable phenomena (such as finances) provide only a

partial explanation for the existence of social capital in informal saving schemes. An additional important qualitative dimension also appears to feature prominently. Notwithstanding the fact that most *stokvel* members do not receive favourable ratings from formal institutions because they are not ‘creditworthy’, there are striking *qualitative* benefits experienced by these participants. The informal social connections that exist within these rural financial structures create possibilities for the utilisation of social capital. Also, some *stokvel* members mentioned that they would contribute to their *stokvel*, even in times of need. This shows that qualitative needs appear to be satisfied before quantitative needs are.

In general, financial activities, as they function in Levhuvhu, reflect clear cases of qualitative indicators for need satisfaction: control and autonomy, risk, mutual trustworthiness, security, hope, solidarity, personal reputation and personal characteristics. For the broader community it can also be concluded that, despite the incidence of poverty, membership to a *stokvel* fulfils a stabilising, harmonising and developmental supportive function in the community as a whole. *Stokvels* can therefore be regarded as social capital with synergistic need-satisfying qualities since a number of needs are simultaneously satisfied.

#### **4.6.1.2 Case study B: Nzhelele farmers’ reaction to flooding**

During February 2000 a devastating flood affected the lives and property of many people in South Africa and Mozambique. This flood also affected the Vhembe district in which this research was conducted. Eighteen (18) farmers were randomly approached and informally questioned about their experiences during the floods.

Considerable media attention was given at the time to the floods, which resulted from the destructive force of a cyclone<sup>28</sup>. The cyclone affected most of the south eastern parts of Africa. Subsistence farmers in the flood affected regions, particularly those in Nzhelele (Annexure C),

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<sup>28</sup>Named ‘Eline’

revealed considerable potential for restoring their ecological balance.

Like the Levhuvhu farmers, the Nzhelele subsistence farmers harvest fruit and vegetables, for example spinach, tomatoes and mangoes. The locations of Levhuvhu and Nzhelele are significantly different because they are divided by the Soutpansberg mountain (see Annexure B). Besides fruit and vegetables, there is also a considerable presence of cattle farmers to be found in Nzhelele. It is thus understandable that it was necessary, not only for rural farmers, but also for their families to adapt to the negative effects of the flood. The majority of Nzhelele village was affected by the disaster event.

The flooding disaster had a number of direct and indirect consequences. Infrastructural damage such as severe damage to roads, bridges, building structures and telephone lines were clearly direct consequences. Likewise, farmers also experienced damage to existing irrigation structures (like water pipes), sensitive root systems of crops, as well as the total crop loss and loss of livestock. The loss of a single cow, for example, could be disastrous for a Nzhelele rural household. Farmers also complained about blocked furrows and canals, caused by excess mud. Apart from the extensive blockage of draining systems, erosion to dirt and gravel roads and to sensitive lands occurred on a large scale. Grazing land became scarce and dry firewood, on which many families depend, became difficult to find. Where families had access to electricity, power failures occurred frequently and mostly without warning.

A number of additional indirect consequences were also triggered by the flood which severely affected farmers' ability to sustain their livelihoods. The large water pools created a breeding ground for malaria, cholera, bilharzia and other waterborne diseases, which posed significant health risks. Diseases affected many crops and livestock and because of the continuing rain, crops could not be sprayed nor livestock vaccinated. Collectively, the direct and indirect consequences of the flooding disaster had dramatic economic implications and effects for the Nzhelele subsistence farmers.

The following factors increased the cost of farming:

- Loans from banks, micro-lenders and financial schemes had to be repaid
- Economic activity in the form of the loss of labour hours, and income for temporary workers and farmers declined.
- Due to the condition of the roads in the region, petroleum and diesel could not be delivered. As a result, farmers could not take their products to markets and they could not attend auctions.
- Savings were spent on repairing damage.
- Food prices increased due to the shortage of fresh fruits and vegetables.

All of the flood-affected villages and communities in the Nzhelele farming community evidenced an urgent need for relief. The South African military became involved and helicopters brought much needed medical supplies, food and blankets to isolated farmers. Despite these efforts, official assistance was limited.

The Nzhelele farmers, therefore, had to confront the challenge of seeking aid. Even commercial farmers in adjacent villages needed to rebuild the physical infrastructure on their farms and in their villages, as well as roads between villages and larger towns. Although the Nzhelele Farmers Association applied for funding from various agricultural unions, it was the financial assistance from churches that brought much needed immediate relief. Farmers also applied for state and insurance finances, but institutionalised finances and technical assistance could only be released after conditions stabilised.

The conditions in Nzhelele and elsewhere in the flood-affected region posed a particular problem in respect of donor funds intended for flood relief. At the time of the flood, the South African government established a National Disaster Relief Fund as a means of administering and

channelling national and international donations to severely effected farming communities in particular.

In reaction to their need to sustain and protect, subsistence farmers came up with important small- scale innovations during and after the flooding catastrophe. Planting was brought to a standstill because the flood occurred in the planting season. Many farmers were forced to devise alternative planting and fertilising techniques on their farms, because the longer crop planting was postponed, the more likely it became that the whole harvest would be lost. Some farmers interviewed took the initiative of amending and improving contours along the natural lines of the flood water. Farmers also shared ideas on the preservation of their cattle and how to increase their existing harvests. When there was a break in the rain pattern, even if it was only for short periods, some farmers attempted to plant in the wet conditions. In other areas the re-planting of crops could only take place after the flood water levels had declined.

The innovations devised by the Nzhelele farmers were subject to and influenced by a variety of factors such as experience, training and tradition. Moreover, information and knowledge sharing was facilitated as farmers interacted with each other.

Several farmers noted that they listened to the radio during the time of the flood. The qualitative questions, somewhat unexpectedly, revealed that some innovative reactions from farmers were directly attributable to local and regional radio broadcasts. Farmers regularly followed weather forecasts and in so doing tried to predict when the rain would stop. Farmers listened to radio stations because the frequent occurrence of power failures made it difficult to watch television. Battery operated radios are common in Nzhelele and most families have radios. These radios were frequently observed in many rural households, particularly those without electricity. Local and regional radio broadcasts helped farmers to form partnerships across cultures and interaction between innovators could thus be established. Interactions between farmers, which resulted from radio broadcasts, later proved to be a valuable asset, especially when farmers had to assess the damage resulting from the flood.

Farmers erected tents for temporary accommodation. This was done so that farmer workers could

avoid travelling long distance in buses and taxis. These actions were much needed since even the alternative access routes became inaccessible for normal vehicles. Some of the Nzhelele farmers constructed a temporary bridge from logs in an effort to provide a pedestrian crossing over one of the damaged bridges. Farmers helped each other to repair important access roads and removed mud from canals and furrows.

Social capital seem to explain, at least to an extent, farmer's cooperation with each other, their willingness to share information and the trust they placed in each other. As such, social capital was a form of social aid to the disaster affected farmers.

Furthermore, farmers experimented together with regard to the following innovations, in order to build upon their existing knowledge:

- Early planting
- Deep ploughing
- Strip cropping
- Modifying channels
- Stabilising river banks
- Widening the variety of vegetable crops planted
- Nutshell and grass mulch

In addition, farmers used sandbags to break water speed and to deflect water away from crops. New canals, contour steps and flood walls were built by farmers in an effort to alleviate the negative consequences of further flood waters.

Other innovations to neutralise the negative effects of the flooding could also be seen in the local farming villages outside the physical boundaries of Nzhelele. In villages outside Nzhelele farmers

allowed rescue teams to utilise space and storage facilities. Both small-scale farmers as well as

commercial farmers demonstrated altruistic behaviour, through establishing horizontal patterns of cooperation with each other. Several examples were observed in which farmers rendered assistance to emergency rescue operations. White farmers made their personal equipment (like generators and tractors) available for rescue operations, provided food and blankets to their workers and brought mobile phones to people. This was done with no expectation of financial returns and one farmer mentioned that his benefit was the *gratitude* of the villagers. Some banks and moneylenders reconsidered repayment rates at the request of farmers.

People in rural villages affected by disasters, such as the Nzhelele farming community will have to recover from the stress of little or no income for their households. In short, both commercial and subsistence farming were severely affected by the flood disaster.

Obviously farmers cannot prevent future floods, but a number of innovative preventative measures were employed to minimise the effects of a possible flood during the next rain season. Farmers were able to detect high-risk areas and the post-flooding period revealed that even inexperienced small farmers planted crops in precautionary ways. Farmers began to plant trees and grass to protect the topsoil and to combat future erosion. Livestock farmers transferred their livestock to lesser affected camps and started with early vaccination before the next rain season.

In conclusion, if the potential social capital of rural farmers (like the Nzhelele farmers) could be mobilised to manage their natural environments, the adverse effects of future disasters could be prevented or significantly minimised. This will improve farmers' resilience and also their chances to recover and to sustain their livelihoods. The innovations of the Nzhelele farmers in reaction to the flooding disaster embody social capital, and the learning experience, as well as their ability to make use of their collective social resources, demonstrates that social capital served a purpose of satisfying needs.

#### **4.6.1.3 Case study C: Reciprocity amongst small-scale agricultural traders in Thohoyandou**

Thohoyandou is a major town in Vhembe, although, compared to the major cities in South Africa or the rest of the world, Thohoyandou is a relatively small town. It is a hub of activities including various agricultural trading practices. This case study of agricultural traders in Thohoyandou, is presented to illustrate that social capital does occur amongst small-scale agricultural traders and that reciprocity forms the basis, and explains much of the economic behaviour that takes place between these traders. The case study involved informal discussions with 27 small-scale agricultural traders, during which questions were posed and observations made on the main market in Thohoyandou.

Trade has been taking place in Thohoyandou for a very long time and has become an important traditional survival strategy for local people. Local trading provides opportunities for people to express their needs and, although a range of different needs seems to be fulfilled, it is mainly food security that attracts many traders to the marketplace in Thohoyandou. Alongside local businesses, a large number of informal traders buy and sell various products and services. Most of the products are locally produced agricultural products and a large quantity is produced within the Limpopo Province. These products include raw materials as well as value added products such as processed foods. Small farmers who participate in local trading in Thohoyandou, bring various agricultural products to the Thohoyandou market. These products provide an indication of the biodiversity of agricultural production that can be found in the broader region.

Discussions with several agricultural traders further revealed that non monetary exchanges are based on reciprocity and that these actions complement, and often supplement money which is scarce amongst small-scale agricultural traders operating in Thohoyandou. Reciprocal exchanges take on many forms and gifts and presents are frequently exchanged between people.

The market in Thohoyandou is also a meeting place for friends and family. Reciprocity can be observed

as social relationships are strengthened between distant families and friends. These social connections suggest that social capital is generated when people meet at the market. Whenever people meet, flattery and compliments, as well as social connectivity in general, form part of the trading process. Important needs, namely those of solidarity and identity are confirmed and supported.

Affinity between traders is also important for at least two reasons. The first is that affinity supports the bargaining processes between traders. Secondly, affinity helps to establish trust between traders, enabling them to accommodate each others' needs.

Trade continues to take place long after sunset and most traders do not specifically adhere to formal working hours as one would typically find in the formal sector. Also, depending on the season and the availability of agricultural products, traders stay for longer times in Thohoyandou. At month ends, for example, more traders are likely to stay temporarily near the market. If business is good, traders will trade their products deep into the night.

The reciprocity found amongst agricultural traders in Thohoyandou appears to be a basic economic norm at the market and related to the needs of the parties involved in the economic transactions. During the trading process the dual phenomenon of money and social exchanges is visible.

The reciprocity that underlies the economic behaviour of the traders found in Thohoyandou goes beyond the macro economic principles of the developed world and indicates that social capital is used to secure and broaden the subsistence base of local people in Thohoyandou, as well as the wider region.

#### **4.6.1.4 Case study D: Social interactions in Vuwani**

The final case study presented here was undertaken to document the interactions between and within rural households experiencing severe poverty. Upon investigation, the rural village of Vuwani revealed many households caught in the poverty trap. Contrary to what may be expected, particularly in view of Putnam's ideas on social organisations (2.3.3), Vuwani ironically turned out to be a good place

to look for social capital.

The observations presented in this case support all three hypotheses stated in section 4.3. The observations also show that economically poor agricultural producers interact in resourceful ways; using collective social assets as a countermeasure against poverty. On the one hand these interactions may be described as desperate measures. On the other hand the actions of Vuwani households may also be described as meaningful in the context of the debate on social capital because of the various need-satisfying properties of their actions.

A random sample of 33 heads of subsistence households were interviewed using unstructured interviews. Observations supplemented the investigation and key informants, like teachers, nurses, local police and the local extension officer provided general background information on agriculture in Vuwani. The study involved predominantly subsistence households, of which 21 described themselves as farmers.

Vuwani is situated in the Vhembe district (see location map: Annexure C) and displays similar economic conditions as those described in case studies A, B and C above, that is, rudimentary dirt roads, a few clinics, street vendors and inadequate employment opportunities. Despite the poor socio-economic circumstances prevailing in Vuwani, needs such as subsistence, protection and participation are satisfied in various ways. This is possible as a result of social capital, which resulted from resourceful interactions. The interactions can also be described as social and economic *strategies* which are used by Vuwani people to satisfy their important needs. The discussion that follows, reports on need satisfaction and emanates from people's interactions in Vuwani, illustrating how social capital is used as social and economic strategies.

*Cooperation and working together*

Personal relations between households are frequently established. Besides their family ties, farmers establish close ties with other farmers, based on pure friendship and familiarity and mainly as a result of the proximity of other farmers, like neighbours.

During this investigation, various farmer groups were observed in Vuwani. These groups can be described as formally limited, but unlimited in their informal existence. Women farmers, who traditionally require the consent of their husbands, work together to combat forms of discrimination. Some farmers, although only a few, reported that contact had been made with agricultural departments of universities and the Government in the past. A number of other farming villages in Limpopo have representatives who were nominated by the farmers themselves. These representatives are normally elected on farmers' days, which are meetings between farmers which, in the village of Vuwani, take place once a month. Like the "civics" of many communities, farmers' representatives seem to act as a mouthpiece and/or linkage between a local farming community and development agents. Even with the many informal groups, farmers attempt to participate in rural associations.

Cooperation and working together enable farmers to gain access to large institutions like the Land Bank. In addition, working together enables farmers to purchase materials, food, seeds, fertilisers and other essentials in bulk. The ability of subsistence farmers to group themselves formally and informally can be attributed to existing social resources, but it also points to the ability of these farmers to take initiatives and to mobilise their potential social capital as a resource.

### *Supplementing income*

The rural households of Vuwani seek opportunities to increase their incomes. Such opportunities are often sought by subsistence farmers and whenever opportunities to generate unexpected

income become available, subsistence farmers are likely to be interested - even if the potential benefits are limited. Vuwani farmers reported that surplus farming products are traded, exchanged and stored to sell at a better opportunity. In so doing, subsistence farmers contribute to agricultural production which

benefits their households, their communities and also, though limited, the Limpopo Province.

Vuwani households need to manage their available time in order to supplement their income. Social capital seems to be useful, given the manner in which subsistence farmers co-ordinate their activities within their available time. Farming activities have specific time requirements. Farmers were observed to adapt their productive time to the weather changes brought about by seasonal variations. A normal working day was from about 7:30 am to 3 pm. When the heat was at its severest, those farmers who employ workers, altered the working hours so that their productivity could be increased. During those times when farmers and workers could not work, their time was utilised for other income generating activities, recreation, or household tasks. Absenteeism is discouraged and, with some exceptions, fines are sometimes given.

### *Food production*

Subsistence farmers not only supply their family and relatives with food, but also provide food for other members of the rural community, like children. Fresh fruit and vegetables are known to contain high levels of vitamins, minerals, proteins and many other nutritional benefits. Teachers questioned in Vuwani noted that children at the local schools often bring mangoes and bananas to school for consumption. Families that live next to rivers regularly consume fish. Excess fish are sold or traded.

In addition to the staple foods consumed by Vuwani households, which appear to be maize (*'pap'*), bread and fruit (particularly banana), the following foods are consumed and can be observed occasionally:

- Bush meat
- Wild fruit and herbs

- Worms, particularly Mopani worms<sup>29</sup>
- Grasshoppers
- Ants and termites.

At the time of this study, a middle-aged woman was observed collecting ants. When asked what she intended to do with the ants, she replied that the ants were her family's "meat" for the evening and that the particular type of ants she was collecting "tasted better than beef". She also noted that she had learnt this survival method at a young age and that the people of her village shared knowledge regarding what could be eaten from their immediate natural environment.

### *Natural environment*

The social interactions within families enable Vuwani households to interact with other households in their environment. The use of grass and wood was observed and deserves to be mentioned here because social capital provides a basis for understanding the distribution of these and other natural resources in Vuwani.

Farming households allow other farmer's cattle to feed on excess grass. Suitable grass is used by households to thatch the roofs of traditional houses and huts in local villages. In cases grass is sold for thatching purposes. Besides feeding and thatching, subsistence farmers use grass for mulching purposes and some grass exchanges are done as favours for one another.

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<sup>29</sup>Dried Mopani worms are often sold and can be bought in some local shops.

Little evidence could be found of subsistence farmers in Vhembe planting trees to obtain wood for personal consumption. Rural woman and children, who are mostly responsible for collecting wood, obtain firewood for cooking from trees nearby their villages; a situation that is resulting in the deforestation of large areas around some rural villages like Elim, Vuwani and Nzhelele. Since commercial forestry is common in the Limpopo Province, wood from mainly Pine trees is used for constructing fences, building alterations and for a variety of everyday farming purposes. Wood is also collected from nearby forests (S A F C O L, Global and Mondi forests) and, since the natural vegetation in areas has been dramatically exhausted by past use, women and children have to look for wood at distances far away from their homes. With permission, commercial farmers allow subsistence farmers to collect wood on their farms, free of charge. This is particularly prevalent when large-scale farmers want to 'clean' the land; either for the purpose of introducing new crops or for the rehabilitation of existing land. In this way commercial farmers and subsistence farmers help each other.

In some areas, particularly in areas where forestry is practised, plenty of wood is available. Dry Guava wood, contrary to Pine wood, is said to form good and lasting coals, capable of retaining heat for long periods and consequently ideal for cooking and heating purposes. Sometimes subsistence farmers buy good quality wood (in terms of retaining heat) from large farms and then re-sell the wood in their own villages. Some respondents also reported the swapping of wood.

One village member in Vuwani makes bricks for building constructions in his village and elsewhere. Brick making can be observed in other villages in Vhembe, for example, *Bafuri*, *Levubu*, *Tshakuma* and *Lwamondo*. The process typically used by these farmers, is effected with the help of self - made ovens and requires the use of a significant stock of wood.

#### *Sharing economic resources: traditional tools*

All the subsistence farmers interviewed in Vuwani have limited resources and mostly use hand tools. Farmers may borrow each others' tools although in most instances primitive technologies

are used to cultivate their land. The following traditional farming methods were observed:

- Seeds and fertilizer are scattered by hand
- Excess grass is slashed
- Planting and harvesting are done by hand
- Oxen are used.

The use of fertilisers is subject to the availability of information and money. Where fertilisers are not available, subsistence farmers frequently make use of manure for fertilising their land. Such fertiliser is obtained from nearby chicken and cattle farms in their area. A group of five subsistence farmers in Vuwani is attempting to build a compost heap as an economic strategy to overcome the problem of expensive compost from the market.

#### *Resourceful relationships amongst farmers*

Relationships of reciprocity amongst subsistence farmers, exist in Vuwani. Subsistence farmers share their experiences and information of, for example, suitable pesticides for vegetable crops, weather predictions and the health of crops and cattle. Subsistence farmers often seek information from each other as well as from other farmers outside their village.

Farmers also play an important role in the cultural activities of local communities. Some of the larger farmers, who own larger pieces of land, allow their land to be used for cultural gatherings of local people. Some large farmers allow cattle, needed for *Lobola* (see section 3.3.5.1), to feed on their land.

Sharecropping occurs in rural villages. Some farmers reported that the utilisation of land is done in accordance with the expectation of landlords to share in the profits of the farmer.

*Decision-making amongst farming households*

Social capital can be detected in the ways subsistence farmers make decisions. Bearing in mind that these farmers mostly farm for the survival of their families, decisions relating to farming activities are normally influenced by a number of criteria which are supported by social capital. In the first instance, farmers regularly consult with each other before important decisions are made. Quite often, farmers' opinions are highly valued, particularly those of the more successful farmers. Farmers discuss planting times and *which* crops to plant. Farmers also consult each other to decide which plants will be the most productive to plant, how to combat pests and which irrigation methods are best. Secondly, and most importantly, norms do have an important influence on subsistence farmers' decisions. The information that subsistence farmers acquire from discussing matters with each other may or may not necessarily be accurate, due to values and norms that prevail in the context in which these farmers operate. However, the information obtained is often seen by the subsistence farmers as sufficient to make decisions that relate to their needs.

Lastly, the availability of farmers is an important resource for the rural community or village. Subsistence farmers also provide opportunities for young, upcoming farmers to learn indigenous farming practices.

*Symbolism*

In Vuwani, symbolism forms an important part of the lives of local people and constitutes social capital in the form of economic exchanges and communication. The way in which economic transactions are carried out in Vuwani takes place with non monetary exchanges such as tobacco, cannabis, fruit and cows. Roosters are frequently given as a sign of goodwill, mostly for favours. These exchanges are important for social capital because, in the case of Vuwani, the norm of gift exchanges strengthens existing friendships and social networks and may also lead to the formation of new friendships and forms of social capital.

Symbolism can also be illustrated by the way in which people communicate. The 'bush telegraph' (see

case study A and subsection 1.2.2) is used to distribute information quickly amongst community members. Information is verbally exchanged and may actually be speeded up during social meetings.

In the next section social capital will be mostly qualitatively expressed in the form of resourceful strategies used by rural subsistence farmers to satisfy their needs. This will be done in order to investigate the occurrence of the relationship between available social capital and need satisfaction in the Vhembe district (aim three) (4.2). The results of the questionnaires presented in the next section (4.6.2) explore further specific forms of social capital as manifested amongst a group of 68 subsistence farmers in Vhembe.

#### **4.6.2 Results of the interviews with subsistence farmers**

As a result of the qualitative nature of the interview questions, all the respondents replied to most of the questions. The features of social capital, as portrayed by the rural subsistence farmers interviewed, represent fractions of the complexity of social interactions found in Vhembe. Having said that, the responses to the specific items listed in the questionnaires are discussed in the following research findings.

##### **4.6.2.1 Item 1 (Trust)**

The first item pertained to trust and, as can be seen from the questionnaire (Annexure A), structured, as well as open-ended questions were put to respondents. 49 (out of 68) respondents answered the first question (1.1) positively which indicated that the respondents feel that most people can be trusted. Those who answered negatively, that is, who felt that most people could *not* be trusted, were mostly men.

Some respondents had reservations. Reasons given for not trusting other people included fear of

being able to survive loss of control and restrictions placed on individual freedom. One respondent noted that other people could only be trusted if their true intentions are known. Another respondent stated that other people could only be trusted 'if you had social power' over him (or her).

Fifty-one (51) of the 68 respondents interviewed indicated that family members could be trusted most (question 1.2). Both immediate family members as well as extended family members seem to be regarded by the respondents as trustworthy. 'In-laws' (e.g. brother or sister-in-law) were mentioned as trustworthy family members whereas traditional leaders were regarded by 30 respondents as least trustworthy (question 1.3).

An element of distrust was revealed when follow-up questions were asked. Questions 1.4 and 1.5 uncovered that, even though the majority of respondents answered 'yes' to both these questions, most respondents were sceptical about help and felt that not all people could be trusted fully when help was offered.

The subsistence farmers interviewed in this study showed that they mostly had little choice other than to rely on each other, particularly in terms of devising survival strategies. The case studies done in Nzhelele (4.6.1.2) and Levhuvhu (4.6.1.1) showed that farmers used their trust in resourceful ways. However, the majority of the respondents were sceptical of trusting outsiders, while family members, as shown in Levhuvhu's case, are mostly trusted with money. In exceptional cases farmers entrusted friends with money (20 respondents).

#### **4.6.2.2 Item 2 (Social connections)**

Fifty-six (56) of the 68 respondents reported that they belonged to a social club or organisation (question 2.1), while eight indicated that they were not connected to these social (or similar) social structures. In addition, 41 of the subsistence farmers appeared to work in teams (question

.2) and many (but not all) regarded their co-workers as their friends. Thirteen (13) regarded their

families as their friends. Twelve (12) respondents reported that they worked alone<sup>30</sup>.

Divergent answers were given to question 2.3 which probed subsistence farmers' willingness to live amongst people with cultures and lifestyles different to their own.. Often there was hesitation when this question was asked to the farmers. Answers ranged from "*no problem*" to '*no*'. This could be attributed to strong cohesion amongst farmers who already know each other and who have longstanding relations, either between the current generation, or who have had such relations during past generations.

Fifty-five (55) respondents indicated that they had done a favour for someone lately (question 2.4). Many indicated that they did favours for family members whilst chicken farmers, notably, reported that they were often approached by schools who asked for donations. Venda farming households seemed to help each other on a regular basis, particularly neighbours, and help amongst village members seemed to be common (question 2.5). The civics featured as an important social structure that 22 farmers perceived as helpful.

Fifty-four (54) subsistence farmers interviewed indicated that they visited their neighbours regularly, mostly once a week (question 2.6). Although these visits were mostly social visits, regular visits to neighbours appeared to be part of their social structure and were also used to gain information on their social environments and to become socially connected.

Sixty-three (63) respondents interviewed indicated that they were satisfied with their family and

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<sup>30</sup>Most of these farmers, whom regard themselves as working alone, have indicated that they trust friends the least (question 1.3).

friends (question 2.7) and this corresponds with the positive answers given in question 1.2. Some respondents noted that family and friends motivated and assisted them to farm and also to sell their products to other village members.

#### **4.6.2.3 Item 3 (Government support)**

With the third question item vertical linkages with government could be probed and possible social resources resulting from such linkages could be detected.

The answers given during this part of the interview were limited to material aspects. For example, when the respondents were asked what they think government should do for them (question 3.3), the answers were very similar: to build houses, provide electricity, provide water and to construct roads.

Sixteen (16) subsistence farmers were of the opinion that they did not have *any* access to government supplied services like roads, health and education (question 3.2). High expectations of better service provision were nevertheless observed from the majority of farmers interviewed. Although the respondents were not asked to motivate their responses when questions relating to this item (government support) were asked, some respondents noted spontaneously that they believed that government supported services would be forthcoming in the near future (question 3.1).

Despite the high expectations amongst some farmers, the overwhelming majority of rural farmers remain poor and most of the subsistence farmers interviewed felt that government was not doing enough to meet their needs. Some farmers said that government only provided electricity in their villages and that other important services were neglected.

#### **4.6.2.4 Item 4 (Past and present community development efforts)**

As a further indicator for social resources, this item relating to past and present community development efforts was included. The implementation of community development efforts in the Vhembe district seems highly vertical, with limited horizontal linkages. Corresponding to the answers received in response to question 3.3, the responses received indicated that the mentality among the subsistence farmers was that the Government is responsible for implementing and sustaining community development in their villages and communities. Very few connections between farmers and community development attempts in their villages and communities were detected.

A significant number of respondents said that they were not aware of any previous development attempts in their villages (question 4.1). Others were aware of such development attempts but mentioned that previous community development attempts had not benefited them or their communities in any way. The responses revealed that farmers felt that previous community development attempts were unsuccessful because such attempts were not sustained long enough for the community to actually benefit.

There may be a number of reasons for these negative responses. One reason, and this was our initial explanation, was due to the extreme rural environmental conditions prevailing in large parts of the Vhembe district. These conditions were so harsh (in terms of heat, rain fluctuations and absence of existing social services) that quantitative development projects (like electrification) would be costly and difficult to maintain. At least 12 respondents, however, felt that the previous development attempts had been successful because, as some noted, even though limited, the community members were integrated.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (64) mentioned that funds and finances were what were needed most to pursue development in their local villages (question 4.2). However, there

were some exceptions: some farmers mentioned that a good rain season would pave the way for community development and others mentioned that the re-institution of Agriven (noted earlier) was

needed for successful community development in their villages. Farmers frequently mentioned that if water were to be made available by government, their villages would prosper. The need for extension services for local farmers was expressed by some farmers. Farmers expressed their desire to get together with established farmers and to share ideas with each other. One mentioned that good luck was needed.

#### **4.6.2.5 Item 5 (Household coping strategies)**

The inclusion of household coping strategies provided evidence that social capital within families not only represented the resources available to rural families, but also appeared to be a key element in accessing resources in general.

As can be seen in the case of Levhuvhu and the responses received from questions 5.1 - 5.3, individuals are prepared to stand by their primary social networks even if this is at personal cost to them. High degrees of reciprocity within rural family members were observed. The general expectation that was that good deeds would be returned and that the kindness would be rewarded when the well-doer experienced a time of need.. Rural households seem to share in at least two important ways. Firstly, they share each others' problems and needs by means of discussions, seeking advice and emotional support. Secondly, rural households share with each other in the material sense: sharing food, money and living space. Individuals, therefore, become servants of their primary social group depending on the strength of social ties. Where social ties appear particularly strong, such as the strong degree of conformity often found amongst extended families, people seem to care for each other's material and psychological interests.

The women of rural subsistence farming families frequently belong to clubs, and attend meetings more regularly than do men. Also, more women than men reported taking part in micro businesses, such as selling the surplus farming products produced on their families' farms. Male

respondents acknowledged that women indeed operated more micro businesses than men. Of interest

was a group of women in the Mutshenzheni village who initiated a floor polish business. Given the fact that traditional Venda huts are often surrounded by footpaths made from manure, the floor polish micro-business seem to be a worthy initiative.

The initiatives taken by the youth, as reported by the respondents, appear to be limited. Besides engaging cultural activities, like singing and dancing (Blacking, 1967 : 3 - 5), and assisting their villages in crime prevention (3.3.2.4), the rural youth appear to organise themselves into playgroups ('sports groups') and share information amongst each other. Farmers also mentioned that information about HIV/ AIDS was shared amongst the rural youth.

A number of old people farm in the Vhembe district. In cases where farming is hampered by the ill health of ageing farmers, elderly farmers appear keen to give advice to young farmers, who in most cases are family members. Since many old people stay at home on their own farms, they often take care of their grandchildren. The seniority of the elderly allows them to be influential in community matters, particularly their own households and the households of their offspring.

The answers given to question 5.2 were consistent with the answers given in question 2.5, namely that families and friends would be approached for assistance. Older farmers mentioned that they would not hesitate to ask their children for certain forms of assistance, whereas at least 13 farmers mentioned that they would approach the pensioners in their families for financial assistance. Eight (8) farmers stated that they would rather approach persons (like friends) outside their families for assistance.

Question 5.3 revealed both qualitative as well as partly quantitative answers. Twenty-four (24) of the respondents indicated that in difficult times their (and other) families coped by regularly meeting and discussing their next actions. Other respondents reported that they relied on prayer alone. Some respondents reported that households encouraged each other; supported each other and that they gave each other hope in dealing with their problems.

#### **4.6.2.6 Item 6 (Formal cooperation)**

Item 6 (formal cooperation) aimed to differentiate between the forms of formal cooperation and was included to detect whether subsistence farmers mobilised their collective social assets to engage in formal actions.

With regard to formal cooperation, in other words, linkages and connections between subsistence farmers and formal organisations like NGOs, government organisations and local businesses, the results of the feedback from at least 49 respondents indicated that formal cooperation with these organisations was remarkably low. Of the most frequent answers received when question 6.1 was asked, was that they (the subsistence farmers), cooperated with civic organisations and church movements and that only these organisations and movements were active in their local villages. Cooperation with local businesses and municipal governments was mentioned, although not as often as many academics and practitioners might perhaps expect.

Besides those rural people who are unemployed and those whom are self-employed, as are the majority of subsistence farmers, the main formal employers in the rural villages of the Vhembe district (question 6.1), as perceived by the respondents, appears to be either government or local businesses. These perceptions could be understood because the local businesses, as well as the local prison, police, educational, and health services, by virtue of their location, employed mainly local persons (question 6.2). It must however be kept in mind that a large percentage of the population residing in the Vhembe district is unemployed and that cooperation with employers, besides in the formal employment sector, is still very low.

Apart from employment, the services provided by the formal sector (question 6.3), as perceived by the respondents, included educational and health services, housing, donations, building materials and food. RDP houses were perceived by the subsistence farmers as a government service that benefited many local rural families. Respondents noted the provision of electricity,

houses and water as formal service provision, essential to the well-being of their families.

Answers received in response to question 6.4 were mixed. The large number of answers given when this question (6.4) was asked (and these answers included more than two-thirds of the responses), revealed that respondents are satisfied that formal organisations are trying to satisfy the needs of local people.

Some, however, reported the opposite. Many criticised formal organisations as being ignorant of local peoples' needs and completely self-interest driven. The answers received from question 6.4 were nevertheless valuable in the sense that only 11 respondents gave midway answers. A distinction could therefore be made between people who were satisfied with the formal sector's efforts to satisfy their needs, and those who were not satisfied with these efforts. Further, the impression gained from the respondents was that formal cooperation is limited to residential associations (like civics) and municipalities.

#### **4.6.2.7 Item 7 (Informal cooperation)**

The occurrence of informal cooperation suggests strong horizontal linkages and connections amongst ordinary people in rural villages. Again, households of subsistence farmers serve as evidence in this regard. Resources like food and water seem to be frequently shared between families. Other resources, such as information, household appliances and money, which were observed during the interviews, seem to be shared and circulated mainly within primary groups, notably families.

Poor subsistence families of the farmers interviewed frequently took part in efforts to accumulate their economic assets. Much like the *Stokvel* (4.6.1.1) and ROSCAs mentioned earlier (2.8.10), a number of burial societies (or 'clubs') exist in the Vhembe district. When question 7.1 was asked (note that it is a structured question), 54 of the farmers interviewed indicated that they belonged

to burial societies. These societies are informal insurances and involve a monthly or a weekly contribution to a common financial pool. The informal burial societies provide accumulated financial

support that can be used for funeral costs, such as the cost of the coffin, flowers and food for the mourners.

When question 7.3 was asked, a large variety of responses were obtained. Informal cooperation, as seen in Nzhelele (4.6.1.2), often occurs in times of need. Rural subsistence farmers indicated that they warn each other of poor seeds on the market and bad times to plant crops. These farmers seem to form informal groups to discuss their problems. During such informal meetings between farmers, relationships of trust, as well as partnerships are generated, sometimes allowing problems and differences within the farmer groups to surface. In addition, stories of success are shared between farmers.

Besides debating general problems and successes, it was noted during the interviews (particularly during question 7.3) that rural subsistence farmers informally cooperate with each other in the following ways:

- The sharing of water sources like irrigation canals
- Sharing equipment
- Giving each other surplus farming sources like seeds, fertilisers and poison
- Advising each other on the health of cattle
- Transporting farming products
- Purchasing products in bulk.

In addition, informal cooperation could be observed in the ways that farmers attempt to secure their properties. Subsistence farmers erect collective fences and use collective roads and gates. Farmers stated that they teach their children to watch out for strangers. It was also observed that some farmers purchase products from each other, thereby circulating money within the group.

Plenty of cases and ways of informal cooperation could therefore be found in the researched area. The evidence presented here clearly shows that informal patterns of reciprocity exist and that these patterns

help subsistence farmers in their quest to satisfy their daily needs.

#### 4.6.2.8 Item 8 (Needs)

Respondents listed numerous ‘needs’ when question 8.1 was asked. Although the responses varied, distinctive needs re-occurred during the interviews. The respondents were requested to mention the three most essential needs, which made it easier to differentiate between important and less important needs as perceived by the farmers. Table 4.2 lists the responses relating to the personal needs as perceived by the subsistence farmers interviewed:

**TABLE 4.2: PERSONAL NEEDS PERCEIVED BY SUBSISTENCE FARMERS**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Food	53
Houses	41
Water	54
Finances	57
Employment	45
Transport	12
Hospitals and clinics	47
Shops	23
Entertainment	2

Number of subsistence farmers who did not respond to this item: 4

Number of subsistence farmers who did respond to this item: 64

Financial support (money) was frequently mentioned as a need and this could be understood in the light of the high number of poor subsistence farmers in the Vhembe district. Forty-three (43) respondents mentioned that people were aware of each others needs (question 8.2) but 18 respondents answered 'no'.

Twelve (12) farmers mentioned that they needed 'transport' (presumably motor vehicles and/ or trucks). These farmers reported that transport was a major obstacle in their efforts to sell their surplus products at markets. Other farmers required bigger farms and expressed their desire to expand their farming activities to include other products. A chicken farmer mentioned that he would like to experiment with pig farming in addition to his existing poultry farming practice.

Although the responses mainly revolved around material needs (or satisfiers), a number of exceptions were observed in terms of non- material needs, which comply with Max-Neef's perception of needs. Several farmers (although this was somewhat exceptional), expressed the desire to unite with other farmers. In one case a farmer mentioned that his basic needs were simple: to buy, to plant and then to sell at a profit to *secure* an income for his family.

When asked what the community or village subsistence farmers could do to satisfy the needs of local farmers (question 8.3), many respondents hesitated or did not respond at all. However, some respondents responded by stating that the local people should support the farmers in their villages by purchasing locally produced farming products. Many respondents mentioned that their communities and villages indeed helped the local farmers by purchasing locally produced products but that local people should share their resources more frequently with each other, particularly when farmers experienced seasonal fluctuations and droughts. At least four farmers specifically mentioned that local community and village members could help them (the local farmers) by preserving existing resources for future use; for example land, roads and vegetation.

The responses received in response to question 8.4 confirmed that social resources are mobilised by local villagers and that collective assets are sometimes effective in counterbalancing the

problems experienced by both local rural farmers and the local community. One relevant illustration in this regard, drawn from the responses to question 8.4, is that of conflict resolution. Conflicts can be resolved within the indigenous cultural structure of the Venda leadership, whereby the help of tribal courts is sought as an alternative to the complicated bureaucratic red tape that characterises western societies. The majority of subsistence farmers who answered question 8.4 supported this viewpoint. A few farmers mentioned that tribal courts are quick, uncomplicated, cheap and fair.

Whenever a perceived need prevails, whether individual or communal, meetings may be organised at village level to discuss the need. If no acceptable solution can be found, needs are communicated to the headmen who will attempt a quick and fair resolution. Serious matters are reported to community leaders, like the Chief. Problems are also brought to the attention of civic leaders.

#### **4.6.2.9 Item 9 (Religious activities)**

Sixty-five (65) of the respondents interviewed indicated that they belonged to a religious movement. The responses obtained from question 9.1 confirmed that the majority of subsistence farmers (61) were Christians and that the subsistence farmers interviewed attend Christian churches.

The general perception amongst subsistence farmers was that churches helped to reduce crime, that churches were good places to meet friends and that churches were helpful in general towards their communities (question 9.2). The helpfulness of churches towards communities, as some respondents noted, did not only involve the donations given by churches to the needy, but also included the moral values instilled within individuals and the hope churches give to people.

Some respondents commented that going to church made them feel more optimistic and that their optimism was carried out to other parts of their lives. Some mentioned that churches gave them

counselling, an important need which appeared to be in high demand amongst households experiencing

social problems. A prominent church leader (Reverend Nedohe, personal interview) confirmed that local churches assisted families with material and non-material needs.

#### **4.6.2.10 Item 10 (Information)**

Despite the absence of a modern communication infrastructure, almost all respondents reported making use of magazines, newspapers, telephones and the radio (question 10.1 and question 10).

Another 'why' question was included as a follow-up question. Subsistence farmers' ideas about information sources were investigated further. Sixty-four (64) subsistence farmers seem to enjoy radio the most because, as one respondent noted, 'you don't have to pay every day to hear the news'. Besides being a cheap communication medium, radios are portable and many villagers were observed carrying radios in their hands; some cycling with radios mounted on bicycles. The subsistence farmers reported that they mainly listened to radio Phala-Phala, a local radio station broadcasting from Thohoyandou (question 10.2). Other radio stations which were mentioned by the farmers included radio Univen (a campus-based radio station), SAFM and Thobela FM. No fixed listening times by farmers could be determined, although farmers appeared to mostly listen to their radios during mornings and evenings and at times when high temperatures and rain made it difficult to do normal farming activities.

The questions relating to the flow of information led me to a further observation. I was told by a subsistence farmer that a young man had his own radio station. During the fieldwork in *Tsianda* I made contact with this young man who was attempting to operate a radio station in his village. With a transmitter erected on a nearby hill and using a motor car battery, he was able to broadcast for two to three hours at a time, within a ten to fifteen kilometre radius. He mentioned to me that his efforts to start a village radio station were hampered by two problems. His first problem was a lack of finance, but he optimistically mentioned that his radio station, once operational, would be able to generate income with advertisements and sponsors. His second problem related to the

legality of the radio station: licenses for community radio stations were rarely granted by the South African national broadcasting body. In essence, this effort (to establish a village radio station) was a plausible local innovation and had potential value to integrate and develop local social capital.

Besides these modern means of communication, meetings, gossip networks, dances and singing all form part of indigenous sources of communication (question 10.4). Religious meetings were recognised by some farmers as important cultural resources of information. Very few farmers appeared to use diaries.

Horizontal communication between local farmers is facilitated by the fact that local farmers understand each other because they mostly speak the same language in Vhembe. This is important with regard to analysing social capital in the region because subsistence farmers are socially connected by means of the language they speak. One farmer mentioned that farmers motivated each other, and that information was also received from white farmers in the region whom could speak *ThiVenda*.

#### **4.6.2.11 Item 11 (Dysfunctionality)**

Questionnaire Item 11 investigated subsistence farmers' perceptions about dysfunctional social processes in their villages.

Forty-four (44) of the farmers interviewed indicated that it was safe in their villages at night (question 11.1). Of those who reported otherwise, four said that it was 'relatively' safe while 19 of the respondents stated that it was not safe in their villages at all at night. Twenty-one (21) respondents indicated their awareness of violent groups (gangsters or *tsotsis*) in their villages (question 11.2).

With regard to problems in local villages that respondents felt needed to be addressed, the

following observations were made. Although 43 farmers mentioned that they were dissatisfied with the occurrence of crime in their villages, they seemed to agree on the causes of crime, namely high poverty levels and unemployment (question 11.3). Farmers mentioned that a bad relationship existed between

local municipalities and their local traditional leaders. This, of course, was not a new discovery, but the fact that some subsistence farmers experienced this relationship as problematic, highlighted the fact that a degree of disfunctionality was present *between* the vertical social relationships that exist in the Vhembe district.

Almost all subsistence farmers were of the opinion that persons of different cultures could live together peacefully in their villages (question 11.4). Hesitations were observed amongst older farmers.

A range of answers was received from question 11.5. Many farmers made reference to local community policing forums and existing crime prevention campaigns as a means of preventing crime. Others reported that they tried to encourage their households (and other people in their villages) not to buy stolen goods and to report suspicious matters to the police. Crime seems to be a frequently debated problem during traditional meetings.

Further responses to question 11.5 revealed that larger farmers in the area, but more especially local businesses employed a well known private security company; one that was known (and feared) for their unorthodox methods of finding and punishing guilty persons. A minority of respondents said that they, the farmers, did not trust the police to solve crimes due to corruption that may occur, but that they felt safe when they saw a security company in their area.

#### **4.6.2.12 Item 12 (Social norms)**

Fifty-nine (59) responded positively to question 12.1. Therefore, in general terms, the farmers interviewed agreed that people in their villages mostly had patience with each other (question 12.1). Only five farmers answered *no* to question 12.1, indicating that people did not have

patience with each other. The same tendency was found in the farmers' responses to the next question. The majority of farmers (50 respondents) agreed that people in their local villages were helpful towards each other (question 12.2), whereas only a few farmers did not describe the people in their villages as

helpful. The responses to questions 12.1 and 12.2 were given with confidence, without delay and, mostly, without a trace of doubt. Because of the nature of these responses, the assumption can be made with reasonable certainty, that subsistence farmers in the Vhembe district experience their co - community and village members as being helpful and patient with each other.

Fifty-seven (57) respondents interviewed in this study agreed that their communities and villages had survived difficult times (question 12.3). Responses to the follow-up question (*why*) revealed that farmers frequently mentioned that they survived their poverty situations, and also that natural disasters were well remembered as 'difficult times'. At least 8 farmers remembered a drought in their region that occurred in 1983.

Although 44 farmers indicated that they would forgive people for making bad mistakes, some had reservations (question 12.4). Some farmers said that they would forgive people for making bad mistakes only if they were convinced that they (the guilty) had genuine remorse, even though they (the respondents) could be worse off.

When asked if farmers would help someone without being paid (question 12.5), 63 farmers answered *yes* and some added spontaneously that they would help others because if they, the interviewed farmers, should need help in the future, help could be obtained from those previously helped.

The norm of reciprocity therefore seems to be a mutual understanding in the Vhembe district. As some remarked: '*we expect people to be helpful here*'. This norm appears to exist not only

between farmers but also amongst normal people's interaction with each other in the Vhembe district.

As unwritten rules, social norms such as helpfulness and patience are functional social resources and together with other norms such as subsistence farmers' devotion to their families, further social resources

are generated, upon which subsistence farmers in the Vhembe district base their expectations. Strong social norms are also present amongst the women taking part in informal saving schemes in Levhuvhu and this explains much of their successful pursuit of other similar schemes. Given the traditional context of the *VhaVenda*, social norms feature as a strong force for compliance with what is socially acceptable behaviour.

#### **4.6.2.13 Item 13 (Participation)**

From a total of 64 respondents who responded to the question, 25 indicated that they participate in community development attempts whereas 39 answered negatively, in other words, they do *not* participate in any community development attempts.

The responses received from the respondents when question 13.1 was asked showed that many respondents regard community development as something that is initiated only by government. Only a few regarded their own indigenous and collective efforts as a reflection of community development. When the respondents were asked “why” they participated in community development initiatives, numerous responses indicated that they did so because their contribution to community development would be beneficial for their community or village. These positive responses showed that respondents experienced a need to preserve their community and that their participation in community development would in some way contribute to the welfare of their villages and communities. It is noteworthy that respondents replied that they participate in community development attempts because it would be in the interest of their children. When asked ‘why not’, one woman farmer said that she and other farmers worked long hours and that they simply did not have time to involve themselves in additional activities beyond their normal

daily tasks. It was noted that 47 respondents reported that there were no community development initiatives currently underway in their villages, which they could participate in.

Fifty-two (52) farmers indicated that they were involved in social clubs (question 13.2) whereas 59

indicated that they participated in community and/ or village gatherings. Older farmers, many of whom regarded themselves as retired, appeared less involved in both formal and informal community groups.

Question 13.3 revealed that 62 respondents were of the opinion that other community members participated in development attempts. Based on the perceptions of the respondents, different means of participation in community development initiatives were recorded:

- Voluntary participation
- Working together on farms
- Sharing ideas
- Organising to solve collective problems
- Providing social and economic resources.

Forty-nine (49) of the respondents reported that they spent their free time with families and friends (question 13.4). Farmers also spend their free time selling their farming products for additional income while some farmers stated that they participate in recreational activities like sports and listening to the radio. 18 respondents stated that they involve themselves with religious activities such as reading and studying the bible and being involved in activities of their respective churches. Family members of the farmers interviewed (question 13.5) seem to spend their free time in similar ways: visiting family and friends, recreational activities (listening to radio, reading, visiting family and friends, and religious and sporting activities). Children generally seemed to occupy their free time by playing with friends, being involved in sporting activities and playgroups (question 13.6). Farmers indicated that their children assisted them

with farm and household work.

Sixty-four (64) of the rural farmers interviewed indicated that they are soccer enthusiasts (question

13.7). Sixteen (16) mentioned that they enjoy tennis and indigenous sports like *umrabaraba*.

#### **4.6.2.14 Item 14 (Group interaction)**

Questions 14.1 - 14.3 showed that farmers display group interaction within groups they belong to. Very weak evidence could be found of interaction between subsistence farmers' sub groups.

Group interaction within large families is expected to be strong whereas the fact that farmers know each other, not only displays strong social horizontal linkages, but also indicates potential for social resource mobilisation. In response to question 14.1, the farmers interviewed in this study reported the following ways they interact with other people:

- Communication (asking advise, consultations, letter writing, sharing ideas)
- Borrowing and lending equipment and seeds
- Plant and transplant seedlings
- Assisting each other in times of disasters (specifically, field fires and floods)

Despite the apparent cohesion that exists within subsistence farmer's informal groups, the subsistence farmers interviewed reported remarkably little incidence of farmer's groups interacting with each other. On the contrary, and confirming the results of Item two (4.6.2.2), connections with non-farming groups were found. Reciprocal connections with non-farming groups can be seen in the regular donations given to local orphanages and soup kitchens by some farmers.

Question 14.2 provided some reasons for belonging to a group, as well as reasons why

subsistence farmers attempted to interact within a group. Belonging to a group, as frequently recorded during the interviews, generally made farmers feel secure, good about themselves, proud, challenged, confident and happy. They also enjoyed a sense of belonging. Some answered that they felt helpful when they shared ideas and they, in turn, also learnt from other farmers. Religious motivations were mentioned.

The responses from question 14.2 were supported by the positive responses received from the next question. All of the farmers who understood question 14.3 and who responded to the question asked, answered *yes* to question 14.3 and it can therefore be stated that the overwhelming majority of the farmers interviewed in this study felt that they could accomplish more in life if they worked together in a group that felt the same about a problem.

#### **4.6.2.15 Item 15 (Confidence, optimism and vision)**

As open-ended questions, questions 15.1 - 15.4 provided further means of exploring social resources. The answers which the subsistence farmers provided when question 15.1 was asked, showed that persons hold fundamentally different viewpoints about the purpose of life. The responses were seldom the same, although the most significant overlaps were found in answers to questions that were religiously grounded. Other consistencies found during the responses included that the purpose of life was to *care* for each other, to [personally] *grow and develop*, to *develop the country*, to *experience* different things in life, to *prepare for the future*, to *work hard*, to *deal with challenges*, to *respect* other people, to live with each other in *harmony* and to *share* ideas.

The nature and content of these responses showed that the material world is important to the subsistence farmers but that these farmers also experience qualitative (non-material) needs as being fundamental in their lives. Only a few answers (fewer than 10 respondents) were presented

as quantitative (or material) responses, namely that the purpose of life is to *prosper economically*.

The majority of respondents are optimistic about their futures in their villages and communities (question 15.2). The optimistic views were detected in responses like *OK*, *positive*, *good*, *not afraid*, *happy*, *grow*, *promising* and *optimistic*. However, 19 of the subsistence farmers interviewed appeared

pessimistic about their futures. Negative answers like *not good, because people do not want to change, deeply concerned* and *people will stay poor* signalled that some farmers hold pessimistic views of their futures. 14 farmers gave intermediate answers. Answers like *it depends* and *I really do not know* could be attributed to the uncertain views held by some farmers.

Qualitative follow-up questions (like *why* or *why not*) revealed further indications of subsistence farmers' needs. At least one elderly farmer stated that he wanted to be respected as a person who had worked hard during his life to achieve what he had achieved as a farmer. Another farmer stated that his future would depend on the services that government would provide in his village.

The responses varied when farmers were asked about their vision for their community or village (question 15.3). These responses were, similarly to question 15.1, never identical. Certain general tendencies could nevertheless be identified during the majority of responses, for example, the *reduction of poverty, a crime free society, increased educational facilities and developed villages*, were given. Some farmers had a vision of *greater diversity* in their farming activities, as well as the *maximisation of farming production, the provision of government subsidised farming support and the introduction of development strategies*. When question 15.3 was asked, farmers expressed a clear need to become *bigger* farmers. This was frequently confirmed. Rural subsistence farmers indicated that they want to expand their farming products in an effort to become commercial farmers.

A rural subsistence farmer in Thulamela expressed his vision for his village as a village that

would be able to provide the same services as those found in urban areas.

#### **4.7     EXTRACTS FROM STORIES AND SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS**

The last question asked to the respondents involved storytelling (question 15.4). Farmers were asked to tell at least one story of how they, the rural subsistence farmers, used their friendships to overcome certain problems. Almost all the farmers told their stories; some appeared eager and told more than one

story. The stories contained in the following presentations, collectively represent further reflections of the social resources used by rural subsistence farmers in Vhembe.

Story 1: Disappearing vegetable crops

A farmer from Maungani told the following story:

*[I experienced a problem of people stealing my crops just before harvest. My family depends on the food we produce on our farm and I had to take immediate steps to stop the theft. The police said that they can not do much and I considered some further options. During a community gathering I told all my friends at the meeting of my problem. Some of my friends told me that they have also encountered the same problem with their crops. My friends and I agreed to keep a random watch on each others crops during night and day, but particularly in the period before we harvest. When a suspicious person is seen in our vegetable gardens, we confront him/ her. The result is that we have experienced only a few incidents of theft this year].*

Story 2: A deal gone bad

Another farmer in Vuwani had the following story to tell:

*[A neighbour of mine approached me to contribute vegetables to a funeral. Since she did not have money at the time, I agreed to give her fruit from our farm to use during the funeral on the*

*condition that she pay me back. She agreed to pay me, but after two months she was still avoiding me. A friend of mine is a close relative to this person who owes me money and I used my friendship to make use of his influence in the community. My neighbour was persuaded in this way and paid me back. We also restored the peace].*

Story 3: The disappearing builder

Another subsistence farmer in Vuwani told the following story:

*[The builder of my house disappeared before he finished the job. I was furious because I already paid him with money that was saved over a long period. I informed everyone I knew in my village and asked my friends to help me to look for this builder. He was eventually located and we organised a family court. During this family court meeting the builder agreed to complete his work and, after discussion, the builder had an explanation which we [the family], did not believe. Because of our collective efforts and friendship between the people here in our community, the builder could not get away with the money and my family have slept under a solid roof during this winter].*

*Story 4: Accessing existing social capital*

One farmer remarked that his son earned more money than him. I noted non-farming tools and motor car spares on the farmers' property and asked what the purpose was of this equipment for a farmer like himself. He noted

*['... the equipment belonged to my son who started a small business fixing cars in my back yard'. [He tried to obtain clients with the help of some of his friends, but only a few of his friends owned cars. One night a friend told me that he has a problem: he does not have time and money*

*to fix his car. I introduced my son to my friend and within one week my son had his first customer].*

The farmer reported that his son started this small business with his (the father's) recommendations to his (the father's) friends. I regarded this observation as significant for social capital formation because

this story revealed four positive aspects about social capital:

- The social capital generated in this case appears to depend on friendship and kinship.
- The strongest link is established by kinship, rather than friendship.
- The young man was able to access his fathers network of friends (*existing* social capital).
- The small business expanded and was maintained for a period of at least two years.

The opportunity was taken to use existing social networks in order to satisfy the desire for self - employment. New social capital was therefore produced and added to the social capital that already existed between the farmer's friends.

*Story 5: Returning a favour*

As can be seen from the discussion thus far, reciprocity occurs frequently in Vhembe. It is not uncommon for Vhembe farmers to practice reciprocal behaviour. The following story, told by a farmer from Nzhelele, gives a qualitative indication of the informal norm of reciprocity, as well as how social capital exists and functions for in a rural community.

*[I give vegetables from my farm to the poor people in my community. My son must also learn to help other people, so I send him with my bakkie to deliver the vegetables to the poor. There is not*

*really a specific reason why we do this for free. All I know is that someday, somewhere someone will do me a favour; or help me when I am in need].*

The farmer who told this story seems to comply with the norm of reciprocity. He also seems to be driven by the belief (or trust) that he could potentially benefit from his present actions. The hope that

favours would be returned to the farmer in future could be described as a security measure, as well as a resource. The same farmer stated that it made him feel good to do favours for others and to teach children respect.

*Story 6: The 'magic' axe*

A farmer from the Tshifulanani village near Lwamondo stated that he possessed a magic axe. This was his story:

[I am blessed with a magic axe. I have lost this axe two times already, but it keeps on coming back to me. The first time I went to cut firewood in the forest and forgot it there. I did not even realise that my chopper [axe] was lost. The next morning when I woke up my axe was lying in front of my door. I then realised that I forgot to bring the axe back home with us and until today I do not know how the axe found its way back home; or who brought it back for me. There is no name on the axe so if someone picks it up they will not know that the axe belongs to me. If one

of my friends brought the axe home, they would have told me. However, no one knew anything.

The second time I lost my axe during a festival when I had to cut wood for a cow being slaughtered. I dropped the axe during the night and there was no way I could see it. Some weeks later, after my family and I returned from a visit to relatives in another location, I re discovered the axe: someone hung the axe from a tree to prevent ants from eating the wood handle of the axe.

Although it is still unclear how the axe was returned, it may be possible to give credit to certain

community attributes that constitute social capital: relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (2.3.1), resourceful relationships (2.3.2), and social connections 2.3.3). Other social capital resources could also explain the apparent mystery, for example, information flows, complex forms of social interaction and cross- network reciprocity. However, the farmer related his good fortune to a spiritual dimension.

## **4.8 CONCLUSION**

The French, American and Italian situations presented by most notably Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993), respectively (see sections 2.3.1 - 2.3.3), differ from the Limpopo situation in several important ways, and it is to these that the discussion now turns. Based on the research findings presented in this chapter, and specifically the occurrence of social capital found amongst agricultural producers of Limpopo, the discussion in the next section deals with an interpretation of social capital as a resource for different needs experienced by communities.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to interpret the results gained from the selection of cases and to reflect on the content of the theoretical perspectives noted during the literature survey, particularly with regard to Bourdieu (1991), Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993) (2.3) as well as Max-Neef (2.6.1). Based on the research results and the critique that social capital is a broad and vague construct, the concept will be taken a step further. A discussion of social capital will be offered to interpret the research findings as specific manifestations of social capital found in the context of the rural people of the Vhembe district.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL FOUND IN EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

The findings generated by the research reveal an unusual profile of social capital. Although the conceptualisations of social capital in Chapter 2 (2.3) do correspond to the research findings, a precise fit cannot be reported here. Whereas the theoretical perspectives presented in Chapter 2 (2.3) deliberate on social capital structurally and analytically, the social capital found in Limpopo gives an indication of the way in which social capital functions in developing communities, how social capital is used and how it may be abused at grass roots level. Case studies A, B, C and D are valuable as they show that situations of great social complexity exist in the developing world, as do great varieties of social capital. In addition, the subsistence farmers' responses differed significantly, with a diversity of social features. These responses displayed informal membership, loose cooperation, complicated unwritten rules (or norms), contextually bounded indigenusness and social connections that fulfil a variety of personal needs (for example, freedom and security). Therefore, the responses revealed information outside the original theoretical boundaries, as well as the fact that the characteristics of social capital exactly as defined in section 2.3, do not exist

in the Limpopo Province. Characteristics of social capital as discussed in 2.3 are absent in regard to need satisfiers. The formation of *ad hoc* groups during the flooding disaster (Case study B) shows that social capital can be functional for communities during chronic bad times. In consideration of the responses of farmers to the items listed in the questionnaire (Annexure A), social capital in the broader Limpopo Province seems different from western and developed societies. The resources that constitute social capital can therefore *not* be described as an exact fit in relation to the definitions of Bourdieu (1983, 1986), Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993) presented in 2.3.

Different types of social capital were found to exist in the Limpopo Province. Social capital in Vhembe exists at a regional level and also at micro levels. The functioning of social capital at regional and national levels can rightfully be interpreted as large-scale, though *insufficient* for need satisfaction and, at times, destructive because power struggles between municipal and traditional leaders limit the satisfaction of certain needs. The health service delivery situation in Limpopo serves as an example. In consideration of the selection of cases noted in Chapter 4, it can be stated that that social capital is plentiful at a grass-roots level. However, the social capital that exist on this level can be interpreted as small-scale only, since it is confined to friendships and rural subsistence families. Plenty of uses for such social capital could potentially be utilised by community developers, although this small-scale social capital seems to exist only to satisfy the needs of small groups. The prevalence of social capital in these micro cases can therefore only be interpreted as *seeds* of social capital within a broader community context and scale.

General and specific measures to control the common pool of resources can be seen from Case study A as well as from the existence of the informal power structures (3.3.2.2). The study did find evidence of farmers using collective and communally-owned material resources (such as land and water) to satisfy needs. The indicators selected in this study illustrated that the combined effect of the varieties of social capital created communities with a sense of empowerment, ownership and control over the resources they share.

### **5.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEED SATISFACTION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL FOUND**

The concepts “social capital” and “need satisfaction” are closely related. This statement follows from examples in the literature survey such as the qualities of social capital found by Coleman (1990 : 302), Schmid (2000 : 5) and Pretty and Ward (2001 : 25) (see subsections 2.3.2 and 2.8). Since social capital could be found in a number of instances where needs prevail, and since social capital functions as a substitute for other need satisfiers (such as social status, cultural identity and entertainment), a strong relationship between social capital and need satisfaction seems to exist. Different forms of social capital are used for the satisfaction of various needs. Sometimes the satisfaction of one need makes the satisfaction of further needs possible, such as case study A illustrates, where women use their memberships to saving schemes to obtain both material needs (money) and non- material needs (participation) (4.6.1.1). Farmers use their social connections to satisfy the needs of protection and food security (4.6.2.7) (4.7). In localities in the Vhembe district where social services were found to be inappropriate and/ or inadequate, sophisticated forms of social capital (such as formal institutions and local businesses) seemed to be correspondingly low. Therefore, the relationship that exists between social capital and need satisfaction can be interpreted as strong and often interrelated. The Limpopo experience shows that this relationship’s strength is contextually bound and reinforced. This is evident from the results obtained in the case studies (4.6.1) as well as the results of the questionnaires discussed in 4.6.2.

The nature of the relationship between social capital and need satisfaction can be motivated by the following interpretations from the literature survey (Chapter 2) and the research chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4):

- The social resources discussed show that social capital can be driven by many community processes and existing social structures. An important social structure that surfaced from the literature study, is that of the family (2.4.1.1). The families’ role in social capital was

reaffirmed in Chapter three, particularly with the structure and functioning of extended families in Vhembe (3.3.5.4), the strong degree of trust mostly maintained in these families (4.6.2.1) and the coping strategies employed by poor rural families (4.6.2.5).

- Needs experienced by local people and the satisfiers sought by these people, indicate that various types of social strategies are used as mechanisms to overcome the perceived needs.
- The generation and distribution of social capital depend on micro and macro levels in the Limpopo Province. At a micro level people's needs are evident and can also be deduced from local poverty. These people aim to satisfy their needs with networks of trust, cooperation and relationships with people and institutions outside the family. Secondly, at a macro level, social capital formation and distribution are influenced by the policies of the South African Government as well as global processes outlined in 2.5.2. If the flooding disaster (Case study B) occurred as a result of global warming (2.5.2.1), then micro level social capital can clearly result from decisions taken at a macro level, by large economic structures.

The relationship between social capital and need satisfaction shows different forms and levels of need satisfaction. Local political, institutional, economic, cultural and even, as seen in Vhembe's case, environmental conditions clearly determine how this relationship unfolds in communities. In view of the different varieties of social capital (4.4), the most desirable qualities of social capital for need satisfaction appear to lie in the ability to satisfy a wide range of needs (synergistic satisfiers) (2.6.2) as well as the ability of social resources to 'grow' into social capital. Both these qualities were found to exist in the Vhembe district. Due to the rural nature of the Vhembe district and the high levels of poverty amongst subsistence households, the momentum of continuous production of social capital formation appears limited.

#### 5.4 POSSIBLE RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL

With the limitations imposed by poverty, one could correspondingly expect limited resources for social capital. On the contrary, resources for social capital were found in the Vhembe district. Given the results of the pilot study and the socio-economic profile of Limpopo (Chapter 3) it can be concluded that the majority of rural households in Vhembe are experiencing economic hardships. Furthermore, the subsistence farmers interviewed and the observations made in rural villages clearly demonstrate that rural households do not have the same access to the benefits and economic resources associated with urban or modern life. Existing social connections amongst rural people in Vhembe seem to be related to personal relations built up over time. These longstanding relations constitute possible resources for social capital in communities and can result from kinship to tribes with high prestige, members of extended families and pure friendship.

Besides resources owned individually, communal resources (for example the shared water supply of subsistence farmers) appear to be resources for social capital because apparent determinants of social capital such as sharing and mutual consideration are being fostered. In so doing, needs of survival and subsistence are being met.

The rural villages and communities found in Vhembe also demonstrated a variety of interacting socio-economic processes. These processes may be described as potential resources for social capital because they are deliberately coordinated in productive ways for need satisfaction. Case studies A, B, C and D showed that people intentionally direct their social resources to overcome socio-economic needs.

Unfortunately, the bulk of commonly conceived needs are concrete whereas invisible needs may be conceived as equally important things satisfied by social capital. The satisfaction of abstract needs serve as resources for social capital as was indicated during this study in the forms of social solidarity found amongst people, the way people spend their leisure time (children form

playgroups, farmers listen to the radio) (3.3.4) and the cultural expressions in art (particularly, dancing

in the *VhaVenda* case) (3.3.8).

From the interviews with agricultural producers, subsistence farmers clearly showed that they are able to use their existing social resources to generate social capital, despite social and economic restrictions. The local resources for social capital formation found in this study include trust (4.6.2.1), social connectivity (4.6.2.2) and strong social norms (4.6.2.12), although the social organisations and connections used in Putnam's (1995) study do not exactly exist in the quality and quantity that the selection of cases used in this study indicates. Instead, *informal* forms of cooperation (4.6.2.7) are used as resource substitutes for social organisations and connections.

Further aspects in the lives of the rural people in Vhembe show that locally available resources act as possible resources for social capital. Voluntary behaviour was observed amongst the rural farmers in the Vhembe district. Farmer-to-farmer voluntary behaviour was evident in farmers' spontaneous assistance towards each other when a fire became a threat (for example on grazing land) and when there was a security threat from intruders on farms. The research carried out in Vhembe also showed that a wide range of circumstances could exist for subsistence farmers to develop cooperation and to draw on existing forms of networks. These circumstances not only allow resource-poor farmers to satisfy various needs, but also to establish new forms of social capital.

Finances and economic growth are required to sustain the satisfaction of various needs. The selection of cases in the Vhembe district had one thing in common: the absence of wealth. Moreover, local skills are needed to develop Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and to create infrastructural conditions that will foster formal social networks in communities. The absence of wealth may prohibit the formation of particular forms of social capital, although, this may be interpreted in another way; namely that the formation of different types of social capital is required to counterbalance the absence of wealth. As a result of the low income and expenditure (3.3.4.3), rural people in the Vhembe district are forced to rely on the social resource networks

found amongst each other. As seen earlier (Case study D) subsistence farmers cooperate to purchase

agricultural products in bulk and they work together to gain access to larger financial institutions, like banks. Social capital seems to be used as a substitute for the absence of community resources, such as wealth and financial prosperity, and could therefore be interpreted as a safety net for rural subsistence communities.

## **5.5 SOCIAL CAPITAL AS NEED SATISFIERS**

Based on the range of needs that social capital appears to satisfy in Vhembe, it is possible to discern certain links with the need satisfiers proposed by Max-Neef as discussed in Chapter 2 (2.6.2):

### **5.5.1 Social capital as a violator or destroyer**

Social capital, seen as a violator or destroyer of certain needs, is meaningful for the interpretation of the study findings because this particular variety of social capital, which can be regarded as dysfunctional social capital (2.5.3), was found to affect agricultural production in Vhembe. The strong cultural beliefs and norms, such as those discussed earlier (3.3.4.6.3), hamper the growth and mobilisation of social networks outside the traditional boundaries and can indeed hinder need satisfaction for rural communities that depend on agriculture for survival. Examples that can be offered include the distrust expressed by subsistence farmers towards traditional leaders (3.3.2.2) and outsiders (4.6.2.1) as well as unreliable information circulating in social networks.

Furthermore, this study dealt with rural households that are generally poor and who live in impoverished circumstances. These circumstances make rural households in Vhembe particularly prone to the deprivation trap which Chambers (1983 : 111 - 113) refers to as an acceptance of being 'peasants' or victims of their needs (2.7). In addition, the conflict that exists between traditional and municipal leaders (Item 11, 3.3.2.2) could be interpreted as violating community development in general and need satisfaction in particular. Farm attacks and racism in Vhembe

place further restrictions on elements of social capital, particularly trust (2.4.1.3; 4.6.2.1), and erode

resources for the fulfilment of needs such as freedom and protection (2.6.2). Therefore, some forms of social capital that exist in Vhembe can be classified as violators or destroyers (2.6.2).

### **5.5.2 Social capital as a pseudo-satisfier**

Social capital may give a false impression of its need satisfying abilities. Social structures and processes that constitute social capital as defined in 2.3 were found to exist in Vhembe, although it is doubted whether certain forms of social capital are indeed resourceful. The Vhembe experience shows that social processes may give the impression of being connected with social capital (for example, cooperation and the general ability to initiate social strategies synergistically) but they have not yet proven to do so. For example, it is uncertain whether the acquisition of land by subsistence farmers would indeed result in sustainable agriculture for commercial farms in the region. Some of the farms on which land claims have been made are commercially profitable farms, like the ZZ2 and ZZ3 farms noted in section 3.4.4.3, and provide employment and significant production contributions to agriculture in Vhembe. Although the acquisition of land by subsistence farmers may create an impression of needs such as subsistence and protection being satisfied, these farmers simply do not have the capacity to sustain existing activities on large farms. Such a satisfier is therefore false.

It is furthermore clear that the false impressions of needs satisfaction created amongst local people in Vhembe, such as unmet political promises, dramatically affect agricultural production in the region since illiteracy, technical support and financial constraints will certainly make needs fulfilment difficult over the long term.

### **5.5.3 Social capital as an inhibiting satisfier**

Social capital may inhibit the satisfaction of a certain need. For example, respondents often expressed misgivings in terms of trust and the expectations in relation to their political and tribal leaders. This could be interpreted from the strong willingness by some respondents to comply with certain norms and rules. Case study A serves as one such example of conformity, where some women indicated that they would contribute their monthly share to the common savings pool even though they ‘did not know how they are going to make it through the month’.

Social capital may *seem* to satisfy certain needs, but it may fail do so. There are formal institutions in Vhembe that only fulfil the minimum requirements for survival.. The micro enterprises that exist in Vhembe exist to fill a single need, namely, to obtain profits. It may seem as if the micro enterprises are successful, but given the limited markets and growth potential of some of these businesses, they remain scattered embryos for potential growth.

#### **5.5.4 Social capital as a singular satisfier**

It may happen that social capital is created to fulfill a specific need. Case study B serves as an illustration in this regard. The Nzhelele farmers formed social patterns which constitute social capital and which were intended to overcome particular singular needs: transport for workers and the sharing of tools, communication and emergency equipment (4.6.1.2). In addition, social capital can act as a once-off satisfier should a need suddenly arise, such as a crisis.

Social capital can also be understood as a single satisfier with regard to important social institutions in Vhembe, for example rural schools in Vhembe. It would appear that a single need is satisfied at some schools, namely the provision of education (3.3.4.2). However, rural schools could ideally fulfill further needs such as sport, leisure and creativity. State-owned hospitals in Vhembe provide limited services and opportunities for local rural people (3.3.7).

### **5.5.5 Social capital as a synergetic satisfier**

Social capital can be a synergetic need satisfier. Case study D (4.6.1.4) shows that the market place in Thohoyandou is more than just a profit-oriented market. The market is also a complicated social network. Small entrepreneurs interact with agricultural role players in the region, and friends and relatives meet socially. Again, women's membership of local saving schemes in Vhembe (4.6.1.1) illustrates the synergetic value of social capital.

Based on the results of the case studies and interviews with farmers social capital can be deemed to be an important part of people's everyday lives, as manifested in Vhembe in every discipline in society: political, economical and social. Since social capital may serve as a synergetic satisfier for needs, and since social capital may be used for purposes which may destroy opportunities for the development of people and communities, a balanced perspective of social capital is needed. A balanced perspective will allow the synergetic value of social capital to be realised.

## **5.6 SOCIAL CAPITAL IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL IN NATURE**

The resource approach has shown the multidimensional nature of social capital. From the discussion in Chapter 2 it seems that social capital is indeed manifested in many ways in community life. The results presented in the previous chapter reaffirm the multidimensional nature of social capital with different appearances in different contexts. As seen in section 2.4, social capital has close links with the economic, political and cultural processes in communities. This raises issues for development practice, particularly with regard to how social capital is 'employed' for community development. The upgrading of social capital in communities has important empowerment implications, not only for the economies of developing countries but also for the social welfare of local communities.

The construct social capital is also a concept (see section 2.5) which, if broken down, appears to consist of further abstract attributes like trust, associations and informal actions. While these

attributes may collectively construe social capital, social capital is also needed to produce and maintain further forms of social capital. In terms of Max-Neef's need satisfiers discussed in 2.6 different kinds of social *capital* is needed to suit specific needs in communities. Social capital theorists therefore need to recognise that social capital can play a variety of different positive and negative roles in a community's life and development. These could be classified as specific varieties of social capital.

## **5.7 THE NECESSITY OF USING A RESOURCE APPROACH**

This study has highlighted some ways in which social capital is useful during the development process of communities. Societal processes continuously affect communities and their welfare. Alongside internal associations, the existence of externally based socio-economic institutions, such as NGOs, parastatals and aid agencies, exercises profound political and economic influences on the way community development (and research) is conducted in rural areas worldwide. Churches, labour and businesses, for example, all compete financially and ideologically; a situation which may affect the discourse and distinct social processes in communities.

The profile of Limpopo shows that large institutions have a profound affect on social capital. Institutions are completely absent in remote rural villages, as in Vhembe's case. By understanding the social good of social capital, it is possible to realise the potential benefits of social capital at a grass-roots level.

A lot can be learned from the stories presented in 4.7, specifically regarding the ways in which farmers use their social connections as resources. In the first story the dire subsistence need(s) of a farmer led to the strengthening of connections with other farmers and, as social resources, these connections were used as a means to overcome the expressed need for food security in particular. The second story shows that the subsistence farmer used her friendship to gain access to the influence of another person. This particular farmer was not sufficiently influential herself, so she made use of her friendship with

another person instead. Her friendship with another farmer

became a resource because the friendship benefited from the influence the other person already possessed. In the fourth story farmers revealed how their neighbourly relationships contributed to solving a common problem of exclusion from the market. Whereas the third story shows that it can be beneficial for subsistence farmers to be as connected as possible with friends and family, the fourth story shows that a kinship connection with an existing functional social capital network could be financially beneficial if opportunities are taken at the right time. Stories five and six reveal important features of social capital in the degree of reciprocity, social connections and positive norms that prevail amongst subsistence farmers. However, the last story is a reminder of the interconnections between the farmers interviewed, not only with each other, but also with their perceived spiritual world.

In summary, the profile of the Limpopo Province (3.3) demonstrates very limited formal socio - economic support for subsistence farmers. With regard to the hypothesis listed in 4.3, the first hypothesis is confirmed by the overwhelming nature of rural peoples' involvement in the traditional social structures. The first hypothesis is further motivated by the observation that social capital was found to be manifested in the Limpopo Province in unique, distinct and indigenous forms amongst certain agricultural role players in the Vhembe district. By means of the horizontal connections between community members and the network of social relations that exists between farmers, conditions and foundations for the use of social capital are established. This reaffirms the second hypothesis.

The case studies discussed in 4.6.1 show that indigenous knowledge of local rural villages and communities is essential for an understanding of the potential of social capital to sustain agricultural production. The item-for- item analysis (reported in paragraphs 4.6.2.1 – 4.6.2.15) provided an indication of the economic and non - economic needs that are satisfied by the social capital found amongst subsistence farmers in the Vhembe district (hypothesis three; 4.3).

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

Social capital features as a resource for community development efforts. This is clear from the wide range of manifestations of social capital in community life in general and agricultural production in particular. This was also revealed during the case studies of rural villages in the Limpopo Province (case studies A to D). The broadness of the social capital idea, as discussed in the literature overview (Chapter 2), and the contexts of developing communities such as the cases selected in this study, necessitate a splintering of the concept to reveal varieties of social capital. In doing so, social capital can be better perceived as resources for the satisfaction of specific needs at grass-roots level, and also as resources for the creation and development of general social, economic, cultural and political resources that are useful for the development process.

In the next and final chapter, an evaluation of the discussion on social capital will be done. Based on the research findings (Chapter 3 and 4) and the interpretations of the research findings presented in this chapter (5), implications and recommendations will be made before the final conclusions will be stated.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The contribution of this thesis rests upon two pillars: the extensive field research reported on in chapters 4 and 5 and the presentation of a novel re-interpretation and expansion of social capital theory in chapters 2, 5 and 6. The findings of the thesis flow out of these two pillars.

The novelty of the social capital concept resulted from the weight of the empirical research and a systematic consideration of social capital literature. In addition to this thesis providing a new conceptualisation of social capital, an empirical study was conducted during which the views of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993) (2.3.1 – 2.3.3) were applied in an African context. Social capital in Limpopo did not exactly resemble these theoretical views. Manifestations of social capital in rural communities of the Limpopo Province were investigated using the expanded perspective of social capital in the thesis. In doing so, it was possible to establish links between social capital and specific needs encountered in the context of agricultural production in Limpopo. Moreover, a fruitful use of the social capital concept was employed during the research, but with a shift in emphasis from social capital being understood as servicing economic needs, to social capital being perceived as a resource for a variety of needs. This needs to be further tested.

##### 6.1.1 Broad findings of the thesis

1. The critical review of social capital theory demonstrated that the dominant social capital paradigm is skewed towards economic needs.
2. I have developed new concepts of social capital viewed as resources for need satisfaction.

3. The thesis has given new information of social capital: social capital is seen in a new perspective in poor rural communities.

### **6.1.2 Specific findings**

1. Economic aspects dominate the social capital paradigm, particularly with regard to the use of social capital for community development efforts.
2. Social capital, as a resource for need satisfaction, was found in the rural areas of Vhembe. Even though the social capital can be described as collectively plentiful, it remains scattered and not well integrated as a whole. It can clearly be seen that rural communities in Vhembe are mostly poor and that social capital is used as a resource by rural communities, but availability of social capital amongst the rural poor in Limpopo can only be described as seeds of social capital.
3. Relationships of power characterize the socio-economic profile of the Limpopo Province. This is evident from the ethnic varieties, the power struggles between the municipal and traditional leaders, the presence of many churches, the variety of official languages, the division between western and traditional medical practices as well as the traditional social processes found in the Province. Gender seemed to be significant in regard to understanding some relationships of power in traditional rural communities; as can be seen in the exclusion of women in cultural practices, as well as distinctive strategies commonly employed by woman to satisfy their particular needs. The existence of large power structures leads to misusing people's needs as political instruments to gain power over resources instead of focusing on people's needs as an end in itself. The building of social capitals is often also a form of defence against such power.
4. Different varieties of social capital were found to exist in Limpopo and these need to be acknowledged. These varieties show that social capital, which has been described as a broad and vague construct (2.5), needs to be specified so that it can be researched in terms of its full

manifestation in community life. For research purposes social capital can be conceived as functional, dysfunctional, active, existing and potential for need satisfaction. Social capital may also be absent in communities.

5. The concept of social capital needs to be developed in the direction of resources for need satisfaction. A close relationship between social capital and need satisfaction is evident from the literature study (2.6), as well as the field work. This relationship exists between social capital and material need satisfiers such as hospitals and schools, although the case studies and the interviews done amongst subsistence farmers indicate that the nature of this relationship is further expanded to include non-material needs, which can only be expressed in qualitative terms.
6. Social capital is contextually bound and the context of Vhembe shows that social capital in rural contexts may indeed exist outside the theoretical boundaries as proposed by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. Based on the feedback from the respondents in the sites studied, questions could be raised about the application of the social capital theory in other similar rural communities in the developing world. Besides the problem of the universal application of social capital theory, current social capital theory also appears limiting as a means of satisfying the wide range of current and potential needs in indigenous rural communities.
7. Given the large variety of needs unmet by large institutions and governments in rural communities, and the strategies employed by local rural people to satisfy these needs, an approach to social capital based on resources for needs satisfaction is needed. Such an approach would facilitate an understanding of resources serving as building blocks of social capital, as well as an understanding of further resources that result from the use of social capital. In this way social capital can be perceived as an important link between local people and available resources, such as institutional resources or public relations with the State.

## 6.2 IMPLICATIONS

- The study of the rural farmers reflects the rural situation of rural people in the Vhembe region of Limpopo, and not South Africa as a whole. It must be kept in mind that the agricultural producers, particularly the subsistence farmers, who took part in this study only account for a small portion of the South African population of agricultural producers. The social life of the rural *VhaVenda* people shows strong similarities with other African communities although any hasty generalisation would be purely speculative.
- The lack of clarity associated with the concept social capital means that the concept may be subjected to abuse by political leaders and economic institutions. Abuse of the content and character of social capital will have further effects on the aims of development interventions, research carried out in rural communities and the satisfaction of rural peoples' needs. The striving for material need satisfiers (such as wealth and financial prosperity) appears attractive for both public as well as private sectors of society and can either create opportunities for social capital, or destroy them. This research amplifies the weaknesses in social capital theory which mislead important role players in societies into ignoring relevant social need satisfiers.
- Since a close relationship was established between social capital and need satisfaction, local rural development efforts aimed at addressing peoples' needs should include social capital as an integral part of the design and implementation of such efforts. It is not sufficient for social capital to be understood as a factor of economic production alone. Such an understanding is skew and counterproductive to achieving holistic and multi – dimensional development objectives.
- The theoretical views of social capital, as perceived by Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam and others (2.3) do not specifically account for the complex social processes found in developing regions of the world. The selection of cases presented in Chapter 3 and 4 have shown that the satisfaction of people needs is fundamental to a better understanding of the manifestations of social

capital in community life and that social capital may be used in different ways as satisfiers for different needs of rural people.

- Development efforts should create opportunities for the creation and mobilisation of social capital at local, regional, national and international levels. Firstly, at a local level, community development is proposed as a reasonably sufficient strategy to both create and mobilise existing social capital. Secondly, fostering social capital at the regional level will require an understanding of the connections between social networks, local institutions and political powers at a local level. In the third instance, social capital creation at a national level will depend on a strong political will and effective political policies formulated by the South African government to foster development in local rural areas. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, are the effects that global processes have on national social capital formation. These effects could be seen in Limpopo via the influences, both positive and negative, that local businesses and institutions may have on local social capital. The selection of cases presented in the research chapter also reveal that social capital can be active in unique forms, a fact that appears to have been insufficiently appreciated by international development initiatives.

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In view of the many appearances of social capital in communities across the world, it is necessary to develop context-specific relations of social capital. This will allow for an understanding of how social capital is used locally as satisfiers of need satisfaction. The selection of cases in Limpopo shows that communities may experience similar needs, but that social capital is employed in different ways to satisfy such needs. These cases also show that social capital is used to satisfy specific needs in communities.
- There is an urgent need to develop policies to strengthen social capital. Better use could be made of locally available social capital, if there was regional and national policy commitment. The Limpopo experience has shown that social capital is supported or

discouraged by larger political powers, and that this affects local interventions. Moreover, effective policies which encourage social capital on a broad scale will also encourage better relations between communities and the State. The interviews with the subsistence farmers, specifically 4.6.2.4, 4.6.2.6 and 4.6.2.15 show that people have high expectations of the State, but given the regional context of Limpopo and the neglect of social capital in various ways (as outlined in Chapter 3), it can rightfully be recommended that the national and provincial governments should strengthen local social capital through policy.

- Further research is necessary. Social capital remains an elusive concept which makes the development of precise measuring instruments (for social capital) difficult. Possible research themes which relate to social capital, as evident from this study, could include: change management, community empowerment, the role of churches, policy studies, youth studies, the role of the elderly and, importantly, indigenous forms of social capital.
- By understanding social capital as a synergistic resource for the fulfillment of various needs, it is possible to better understand how social networks affect institutional discourse. This is a particularly urgent task in developing countries and developing communities. From the selection of cases in Limpopo it can be seen that the social capital that exists at different levels allows an understanding of the social embeddedness of institutions in the social, economic and political landscape of the region.
- Based on the research findings presented in Chapter 4, a broadening of the social capital theoretical paradigm is needed. This implies a re-think of social capital in terms of the social processes in developing countries and regions. The World Bank and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) should endeavour to draw on the strengths of communities, rather than their shortcomings which lead to patterns of dependency. In so doing, the resource- qualities of social capital could be discovered.

#### 6.4 FINAL CONCLUSION

Social capital is important for the development process. By investigating resources, social capital can be used to find local resources available to communities. The research done in Limpopo shows that an understanding of social capital as an economic good only, is limiting, and that better use can be made of social capital by viewing it as multi-dimensional and as a *collection of resources* relevant to satisfy a wide variety of needs.

*‘The construction of a human economy poses an important theoretical challenge, namely, to understand fully the dialectic between needs, satisfiers and economic goods. This is necessary in order to conceive forms of economic organization in which goods empower satisfiers to meet fully and consistently fundamental human needs’. Max - Neef (1991 : 25)*

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## QUESTIONNAIRE: SOCIAL RESOURCES

### 1. Trust

1.1 Would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can never be too careful in dealing with people?

1.2 Which people do you trust most?

Family	friends	government officials	traditional leaders	other
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1.3 Which people do you trust the least?

Family	friends	government officials	traditional leaders	other
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1.4 Do you think that people are mostly looking out for themselves when they try to be helpful?

1.5 Do you think that if people get the chance that they will take advantage of you?

### 2 Social connections

2.1 Do you belong to any social club or social organisation?

2.2 Are your co-workers (like co-farmers) also your friends? Do you work as a team?

2.3 Do you enjoy living amongst different people with different cultures and lifestyles?

2.4 Have you done a favour for someone lately?

2.5 Can you get help from people in your village if you need help? If so, from whom?

2.6 How often do you visit your neighbours?

Daily	once a week	less than once a week
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2.7 Are you satisfied with your family and friends? Why/ why not?

### **3 Government support**

3.1 Which services are being offered by government here in your village?

3.2 Which of these services do you *not* have access to?

3.3 What do you think the government should do for your village?

### **4 Past and present community development efforts**

4.1 Do you think that previous development attempts were successful or not successful here  
in your village or community?

4.2 What do you think your community or village need to become successful in its  
development attempts?

### **5 Household coping strategies**

5.1 Describe in detail the initiatives taken by the following people in your community or  
village:

- women
- youth
- elderly

5.2 Which of your relatives could you ask assistance from?

5.3 Describe in detail a particular way in which your family cope during difficult times.

### **6 Formal cooperation**

6.1 Which local formal organisations are active in your community or village?

6.2 Who are the main employers in your village?

6.3 Which services do they provide to you and your family?

6.4 Are you satisfied that local formal organisations contribute to the satisfaction of needs in your community? Why/ why not?

6.5 Do you cooperate with any formal organisation and do you think that they help you to satisfy some of your needs? Please explain your answer as detailed as possible.

## 7 Informal cooperation

7.1 Which of the following informal schemes do you participate in?

Stokvels	saving schemes	burial societies	other
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7.2 Which of the informal activities in which you are involved in do you think is most resourceful for you?

7.3 In which informal ways do the farmers in your village cooperate with each other?

## 8 Needs

8.1 What are your personal needs?

8.2 Do you think people here in this village are aware of each others needs?

8.3 How does your community or village help you to satisfy you and your families' needs?

8.4 How does your village cope with the problems of its people? How does your village help you?

## 9 Religious activities

9.1 Do you attend any church, if so, which religion ?

9.2 How do you think that the churches in the area help your village or community?

## 10 Information

10.1 Which sources of information are most useful to you? Why?

10.2 Do you listen to the radio, if so, to which radio stations and at what times?

10.3 What do you read?

Newspapers	books	magazines	other
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10.4 Which are the other sources of information available here in your village/ community?

## 11 Dysfunctionality

11.1 Is it safe in your village at night?

11.2 Are there gangs or violent groups operating in your village?

11.3 Which problems exist in your village or community that you feel need to be addressed?

11.4 Do you think that different cultures can live peacefully together in this area?

11.5 What do the people in your village do to prevent crime?

## 12 Social norms

12.1 Do you think people have patience with each other in your community or village?

12.2 Would you describe the people here in your village as being helpful towards each other?

12.3 Do you think that your village or community has survived difficult times, if so, why?

12.4 Do you forgive people if they make bad mistakes?

12.5 Will you help someone without being paid? Why?

## 13 Participation

13.1 Do you participate in any community development attempts? (Why?/ Why not?)

13.2 Are you an active member of any of the following:

Social club	interest group	union	community or village movement	other
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13.3 Do other community members participate in any development projects and, if so, how?

13.4 How do you spend your free time?

13.5 How does your family spend their free time?

13.6 How do the children spend their free time?

13.7 Do you participate in sport activities? If so, which types of sport?

#### **14 Group interaction**

14.1 In which ways do you cooperate with other people (e.g. other farmers, women's groups, interest groups?)

14.2 How does belonging to a group make you feel?

14.3 Do you think that you can accomplish more in life if you work together with a group that feels the same as you about a problem?

#### **15 Confidence/ optimism/ vision**

15.1 What do you think is the purpose of life?

15.2 How do you feel about your future here in your community or village?

15.3 What is your vision for your community or village?

15.4 Can you tell a story of when you used your friendship to overcome a certain problem?

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE - THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

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