RECREATION PROVISION IN LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC

COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

Engela van der Klashorst

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER ARTIUM

(Human Movement Science)

in the Faculty of Humanities,

Department of Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences,

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

May 2010

Study Leader: Professor A.E. Goslin

Co-Study Leader: Dr. J.G.U. van Wyk

1

DECLARATION

I, Engela van der Klashorst, hereby declare that this research for the degree, Magister Artium (Human Movement Science), at the University of Pretoria, has not previously been submitted by me for the degree, at this or any other university; that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all materials from published sources contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

....
Date   Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people for their support in the completion of this study:

- ➢ God, my Saviour, who took me on the road less travelled.
- ➢ My mother, Engela. Thank you for all your untiring support and faith in me. Together we make a great team!
- ➢ Professor A.E. Goslin, thank you for changing my life. You played a critical role in my decision to pursue a career in recreation. Thank you for your guidance in the completion of this study.
- ➢ My co-supervisor, Dr. J.G.U. van Wyk, thank you for the encouragement and enthusiasm towards my completion of the study.
- ➢ Renier, my brother, who believes that I can accomplish whatever I put my mind to. Thank you for introducing me to the poorer members of our society – you opened my eyes to the true meaning of being a Christian.
- ➢ My father, Philip. Thank you for your support, and being who you are.
- ➢ The special residents of Danville and Elandspoort, thank you for showing me that life is about more than money. You inspire me to keep searching for a way to change your communities for the better.
- ➢ Philip, Mia and Stephan, the best three kids in the world. Your photo on my screensaver was a great motivator in finishing this study. I hope I can be your inspiration one day.
- ➢ Jontè, my Yorkshire terrier, thank you for keeping me company when I was working on this study. You are a true friend!

SUMMARY

Title: Recreation provision in lower socio-economic communities in South
                Africa

Candidate: Engela van der Klashorst

Degree: Magister Artium (Human Movement Sciences)

Department: Department of Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences

Supervisor: Professor A.E. Goslin

Co-supervisor: Dr. G.J.U. van Wyk

The provision of leisure and recreation has the potential to vitalise and change lower socio-economic communities. The benefits of leisure and recreation participation are, however, absent in the lower socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort, as recreation and leisure activities are not seen as necessary needs that should be provided for the residents. Lower socio-economic status communities tend to suffer as a consequence of the often subliminal assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people. A major barrier to the implementation of recreation programmes in lower socio-economic communities remains the fact that these programmes often fall into the ambit of non-profit organisations, whose first priority does not usually include recreation provision.

Second-order cybernetics theory is introduced in this study as a possible alternative approach to recreation provision in lower socio-economic communities. Engaging in a second-order cybernetics approach, the recreation provider can look beyond the feedback patterns utilised by a community to maintain its status quo, and work with and within a community to establish a sustainable recreation programme. Through the use of a second-order cybernetics approach, the residents of a lower socio-economic status community will no longer be regarded as the 'observed' participants of a programme that has been designed by an 'observer' and 'expert' recreation provider, but will, rather, participate in and share the responsibility of designing their own recreation programme for the community.

The following three hypotheses were formulated:
> Recreation provision in lower socio-economic communities will benefit from a
  second-order cybernetics approach.

- Sustainable recreation provision in a lower socio-economic status community will enhance the quality of life of the residents engaging in the activities available within the community.

- Second-order recreation provision in a lower socio-economic community will create an environment that is likely to be beneficial for social change.

In order for the hypotheses to be tested, the aims of the study were:
- To examine the influence of recreation and leisure opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining social cohesion and quality of life in lower socio-economic status communities.
- To identify the barriers to providing and maintaining a comprehensive, sustainable recreation programme in a lower socio-economic community.
- To understand the way in which the residents of Danville and Elandspoort view recreation and recreation provision within the communities.

- To identify the similarities and differences between the current approach to recreational provision in the lower socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort and a second-order cybernetics approach.

Grounded in a qualitative framework, the research methods for the study included a literature review, the use of focus groups and vignette techniques, and observation. The sampling for the focus groups was done by means of convenience sampling. In total, six focus groups, which were segmented by place of attendance, participated. A total of 60 participants were used in the study, excluding the residents to whom the researcher spoke throughout the course of the study, and as part of the observation.

It was found that a positive relationship exists between lower socio-economic status and inappropriate recreation programming. Lower socio-economic status communities are excluded from participation by means of several barriers, including factors such as cost of participation, registration fees and transport. An important barrier to recreation participation in the lower socio-economic status communities of Danville and Elandspoort that was identified in the study was the absence of recreation facilities in the communities. Residents confirmed that television and the consumption of alcohol were the main recreation activities in the communities. The responses provided in focus group discussions confirmed the fact that residents felt

excluded from society, and that they also assumed that leisure and recreation activities were privileges that were reserved only for the middle and higher socio-economic status communities. Residents within the communities did not only feel excluded from society, but also felt powerless to do something about the situation. In response to the question concerning their perception of quality of life within the communities, participants demonstrated that they felt that recreation programming would be a positive contribution to the communities' perception of a better quality of life. A second-order approach to recreation provision in the communities of Danville and Elandspoort will assist in facilitating a process of social change within the communities by including residents in the planning and provision of a community recreation programme.

In order to utilize the full potential of leisure and recreation provision in the lower socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort, the following aspects are suggested for the undertaking of any further research:

➢ The potential of leisure and recreation provision to facilitate social change in a lower socio-economic community.
➢ Real barriers versus perceived barriers to recreation provision and recreation participation in a lower socio-economic community.
➢ Second-order cybernetics recreation provision as a community development approach: implementation and evaluation of change and sustainability within the community.

Keywords:

Recreation provision; lower socio-economic communities; second-order cybernetics; social change.

SAMEVATTING

Titel: Rekreasievoorsiening in laer sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe in
                Suid-Afrika

Kandidaat: Engela van der Klashorst

Graad: Magister Artium (Menslike Bewegingskunde)

Departement: Departement Biokinetika, Sport- en Vryetydswetenskappe

Studieleier: Professor Dr. A.E. Goslin

Medestudieleier: Dr. J.G.U. van Wyk

Die voorsiening van rekreasie in 'n lae sosio-ekonomiese status gemeenskap het die inherente vermoë om 'n positiewe verandering in die gemeenskap te bring. Die voordeel van rekreasie kan egter nie in die lae sosio-ekonomiese status gemeenskappe van Danville en Elandspoort verwesenlik en bydrae tot 'n hoër persepsie van lewenskwaliteit nie, aangesien rekreasievoorsiening dikwels nie gesien word as 'n nodige behoefte in die versorging van lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe nie. Die voorsiening van behoeftes in lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe val dikwels onder die vaandel van geloofsgroepe (kerke), nie-winsgewende organisasies en vrywilligers wat, alhoewel met goeie bedoelings, dikwels onbewustelik as 'kenners' namens die gemeenskap besluite neem.

'n Tweede-orde kubernetiese benadering tot rekreasievoorsiening word in die studie voorgestel as 'n moontlike alternatief tot die huidige benadering in lae sosio-ekonomiese status gemeenskappe. Die gebruik van 'n tweede-orde kubernetiese benadering gee die rekreasievoorsiener die geleentheid om verby die gemeenskap se terugvoer patrone te kyk, en saam met die gemeenskap 'n volhoubare rekreasieprogram te ontwikkel. 'n Tweede-orde kubernetiese benadering tot rekreasie voorsiening verander die posisie van die gemeenskapslede van 'geobserveerde' deelnemers aan 'n rekreasie program ontwerp deur 'n 'observerende' rekreasiekundige, na 'n deelnemende rol in die ontwerp van die rekreasie program vir die gemeenskap.

Die volgende drie hipoteses is geformuleer in antwoord op die navorsings probleem:
  ➤ Rekreasie voorsiening in lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe sal positief beïnvloed word deur 'n tweede-orde kubernetiese benadering.

> ➢ 'n Volhoubare rekreasie program en geleenthede vir rekreasie deelname in die lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe van Danville en Elandspoort sal die gemeenskap se persepsie van lewenskwaliteit verhoog.
> ➢ 'n Rekreasie program met 'n tweede-orde kubernetiese benadering in 'n lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskap sal bydrae tot 'n omgewing ontvanklik vir sosiale verandering.

Die doelwitte gestel vanuit die hipoteses is as volg:
> ➢ Om die invloed van rekreasie en vryetyds-besteding geleenthede op die sosiale samehorigheid en handhawing van 'n positiewe persepsie van lewenskwaliteit in die lae sosio-ekonomies gemeenskappe van Danville en Elandspoort te ondersoek;
> ➢ Om die struikelblokke tot die aanbied van 'n volhoubare rekreasieprogram in 'n lae sosio-ekonomies gemeenskap te identifiseer;
> ➢ Om te verstaan hoe die inwoners van die lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe van Danville en Elandspoort rekreasie voorsiening in die gemeenskap sien en ervaar;
> ➢ Om ooreenkomste asook verskille tussen die huidige benadering tot rekreasie voorsiening in die gemeenskap, en 'n moontlike tweede-orde kubernetiese benadering te identifiseer.

Navorsing in die studie is kwalitatief en navorsingsmetodes sluit in 'n literatuurstudie, fokus groepe, vignette tegniek, informele onderhoud en observasie. Selektering vir die fokus groepe is gedoen deur gerieflikheids-selektering, met indeling volgens die plek van bywoning: twee sopkombuise in Elandspoort, 'n sopkombuis in Danville en 'n ma-en-baba sentrum in Danville. 'n Totaal van sestig deelnemers is gebruik in die studie, uitgesluit die gemeenskapslede met wie die navorser gepraat het deur die verloop van die studie.

'n Positiewe verhouding is gevind tussen lae sosio-ekonomies status en swak rekreasie voorsiening. Lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskappe word uitgesluit deur die bestaan van verskeie struikelblokke tot deelname aan rekreasie, insluitend koste van deelname, registrasiefooie en vervoerprobleme. 'n Belangrike struikelblok tot deelname aan rekreasie geidentifiseer in die studie is die afwesigheid van rekreasie fasiliteite in die gemeenskap. Inwoners het bevestig dat televisie en verbruik van

alkohol die belangrikste vorm van rekreasie in die gemeenskap is. Reaksies van deelnemers aan die fokusgroepe het bevestig dat inwoners uitgesluit voel van die samelewing, en dat die aanname binne die gemeenskap bestaan dat rekreasie en vryetyd-aktiwiteite die voorreg van middel en hoër sosio-ekonomiese status gemeenskappe is. In reaksie op inwoners se lewenskwaliteit is daar deur die deelnemers aangedui dat rekreasie aktiwiteite in die gemeenskap sal bydrae tot 'n positiewe persepsie van lewenskwaliteit.

Om die volle potensiaal van rekreasie voorsiening in die gemeenskap van Danville en Elandspoort tot reg te laat kom, word die volgende aanbevelings gemaak ten opsigte van verdere navorsing:

➢ Die potensiaal van rekreasie en vryetydsbestuur in die fasiliteitering van sosiale verandering in 'n lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskap.
➢ Werklike struikelblokke teenoor die 'persepsie' van struikelblokke in 'n lae sosio-ekonomiese gemeenskap.
➢ Implementering van 'n tweede-orde kubernetiese rekreasie program in 'n lae sosio-ekonomiese status gemeenskap.

Sleutelterme:
Rekreasievoorsiening; lae sosio-ekonomies gemeenskappe; tweede-orde kubernetika; sosiale verandering.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER FOUR

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

LIST OF PHOTO'S

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, AIM, AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

1.1. INTRODUCTION:

'*If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich...*'

- John F. Kennedy

Leisure, sport and recreation are not new concepts in society. These concepts have been associated with elitism and class privilege since the earliest civilizations. It is common knowledge that impoverished communities are characterized by poverty, unemployment, poor health and limited access to services, if any, such as recreation provision. However, it is felt that, through recreation experiences, individuals are enabled to live more satisfying, enjoyable and productive lives than if such opportunities were not accessible to them (Iwasaki, 2006).

For chronically poor people, poverty is not only about earning a low income, it is also about multidimensional deprivation. Not being literate, not having access to health care, social isolation and exploitation all play a part. Such deprivation and suffering exist in a world that has the knowledge and resources to rectify the situation. The causes of chronic poverty are complex and usually involve sets of overlaying factors; rarely is there a single, clear cause. Some of these factors are labelled 'maintainers' of chronic poverty and operate so as to keep poor people poor. 'Drivers' of chronic poverty push vulnerable non-poor and transitory poor people into poverty so that they cannot find a way out of the situation. Poverty is often passed on from one generation to another as if offspring suckle the condition at the breast. Poverty refers to what the poor are lacking, but the lack could be the result of a condition either created or uncorrected by the upper and middle classes. It can, thus, be argued that the poor define the middle and upper classes (Stromquist, 2001).

This study focuses on four areas within recreation provision in low socio-economic communities: recreation participation and socio-economic status, recreation provision and social change, recreation activity and quality of life (QOL) and recreation programming with a second-order cybernetics approach. Within all of

these themes, reference is made to barriers that exist in recreation provision in low socio-economic areas.

Leisure and recreation participation often change as a result of certain life events such as loss of employment and reduction in income. Targeted leisure and recreation programming can play a part in helping people to maintain well-being and to cope, or grow with these transitions (Mannell, 2006). Scott (2000), nevertheless, argues that many people living in lower socio-economic communities are finding that the quantity and quality of available park and recreation have worsened. His view is summarised in the title of an article, *Tic, toc, the game is locked and nobody else can play!*

Issues of justice and injustice within low socio-economic communities have been only tangentially addressed in the literature pertaining to leisure and recreation participation. Some groups suffer as a consequence of the often subliminal assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in their ordinary interactions, in their culturally stereotypical perceptions, in short, the normal processes of everyday life (Young cited in Allison, 2000). A major barrier to the creation of recreation and leisure programming remains the fact that these programmes often fall into the ambit of non-profit organisations, which are dependent on donations and volunteers. The primary aim of most non-profit organisations is, firstly, to provide food and clothing. Everything else, including recreation provision, is secondary.

Social exclusion has become a central organising concept in social policy research. This concept is multi-dimensional, and embraces economic, social and political deprivation. In contrast to earlier research traditions, the perspective of social exclusion draws attention to how people are 'put out of society' by their inability to participate in customary leisure activities. The ability to participate in leisure activity is the product of both access to leisure goods and services, as well as to a sufficient amount of leisure time. Consumption of leisure goods and services is primarily determined by income. Consequently, low-income status often results in exclusion from participation in leisure activity (Bittman, 2002).

Urban parks, open spaces and recreation facilities remain predominantly local facilities. It can, therefore, be argued that the spatial provision of parks and

recreation facilities is critical in achieving – or denying – social inclusion and integration, as are the decisions about the types of equipment and facilities offered in a park. When parks and open spaces appear to be hostile and underequipped to residents, it may lead to increased feelings of exclusion and isolation, rather than the fostering of social integration. This type of isolation also encourages reinforcement of boundaries (and differences) between communities, a situation that is further backed up by who is allowed (or not allowed) access to community spaces (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000).

In Western cities, most leisure provision is privatised and consumption thereof occurs in private spaces (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Findings from a study by Giles-Corti and Donovan (2002) demonstrate an inequitable distribution of recreation facilities in favour of high socio-economic status suburbs. These findings raise concerns that inadequate access to recreation provision in disadvantaged communities contributes to lower levels of participation in physical activity and also to alienation from society. Low-income families are confronted with a formidable list of barriers to participation in sports, arts and community recreation programmes. Registration fees, the cost of sports equipment, materials and uniforms, the lack of private transportation, and the costs of and difficulties with public transportation are cited as major barriers (Boyle, DeWit & Racine, 2006). Engaging in most sport, recreation and physical activities requires money, clothing and equipment; subscriptions to clubs and magazines, match fees, insurance and coaching if a person becomes more serious; entry fees to facilities as competitors and spectators; and travel, food and expenses when competing away from home (Collins, 2004).

It is often argued that people in the lower socio-economic strata do not need recreation facilities as they do not work. Unconsciously, it is assumed that leisure and recreation activities are privileges of the middle and upper classes, and that people in low socio-economic communities have no right, and surely no interest in quality recreation experiences. This perspective often results in the stigmatisation of the lower socio-economic communities as being unworthy of society's efforts, and as needing only minimal attention in recreation programme and facility development. There have been arguments (King, 1998) that state that targeting the poor or underprivileged sectors for the promotion of recreation and physical activities may

be inappropriate or counterproductive, since it is felt that they clearly have more pressing issues to be worried about.

The means by which people who are dissimilar to those in mainstream society, for example, those living in a low socio-economic community, are labelled and represented as the 'other' by dominant groups' perspectives and experiences, thus rendering these other groups invisible, is known as 'cultural imperialism'. It is a process by which a dominant group defines and expropriates the accepted 'rules' of the society through widely disseminated mass communication, the maintenance of stereotypes and other forms of cultural expression. The injustice of cultural imperialism is that the oppressed groups' own experience and interpretation of social life finds little expression that touches the core of dominant culture, while that same culture imposes on the oppressed group its own experience and interpretation of social life. Many historically oppressed groups continue to struggle, define and redefine themselves in ways quite different from those that have been imposed by the dominant order (Allison, 2000).

Scott (2000) postulates that a 'business as usual' attitude within the leisure and recreation industry perpetuates inequality in several ways. Firstly, leisure service agencies have adopted an entrepreneurial approach to service delivery that includes the generation of revenue through fees and charges, privatization and efficiency. In some communities and agencies where these practices are employed, social equity appears to be becoming less important in decisions concerning resources and services. Consequently, many people living in poorer communities are finding that the quality and quantity of available park and recreation services have worsened. Recreation activity plays an important role in the concept of quality of life. To develop any form of sustainable recreation programme that addresses the needs of marginal, low socio-economic communities, there should be systematic attempts to understand what quality of life means within the context of that community, as well as to understand how these barriers influence the quality of life of residents. Shin and Rutkowski (2003) mention that quality of life is a difficult concept to define in social science. People living in different situations perceive different factors as being essential to a meaningful existence. As a consequence, the notion of quality of life has been defined in different ways, from different viewpoints. Broadly defined,

quality of life refers to a person's sense of wellbeing, that is, his or her satisfaction with life. Iwasaki (2006) views the notion of quality of life as being primarily concerned with whether people have a *'good'* life. The researchers mentioned above also include the objective (i.e. the conditions of life) and subjective (i.e. the experience of life) aspects of quality of life in their definitions.

The World Health Organisation (1997), as cited by Iwasaki (2006:26), defines quality of life as an '*individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system, and in relation to their goals, expectations and standards'*. The World Health Organisation's Quality of Life Assessment (WHOQOL) was based on an extensive pilot test that involved using focus groups in fifteen centres around the world. It is worth noting that participation in, and opportunities for recreation and leisure activities were found to be a significant contributor to quality of life, based on confirmatory factor analysis. This finding suggests that leisure activity represents a key element of quality of life in all communities.

The question arises as to why we should concern ourselves about the quality of life of individuals who may be poor, or elderly, or deviant. According to Allison (1991:47–53), quality of life refers to a general sense of being, a sense that things are good with life and that a general sense of contentment exists with one's living conditions:

> *'Those involved in whatever facet of sport science, sport practice, or sports medicine must assume at some level that some involvement in sport, play or recreation activities somehow enhances the physical and mental health of participants and, to some degree then, has the potential to enhance the quality of life of those who choose to engage in such activity'*

It is, therefore, not a question of whether or not recreational provision should be seen as a surplus need, a privilege, or whether the qualities which it brings to life are seen as a right to be shared by all individuals, but rather one of why recreation facilities are not being substantially implemented in more low socio-economic communities. Jackson (2006) warns that the value of leisure as a means to achieving economic and social goals has been ignored and undervalued for far too long.

If it is acknowledged that one of the tenets of recreation, leisure and sports programmes is to enhance the quality of life of all individuals, then Allison's (1991) contention that providers must strive towards providing opportunities for participation for all is of crucial importance. Even though recreation participation and satisfaction with leisure activities often decreases with unemployment, access to constructive and stimulating recreation activity helps people to cope with loss of work and low socio economic conditions. The unemployed, whose leisure time is usually characterised as 'doing nothing' and 'watching television', appear to develop lower self-esteem during periods of unemployment and this, in turn, leads to the perception of lower quality of life (Mannell, 2006). The research of Neal (1999) corroborates the fact that leisure experiences can play a significant role in enhancing a person's quality of life. In his study, Neal explains the hierarchy model of life satisfaction that is used to clarify the relationship between leisure satisfaction and quality of life. The hierarchy model postulates that the affect within a life domain spills over vertically to the most superordinate domain (life in general), thus determining life satisfaction.

Leisure and recreation opportunities have the potential to make a significant contribution to the well-being of a community (Russell & Jamieson, 2008). However, if there are no recreation programmes and opportunities available, such a lack could contribute to an opposite, negative situation. Recreation programming in the Danville/ Elandspoort community does not contribute to the community's well-being and life satisfaction, as it is usually undertaken in a fragmented way.

Recreation provision must possess three characteristics in order to be able to play a transformative role in low socio-economic communities, or to contribute to change within such a community. These three include equal access to recreation programmes, equal participation possibilities, and equitable outcomes. Van Buren (2007: 310) refers to the communication scholars, Singhal and Rogers, who define social change as *'the process by which an alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system'*. Change can occur at the individual, community or other system level. Furthermore, methods to promote social change can bring about a direct transformation or can assist in creating an environment more conducive to change. In the preface to their book, *Leisure as Transformation*, Edginton and Chen

(2008) state that leisure holds infinite possibilities for change. As such, leisure is an optimal medium for transformation. Shaw (2006) is convinced that leisure and recreation opportunities can play a role in working towards equity in general, and also in reducing disadvantage that is linked to factors such as income, education and gender. As a result, leisure opportunities could help to challenge processes that lead to the construction of difference. Leisure and recreation opportunities are also potential contexts for empowerment, which can be directed towards social transformation and the distribution of power and privilege within societies. In the study of social change, attention is focused on factors influencing change and resistance to change. Individuals and groups are not always in favour of new ideas and technological changes. Innovations might be actively or passively opposed, thereby exhibiting resistance to change (Edginton, 2008).

Socialization in western society often takes place in a world where philosophical assumptions are firmly rooted in western scientific tradition. This approach teaches a linear cause-effect approach as the only one that is appropriate, and states that any problem is solvable if an answer to the question *'why?'* can be found. From this perspective, event A causes event B (A→B) in a linear, unidirectional fashion. A is held responsible for B, and, consequently, causes B. Living in a low socio-economic community is, therefore, seen as a reason for the provision of substandard recreation programmes. From this perspective, reality is considered as being separate from people, as existing outside of them, outside their minds. Meaning, thus, comes from external experience, and individuals are the recipients. The individual is seen as reacting to reality rather than as creating it. Flowing from this is the belief that the subject/mind can view objects/reality from a distance without imposing its values or beliefs on reality (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). From this theoretical perspective, it can be reasoned that residents of low socio-economic communities, for example, Danville and Elandspoort in the Tshwane Metropolitan area, are poor and, therefore, do not have access to quality recreation facilities; or, that unemployment is the cause of no recreation participation. It is, however, difficult to translate social situations to a linear cause-effect approach and solution. There are usually various contributing factors that lead to a certain effect, where the effect, in turn, has an influence on the cause. Recreation activity is largely a social phenomenon, and therefore requires an

approach that offers the recreation provider an alternative way of approaching a community.

Cybernetic theory directs attention away from the individual, and from individual problems viewed in isolation, towards relationship issues between individuals. For observers from outside a community, a low socio-economic community may resemble a 'black box', that is, what really happens on the inside is not clear from the outside (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Outsiders tend to believe that the provision of clothing and food will help in the development of low socio-economic communities. Recreation providers might reason that a community needs new facilities, when, in fact, it may perhaps need constant, sustainable recreation programmes. Within cybernetic theory, linear causality does not exist (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Instead, there is an emphasis on reciprocity, recursion, and shared responsibility. In the case of recreation programmes, it is, therefore, not the sole responsibility of the recreation organiser to provide a recreation programme for the community. The community and the recreation provider exist in a relationship where each influences the other, and both are equally the cause and effect of each other's behaviour. Subjectivity is seen as inevitable as the observer perceives, acts on, and creates his or her own reality. The interdependence of observer and observed is an important aspect of a holistic perspective that takes into account the context of the interaction. Such interaction is seen as a non-causal, dialectic process of mutual influence in which both participate. Understanding requires the assessment of patterns of interaction, with the emphasis being on *what* is happening, rather than on *why* it is happening (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

Decisions regarding the goal of social change, whether first- or second-order change, depend on the situation and values of those involved. Second-order change may not always be desirable or necessary, but often first-order change simply leaves the burden of change to the community's members. Second-order change has more potential to shift this burden, and alter the balance of power or resources. Therefore, it can be stated that, although small incremental steps to change certainly have a time and a place, promotional efforts that explicitly target the status quo have greater potential to destabilise non-adaptive systems, and to create system-level change

when appropriate (Tseng, Chesit-Teran, Becker-Klein, Chan, Duran, Roberts & Bardoliwalla, 2002).

In order to be consistent with the cybernetic theory's assumption of *'recursiveness'*, or reciprocal causality, people and events must be viewed in the context of mutual interaction and mutual influence. Rather than looking at individuals in isolation, the relationship between the individual and his or her environment is examined, that is, how he or she interacts with and influences the other. It can be argued that a low socio-economic community needs a higher socio-economic community to provide for its needs, just as the higher socio-economic community needs the low socio-economic community to provide for the confirmation of its social status. While the dominant party may appear to hold more power than the submissive one, the one cannot dominate the other unless the latter agrees to submit. One community cannot be submissive without the cooperation, whether conscious or not, of another community which dominates.

Cybernetics is divided into a first- and second-order approach. In a first-order approach, the observer observes the identified system, but is not included in the system. The system, or in this case, the low socio-economic community, is seen in terms of an airliner's 'black box', and the recreation provider attempts to understand its operation by observing what goes into and comes out of the system (the feedback processes), without being a part of the system. First-order cybernetics puts the observer in another black box, and fails to take into account the interactions of the two systems as they both exist within a larger context (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). A first-order cybernetic system detects and corrects errors; it compares a current state to a desired state, acts to achieve the desired state, and measures progress toward the goal (Dubberly & Pangaro, 2007). Second-order cybernetics (also known as 'cybernetics of cybernetics') moves the system up to a higher level of abstraction so that there is no longer an 'observer' of the black box. On the level of second-order cybernetics, systems are not viewed only in the context of the inputs and outputs of, or relationships with, other systems (Leydesdorff, 1997). Systems are moved to the larger context that includes the black box plus the observer. At this higher level of abstraction, the observer becomes part of, or a participant in what is observed. A second-order cybernetic systems' recreation provider, working with a social system,

recognises that particular system as an agent in its own right, interacting with another agent − the observer (recreation provider). Observer and observed cannot be separated, and the result of the observations will depend on the interaction. The community and the recreation provider can, consequently, not be separated. The observer, too, is a cybernetic system, trying to construct a model of another cybernetic system (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). Second-order cybernetics originated in reaction to what were seen as the deficiencies of first-order cybernetics, and generally deals with living systems, and not with the development of control systems for inanimate technological devices. These living systems range from simple cells all the way up the evolutionary scale to human beings and communities, while the observers themselves are obviously also human beings. In contrast, thus, to the engineering approach of first-order cybernetics, most of second-order cybernetics could be said to have a mainly biological approach, or, at the very least, a biological basis (Geyer, 1998).

The ultimate goal of recreation provision in communities must, on some level, be to bring about change; however, change is a difficult process to instigate as communities tend to resist deviating from what is known to them. By operating from a second-order cybernetics perspective, the recreation provider facilitates the change process. Second-order change involves a change in the rules of the system, and, as a result, in the system itself. By changing the rules, perceptions are changed, and new behavioural alternatives become possible in the process. It requires a response that is illogical to place in context, and also paradoxical when considered within the framework of the existing rules (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Approaches to programmes for people from low socio-economic communities are often rooted in first-order change: the logical solution to problems, for example, feed the hungry, house the homeless. However, in many instances, change at this level does not produce the desired effect, because the opposite equals more of the same. For that reason, the poor will stay poor. The system of which they are a part will keep on doing what it is supposed to do to maintain homeostasis (Leydesdorff, 1997). In the case where the rules of the game or the norms within a setting are strictly enforced, only first-order change occurs. There is change, but it is constantly moving in the same direction. This type of change does not question the norms, rules or regulations that govern the ebbs, flows and interconnections within the system. Instead, it

reinforces the regularities by counteracting any deviation that threatens the norms. Second-order change, in contrast, acts upon the flow of change by altering its form or direction, thereby changing the premises, rules or assumptions governing the system as a whole (Tseng *et al*, 2002).

Decisions regarding the goal of social change, whether first- or second-order, depend on the situation and the values of those involved. Second-order change may not always be desirable or necessary, but often first-order change simply shifts the burden for change onto community members. Second-order change has more potential to shift this burden and alter the balance of power or resources. Therefore, it can be said that, although small incremental steps to change certainly have a certain time and place, promotional efforts that explicitly target the status quo have greater potential to destabilise non-adaptive systems and to create system-level change when appropriate (Tseng *et al*, 2002).

Although no literature could be found on the topic of recreation provision from a second-order cybernetics approach, the literature that was reviewed indicated that the potential of cybernetic theory has not yet been fully recognised. It is anticipated that a careful consideration of the insights of cybernetics may open up new horizons for social theory (Vanderstraeten, 2001). Recreation and leisure activities take place in a social realm, and implementing second-order cybernetic principles will assist recreation providers in understanding communities on another level. While first-order cybernetic systems can be considered as observable translations of input into output, second-order cybernetics adds the perspective of evolution to networks of first-order systems (Leydersdorff, 1997).

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The latter statement of Leydersdorff (1997) presents the basis of the problem statement of this study. Although leisure and recreation provision have the potential to vitalise and change low socio-economic communities (Danville and Elandspoort in the Greater Tshwane Metropolitan Area), they seems to lack a positive and sustainable impact on the quality of life of residents within these two communities, the reason being that interventions are not implemented on a regular basis, and are

usually once-off events rather than a planned, continuous programme. Recreation provision in the Danville and Elandspoort communities has stagnated over the years. It appears as if the current priority of the Danville and Elandspoort communities as systems is to maintain homeostasis and equilibrium, and is therefore viewed as a *'black box'* from the outside. Recreation provision within the communities of Danville and Elandspoort does not currently have a positive impact on the quality of life of the residents, as recreation and leisure activities are not regarded as necessary needs that must be met. Available recreation programmes within these communities currently utilise a first-order approach, resulting in low attendance on the part of residents. It is hypothesized that, by adopting a second-order cybernetics approach rather than perpetuating a first-order cybernetics approach, a positive impact can be made upon recreation provision within the communities of Danville and Elandspoort.

1.3. HYPOTHESES

Based upon the abovementioned hypothesis, it is further hypothesized that:
- ➢ Recreation provision in low socio-economic communities will benefit from a second-order cybernetics approach.
- ➢ Sustainable recreation provision in low socio-economic communities will enhance the quality of life of those participating in the activities.
- ➢ Second-order recreation provision in low socio-economic communities will create an environment that is beneficial for social change.

1.4. AIMS OF THE STUDY

Against the context of the abovementioned statements, the aims of the study are:
- a) To examine the influence of recreation and leisure opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining social cohesion and quality of life in low socio-economic communities.
- b) To identify the barriers to providing and maintaining comprehensive, sustainable recreation programmes in low socio-economic communities.
- c) To understand the way in which residents of Danville and Elandspoort view recreation activities and recreation provision within the communities.

d)To identify the similarities and differences between the current approach to recreation provision in these communities and a second-order cybernetics approach.

1.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1. Research design

Grounded in a qualitative framework, the research methods utilised in the study involved a continuous interplay between data collection and theory. The study made use of participatory research in its data collection approach, employing focus groups who were presented with hypothetical vignette situations, and conducting informal interviews. A comprehensive literature review provided the necessary theoretical background. According to Piercy and Thomas (1998), the use of participatory research empowers the consumers of services to become leaders in evaluation and change. Focus groups proved to be an effective means of obtaining in-depth information about participants' experiences, understanding and view of recreation provision and participation within their communities.

A second-order cybernetics approach was recommended as an alternative approach to recreation provision within the community, and research methods therefore conformed to this approach. Traditional quantitative research methods are consistent with a first-order cybernetics, modernist tradition, however, a second-order cybernetics, postmodernist approach abandons the *'obsession of truth and representation...'*, thereby rejecting the idea that science is objective or that it gives us an unbiased view of the world (Becvar & Becvar, 2000:337). Qualitative research emancipates people from the tight boxes of normative social science. The context of a vignette (a hypothetical situation), as used in this study, enabled participants to adopt a non-personal perspective that resulted in their feeling less threatened. Vignette scenarios used in the study served to highlight selected concepts of the real world in which participants live, in this case the concept being that of recreation provision. In this way, the researcher was able to glean the participant's perceptions, beliefs and attitudes to the range of issues presented. The vignette technique was the selected research method for this study, the reason being that it improves the quality

of data generated by reducing the influence of socially desirable responses (Hughes & Huby, 2002).

1.5.2. Demarcation of the research area

This study focused on two communities, Danville and Elandspoort, situated in Pretoria West, and currently part of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The study area had hitherto been regarded as a historically white, working-class area, but, since 1994, an influx of black residents has altered its profile irrevocably. The resultant situation is one in which black residents are better-off, economically-speaking, than white residents, the latter situation therefore giving rise to an upwardly mobile black community alongside an economically-depressed white one. The study area consisted of less than 15 000 residents in total (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Danville and Elandspoort are located approximately three kilometres north of an industrial area. Although they started to develop and expand in the 1950s, they nevertheless have a history of being lower socio-economic white areas within Pretoria's urban structure (Abbey, 2007). The research area is in close proximity to many services and is centrally located within the greater Pretoria region, yet it does have large buffer areas separating it from other neighbourhoods. To the east of Danville is Trans Oranje road, which separates it from Philip Nel Park. To the south of Danville and Elandspoort is the N4 highway, and to the south of the N4 there is a greenbelt and also the Quagga River. Danville and Elandspoort are two communities that exist alongside each other, and they are separated from other neighbourhoods by natural and structural boundaries. These two communities have a similar social and racial composition, and, as such, will be studied as a unit. The majority of Danville residences are single family dwellings on individual stands. The residences in Elandspoort constitute low-cost housing structures. The Wendy houses found in many backyards are what some families call home. Most residents are without full-time employment or are working in jobs that yield meagre earnings. Many of the residents have not completed their high school qualifications. As a result of the historically low level of education, a substantial number of residents are unemployed, as most current employment opportunities require high school education and training.

Recreation opportunities and facilities are non-existent, except for some ad hoc recreation programmes that are presented by 'outside' church groups at their soup kitchens. Access to private transport is scarce, and residents often do not have the motivation to seek leisure experiences outside the borders of their communities. A large central area of Elandspoort constitutes open space, but is used as an illegal dumping site. Open spaces in Elandspoort are not well maintained and, although they could be transformed into functional parks, there are no current plans from the City of Tshwane to rehabilitate any of the areas for this particular purpose (Abbey, 2007).

Churches and volunteer groups in both communities are responsible for most of the programmes aimed at the disadvantaged residents. Donations in the form of money, food and useable items are regularly collected and distributed to the needy. Much of the communities' assistance comes from various religious groups and, in return, recipients are expected to attend and participate in religiously-orientated services. The programmes include activities at different soup kitchens, for example, knitting classes. The residents who participate in activities do not have any input in the selection of such activities.

1.5.3. Sample

Social research is often conducted in situations that do not allow for the probability sampling that is used in large-scale surveys (Babbie, 2008). This study is concerned with a detailed in-depth analysis, and has used a non-probability sampling technique known as *'convenience sampling'*, a method in which participants are chosen on the basis of their availability.

Sampling for the study occurred at four separate venues, three of which were soup kitchens, (two in Elandspoort, one in Danville), and the fourth one a mom-and-baby centre in Danville. A total of 60 participants, aged sixteen and older, took part in the study. This group excluded residents to whom the researcher spoke during the course of the observation and study.

1.5.4. Research instruments

1.5.4.1. Literature review

Issues revolving around the first aim of this study, namely, to examine the influence of recreation and leisure opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining social cohesion and quality of life in low socio-economic communities, were only partially addressed in the literature review. When it came to the second aim of the study, the literature review provided a great deal of information regarding the identification of barriers to the provision of a sustainable recreation programme in low socio-economic communities. The study's fourth objective dealt with the similarities and differences between the current approach to recreation provision in low socio-economic communities, and a second-order cybernetics approach. In this study the researcher identified that the current approach to recreation provision in low socio-economic communities unconsciously makes use of a first-order cybernetics approach. The literature review provided insight into this by presenting an explanation of both first- and second-order cybernetics.

1.5.4.2. Focus groups

The focus group method, also known as group interviewing, allowed the researcher to question several individuals systematically and simultaneously, thus prompting a lively discussion (Babbie, 2008). In a typical focus group, 8 to 15 people are brought together to engage in the guided discussion of a topic. This technique proved useful within this study, as it provided respondents with the opportunity to raise relevant issues about recreation provision in their communities in a familiar, non-threatening environment, and as part of a group of people with whom they identified. In discussing living conditions within a low socio-economic community, a researcher touches on a sensitive subject. The focus group provided the researcher with a suitable forum for such discussion, as it served to insulate participants within the confines of the group.

The focus groups comprised of ten participants per group, with a total of six focus groups participating in the study. Focus group discussions were held at four separate venues, namely, two soup kitchens in Elandspoort, and another soup kitchen and mom-and-baby centre in the Danville. The focus group method used in this study

was based on semi-structured interviewing, and included the following topics for discussion: current recreation opportunities within Danville and Elandspoort; the participants' perceptions of their quality of life, and whether they believed that it would improve in the presence of sustainable recreation opportunities; attendance at recreation programmes organised by volunteers from outside the communities; and barriers to participating in available recreation programmes. The focus groups served to provide feedback with regard to all four research aims, but specifically with regard to the third aim, namely, to understand the way in which the residents of the Danville and Elandspoort communities viewed recreation provision within their communities.

1.5.4.3. Vignette technique

The vignette technique was used in this study as a complementary source of data collection during focus group sessions. According to Petelewicz (2000:2), *'Vignettes are appreciated as the technique that enables researchers to get concrete, standardised and reliable answers due to more detailed and structured stimuli than usually vague survey questions'*. The context of the vignette – a hypothetical situation – enables participants to adopt a non-personal perspective, which is less threatening to them. It emphasizes identification with the characters within the vignette. The vignette consisted of five 'situations' in which information on the following concepts was collected: leisure and recreation provision in the community; community members' perception of their quality of life; participation in recreation and leisure activities; social status and recreation provision; recreation provision as agent for stimulating social change within the communities; barriers to recreation participation.

> ➢ Vignette 1: Leisure and recreation provision in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort. This vignette measured the link between low socio-economic status and opportunities for recreation participation, as well as the link between low socio-economic status and motivation to participate in a recreation programme.
> ➢ Vignette 2: The second vignette put a spotlight on barriers to recreation participation – real and perceived. This vignette attempted to find an answer to the second aim of the study.

- Vignette 3: The third vignette looked at the link between recreation participation and residents' perception of their quality of life in a low socio-economic community. This vignette addressed the first aim of the study, namely, to examine the influence of leisure and recreation opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining social cohesion, as well as the role that recreation activity currently plays in terms of quality of life in a low socio-economic community.

- Vignette 4: Recreation opportunities can reduce social inequality and social exclusion. The third vignette focused on the question of whether recreation opportunities in a low socio-economic community could facilitate social change. This vignette can be linked to the first aim of the study but its main focus is on the fourth aim, namely, to understand the way in which residents within the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort view recreation provision in their communities, and whether it currently underlines their social status.

- Vignette 5: Current recreation programmes in Danville and Elandspoort are provided by volunteers from outside the communities. This vignette looked at the way in which residents viewed the recreation programmes that they were currently being provided with in their communities.

The focus group technique was developed as a way of *'getting beneath the surface'* in information-gathering interaction (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), and this technique proved to be the ideal research method for this study. The researcher remained in the research area after the focus group discussions, and participants made use of these follow-up sessions by adding to their initial responses.

1.5.4.4. Observation

Observations were undertaken by adopting the approach of 'observer-as-participant', a situation where the observer is known to the residents as the researcher, but is part of the social life of residents, and records what is happening for research purposes. This approach was in keeping with the aims of the study in that residents were observed using a second-order cybernetics approach with the researcher in the role of participant in the system, as opposed to a first-order cybernetics approach, with the researcher in the role of expert. The observational component of the study was

recorded with a microcassette recorder throughout the period of research, which covered an extended period of time of up to at least one year. This extended period of time reduced the 'reactivity' effect, which is the effect of the researcher on the researched (Babbie, 2008). The reactivity effect was further reduced in this study by the fact that the participating residents were familiar with the researcher, as she had been actively involved in the communities for the past five years. As a result of this extended contact, the researcher was able to see how events evolved over time, and could appreciate the dynamics of the situation, the people, contexts, resources and roles within the observed communities.

Residents residing in Danville and Elandspoort were observed throughout their normal daily routine in order to record information on the physical environment; the characteristics of the groups and individuals being observed; the interactions taking place; as well as the resources and the organisation thereof in existing recreational activities.

Observation was undertaken in a semi–structured manner, with an agenda of issues that were intentionally observed, and in which data was gathered to illuminate these issues in a less predetermined manner. Observation included the gathering of both oral and visual data. Video-recording devices were not used in the recording of observations, as this might have led to the problem of reactivity. Observations were recorded as field notes, written at several levels, including:

➢ Descriptions of the physical settings of the events;
➢ Descriptions of events, participants' behaviour and activities;
➢ Descriptions that, when written out, would form a comprehensive and comprehensible account of what was happening in the community.

Four sets of observational data were used, and included:
➢ Notes made *in situ.*
➢ Notes that were made as soon as possible after the initial observation.
➢ Journal notes to record issues, ideas and difficulties observed in relation to recreational and leisure activities.
➢ A tentative record of ongoing analysis and interpretation.

The study was set up, and the researcher consulted with a number of formal steering committees within the research area. As the residents were already familiar with the researcher (with reference to second-order cybernetics), she was not considered an 'outsider', and this fact served to decrease any resistance they might have had to subsequent interventions.

1.5.5. Data analysis

1.5.5.1. Focus groups using the vignette technique

Discussions that were generated by the five vignettes during the focus group sessions were audio taped by using a microcassette recorder. The data was transcribed and analysed, and focused primarily on the search for explanatory patterns between the following variables and concepts:

- Leisure and recreation provision in the lower socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort;
- Residents' perception of their quality of life with reference to current recreation opportunities within the communities;
- Current participation in recreation and leisure activities within the communities;
- Social status and recreation provision;
- Recreation provision as a facilitator for stimulating social change within the communities.

Everything that was said during the discussions was transcribed, as the meaning of what was said could be interpreted only in the context of the sentences that surrounded it, as well as from the conversation as a whole (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The reliability of the transcriptions was reviewed by means of the researcher's reading of the transcripts while simultaneously listening to the audio recording. During this process, silences that were missed during the transcription process were noticed, indicating grounds for further analysis. Using cross-case analysis, an attempt was made to explore patterns appearing within the data obtained via the observational methods, as well as in data generated by the vignettes. The specific strategy within cross-case analysis that was used on the data obtained from the focus groups and vignettes was the variable-oriented analysis, which was adapted as a concept-oriented analysis. In this latter analysis, interrelationships between

concepts get presented as both a discussion and as a concept map, where relationships among concepts can be seen more clearly in graphical format. This analysis of the transcribed data was then linked to the relevant theory, resulting in a continuous interplay between the data analysis, and the theory gleaned from the literature review. Any relationships that could possibly exist between the abovementioned research concepts were then sought out and confirmed.

1.5.5.2. Observation

Systematization was used within the recording of observations in order to increase the reliability of the data generated in the study. An emic analysis approach, in which understanding come from within the system, was used on the observed data, using the conceptual framework of residents, and building a general account from pieces of their experiences of the situation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This emic understanding followed an inductive process, and fitted within the qualitative approach, the reason being that the definitions of the situation were captured through the eyes of the observed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

Analysis was achieved by means of 'progressive focusing', a method in which the researcher was required to undertake analysis during the period of observation. Typological analysis was used, working from a classifying process in which data was placed into categories (Cohen *et al*, 2000). Analysis of focus group discussion data was classified into the five vignette categories, whereas the data gathered by means of observation was analysed in categories that included descriptions of the setting, residents' behaviour within different settings (for example, at a church meeting, at a soup kitchen, at a school gathering), nature of participation (for example, involved/ uninvolved, participant/spectator), and activities (for example, active/passive, food involved/not involved). By using an emic approach in the gathering and analysis of data, the categories of analysis developed throughout the period of observation.

1.5.6. Statistical Analysis

Statistical procedures are used to analyse quantitative data. As this study was of a qualitative nature, no statistical procedures were followed. Data gathered during the research period was analysed according to the data analysis as explained in the previous section.

1.6. TERMINOLOGY

The following concepts are used throughout and therefore need to be clarified:

Community

A locality or place such as a neighbourhood where relational interaction or social ties draw people together (Connell, 2002).

Poverty/Low- income status/ lower socio-economic status:

Poverty or lower socio-economic status is defined as a lack of not only income, but also of political power, individual self-respect and opportunity. Poverty is not merely a condition of economic insufficiency; it also implies social and political exclusion (Dawson, 1988).

Social exclusion

Social exclusion is a multidimensional concept embracing economic, social and political deprivation. Social exclusion is a process, and can be described more comprehensively as a lack of access to four basic social systems, namely, democracy, welfare, the labour market, and family and community (Collins, 2004).

Barrier/constraint

A barrier is defined as any cause that restricts features of availability and accessibility. Barriers in sport, recreation activity and leisure are defined as factors that preclude or limit an individual's frequency, intensity, duration or quality of participation in sport, recreation and leisure activities (Amusa *et al*, 2008).

Quality of Life

Quality of Life (QOL) refers to an individual's sense of well-being and his or her satisfaction with life. It includes the needs and desires, aspirations, lifestyle preferences, and other tangible factors that determine overall well-being (Allison, 1991).

Social change

Social change refers to the process by which an alteration occurs in the structure and functioning of a social system (Van Buren, 2007).

Empowerment

Empowerment implies the process of enhancing the possibility that people can control their own lives more actively. Through empowerment individuals do not only gain control and mastery over their own lives but also over democratic participation in their community as well (Duffy & Wong, 1996).

Cybernetics

Cybernetics is the study of how systems use information, models, and control actions to steer towards and maintain their goals, while counteracting various disturbances (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

Systems theory

The term 'systems theory' is often used as a synonym for cybernetics theory (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

First-order systems theory/ Simple cybernetics

At the level of first-order systems/simple cybernetics, the observer is placed outside the system as observer of what is going on inside the system. The observer does not view himself as part of the system, and is not concerned with why the system does what it does (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Second-order theory/cybernetics of cybernetics

Second-order systems, also known as 'cybernetics of cybernetics', move up a level of abstraction. At this higher level of abstraction, the observer becomes part of, or participant in, that which is observed. There is no reference to an outside environment, and the boundary is unbroken (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

1.7. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY:

Chapter one provides an introduction to the study and is titled, *Recreation provision in low socio-economic communities*. It provides a framework for the study, including the research hypothesis, research aims, research methods and analysis of gathered data. Chapter one concludes by defining the terminology used in the research, and positioning the study in a framework. Chapter two is titled *Recreation and Quality of Life in a low socio-economic community*. The chapter commences by defining low socio-economic status and poverty, and discusses how low socio-economic status can lead to social inequality and social exclusion. It provides a background on the history of the relationship between recreation participation and low socio-economic status,

and explains why low socio-economic status can be seen as a barrier and a constraint to recreation participation. Recreation activity plays an important role in the perception of QOL. Chapter two concludes by defining the concept of QOL, evaluating it in low socio-economic communities, and exploring the potentially beneficial contribution of recreation provision to the QOL of low socio-economic communities.

Recreation participation plays an important part in the well-being of communities. Chapter three looks at the ways in which recreation provision can assist in facilitating social change. The chapter is titled, *Recreation and social change,* and begins by defining social change. It looks at the concept of leisure and recreation provision as a vehicle for social change within low socio-economic communities, and at social change through recreation participation in community development and empowerment. The chapter concludes with a description of how social change can be facilitated through recreational participation by providing examples of recreational interventions in communities.

Chapter four introduces cybernetics as an alternative approach to recreation provision in a low socio-economic community, and is titled, *Recreation programming in communities using a second-order cybernetics approach*. The chapter begins by explaining the origin of cybernetics, and draws a comparison between the first- and second-order cybernetics approaches. Second-order interventions and strategies are presented as options when working within a community. The chapter concludes by looking at a possible second-order approach to recreation provision in a low socio-economic community.

Chapter five, *Results and discussion*, summarises the research findings by presenting a summary of participants' responses to both the vignette and semi-structured interview questions, and a summary of the observations. The chapter concludes with a concept map that depicts the results of the study in a diagram. The final chapter, chapter six, *Conclusion and recommendations*, presents the important findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research. Chapter six outlines the final conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS COMMUNITY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter two provides an overview of the relationship between low socio-economic status and recreation opportunities. The chapter starts by defining poverty, and then goes on to explain how low socio-economic economic status affects recreation opportunities. Recreation opportunities can ultimately play a beneficial function in reducing social inequality and social exclusion. However, as will be described in this chapter, it is clear that recreation activity is seen as the antithesis to work. This dilemma is made obvious throughout the relevant literature, with recreation opportunity not being considered as a necessary need for the poor and unemployed. Residents within a low socio-economic status community face several barriers to recreation participation that have a negative influence on the residents' perception of quality of life. The chapter concludes by examining the impact of recreation opportunities on residents' perception of quality of life in a low socio-economic community.

2.2. POVERTY DEFINED

Poverty can be defined as a lack of not only income but also of political power (registering a voice within the system), individual self-respect and opportunity (Dawson, 1988:226). Although a state of poverty is often seen as being merely a lack of material goods, it not only has an effect on a person's income, but also on other areas of his or her life, for example, in recreation participation and socialisation. Poverty, then, is not merely a condition of economic insufficiency, but also one of social and political exclusion. Residents in a low socio-economic status community are socially excluded from society, the reason being that they are on the 'receiving end' of what has been used and discarded by the rest of society, and this includes recreation facilities. Residents feel powerless to change the situation they are in, and this leads to the perception of political exclusion.

'We're not part of society. We're not part of the running of the community. We shouldn't have a say... because we're not putting anything into the community. That's the stigma. If you're on welfare you don't count. I don't mean that in a negative way, you're just not there...' (Reid & Frisby, 2002:1).

This view suggests that, at the very least, any approach in dealing with the issue of poverty must provide for opportunities for recreation activity, educational and social mobility, as well as for participation in the decision-making processes of the community (Dawson, 1988).

In general, in the countries of the world, there is apparently progress within key social indicators in that life expectancy rates are going up, while infant mortality and illiteracy rates are going down. Yet, poverty remains an issue. Could it be that the forces that determine poverty are being ignored? Stromquist (2001) suggests that maybe too much time is spent on defining poverty while simultaneously paying insufficient attention to the mechanisms and processes that create and sustain it. When one analyses definitions concerning poverty, it is evident that poverty remains a salient feature of both modern western society and developing countries (Dawson, 1988).

Many observers of the characteristics of inequality and poverty propose that poverty be considered, not as a static, but rather as a dynamic phenomenon, which may be the result of two alternative processes, namely, insufficient upward mobility beyond a so-called poverty line, and excessive downward mobility below the aforementioned critical income threshold (Muller, 2002). On the contrary, social inequity is a structurally resistant and persistent feature; changing it requires major effort, resources, know-how and matching persistence, all of which have been lacking in previous policies (Collins, 2004). This shift towards a mobility-based approach obviously opens up new theoretical perspectives: 'mobility theory', applied to the problem of poverty and inequality provides an answer to the question as to the extent of poverty's relationship to structural factors such as low wages or poor public schooling or, alternatively, to individual factors such as welfare dependency or a lack of geographical mobility. In the first case, it is the societal structure that prevents individuals from extricating themselves from poverty by means of upward mobility. This situation is typical for the working poor, who are unable to rise above the

poverty line in spite of having a full-time job. In the second case, the person concerned has a real chance of uplifting him or herself from a poverty-stricken life; however, for one reason or another, he or she does not perceive nor utilize this opportunity in an appropriate way. This second alternative typically characterizes a situation of welfare dependency ('welfarisation'), a situation acquired through a process of 'learned helplessness' in which the recipients of social assistance have given up on improving their situation by means of a paid job (Muller, 2002).

For chronically poor people, poverty is not only about having a low income, but it is also about multidimensional deprivation. The characteristics of poverty include illiteracy, lack of access to health care, social isolation and exploitation. Such deprivation and suffering exists in a world that has the knowledge and resources to eradicate it. The causes of chronic poverty are complex, and usually involve sets of overlaying factors. Rarely is there a single, clear cause. The many causes of poverty include a saturated rural labour market, ill-health and alienation from society. Some of these factors are 'maintainers' of chronic poverty. They operate so as to keep poor people poor. Other factors are 'drivers' of chronic poverty, that is, they push vulnerable, non-poor and transient poor people into a poverty-stricken situation out of which they cannot find a way. Some situations of poverty pass from one generation to another, as if the offspring suckle it at the mother's breast.

Socio-economic status, whether assessed by income, education or occupation, is often linked to a wide range of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, arthritis and diabetes. Lower socio-economic status is also associated with a higher mortality rate, and the greatest disparities occur in middle adulthood, ages 45 to 65. Exposure to damaging agents in the environment, including lead, asbestos, carbon dioxide and industrial waste, varies with socio-economic status. Those lower on the socio-economic status hierarchy are more likely to live and work in far worse physical environments. Poorer neighbourhoods are located disproportionately nearer to highways, industrial areas and toxic waste sites, since land in these areas is cheaper. The quality of housing is also inferior in low socio-economic status communities, and there is often overcrowding within houses (Adler & Newman, 2002). Dannenberg, Jackson, Frumkin, Schieber, Pratt, Kochtitzky and Tilson (2003) agree with the findings of the study undertaken by Adler & Newman

(2002), and add that the design of a community's environment also influences the physical and mental health of its residents. Community leaders and public health officials need to know more about which community design and use of land choices are most effective in improving the physical, mental and social well-being of a low socio-economic community. Environmental conditions have a negative effect on recreational participation, as can be seen in Danville and Elandspoort. The communities do have open spaces that can be utilised for recreational purposes, however, these areas are undeveloped, and attract drug dealers, and are therefore seen as unsafe by the residents. The lack of recreation spaces and opportunities are also apparent in the way that the children and teenagers within the community tend to socialise. While sitting passively on street corners, they convey the impression that doing nothing seems to be the only recreational activity available.

People living in poverty are also known in terms of 'living on the margins'. Defining others as marginal enables another to have power over them. Marginalization has political effects on both a micro and macro scale, from the local to the global. Marginalized groups may be denied access to elite spaces, and these groups may in fact be restricted to special marginalized spaces of their own. This concept operates on many levels: an inner city slum is a marginalized space, as is the entire Third World. Marginalized groups are denied access to other spaces, for example, in more 'respectable' parts of the city. This postmodern perspective provides a multiplicity of reference points among which we are free to move. In much the same way that Einstein's theory of relativity dethroned the single reference point in physics, postmodernism seeks to dethrone the single reference point of Western culture, thus weakening the power relationships that bind all marginalized groups to the centre. This defines relative marginality: moving from one reference point to another to change the meaning of marginality, making it a fluid, relative concept (Cullen & Pretes, 2000).

According to Cullen & Pretes (2000), another way of understanding marginality is one in which marginalization is viewed as a social construction. In this view, power becomes the central determinant of marginality. The social constructivist view perceives marginality as a power relationship in which one group views itself as a

'centre', and consequently views all minorities and non-members as marginal or 'other'. Classifications of marginality are often in the service of a social class.

Poverty has an impact on the home environment, and in turn, the home environment has an impact on the productivity, emotional well-being, and health of all family members (Park, Turnbull, Rutherford & Turnbull, 2002). Common sense tells us that whether or not members of a household are employed will have a significant influence on the well-being of household members. This is because work is undertaken for payment, and payment brings money into the household (Graham, 2006).

Wilson (as cited in Rankin & Quane, 2002) argues that 'high poverty' neighbourhoods lack social resources in the form of individuals and institutions connected to the broader society. The resulting social isolation means that families and children have little exposure to the kinds of cultural and social capital resources that reinforce normative orientations and facilitate economic self-sufficiency.

Children growing up in poverty do worse than those from more affluent families on a variety of health, cognitive, social and behavioural outcomes. While part of the reason for the disparity is due to poor families' lack of financial resources, family poverty is also correlated with other factors associated with less optimal child-rearing outcomes, including single parenthood, low parental educational attainment, and welfare dependence (Rankin & Quane, 2002). Poverty is linked to a decline in recreation opportunities, because recreation activity is not seen as a necessary need when compared to those of food, shelter and clothing. However, negative forms of recreational practises do exist in low socio-economic communities, including smoking, drug and alcohol abuse. Viewed from outside the community, the question might be asked as to why residents within a low socio-economic community spend money on cigarettes, drugs and alcohol when they cannot afford food for their families. The answer to this question is relatively obvious. If you live in a low socio-economic community such as Danville or Elandspoort, you have several soup kitchens to choose from at which to eat lunch every day. Providing that you make the effort to attend lunch at the soup kitchen every day of the week, you will receive a food parcel for the weekend. Your children will be fed at school both before classes and then during the lunch break. Volunteers from outside the community will

provide you and your family with clothing, and the government will pay your social grant every month. Your motivation levels will be low, and a cigarette or glass of wine will help you escape from reality for a while. Outsiders give and you receive. It is a system, and, as will be discussed in chapter four, both sides of this system contribute to the maintenance of a low socio-economic community. In this study, it is argued that sustainable recreation opportunities can be a lifeline to a low socio-economic community, in that they can provide a more permanent escape from feelings of being poor and without hope.

2.3. SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND EXCLUSION

Theories of social inequality suggest a rather static view of poverty. The generally slow change of social stratification makes the scientific community often forget that poverty is, at the micro level, by no means a static phenomenon. Even if the overall distribution of wealth remains relatively stable at the macro level, there is the possibility of circular mobility in which the flows of the upwardly and downwardly mobile persons are relatively balanced. Mobility studies show that this possibility does not only exist in theory but also in practice (Muller, 2002).

The concept of social exclusion dates from about 1974. It is a wider and more dynamic process than being locked into conditions of poverty, but Collins (2004) makes the argument that poverty is still the core of social exclusion. Social exclusion is a process, and can be described more comprehensively as a lack of access to four basic social systems, namely, democracy, welfare, the labour market, and family and community (Collins, 2004). The geographical polarisation that is characteristic of poverty is both a key cause and a symptom of social exclusion. Many communities are stuck in a spiral of decline. This neighbourhood and community decline is fuelled by a combination of factors including economic change, the decline of old industries, and new skills demands. At the same time, increased family breakdown, the declining popularity of social housing, and an ever-increasing concentration of vulnerable people in poor neighbourhoods all serve to make a contribution to this decline (Wallace, 2001).

The concept of social exclusion has become a central organising concept in social policy research. Social exclusion is a multidimensional concept embracing economic,

social and political deprivation. In contrast to earlier research traditions, the perspective of social exclusion draws attention to how people can be 'put out of society' by means of their inability to participate in customary leisure activities. The ability to participate in leisure activity is the product of both access to leisure goods and services, and also sufficient amounts of leisure time. Consumption of leisure goods and services is largely determined by income. Consequently, earning a low income is often the reason that certain individuals are excluded from participation in leisure activity (Bittman, 2002).

Areas with high crime and unemployment rates acquire poor reputations, and often people, businesses and employers leave. Government policies have not been sufficiently adequate in addressing these issues, and sometimes they have been part of the problem. Criticism of these policies focuses on the short-term time frames of previous approaches; the failure to consult communities; the lack of information and evidence to underpin policy approaches (Wallace, 2001).

Urban parks, open spaces and recreation facilities remain predominantly local facilities. It can be argued that spatial provision of parks and recreation facilities is highly critical in achieving – or denying – social inclusion and integration, as are the decisions about the types of equipment and facilities on offer. When parks and open spaces appear to residents to be hostile and underequipped, the situation can lead to an increased feeling of exclusion and isolation, rather than to the fostering of social integration. This type of isolation also encourages the reinforcement of the boundaries (and differences) between communities, backed by who is allowed (or not allowed) access to community spaces (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000).

Societies are concerned about high rates of unemployment, not only because of the fact that the unemployed are poor, but also because they are likely to be socially excluded. A concern with 'exclusion' from the benefits of citizenship in a welfare state lies at the heart of much literature about social policy. An analysis based on the concept of social exclusion goes beyond resource allocation, and includes social identity, culture, agency and, ultimately, power relations. Social exclusion is an act; something that one social grouping does to another. The act of exclusion is often mediated by a particular set of institutional arrangements, which hide the consequences of the exclusionary social actions from many of the participants in the

process (Bittman, 2002). According to Atkinson (as cited in Bittman, 2002:409), 'People are excluded not just because they are currently without a job, but because they and their children have little prospect for the future...' However, if social inclusion and participation is to be encouraged, and social exclusion avoided, then people must achieve a particular standard of living relative to the prevailing conditions in their community. The concept of social exclusion is especially important with regard to its effects on the prospects of those who are excluded (especially children), and also with regard to the capacity of others to limit a person's own capability to alter these circumstances. If the community standard is that people have to have access to leisure and recreation activities, then it follows from the social exclusion framework that people need recreation and leisure opportunities to enable them to have, and to maintain a positive outlook for the future. Low socio-economic communities should not be excluded from the benefits inherent in recreational and leisure provision, and there should be a shift away from merely asking *if* such opportunities would be beneficial, to inquiring rather as to *how* they could be implemented. Excluding residents in a low socio-economic community from the benefits of recreational and leisure opportunities is tantamount to excluding them from society.

When looking at social inequality, it is important to bear in mind that justice is not only about fairness in the distribution of goods, but that it also involves the degree to which social institutions promote the conditions necessary for the realisation of values such as learning, playing and communicating with others, participating in forming and running institutions, and receiving recognition from others for such participation (Freysinger, 2006). Social injustice, then, refers to the extent to which the pursuit of such values is inhibited by the oppressive institutional constraints, and barriers that inhibit self-determination and growth, and includes the more covert and systemic properties of injustice that are embedded in everyday interactions. According to Freysinger (2006), injustice is enacted in a variety of forms including exploitation (the control or domination of one group over the economic and social resources of less powerful groups), marginalization and powerlessness (the extent to which groups of people are excluded from useful participation in social life), cultural imperialism (the means by which people of difference are codified and represented

as 'other' and rendered invisible), and violence (including physical and mental abuse, as well as fear of violence).

The framework of Feagin & Feagin (as cited by Scott, 2000) encourages an examination of how inequities in one institutional sphere (for example, the economy, housing and schools) have an impact on access to goods and services in other spheres (for example, access to park and recreation resources). This perspective suggests that inequalities are cumulative in nature as institutional practices are interrelated. The framework also advises one to examine how seemingly neutral organizational and institutional practices in the present time systematically reflect or perpetuate the effects of preferential treatment or intentional discrimination in the past (Scott, 2000). Institutional discrimination is insidious because inequality stems from everyday practices that are deeply embedded within organisations, and are perceived by organisational members as being legitimate (Scott, 2000). 'Business as usual' within the leisure and recreation industry perpetuates inequality in several ways. Leisure service agencies have adopted an entrepreneurial approach to service delivery that includes the generation of revenue by means of fees and other charges, privatization and efficiency. In some communities and agencies where these practices are employed, social equity appears to be taking on less importance when it comes to decisions concerning resources and services. Consequently, many people living in poorer communities are experiencing a decline in the quality and quantity of available park and recreation services (Scott, 2000). A less obvious practice in terms of leisure inequality is that of promoting customer loyalty. Loyal patrons are desired because they are believed to provide leisure service agencies with long-term sources of income and support. Emphasizing customer loyalty and service quality are laudable and necessary goals, but these practices may result in a situation in which agencies tend to de-emphasize a concern over social equity and inclusion. They may ask why they should change anything when their centres are already being frequented by loyal customers who like and support what they are doing. Scott (2000) relates this problem to the game, 'Tic toc, the game is locked and nobody else can play!' Many disenfranchised communities experience similar misfortune. Their leisure needs have been subordinated as leisure service organisations find themselves busily providing popular and established programmes and services to traditional clientele (Scott, 2000).

Although the social, cultural, historical and political histories of oppressed groups differ, five common conditions can be identified, namely, exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Not only is the distribution of types of labour important, but also the structural and societal features that continue to constrain the kinds of opportunities available to people of difference. Marginalisation and powerlessness refer to the extent to which groups of people are expelled from useful participation in social life. Marginalisation and powerlessness take on many forms including material deprivation as well as exclusion from decision making, from opportunities for personal workplace development, and from a range of life choices. Even if people defined as 'marginal' were provided with a comfortable material life within institutions that respected their freedom and dignity, the injustice of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness, boredom and lack of respect (Allison, 2000). In Danville and Elandspoort, residents are not provided with a comfortable material life, but are provided for in terms of shelter, food and clothing. Satisfying basic needs, however, does not change the way that the residents view themselves, and only serves to maintain the injustice of marginality. Recreation opportunities 'provided' by people from outside the community run the risk of enforcing marginality and contributing to the residents' feelings of uselessness.

2.4. THE INFLUENCE OF POVERTY AND LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON RECREATION PROVISION AND PARTICIPATION

The considerable body of research on human development indicates that health and well-being is linked to financial resources. Children and youth from low-income families are more vulnerable; they generally experience more physical, behavioural and mental health problems; they are more likely to be overweight and obese; suffer more neglect and physical violence; do less well at school, are more likely to drop out; and experience less labour market success than people from more affluent family backgrounds (Totten, 2007).

Holman includes leisure as part of survival, and says:

> *'Men and women are not just physical beings. They are also psychological and social beings who possess personalities and who live within communities.*

51

Consequently, they will spend money to meet needs engendered by these aspects of their lives... Families have a psychological need for leisure, and... will cut expenditure on food in order not to forego an occasional visit to a cinema or football match' (as cited in Allison, 1991:48).

Murdock (as cited in Freysinger, 2006:48), defines citizenship as 'the right to participate fully in contemporary social, political and cultural life.' He continues by stating that leisure activities provide many of the key spaces for such participation. In this sense, inequality in leisure and recreation opportunities can be seen when the economy of exclusion both prevents and segments social participation. Much theorizing and research in leisure studies take place within a normative citizenship paradigm which regards public leisure provision as a central component of social citizenship, and largely ignores the predominantly commercial nature of modern leisure and recreation provision. This combines with a 'reproductionistic' society in leisure, emphasise leisure as an area of inequality and inequity with a downplaying of issues relating to the nature of leisure experiences (Coalter, 1998).

Van der Veen (2003) expresses the opinion that recreational and social opportunities are excellent outreach techniques in communities where many poorly-educated residents have usually experienced troubled relationships with educational institutions — experiences which taught them mostly that they could not learn, or at least that they could not learn in the way traditional schools and courses expected. Through the use of recreation activity as a form of education in community development, community workers can establish a rapport with residents that would not otherwise arise spontaneously in educational situations.

The assumption that employment is a dominant force that shapes the patterning of leisure and recreation participation is particularly apparent when one notes how difficult it is to apply traditional concepts of leisure to people who are not employed. Exploring the leisure activities of people who are unemployed, and who fall into the category of low socio-economic status, can lead to an understanding of their lives and perceptions (Dattilo, Dattilo, Samdahl & Kleiber, 1994). Low-income adults are more likely to suffer from stress and mental health problems due to difficult life events, such as not being able to pay their bills, being evicted, losing their jobs, moving frequently and worrying about money. As the length of time spent in

conditions of poverty increases, so too do children's levels of stress and feelings of unhappiness, anxiety and dependence (Park, Turnbull & Rutherford Turnbull 2002).

Evident in the research on recreation provision (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000) is the apparent increase in marginalized and stigmatized spaces and people. Rather than reflecting the introduction of new opportunities, the situation at present sees a crisis in provision. This is due to the incremental effects of years of inadequate maintenance and renewal of such marginal spaces, and also because these parks and playgrounds are viewed by the users as irrelevant, boring and antisocial. Marmot (2001) agrees with this view, and adds that living in a disadvantaged community may be bad for health because of lack of access to amenities, which in turn may affect access to healthy foods, to opportunities for physical activity, and to medical and other services. In addition, insecurity, fear of crime, the negative effects of a low position in the socio-economic hierarchy, and a lack of social support are all features of disadvantaged communities that might increase inequalities.

People experiencing chronic poverty are often those individuals who have benefitted least from economic growth and development. Opportunity is not sufficiently effective in helping chronically poor people to escape from their living conditions. They need targeted support, social assistance and social protection, and political action that will confront their exclusion. In order to overcome the perpetuation of chronic conditions of poverty, a framework is needed that prioritises a secure livelihood for all, puts more chronically poor people in a position where they can take up opportunities, takes empowerment issues seriously, and recognises obligations to provide resources. In the search for a solution to poverty alleviation, the emphasis is on short-term solutions. With regard to recreation provision, a one-day fun programme in a low socio-economic status community is an example of such a solution. One-day programmes are not sustainable, and, in reality, they serve only to enforce the marginality of residents in low socio-economic communities. Opportunities for the poor are complimented by the government in its subsidiary role of providing certain public goods and income transfers targeted directly at the poorest in society (Stromquist, 2001). Social grants as well as childcare grants are an example of the government's subsidising of low socio-economic communities. However, for any policy to open the door to genuine development for chronically

poor people, it should first address the inequality, discrimination and exploitation that drive and maintain poverty.

Most contemporary definitions of poverty include some reference to higher needs, quality of life, or well-being that directly or indirectly consider the concept of leisure. Perhaps the most influential and controversial of these recent attempts to define the poor is the 'style of living' poverty defined by Townsend (as cited in Dawson, 1988). The key to understanding poverty, from his point of view, is 'relative deprivation'. This term refers to objective conditions of existence that prevent participation in what is conventionally acknowledged as the 'national style of living'. Societal norms condition people to have expectations of being able to live according to a certain style of life or according to a certain standard in life. Townsend establishes a list of objective indicators for his 'style of living' theory, which includes diet, fuel, clothing, housing, conditions of work, family support, recreation, education, health and social relations. These indicators are then employed as objective measures of relative deprivation. People lacking certain amenities, or who are not participating in certain activities were found to be deprived with respect to certain areas in life. Within this style of living, leisure activity is accorded a significant role in the determination of who is to be considered poor in a given society.

Although the theory of relative deprivation has met with resistance, it nevertheless emphasizes that leisure plays an increasingly prominent role in the definition of poverty in wealthier countries. In affluent societies the poor, or people with low socio-economic status, are those who struggle for the means with which to meet daily needs, whether physical or higher level needs such as acceptance. Increased wealth has created a situation in which leisure activity is often not regarded as a luxury, but rather as an essential factor in individual and community well-being. The fact that opportunity for leisure activity is widely accessible to the average person makes people who are 'leisure poor' stand out from the rest of society. Not surprisingly, according to Dawson (1988), people who are 'leisure poor' also tend to be those who are 'income poor' as well.

Hunter (as cited in Dawson, 1988) expressed concern, as early as 1904, that poor people could not meet the social necessities of life that he felt included at least some recreation opportunities. Hunter's concern for the necessities of social life was later

reflected in a report on poverty undertaken for the United Nations. This report holds that the two basic components required to maintain an adequate level of living are physical and cultural needs. Physical needs include nutrition, shelter, and health. Basic cultural needs are seen to be education, leisure and recreation activities, as well as employment and personal security. Consequently, being in a condition of poverty implies that a person does not have adequate leisure time or access to participation in recreational activities.

The tension between leisure activity as opportunity and social inequality is also evident from the (relatively recent) history of organised leisure, or leisure as professional practice in Western societies. Early on, in the history of organised play and leisure in many western countries, the notion emerged that at least some of those who were newly arrived and/or 'at the bottom' of the social ladder needed to learn to fit into 'the existing social order'. Organised play and leisure was seen as an avenue to achieve this (Freysinger, 2006). It was furthermore felt that both society – and the individuals who were the targets of such programmes – would benefit from these efforts through improved health and fitness, learning, and resulting socialisation. Organised play and leisure were seen as a means to reducing social inequality and promoting citizenship (Freysinger, 2006). Across history, therefore, as well as around the world, at least part of the advocacy for publicly founded or state-supported leisure and recreation activities is the notion that such activities provide opportunities for individuals and communities. There was, however, also the recognition that such opportunities may not be available to all in a given society. Resources (for example, time, money, ability, and optimal health, social and cultural capital) for various forms of leisure and recreation activities are not equally distributed across populations, resulting in a lack of equality of opportunity. In addition, by situating examinations of leisure within the context of history, social and economic conditions, and relationships of power, research provided evidence of the extent to which leisure produced and reproduced socially inequality. Political and international bases of these concerns also suggested a need to expand the definition of social inequality and opportunity to include global inequality and opportunity (Freysinger, 2006).

Commercialisation of the benefits of leisure activity has been accompanied by a shift away from such activity as being central to the common good and to community. Consequently, society's perception of the social benefits of leisure activity (individual health and well-being) has been restricted, and the meaning of leisure activity to the community de-emphasized (Arai & Pedlar, 2003).

According to King (1998), arguments that target the poor or underprivileged in favour of the promotion of recreation and physical activity may be inappropriate or counterproductive, since they clearly have more pressing issues to be worried about. Current data available in the United States, however, indicates that this argument may not be accurate. Projects such as the Community Health Assessment and Promotion Project (CHAPP), which have targeted the inner-city, low-income residents of Atlanta, Georgia, indicate that this segment of the community is quite interested in positive, health-promoting kinds of behaviour, such as physical activity, over which they can actually exert some control, and as a result of which they can hopefully become empowered. Leisure and recreation activities are not life-sustaining, and therefore often not included in services to people living in low socio-economic communities. While it is true that leisure and recreation activities do not have to cost money, real and measurable differences between the poor and the rest of the society do exist with respect to levels of recreation participation and patterns of leisure behaviour (Dawson, 1988). Francis (as cited in Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000:139) reacts to the viewpoint that parks and recreation areas in low socio-economic communities can be seen as inappropriate or counterproductive, by posing the question, 'for whom are parks and playgrounds provided?' It has been suggested that the impact of parks and playgrounds may not be as straightforward, or as beneficial as many protagonists claim. Hayward (as cited in Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000:139) states that:

> *'Instead of reducing problems, parks have caused problems; instead of being a melting pot for a neighbourhood's diverse population, parks seem to create social tensions. Thus, people often decide whether to use a park on the basis of who else goes there, rather than merely evaluating landscape features or recreational opportunities. And, unfortunately, the physical quality of a park may depend on the political clout of the neighbourhood more than on the needs and interests of the park's users.'*

It is therefore evident that local authorities, as the main providers of parks and playgrounds, face difficult decisions. Provision of recreation facilities, parks and playgrounds may possibly be more socially and ethnically democratic and equitable in terms of their use, however, there is a concern that this democracy and equity may be part of a wider process of institutional regression and racism. This is characterised by differential access to resources on the grounds of class. Whereas one group is enjoying the fruits of city centre investment and green spaces, others are confined to increasingly run-down, inadequately maintained, and dangerous neighbourhood spaces.

Meaningful recreational opportunity depends on the interrelated features of availability and accessibility of recreation resources or sites. If barriers to participation were absent or negotiable, the satisfaction and fulfilment sought by participants would be realized, and quality recreation experiences would be the norm. The supply of recreation resources in quantity and quality, as well as in space and time, is a critical element in creating and structuring fulfilling recreation opportunities. The nature of recreation resources, and their availability in functional terms, depends on factors such as the quality of the landscape, the nature and extent of development, carrying capacity, ownership, distribution, and access. These factors, in turn, reflect economic, behavioural and political factors that help shape public and private decision making about recreation provision (Jenkins & Pigram, 2003). The segregation of people and recreational spaces is far from incidental to the role and function of local democracy. While rewarding the successful citizens with access to new and exciting spaces, the unexciting, less well-maintained spaces equally remind those who use them of their subservient status within the social order (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000). These researchers continue to offer some observations on the extent to which the provision of urban parks and playgrounds has a role to play in promoting social inclusion among urban youth from ethnic minorities and low socio-economic status. It is argued that, far from promoting integration and understanding, inappropriate provision may lead to the reverse, that is, frustration, boredom and isolation. An apparent contradiction emerges in which parks and public spaces are determined to be of value to those who use them, despite a lack of evidence about the contribution made to integrative or community

experiences. As a result, it is claimed that parks, recreation and public spaces are seen as boring, irrelevant, manipulative and institutionally racist.

Ravenscroft and Markwell (2000) use the provision of parks and open spaces as an example of Foucault's construct of 'heterotropia', which is the carving out, or recreation of a 'compensatory world' in which people may experience a form of freedom. Foucault argues that, through the use of a calculated manipulation of heterotropia's elements, its gestures and kinds of behaviour, heterotropia underwrites discipline, and that it is a part of the disciplinary structure through which power is exercised and people are controlled. As an example, when considering the continued use and popularity of environments such as parks and playgrounds, Deleuze and Guattari (as cited in Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000) suggest that people often invest in 'oppressive' systems for the reason that the investment itself may offer the possibility of escape from the system.

Living in conditions of poverty restricts an individual's ability to be able to spend on leisure activities (Collins, 2004). Money or the lack thereof is often at the root of the main differences in the use of leisure time in different social strata, and leisure differences between them are basically and blatantly inequalities rather than alternative ways of life. The poor in any society suffer restricted leisure opportunities and lower rates of recreation participation. Nevertheless, to be without access to or opportunity for leisure, is to be poor (Dawson, 1988). In his socio-historical analysis of the relationship between leisure and the definition of poverty, Dawson (as cited in Allison, 1991) clearly exemplifies the dilemma, namely, that early attempts to define poverty, and thus to characterise the needs of the poor, did not consider leisure activity at all. Definitions describing poverty saw it as a situation where a minimal amount of resources were needed to survive. Leisure activity was not considered 'life-sustaining' and recreation activities were seen as incidental to survival.

Access to recreation opportunities is a key influence in recreation participation. Access has many facets, and the use of recreation areas can effectively be denied or constrained in a variety of circumstances (Jenkins & Pigrim, 2003). When a family's priority is survival, recreation participation has to move into the background. Poverty restricts opportunities for families to play, exercise and socialize in recreational activities. The cost of sports equipment, fees, and uniforms for participating in

leisure activities, and also finding enough time for recreation activities are all beyond poor families' affordability levels. User fees, although widely accepted, significantly discriminate against low-income people. Based upon data generated in a study by Moore and Stevens (2000), it is estimated that a daily fee (in this case $5) for the use of public land will have a significant impact on about 49% of low-income people. If low-income families are excluded from public parks and recreation areas, then serious policy questions are raised about the very purpose of public recreation provision. A clear sense of public mission and public purpose is essential to the formation of a sound recreation policy. Because notions of participation, choice, individual freedom, and QOL are central to the concept of a person's social rights, much research into leisure and recreation opportunities views increased public provision for leisure activity as being part of an evolutionary process of the development of citizenship (Coalter, 1998).

For much of the twentieth century, it was customary to regard expenditure on leisure activity as unnecessary expenditure. This was partly because the norm in studies of poverty was set at such an austere standard that no-one could challenge it as being too high. The 'Basic Needs Budget', for example, was devised in 1993 and covered only seven areas of expenditure for low-income communities, namely, food, housing, health care, transportation, clothing, child care and personal care. Leisure expenditure was clearly regarded as unnecessary (Bittman, 2002).

Investigators in New York observed that playgrounds in low-income communities had more overall hazards, as well as equipment maintenance hazards. A review of hazards in these playgrounds suggested that glass and other dangerous debris tended to be more common in playgrounds that were located in low-income areas. Missing, or broken parts and equipment gaps were present in many playgrounds. Playgrounds in both low- and very low-income communities needed attention. Attention to trash and debris removal was also needed and it was concluded that families living in low-income communities need play spaces that are easily accessible in their own communities (Powell, Ambardekar & Sheehan, 2005). People living in a poorer, lower socio-economic neighbourhood perceived that parks were less accessible and that their neighbourhoods were less attractive and less safe for activities such as walking (Burdette & Whitaker, 2004).

According to a national telephone survey in the United States, perceived environmental barriers to physical activity are strongly related to income level. Twice as many low-income respondents (31%) as moderate income (15%) respondents identify concerns about safety in their neighbourhoods as an obstacle. Not surprisingly, affordability of recreational facilities is cited as an important obstacle by 50% of low-income respondents (Sallis, Bauman & Pratt, 1998). Results of a focus group study in Australia also suggest that people believe that access to both free and non-free facilities could make recreation and physical participation more likely. It concludes that parks are more likely to stimulate activity if they are aesthetically pleasing and have tree-lined walking paths rather than empty, open spaces (Sallis *et al*, 1998). Collectively, these studies reflect a story about the way in which the lives of children from ethnic minorities and low socio-economic communities differ from those of other children. When the question is raised as to why the environments of children in low-income communities are relatively less conducive to healthy eating and physical activity, the researcher is confronted with the all too familiar reality that availability of fresh food, food advertising, school policies, recreational facilities, and opportunities for safe, affordable, physical activity – environmental factors that directly and indirectly influence health and survival – are not exempt from the forces of racial or economic stratification, and that, in fact, they may help define and perpetuate it. The effective costs of unhealthy eating and inactive living, in terms of the economy and in terms of behaviour, are higher and the feasibility lower in low-income communities compared to higher-income communities (Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007).

Scott (2000) claims that a number of leisure service agencies are not meeting the leisure and recreation needs of disenfranchised groups effectively. In Western cities, most of the leisure and recreation consumption is privatised and occurs in private spaces (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Findings from a study by Giles-Corti and Donovan (2002) demonstrate an inequitable distribution in recreation facilities in favour of high socio-economic status suburbs. This finding raises concerns that limited access in disadvantaged communities contributes to lower levels of participation in physical activity and an alienation from society. In addition, many practitioners and recreation providers lack the skills to appreciate the needs of disenfranchised groups such as low socio-economic communities. Without a multicultural and diverse staff, leisure

service agencies ultimately fall prey to 'cultural imperialism'. This can be described as the tendency to normalise dominant groups' perspectives and experiences, and to make invisible the viewpoints of subordinate groups (Scott, 2000). Practitioners and leisure providers appear to believe that people are able to act freely on the basis of their leisure preferences. They seem to believe that people are fully capable of self-determination, that they have equal means and access to leisure resources, and that there is a relatively just distribution of recreation resources (Godbey as cited in Scott, 2000). Many recreation centres and providers are able to downplay or ignore the factors that make visitation to these centres problematic for disenfranchised groups. These factors include a low income, lack of access, living in isolation, fear of discrimination and harassment, lack of knowledge and lack of skills. Social institutions commonly group immigrants, the working classes and low-income classes together as entities that need rescuing. These groupings are then seen as 'children' whose behaviour needs to be reshaped and controlled (Butler, 2003).

According to Ravenscroft and Markwell (2000), most leisure and recreation provision, particularly in sports' centres, have been shown to have a regressive and exclusionary impact on local residents. There have, however, been claims that public provision for informal recreation opportunities in the form of parks, playgrounds and open spaces, could have a more positive and integrative impact on local residents. Issues of justice and injustice within low socio-economic communities have been only tangentially addressed in the literature on leisure (Young, cited in Allison, 2000).

In a case study undertaken by Ravenscroft and Markwell (2000) in the town of Reading, England, the relationship between the provision of parks and playgrounds, as well as their impact on the integration and exclusion of ethnic lower socio-economic youth was explored. It was found that there are clear differences in the quality of both the resources and the young people's experiences thereof. People living in inner cities and low socio-economic communities face increasingly dangerous and unpleasant public spaces, causing them to absent themselves from such spaces. Residents in these communities are often single-parent families who are experiencing high levels of unemployment and, consequently, associated poverty, and are thus subject to an increased level of crime and delinquent behaviour.

Crime rates and perceptions of danger are higher in low-income neighbourhoods. Unsafe neighbourhoods deter children from playing outdoors after school, or in parks. Less time spent outdoors not only displaces physical activity, but also increases television viewing (Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007). Research has indicated that one of the root causes of criminal behaviour is delinquency, which could be improved, in part, by access to positive leisure opportunities (Scarman, as cited in Ravenscroft & Markswell, 2000).

The effects of walking through neighbourhoods characterised by deprivation cannot be underestimated. In a study undertaken by Bostock (2000), mothers said that they try not to think about the poor state of the environment, but that they cannot always escape the sadness of living in a place that has been left to decline. Walking, such as other dimensions of life in low-income communities, is a critical part of the daily experience of poorer women. While many people walk for pleasure or to protect their health, for the poor, walking is the primary form of transport. This form of activity cannot be seen as a form of recreation (Bostock, 2000). Low-income families and mothers in particular, often engage in negotiations to 'borrow' transport resources from relatives if they want to participate in activities outside of the community (Bostock, 2000). The result is that women in low socio-economic communities have been shown to be less active in their leisure time than those from higher socio-economic communities (Ball, Salmon, Giles-Corti & Crawford, 2006).

The fact that poor families often cannot afford adequate housing implies that they have little choice about whether they are able to live in more pleasant neighbourhoods. Compared to children of non-poor families, children of poor families are more often excluded from high-quality childcare environments, better schools and safer play areas (Park *et al*, 2002). Duncan, Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov investigated how neighbourhood conditions affected a group of parents and their five-year-old children. It was found that living in a low-income neighbourhood had a significant correlation with higher levels of the kinds of antisocial behaviour usually exhibited by young children, such as temper tantrums or destructiveness. The authors hypothesised that parents are less inclined to quell aggression and 'acting-out' in their children because they felt that there was a greater need for the children to be able to defend themselves in such neighbourhoods. This kind of behaviour can also

be caused by a lack of physical activity and stimulation. Studies examining individual influences on physical activity have identified that lack of money, lack of transport, illness, disability, personality factors, and coping styles all contribute to an explanation of socio-economic status differences in physical activity (as cited in Park *et al*, 2002).

A study by Wilson *et al* (2004) reinforce the Duncan *et al* (as cited in Park *et al*, 2002) study findings, as their results indicate that socio-economic status affects access to, and safety for physical activity because of fewer facilities, poorer conditions of these facilities, and unsafe conditions in low socio-economic communities. Many playground reformers believed that playgrounds should be built in the worst neighbourhoods so that they have the greatest impact, as they are intended to attract children away from the streets, and, in so doing, contribute to their development as desirable citizens (Butler, 2003). For those individuals living in neighbourhoods with few amenities for children, or with poorly managed grass areas that are littered with dog faeces and soiled needles, day trips away from these areas promote a sense of inclusion and connection with the outside world (Bostock, 2000).

The importance and relevance of recreation participation in lower socio-economic areas are reinforced by a number of international studies. The Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-income Families concluded that innovative approaches should be taken to ensure that every child, regardless of financial circumstances, experiences play, without barriers, engaging in positive and high-quality leisure and recreation pursuits, and enjoying physical, social and emotional health through participation in community recreation provision (Totten, 2007). Low-income communities are often 'priced out' by high travel and equipment costs in recreation participation. Everyone, including members of low-income families, must make choices about how to spend his or her money, and so it is not surprising that resource-based recreation activity ranks relatively low among the priorities of low-income communities (More & Stevens, 2000).

An Australian study showed that people living in lower socio-economic areas thought that television was a basic item of necessity. It was suggested that owning a television was a means of saving the cost of more expensive out-of-home entertainment. Participants in all focus groups believed that the ability to purchase

alcohol was a social necessity. Even the 'income-constrained' single parents suggested that it was not possible to manage without it. The consumption of alcohol was explicitly linked to the capacity to participate in a community form of social life (Bittman, 2002). Once poverty limits a family's choices for recreation and leisure activities, high risk and unhealthy habits such as smoking and heavy drinking may take their place in the surplus of unstructured time (Park *et al*, 2002).

There is, however, a range of opinion within studies on leisure as to the extent to which the public sector could provide for 'leisure citizenship'. For example, Roberts (as cited in Coalter, 1998) outlines a plurist, mixed economy version of the role of the public sector. He concludes that opportunities for recreation activity are among the goods and services which public authorities can distribute to enhance the standards and quality of life among otherwise disadvantaged groups. Ravencroft (as cited in Coalter, 1998) disagrees, however, by arguing that the state has a social responsibility, regardless of its dominant economic ideology, to provide for the basic leisure needs of society.

In conclusion to this section on the influence of poverty and low socio-economic status on recreation provision and participation, a review is presented of the different viewpoints that have been expressed. After this, the issue of low socio-economic status as a barrier and constraint to recreation provision in a low socio-economic community will be discussed. In the preceding section, it became clear that there is an assumption that employment shapes the patterning of leisure and recreation participation. From this viewpoint flows the belief that targeting the poor and underprivileged for recreation provision is counterproductive, as it is felt that residents living in such communities must have more important issues to be concerned with. As will be discussed in chapter four, this way of approaching a low socio-economic community emanates from a first-order cybernetics approach, and functions so as to reinforce the socio-economic status of the community. In reality, recreation and leisure programmes are excellent outreach endeavours for the inclusion of low socio-economic status communities as citizens in society, and for providing the residents with the opportunity to participate fully in contemporary life. The theory of relative deprivation emphasizes that the scarcity of leisure and recreation provision plays a prominent role in the definition of poverty in wealthy

countries. This is visible, for instance, in the crisis in recreational provision in low socio-economic communities in which the conditions of their recreation spaces emphasize the difference in socio-economic status. Playgrounds in low socio-economic status communities have more overall hazards; environmental conditions in such communities are not conducive to recreation and leisure pursuits and opportunities. Recreation and leisure activities do not necessarily have to be expensive; however, there are barriers and constraints preventing residents from engaging in positive leisure and recreation experiences.

2.5. LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AS BARRIER AND CONSTRAINT TO RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Barriers in sport, leisure and recreation activities are defined as factors that preclude or limit an individual's frequency, intensity, duration or quality of participation therein (Amusa *et al*, 2008). It is important to note the difference between a constraint and a barrier with regard to leisure and recreation participation and programmes. A constraint limits a persons' participation in an activity, whereas a barrier refers to any factor that intervenes between the preference for an activity and participation in it' (Raymore *et al*, 1994). A barrier is thus harder to overcome. A constraint to leisure and recreation activities, in contrast to a barrier, is consequently anything that inhibits a person's ability to participate or take advantage of leisure services in order to achieve a desired level of satisfaction (Dattilo *et al*, 1994).

Concern about barriers, non-participation in recreation activities, and lack of leisure opportunities has always been central in park, recreation, and leisure services. According to Gruneau (as cited in Shogan, 2002), it is not the absence of socially produced rules and constraints that characterizes leisure: rather it is their presence. The social and economic forces that have been destabilizing employment, gender, and age roles have not left leisure and recreation activities unscathed. Both are affected by the same new technologies and globalization issues that have been transforming working life (Hendry, Kloep, Espnes, Ingebrigsten, Glendinning & Wood, 2002). A number of studies (Hannon, Cradock, Gortmaker, Wiecha, El Ayadi, Keefe & Harris; Zedlewski, Chaundry & Simms; Brown & Moran) have suggested that the perception of barriers or constraints to leisure and recreation

participation is related to socio-economic status. An increase in the level of a person's education and income is related to a reduction in perceived barriers to the commencement of recreation participation. However, an increase in income will probably move a person into a higher socio-economic status community. According to the suggestion made that the 'perception of barriers and constraints to leisure and recreation is related to socio-economic status', it would follow therefore that residents from a low socio-economic status community have a more negative perception of existing barriers to their recreation participation. This is a simplification of a very complex situation, and does not provide a solution to the removal of barriers in a low socio-economic status community. However, it can be said that people from low socio-economic communities are less likely to be aware of public leisure services; and people in the lowest income category are the least frequent users of recreational and leisure facilities. Based on these findings, it may then also be suggested that individuals with lower incomes are more likely not to participate in leisure pursuits, owing to reasons of 'lack of interest' and 'lack of awareness' (Raymore et al, 1994). From these findings, it can be concluded that people who participate in a wide range of leisure and recreation activities are more likely to come from higher socio-economic status groups.

A major barrier to recreation and leisure programming in a low socio-economic community is the fact that these programmes are often undertaken by non-profit organisations, which are dependent on donations and volunteers from the public. The first priority of most non-profit organisations is, however, to provide food and clothing. For a non-profit organisation, everything else seems to be secondary.

Several other barriers that prevent a low socio-economic community's participation in recreation and leisure activities have been identified. Some of these barriers include a lack of leadership and capacity building, cultural barriers, lack of human resources, poor awareness campaigns, lack of funding from outside donors, overcrowding, crime, and lack of parks and sports and recreation facilities. These factors often lead to the development of a number of health problems, including hypokinetism, obesity, hypertension, premature mortality and increased prevalence of concomitant social and economic problems (Amusa *et al*, 2008), which, in turn, become reasons for not participating in recreation activities.

Urban social scientists have argued that community structural features, such as poverty and residential instability, affect local social organizations in ways that have consequences with regard to the attitudes and behaviour of residents. Highly disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to have lower levels of neighbourhood cohesion and integration, and weak and ineffective institutions. High-poverty neighbourhoods lack social resources in the form of individuals and institutions that are connected to the broader society. The resulting social isolation means that families and children have little exposure to the kinds of cultural and social capital resources that reinforce normative orientations and facilitate economic self-sufficiency (King, 1998).

Inner city, urban neighbourhoods and low socio-economic communities suffer because of stereotyping, and this, in turn, poses a barrier to developing effective health promotion strategies. The terms 'inner city' and 'low socio-economic community' are often employed as a form of shorthand for a syndrome of problems. In much the same way, the concept of the 'underclass' is open to racial and social class stereotyping that obscures important forces. The term 'underclass' describes neighbourhoods in which deindustrialization, poverty, crime, and lack of positive role models combine to create unhealthy environments. Stereotypical perceptions of people or places ignore the diversity and strengths of neighbourhoods, the important resources that flow into inner-city neighbourhoods, and the outsiders who affiliate with these neighbourhoods (Leviton *et al*, 2000).

Evident from research (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000) is the increase in marginalized and stigmatized spaces and people in societies. Rather than there being a situation that reflects new opportunities, the position is one of a crisis in provision. This is due to the incremental effects of years of inadequate maintenance and renewal of such marginalised spaces, as well as existing parks and playgrounds being viewed by those who use them as 'controlling', 'irrelevant' and 'antisocial'. This has led Francis (as cited in Ravenscroft, 2000) to question for which sectors of the population parks and playgrounds are actually provided. It is suggested that the impact of parks and playgrounds may not be as straightforward or as beneficial as many protagonists claim:

> *'Instead of reducing problems, parks have caused problems; instead of being a 'melting pot' for a neighbourhood's diverse populations, parks seem to create*

social tensions. Thus, people often decide whether to use a park on the basis of whom else goes there rather than merely landscape features or recreational opportunities. And, unfortunately, the physical quality of a park may depend on the political clout of the neighbourhood more than on the needs and interests of the park users' (Ravenscroft & Markswell, 2000:139).

In this study, the focus is on recreation provision within low socio-economic communities. The previous section addressed the link between recreation and low socio-economic status, as well as discussing the barriers faced by residents living in a low socio-economic community. The next section will address the use of the term 'community'.

2.6. DEFINING COMMUNITY

The concept of a community is more elusive than apparent (Connell, 2002). Conventional approaches view the term 'community' as a given object, presuming it to be a meaningfully distinct form of social order. Community is defined by the editors of *Urban Problems and Community Development* (as cited in Weschler, 2000:317) as, 'comprising the residents of a geographic neighbourhood or multi-neighbourhood area no matter how they relate to each other'. According to Van der Veen (2003), community is a magical concept. According to Etzioni (as cited by Van der Veen, 2003:581): 'community can be defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often criss-cross and reinforce one another (rather than merely one-on-one or chainlike individual relationships) and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms and meanings, and a shared history and identity − in short, to a particular culture.'

Most authors try to find a definition that transcends the one of a traditional community, but which can also be applied to communities in the present time. Formulations include definitions that refer not only to the local, territorial community, but also that include categorical communities such as the 'business community' or the 'Greek community' or, in the case of poverty, 'low socio-economic communities' (Van der Veen, 2003).Within Danville and Elandspoort, different categories of community exist in the form of the 'working community', the

'poor white community', as well as the different 'church group communities'. Within communitarian thought, community is often found and defined by geography or biology, as is partially the case in this study. The communities under study are defined by geographical location, and also by their socio-economic status. In an open community with permeable boundaries there is room for people to choose, to engage in communities of choice. In terms of leisure and recreation activity, focal practices bring people together, not around issues of power, but because of feelings of appreciation (Arai & Pedlar, 2003).

A person's place in the world may be formulated as, 'this is my place'. *This* place is distinct from other places, but because people cannot fully conceive of all other places, the totality of the world cannot be conceived. A sense of place stands in distinction to an unknowable world. Therefore, place is what it is, or is what it is not. This self-reference is concealed by coding *my place* as a distinction between community and the world (Connell, 2002).

Within a society that fails to acknowledge the relevance of interdependence and of cross-community relations, a community is less likely to be open and inclusive. This is not to imply that in spatially-based, functional, or kin-based communities social cohesion and openness are secure. A 'good' community is one in which there is argument, even conflict, about the meaning of the shared values and goals, and certainly about how they will be actualized in everyday life. Community is not about silent consensus, but about where the consensus can be challenged and changed – often gradually, sometimes radically – over time. More recent discussions of social cohesion and inclusive communities offer a broader understanding of community in which cohesion and openness are conditions that can coexist. The function to be performed by a community system is to reduce complexity, and this is achieved through self-observation. The more complex the world turns out to be, the more improbable the ability to communicate becomes, and the persistence of a community therefore less likely (Connell, 2002). For Frye (as cited in Arai & Pedlar, 2003), community is not just the formation of consensus but also the coexistence of difference. As she states, community is not so much the *building up* of something, but the removal of the structures that separate us and the *creation of space* for people to come together. Thus, openness in community is the creation of space that provides

alternatives to the structures (class, sexuality, and race) that have traditionally confined and marginalized people. As Borgmann (as cited in Arai and Pedlar, 2003:198) stated, *"Civic membership is substantially and actually enacted in communal celebration. Here the rich are not helping the poor; they join them"*. The emphasis is not on 'doing good' as in the charity work that characterizes much of the voluntary sector; rather it is on the common good, a result of people participating together in a shared endeavour that they perceive to be meaningful.

When employing a systemic model of community, community comes to be viewed as a complex system of friendship networks and formal and informal associational ties, rooted in family life and ongoing socialisation processes (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Today, community is 'lost' in the pursuit of globalisation, 'saved' in the virtual world of the Internet, and 'found' in concepts of social capital, civil society, community economic development, community capacity building and sustainable communities (Connell, 2002). Wilkinson (as cited in Connell, 2002) avers that it is necessary to recognize the complexity of 'community' before defining it. Two trends that are apparent in the literature on community and social organisation serve to aid in advancing beyond a critique of normal sociological approaches. First, the use of the term 'system' as a core concept to define community has increased. Second, there have been recent applications of complexity theories to social systems. Formulating the term 'community' using complex systems thinking is not well developed however. Advancing this line of thinking requires a general theory of social organisation that presumes complexity as a condition for interaction.

The community effect in a low socio-economic status community can be understood, within the socio-cybernetic framework, as the manifestation of a comprehensible world through the increasing complexity of society. The need for a comprehensible world persists, but through societal evolution the programmes that are available for people to actualise this need have changed. It is therefore the openness of social systems that gives rise to a community effect (Connell, 2002)

In whichever way community is defined, there seems to be a tension that is apparent between the idea of a community and the idea of community development. In one viewpoint, community is seen as something that exists and that relates to village

communities, working-class neighbourhoods or ethnic communities. From another viewpoint, a community is often perceived of as something that is rather weak, and which must be nurtured, supported, 'developed'. Communities are often latent in nature and it is hard work to get them to materialize, to make them manifest. In the words of Beresford, an Australian community worker, 'Community appears to be a "*now you see it and now you don't*" phenomenon' (Van der Veen, 2003:581). Connell (2002) supports this view, and adds that establishing a community is neither necessary nor impossible. Societal evolution does not imply an orderly process.

2.7. RECREATION PARTICIPATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL)

Leisure and recreation activities have long been linked with a higher perception of quality of life on the part of participants. In the discussion on recreation activity and quality of life, the following aspects will be looked at: defining quality of life; the community quality of life model and the perception of quality of life in a low socio-economic community. The section ends with an investigation into the contribution of leisure and recreation participation to the perception of quality of life in low socio-economic communities.

2.7.1. Quality of Life defined

It is widely accepted in the social sciences that quality of life is a difficult concept to define. People living in different situations see different things as being essential to a meaningful existence. As a consequence, the concept of quality of life has been defined in many different ways (Shin & Rutkowski, 2003). It is important to keep in mind that quality of life is a hypothetical construct, not an entity (Hunt, 1997). Broadly defined, quality of life refers to a person's sense of well-being, that is, his or her satisfaction with life. It includes the needs and desires, aspirations, lifestyle preferences, and other tangible factors that determine overall well-being. Quality of life can refer to a very general essence of being; a sense that things are good with life, and that a general sense of contentment exists with one's living conditions (Allison, 1991). Quality of life implies a good life, and it is believed that a good life is the same as living a life of high quality (Ventegodt *et al*, 2003). Life satisfaction refers to the fact that one is living a better kind of life, enjoying oneself, and, in general, having a better quality of life (Hunt, 1997).

A number of definitions of quality of life consider the concept only in terms of objective indicators, such as socio-economic status, or housing conditions. Hollandsworth (as cited in Meeberg, 1993:36) puts forth the idea that the objective criteria of quality of life relate more to quantity and a sense of 'fullness' of life than to quality of life. Meeberg (1993) argues that objective indicators do not truly reflect QOL, but are merely an indication of a person's living conditions.

Objective factors do contribute to quality of life, but do not provide a complete assessment of a person's quality of life. Both subjective and objective indicators are needed to measure quality of life. Subjective indicators directly address life experiences, whereas objective indicators address only aspects that influence life experiences. Allardt (as cited in Freysinger, 2006) also emphasizes the subjectivity of quality of life, by postulating that it is the sum of having, loving and being. Quality of life can thus be viewed as a combination of material, social and cultural resources, supportive relationships with others, and the recognition of a person's own existence as well as that of others.

When, in terms of Western culture, a 'good life' is defined, cultural conditioning tends to encourage the inclusion of such concepts as, elements of happiness, fulfilment of needs and functioning in a social context as part of the description. According to Ventegodt *et al* (2003), these elements can then be divided into three loosely separate groups, each concerned with a specific dimension of a good life:

➢ The subjective quality of life refers to how good a life each individual feels he or she has. Each individual personally evaluates how he or she views things and his or her feelings and notions. Whether an individual is content with life and happy are aspects that reflect the subjective quality of life.

➢ The existential quality of life refers to how good one's life is at a deeper level. It is assumed that the individual has a deeper nature that deserves to be respected and that the individual can live in harmony with. People might think that a number of needs in human biological nature have to be fulfilled, that these factors, such as conditions of growth, must be optimized, or that we must all live life in accordance with certain spiritual and religious ideals laid down by the nature of our being.

➢ The objective quality of life refers to how one's life is perceived by the

outside world. This view is influenced by the culture in which people live. The objective quality of life reveals itself in a person's ability to adapt to the values of a culture and tells us little about that person's life. Examples may include social status or the status symbols one is expected to possess in order to be a respected member of that culture.

As these three overall dimensions of quality of life are loosely grouped with notions that are relevant to quality of life, and which tend to overlap, they can be categorised into a spectrum that ranges from the subjective to the objective. The existential element features in the middle of this spectrum, as it unites the subjective and the objective, as will be indicated later. The existential centre also represents the depth of the being of humanity. Other definitions of the quality of life integrate subjective and objective aspects of a person's life at a higher state in life. This has been expressed by the terms 'flow' and 'sense of coherence' (Ventegodt *et al*, 2003).

The theoretical spectrum that encompasses the concept of QOL is referred to as 'the integrative quality-of-life (IQOL) theory' (Ventegodt *et al*, 2003). According to Baker and Palmer (2006), research suggests that subjective measures have a greater effect on quality of life than objective measures and that the measures of quality of life can range from the purely physiological through functional capacity to a complex series of questionnaires on social activities and physiological problems (Hunt, 1997).

2.7.2. Community Quality of Life (QOL) model

The community quality of life approach elicits the understanding of community members as to how community aspects either support or do not support health and well-being. Community quality of life is the term used to describe community factors that are perceived as affecting health and well-being. Public transportation may or may not be present in a community. How the presence of transportation is perceived and used by community members will determine whether it has health- and well-being enhancing properties. The community quality of life approach recognizes how structures within a community are interpreted by individuals and determines the effect these structures have on human behaviour. Therefore, the community quality of life approach focuses on the understanding of community members as to what it is that makes life good or not good for them. The quality of life model directs attention towards how these factors affect residents' lives by considering whether and how basic

human needs are being met within a community (Raphael *et al*, 2001).

The community quality of life model is further influenced by the humanistic-existential tradition. This approach recognizes that individuals within a community have physical, psychological and spiritual needs. It acknowledges the need to belong to places and social groups, as well as to distinguish oneself by pursuing goals and making choices and decisions. In this model, quality of life is defined as the degree to which a person enjoys the important possibilities of his or her life in the following three areas. Firstly, the area of 'being' reflects who one is, and has physical, psychological and spiritual components. Secondly, 'belonging' is concerned with the fit between a person and his physical, social and community environments. Thirdly, 'becoming' refers to the success a person attempts to achieve in his or her personal goals, hopes or aspirations. It involves practical and day-to-day activities, leisure pastimes and other such factors that aid in helping a person to cope and to grow (Raphael *et al*, 2001).

The community quality of life model serves as a means of understanding how community factors influence health and well-being, and identifies nine domains of QOL (Raphael *et al*, 2001), which are as follows:

- ➢ *Physical being* — physical health, mobility, nutrition, fitness and appearance.
- ➢ *Psychological* — independence, autonomy, self-acceptance, freedom from stress.
- ➢ *Spiritual being* — personal values, standards, spiritual beliefs.
- ➢ *Physical belonging* — physical aspects of the immediate environment.
- ➢ *Social belonging* — relationships with family, friends and acquaintances.
- ➢ *Community belonging* — availability of societal resources and services.
- ➢ *Practical becoming* — home, school and work activities.
- ➢ *Leisure becoming* — indoor and outdoor activities, recreational resources.
- ➢ *Growth becoming* — learning things, improving skills and relationships, adapting.

2.7.3. Quality of Life (QOL) in low socio-economic status communities

Poverty refers as much to quality of life as it does to income status (Allison, 1991).

Inadequate schools and poor quality of life often go hand in hand. The relationship between schools and families is often riddled with tension. Weschler (2000) stated unequivocally that it is of great importance that the gap between schools and residents within low socio-economic communities is bridged. Only then can schools become an important contributor to local social change and improvement towards the quality of life of residents. To accomplish this, schools should move beyond individualistic solutions, and should become part of a sustainable system of social support in the community.

There seems to be an increasing interest in the role that community structures play in the promotion of health and well-being among citizens. Community structures may involve local services, the presence of affordable housing, healthy food and public transportation, community activities that support quality of life, or the sense of social cohesion that exists among community members (Raphael *et al*, 2001).

Marginalised communities need a sense of autonomy. Weinberg (as cited in Allison, 1991) points out that marginalised groups are often unable to be independent, and makes the suggestion that a 'different' voice which fosters autonomy with interdependence is essential in working with such communities. To treat marginalised groups as 'otherwise' debilitates their sense of self, their sense of self-efficacy and oppresses that which they may have to offer society. To develop any form of sustainable recreation programme that addresses the needs of marginalised, low socio-economic communities, there must be a systematic attempt to understand what quality of life means within the specific context of the community. Such a process will entail an attempt to listen to the community's residents, allowing them to talk freely about their lives and needs as they perceive them. For a successful recreation programme to be established within a low socio-economic community, recreation providers must therefore explore all avenues that residents use to maintain some sense of quality of life in their lives. The notion that equates money with recreation and leisure participation may lead to difficulties, as poverty can take many forms. Deliberate attempts must be made to understand the nature – both positive and negative – of the lives of the residents within the low socio-economic community (Allison, 1991). Using the framework of a second-order cybernetics approach, the recreation provider should be careful not to fall into the trap of the current approach to recreation

provision within low socio-economic communities in which the recreation provider approaches the community as an 'expert', forcing his or her framework onto a system with a different point of view. For many residents, a key factor in quality of life is the services that are available, as well as the opportunities for employment and recreation participation. Barriers to quality of life include addiction, crime and safety concerns, and cuts to services, environmental issues, poor housing, poverty and unemployment (Raphael et al, 2001).

2.7.4. Contribution of leisure and recreation participation to Quality of Life (QOL) of low socio-economic communities

In 566 BC, Siddhartha Gautama asked, '...in the midst of the great cycles of life and death, where are freedom and happiness to be found?' (Caldwell, 2005:17). Ancient Greek scholars posed similar questions, and partook in leisure activities to achieve excellence in all aspects of life. Although an ancient concept, it is still evident today that participating in meaningful, interesting and personally expressive activities such as recreation pastimes are essential to emotional, cognitive and social health and well-being.

The questions can be posed as to what quality of life means within the lives of marginal groups. Is it possible to introduce sport, recreation and leisure activities as possible avenues for changing and improving their quality of life? If it is accepted that one of the tenets of recreation, leisure and sports programmes is to enhance the quality of life of all individuals, then surely an effort must be made towards ensuring that opportunities exist for participation that is available to all (Allison, 1991). The significance of leisure and recreational activity in the improvement of quality of life has been universally recognized and has been accorded the status of a human right. The fact that it is recognized as a basic human right, spawned programmes such as 'Sport for All', a movement supported by the International Olympic Committee, and which is aimed at promoting physical activity for all individuals, regardless of race, social class or gender. The United Nations has also included the improvement of opportunities for recreation and leisure activities as a priority for its international youth policy (Wallace, 2001).

In the United States, over the past 100 years, municipalities have been held accountable for creating local park and recreation departments, and this has largely

been justified by the fact that their existence is viewed as a positive contribution to quality of life. There are very few studies that have attempted to examine the effect of recreational participation on overall quality of life for the general public in a model that also examines residents' perceptions of their community (Baker & Palmer, 2006). In North America, driven by the thinking of early twentieth century reformers such as Jacob Riis, Jane Addams, Joseph Lee and Luther Gulick, there was a firm belief in the potential of recreation activity for the enrichment of quality of life. This connection between democracy and recreation activity as a public good, and between recreation activity, play and broader social concerns was firmly established (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Those involved in whatever facet of sport, recreation and active leisure, assumed that involvement in sport, play or recreation activities somehow enhanced the physical and mental health of participants, and therefore had the ability and potential to enhance the quality of life of those who chose to engage in such activity (Allison, 1991). It can therefore be deduced that recreation participation has the potential to enhance the quality of life of people living within low socio-economic communities.

Traditional approaches to the measurement of leisure activity's relationship to quality of life have emphasised place-centred indicators (for example, the frequency of leisure facility usage) and tended to ignore person-centred criteria (for example, satisfaction with leisure experiences). Moreover, the underlying assumption in subsequent policy outcomes has been that increasing the number of facilities and services will automatically enhance people's quality of life (Lloyd & Auld, 2002). In contrast to the positive influence attributed to leisure and recreation participation on quality of life, the results of a study by Baker and Palmer (2006) suggest that the effect of these two variables (leisure and recreation) on quality of life was mediated by community pride. According to their study, community involvement and residency had very little effect on quality of life. Interestingly, the effect of community elements was negative on quality of life. These findings suggest that elements used to measure community pride and community elements were better predictors of quality of life than any of the exogenous variables. The researchers in this particular study were, however, unable to examine empirically the relationship between recreation participation and community involvement, as well as residency and community involvement, and this probably influenced the outcome of the study.

Recreation and sport-for-all movements are meant to address the quality of life of all sectors of the population. Allison (1991:45) poses the question, 'to what extent do we really concern ourselves with all groups, or to what extent do we only focus predominantly on the mainstream?' Contemporary society places a premium on wealth, youth, competitiveness and physical strength. To what degree are field professionals and recreation providers doing the same? To what degree can 'sport-for-all' be changed to 'sport-for-some'?

Social interaction is a central component of recreation activity. According to Csikszentmihalyi (as cited in Lloyd & Auld, 2002), participants in recreation activity report deriving the most positive experiences when in the company of friends. Social recreation activity has been shown to have a positive influence on the quality of life of a diverse range of social groups, including middle-aged, 'at-risk' women in low socio-economic communities, the aged, the unemployed and the 'dissatisfied' employed.

Strong support for the idea that the value of an activity is not only determined by the frequency of engagement, but also by the attitude and state of mind of the participant comes from the work of Lloyd and Auld (2002). A person's attitude to leisure activities has a highly significant and positive effect on both the extent of leisure participation and the degree of satisfaction derived therein. The specific activity in which a person is engaged is therefore far less important than the level of satisfaction derived from it in terms of enhancing quality of life. In a study of 137 participants aged over 60, the interrelationships among demographic, recreation and quality of life variables were investigated by means of using 'path' analysis. Results indicated that recreation participation had an indirect relationship through recreation satisfaction with quality of life (Lloyd & Auld, 2002). Allen (as cited in Arai & Pedlar, 1997) also states that there is both conceptual and empirical support for recreation and leisure areas, services and opportunities, as contributors to a community's satisfaction with life, and thus to a community's perception of quality of life. As residents participate in recreation activities within a community, it increases their level of involvement within the community. Through increased levels of involvement, the individual's sense of community and commitment increases, he or she has the ability to meet more people, to get involved in community activities

and events and to volunteer in activities (Baker & Palmer, 2006). The study of Neal (1999) indicates similar findings, namely, that leisure experiences can play a significant role in enhancing a person's quality of life. In his study, Neal explains the hierarchy model of life satisfaction that is used to clarify the relationship between leisure satisfaction and quality of life. The hierarchy model postulates that the effect within a life domain spills over vertically to the most superordinate domain (life in general), thus determining satisfaction with life. From this perspective, it can be expected that satisfaction with life in general is a positive function of satisfaction with one's leisure life. Leisure activities can provide opportunities or spaces for meaning-making, although people under varied circumstances may gain different meanings from such activities. According to the World Leisure Association's statement on leisure education and community development, meaningful leisure activity can provide 'opportunities for self-actualization and further contribution to the quality of community life' (Iwasaki, 2008). Caldwell (as cited in Iwasaki, 2008) identified several entangled aspects of leisure activity that can generate meaning, such as a context for self-determined behaviour, competence, social relationships, self-reflection and affirmation, identity development along with transcending negative life events. People can find positive meaning within ordinary daily events and activities by discovering positive values, having positive experiences and gaining a sense of well-being from these events and activities (Iwasaki, 2008). Meaningful leisure opportunities are important for learning, self-determination, self-identity and self-actualisation, building communities, and enhancing the quality of personal and community life. Therefore, leisure-orientated activity can provide opportunity for human development, thus establishing a basis for meaning-making and enhancement of quality of life (Iwasaki, 2008). According to Baker and Palmer (2006), participation in leisure or recreation activities is considered an essential component of an individual's sense of well-being. Researchers have identified certain positive benefits of leisure participation that are associated with an elevated sense of well-being. These benefits include relaxation, self-improvement, and family functioning, as well as cultural awareness. Public spaces that support particular types of public life become freely chosen settings for family and community enjoyment, development and discovery. While in the process of choosing those spaces for their public lives, residents are then also able to choose to experience other group settings that are conducive to relaxed exchange (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000).

Caldwell (2005) is convinced that recreation activity contributes to physical, social, emotional and cognitive health as prevention and coping (adjustment, remediation, diversion) mechanism. Leisure and recreation opportunities may be restorative and beneficial and move one towards the enjoyment of good health. They may deter certain kinds of detrimental behaviour before they even occur. Promoting positive activity and increasing protective factors therefore becomes a key part of a 'prevention' perspective. Pondè and Santana (as cited in Caldwell, 2005) posit that participation in leisure activities is a protective factor for women's health, particularly among those living in conditions of poverty. Leisure activities correlate positively with a low incidence of anxiety and depression among women who do not experience job satisfaction and who have low family incomes, that is, women from low socio-economic spheres. Research further indicates that participation in organised activities can enhance emotional adjustment, encourage pro-social and altruistic behaviour, and provide benefits associated with membership in a group. In addition, children's participation in recreation and leisure activities laid the foundation and shaped their leisure patterns later in life (Verma & Larson, 2003).

The work of Caldwell (2005) emphasizes the positive influence of recreation on overall quality of life. Leisure and recreation participation promote health, as meaningful activity influence social inclusiveness and encourage self-expression, thereby promoting human potential. Achievement-orientated and social leisure activities also have a positive impact on a person's state of mind. However, inactive leisure pastimes, for example, watching television, tend to have a negative impact on one's mental health. Leisure and recreation participation can act as a means to transcend negative life events, such as finding oneself in a situation of poverty, and can be used by a person who experienced a negative life event, or series of events to find new meaning in life and to become as if reborn in a way that allows for a fuller realisation of one's potential. According to Caldwell (2005), the role of leisure activity in coping with stress has received considerable attention over the past decade. It has been hypothesised that the social support and self-determination gained through leisure and recreation participation are important buffers to stress. Three leisure-based coping strategies, namely, 'leisure palliative coping' (doing something in leisure and recreation activity to give temporary relief from stress in order to 'regroup' and gain perspective), 'leisure mood enhancement' (participating

in a leisure/recreation activity to get into a better mood), and 'leisure companionship' (spending time with friends) were cited as examples of such buffers to stress. The following proposals have been put forward regarding the positive role that leisure and recreational activities can play at times when an individual is forced to cope with negative life events, such as experiencing low socio-economic status and stress:

- ➢ Leisure activities buffer the impact of negative life events by being distracting.
- ➢ Leisure activities buffer the impact of negative life events by generating optimism about the future.
- ➢ Leisure activities buffer the impact of negative life events by aiding in the reconstruction of a life story that is continuous with the past.
- ➢ Leisure activities are used in the wake of negative life events as vehicles for personal transformation.

The first two propositions consider the value of leisure activity and self-protection, and the latter two consider the value of leisure activity for self-restoration and personal transformation. Studies reviewed in Caldwell's (2005) research suggest that leisure activity can be considered in general to be a protective factor, and identified specific aspects or elements of leisure activity that act as a protective factor, including:

- ➢ Benefits of personally meaningful and/or intrinsically interesting activity derived in leisure participation.
- ➢ Need for social support, friendships and social acceptance in leisure activity.
- ➢ Competence and self-efficacy derived from leisure participation.
- ➢ Experiences of challenge and being totally absorbed in leisure activity.
- ➢ Being in a position of self-determination and being in control in leisure activity.
- ➢ Feeling relaxed, disengaging from stress, being distracted from negative life events through leisure activity.
- ➢ Ability of leisure activity to provide continuity in life after experiencing disability or trauma.

Recreation activity is considered as one of the few 'free' contexts in a person's life. Most people participate in leisure and recreation activities out of some sense of personal choice, because such activities are inherently interesting and motivating.

The inherent interest and enjoyment connected to the leisure and recreation context provide an opportunity for meaningful social engagements, self-expression and creativity. Although leisure and recreation contexts are not the only ones in which meaningful activities can occur, they are often the most important or even the only contexts in which an individual can be his or her true self, and be made to feel that what he or she does is personally meaningful and authentic. Creating art or music, doing some form of outdoor activity that connects people to nature, and volunteer work is identified as forms of leisure activity that contribute to a sense of personal meaning and well-being (Caldwell, 2005).

Several aspects of leisure and recreation activities promote interest and contribute to meaning in life, one of the primary ones being that leisure activity is a context that gives rise to a self-determined, autonomous kind of behaviour, which, according to the self-determination theory, promotes intrinsic motivation and thus interest. For people who have experienced uncontrollable, detrimental life events, such as being unemployed and living in poverty, participation in leisure activity provides an opportunity to experience some level of control and choice. Related to behaviour that is self-determined, are issues of competence and social relationships. People tend to choose to engage in activities in which they feel competent, or in which they can develop competence, thereby heightening the opportunity to become self-efficacious individuals. When a participant's skills are appropriately matched with the challenge at hand, an experience of 'flow' is likely to occur. Flow is characterised by a feeling of being 'at one' with the activity, of experiencing a positive affect, of being absorbed and unaware of the passage of time. It is likely to occur when there is clear feedback about performance and there is also some structure to the activity (Caldwell, 2005).

Not all leisure experiences and activities are, however, positive. Negative leisure activities, such as those involving drug and alcohol abuse, do not contribute to quality of life. Drugs play a key part in the irregular economy of poor areas and this situation is often a characteristic of poor urban communities (Collison, 1996). For a long time, leisure activity was considered to be wholly beneficial and was defined in ways that did not allow for concepts such as 'negative leisure' to be considered. It was never assumed that people could do things during leisure time that could be

detrimental to them. Practitioners disallowed the idea that negative experiences (boredom) and kinds of behaviour (substance abuse) could occur, although some would still maintain that those experiences and kinds of behaviour are connected to free time and not to leisure activity. Leisure time can, however, present individuals with opportunities for both risk-taking kinds of behaviour as well as for worthwhile pastimes (Caldwell, 2005). Research indicates that youth spending more free time in unstructured contexts were prone to getting involved in 'negative' leisure activities. Unstructured time may also result in time wasted on 'passive' activities that do not pose a challenge nor provide engagement with or absorption in a task. (Wallace, 2001). Logic suggests that leisure time can also be a time of loneliness, substance abuse and/or inactivity. Participation in successful and healthy recreation and leisure activities does not come naturally to everyone. Some people lack the skills and resources to cope with the stresses of life on their own, and thus they require guidance to manage problems and stress. This is particularly true when people are de-motivated or are faced with traumatic life events such as finding themselves living in poverty (Caldwell, 2005).

Involvement in activities such as sport, painting and other such hobbies can foster the adoption of other healthy kinds of behaviour, including the avoidance of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and aggressive tendencies. Greater participation in active leisure pastimes has been found to be related to lower levels of depression and lower levels of aggressive kinds of behaviour (Verma & Larson, 2003).

2.8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion to the discussion on quality of life, the positive effects of recreation opportunities in that regard need to be stressed, particularly when it comes to low socio-economic status communities, Leisure and recreation opportunities should, for this reason, be a sustainable part of the social fabric of a low socio-economic community. Leisure and recreation provision are currently almost non-existent in the communities of Danville and Elandspoort, but, if implemented using a second-order cybernetics approach, could very well contribute to social change in those communities.

CHAPTER 3

RECREATION PROVISION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Social change is an inherent factor in low socio-economic communities. In the preceding paragraphs, it has been established that leisure and recreation provision can contribute positively to changing social conditions in such communities. In subsequent paragraphs, social change is defined from the perspective of a low socio-economic community, with a discussion of the role of recreation provision in social change. The chapter first defines social change from a low socio-economic status community's perspective, and follows with a discussion on the potential role of recreation provision in the process of social change.

3.2. DEFINING SOCIAL CHANGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS COMMUNITY

Social change can be defined as 'the process by which an alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system' (Van Buren, 2007:304). Change can occur at the individual, community or other system level. Furthermore, methods to promote social change can yield change in different ways; they may trigger direct transformation or may help to create an environment that is more conducive to change. Social change can be unplanned (spontaneous) or planned. Naturally occurring change is defined as unplanned change, and includes changes brought about by natural disasters and shifts in the population (for example, the 'baby boomers'). Unplanned change is considered as being stressful, as, although rare, it is often serious and uncontrollable (Duffy & Wong, 1996). Unplanned change in the Elandspoort and Danville communities came about as a result of the closure of the ISCOR iron and steel plant that caused a substantial number of residents to be unemployed and thus catapulted into a downward spiral of poverty.

Planned change is an intentional and deliberate intervention procedure that is undertaken to change a situation or a community. Within the context of a low socio-economic status community, the aim can be to change several components of the community, or to target a specific component. However, as will be seen in second-

order cybernetic change, it is not possible to change one thing without it having an effect on the rest of the system or community. Planned change is distinguished from unplanned change by four characteristics. First, planned change is limited in scope; what is to be changed is targeted in advance. Second, planned change is directed toward enhancing the quality of life of community members, that being the primary purpose of it. Third, planned change usually involves those affected in the change process. Recreation providers should not impose change on community members, rather, the role of the recreation provider should be to inform community members of viable options, to assist them in the selection of appropriate options, and then to participate with them in the design and implementation of proposed change. Community members must, therefore, have a function within the change process. Finally, planned change is often guided by a person who acts as a change agent.

A 'transactional systems' perspective assumes that individuals and aspects of their environment transact with each other in changing relationships across time. The promotion of social change intervention is implemented in open systems. Particularly as promotion efforts move away from more elementary, unidirectional, causal relationships, these efforts must address the dynamic and continuous processes by which elements in a system simultaneously influence each other and the system as a whole. The promotion of a social change framework inherently embraces the notion of a universe of alternative processes, as opposed to a limited set of end-states. The recognition of these open systems allows us to consider a variety of alternative strategies that are based on different assumptions about the strengths of particular settings (Skinner, Stewart & Edwards, 1999).

Cultural, as well as community processes must be emphasized in the promotion of social change. Within the context of change, culture is not limited to ethnic groups. Community identities and culture are not static entities, but evolve continuously when social contexts change. The intervention process is created within a particular cultural framework that determines the values, goals, tactics and strategies that are incorporated and employed. Simple alterations or add-on components rarely shift the fundamental cultural processes through which intervention was initially created. Promotional efforts should assess the particular cultural and historical context of the local community, and then decisions should be made as to how best to proceed.

Cultural processes are an evolving part of a social ecology and are embedded within it. The processes often differ across various levels of power, socio-economic resources, neighbourhoods, geographical regions and time. Across settings, communities with varying socio-economic resources often differ in their cultural processes (Tseng *et al*, 2002). It has, however, not been common in discussion of the prerequisites of social systems to include explicit treatment of cultural prerequisites. The integration of cultural patterns, as well as their specific content, involves factors which, at any given time, are independent of other elements for the action system, and yet must be articulated with them (Parsons, 1991). The promotion and initiation of social change involves careful consideration to the temporal and historical processes of social transactions. Within this framework of change, the assumption that social reality is an objective event characterized by unalterable historical processes is challenged. A description of a 'chronosystem' is used, in which it is seen as being essential for considering temporal processes in transactions between people and the environment in which they live (Tseng *et al*, 2002).

Time and change are inherent aspects of a system, and a systems approach to change must include an analysis of how transactions change over time. Temporal analysis provides information about how social regularities were formed, and why they are maintained. Temporal analysis also enables the identification of important forces that facilitate social change. Analysis of temporal processes allows for the identification of morphostatic processes that maintain the status quo, but also points to the adaptive functions that were traditionally served by them. Resistance to change occurs because of two reasons, namely, that people are uncertain as to the effect that the change will have upon their lifestyle, and that habit conditions the individual to follow a predetermined behavioural response (Edginton, 2008). The term 'resistance' is used to refer to actions or processes that challenge difficulties that people experience in their everyday lives. These difficulties reflect the social and material conditions of people's lives, such as living with the effects of social stigmatization or living in conditions of poverty. The conditions of constraint are then reinforced and perpetuated through societal beliefs, values, expectations and ideologies (Shaw, 2007).

The question as to why resistance occurs is posed by Duffy and Wong (1996), who

conclude that societies and communities have a built-in resistance to change. Members of communities are trained to follow their own ways, which they regard as safe or superior. Communities often feel that their existence is threatened by new groups and new ideas. Change is often seen as unwelcome, not just by the community, but also by individuals within the community. Social psychology acknowledges that individuals are also resistant to change, and one of the causes of this resistance is believed to be 'cognitive laziness'. According to Duffy and Wong (1996) most humans are 'cognitive misers' who take the path of least effort in terms of decision making and thinking. Other individuals may be closed-minded or dogmatic and may conserve old ways and recoil from new ideas because of the rigidity in their thinking.

While an index of social dislocation can be constructed (with reference to homicides, rape, family violence, divorce and so forth), it does not follow that individuals or social groups would necessarily or automatically experience the everyday world as disorderly (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). The round of everyday activities, that is, sleeping, eating, talking and cleaning the household, *may* remain relatively normal and stable despite considerable dislocation. In other words, theorisations of social change that are derived from observed macro processes of disorder, dislocation and social and economic transformation may underestimate the importance of the lived experience of the dull routine of everyday life, and its role in undertaking ongoing 'repair' work to normalise social relations (Turner as cited in Forrest & Kearns, 2001).

3.3. THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF RECREATION PROVISION IN THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In studies of social change, attention is focused on factors that influence change and resistance to change. Communities are not always in favour of new ideas and technological changes. Change and innovation might be actively or passively opposed, and thereby resistance to it might be exhibited in one way or another (Edginton, 2008). The natural state of a system is a state of equilibrium, and a departure from that state would be 'damped out' by the system (Dooley, 1997). Resistance to change in the form of a recreation programme can, for example, be

seen in low attendance figures of new programmes, or in high drop-out rates that occur during the course of programmes.

Laughlin (as cited in Skinner, Stewart & Edwards, 1999) suggests that, within a system, the sub-systems are the tangible elements, and these include buildings, people, and machines, as well as the behaviour and nature of these elements. The design archetype and interpretive schemes are the less tangible dimensions, and these are responsible for giving direction and meaning, thus providing interconnection to the more tangible elements. When a system is in equilibrium, for example, the communities of Danville and Elandspoort, who manage to maintain equilibrium by remaining the 'helpless' receivers of donations – the interpretive schemes, design archetype and sub-systems are, at any point in time, in some form of dynamic balance. It is the impact of an environmental disturbance that can, consequently, cause a system to temporarily move out of equilibrium (figure 3.1). The organisation will either absorb the disturbance and maintain its previous equilibrium, or as a result of a shift in design archetype, sub-system elements and interpretive schemes develop a new equilibrium, and therefore social change has occurred (Skinner *et al*, 1999). Recreation and leisure provision have the possibility to instigate social change within a low socio-economic community, but in order for effective change to occur, it must be done through the understanding of the component elements of the system and the manner in which they interact with each other. By developing an understanding of this interaction, the future states of the system could be predicted.
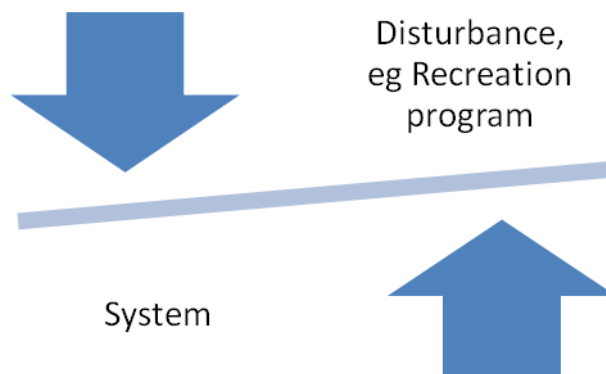
Figure 3.1. Impact of environmental disturbance on the system

Within a community, the role of a change agent in the process of social change can be fulfilled by recreation providers. When promoting social change, the focus should be on the promotion of dynamic processes within a community as system rather than on outcomes within individuals. Systems are viewed as flexible and capable of facilitating multiple adaptive pathways for individuals and groups (Tseng *et al*, 2002). Change techniques should be problem-orientated, and should be aimed at finding solutions to problems rather than merely being idealistic in perspective. Similarly, change strategies should focus on multiple social levels rather than on specific individuals within the community.

Social change that is brought about by means of recreation provision can be approached from the perspectives of the promotion of recreation opportunities and also the introduction of preventive programmes. Preventive programmes attempt to block a problem from occurring altogether (Duffy & Wong, 1996), whereas promotional programmes focus on the strengths of a community. Promotion of recreation opportunities lends itself to an opening up of intervention possibilities that extend beyond the mere absence of problems. In doing so, it challenges the status quo in more expansive ways than preventive measures have managed to do in the past. Rappaport (as cited in Tseng *et al*, 2002) argues that preventive programmes often draw upon rules and assumptions that actually perpetuate the problems they are trying to prevent. Preventive goals often are confined to the absence of problems or deviations from prescribed norms, and these goals are achieved by moving individuals and settings toward predefined and presumed superior states by countering their deviation from those states. These efforts not only run the risk of maintaining the status quo, but can also limit the possibilities for communities to reach their potential.

A promotional approach, in contrast to preventive programmes, draws upon empowerment theory, and recognizes existing strengths among low socio-economic community residents and their settings. Preventive techniques should, however, not be abandoned altogether. Preventive activities should rather be reframed as one set of tools among many available for achieving larger goals of promotion. The conceptual framework for promotion of social change incorporates a set of guiding principles primarily derived from theoretical writings in community psychology, community

development and related fields. Although these principles are not new to community psychology, they are not frequently brought together in a comprehensive way to address intervention and social change.

Preventive techniques that target person-centred deficits among high-risk populations, such as low socio-economic communities, may increase the likelihood of victim-blaming. Preventive programmes that target young, low-income mothers for parenting classes may, for example, run the risk of reinforcing the assumption that these mothers are deficient in their parenting skills. By directing collective attention to the deficiencies of a low socio-economic status community, a cyclical process of disempowerment through labelling and reduced expectations can be created. Recreation activities must, therefore, be initiated with the utmost care, and should rather focus on promoting a positive element in the community as a starting point. Primary prevention, as opposed to the promotion of social change, has often sought to target specific risk factors and outcomes that are isolated within a closed systems approach. Promotion of social change, in contrast to a preventive programme, rests on transactional, ecological and open systems perspectives that assume that people are nested within various contexts, settings and situations across time. Intervention that is based on primary prevention stresses a method of intervening on risk and protective factors that emphasises linearity and isolation of individual factors. Practitioners of preventive methods have often confronted problems by means of scaling-up from pilot, controlled trials to large-scale programme dissemination. Closed system approaches are, however, inadequate for dealing with the open systems of ecological niches (Tseng *et al*, 2002).

In contrast to traditional approaches to the promotion of wellness and social competencies, promotion of social change advocates the promotion of processes rather than particular end-states, outcomes, or qualities that are presumed to be superior. Traditional promotional paradigms fit well within an 'organismic' perspective that views systems as striving to maintain or move toward ideal states via homeostatic or maintenance processes. In contrast, a 'promotion of social change' framework relies on processes that can either move a system away from stability (morphogenesis) or to new levels of stability (morphostasis) when appropriate (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Change is viewed as an ongoing, intrinsic aspect of the

event without regard to movement toward some ideal that, if achieved, involves no further change. Promotion of social change moves away from an existing social system that focuses on preventing or promoting particular end-states or maladies. Instead, promotion of social change embraces a focus on facilitating adaptive systemic processes and developmental opportunities in an ongoing evolution of change. Intervention that promotes social change focuses on social systems rather than on individuals, and rather than focusing on what can be achieved, the focus is on the positive benefits inherent in, for example, the recreation activity itself (Dooley, 1997). A dynamic process-approach values flexibility and fluidity within settings, and allows for a variety of alternate pathways which might be adaptive for diverse individuals within a particular context.

Promotion of social change is further characterised by careful attention to values, language and critical analysis, a reliance on systems theory, as well as a multifaceted appreciation of context that includes time, culture and power. The framework for the promotion of social change emphasizes careful examination of the values of various stakeholders, particularly when deciding what to promote and how to go about promoting it. Before attempting a process of social change, it is fundamental to determine for whom it is intended, and in which context a particular process might be adaptive. Every effort to promote social change should begin with a process of critical analysis of the system in which social issues and change will be defined. Critical analysis and social constructionist philosophies lead research to place prior, current and future understandings of the social issue within their political, cultural and temporal context. Emphasis is placed on the need to critically view the current, existing system of assumptions and rules in which social problems and their solutions have been defined and understood. While promotion of social change should begin with an attempt to examine the implicit assumptions underlying the social construction of an issue, a process of divergent thinking facilitates a re-conceptualization of the issue in various ways. The goal of identifying solutions that can be reproduced across the board is replaced by a goal of facilitating processes in which communities set and pursue their own agendas.

A key goal in organizing a community is the creation of level processes leading to increased community cohesion. This cohesion leads to organized action towards a

community goal, which in turn leads to organizational power. Network members also seek to create processes that facilitate interaction and cooperation among multiple community organizations which could ultimately lead to empowerment at the community level; a second-order change. Rather than terminating once a particular end-state or goal is reached, the organisation continues in a cycle of reflection, as members consider how the community evolved during the organizing cycle, and new action as additional strategy is identified. This facet of the process is critical in the fact that it allows for the continual evolution of change and, consequently, the community itself does not reach a fixed point (Tseng *et al,* 2002).

Changes within systems can exist at multiple ecological levels. Community organizing and low socio-economic neighbourhood development intervention, usually target mesosystems for change, and try to alter relationships between micro systems such as families, schools, businesses and churches. However, it is macro systems that must be influenced in order to generate policy-level change. Simply improving mainstream services would not single-handedly address the needs of individuals and communities, or tackle the overlaps, duplication, and demoralisation that set in when individuals and different agencies are struggling with facets of the same problem without being properly linked (Wallace, 2001). To further expand the scope and quality of promotion of change attempts, conceptual and practical issues at different ecological levels must be explored. For example, efforts to promote social change at macrosystem levels have often led to *'one-size-fits-all'* strategies. These universalistic strategies are effective and practical under certain circumstances, but in other situations they can severely limit opportunities to promote multiple, adaptive pathways. Targeting *'social regularities'* and *'turning points'* are two particularly promising ways to promote dynamic, facilitative processes at multiple ecological levels. Social regularities are emergent phenomena for introducing intervention at both micro and mesosystem levels. Social regularities can be explained as the frequency and pattern of transactions between two social entities, and are referred to as the *'rules of the game'*. Saranson (as cited in Tseng *et al*, 2002) states that the intended outcomes of a systemic intervention should involve the change of an existing regularity, elimination of one or more thereof, or the production of new ones. Microsystems and mesosystems represent the status quo. In contrast to a traditional preventive framework that can inadvertently reinforce the status quo by

reigning in or preventing non-cooperation in individuals, the promotion of social change within this framework explicitly examines the status quo, and targets that, together with the ecological level at which it exists, as the point of intervention.

Mesosystem regularities are altered within a recreation programme as it engages adults within a community to create supportive contexts in which youths can find mentorship and a sense of belonging as they become adult members of the community. Given the dynamic nature of systems, another potential target for the promotion of social change would be 'turning points'. Turning points can be seen as times when systems are in transition, for example, when there is economic change within communities. A turning point within the Danville and Elandspoort communities occurred with the closing down of the ISCOR plant in Pretoria West. At the time, there was a focus on turning points and transition, the reason being that they imply a less value-laden motion of change, allowing non-linear, multiple pathways rather than linear, progressive, universally ideal notions of growth and development. Turning points and transitions for systems often represent opportune moments for shifting the flow of change by breaking old, and establishing new dynamic processes. They represent the possibility for movement along an alternate pathway. At turning points, interrelationships between people, settings and time become more visible and vulnerable to change. Communities can, therefore, take advantage of the nature of transition inherent in them. Turning points then, become opportune times to promote social change (Skinner *et al*, 1999).

Emphasis on change at lower ecological levels reflects the traditional preventive and promotional goals of changing individual-level outcomes such as teenage pregnancy, problematic behaviour, unemployment and social competencies. The challenge facing the promotion of social change is the development of promotional efforts that match the ecological orientation for intervening at higher levels of analysis. It must be kept in mind that preventive or promotional activities that target individual-level outcomes for change may not affect the status quo of non-adaptive systems. The examples of *'Head Start'* and *'Sesame Street'* are specified by Tseng *et al* (2002). These forms of intervention are population or combined individual-level types of intervention, designed to promote skills and competencies of young children who are living in poverty. Although these forms of intervention were initiated in an attempt to

level the playing field within socio-economic classes, it did not change the larger social or economic contexts that produce inequity. The situation of a revolving cycle of poverty and inadequate preparation for school was therefore maintained. Similarly, much public health intervention has achieved some successes in the promotion of health outcomes at the population level, but has failed to address the academic forces that create inequity in access to programmes and healthy environments. Translated into systems language, the changes at the individual level are first-order changes that change individuals but not the system, which in this case is the community, itself.

3.4. CONCLUSION

Social change can occur in several ways, and sometimes it can happen in a way that is least expected. A recreation programme might not be the obvious way to bring about social change in a low socio-economic community; however, a sustainable recreation programme can bring about positive social change if approached correctly. Communities are not always in favour of change, but approaching a low socio-economic community from a second-order cybernetics perspective could improve the probability of a recreation programme may be able to bringing about social change.

CHAPTER FOUR
RECREATION PROVISION IN COMMUNITIES FROM A SECOND-ORDER CYBERNETICS APPROACH

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Social scientists created theories of social systems not only in an effort to describe a social system but also in the hope of changing it. People in different levels of society make different assumptions about human behaviour and motivation (Umpleby, 1994). Recreation providers from a middle socio-economic status background have certain perceptions of low socio-economic status communities. Designing a recreation programme as an 'observer' and 'expert' will, however, alienate the community from the provider. This is an example of a first-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision, with the community being observed as a 'black box'. Approaching the same community from a second-order cybernetic viewpoint will remove any assumptions, and will therefore alter the distinction between the recreation provider and the low socio-economic community.

4.2. CYBERNETICS: AN INTRODUCTION

Cybernetics, derived from the Greek *kybernetes*, or 'steersman' can roughly be translated as the art of steering (Geyer, 1994). The term *'cybernetics'* first appeared in antiquity with Plato, and in the 19th century with Ampère, who both saw it as the science of effective government. The concept was revived and elaborated on in 1948 by mathematician, Norbert Wiener (as cited by Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001), in his seminal book, the title of which defined it as, *Cybernetics, or the study of control and communication in the animal and the machine*. Inspired by wartime and pre-war results in mechanical control systems such as mechanisms and artillery targeting systems, in addition to the contemporary development of a mathematical theory of communication (or information) by Claude Shannon, Wiener set out to develop a general theory of organizational and control relations in systems (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). The early period within cybernetic thinking was marked primarily by the study of feedback loop and control systems, as well as by efforts to construct 'intelligent systems'. This period is labelled as the *'period of engineering'*

cybernetics, or the cybernetics of observed systems (Umpleby, 1994). In the early 1970s, Heinz von Foerster, following a suggestion made by Margaret Mead, led a movement to focus attention on the observer, thereby literally turning cybernetics 'onto itself'. These ideas of 'cybernetics of cybernetics' or second-order cybernetics soon attracted increasing attention from the social sciences. The roots of second-order cybernetics were actually already present at the time the field was founded in the 1940s, as Von Foerster pointed out that an interest in knowledge, cognition, observation and the nervous system was the original intent underlying cybernetics (Umpleby, 1994).

Factors that distinguish cybernetics, also known as systems theory, are the emphasis on control and communication – not only in engineered, artificial systems – but also in evolved, natural systems, such as organisms and societies, which set their own goals, rather than being controlled by their creators (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). Cybernetics is concerned not so much with what systems consist of, but with how they function. Cybernetic thinking focuses on how systems use information, models, and control actions to steer towards and maintain goals, while counteracting various disturbances. Being inherently transdisciplinary, cybernetic reasoning can be applied to understand, model and design systems of any kind, be they physical, technological, biological, ecological, psychological, social, or any combination of those (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

Umpleby (1994) described four elements to illustrate systems within cybernetic theory:

➢ *Variables*. The most highly regarded approach within the scientific community is to define a system as a set of interrelated variables. When describing a system in terms of variables, the structure of a system is described by the relationships among the variables, ideally presented in the form of equations. The behaviour of the system is described by the changes in the values of the variables over time.

➢ *Events*. Some systems are described by a sequence of events or states. A problematic pattern of interaction between two people is often presented as a recurring series of events.

➢ *Groups*. Social systems are often described as being composed of different

groups of people. Groups can be defined by profession, income, beliefs or values.

➤ *Ideas*. One feature of complex social systems is that different groups are playing different games. They not only have different goals, but they also live in different conceptual worlds.

Johannessen (1998) added four main building blocks:

➤ The sub-systems and the system must be viewed in context, the part versus whole relationship, which provides direction for stability and structure.

➤ The system in the environment, not the system separated by a border, is emphasized, which gives direction for identity and norms.

➤ The element-relation connection which gives direction for changes in the system.

➤ The reorganisation of the system of relations which gives direction for creation processes and innovation in the system.

In Newtonian science, cause is followed by effect, in a simple, linear sequence (figure 4.1). Cybernetics, in contrast, is interested in processes where an effect feeds back into its very cause (figure 4.2). Circularity has been a problematic concept in science, leading to deep conceptual problems such as the logical paradoxes of self-reference. Cybernetic theory discovered that, if modelled adequately, circularity will lead to an understanding of fundamental phenomena, for instance, self-organization, goal-directedness and identity, in a way that had escaped Newtonian science (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

Figure 4.1: Linear sequence associated with Newtonian science
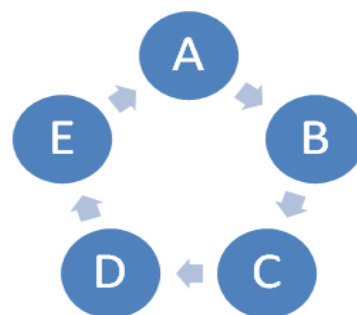
Figure 4.2: Circularity associated with Cybernetics

An important question in cybernetics becomes *'what is the pattern which combines a given phenomenon or problem?'* It is difficult to identify cause and effect in a pattern, as a pattern can metaphorically be regarded as a circle or a spiral, which has no beginning or end. The pattern within a system is connected by relationships (Johannessen, 1998). Early efforts to apply the homeostasis-orientated type of cybernetic theory to the field of social science was met with resistance from a community which considered such a theory to be too conservative, simplistic, mechanistic and linear to be applicable to the world of human interaction (Geyer, 1994).

Probably the most important innovation of cybernetics is its explanation of goal-directedness or purpose. An autonomous system such as a community can be characterized by the fact that it pursues its own goals; resisting obstructions from the environment that would make it deviate from its preferred state of affairs. Goal-directedness therefore implies regulation of − or control over − perturbations. A room in which the temperature is controlled by a thermostat is an example of goal-directedness. The setting of the thermostat determines the preferred temperature or goal state. Perturbations may be caused by changes in the outside temperature or a draft. The task of the thermostat is to minimize the effects of such perturbations, and thus to keep the temperature, as much as possible, constant with respect to the target temperature. The goal of an autopoietic, 'self-producing' system is survival, that is, the maintenance of its essential organization (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

According to Krippendorff (1996) the shift from first-order to second-order cybernetics signalled a shift in scientific attitudes towards reality, from privileging the perspectives of detached observers, spectators or engineers of a world outside of themselves, to acknowledging the observer's participation in the world observed and constructed. First-order cybernetics (figure 4.3) is based on positivism, while second-order cybernetics (figure 4.4) is actor-orientated and focuses on the observer observing the social system (Johannessen, 1998). Second-order cybernetics explicitly includes the observer in the system studied. It generally deals with living systems, and not with developing control systems for inanimate, technological devices. These living systems range from simple cells all the way up the evolutionary scale to

human beings; while the observers themselves are obviously also human beings. In contrast to the engineering approach of first-order cybernetics, second-order cybernetics has a mainly biological approach (Geyer, 1998). Second-order cybernetics necessitates a rejection of the previous metaphor of any system resembling a machine which could be manipulated by an external, independent observer, for example, an 'expert' recreation provider 'changing' a community while that person (the recreation provider) stays unchanged (Cullin, 2005).
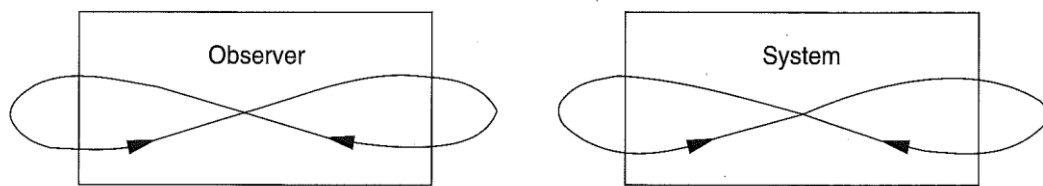
Figure 4.3: First-order cybernetics (Becvar & Becvar, 2000: 78)
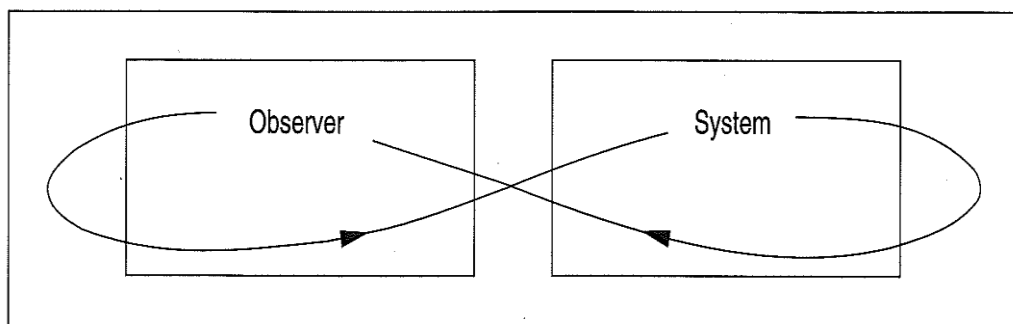
Figure 4.4: Second-order cybernetics (Becvar & Becvar, 2000: 78)

Since its initiation, second-order cybernetics has been dealing increasingly with social science problems. Accepting the reality of concepts like autopoiesis, self-organization and self-reference, and trying to incorporate this in realistic research designs, it becomes extremely difficult, methodologically, to engage in solid empirical research (Geyer, 1998).

In recent years, increasing attention in cybernetic research has been given to social systems. Whereas the work on the biology of cognition required that attention be

shifted from what was observed to the observer, the recent interest in social systems requires an emphasis on multiple observers and their beliefs. Social scientists created theories of social systems not only in an effort to describe social systems, but also in the hope of changing them (Umpleby, 1994).

Cybernetics, whether understood in its first- or second-order conceptualisation, is about the interrelatedness of things (Cullin, 2005). The following section compares the first-order cybernetic approach with the second-order cybernetic approach, whilst simultaneously discussing each approach.

4.3. FIRST-ORDER CYBERNETICS VERSUS SECOND-ORDER CYBERNETICS

4.3.1. First order cybernetic system

In first-order cybernetics, a system will be studied as if it were a passive, objectively given 'entity' that can be freely observed, manipulated, and taken apart. The observer is not seen as either part of the system or concerned with why it does what it does. The focus is on describing what is happening (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). First-order cybernetic systems detect and correct error, compare a current state to a desired state, act to achieve the desired state, and measure progress toward the goal (Dubberly & Pangaro, 2007). In terms of a low socio-economic community as a system, first-order cybernetics is primarily interested in homeostasis or equilibrium-maintenance; in restoring a system's equilibrium when it is disturbed by an external influence impinging on that system. Positive feedback loops, which cause morphogenesis rather than homeostasis, are given much less attention in first-order cybernetics (Geyer, 1994). One of the important contributions of first-order cybernetics is its premise of circular processes – in technology and in society. The circular causal cycle may be short – for example, A causes B and B causes A (Geyer, 1998).

At the level of first-order cybernetics, the recreation provider is placed on the outside of the system as observer. The focus is on describing what is happening in the system. The subsequent discussion includes the concepts used in describing and defining a first-order system from an observer's point of view: recursion, feedback,

morphostasis and morphogenesis, rules and boundaries, openness and closedness, entropy and negentropy, equifinality and equipotentiality, communication and information processing, relationship and wholeness, goals and purposes.

4.3.1.1. Recursion

Looking at the world from a cybernetic perspective, the question 'why' is not asked. The interest does not lie in cause. Consistent with the assumption of recursiveness, or reciprocal causality, people and events are seen in the context of mutual interaction and mutual influence. Rather than looking at individuals in isolation, the relationship with the individual and his or her environment is examined: how it interacts with and influences the other. The behaviour of A is seen as the logical compliment to the behaviour of B, just as B's behaviour is a logical compliment to the behaviour of A (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). A low socio-economic community is therefore defined by a higher socio-economic status community, if each is to perform a particular behavioural role. Domination cannot occur without submission. A low socio-economic community cannot be submissive without the cooperation, conscious or not, of another community which dominates. The Danville and Elandspoort communities can be said to be dominated by external communities and volunteers. The Danville/Elandspoort community submits to domination to maintain its homeostasis, as indicated in figure 4.5.
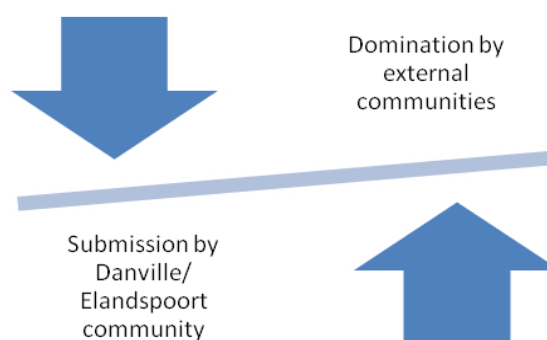
Figure 4.5: Submission/domination homeostasis

From a cybernetic perspective, meaning is derived from the relation between systems as each defines the other. Causality, therefore, becomes a reciprocal concept found

only in the interface between individuals and systems as they mutually influence each other. According to this recursive perspective, every system is seen as influencing, and being influenced by other systems. An advantage in cybernetic thinking is the ability to increase the awareness of this range of levels (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Given the principle of 'recursivity', isolated cause-and-effect events are only a partial arc of a larger pattern of circularity, and 'a unilineal focus on part of a system will disrupt and fractionate the balanced diversity of an ecosystem' (Keeney as cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2000:66). However, according to cybernetics theory, the system will use feedback patterns to deflect the disturbance and return it to its state of homeostasis. Once-off recreation programmes will therefore not be sustainable, as the system will reject the interference in order to return to its status quo.

4.3.1.2. Feedback

Feedback delineates the process in which information about past behaviour is fed back into the system in a circular manner. Feedback is behaviour, and is all-pervasive. Cybernetics perspective is inherently circular, and feedback occurs via feedback loops. Positive and negative feedback loops are both examples of circular causality. Feedback can either occur spontaneously, or can be engineered (Geyer, 1994).

A first-order cybernetic system provides a framework for describing simple interaction. It introduces and defines feedback; it frames interaction as information flowing in a continuous loop through a system and its environment; it frames control in terms of a system maintaining a relationship with its environment and forms a coherence in which goal, activity, measure and disturbance each implies the other (Dubberly & Pangaro, 2007). At the level of first-order cybernetics, reference is made to both positive and negative feedback; however, these two concepts do not signify value judgements. Negative feedback processes are, however, a more regular occurrence. Positive and negative feedback mutually refer to the impact of the behaviour upon the system, as well as the response of the system to that behaviour. Positive feedback therefore acknowledges that a change has occurred and has been accepted by the system, whereas negative feedback acknowledges that the status quo is being maintained. A feedback process can be evaluated relative only to context,

and neither positive nor negative feedback *causes* anything, and both merely act as descriptors of processes in a given system at a particular time. Feedback processes are self-corrected mechanisms, indicating variations and fluctuations that serve to increase the probability of the survival of the system. Change and stability are both needed for the survival of a system. Positive feedback is seen as an error-activated process, as it describes a process whereby information about a deviation from a previously established norm is fed back into the system, and is responded to in such a manner that the difference is accepted. System maintenance behaviour, therefore, occurs in response to change. The occurrence of a new behaviour in a system suggests that change may be necessary in order for the system to remain stable in a functional way (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Negative feedback processes indicate that fluctuations or disturbances are opposed, and that a particular level of stability is being maintained. Information about this stability is then fed back into the system and responded to accordingly. In both negative and positive feedback, the stability of the system is maintained in the context, whether in a functional or dysfunctional manner (Zangeneh & Haydon, 2004). A low socio-economic community may resist a new recreation programme using a negative feedback system, and, thereby, oppose the 'disturbance'. The recreation provider therefore experiences resistance from the community, with the community striving to maintain stability in the system.

Perturbations resisted in a control relation can originate from either the inside or the outside of the system, but can functionally be treated as originating from the same external source. To achieve its goal, the system must have a way to block the effect of perturbation on its essential variables. There are three fundamental methods to achieve such regulation, namely, buffering, feedback and feed-forward (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). Buffering is the passive absorption or 'damping' of perturbations. The mechanism of buffering is similar to that of a stable equilibrium, dissipating perturbations devoid of active intervention. On the downside, however, buffering can dampen only the effects of uncoordinated fluctuations, and cannot systematically drive the system to a non-equilibrium state (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). Feedback and feed-forward both require action on the part of the system, to suppress or compensate the effect of the fluctuation. Feed-forward suppresses the disturbance before it has a chance to affect the system's essential variables. This requires the capacity to anticipate the effect of perturbations on the system's goal (Heylighen &

Joslyn, 2001).

First-order cybernetics is primarily interested in negative feedback loops; therefore, it is interested in homeostasis or equilibrium-maintenance, or at least in restoring the system's equilibrium whenever it is disturbed by external influences impinging on that system (Geyer, 1994).

4.3.1.3. Morphostasis/ Morphogenesis

A system's ability to remain stable in the context of change, and to change in the context of stability, is defined by morphostasis and morphogenesis. Morphostasis is a system's tendency toward stability and a state of dynamic equilibrium. Morphogenesis refers to the system-enhancing behaviour that allows for growth, advancement, and change, all of which are characteristic of functional systems. In a well-functioning system, both morphostasis and morphogenesis are necessary. They cannot be separated (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Danville and Elandspoort are examples of systems in states of morphostasis, with each community's having the tendency to move toward stability. Whereas an extreme on both sides of morphostasis and morphogenesis would be dysfunctional, in a healthy system there would be an appropriate balance between the two. The rules of the system will allow for a change in the rules when such changes are necessary (Geyer, 1994).

4.3.1.4. Rules and Boundaries

The rules according to which a system operates are made up of the characteristic relationship patterns within the system, expressing the values of the system, as well as the roles appropriate to behaviour within the system. A system's rules distinguish it from other systems, and therefore rules form the boundaries of a system. Rules and boundaries are not visible, but are understood from the repeated patterns of behaviour of a system. A system exists only in the eyes of the observer, therefore only as the observer chooses to define it as such. The rules of a system are implicit for most part, existing outside the awareness of the members of the system (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). The Danville/ Elandspoort community is defined in this study as a system or a community, the reason being that the researcher chooses to define it as such. Rules and boundaries characterising this system become visible to the observer through observation of the defined system. Cybernetic theory holds that any part of

the universe can be mentally and arbitrarily carved out, and be called a system, however, once the boundaries of a system are delineated, they must be kept. This follows from the so-called 'black box' approach (named after the early metal boxes containing electrical wiring, which were painted black), presupposing that the external observer can never really observe the system from within, but can determine only what goes in (input) and what comes out (the output). From the differences between the two, inferences can then be made about the way the system works, depending on the mindset of the observer (Geyer, 1994). Observing the Danville and Elandspoort communities from the outside, feedback (output) from the systems suggests that food and clothing are needed (figure 4.6.). Input from outside the systems answer this 'need' with inputs, providing food and clothing. This cycle will continue, and will thereby maintain the low socio-economic communities' status quo.

Figure 4.6: Cycle maintaining a community's status quo

The concept of boundaries implies the notion of a hierarchy of systems. Any system exists as part of a larger system or suprasystem, and has smaller sub-systems for which it is the suprasystem. The concept of boundary connotes the separateness of a system from a larger system as well as a belonging to that suprasystem (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). A community can therefore be seen as a separate system whilst being part of a system of communities. Sub-systems of families exist in the larger system of the community. A system's boundary together with its rules, act as a gatekeeper for the flow of information into and out of the system. Maintenance of a community's identity involves a process in which the boundary functions as a buffer for information from outside the system, screening it for compatibility with the community's value system. The boundary of a system also describes the exit for information from the system. Such information is different from the inputs of other systems, but it is not purely what happened within the system. Incoming information

is transformed by the system and is then emitted as new information to other systems (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Maintenance of the Danville/Elandspoort community's boundaries occurs by screening incoming and outgoing information. This screening process becomes evident, for example, within the soup kitchen's declaration of donations. External donors are often not aware of other donors donating to the same soup kitchen. The boundaries of the Danville/Elandspoort system therefore describe the exit of information, emphasising the need for food and clothing, and, by doing this, maintain the status quo of the system. This process, as illustrated in figure 4.7, forms part of a cycle, defined by the provider-recipient relationship, where both systems do what they do best according to the feedback process.

Input: food/ clothing   Danville/ Elandspoort community as black box.   Output: need food/ clothing

Status quo maintained   Food/ clothing provided
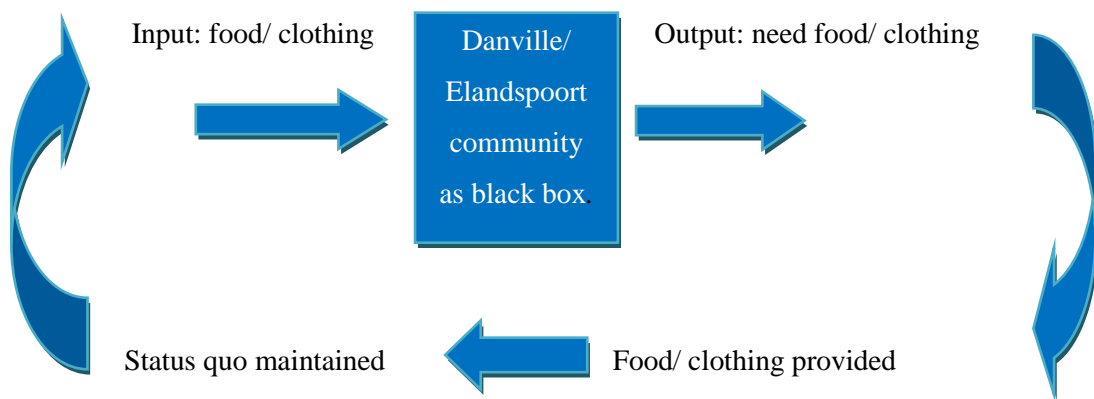
Figure 4.7: Provider-recipient relationship maintaining the status quo in the Danville and Elandspoort communities

System boundaries are drawn using an observer-dependent, time-dependent, and problem-dependent method. It is necessary to be fully aware of this when determining what falls inside, and what falls outside the field of inquiry (Geyer, 1994). From a first-order cybernetic perspective, boundaries surrounding the Danville/ Elandspoort community might be drawn as:

➢ Problem-dependent: unemployment.
➢ Time-dependent: the time of enquiry.
➢ Observer-dependent: delineation done by observer, for example, in this study the boundaries will define recreation provision within the Danville/ Elandspoort community.

4.3.1.5. Openness and closedness of system

The extent to which a system screens out or permits the input of new information is defined as the openness or closedness of that system. Openness or closedness is a matter of degree, and a balance between the two is desirable for the healthy functioning of a system. The particular end of the continuum that is suitable for a certain situation can be determined relative only to the context. When a system and its identity are threatened by a context very different from their own, closedness will be a more feasible option if that identity is to be maintained (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

The Danville/Elandspoort community functions to retain its homeostasis and identity as a low socio-economic community in need of help. External input threatening the community's identity and status quo will be screened out by the community's resorting to the 'closedness' side of the continuum. The openness and closedness of a system is a possible reason why developmental programmes within low socio-economic communities often fail. First-order attempts at changing a system can be screened out if that system wants to retain its homeostasis.

4.3.1.6. Entropy/negentropy

Balance between openness and closedness is appropriate; therefore being either too open or too closed will be dysfunctional. At both extremes, the system may be said to be in a state of entropy (figure 4.8), or tending towards maximum disorder and disintegration. By either allowing in too much information or not enough information, the system risks losing its identity and thus its survival. But, when an appropriate balance between openness and closedness is maintained, the system is in a state of negentropy, or negative entropy, and is tending toward maximum order. The system is allowing information in and allowing change as appropriate, while screening out information and avoiding changes that would threaten its survival (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Figure 4.8: Negentropy versus entropy

The concept of entropy/negentropy is an important consideration for an external recreation programme: too much new information will threaten a system, and will lead to a state of entropy, resulting in an unsustainable recreation programme.

4.3.1.7. Equifinality/ Equipotentiality

Regardless of the balance between morphogenesis and morphostasis, openness and closedness, entropy and negentropy, all systems can be described according to the concept of equifinality: the system as it is its own best explanation of itself; despite of where the beginning is, the end will be the same. Literally meaning 'equal ending', equifinality is the tendency towards a characteristic final state from different initial states and in different ways, based upon dynamic interaction in an open system attaining a steady state. (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Goal-directedness can be understood most simply as the suppression of deviation from an invariant goal state. In that respect, a goal is similar to a stable equilibrium, to which the system returns after any perturbation. Goal-directedness and stability are both characterized by equifinality; different initial states lead to the same final state, implying the destruction of variety. Distinguishing goal-directedness and stability is the fact that a stable system automatically returns to its equilibrium state without performing any work or effort. However, a goal-directed system must actively intervene to achieve and maintain its goal; otherwise it would not be in equilibrium (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

Residents within a community develop habitual ways of behaving and communicating, and these are referred to as 'redundant patterns of interaction'. Systems consist of patterns, and these patterns tend to repeat. Regardless of the topic,

ways in which members of a given relationship communicate (for example, argue, solve problems and discuss issues) will generally be the same. These redundant patterns of interaction are the characteristic end-state referred to by the concept of equifinality. Equipotentiality, in contrast to equifinality, is the idea that different end states may be arrived at from the same initial conditions. The concept of both equifinality and equipotentiality directs attention to the level of process, excluding the need for history or for asking why something is the way it is. Cybernetic theory is concerned with the here-and-now; with the particular organization and ongoing interaction in a system, rather than with the origins of these characteristic patterns and processes. Why the Danville/Elandspoort community is in a state of poverty, with a high rate of unemployment, is seen as history. Focusing on the here-and-now therefore requires an analysis of the current organisation, characteristic patterns, and processes that maintain the system's status quo. Achieving insight is not the route to problem solution from a cybernetics perspective, where the goal is to understand the context into which a problem fits, to identify the patterns maintaining the problem, and then to change the context. A historical framework may provide an understanding regarding the context of a problem, but, in contrast, cybernetic thinking does not seek to place blame or to locate cause. It is interested in attempted solutions and current communication about the problem, all of which have become part of the problem rather than of its solution. Given the concept of equifinality, it can be said that the Elandspoort/Danville community is stuck in a certain mode, and that the processes in use are no longer effective. What is needed in this situation is new information, as well as new ways of communicating, and therefore new ways of behaving, relative to the problem (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

4.3.1.8. Communication and Information Processing

Communication and information processing form the core of cybernetic theory (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Three basic principles underlie this concept:

➢ Principle one: one cannot not behave.
➢ Principle two: one cannot not communicate.
➢ Principle three: the meaning of a given behaviour is not the true meaning of the behaviour. It is, however, the personal truth for the person who has given it a particular meaning. Reality is subjective and each person's perception is

equally true and valid for that person.

Luhman (as cited in Johannessen, 1998) argues that communication is the foundation of social systems. Communication involves people, not only as participants, speakers and listeners, but also as observers of their own participation in the process. This includes observing other communicators as well. Participating in communication is primary. Without language, however, this participation has no discernible structure. Communication is a fundamentally local and self-referential phenomenon, that is, what it is or entails varies widely from one culture to another (Krippendorff, 1996).

Cybernetic theory elaborates on the analysis of the concept of communication by explaining communication as occurring in three different modes, namely, the verbal or digital mode, the nonverbal mode and the context. The combination of the nonverbal mode and the context is called the analog. The verbal or digital mode refers to the spoken word, the report phase of the message and is considered the least powerful part in defining how the message is received. The explicit content of a message must be qualified by the nonverbal and context modes if the recipient is to be able to decide the meaning of a message, therefore, the analog is more powerful. The nonverbal mode is the command aspect of the message. This mode involves voice tone, inflection, gestures and facial expression. It is the relationship-defining mode of communication, because it defines the intention of the sender of the message. The context further alters the meaning of a message. Where it is said, with whom it is said and when it is said constitute the elements of context. A change in context usually means a change in the rules of the relationship. There are thus two levels of communication, namely, the content (the digital portion), and the process (the analog). When these two levels match, a congruent message is sent. When the two levels do not match, problems arise, and the ensuing interchange will not be productive (Dooley, 1997). The communication aspect of a recreation programme is often neglected, and is a contributing factor in its success or failure. The recreation provider, as outsider to the system, must take care that both the digital portion and the analog match, to ensure that a congruent message is sent to the community. A recreation provider might say that he is excited about a new programme; however this statement must be confirmed by facial expressions, intonation and the context in which it is said.

4.3.1.9. Relationship and wholeness

Two systems relating together are not independent; they mutually influence each other. The fundamental rule in cybernetic theory is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, therefore $1 + 1 = 3$. The three elements in the equation are the two individuals (or communities), plus the interaction, and it is this interaction that provides the context of a relationship. The perspective in cybernetic theory is relational, and the focus is on the context, or the whole, without which behaviour cannot be fully understood (Geyer, 1994). The recreation provider cannot stay unchanged in the interaction with a community. Together, the two systems in interaction form the context for the relationship. Behaviour within this relationship can therefore be understood only within the specific context.

4.3.1.10. Goals and Purposes

All attributions of purpose are made by an observer who is interpreting the behaviour in question. Cybernetics provides no exception to this dilemma, as the purpose of a system can be stated and invented only according to the perception of the observer looking at it. Cybernetic systems behave as if goal directed, however, it is not consistent with a cybernetics perspective to speak of goal or purpose, because these concepts imply intra-psychic notions such as motivation or intention, and are causal or linear in nature. The best definition of a system is itself, therefore, the only logical claim that can be made is that the system exists in order to exist, or to do what it does. However, that is circular reasoning, and begs the question of goal or purpose. It can thus be said that the best definition of the Danville/Elandspoort community is itself and that it exists in order to exist. While a goal might be inferred, it requires someone on the outside of the system – an observer – to do that. The purpose for, or the purpose of the system, is invented by the observer self. While it is useful to operate on the level of simple cybernetics, also called first-order cybernetics, when looking at a system from outside, the system level that includes the observer cannot be excluded (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

First-order cybernetics provides an alternative perspective (to the linear action-reaction approach) on how low socio-economic communities are seen by an observer from outside the community. The observer is, however, not seen as a part of the system (community), and the system is described as a 'black box' with the observer

looking in from the outside. At the level of second-order cybernetics, the community is no longer viewed in terms of being an unknown black box, and instead the observer is included as part of the community, with no reference to an outside environment.

4.3.2. Second order cybernetics:

Second-order cybernetics originated nearly thirty years later than first-order cybernetics, that is, in the early 1970s. The term was coined by Heinz von Foerster in a paper prepared for the 1970 meeting of the American Society for Cybernetics, entitled, *Cybernetics of cybernetics*. He defined first-order cybernetics as the cybernetics of observed systems, and second-order cybernetics as the cybernetics of observing systems (Geyer, 1994). Second-order cybernetics originated in reaction to what was seen as the deficiencies of first-order cybernetics.

Second-order cybernetics, also called cybernetics of cybernetics, moves up one level from first-order cybernetics. In second-order cybernetics, the system (community) is defined as having the ability to reflect on its own operations on the environment, and on itself (Geyer, 1998). A key element of second-order cybernetics is the concept of homeostasis, which is maintained through the circular process of feedback (Cullin, 2005). At the level of second-order cybernetics, a system is no longer viewed only by the inputs and outputs of, or relationships with, other systems. The observer is part of the system that is observed, and therefore everything that is happening within a community is entirely self-referential. There is no reference to an outside environment; the boundary is unbroken and the system is closed, and a closer approximation of wholeness is attempted. Second-order cybernetics not only includes the observer in what is observed, but also offers an interactive, recursive, self-corrective and contextual explanation of what is, or seems to be, occurring (Cullin, 2005). The focus in second-order cybernetics shifts from a behavioural analysis based on inputs and outputs that emphasises the outside environment, to a recursive analysis that emphasizes the internal structure of the system, as well as the mutual connectedness of the observer and the observed (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Second-order cybernetics nests one first-order cybernetic system with another, providing a framework for describing the more complex interactions of nested systems (Dubberly & Pangaro, 2007). From a second-order cybernetics perspective,

the recreation programme organiser becomes part of the community, and is able to describe interactions and processes within the community that were previously closed to the external observer. The fact that the observer is part of a broader observing system that includes the observed, does not cancel out the cybernetic properties of what can still be punctuated as an observed second-order cybernetic system (Cullin, 2005). Umpleby (1994:637) states that it is necessary to ask the question, 'what precisely are the various observers of a system thinking?' Granted that different observers construct different 'realities', what are their realities or conceptions of the world? Given differences in perception, how do people reach agreement on shared purposes? Which values and institutions are most successful in promoting the development of both individuals and social systems? As observer, it can never be said that any one person's view of the world is correct. It merely fits the person's experiences. One implication of the notion that each person constructs his or her own reality on the basis of experience is that one person (for example, the recreation provider) cannot impose his views on another person. A recreation provider might have been raised in a middle class socio-economic community, experiencing the opportunities for sport, recreation and leisure activities that form a part of the society. This does, however, not necessarily mean that this person's view of recreation provision is better than that of the community's. It merely fits that person's experiences. In second-order cybernetics, the recreation provider is therefore not seen as the 'expert', but rather as a facilitator, facilitating a change in the behaviour of the system.

On the level of second-order cybernetics, the recreation provider is no longer merely the observer of the system; the provider becomes a part of the system that is observed. Terminology used to describe a system on this level of abstraction include wholeness and self-reference, openness and closedness, autopoiesis, structural determinism, structural coupling and non-purposeful drift, epistemology of participation, and reality as 'multiverse'.

4.3.2.1. Wholeness and self-reference

Self-reference has been an important concept in distinguishing second-order cybernetics from first-order cybernetics. In second-order cybernetics observers refer to themselves, however, second-order cybernetics emphasizes biological and

linguistic self-reference (Umpleby, 1994). Self-reference occurs when the system observes itself and describes itself as different from its environment. Through the process of self-observation and self-description, meaning is assigned to the environment in the form of a difference. Self-observation and self-description are necessary operations of self-referential social systems, with systems forming as an outcome of processing paradox (Connell, 2002). Self-reference, the mutuality or simultaneity of interactions, gives whole systems their sense of organizational closure, or autonomy. Understanding the autonomy of a system precludes reference to an outside environment, and autonomy can be described only through references to the system itself. Autonomy, therefore, refers to the highest order of recursion or the feedback processes of a system, and the range of deviation or level of stability maintained is that of the organization of the whole. At this level, systems acquire identity as particular units, for example, as a community (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Husserd (as cited in Connell, 2002) argues that subjectivity and self-reference are unavoidably bound.

A concept of system encounters self-reference, for instance, the necessary distinction between system and environment is manifested as a self-description. Determining what a system is requires determining what a system is not. The theory of self-reference accepts this paradox so that not comprehension from the outside, but only self-description from within, in the course of the systems own operations, is possible. What the community of Danville/Elandspoort *is* therefore what it is, but also what it is not. A shift to viewing social systems as self-referential observing systems fully displaces the conventional role of the subject in sociology. This shift is reflected in methodology as a shift from first-order observations to second-order observations. The 'community problem' may be characterised as a limitation of first-order observations. First-order cybernetics presumes an external observer, and is consequently constrained by the sociological limitations of standard sociological science that describe community. Alternatively, in second-order cybernetics, the aim of observation is no longer to construct a theory of observed phenomena, but to include the observer in the domain of science (Connell, 2002).

4.3.2.2. Openness and Closedness

At the level of second-order cybernetics, the system, together with the observer, is

understood to be mutually interacting within a larger system of which the boundary is closed, and therefore no reference is made to an external environment. Autonomous systems are interactive, and changes may occur at this level, involving the structure of the system, or the way in which the organization of the whole is maintained. Interactions of systems at the level of autonomy must therefore be referred to as perturbations rather than as inputs. Cybernetically-speaking, structure refers to the relations between the parts, as well as the identity of the parts, that constitute the whole (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Coding and programming make the simultaneous closure and openness of a system possible, the reason being that a system operates only according to its code, for example, 'my community', and it is closed in this regard (Connell, 2002). The extent to which communities such as Danville and Elandspoort screen out or permit new information – such as a new recreation programme – is referred to as the openness or closedness of that system. If, however, the identity of a system is threatened, or is perceived as being threatened, the system will lean towards closedness to protect its identity. The identities of the communities of Danville and Elandspoort are based on their socio-economic status and the fact that the residents are unemployed and in need of external help. A recreation programme that promotes independence in participants will threaten the identity of the community.

4.3.2.3. Autopoiesis

Autopoiesis is the way in which the parts in a system relate, rather than the nature of the parts. Self-generation, as process, has been labelled autopoiesis. Autopoiesis literally means a 'self-producing' system (Johannessen, 1998). The product of an autopoietic system is always itself. That is, the system does what it does in order to do what it does. The being of an autopoietic unity is inseparable, and this is their specific mode of organisation. At the level of cybernetics of cybernetics (second-order cybernetics) only negative feedback can be referred to, and this maintains the status quo. To describe positive feedback is to look at deviation and change in isolation rather than in the context of the larger autonomous system. Within that larger context, the system operates to maintain itself, according to the rules of autopoiesis. Cybernetic descriptions are therefore always made in terms of negative feedback (Connell, 2002).

The idea of autopoiesis or 'self-making' in cybernetic vocabulary is used to describe processes by which a system maintains itself and achieves autonomy. This framework is useful for understanding a community, how it forms and how it maintains itself (Dubberly & Pangaro, 2007). According to Maturana & Varela (as cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2000:46):

> *'the most striking feature of an autopoietic system is that it pulls itself up by its own bootstraps, and becomes distinct from its environment through its own dynamics, in such a way that both things are inseparable...'*

In other words, a boundary is necessary in order to distinguish a community from the larger context, whilst at the same time keeping in mind that the dynamics of interaction are necessary in order to distinguish a boundary. Through autopoiesis, the system draws its own boundaries, determining what belongs to the environment and what belongs to the system, therefore, only the system can decide what to accept as constituting itself and how to demarcate its identity from other systems. This self-constitution implies that system identities are independent from observation from other systems, and this identity cannot be caused by forces external to the system. Social systems, for example, a community, can for that reason be referred to as autopoietic, self-referential systems. The collapse of boundaries between observer and observed gives rise to a theory of observing systems (Connell, 2002). Boundaries do not *cause* the system, nor does the system cause the boundary. Each requires the other, and both are part of the unitary process of autopoiesis (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). The primary distinction that guides observing systems is system-environment and the system's ability to observe this distinction. It is a framework that transcends the individual-community-society schema and creates alternative possibilities for understanding community and its effect in rural and low socio-economic settings (Connell, 2002).

Gray *et al* (as cited in Skinner *et al*, 1999) specified three conceptualisations of system boundaries. The first addresses the boundaries of closed systems and suggests that the boundaries of these systems are relatively impermeable to the forces of their surrounding environments. It is consistent with change theories that assume implicitly that systemic boundaries are distinct and remain intact throughout the change process. The second and third forms of system boundaries have distinct

parallels with open systems theory, recognizing the interdependencies between the system and its environment. The second conceptualisation of a system boundary suggests that, in the aftermath of change, the boundary will congeal, reducing exchange and increasing systemic insularity. In this situation, change is seen essentially as divergent in nature and as ceasing once equilibrium is regained. The third conceptualisation is more dynamic and recognises the importance of active boundary maintenance. Within this framework, defining what is inside the organisation and what is outside the system becomes an important role of system management, and the survival of the system is dependent on an ongoing, appropriate relationship with its environment. Successful systems are likely to be more fully responsive to things such as changing technologies, shifting needs and new sources of revenue (Skinner *et al*, 1999). Johannessen agrees with Gray *et al* (1999), and adds that within cybernetics closure is a condition for openness. The cognitive openness is a form of knowledge linked to the environment of the system which maintains organisational learning. The recursive element is critical for the understanding of the normative element at various recursivity levels (Johannessen, 1998).

When explaining a system, Bateson (as cited in Vanderstraeten, 2001) uses a comparison to a frog's visual cortex. The authors of a study on a frog's visual cortex had implanted micro-electrodes therein in order to measure the strengths of neural responses to various stimuli. It was registered that small objects in fast, erratic motions elicited maximum response, whereas large, slow moving objects evoked little or no response. The frog's perceptual equipment allowed it to perceive flies while it ignored other phenomena irrelevant to its interest. The results implied that the frog's perceptual system does not so much register reality as construct it. It can, therefore, be claimed that a living system responds to its environment in ways determined by autopoiesis. The system constructs its environment through the domain of interactions made possible by its autopoietic organisation. A living system operates within the boundaries of an organisation that closes in on itself and leaves the world on the outside (Vanderstraeten, 2001).

The question then, in second-order cybernetics, becomes one of how observing systems observe. The observation must indicate what is being observed,

distinguishing the observed from what is not observed. For example, the recreation provider can delineate what is being observed by identifying what is not being observed. In the Danville/Elandspoort community, the recreation provider might observe the lack of sustainable recreation programmes, or the observation might be made according to geographical boundaries. The community as system is determined by the recreation provider, but boundaries must be described by what is being observed and what is not. Observing is thus equated with distinguishing, and it becomes clear that the choice of a distinction entails important consequences. An observation is an operation that applies a distinction to indicate one side of the distinction, and not the other, encompassing two components: distinguish – and – indicate. During the observation itself, these components cannot be separated or blended. It is not possible to make an indication without drawing a distinction. The distinction itself remains unobservable, because it cannot be indicated as one of the sides of the distinction. Every distinction is a 'blind-spot', and this blindness is presupposed as the condition of the possibility of the observation. Following second-order cybernetics theory, the world can therefore not be objectively represented within the system. It cannot instruct an observing system. Second-order observations focus on the blind-spot of an observer, bearing in mind that the second-order observation is also a first-order observation, in so far as it cannot distinguish its own distinction (Vanderstraeten, 2001).

4.3.2.4. Structural Determinism

At the level of autonomy, systems are structurally determined, and the system itself determines the range of structural variations it can accept without loss of identity. The system is limited, however, by virtue of its structure, with what it can and cannot do. The environment does not determine what a system does, but as perturbing agent, may provide a context or historical instance for the occurrence of what the system's structure determines it to do. According to the notion of negative explanation, 'what is possible' is a function of the structure of the system and the constraints placed upon it by the environment. The system can do, or become whatever its structure allows, as long as that choice is not forbidden by the environment (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). According to the principle of structural determinism, the communities of Danville and Elandspoort structurally determine what they can and cannot do. The system can do what the structure allows. The structures of Danville and Elandspoort,

as systems, do not permit independence, as the identities of the systems are based upon being dependent.

4.3.2.5. Structural coupling and Non-purposeful Drift

According to the notion of structural determinism, the way in which a system functions is always correct. It is correct because the system does only what its structure determines it can do. Only from the perspective of an observer can the actions of a system be seen as an error. Systems exist in a medium that includes other systems and observers. The degree to which these systems are able to coexist is defined by the concept of 'structural coupling'. Systems survive by fitting in with other systems. Change will therefore require a process of structural transformation in this context of organisational invariance. Systems interact with each other in a given context, for example, the community as a system with the recreation providers and outside donors as a system (figure 4.9). How they interact in that context is a recursive process of mutual influence, feedback, and adaptation within a range determined by the structure of the respective systems (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Figure 4.9: Structural coupling of systems in the Danville and Elandspoort communities

Recreation providers, as observing systems, do not *change* systems. Behaviour is changed and the impact of this new behaviour is examined in terms of reactions to it, in an ongoing modification process. If this interaction is characterized by a change in the system, feedback has been established, and a change in context has occurred.

4.3.2.6. Epistemology of Participation

Structural coupling has enormous ramifications for how reality can be seen. The most that can be said is that new and different ways to coordinate a person's actions with other people are created. An observer cannot act as an expert, delineating a more accurate representation of reality. Objectivity is impossible. This way of thinking is called an epistemology of participation (Dooley, 1997). Following this principle, it is not possible for the recreation provider to be an objective expert with a more accurate understanding of reality than the residents in a community. A recreation provider attempting to provide a programme from the stance of an expert might be tempted to exclude the community, as the provider 'knows' what is best for the residents. Various playgrounds and recreational facilities have been erected by 'experts' in communities in which the facilities remain unused.

4.3.2.7. Reality as a multiverse

In second-order cybernetics, reference can no longer be made to a universe. It can be seen as a 'multiverse' of many equally valid observer-dependent realities. The task of the recreation provider must be to help communities (as systems) create a reality within which the residents may operate more effectively, and, thereby, may construct a reality that is supportive (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Vanderstraeten (2001: 298) explains the concept of reality as 'multiverse':

> *'Knowledge is the end result of the internal processes we use to construct our inner world. The inner world is a metaphor for the outer world. Each person is his own central metaphor.'*

4.4. SECOND-ORDER INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Decisions regarding the goal of change – first or second order – depend on the situation and values of the community involved. Second-order change may not always be desirable or necessary, but often first-order change simply leaves the burden for change on the community members. Second-order change has more potential to shift this burden and alter the balance of power or resources. Therefore, it can be said that, although small incremental steps to change certainly do have a certain time and place, promotional efforts that explicitly target the status quo have

greater potential to destabilize non-adaptive systems and to create system-level change when appropriate (Tseng *et al*, 2002).

Comparisons between the neighbourhood economic development programmes of the 1960s and more recent initiatives provide an example of first versus second-order change. In the 1960s, there were widespread efforts to provide neighbourhood-based services in poor communities. These efforts represented first-order change because they primarily sought to increase residents' access to services without changing the dynamics between different components of the social system. Although well-intentioned, these programmes proved unsuccessful in addressing the core issues facing inner-city communities, because they did not tackle the larger system of inequities, as well as the fact that children and families from a low socio-economic status community are geographically and socially isolated from the rest of the society. In contrast, more recent initiatives have attempted second-order change by altering relationships between inner-city, low socio-economic residents and suburban communities through the provision of transportation and job information, resources that decrease the social and economic isolation of the residents. This category of initiatives focuses on partnerships between neighbourhood-based organisations and the government or private sectors, therefore changing relationships among various components of the social system.

4.4.1. Theory of change

Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland and Richard Fisch are the authors of the *Theory of Change*. Understanding how to solve problems also requires understanding as to how problems are created and maintained. According to Watzlawick *et al* (as cited by Becvar & Becvar, 2000), the attempted solution becomes the problem, and therefore, must be the focus of change if the problem is to be solved. Second-order change involves a change in the rules of the system, and thus in the system itself. The framework of this theory explains that, before change can occur in the Danville/Elandspoort community, there must be an understanding of how the problems within this community are maintained. When observing this community, several 'attempted solutions' are currently actually maintaining the problem (as identified by the observer delineating the research problem). Reacting to feedback,

volunteers from outside the system attempt to solve the problem by donating food, money and clothing, however, these attempted solutions are maintaining the status quo of the community, and therefore become the problem.

Laughlin (as cited in Skinner *et al*, 1999) suggests that a system will change only when disturbed, kicked or forced into doing something. Once the system undergoes an environmental disturbance, the type of change can be either first or second order. He puts forward the notion that change can be typified as morphostasis (first order) or morphogenesis (second order). In first order change, an environmental disturbance is met by rebuttal or reorientation. In either of these reactions, the fundamental values or beliefs do not change. Rebuttal is characterised by the system attempting to deflect or externalize the disturbance in order to return to the previous state of inertia. Reorientation is the result of a disturbance that cannot be rebutted, but has to be accepted or internalised into the workings of the system. It is indicated that in each case, while some slight change may occur, the 'core' of the system is basically unaffected. Thus, change is effectively resisted by the system, which prefers the previous state of inertia. Change from the perspective of cybernetics requires a change in context. By changing the rules, perceptions are changed, changing the way that the problem is viewed, with new behavioural alternatives becoming possible in the process. First-order change consists of what is thought of as the logical solution to a problem, for example, turning on a light when it gets dark, feeding and clothing the poor. In both situations, we solve the problem by doing the opposite of what has occurred. However, in many instances, change at this level does not produce the desired effect, because the opposite equals more of the same, therefore, the poor will stay poor, and the low socio-economic community (seen as a system) will keep on doing what it is supposed to do (being the submissive recipient) (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Second-order change, in contrast, requires a response that is illogical to context, paradoxical when considered within the framework of the existing rules. Laughlin (as cited in Skinner *et al*, 1999) differentiates between two types of second-order change. Colonisation is forced on the system by an initial environmental disturbance. As a consequence, the direction this type of change takes through the system is not freely chosen, but is imposed by an external body or an internal directive. The

disturbance invokes change to the design archetype, and then impacts on the sub-system elements as well as on the interpretive schemes. This then results in the coercive infiltration of new guiding values and beliefs into the system, however, these new values and beliefs may not always be agreed upon by system members and are consequently seen as potentially regressive. Not all change needs to be second-order in order to be effective; however, there are many situations in which it offers the only hope of a sustainable solution. Changing the logical response to low socio-economic communities by, for example, treating the residents as clients instead of receivers of second-hand donations, delivering a service instead of charity. By changing the response, the system will respond in a different manner, changing the rules of the game. Such an illogical response would allow new kinds of behaviour to occur, in as much as it is part of a new frame that redefines the context (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

A system which may run through all its possible changes (no matter how many there are) without effecting a systemic change (that is, second-order change), is said to be caught in a 'game without end'. It cannot generate from within itself the conditions for its own change; it cannot produce the rules for the change of its own rules. The key to understanding problem formation and resolution, therefore, is awareness of the reciprocal nature of behaviour, the importance of the context that defines behaviour, and which particular kinds of behaviour have meaning, and thus the significance of process. The content of the argument is unimportant. Given the notion of equifinality, regardless of the topic, whenever the system gets into a 'game without end' scenario, the pattern repeats and the problem is not solved. The community will still need food and clothing, and residents will still be dependent on donations. What matters, at this point, is the process. Changing the context equals changing the rules (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

The recreation provider must be creative in his response to problems that require second-order solutions. Whether problems appear insoluble because we deny their existence, because we attempt solutions at the wrong level, or because no solution is possible, how a problem is perceived and defined, must be the focus of change. Recreation provision is an illogical solution to poverty, as it does not provide for the basic needs of residents within a low socio-economic community. Changing the

context of the problem (poverty) by providing an illogical solution (recreation programmes) may, however, just be the solution to the situation.

4.4.2. Reframing

A reframe takes a situation and lifts it out of its old context (set of rules) and places it in a new context that defines it equally well. This new context offers an alternative, or new meaning to which new and different responses are logical and thus possible. The key to successful reframing is to provide a new context for the situation that is acceptable to the residents in the low socio-economic community. To be able to do this, the recreation provider must have a good sense of the world-view according to which the system is currently operating. If the system accepts this new frame, new actions consistent with new meaning may replace the old kinds of behaviour, and it will be very difficult to operate according to their previous perceptions (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

4.4.3. Paradoxical interventions

A paradoxical intervention, according to Cullin (2005), is an intervention that, if followed, will accomplish the opposite of what it seemingly intended to accomplish. Such intervention can be seen to turn upon itself the forces that a system employs. Paradoxical intervention operates in a manner similar to the reframe, as it redefines the context, thereby changing the meaning of a situation, and opening up new behavioural alternatives. An example of this process is describing a symptom. For example, rather than telling residents in a low socio-economic community that they must be active to be healthy, it would be better to inform them that they obviously need to be inactive and to rest, and certainly should not try to change. To issue instructions to a community to do something that can only be done spontaneously, is to put the residents in a 'be spontaneous' paradox – a double bind. Once a person is 'freed up' to feel what he is feeling, and thus stops resisting what is happening, spontaneous elimination of the problem is more likely to occur. If residents then decide to participate in a recreation activity, it can be said that second-order change took place.

4.4.4. Problem formation resolution

Problems occur when a situation is labelled as a problem. Until a problem is

perceived as such, and is labelled, that problem does not exist. A problem, therefore, exists only in the eye of the beholder. Problems that remain persistently insoluble should lead one to suspect that questions have been asked in the wrong way. Thus, while a community might be defined as a 'problem', the person with the problem is the one defining it. Cybernetic change is therefore a function of changes in individuals as they change their perceptions and thus their interactions around particular issues (Skinner *et al*, 1999).

In the communities of Danville and Elandspoort, there exist a lack of recreation facilities and activities. The community, however, does not perceive this as a problem, as the system does what it is supposed to do. The 'problem' exists for the person defining it; in this situation it exists for the recreation provider. Even though the community, as system, does not perceive the lack of recreation activities as a problem, it does not mean that the problem does not exist.

4.4.5. Stochastic processes

From a systems perspective, change is said to occur in a stochastic or partially random manner. While the context may change, thereby defining new kinds of behaviour as logical responses, one cannot predict the exact nature of these responses (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). A recreation practitioner may have a certain change of behaviour in mind. However, what actually happens within the community through the change process might be different to the planned outcome. It is random and stochastic. Specific change cannot be guaranteed. In reference to a recreation programme in the Danville and Elandspoort communities, recreation participation entails certain positive outcomes, but the nature of the communities' responses to the recreation programme cannot be predicted.

4.4.6. Perturber versus change agent

Just as it is not possible to speak to a system, in the same way it cannot be joined or treated or changed. By being present, the recreation provider helps define a new context, and thus a new system within which the members behave differently. The goal of the recreation provider is to perturb the system in such a way that it compensates with more functional kinds of behaviour for the system This means that new information must be provided, which the system may choose to incorporate into

a self-corrective process that facilitates self-maintenance at the same time (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

4.5. CURRENT APPROACH TO RECREATION PROVISION IN LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (FIRST-ORDER CYBERNETIC APPROACH) VERSUS A SECOND-ORDER CYBERNETICS APPROACH TO RECREATION PROVISION

4.5.1. First-order cybernetics recursion versus second-order wholeness and self-reference

Current recreation programmes function according to the first-order cybernetic principle of recursion in which the recreation provider, as outsider, does not ask the question as to *why* something in a community is happening. In a situation in which residents from a low socio-economic community gradually stop participating in a programme, the organisers will cancel the programme altogether rather than seek an explanation as to the reason. A first-order recreation programme is presented and dominated by a recreation provider, in the role of expert from outside the community. Participants in the programme are placed in the role of passive 'receiver' and therefore it can be said that a recreation programme following this approach will not be claimed by the participants as 'their own'. Being a passive receiver denotes that the participant does not have control over the recreation programme; it is in the hands of a dominant 'expert'. In the situation where a recreation provider is interested in improving a system such as a community, the system must be regarded as a collection of thinking participants. There is an interaction between action and thought. If the way people think can be changed, the way they behave will change. And, if the way people behave changes, it will eventually change the way they think, as their thoughts become consistent with their actions (Umpleby, 1994).

Current recreation intervention that promotes physical activity in low socio-economic status communities targets only individual behaviour, thereby implying that individuals are the main avenue for behavioural change, and thus setting aside area and community factors as being less relevant. The failure of individual-based initiatives to result in sustained increases in physical activity is not surprising, since this type of intervention is of a first-order cybernetic nature, and is, in effect, trying

to persuade individuals within a community to participate in activities in an environment that is (or perceived to be) hostile to the activities it promotes (Trayers & Lawlor, 2007).

The clinical model perspective that has been applied most often in the physical activity field typically yields a 'waiting' stance on the part of the health professional. This is reflected by the tendency to develop programmes in which the individual is expected to seek out the intervention being offered by the 'professional'. The programmes are often scheduled at a time and location that are convenient for the professional, though not necessarily for those in the community who may be interested in participating (King, 1998). The manner in which charity organisations assist low socio-economic communities is paradoxical. On the one side, there is a 'reaching out' to the community; on the other, the dependent position of the community is strengthened.

 A proposed second-order cybernetic approach would use a higher level of recursion than a first-order cybernetics one, with the community as system referring to itself. The community observes itself, and describes itself as different from its environment. By using self-observation, meaning is assigned to the environment by the system itself, implicating that the community has control of recreation provision within the system, and thereby claiming ownership thereof. In a second-order cybernetics approach, the community is not viewed by an outside observer, and the recreation provider as system becomes part of the community. The relationship between recreation provider and community participant changes from 'dominant-submissive' and 'donor-receiver' to 'mutually beneficial'.

In a first-order cybernetic recreation programme, the community, as system, will remain in a 'submissive' role in order to maintain the homeostasis of the system. The community will use feedback patterns to deflect the recreation programme, experiencing it as disturbance. The current approach to recreation provision within low socio-economic communities functions from the understanding that the recreation provider brings change, whilst staying unchanged by the community and the process of change. In second-order cybernetics, the concept of wholeness contradicts this assumption, with the recreation provider being part of a bigger system and in this system the observer cannot stay unchanged in the process. Self-

reference, as an addition to wholeness, gives a system its senses of organisational closure, also known as autonomy. Autonomy refers to the highest level of recursion, and confirms that self-description is possible only from within a system. The recreation provider, directing a recreation programme from a first-order cybernetics viewpoint (figure 4.10), cannot understand the operations and functions of behaviour of a system from the outside; however, approaching the same system from a second-order cybernetics viewpoint (figure 4.11), the recreation provider will become a part of the system, and therefore a part of the self-description.
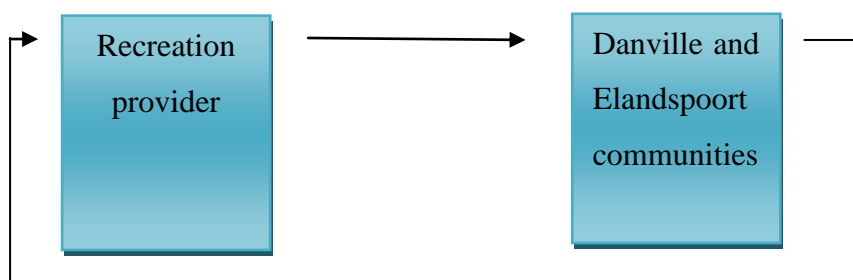
Figure 4.10: First-order cybernetic approach to recreation provision
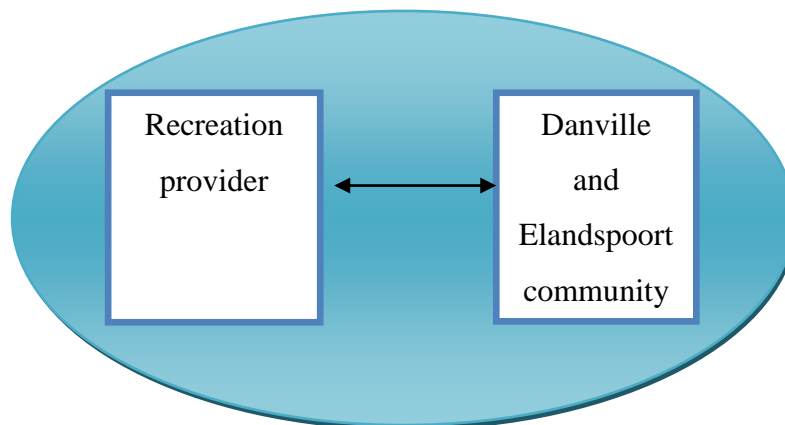
Figure 4.11: Second-order cybernetic approach to recreational provision

Cybernetics, understood in both first- and second-order, is inherently circular. Linearity does not exist, with circular causality explained via positive and negative feedback loops. In first-order cybernetics, the system introduces and defines

feedback. Interaction is framed as flowing in a continuous loop through the community (figure 4.12).

Input: Help with clothing, money and donations

Danville and Elandspoort Community

Output: Need clothing, food and donations

Negative feedback loop maintaining homeostasis
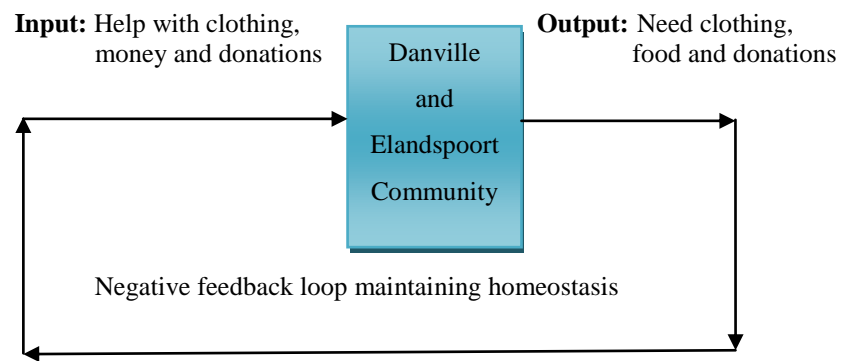
Figure 4.12: First-order cybernetic system feedback

Within first-order cybernetics, new information, different to that within the negative feedback loop, for example, a new recreation programme will result in the generation of positive feedback; a deviation or disturbance to the system. Information about a deviation from the previously established norm is fed back into the community. The occurrence of a new behaviour in the community suggests that change may be necessary for the community to maintain stability. However, in a first-order cybernetic system reference is made to negative feedback, thus indicating that the disturbance (for example, the recreation programme) is opposed, and stability therefore maintained. A low socio-economic community viewed as a first-order system will therefore strive to maintain its current status quo, and will oppose any other information that may be altering the negative feedback process.

A low socio-economic community, observed as a first-order cybernetic system's ability to remain stable in the context of change, is defined by the concept of morphostasis. A community may possibly accept a recreation programme, but no actual change in the structure of the system will occur. The recreation programme will then be accepted provided it corresponds to the rules and boundaries of the community. The implementation of conforming to these rules will result in the

recreation provider's directing and initiating recreation activities with participants from the community as 'recipients' of the recreation programme as 'donation'. In contrast to first-order cybernetic morphostasis, morphogenesis, associated with second-order cybernetics, refers to a community's enhancing behaviour allowing for growth and change. With the recreation provider as part of the community system, the community is approached from a position that sees morphogenesis as a definite outcome. In a second-order system, both morphostasis and morphogenesis are necessary; morphostasis follows morphogenesis, resulting in a low socio-economic community's acceptance of changes in the system. The system accepts the changes, and maintains this changed system as the new status quo.

Private and governmental organisations and agencies have been established to help rural and low socio-economic communities raise their standard of living. While these organisations have helped a significant proportion of low socio-economic communities, there remain many families who have been relatively less affected by these efforts. Residents within a low socio-economic community will remain potential 'clientele' and must be 'reached' if they are to be integrated into the mainstream of contemporary society (Douglah & Roycroft, 1967).

At the level of second-order cybernetics, the community, together with the recreation provider, is understood to be mutually interacting within a larger system with a closed boundary. No reference to an outside environment is made, with this larger system seen as an autonomous system. Changes in the structure of the low socio-economic community will occur on this level. Information dissimilar to the rules and boundaries of the system is essentially positive feedback; however, it is referred to as perturbations rather than inputs. The recreation provider, as observing participant in the system, understands that it is not possible to 'change' a system. By being a part of the community, the recreation provider's behaviour changes the way in which the community is approached (his behaviour towards the community) by not fulfilling the expected role of 'expert' or 'donor' from outside the community; but, rather being a part of the system, facilitating a recreation programme. The impact of the new behaviour on the system, as well as the system's reaction to the change, is measured. If community change is simply 'done to' residents, the right solution will not be found. New funding will simply flow through neighbourhoods rather than

enriching them. Residents of communities such as Danville and Elandspoort are currently seen as problems and not as assets: this is the failure of many funding programmes, and that is why community empowerment and community involvement must be at the heart of any recreation provision strategy (Wallace, 2001). If community change is simply 'done to' residents in such communities, the right solution will not be found. The goal aimed for by the recreation provider, therefore, is to create a context in which the desired outcome, a change in the system's structure, is a logical response. Change in a system (with reference to a recreation programme) will occur only with a response from the recreation provider that is illogical to the context of the existing community structure, paradoxical within the framework of the existing rules and boundaries maintaining the system. The ability to allow for self-direction among community members is a key element of a healthy community. The recreation professional serves as resourceful enabler, but the community determines the action. It is through this form of action that a low socio-economic community gains strength and can start the process of reclaiming responsibility for individual and collective well-being (Arai & Pedlar, 1997).

A second-order cybernetics approach views behaviour as being determined by the interplay among multiple domains, including individual, community and public policy factors. According to Mihalko and Wickley (2003), there are multiple opportunities for promoting physical activity and recreation opportunities within the community. Specifically, modifying environmental supports and barriers, providing opportunities for successful engagement in activity, and encouraging a sense of social 'connectedness' are integral components within behaviour – and community change.

The success of a healthy, self-reliant community lies in having members who are willing to embrace the concept of self-reliance, and move beyond sole reliance on recreation providers for their recreation and leisure needs. This provides the opportunity for community members to play an active role in identifying the sorts of challenges and problems facing the community. Solutions determined by community participation are most likely to succeed in addressing the problem. Healthy communities move beyond professional, determined direction, but that does not mean that a community is left to fend for itself. A healthy community requires the

involvement of a leisure and recreation provider in a way that is enabling, facilitating and mutually beneficial. Participation of this nature will encourage self-determination, local action and community building. The ability to allow for self-determination and self-direction among community members is a key element of a healthy community. It is through self-action being enabled that communities gain strength and begin the process of reclaiming responsibility for individual and collective well-being (Arai & Pedlar, 1997). It is through approaching recreation provision from a second-order cybernetics viewpoint that residents within the community are empowered, and are no longer reliant on donors for their well-being.

4.6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, cybernetics theory was introduced as an alternative approach to recreation provision in a low socio-economic community. These communities often come across, to an observer, as consisting of 'helpless' individuals in need of saving. While it may be true that residents within a low socio-economic community need external help, they are not actually 'helpless', but are merely cast into the role of 'victims'. Feedback patterns in the community exist to maintain stability within the system, thereby exemplifying the illustration of suffering.

Second-order cybernetics provides an alternative approach that enables the recreation provider to see beyond the feedback patterns set up by the community. This approach allows community members to be part of the recreation programme, thereby moving them away from being 'receivers' to being responsible members of society. Looking at a low socio-economic community as a second-order system; it is imperative that research within the community must be done from a second-order viewpoint; thereby including community members as viable participants.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The general aim of this study was to analyse, from several angles, recreation and recreation provision in a low socio-economic status community. To achieve this goal, the study explored the relationship between recreation participation and low socio-economic status; the influence of recreation activity on residents of such a community's perception of quality of life; the effect of recreation provision on social change in a low socio-economic status community; and an alternative second-order cybernetic approach as substitute for the current approach to recreation provision (first-order cybernetics approach) in a low socio-economic community.

Using data obtained from the literature study, audio taped focus group discussions of vignettes, interviews with residents, as well as observation of the community, this chapter will deal with the analysis and interpretation of said data.

5.2. METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

In chapter one, the research methodology was discussed. In order to place the data obtained in context, and to retain continuity, aspects of the research methodology are highlighted again, and additional clarification is presented.

The study was qualitative in nature, and made use of participatory research, using focus group discussions as a method of data collection. The focus group technique was used in two ways. Firstly, a series of five vignettes was presented to the focus group, and participants were asked to respond to hypothetical situations. Secondly, the focus group was used as a setting for informal, semi-structured interviews in which participants responded to and further discussed pre-formulated topics.

This particular research approach was chosen as it is categorised within systems-based research. Systems-based research concerns itself with discovering various components of the system (in this research the community), and how these components interact to create a context or system. The approach therefore seeks to

investigate whether a particular phenomenon is understandable in terms of the context in which it occurs. This particular approach questions some of the core assumptions of most traditional research methods, for example, the assumption of linear causality, which presumes that every phenomenon can be explained by a cause-and-effect relationship, and which can be isolated from the effect and the context in which it occurs. 'Recreation participation' and 'living in a low socio-economic community' are not concepts that can be separated; the phenomenon must be studied and explained in context. According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999:257):

> *'Systems research assumes that many phenomena are better understood as a function of the context or 'systems' within which they occur and where they serve adaptive or stabilising functions, often as both cause and effect.'*

The task of the researcher in this study was therefore to identify, firstly, the various systems that were in operation within the two communities, and then to describe the way in which phenomena operate within these systems.

5.2.1. Focus Groups

The focus groups consisted of 10 participants per group in a total of six focus groups. Focus group discussions were undertaken at four separate venues, two at soup kitchens in Elandspoort; one at a soup kitchen in Danville; and the last at a mom-and-baby centre in Danville. The discussions at three of the venues attracted mostly female participants. However, the Danville soup kitchen received interest from both males and females. The ages ranged from 16 to 55 years.

Focus group participants met twice with the researcher as a specified focus group. The researcher has been working in this community for four years, and was therefore not perceived as an outsider by the residents. It was observed, during one of the first meetings at the Danville soup kitchen, that participants' responses appeared to alter in the presence of the soup kitchen owner. Subsequent sessions at the specific venue excluded the owner. This situation was an excellent example of the nature of feedback patterns, and how, within a low socio-economic community, they serve to maintain the status quo. The owner of the soup kitchen resisted change, and thus did not welcome any suggestions deviating from the usual food donations.

5.2.2. Observations

Observation was done throughout the research period, and included observing the community in general, the characteristics of the residents in the community with reference to the kinds of behaviour at certain events, and participation in activities. Observation also included observing the daily patterns of residents, as well as interaction in the community.

5.2.3. Vignettes

The study initially included nine vignettes, however, after a trial run, it was concluded that such a large number would most likely be too taxing on the attention span of the residents, and it was subsequently reduced to five.

The five vignettes included in the study corresponded with the study's aims, and focused on the following themes:

➢ Recreation participation and low socio-economic status.
➢ Barriers to recreation participation in low socio-economic communities.
➢ Recreation participation and quality of life.
➢ Recreation participation and social change.
➢ Recreation provision from a second-order cybernetics approach.

The abovementioned vignettes corresponded to the aims of the study as follows:

Table 5.1. Vignette correlation with study aims

Vignette	Aims of study
Recreation participation and low socio-economic status	The theme of the first vignette supports the four aims of the study
Barriers to recreation participation in low socio-economic communities	To identify the barriers to the provision of a comprehensive and sustainable recreation programme in a low socio-economic community, as well as the barriers to recreation participation in a low socio-economic community
Recreation participation and quality of life	To examine the influence of leisure and recreation opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining societal cohesion and quality of life in a low socio-economic community
Recreation participation and social change	To understand how residents in the low socio-economic community of Danville

	view recreation participation and recreation provision.
Recreation provision from a second-order cybernetics approach	To identify the similarities and differences between the current approach to recreation provision in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort and a second-order cybernetics approach

The vignette technique made it possible for the researcher and the participants to discuss the scenario together – as linked systems. It altered the position of the researcher from one of outside observer, to that of a person discussing a story *with* the participants, not *for* them. The process therefore facilitated a second-order cybernetic approach to research within the two communities.

5.2.4. Data collection

Data for this qualitative study were obtained from the relevant literature, focus group discussions, responses to vignettes and semi-structured interview questions, and from information gathered while observing the community. Focus group discussions were audio-taped and transcribed for analysis, whilst notes were taken continuously during observation, and data derived were divided into several categories. Categories selected for data analysis included: perceived barriers to recreation participation; participation in recreation programmes; perception of quality of life; available recreation opportunities; low socio-economic status and recreation participation.

The study used qualitative data, the reason being that such data generates rich, valid and detailed process information, leaving participant's perspectives intact, whilst simultaneously providing the researcher with an insider's, second-order cybernetics view, which makes it possible to better comprehend the research phenomenon studied. The ideas and perceptions of participants were explored by means of emic analysis, thus providing an 'insider's view' and a search for commonalities (Holloway, 1997). The study attempted to examine the experiences, feelings and perceptions of the residents under study, rather than impose an outside framework onto participants.

5.2.5. Focus group data analysis

5.2.5.1. Focus group data gathered from vignette responses

Responses from participants in the hypothetical vignette situations, were grouped into the five vignette categories:

➢ Recreation activity and low socio-economic status.
➢ Barriers to participation in recreation activities in low socio-economic communities.
➢ Recreation activity and quality of life.
➢ Recreation activity and social change.
➢ Recreation provision using a second-order cybernetics approach.

Data were analysed and compared to that which was gleaned from the literature review, as well as from observational data, resulting in a process of cross-case analysis. Interrelationships and explanatory patterns between concepts in the vignettes were presented in the discussion as well as in a concept map (refer to page 159). The following explanatory patterns were included in the concept map:

➢ Leisure and recreation provision in the low socio-economic status communities of Danville and Elandspoort.
➢ Community residents' perception of their quality of life with reference to recreation provision in the community.
➢ Current participation in leisure and recreation activities in the community.
➢ Social status and recreation provision.
➢ Recreation provision as a vehicle for social change within the community.

5.2.5.2. Focus group data from semi-structured interviews

The focus group method was based on semi-structured interviews guided by vignettes, and included the following topics for discussion:

➢ Current recreation opportunities within the Danville and Elandspoort communities.
➢ Participants' perception of their quality of life and whether they believed that the QOL in the community would improve in the presence of sustainable recreation opportunities.

➢ Attendance at recreation programmes organised by volunteers from outside the community.

➢ Barriers to participation in a recreation programme.

Participants' comments were analysed in order to detect the most important themes, issues and ideas. Trends and patterns in the content of each discussion were transcribed and analysed.

5.3. SAMPLING

For this study, the researcher made use of convenience sampling for the focus groups on the basis of their availability. The study recruited participants who resided in the communities of Danville and Elandspoort, and who either attended soup kitchens in the afternoons, or the mom-and-baby centre in Danville. Sixty participants in the focus groups, divided into six groups constituted the sample. Participation in the study took place at four venues, and participants were divided according to the venues they attended. By enlisting the particular participants in the study, the researcher ensured that the information gathered came from those residents in the community who would most likely benefit from recreation opportunities in the research area.

5.4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the study are presented in the form of a summary of participants' responses to both the vignettes and the semi-structured interview questions, and also a summary of data derived from observations. A concept map (refer to page 159), in which interrelationships between concepts are presented, is provided.

5.4.1. Focus group results from vignette

The focus group, as a qualitative research method, gave the researcher access to a variety of communicative opportunities within the groups, as people's knowledge and attitudes are not always entirely apparent in their reasoned responses to direct questions (Kitzinger, 1995). Vignette scenarios were presented to the focus group discussions to enable the researcher insight into the system and to see beyond the feedback mechanisms usually utilised by the system to maintain the status quo of

unemployment, and thus in need of external help in the form of food, clothing and financial assistance. The status quo would be challenged in the event of change occurring: residents having fun and enjoying a recreation activity would differ from their current status as 'suffering', 'helpless', and in need of external help. The focus group method had an added benefit of allowing the participants who could not read or write a chance to participate. By allowing the non-literate residents the chance to voice an opinion, it was possible for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the community.

A total of six focus groups were used. Discussions in and responses from the different focus groups were similar; however, a remarkable difference in opinion was observed in the group that was assembled at the mom-and-baby centre in Danville. Participants in this group were more open to the possibility of change, and revealed a more positive outlook on a future within the community.

Residents within Danville and Elandspoort are predominantly Afrikaans-speaking; therefore the research was conducted in Afrikaans. Transcriptions of focus group responses were translated into English by the researcher. An attempt was made to keep the translation as close to the original meaning as possible in order to preserve authenticity.

5.4.1.1. Vignette 1: Recreation participation and low socio-economic status

The first vignette investigated the link between low socio-economic status and opportunities for recreation participation, as well as the link between low socio-economic status and motivation to participate in a recreation programme. Socio-economic status and income level have an effect on recreation provision and recreation participation. Participants in the focus groups were presented with a vignette read out by the researcher depicting the following hypothetical situation:

Vignette 1:

Pretoria Recreation Services provides a variety of recreation programmes for children, teenagers and adults. Ben and his family would love to participate in some of the programmes offered, but they do not have a car to drive to the activity centre, and they cannot afford the fees to participate. Ben feels that most municipalities and recreation centres target their programmes to people who are the easiest to reach and who can afford to participate, and tend to ignore families who don't. Because of the fact that they advertise the programmes to easy-to-reach families, people in Ben's community are not always aware of available recreation facilities and programmes.

Results

Residents living in a low socio-economic community have to prioritise expenditure in order to survive. From participants' responses to the vignette, it became clear that they often have to decide between spending money on fun activities or necessities such as food and electricity. According to Bittman (2002), consumption of leisure and recreation goods is determined by the amount of income available to the individual; therefore, a low income often leads to exclusion from leisure and recreation participation. However, the manner in which some of the responses were made confirmed the notion of *'learned helplessness'* proposed by Muller (2002), referring to the fact that recipients of social assistance appear to have given up on improving their situation. Muller (2002) described this phenomenon as *'welfarisation'*, but the vignette responses added another dimension to the concept – *transferred responsibility*. Part of learned helplessness involves the transferring of responsibility to other persons or groups of people. One participant, however, raised the issue that, in her opinion, it was not the case in Danville and Elandspoort that decisions always had to be between survival and recreation participation. She believed that the church and the soup kitchen provided for most of her 'survival' needs and that the extra money that she sometimes earned left her with enough to spend on 'something nice'. Debating this statement, another respondent aired the view that even if there was money to spend on recreation activities, there were no

opportunities available to spend it on:

'...not to say that I do have money. But if I did have extra money, on what would I spend it? Do you see a movie theatre? Do you see a bowling alley? No! We have the Wimpy in Quagga centre for fun, and if that is not your thing, we have a bottle store. Hey, we have five bottle stores! How is that for recreation?'

Leisure and recreation activities are often associated with middle and higher socio-economic status communities. This was confirmed by a statement of a young mother:

'When you watch television – do you see poor people sitting on the beaches? Do you see poor people on the rides at Gold Reef City? No. If you have money you can participate...'

An interesting observation emerged during the vignette technique. Participants did not refer to the fictitious character, Ben, in the vignette, but immediately applied this vignette to their own situation. One of the respondents, in reaction to the vignette, stated:

'Why would the centre want to advertise in Ben's neighbourhood? Advertising will cost the company money, and why advertise somewhere where people will not have the money to come? Ben cannot expect people to include him if he can't pay. I don't mind them not advertising programmes here (in Danville and Elandspoort), because it will just make me feel worse about myself, seeing what I can't have...'

The above response is in line with findings in the work of Dawson (1988). This particular participant referred to *'them'* versus *'us'*. This suggested that poverty is not just a condition of economic insufficiency; it also leads to the experience of social exclusion. Simply providing free programmes will therefore not be an answer to the problem of recreation provision in a low socio-economic community. Social problems cannot be solved in isolation; what is required is an analysis of the combination of problems in which a particular problem is set, as no single criterion caused the problem in the first place. However, any approach towards addressing the problems of a low socio-economic status community should, at the very least, include opportunities for recreational activity (Dawson, 1988).

Responses from the vignette scenarios confirmed that leisure and recreation

141

provision in Danville appeared to be inadequate, and that residents have to decide between survival and participating in recreation activity. Poverty is linked to a decline in recreation opportunities, as recreation activity is not seen as a necessary need compared to food and other necessities that are essential for survival. Contrary to expectations, however, one response showed that residents sometimes do have extra money, but that there are no recreation and leisure activities available on which to spend it. This response confirmed the positive relationship between inadequate recreation provision, recreation facilities and recreation opportunities and living in a low socio-economic status community. Respondents further showed remarkable insight into their situation as well as concepts of social and marketing exclusion.

5.4.1.2. Vignette 2: Barriers to recreation participation in low socio-economic status communities

The second vignette drew attention to barriers to recreation participation – real and perceived. This vignette attempted to find answers to the second aim of the study namely to identify barriers to providing and maintaining comprehensive, sustainable recreation programmes in low socio-economic communities such as Danville and Elandspoort.

> Vignette 2:
>
> *Billy wants his children to participate in a holiday recreation programme during the June holidays, however, living in a community with a high rate of unemployment, and with a low monthly income, he finds it hard to get access to a quality holiday programme. Most of the available recreation programmes are not in their community, and are expensive to enrol in. He knows that participating in a recreation programme will be a positive experience for his two sons. Billy feels that people from outside the community do not understand the barriers which he must overcome to participate in an activity and that they do not care enough to ensure quality and accessible recreation programmes within lower socio-economic communities.*

Results

There are many health benefits associated with community recreation provision, such

as increased fitness, self-esteem and self-efficacy, decreased anxiety and stress, and increased social cohesion. Responses to this vignette demonstrated that participants are aware of the positive benefits gained by recreation participation:

'The kids are so bored, Billy is right, the kids will enjoy a programme during the holidays. When they don't have something to do they just get into trouble'.

Yet, although participants are aware of the benefits of participation, constant barriers to regular involvement in community recreation activity persist for those who live on the margins of society, and who are unable or unwilling to conform to dominant expectations inherent in modern forms of recreation provision.

'It doesn't matter what Billy wants. He must be real about his situation. Even if he can get the programme for free, there will be something else that prevents the kids from attending – transport, maybe they don't have the right shoes, maybe they need pocket money'.

As can be seen from this response, residents of Danville and Elandspoort face considerable barriers to accessing traditional market-driven forms of community recreation activity. These barriers include material deprivation (affordability of programmes, childcare, transportation, equipment, and dress codes), 'stigmatising' policies and practices that label people as 'poor'; the discrimination and stereotyping of community recreation workers; programmes and services that fail to consider transport and childcare needs and expenses, and inappropriate scheduling in terms of times, locations and content (Reid & Frisby, 2002). Low-income communities are 'priced out' by high costs associated with recreation participation (More & Stevens, 2000). For people who are not part of the consumer class in society, for example, a low socio-economic community, systemic barriers to community recreation services are prevalent, especially in local government departments that are operating from public management ideology where revenue generation and efficiency take priority.

Lower socio-economic status has a positive correlation with poor or a lower knowledge about leisure and recreation activity, and the perception of barriers to recreation participation is related to socio-economic status. Participants' responses to this vignette confirmed that residents of Danville and Elandspoort have a real negative perception of existing barriers to recreation participation (Raymore *et al*,

2002).

> *'Most activities that are available, I can't do. Billy wants his kids to participate. Chances are good that they will not be able to do what the other kids do. If his kids participate in a programme outside this community, all the other kids will know they are different, they are poor. His kids won't go again'.*

People choose to engage in activities in which they either feel competent, or in which they think that they can develop competence (Caldwell, 2005). Barriers to recreation participation in a low socio-economic community are more complex than just the issue of the lack of money. Responses to this vignette confirmed the existence of barriers to recreation and leisure participation in the communities of Danville and Elandspoort, and therefore confirmed the relationship between low socio-economic status and barriers to recreation participation. A comparison between barriers to recreation participation as perceived by participants during focus group discussions in Danville and Elandspoort, and barriers identified in the literature, is summarised in table 5.2. Barriers marked with an 'X' represent barriers that occur in the category specified.

Table 5.2. Barriers to recreation participation in a low socio-economic community: literature versus study

Barrier to recreation participation	Literature	Danville and Elandspoort
Lack of transportation; facilities inaccessible with public transport; lack of car ownership; lack of access to recreation facility; distance to facility	X Green, 2001; Wallace, 2001; Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004; Dattilo, Dattilo, Samdahl, Kleiber & Douglas, 1994; Bostock, 2000; Ellaway, Kirk, Macintyre & Mutrie, 2007; Glenn, 2000; Estabrooks, Lee & Gyurcsik, 2003; Moore, Diez Roux,	X

	Evenson, McGinn & Brines, 2008; Burdette & Whitaker, 2004; Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2002; Scott, 2000; Jackson, 2008; Reid, Panic & Frisby, 2002; Wegner, Flisher, Muller & Lombard, 2006; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	
Public parks are more accessible to ethnic minority youth than other types of leisure facilities	X Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000	Participants in the study did not identify public parks as more accessible to ethnic youth as a barrier within the community.
Parks and public spaces are seen as boring	X Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000	Participants in the study viewed parks and public spaces as unsafe, but not as boring.
High crime rates; Neighbourhood safety; security; unsafe neighbourhoods; bad neighbourhoods	X Wallace, 2001; Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004; Dattilo *et al*, 1994; Marmot, 2001; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007; Ball, Salmon, Giles-Corti & Crawford, 2006; Wegner *et al*, 2006; Park, Turnbull & Rutherford Turnbull, 2002; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	X
Vandalism of parks and recreation equipment	X Wallace, 2001	X
Drug dealing in public areas; criminal activities in public areas and parks	X Wallace, 2001	X
Short term policy approaches; governmental policies; 'stigmatising' policies	X Wallace, 2001; Scott, 2000; Reid, Panic & Frisby,	X

and practices	2002	
Failure to consult communities and harness the community's energy and ideas; restricted sense of entitlement; lack of control; organisational discrimination; cultural imperialism (dominant groups' views are normalised); opposition towards system	X Wallace, 2001; Dattilo *et al*, 1994; Ellaway *et al*, 2007; Scott, 2000; Wegner *et al*, 2006	X
Lack of childcare facilities; lack of supervision for children in play areas	X Powell, Ambardekar & Sheehan, 2005; Reid, Panic & Frisby, 2002	X
Individualistic solutions; individualistic approach to recreation problems from providers (leading to inconsistent programmes)	X Weschler, 2000; Trayers & Lawlor, 2007; Moore *et al*, 2008	X
Unattractive community environment; environmental barriers; environment hostile to physical activity and recreation participation; poorly maintained recreation areas; unsafe equipment; hazards in play areas; trash and debris in recreation areas	X Weschler, 2000; Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004; Trayers & Lawlor, 2007; Hunnicutt, 2000; Wilson, Kirtland, Ainsworth & Addy, 2004; Kearns & Parkinson, 2001; Ellaway *et al*, 2007; Powell *et al*, 2005; Burdette & Whitaker, 2004; Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	X
Low education level	X Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004	Residents did not perceive their educational level as low, although it was below standard.
Obesity	X Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004;	X

	Collins, 2004; Ellaway *et al*, 2007; Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007	
Lack of community-level settings conducive to physical activity; lack of sidewalks; lack of recreation facilities	X Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004; Trayers & Lawlor, 2007; Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994; Jackson, 2008	X
Expenses associated with recreation activity; lack of money; high user fees; commodification of recreation activities; registration fees; privatisation of recreation facilities; unaffordable costs	X Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004; Dattilo *et al*, 1994; More & Stevens, 1998; Amusa, Toriola, Onyewadume, Dhaliwal, 2008; Collins, 2004; Bittman, 2002; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Dawson, 1988; Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007; Scott, 2000; Jackson, 2008; Wegner *et al*, 2006; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000; Park, Turnbull & Rutherford Turnbull, 2002	X
Unattended dogs in parks and public spaces; stray dogs	X Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004; Wilson *et al*, 2004	X
Drug abuse; alcohol abuse; substance abuse; smoking	X Laverack, 2006; Bittman, 2002; Wegner *et al*, 2006; Park, Turnbull & Rutherford Turnbull, 2002	X
Lack of skills; lack of information; lack of awareness; unaware of available recreation opportunities	X Dattilo *et al*, 1994; Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994; Shogan, 2002; Wegner *et al*, 2006;	X

	Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	
Alienation from other social groups and communities; disconnection from society; social isolation	X Laverack, 2006; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Reid, Panic & Frisby, 2002	X
Illness (perceived or real); physical inability	X Trayers & Lawlor, 2007	X
Loss of community; low neighbourhood cohesion	X Hunnicutt, 2000; Dattilo et al, 1994; Rankin & Quane, 2002	X
Low level of motivation; passivity; lack of interest; low level of desire to participate; no energy	X Hunnicutt, 2000; Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994; Ball et al, 2006; Wegner et al, 2006; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	X
Electronic media: video games, television	X Hunnicutt, 2000; Caldwell, Baldwin, Walls & Smith, 2004; Yancey & Kumanyika, 2007; Ball et al, 2006	X
Family commitments	X Dattilo et al, 1994; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	Participants did not perceive family commitments as a barrier to recreation participation.
Low self-esteem; poor body image; shyness	X Dattilo et al, 1994; Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994	X
Time constraints	X Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994; Bittman, 2002; Jackson, 2008; Park, Turnbull & Rutherford Turnbull, 2002	Participants viewed the availability of time as excessive rather than as a constraint.
Intra-personal constraints including stress, depression, religiosity, anxiety, perceived self-skill. Negative thought	X Raymore, Godbey & Crawford, 1994; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997;	X

processes	Juniper, 2005	
Welfarisation of public recreation services; stereotyping of participants according to socio-economic status	X Coalter, 1998; Reid, Panic & Frisby, 2002	X
Lack of human resources to staff recreation facilities	X Amusa *et al*, 2008	X
Interpersonal barriers: lack of recreation partner; relationships between individuals; lack of social support; lack of social resources	X Wilson *et al*, 2004; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997; Marmot, 2001; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Ball *et al*, 2006; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000	X
Inadequate opportunities	X Bittman, 2000; Estabrooks *et al*, 2003; Wegner *et al*, 2006	X
Peer pressure (teenagers); peer associations; influence of peers	X Caldwell & Darling, 1999; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Wegner *et al*, 2006	Participants in the study did not identify peer pressure as a barrier to recreation activity in the community.
Lack of private gardens	X Ellaway *et al*, 2007	Participants in the study had access to a garden.
Participation as obligation; low level of control over physical activity; feelings of disempowerment	X Stebbins, 2000; Estabrooks *et al*, 2003; Wegner *et al*, 2006	X
Gender stereotypes	Wegner *et al*, 2006	

5.4.1.3.Vignette 3: Recreation participation and quality of life (QOL)

The third vignette examined the link between recreation participation and residents' perception of quality of life and addressed the first aim of the study. It focused on the influence of leisure and recreation opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining social cohesion, as well as the role that recreation participation currently plays in terms of the residents' quality of life.

> Vignette 3:
>
> *Thomas and his family live in a very poor community. Although they struggle, they have art programmes, sport participation opportunities and various recreation events within the community. Most of the members within his community participate in one of the available programmes, and it contributes to his community. Thomas feel that he has a high quality of life even though he is unemployed. Participating in the recreation and sports programmes makes him feel that life is not really too bad.*

Results

Responses from participants in the focus groups revealed some stressors associated with poverty, and emphasized how a person's quality of life can be affected by poverty.

'If you don't have money, the bills can't get paid and you can't relax and have fun'

One participant responded to the vignette by asking in which country Thomas lived:

'If I were Thomas, I would also feel better about my life. The days are endless. Today is the same as yesterday, and tomorrow will also be no different. If I had something to look forward to, I would feel better about who I am. Tell me where Thomas lives so that I can go there'.

Fun and pleasurable leisure and recreation experiences not only enhance the quality of the present moment, but also contribute, in a cumulative manner, to long-term psychological well-being. Leisure activity can promote coping mechanisms and personal growth experiences in response to the stress of daily hassles and negative life events such as unemployment. Allison (1991) confirmed this positive link between recreation participation and a higher perception of quality of life by stating that involvement in sport, play and recreation activities somehow enhances the physical and mental health of participants, and will therefore also enhance the quality of life of those who participate.

Recreation involvement can contribute to health and well-being by positively influencing other domains of life such as family and interpersonal relationships. A

respondent remarked that:

'...when we played sports in primary school I didn't feel so angry and useless all the time. If the community that Thomas lives in provide recreation and sport activities I can almost guarantee that violence and alcohol abuse in that community will decline'

Recreation activity can indeed be a substitute for alcohol consumption, by providing an alternative form of release, however, once poverty limits a family's choice of recreation and leisure activities, high risk and unhealthy habits such as smoking and heavy drinking may take their place in the overload of free, unstructured time (Park *et al*, 2002).

Community recreation opportunities can contribute either positively or negatively to inter- as well as intra-community relationships, by challenging or reinforcing divides and inequities. One young respondent said:

'You know what would be great? If the people who come from over the hill can stay a little longer, and play soccer or something with us. Then we will be on a level foot for a few hours'

Marginalised communities need a sense of autonomy, because they are often unable to be independent. Residents living in low socio-economic communities are the receivers of help and donations, thus making them dependent on other people. By participating in recreation activities, the residents are provided with a situation in which money (or the lack thereof) will not be the determinant in their perception of their quality of life (Allison, 1991).

5.4.1.4. Vignette 4: Recreation participation and social change

Recreation opportunities can reduce social inequality and social exclusion. The fourth vignette focused on whether recreation opportunities in a low socio-economic community could facilitate social change. Although this vignette can be linked to the first aim of this study its main focus is on the fourth aim namely to understand the way in which residents of Danville and Elandspoort view recreation provision in their communities, and whether they believed that recreation participation currently reinforces their social status.

Vignette 4:

Susan has seen a programme on television in which a community is very active, and where they have playgrounds where children play and adults exercise. Susan believes that her community can experience positive change if they can also have activities, sport programmes and fun things to do. If there is something else to do than just sit around, people will not be so bored, and will want to do more. Susan feels that this will have a positive impact on her community.

Results

The communities of Danville and Elandspoort have numerous systems to support local residents. Unemployed residents take advantage of available soup kitchens, food banks as well as government grants. It does not contribute to the resident's perception of a quality of life, as residents are caught in a cycle of poverty. Leisure and recreation activities could be vehicles to improve residents' quality of life, and could also assist in achieving goals other than quality of life, for example, physical and mental health, economic survival, learning and human development – factors enhancing the possibility of social change. A response made by a participant during the discussion, uncovered a possible barrier suggesting an explanation as to why sustainable recreation programmes are not being realised:

'The people running the soup kitchens will not be happy about new activities. Berta (name changed to protect privacy) who runs our soup kitchen and Bible club will tell you that it won't last. No programme can change our situation, and I agree with her. Maybe this Susan saw a programme, but the people in the programme have money. I am sure of it.'

This statement confirmed Duffy and Wong's (1996) observation that communities have a built-in resistance to change, because they feel that their existence will be threatened by any change to the system.

Leisure and recreation facilities provide potential contexts for both resistance and empowerment that can be directed towards social transformation and the distribution of power and privilege within and between societies. One focus group could,

however, not see past possible barriers to possible beneficial change through recreation participation:

'...it would be great to have something to do, but that won't change who we are, games will not change the fact that we are unemployed, with no money to do anything else than what people want us to do'

Focus group participants at the mom-and-baby centre, however, looked beyond the barriers, and expressed the belief that the community could change in reaction to recreation opportunities.

'Maybe everybody will not participate immediately. But if they see people participating and having fun, they might want to join. Even if they don't, people who do participate can already make a small change. If my baby can grow up in a house where we don't just sit and do nothing, it can change her life. And that, to me, will be the best change ever'

In communities such as Danville and Elandspoort, a seemingly small change such as a group of residents experiencing better physical health as a result of exercising can be the impetus for positive social change. In response to the vignette, another participant added:

'If I could have something exciting to do, something exciting, somewhere to go, I will do without all the clothing donations. I don't need more clothes; it can't change who I am. I might even have enough energy to go and look for a job!'

This particular response corroborated Dooley's (1997) findings that the promotion of social change embraces the facilitation of adaptive systemic processes and the development of opportunities in an ongoing evaluation of change within a community. The development of seemingly small opportunities can therefore facilitate the adaptation of systemic change.

Planned change is an intentional intervention to change a specific situation. Attempting to facilitate change in low socio-economic status communities must, however, be approached with sensitivity, as even apparently innocent community-based leisure opportunities can negatively affect community relationships if it reinforces divisions and inequalities (Shaw, 2006). One elderly respondent clearly

felt offended by the discussion, and remarked:

'I am tired of people trying to change me. Nobody really wants to change who we are, if we were not here who will they save? You know what? Everybody with a bright idea wants to test it on us. Why not? We clearly are helpless'

After experiencing a four year involvement with this specific community, the researcher understood that the latter response was not totally uncalled for. To a researcher viewing the system of Danville and Elandspoort from a first-order cybernetics point of observation, this person seemed ungrateful, however, being a part of the system, thereby approaching the community from a second-order cybernetics stance, the researcher agree with this respondent. Social change cannot occur in a situation where one group of people is seen as helpless and inferior. Communities such as Danville and Elandspoort are targeted for research projects; however, they are used for short-term projects and then discarded, because the residents have not been involved in the process. Studies are done *on* them, not *with* them.

One participant tried to explain why change is not possible in Danville and Elandspoort:

'Many people in the community turn to drugs and alcohol to get away from the hopelessness and despair. You might think we enjoy getting food from other people. But it is humiliating. The only thing that I can change is the few hours when I don't have to be poor, when I can just forget. Running around kicking a ball will not change anything. I will still be poor.'

It seems as if residents living in the Danville/ Elandspoort community are stuck in a first-order cybernetics system. They try to place the responsibility for their behaviour elsewhere; "If I drink, it is not *my* fault; it is because I am poor". Learned helplessness is one of the biggest barriers that need to be overcome in a low socio-economic community. Approaching a community from a second-order cybernetics perspective could guide them to assume at least part of the responsibility for this situation. Recreation provision as social change intervention is not comprehensible to some of the residents, as it does not fit into the negative feedback patterns that maintain the community's status quo.

5.4.1.5. Vignette 5: Recreation provision from a second-order cybernetics approach

Current recreation programmes in Danville and Elandspoort are provided by volunteers from outside the community. This vignette explored the way in which the residents viewed the current recreation programmes, as well as the way in which they viewed service providers from outside their community.

Vignette 5:

Mr. Jacobs from the Hatfield Presbyterian Church decided that his church will host a fun recreation event in a community suffering from conditions of poverty. He feels it is his duty as a Christian, but is not sure exactly what to do during such an event. He decides that he will hold a meeting with the people in his church. Together they can decide which event will be suitable for the community. The group can appoint volunteers from the church in Hatfield and can then decide on a suitable date for the recreation event. It is not necessary to consult with the residents living in the poor community, because he assumes that any time will be acceptable to them, as they do not work.

Results

'I do not need an event. I don't need fun and games. I need food and money for my children...'

The above response from a mother confirmed the argument put forward in this study that a system will maintain its status quo by making use of negative feedback systems. This mother was clearly concerned about the survival of her children, and recreation activities, in her line of thinking, had to take second place. An analysis of this response from a second-order cybernetic view, however, suggested that the mother delivered an automatic response in line with negative feedback patterns maintaining the community's status quo. By being a part of the system, what cannot be seen by a first-order observer becomes obvious to the second-order observer. The first-order observer might react with a first-order solution, providing more food and clothing. In contrast, the second-order observer can look beyond feedback patterns and identify the situation for what it really is. The comment made by the mother is

representative of several reactions to this vignette. It provided examples of how participants in focus groups tried to block information that was foreign to their system's boundaries. Participants reacting to the vignette in this manner also tried to ensure that responses were consistent with the premise that they still needed food and clothing.

One participant in a focus group discussion at a soup kitchen stated:

'...beggars can't be choosers. The people who come to our community come here to help us. I do not want to complain about them. But, if I can say something...I know we have all day, it is not as if I am going somewhere. But people make promises about what they will do. In this community, if you make a promise people will wait for it. Don't make a promise if you can't keep it. People come here. They do not ask what it is we want. What it is that we want to do? No, we all must want the same thing, because we are poor. Being poor, it does not mean that I want everything for free. I will work for it. But ask me what I want. Don't decide for me...'

Second-order cybernetics rejects the metaphor of a system resembling a machine that can be manipulated by an external, independent observer (Cullin, 2005). Recreation providers, for example, volunteers from church groups such as were portrayed in the vignette, often fall prey to notions of cultural imperialism, and, in so doing, unwittingly embrace the tendency to normalise a dominant group's perspective and to make the views of subordinate groups invisible (Scott, 2000).

5.4.2. Focus group responses from semi-structured interviews

5.4.2.1. Perception of recreation opportunities within the Danville and Elandspoort communities

In order to establish what participants' perceptions of current recreation opportunities in the community were, the researcher verified their understanding of the term 'recreation'. Several responses to a request to define *'recreation'* included a reference to sport. Participants also included the words *'fun'*, *'games'* and *'play'* in their descriptions. It was, however, remarkable how respondents related the concept of '*recreation'* to their attendance at soup kitchens and Bible clubs. This reference to soup kitchens as a form of recreation activity could serve as an indication for a future starting point at organising recreation programmes.

In order to determine participants' perceptions of recreation opportunities within the community, the following questions was asked:

'Are you aware of any recreation activities available in Danville and Elandspoort? Do you participate in a recreation activity in the community?'

Two of the respondents in one focus group were of the opinion that there were no recreation activities that they were aware of. One respondent replied that they did have needlework classes, but that she did not like going there because one had to participate in the Bible club if one wanted to join the needlework class.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the participants' responses is that respondents perceive there are no available recreation opportunities for the residents of Danville and Elandspoort. This is in line with the findings of a study by Dawson (1988) who noted that people living in poorer, low socio-economic status communities perceive limited recreation and leisure opportunities.

5.4.2.2. Perception of current quality of life. The influence of recreation opportunities in a low socio-economic status community on the perception of quality of life

In order to determine the influence of recreation opportunities in a low socio-economic status community on the quality of life, the question was posed:

'What do you see as a good quality of life? Do you think that recreation opportunities within the community can enhance your quality of life?'

Several respondents equated what they felt was a good quality of life to a situation in which they did not have to concern themselves with necessities such as food and money. The concept of recreation activity as a factor in enhancing one's quality of life appeared to be beyond their frame of reference. One respondent, however, noted that he could recall how good he felt after he had played rugby in high school. He added that, if that was what was meant by quality of life, then he believed that recreation activities could contribute to a positive perception of it. Other responses included reference to certain activities that would lead to an elevated perception of quality of life. Activities mentioned included a soccer club, action cricket and an informal rugby league. The benefits of active leisure and recreation pastimes for one's physical health are well-documented, and these findings also provide evidence

for enhancing psychological health and well-being, and, therefore, one's perception of quality of life. Activities suggested by the respondents as possible contributors to an elevated perception of quality of life differed from recreation activities currently provided in the research area which were predominantly passive or work-skills related.

'The days are endless. What do I know about quality of life if every day in my life is the same as the one before, and will be the same as the one coming?'

Leisure involvement contributes to individual health and well-being by structuring free time and replacing idleness with constructive behavioural alternatives. The above response confirmed that one's perception of quality of life can be related to recreation opportunities within a community. While rewarding 'successful', employed citizens with access to new and exciting spaces, the sparser, less well-maintained spaces and ineffectual recreation programmes remind those who make use of them of their subservient status within the social order (Ravenscroft & Markwell, 2000). This finding suggests that, just as recreation opportunities could enhance a person's perception of quality of life, the absence thereof could also lead to a decrease in the perception of quality of life.

'I just feel so bored. If I can just feel a bit motivated I might participate in something. But, there is nothing that seems worth doing'

This feeling of boredom could be categorised as both a barrier to recreation participation, and to experience a better perception of quality of life. Psychological theories and social control theories both attempt to explain the occurrence of boredom. Psychological explanations (Wegner, Flisher, Muller & Lombard, 2006; Caldwell *et al,* 1999) suggest that boredom stems from:

➢ A lack of awareness of stimulating things to do in leisure and recreation.
➢ A lack of intrinsic motivation and self-determination; to act on the desire to alleviate boredom.
➢ A mismatch between a person's skills and the challenge at hand (the under-stimulation model of boredom).

The psychological explanations suggested are conditions that are present in the

research area, although not expressed as such. Once boredom is perceived, the person might lack the ability to identify changes that could be made, or perceive ways in which they could act on the desired change.

5.4.2.3. Barriers to participation in recreation activities

Respondents were asked as to what they saw as barriers to participation in recreation activities. The question posed was:

'What prevents you from participating in leisure and recreation activities?'

It was clear from the responses that respondents perceived lack of money, transport problems and total lack of recreation opportunities as major barriers to recreation participation.

The following barriers were also listed, and corroborated findings in the literature review:

- ➢ **Lack of money** (Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004). *'It is either participating in sport or eating in our house. You have to decide – play or eat.'*
- ➢ **Illness** (Trayers & Lawlor, 2007). *'I have high blood pressure and cannot do anything physically exhausting'; I am diabetic and am not allowed to exercise.'*
- ➢ **Low motivation** (Hunnicutt, 2000). *'I am just not in the mood*; 'if only I had the energy.'*
- ➢ **Lack of self-confidence** (Wegner et al, 2006). *'Even if I could participate, I won't know how. People will think I am a joke. Before I am the joke to somebody else, I'd rather not participate.'*
- ➢ **Superior attitudes of people presenting the programmes** (Wallace, 2001). *'Just because I am poor doesn't make me less of a person'; 'The charity people don't really want to be here. I can see them looking at their watches. They are probably wishing this can be over.'*
- ➢ **Unsafe environment and lack of attractive parks and spaces** (Powell, Slater & Chaloupka, 2004) *'At least the people in Danville have parks. The parks are messed up, but at least they have them.'*
- ➢ **Accessibility and transport problems** (Wallace, 2001). *'There is nothing to do in our area, and I do not have a car to go anywhere else'; 'I might be able to go somewhere if I take the bus, but then I have to use money for the bus fare that I*

don't have.'

5.4.2.4. Recreation programmes organised by volunteers from outside the community

The question formulated to identify how respondents perceived current recreation programmes in the community provided by volunteers, read as follows:

'If you can present volunteers providing recreation opportunities in this community with information on how to attempt the programmes, what will you tell them? How do you feel about the programmes done by volunteers?'

According to Burnett (2008) sports development and recreation activity providers who do not involve the 'community-in-development' may expect rejection and a low level of participation, since top-down, product-driven intervention is often met with resistance. Respondents were reluctant to respond to the question that focused on available external assistance from volunteers, and the question evoked a magnitude of answers and suggestions resembling a first order cybernetic orientation, for example:

'I would say thank you for doing something for us'

'I wouldn't say anything; they do this without getting paid. We don't pay them, so we can just be happy that they come'.

In an attempt to move from a first order cybernetic to a second-order cybernetic understanding of respondents' perception of recreation participation in the community, the researcher posed the following question to the respondents:

'How would you motivate people in the community to participate in a specific recreation programme?

This prompted the answer:

'The easiest way to get people to participate is to give food after the programme. Tell residents that they will get something if they participate'

This response provided a clear example of a first-order solution to a complicated problem. Participation in recreation activities in low socio-economic status communities is often extrinsically motivated (Caldwell, Darling, Payne & Dowdy,

1999). An older respondent, provided the following answer:

'We are here. You don't have to make an appointment with us; it is not as if we are going somewhere. Nobody asks you if you can participate at a certain time. It is just assumed you will. Nobody asks you if you want to do ballet or whatever. You are poor; therefore you will be happy to do it'.

The hypothesis of the study, which stated that the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort would benefit from a second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision, was thus lent credence to by the above response, a response which might have been misunderstood by a researcher who was working from a first-order cybernetics point of view. The communities of Danville and Elandspoort are currently viewed from a first-order cybernetics approach and therefore categorised as helpless, as the person observing the community from the outside react to feedback patterns emanating from the 'system'. From a second-order cybernetics approach, however, the volunteer will become involved in the community – not as expert – but as facilitator of change in a situation where the community itself is part of the solution.

5.4.3. Data obtained by means of observation

Data were collected by observing and recording residents' behaviour in the context of everyday interaction. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) observation allow the researcher to build up an understanding of phenomena through observing particular instances of the phenomena as they emerge within a specific context. By observing experience, the researcher becomes a part of that experience, and therefore becomes a part of the system under observation. Observation was not attempted from a first-order cybernetics perspective in which the researcher observed the community as an expert. Observation was done from the understanding that the community cannot be manipulated and changed by an observer whilst the observer (the researcher) remains unchanged, therefore, a second-order cybernetics approach. The data was presented by way of typological analysis, and was placed in the following categories:

➢ Description of the Danville and Elandspoort communities, residents' behaviour, and activities occurring in the communities.

> ➤ Description of the physical settings of current recreation programmes within the community.

5.4.3.1. Description of the behaviour and activities of the residents in the Danville and Elandspoort communities

Observing the communities of Danville and Elandspoort provided the researcher with a rather bleak view of the situation. The face of poverty was unmistakable: broken cars, pregnant teenagers strolling on sidewalks with toddlers in tow, and residents sitting in front of houses with no apparent goal. A feeling of listlessness hung over the community, giving the impression of a lazy Sunday afternoon.

When passing the parks in the community (only two of which had playground equipment,) the researcher was struck by the fact that there were no children playing there, and instead was being used by 'junkies' (drug users) and the homeless at night. Litter that was visible in the parks, as well as throughout the community of Elandspoort, further contributed to the impression that the area was poverty-stricken and woefully neglected (photo 1).

Photo 1: Park in Danville, Pretoria West

At three o'clock, on weekdays, the unemployed residents attend soup kitchens, also known in the community as 'Bible clubs' (photo 2). Volunteers from outside the community provide lunch, as well as clothing and other donations. At some of the soup kitchens, volunteers provide ingredients from which lunch can be prepared. The difference between the residents of middle to high socio-economic status communities in Pretoria East (donors and volunteers) and residents of low socio-economic status communities in Pretoria West (receivers) is all too apparent, and it is not possible to overlook the dominant-submissive relationship that exists between the two groups. This combination of nonverbal communication between the two socio-economic status groups and the context in which communication takes place is indicative of a first-order cybernetic system at work. Lunch at the soup kitchens is not a shared experience between the two socio-economic status groupings, and volunteers usually hover at the edges of the soup kitchens, overseeing the proceedings. Daily lunch starts off with the singing of gospel songs by children from the community. When observing this practice over a period of time, one could conclude that this praise/worship scenario fulfilled a function in the negative feedback process, that is, it maintained not only the community's homeostasis, but also the system of donors as *'good Christians'*. Both sides of this relationship maintained their positions, and the one defined the other.

When observing the community from a second-order cybernetics viewpoint, that is, observing the internal state of the community from within the community, it became evident that the residents were constantly being *'saved'* by volunteers from outside the community, and as a result were assigned *'victim'* status. This process *of 'being the victim'* leads to the situation where any responsibility whatsoever is removed from the individual and reinforces the first-order cybernetic approach.

Photo 2: Soup kitchen in Elandspoort

Recreation provision in the community followed the same pattern as did food provision. Recreation activities were not used as positive interventions in the lives of residents, but rather as a way of passing the time. Activities were initiated by volunteers from outside the community, who presented activities at times they found suitable. When observing the activities offered, such as needlework classes, it became clear to the researcher that opportunities for recreation participation were lacking. The community had the potential for hosting various recreation activities, as there were parks and school grounds, a huge, open, unused field in the middle of Elandspoort, as well as a swimming pool. The answer to the question why the residents were not utilising these facilities might lie partly in the relationship between outside volunteers and residents, as well as in the enforced *'helplessness'* of the residents.

Children in the community walked around after school, and created the impression that they were waiting for something to happen. Children in the Elandspoort community specifically, did not seem to *really* play.

5.4.3.2. Description of the physical settings of current recreational activities

Although the Danville and Elandspoort communities did have park and playground facilities, the overall atmosphere in the communities did not lend itself to participation in 'play' activities (photo 3). Litter and debris were in abundance, further prohibiting play and recreation (photo1). One park in the Danville community had playground equipment that did not appear to be run-down, but no children were using the equipment.

Photo 3: Open field in Elandspoort

Observation of the behaviour of residents within the communities, as well as of the environment in the communities underlined the necessity of introducing a second-order cybernetic approach to recreation provision within the two communities. As 'receivers', the residents tend to engage in activities that are externally motivated, such as attending a Bible club to receive lunch and clothing donations. Responsibility for their situation is also externalised, indicative of a first-order cybernetic approach. Volunteers from outside the communities view residents as 'victims', responding to feedback patterns that reinforce the first-order framework. A second-order cybernetic approach will break this pattern and will reinstate residents as citizens responsible for their own future. The state of the environment

in the community provides another example of the community being stuck in a first-order cybernetic framework. Although it is possible for residents to clean the open areas and remove the litter, as *'helpless victims'* they are not responsible for the state of disarray, and are therefore not responsible to change the situation.

5.4.4. Concept map: research findings

Research findings are summarised in a concept map (figure 5.2). Analysis of research transcripts from the focus group data, recorded observational data and data from the informal interviews gave rise to the following themes:

➢   Leisure and recreation provision in the low socio-economic status
    communities of Danville and Elandspoort.
➢   Perception of quality of life of residents within Danville and Elandspoort with
    reference to recreation provision in the communities.
➢   Current participation in leisure and recreation activities in the Danville
    and Elandspoort communities.
➢   Social status and recreation provision.
➢   Recreation provision as an impetus for social change within the communities.

Relationships among concepts are displayed in a concept map as the relationships among concepts can be clearly visualised in a graphical format (Babbie, 2008). There are different formats for presenting interrelationships among research concepts; however the format utilised to summarise research findings in this research constituted a one-page flow diagram.
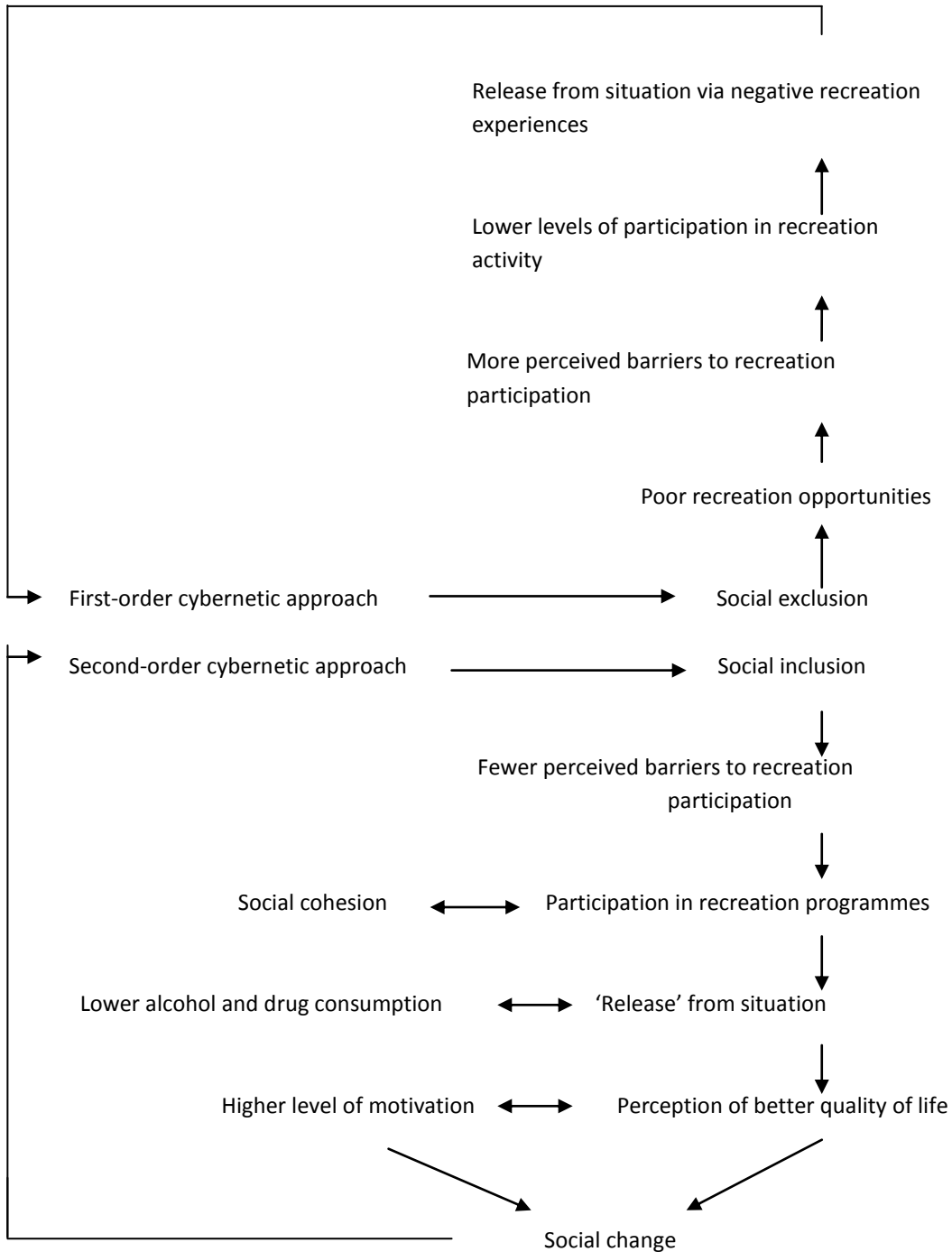
Figure 5.2: Concept map illustrating interrelationships between research concepts

The concept map is divided into two sections: a first-order cybernetic approach and a second-order cybernetic approach. Focusing on the difference between the two approaches, the content map flows from the middle of the diagram in opposite directions, visually presenting the difference between the two approaches with regards to recreation provision in a low socio-economic community.

The current approach to recreation provision in Danville/Elandspoort can be regarded as a first-order cybernetics approach in which the community is approached as a *'black box'*, separate from the outside system and occupied by volunteers and community members from outside the low socio-economic communities. This approach inadvertently reinforced the experience of social exclusion of the residents. Recreation facilities were seen as scarce and recreation provision as inconsistent. Poor recreation opportunities within the community, made worse by the experience of social exclusion, led to the residents' high level of perceived barriers to recreation participation. Perceived barriers included lack of money, high club and participation fees and lack of transport. Real barriers included illness, low motivational levels and feelings of alienation from society. The existence of barriers (whether perceived or real) resulted in low levels of participation. Release and escape from this bleak and hopeless situation of unemployment and poverty subsequently occurred in the form of negative free time activities such as drug and alcohol abuse, violent behaviour and excessive periods of time spent sitting passively in front of the television. It is postulated that this first-order cybernetics cycle will stay in place unless it is replaced by a second-order cybernetics approach.

A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision could give rise to experiences of social inclusion on the part of the residents as the recreation provider will no longer be an observer of the community, but will instead interconnect with the community system. In this new approach residents will be included as responsible participants in the planning and execution of sustainable recreation programmes. Residents will no longer be the receivers of 'charity' recreation provision, but will take ownership of their own recreation programme. Even though recreation facilities will remain scarce within the community, the perceived barriers should be decreased, given that residents will not feel powerless to change their own situation anymore. Participation in sustainable recreation programmes could serve to strengthen and unify the community and could therefore strengthen the experience of social cohesion within the system. The ultimate goal of recreation provision from a second-order cybernetics approach could be the escape from a situation of poverty and unemployment (if only for a few hours) and a decrease in negative free time activities such as alcohol and drug abuse. With recreation activities being made available within the community, hours spent in front of the television could also

decrease. The experience of living in a community with a more positive outlook could subsequently strengthen the resident's perception of quality of life. With the occurrence of a higher level of personal motivation and claimed control over the situation, social change within the community could become a possibility.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Chapter five provided an analysis of data collected from the responses in both focus group vignettes as well as from the responses to the semi-structured interview questions. Observations supplemented the vignette analysis data. Categories of analysis included:

➢ Recreation participation and low socio-economic status
➢ Barriers to recreation participation in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort.
➢ The relationship between recreation provision and the perception of quality of life.
➢ Recreation provision and social change.
➢ Recreation provision using a second-order cybernetics approach.

The abovementioned patterns that were derived from the data were compared with the data gleaned from the literature review, resulting in a cross-analysis of data, which was summarised in a concept map. The analysis seemed to confirm the hypothesis of the study:

➢ Recreation provision in low socio-economic communities benefit from a second-order cybernetics approach.
➢ Sustainable recreation provision in a low socio-economic status community could enhance the quality of life of residents participating in activities that available within the community.
➢ Second-order cybernetics recreation provision in a low socio-economic community could create an environment conducive to social change.

Recreation and leisure activities can serve to change a community for the better. Recreation provision within the community was seen as secondary to the provision of other needs within the community, resulting in inconsistent, sporadic recreation

provision. This situation was aggravated by a first-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision that was utilised by volunteers that excluded residents as responsible individuals who were in control of the development and future of the community.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One it was hypothesised that a second-order cybernetic approach to recreation provision in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort could enhance the quality of life of residents therein contributing to the creation of an environment beneficial for social change. Advantages of leisure and recreation participation are well researched in the literature. Residents in a low socio-economic community are, however, excluded from experiencing these benefits, since they face numerous barriers to recreation participation. Volunteers from outside the community often view recreation provision in such communities as inappropriate, since there appear to be more immediate physiological needs to meet (King, 1998). With the imbalance of power between the external 'donors' and the 'receiving' community persisting, it seems likely that poverty is a condition from which the residents of Danville and Elandspoort will never escape.

The problem statement for this study was formulated as:

Leisure and recreation provision have the potential to vitalise and change the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort in the Greater Tshwane Metropolitan Area. This provision, however, seems to lack a positive and sustainable impact on the quality of life of residents within the communities the reason being that intervention is not implemented on a regular basis, and is usually a once-off event rather than a planned, continuous programme. Recreation provision in the Danville and Elandspoort communities has stagnated over the years. It appears as if the current priority of these communities, as systems, is to maintain homeostasis and equilibrium, and therefore they are viewed as a 'black box' from the outside. Recreation provision within the two communities does not currently have a positive impact on the quality of life of residents, as recreation and leisure activities are not regarded as essential needs that must be satisfied. Available recreation programmes within these communities currently utilise a first-order cybernetic approach, resulting in low attendance of residents. It was hypothesized that recreation provision within the communities of Danville and Elandspoort can be positively impacted on by

adopting a second-order cybernetic approach rather than by perpetuating a first-order cybernetic approach.

Based on the stated problem statement, it was hypothesised that:

H0 (a): Recreation provision in low socio-economic status communities will not benefit from a second-order cybernetics approach
H1: Recreation provision in low socio-economic status communities will benefit from a second-order cybernetics approach.

H0 (b): Sustainable recreation provision in a low socio-economic status community will not enhance the QOL of residents in the community.
H2: Sustainable recreation provision in a low socio-economic status community will enhance the QOL of residents in the community.

H0 (c): A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision in a low socio-economic status community will not create an environment that is beneficial for social change.
H3: A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision in a low socio-economic community will create an environment that is beneficial for social change.

In Chapter One, the aims of the study were identified as:

➢ To examine the influence of leisure and recreation opportunities as a means of improving and maintaining social cohesion and QOL in a low socio-economic community.

➢ To identify both the barriers to the provision of a comprehensive and sustainable recreation programme in a low socio-economic community, and the barriers to recreation participation in a low socio-economic community.

➢ To identify similarities and differences between the current approaches to recreation provision in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort, and a second-order cybernetics approach.

➢ To understand how residents in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort view recreation participation and recreation provision within the communities.

Conclusions and recommendations will subsequently be presented according to the

above four aims.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS

Results of the study confirmed H1, H2 and H3:

6.2.1. H1: Recreation provision in low socio-economic status communities will benefit from a second-order cybernetics approach

➢ A positive causal relationship exists between low socio-economic status and exclusion from participation in recreation activities. Consumption of leisure and recreation goods and services is primarily determined by income. Consequently, low income status often results in exclusion from participation in leisure and recreation activity (Bittman, 2002). By adopting a second-order cybernetics approach, the community of Danville and Elandspoort can overcome the barrier of exclusion, by means of structural determinism, in which the system can do what the system itself allows it to do.

➢ Recreation activities could provide a temporary release from the situation of stress and unemployment. In a first-order approach to recreation, community members in a low socio-economic community are seen as 'helpless' receivers of donations from outside the community. By approaching a recreation programme from a second-order cybernetic approach, participants in low socio-economic status communities are empowered to be actively involved; not merely 'receiving' a recreation programme as donation. Participation in recreation activities can therefore provide a temporary release from a situation of stress and unemployment

➢ A positive, sustainable recreation programme could provide alternative forms of release to residents in a low socio-economic community that could, eventually diminish the incidence of substance abuse as a recreation activity. Substance abuse was identified by respondents as a major barrier to community cohesion and was also regarded as being a contributor to community violence.

➢ Low socio-economic communities are marginalised and dependent on external funding from government, volunteers and non-profit organisations. Dependence has a negative effect on individual's perception of quality of life. A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation participation could assist to restore a sense of

173

autonomy in residents, thereby moving them away from a state of dependence to a situation of interdependence between the residents in the community and the recreation provider.

➢ Recreation participation contributes to the health and well-being of a community by positively influencing domains of life such as family and interpersonal relationships.

➢ A positive relationship exists between recreation participation and an elevated perception of quality of life. Involvement in sport and recreation activities enhances the physical and mental health of participants, thereby impacting the quality of life of participants.

6.2.2. H2: Sustainable recreation provision in a low socio-economic status community will enhance the quality of life of residents in the community

Residents in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort face a considerable amount of barriers to participation in recreation programmes. Barriers identified in both the literature review and the analysis of the data included:

➢ *Lack of money*. Without money a person cannot participate in recreation activities, therefore the lack of money constitutes a barrier to recreation participation for residents in a low socio-economic community.

➢ *Lack of transportation*. In addition to the lack of recreation facilities within the communities, a lack of transport to enable access to recreational activities elsewhere is a major barrier to the residents of Danville and Elandspoort.

➢ *Stereotyping*. Residents remarked that volunteers are inclined to classify participants in community recreation programmes as 'victims' and 'poor'.

➢ *Lack of equipment*. Equipment within the low socio-economic communities is worn-out and not well maintained. Existing equipment is vandalised by youth 'acting out' in the community.

➢ *Lack of knowledge about available recreation opportunities*. Residents are embarrassed to enquire about any free programmes that may be available.

➢ *Shifting of responsibility*. Recreation provision in low socio-economic communities is often regarded as the responsibility of non-profit organisations and volunteers, and is not perceived of as a necessary need that must be provided for. Solutions to the lack of recreation opportunities within a low socio-economic status community are therefore often individualistic and short-term in approach.

> *Exclusion of residents in planning of recreation programmes.* Recreation programmes are initiated without consultation with the residents of the community. Participants feel that outside volunteers view having to take part in recreation programmes as an obligation. However, the volunteers also view non-participation on the part of community residents as 'ungrateful'. Exclusion from involvement in the planning of a recreation programme further alienated residents within the low socio-economic status communities of Danville and Elandspoort.

Residents' perception of the current recreation opportunities within the Danville and Elandspoort community:

> Recreation areas within the Danville and Elandspoort communities are hostile and unsafe.

> There is a lack of recreation opportunity within the community. To participate in a recreation activity, residents have to overcome several barriers such as lack of money, scarcity of transport and finding an appropriate activity.

> Parks and recreation areas within the community are utilised for criminal activities and are not suitable for children to play in.

> Parks and recreation areas are poorly maintained by the municipality. Parks are filled with trash left by homeless people and drug distributors.

> Recreation programmes are presented by volunteers with little knowledge of recreation provision.

> Recreation opportunities in the community are inconsistent. Programmes tend to start and end without prior notification.

6.2.3. H3: A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision will create an environment that could be beneficial for social change

> Current recreation provision in Danville and Elandspoort concurs with a first-order cybernetics approach. No similarities were found between the current approach to recreation provision in Danville and Elandspoort and a second-order cybernetics approach.

> The current, first-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision in Danville and Elandspoort excludes residents in the community from participation in a recreation programme in which they have control of the activity. Responses by participants to the vignette, as well as to the informal interviews confirmed that

residents view themselves as being excluded from society. This perception of social exclusion is further strengthened by volunteers from outside the community acting as experts, delineating residents as 'victims'.

➢ Residents in Danville and Elandspoort transferred responsibility for the lack of recreation activities to both the government and volunteers from outside the community. This is characteristic of a first-order cybernetic system, with feedback patterns such as, 'it is not my fault that I am unemployed' and 'there are no recreation facilities because we are poor'. Feedback patterns such as these are endemic in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort, and maintain the status quo of the community as 'needy', and 'helpless'. A first-order cybernetic solution will react to the feedback comments, and will therefore include actions such as the provision of new recreation facilities, employment programmes, and recreation programmes that introduce employment skills. A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation participation will see the recreation provider engaging within the community, connecting with the community system. By interconnecting the recreation provider (as system) and the community (as system), the recreation provider will be able to see beyond the feedback patterns that are endemic in the community. Within the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort, the recreation provider will see that recreation facilities might be scarce but that they are made available, and engage residents in the planning and provision of a recreation programme.

➢ Current recreation programmes within Danville and Elandspoort function according to the first-order cybernetics principle of recursion. The recreation provider, working from a first-order cybernetics approach, does not ask *what* is happening, but rather asks *why*, thereby looking for a linear cause-effect answer to a complex problem. A second-order cybernetic*s* approach draws on a higher level of recursion, and changes the relationship between the recreation provider and the community from a 'dominant-submissive' one to a 'mutually beneficial' one.

➢ Current recreation programmes in the community target individual behaviour. A second-order cybernetics approach to recreation participation views behaviour within the context in which it occurs.

➢ A first-order cybernetics approach employs a 'waiting' stance, whereby residents

have to seek out programmes offered by an 'expert'. A second-order cybernetics approach engages participants in the planning of the recreation programme and thereby facilitates awareness of available recreation opportunities.

➢ Approaching a recreation programme from a first-order cybernetics approach, a recreation programme will be accepted by a community provided that it corresponds with the *rules* and *boundaries* of the community. In the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort, this approach resulted in morphostasis*, that is,* the occurrence of no social change, since it served the purpose of maintaining the status quo in the communities. In a second-order cybernetics approach, morphogenesis, that is, the community-enhancing behaviour allowing for growth and change, is seen as a definite outcome of a recreational programme. Changes will be accepted by the community, and will be maintained by the community, as system, as the new status quo.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RECREATION PROGRAMME IN A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS COMMUNITY BASED ON A SECOND ORDER CYBERNETICS APPROACH

The following recommendations are based on the results of the study and include recommendations for future recreation provision in low socio-economic status communities. It is recommended that:

➢ Recreation providers approach a low socio-economic status community from a second-order cybernetics approach, and not from a first-order cybernetics approach. Approaching a low socio-economic community from a second-order cybernetics approach will entail that the recreation provider avoid approaching the community as an outsider (first order cybernetics approach), but rather as facilitator from within the community.

➢ Recreation providers should identify feedback patterns employed by a community. Low socio-economic communities should be approached by asking *what* is happening, and not *why* it is happening.

➢ Recreation providers should define who they are, and be conscious of the frame of reference that they bring to a community. It must be borne in mind that

according to a second-order cybernetics approach, a person cannot *not* communicate. Recreation providers bring a certain amount of expertise with them, but must be sensitive to the community's ideas and needs. A low socio-economic community must not be approached by the recreation provider as a system that can be manipulated.

6.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In view of the limited scope of this study, a more in-depth study should provide more insight into the topic of recreation provision in low socio-economic communities. The following aspects warrant further investigation:

➢ The current study proposes the use of a second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision. Further research is needed to confirm the successful implementation of a second-order cybernetics approach.

➢ Leisure and recreation participation are often seen by volunteers and the public at large as non-influential, non-serious aspects of life that are separate from the crucial issues and concerns dominating social policy. The potential of recreation participation to facilitate social change is an area of research that could receive more attention.

➢ A more systematic and intensive effort is needed to uncover the realities of living within a low socio-economic status community. Research could focus on the influence of leisure to the meaning-making and enhancement of quality of life within a low socio-economic community.

➢ Given evidence about the value, significance and benefits of leisure and recreation participation, it is clear that access to leisure and recreation opportunities is an important human rights issue. Research could investigate what roles leisure and recreation participation must play as part of a person's basic human rights, especially in low socio-economic communities.

➢ Further research is needed in identifying how low socio-economic communities can be engaged in the planning process and in policy development.

➢ Further research on barriers to recreation participation in low socio-economic communities is needed focusing on real barriers versus perceived barriers to recreation participation.

➢ The suggested second-order cybernetics approach to recreation provision should

be applied in a low socio-economic community and results compared to contemporary community development approaches.

➤ There is a need for a review of public policies that support and promote access to leisure and recreation facilities in low socio-economic communities. Research could be aimed at determining the way in which benefits of leisure and recreation activity could be maximised while minimising negative outcomes.

➤ An important assumption to be challenged is the relationship between work and leisure. If leisure and recreation participation are seen as the antithesis of work, should recreation provision be a necessary requirement in low socio-economic communities?

➤ A more integrated approach to recreation provision in low socio-economic areas is needed. Policy and the utilisation of resources need to be aligned.

6.5. FINAL STUDY CONCLUSIONS

This study explored an alternative approach to recreation provision in the low socio-economic communities of Danville and Elandspoort. The practice of excluding low socio-economic status communities and people living 'on the margins' resulted in a situation where people in the lowest category of income are the least frequent users of recreation facilities and programmes. A second-order cybernetics approach was suggested as a possible alternative approach to recreation provision in low socio-economic communities. However, further research is needed to confirm second-order cybernetics as a viable option.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, N.E. & Newman, K. (2002). Socio-economic disparities in health: pathways and policies. *Health Affairs,* 21(2): 60−65.

Abbey, S.K. (2007). *Modelling socio-economic dynamics in a working class desegration area in post-industrial, post-apartheid South-Africa: the case of Danville-Elandspoort, Pretoria*, Masters thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Allison, M.T. (1991). Leisure, sport and quality of life − those on the fringes. *Sport for All.* Edited by Oja, P & Telama, R. Elsevier Science Publishers.

Allison, M.T. (2000). Leisure, diversity and social justice. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 32(1): 2−6.

Amuso, L.O., Toriola, A.L., Onyewadume, I.U. & Dhaliwal, H.S. (2008). Perceived barriers to sport and recreation participation in Botswana. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance (AJPHERD),* 14(2): 115−129.

Arai, S.M. & Pedlar, A.M. (1997). Building communities through leisure: Citizen participation in a healthy community's initiative. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 29(2): 167−183.

Arai, S. & Pedlar, A. (2003). Moving beyond individualism in leisure theory: a critical analysis of concepts of community and social engagement. *Leisure Studies,* 22: 185−202.

Aytur, S.A., Rodriguez, D.A., Evenson, K.R., Catellier, D.J. & Rosamond, W.D. (2008). The sociodemographics of land use planning: relationship to physical activity, accessibility and equity. *Health and Place,* 14(3): 367−385.

Babbie, E. (2008). *The Basics of Social Research*. Thomson Wadsworth: Belmont.

Baker, D.A. & Palmer, R.J. (2006). Examining the effects of perception of community and recreation participation on Quality of Life. *Social Indicators Research,* 75: 395−418.

Ball, K., Salmon, J., Giles-Corti, B. & Crawford, D. (2006). How can socio-economic differences in physical activity among women be explained: a qualitative study. *Women and Health*, 43(1): 93−113.

Becvar & Becvar. (2000). *Family Therapy: a Systemic Integration.* Allyn and Bacon:

Boston, Massachusetts.

Bittman, M. (2002). Social participation and family welfare: the money and time costs of leisure in Australia. *Social Policy and Administration,* 36(4): 408–425.

Bostock, L. (2000). Pathways of disadvantage? Walking as a mode of transport among low-income mothers. *Health and Social Care in the Community,* 9(1): 11–18.

Boyle, M.H., DeWit, D. & Racine, Y. (2006). *Investing in Children: Community Influences.* [Online]. Available from: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/nlscy/2002-000085/page07. [Accessed 05 /07/ 2008].

Brown, G.W. & Moran, P.M. (1997). Single mothers, poverty and depression. *Psychological Medicine,* 27: 21–33.

Burdette, H.L. & Whitaker, R.C. (2004). Neighbourhood playgrounds, fast food restaurants and crime: relationships to overweight in low-income preschool children. *Preventive Medicine,* 38(1): 57–63.

Burnett, C. (2008). *African Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance,* 14(3): 225–239.

Butler, A. (2003). The culture of play: in search of Utopia through the American Playground. *Anamesa.* [Online]. Available from: http://www.nyu.edu/pubs/anamesa/archive/fall_2003_culture.htm. [Accessed 27/07/ 2008].

Caldwell, L.L.; Baldwin, C.K.; Walls, T. & Smith, E. (2004). Preliminary effects of a leisure education program to promote the healthy use of free time among middle school adolescents. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36(3): 310–335.

Caldwell, L.L. & Darling, N. (1999). Leisure context, parental control, and resistance to peer pressure as predictors of adolescent partying and substance use: an ecological perspective. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31(1): 57–77.

Caldwell, L.L.; Darling, N.; Payne, L & Dowdy, B. (1999). 'Why are you bored?' an examination of psychological and social control causes of boredom among adolescents. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 31(2): 103–121.

Caldwell, L.L. (2005). Leisure and health: why is leisure therapeutic? *British Journal of Guidance and counselling,* 33(1): 7–26.

Coalter, F. (1998). Leisure studies, leisure policy and social citizenship: the failure of welfare or the limits for welfare? *Leisure Studies,* 17: 21–36.

Cohen, L.; Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education.* Routledge Falmer: New York.

Collins, M. (2004). Sport, physical activity and social exclusion. *Journal of Sports Science* [Online], 22. Available from: http://0-find.galegroup.com.innopac.up.ac.za:80/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE [Accessed 06/ 09/ 2008]

Connell, D.J. (2002). *Community: a Place between Risk and Security*. Paper presented at Rural Sociological Society 65th Annual meeting: August 14–18, 2002.

Collison, M. (1996). In search of the high life: drugs, crime, masculinities and consumption. *British Journal of Criminology* [Online], 36(3). Available from: http://0-find.galegroup.com.innopac.up.ac.za/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE [Accessed 02 /01/ 2009]

Cullen, B.T. & Pretes, M. (2000). The meaning of marginality: Interpretations and perceptions in Social Science. *The Social Science Journal* [Online], 37(2). Available from:http://0-find.galegroup.com.innopac.up.ac.za/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE [Accessed 30 /12/ 2008]

Cullin, J. (2005). The ethics of paradox: cybernetic and postmodern perspectives on non-direct interventions in therapy. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy,* 26(3): 138–146.

Dannenberg, A.L.; Jackson, R.J.; Frumkin, H.; Schieber, R.A.; Pratt, M.; Kochtitzky, C. & Tilson, H.H. (2003). The impact of community design and land-use choices on public health – a scientific research agenda. *American Journal of Public Health,* 93: 1500–1508.

Dattilo, J., Dattilo, A.M., Samdahl, D.M. & Kleiber, D.A. (1994). Leisure orientations and self-esteem in women with low incomes who are overweight. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 26(1): 23–26.

Dawson, D. (1988). Leisure and the definition of poverty. *Leisure Studies,* 7: 221–231.

Dooley, K.J. (1997). A complex adaptive systems model of organisation and change.

Nonlinear Dynamics, Psychology and Life Sciences, 1(1): 69–97.

Douglah, M.A. & Roycraft, P.F. (1967). Studying the low-income family. *Journal of Cooperative Extension,* Fall: 164–170.

Dovey, S.M.; Reeder, A. & Chalmers, D.J. (1998). Continuity and change in sporting and leisure time physical activities during adolescence. *British Journal of Sports Medicine,* 32: 53–57.

Dubberly, H. & Pangaro, P. (2007). Cybernetics and service-craft: language for behaviour-focused design. *Kybernetes,* 9: 1–23.

Duffy, K.G. & Wong, F.Y. (1996). *Community Psychology.* Allyn and Bacon: Boston, Massachusetts.

Edginton, C.R. & Chen, P. (2008). *Leisure as Transformation.* Sagamore: Champaign, IL.

Edginton, C.R. (2008). World Leisure seeks proposals to establish World Leisure Centres of Excellence. *World Leisure Journal*, 50(2): 150-151

Ellaway, A.; Kirk, A.; Macintyre, S. & Mutrie, N. (2007). Nowhere to play? The relationship between the location of outdoor play areas and deprivation in Glasgow. *Health & Place*, 13(2): 557–561.

Estabrooks, P.A.; Lee, R.E. & Gyurcsik, N.C. (2003). Resources for physical activity participation: does availability and accessibility differ by neighbourhood socio-economic status? *Annals of Behavioural Medicine*, 25(2): 100–104.

Forrest, R. & Kearns, A. (2001). Social cohesion, social capital and the neighbourhood. *Urban Studies,* 38(12): 2125–2143.

Freysinger, V.J. (2006). Social Inequalities and Opportunities. In Edgar L. Jackson (Ed). *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development, Hangzhou Consensus.* (pp. 25–39). Zheijang University Press.

Frisby, W. & Millar, S. (2002). The actualities of doing community development to promote the inclusion of low income populations in local sport and recreation. *European Sport Management Quarterly,* 2(3): 209–233.

Geyer, F. (1998). *Sociocybernetics and the new alienations.* Paper presented in WG01 Session 16 at 14th World Congress of Sociology, Montreal.

Geyer, F. (1994). *The challenge of sociocybernetics.* Paper prepared for Symposium VI: Challenges to Sociological Knowledge. 13th World Congress of Sociology, Bielefeld.

Geyer, F. & van der Zouwen, J. (2001). *Sociocybernetics: Complexity, Autopoiesis and Observation of Social Systems.* Greenwood Publishing Group.

Giles-Corti, B. & Donovan, R.J. (2002). The relative influence of individual, social and physical environment determinants of physical activity. *Social Science and Medicine,* 54(12): 1793−1812.

Glenn, E. (2000). Citizenship and inequality: historical and global perspectives. *Social Problems*, 47(1): 1−20.

Graham, P. (2006). IDASA. Inheriting poverty? The link between children's wellbeing and unemployment in South-Africa. Edited by Paul Graham. ABC Press: Cape Town.

Green, G. P. (2001). Amenities and community economic development: strategies for sustainability. *The Journal of Regional Analysis & Policy*, 31(2): 61−75.

Grover Duffy, K. & Wong, F.Y. (1996). *Community Psychology.* Allyn and Bacon: Boston.

Gungubele, M. (2003). Address by MEC Mondli Gungubele on the tabling of the Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture Department Budget Vote, Gauteng Legislature, Monday 2 June 2003.

Hannon, C; Cradock, A.; Gortmaker, S.L.; Wiecha, J.; El Ayadi, A.; Keefe, L. & Harris, A. (2006). Play across Boston: a community initiative to reduce disparities in access to afterschool physical activity programs for inner-city youths. *Preventing Chronic Disease. Public Health Research, Practice and Policy,* 3(3): 1−8.

Hendry, L.B.; Kloep, M.; Espnes, G.A.; Ingebrigsten, J.A.; Glendinning, A. & Wood, S. (2002). Leisure transitions – a rural perspective. *Leisure Studies,* 21: 1−14.

Heylighen, F. & Joslyn, C. (2001). Cybernetics and Second-Order Cybernetics. In R.A. Meyers (ed), *Encyclopedia of Physical Science & Technology (3rd edition)* (pp.1-24). Academic Press, New York.

Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic concepts for qualitative research.* Wiley-Blackwell:

Oxford.

Hughes, R. & Huby, M. (2002). The application of vignettes in social and nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 37(4).

Hunnicutt, B.K. (2000). Our reform heritage: recovering the vision of community leisure service. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 32(1): 58–61.

Hunt, S.M. (1997). The problem of quality of life. *Quality of Life Research,* 6: 205–212.

Iwasaki, Y. (2006). Leisure, the Quality of Life, and Diversity: An International and Multicultural Perspective. In Edgar L. Jackson (Ed). *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development, Hangzhou Consensus.* (pp.25–39). Zheijang University Press.

Iwasaki, Y.; Mactavish, J. & Mackay, K. (2005). Building on strengths and resilience: leisure as a stress survival strategy. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 33(1): 81–100.

Iwasaki, Y. (2008). Pathways to meaning-making through leisure-like pursuits in global contexts. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 40(2): 231–235.

Jackson, E.L. (1997). In the eye of the beholder: a comment on Samdahl & Jekubovich (1997), "A critique of leisure constraints: comparative analysis and understandings". *Journal of Leisure Research*, 29(4): 458–468.

Jackson, E.L. (2006). Setting the Stage: Introduction to the World Leisure Consensus Symposium on Leisure and the Quality of Life. In Edgar L. Jackson (Ed). *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development, Hangzhou Consensus.* (pp.17–24). Zheijang University Press.

Jackson, E.L. (2008). Geographical aspects of constraints on leisure and recreation. *Canadian Geographer/ Le Géographe Canadien*, 38(2): 110–121.

Jenkins, J.M. & Pigram, J.J.J. (2003). *Encyclopaedia of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation.* Taylor & Francis.

Johannessen, J. (1998). Organisations as social systems: the search for a systemic theory of organisational innovation processes. *Kybernetes*, 27(4): 359–387.

Johnston, L.D.; Delva, J. & O'Malley, P.M. (2007). Sports Participation and Physical

Education in American Secondary Schools: Current Levels and Racial/ethnic and Socio-economic Disparities. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine,* 33(4) Supplement 1: S.195–S.208.

Juniper, D. (2005). Leisure counselling, coping skills and therapeutic application. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 33(1): 27–36.

Kearns, A. & Parkinson, M. (2001). The significance of neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, 38(12): 2103–2110.

King, A.C. (1998). How to promote physical activity in a community: research experiences from the US highlighting different community approaches. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 32 (Supplement 1): S3–S 12.

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research: introducing focus groups. *BMJ*, 311: 299–302.

Krippendorff, K. (1996). A Second-Order Cybernetics of Otherness. *Systems Research,* 13(3): 311–328.

Laverack, G. (2006). Improving health outcomes through community empowerment: a review of the literature. *The Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition,* 24(1): 113–120.

Leviton, L.C.; Snell, E. & McGinnis, M. (2000). Urban issues in health promotion strategies. *American Journal of Public Health,* 90: 863–866.

Leydersdorff, L. (1997). Sustainable technological developments and second-order cybernetics. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 9(3): 329–341.

Lloyd, K.M. & Auld, C.J. (2002). The role of leisure in determining quality of life: Issues of content and measurement. *Social Indicators Research* [Online], 57(1), Available from: http://0-proquest.umi.com.innopac.up.ac.za/pqdweb?did=110509429&sid=4&Fmt=3&clientId=15443&RQT=309&VName=PQD [Accessed 2008 /12/ 18]

Mannell, R.C. (2006). Health, well-being and leisure. In Edgar L. Jackson (Ed). *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development, Hangzhou Consensus.* (pp.17–24). Zhejiang University Press.

Marmot, M. (2001). *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 345(2): 134–136.

Meeberg, G.A. (1993). Quality of Life: a concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 18: 32–38.

Mihalko, S.L. & Wickley, K.L. (2003). Active living for assisted living: Promoting partnerships within a systems framework. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine,* 25(3): 193–203.

Moore, L.V.; Diez Roux, A.V.; Evenson, K.R.; McGinn, A.P. & Brines, S.J. (2008). Availability of recreational resources in minority and low socio-economic status areas. *American Journal of Preventive medicine,* 34(1): 16–22.

More, T. & Stevens, T. (2000). Do user fees exclude low-income people from resource-based recreation? *Journal of Leisure Research,* 32(3): 341–357.

Muller, G.P. (2002). Explaining poverty: On the structural constraints of income mobility. *Social Indicators Research* [Online], 59(3). Available from: http://0-proquest.umi.com.innopac.up.ac.za/pqdweb?did=204673191&sid=2&Fmt=3&clientId=15443&RQT=309&VName=PQD [Accessed 18 /12/ 2008]

Nadirova, A. & Jackson, E.L. (2000). Alternative criterion variables against which to assess the impacts of constraints to leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 32(4): 396–405.

Neal, J.D. (1999). The role of satisfaction with leisure travel/ tourism services and experiences in satisfaction with leisure life and overall life. *Journal of Business Research,* 44(3): 153–163.

Park, J., Turnbull, A.P., Rutherford Turnbull, H. (2002). Impacts of poverty on Quality of Life in families of children with disabilities. *Exceptional Children,* 68(2): 151–170.

Parsons, T. (1991). *The Social System.* Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Petelewicz, M. (2000). *Methods for data gathering. The successful story-applicability of the vignette technique.* Available from: http://www.hanken.fi/qualitativeresearch2008/papers/marta_petelewicz.pdf [Accessed 02/05/2009]

Piercy, P. & Thomas, V. (1998). Participatory evaluation research: an introduction for family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 24(2): 165–176.

Powell, E.C., Ambardekar, E.J. & Sheehan, K.M. (2005). Poor neighbourhoods: Safe playgrounds. *Journal of Urban Health,* 82(3): 403–410.

Powell, L.M.; Slater, S. & Chaloupka, F.J. (2004). The relationship between community physical activity settings and race, ethnicity and socio-economic status. *Evidence-based Preventive Medicine*, 1(2): 135–144.

Rankin, B.H. & Quane, J.M. (2002). Social contexts and urban adolescent outcomes: the interrelated effects of neighbourhoods, families and peers on African-American youth. *Social Problems,* 49(1): 79–100.

Raphael, D., Renwick, R., Brown, I., Steinmetz, B., Sehdev, H. & Phillips, S. (2001). Making the links between community structure and individual wellbeing: community quality of life. *Health and Place*, 7(3): 179–196.

Ravenscroft, N. & Markwell, S. (2000). Ethnicity and the integration and exclusion of young people through urban park and recreation provision. *Managing Leisure*, 5: 135–150.

Raymore, L.A., Godbey, G.C. & Crawford, D.W. (1994). Self-esteem, gender and low socio-economic status: Their relation to perceptions of constraint on leisure among adolescents. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 26(2): 99–110.

Reid, C. & Frisby, W. (2002). Promoting women's health, equity, and inclusion: the role of accessible community recreation in reducing social isolation. In: Jackson, E.L. (editor) *Abstracts of Papers presented at the 10th Canadian Congress on leisure research.*

Russell, R.V. & Jamieson, L.M. (2008). *Leisure Program and Planning.* Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL.

Sallis, J.F.; Bauman, A. & Pratt, M. (1998). Environmental and policy interventions to promote physical activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine,* 15(4): 379–397.

Samdahl, D.M. & Jekubovich, N.J. (1997). A critique of leisure constraints: comparative analysis and understandings. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 92(4): 430–452.

Scott, D. (2000). Tic, toc, the game is locked and nobody else can play! *Journal of Leisure Research,* 32(1): 133–137.

Shaw, S.M. (2006). Re-framing Questions: Assessing the Significance of Leisure. In Edgar L. Jackson (Ed). *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development, Hangzhou Consensus.* (pp. 40–46). Zheijang University Press.

Shaw, S.M. (2007). *Social change through leisure: recreation can challenge social standards and result in empowerment or social change*. [Online]. Available from: http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentID=5379.org [Accessed 14 /12/ 2008]

Shin, D.C. & Rutkowski, C.P. (2003). Subjective quality of life of Korean life in 1981 and 2001. *Social Indicators Research* [Online], 62(1). Available from: http://0-proquest.umi.com.innopac.up.ac.za/pqdweb?did=410460531&sid=2&Fmt=3&clientId=15443&RQT=309&VName=PQD [Accessed 15 /1/2008]

Shogan, D. (2002). Characterising constraints of leisure: a Foucaultian analysis of leisure constraints. *Leisure Studies,* 21: 27–38.

Skinner, J.; Stewart, B. & Edwards, A. (1999). Amateurism to Professionalism: Modelling Organisational Change in Sporting Organisations. *Sport Management Review*, 2: 173–192.

Stebbins, R.A. (2000). Obligation as an aspect of leisure experience. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32(1): 152–155.

Stromquist, N.P. (2001). What poverty does to girls' education: the intersection of class, gender and policy in Latin America? *Compare*, 31(1): 39–56.

Tarrant, M.A. & Cordell, H.K. (1999). Environmental justice and the spatial distribution of outdoor recreation sites: an application of geography. *Journal of Leisure Research,* 31(1): 18–35.

Terre Blanche, M. & Durrheim, K. (1999). *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences.* University of Cape Town Press: Cape Town.

Totten, M. (2007). Every child plays: the health, social and economic benefits of increasing access to recreation for low-income families. Document prepared for the Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for low-income families.

Trayers, T. & Lawlor, D.A. (2007). Bridging the gap in health inequalities with the help of health trainers: a realistic task in hostile environments? A short report for

debate. *Journal of Public Health,* 29(3): 218‒221.

Tseng, V., Chesit-Teran, D., Becker-Klein, R., Chan, M.L., Duran, V., Roberts, A. & Bardoliwalla, N. (2002). Promotion of Social Change: a Conceptual Framework. *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 30(3): 401‒427.

Umpleby, S.A. (1994). Cybernetics of Conceptual Systems. *Cybernetics and Systems: An International Journal*, 28: 635‒651.

Van Buren, K.N. (2007). Partnering for social change: Exploring relationships between musicians and organisations in Nairobi, Kenya. *Ethnomusicology Forum,* 16(2): 303-324.

Vanderstraeten, R. (2001). Observing Systems: a Cybernetic Perspective on Systems/ environment Relations. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour,* 31(3): 297‒311.

Van der Veen, R. (2003). Community development as citizen education. *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 22(6): 580‒596.

Ventegodt, S., Merrick, J. & Andersen, N.J. (2003). Quality of Life Theory I. The IQOL Theory: an Integrative Theory of the Global Quality of Life Concept. *The Scientific World Journal,* 3: 1030‒1040.

Verma, S. & Larson, R. (2003). Examining adolescent leisure time across cultures. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development,* 99: 1‒7.

Wallace, M. (2001). A new approach to neighbourhood renewal in England. *Urban Studies,* 38(12): 2163‒2166.

Wegner, L., Flisher, A.J., Muller, M. & Lombard, C. (2006). Leisure boredom and substance use among high-school students in South-Africa. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 38(2): 249‒266.

Weschler, L.F. (2000). Urban Problems and Community Development. *The Social Science Journal* [Online]*,* 37(2): 317. Available from: http://www.0-find.galegroup.com.innopac.up.ac.za/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE [Accessed: 30/12/2008]

Wilson, D.K., Kirtland, K.A., Ainsworth, B.E. & Addy, C.L. (2004). Socio-economic status and perception of access and safety for physical activity. *Annals of Behavioural Medicine*, 28(1): 20‒28.

Yancey, A.K. & Kumanyika, S.K. (2007). Bridging the gap: understand the structure of social inequities in childhood obesity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 33(4) Supplement 1: S172–S174.

Zangeneh, M. & Haydon, E. (2004). The psycho-structural cybernetic model, feedback and problem gambling: a new theoretical approach. *International Journal for Mental Health & Addiction,* 1(2): 25-31.

Zedlewski, S., Chaudry, A. & Simms, M. (2008). *A Safety Net for Low-income Families.* The Urban Institute: Washington.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: VIGNETTE SCHEDULE

VIGNETTE 1:

Pretoria Recreation Services provides a variety of recreation programmes for children, teenagers and adults. Ben and his family would love to participate in some of the programmes on offer, but they do not have a car with which to drive to the activity centre, and they cannot afford the fees required to participate. Ben feels that most municipalities and recreation centres are targeting their programmes at people who are the easiest to reach, and who can also afford to participate while they tend to ignore families from further afield who can't. As a result of the fact that the programmes are advertised only to easy-to-reach families, the people in Ben's community are not always made aware of available recreation facilities and programmes.

VIGNETTE 2

Billy wants his children to participate in a holiday recreation programme during the June vacation. However, when living in a community characterised by high rates of unemployment, and low monthly incomes, the residents find it hard to gain access to a quality holiday programme. Most of the available recreation programmes are not offered in their community, and are expensive to enrol in. He knows that participating in a recreation programme will be a positive experience for his two sons. Billy feels that people from outside the community do not understand the barriers which he must overcome for his sons to be able to participate in an activity and that they do not care enough to ensure quality and accessible recreation programmes within lower socio-economic communities.

VIGNETTE 3

Thomas and his family live in a very poor community. Although the residents struggle to survive, they have organised art programmes, sport participation opportunities, and various recreation events within the community. Most of the members within his community participate in one of the available programmes, and

this fact contributes in a positive way to the community. Thomas feels that he has a high quality of life even though he is unemployed. Participating in the recreation and sport programmes makes him feel that life is not really that bad.

VIGNETTE 4

Susan has seen a programme on television in which a community is very active, and in which there are playgrounds where children can play, and adults can exercise. Susan believes that her community can experience positive changes if they can also have activities, sport programmes, and other fun things to do. If there is something else to do than just sit around, people will not be as bored, and will want to do more. Susan feels that this will have a positive impact on her community.

VIGNETTE 5

Mr. Jacobs, from the Hatfield Presbyterian Church, decides that his church will host a fun recreational event in a community that is poverty-stricken. He feels it is his duty as a Christian, but is not sure exactly what to do during such an event. He decides that he will hold a meeting with the people in his church. Together they can decide which event will be suitable for the community. The group can appoint volunteers from the church in Hatfield, and can then decide on a suitable date for the recreation event. It is not necessary to consult with the residents living in the impoverished community, because he knows that any time will suit them, as they do not work.