Chapter 2: Philosophical and theoretical driving force of the study

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The philosophical point of departure for this research study originates in the ideology of community development. The concept 'ideology' is used to refer to certain beliefs and doctrines reflecting the views of experts in the field. Community development in a broad sense connotes a process of social learning through people's participation in promoting self-reliance (Burkey, 2000:60). Within the context of this study, it refers to the process of assisting needy people within a specific geographical area (the community), to address felt needs and improve their lives for the better.

PAR is evident as paradigm. The term 'paradigm', as used here, means a pattern of ideas, values, methods and behaviour, which fit together and are mutually reinforcing. PAR is considered a research methodology as well as a development strategy. Although the dimensions of PAR denote participation, action and research, it is specifically rooted in the notion of 'participation', which is the very means to, and end of, human development (Fals-Borda, 2000: 30; Fals-Borda, 1991a:5; Greenwood & Levin, 1998:7).

The PAR paradigm, as applied in this research study, is underpinned by a combination of various research theories and approaches such as CBPR and critical social theory with aspects of adult education theory and evaluative research intertwined. CBPR is seen as PAR applied within the context of communities. The relevance therefore is noticeable. Critical social theory is seen as the mould into which PAR is set and needs to be discussed first. Principles of adult education theory and evaluative research are applied during the designing and implementation phases of the intervention and will only be briefly introduced in this writing. A more detailed explanation will follow during the discussion of each intervention phase. The common theme in all these theories is the full participation of the actors in the process of learning about their needs and opportunities and in the action required to address them.

This philosophy was considered the epistemological basis of the research process. It gave guidance, orientation, and direction to researcher, the change agent, throughout the study and me. This basis is graphically portrayed in Figure 2.1, indicating how the various theories, approaches and principles were applied. This writing was mainly done for academic purposes to reveal my own thoughts as researcher and conductor of this research effort. Each of the research theories, approaches and principles, as it appears in Figure 2.1 are introduced and discussed with the purpose to assist the reader in formulating a similar philosophical perspective on the study.

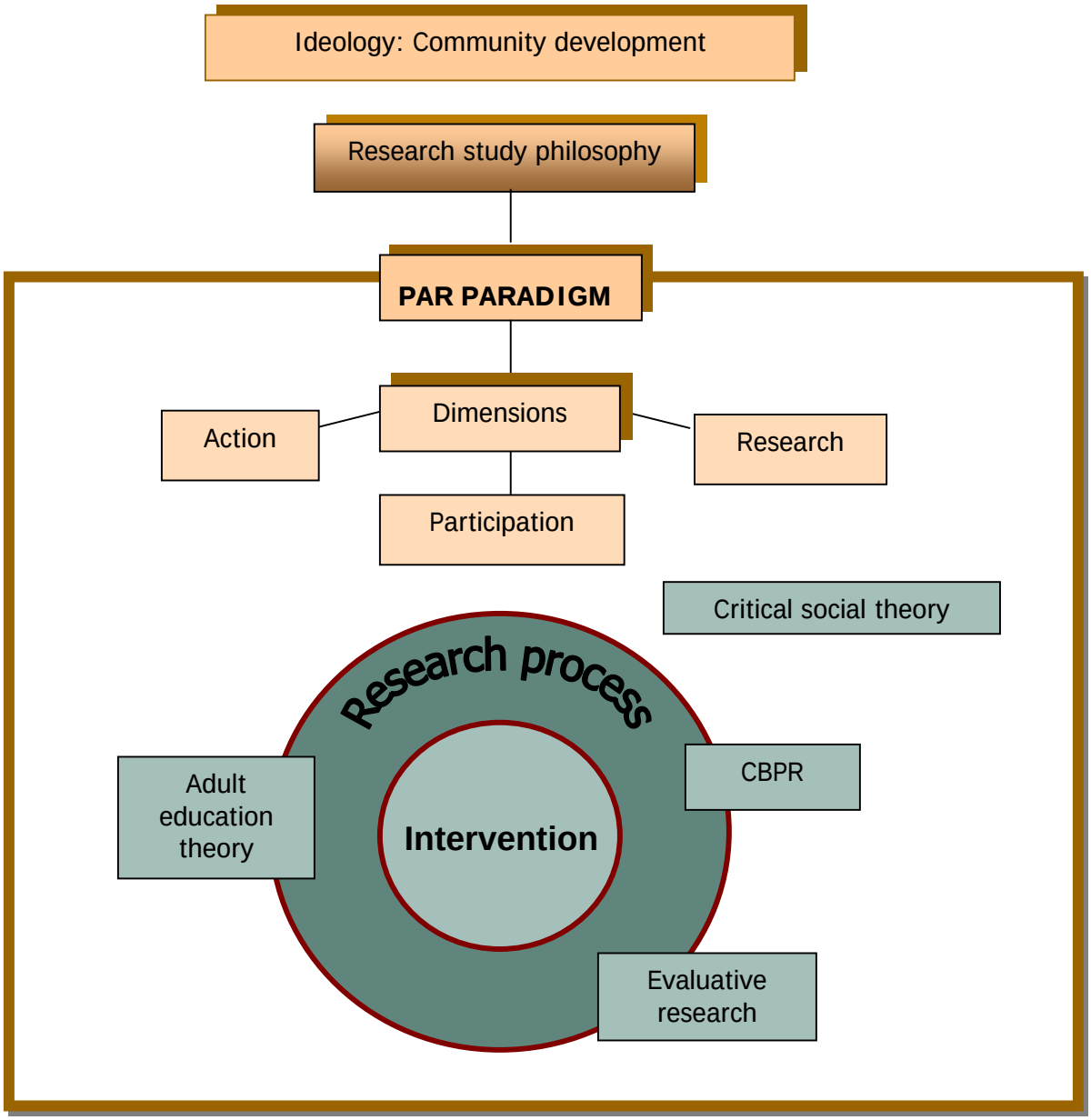

FIGURE 2.1: PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

2.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The ideology of 'community development' is often used as vehicle to bring about change in rural communities. There is no fixed and final definition of development; merely suggestions of what development should imply in particular contexts. It is been described as a normative concept that is value-laden, multidimensional, interrelated, and involving choices about set goals. These goals, within various contexts, all have in common to achieve the full potential of all persons in a community. Development in itself embraces change evolving gradually over time. It highlights the

fact that development is a process of continual learning, demanding the participation of all towards self-reliance (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997:71).

Development can also involve structural transformation, which implies political, social and economic changes (Hettne in Burkey, 2000:33; Coetzee & Graaff, 1996; Wetmore & Theron, 1998). It can also imply the provision of social services or the introduction of new technologies. It is obviously not merely a simple matter of implementing programmes. Development involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviours of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society. These changes have to appear from within individuals and groups and cannot be imposed from the outside (Burkey, 2000:48).

The fundamental objective of development lies in the idea of a world in which each individual has the right to live a life of well-being and worthy of a human being. In any meaningful sense, it will begin with and within the individual. Unless motivation comes from within, efforts to promote change will not be sustainable by that individual. Without such a development within people themselves, all efforts to improve people's quality of life will be immensely more difficult, if not impossible. The process whereby people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems is the essence of development (Burkey, 2000:56). Development is not always compatible with theory but should concern itself instead with reality as defined, not by scientists and researchers, but by people themselves (Wetmore & Theron, 1998:35). Burkey (2000:49) very illustratively wrote the following:

"Participatory development is not a patchwork quilt of different coloured components, but a finely woven textile of many coloured threads. These threads are woven together by the people and the pattern is determined by their own needs and priorities".

2.2.1 Rural community development

The commonly accepted approach to rural community development has been to establish programmes, which treat the community as a more or less harmonious unit (Burkey, 2000:42). It is assumed that individuals, groups and classes in a community have common interests, which are sufficiently strong to bind them together. It is also assumed that these interests are sufficiently common to create general enthusiasm and that any conflict of interest are sufficiently reconcilable. These assumptions have proven to be unrealistic. People in the community that are better off, usually benefited most from programmes, followed by a growing disparity and further inequality.

Given the negative results of programmes for the poor, arising from 'harmony models' of community development, an alternative must be used to ensure that the more powerful elements in the community do not receive most of the benefits of developmental activities. Burkey (2000:42) suggests that efforts should be directed to smaller, more homogeneous groups, which is precisely done within this research study.

Sustainable rural development, however, will only be achieved through the efforts of the rural people themselves working for the benefit of themselves, their families and their communities. After decades of paternalism, all too many rural people have come to believe that government agencies are going to develop them. The result was apathy interspersed with peaks of expectation as one or another new development programme comes their way. Rather than promoting development, such programmes have ended up developing 'dependency thinking' (Burkey, 2000:43).

2.3 CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY

The core concept of the critical social theory is to be found in the idea of transformation. To merely understand and interpret the lives of people is not enough; people need support to change their lives for the better. The aim of social science should therefore be to assist people in different ways to change their lives and liberate themselves. Researchers need to move beyond mere understanding and interpretation of phenomena to emancipation, empowerment and transformation of the people affected by the phenomena. Explanation of phenomena under investigation should thus lead to transformation and change in the world and lives of the people involved. The ultimate epistemological criterion of research should consequently be pragmatic (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:37).

The founders of the Frankfurt School originally formulated a critical social theory in the 1930s. They reinvigorated Marxian orthodoxy and rejected positivism as a worldview of adjustment (Agger, 1991:24). Positivism suggests that one can perceive the world without making assumptions about the nature of the phenomena under investigation. One experience the world as rational and necessary, thus deflating attempts to change it. It reinforces passivity and fatalism. Critical theorists attempt to develop a mode of consciousness and cognition that breaks the identity of reality and rationality, viewing social facts not as inevitable constraints on human freedom, but as pieces of history that can be changed. It has a sort of 'dialectical imagination', which Jay (in Agger,

1991:24) defines as *"the ability to view the world in terms of its potential for being changed in the future, a hard-won ability in a world that promotes positivist habits of mind acquiescing to the status quo".*

Jürgen Habermas (1988) extended the theory giving it a linguistic turn in the form of his communication theory. He attempted to shift critical social theory form the paradigm of consciousness to the paradigm of communication. He tried to integrate the positivistic emphasis on control with the hermeneutic insistence on communication and added the critical interest of emancipation and transformative science. He introduced the concept of 'self-reflection', which determines the meaning of validity of critical propositions of this category. Self-reflection is determined by an emancipatory cognitive interest.

Brian Fay (1975) further developed the work of Habermas. He stated that a critical social science is one that "attempts to account for the sufferings and felt needs of the actors in a social group by seeing them as the result of certain structural conflicts in the social order." He attempted to explain these conflicts and hence the sufferings and felt needs of the people by giving a historical account in quasi-causal terms. He depicted the latent contradictions between the needs, wants, and purposes, which the social order gives rise to as well as the satisfaction that it provides (Fay, 1975:96).

A critical social science must become part of the everyday life worlds of ordinary people. It should perform an educative and ultimately a transformative role. The aim is therefore to liberate people from their state of alienation through the process of self-reflection to transform or change the human condition through a critique of those alienating or repressing factors, which sustain their alienation/false consciousness/self-deception.

Agger (1991:19) moved critical theory into a third generation, indebted with post structuralism and postmodernism as well as with a feminist version of postmodernism. Postmodernism rejects all appeals to meta-narratives, but celebrates the local, the specific and the differences and accepts the link between inquiry and power. It promises a positive science (universal and objective) as well as an emancipatory science. It further supports the search for concrete, contest-specific and historically situated narratives that are not divorced from the social and political interest of people.

Within the mould of critical social theory, PAR can now be cast.

2.4 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR) PARADIGM

"Participatory research was defined as a vivencia (life experience) necessary for the achievement of progress and democracy, a complex of attitudes and values that would give meaning to our praxis in the field. From this time on, PAR had to be seen not only as a research methodology by also as a philosophy of life that would convert its practitioners into 'thinking-feeling persons'. Then our movement took on world-wide dimensions" (Fals-Borda, 2000: 30).

PAR stemmed from community development movements for oppressed people. It originated as a 'dialectical response to a contemporary crisis', referring to the realisation within social science that the knowledge production aspirations of the academics did not inform social practice and the fight for social justice (Fals-Borda, 1991a:4). This contemporary crisis leads to an upsurge on so-called 'alternative' research methodologies, which by definition had explicit political goals and commitments, namely to liberate and empower those who were being studied. PAR seems to be an inevitable move towards a new paradigm of inquiry. It has been described, as a method of research where creating a positive social change is the predominant driving force. PAR grew out of social and educational research and exists today as one of the few research methods, which embraces principles of participation, reflection, empowerment and emancipation of groups seeking to improve their social situation (Seymour-Rolls & Hughes, 1995:1).

The following definition of PAR proposed by Whyte (1995:289-290) could be considered a basic definition including the views from different traditions and ideologies:

"Participatory action research involves some members of the subjects of study, participating actively in all phases of the process from the design of the program, through its implementation, and including actions that come with or follow upon the research".

In the Third World, PAR has emerged as part of the search to render development assistance more responsive to the needs and opinions of the local people. Oppose to conventional research, PAR is defined by an approach that aims to democratise science, to engage the subjects of research as active participants in what is often an interdisciplinary enterprise (Maclure & Bassey, 1991:190). Three particular attributes distinguish PAR from other established research strategies:

- Shared ownership of the research enterprise
- Method of community-based learning
- Aims to stimulate community-initiated action.

Pragmatically PAR is further cited as a cyclical, reflective process. The different elements and aspects can therefore not be arranged in a consecutive order. It may start of with the formulation of a problem, including exploring a need for inquiry and deciding what the purpose of research would be. This may evolve from interactions with members and groups in the field or community. The researcher and research participants then decide together how to conduct the study. Implementation is done by periodic fact-finding trips (household trials) on a collaborative basis. The products/results of the research (also referred to as local theory) are created by using different types of expertise and frames of reference of the participants and researcher (change agent) as a point of departure. The data however, should make sense to the participants, and deployed in terms of their own language and in relation to their own perceptions and values. Dissemination of results should not only be to academic audiences but primarily returned to the participants (Argyris & Schön, 1991:86; Greenwood & Levin, 1998:65; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000:595; Seymour-Rolls & Hughes, 1995).

The consecutive process of PAR is also described in terms of a cycle surrounding some inner moments, namely that of reflection, planning, action and observation. These research moments exist interdependently and follow each other in a spiral or cycle (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000:597). The most distinctive feature of PAR, which informs and influences all the other characteristics of this paradigm is that it involves participation between the participants and the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:315). Participation as a feature and a dimension of PAR is discussed later in more depth. Other principles that form part of PAR are considered to be:

- The role of researcher as change agent
- The democratic nature of the research relationship
- Incorporation of local knowledge
- Knowledge generated for purposes of action
- Ownership
- Empowerment
- Emancipation
- Collaboration and social interaction
- Eclecticism and diversity

- Case orientation
- Emergent social process
- Linking scientific understanding to social action
- Recursive (reflexive and dialectical)

(Babbie & Mouton, 2001:315; Greenwood, Whyte & Harkavyl, 1993:178; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000: 595; Whyte, 1991:97).

It is these principles, which set PAR apart from traditional research methods and other modes of 'action research'. The key difference between PAR and conventional methodologies lies in the location of power in the research process. Within PAR, participation is taken to the extreme, involving the people in data gathering, analysis and controlling and use of outcomes, to the extent of shared ownership of the research enterprise (Nelson & Wright, 1995; Reason, 1994:201). PAR is explicitly committed to conducting research that will benefit the participants either through direct intervention or by using the results to inform action for change. A detailed discussion on the minor differences between PAR and 'Action Research' is beyond the scope of this thesis.

PAR also has an overtly political stance. This orientation owes much to critical theory, which emphasizes the political role of scientific inquiry (Fals-Borda, 1991b:162). However, PAR also stimulates community-initiated action, which is often not politically motivated.

PAR emerges over time as a process; it does not appear full-blown at the outlet in most situations. Each programme usually started as an attempt to solve a particular kind of problem and gradually opened into a much broader and deeper participatory action research process (Greenwood *et al*, 1993:180). PAR according to Burkey (2000:60) is a process of conscientisation. The primary objectives being to increase understanding of the local situation and to increase insight of the local people into what factors and relationships are the root causes of and contributing factors to their problems.

PAR is a contested concept applied to a variety of research approaches and employed in a diversity of fields and settings. The nomenclature itself reflects the contestation, with dimensions of action research encompassing most of the approaches with participatory research overlapping to include the rest. There is some convergence of interest among researchers in each of the approaches with some shared views but differences as well.

2.5 DIMENSIONS OF PAR

PAR can logically be dissected into dimensions of participation, action and research. This tripartite is also integral to any learning process within a community and therefore part of the development strategy itself. Within various research studies and programmes there will be a multiple meanings of these concepts. In some instances, people will be aware of the different meanings they give to a word and will contest them, but in others, people will assume that they understand each other when they use the same word, and implicit ideological differences will not be openly contested. To avoid any such confusion, the concepts of participation, action and research, as they apply in this study, need further explanation.

2.5.1 Participation

Scholars of PAR and many development agencies seem to agree that different degrees of participation can be discerned. They distinguish between a continuum of participation, ranging from minimal to intense participation, as illustrated in Figure 2.2. Each type of participation is related to the degree of involvement and control of the researcher and the participants. At the one end of the scale, there is the position where participation means manipulating participants into being involved in projects where they have no interest in, also referred to as 'pseudo-participation'. The next level can be described as informative, where the researcher, who holds control, is merely informing participants about decisions and actions. Then follows the level of consulting participants on the central aspects of the research, but the researcher stills stays in control, taking responsibility for decision-making. The middle position on the scale reflects the view of a partnership between researcher and participants with decision-making and control being shared. The researcher starts to transfer control until participants are empowered. At the other extreme of the scale is thus the realm of what is termed 'participant control' referring to the participants who are in full control of the research study (Fals-Borda, 1991a:5; Greenwood & Levin, 1998:7; Reason, 1994:198).

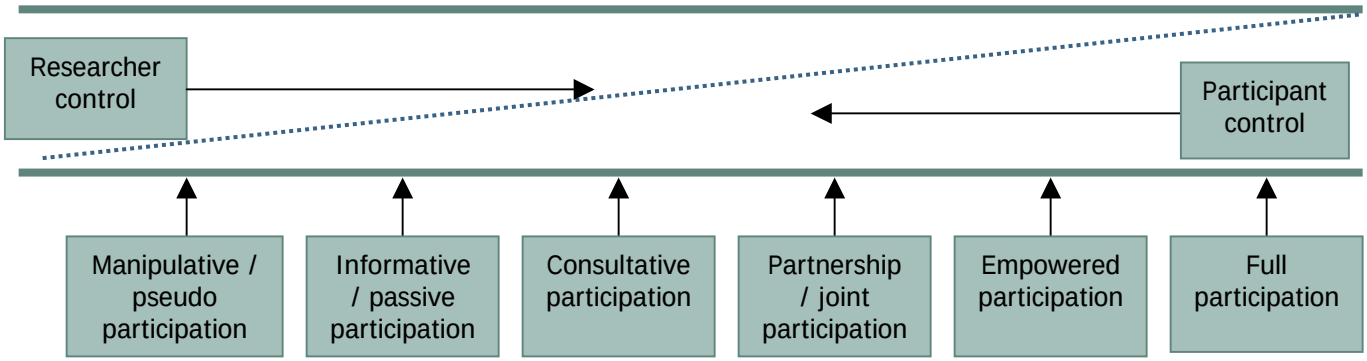

FIGURE 2.2: CONTINUUM OF PARTICIPATION (Eyben & Ladbury, 1995:199; Fals-Borda, 1991a:5; Greenwood & Levin, 1998:7; Karl, 2002)

The World Bank Learning Group also uses a schema to measure the intensity of participation (Eyben & Ladbury, 1995:199). This schema relates to four levels of participation, namely that of *information sharing, consultation, decision-making and initiating action*.

- Information sharing occurs when information is shared with programme beneficiaries about the aims of the programme and the way it will affect them. It puts people in the picture and can help facilitate individual and collective action.
- Consultation means that people are not just informed but consulted on key issues. Local people may provide feedback to programme managers who can use this to influence the design and implementation of future phases of the programme.
- Decision-making occurs when people are involved in decision-making about aspects of the programmes, including programme design and implementation from the beginning.
- Initiating action takes place when people feel confident enough to propose action and to initiate it themselves. Proposals are community-based, not assigned by outside agencies.

No particular hierarchical order is intended. The appropriate level of participation depends on the type of programme and the socio-economic environment in which it is being implemented. Beneficiary participation should only be fostered on the grounds of enhancing efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability (Eyben & Ladbury, 1995:199).

Effective participation is probably most likely when the various involved partners are satisfied with the level at which they participated. Because this was a PAR study and not a full blown developmental project, the degree of participation was limited. The research team had specific goals to reach and had distinct roles and responsibilities, which could not be shared with the participants. Other factors that limited full participation were the character of the needs addressed,

the environmental conditions (they were living on a commercial farm and are dependent on the farmer), the aims and capacities of the research team and the skills of the researcher. It was therefore not reasonable to demand full-scale participation.

The degree of participation, which is possible within a particular research study, is a function of a combination of factors. It is the joint result of the character of problems and environmental conditions under study, the aims and capacities of the research team and the skills of the researcher. The researcher also has a distinct role and responsibility, which cannot be shared by others, and therefore places limits on degrees of participation (Karlsen, 1991:145). It will not be reasonable to demand full scale PAR to be achieved in all cases or even the same degree of participation (Greenwood *et al*, 1991:180).

No one may mandate in advance that a particular research process will become a fully developed participatory action research programme. Participation is a process that must be generated. It begins with participatory intent and continues by building participation processes into the activity within the limits set by the participants and the conditions. To view participation as something that can be imposed, is both naïve and morally suspect. Developing the participatory dimension of PAR is a responsibility that never is completely fulfilled and can always be improved (Greenwood *et al*, 1991:180).

Participation, related to the research process of PAR, implies that all participants in a study are integrated by participating fully and actively. Research is thus transformed into an active and interactive communal enterprise (Fals-Borda, 1991b:150). The action part of PAR will now be clarified.

2.5.2 Action

There is a peculiar distinction in proximity and responsibility between action and research that makes is useful to consider these principles separately. Action in the research process is a strategy for using scientific models to solve practical problems. Research fulfils a dual aim of theorizing and taking action, with action based on theorising. The researcher is not only theorising and describing problems but also contributing to evolving solutions; not only responsible for the research process, but at the same time a participant and jointly responsible for the change process (Karlsen, 1991:145).

Most social scientists seek to understand social relations, not change them. Historically, research was considered an intellectual activity and researchers were not expected to engage in action. Schrijvers (1995:23) proposed an alternative by using a dialogical approach, where dialogue form the main communication process within the research process. This dialogical approach makes room for research that is action-based.

Action, for the purpose of this study, involves initiating change through a process of discussion, negotiation and dialogue between researcher and participants. Action is also seen as the only sensible way to generate and test new knowledge (Greenwood & Levin, 1998:6). An overlap with research, however, is eminent. Certain parts of the process remain the sole responsibility of the researcher and participants cannot share in that. Ensuring that the data, assumptions and interpretations are valid is the researcher's responsibility. Only researchers can present findings to scientific communities. The researcher can relate to the action process through dialogue, reflection and learning and therefore has a responsibility for both action and research processes (Karlsen, 1991:149). The researcher, however, is not a permanent part of the field and can withdraw as soon as the research-defined part of the action process has been concluded. The outcomes of action and research do not therefore have the same degree of proximity to researchers. The participants do not have to take part in the research process, but they have to live with results from the action process.

Conclusively then, action refers to investigating reality in order to transform it. It involves a sequence of activities that starts with identifying a problem or opportunity, and the factors that may influence the solution. It then proceeds through several steps to formulate, implement, and access the required change with the aim to make a difference in the day-to-day- lived realities of participants in their work and lives (Walton & Gaffney, 1991:101).

2.5.3 Research

Research within the PAR paradigm has a defined purpose to generate knowledge that leads to action and through reflection to new knowledge and action. Both research participants and researcher share created knowledge. Research becomes a social activity where the researcher is part of the reality being investigated. Without the action part, though, research is an exercise for the benefit of researchers only (Burkey, 2000). It is mainly seen as a learning strategy and only

secondarily as producing results in the conventional sense. It is a way of learning how to explain a particular social world by working with the people who live in it to construct, test, and improve theories about it so they can better understand and control it (Greenwood *et al*, 1993:179).

Research can be 'grounded' by including elements of action and participation. 'Applied research' is evident when the researcher identifies practical problems as research problems and emphasizes the implications for practice rather than for theory (Walton & Gaffney, 1991:119). Those in the action process share the steps taken during practicing research. Research and action, however, have different objectives (Karlsen, 1991:149). Each step of the research process can potentially contribute to, or being informed by, the aspects of the action process. Research and action without participation, however, cannot be effective. At each stage of these processes, participation can potentially strengthen both the knowledge and the action outcomes. The action and research processes can thus benefit from one another and from greater participation (Greenwood & Levin, 1998:56; Greenwood *et al*, 1993:189).

2.6 COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

When PAR involves the conducting of research, which recognizes the community as a social and cultural entity, with the active engagement and influence of community members in all aspects of the research process, it is referred to as community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; O'Fallen, Tyson & Dearry, 2000:1). CBPR will be introduced to the reader with the purpose of showing the relevancy to the research study.

CBPR is committed to conducting research that will benefit the participants either through direct intervention or by using results to inform action for change. Community participation, as an active partner in the research process, provides numerous benefits to research findings and public health intervention programmes. Community participation builds and strengthens the capacity of community residents to address future health risks, through education, outreach, and training (O'Fallen *et al*, 2000:1).

The rationale for CBPR includes as its aim to improve health and well-being of communities involved, both directly through examining and addressing identified needs and indirectly through increasing power and control over the research process. Other advantages of incorporating this approach into research designs are stated as that it:

- Enhances data quality and quantity, by establishing trust and by engaging local knowledge and local theory based on the experience of people involved
- Moves beyond categorical approaches and overcomes fragmentation and separation of individual from culture and context
- Improves research definition and direction
- Enhances translation and sustainability of research findings
- Improves the community's health, education and economics, by sharing knowledge obtained from programmes
- Has the potential to bridge the cultural gaps that may exist between the partners involved (Israel, 2000:1).

The key principles of this approach are captured as that it recognizes the community as a unit of identity and that it strengthens a sense of community through collective engagement. It builds on strengths and resources within the community and seeks to support or expand social structures and social processes that contribute to the ability of community members to work together to improve health. Further more (it):

- Facilitates collaborative involvement of all partners in all phases of the research and focuses on issues and concerns identified by community members, creates processes that enable all parties to participate and shares influence in the research and associated change efforts.
- Integrates knowledge and intervention for mutual benefit of all partners
- Gathers information related to interventions and new understandings emerge as participants reflect on the interventions conducted
- Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities
- Facilitates the reciprocal transfer of knowledge, skills, capacity and power
- Gives explicit attention to the knowledge of community members and an emphasis on sharing information, decision-making power, resources, and support among members of the partnership
- Involves a cyclical and iterative process
- Includes community assessment, development of research methodology, data collection and analysis, interpretation of data, determination of intervention, dissemination of results, intervening, establishments of mechanisms for sustainability
- Addresses health from both positive and ecological perspectives
- Emphasizes physical, mental and social well-being

- Encompasses biomedical, social, economic, cultural, historical and political factors as determinants of health
- Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners
- Gives ongoing feedback of data and usage of results to inform interventions
- Involves a long-term commitment by all partners (Israel, 2000:21).

CBPR should be an integration of these principles in various combinations and on various levels. The extent to which any research study can achieve these principles, or a combination there-of, will vary depending on the context, purpose and participants involved in the research process.

There are numerous examples of successful community-based participatory research programmes. These programmes have accomplished their research objectives and shown research productivity by maintaining a positive working relationship between community and scientific collaborators. While there are successful programmes, there seems to be not a single model for success. However, the process of CBPR entails several components and stages of elements that must be considered if we are to understand the features of successful process. These components include:

- The formation and ongoing maintenance of community relationships
- Developing a focus area
- Defining research problems
- Understanding the ideological background and political nature of CBPR
- Documenting and communicating results (Arcury, 2000:42).

Building relationships is extremely important for conducting successful CBPR programmes. These relationships entail individual scientific investigators working with and developing the trust of community members. Building these relationships takes time. The time invested to build mutual understanding is essential if a programme is to flourish, because the investment in person-to-person relationships is translated into the flexibility and trust necessary for those stressful aspects of collaboration. It is also important to establish relationships between the academic institution and the community that extend beyond the person-to-person relationships. Community members need to have a sense that academic institutions are reliable and that the scientific organizations will not withdraw when political pressure is applied. Involving students in CBPR programmes is a mechanism for increasing academic reliability. Scientists involved in CBPR programmes need to be aware of colleagues who have important research skills and who already have the ideology that will make them amenable to working in CBPR.

A successful CBPR programme is dependent on participants acknowledging the roles of ideology. Participation requires sharing an ideology about the importance of community participation in problem solving. Collaborating in a CBPR programme is a statement that reflects mutual respect, democratic decision making and enhances the benefits of research for local communities (Arcury, 2000:46). In the process of CBPR there is always political power of some sort involved. To ignore political and legal pressure would be detrimental to CBPR programmes. The willingness of academic researchers to engage in advocacy and policy enhances credibility in the community and build trust.

One of the exceptional features of CBPR is that it combines basic research with interventions, with a constant challenge in the tension between the research and intervention aspects of the programme. The need to delay the beginning of the intervention due to data collection for the basic research aspects of the programme can be a source of frustration for community members who feel the community is receiving no direct benefit from the research until the intervention activities begin. A well-designed study also involves extensive planning for the baseline and post-intervention data collection that will determine the success of the intervention. This methodological approach to planning the intervention can be viewed as too prolonged to community members who recognize the need in the community for the intervention to occur in a timely manner. Successfully navigating this challenge is greatly facilitated if the partnership has established a level of trust that allows honest and open discussion of all members concerned (Brakefield-Caldwell & Parker, 2000:57).

The value-addedness of combining basic research and intervention research can produce a synergistic effect for the overall research study as well as individual benefits. The intervention component can use data collected through the basic research component to guide intervention activities as well as to evaluate the effect of the intervention. If the basic research involves human participants, study participants are better recruited and retained through the opportunity afforded for involvement in intervention activities. The input of community members in the programme design, implementation and evaluation of combined basic and intervention research greatly enriches the research process and overall outcomes. Community member's contributions ensure the programme to be grounded in the experience of members of the particular community where the research is taking place. Involvement of community members also greatly increases the cultural

appropriateness of interventions and outcomes that are being measured (Brakefield-Caldwell & Parker, 2000:59).

Community members can assist researchers in finding solutions to possible ethical dilemmas that are identified such as translation of informed consent forms into a meaningful context for non-English speaking research participants. By involving community members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the initial interventions and basic research, researchers can ensure the acceptability of the intervention to potential consumers. Community members are the future consumers of the intervention that is being tested. Their input in refining the intervention and evaluating not only its effectiveness but also its acceptability to future consumers will enhance the quality of the research findings.

The approach of CBPR emphasizes capacity building for all partnership members. Through the acquisition of new skills and understanding, the capacity of all partners can be increased. This increased capacity can result in positive long-term effects such as social change and civic involvement. Though researchers are still struggling with how best to document and measure these long-term effects, there is growing evidence of the importance of effects such as civic involvement on the health of communities (Brakefield-Caldwell & Parker, 2000:59).

2.7 ADULT EDUCATION THEORY

There are many theories useful in improving our understanding of adult education. Most of these theories focus on learning, or teaching or both aspects (Green, 2002:11). The emphasis in this research study is on the theories of learning, as it is assumed that the principles of these theories will contribute not only to understanding how adults learn, but also on how to construct and facilitate the learning process. Merriam and Caffarella (1999:249) organised the theories according to those that focus on adult characteristics, those that emphasise an adult's life situation, and those that centre on changes in consciousness. These three categories can broadly be linked to the adult learner, the learning situation and the learning process (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999:249).

Most of the theorists and authors on adult education seem to try to identify principles that can be applied to practicing adult education, summarising what has been learned from research or observed in practice. Merriam and Caffarella (1999:302) questioned the usefulness of a set of principles for guiding research or practice. Learning in adulthood is embedded in its context and a

single set of principles is not likely to hold truth for the wide-ranging diversity of learners in learning situations. Nonetheless, until an integrated theory is established, a generic set of principles can be useful to guide adult education activities.

For the purpose of this study, a summarised version of adult learning principles (as presented in (Green, 2002:11) will suffice. These principles are mentioned where it was applied, namely during the implementation phase of the intervention (see Chapter 7).

2.8 EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

Evaluative research can be undertaken for different purposes, namely to make judgments, improvements or to be knowledge-oriented (Patton, 1997:68-76).

In the case of **judgment** evaluations – the aim is to come up with a value assessment regarding the worth of an intervention. Evaluations done for this purpose endeavour to answer questions such as:

- was the intervention successful
- was it effective
- was the intended target group reached
- did the intended beneficiaries receive the intervention in the most effective and efficient manner (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:337; Patton, 1997:76).

Improvement evaluations are undertaken to inform programme managers and stakeholders about ways of improving the intervention. Formative evaluation and quality enhancements are examples there-of. Improvement is also called for when questions such as the following are asked: what are the programme's strength and weaknesses; has the programme been properly implemented; what constraints are there on proper implementation; are the programme participants responding positively to the intervention? (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:339; Patton, 1997:76).

To **generate knowledge** about programmes is often set as a more academic aim. Research is then done to gather a deep understanding of how interventions make a difference in the world of the participants. Generalisations about the effectiveness of a programme or to build new theories and models also plunge within this category (Patton, 1997:76). It is also said that evaluation

studies of this kind is driven by concerns for understanding how people change their attitudes and behaviour because of successful interventions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:339).

2.8.1 Various approaches

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 350) offers three methodological approaches within evaluative research, namely:

- Applied PAR
- Experimental
- Qualitative designs.

Applied PAR (as previously discussed), refers to participatory evaluation which involves empowerment of the participants in a collaborative way to incorporate them as co-evaluators of the study or programme. Communities are empowered and emancipated through the involvement of the participants and other stakeholders in the evaluative process (Fetterman, Kaftarian & Wandersman, 1996; Reason, 1994:189; Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1999: 57-62). Experimental approaches include quasi-experimental designs and are using quantitative data. These evaluations are often associated with outcome or impact evaluations. Within the quasi-experimental design, three different designs are found, namely time series, non-equivalent control groups and multiple-time series (Posavac & Carey, 1997: 142-180; Rossi *et al*, 1999:309-340). Qualitative designs are described as flexible, open and associated with process evaluation conducted in natural settings (Glaser & Strauss, 1999: 15-18; Posavac & Carey, 1997: 213-231).

The World Bank (2002b) provides a useful overview of some tools, methods and approaches for monitoring and evaluation. This overview is summarised in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: SUMMARY OF EVALUATIVE TOOLS, METHODS AND APPROACHES
(World Bank, 2002b)

Approach	Purpose	Use	Advantage	Disadvantage
Performance	Measures inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts	Setting targets Identifying problems Indicating if reviews & in-dept interviews are needed	Effective Facilitates benchmarking & comparisons	If poorly defined, not a good measure Tendency to define too many indicators Trade-off between optimal and measurable
Logical framework	Clarifies objectives Identifies causal links Identifies performance indicators Reviews progress	Improving quality of designs Summarising activities Assisting in operational plans Providing objective basis	Ensures analysis of assumptions & risks Engages stakeholders Can be used as management tool	Stifles creativity Static if not updated Requires training and follow-up
Theory-based	Allows identification of critical success factors	Mapping of complex activities Improving planning & management	Early feedback Early correction of problems Identifies side-effects Helps prioritising Basis for likely impacts	Easily becomes overly complex Stakeholders might disagree about critical factors
Formal survey	Collects standardised & comparable information	Providing baseline data Comparing of groups, changes over time, conditions within targets Describing conditions Key input to evaluation of impact Preparing for strategies	Can be applied to populations Quantitative estimates can be made	Results are not available for long time period Data analysis can be a bottleneck Expensive Time-consuming Information is difficult to obtain
Rapid appraisal	Quick, low cost way to gather views and feedback	Providing rapid information for decision-making, qualitative understanding, context and interpretation of quantitative data	Low cost Quickly (4-6 weeks) Flexible	Relates to specific communities Less valid, reliable and credible than other methods
Participatory	Active involvement of all stakeholders	Learning about local communities Identifying problems Providing knowledge and skills to empower people	Examines relevant issues Establishes partnerships and local ownership Enhances local learning Provides timely, reliable information	Less objective Time-consuming Potential for domination and misuse
				(continued)

TABLE 2.1: SUMMARY OF EVALUATIVE TOOLS, METHODS AND APPROACHES (World Bank, 2002b) (continued)

Approach	Purpose	Use	Advantage	Disadvantage
Public expenditure tracking survey	Tracks the flow of public funds Determines extent to which resources reach targets Part of a larger service delivery	Diagnosing problems Providing evidence on delays and corruption	Supports accountability Improves management	Reluctance to be transparent Substantial cost
Impact	Systematic identification of effects Better understanding of extent to which activities reach target	Distinguishing impact and outcome activities from other external factors Clarifying whether costs were justified Drawing lessons for future activities Comparing effectiveness Strengthening accountability for results	Estimates of magnitude of outcomes Answers to central developing questions Adds confidence to managers and policy-makers	Expensive Time-consuming Difficult to identify appropriate counter-factual
Cost benefit / cost effective	Measures inputs and outcomes in monetary terms Outcomes are sometimes measured in quantitative terms	Informing decisions about efficient allocation of resources Identifying highest rate of return on investment	Estimates efficiency Makes explicit economic assumptions Convinces that benefits justify activities	Fairly technical Results dependent on assumptions Results must be interpreted with care

Most of the indicators depend on the scope and depth of the process used to define indicators; programme complexity; quality of information sought and the comprehensiveness of the system. It was decided to left out information on the cost, skills and time required in the table, since these vary greatly, depending on the depth and duration of the activities. Most approaches need several days of training in a range of skills such as data collection, analysis, reporting, and management information.

Other approaches reported in the literature are

- Conventional (Greenwood *et al*, 1998:236; Rietbergen-McCracken, Wood & Simpson-Hébert, 1998:120)
- Constructivist (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
- Partnership (Silka, 2000:49).

The theory-driven approach was also mentioned by researchers such as Bickman (1987:15) and Weiss (1997:501), who persuasively argued for the use of a theory-driven approach to programme

evaluation. This approach does not claim any theoretical proposition about the causal process by which a particular programme was expected to work. Although key variables and relationships are identified as being the foundation, the descriptive information is not connected to effective outcome or process evaluation. A useful evaluation model should therefore also contain an integrated theory within which the specific formulation of programme elements, rationale and causal processes can be embedded.

Lipsey and Pollard (1989:318) stated that it would be better for evaluators to have a long list of possible theory forms to think about as candidates for describing the different programmes as they study. The more differentiated the notions of possible theories, the more likely it will be to develop a theoretical framework that will fit well with any programme.

The approach of choice in this study was the participatory approach. If evaluations are to be truly participatory, then effort needs to be directed at developing practices that will prepare all parties to contribute to this process. There is a need to develop strategies for building evaluation capacity within all partnerships. The evaluation should not focus just on what is of interest to the funders or academic partners, but also be designed to gather information that will enable the community partners to answer community questions. Participatory evaluation aims to create a learning process for the programme recipients that will help them in their efforts to research desired goals. Evaluation aims to make a difference by helping programme recipients achieve their own goals better.

A standard practice in participatory evaluation is to involve the recipients of a programme or an activity in the process of interpreting evaluation results. The most conventional way to do this is to discuss the collected data with the local people as way of making sense of the findings. A more advanced form is to involve participants in the process of designing what to evaluate from the beginning of the programme, to engage them in the data collection process, and to include them in making sense of the findings (Greenwood & Levin, 1998:240).

This participatory process can differ widely amongst evaluation practitioners. Each evaluator engages the participants in ways that are comfortable for both parties. Some construct meetings; others use group dynamic processes and other participatory techniques. Participatory evaluation strategies have a lot in common with the complexity, diversity and specificity of ‘Action Research’ (AR) approaches in general. Participatory evaluation, though a form of practice in its own right,

builds directly on studies from AR, and many of the authors refer directly to particular AR works as part of their intellectual repertoire.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The philosophical perspective of this study is found in the broad field of community development. The researcher is seen as a change agent whose primary responsibility is to initiate and facilitate emancipatory change during the research process. The role of the researcher during this process will vary from participant, control agent, consultant and partner, taking us to an 'alternative' way of knowledge production, namely that of participatory action research. The following research theories, approaches and principles are applied, namely critical social theory, PAR (and dimensions thereof), CBPR, adult education theory and evaluative research. These theories are all reflected in the design, implementation and evaluation phases of this study. Evaluation is specifically seen as a participatory research activity. The specific combinations of methods as well as the particular approach chosen were seen as appropriate for the context of this study in terms of its aim and objectives.

The design of the research study is discussed next.