PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

The Case of Zimbabwe

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAF-SAP	African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme
ADA	Agricultural Development Authority
AFC	Agricultural Finance Corporation
AGRITEX	Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services
CA	Communal Area
CACU	Central Association of Co-operative Unions
CARD	Co-ordinated Agricultural and Rural Development
Co-op	Co-operative
CSC	Cold Storage Commission
DA	District Administrator
DDC	District Development Committee
DERUDE	Department of Rural Development
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MCCD	Ministry of Community and Co-operative Development
MCDWA	Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs
MLARR	Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement
MLGRUD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Planning Agency
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCCZIM	Organization of Collective Co-operatives in Zimbabwe
ORAP	Organization of Rural Associations for Progress
PA	Provincial Administrator
PC	Provincial Council
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union
PMD	Prime Minister's Directive
RDC	Rural District Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
VOICE	Voluntary Organizations in Community Organization
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
ZANU(PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZMDC	Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of the Study

There has been a number of studies undertaken on beneficiary participation in development in the past. Most of the studies view beneficiary participation as necessary for meaningful development. A few are critical of the implementation of participatory development projects and accuse project-sponsoring organizations and governments of paternalism. It is, however, generally agreed in development circles that successful development programmes and projects are those in which beneficiaries participate. But beneficiary participation cannot be the panacea for all the problems of rural and national development. Participation can only be useful in the design and implementation of feasible, appropriate and acceptable projects and programmes.

This study seeks to explore the concept of beneficiary participation in development in Zimbabwe since the attainment of national independence in 1980. The study does not seek to propose a new line of thinking; instead, it reviews selected works on the subject, and relates them to the practice of beneficiary participation in development in Zimbabwe. The study seeks to expose the reader to some of the available literature on the subject, as well as point out some of the problems that beset participation in development in developing countries in general, and those that seem to apply to Zimbabwe in particular. At the end of this study is a bibliography of publications referred to in the text. Hopefully, this will assist the reader in identifying additional reading material.

This study was undertaken as part of a project of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Zimbabwe. The main purpose of the study is to produce relevant teaching material for use by the staff and students of this Department. The second purpose of the study is to document and analyse several developmental activities that have been occurring in Zimbabwe since 1980 as a way of determining the direction in which national development seems to be going. To this end, the study will identify and discuss selected aspects of development institutions and structures and highlight their roles in facilitating beneficiary participation in Zimbabwean development.

Several works are reviewed in Chapter 1 to identify and discuss some of the major theoretical or conceptual aspects of beneficiary participation in development. Some of the works reviewed are, however, based on empirical studies carried out in developing countries, including those in Africa. The reviewed works emphasize the importance attached to beneficiary participation by developmentalists and practitioners of public policy throughout the modern world.

Chapter 2 focuses on the local government system in Zimbabwe and identifies it as the most critical public developmental machinery through which beneficiary

participation is expected to take place. The various structures and functions of the local government system are identified and discussed in relation to their contribution to development and beneficiary participation. The constraints and weaknesses that both these structures and the beneficiaries face are discussed in some detail. It is clear from the various examples cited in Chapter 2, that although several post-independence reforms have been instituted, the resultant local government system largely fails to meet the expectations of beneficiaries in facilitating their participation in development.

The discussion in Chapter 3 focuses on other structures and institutions of beneficiary participation in development in Zimbabwe. Political parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), co-operative societies and other mass organizations are identified as providing alternative avenues for beneficiary participation in development. The Chapter underlines the importance of public institutional support for voluntary organizations if they are to succeed in meeting their objectives. The support systems required are largely of a policy and training nature rather than handouts from government and NGOs, although these have their uses as well.

In order to further sharpen the study's focus on Zimbabwe, Chapter 4 discusses five different cases. Each case was selected for its strengths and weaknesses as regards beneficiary participation in development in Zimbabwe. However, the selected cases are largely illustrative. They do not reflect the total picture of developmental activities in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, the majority of beneficiaries, projects and development authorities would agree that the situation depicted by these five cases is strongly representative of the nature of beneficiary participation in the country.

In the final chapter, Chapter 5, a summary of the highlights of the first five chapters is provided. The chapter goes further to make some specific recommendations for the improvement of beneficiary participation in development in Zimbabwe. This is, by far, the most controversial part of the study since there are some readers — researchers, policy-makers, and, perhaps, even some beneficiaries — who will hold significantly divergent views from those proposed in this study. Hopefully, the controversy will facilitate rather than inhibit further research and debate on this important aspect of the development process.

Approach and Methodology

As noted earlier, a number of published works have been consulted for the purpose of preparing this study. Most of the studies provided debate on the theoretical aspects of beneficiary participation. Empirical data was obtained through a study of five projects in various rural areas of Zimbabwe. Most of the information was obtained through observation and structured and unstructured interviews with both participants and change agents in the various areas.

Some of the case studies were initially prepared by graduate students under my supervision. I later visited the areas for data validation. Several government documents were studied and discussions held with relevant government officials at various levels of the Public Service in Zimbabwe. Discussions were also held with local government officials and representatives. The study also benefited from a survey on local government in Zimbabwe which I conducted.

In Chapter 1, I deliberately selected material which deals mainly with participation in development. There is no shortage of material dealing with participation in general, or with political participation. There was, therefore, a deliberate attempt to restrict the works reviewed to those relating to beneficiary participation in development, particularly in developing countries. Even then, the study had to be very selective in the choice of reviewed material since there is a significant amount of it as demonstrated by the bibliography at the end of the book.

With regard to research on the Zimbabwean cases and the local government structures, we experienced only minor constraints as most of the relevant officials were supportive of the study. There were, however, some documents that were only available to the researcher on condition that they were used in the official's office and not taken out or copied in any way. Such documents were difficult to cite in this study. Furthermore, there was a considerable amount of information which bureaucrats considered to be "classified" and therefore not available to us.

Beneficiaries, for their part, were most enthusiastic about giving information regarding their roles in development projects. There were no incidents of hostility or reluctance to give information. There were, however, a few problems of misunderstanding as some of the beneficiaries assumed that the research would necessarily result in the government changing certain procedures, rules and regulations to their benefit. The only beneficiaries who tended to be problematic were co-operative officials. Some, for example, were reluctant to allow researchers to examine their records. Records of a few co-operatives were only made available after written instructions from the Department of Co-operative Development had been delivered to the co-operatives' management.

I

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

As mentioned before, a considerable amount of work has been done on the concept and process of participation, particularly in relation to the development efforts of Third World countries. This study will make a brief review of some of these studies to expose readers to some of them. This chapter, however, begins by reviewing some of the decisions made at a United Nations Conference on Popular Participation in Africa.[1] This will not only assist in identifying some of the elements of the conceptual framework for this study; it will also provide an insight into current thinking on popular or beneficiary participation in development in Africa.

The United Nations Conference on Popular Participation

The theme of this conference was "Putting the People First". This was a fitting theme since participation is, or should be, about putting the people, however defined, first. In his opening address, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) noted that three decades after most African states had attained national independence, ". . . the generality of our people have been excluded from any critical and significant contribution to national directions".[2] Decrying the increasingly narrowing base for decision-making and the lack of popular debate on national development policies, the UNECA Executive Secretary observed:

> This process of marginalizing the participation of the people in the formulation of public policies, which has tremendous negative impact on their well-being and even on their very survival, has been exacerbated by the persistent socio-economic crisis which Africa faced throughout the 1980s, with the consequential ever-growing concern and pre-occupation by governments with short-term crisis management.[3]

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[1]   United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, "International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa"; (Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania), 12–16 February, 1990.

[2]   Adebayo Adedeji, 'Putting the People First', (Opening Statement delivered at the UNECA Conference on Popular Participation in Africa, 12 February, 1990). p. 2.

[3]   Ibid.

The African socio-economic crisis is not yet over, neither has the marginalization of ordinary people. For the most part, African countries have resorted to the recruitment of foreign experts and managers though some of them are imposed upon them by those who can provide access to external financial resources.[4] This has resulted in limiting the scope for ". . . independent policy-making and national economic management in Africa has gradually diminished and narrowed".[5]

The problem of the marginalization of the people as a result of their being excluded from decision-making processes for development is pervasive throughout Africa and the Third World. It is a negation of the principle of the democratization of the development process. The UNECA Executive Secretary rightly observed:

> The democratization of the development process — by which we mean the
> empowerment of the people, their involvement in decision-making, in
> implementation and monitoring processes — is a 'conditio sine qua non'
> for socio-economic recovery and transformation.[6]

Thus people's involvement or participation in decision-making results in the democratization of the development process. This necessarily results in the reduction of authoritarianism, a phenomenon for which Africa is sadly noted. Empowerment of the people must necessarily result in the reduction of the power held and exercised by a few executives, whether they be politicians, managers or administrators. Empowerment must therefore lead to meaningful self-reliant development of the economy and self-transformation of the people.[7] The extent to which these processes have occurred in Africa is virtually negligible.

The UNECA Executive Secretary makes several other observations and pleas which are summarized below:

- People's participation in development is the engine for launching the processes of economic transformation; it is the motor for accelerating the process of change and development;
- People's participation expands the areas of debate on national development issues, it diffuses power and subordinates state control to popular politics;
- Self-reliant development requires that power be redistributed in favour of society rather than be concentrated in the hands of a few;

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[4]   *Ibid.*   [5]   *Ibid.,* 3.

[6]   *Ibid.* Experience has shown that very few African Governments are willing to democratize the developmental process because this will have what they consider to be negative implications for their position, power and status in governance.

[7]   *Ibid.,* 4. At the time of writing, several African authoritarian regimes had already fallen to the increasing demands for democracy from their citizens. It is, however, still too early to determine whether this trend will lead to the democratization of the development process and the empowerment of the people.

- The politics of consensus and consent, conviction and commitment, compassion and accountability are the practical corollary of a concern for a nation as a whole, not just for a particular group;
- There must be material incentives for people to make the fullest possible use of their skills and talents — that is, to participate meaningfully — and this calls for a development ethic which is not only informed by social justice, but the benefits of which are sufficient to provide the basic needs of the individual and the family;
- To achieve and sustain meaningful development, it is necessary to ensure the education and training, health, well-being and vitality of the people so that they can participate fully and effectively in the development process;
- There is need for the creation of an enabling environment in terms of political freedoms — of speech, association, freedom from arbitrary arrest and molestation. It is in such an environment that high levels of productivity can be generated and sustained, and values of self-reliance and self-confidence can be developed;
- Within African countries the initiative and vitality of the rural poor have for too long been sapped by the rural rich and the government officials from the city.[8]

These are cardinal elements of participatory development, particularly in Africa. Some of them will be dealt with in various sections of this study. But the UNECA Executive Secretary's comments constituted only an opening address of the UN conference under review. Of even more critical interest to this study is the substance of the final report of this Conference which is summarized below.

The Conference observed that the political context of socio-economic development in Africa has largely been characterized by an over-centralization of power as well as by various impediments to meaningful and effective participation of the majority of the people.[9] This, according to the "African Charter for Popular Participation", has resulted in the demotivation of the majority of the African people and their organizations, to the extent that they are not able to "contribute their best to the development process and to the betterment of their own well-being".[10] This, in turn, has led to the curtailment of collective and individual creativity of the people.

The second assertion of the Conference, as set down in the Charter mentioned above, is that nations cannot be built without the popular support and full participation of the people:

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[8] *Ibid.*, 4–7. See also 'African Charter for popular participation in development and transformation', (International Foundation for Development Alternatives) *IFDA Dossier*, (Oct./Dec. 1990), LXXIX, 3–16.

[9] UNECA, 'African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation' (Arusha, 1990), 4.

[10] *Ibid.*

> . . . nor can the economic crises be resolved and the human and economic
> conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity
> and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people. After all, it is to
> the people that the very benefits of development should and must accrue.[11]

The Charter, therefore, calls for the altering of Africa's structures, patterns,
and the political context of socio-economic development. As most African
politicians have discovered, these inherited structures and institutions do not
adapt easily, if they adapt at all, to the needs and demands of a modern state
which is grappling with the problems of socio-economic development and nation
building. Fred G. Burke accurately observes:

> . . . the capacity of African political systems to be sensitive to, and then
> respond to, the demands of the people is very low. It is low because the
> inherited colonial system was not egalitarian or democratic or participatory
> but rather authoritarian — sensitive not to the needs and the demands of
> the masses but to those of the colonial office in London or Paris or to a
> settler community. Thus, the likelihood that politics will successfully manage
> this growing conflict is problematically slight.[12]

This low capacity of African governments to respond to the needs of the
people, it can be argued, is a major contribution to the stagnation that African
economies are currently experiencing. The African Charter for Popular
Participation, therefore, calls on African governments to abandon or transform
the inherited structures which are obsolete and inappropriate for Africa's
development.

> . . . there must be an opening up of political . . . processes to accommodate
> freedom of opinion, tolerate differences . . . and ensure the effective
> participation of the people and their organizations and associations in
> designing policies and programmes.[13]

This is a call for what the Charter terms "human-centred development" which
should aim at improving the well-being and living conditions of the people.[14]
The call is further reinforced by the need for Africa to realize that it is becoming
increasingly marginalized in world affairs both geo-politically and economically,
and that its greatest resource is its people.[15]

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[11]   *Ibid.*

[12]   Fred G. Burke, 'Public administration in Africa: The legacy of inherited colonial institutions'; *Journal of Comparative Administration*, (1969), i, (iii), 345–78.

[13]   *Dialogue: The Voice of the People in North-South Co-operation*, (Sept/Oct. 1990) (xiv), 1.

[14]   UNECA, 'African Charter for Popular Participation', 5.

[15]   *Ibid.*

People must be empowered to determine the direction and context of development within an environment of social and economic justice. That this empowerment is not taking place in most African countries is confirmed by the abject poverty in which the majority of Africans live. Furthermore, the absence of an environment which is conducive to meaningful development is a result of, *inter alia*, the exclusion of the majority of people from the development process. People are expected to be passive recipients rather than active initiators of change.¹ In addition, there is widespread repression in most African countries and a perfect recipe for economic stagnation and civil strife emerges.

The Charter further upholds and supports the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF — SAP) "which was endorsed by the twenty-fifth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)".¹⁶ It, however, rejected or disapproved of economic programmes such as the orthodox Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which, the Charter felt, undermine the human condition as well as disregard "the potential and role of popular participation in self-sustaining development".¹⁷ The experiences of several African states under the harsh IMF and World Bank conditionalities through the orthodox SAP attest to the undesirability of these inhuman socio-economic measures. It may be best to conclude this section on this historic Charter by quoting the following from the document:

> In our sincere view, popular participation is both a means and an end. As an instrument of development, popular participation provides the driving force for determination of people-based development processes and willingness by the people to undertake sacrifices and expend their social energies for its execution. As an end in itself, popular participation is the fundamental right of the people to fully and effectively participate in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels and at all times.¹⁸

African governments did not necessarily celebrate the decisions and recommendations of the Conference. It would be fair to state that few, if any of them, have responded positively to the Conference's recommendations. A number of reasons could be given for this state of affairs. The major reason would be the question of power distribution which is necessary for the generation of meaningful participatory development. It is necessary at this stage, however, to

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¹⁶   *Ibid.* See, for example, 'Declaration on Africa: For democracy, for development, for unity,' *IFDA Dossier* (July/August 1986), (LIV)

¹⁷   *Ibid.*, 6. It must be noted, however, that the majority of African countries that are undertaking economic structural adjustment programmes are still following the IMF/World Bank models or versions. This includes Zimbabwe.

¹⁸   *Ibid.* The major weakness of the Charter is that there is no agreed mechanism for its enforcement. It is therefore likely to be one of the many fine documents which grace the national bureaucrats and politicians' offices but of no redeeming value to the people.

consider other works on participatory development which may contribute to the identification of other reasons why beneficiary participation faces a brick-wall in many developing countries.

Selected Works on Participatory Development

This section briefly reviews some of the literature on participation. Space and time constraints do not permit a comprehensive discussion of all available literature on the subject. The primary objective of this section is to identify a number of conceptual aspects of participation with a deliberate bias towards those concepts that are relevant to beneficiary or popular participation in development. The selection of the literature being reviewed in this section is largely based on availability of the literature to me at the time of writing rather than on choice or preference of some literature over those works which are not mentioned.

The United Nations has, for some time, been interested in the whole concept of beneficiary or popular participation in development. Several resolutions of the United Nations have urged member states to encourage and practise the involvement of beneficiaries or marginalized people in the development process as far as possible.[19] A United Nations publication argues that there are basically three ways of viewing popular participation in development, namely, "mass sharing of the benefits of development; mass contribution to the development effort; and [mass] decision-making in development".[20] These are closely related aspects of the development process. Popular participation is therefore being viewed as both a goal of development which requires that national resources and opportunities be equitably distributed, and as a way of facilitating and energizing the development effort by means of popular involvement in developmental decision-making:

> The relationship is a two-way venture: People contributing to the developmental effort increase the benefits for them, and this then acts as an incentive for increased popular contribution to development. . . . Popular participation is also seen as a categorical term for citizen or people power.[21]

The term *development* is used in this study to refer to the process of improving the living standard of people by improving their material worth or resource base, as well as to the facilitation of change in the distribution of material goods

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[19]   See, for example, General Assembly Resolution 2542 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969; and Resolution 2626 (XXV) both of which are discussed briefly in the United Nations, *Popular Participation in Decision Making for Development* (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 1975).

[20]   Ibid., 4.

[21]   Gelia T. Castillo, "How Participatory is Participatory Development? A Review of the Philippine Experience," (Philippine Institute For Development Studies, 1983), 482.

among the people. Both of these have significant implications for the social relations that arise in the process. Thus beneficiary participation can only be active or meaningful for the masses if they are effectively involved at the various levels of the development process.

For example, popular participation is considered severely limited when the masses are merely being asked to choose between alternatives initially selected by bureaucrats. The limitation of participation becomes more evident under these circumstances when none of the alternatives proposed by the bureaucrats meet the expectations of the masses, or fail to address what the masses may feel are their felt needs. This study will refer to several Zimbabwean situations where beneficiary participation is largely restricted to the masses or their representatives making choices between predetermined alternatives. In most of these cases, the result is that the masses take the exit option, become apathetic and disinterested in much of organized or collective developmental effort.

The United Nations publication further argues that mass participation in decision-making for development constitutes a critical element which distinguishes *passive* from *active participation*:

> A more comprehensive view of the decision-making process involves four stages: defining the situation requiring a decision; choosing the preferred alternative; determining how best to implement the decision once it is made; and evaluating the consequences of the action taken ... Of these four stages, the first may well be the most important, since the way in which a problem situation is defined not only determines the possible alternative solutions but usually tends to restrict the number of relevant choices. If the people are not involved at this first stage, their participation may be limited to merely ratifying what has been predetermined for them.[22]

Equally crucial to the development process is the people's participation in the evaluation process. This will enable the people to identify the constraints or problems associated or brought about by their previous decisions and may significantly influence their subsequent decisions. In practice, however, it is not uncommon that bureaucrats or donor development agents carry out this crucial process on their own as well as keep the results to themselves. The people never get any feedback. They are therefore likely to make the same mistakes over and over until they become demoralized by the whole notion of popular participation in development.

Another aspect of participatory development which warrants mention is the distinction between *direct* and *indirect participation*. The two terms are closely related to the terms *active* and *passive participation* already used in this study. It

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[22] United Nations, *Popular Participation in Decision Making*, 5. The discussion of the local government structures in Zimbabwe in Chapter 3 confirms this requirement.

has been indicated that active participation goes beyond mere choice-making from among predetermined alternatives while passive participation largely pertains to such choice-making and even manipulation of the masses by those who will have made the critical decisions in the first place.

The UN publication mentioned above argues that direct participation in decision-making for development "involves physical interaction between those persons in whom society has vested the authority to make decisions and the people affected by those decisions".[23] Under normal circumstances, this form of participation is quite feasible at the local level but quite difficult, if not impossible, to achieve at higher levels. What often militates against beneficiary participation in development is the fact that the "physical interaction" is not always adequately informed to result in active participation taking place. In other words, there can be physical interaction without the opportunity for the people or their representatives to make meaningful and informed decisions. This is particularly so in most of Africa's rural communities where the bureaucrat is often 'king'.

The complexity of most regional, national and international organizations usually dictates that indirect rather than direct participation is resorted to. The people's wishes are usually conveyed to the decision-makers through established channels of communication whether they be institutional or episodic arrangements.[24] People are thus usually represented in decision-making bodies by popularly elected representatives who are expected to be fully aware of and share their views and interests. Sometimes it is necessary to have in-built mechanisms for the replacement of 'dead wood' — that is, representatives who have either become incorporated in the bureaucratic system or who are generally ineffective. Several other factors also come into play to determine the efficacy of indirect mass participation in decision-making for development:

> The efficacy of each form of indirect participation will, of course, depend on many factors, including the method of selecting representatives, the availability of adequate channels for reaching decision makers, the absence of structural constraints on participation, and the types of issues involved. It is possible to ascertain whether such channels exist, and whether they are used by the people, and under what conditions they are most effective in facilitating active involvement in the decision-making process.[25]

The case of Zimbabwe, which is the subject of this study, clearly demonstrates that some of these factors result in beneficiary participation being restricted to the passive mode with negative implications for meaningful development for the people. Institutional constraints are particularly noted as a major contributor to the restriction of the people's participation in development. Other factors shall be discussed later in this study.

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[23] Ibid., 6.   [24] Ibid., 7.

[25] Ibid.

The 1975 UN publication referred to earlier provides a hierarchy of the various aspects and meanings of popular participation in development. These are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I
MEANINGS OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN TERMS
OF DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Aspects of Development

Popular Participation as	Improvement of material welfare	Improvement of social relations
End-state or goal	Sharing of material outputs of development	Receiving benefits of improved social relations (e.g. equal opportunity, end of discrimination)
Passive process	Contributing to production (e.g. working; in investing; saving)	Contributing to improved social relations (e.g. being a "good citizen" or "good neighbour")
Active Process	Participating in decisions to allocate factors of production	Participating in decisions on determination of societal values and roles, and on distribution of benefits

Source: United Nations, *Popular Participation in Decision Making for Development*, 9.

Beneficiary participation in development can thus be argued to be an essential factor for increased productivity of material and non-material benefits of development. The various levels at which participation can occur and the different types of participation serve to indicate that participation can be represented on a continuum, with zero popular participation on one extreme, when only one person makes the decisions, and total participation on the other extreme, with everyone participating involved in decision-making. In real life, however, the level and type of beneficiary participation that is attainable is determined by the nature of activities or decisions to be undertaken. The ideological context of development may also be crucial to the type and level of beneficiary participation in a given environment.

James Midgley (1987) argues that although many proponents of the participation theory claim to be committed to socialism and marxism, the views they express are derived from a blend of individualism, populism and anarchism.[26] These are all ideologies which, according to Midgley, "incorporate a basic distrust of the state".[27] He accuses intellectuals of failing to engage in critical debate about the precise meaning of the concept of participation:

> As an ideal, participation is shielded from the profanities of intellectual scepticism. Few academics would quarrel with the view that development policies should be more sensitive to needs of ordinary people, or that opportunities for peoples' involvement in development projects should be enhanced or that ordinary people should share in the benefits that flow from development effort. To criticize these ideals would appear to be most ungenerous.[28]

While this assertion is largely accurate, it, however, fails to make adequate exceptions to the rule. The critical study by D. S. Cupps (1977) identifies several problems which are a result of excessive and increasing citizen participation in administrative and political institutions and processes:

> The general assumption is that broadened participation is desirable because it increases the representativeness and responsiveness of our administrative and political institutions, heightens citizens' sense of political efficacy, and acts as an important check on the abuse of administrative discretion. Yet . . . there is a growing body of data to support the contention that public participation which is automatic, unrestrained or ill-considered can be dangerously dysfunctional to political and administrative systems.[29]

Cupps (1977) identifies and discusses the various problems which result from over-enthusiastic pursuit of public participation, and he categorizes them as follows:

- potential shortsightedness of political responses to the citizen participation movement;
- problems of representation and legitimacy;
- problems associated with the style and tactics of public interest groups and their spokesmen; and,
- the absence of sophisticated cost-benefit analysis of citizen group policies and programmes.[30]

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[26]   James Midgley, 'Popular participation, statism and development', *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, (1987), (II), (i), 5
[27]   *Ibid.*   [28]   *Ibid.*, 6.
[29]   D. Stephen Cupps, 'Emerging problems of citizen participation', *Public Administration Review*, (1987), (XXXVII), (V), 478.
[30]   *Ibid.*, 479.

Some of these problems of participation will be demonstrated later. For now, suffice it to state that there has been some critical examination of participation at both the academic and practical levels. But, the point made by Midgley is still valid and requires that a more critical approach be adopted in analyzing the role of beneficiary participation in development.

In dealing with the definitional aspect of participation, Midgley prefers to focus on popular participation which he argues is synonymous with populism.[31] He cites Wile's definition of *populism* which is, "the belief that virtue resides in the simple people who are in the overwhelming majority and in their collective traditions".[32] He argues that like participation, populism tends to appeal to mass sentiment; it claims to represent the interests of the ordinary people and to seek to protect them against "hostile political forces and unfavourable economic conditions".[33]

John D. Montgomery and Milton J. Esman (1971) define *participation* "not in the passive sense of sharing in governmental beneficiencies, but in the more active sense of exerting influence on administrative behaviour and on the outputs of official action".[34] They argue that greater participation by those who are poor and deprived will mean their greater influence on the decisions and programmes which relate to their welfare:

> We distinguish genuine participation, which implies real influence from symbolic, manipulated, or controlled participation, which is intended to ratify rather than influence official behaviour.[35]

These two authors seek to depart from viewing participation as a mere political process which should focus on the cardinal points of democracy — choosing leaders, determining the scope of government action, assessing priorities and programmes and expressing preferences. Instead, they focus on those aspects of the definition of participation which they argue are more pertinent to development administration; that is, "the relationship of career administrators to the public and the public interest".[36]

Chuku T. Uwakah (1981), focusing on participation in education and rural development, defines participation as a process of co-operative action "in which a group of individuals willingly share in the responsibilities and consequences of a common undertaking or the achievement of a particular task".[37] This makes

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[31]   Midgley, 'Popular participation', 8.

[32]   *Ibid.*   [33]   *Ibid.*

[34]   John D. Montgomery and Milton J. Esman, 'Popular participation in development administration', *Journal of Comparative Administration*, (1971), III, (iii), 359.

[35]   *Ibid.* The discussion on the Zimbabwe local government structures seems to indicate that participation under that system is of the symbolic, manipulative and controlled nature.

[36]   *Ibid.*, 358.

[37]   Chuku T. Uwakah, 'Motivation to participate in rural education programs among villagers in Eastern Nigeria', *Rural Africana* (Spring 1981), X, 55.

it necessary for change agents to be particularly concerned about participation if their programmes are to be successful. Uwakah further asserts: "No development program, however grand, can succeed unless the local people are willing to accept it and make an effort to participate."[38] The voluntary nature of the process of participation tends to require that the programmes in which beneficiaries are to participate effectively be perceived as capable of providing benefits which the participants will appreciate both collectively and individually. As shall be argued later, this has implications for the success of government-sponsored socio-economic programmes.

Adam I. Z. Nkumika (1987) indicates that the discussion of popular participation in development policies goes as far back as the 19th century. He points out that participation was then understood to mean civil involvement in political life, "as the realization of the self-determination of the individual".[39] These were the times of civil emancipation when participation was viewed as a "precondition for overcoming the historical development of the social and economic inequalities of social groups and classes in any one society".[40] International development agencies gave the concept and process of popular participation further prominence, particularly when the International Labour Organization "stipulated that participation is a `basic human need' and thus a value in itself".[41]

Gelia T. Castillo (1983) argues that people's participation in development tends to be determined by the nature of the institutions or organizations that are set up for this participation.[42] He says that, people's involvement in community action is mainly along programme implementation and maintenance:

> The programs being implemented at the village level are packaged programs whose planning and decision-making processes were done by high level policy makers from the different agencies and brought to the community for implementation. The standard procedure is to organize groups at the village level to carry out these programs, hence, it is not unusual to have an organization, a group or a brigade for each program designed at the national level.[43]

Later in this study there will be a discussion of some of Zimbabwe's rural

[38]   *Ibid.* This may, in the main, be true but it does not take into consideration some of the programmes carried out under authoritarian regimes against the wishes of the people. Not all of these programmes have collapsed or are a complete waste.

[39]   Adam I. Z. Nkumika, 'The role of popular participation in programmes of social development', *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, (1987), II, (i), 18.

[40]   *Ibid.*   [41]   *Ibid.*

[42]   Castillo, *How Participatory is Participatory Development?* 479.

[43]   *Ibid.* The roles of the DDC and the PDC under the local government system in Zimbabwe certainly conform to this arrangement (see Chapter 2).

development programmes which will further confirm this assertion by Castillo. Top-down structures of local government and community development result in bureaucrats doing most of the planning and decision-making in the development process. Meaningful participatory structures and organizations need to be bottom-up in nature. These are usually referred to as *participatory structures* and they are normally of a voluntary nature.

Frank Powell (1988) argues that active participation in development requires that the community or the beneficiaries are fully involved in the whole process, from design to implementation of a programme.[44] The community tends to be actively involved in those programmes that they have contributed to at each and every stage — design, planning, implementation and evaluation. Passive participation occurs when the community is expected to simply join in at the implementation stage. Powell writes:

> If someone from outside the community comes in with a plan or proposal, everyone in the community assumes that responsibility for implementation lies with the person, agency or organization that developed and introduced it. The organization or agency will obviously provide the funding and do the work. The community has little ownership either of the process or the outcome.

> This reduces the community's role to that of passive recipient; it is 'welfare-ism' at its worst. The absence of any sense of accomplishment erodes community pride rather than strengthens it. Instead of creating a sense of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, there is a crippling sense of dependency and what is implicitly communicated is that the community is not qualified to design and implement projects; or, in short, the people are not capable of caring for their own needs. Such outside, expert-based development can lead to negative and incapacitating self-images.[45]

Here again, the Zimbabwean cases confirm the fact that when people are expected only to be passive recipients of government- and donor-initiated handouts and programmes, they tend to shun participation and basically lose interest in the programmes. This leads to programme failure and continued underdevelopment of rural communities. Powell's assertion also indicates that there are various types of beneficiary participation in development which need to be considered when designing participatory development activities. The same sentiments are echoed by Castillo who identifies the following types:

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[44]   Frank Powell, 'Training for participation', in Institute of Cultural Affairs International, Brussels, (ed.) *Approaches That Work in Rural Development* (K.G. Saur, New York, London, Paris, ist edition 1988), 161.

[45]   *Ibid.* Problems of this nature are reflected in some of the cases relating to the Zimbabwe situation (Chapters 2 and 3).

1. Membership in community organizations set up for the mobilization of the community *vis-a-vis* agency programs (please note: the term used here is 'mobilization');
2. Contribution of personal labour, material and monetary assistance to infrastructure, health and sanitation projects, etc.;
3. Patronage of agency-initiated institutions such as nursery schools, credit and consumer cooperatives;
4. Attendance at community assemblies called to disseminate information on program implementation plans and attendance at skills training seminars;
5. Cognitive participation in terms of being recipients of information about community activities.[46]

Castillo argues that in all these cases, the beneficiaries have very limited access to decision-making prior to the finalization of plans. This is not genuine participation since even at the implementation stage only the community leaders have any say in the allocation of resources emanating from the programmes.[47] Citing Mary Hollnsteiner, Castillo identifies six different modes or types of people's participation which are distinguished according to the degree that the people have direct exercise of power in development activities. These are:

1. Local elite decision-making mode:
   a) "Solid-citizen" educated groups appointed by outside authorities (people are minimally involved, if at all, in decision-making).
   b) Appointed local leaders in the government bureaucracy (although people's involvement is still minimal, official character of leaders' authority encourages people to join in program activities as followers or recipients of the benefits entailed).
2. People acting in an advisory capacity to elites in authority:
   a) Planners in 'ex post facto' consultation with people's groups (people's involvement in discussion of plans after they have been formulated allows few genuine options; participation exists but only in token fashion).
   b) Planners in consultation with people's groups from the beginning of plan formulation (this gives people a significant share in decision-making but planners still control the process).
3. People sharing in or controlling local political decisions affecting their lives:
   a) People have one or two minority representatives on a decision-making board (people's participation is significant because they share in decision-making by having an official vote on a local government board).

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[46] Castillo, *How Participatory is Participatory Development?* 479–80.

[47] *Ibid.* In some cases, even the leaders do not have any say about the allocation of resources at this stage. This is commonly the case under conditions of limited decentralization as the Zimbabwe case will illustrate.

b) People have the majority representation on a decision-making board (people have attained full participation in controlling the actions of the official decision-making body).[48]

The last two modes of people's participation in development can only be regarded as providing full participation if the representatives of the people are truly representative and "truly people". In other words, they should be representatives elected by the people themselves without external interference or top-down influence on the people. These representatives will probably be few in number but capable of adequately and effectively representing the values, goals, interests and wishes of those they represent on decision-making bodies. The determination of how representatives are elected is not an easy one to resolve. It is generally accepted that community representatives elected and recognized by the community as such constitute meaningful people's participation in decision-making.

The limitations of the first two modes of participation mentioned above are largely obvious. The "solid-citizen" approach usually ends up with the appointed "representatives" making decisions that the appointing authorities would like them to make, rather than making decisions that necessarily benefit the people they are appointed to represent. The appointed leaders owe their positions to those who appoint them and may feel little obligation to regularly consult the people on issues of significance to them. At any rate, it is these appointed leaders who will seek the people's active participation in programmes rather than that people will be motivated by the perceived benefits of their participation. In most cases, local leaders who accept to be appointed in positions where they have to mobilize the people for dubious programmes eventually lose their positions or credibility.

When planners seek the people's participation in ready-made plans, programmes and projects, they often meet with stiff resistance as people feel left out of the initial processes which would have enabled them to acquire some proprietary values of the programmes or projects. The result is that such programmes and projects fail to attain the expected goals, or they collapse as soon as they are handed over to the people for maintenance. People are usually quick to recognize that the bureaucrats are in control of plans, projects and programmes. Thus although people are sometimes consulted at the outset, they feel helpless and powerless in effectively influencing the final outcomes of planning. The bureaucrats who have control of the finances and the other critical resources needed for the programmes or projects are, therefore, largely viewed as the ones who have the responsibility of assuring that the programmes and projects succeed. In other words, people recognize themselves as only marginal participants in the development process.

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[48]   *Ibid.*, 480–1.

As the Zimbabwean cases discussed later in the book will confirm, it is very difficult for any government to willingly accept the third mode of people's participation mentioned above. Instead, government agencies often resort to the first two modes where they have the opportunity of maintaining a tight hold on resources and on the direction which development will take. There are, however, mass or people's voluntary organizations over which government may have little or no control, and which are involved in development. Some of them are able to facilitate meaningful people's participation in development, but others are weak or suffer from constraints which make them fail to attain their goals in spite of their high levels of beneficiary participation. In other words, beneficiary participation must not be taken as a solution for all the development woes of developing societies. It, nonetheless, is an essential ingredient for people-centred development. Powell aptly notes:

> Yet, for all the issues, participation is here to stay. Without it, no project can be successful for long or sustainable beyond the initial intervention. The evidence is simply overwhelming. Virtually every analysis of failed projects begins with the lack of genuine community participation as a primary contributing factor.[49]

The literature on development has been consistent in its advocacy for popular or beneficiary participation in the development process. This makes the concept of participation rather complex. It, therefore, stands to reason that participation can be viewed differently from different angles; or that the focus of the author or analyst may determine the definition of participation at the given time, and in relation to a specific situation. Krefetz and Goodman (1973), for example, argue that populists and elitists tend to focus on either the participants or on the programme:

> Populists seem to believe that participation is desirable because it has positive effects on the participants. In their view, participation results in increased responsiveness to the needs and desires of the participants and improves participants' self-image, self-confidence, and sense of power. There are also those who seem to view participation as desirable because they believe that it enhances the administrator's programs.[50]

The majority of development theorists hold these views. The major thrust of the argument by populists is that participation of beneficiaries in the development process results in their "empowerment". Opening the UN International Conference on Participation in 1990, the Tanzanian President alluded to the notion

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[49] Powell, 'Training for participation', 162.

[50] Sharon Perlman Krefetz and Allan E. Goodman, 'Participation for what or for whom?', *Journal of Comparative Administration* (1973), V, (iii), 368–9.

of peoples' empowerment when he asserted that the time had come for the people themselves to occupy the driver's seat of the vehicle for social, political and economic transformation:

> The Charter can become a force for a new Africa where there is development and economic justice, not just growth; where there is democracy and accountability, not despotism, authoritarianism and kleptocracy . . . the era of public lethargy, perpetual grumbling and the dependence syndrome is over.[51]

But to return to Krefetz and Goodman, the view of the elitists regarding participation is contrary to that of populists. These two authors argue that elitists regard participation as undesirable and as having negative effects on administration and decision-making.[52] Popular participation is largely viewed by elitists as having the potential to make programme administration less efficient; it will also lower the quality of development programmes. Krefetz and Goodman write:

> It is possible . . . that analysts primarily concerned with the effects of participation upon the participants might view participation as undesirable because its effects are negative. Participation in one program . . . could lead to a rising demand for participation in other programs far beyond the capacity of the administrative system to satisfy. Rather than lead to a sense of socio-political well-being, then participation could lead to frustration on the personal level and disruption on the system level.[53]

Populists, on the other hand, regard participation as desirable for the enhancement of human development. It does not only foster organizations' responsiveness to the needs and desires of the participants, but also "improves participants' self-image, self-confidence and sense of power".[54] It is, however, necessary to recognize that there are a number of factors which impinge on the process of participation, factors which relate to such elements as the socio-economic environment, status of participants, nature of development programme and perceived benefits of participation, to name only a few. Most of these factors are discussed in some of the works listed in the bibliography. Suffice it to state here that participation is not a constant. Krefetz and Goodman aptly observe:

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[51]   *Dialogue*, 'Arusha Conference', 2.
[52]   Krefetz and Goodman, 'Participation for What', 369.
[53]   *Ibid*. This is a commonly held view among programme planners and administrators. To them, popular participation has the negative effect of reducing their capacity to predict and control the development process. When programmes fail, however, they are normally the ones to be blamed. In other words, the programmes' success becomes more important than the people who are supposed to benefit from the programmes.
[54]   *Ibid.*, 368.

> The effects of citizen participation vary with the nature and context of the participation experience. Decisions on the appropriate level or scope of participation "for whom" depend upon the issue of participation "for what" is decided.[35]

Thus the effects of participation will be different in each case for the participants involved and for the administrators and the administrative system. There are always costs and benefits of beneficiary participation in development programmes.

Benefits of Participatory Development

Authorities are largely agreed on the benefits of beneficiary participation in development. Beneficiary participation tends to result in the mobilization of greater resources and therefore the accomplishment of more with the same budget.[56] This means that beneficiary participation can enhance efficiency in resource use for development. For example, rural labour is usually grossly under-utilized. Beneficiary participation will facilitate better and increased use of such labour and local knowledge thereby reducing project costs.[57]

Secondly, beneficiary participation in development enhances self-reliance and the development of internally self-sustaining processes of development. These, in turn, result in the holistic transformation and the enhancement of material attributes of a society.[58] The culture, attitude to work, saving and investment habits, skills and social systems[59] of participants are bound to be significantly and positively influenced. This self-transformation of society is probably one of the most critical benefits of participatory development. But this self-transformation has other benefits and consequences which shall be noted here but not discussed in detail. These are best summed up by Adebayo Adedeji as follows:-

> Given the growing marginalization of the people in the development process, the question which we cannot avoid raising is: do our governments genuinely and truly want this process of transformation to take place, given the fact that it inevitably tolls the death knell of authoritarianism, it expands the areas of debate, it diffuses power and subordinates State control to popular politics? The voice of the people rather than the voice of one person, or of an oligarchy, becomes the supreme guide of public policy and public interest.[60]

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[35]   *Ibid.*, 370.

[56]   Kurt Finsterbusch and Warren A. van Wicklin III, 'The contribution of beneficiary participation to Development project effectiveness', *Public Administration and Development*, (1987), vii, 1–23.

[57]   *Ibid.*   [58]   Adedeji, 'Putting the People First', 4.

[59]   *Ibid.* Some of the Zimbabwe cases amply demonstrate these factors.

[60]   *Ibid.*, 5. Considerable changes have taken place in Africa since the holding of this UNECA Conference. It is too early, however, to determine whether the changes will result in increased or decreased participation of the people in development.

Thus self-reliant development based on beneficiary participation necessitates the distribution of power throughout society. Such distribution of power must be accompanied by effective and meaningful mechanisms for political accountability. All these, in turn, enhance the politics of consent, consensus, conviction and commitment so greatly lacking in African states and other developing societies.

It must be noted, however, that the call for beneficiary participation, self-reliance and self-transformation is tantamount to a rejection of state-sponsored development. It is, in effect, a call for alternative approaches to development. James Midgley argues that most proponents of popular or beneficiary participation in development express anti-statist sentiments in the form of three major arguments which are that the state is inefficient, paternalistic and oppressive:

> Because of its inefficiency, paternalism and oppression, the state is not regarded . . . as a viable agent of development. Instead they (proponents of participation) suggest an alternative strategy which devolves the responsibility for progress on to ordinary people and empowers them through 'conscientisation' to take control of their own destiny. In this scenario, the structures of state power whither away liberating human capacities and aspirations.[61]

The scope of this study does not allow a full discussion of some of the elements contained in the above quotation. It is, however, necessary to state here that I am not calling for the complete withdrawal of the state from the development arena. The state in most Third World countries continues to remain an essential, if not crucial, agent for the attainment of reasonable levels of what may be termed "balanced development". The role of beneficiaries in development must be enhanced to the extent that their dependence on state initiatives, handouts and development programmes is progressively reduced and eventually eliminated. This will be of mutual benefit to both the state and the beneficiaries.

Closely related to the second aspect of benefits of participation is the third one: the contribution that beneficiary participation makes to effectiveness, efficiency and equity.[62] Beneficiary participation in development programmes tends to supply useful information to programme administrators and planners. It also acts as an incentive to client groups, encouraging them to participate and co-operate with programme administrators. This has the mutual benefit of facilitating beneficiary input into development programmes, policies and decisions and of their acceptance by the beneficiaries.

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[61] Midgley, 'Popular participation', 9.

[62] Montgomery and Esman, 'Popular participation in development', 363.

In short, beneficiary participation will lead to the democratization of the development processes in society. There are, however, several problems which can result from this kind of democratization as Montgomery and Esman observe:

> Democratic participation may injure as well as promote the prospects of administrative success e.g. when it generates expectations or demands that administrators cannot satisfy, or when participative organizations fall into the hands of groups hostile to the administrator's objectives.[63]

Thus, in handling beneficiary participation, administrators need to be skilled enough to ascertain how much, when, and in what aspect of a programme is beneficiary participation to be utilized. Honesty and frankness with participants become crucial elements since participants are sensitive to any appearance of disabuse and deceit.

Beneficiary participation has the further benefit of facilitating better project design. This is linked to one of the benefits discussed earlier. The supply of accurate information on the locality and on the felt needs of beneficiaries goes a long way to ensure that the project designed to meet such needs meets the expected or appropriate standards of the beneficiaries. The project, therefore, tends to be truly worthwhile, and the beneficiaries will feel a sense of responsibility and ownership towards it.[64] This, in turn, goes a long way to ensure project success. A successful project is of mutual benefit to both the beneficiaries and the sponsoring organization.

In addition to enhancing appropriate project design, beneficiary participation also has the benefit of facilitating the implementation of plans. It is one thing to plan and another to successfully implement the plan. People are generally apathetic or indifferent to plans, programmes and projects designed outside or imposed on them by others irrespective of the merits of such plans, programmes, or projects:

> In contrast, when plans are generated by the people who are to implement them so that the goals and the motivation are wholly internalized, implementation becomes much less problematic.[65]

It is also possible to identify some of the benefits of beneficiary participation on the basis of the reasons given by participants themselves for their involvement in given projects. In a study of the motivation to participate in rural education programmes in Eastern Nigeria, Chuku T. Uwakah,[66] for example, obtained the results reflected in Table 2 below:

[63] Ibid.
[64] Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin, 'The contribution of beneficiary participation', 4.
[65] Nkumika, 'The role of popular participation', 19.
[66] Uwakah, 'Motivation to participate', 63–4.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS
BASED ON THEIR REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING

Reasons	Full-time Farmers (%)	Part-time Farmers (%)	Total (%)
Improve socio-economic status	73,3	91,1	85,6
Become functionally literate	22,2	72,3	56,8
Regain lost opportunities	6,7	12,9	11,0
Mix with people	2,4	7,9	6,2
Secure Government aid	17,8	24,8	22,6

Source: Chuku T. Uwaka, 'Motivation to participate', 64.

The major argument that can be derived from Table 2 is that beneficiaries agree to participate in development when the benefits to be realised are perceived to be of socio-economic value to them. Thus in most cases it is the beneficiaries or the participants themselves who are better able to identify the benefits of participating in a given programme or project. Some of the cases presented in Chapter 5 will assist in identifying specific benefits expected from participating in specific programmes or projects.

For political leaders, participation of beneficiaries in decision-making for development has the advantage of eliminating popular resistance to change. Political decisions which have significant implications for the development process require widespread consultation with the people who will be affected by such decisions. If new ideas, different ways of doing things are being promoted, or if the established traditional systems are being challenged, it is necessary that the people be involved in the making of decisions regarding such changes.

The people's involvement or participation in the making of radical decisions about their own development will go a long way to facilitate the acceptance of the new ideas and decisions. This does not only ensure that development will not be unimpeded, but will also provide the political leaders with legitimate political power. Political leaders who lack legitimacy often experience serious difficulties in making decisions which the people will accept without resistance. Coercion is often used to forcing unpopular decisions upon the people in communities where the political leadership is not accorded legitimacy:

> There is strong evidence that political legitimacy derives fundamentally from widespread popular participation in decision making. A characteristic noted in countries where political power is legitimate is that these countries have institutionalized means for participation and people believe that they have the power to share in decision making.[67]

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[67] United Nations, *Popular Participation in Decision Making for Development*, 13.

Institutionalized beneficiary participation thus enhances political legitimacy, which, in turn, facilitates the acceptance of innovative ideas of societal development. Many African leaders have preferred the marginalization of the people to their participation in the political processes and this has had serious negative consequences for the development of African economies. In some cases, authoritarian regimes have been toppled as a result of popular revolts in the face of, and as a consequence of, the lack of political legitimacy among the political leaders. The United Nations (1975) publication cited earlier aptly notes:

> In the sense that marginality is in fact the absence of participation, there is a logical basis to assume participation is the primary vehicle for creating legitimacy for institutions and achieving integration . . . There is ample evidence to indicate that higher levels of economic development are associated with participation at the national level . . . participation itself can foster attitudes and behaviour which promote legitimacy for Governments, thus providing the basis for institutionalization and national integration."[x]

The acceptance of new and improved ways of undertaking development activities by the people also generates benefits for the administrators and planners. It has already been stated that beneficiary participation will normally enable the planners and administrators to have access to more accurate information on the areas and problems they are required to find solutions to. The beneficiaries themselves become invaluable sources of this information. The difficult part remains that of ensuring that the planners and administrators correctly or accurately ascertain the people's wishes.

Participation, nonetheless, enables the planners and administrators to consult with the people on their needs, on what local resources are available, on what the people themselves can do to contribute to their own development, and it enables the planners to inform the beneficiaries on what government resources may be made available for given developmental activities. This interaction between the planners and the people goes a long way to ensure that planned programmes and projects can be implemented. This is a major benefit of beneficiary participation in development.

With regard to popular participation in local government structures or institutions, the major advantage is that administrators tend to be able to marshall meaningful levels of collective effort in production from among the people they serve. The involvement of the people's representatives in the local government bodies at various levels facilitates effective mobilization of the people's efforts and contribution to development activities. The people will largely view the various activities as their own, thereby generating considerable public interest in such programmes and projects. The United Nations publication on popular

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participation states: "That participation is a prerequisite for support of local government activities has been underscored in a growing number of studies on public administration".[69]

But beneficiary participation is not merely a bagful of "goodies". There are a number of impediments as well as costs that are associated with beneficiary participation in development.

Impediments to and Costs of Participatory Development

Perhaps the main obstacle to beneficiary participation is that of implementation.[70] All sorts of problems emerge when efforts are made to make beneficiaries participate in programmes. These include the need for more time to sell new ideas, the need to genuinely consult more people and reach a consensus, and the organizational complexities that are a function of involving many people with diverse interests. Some of the possible consequences include frustration of the administrators, overburdening of sponsoring organizations and possibly the collapse of fragile projects as they run out of energy.[71] Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin argue:

> A strong case can be made for providing much-needed assistance as simply and quickly as possible and not jeopardizing projects with the difficulties and complexities of participation. Delivering aid efficiently is the overriding priority for donor agencies . . . Participation is secondary and often not congruent with the political and organizational imperatives of conventionally managed projects.[72]

This largely serves to explain why sometimes project administrators and donor organizations tend to de-emphasize beneficiary participation in some of their programmes and projects. In any given project, the administrator needs to know in advance, whether beneficiaries are likely to behave apathetically, militantly or co-operatively.[73] This will enable him to decide whether or not to solicit beneficiary participation for the project. Participation is, however, an interactive relationship. Administrators will as much have certain attitudes towards participation as beneficiaries will have. Montgomery and Esman identify six paired relationships that tend to obtain between project administrators and participants:

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[69]   *Ibid.*, 24–5. Chapter 3 illustrates this fact in the discussion of the Zimbabwe local government system as a facilitator of beneficiary participation in development.

[70]   Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin, 'Contribution of beneficiary participation', 4.

[71]   *Ibid.*

[72]   *Ibid.*, 4–5.

[73]   Montgomery and Esman, 'Popular participation in development', 367.

1. Resistant administrator   —   apathetic clientele;
2. Resistant administrator   —   militant clientele;
3. Resistant administrator   —   co-operative clientele;
4. Favourable administrator —   apathetic clientele;
5. Favourable administrator —   militant clientele;
6. Favourable administrator —   co-operative clientele.[74]

It is not possible to discuss these in any detail in this study. It must, however, be obvious that the sixth type of relationship is the most ideal one. Regrettably, it is also the type most difficult to attain. Each set of relationships is determined by a number of what may be called *project* and *environmental variables*.[75] These include: the administrator's perception of the participants' behaviour; his view of the consequences of beneficiary participation for the success of the project; participants' perception of the merits and benefits of the project; their expectations at the individual and collective levels; as well as their situational disposition towards participation in the project.

A further impediment to meaningful beneficiary participation in development activities is the tendency of administrators and sponsoring organizations to utilize existing social structures in a given community. This maintains, if not worsens, socio-economic inequalities rather than lead to change and increased equality. The arguments for using existing societal structures and organization centre around many factors, some of which include the notions of acceptability of the programme or project and, of the sponsoring organization and its personnel; access to local resources and knowledge; and ease of participant mobilization. In the final analysis, however, it is usually the better off in society who benefit most from the programmes and projects, thereby exacerbating the problem of inequality. In the long run, the under-privileged become so marginalized that they resist further attempts to lure them into participation in development activities.

The above assertion obviously complicates the discussion since one of the pre-conditions for effective beneficiary participation in development activities, according to Francis Mulwa, is effective local leadership:

> This relates to the scope of commitment to the cause of the group; trustworthiness and accountability; the degree of creativity, and developed, general leadership skills. Such leadership would show high respect for people's ideas and experiences and the value of the human person.[76]

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[74] *Ibid.*, 367–8.

[75] *Ibid.*, 368. These variables can also change with time even in relation to one project or programme.

[76] Francis W. Mulwa, 'Participation of the grassroots in rural development: The case of the Development Education Programme of the Catholic Diocese of Machakos, Kenya' *Journal of Social Development in Africa* (1988), III, (ii), 49–65.

However, the fact remains, most of the local leadership are people who rise well above the local community in terms of education, social and economic status. These are people who are likely to support those development programmes and projects which benefit them and which do not threaten their vested interests. Effective local leadership for development projects therefore needs careful consideration if it is not to result in increased inequalities and the discouragement of grassroots participation in subsequent development activities.

Meaningful beneficiary participation can also be hindered by lack of grassroots awareness of "the social forces militating against their socio-economic welfare".[77] Without an in-depth appreciation of the causes of their suffering, under-privileged people will be frustrated and may resist participation in development programmes. Bringing about adequate levels of awareness is probably one of the major tasks of a change agent seeking meaningful beneficiary participation in development projects among the poor.

In a study of factors which promote or deter participation in development activities, P. Alfiler argues that popular participation is a four-stage process.[78] Alfiler identifies the four stages or phases as follows:

1. the individual level;
2. the community;
3. the government and other sectors; and,
4. the greater society.[79]

These phases interact with each other, so that changes introduced at one phase may influence developments at the other phases. Alfiler further identifies a number of factors or conditions which promote or deter participation at each of the four levels listed above.[80] Although the focus of this section is on factors that impede participation, the tables below indicate both these and the factors that promote participation for a more complete picture.

No elaboration of the listed factors will be attempted in this study. In fact, the factors are fairly self-explanatory as listed by Alfiler.

At the societal level, there are, according to Alfiler, a number of factors which impede popular participation. These include:

1. Colonial experience: which generated a subservient and oppressive mentality which hinders people from participating in politico-socio-economic decisions and programmes which affect them;
2. Poverty: which results in most people being concerned more with survival than with the attaintment of better living conditions.

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[77]   Ibid., 52–3.

[78]   P. Alfiler, 'Factors that promote or deter popular participation in development: The Philippine experience' Philippine Journal of Public Administration (1983), XXVII, (i), 23–41.

[79]   Ibid., 34.   [80]   Ibid., 35–8.

3. Ineffectiveness of participation as a means of getting service: this may be based on the people's experience that their participation will not materially affect the delivery of services;
4. Other factors such as:
    *   the paternalistic nature of employer-employee relationships;
    *   managerial styles which scorn and negate worker participation;
    *   authority-oriented, passive and unquestioning traits among workers;
    *   the free enterprise character of the economy dominated by multi-national corporations; and,
    *   the disunited labour movement with varying political and ideological orientations.[81]

Tables 3, 4 and 5 illustrate the fact that, though desirable, beneficiary participation entails certain significant difficulties that need to be taken into account when development activities are being considered. For example, it is not necessarily true that when poor people perceive potential benefits from a given project then they logically decide to participate. Furthermore, the tables indicate that the constraints that may face beneficiary participation in development originate from various levels — individual, society, government organizations, environment. These are significantly diverse origins of the difficulties that have to be overcome, so that it may be quite difficult to prescribe any viable solutions to these problems.

Castillo, citing Hollsteiner, identifies five more difficulties of beneficiary participation in development which are closely related to the ones identified by Alfiler in the above-mentioned tables. These are:

*   It (participation) is time consuming, often nerve-wrecking and can become a Pandora's box of problems;
*   Local communities understandably tend to concern themselves almost exclusively with their own self-interests (Self-help projects in which people are expected to work 'gratis' for the sake of the community may become exploitative if carried too far).
*   In conceptualizing community participation, the perceptions are often limited to the involvement of men (seldom women).
*   The administration-sponsored community worker gets caught between people and administrators in the event of conflicts between them.
*   People's participation poses problems to authorities sensitive to public protests.[82]

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[81]   Ibid., 37–38.
[82]   Castillo, How Participatory is Participatory Development, 485.

There are some political costs to political leaders which result from people's participation in development. Decentralization entails the distribution of political power from the centre to the periphery. This necessarily leads to reduced power for the national politicians. Experience in most African countries indicates that the tendency for most politicians is to recentralize rather than decentralize power. The United Nations publication on popular participation observes:

> Promoting popular participation will reduce a leader's ability to make decisions unilaterally, because many operational decisions would have to be decentralized and more people would have to be involved in the discussions leading up to a policy decision. Those privileged elite groups in society who have been accustomed to participating in decision making would also have their power reduced.[83]

TABLE 3
FACTORS THAT PROMOTE/IMPEDE PARTICIPATION
AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Promoting Conditions	Impeding Conditions
Realizes that what he thinks and feels is important and that he can think and talk intelligently	Feels that what he thinks is not important; can hardly articulate his thoughts.
Is confident that he has the capability to mould himself and his environment.	Feels incapable of acting on his own or transforming the environment.
Is conscious and aware of the societal factors that impinge on him as an individual.	Is not aware of the socio-politico-economic conditions that influence his life.
Has actual experience in participating in group problem analysis or problem-solving situations	Has no notion nor experience in any collective involvement which entails discussion and analysis of issues with other individuals.

Source: Alfiler, 'Factors that promote or deter popular participation', 35.

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[83]   United Nations, *Popular Participation in Decision Making*, 15. This was firmly stated by the 400 delegates attending the UNECA Conference as follows: "We strongly believe that popular participation is dependent on the nature of the State itself and ability of Government to respond to popular demand. Since African Governments have a critical role to play in the promotion of popular participation, they have to yield space to the people" *IFDA Dossier*, (1990), (LXXIX), 7.

TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAY PROMOTE/IMPEDE
COMMUNITY (CMTY) ORGANIZATION (CO)*

Characteristics	Promoting Conditions	Impeding Conditions
Cmty structure	More homogeneous cmtys as people are not affected by cmty class structures.	CO may highlight heterogeneous cmty differences among various sectors of structures and the cmty.
Physical dispersion / communication network	Some cmtys are so physically structured that houses are close and messages can be conveyed quickly to facilitate CO.	Dispersed houses in a wide area make communication and organizing work harder.
Experience in	A cmty which has experienced or has active cmty associations will be easier to organize and mobilize.	Cmtys which do not have CO any experience in CO are more difficult to organize.
Economic status of cmty	Cmtys which have regular income and not bother with survival can participate better.	Poor cmtys find it difficult to find the time for participation.
Cmty leadership selection	Cmty leaders elected by cmty can facilitate the CO process.	Cmty leaders appointed by external authorities may not be supported by people.
Involvement of informal leaders	Where formal leaders are supported by informal leaders recognized by cmty, CO is easier.	CO is hampered by conflict between formal and informal leaders.
Leadership	Cmty leaders who actively involve the cmty members promote participation.	Leaders who discourage style participation through their leadership style deter citizen participation.
Emotional cost to cmty	CO's realization that CO is emotionally taxing and time-consuming will lessen negative reactions to their job.	Inability of cmty to appreciate expected emotional cost can adversely affect their performance.
Manner of fielding COs	Enough time is provided for the COs to do their work.	CO is done quickly to achieve predetermined targets.

* CO = Community organisation

Source: Alfiler, 'Factors that promote or deter popular participation', 36.

TABLE 5
FACTORS THAT PROMOTE/IMPEDE PARTICIPATION
IN GOVERNMENT (GOVT) PROGRAMMES

Characteristics	Promoting Conditions	Impeding Conditions
Bureaucratic character/ "Technical Expertise"	Govt personnel understand that what they know may not be socially relevant to the needs of the clients and the conditions in the cmty.	Govt field personnel tend to feel that because of their education and expertise they know better than the people.
Measures of performance	There is greater emphasis on whether citizens' or the cmtys' needs are met by the services goods delivered.	Measurement of bureaucratic performance emphasizes organizational standards rather than level of client satisfaction.
Plan approach	Bureaucrats prepare flexible plans which allow them to modify procedures and rules according to demands or cmty.	Govt personnel tend to plan out the scheme for the programme in detail, developing a model for all cmtys, regardless of peculiar characteristics.
Nature of program	Programs which meet what the people consider their priority needs get more sustained participation.	Programs that the bureaucrats feel do not meet a priority need are not actively supported over a longer period.
Choice of ' cmty	Depressed cmtys which are not reached by services are the target of organizing efforts.	Govt programs tend to choose as program areas cmtys which have greater likelihood to succeed; in most instances, these are also the cmtys which are organized.
Participation	Understanding the time necessary for participation, bureaucrats allow enough time to prepare the cmty, thus ensuring that services/goods are delivered at the time needed.	Thinking that the prompt delivery of services is more critical than participation, bureaucrats forgo the latter to please the clients.
Bureaucratic specialization	Social and technical personnel cooperate with each other in the field.	Social and technical personnel do not relate/ synchronize their work even when working on the same project in the same area.

Source: Alfiler, 'Factors that promote or deter popular participation', 37.

Apart from the usual fear of losing status and privilege, the politician is also afraid of being unable to enforce decisions concerning development when power has been distributed among beneficiaries. It is also feared that some of the decisions made nationally may be subjected to the democratic process with the risk that they may end up being rejected by the people at the grassroots. In most cases, politicians fail to appreciate the fact that decentralization of decision-making facilitates better communication between government and the people, thereby reinforcing legitimate power and ensuring tenure of office for the politicians.

Furthermore, for political leaders, beneficiary participation brings about the cost of increased societal conflict in the sense that communities will seek to make decisions that are of a short-term nature while politicians themselves may tend to focus on long-term implications of development decisions. Besides that, communities tend to prefer those decisions that are directly applicable to their localities rather than those which affect the whole nation. These problems or costs often cause the politician to prefer to remain firmly in control of most of the decision-making activities rather than cede some of them to the citizens:

> Many leaders, in fact, prefer to make decisions without public debate, hoping that their judgement will be accepted. There is a natural desire on their part to be able to make what they consider necessary decisions with a minimum of conflict. In many countries, substantial numbers of people prefer to accept this approach, not because they recognize any special virtue in their political leadership, but because they desire to be relieved of the anxieties and responsibilities imposed by participation in decision making.[84]

Debates on national issues, whether they be on development or not, are sadly shunned in many African states. In fact, individuals who seek to engage governments in national policy debates are often persecuted as subversive elements. Opposition political parties who challenge unilaterally made decisions are also viewed in the same light and receive the same treatment from the ruling elite. The consequences for participatory development can only be assumed to be necessarily adverse. The argument that the people prefer not to be involved in decision-making in order to avoid responsibility and anxiety over those decisions is primarily a weak excuse for authoritarian governance. In reality, people are often quite willing to face the consequences of their decisions, especially if such decisions are made collectively through democratic processes and institutions.

Another cost of beneficiary participation in development is the disparity in levels of information between the political leaders and the beneficiaries. It has already been stated that national political leaders tend to focus on the totality of the nation while beneficiaries prefer to look at their immediate localities. The

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[84]   *Ibid.*, 16.

information available to the national leaders also tends to be of a national rather than a local nature. Conflicts arise between national politicians and beneficiaries when decisions based on more complete national information are proposed to communities which may not have the complete picture. The tendency for many African leaders is to withhold necessary information from the general public in order to use it as a resource which will primarily work for them. But, there is also another side to the same issue. Beneficiaries often have more accurate information about their own localities than national politicians. Beneficiaries who have the privilege of being involved in decision-making therefore tend to be forced into situations where they disagree with national decision-makers, especially in relation to the decisions that may affect their localities directly. This cost of participation is usually one that the national politician is quite willing to pay, given the advantages that tend to accrue from preserving their monopoly of information on national development.

What are the costs of beneficiary participation in development for planners and administrators? A few of these have been noted earlier. In brief, however, it may be stressed that planners and administrators are usually unsympathetic to beneficiary participation because of the need for consultation with the people which can be time-consuming and expensive. They also try to avoid co-ordination problems by limiting beneficiary participation and ensuring that what they will have decided upon is implemented with minimal delay.

The fact that beneficiary participation enables planners and administrators to have more accurate and detailed information on the areas for which they plan is countered by the fact that most planners find this additional information more complex and therefore difficult to process. For example, planners have been known to find that none of the nationally agreed development objectives have been mentioned by community groups which they have consulted with an attempt to facilitate beneficiary participation in planning.

Some have found that the bulk of the information supplied by local leaders and representatives has not been amenable to their socio-economic models. They therefore fail to make meaningful use of such information in the planning process. They normally ignore this information and proceed to plan without adequate consideration of social and cultural factors, with disastrous results when beneficiaries perceive the planned programmes and projects as failing to meet their primary needs.

It is not necessarily true that involving the people in decision-making will jeopardize technical criteria. On the contrary, it should lead to technical improvements.[85] Development programmes and projects cannot be ends in themselves; they should be aimed at serving the people that are in need of development. In planning them, therefore, the preferences and cultural practices

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[85]   *Ibid.*, 22.

of the people should be taken seriously. The best way of ensuring that this happens is to allow and encourage beneficiary participation in the planning process.

Finally, there are also costs of beneficiary participation in development for the beneficiaries themselves. The majority of the factors which impede beneficiary participation in development which were discussed above can largely be regarded as the costs that beneficiaries may be called upon to pay should they wish to participate. Not every beneficiary is able and willing to participate in development programmes and projects, even though they may correctly perceive the benefits that may accrue to them as a result of their participation.

Even in situations where there are no structural obstacles to beneficiary participation, there will be some beneficiaries who will prefer not to be involved in organized development activities. In brief, the reason for this is that the decision whether or not to participate is based on more than just the costs and benefits to a prospective participant. Such other factors as the nature of the issues involved, the socio-economic factors and even the ideological position of the ruling elite *vis-a-vis* that of the prospective participant can have a bearing on the final decision that he or she makes.

In general, however, participation in development activities means that the participants will be willing to give up some of the other activities or engagements they would otherwise be occupied with. Particularly in cases where participation entails organized and collective action, beneficiary participants are always having to choose between the common good and the individual interests. Many elected community leaders face the problem of having to neglect their own household affairs in order to participate in community organization activities. When they reduce their availability for the latter they often risk being recalled or failing to secure re-election even if their performance will qualitatively be still the best in the community. The United Nations publication cited earlier aptly observes:

> Active participation requires time to attend meetings, vote and inform oneself about issues. This is often not acceptable to a great number of citizens, particularly in societies where the privatization of life has gone far and additional demands for civic participation can only be met by foregoing personal activities.[86]

A further cost of beneficiary participation in development activities for the community or for the beneficiaries is that their involvement in the decision-making process for development may mean that when problems arise they will be the one to bear the blame. In other words, they will not be able to blame government or the donor agencies for the failure of the decisions which they themselves made or contributed to. This psychological cost can, in fact, be of

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[86]   *Ibid.,* 26.

serious gravity in politically sensitive societies. Here again the elected representative, who will have exercised his responsibility as an active participant, may face the wrath of the people. The exit option is often resorted to thereby negating the notion of beneficiary participation in development.

As shall be observed later in this study, the Zimbabwean cases amply illustrate several of these potential difficulties. There are obviously many other deterrents to and costs of beneficiary participation in development activities.[87] Those noted here, however, will be useful in the discussion of the Zimbabwean case. Some of the impediments and factors noted above will be relevant while others will be irrelevant to the case of Zimbabwe discussed in the remaining chapters of this study.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the various conceptual aspects of beneficiary participation through reference to selected literary works which I could lay my hands on. It is evident from the reviewed literature that authorities are largely agreed on the importance of encouraging and facilitating meaningful beneficiary participation in development at all levels. The study makes a deliberate decision to focus mainly on the participation of grassroots-based beneficiaries since they constitute the majority of the less advantaged in Zimbabwe. To that end, rural and community development are viewed as primarily the major concern or target of beneficiary participation.

The majority of authors whose literature was reviewed in this study believe that the benefits of popular participation in development, particularly in decision-making, far outweigh the costs. They also agree on the fact that although there are many factors which militate against meaningful beneficiary participation, they are not insurmountable. They can and should be eliminated in order to facilitate and enhance beneficiary participation. There are benefits and costs of participation at all levels of development and for all the parties involved. The context or environment of development has a lot to do with what levels, quantities and qualities of beneficiary participation can be expected or should be encouraged or solicited, and for what type of decisions. The cost of restricting or rejecting participation is, however, clearly shown to be too high for any nation in the long run.

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[87]   For additional impediments see, for example, Oakley, P. and Marsden, D.J. *Approaches to Participation in Rural Development* (Geneva, ILO, 1984), 29–35.

2
LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Rationale for Beneficiary Participation in Development Activities

Reference has briefly been made to the negative effects of the colonial era on the development of Zimbabwe. It must be stressed, however that colonial policies resulted in the creation of a dualistic mode of development which favoured one race — the settler Whites, at the detriment of the Black majority. The system also resulted in fairly well-developed urban centres and grossly underdeveloped rural areas. Even the rural areas were divided into White and Black with the former constituting mainly mining centres and large-scale commercial farms, and the latter being termed Tribal Trust Lands (now Communal Areas).

Serious disparities existed in the level of development between rural and urban areas on the one hand, and Black or African and White rural areas on the other. Communal areas were largely devoid of basic infrastructure such as good roads, schools, clinics, electricity and reticulated water facilities. These were all readily available in the White rural areas and in urban areas. Yet it was in the communal areas that the majority of the people of Zimbabwe lived, some 70 per cent of the total population. When national independence was attained in 1980, one of the major tasks of the new government was to redress this situation and ensure that the majority of Zimbabweans would be provided with facilities and opportunities for development.

The new government sought to reconstruct and rehabilitate the economy in such a way that basic human necessities would be accessible to Zimbabweans of all walks of life regardless of where they were located within the country. But the war of national liberation had taken its toll on Zimbabwe. The destruction of human and natural resources was so great that it became necessary to appeal for foreign assistance from international donors in order to obtain financial and technical resources for national reconstruction and development.

For its part, the ruling party which came to power in 1980 advocated the socialist ideology which has as one of its cardinal points, people's participation in decision-making and development. It was argued that the capitalist ideology had resulted in the negation of the Zimbabwean people's development and in their oppression. Socialism was viewed as the only viable alternative which

development projects or programmes. The problem with this approach is that it does not really guarantee that the trained individuals will be able to find an avenue for the utilization of their newly acquired skills. There is, therefore, a need for careful needs assessment before the training of civil leaders and the poor is undertaken. There must be some link between the proposed training and the expected development activities of the trainees.

To facilitate this needed link between training and development activities among the needy communities in Zimbabwe, there is need for NGOs to come together from time to time to co-ordinate their efforts and exchange notes on their activities in various parts of the country. This forum must include both indigenous and foreign NGOs. It may also be useful to invite selected government agencies that are involved in community development to these meetings. This will not only ensure singleness of purpose among NGOs, but will also significantly reduce such negative elements as conflict and suspicion. Beneficiary participation in development will certainly be greatly enhanced by such an arrangement.

With regard to umbrella NGOs such as VOICE, ORAP and others, these should redirect more of their energies to policy advocacy on behalf of their member organizations. It appears as if little is being done at the moment by these organizations to influence development policy in Zimbabwe. Sometimes these NGOs come on the policy scene far too late to make any difference. They should be energized to lobby politicians and policy-makers well before a proposed policy has reached Cabinet and Parliament. They should also seek to be taken notice of by critical organs of government which allocate development resources and set development priorities. A lot could be achieved through the work of these NGOs in the areas suggested.

Another major weakness of the activities of NGOs in development is that the majority of them do not evaluate their completed development activities at all. This is an essential part of the development process. Those that do evaluate their activities seem to do it without the participation of the people even if they planned and executed the activities together with the people. The people's involvement at the evaluation stage is vital if the people are to acquire some skills in evaluation.

Furthermore, the people's involvement at this stage will also enable the people to identify the mistakes that may have been made and try to avoid them in future, or even to correct some of them in given projects. It may also be useful to share evaluation reports among NGOs and researchers for purposes of creating a viable critical mass. Currently, evaluation reports, where they exist, seem to be sacred cows for most NGOs. Researchers are usually provided with all other project documents but not evaluation reports.

The work of NGOs at the ward and village levels has been noted to be of significant interest to the people. The main problem at these levels seems to be that of poor maintenance of completed projects after the departure of the NGOs. This could, perhaps, be avoided by close working relationships between NGOs

and District Administrators or Extension Officers. It is not enough that NGOs seek only the collaboration and assistance of WADCO and VIDCO members before undertaking a project in a given locality. The involvement of District Administrators and Extension Officers is vital for the continuity and effective maintenance of these projects in the long run.

Related to this is the problem of the demands made upon the people's time or commitment to development projects sponsored by NGOs *vis-à-vis* those sponsored by central government or local authorities. NGOs should be sensitive to the decision that villagers have to make between these two groups of development projects. As far as possible, NGOs should try not to compete with government in attracting people to participate in development projects. This tends to annoy government officials and may have negative consequences for participatory development as government might seek to evict the NGO from the area.

The losers, as is always the case, will be the poor and needy members of the community. NGO activities should always take second precedence to those of government or local authorities, including meetings. The people should never be placed in an invidious position of having to choose between the two. The creation of a viable and cordial development environment is incumbent upon both government and the NGOs. Conflictual grand-standing has the tendency of victimizing those it is purported to benefit.

Finally, government needs to accept that NGOs play a vital role in people-centred development. Government must, however, not take the exit option by viewing NGOs as fulfilling the development role which it should play. Instead, government should realize that NGOs are only filling in some of the gaps that it, or the people by themselves, cannot fill. NGOs must thus be accepted by government as partners in development. This will clear the air for meaningful participatory development and will yield positive results for the people.

Proposed Improvements to Rural and Community Development

First, the Zimbabwean government should stabilize the Department of Community Development, which has been shuffled from one ministry to another since independence. The Department of Rural Development has had the same experience until very recently. Both departments should be located in the MLGRUD.

There is no need for two departments dealing with the aspects of rural or community development. It may be best to simply combine the two departments into one under the name Department of Rural and Community Development. This will not only reduce public expenditure on administration; it will also significantly reduce the confusion, duplication and omission that currently beset these two departments.

The second way of improving rural and community development in Zimbabwe may be to limit the range of community development projects that

communities are expected to participate in at any one time. Evidence available indicates that communities are currently engaged in all manner of activities but in very small numbers per project. The impact of these projects is largely negligible for the improvement of the standard of living of the people. Besides these, most of the projects have failed to meet the needs of the people because the institutional support structures they need have not been forthcoming from sectoral ministries.

These ministries are not normally staffed with officers who are "jack of all trades" concerning development projects. Therefore, rural and community development projects must be restricted to those areas in which government officials have expertise in, or in which institutional support can be sourced from NGOs and other development assistance bodies by government. The current situation, where only a few people are involved in rural and community development projects, negates both participation and development. It demotivates people to participate, especially when their projects fail due to lack of expert or professional advice. The range of activities that communities can be expected to participate in can be increased over time as development officers or change agents with the requisite skills are trained and deployed.

What then should happen to development projects that small groups of people are interested in but which extension officers cannot handle? Such projects should be allowed to proceed, but without the involvement of the Department of Rural and Community Development. NGOs can also be encouraged to support these projects if they have or can afford to hire the necessary expertise. In fact, NGOs can also assist in on-site or on-the-job training of some of the extension workers.

Available evidence indicates that only a small percentage of the needy people in Zimbabwe are known to be participating in rural or community development projects. This raises serious questions about the cost to the public of having a Department of Rural and Community Development which caters only for these few. It can be assumed that the majority of the needy are not participating because they do not perceive the current projects as having the potential to provide any tangible or meaningful benefits to them.

The Department, therefore, needs to undertake a serious study of the nature of the problems that poor people face in their daily lives and devise projects and programmes that address those needs. It is a well-known fact that in a drought year, the number of people who participate in Food for Work programmes far exceeds all expectations, while very few people turn up for the same projects during years of normal harvests. Does this not confirm that the regular projects and programmes promoted by the Department of Rural and Community Development are of low priority in the opinion of the people? Food for Work projects can hardly be regarded as development projects; they are largely "survival projects" as far as the people are concerned. Most Food for Work projects collapse as soon as there are good harvests.

The third way through which rural and community development can be enhanced to facilitate participatory development in Zimbabwe is to review

government policies regarding this critical area. Government policies need to be so structured as to adequately support community and rural development groups by, for example, providing the needed development infrastructure, protecting the products of small groups from unfair competition with established enterprises and providing these groups with adequate incentives to participate in viable development projects and programmes. These incentives could include low or no taxes on required inputs, availability of market stalls, reduced transport costs and preferential treatment by parastatals.

It has already been stated that central government should not try to control such other development agencies as NGOs. Co-ordination of development activities, however, is a different matter. There is need for government to know what is going on in community and rural development in order to avoid costly duplication and omission of vital activities. A possible way of ensuring that balanced, people-centred development takes place throughout the country is for the Department of Rural and Community Development to require that all development agencies involved in rural and community development liaise with it to avoid development agencies working at cross-purposes.

Politicians who are interested in facilitating the provision of development aid or sponsoring some projects in their constituencies should do so with the full awareness of the Department of Rural and Community Development. In other words, the Department should maintain the crucial function of co-ordinating participatory development activities in which communities are beneficiaries. This will also enable officials of the Department to first evaluate proposed projects and advise on their viability and on how they can benefit from other proposed or on-going activities. It is unrealistic to expect the Provincial Governors to carry out this task to any meaningful extent as is the current arrangement.

Finally, rural and community development in Zimbabwe can be improved through the training of community leaders in specific areas of their interests (or the interests of their communities). Currently, there is a considerable amount of "development training" going on in Zimbabwe. The major problem with this kind of training is that it assumes that all districts in a given province are undertaking or even interested in, for example, "Leadership Qualities", a common topic which some of the participants have had to endure year-in and year-out as community leaders.

Training for rural and community development should be better focused than this. It should be needs-focused and determined. It should be tailor-made to meet the specific training needs of the selected community leaders. The usual assumption that all community leaders who have turned up for a training programme have no skills in a whole gamut of areas is not only dubious and costly, it is also demeaning to the extent that some community leaders have since given up on the privilege of attending these programmes unless they have nothing particularly interesting or rewarding to do at the time.

Provision of on-site or non-institutional training to community leaders should be considered. This has the advantage of getting more of them from a given area

to attend, and will help to further focus the training as their specific problems or circumstances can be better addressed during these training sessions. The obvious reason for government to resist this approach is the heavy demand on manpower that it entails. A possible solution is to make use of NGO and private-sector personnel for some of these activities rather than rely solely on civil servants.

University teachers and parastatals personnel could also be asked to take on some of these duties during vacations, or during special release periods. Government would, of course, be expected to meet some of the basic costs, such as provision of transport and accommodation, when trainers have to be away from their normal operational bases. The need to also train even these trainers hardly needs to be mentioned.

Conclusion
This chapter has made far reaching and varied suggestions on what can be done to improve on various aspects of participatory development in Zimbabwe. These suggestions are largely based on the discussion of participatory development in the earlier chapters, and on my personal observations and experiences as a Zimbabwean. Obviously, many of these suggestions will be unacceptable to the Zimbabwean government and the other development agencies mentioned in the study. Others may be acceptable but may need modification or further investigation. I hope that the suggestions made will generate debate and further studies on development and beneficiary participation. The details pertaining to most of these suggestions have not been adequately dealt with and are beyond the scope of this study. I hope that the study has generated or provoked an interest in participatory development which will lead to the raising of the living standards of the needy people of Zimbabwe.