GEOGRAPHY

Promoting Sustainability:

Partnerships in the Catholic Church Development Chain

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Geographical Paper No. 177

Promoting Sustainability:

Partnerships in the
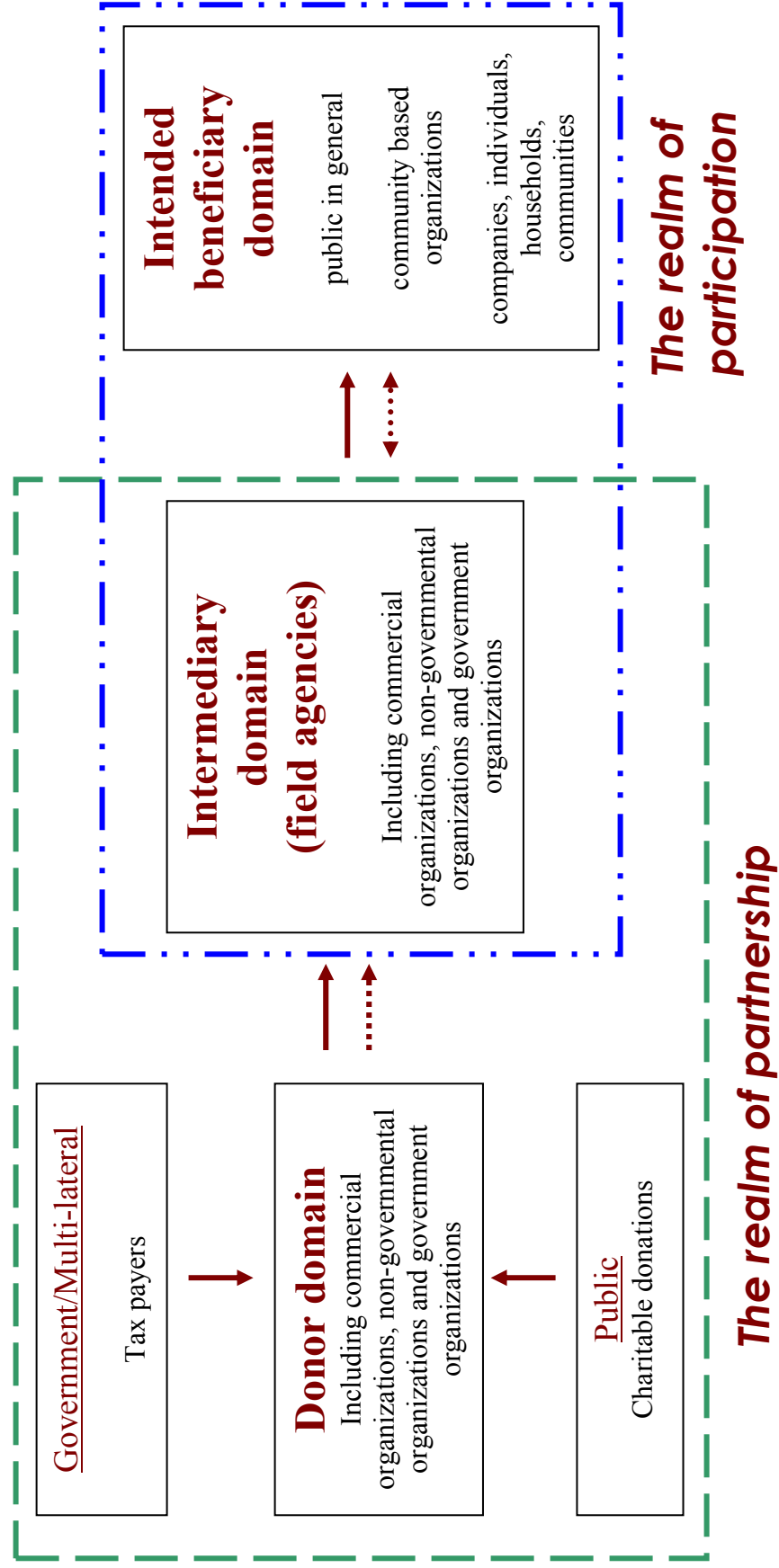## Catholic Church Development Chain

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Introduction

The notion of including stakeholders, those affected (positively or negatively) by a sustainable development programme in both its design and implementation, has become a central concern for those instigating such programmes. Such an approach often referred to as 'stakeholder participation', stakeholders being those who are affected by the programme in one way or another, 'participatory development' or more simply still as 'participation'. Partnership has much in common with participation, and the two terms are often considered as synonymous; after all the inclusion of stakeholders in the development process is partnership. The difference, if any, between them is perhaps that partnership is more often employed to describe the relationship between institutions, or more accurately individuals within them. In a sustainable development programme like that represented in Figure 1, the boxes to the left are the donors, those in the middle are the 'intermediaries' or field agencies and those to the right the stakeholders, including intended beneficiaries as well as those who might well be disadvantaged. The term 'partnership' is often used to describe the desired (by those involved) relationship between the organizations in the centre of the figure with those to towards the left, while participation is often employed to discuss the desired relationship between those in the centre and on the right (Davies, 2002). This may appear to be arbitrary and laborious distinction, which to some extent is true, but given that the literature often employs the terms in the form given here this paper will follow the same convention.

The aim of this paper is to unpack the meaning and implementation of participation and partnership (P&P). This is a large topic with a substantial literature. Therefore in order to give the discussion more focus later in the paper we will explore the issues in greater depth in one global organization that has promoted and embraced participatory sustainable development, namely the Catholic Church. The Church is a single body encompassing almost all boxes in *Figure 1*, with the exception of government agencies (North and South). This body shares the same global belief system and structures, and as such provides an excellent opportunity for exploring partnership in terms of what it means and how it works. The Catholic Church is a highly complex entity having a long history of involvement in what today is called sustainable development. Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962 to 1965), which redefined the Church's engagement with the modern world, it had a long history of involvement in education and health care. While the Church itself is global, its structures are embedded socially, culturally and economically within nation-states. Countries of the developed world have agencies responsible to their National Conference of Bishops that are charged with collecting funds to support evangelical and development activities throughout the world. But these agencies have to function within local contexts of governance and legality. They also seek funds from government organizations and as a result have to comply with any conditions which may be imposed. In order to provide further focus the emphasis in this paper will be upon three Church based development agencies from Europe – CAFOD (England and Wales), TROCAIRE (Ireland) and MISEREOR (Germany) and their interaction with Church-based field agencies in the Abuja Ecclesiastical Province, Nigeria, West Africa.

Figure 1: **Simplified version of the aid chain (Bold arrow = flow of financial resources; Dashed arrows = flow of 'technical' information, advice and expertise)**

The realm of partnership

The realm of participation

Donor domain
Including commercial organizations, non-governmental organizations and government organizations

Government/Multi-lateral
Tax payers

Public
Charitable donations

Intermediary domain (field agencies)
Including commercial organizations, non-governmental organizations and government organizations

Intended beneficiary domain
public in general
community based organizations
companies, individuals, households, communities

Figure 1 is a simplified representation of a sustainable development programme. In practice each of the boxes in the figure could comprise a diverse range of organizations, each with their own structures, procedures and mandate, and may include 'non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) as well as government organizations (GOs) and commercial organizations. Indeed, since the 1980s NGOs have become increasingly important players in the chain, especially in relation to sustainable development programmes implemented in less developed countries (Fowler, 1988, 2000; Bratton, 1989; Agbola, 1994; Tandon, 2000). In part this is because they are perceived as being able to 'get things done' faster, better and cheaper than government agencies (Smillie, 1995). They emerged as a better option to the perceived failure of state-led development initiatives of the 1970s and 1980s (Lewis, 1998). NGO staff enjoy the reputation of being highly motivated, and in a world where 'value for money' has become increasingly important as a management mantra the rise of the NGO sector is understandable. However, while the development partnerships shown in *Figure 1* are often perceived in terms of state-NGO relationships they are not limited to this. There are commercial-government (Atkinson, 1999) as well as commercial-NGO multi-sectoral relationships (Chowdhury, 2004), as well as single-sector partnerships such as those between NGOs, GOs or commercial companies.

Why are P&P important in sustainable development programmes? After all P&P can be expensive and time-consuming, and may also require a great deal of effort and skill to cultivate and sustain. There are a number of rationales, but at its simplest P&P could simply be a matter of maximising the probability of success in a sustainable development intervention. The argument here is one of efficiency. Partners and stakeholders are a resource – a font of specialised knowledge and expertise – ready to be tapped and brought to bear within the programme. Secondly, P&P may be seen as a way of providing individuals and groups with some sense of 'ownership' of the intervention process thereby ensuring appealing outcomes that are as well viable and highly promising of continuity. In part this rationale is wrapped up with the 'efficiency' argument in the sense that it is founded on a desire to make the development 'better'. It is not only a mater of eliciting local knowledge and expertise but also local involvement in implementation best achieved by ensuring that all feel involved.

The third argument is distinct from the above mentioned utilitarian rationales (P&P as a means to an end). Here P&P is founded on a sense of human right – people who will be affected by an intervention have a right to a say in the process (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004, 2005). Here participation is not just a means but an end in itself (Cleaver, 2001; Parfitt, 2004). Indeed the rationale can go further and become synonymous with deep, powerful and evocative words like empowerment, emancipation and liberation. The right-based rationale for participatory development has become something of a 'designer item', but there is some understandable temperance as to what it means in practice (Miller et al., 2005a). After all who had the idea of the intervention in the first place (Mosse, 2001)? Is this an imposition deemed right or good for partners and possibly something coming to them out of the blue?

Of course, all three of these rationales are compatible and may exist in parallel, even if the prime rationale may only be connected to one or more of them depending upon the local context. For example, the ethical concern that stakeholders have a right to a voice in relation to what needs to be done and how best to do it can be regarded by some as of lesser importance in a context where democracy and 'civil society' appear to be strong. After all, it can be argued, if people can vote in their local, regional and national governments as well as command a strong voice through pressure groups, then surely it is through this political process that their rights in influencing sustainable development are primarily exercised? Here the emphasis may well be upon the utilitarian advantages of P&P. Alternatively, in those contexts where people do not have a vote and/or pressure groups are either absent, suppressed or simply ignored, the ethical concern to be 'participative' in development may become greater. Indeed, the interaction of groups such as NGOs with government has provided a fruitful arena for discussion. Different strands of theory regard them as supplemental, complementary or even adversarial (Young, 2000). Underpinning the latter is the advocacy role taken on by some NGOs which can be critical of governments. Yet NGOs are usually not democratically accountable, and can even be regarded as "*undermining democratic processes*" (Lister, 2004). Promotion of democratic reform and 'civil society' by NGOs can even be regarded as a new form of "*imperialism and trusteeship*" (Mohan, 2002). While not democratically accountable in the same sense that elected governments are, NGOs are accountable to those providing them with resources as well as those they are seeking to help, including those in the south (Lister, 2004). Accountability pervades all components and flows as outlined in *Figure 1*, but donors at the left hand side of the figure are in a particularly strong position to impose rigorous management systems on those receiving resources – the "*audit culture*" of Townsend and Townsend (2004; page 272). Indeed inequality pervades the boxes of *Figure 1* and as well as providing a rationale for P&P in the first place, as different groups have different skills and experience to bring to the relationship it can also provide polarities of power and influence; those with the money can impose their wishes on those without. This provides the conundrum at the heart of this paper. How can the inevitable spectra of power in such development chains be reconciled with rationales for P&P?

The paper will begin by exploring the meaning and implementation of participation and partnership in sustainable development chains before moving on to analyse partnership as it is realised in the Catholic Church development chain. The results described in the paper were obtained from a study implemented during 2004. Self-selected representatives from the three European donors were interviewed about their vision of partnership. In addition some key development personnel from Nigeria were interviewed, along with the Archbishop of Abuja.

Participation

As an illustration of the current popularity of 'participation', at the June 2005 Sustainable Development Research Conference held in Helsinki, Finland, participation was mentioned in many of the papers published in the proceedings. *Table 1* is a list of broad topics that formed some of the conference themes. Single paper sessions have not been included and a number of sessions have been pooled in order to simplify the table. For example, the category 'business, industrial ecology and sustainable development' has been created by pooling 8 sessions. The table shows the total number of papers presented for each topic, the number of papers that mentioned 'participation' at least once, the count of mentions of 'participation' for all of the papers and the count for those papers that mention 'participation' at least once. The term 'participation' was widely used in the conference and what is especially noticeable from the table is that topics centred on consumption, policy, government and education tends to mention participation more frequently than do topics focused on business and the more technical topics on energy, transportation and agriculture. Of course this is hardly a scientific survey but even so the popularity of participation in papers for what is perhaps the premier sustainable development research conference merits attention.

The origins of participatory development as it is currently understood are varied and much depends upon a definition of the starting point. The idea that people have a right to participate in how they are governed is ancient, and it is impossible to define an origin that is in any way meaningful for a paper of this sort. However, there is one thread of argument that must be mentioned, if only because it has repercussions for the later discussion on P&P within the Catholic Church. Henkel and Stirrat (2001) argue for an origin in part arising out of a Christian ideology which had a strong influence in the Reformation movement. In the early days of Christianity Latin became the universal language in order to ensure everyone had a common understanding of its principles. While this was done in good faith so as to optimize understanding and participation of its members the basic assumption was flawed. The place of the vernacular was forgotten and only a select few Christians knew Latin. This then became a key issue in the Reformation movement where the idea of participation was of paramount importance on the level of theology, liturgical service and administration. The far reaching reforms of the Reformation saw a shift from Latin to the vernacular as a language of religion. From this arose a more genuine understanding of the principles for which they stood and a more responsible way of engaging with them. Does this not sound familiar? Of import also were other reforms that shortly ensued within the reformed churches. These related to structures which witnessed a move away from a hierarchical and more remote top down management towards a more decentralized administrative structure of the Protestant Churches. The Catholic Church still adheres to its hierarchical and 'top down' structure though there have been many suggestions to make it more collegial. The Reformation had a significant impact on governments and monarchies throughout Europe as well as its empires and colonies worldwide. This will be discussed in greater detail later.

Table 1: **Mention of 'participation' in papers presented at the Sustainable Development Research Conference held in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2005**

Session/category	No. of papers				Rate per paper	
	Total no. of papers	mentioning participation	% of papers	No. of mentions of participation	Of papers mentioning participation	Of all papers
Consumption and sustainable development	2	1	50	17	17.00	8.50
Local and regional authorities	9	9	100	61	6.78	6.78
Environmental-sustainable development policy	18	9	50	74	8.22	4.11
Developing country perspective	18	10	56	70	7.00	3.89
Environmental education	14	8	57	45	5.63	3.21
Corporate social responsibility	5	4	80	15	3.75	3.00
Transdisciplinary case study research for sustainable development	8	7	88	21	3.00	2.63
Sustainability networks	22	11	50	32	2.91	1.45
Life Cycle Analysis	9	4	44	13	3.25	1.44
Theories and concepts of sustainable development	14	6	43	16	2.67	1.14
Sustainability and accounting	8	5	63	9	1.80	1.13
Business, industrial ecology and sustainable development	65	19	29	57	3.00	0.88
Transportation and sustainability	3	1	33	1	1.00	0.33
Agriculture	6	1	17	1	1.00	0.17
Energy	11	1	9	1	1.00	0.09

Beginning with what is now referred to as 'modernist' development which can be traced to the late 1940s and taking this as our starting point, one of the earliest and most cited attempts to categorise participation was presented by Arnstein (1969). A summary of her classification is presented as *Table 2.*

Table 2: **Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation'**

Type of participation	Characteristics
Passive	People are told about a decision or what has happened with no ability to change the decision. There is no participation.
Functional	Participation is seen by managers or policy makers as the best way to achieve their goals or to reduce costs. The people have little control over what needs to be done (i.e. during planning), but may have some control over how it is to be done.
Consultative	People are consulted about what needs to be done but the way in which they are asked is set by external agents and this group also controls the analysis and presentation of the results.
Manipulative	People are given limited representation on a committee, board or panel charged with implementing or managing sustainability. They would have the same voting or speaking rights as anyone else, but they have little real power as they may be easily outvoted by the other members.
Interactive	People are involved in the analysis of condition, development of action plans etc. This is not simply a matter of enhancing functionality as participation is seen as a right.
Self-mobilisation	People mobilise themselves and initiate actions without the involvement of any external agency, although the latter can help with an enabling environment when approached.

The categories vary from one extreme at the top end of *Table 2* where participation is absent to the bottom of the table where there is self-mobilisation as distinct to an

externally mediated mobilisation that is the hoped for norm in development projects (Swaminathan et al., 2003). Arnstein's insight was that in between these extremes there is a variety of positions which those involved may refer to as 'participation' but which in practice represent quite different situations. For examples, with 'manipulative' participation there may be some representation from stakeholders who do have a say in what happens, and perhaps the same voting rights as everyone if the body is a committee or board, but as they are out-numbered then they may have little power to influence decisions. Those involved can rightly say they are being 'participatory' but in practice it is the external agents who have control.

Interestingly, while notions of participatory development are not geographically specific (Arnstein's Ladder emerged within a USA context), it did achieve its greatest and most visible prominence in developing countries. There are a number of reasons for this (Miller et al., 2005b), but perhaps the foremost is that many developing countries emerged from a non-democratic colonial past during the late 1950s and 1960s. Prior to independence, policies were set by the colonial power, and development comprised what needed to be done to produce and export raw materials to the colonial centre. Nothing was done to enhance local manufacture and the emphasis was on the importation of the finished goods for sale often where the raw material was produced. Planning was highly centralised and participation, where it occurred at all, was confined to ensuring best value for money and not how this affected local sustainability and the role of the local communities. Even with national independence and democracy, freedom of action was still limited and many countries rapidly developed into dictatorships, often with abuses of human rights and corruption. Development in such contexts was almost inevitably top-down in nature, typically implemented through a succession of 'development plans'. Participation was very much in line with the 'passive' category of *Table 2.*

However, while the presence of a democratic deficit in newly independent states may be regarded as a reasonable spur for the rise in prominence of participatory development amongst development practitioners and academics in the richer countries, it has to be remembered that 'democracy' is a subjective term in much the same way as is sustainable development. For example, many democracies have a system of proportional representation (PR) – the make up of the government does reflect the relative proportions of those that voted. However, what about those countries with a 'first past the post' (FPTP) electoral system? Here it is possible to have a government that is some distance from reflecting the proportion of those voting for the parties. In the UK election of 2005, for example, the Labour Party won 35% of the votes of those who did vote (61% of the registered electorate actually voted) and a total of 356 seats out of the 645 contested (equivalent to 55% of the seats). This hardly seems representative. Indeed, in theory the two systems, PR and FPTP, can generate quite different results from an identical voting pattern.

In *Table 3* there are 10 constituencies which return a member of the national parliament. Each constituency is assumed to have exactly the same number of voters (67,000 in this case – the average recorded for all the UK parliamentary constituencies in 2004). It is assumed that there are two parties - 'A' and 'B' – that contest each constituency. Of the

total votes cast, party A wins 70% and part B 30% of the vote. With proportional representation party A gets 70% of the seats in parliament while party B gets 30%. However, note how in FPTP the results is almost exactly the opposite given that party B won 6 seats albeit by a very low margin – 134 votes in each case. The other 4 constituencies are won by part A with a massive majority. It is important to note that even with mature democracies there can be 'deficit' between what electors vote for and what they get. Voters taking part in FPTP may reasonably question whether their vote counts at all. For example, constituencies 7 to 10 of *Table 3* are dominated by party A and frankly the supporters of party B might reasonably assume that they should not bother to vote at all. In FPTP the election of *Table 3* is won or lost in constituencies 1 to 6. Within an FPTP-based democracy one could equally argue that participatory development should be the norm rather than the exception. Of course it is all relative and in contexts where people do not have a vote at all or where there is suppression the moral need for participation is greater.

Table 3: **Theoretical comparison between proportional representation and 'first past the post' systems of translating votes to representation.**

Constituency	No. of voters	Proportion of votes		Number of votes		Winner
		A	B	A	B	
1	67,000	0.499	0.501	33,433	33,567	B
2	67,000	0.499	0.501	33,433	33,567	B
3	67,000	0.499	0.501	33,433	33,567	B
4	67,000	0.499	0.501	33,433	33,567	B
5	67,000	0.499	0.501	33,433	33,567	B
6	67,000	0.499	0.501	33,433	33,567	B
7	67,000	0.999	0.001	66,933	67	A
8	67,000	0.999	0.001	66,933	67	A
9	67,000	0.999	0.001	66,933	67	A
10	67,000	0.999	0.001	66,933	67	A
Totals	670,000			468,330	201,670	
		% of total votes		**69.9**	**30.1**	

Number of seats (PR)	7	3
Number of seats (FPTP)	4	6

The colonial legacy and the democratic vacuums which continued after independence created one backdrop for the rise of participatory development as a fundamental human right, but was by no means the only impetus. Other reasons often cited for the rise of participation in the developing world include:

➢ a gradual disenchantment amongst social scientists with macro-developed policies primarily implemented by economists. These tended to follow the assumption that economies could be 'modernized' and the resulting benefits would 'trickle down' through the community to eventually reach the poorest. But this trickle down often did not occur and development projects seemed to at best generate little in the way of sustainable improvements and at worst could make matters worse for many while benefiting a few. The 'Green Revolution' of the 1960s in Asia is often quoted as a classic example. Participation was seen as a counter to this worldview, and in the view of one writer (Francis, 2001) took on almost mystic undertones amongst major development donors as a rite of communion for previous sins!

➢ A growing application of community development within a radical framework, mostly notably in South America (e.g. the writings of Paulo Freire such as *Pedagogy of the oppressed* published in 1972). Freire was a Brazilian educationalist (1921-1997) who maintained that dialogue involves respect, not one person 'acting' on another. He saw participation as a necessary means of developing consciousness with the power to transform reality. Also included here is the rise of Liberation Theology within members of the Catholic Church in South America as a response to the real and pressing problems it encountered in some countries. Its proponents regarded the primary duty of the church to be the promotion of social and economic justice and hence it was necessary to commit the institutional church to the poor and create a radically new model of church pastoral work. It has to be said that this was not welcomed by the Church hierarchy.

➢ The writings of Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) and others regarding organizational structures and management in the developed world. Lewin is best known for *'field theory'* – the notion that human behaviour is influenced by both the person and the environment and the term 'action research'. Lewin (1948; pages 202-3) summarises his views on the role of research:
 "The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice."
These ideas in turn fed into and connected with the generic field of operational research in the 1940s and problem solving methodologies (PSMs). Perhaps the most well-known of these is the 'soft systems' methodologies of Checkland (1981; Checkland and Scholes, 1990).

➢ The gradual rise of post-modernism in the 1960s also had an influence. This questions positivist knowledge derived primarily through reductionist methods and applied through scientific elites as the only representation of 'truth'. Post-modernism encompassed a view that there are many representations of reality, and the positivist approach is but one way of achieving this. As a result local

knowledge and perspectives grew in importance amongst social and natural scientists working in the broad field of development. Ultimately this school of thought gave rise to the so-called post-development perspectives of Estreva (1992) and Escobar (1995) amongst others. Others counter such 'postist' (post-modern, post-development, post-structural) arguments as being deconstruction for the sake of it while the poor remain poor and instead point to the real differences that aid and structuralist interventions can make (Blaikie, 2000).

In the 1970s social scientists working in development began to initiate a process of dialogue with primarily rural-based populations in order to better understand their circumstances and wishes. The initial emphasis on rural populations was not surprising given an assumed importance of agriculture in developing countries as a source of food, employment and income. Also, in many developing countries it was in the rural areas that most of the population lived. This broad process was called Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). A combination of a rural, mostly agricultural, emphasis along with the philosophy of enhancing the voices of the population led to the shorthand term 'farmer first', coined by Robert Chambers and others. A conference held at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS, University of Sussex) in 1978/79 set out many of the underlying principles and approaches of RRA (Chambers, 1983). Chambers is a prolific writer on the topic of participation, and indeed his name is often associated with the approach (Chambers 1993, 1997). RRA as originally envisaged is an extractive process focused on information gathering in order to feed into the planning of policy, research and other interventions. The knowledge is gained through what its proponents referred to as a holistic process rather than the reductionist approaches of positivist science which was deemed to have generated inappropriate research. Ironically the techniques used within this 'holistic process' were not that new to 'conventional' social science. The mindset was.

It should be noted that RRA is but one convenient and well-known label for a spectrum of processes geared towards eliciting local views and knowledge as a way of making development interventions better. There are many other approaches that act largely in an extractive sense to feed into planning and management. To avoid the misapprehension that participatory approaches are only employed in developing country contexts see Tippet (2004), Vantanen and Maritunen (2005), Jonasson (2004) and Conroy and Berke (2004) for some developed-country based examples of participation in planning and resource-management.

However, for all its holistic language the use of participatory techniques in an extractive mode does have limitations. Can it be called 'participation' if there is still a relationship of 'giver' and 'receiver'? During the 1980s some saw RRA as having the potential to go beyond extraction and move towards a catalysation of community awareness and action. In other words the same techniques could be employed to let communities learn about themselves and instigate change as a result - a facilitation of empowerment and even liberation. Of course it could be argued that the very process of carrying out an extractive RRA could lead to those involved questioning their situation and making suggestions as

to how matters can be improved. However, in RRA and its extractive cousins this may be but a by-product of only secondary importance. The new approach was all about empowerment as the first and indeed only goal, and was termed Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). PRA stressed the unpredictability of social phenomena, the subjective nature of 'data' and the endemic nature of 'problems' that people face. In effect, PRA attempts to be a practical embodiment of a post-modern deconstruction of development. The initial 'rural' emphasis of RRA/PRA in the 1970s and 1980s widened in the 1990s to include urban settings, and the word 'appraisal' has been dropped in favour of collaborative learning. Yet another term, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), has been created (Sellamna 1999).

The spectrum of RRA – PRA – PLA does have one thing in common. All are geared towards a development intervention – to 'do' something – which is being catalysed by an external agent. RRA and its ilk are extractive processes that feed into planning, while PRA-PLA is an empowerment of a community as a precondition to action. They typically take place in the context of a project and hence exist within constraints of time and resources. The decision to 'do' an RRA-PRA-PLA is typically taken by outsiders within this project/programme context, and while the community may have some control over the form of the process and its pace they are still being 'acted upon' or facilitated (Kothari, 2001). Alternatively rather than have a facilitator-facilitated process it is possible to create a sustainable space of interaction between groups by changing the form and function of existing institutions i.e. the boundary organizations of Carr and Wilkinson (2005).

More recently still, the notion of participation in an interventionist sense of a practical 'doing' of development has been superseded by participation as a means to facilitate 'knowledge rights' in scientific decision making (Leach et al., 2002) and citizenship (Williams, 2004a; Hickey and Mohan, 2005). Here the language is one of a wider emancipation rather than a more narrow focus on an immediate 'doing' of something within a project/programme. There are strong echoes here of the 'rights based' rationale for participatory development, and addresses what some see as the problems brought about by a negation of politics in participatory development (Chhotray, 2004). Hickey and Mohan (2005) argue that participatory approaches are most likely to succeed if:

1. they are located within a radical political project

2. they are geared towards rights of citizenship, especially for marginalized groups

3. they encourage an engagement with development as a broad process of change

Partnership

For the relationships towards the left of *Figure 1* at one extreme they could be nothing more than that of contractor and sub-contractor (Hailey, 2000), with field agencies being

a "*service delivery mechanisms for pre-determined development*" (Mohan, 2002; page 148) contracted to produce x number of wells in y months. At the other extreme it could be more of a "*contract between equals*" (Cox and Healey, 1998) founded on an intimate and long lasting interaction with mutual respect (Lister, 2000). Some define partnership more tightly by stating that it is "*an arrangement existing between two or more organizations [or individuals or institutions] in working towards a commonly defined goal*" (Darlow and Newby 1997, cited in Davies 2002; page 191). The implication is that the partners agree on their defined goal, but as we have already seen consensus can be a mirage. Brinkerhoff (2002a; page 21) states this even more succinctly:

"*Partnership is a dynamic relationship amongst diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner*"

and in Brinkerhoff (2002b; page 216) there is more:

"*Partnership encompasses mutual influence, with a careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy, which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision-making, mutual accountability, and transparency*".

This definition is not just about a shared and agreed goal (a consensus as to what needs to be done) but upon a rational division of labour which contours the advantages held by each partner (Anderson, 2000). It also stresses a need for mutual respect and independence (Larkin, 1994), so that one partner is not simply taken over by the other, and a vision that goes beyond a simple transfer of resources. Relationships founded on a one way transfer of money and nothing else are less likely to be seen by field agencies as partnership except to placate and mollify their northern 'partner' (Lewis, 1998).

A useful framework for helping to identify partnership as a form of relationship has been presented by Brinkerhoff (2002a). As shown in *Figure 3a* she identifies two axes of relationship as 'mutuality' (how dependent the organizations are upon each other) and 'identity' (the distinctiveness of the organizations). In Brinkerhoff's view partnership equates to a position where there is maximum mutuality and identity (the shaded box), while the other three boxes equate to a range of relationships including 'contracting' (one organization contracts the other), extension (one organization becomes an extension of the other) and co-option/absorption (the organizations become one and the same). Given that partnership and participation are two forms of the same relationship (Davies, 2002), not surprisingly this framework can be hybridised with Arnstein's (1969) classification of participation (*Figure 3b*). In *Figure 3b* Arnstein's typology is mapped out using the same axes as of Brinkerhoff, only this time the relationships refer to relationships between citizens and those in authority. True partnership occurs where there is genuine respect for each others perspective and partners are willing to make compromises. Other segments of *Figure 3b* are more one-way in nature, mostly with those in power dictating to (educating) or manipulating those without. Note that power can also go the other way – citizens can also make decisions without a dependence upon managers.

In practice all sorts of relationship between the groups of *Figure 1* can occur, and these will change with time (Davies, 2002), but should they all be seen as 'partnership'? After all a combination of high mutuality and individual identity can occur in situations that are far from being what some might regard as a partnership. For example, one organization in such a relationship could seek to influence what the other does in ways that maintain individual identity yet could be resented by its 'partner' all the same. Indeed, as Fowler (1999) points out, "*not all development relationships are partnerships. Nor should they be*". The problem is that the term partnership, like participation, has such an appeal that it is indiscriminately used to cover almost all relationships. If the partnership label is to be more selectively applied then what is it, how can it be recognized and what advantages does it bestow?

Figure 3: **Models of relationships**

(a) Between organizations (after Brinkerhoff, 2002a)

		Mutuality (mutual dependence)	
		Low	High
Organizational Identity	High	*Contracting* One organization contracts another	*Partnership* **Organizations work together to meet their goals**
(distinctive and enduring characteristics)	Low	*Extension* One organization becomes to all intents and purposes an extension of the other	*Co-optation & gradual absorption* One organization becomes absorbed/co-opted into the other

(b) Between citizens and those with power (based on Arnstein, 1969)

		Mutuality (mutual dependence)	
		Low	High
	High	*Delegated power/citizen control* Citizens take on decision-making responsibilities	*Partnership* **Citizens involved in compromise decisions between a range of partners**
Individual Identity	Low	*Manipulation/therapy* Non-participation with power-holders dictating to or 'educating' citizens almost as extensions of themselves	*Informing/consultation/placation* Degrees of tokenism with citizens dependent on power holders for action

The oft-stated advantage of partnership is based on an assumption that it enables a more efficient use of scarce resources by utilising compatibility within the partnership network – what some refer to as the "*value adding partnership*" (Johnston and Lawrence, 1988). A donor can avoid the need to create and staff a regional office by working in partnership with field agencies which are also assumed to be better connected to intended beneficiaries (Mohan, 2002). Partnerships may also be better placed to 'lever' funding from government and multilateral donors such as the EU (Geddes, 2000). There may also be assumptions of mutual learning and sharing of ideas, particularly when linked to institutional development of a field agency located in a less developed country where there may be a need for training (Postma, 1994; Lewis, 1998). Allied to these tangible benefits for forming partnerships is often a recognition of global inter-dependences and a need for solidarity (Postma, 1994; Fowler, 1999). In essence, partnerships provide benefits by making the sum of the whole greater than the sum of the parts. Notice how this language of mutuality contrasts with that of participation where it is not the 'whole' which matters - facilitator(s) strive to help and/or liberate the facilitated and not themselves, at least not in the immediate sense. However, whether partnerships do actually help enhance performance in development has yet to be determined (Brinkerhoff, 2002b).

Partnership is not just a product of the development chain linking north and south. Indeed in many ways the popularity of the term borrows much from the rise of public-private partnerships throughout the developed world of the 1980s, particularly in the UK with Thatcherism (Hastings, 1996) and its extension into the Third Way agenda of Tony Blair's New Labour Party which came to power in 1997 and emphasized more local initiatives (Power, 2000; Schofield, 2002). This 'Third Sector' hybridization of private and public was considered as an important alternative "*not replacing the existing order, but matching and balancing the important roles played by public and private sector agencies*" (Larkin, 1994; page 7). Efficiency and expertise from the private sector were combined with public interest and accountability, and fresh perspectives were brought to government services (Kolzow, 1994; Woodward, 1994). The 'Third Sector' partnerships were not just about delivering better services in the short term but a desire for the partners themselves to learn and be influenced by each other. It has been argued that companies can gain much from such partnerships with the public or even NGO sectors such as a better image and influence on policy (Rundall, 2000), but the typical assumption was that the public sector partner had more to learn from the private partner. There could equally be an influence operating in the other direction helping to "*challenge the private sector to adopt more 'social' objectives, less driven by short term gain*" (Hastings, 1996; page 262). More sceptical views see such multi-sectoral partnership as possibly nothing more than a "*search for a fix*" (Geddes, 2000; page 797). Atkinson (1999; page 59) states that:

> "*...there is no single authentic mode of assigning meaning to terms such as partnership and empowerment, that their meaning is constructed (i.e. produced and reproduced) in a context of power and domination which privileges official discourse(s) over others*".

Nevertheless, it is sometimes assumed that discussions regarding partnership in such multi-sectoral contexts are more advanced than with development chain partnerships and could have much to offer (Lister, 2000).

A third strand to the partnership literature needs to be outlined. There are studies which use the notion of partnership to explore relationships within the private sector where there may be competitive advantages to partnership (Liedtka, 1996; Greenwood and Empson, 2003). In itself this is a large literature including suggestions as to how successful 'partnership' can be created and maintained (Bantham et al., 2003). Interestingly these include buyer-seller relationships as a form of partnership fulfilling all of the earlier definitions and indeed the criteria of high mutuality and high identity of *Figure 3*.

Realities of partnership and participation: The unrequited dream

Have P&P succeeded in their goal of helping us achieve sustainable development? The answer to the question is often assumed to be 'yes' as surely P&P can only be a 'good thing'.

With participation this sense of inevitable benefit is perhaps strongest. After all:

> "*Development practitioners excel in perpetuating the myth that communities are capable of anything, that all that is required is sufficient mobilization (through institutions) and the latent capacities of the community will be unleashed in the interests of development.*"   Cleaver (2001, page 46).

For all this promise there is little evidence to support the contention that participation 'works' (Cleaver, 2001), and a few empirical studies have actually pointed to the contrary (e.g. see Beard, 2005, study of participatory development in Indonesia). As one author puts it some 20 years after the rise of participatory approaches in development:

> "*While the practice of PRA has brought in a sometimes refreshing feeling of exhilaration (or panic) among the scientific community and forces it to reconsider its methods, the contribution of PRA, in itself, to the insights of research, the performance of development projects, or to the well being of the communities that use it remain still to be evaluated.*"   Sellamna (1999)

Unfortunately participation is often assumed to be another word for 'panacea' (King, 2003), but if nothing else has been learnt over 50 years of development effort it is that magic bullets – even those with resounding rhetoric - do not always work. The causes of under-development are deep rooted and multiple, and loudly proclaimed promises of success if unfulfilled can lead to a reflection as to the causes of failure. Indeed since the late 1990s there has been the rise of a series of critiques (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mansuri and Rao, 2004) and counter-critiques (Mutamba, 2004; Parfitt, 2004; Williams

G, 2004) of participatory development, especially when applied within its PRA-PLA sense of empowerment to action. Interestingly participation in a more limited extractive sense as a feed into planning has not been so critiqued, possibly because the promises are not so high.

What would prevent participation in the mode of PRA-PLA from succeeding? What Bevan (2000; page 756) refers to as the "*first fundamental problem*" with participation in a developing country context gives us a clue:

> *"there is little recognition of the fact that poor people are diversely embedded in unequal meso, macro and global economic and social power structures, or of the fact that the passing of time entails trends, shocks and conflicts which lead to changes in structures, and in the positions of people within those structures."*
>
> Bevan (2000; page 756)

As Biggs and Smith (1998) note, "*The limitations of participatory methods become a problem where exaggerated confidence in their efficacy leads to their being used exclusively and uncritically.*" Thus while participation could help in highlighting problems and issues that need to be tackled, and perhaps even provide some insights as to how these could be best addressed, if people have no real power to change a situation, and unfortunately this is often the norm rather than the exception in many contexts– north and south - then highlighting the problems they face is not in itself going to change the circumstances. Giving people a louder voice does not necessarily mean that those with the power to make change will listen. After all, policy makers and managers are often tied to other more pressing mantra than having to 'listen to the people' including 'value for money' and efficiency of service delivery. This lack of power may result in people becoming tired and frustrated "*of being asked to participate in other people's projects on other people's terms*" (Bevan, 2000; page 758). Indeed participation can become a corrupted term as it does nothing more than reinforce external power and deepen distrust and resistance (Nuijten, 2004).

Secondly there is the 'myth' of consensus (Peterson et al., 2005) allied to a myth of community (Guijt and Shah, 1998). Proponents of PRA-PLA at one level embrace variety and dismiss a notion of the 'average' so beloved, they say, of the positivists. They argue that it is necessary to search for variety. Understanding and appreciating variation is one thing, but enabling a 'doing' something about constraints is something else. As a result participatory techniques are usually applied to order to draw out some underlying issues that need addressing in an extractive sense, such as with RRA, or to go further and explore solutions that can emerge from the community itself. In either case – extractive or as a prelude to action what is being sought is a consensus – an agreement as to what 'is' and what 'needs' to be done is required, even if these are multiple rather than single in nature. Well-established techniques such as multi-criteria analysis (MCA), integrated assessment and risk-analysis can help elicit a pattern given such a set of multiple goals, objectives and perspectives (Marjolein and Rijkens-Klomp, 2002; Willis et al., 2004;

Mendoza and Prabhu, 2005). It would seem that despite the embrace of diversity there is an inevitable move to reduce – to come out with a plan. But is this realistic?

Obviously there are practical concerns over representation – ensuring that all those who have a stake in the development, either as 'winners' or losers – have a voice (Barnes et al., 2003). This is more difficult than it sounds, but even if an adequate representation was achieved at least physically in meetings etc. then how is the diversity of what emerges best handled? Indeed, what if there is little agreement over what the important issues are, let alone how to address them? What if people have little common interest and needs and hence there is little or no consensus? After all any community encompasses a wide range of individuals and social units spanning gender, age, ethnic, experience and wealth spectra, and a priori one would expect to find little consensus and not be surprised if one did not emerge (Hibbard and Lurie, 2000).

A participatory approach could well discover such richness and acknowledge the lack of consensus producing a valid finding in itself and indeed be a new awareness for the community, but is hardly a good starting point for focused action within the typical time-scale of a project. It is more likely that these differences will lead to a diverse set of actions, some of which may well be contradictory such as environmental protection and economic growth (Peterson et al., 2005). Worse still it may be that differences are suppressed either by the community or, even worse, by the facilitator(s), in order to arrive at a supposed consensus. MCA is a useful approach for achieving an apparent consensus, but does tend to hide two critical points. First it is usually applied by an external facilitator and secondly it seeks to arrive at consensus, even if combined with a participatory ethos (Mendoza and Prabhu, 2005). While everyone may feel a sense of fulfillment, indeed happiness that the process is finally over, agreed action points may rapidly evaporate. The ultimate myth of consensus, and potentially the most damaging, takes us back to the issue of power. Here the participatory exercise may do no more than draw out the views and wishes of those with the loudest voice and simply reinforce and exacerbate existing power inequalities within the community (Mosse, 2001; Cornwall, 2003; Peterson et al., 2005). Consensus becomes an expression of the desires of the minority at the expense of the majority. Some express this concern in even stronger terms:

> *"……participation can cause decisions to be made that are more risky, with which no one really agrees, or that rationalize harm to others, and it can be used consciously or otherwise to manipulate group members' ideological beliefs."*
> Cooke (2001, page 102)

Thirdly there are the problems of scaling-up (institutionalization) of participation within large institutions. This has proven to be problematic as discussed by Corneille and Shiffman (2004) for USAID. The problem is that such organizations have a multitude of other pressures, including those of accountability and indeed survival (Townsend, 1999; Townsend and Townsend, 2004), that often make the promotion and use of participatory approaches a cumbersome process.

"……..participatory approaches do not sit well with hierarchically structured organizations, and that institutional cultures are embedded in wider cultures that are not so easily transformed".   Bevan (2000, page 752)

The degree to which participatory approaches can become 'institutionalized' as a means of directing policy is an area of much current debate but a number of authors have strsssed that this is not easy to achieve (Holland and Blackburn, 1998; Blackburn and Holland, 1998).

Finally, even with the notion of participation as a means of political empowerment there are problems. Newman et al. (2004) explore the constraints within so-called 'collaborative governance' in a UK setting. Forde (2005) describes how "*pseudo-participatory*" approaches were applied in Ireland as a means of strengthening the role of citizens in local democracy but instead the process consolidates a top-down administration rather than enhancing the development of a participatory democracy – and that is in a developed country with a well-established electoral system of PR! A not dissimilar example is provided for South Africa by Williams, JJ (2004).

Unfortunately, given all of the above and despite its obvious appeal it would sometimes appear that participation is a convenient catch-phrase for donors and practitioners, but in reality it is business as usual. Real participation leading to real change can often appear to be as elusive as the end of a rainbow (Eversole, 2003).

If participation has had difficulties in practical realization what can be expected with partnership? One of the problems in answering this is that while the literature on partnership in development chains is substantial (Brinkerhoff, 2002a) there is a shortage of material on theory and analytical frameworks (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). More surprising still, but in line with the point made earlier about participation, there is a dearth of literature which critically evaluates the performance of partnership (Davies, 2002). Case studies abound, (including for example, Wallace, 2003, on NGOs in the UK), but only a few studies seek to analyse the driving forces at play in the formation of a partnership, seeing how the partnership functions and the benefits (if any) it delivers. In short, there is a lack of analytical frameworks which allow partnerships to be dissected. A further problem can be added to this. Most of the literature on partnership in a development context deals with donors and field agencies, usually focussing on one of each, but what about partnership between a group of donors or field agencies? It is known that the relationships between these groups can be negotiated and indeed contested (Harrison, 2002), but if termed a 'partnership' what does it mean? The relationship between these groups could also impact upon the form and function of participation between the field agencies and intended beneficiaries.

A commonly expressed approach to exploring partnership is the analysis of power between partners in the network (Saidel, 1991; Postma, 1994; Atkinson, 1999; Lister, 2000) – a feature which has echoes within the critical analyses of power in participation. An analysis of power is logical given that those with the resources (the donors) have the

resources being sought by field agencies acting on behalf of beneficiaries – an "*inevitable inequality*" (Anderson, 2000; page 496) 'top down' in nature. Donors can stipulate terms and conditions that their southern partners have to match, and donors can do this in the name of accountability and 'value for money' (Fowler, 1998; Mosse, 2001; Mohan 2002). While partners are free to resist some of the stipulations being placed upon them there is obviously a trade-off. After all, if they don't want the money another may be only too pleased to comply. Limited supply of funds with an ever increasing demand for those funds leads to competition (Smillie, 1995; Aldaba et al., 2000; Hailey, 2000), and some field agencies may be able to compete more effectively than others (Moore and Stewart, 1998). Much the same can be said of NGO donor relationships with government agencies in the north (Lewis, 1998; Wallace, 2003; Townsend and Townsend, 2004). As a result some understandably see partnership as a "*loaded process*" (Mohan 2002; page 141), with the term helping to ameliorate uncomfortable inequalities in power between donors and field agencies (Fowler, 1999). Indeed, rather than the indiscriminate use of an "*innocuous cover*" (Fowler, 2000; page 642) for all development chain relationships:

> "*Perhaps a more honest, and strange as it may sound, humble acknowledgement on the part of the donor side of the relationship of their good luck in being well-off could provide a better basis for interaction with recipients (who certainly know this anyway*." Anderson (2000; page 497):

Lister (2000) provides an example of an analysis of power in partnership for a group of organizations in Central America, and set out a chain akin to the model in *Figure 1*.

A funder (BD) – a northern-based NGO – a group of southern partners

She then applied Dahl's (1957) four key constituents of a power relation to analyse the partnership:

- ➢ **Base of power**   (the resources using to bring about influence)

- ➢ **Means or power**   (actions that can be taken to bring about influence)

- ➢ **Scope of power**   (specific actions taken to bring about influence)

- ➢ **Amount of power**   (the extent of the influence)

Using this model, Lister (2000) comes to the conclusion that individual actors and relationships are critical in any partnership as it is through these that the four constituents of power are expressed. As a result "*the partnership is vulnerable to changes in individuals and patterns of organizational leadership*" (Lister 2000, page 236), and this calls into question "*much of the theory currently being developed for NGOs in terms of capacity building, institutional strengthening, scaling-up and diffusion of innovation,*

which all rely on organizational processes as the basis for change." (Lister, 2000, page 237).

The analysis of power can be criticized in that it does have a one-dimensional feel to it given the assumption that almost all the power resides with the donor. But field agencies are not powerless, and Forbes (1999) has described examples where such agencies have made use of their closeness to the local scene (and knowledge of local-ness) to influence donor behaviour. After all, donors will typically know far less than their local partners about the very groups they are trying to help (Lancaster, 1999). It is also worth stating the obvious - that donors need to work with good and reliable field agencies otherwise the *raison d'etre* of the donor is questionable. Also, not all development partnerships have a donor as one of the components. Chowdhury (2004) provides an example of a successful partnership in Bangladesh between an NGO (the Grameen Bank) and a telephone company.

Interestingly, while discussions of power particularly in north-south based partnerships have been prominent, this has not been the case in studies of partnership in public-private relationships of the developed world which in one writer's view have largely ignored issues of "*power, influence and resistance between the broader range of stakeholders*" (Hastings 1999). One approach that has been used to understand power within multi-sectoral partnerships assumed to be dialectical in nature (Atkinson, 1999) is critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992). Critical discourse analysis follows from the theory that there is a dialectical relationship between the use of language and social change such that changes in one will be influenced by changes in the other. Hastings (1999; page 93) argues that partnerships can be thought of as a "*form of governance capable of 'hot housing' social change……..at least amongst those who participate in them*". As a result of allowing for a dialectical relationship rather than a 'one way' process the partnership can be analysed by exploring the evolution of changes in assumptions, values and practice that has taken place since the partnership was founded. Hastings applied this approach to an analysis of transformation in private-public-volunteer partnerships of the UK, where it is often assumed that the private partner has more power to influence change (Hastings, 1996, 1998, 1999). After all, the private sector partner is in the partnership to help "*'shake up' the public sector*" (Hastings, 1996; page 262). A development chain example of a discourse analysis, although not expressed as such, is provided by Postma (1994) who explored the discourse between donors and NGOs in Mali and Niger and used these to see how demands from the donors are played out amongst the NGOs.

Such an analysis of discourse in partnership contrasts notably with the basis of participation where the dialogue tends to be one-way in nature. There has been little, if any, analysis as to how the 'doing' of participation influences those external agents who facilitate the process and how they use this knowledge. Care must also be taken when using discourse to analyse power, given the pro-partnership rhetoric, whether sincere or not, that is likely to be encountered from all partners in the relationship for different reasons. Hastings (1999; page 104) makes the point that:

"Indeed, the level of rhetoric which surrounds the partnership project together with the growing emphasis on the effective presentation of policy makes issues such as the nature of inter-sectoral power relationships, or contestation over the nature of the policy problem, particularly difficult questions to research".

Critical discourse analysis may provide a means of extending beyond the almost inevitable spin.

Another theory of interest for this paper is the adaptation of 'inter-dependence theory' (or perhaps more accurately 'school of thought') for individuals in close relationships such as marriage (Rusbult and Van Lange, 2003). Here the partnership is not just a useful and temporary conjunction to fulfil an agreed objective, but one based on a longer-term interaction with a level of investment, *"including feelings of attachment to a partner and desire to maintain a relationship, for better or worse"* (Rusbult and Buunk, 1993; page 180). Inter-dependence in this literature is much more than the simple 'low' or 'high' scales of *Figure 3a* but delves deeper into understanding the basis for dependence – the way partners affect one another. While there are echoes here of the Dahl constituents of power relations, the debate goes deeper. Indeed, one advantage of this school of thought is its potential to generate a multi-dimensional *"taxonomic characterization of situations"* (Rusbult and Van Lange, 2003; page 370) as a first step in analysis.

Bantham et al. (2003) borrow from interdependence theory to explore the partnerships between sellers and buyers. They posit what they refer to as mindset and skillset enablers in all relationships:

➢ **Mindset enabler:**

   Awareness of tensions in relationships and a willingness to address them. The tensions may be endogenous and exogenous to the relationship.

➢ **Skillset enabler:**

   Communication behaviours that facilitate the management of tensions. Borrowing again from the inter-personal literature Bantham et al (2003) suggest that skills such as 'non-defensive listening', 'active listening', 'self-disclosure' and 'editing' can be included here. It is perhaps no coincidence that some suggest *"listening is at the cornerstone of effective partnership"* (Ndiaye and Hammock, 1991; cited in Postma, 1994; page 454) but the type of listening is important.

The two enablers are related, a willingness to manage tensions has to follow from an awareness of such tensions coupled with a desire to do something about them. Indeed it is

possible to combine the inter-dependence and investment theories of relationships with an analysis of power within development chains. Clearly, for the mindset and skillset enablers to function there has to be a genuine commitment from donors and their partners in the field.

Perhaps the most practically grounded analytical framework for partnerships is that of Brinkerhoff (2002b), which she designed primarily as a tool to help with evaluation in a development context. After all, the point of the partnership (as indeed with participation) is not just to be a "*blind mantra with little consideration of what the processes conducted under those banners actually produce*" (Davies, 2002; page 201) but to 'add value' and hence generate tangible benefits. Like participatory development, partnerships *per se* are no guarantee of creating such benefits. However, the effectiveness of partnerships in delivering benefits has received little attention, and care must be taken not to take the evidence presented by the partnership itself as the only evidence of success (Geddes, 2000). Indeed, Geddes (2000) goes so far as to claim that the multi-sectoral partnership in Europe has only had marginal success in addressing issues for which they were established. Brinkerhoff provides a detailed checklist of characteristics under four main headings to help with evaluation of partnership performance.

➢ presence of pre-requisites and success factors

➢ partnership practice (the mutuality and organizational identity components highlighted in *Figure 3*)

➢ partner performance

➢ outcomes of the partnership relationship

The Brinkerhoff framework is complex, and, of course, many of the characteristics identified under the four main headings will interact. Nonetheless the framework is useful in setting out the characteristics (indicators) to be looked for in assessing the functionality as well as effectiveness of a partnership. One problem is that many of them are subjective in nature. For example, a popular device amongst some donors for engendering transparency and accountability is the planning framework, one commonly cited example of which is the logical framework – or logframe. In brief it is a project planning device intended to help identify goals, processes and outcomes of a project with suitable indicators for measuring attainment (Aune 2000). However, this is a rather mechanical device demanding some exactness as to what will be done, by whom, when as well as setting out how achievement will be gauged. One donor may see this as the height of transparency and accountability while another will prefer a less mechanistic approach. However, like the interdependence theory, and its associated concepts, logic and tools, the Brinkerhoff framework allows for the creation of a typology of relationships as a first step towards a fuller analysis. After all, while all the indicators can be assessed for any partnership they indicate little about the driving forces at play. This is not unusual, as

much of the work in organizational theory to date has focussed more on the identification of variation rather than explaining it (Greenwood and Empson, 2003).

Given that the analytical approaches of Lister (2000), Hastings (1999), Bantham et al. (2003) and Brinkerhoff (2002b) all address partnerships, albeit in different contexts and from varied angles, it is not surprising that they can be combined into a single multi-analytical framework as shown in *Figure 4*. The four columns of *Figure 4* represent the four analytical approaches, but there is clearly some overlap. The Bantham et al (2003) approach which dissects partnerships in terms of interdependency theory by looking for mindset and skillset enablers can help in exploring the issues of pre-requisites and practice identified by Brinkerhoff. The Lister (2000) and Hastings (1999) analyses of power relations, discourse and change in partnerships can also be mapped onto *Figure 4* to help explain the characteristics of some of the indicators identified by Brinkerhoff. The mindset/skillset enablers of interdependency theory can be used to explore partnership pre-requisites and practice and help with an understanding of power mapped via Dahl's relations or critical discourse. Each may be incomplete, but together they provide a rich insight into what is happening together with an explanation.

The following section of the paper will explore how these ideas are inter-related and how they could each generate separate insights which can be pooled into a deeper understanding of partnership in development chains. The case study employed will be the Catholic Church-based development chain linking donors in the North (in this paper taken to be three Catholic-based donor agencies in Europe) and its field partners in the South (here taken to be one Province in Nigeria, West Africa). While participation of stakeholders is also a critical element within this chain it will not be discussed in detail here.

Figure 4: **The four analytical approaches reported in the literature for partnership.**

1	2	3	4
Power relations *(Lister 2000)*	**Discourse** *(Hastings 1999)*	**Inter-dependence** *(Bantham et al. (2003))*	**Function/Performance** *Brinkerhoff (2002b)*
ANALYSIS OF POWER			
Identify the following for the donors:	*Evidence for a discursive influence between donor and field partners in terms of three key areas:*	*Check to see whether the following Enablers are in place amongst both donors and field agencies:*	*Look for the following criteria amongst donors and partners:*
Base of power (resources available to donor) **Means** of power (procedures employed when handing over resource) **Scope** of power (specific actions e.g. evaluation)	**Programmes:** Assumptions about what is important to address in development programmes and projects. **Practice**: how best to address the goals set in development (including issues of resourcing, timescales, assessing impact etc.) **Accountability**: how is accountability addressed and to whom? How are these set out?	**Mindset:** awareness of tensions along with a willingness to address them. Identify what these tensions are perceived to be and why they exist? Identify examples of such awareness, or lack of it, from the perspective of donors and field agencies. **Skillset**: Is there evidence of non-defensive listening, active learning, self-disclosure and editing? If so, how are these '**institutionalised**'? Awareness of them as important enablers. Identify examples of presence or absence.	Presence of **pre-requisite** and **success** factors Linkage between **mutuality** and **organizational identity** **Partner performance** **Outcomes** of the partnership relationship Does each partner meet their objectives? How do they seek to maintain the '**identity**' of the partnership? How is it presented?
Amount of power (the extent to which the donor influences what is done in the field) *Contrast this perspective on power with that taking a more discursive approach.*	Is there really a "*shared understanding*" of these? Is there a discourse or is the process 'one way' (e.g. donor led)?		
How are these power issues influenced by relationships with national and international donors?		*Importance of personal relationships?*	*Evidence for a rational division of labour?*

25

The Catholic Church: one embodiment of partnership and participation

In 1962 the Catholic Church summoned itself to 'a new way of being church' especially through the documents of the second Vatican Council published in the early 1960s. It compelled members to read the signs of the times and be relevant not just to its traditional ministries of health care, education and evangelization but also to tackle injustive and poverty in the widest possible sense. Henceforth its remit has been more radical. The underlying causes of problems would be a starting point involving a more radical approach to Ministry than that in vogue at the time of the Second Vatican Council. The post conciliar documents emphasized again the call of the Church to go beyond its own membership encouraging an ecumenical approach, partnership with all other denominations in the delivery of the good news that is its mission. Development was understood as something that would bring peace, and development was the new name for peace.

It is perhaps ironic that Liberation Theology and the social analysis it prescribed as essential to understanding what development was about was spawned from the Second Vatican Council during the later years of the 1960s. Liberation Theology was the brain child of indigenous Latin American Theologians (Aldunate, 1994). It did not have the same impact in Africa as it did in Latin America as fewer African Theologians promoted it. Nevertheless, despite some official opposition to Liberation Theology the development policy and programmes within the Catholic Church in the 1970s were highly influenced by Liberation Theology and the development methodologies it propounded. There were even accusations of a drift towards Marxism and revolutionary politics by development agencies of the Church (Pelletier, 1996).

As the Catholic Church claims to be universal it's northern (in the context of this paper these are donors) and southern based development agencies share the same moral beliefs in a global community of equals. It is as well a community seeking lasting transformation with members open to learning from each other rather than just a temporary and ephemeral partnership created to deliver a single development project. As such the Catholic-Church chain is an example of a long-term partnership of members based on shared beliefs and morality which stress tolerance, respect for neighbour and a need to listen. Thus there is at one level a sense of the core axis of *Figure 2* from Catholic membership in the north, donors, field agencies and beneficiaries in the South being one single body. This long-standing relationship would be expected to facilitate the application of interdependency theory concepts as well as providing the necessary mindset enablers for true partnership. At least in theory, this might serve to heighten awareness of disparate power relationships along the chain. This allows an excellent opportunity to test the multi-analytical framework of *Figure 4.*

A second advantage of the Catholic Church development chain in testing analytical frameworks of partnership lies in the universal structures that apply throughout the chain. Given the hierarchical and universal nature of the Church (*Figure 5*), donor organizations in the north are embedded within this structure in the same way as its southern
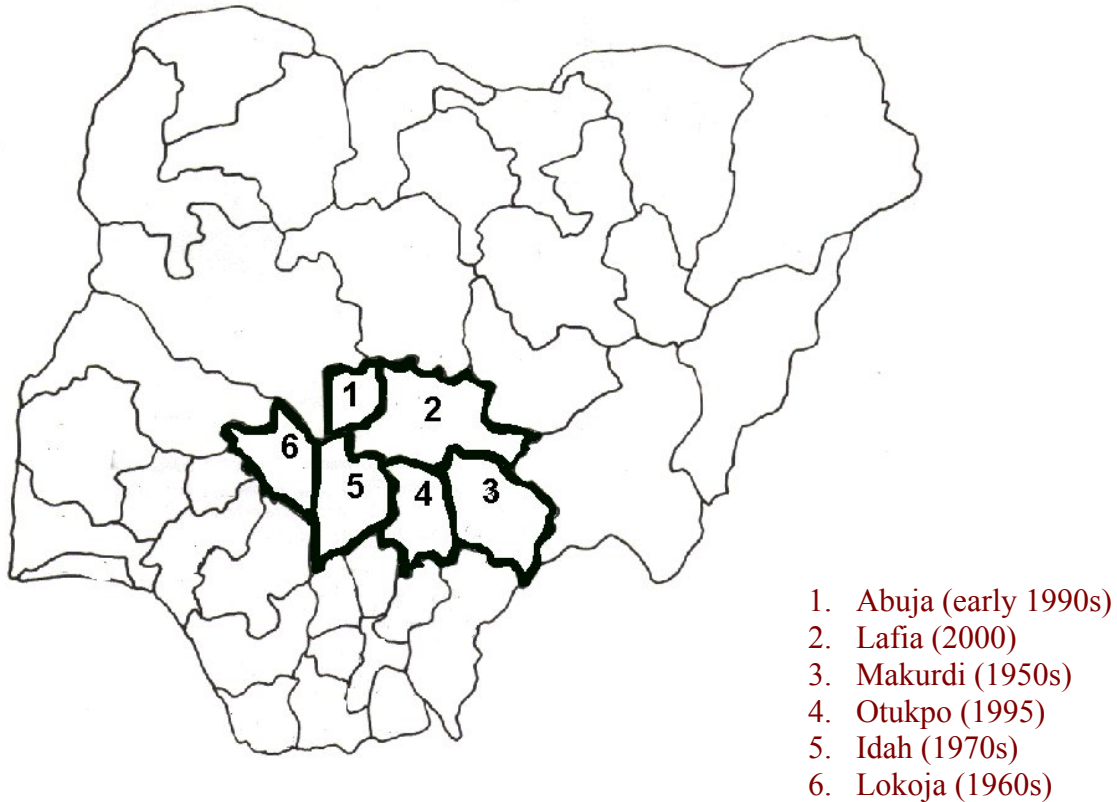
counterparts. As a result each knows the operational context within which the other parts operate.

Figure 5: **Catholic Church hierarchy**

Rome (*Pope*)

|

Country (*Cardinal*)

|

Arch-Diocese/Ecclesiastical Province (*Arch Bishop*)

|

Diocese (*Bishop*)

|

Parish (*Priest*)

|

Laity

A further advantage rests in the potential for exploring the impacts of national environments. The Catholic Church donors in the north are influenced by Catholic teaching as well as national historical, cultural and economic conditions. Even though there are many international development donors, e.g. CARITAS and others based in Rome and elsewhere, some funds for the national-based donors come from the government aid agency of that country. Given this situation it can be hypothesised that there are differences between the donors arising from their national context in terms of priorities and expectations. Arising from this is the issue of partnership between donors and indeed between the field agencies. These are points rarely mentioned in the literature. Catholic-based donors from different countries will have interests that overlap and it is logical to question the extent of coordination of their activities in the interest of making the best use of their individual resources. Does this happen and if not, why? This was the rationale for selecting three Church donors - CAFOD, TROCAIRE and MISEREOR - from England/Wales, Republic of Ireland and Germany respectively. In order to explore the Southern dimension of partnership it was decided to focus on Abuja Ecclesiastical Province of Nigeria, West Africa (*Figure 6*).

Figure 6: **The Abuja Ecclesiastical province, Nigeria.**

1. Abuja (early 1990s)
2. Lafia (2000)
3. Makurdi (1950s)
4. Otukpo (1995)
5. Idah (1970s)
6. Lokoja (1960s)

Catholic-based development agencies: the south (Nigeria)

Nigeria has one of the largest populations of any African country (currently assumed to be 120 million people). It has had a turbulent history with two *coups d'etat* taking place just six years after independence in 1966. These gave rise to a civil war lasting from 1966 to January 1970. Military intervention continued until October 1979 when civilians returned to power. Their tenure lasted four years. The ruling party was re-elected for a second term but the army believed them to be unequal to the task of governance and by the close of 1983 had taken over the reins once more. In the years that followed army overthrew army and military dictatorship was the order of the day until 1999 when democracy was restored. At the time of writing it would appear democracy is the accepted norm. Coups are no longer accepted and there is a growing understanding that the democratic process is the way forward. Still in the early stages much debate and discourse revolves around it with good governance seminars and workshops helping the citizenry to grow more in understanding of what it entails in the Nigerian context.

It is generally assumed that about 30% of the population is Christian, and roughly half is Catholic. There are nine Ecclesiastical Provinces in the country divided between forty nine Catholic dioceses; each is headed by a Bishop. Each Province is led by an Arch Bishop and in one instance a Cardinal. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the latter is called an archdiocese. Abuja Ecclesiastical Province comprises most of the middle belt of Nigeria and is located in the centre of the country. Abuja Province comprises six diocese - Abuja, Jos, Lokoja, Makurdi, Idah and Otukpo. The youngest of the six dioceses is Lafia, created in 2000. Because Abuja is the capital of Nigeria the Arch Diocese of Abuja is known as the Metropolitan.

The Catholic Church development chain in Nigeria has a unique trajectory having much internal variation as there is no obligation for conformity between dioceses. However, because of the universal nature of the institution and the discourse that takes place within it there is a commitment to general policies that address underlying problems at particular times. To ensure the efficient delegation of authority each diocese in Nigeria has a Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) headed by a JDPC coordinator. When the JDPC system was initially introduced in Nigeria in 1970 the number of dioceses was smaller and Liberation Theology was a powerful force for change. In each diocese there is also a Health coordinator whose remit extends to the total health care needs of the diocese. All seek funds from the same Catholic-based donors (and secular ones) for programmes/projects. A programme is a rolling plan over some 3 to 5 years (or more) while a project is a once-off activity such as the building of a borehole or road. Both could be subject to a planning framework. In the interest of greater efficiency and support in health care provision, the three Northern provinces Abuja, Kaduna and Jos are coordinated in an inter-provincial structure. Performance in each diocese depends on longevity, capacity and connections with the potential sources of assistance found mainly in the political and commercial centres in the Federation. Abuja is of course where the Federal ministries and parastatals have their offices and most of the donors and NGOs their headquarters. The diocese comprising a province will differ in terms of their history (some have been created quite recently) and this makes comparisons between them rather complicated.

The unifying link for the coordinators of JDPC and Health is through the Provincial meetings. Here a number of programmes which respond to needs common to all dioceses in the province are planned and coordinated. Abuja province along with some other provinces in the country has an administrative secretary who sees to the smooth execution of programmes and as the title implies does the administration required. The group commits itself to shared activities based on their shared beliefs emanating from Catholic Social teaching, the *raison d'etre* of these programmes. There are of course some commonalities and some dioceses are assisted by more than one donor. Health programmes are also discussed but currently in Abuja it is the inter-provincial programmes network that offers most assistance to dioceses. Substantial aid is available for HIV/AIDS but not all dioceses receive the same help or share common donors. The Health Coordinator system did help donors make choices in selecting dioceses for specific programmes and those with suitable structures in place gained. However by coming together moral support and information are more forthcoming especially for those

newly created dioceses. By being part of a system they can link more easily to new interventions and benefit from the experience of the group. This can hardly be described as a 'bottom up' approach but if the afore mentioned is in progress efforts can be made to enhance local initiatives by being ready to avail of what is on offer.

While the Church is global, its structures reflect and respect local and national geographic divisions and sensitivities as can be seen in the Nigerian Church context where diocesan boundaries reside within state boundaries. It also has to work within the legal frameworks set by the state and Federal Government; the Church's development personnel liaise with Federal, State and Local governments on a regular basis.

In order to explore partnership in greater depth it was decided to focus on Abuja Province. There are a number of reasons for selecting this particular province:

1. Abuja Province encompasses the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria and at least in theory is the best placed of all provinces to have a strong interaction with Federal government.

2. Many aid agencies have their headquarters in Abuja, and again this facilitates an interaction with Abuja Province.

3. Abuja Province has an interesting mix of diocese. They vary in terms of age, size (in terms of Catholic population) and composition, characteristics which could well have a bearing on their partnership with donors. Lafia Diocese, for example, is relatively young and has yet to have the time to establish a 'track record' in development, while Makurdi is much older and well-established. Some dioceses have their headquarters at the state capital (Lokoja, Makurdi) while others for example Idah and Otukpo are far from them. Such conditions could well have an impact in relation to interaction with State government.

4. Abuja province is home to a diocese with one of the oldest and best-established JDPC in Nigeria; this will form the basis of a donor-field agency partnership case study analyzed later in the paper.

Interviews were held with a number of development personnel in Abuja Province, including the Arch-Bishop and Bishops, a number of JDPC and health coordinators as well as provincial personnel. The JDPC coordinator and staff of the diocese selected for the more in-depth analysis later in the paper were also interviewed. Unsurprisingly given that they share the same teaching and operate out of a mutual knowledge of structures etc. the development personnel of Abuja Province have a preference for dealing with Catholic-based donors. They feel there is a mutual understanding. However, while the respondents from Abuja Province generally have no difficulty in regarding their relationships with the Catholic donors as partnership they do acknowledge that they may not always have much influence on donor behaviour.

Catholic-based development agencies: Europe

The rich countries of the North have agencies responsible to their National Conference of Bishops for collecting funds to support evangelical and development initiatives throughout the world. This paper focuses on three such donors:

➢ CAFOD   (England and Wales)

➢ MISEREOR (Germany)

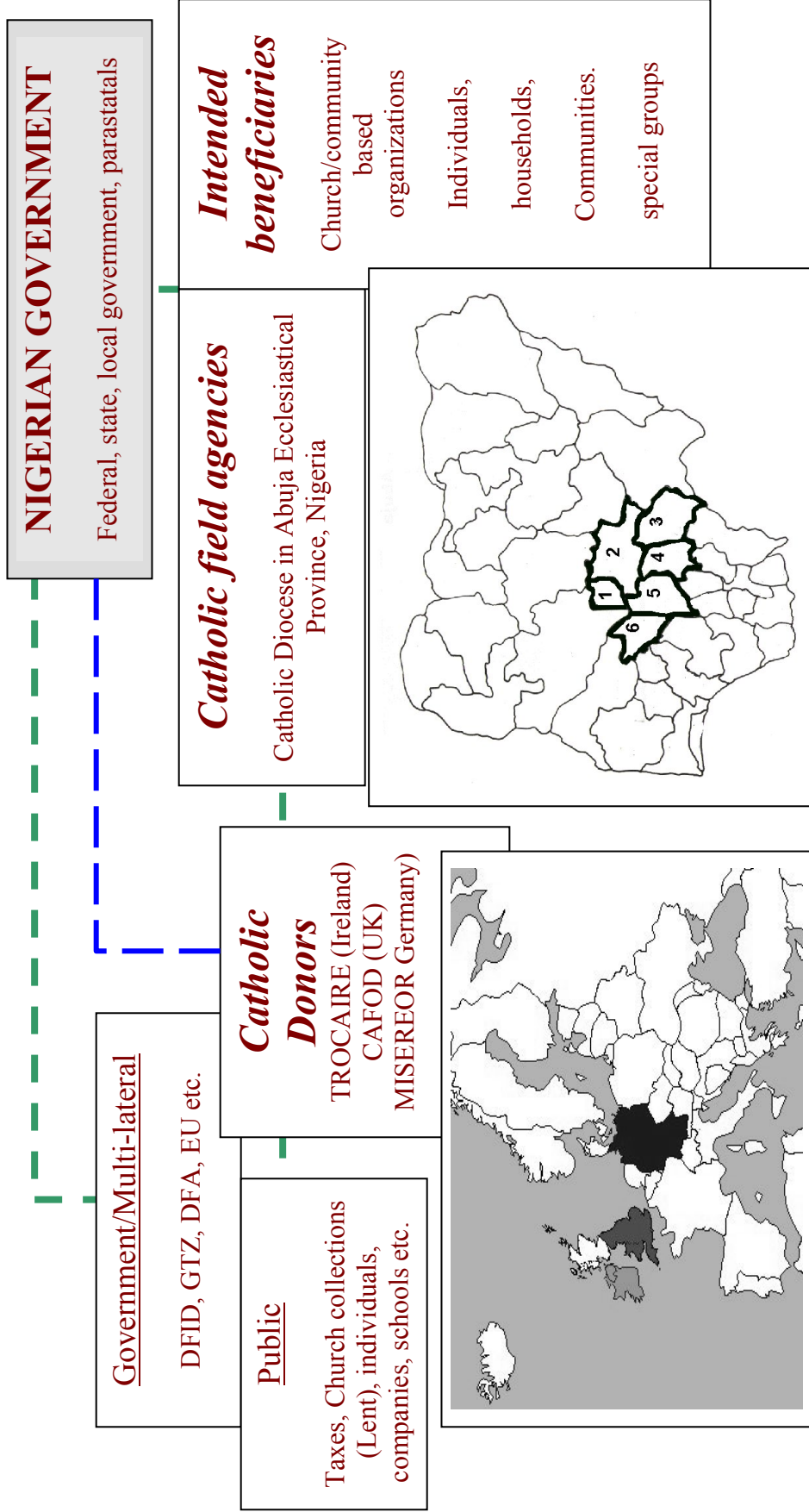➢ TROCAIRE   (Irish Republic and Northern Ireland)

While all three assist activities in Nigeria and Abuja Ecclesiastical Province, they do so to differing degrees and varying ways. They also have to work with their national aid agencies as well as international organizations such as the European Union. This is linked mainly though not exclusively to obtaining funds. The result is a complex web of inter-relationships *(Figure 5)* between CAFOD, MISEREOR, TROCAIRE, the sources of their funds, Abuja Ecclesiastical Province, Nigerian government, its parastatals and, of course, those meant to ultimately benefit from interventions. For this paper representatives of all three donors were interviewed for their views regarding partnership with the diocesan groups in Nigeria and particularly the Abuja Province. They also provided information about their own donors typically the relevant national government aid agencies and other sources such as Church donations.

London based CAFOD, dating from 1962, came into being through combining the initiatives and concerns of the Catholic Women's League and the Union of Catholic Mothers. CAFOD currently has approximately 200 staff working through twelve regional offices in England and Wales. These are well-staffed. Unlike TROCAIRE and MISEREOR these regional offices do not mirror the British diocesan structure though such plans are being discussed. CAFOD has 1,600 volunteers who act as parish contacts (some training and support is provided at what it calls 'Milestone Days'). A new post (Volunteer Support Officer) has been created with a mandate to train and motivate local volunteers. CAFOD targets the Catholic membership of approximately four million baptized Catholics in England and Wales for fundraising purposes

CAFOD has recently devoted time and thought to its 'image' within the Catholic Church and beyond, and how this has a bearing on partnership. This was driven by a perceived need for the reinvigoration of their vision, mission and values. It considers the following two items to be the most significant elements driving this change:

1. a move away from its earlier use of an image of a starving child to show people at their best.
2. a renaming of the organization calling itself 'Catholic Agency' rather than 'Catholic Fund'. This was in part influenced by their desire to maintain professional relationships with DFID and the EU.

Figure 5: **Part of the Catholic Church development chain linking three European donors to partners in Abuja Ecclesiastical Province, Nigeria. Lines indicate an interaction in terms of a flow of resource or information.**

NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT

Federal, state, local government, parastatals

Intended beneficiaries

Church/community based organizations

Individuals,

households,

Communities.

special groups

Catholic field agencies

Catholic Diocese in Abuja Ecclesiastical Province, Nigeria

Catholic Donors

TROCAIRE (Ireland)
CAFOD (UK)
MISEREOR Germany)

Government/Multi-lateral

DFID, GTZ, DFA, EU etc.

Public

Taxes, Church collections (Lent), individuals, companies, schools etc.

Of the three agencies CAFOD was the most liberal in its use of the term 'partner'. They "*work through all kinds of partner, and go where the need is greatest*". Catholic-based partners are preferable, but those interviewed stressed having strong relationships with non-Catholic groups such as Islamic Relief. CAFOD includes among its donors DFID, private groups and other institutions, and sees itself as working in "*impassioned relationships*" rather than just being a development donor transferring resources to others. In the past relationships between CAFOD and DFID were described as "*rosy and based on trust*", but CAFOD feels that this relationship has changed. CAFOD now has what it and DFID refer to as a "*partnership agreement*" (Wallace, 2003) amounting to £8 million over a four year period. Prior to this CAFOD received a block grant from DFID. The "*partnership agreement*" is negotiated between the two partners, with DFID insisting upon components that match its agenda, such as the need to demonstrate impact. It was suggested to CAFOD that they were now a 'sub-contractor' for DFID, and while those present did not disagree with this statement they preferred the term 'broker'.

CAFOD displays an obvious keenness to be involved with its Southern-based partners at the grassroots level. As a result it has offices in Nairobi (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), Harare (Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi) and Addis Ababa (joint with TROCAIRE). CAFOD also shares offices with Christian Aid in Sierra Leone/Liberia. These locations were chosen as they were the most significant in terms of CAFOD programmes at the time. Applications for funding go to local offices and only to London if there is no local office. Besides having these regional centres for decision making on projects CAFOD also has programme officers based in the field who help implement programmes. There is such an office in Jos. There is some cooperation between staff at the offices, but seemingly not to the extent that it could be termed a partnership according to the criteria given earlier in the paper.

When dealing with funding applications from field agencies CAFOD does use a variant of a planning framework though not considered by them as vital. There is a feeling that CAFOD has now to be more demanding than previously in determining indicators of impact, driven in part by its partnership with DFID and the EU. However, while a proposal coming from those applying for aid from CAFOD does not have to follow a rigid logframe format all relevant information required by CAFOD is obtained within the application. This information collection takes on a great urgency when it comes to reporting as accountability transparency and responsibility are hallmarks of the current agreement.

TROCAIRE, the youngest of the three agencies, was founded in 1973. It is also the smallest with about 165 staff in total, including field offices and its office in Northern Ireland. The head office in Maynooth (near Dublin) has about 75 staff. Unlike CAFOD who rely on volunteers, TROCAIRE has a priest appointed by the Bishop in each diocese who acts as TROCAIRE'S representative. He also looks after collections from local schools. Commitment to the cause varies depending on his experience and attitude. TROCAIRE does track the fund raising performance of each diocese in Ireland as TROCAIRE staff visit parishes during the Lenten campaign each year. Most TROCAIRE staff would view themselves as having an obligation to fundraise for the organization. .In

2003 they visited 90 parishes out of approximately 1100 in the country. During the visits the staff appeals on behalf of TROCAIRE and report progress. Of its total income, about 65% comes from public donations and collections, the rest from the Irish government in one form or another. Tax rebates are available for donations.

TROCAIRE has a strong commitment to development education in Ireland. Indeed it is stipulated in its constitution that 20% of its core resources has to be used to educate the Irish people as to the causes of poverty and injustice. Trocaire has taken a unique stance here as no other Irish NGO, or indeed any of the Catholic NGOs in Europe, has a similar mandate set out in its constitution. Because TROCAIRE was founded later than many of the other Bishops-Conference agencies in Europe its staff feel that they gained much from the experience of their counterparts.

Like CAFOD, TROCAIRE freely employs the term 'partner' for all those it works with but at the same time there is an acknowledgement that there are different types of partner. It is noticeable that TROCAIRE has a greater reticence to refer to government donors in particular as partners. The term 'core partner' is used primarily for southern field agencies that have a strong and long term relationship with TROCAIRE. While TROCAIRE was far less willing to consider government aid agencies as 'partners' it is interesting that the latter do see TROCAIRE as a partner. TROCAIRE feels that its relationship with government aid is not a partnership given that TROCAIRE has little influence over what the Irish government aid programme implements in the south. Compared with CAFOD there appears to be a greater sense that TROCAIRE does not want to be co-opted into the government agenda.

TROCAIRE receives a block grant from the Irish aid agency every three years amounting to approximately 30% of TROCAIRE's budget. It enjoys wide latitude as to how it can spend the money as generally there is no interference from government. There have been exceptions, and TROCAIRE cited recent pressure from the Irish aid agency for them to become involved in Eastern Europe. This was successfully resisted. As TROCAIRE has an office in Northern Ireland it has access to DFID funding. TROCAIRE also acts as a broker between its southern partners, the EU and Irish Aid. When acting in this capacity TROCAIRE receives some 7 to 9% of the total project costs for its services if the application is successful. In that sense TROCAIRE acts as a broker rather than a partner. Like CAFOD, it has field offices in the south and in 2004 each had a Euro 7,000 annual discretionary fund for project funding. There are as well programme officers who help with the implementation of projects. TROCAIRE field officers were in part a response to the decentralisation and devolution of funding powers by the EU to country offices. TROCAIRE has a three year strategic plan for each country produced in consultation with a sample of partners in the South (a questionnaire is sent to them and meetings held). Proposals not complying with these arrangements will not usually get funded.

MISEREOR, based in Aachen, Germany, was founded in 1958 and is the oldest and largest of the three agencies with the greatest staff strength and biggest budget. Some 40% of its income comes from the Lenten campaign, a change from the time when MISEREOR was first established and public funding was 100%. Like the others, it

targets the Catholic membership for donations but now feels the public is more willing to give for emergency relief and children than long-term projects. In Germany donations to the Church are subject to tax relief (up to 10% of income tax can be offset).

One issue highlighted by MISEREOR but not TROCAIRE or CAFOD is the presence of several 'competing' Catholic agencies in the country, all collecting funds. This would appear to be a more significant issue in Germany than in Ireland or England/Wales. The MISEREOR respondents felt that while there are yearly coordination meetings and campaigns are staggered there is inevitably some competition between them. However, although there has been talk of merging these Catholic-based organizations in Germany it was also felt that competition can be beneficial and the multi-agency approach does maximise income rather than limit options which would be the inevitable result of a one-agency approach. However, it was also felt many people probably don't know the difference between them. It is interesting to note that despite all these organizations being Catholic-based MISEREOR did not use the term partnership, preferring instead to use 'competitor'. Nevertheless, it would view the protestant churches and non-Catholic NGO as its main competitors although it occasionally has joint campaigns with them.

Of the three agencies MISEREOR was perhaps the most rigorous in its use of the term 'partner'. It does not see its donors as 'partners', and goes so far as saying that many of them would not want to be regarded as partners. Instead, it prefers to use the term in connection with those it works with in the South. In parallel with this more rigorous interpretation it can be noted that MISEREOR is arguably the best placed of the three in that it gains income from a 'Church Tax' (set at 9% of income tax) collected by the state. Money goes to the Catholic dioceses in Germany (Euro 4 billion in 2003/04) based on the population declaring itself in tax returns as 'Catholic'. Each diocese passes a share to MISEREOR (Euro 11 million in 2002).

In addition, MISEREOR obtains a block grant direct from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and not via aid agencies such as GTZ. Some 60% of it's funding in 2003 came from this source. The MISEREOR perspective is that there are no strings attached to this block grant. Indeed, it's relative independence from German government agencies has some interesting repercussions. GTZ, in line with a number of government aid agencies in the developed world such as DFID, has sought to promote relationships with southern-based NGOs, including the Catholic Church development groups, as these are regarded as viable and effective alternatives to funding southern governments. However, MISEREOR disagreed with GTZ seeking out relationships with southern NGOs feeling that the role of GTZ ought to be to work directly with governments in the south. MISEREOR ran something of a campaign requesting that GTZ disengage from working with southern NGOs and this has apparently been successful.

In addition to MISEREOR's rigorous view regarding donors not being partners, there exists a more refined sense as to what partnership means in practice., It does not for example have 'programme officers' based in Africa as do CAFOD and TROCAIRE because it sees this as conflicting with "*true partnership*". It does have regional offices with staff (Harare, Addis Ababa, Kinshasa, Burkina Fasu, Cameroon, Chad), but these do

not get directly involved in projects and act only in an "*advisory and guidance capacity*" (termed a "*strategic orientation*"). Interestingly, joint offices in the south with either CAFOD or TROCAIRE are not seen by MISEREOR as necessarily a desirable option, although there is an acknowledged need to meet on a regular basis.

MISEREOR focuses on programmes (more long term activities) rather than projects. Projects are seen as catalysts for change, but unlike some other Catholic donors (without naming them) MISEREOR has been careful not to become too project orientated. It also feels that there are problems with the planning framework approach for programmes/projects, and prefers instead to use "*dialogue and guidelines*". Therefore a certain vagueness is described as being acceptable; although they recognize the downside of not being so 'strict' could result in money being wasted.

As of 2003 a statement ('Orientation Paper') is produced by MISEREOR for each country every three years following meetings and dialogue in that country. This sets out the priorities for the relationship between MISEREOR and the southern field agencies. For example, a memorandum of understanding has been created with the Catholic Church in Nigeria (discussions finalised in November 2003 and signed in March 2004). From MISEREOR's perspective the need for this has been driven by a number of factors:

➢ growing indigenization of the Catholic Church's development structures

➢ rise of democracy in Nigeria since the late 1990s

➢ growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria

➢ need for the African Department of MISEREOR to have a corporate identity (an expression of what it does)

The issue of indigenization highlighted by MISEREOR warrants special mention as it will appear again in this paper. Catholic missionaries have a long history in Nigeria, arriving first towards the end of the 19th century. Many of them were European. As a result, missionaries have tended to play a significant role within the JDPC and health groups of the dioceses and provinces between the 1960s and 1990s. Gradually the missionaries have pulled out of the country as Nigerian priests, brothers and sisters have taken their place. By the turn of the 20th century there were few expatriates (non-Nigerians) in development positions in Nigeria. Indeed, in the view of the Arch-Bishop of Abuja Province one of the major problems faced by Catholic development agencies in the south is not so much the increasing demands for accountability from northern partners but the need to replace an essentially volunteer workforce (mostly expatriate missionaries) with indigenous people of equal caliber but paid on a salary basis. This requires a whole new approach backed up with recurring funding or core funding rather than a reliance on one-off projects.

It also needs to be noted that indigenization has been something of a priority in general within Nigeria at specific points in its history. The Nigerian government released an Indigenization Decree in the early 1980s requiring that for all companies, foreign and Nigerian, headed by an expatriate executive they must have a minimum of two Nigerian deputies.

The realisation of partnership in Catholic Church development chains

Given the complex web of relationships briefly outlined above, how can the Catholic-based development chain be analysed in terms of its partnership? At one level this may appear straightforward. For example, the long-lasting nature of the relationships between the donors and field agencies should allow many of the Brinkerhoff partnership evaluation indicators to be applied. Have the partnerships been successful? Similarly one can look for mindset/skillset enablers and evidence for an exercise of power using the Dahl and Critical Discourse analyses. However, it is our contention that this apparent ease of analysis can be illusionary. One of the reasons for this is the complexity involved even with relatively few defined actors as presented here, can make for an over-simplified analysis. We will illustrate this point by taking the relationship between just one diocese in the Province and just one of the three Catholic-based donors.

The diocese and the donor that form the heart of the story will remain anonymous in order to avoid any misunderstanding or prejudice. From here on in they will be referred to as the 'diocesan development agency (DDA)' and the 'donor'. These rather stark titles should not in any way detract from the more charismatic characteristics of both groups; indeed neither would see themselves as just a 'donor' or a 'development agency'. The labels are chosen solely to keep the analysis from becoming too wordy. The DDA takes on the role of JDPC (but not the official title – hence we have not used it here) of one of the Abuja Provinces diocese. While the mandate has remained constant, its form, function and official title have changed during the period covered by the story, but DDA is a useful umbrella term. Also, while the terms 'diocese' and DDA could perhaps be seen as interchangeable (the Bishop heads both) we will keep the distinction between the two in place in order to reflect the fact that the DDA is to all intents and purposes a self-managing organization existing within the diocesan structure. The coordinator of the DDA is in effect the JDPC coordinator of the diocese, and there is also a separate coordinator for health. The period involved dates from 1970 to the present (some 35 years). What happens if we apply the four schools of thought already highlighted to the partnership experience of these two groups? What conclusions do they help us reach – if any?

We will begin with a story – a narrative of a relationship between the donor and the diocese 'owning' the DDA. It is only one and even part of the many that could be told, and it is a story reflecting only a few person's response in the relationship – indeed one of those helping to tell the story is the only one to stay in the same post throughout most of the years and hence in the best position to provide a time-line. That person is the DDA

coordinator of the chosen diocese. Other actors involved have come and gone, and some have died. But given this limitation it is still a story rich in insight and provides a basis for the application of the four approaches to analysis.

In this particular diocese donors did not enter the scene for many years. The donor at the heart of the story was among the first to be contacted by the DDA in 1972 when it provided a motorcycle for a local teacher helping with data collection for social analysis. Prior to 1972 no donor, Catholic or any other, was involved in providing funds. In the early 1970s it was only concerned with investigating what the local population, especially women, saw as problems they would like to solve for themselves. The parish was the traditional unit of operation, and the parish priests (most of whom were expatriate missionaries at the time) helped support local activities. The desire of the DDA in the early 1970s was to steer clear of donors as much as possible, including Catholic-based ones. In the words of the coordinator it felt that "*the more you could do for yourself the more control you had over the situation*". Despite this intention some members of the wider community felt they were doing as much as they could for themselves within their restricted resources. Without 'bringing money' they felt progress would be greatly retarded. No one could deny there was a scarcity of cash and it was clear that many were in debt to moneylenders who charged exorbitant rates of interest. Agriculture was the only means of income for the people of the diocese and from which some capital might be accumulated if there was some means of improving livelihoods. But this was difficult given the subsistence nature of the production systems then in place. Technical assistance was sought through the local Ministry of Agriculture, but it was only when this route proved inadequate that the DDA approached Gorta - a secular donor linked to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and not Catholic-based. Gorta's main emphasis was on the relief of famine and its causes. Gorta were happy to assist with funding towards seed and other basic technical components. It was also happy with the results of this initiative and as far as the field agency was concerned there was no perceived attempt on its part to negotiate with its staff on what to do or how to do it. Running concurrently with this technical assistance was the investigation of the possibilities of enhancing local structures – the traditional rotational savings structures. Gorta soon provided start-up capital for a local credit scheme based on the indigenous savings schemes already in place.

The first Catholic-based donor of the diocese, and the one whose relationship with the DDA forms the core of this story, first entered the scene with the establishment of what is now known as the JDPC Coordinator network in 1970/71. The earliest assistance from the donor was for the technical component of the agricultural development project – notably the provision of salaries for local technical staff and inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides. Although the assistance wasn't huge the donor did request for an evaluation of the DDA as early as 1976 (some 3 years after their assistance began). Although the DDA had no control over this decision it was not antagonistic to the idea and saw it as a positive contribution integral to the development process. The evaluation acknowledged the gallant effort being made but recommended that more personnel and structures were needed to maintain the momentum. The donor responded by providing more support with salaries and basic facilities such as office buildings and essential equipment.

A further evaluation of the DDA instigated by the donor took place six years later in 1982. The DDA was less supportive of this second evaluation because it coincided with the close of a major World Bank project within which the DDA had inevitably become a significant player during the late 1970s and early 1980s and was in the process of divorcing itself from this project. It was also a time of great political and economic upheaval in Nigeria as Structural Adjustment was due to be implemented in the mid 1980s. Negotiations were well underway and the future upheaval was preempted in day to day events. An apt example was that many people who expected to be part of the work force for many more years were losing their jobs. Therefore the DDA felt it was an inappropriate time for an evaluation as there were many changes taking place within the organization and any recommendations could be outdated by the time the report was published. But there was no negotiation. Understandably, the outcome was rather confusing as events did overtake most of the findings. However, it did result in a series of three year rolling plans with continued core funding (mostly in the form of salaries, administration and technical inputs) with the donor. In retrospect it was almost an idyllic situation for the DDA as it could plan realistically with its groups what needed to be done over reasonable lengths of time without constantly chasing funds. Donor staff visited regularly over these years exerting no pressure for any particular activity.

However, there were some less positive forces at play. Since the 1970s, and even before the projects had taken off, the donor had been raising a series of concerns relating mainly to the indigenization of the DDA which since its inception in 1970 had been led by an expatriate missionary. As is usual with such situations the congregation concerned (based in Europe) did have a plan for a replacement with a local member of the same order when someone suitable became available. The expatriate who set up the DDA would then move on to another country and plans were already in train for this move. This is the missionary vocation. In the late 1970s a possible local counterpart was identified and in training following a two year apprenticeship with the DDA. However, this appeared to be much too slow and ponderous for the donor despite the fact that as a Catholic-based organization its personnel were familiar with the way in which missionary orders work. At the donors insistence a lay person was also sent for training with a view to taking on the role of coordinator. As well as creating an obvious basis for confusion as to who would become coordinator – the donor-sponsored lay person or the local member of the religious order – so great was the pressure for immediate change despite repeated warnings from the DDA that adequate time and thought were not taken to select a lay candidate or providing the necessary salary and conditions of employment.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that the donor pressure for indigenization was counter-productive. While the order tried to pursue its standard practice and recalled the expatriate coordinator with a view to starting up projects elsewhere – South Africa was a possibility given the severe needs at that delicate time in the country's history and the desperate need for development – the individual had to be recalled to Nigeria on numerous occasions to continue the work for the DDA as it was simply not possible to find a lay replacement willing to work at the salary levels and employment conditions provided by the diocese. The position of the local member of the religious order also

became confused and for a time it looked as though the order would have to pull out of the DDA altogether and reassign the individual concerned. In retrospect the interference did not help the overall indigenization process and hurried choices were made which retarded rather than accelerated the process. Apart from generating a degree of uncertainty and turbulence which impacted negatively on the development work the whole process had to commence from scratch many years later.

Interference from the donor in the affairs of the DDA took another form in the early 1990s. By this time the indigenization pressure had more or less ceased as it became clear to all that the result of the previous interference had been counterproductive. The original coordinator had to be put back in place to steer the DDA back onto an even keel and the process of indigenization had to begin again. However, there had also been changes in donor personnel and it would appear that the lessons of the past had not been learnt. In the early 1990s the donor was of the opinion that the DDA needed help with appropriate technologies especially in relation to agriculture. Some donor personnel were of the opinion that the DDA would benefit from sharing experiences with other Catholic development agencies it funded in East Africa. The DDA in Abuja Province had little choice in any of these arrangements and felt obliged for many years to carry out trials investigating the effectiveness of these technologies. Given that the technologies were adapted for very different socio-economic and environmental conditions in East Africa it did not come as a surprise when they proved to be futile and ineffective in the West African scenario. It was clear from the outset to many within the DDA that successful adoption was unlikely and this was relayed to the donor. In retrospect it has to be said that the pressure from the donor was not as severe as it had been over indigenization in the 1980s, but so sensitized was the DDA to such pressure that it deemed it necessary to continue with trials long after the 'recommendation' was made.

The third donor evaluation took place in 1997 and was again at its instigation. Ironically the team contracted to conduct the evaluation had great difficulty in communicating the largely positive results to the donor! Neither was the DDA invited to discuss the finings with the donor, despite numerous communications from the DDA and indeed the evaluation team requesting such a meeting. Though they did not openly declare their intentions, it was clear that irrespective of the evaluation report the donor had reconsidered its relationship with the DDA. Rumors circulated within the development community in Nigeria; did the donor want to disengage from its long partnership with the DDA? Intentions eventually became clearer in 1998 when core funding was cut by 50% without any discussion. This proved to be the unkindest cut of all in the long relationship between the donor and DDA, as uncertainty regarding its future resulted. The view of the DDA was that an open plan for disengagement, an exit strategy, would have been perfectly acceptable but it was not afforded such a courtesy. This could have led to the total collapse of the DDA except for its internal resilience and inner resources which drove it to widen its income source base. Indeed the view of the DDA is that the overall outcome of this experience was positive. It had learned many hard lessons; the first being that it needed to get back to its original philosophy to avoid dependency on outsiders or on any one group. Genuine partnership has to be robust enough to face facts jointly. This was eventually the case and with fresh dialogue it became clear the new form of

partnership would be different. A new beginning was made at the advent of the third millennium. The donor base was widened to include other Catholic-based and secular organizations A totally new programme on infrastructure replaced the agricultural intervention though of course this programme is the logical follow up to this given that inaccessible land is the only place where productive farming can now take place.

The final chapter of the story – the preent day scenario - is more positive. The donor has since reengaged with the DDA and the relationship at the moment is far more positive.

So what does this experience related by one side of the partnership impart about the nature of the relationship? The story can be interpreted using all four schools of thought summarized in *Figure 4.*

1. *Power relations*

It is obvious that the experience narrated above can be mapped onto the analysis of power suggested by Lister (2000). The donor had the upper hand in that it had control over finance i.e. the base of power. It also had the means of power through its own collections as well as the scope of power (evaluation and communication). The DDA allowed itself to become dependent upon the donor for core funding and thereby allowed an exacerbation of the power gradient. Both donor and DDA together allowed a substantial differential in power to exist and with it came the exercise of the power. The DDA did not have to do this – it purposefully chose that course of action beginning with its first involvement with the donor in the 1970s. Worthy of note is that the donor was only too pleased to have the DDA as a partner, a point illustrated by its increasingly financial commitment during the late 1970s and 1980s.

The power differential became increasingly tangible during the 1980s and 1990s, albeit with two different foci. In the 1980s it was rapid indigenization while in the 1990s it was the provision of technical assistance to the overall agricultural programme which it thought might benefit from an East African experience. The climax to this exercise of power by the donor was when it unilaterally decided on the sudden removal of most funding for the DDA. There was no discussion with the DDA who had no input into the process other than discussions with the evaluation team. Dialogue was conspicuously absent. Rumors abounded.

Thus the picture which emerges from such an analysis of power appears to be stark and hardly one of partnership in any true sense of the term. The donor dominated the relationship and the DDA was almost subservient.

2. Discourse

If the relationship is explored through the presence of discourse then the picture is slightly different. The view of the DDA is that much encouragement was provided by the donor over the 35 years through visits and staff exchange sent by the donor for orientation to development. During this time there was exchange of ideas but at other key times discourse was patchy and inconsistent. The last evaluation provides the best example of the latter. The donor's abrupt disengagement from core funding was not explained and from the DDA's perspective was difficult to understand given that the outcome of the evaluation seemed to be so positive. Indeed even the evaluation team seemed to have difficulty getting to meet with the donor who, after all, had paid for it and provided the terms of reference! While the donor probably felt that it had good reasons for disengaging, and may also have felt under no obligation to communicate with the DDA for whatever reason, in the eyes of the DDA this was a serious failing for those committed to Gospel values.

But there were other times – indeed perhaps the majority of the 35 years - which were characterized by discussion and dialogue. Exchange visits were quite frequent and for certain aspects of the DDA's work the donor was willing to listen and offer advice. In a sense discourse was compartmentalized, the donor realized some issues, perhaps the majority over the 35 years, were open to discourse while others were not. Part of this was obviously due to the nature of the issue, While some were clearly 'non-negotiable' in the eyes of the donor there were other reasons. A certain detached attitude was tangible at identifiable times, which may well be that of a particular desk officer. During more than three decades the donor had three different desk officers for Nigeria and numerous other changes throughout the organization as a whole while despite the turbulence the DDA had the same coordinator. Development fashions also changed during that time. Thus it is understandable that agendas and attitudes would change, and so would the basis for discourse.

Therefore should an analysis of power remain in isolation then a misleading and unjust portrayal of the overall relationship would emerge. The exercise of power which emerged at distinct times corresponded with a collapse in discourse. For other periods, indeed for perhaps the most of the time, there was discourse on a wide variety of issues and both partners valued the views of the other.

3. Inter-dependence

At one level there was no joint awareness of tensions between DDA and donor during the period when pressure was applied for indigenization. The DDA felt that it tried hard to convey the problems as it perceived them. The DDA coordinator was not in a position to appoint their own successor and negotiations if required by the donor ought to have been negotiated differently. It led to much embarrassment at the time and in retrospect most of the problems experienced since could be attributed to lack of adequate discourse brought

about by donor's lack of willingness to listen. The complexities of engaging with different religious Missionary groups were not fully grasped. Of course the overarching problem of communication within Nigeria and beyond was underestimated. The nearest functional telephone was an eight hour drive away from the diocese. Change of desk officers and other staff at the donor severely limited institutional memory and the apparent pressure of work in the offices of the donor all took their toll. Change in donor polices rarely became common knowledge. Therefore neither the 'mindset' or 'skillset' components of Bantham et al. (2003) for good discourse existed consistently over the 35 years. There was simply no basis for a discussion until, in 1999 the DDA's coordinator took the initiative to request and obtain an appointment with the relevant donor desk officer at the time. A face-to-face meeting led to a truce. The situation changed and a new meeting of minds replaced the tensions. Non-defensive listening returned. There was no need to discuss the past or the reasons why tensions existed.

Again at first sight this maps neatly onto the analysis based on power. However, in the overall picture of inter-dependence the situation is more complex than the narrative would imply. As already discussed, much depended upon personal relationships between primarily the DDA co-coordinator and the donor desk officers. They did vary over the 35 years. At times the donor clearly valued its relationship with the DDA, as evidenced by the increased funding during the 1970s and 1980s, and both parties showed good evidence of both mindset and skillset attributes conducive to partnership. Both organizations maintained their identity, although as we have seen there was an increasing dependency of the DDA on the donor for funds. But the donor also needed the DDA as a 'flag ship' for its activities in Nigeria and often quoted the DDA as one of its success stories not just in Nigeria but in Africa. It sent many people to visit the DDA to get ideas as to how it organized and managed local initiatives. However, communication problems did not help and neither did the change in desk officers. Relationships between successive field officers might also have a role in how they behaved towards the DDA. At key times during the history of the relationship these mindsets and skillsets were absent. Thus inter-dependence varied considerably over the 35 years, and at times the mindset and skillset attributes which existed were over-ridden.

As for institutionalization of mindset and skillset this simply did not occur. There was no institutional memory at the donor, and each desk officer came in with his/her agenda and personal attributes. Discussions that had taken place with previous officers may as well not have occurred. Ironically much of this was apparent because the DDA did have the same coordinator throughout. If the coordinator had also been changed then institutional memory would have failed on both sides and neither would have been any the wiser.

4. Functional / Performance

During the 35 years of the relationship both organizations maintained their own distinctive identity – there was no attempt by the donor to take over the DDA or generally to tell it what to do at an operational level. Though interest waxed and waned at times

interference did not go beyond their efforts to promote indigenization (during the 1980s) and inappropriate technologies during the 1990s. When the donor decided to disengage from the DDA then mutuality was severely strained. Therefore in Brinkerhoff's (2002) categorization shown in Figure 3 the relationship was not one of 'contracting, 'extension' or 'co-option'. It was one of partnership.

In mechanical terms the partnership between DDA and donor was highly successful.

- ➢ A total of 10,000 farmer councils were established across the diocese

- ➢ 25 rain harvesting projects

- ➢ 12 bridges and culverts

- ➢ Was one of the major donors for a hospital of 100 beds

- ➢ Helped provide a water supply for a midwifery school

- ➢ Trained numerous hospital personnel (lab technicians, anesthetists etc.)

- ➢ Funded training and a primary health care programme which reached some 20 villages for 15 years

- ➢ Helped with office buildings, archives and stores

- ➢ Helped establish a 20 Ha seed multiplication farm in the diocese. This is also used for training and research.

- ➢ The on-farm research programme has proven so successful that the improved crop varieties promoted by the implementer now cover vast tracts in the region.

A major contribution has decidedly been made to food security. In that sense both partners met their objectives in quite a sustainable manner. The farmer council organization is self- generating and is currently in a second and third generation of farmer group programmes. The donor has not funded these latter programmes but its investment lives on as interventions have been founded on the original network and framework which it generously sponsored when such ideas were novel. The evaluation of 1997 highlights this.

The decisions to engage with these activities were first taken by the DDA following extensive discussions with the communities it serves and then put to the donor. A healthy discourse took place, and changes were made where appropriate and where both parties agreed they would be desirable. With the exception of the insistence to promote East

African technologies during the 1990s there was no attempt by the donor to impose decisions on the DDA in any of these activities.

Thus the analysis based on the Brinkerhoff model shows the relationship between the implementer and donor as a highly successful partnership.

So what picture do these four analyses play in understanding the relationship between the DDA and the donor? This is far more complex than it would appear at first sight from the narrative presented by the DDA. An initial analysis would suggest that a Lister (2000) approach of looking at the base-means-scope of power clearly suggests that the donor had exercised its power over the DDA. But the supposed 'victim' in this – the DDA – admitted that it had allowed this to happen and would not let it happen again. Also this exercise of power occurred only a few times in the 35 year history of the relationship (although admittedly these were key) which for the most part showed signs of being a true discourse of equals. Much was done as a result and the roll call of successful interventions is impressive. The other extreme – an analysis or efficacy as promoted by Brinkerhoff – yields a picture of a model partnership.

In a long-term relationship such as that represented by the DDA and donor it is to be expected that 'ups and downs' will occur. It must be remembered that this relationship was played out in one of the most economically and politically turbulent countries in Africa and took place over a period that included structural adjustment with that ensuing upheaval and international isolation. In itself this is hardly conducive to the sustainability of any relationship between a Nigeria-based partner and one overseas. Add to this the turbulence in the Catholic Church and indeed in development as the emphasis shifted between 'top down' neo-liberal to more participatory approaches then it is not so surprising that analysis of the partnership yields different pictures at different times, after all 35 years is a long time.

Are the four analytical frameworks appropriate for such timescales? If each is taken in isolation and applied to the 35 years then the answer has to be no. What is required for such relationships is a more flexible approach which allows for an analysis of power, discourse, inter-dependence and efficacy to be applied. When that is done a true partnership emerges which had its times of discord and which resulted in a unilateral divorce. It lasted longer than many marriages, and when it broke down completely it took less than two years for the ex-partners to rediscover their appreciation for the next and renew their relationship. While the DDA is adamant that it will no longer allow itself to become so dependent on a single donor again, it clearly values its past relationship with the donor despite the occasional hiccup. Similarly the donor clearly re-learnt the value of its past relationship with the DDA. Perhaps the best sign of all in true partnership is when both partners realize that they miss the other.

Conclusions

The Catholic Church development chain provides much information with regard to views on partnership. Even from this preliminary analysis centred on but three of the European donors and one Ecclesiastical Province from Nigeria it is clear that much complexity exist. All three donors share the same underlying and deeply-held set of beliefs, and all of them remarked upon the advantages they have in working with those who have similar outlooks and structures. There are ties linking all the Church components of Figure 2, and as such there is a real depth of feeling, not just a transient set of relationships that come and go. This must be a significant advantage, and helps to invoke a real sense of partnership. These are the re-requisites and success factors of Brinkerhoff in Figure 4. The 'partnership champion' here is perhaps the best one of all; the sense of being part of one body.

All three donors use the term partner for those with whom they work in the south, although they do acknowledge working with some more than others. CAFOD in particular stressed that it does have partners outside the Catholic Church, and what mattered for them was getting the job done. All three expressed the importance of trust and confidence and while they acknowledge that they have the resources to disburse there is a sense of 'sharing power' and commitment to their partners.

Yet there were differences. MISEREOR was the most rigorous in how it applied the term partner. They did not see their donors (including government aid agencies) as partners and nether did they think these wanted to be regarded as partners. Their engagement with southern partners reflected a sense of distinctiveness in how they regard the relationship, and pointed out how this differed from other Catholic donors. CAFOD was at the other end of the spectrum, and had no difficulty in describing their relationship with DFID as a partnership. But what is behind these differing positions? Part of the answer is no doubt related to the relative power of the government aid agency expressed in term of the mode of disbursement rather than the amount of resource. DFID does not give a block grant but negotiates an agreement with CAFOD on terms that are comfortable for both. The relationship is referred to as a partnership by both agencies, but there is a power factor here. DFID requires tightly defined planning frameworks and the contracts are closely regulated. This applies to all NGOs working with DFID and not just CAFOD (Wallace, 2003). In contrast MISEREOR has secure (if declining) funding from the Church tax collected by government, and the block grant it receives from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation. TROCAIRE is somewhere in the middle, but clearly sceptical of regarding its relationship with government as a partnership.

Both CAFOD and TROCAIRE had similar presences in the south, with regional offices and programme officers that helped with project implementation if southern partners so desire. This differed markedly from the MISEREOR position. While this would imply at least some differences in the 'partnership practice' of Figure 4 all obviously have their advantages. This opens up some of the subjectivity that must inevitably pervade the indicators raised by the Brinkerhoff framework. Another example is that while all three donors ask partners to signify what it is they intend to do with resources, the formats are

slightly different. MISEREOR would appear to be the most flexible, followed by TROCAIRE and CAFOD. The latter say they use a 'variant' of the logframe, but softened to make it feel less mechanical. It is known that other Catholic donors are more committed to the use of the logframe, and while MISEREOR are critical of this they acknowledge that this could mean that some of the resources they allocate are wasted.

Should these members of the same family work together more closely? Surely there could be benefits to this? While there is a coordinating body for these donors this was not seen as being highly relevant. Indeed there was an expressed feeling that a stronger coordination, or even merger, would not necessarily be in the interest of the donor community or recipients. MISEREOR expressed this quite strongly, particularly with regard to sharing offices in the south where one would think that there could be significant resource savings. It was also interesting to hear how MISEREOR sees its relationship with other Catholic agencies collecting funds in Germany as competitive rather than being a partnership, and why in practice competition is positive rather than negative.

Of the three organizations the two that had given more thought to the possibility of working more closely were TROCAIRE and CAFOD, but even here the relationship between them did not progress much beyond a regular coordination meeting. Indeed, these two also had very different views as to how the other functions in their own country. CAFOD sees competition in Ireland as being less than in England and Wales, but they see TROCAIRE as being more aggressive in terms of institutional funding. By way of complete contrast TROCAIRE feels it has to work in a very competitive environment – more competitive than that of CAFOD.

This would appear to be, and indeed it is, a development chain that begs for analysis. How is partnership 'played out' between these donors and its southern partners? Four 'schools of thought' with regard to analytical frameworks for partnership were presented earlier in the paper and each had their own logic. It is necessary to both identify and explain organization variation (Greenwood and Empson, 2003). For example, Lister's (2000) insight that personal relationships are important was borne out by a number of comments made by diocesan personnel in Nigeria, but far less prevalent in the answers given by donors. The latter tended to stress the qualities of project submissions and longer-term relationships with groups rather than individuals. However, it was interesting to note that one of the reasons given by MISEREOR for its move towards country 'orientation papers' was indigenization of the Church and the decline of foreign missionaries as custodians of local development.

However, it is perhaps in the overlaps between these 'schools of thought' that the greatest value lies. These overlaps can occur in the same time or can occur over time so that one framework or a specific combination may be more appropriate at one time rather than at another. The example given was a narrative taking place over thirty years with one of the three donors and just one of the dioceses comprising Abuja Ecclesiastical Province. At times an analysis of the relationship between the donor and DDA based upon a power differential as suggested by Lister (2000) would appear to generate one answer (the donor

did have and exercised its power – partnership was all but absent) yet at other times this did not happen. Base, means and scope of power may have remained much the same but the exercising of it did not. To be sure there were some critical periods when the DDA was undoubtedly frustrated and even angry with its partner, and damage did occur, but taken over the 35 years even they were unwilling to say that power in the relationship was a one-way street. A more functional analysis along the lines suggested by Brinkerhoff generates a more descriptive picture as to the nature and practice of the partnership. This story was unanimously one of partnership success – much was achieved because of the relationship, despite its ups and downs over the 35 years. But the Brinkerhoff approach says much about what they are doing, but much less about why they take the views they do. Similarly, and probably unsurprisingly, the analysis of discourse (Hastings, 1999) and inter-dependency (Bantham et al., 2003) showed much change over the 35 years. A snapshot could generate quite a different result to one taken just a few years later. Priorities, agendas and personal relationships changed much over that time.

Partnerships are complex and subtle relationships the nature of which changes with time, but they are vital for the functioning of the development chain. Given the persistent inequalities in the world it looks as if they will be around for some time to come. Therefore it is important to understand how they work and why they produce relationships that can make or break development intervention.

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