

The Significance of Social Capital in State Provided Housing: The Case of Hlalani, South Africa

Sipho Jonathan Nkambule¹ and Takunda John Chirau²

Abstract: *Under the apartheid regime, housing was used as one of the tools for segregation. Urban black people resided in townships characterized by high densities (with others staying in hostels) and inadequate services. The urgent task of the new democratic South African government was to adopt a policy framework for all citizens, hence the slogan “Housing the Nation”. The objective of the paper is to map out the forms of social interaction and community activities which exist in Hlalani in terms of the notion of sustainable human settlements in housing. This paper focuses more on the question of social capital by examining both intra-household and inter-household relations and the kinds of social networks which exist within Hlalani. The paper argues that social capital formation is contributing to community belonging and social cohesiveness remains an elusive dream for Hlalani residents. The paper concluded that social networks which do exist in Hlalani do not enable community participation and do not provide the basis for the reduction of poverty.*

Keywords: housing, social capital, community, households, sustainable

Introduction

The apartheid system of racial domination, bequeathed a racially-based spatial legacy in urban South Africa which regularly undercut the emergence of social capital. When a city is so systematically divided through acts of authoritarian social engineering like the South African city, the end result is often social alienation and segregation. After the 1994 democratic elections, the African National Congress (ANC) government adopted the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) to address, amongst other apartheid legacies, the housing needs and aspirations of the poor, politically marginalized and economically exploited (Kallis and Nthite 2007: 3). The houses built (by the government) under this programme became to be known as RDP houses. The RDP saw an important role for housing and it implied that housing is central to economic growth and development. In the post-apartheid South Africa social capital and social cohesion have emerged as an area of key interest to various government departments, including the Department of Human Settlement, aiming to combine community building and a whole of government approach to policy. The most contemporary housing policy is the Breaking the New Ground (BNG) which aims among other things to create and maintain a safe, strong, socially cohesive communities which embrace community life and social connections, and to provide economic opportunities, access to clean water, sanitation, safe place free from crime, etc.

¹University of KwaZulu-Natal, Built Environment and Development Studies, Durban, South Africa. Email: msuthu77@yahoo.com

²Witswatersrand University, Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Johannesburg, South Africa

The main argument made in this paper is that state's involvement in public housing programmes, does not seem to contribute significantly to the social reproduction of urban black communities. The significance of social capital to these communities, in the face of limited housing provision by the state and grand claims about human settlement sustainability, becomes critical. In South Africa social capital in public housing is the least researched and indeed is often overlooked completely. The main aim of the paper is to examine the kinds of social capitals which exist in Hlalani (a township in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province), and whether these social networks contribute positively to their daily survival livelihood strategies. The paper discusses the following main topics theory of social capital in housing, research design, background and socio-economic conditions in Hlalani, intra-households-relations, inter-relations, community participation in development and community activities, positive and negative networks.

Theory of Social Capital on Housing

There are a number of problems in the formulation and usage of this concept. Social capital is a hotly contested concept. The arguments made by different scholars are that there is no one clear definition of social capital and it is ambiguous. According to Tzanakis (2013) the concept has been widely used in different fields as a formula for societal problems and non-economic solutions. The broadening of its meaning and the weakening of its application has resulted in questioning of its true content. However, social capital is undoubtedly of sociological interest which describes communal vitality. The paper draws from both Bourdieu and Putman viewpoints on social capital, and study uses these two theories to analyse data. The way Bourdieu and Putman theories on social capital deal with the problems of the society differ. Bourdieu speaks of sociology of conflict or struggles, forms of deprivation, domination and power. Contrary, Putman discusses about sociology of social integration. In his theory concepts of trust and social capital are guided by question about machineries that foster "integration of the values of society, solidarity and togetherness; and that create consensus and sustain the stable development of society" (Siisiainen 2000: 22). For Van Schaik (2002), social capital is measured by the individuals' attitude towards trust and norms and values of reciprocity. In short, how individuals invest in each other through time, resources and support. Putnam (1993: 3) defines social capital in terms of:

Community cohesion associated with: the existence of co-operative and accessible community networks/organizations; high levels of participation in these; a strong sense of local identities; and high levels of trust, mutual help and support amongst community members.

However, this definition has been heavily criticized due to its strong connection to social cohesion. According Bourdieu, social capital is "made or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group" (Bourdieu, 1986: 248). He describes social capital as a form of capital owned by members of a group. In this regard, social capital is a collective valuable resource providing its members with credits, and it is sustained and solidified for its usefulness when members remain in

the social network. Bourdieu describes social capital as the totality of all resources available to someone by being part of a social network. He believes that there are three elements of capital which are all related to class. These capitals are social, economic and cultural. In Bourdieu's view social capital is associated with the volume of accrued social capital and size of network controlled by an individual (Bourdieu 1986: 249). He further argues that the main reason individuals join certain networks is the envisaged profit. This kind of profit is not necessarily economic, however, he believes that actors profit more from economic capital than other capitals. The agents' potential for accumulating social control and profit of are unevenly distributed. Bourdieu's views have been heavily criticized for favouring economic capital as the main source of profit than the other capitals (Alexander, 1996; Jenkins, 1992).

In Putman's perspective social capital is seen as a "blessing" that decreases anti-social behaviour, stimulates democracy and has financial benefits. According to Putman social capital has more benefits. There are said to be three significant outcomes of social capital. Firstly, it enables citizens to resolve common problems more easily through increased cooperation. Secondly, it facilitates the processes that allow communities to develop through increased levels of solidarity and trust. Thirdly, it works as a mechanism to distribute information that facilitates the achievements of collective and individuals goals (Putnam 2000: 290). Putman view that trust has all-positive results is baseless and it demonstrates to be naïve in practice. Such assumptions fails to recognize that trust can also be created by conflicts, and mistrusts. Bourdieu theory on social capital is not interested whether the results of social capital are positive or negative. Portes (1998), notes that social capital can have negative and positive results. Positive social capital as linked to enforced, assured solidarity and obligatory trust, and on the hand negative social capital is associated with unsociable networks that have detrimental impact to the society as a whole. This could have negative implications for the surrounding society (Werner 2007: 4). Portes is against Putman's idea that social capital always produces positive outcomes. He believes that there are a number of negative aspects associated with social capital. One of the key negative aspects is the exclusion of individuals who are not part of social network (Tzanakis 2013).

Three basic forms of social capital are normally identified in the literature, namely: bonding, bridging, and linkages. Bonding social capital focuses on strengthening already-existing social relationships such as religious associations, regional-based groups, gender-based groups and ethnic or racial organizations and associations. Bonding social capital therefore reinforces solidarity and norms of reciprocity among people who have an existing high level of trust between and among themselves. However, this kind of social capital can undermine integrative objectives linked with broader society because it is exclusive. Bridging social capital allows social interaction and relationships between diverse groups of people, and often between groups and people across the usual social divides. Therefore, "if bonding social capital provides a type of superglue between highly trusted individuals and groups, then, bridging social capital reduces friction and increases movement between unrelated and often, unknown groups of people" (Tatlietal. 2011: 14). Both types of social capital are important to the success of societies in a number of ways. However, each type has its own weakness. Finally, linking social capital involves relationships between:

Different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups. Positive examples of linking social capital include shared habits of participation in civic affairs, and open and accountable relationships between citizens and their representatives (Moobela et al. 2007: 6).

In this regard, the emergence and existence of strident civic organizations are seen as crucial in building linking capital specifically networks between ordinary citizens and those in authority, hence allowing ordinary people to influence and be engaged in decisions made by state structures which directly their community (Lake and Huckfeldt 1998: 567).

Studies in sociology of housing has long accepted that a house is more than just a shelter it is associated with things like the neighbourhoods, economic opportunities, community facilities and all these things have significant repercussions on social capital as they can influence the way people interact and bond with each other and the sense of community among individuals (Foley 1980; Pynoos 1973). Housing is the central constituent of the built urban environment (Chui 2004) and plays a pivotal role in all dimensions of sustainable human settlements. These dimensions are social, economic and environmental (Tibajuka 2008: 1). Crucially, the social dimension of sustainability often encompassed under the notion of social capital. Despite the fact that housing provision need resources in form of financial capital for their development, it become quite clear that economic resource alone do not lead to human settlements sustainability. This has led to the acknowledgement that combinations of resources are crucial to improve human settlement wellbeing, including human capital, cultural capital, economic capital and social capital.

Research Design

This section focuses on the research design which provided the basis for the paper. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methodology was adopted in the study known as mixed methods approach. A qualitative style of methodology involves the surveying targeted group, participation of the researchers and direct observation, in which is trying to comprehend a specific phenomena. Quantitative style includes survey research which produces information that is intrinsically statistical in nature (Neuman, 2003: 364). Qualitatively, the research entailed informal in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This qualitative research work aimed at capturing the forms of social and community interaction which exist. The in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face and guided by an interview schedule. They each took no longer than one hour to complete. Forty-two interviews were conducted, mainly with the same people who were respondents to the questionnaire. We held two focus group discussions. One group consisted of ten participants and the other had fifteen participants. The participants were selected from the questionnaire respondents and interviewees. The discussions, like the interviews, were recorded on audiotape for accuracy (Puchta and Potter 2004: 97) but the researchers also took notes with regard to the interaction taking place between the participants. Each focus group discussion lasted about 45 minutes. In terms of quantitative research, a survey was undertaken based on a fixed questionnaire (Bryman 2004; Dick 2006) and a selected sample of Hlalani residents.

The survey was particularly important with respect to provide an overview of socio-economic conditions in Hlalani, including the status and character of the houses occupied by residents.

The municipality has built approximately 560 RDP houses for Hlalani residents. Fifty households, consisting of 287 people, were surveyed (with the number of people per household ranging between two and nine persons). The survey participants have been staying in the study area generally for more than eight years and the sample selected was based on purposeful sampling. The aim was to identify households which occupy (RDP) subsidized low-income housing and not self-constructed shacks. Also, the researchers were not able to obtain a complete list of all residents in Hlalani who occupied state-subsidized housing and hence a simple random sample of a clearly identified universe was not possible.

Results and Discussion

Background and Socio-Economic Conditions in Hlalani

The study was conducted in Hlalani (meaning "Stay There"), which is one of the townships in Grahamstown East. Hlalani was one of the first sections of Grahamstown East to receive RDP houses in the 1990s. Grahamstown is located in the second largest province in South Africa (the Eastern Cape Province) and is the heart of the local Makana Municipality (which exists within the larger Cacadu District Municipality). It is situated 120 km from Port Elizabeth to the southwest and 180 km from East London to the southeast. The province has a population of 6.4 million people, with fourteen per cent of the population of South Africa living in the Eastern Cape (Census in Brief 2003: 6). Many residents in Hlalani have moved from informal settlements into RDP housing in recent years. Though this has led to some sort of fixed property ownership on their part, poverty remains very pervasive in the township because of unemployment, low wages and limited alternative livelihood strategies. Of the fifty households who participated in the study, all but one household had a member who worked in the formal economy on a fulltime basis. But, given the low monthly wages, households are struggling to sustain themselves on the available income with significant debt existing for many households. In the survey, Hlalani residents with full-time formal employment consisted primarily of females, and they included the following low-skilled employees: shop assistants, construction labourers, domestic maids, security guards and one administrative assistant. Domestic work, which is notorious as a low-paid sector of employment, is the predominant full-time employment. The salaries range from R1,300 to R3,000 per month, with the breakdown of salaries (from highest to lowest) as follows: the administrative assistant (R3,000), maids and security guards (between R1,800 and R2,000), and construction labourers and shop assistants (between R1,300 to R1,500). The female-headed households with children rely quite heavily on the child support grant as a source of income.

Residents in Hlalani are not only victims of unemployment and marginalization, as they are agents in their own right through ingenuity and creativity. They do this for instance through

informal economic activities as a source of income and survival. The economic activities include selling fire wood, providing transport to carry goods from town and around the township using a donkey cart, selling homemade beer (called umshovalale) and selling meat such as tripe; there are also money lenders, hair dressers and robbers who rob people for survival. Income generated from these activities is for basic and immediate household expenses. Those who sell or provide services often provide their customers with credit and sometimes this is not paid or is not paid in good time; this of course negatively affects their business and cash flow. Although they engage in a number of informal economic activities for survival, these activities does not positively contribute to their daily lives. In short, they are not sustainable because they are still trapped in the circles of poverty.

The level of poverty in Hlalani is reflected in the education of residents. The fieldwork reveals that there is a very high dropout rate from school in Hlalani and that there is a negative view of the role of education in facilitating any improvement in socio-economic status. In this respect, one female participant noted that:

Many people are educated and some of them are graduates from colleges like Midlands but they are unemployed. So it is a waste of time to be educated in our days (March 10, 2012).

Most participants in the survey argued that dropping out of school arises because of household inability to pay for school uniforms and other education-related expenses. Learners wearing old uniforms to school are subjected to ridicule. The research findings revealed that 16% of the participants have a primary level education, 22% have a lower secondary level education, 26% a higher secondary level education, 12% some kind of tertiary education, while 24% of the participants are illiterate.

Though the length of stay in Hlalani for survey participants has been reasonably long, the poverty context has led to a situation where relationships between households do not seem to be based on high levels of trust. This is consistent with the argument by Richards and Roberts (1998: 8) that “poverty and economic crisis lead to an unstable situation, where individuals do not have much to lose by breaking trust”. Poverty and housing are inseparably linked (Blane 2006) and, in the case of Hlalani residents, their conditions of poverty are constantly manifested in their day-to-day lived experience in relation to housing, water, sanitation and other services. Greater dependence on social capital among poor people becomes imperative in times of reduced state commitment of resources to improving the lives of the poor, but the question of the existence of social capital in communities like Hlalani is complicated and questionable as explored in the following sections.

Intra-Household Relations

Households are a key focal point of contemporary human societies and a fundamental basis for social structuring of society and the social positioning of individuals in society. They are a critical place where social values if not produced are at least inculcated and, for this thesis, an important place and space

for the generation, maintenance and possible undermining of social capital (Edwards et al. 2003: 3). This section, in looking at intra-household relations has one sub-section, namely, family bonds.

Family bonds

The research clearly shows that residents in Hlalani value their families as a site where identity and bonding relationships are forged. Dodson and Wilson (2009: 52) suggests that family relationships “do not offer many of the positive factors found in friendships” but the study indicates that families continue to play a significant role in Hlalani, and that local residents turn first to family before turning to friends for various forms of assistance. Even more specifically, relationships of mutuality exist within immediate families more so than extended families. One unemployed male resident aged 30 noted in this regard:

I do not ask anything from my relatives, I only ask from my mother if I need anything. My mother looks after me (Interview, April 16, 2012).

Despite relational problems existing in some households more than others, family social relations tend to be characterized by trust, reciprocity and strong social ties. Parenting was found to be a key mechanism in the development of values such as trust and cooperation (and of social capital more abstractly). These types of familial relations exist in conditions of marked physical overcrowding within houses in Hlalani. On average, at least amongst the residents who formed part of my study, there are about seven individuals in any one house (with house sizes being about 40 square metres). According to (Graydon 2001), the definition of crowding depends on local cultures such that it is not unusual for large families under certain socio-cultural conditions to share what other cultures might consider cramped physical spaces. At some point, however, questions about space do begin to have a negative effect on the mental, emotional and sometimes physical health of household members. Overcrowding though in itself may not lead to an undermining of social connectedness and social cohesion (Stone and Hulse 2007: vii) amongst family members located within a particular household sharing a common physical space.

It may in fact be the case, with regard to Hlalani households, that the existence of large families in limited spaces brings these families together as socially functional units based on specific forms of interconnectedness. For instance, the cramped space within the RDP houses provides a number of vital opportunities to intermingle and interconnect together, if only to chat and watch television. RDP houses as physical structures, though perhaps built with insufficient cement, nevertheless cement the occupants together in a manner which more spacious houses would not. One of the unmarried female participants therefore stated bluntly:

It is not good for the house to be small but its advantage is that it makes us very close (Interview, March 15, 2012).

Overcrowding in Hlalani hence may not be understood by occupants in the same manner as posited by outsiders. However, it may be that Hlalani residents have adjusted to a bad situation and are seeking to rationalize their everyday existence as a form of compliance to a social condition which is beyond their control.

In this respect, it is certainly the case that problems do exist within Hlalani families sharing a RDP house. There are signs of disturbances, disrespect, arguments and divisions at times, but these cannot always be reduced to space constraints in any clear linear fashion. In some cases such problems can be attributed to questions about space. For instance, in certain households, family members on occasion come back home late at night, make excessive noise and disturb other family members who are sleeping. Such issues raise levels of stress and have the potential to boil over into more serious long-term problems including physical violence (Chan et al. 2006: 2). Hence, there is a correlation between the size of houses, overcrowding and conflict, though this is not a universal one. The study shows that sometimes conflicts within families consolidate relations or act as a binding agent between family members rather than being associated with stress and divisions. In this regard, drawing from Bourdieu and Putman theories of social capital one would argue that conflict is the basis of trust and solidarity in some families in Hlalani.

Inter-Household Relations

By way of summary of the key findings, it seems that in Hlalani there is only limited evidence of patterns of cooperative social interactions; in other words, mutual reciprocity and social cohesion are not pervasive and this leads to, if not a divided community, then a community devoid of social unity. This section is divided into two sub-section namely, neighbourliness and friends.

Neighbourliness

When asked if they look after or assist each other in the immediate neighborhood, 40% of respondents answered 'yes' and 60% answered 'no'. Those who answered 'yes' believed that they have a sense of reciprocity with their neighbours, whereby they assist each other in times of need. Some of those who answered in the negative highlighted that even though some households in their area are relatively well-off financially, they do not help others in times of crisis. They spoke about the plight of particularly youth of school-going age whose education could be uplifted with support from the broader community. The implication is that this type of support is not taking place in Hlalani, as households tend to be inward-looking rather than community-spirited. This is despite the fact that residents would clearly prefer some kind of inter-household symbiotic relationship which enhances the livelihoods of all Hlalani households and brings about strong community ties.

But households generally had only limited interaction with their immediate neighbours and most felt that it would be awkward to ask for financial or other forms of assistance from neighbours for everyday needs let alone for extraordinary ones. This also stems from general mistrust between neighbours including positing insincere motives behind any out-reaching arm from another household. As one male resident aged 36 bluntly claimed:

Some pretend to be helping you but they don't mean it. They will go around saying, 'I helped him' and this is not good (Interview, March 25, 2012).

This overall hesitancy in forming inter-household bonds or even *ad hoc* relations of assistance is evident in the case of disputes within the community. Many disputes take place between households in Hlalani,

including over alcohol, girlfriends or boyfriends, money and gossip. When asked if they sought mediation when disputes do arise, 34% of respondents answered 'yes' and 66% answered 'no'. Those who answered 'yes' had sought mediation from other nearby households or from locally-recognized and mutually-accepted structures. Most of those who answered 'no' indicated that, while disputes do occur, they no longer seek mediation because they do not trust any locally-based mediators; in the past, they claim, mediators took sides without first fully identifying the nature of the dispute. Others believe that there is no need to ask for mediation, as they handle the matters directly (without necessarily resolving them) or they prefer to let the dispute dissipate uneasily if at all. In Bourdieu's terms Hlalani settlement is a site of conflict and domination to accrue resources which in many cases results in the division of inter-household relations.

The discussion so far would seem to imply that *Ubuntu* does not in any way exist between households within Hlalani and therefore fails to animate relationships between them. *Ubuntu* means "a spirit of fellowship and humanity" (Burnett 2006: 124). In short, it refers to the sense of community and morality linked with traditional African societies. The study directly confirms the absence of *Ubuntu*, at least in terms of the social meanings which residents give to inter-household relations. There is a claim, among the older residents, that any loss of *Ubuntu* has a generational dimension. The younger generation is said to have contributed to the undermining of inter-household unity. The absence of *Ubuntu* in Hlalani amongst those who reminiscent about it means the absence of humanity, dignity, unity, reciprocity and trust.

The notion of trust indeed runs as a central theme in many of my interactions with Hlalani households. When asked explicitly about trust between households, only 22% of respondents said that they trusted their neighbouring households. Such low levels of trust are expressed in the erosion of any sense of identity and identification vis-à-vis Hlalani as a site of community belonging. Some residents speak openly about suffering back-stabbing by their (seemingly) once trustworthy neighbours, such that they have looked for and found 'neighbours' (or people they can trust) outside of Hlalani. Many relationships between nearby neighbours (understood spatially) in Hlalani have been broken, never to be repaired. Insofar as there was bridging social capital between households in the past, it appears that this has been drained out of the community; with some households almost completely alienated from any interaction beyond their own household.

Friends

More than half of the respondents (56%) indicate that they have friends in the neighbourhood, though it seems that the depth of friendship is often shallow or that friendship is intermittent or turns sour very easily. Friendships are particularly vital for young adults who are mainly unemployed. Friendships in these cases offer some meaning to everyday existence and also allow young adults to structure their days. The friendships established between young male adults are often replacements for the absence of meaningful relationships within their respective households; these young adults are prone to fighting

verbally with their parents and hence friendships within Hlalani may relieve or alleviate tensions built-up elsewhere.

Male friends tend to meet at street corners and in shops to discuss sports, girls and sometimes politics. The most common type of reciprocity entails the exchange or sharing of cigarettes, alcohol and illicit drugs, and the relationships as a general tendency are based on these instrumentalist-type transactions. Sometimes they steal to buy alcohol and drugs; however, they do not see themselves as criminals. Male friends also go to taverns to drink alcohol and there they sometimes meet the friends of their friends. Expressive support is not in evidence in these male friendships. Although there is instrumental support, it is found in petty things like the exchange of cigarettes and alcohol. The networks of young female adults are very rich in expressive social support, as they find it relatively easy to go to their friends and share their personal problems. They realize though that these problems are likely to be shared with others in the female-based network and hence will not remain confidential. Female friends, compared to male friends, appear to make greater use of information technology (including “WhatsApp” and “Facebook” via cellular phones) to stay connected, remain close and disseminate news. In this sense technology contributes to the formation of social capital through female networks in the settlement. In this regard, it is important to note that “the formation of social capital Information and Communication Technologies are found to enable individuals to thicken existing ties and generate new ones” (Zinnbauer 2007:23). The significance of this quotation is the reference to generating new ties. In Hlalani, the cellular phone-based technology enables young female adults to establish new contacts and networks and possibly friends outside Hlalani. In this sense, “WhatsApp” and “Facebook” are contributing to the erosion of any residual bonds of spatial proximity in Hlalani settlement. In Putman’s (2000) thought this is “privatization of leisure”. High levels of trust do not seem to exist within either male or female friendships. Sometimes the friendships appear to be mere pretense and more equivalent to acquaintances.

Community Participation in Development and Community Activities

Community involvement and participation in common activities is a key element in identifying the existence of social capital in practice and it facilitates community development (Reid 2000: 3). Participation in informal community activities and in civic associations is a form of social networking which enhances the prospects for sustainable communities (Narayan and Woolcock 2003: 238). The study of Hlalani found that only low levels of participation exist, such as cultural activities and sports. Indeed, when asked explicitly about belonging to community-based organizations, 80% answered in the negative.

During the planning phase of the RDP housing development in Hlalani, residents were not consulted by the state in any shape or form; no community input or local expression of views were incorporated into the planning phase. Hence, when asked if they were encouraged to participate in the planning phase of the housing development programmes, all respondents claimed that no such encouragement was forthcoming from the state. In fact, all residents claim that they have been totally excluded from any engagement in community development initiatives and that this absence of engagement has

effectively destroyed any prospects of a sense of community belonging, identity and pride. Hlalani residents feel isolated and excluded from the state. By being consulted, residents emphasized in particular the sense of pride and degree of ownership over community projects which might emerge. In one focus group, they asserted that:

If Councilors had consulted us at the planning stage of the housing development project in order for us to voice our views, for example to contribute to the design of the houses, we were going to like our houses and our settlement. So we are not proud of the houses and the settlement itself (May 20, 2012).

Linking capital, with specific reference to the relationship between state and citizenry, is all but lacking in Hlalani. Because the municipality is at the coal-face, the wrath of Hlalani residents is in large part directed to the local municipality which, after all, is the constitutionally-assigned local development agent. Residents repeatedly spoke, and quite aggressively at times, about the sheer un-accountability of municipal officials when it comes to ongoing service delivery problems in Hlalani and they claim that such officials are there simply to line their own pockets. In this regard, Bourdieu would argue that the municipal officials' main reason to join the municipality was the calculated profit, thereby depriving the poor their rights to access to basic services.

Attendance at community events may contribute to a sense of belonging as this provides residents with opportunities to come together, interact and participate (Holdsworth and Hartman 2009: 89). Instead of any municipality-sponsored events, Hlalani occupants (74%) rather attend cultural and traditional events independent of the state. The dominant ethnic group in Hlalani is Xhosa-speakers and Xhosa culture is respected locally and upheld on a regular basis. Any differences and divisions between households are set aside and laid to rest on a temporary basis in the pursuit of observing cultural practices and events; such events are held by a particular household on for instance the death of a family member. They do this, as the dominant reasoning goes, because attending a cultural event while holding grudges against neighbours or against the household holding the event will mean that Xhosa ancestors will not bless the ceremony. In a Durkheimian sense, then, these ritualistic events have the unintended consequence of bringing about some degree of harmony and cohesiveness to an otherwise disjointed and dysfunctional local community.

These traditional ceremonies though do not only enhance social interaction, as they also play a role in relieving poverty. One male respondent aged 50 therefore claimed, in self-interested fashion:

You know traditional ceremonies are beneficial to some of us because if there is a ceremony we attend and we will get food. This relieves the stress as I do not have food at home (Interview, May 24, 2012).

Hlalani residents invest energy and time in preparation for traditional ceremonies because of some inkling or perhaps expectation of a return on the investment. Some residents help the household holding the ceremony by, for example, cutting wood or slaughtering a goat or cow, expecting that they will receive food and alcohol in return at the ceremony when held. The kind of reciprocity generated here is what could be called 'tit for tat' reciprocity. Although cultural ceremonies seem to facilitate social interaction, again there is a sense in which this interaction entails some degree and kind of pretense and therefore rings hollow in terms of building longer-term relationships. Those who do not attend such

ceremonies (26%) gave the following reasons: being unaware of the event or being too busy, or because the events are not relevant to their interests or their age group.

Involvement in leisure activities is also important in creating community networks and bonds vital for social cohesion. Different sports teams exist in Hlalani, including for rugby, cricket and soccer. A number of respondents cited that there are many talented sports people in Hlalani and a significant willingness on the part of residents to engage in sports, but that there are no playgrounds, sports kits and sponsors. This has a negative impact on the generation of social capital in Hlalani because “sport provides opportunities for the development of both bridging and bonding social capital” (Tonts 2005: 139). Thus, the absence of playgrounds, soccer kits and sponsors detrimentally affects the quality of residents’ everyday life and inhibits community integration and belonging.

Positive and Negative Social Networks

This section focuses on three institutions which prevail in Hlalani: churches, *stokvels* and gangsterism. The section identifies their implications for social networking and cohesion in the local community. During good times and troubled times, individuals turn to a range of different institutions for support and comfort (Robicheaux 1998: 4). We refer to churches and savings clubs (known as *stokvels*) as positive networks and gangsterism (in the form of the gangs called the ‘twenty eights’ and the ‘twenty sixes’) as negative networks from the perspective of primarily bridging social capital. All these institutions exemplify bonding capital, but it is important to note that even ‘positive’ networks are exclusionary. Nevertheless, churches and *stokvels* are far more likely than gangs to generate social capital of a kind which will facilitate community cohesion.

Church

The interviews reveal that churches provide both expressive and instrumental support. Expressive support entails assisting church members emotionally during stressful times. For example one female aged 55 participant noted:

Church is where we offload our burdens especially on Thursdays during women’s prayers. As women we’ve got problems, so this makes us to unite and to be one and carry other’s burdens through prayer. When you come out of church you will feel better (Interview, May 22, 2012).

From this statement, it becomes clear that the shared problems faced in life in this case, by women bring residents together, acting so to speak as ‘social glue’. Instrumental support entails supporting church members materially and financially. Besides these contributions, church members attend the funeral wearing the church uniform which symbolizes unity in Jesus Christ. Reciprocity and trust help church members to cooperate and work together to achieve shared objectives. Indeed, church members believe and in most cases, quite rightly that mutual assistance is embedded in their daily practices and this has a direct influence on social cohesion. However, this reciprocity is exclusionary in that social support is only available to members of that particular church or denomination.

On the whole, the study reveals that members of church communities have more extensive and stable social networks and greater access to social support than do their non-church going co-residents. But

even within churches, there is variation in levels of support provided. More specifically, active church members receive more social support and less active members receive less support. This is consistent with the study by Ellison and George (1994: 58) which concluded that “active participants in religious congregations may receive greater social support, on average, than their less active or unchurched counterparts”. Such practices act as a form of social control in preventing non-church members from abusing the resources found in the church; and, for less active church members, it acts as a way of disciplining members to ensure that they adhere to church principles. In Portes (1998), line of thinking the churches in Hlalani enforces positive social capital through providing resources to its members to reinforce active church participation, solidarity and trust while non-members are excluded.

Stokvels

Many women in the study who are single mothers and sometimes widows are members of *stokvels*; this helps these women to generate sources of income to raise their children. A *stokvel* is “a type of credit union, or communal buying group, in which a group of people enter into an agreement to contribute a fixed amount of money to a common pool weekly, fortnightly or monthly, to be drawn in rotation according to the rules of the particular *stokvel*” (Townsen and Mosala 2008: 1). *Stokvels* in Hlalani help members in many ways in addition to financial assistance. They satisfy participants need for sharing, belonging, social interaction and emotional support. Although Bourdieu has been criticized of privileging economic capitals over other capitals but in the case of Hlalanistokvel members joined the group mainly for economic capitals. The research highlights though that there are very few *stokvel* associations in Hlalani. Many other *stokvels* existed in the past, but divisions arose within them and the members went their separate ways. The reasons cited for their disbanding involve claims about some co-members, namely, that they are unreliable, untrustworthy, marked by jealousy and practice witchcraft. *Stokvel* members highlighted the importance of trust in their associations, and they indicated that there are mechanisms in place to build and maintain trust and ensure that the social networks flourish. They thus recognize that trust “is a key ingredient in transactions, a lubricant permitting voluntary participation” (Dasgupta 2001: 312), though ensuring that members comply (such as confirming bank deposits) seems to go contrary to a living and active trust.

Gangsters

The research found that there groups of gangsters in Hlalani which are involved in criminal activities such as rape and robbery which negatively affect the community. Due to the fact that community policing in the area is almost absent, the settlement has become a breeding ground for gangsters. Reputation is very important to all gangsters in Hlalani. The gangsters gain and maximize their reputation by being as violent and anti-social as possible, at least in relation to the forms of crime within which they engage.

The gangsters are called the ‘twenty eights’ and the ‘twenty sixes’. The twenty eights rob people without normally harming them physically; however, sometimes they do molest or rape victims. The twenty sixes rob and intentionally harm people; they believe in shedding blood and sometimes victims are killed. The twenty eights are called ‘sunrise’ because they operate during broad day light, while the

twenty sixes are labeled 'sunset' because they operate at night. The effects of the gangs on the community as a whole are fear and terror, both day and night. The local concentration of young males who are unemployed and lack tight familial social controls facilitates gang membership; once a member, gang discipline kicks in. But between the two gangs there is conflict at times, despite or perhaps because of their different *modus operandi*. One male respondent aged 30 who is a member of the 'twenty sixes' claims:

The twenty eights and the twenty sixes hate each other because of their differences on how they do their business [of robbing people](Interview, May 22, 2012).

Even within one particular gang there is antagonism. The same gang member said:

We don't trust each other. It is the survival of the fittest; you must always watch your back (Interview, May 22, 2012).

The only reciprocity that occurs in the gangs is that of alcohol, dagga and other drug substances. Although they operate as a group, they do not emotionally support each other if for example a member loses a family member. In these groups there is no expressive social support. Violence is not only directed to the community but even to members within the group, often through initiation ceremonies. In the case of membership in the 'twenty six' gang, as indicated by a member of this gang, each member will need to kill someone at some time to '*strengthen your number*' (Focus Group, May 22, 2012), that is, to gain full membership. In Bourdieu terms the gangsterism field in Hlalani is a site of conflict, violence and domination. In this kind of association violence and power is produced and reproduced by the gangsters as they are enjoying the game that they are playing. Clearly, then, these gangs while engaged in intense bonding social capital internally are negative networks in the sense of minimizing the prospects for a broader, community-wide bonding process. This kind of "evil networks" (as we would like to term them) may be labeled by sociologists as a sign of "fragmented society", "anomalities", "social traps".

Conclusion

Overall, the current social networks which do exist in Hlalani do not facilitate community participation and do not provide the basis for the alleviation of poverty. Low levels of trust and solidarity in particular do not allow for the emergence and development of efforts to bring about change by engaging with local state structures in any meaningful manner. Intriguingly the absence of linking capital, or the disenchantment of Hlalani residents with the local municipality, does not appear to animate the consolidation of bridging capital between households of a kind in opposition to the municipality. If anything, this absence has led to a withdrawal of Hlalani households from broader interaction with each other and thus has served to insulate households from each other. In other words, it may be that bonding capital within households is intensifying. This argument, we would suggest, is the key contribution made by this thesis to existing sociological knowledge. Bonding, bridging and linking capitals must be seen as mutually animating each other, and in a contingent and fluid manner. Although they may be discrete and separable analytically and descriptively, they point to sets of social relationships on the ground which intertwine and give shape to each other. Their particular forms and the interrelations between them are historically- and socially-produced and therefore subject to change.

The discussion of social capital leads to the inevitable conclusion that sustainability is a misnomer with respect to Hlalani.

References

- Alexander, Claire, E. (1996). *The Art of Being Black: The Creation of Black British Youth Identities*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Blane, D. (2006). *The Life Course, the Social Gradient, and Health*. In M. Marmot & R. G. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Social Determinants of Health* (2nd ed., pp. 54-77). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital In J.G. Richardson (Ed). *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology Of Education*, New York: Greenwood Press, Pp. 241-258.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Methods*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Census in Brief (2003). *Census 2001, Report no.03-02-26*. Statistics South Africa.
- Chan, E. and Lee, G.K.L (2008). *Critical Factor for Improving Social Sustainability of Urban Renewal Projects*. *Social Indicators research* 85, pp. 243-256.
- Chui, R.L.H (2004). *Sustainable Development: A New perspective for Housing Development*. University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.
- Dasgupta, P. 2000. *Economic Progress and the Idea of Social Capital*. In Dasgupta, P. & Serageldin, I. (eds) *Social capital: A multifaceted perspective*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Dick, B. (2006). *Action Research Resources: Community Consultation*. University of Queensland.
- Edwards, R, Franklin, J and Janet Holland, J. (2003). *Families and Social Capital: Exploring the Issues*. Families & Social Capital ESRC Research Group. South Bank University, London.
- Ellison and George, L.K (1994). *Religious Involvement, Social Ties, and Social Support in a Southeastern Community*. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 33, No. 1 pp. 46-61.
- Foley, D. 1980. The Sociology of Housing. *Annual Review of Sociology* 6: 457-478.
- Graydon, R. (2010). *What is Poverty Housing?* *Habitant World*. The Publication of Habitat for Humanity International.
- Graycar, A. 1999. *Crime and Social Capital*. 19th Biennial International Conference on Preventing Crime, Melbourne.
- Jenkins, R. (1992). *The Work Of Pierre Bourdieu*, London: Routledge.
- Kallis and Nthite. (2007). *Review of Transfers in the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations System in South Africa: Assessment of the National Housing Allocation Formula*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Holdsworth, L. and Hartman, Y. (2009). Indicators of Community Cohesion in an Australian. *Country Town Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, Issue 2.
- Johnson, E.H. (1952). *Family Privacy in a Multi-Unit Dwelling*. *Marriage and Family Living*. National Council on Family Relations
- Kawachi, I. (2006). *Social Capital and Community Effects on Population and Individual Health*. *Annals New York Academy of Sciences*. Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Kawachi, I. and B. Kennedy, (1997). *Health and Social Cohesion: Why Care about Income Inequality?*. *British Medical Journal*, vol. 314, pp. 1037-1040.
- Moobela, C., Andrew D.F., Price, B., Peter J. Taylor, C and Vivek N., Mathur, D. (2007). *Determinants of Social Capital: Prioritising Issues for Holistic Urban Sustainability Assessments*. Department of Civil & Building Engineering, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK.

- Narayan, D. and Woolcock, M. (2003). *Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research and Policy*. World Bank Researcher. Vol. 15(2) pp. 225-249.
- Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Fifth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 24, pp. 1-24.
- Puchta, C. and Potter, J. (2004). *Focus Group Practice*. Sage Publications, London.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling Alone*. Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Pynoos, J., Schafer, R., Hartman, C, eds. (1973). *Housing Urban America*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Reid, N.J (2000). *Community Participation. How People Power Brings Sustainable Benefits to Communities*. USDA Rural Development Office of Community Development.
- Richards, P and Roberts, B. (1998). *Social Networks, Social Capital, Popular Organizations, and Urban Poverty: A Research Note*. Presented at the Seminar on Urban Poverty sponsored by ALOP and the World Bank, Rio de Janeiro, May 14-16.
- Robicheaux, S. (1998). Perceptions Of Social Support Within The Context Of Religious Homophily: A Social Network Analysis. Unpublished MA Thesis. University of Southwestern Louisiana.
- RSA (2004). (Department of Housing). *Breaking New Ground. A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlement*, Pretoria.
- Siisiainen, M. (2000). *Two Concepts of Social Capital: Bourdieu vs. Putman*. Paper presented at ISTR Fourth international Conference, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.
- Stone, W and Hulse, K (2007). *Housing and Social Cohesion: An Empirical Exploration*. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Swinburne- Monash Research Centre.
- Tibaijuka, A.K. (2008). *Promoting Socially and Environmentally Sustainable Human Settlements*. UN Habitat, Geneva.
- Tonts, M. (2005). Competitive Sport and Social Capital in Rural Australia. *Journal of Rural Studies* 21 pp. 137–149.
- Townsen, S and Mosala, T. (2008). *The Stokvel Sector: Opportunities and Challenges*. Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Tzanakis, M. (2013), Social Capital in Bourdieu's, Coleman's And Putnam's Theory: Empirical Evidence and Emergent Measurement Issues. *Educate* Vol. 13, No. 2, 2013, P. 2-23.
- Van Schaik, T. (2002), *Social Capital in the European Values Study Surveys*, Paper Prepared for the OECD-ONS International Conference on Social Capital Measurement London.
- Werner, I.B. (2007). *Social Capital In Housing Management- The Concept as a Tool for Analyzing Problems and Formulating Goals For Action*. Royal Institute of Technology Architecture and the Built Environment, Rotterdam.
- Zinnbauer, D. (2007). *What can Social Capital and ICT do for Inclusion?* Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Luxembourg.