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A COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND POLICY MAKING FOR LAKE TAUPO

A Thesis
submitted in fullfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosphy
at the
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by
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Mr. Arunachalam and Madam Mary Kannammal who always wished I achieve the highest in education.

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to gain a theoretical and empirical understanding of the meaning of a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good (CAACG). The hermeneutic analysis adopted in this study starts by explaining the researcher's pre-understandings which includes contemporary ideas on accountability, communitarianism and sustainability. A theoretical communitarian model was designed by synthesising these ideas. Using the theoretical model the researcher attempted to advance the meaning of CAACG in multiple contexts which include: the global context on sustainability; the New Zealand context on local governance; and more specifically in the context of planning and policy making for the sustainable development of the Taupo District. The use of such multiple contexts is crucial for this study. This is because communitarian ideology in New Zealand has historical roots in Local Government which, in recent years has been influenced by the global discourse on sustainable development. The adoption of multiple contexts is aimed at providing a holistic and historical understanding of planning and policy making processes in the Taupo District and the manifestation of CAACG in the processes.

In this interpretive study the term "text" is defined as the empirical data which consists of public documents, website material, minutes of community meetings, field notes and transcriptions of interviews. The empirical data is about processes and outcomes of collaboration between the community groups, public authorities and private entities in formulating strategies and policies for sustainable development of the Taupo District. Interpretation of the empirical data involved understanding the "text" from the vantage point of the pre-understandings of the interpreter. The interpretation of the "text" is aimed at explaining the manifestation of CAACG in the Taupo District. The methodological orientations of the thesis are predominantly consistent with the hermeneutic tradition of Gadamer (1975). However, although the interpreter started with the intention of strictly confining to the subjectivist approach of Gadamer (1975), at times the hermeneutic methodology adopted by the researcher encroached into the methodological orientations of objectivist hermeneutics. The use of objectivist hermeneutic was inevitable as it was necessary to understand the authorial intention in the text before the interpreter understands the text from the

perspective of his pre-understandings. Hence, the researcher rejects the assumption of objective-subjective dichotomy and subscribes more to the philosophical arguments advanced by contemporary scholars (such as Boland Jr, 1989 and Ricoeur, 1981) who find both the subjective and objective philosophies as necessary for interpreting texts.

The hermeneutic analysis undertaken in this study suggests that the meaning of CAACG appears in the context of communal processes (including planning and policy making processes) and the strategies and policies formulated by the Taupo community. The meaning of CAACG may not be obvious to any reader of the “text”. It arises from the interpretation of the “text” from the perspective of the interpreter’s pre-understandings on a communitarian approach to accountability. The interpretation suggests the existence of a community of interests, community values and concerns, and communal processes in the Taupo District. Community values and concerns are associated with Lake Taupo. The primary concern of the community is the pollution of Lake Taupo caused by animal farming in the land surrounding the lake and the impact the pollution has on the environmental, economic and cultural values of the community. The communal processes involved collaboration between the community and public authorities in planning and policy making for the protection of Lake Taupo. The interpretation also indicates the manifestation of several dimensions of accountability in the communal processes; joint accountability or 360 degree accountability in the Taupo District; and the holistic meaning of environmental and social accounting.

In the Taupo District the operation of the CAACG can be affected by several factors. Symmetry of power can be affected in terms of the preferential treatment given to the indigenous community and its segregation from the rest of the community. The strong influence of local authorities in the planning and decision making processes makes the community appear helpless without the local authorities. Communitarian processes intended to empower the community may actually strengthen the position of local authorities. Power has actually shifted from Central Government to local authorities and may not necessarily have shifted to communities. However, the endeavours to engage the community in the Taupo District can be seen as attempts to

build the capacity of the community to participate in the processes and time will tell how effective the CAACG will prove to be.

This thesis is the pioneer in advancing the theorization of the CAACG and has added a substantial contribution to accountability literature. It suggests a new way of looking at environmental and social accounting in which the emphasis is on community involvement through reporting and deliberation (dialectical dimension of accountability) on the impacts of human activities on the natural environment. The CAACG is premised on the centrality of community and the assumption of a 360 degree accountability in which everyone in the community has mutual responsibility to protect the common good and can be subject to critical enquiry for the adverse impacts of their activities on the common good. The CAACG does not accord private corporations the privilege status of “reporting entities” but considers environmental and social accounting as the agenda of the community.

The concept of CAACG is not utopian as it may sound to some readers of this thesis. There are ample evidence of communities throughout the world demanding a voice in statutory planning and decision making for sustainable development. The increasing focus on environmental sustainability and community participation in the planning and decision making processes arises from greater awareness of the detrimental impacts of environmental pollution and the realisation that the decision on the common good cannot be left to free market forces and private corporations. The natural environment belongs to a community of interests which wants to participate in joint responsibility and collective planning and decision making. No individual or group has the right to make decisions about the natural environment without consulting the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mahatma Gandhi once said “Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory”. When I commenced this study, my aim was to put my best effort and make the most of the research process. Although I encountered a number of challenges during the journey, I was determined to produce a good thesis, at least a thesis that made sense to me. Overall I have no regrets in undertaking the research because there were several aspects of the research that I enjoyed. The opportunity to research accountability in the Taupo District opened the way for travelling to one of the inner most parts of New Zealand and for acquainting with the culture and beliefs of the Taupo community. The trips to the Taupo District were memorable, not only I enjoyed the beautiful scenery all the way to Lake Taupo but was welcomed to community meetings and provided lots of information for my research. My supervisors were very supportive and allowed me to be in full control of my research. Their liberal minded and unimposing approach, allowed me to explore and expand on existing ideologies. Except for the time and word limitations, I was not restricted in any way to express my thoughts during discussions and in my writings. The excellent research facilities available at the Waikato Management School and the abundance of library resources complemented my research efforts. My family was not left out of the research process. I often amused them with my research findings and even attempted to explain complicated philosophies in layman terms. One of the most difficult (sometimes annoying) challenges was people consistently asking me about my PhD progress. It appeared that I was being accountable to so many people, almost everyone who knew me and whenever they met me. Even my children often asked me whether I have completed a certain chapter of my thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|---|
| CAACG | Communitarian Approach to Accountability for the Common Good |
| EW | Environment Waikato. Also referred to as the Waikato Regional Council |
| LGA 2002 | Local Government Act 2002 |
| LWAG | Lake and Waterways Action Group |
| RMA 1991 | Resource Management Act 1991 |
| TDC | Taupo District Council |
| TLC | Taupo Lake Care |

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THESIS

Communitarians seek to rebuild community. However, we do not believe that a return to villages or small-town....is necessary. What is needed, rather, is a strengthening of the bonds that tie people to one another, enabling them to overcome isolation and alienation. Above all, it is necessary to re-establish in communities the moral voice that leads people to encourage one another to behave more virtuously than they would otherwise. Communities need to foster civility – a sense of social order and mutual consideration. If they do not, we will be reduced to relying on hordes of inspectors, auditors, police....of which there are never enough in a society whose moral foundations have crumbled (Etzioni, 1995, p. iii).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Accountability is an elusive concept (Bovens, 2005a; Lakoff & Smith, 2007; Mulgan, 2000; Sinclair, 1995; Walker, 2002). It can mean different things to different people (Lakoff and Smith, 2007) and encompasses multiple and conflicting meanings (Walker, 2002). According to Sinclair (1995), “Accountability is subjectively constructed and changes with context” (p.219). The definition of accountability is “dependent on the standpoint from which one attempts to define it” (Walker, 2002, p.63) and has discipline- specific meanings (Cooper & Owen, 2007). A substantive view in the literature associates accountability with the process of account giving in which one party has an obligation to provide an account of its conduct to another party (Bovens, 2005a, 2005b; Gray, Owen & Adams, 1996; Jones, 1992). The account giving process is the original core sense of accountability with the longest lineage in accountability literature pedigree and in the understanding of practitioners (Caiden, 1988; Finer, 1941; Thynne & Goldring, 1987). However, several scholars have conceptualised accountability beyond the account giving

dimension and extended its meaning to include several other dimensions such as: responsibility (Bovens, 2007; Bovens, 2005a; Gray et. al, 1996; Mulgan, 2000); moral responsibility (Corbett, 1996; Day & Klein, 1987; Finer, 1941); dialogue (Aucion and Heintzman, 2000; Bohman, 1996; Drysek, 2002; Gray, Kouhy & Lavers; 1995; Mulgan, 2000; Roberts, 2002) relational responsiveness (Painter-Morland, 2006); decision making (Behn, 2000; Bovens, 2007; HAP International, 2007; Lehman, 1999); and controllability (Aucoin & Heintzman, 2000; Bovens 2007; Lehman, 1999; Lupia, 2004; Mulgan, 2000).

The interrelatedness of the various dimensions is encapsulated in the process of accountability in which the account giver (or accountant) provides explanation or justification for conduct, as a result of which the account receiver (or accountee) imposes sanctions and the accountant faces consequences (Mulgan, 2000). In this process, account giving is only one aspect of accountability and covers only the role of the accountant in the accountability relationship. The account giving dimension does not cover the role of the account receiver. The account receiver's role to pass judgments and impose sanctions has broader implications for accountability. It is analogous to enquiry and evaluation of the conduct of the accountant and making decisions regarding sanctions to control the activities of the accountant. The interaction between the accountant and accountee is a dialectical process in which the accountee poses questions and the accountant provides explanations and justifications for conduct, and this is followed by dialogue to pass judgements and impose sanctions. Such dialogical process is inherent in public forums where the public officials are made accountable for their actions (Bovens, 2007).

The obligation to provide an account arises from responsibility assigned to or expected from the accountant. The responsibility can arise from a contractual obligation such as the obligation of corporate managers to provide an account to shareholders or from the mutual responsibility of corporations to society for their social and environmental performance (Adams, 2000; Amaeshi & Adi, 2006; Bebbington & Thomson, 2007; Cornelius, Wallace, Tassabehji, 2007; Crowther, 2000; Gray, 1996; Gray, 2000; Gray, Kouhy & Lavers, 1995; Lehman, 1999; Mathews, 1995); or even collective responsibility or 360-degree responsibility and

accountability where participating individuals in a community are responsible and accountable to each other (Behn, 2000).

In summary, accountability can be defined in a narrow sense involving account giving or a broad sense covering other interrelated dimensions (including the account giving dimension) which, together, can provide a holistic meaning of accountability. Understanding accountability solely from the perspective of the account giving dimension may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in accountability. To expand the meaning of accountability it is necessary to look beyond the account giving dimension and recognise accountability as comprised of several interrelated dimensions. An example of a broad accountability environment is the interaction and collaboration between community, public authorities and private entities where everyone is accountable to everyone else (Behn, 2000) for safeguarding the common good. Such broad accountability portrays democratic local governance (Blair, 2000; USAID, 2000). According to Blair (2000), accountability covers a much wider range of activity and scope in democratic local governance than appears at first glance.

The promulgation of the above representations of accountability makes the concept increasingly elusive and creates the necessity to empirically investigate the very nature of accountability. This thesis provides an interpretive analysis of the nature of accountability. I set out to explore accountability in the context of a communitarian approach to local governance involving collaboration between local communities, public authorities and private entities to safeguard the common good. The empirical focus of my research is local governance in the Taupo District. In this study, the communitarian approach refers to collaboration¹ between the Taupo District

¹ According to NACCHO (2007), collaboration is a process by which groups come together and work together to achieve common goals and objectives. A standard definition of collaboration is less important than a common understanding of the expected relationships and actions among the participating partners. The purpose is to leverage strengths to the greatest advantage of the community as a whole in order to address issues of common concern and to accomplish something jointly that one individual or agency alone cannot accomplish. The collaboration is achieved through integration of diverse perspectives to create better appreciation and understanding of issues of common concern.

community, public authorities and private entities in order to deliberate on issues of common concern, to redefine roles and responsibilities, and to formulate strategies and policy proposals to control activities that affect the common good (Lake Taupo). The study focuses on the operational dynamics of dimensions of accountability within the environment of this local governance. I refer to such a form of accountability as the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good (CAACG). Using the principles of philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1975; 1976; 1988) as a theoretical basis for methodology and methods, this study provides an interpretation of the process and outcomes of the local governance in order to uncover the dimensions of CAACG. Gadamer's approach to hermeneutics entails starting the interpretive process with some pre-understandings (or foreknowledge). My pre-understandings are drawn from literature on concepts of accountability, communitarian ideology and sustainability paradigms. Using these pre-understandings, I formulate a preliminary conceptual framework for CAACG to guide the interpretation of empirical data which were collected during my field study in the Taupo District. The empirical data (or 'text') consist of public documents, observations by the researcher and interview responses, all of which provide information on processes and outcomes of local governance in the Taupo District during the period 1998 - 2008. The interpretive analysis involves a multiplicity of processes of alternating between the pre-understandings of the interpreter and the whole and parts of the "text". Simultaneously, a dialogue takes place between the interpreter and the text. The interpreter poses questions to the text and vice versa. To gain a holistic understanding of the nature of accountability, the interpretive analysis also draws from several other contexts including: global discourse on sustainable development; historical and institutional contexts of New Zealand's Local Government, and the more idiosyncratic historical and socio-economic context of the Taupo District. Through the interpretive analysis the interpreter discovers how dimensions of accountability are implicated in the processes and outcomes of local governance in the Taupo District. In short, this thesis argues that various dimensions

Collaborative processes in resource and environmental management serve as a venue for the exchange of information and ideas for decision making that focuses on common problems, and for developing the capacities of agencies, organisations and communities to deal with the challenges of the future (NACHHO, 2007).

of accountability acquire meanings within the context of the processes and outcomes of local governance in the Taupo District. In undertaking the interpretive analysis, this study also probes into contemporary understandings that tend to limit accountability to the process of account giving. The primary objective is to explain how various dimensions of accountability are implicated in the communitarian approach to local governance. The study explores the meaning of communitarian approach to accountability for the common good (CAACG) in an empirical setting.

A burgeoning body of literature suggests the emergence of local governance for decentralised, collaborative and participative procedures in planning and policy making for the common good (Blair, 2000; Burlane, Andrew, Chiasson & Harvey, 2008; Gaiha, 2008; John, 2001; Kearns, 1995; USAID, 2000; Weber, 2003). A primary motivation for countries to adopt decentralised local governance is to allow local people to participate more effectively in local affairs, including identification of community priorities and involvement in Local Government decision making (USAID, 2000). The decentralization “gives the local governance system the opportunity to become democratic” (USAID, 2000, p.7). It also makes Local Governments “increasingly responsive to and interactive with the community” (USAID, 2000, p.12). The process involves collaboration between local authorities and local communities (Thomas & Memon, 2005; 2007) in ‘collective problem solving in the public realm’ (Caporaso, 1996) and partnership in policy areas (Barber, 1984; Held, 1996; McCall & Williamson, 2002; Morison, 2000) for the common good. The common good can be anything that contributes to the general well-being of all, and includes the natural environment, economic development and common values (Jordan, 1989). Lovett (1998) defines the common good as:

...something which is valued for its service to the community or society at large, rather than for its service to specific members of subgroups. The common good does not arise simply through the aggregation of the interests of a community's individual members; rather, common goods are formulated by the community as a community through an ongoing public dialogue that draws on the common culture and shared values of that community (p.3)

Local governance acquires broader meanings when its scope is extended beyond the role of the state and Local Government authorities. In contemporary literature, the term governance refers to a new mode of governing that is different from the old hierarchical model in which state authorities exercise control over civil society (Mayntz, 2003; Meehan, 2003). Modern day governance refers to a non-hierarchical mode of governing, where non-state actors participate in the formulation and implementation of public policy (Rhodes, 1997). Local communities and their networks are important players in planning and policy making processes (Meehan, 2003). According to USAID (2000), decentralisation provides Local Governments with greater political authority and responsibilities to convene local elections and establish participatory processes. USAID (2000) defines democratic local governance as:

...the process of governing democratically at the local level, viewed broadly to include not only the machinery of government, but also the community at large and its interaction with local authorities... When effective decentralization and democratic local governance advance in tandem, Local Governments and the communities they govern gain the authority, resources, and skills to make responsive choices and to act on them effectively and accountably. Advancing the capacity of Local Governments to act effectively and accountably requires promoting the desire and capacity of civil society organizations and individual citizens to take responsibility for their communities, participate in local priority-setting, assist in the implementation of those decisions, and then monitor their effectiveness (p. 2).

According to Kearns (1995), local governance provides opportunities for active citizenship and a greater range of organisations (both governmental and non-governmental), within a pluralistic system to exercise power and influence through negotiation for devising collective strategies. In this collective approach, local authorities enter into negotiations with local citizens and organizations rather than exercising rule through laws and by-laws. Local governance depicts a system where formal authority is supplemented by an increasing reliance on informal authority (Pierre, 2000). It is transition from Local Government to local governance (John, 2001).

In a modern day context, ideas of devolution and partnership suggest new sets of relationships between local communities and policy makers (Raco & Flint, 2001).

Decisions on the common good are not left to political representatives, authoritarians or to individuals in the marketplace but are determined through collective enquiry and informed discussions by members of a community who participate as equal citizens with equal bargaining power (Tam, 1998). Such symmetry of power aims to provide greater political equality as a counterweight to the power of politicians and bureaucrats (Perlgut, 1986). Community empowerment or capacity building is expected to: develop critical consciousness (le Compte & de Marrais, 1992); develop networking and lobbying power (Cuthill, 2002); and allow the community to engage with institutions of government (Taylor, 2007). Other key considerations for capacity building are decentralisation and devolution of power and responsibilities from state to local communities (Ramachandran et al., 2005; Robertson & Lawes, 2005; Taylor 2007); wider availability of information (Taylor, 2007); and the formation of knowledge networks (Jordan, Gunsolus, White, & Damme, 2003). However, Cuthill (2002) cautions that initiatives to introduce more participatory democracy should not be aimed at ‘control of power’ (p.86) or to “replace one ‘power’ with another ‘power’” (p.86-87) rather the purpose should be ‘to develop collaborative processes based on trust, cooperation and respect between citizens and Local Government’ (p.87).

Contemporary studies provide ample instances of local governance and collaborative endeavours between communities and public authorities, such as: in natural resource management and conservation (Austin & Eder, 2007; Dungumaro & Madulu, 2003; Martinez, Gerritsen, Cuevas, & Rosales, 2006; Mbaiwa, 2005); local governance and community participation in sustainable management and democratic decision making in health systems (Israr & Islam, 2006); community-based enterprise (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006); policy development (Tran, 2006); research, knowledge networks, information sharing and interactive participatory style problem solving (Kroma, 2006; Nerbonne & Lentz, 2003; Jordan, Gunsolus, White, & Damme, 2003); eco-tourism development (Lai & Nepal, 2006); waste management (Rathi, 2006); participatory planning and education for sustainability (Tippett, 2005); water resource management (Swatuk, 2005); forest management ((Robertson & Lawes, 2005); environmental decision making (Adomokai & Sheate, 2004); and management of environmental issues (Roberts & Diederichs, 2002). In New

Zealand, one of the most intriguing developments of the past decade has been the rise of collaboration between local district communities, local authorities and local businesses in their attempts to formulate strategies and policies for sustainable development (Knight, 2000; Burke, 2004; Cousins, 2002; Taupo District Council, n.d.). Their collaborative endeavours resonate with decentralised, participatory decision making processes while their plans and policy outcomes resemble Local Agenda 21² for the districts. In this regard, several local authorities in New Zealand have prepared Local Governance Statements in compliance with section 40 of the Local Government Act 2002 (Knight, 2000, Burke, 2004). The Local Governance Statement outlines the ways in which a local authority engages with its community, makes decisions and the ways in which the community can influence those processes.

A number of extant studies attempt to link accountability to processes and outcomes of local governance (Behn, 2000; Blair, 2000; Lehman, 1999; Weber 2003). According to Blair (2000), the central themes in democratic local governance are citizen participation and accountability. Blair states that "...participation is to give citizens a meaningful role in Local Government decisions that affect them, while accountability means that people will be able to hold Local Government responsible for how it is affecting them" (p.22). Blair (2000) asserts that the viability of democratic local governance depends on participation by as many citizens as possible (including women and minorities) in local decision-making and on the accountability of local authorities for their actions. Weber (2003) draws a link between accountability and local governance in several rural communities in Western United States. Lehman (1999) articulates a communitarian approach to social and environmental accounting involving cooperative enquiry into the adverse impacts of corporate activities on the natural environment and collaboration to impose sanctions on such activities. The communitarian model of accountability seeks to bring about social change through informed dialogue in the public sphere

² According to Hughes (2000), "Implementation of Agenda 21 at the local level is known as Local Agenda 21. This involves developing partnerships among local authorities, the business sector, NGOs and citizens to improve quality of life through the management and enhancement of the local environment and social and economic conditions." (p.iv).

(Lehman, 1999). Behn (2000) advocates collective accountability or 360-degree accountability where parties in the collaboration are accountable to each other.

Communitarian philosophy provides a theoretical basis for local governance in which community concerns, priorities and values are the focus of collaboration between local communities and local authorities. In communitarian theory, empowerment refers to the form of public participation where citizens are involved jointly in the decision-making process with elected representatives and managers (Thomas & Memon, 2005). Empowerment is about deciding together and sharing responsibility, accepting other people's ideas and jointly determining what the best options are to pursue in the policy-making process (Forgie, et al., 1999). Empowerment gives new authority to citizens in the decision-making processes of liberal democracies (Forgie, et al., 1999). To empower citizens requires a healthy culture of information sharing and dialogue.

Communitarian theory endorses mutual responsibility (Tam, 1998) requiring empowered local citizens to work collaboratively towards the common good of the community (Cuthill, 2002). Mutual responsibility is not limited to the commitments of local community, but also implicates other players. For example, it implies sharing of responsibility for environmental stewardship among local communities, public and private sectors (Sekhar, 2005). Communitarians believe that the good of all could be promoted by some form of mutually advantageous cooperation (Jordan, 1989), such as during environmental disasters (Skanavis, Koumouris, & Petreniti, 2005), and to fulfill essential needs (Asadi-Lari, et al., 2005). According to Etzioni (1996), the common good is determined by dialogues between individuals in a community who express their preferences. Ethical concern for the common good provides a basis for participation and collaboration (Cuthill, 2002).

Cooperative enquiry is a process of community deliberation in the public sphere to evaluate and validate truth claims (Aristotle, 1968; Gay, 1970; Lehman, 1999; Tam, 1998; Taylor, 1989). Cooperative enquiry is particularly important when sustainability and sustainable development are inherently dynamic, indefinite and contested concepts (Mog, 2004) with no single meaning and subject to many

interpretations (PCE, 2002). Lawrence and Arunachalam (2006) provide empirical evidence to show that priorities are assigned to economic, social and environmental considerations on the basis of the community engaging in cooperative enquiry and collaborating with public authorities. Through an interactive, participatory style of problem solving, learning is triggered and innovation diffused in the community (Kroma, 2006). The process includes a range of deliberative mechanisms: citizens' panels, citizens' juries, user and area-based forums (Newman et al., 2004); web-based dialogue, participative events and seminars, and community level discussions. (Jones, 2006); discussion forums, file-sharing and e-learning communities (Cheng & Vassileva, 2006). Social processes of cooperative enquiry serve as the primary venue for communitarian accountability. This venue is what Lehman (1999) refers to as the public sphere.

The principal thesis of this interpretive study is that accountability acquires meaning within a communitarian approach to local governance. The following are key characteristic features underpinning the communitarian approach:

- The moral dimension inherent in communitarian philosophy, in which enhancing the common good is the primary motive of local governance
- The public sphere is a venue for developing accountability relationships and carrying out the dimensions of accountability. The public sphere takes the form of a process of cooperative enquiry to engage the community in debate and dialogue. In modern day community contexts, the process of cooperative enquiry engages both local community and local authority in collaboration to address sustainable development (including environmental and social issues) through planning and policy making for sustainable development.

1.2 MEANING OF “COMMUNITY”

The term “community” may sound ambiguous and create a question in the minds of most readers as to “What is a community?” Over the centuries, with developments in social, political and economic ideologies and systems, several concepts of community have evolved in literature (Ahrne, 1998; Alexander, 1998; Aristotle,

1968; Etzioni, 1993; Frazer, 1998; Lehman, 1999; Miller, 1995; Reese, 2001). Alexander (1998) believes that ideas about community are undergoing a secularization process which is:

...a process that takes an idea from practical experiences, from the often overwhelming pressures of moral, economic, and political conflicts, to the intellectual world of conceptual disputation, paradigm dispute, research program, and empirical data. Even after they have made this transition,...such concepts retain significant moral and political associations, and they remain highly disputable. What has changed is the terrain in which they are discussed, compromised and struggled over (p.2).

Aristotle (1968) refers to a community or polis as an organised political community of a city. Aristotle believed that a community is developed naturally from several levels of human associations. The first level is the naturally instituted association between male and female to form a family or household. The second is an association of households to form a village. In a more complex form, a polis is an association of several villages. According to Aristotle, a natural relationship exists between man and the community to which he belongs. Aristotle (1968) observes:

The polis, or political association, is the crown: it completes and fulfils the nature of man: it is thus natural to him, and he himself 'naturally a polis animal'; it is also prior to him, in the sense that it is the presupposition of his true and full life (p.2).

Aristotle (1968) explains the importance of community to an individual:

...the polis belongs to the class of things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature an animal intended to live in a polis. He who is without a polis, by reason of his own nature and not of some accident, is either a poor sort of being, or a being higher than man....The man who is isolated- who is unable to share in the benefits of political associations, or has no need to share because he is already self-sufficient- is no part of the polis, and must therefore be a beast or a god. Man is thus intended by nature to be a part of a political whole, and there is therefore an immanent impulse in all men towards an association of this order (pp. 5-7).

Aristotle (1968) believes that this natural relationship has an impact on the individual's identity. An individual develops an identity, talents, and pursuits in life only in the context of a community. The relationship between the individual and the community is governed by shared values and practices and these, in turn, shape the values and understandings of the individual. According to Miller (1995), Aristotle theorises a community as a group that collaborates for the sake of some common good.

For MacIntyre (1984), individuals flourish only within the context of communal practices. Individuals are deeply dependent on the community for their moral development, their sense of self-identity and self-esteem, and their ability to lead lives with unity and meaning. This reliance on the community necessitates the formation of a well-functioning community in order for the individual to flourish. Bradley (1927) argues that, because of this dependence of the individual on the community, the individual has an obligation to belong to the community and obey its dictates.

Some scholars equate the notion of civil society with the concept of community. Alexander (1998) describes a large community, consisting of several communities, as a civil society. According to Ahrne (1998), civil society is about social relationships and interactions between people which “allows people to be individuals at the same time as they are parts of society” (p.86). Miller (1995) considers a community as a fusion of the concepts of the state and society. A society includes the full range of associations which human beings need to meet their basic needs. This all inclusive community consists of an intricate web of human relationships, voluntary as well as coercive, private as well as public, through which individuals can find sustenance, companionship and happiness. The current worldview recognises the need to reflect the differences between and within local communities (Richardson, 2005). Community does not imply trying to recapture lost forms of solidarity; it refers to practical means of furthering social and material goals of neighbourhoods, towns and larger areas (Giddens, 1998)

Other scholars have linked the concept of community to common values and shared understandings. For Frazer (1998), a community is a set of relations of trust, shared values and mutual respect and understanding between individuals to support socially useful and common interests. In a similar vein, Etzioni (1993) defines community as an amalgam of a web of relationships among a group of individuals who also share a commitment to a set of shared values and who have shared history and identity – in short, a particular culture. A similar definition offered by Reese (2001) describes communities as “Webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and shared values...” (p.2334).

One of the main criticisms directed at communitarian ideology is the conceptual vagueness of its term ‘community’. According to Hampton (1997), liberal critics argue that the concept of community is difficult to define. Communitarians offer no clear theoretical analysis of the notion of community, how communities function, under what conditions communities flourish and what the consequences of the establishment of communities would be for other aspects of human life. According to MacIntyre (1984), communitarians often switch between a descriptive sense of community and a prescriptive sense of community, the term community is more exemplified than theoretically analysed and communitarians do not provide a sufficient justification of community as the key social formation.

However, Frazer (1998) considers the vagueness of the term ‘community’ as a source of both its strength and weakness. Community can mean all those who live in a locality, or those who share a particular set of religious or cultural values, or those who share a particular set of political aims, or those who share some other social characteristic. This vagueness contributes to the rhetorical power of the concept in that it can exist in different contexts. According to Frazer (1998), communitarians consider the criticism of the use of the term community does not affect their beliefs that individuals are deeply affected by the social and cultural structures that generate them, that social relationships in some important sense are prior to individualistic aspirations, and that social collectives are real, existing features of our world. In a similar vein, Daly & Cobb (1994) contend that although the term community has been used in many ways, comes in all types and sizes and has no fixed meaning, it

can be given a meaning within fairly wide parameters that seem important for a particular project. I approach interpretation of 'text' with the above pre-understandings on the concept of community. My interpretation aims to provide insights on the meaning of community within the context of local governance in the Taupo District.

1.3 MY PRE-UNDERSTANDINGS

My pre-understandings evolve from a literature review on accountability and local governance. The pre-understandings are as follow:

1. The meaning of accountability extends beyond the account giving dimension. Accountability also encompasses other dimensions such as responsibility, dialogue, relational responsiveness, decision making and controllability.
2. Various dimensions of accountability are implicated in a communitarian approach to local governance. The dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of the processes and outcomes of collaboration between community and public authorities in Local Government planning and policy making. The dimensions are interrelated and together provide a holistic meaning of accountability.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this thesis is to examine the broad dimensions of accountability and the institutions that enhance accountability. The purpose is to expand the meaning of accountability beyond its conventional account giving sense and develop an expanded meaning of accountability, that is, a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. The interpretative approach of the study has both descriptive and normative elements. The descriptive facet of the study appears when I set out to explain how accountability is constituted in processes that engage a district community, public authorities and private entities, in planning and policy making for sustainable development. The descriptive feature is also contained in analysis of the outcomes of the processes, that is, agreements, strategies and policy proposals, to explain how dimensions of accountability are implicated and

acquire meanings within the context of these outcomes. The descriptive feature is once again implicated when I examine factors which hinder the operation of the communitarian approach to accountability. This thesis takes a normative stance in various ways. First, the study prescribes hermeneutics as a methodology for analysing the “text” consisting of multiple documents and data. The study draws on a theoretical CAACG model and validates the model by interpretation of the “text”. The normative stance is consistent with the hermeneutic methodology that uses pre-understanding as a basis for interpreting text. Second, the normative approach seeks to suggest a meaning for a CAACG and that accounting and accountability should operate in a broader environment. In particular, the study prescribes advancing environmental and social accounting and accountability by engaging a local community of interests in planning and policy making in collaboration with local authorities. Third, from the normative perspective the study uses the empirics to show how a communitarian approach to accountability could be a basis for policy making. I examine the conditions (planning and policy making processes) under which such broad-based accountability is most likely. In summary the primary research objective and the supplementary objectives can be said to have both descriptive and normative connotations.

1.4.1 Research Question

The objective of this interpretive study is to elucidate how dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of community participation and collaboration with local authorities and private entities in planning and policy making for sustainable development. The objectives of my research can be restated in the form of the following principal research question:

What are the dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good?

The research question stated above only serves as a broad guide to the interpretive study. To examine the principal research question, I have formulated the following questions:

- What is the meaning and scope of a community in the Taupo District?
- How is communitarian ideology reflected in the processes and outcomes of community participation in planning and policy making for the sustainable development of Taupo District?
- How is accountability implicated when a community is engaged in planning and policy making for sustainable development? What are the dimensions of the accountability? Who are the parties involved in the accountability? What are the factors that influence the dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability?
- What are the conditions under which broad-based (or CAACG) is most likely?

1.5 THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FOCUS: THE TAUPO DISTRICT, ITS COMMUNITY, SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The primary issues of concern to the Taupo community are the pollution of Lake Taupo and the impacts of the pollution on the values of the community (Environment Waikato, 2004b; Sanders, 2001). The water quality of the Lake is being affected by activities in the surrounding catchments of the Lake (Environment Waikato, 2000a; Edgar, 1999; Petch et al., 2003). Excess nitrogen flowing into the Lake from farmlands, septic tanks and urban storm water runoff is degrading water quality by causing toxic algal booms in the Lake (Brown, 2003; Environment 2001a, 2001b & 2001c; Vant, 1987, Vant 2004). Intensive animal farming in the surrounding catchments has been identified as the main source of the nitrogen flows into Lake Taupo (Edgar, 1999; Environment Waikato, 2003; 2004b; Hadfield et al., 2001, 2007; Hamilton & Wilkins, 2004; Petch et al., 2003). Lake Taupo is treasured as a national icon in New Zealand. The Lake is the main source of water supply for the greater Waikato Region. Major economic activities in the Taupo District, including tourism, recreation, and fishery, depend on a clean and clear Lake while the indigenous Maori community, Ngati Tuwharetoa, claim customary rights³ over

³ Customary right gives Maori the right to exercise their customs, life principles and culture. See Chapter 6 section 6.3 for detail discussion.

the Lake (Environment Waikato, 2004b, 2008; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia, 1992; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000, 2003). With such diversity of interests, Lake Taupo has become the joint responsibility of the community or community of interests.

The Regional Council (Environment Waikato) and District Council (Taupo District Council) want to establish policy decisions for land use in the catchments to prevent increases in nitrogen flows (Environment Waikato, 2001c). Policy changes are anticipated to have economic and social implications for farming, tourism, recreation and other activities. The planning and policy formulation involved collaboration in the Taupo District between local residents, community-based groups and public authorities (i.e. Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council and Central Government agencies).

The collaboration which took place during the period 1998 - 2008 aimed at developing sustainable strategies and policies at grassroots levels in the Taupo District with primary emphasis on protection of the water quality of Lake Taupo and community-held values attached to the Lake. Major outcomes of the collaboration were formulation of three key strategies: Taupo District Economic Development Strategy 2002 (APR Consultants; 2002), Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy 2003 (Environment Waikato, 2003), and Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy 2004 or 2020 Action Plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b). In addition, a community accord (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999) was initiated and developed by a community-based group, Lakes and Waterways Action Group (LWAG), in collaboration with local authorities and local residents. The Environmental Strategic Plan 2000 (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000) and the Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2003 (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003) were formulated by the local Maori community. A policy proposal for protecting Lake Taupo, known as Variation 5 (Environment Waikato, 2005a), was released by Environment Waikato in 2005 for public comments. A total of 136 submissions were received from local residents, community-based groups and other sectors (Environment Waikato, 2005b). The submissions addressed over 820 matters related to the pollution of Lake Taupo.

1.6 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Several factors provided motivation for this study. First, this study is motivated by previous studies on accountability and local governance. The studies indicated that since the 1992 Earth's Summit in Rio De Janeiro, there has been increasing trend towards collective decision making on matters related to sustainable development (as indicated in Adomokai & Sheate, 2004; Austin & Eder, 2007; Barrutia, Aguado, Echebarria, 2007; Burke, 2004; Curtis, 1998; Curtis, Birkhead & Delacy, 1995; Datta & Virgo, 1998; Khan & Khisa, 2000; Wild, 1999). Decentralised and democratic local governance continues to gain importance in many countries seeking to increase community involvement and accountability in government decision making (USAID, 2000). Today, accountability seems more crucial than ever, as environmental, social and economic problems become increasingly complex and solutions not easily forthcoming. Failures of integrity in corporate and government institutions and increasing environmental and social problems have made accountability to a broad section of society all the more important. When people are deceived and distrusted for their ability to handle the truth, democracy is itself weakened (Grace, 2004). To re-establish trust in public and private institutions, Grace (2004) calls for accountability for vital behaviours that includes: holding institutions accountable for telling the truth; asking good questions that engage the people; and pointing towards hope. Grace (2004) calls for mutual accountability which engages the people to make them better stewards of their common good. Hence, the questions regarding the nature of accountability are crucial ones: What does accountability mean? Who is accountable? To whom is accountability due? What is the subject matter of accountability? What are the dimensions of accountability?

This study is also motivated by the recommendations of Agenda 21 regarding community participation in planning and decision making for sustainable development. Agenda 21 is an official document reflecting the global consensus and political commitment of more than 178 governments on development and environmental cooperation. Its recommendations were adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (United Nations , 2000). Among its recommendations,

Agenda 21 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004) considers public participation in decision making processes as a fundamental prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development (Chapter 23 Agenda 21). The need for public participation arises because issues on environment and development have roots in local activities requiring cooperation and partnership between local authorities and their communities. Community participation envisaged in Agenda 21 involves the participation of individuals (including indigenous people), social groups and organizations in decisions which affect the communities in which they live and work. The forms of participation recommended in the Agenda include public consultation, dialogue, information sharing and accessibility to communities of environment and development information held by local and national authorities. Community participation aims to create household awareness of sustainable development issues and to collate community views for formulating sustainable strategies and policies. In line with the recommendations of the Agenda, many OECD countries have been attempting to implement sustainable development at grass-root community levels (Burke, 2004; Estarellas, Garcia, Lopez, 2005; Gaye, Diouf & Keller, 2001; Hughes, 2000; Joas & Gronholm, 2000; Jorby, 2000; Knight, 2000; McCallum, Hughey & Rixecker, 2007; Rowe, 2000; Taupo District Council, n.d.).

I would not rule out peer motivation as one of the factors that developed my research interests in accountability and sustainable development. My supervisory team consists of accounting scholars who subscribe to critical theory and show keen interest in researching sustainable development and the holistic nature of accountability. Motivation was provided also by the Waikato Management School where I am an academic staff member and doctoral student. A meta research theme of the Waikato Management School is “Social and Sustainable Development” focusing on creating sustainability for individuals, organisations, communities (including Maori), nations and the global community and the challenges they face in sustainable development. The school’s commitment to the research agenda has been affirmed by the Associate Dean Research, Waikato Management School, Professor Delwyn N. Clark:

The Waikato Management School is distinctive in its commitment 'to inspire the world with fresh understandings of sustainable success'. These fresh understandings will be achieved through our high quality research that can influence policy makers, excellent teaching, through the knowledge and values our graduates take into the workforce, through our continued consulting with business and the outstanding experiences offered to everyone who connects with the School. We see education and research as key factors in enabling New Zealand to be a sustainable nation and sustainability as central to the future of business (Waikato Management School, 2007, p.1).

The school's research agenda coincided with my cognitive interests in environmental and social accounting and my attempts to formulate a research objective in that field of study.

The access to information and community meetings in the Taupo District was an important factor that motivated me to frame empirical research in that area. At the initial stages of my PhD, I became aware of ongoing collaboration in the Taupo District to address the pollution of Lake Taupo. I was introduced to Environment Waikato Officials by my supervisors who had made earlier contacts with them. My subsequent contacts exposed me to a wealth of empirical data on local governance in Taupo District as well as being invited to numerous community meetings. This empirical focus, together with my prior readings on the communitarian approach to environmental and social accounting (such as Lehman, 1999), convinced me that I could combine both theory and empirical data for my PhD thesis.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of ten interrelated chapters. Following is a summary of the coverage in each chapter.

1.7.1 Chapter One: Overview of Thesis

The chapter provides an overview of the thesis. It draws on extant studies that articulate broad dimensions of accountability and explains the broad sense of accountability adopted in the thesis. The chapter argues that accountability is more than an account giving process and is linked to a broad range of other interrelated

dimensions such as responsibility, dialogue, responsiveness, controllability and decision making. More specifically, the chapter makes reference to studies which explain how broad dimensions of accountability become operational during dialogue between government officials and the public. Invoking these ideas on accountability, this chapter suggests that broad dimensions of accountability acquire meaning when a community participates in planning and policy making for sustainable development. For the purpose of exploring the broad meaning of accountability with the context of a community, the chapter sets the scene in the Taupo District of New Zealand. It suggests hermeneutical enquiry of the processes and outcomes of community participation in planning and policy making for the sustainable development of the Taupo District.

1.7.2 Chapter Two: Research Methodology

The primary objective of the chapter is to explain the theoretical basis underlying the methodology adopted in this interpretive case study. The chapter offers the justifications for the choice of the methodology. The chapter explains how the principles of philosophical hermeneutics, (including whole-part philosophy, the concepts of pre-understanding, historicity; and fusion of horizons) have been applied in the interpretive case study. The hermeneutical process involves interpretation of text which is defined in the chapter as public documents and other empirical data (such as minutes of meetings and interview transcripts) that were gathered during field work in the Taupo District.

1.7.3 Chapter Three: Research Method and Mode of Analysis

The chapter describes the interpretive case study method used in this study. The main objective of an interpretive case study method is to draw inferences about a phenomenon from within a real-life context. The interpretive case study method is grounded in hermeneutic theory and has applied pre-understandings of the researcher to interpret and draw inferences from empirical data. The chapter also describes the techniques used in collecting data and the mode of analysis of the data. Data collection techniques include attending community meetings in the Taupo District and conducting interviews with participants from the Taupo Community and local

authorities in the district. Public documents obtained from various sources include a community accord, strategies and policy proposals for sustainable development. Website and press releases provide a wealth of information about environmental issues faced by the Taupo community. The mode of analysis refers to the interpretive process for making sense of the data. The chapter presents the interpretive process as alternating between pre-understandings and empirical data in concentric circles and fusion of horizons. The purpose is to understand and unfold the meaning of CAACG.

1.7.4 Chapter Four: Pre-Understandings

This chapter clarifies pre-understandings that I brought to the interpretive process. As this thesis is concerned with a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good, the chapter focuses on explaining my pre-understandings that stem from contemporary literature on communitarian theory, accountability concepts and sustainable paradigms. The chapter suggests that, together, these theories provide a conceptual framework that defines the features of a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. The conceptual framework provides a vantage point for the interpretation of the text. The chapter suggests the possibility that the pre-understandings may become altered in the light of new meanings that may emerge during the interpretive process.

1.7.5 Chapter Five: The Global Context - Global Discourse on Sustainable Development

The global discourse referred to in this chapter consists of international consensus, declarations and recommendations on sustainable development that are outcomes of international conferences facilitated by the United Nations. Understanding the concept of sustainable development as it has developed in the global context is important for this New Zealand based empirical study. New Zealand has participated in the global discourse and it has political commitment to implement the recommendations of international consensus such as Agenda 21. The global discourse has significant influence on Local Government legislations and government policies on sustainable development in New Zealand. Therefore, the chapter argues that the global discourse is an important context for understanding a

communitarian approach to accountability for the common good in the Taupo District.

1.7.6 Chapter Six: The New Zealand Context – Evolution of Communitarian Approach to Local Governance, Sustainable Development and Accountability.

Understanding present real-life phenomena within the context of past historical events is an important aspect of philosophical hermeneutics. Such understanding is related to the concept of historicism, that is, approaching a text from a historical perspective. In Chapter 6, historicism refers to the evolution of communitarian ideology in New Zealand. The evolution is related to community participation in Local Government planning and policy making processes. The chapter explains the factors that have influenced the evolution of communitarian ideology and how Local Government reforms and changes in Local Government legislations have contributed to community participation in Local Government affairs. It also discusses how the Treaty of Waitangi, Agenda 21 and international declarations that contain communitarian and sustainability themes in their recommendations, have influenced Local Government reforms in New Zealand. The chapter argues that any understanding of community involvement in sustainable development, and implications this has on accountability, becomes more meaningful by invoking these historical developments. Put differently, the text in this case study is understood in the context of the past historical events.

1.7.7 Chapter Seven: The Case Study Focus The Taupo District, Its Community and Sustainability Issues

This chapter provides an overview of the Taupo District and explains the environmental and social issues confronting the Taupo community. The chapter highlights the causes of the pollution of Lake Taupo and how the pollution continues to affect the diversity of interests and values of the Taupo Community causing conflicts of interests and tensions in the community. The chapter explains how dimensions of accountability are manifested in the community debate on the pollution of Lake Taupo. The chapter identifies the prejudices inherent in the Taupo

community and explains how the prejudices affect the operation of a communitarian approach to accountability.

1.7.8 Chapter Eight: Communitarian Approach to Accountability in the Context of Communal Processes

The main objective of the chapter is to explain how broad dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of communal processes. The processes discussed in the chapter took place during the period 1998 until the first quarter of 2008 and involves community participation in planning and policy making for sustainable development of the Taupo District. The chapter classifies the communal processes into several categories as follow:

- Process for establishing community concerns and values
- Process for developing strategies
- Policy making process
- Supplementary communal processes

Information about these processes was obtained from several sources, including: public documents; publications on surveys conducted on the Taupo Community by local authorities; press releases and website material; minutes of community meetings; and interviews. The chapter explains how the meaning of CAACG is implicated in the processes. The key assertion that flows in the chapter is that the processes serve as a venue for the operation of the communitarian approach to accountability. The pre-understanding from Chapter 4 and historical understanding gained in Chapters 5 and 6 guided the interpretation of the empirical data. The chapter emphasises that the dialogical, responsiveness, information sharing, mutual responsibility and account giving dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of the communal processes. The chapter also examines the idea of 360 degree accountability (Behn, 2000) within the context of the process in the Taupo District. It also offers critical reflections on the communal processes by highlighting factors that affect symmetries and asymmetries in the Taupo community, thereby challenging the communitarian approach to accountability.

1.7.9 Chapter Nine: Accountability Acquires Meaning within the Context of Community Strategies and Policies

The primary objective of this chapter is to provide an interpretation of the public documents which were the outcomes of the communal processes. The documents consist of agreements, strategies and policy proposals developed during the communal processes. The interpretation of the documents involves “whole-part” and fusion of horizons. The chapter explains how meaning of “parts” and “whole” of each document are interrelated. The purpose of the interpretation is to explain how the dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of the public documents. The chapter also highlights tensions and contradictions within and between the documents and offers some critical reflections of the prejudices inherent in the documents.

1.7.10 Chapter 10: Reflections and Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis. It provides a summary of main issues covered in the thesis and a summary of major findings of the interpretive case study. The significance of the communitarian model of accountability for local governance is highlighted. The contributions of the study to accountability literature and to hermeneutic methodology are acknowledged. Research limitations and problems encountered in using the hermeneutic methodology are discussed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research directions.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of my thesis. The overview is intended to introduce and help the reader understand the complex issues and context within which this empirical research is undertaken. It explains the main themes (such as local governance, accountability, community, sustainability and common good) that shape my hypotheses and describes the theoretical framework underpinning the empirically based interpretive study. The purpose of the interpretive case study is to unfold new meanings of accountability through hermeneutic exploration of the processes and outcomes of local governance in Taupo District. The structure of the thesis is explained and a summary provided for each of the ten chapters in the thesis. It is important to note that chapters 4-9 are structured according to the hermeneutic

process adopted in this study. The hermeneutic process entails defining pre-understandings in chapter 4; defining global and New Zealand context in 5 and 6, and followed by the interpretive analysis of empirical data in chapters 7 to 9. Before pursuing the hermeneutic process it is important to explain the choice of methodology and methods and the hermeneutic theoretical framework underpinning the choice. The methodology is discussed in chapter 2 and methods in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Reality is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based upon our perceptions. What we perceive depends upon what we look for. What we look for depends upon what we think. What we think depends upon what we perceive. What we perceive determines what we believe. What we believe determines what we take to be true. What we take to be true is our reality (Zukav, p.310)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The outcomes of any research are largely influenced by the methodology used and the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the methodology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Ontology refers to the nature of reality and epistemology to the way to discover reality (Crotty, 1998). Theoretical perspectives which inform social science research have been broadly classified in literature as belonging to either the subjectivist or objectivist paradigms (Crotty, 1998; Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Disparities between these paradigms originate from their contrasting assumptions on epistemology and ontology. Subjectivists assume a nominalistic ontology and a relativistic epistemology and use an ideographic methodology while objectivists assume realism, positivism and adopt a nomothetic methodology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The nominalistic position of subjectivists assumes that the social world is a creation or projection of the human mind and is subject to individual cognition (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Crotty, 1998; Putnam, 1983). This nominalistic approach is supported by a relativistic epistemology and an ideographic methodology seeking to understand the social world from the view point of individuals and the subjective experience of the individuals involved in the phenomenon being researched. The epistemology of subjectivists is concerned with the relative nature of the social world and understanding what is unique to the individual rather than understanding general

and universal laws (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Social reality, under subjectivism, is a creation of the interaction of individuals and a projection of the mind. Individuals are in the very act of constituting social reality. The interpretive paradigm is embedded within the subjectivist's dimension and seeks explanation within the realm of the consciousness and subjectivity of the researched, participant or author, as well as the researcher, observer or interpreter of action or text. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), to interpret means to understand the subjective meaning of social action. The interpretive approach focuses on culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world. Social phenomena are seen to stem from the subjectivity of human consciousness (Crotty, 1998).

In contrast, the ontological assumption of objectivism assumes that the social world is external to individual cognition, that social reality is objective and exists independently of individual consciousness and is waiting for discovery (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Underlying the objectivist perspective is the positivist epistemology which aims to search for regularities, universal laws and causal relationships. The nomothetic methodology employed by an objectivist focuses on testing hypotheses by using quantitative techniques for data analysis. From their epistemological stance, objectivists look for consistencies, regularities and general laws which can explain causes and nomothetic relationships.

Several theoretical frameworks originating from the subjectivists and objectivists paradigm can be distinguished on the basis of their assumptions regarding the nature of society in relation to sociology of regulation and sociology of radical change (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Some of these theories include structural-functional theory, constructionism, phenomenology and hermeneutic (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Neuman, 2003). In view of the numerous options for theoretical frameworks, a researcher needs to explain the methodology, the philosophical assumptions underpinning the chosen methodology and justifications for the choice of the methodology. The primary objective of this chapter is to explain the methodology adopted in this study and to justify the choice of the methodology. The focus of discussion is on the hermeneutic methodology and how it has been applied in the interpretation undertaken in this study.

This chapter is structured in the following manner. In section 2.2 I define hermeneutics theory and explain the objectivist, subjectivist and critical perspectives to hermeneutics. The epistemology and ontology of the different perspectives are also explained. Next, in section 2.3, I explain the fundamentals underpinning philosophical hermeneutics and how philosophical hermeneutics is applied as a methodology in this study. The discussion in this section focuses on explaining the meaning and application of text, hermeneutic circle, pre-understandings, fusion of horizon, dialogue, language, historicity, contextual understanding and so on, all of which are key concepts in philosophical hermeneutics. Finally, in section 2.4, I summarise my methodology and provide justifications for the choice of philosophical hermeneutics as the theoretical basis of my methodology.

2.2 HERMENEUTICS THEORY

Generally hermeneutics is defined as the theory of interpretation (Bauman, 1978; Palmer, 1969; Ricoeur, 1974; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Bleicher, 1980; Dilthey, 1976; Gadamer, 1976; Boland, 1991; Crotty, 1998; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Llewellyn, 1993; Schleiermacher, 2002). The theory consists of a nexus of ideas (Llewellyn, 1993), principles, rules and methods underlying the interpretation of text (Crotty, 1998). Interpretation is the process of coming to understand text (Boland, 1991) and is concerned with understanding the external objectifications of the human mind, including written texts, works of art and social actions of individuals, groups, organisations, institutions, and communities (Palmer, 1969; Ricoeur, 1981).

The development of hermeneutic theory has been primarily influenced by two schools of thought, that is, objectivist and subjectivist, with radically different conceptions of its scope and purpose. The objectivist approach follows the tradition of Schleiermacher (2002) and Dilthey (1976) while the subjectivist approach is influenced by the ideas of Heidegger (1967) and Gadamer (1975). A third perspective, critical hermeneutics, takes a reflexive approach towards the text and the prejudices of the interpreter (Ricoeur, 1974; 1981).

2.2.1 Objectivist Approach to Hermeneutics

The objectivist approach to hermeneutics subscribes to the idea that a text has fixed meanings, that is, meanings intended by the author of the text (Schleiermacher, 2002; Dilthey 1976; Ricoeur, 1974). The task of interpretation is to retrieve the original meaning intended by the author and understand the historical context in which the text was written (Prasad, 2002; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Hirsch, 1967). Through a “mysterious process of mental transfer” (Palmer, 1969, p.104) and through reliving the author’s experience, objectivists claim that objective knowledge can be obtained (Dilthey, 1976). The process of understanding is within the context of the social and historical world from which the text was created, that is, the author’s social-historical world (Palmer, 1969) and the author’s inner experience (Palmer, 1969). During the process of understanding, empathy sets in and the interpreter uses imagination and intuition to assimilate the mental universe of another person. This means, as Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000) claim,

...living (thinking, feeling) oneself into the situation of the acting (writing, speaking) person. With the help of imagination one tries to put oneself in the agent’s (author’s, speaker’s) place in order to understand the meaning of the act (the written or spoken word) more clearly (p.54).

The author’s experience and intended meanings come to fullest expression and understanding through the medium of language (Palmer, 1969). Texts, speech, art and actions are expressions of meaning (Crotty, 1998) and “lived experience is incarnate in language” (Crotty, 1998, p.95). They are expressed in language and grammar is used to understand the meaning intended by their originators. Hence, the objectivist approach to hermeneutics is driven by rigid grammatical rules, methods and techniques for textual interpretation (Prasad, 2002).

The objectivist’s approach assumes that true understanding is achieved by letting the phenomenon manifest itself without forcing the interpreter’s categories on the phenomenon (Palmer, 1969). The interpreter “does not project a meaning onto the phenomenon, rather what appears is an ontological manifestation of the thing itself” (Palmer, 1969, p.128.). An interpretation is considered valid if it unfolds the author’s intended meaning (Klecun-Debrowska & Cornford, 2000). Objectivity (i.e. author’s intended meaning of text) as implied in objectivist hermeneutics points to the

existence of a subject-object dichotomy in the interpretive process, a polarity between the subject/ interpreter and object/ text (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

2.2.2 Subjectivist Approach to Hermeneutics

The subjectivist approach (Heidegger, 1967; Gadamer, 1975) dispels the subject and object dichotomy assumed by the objectivists. Subjectivists emphasise the role and influences of the interpreter who approaches the text with her/ his own world of tradition and prejudices. A fusion of the horizons of the interpreter and that of the text takes place during interpretation. The purpose of hermeneutics, according to subjectivists, is no longer a re-enactment of the original meaning intended by the author. Ontology is created by the interpreter experiencing or interpreting a phenomenon (Heidegger, 1967). The interpreter is in the very act of constituting any object as object (Palmer, 1969). The object is not a fixed understanding but historically formed, accumulated in the very experience of encountering the phenomenon. Hermeneutics means bringing out what is unknown to light, revelation and disclosure (Palmer, 1969), that is, bringing out hidden meaning behind a phenomenon. Heidegger (1967) offers an ontological conception of hermeneutics, emphasising existential understanding and historicism. The philosophical position underpinning existentialism is that the individual finds meaning in his or her own existence, not in any externally imposed doctrine (Rohmann, 1999).

According to Gadamer (1975) the interpreter's understanding of a text can differ from that of the author of the text. This is "created by the historical distance between them" (p.263). Gadamer (1975) argues that every age understands a text in its own way within the context of the tradition of the age. The real meaning of a text to the interpreter "...is always partly determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter" (p.263). Gadamer (1975) asserts that "the meaning of a text always goes beyond its author" (p.264) and therefore "understanding is not merely reproductive, but always a productive attitude as well" (p.264). Going beyond the author's intended meaning happens because the prejudices or pre-conceptions, historical situation and tradition of the interpreter is different from that of the author of the text. Interpretation means to understand the author's experience in reference to the interpreter's own horizon of experience, that is, meaning of a past work is defined in

terms of the questions put to it from the present. Application of the meaning of the text to the present situation always takes place during the process of understanding. The researcher attempts to re-enact the meaning of a text or action in new contexts transcending the original social conditions under which the action or text developed (Llewellyn, 1993). The outcome of this interpretive process is regarded by Llewellyn (1993) as being mediated by the researcher who is trying to make sense (Ricouer, 1981) of the text or action. Through the hermeneutical process, 'interpreters may develop meanings that the authors themselves would have been unable to articulate' (Crotty, 1998, p.91). The implication is that the text can have several meanings rather than one (Klecun-Dabrowska, & Cornford; 2000), depending on the context assumed in the interpretation. Hence, no interpretation can claim to be definitive but fresh relevance and interest can be obtained by understanding a text from a new perspective.

According to Crotty (1998), the process of understanding begins with a set of ideas that provides rudimentary understanding of what the interpreter is trying to understand. The outcome of understanding is a development of the rudimentary understanding "with the more developed understanding returning to illuminate and enlarge one's starting point" (Crotty, 1998, p.92). New facts that emerge during the process of interpretation replace old ideas and provide new meanings, in the light of which the interpreter's frame of reference is transformed (Alvesson & Skoldberg; 2000). Through hermeneutical inquiry the interpreter can uncover hidden meanings (Crotty, 1998) which the author was not able to articulate (Crotty, 1998).

Contemporary scholars regard hermeneutics as a methodology for interpreting the products of the human mind (Palmer, 1969; Burrell & Morgan 1979; Follesdal, 1994; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000) and for understanding the fundamental nature of the social world within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity. Nominalistic ontology, relativistic epistemology and ideographic methodology are key philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutics theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Crotty, 1998; Putnam, 1983). Under these assumptions, social reality is seen as a projection of the human mind and the subject of individual cognition. The purpose of interpretation is to understand the social world from the viewpoint and the subjective

experience of individuals involved in the research. Individuals are in the very act of constituting social reality. This means that social phenomena can only be fully understood in relation to the minds which created them and to the inner experience which they reflect.

The implication of these epistemological and ontological assumptions is that the same text can have different meanings for different human subjects (Doolin, 1998). A methodology based on hermeneutic theory seeks to understand the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social world and attempts to explain what is unique to the individual rather than what is general and universal (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The epistemological assumption in subjectivist hermeneutic methodology rejects the reductionist and objectivist perspective of natural sciences but relies on a phenomenological approach to identify the type of knowledge and understanding that is appropriate for interpreting human phenomena (Palmer, 1969).

2.2.3 Beyond the Objective- Subjective Dichotomy

Hermeneutic theory in the tradition of Schleiermacher emphasises objectivism in interpretation in which retrieving the author's intention, that is the meaning intended by the author, was the ultimate aim of interpretation (Palmer, 1969). Gadamer (1975) considers the hermeneutics stance of Schleiermacher as conceiving the "natural sciences' ideal of objectivity" (p.260). According to Gadamer the theory of Schleiermacher considers understanding as a means by which "one places oneself entirely within the writer's mind and from there resolves all that is strange and unusual about the text" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 261). However, Gadamer argues that such a stance ignores the importance of "historical consciousness in hermeneutical theory" (p.260). Hermeneutics in the tradition of Gadamer (1975), in particular philosophical hermeneutics, suggests that the interpreter go beyond retrieving authorial intention and find new meanings in the context of the pre-understandings of the interpreter. According to Gadamer (1975), understanding is governed by the tradition to which the interpreter belongs and tradition is produced by the interpreter by participating in its evolution and hence determined by the interpreter. Therefore, the hermeneutic circle of understanding "is not a 'methodological' circle but describes an ontological structural element in understanding" (p.261).

A number of scholars reject the subjective-objective dichotomy and recognise both objective and subjective approaches as important research paradigms (Bernstein, 1983, Boland, Jr. 1989; Boland & Pondy 1983; Gadamer, 1975; Morgan, 2006). Bernstein (1983) calls for an urgent need to move beyond objectivism and relativism. Bernstein contends that confusion has set in by the views of the philosophers toward opposing positions and that the differences between objectivists and subjectivists are less significant than what they share. Boland, Jr. (1989) rejects the dichotomy that suggests objectivists and subjectivists are two different kinds of researchers who focus on different realms of experience. Boland and Pondy (1983) argue that the subjective and objective approaches cannot stay separate as different areas of research and researchers need to appreciate the synthesis of both approaches in carrying out their research. Morgan (2006) draws on both objectivism and subjectivism in reading and interpreting different images of organisation.

Both objectivity and subjectivity are implied in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. For Gadamer (1975) the hermeneutic circle of understanding "is not formal in nature, it is neither subjective nor objective" (p.261) but is an "interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter" (p.261). Gadamer's (1975) philosophical hermeneutics does not reject the existence of authorial intention in a text but proposes to go beyond the author's intention by propounding that interpreters find new hidden meanings from the perspective of their pre-understandings. Philosophical hermeneutics does not deny the presence of the author's intention but promulgates the significance of going beyond the author's intention. Gadamer argues that:

Hermeneutics must start from a position that a person seeking to understanding has a relation to the object that comes into language in the transmitted text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition out of which the text speaks. On the other hand, hermeneutical consciousness is aware that it cannot be connected with this object in some self evident, questioned way, as is the case with the unbroken stream of a tradition (p.262).

However, when the text is not intelligible the interpreter starts to doubt the transmitted text and seeks to discover in what way it can be remedied (Gadamer, 1975). Gadamer clarifies his philosophical position:

“Just as the recipient of a letter understands the news it contains and first sees things with the eyes of the person who wrote the letter, i.e. considers what he writes as true, and is not trying to understand the alien meanings of the letter writer, so we understand texts that have been handed down to us on the basis of expectations of meaning which are drawn from our own anterior relation to the subject...It is only when the attempt to accept what he has said as true fails that we try to ‘understand’ the text, psychologically or historically, as another’s meaning.. ...understanding means, primarily, to understand the content of what is said, and only secondarily to isolate and understand another’s meaning as such.” (p. 262).

Gadamer (1975) believes a reader experiences “familiarity and strangeness” (p.263) in regard to the language in which the text addresses the reader and the story that it tells. The intermediate position between the “strangeness and familiarity” portrays the place “between being an historically intended separate object and being part of a tradition”(p.263). Gadamer considers the intermediate area as the “true home of hermeneutics”(p.263). The intermediate position in which hermeneutics operates manifests the conditions in which understanding takes place, that is, it signifies “the prejudices and the fore-meanings in the mind of the interpreter” (p.263).

Philosophical hermeneutics also emphasises the temporal difference created by historical distance between the interpreter and the author and its significance for understanding (Gadamer, 1975). According to Gadamer (1975)

Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text is part of the whole of the tradition in which the age takes an objective interest and...the real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and whom he originally wrote for. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always partly determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history... the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a

reproductive , but always a productive attitude as well. Perhaps it is not correct to refer to this productive element in understanding as 'superior understanding'...it is not enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all." (pp. 263 -264).

I consider both objective and subjective stances to hermeneutics as essential for interpretation. Surely any author must have meant something or have some intentions in writing a text. It is logical to assume that authorial intention or the author's subjectivity is present in a text and exists independently (stands apart) of interpreters and from any meaning interpreters bring out by interpreting the text from the perspectives of their pre-understandings and prejudices. Although retrieving the author's original intentions may pose difficulties to the interpreter, especially when a temporal distance exists between the author and the interpreter who may be exposed to different traditions and prejudices, it is not appropriate to deny the existence of objectivity in the form of the author's intentions or even the author's subjectivity in the text. Also, if there is no temporal distance between the author and the interpreter and they experience the same tradition, it is likely that retrieving the author's intention may not pose difficulties to the interpreter. In any situation, my argument is that researchers need to understand what the author is articulating and the author's intention before reading the text from the perspective of their pre-understandings. Interpretation involves understanding the author as well as and even better than the author understands himself (Ricoeur, 1981). In short there is both objectivity and subjectivity involved in the interpretive process.

Although both objectivity and subjectivity are present in the interpretation of a text, the extent to which the interpreter is able to extract the objective meaning or authorial intention needs consideration. Retrieving the author's intentions may pose difficulties when the interpreter belongs to a tradition and time different from that to which the text and its author belong. The pre-understandings of the interpreter and the author regarding a phenomenon or the perspectives from which they read the text may be different. As such the interpreter may be familiar with the tradition of the text or totally alien to the tradition or be in a position of strangeness and familiarity.

2.2.4 Critical Hermeneutics

Critical hermeneutics combines both critical theory and philosophical hermeneutics to provide a reflexive approach for the interpretation of the text (Prasad, 2002). Reflexivity in critical hermeneutics can be a dialogue between the interpreter and text. The task of interpretation is to offer critique of the text and the prejudices of the interpreter (Prasad, 2002). Critical hermeneutics conceptualises interpretation as a critical-emancipatory process that requires the researcher to dig beneath the surface language and meaning of the 'text' with a view to retrieving those meanings that often lie buried (Prasad, 2000), and appropriating the evaluation for enacting change (Llewellyn, 1993).

In critiquing the text, the interpreter adopts a critical stance to reveal ambiguities in the text. The interpreter also uncovers tensions and contradictions between parts and whole and between ideologies and concepts used in the text. Critical hermeneutics also involves source criticism or evaluation of the authenticity and biasness of the text or source which has some knowledge about the phenomenon being interpreted (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). From a critical perspective a text is also read for what it excludes (Klecun-Dabrowska, & Cornford; 2000).

Another form of critique reflects on the prejudices of the interpreter (Gadamer, 1975; Llewellyn, 1993; Prasad, 2000). The sceptical interpreter challenges his or her prejudices in order to filter productive prejudices and separate them from unproductive prejudices (Gadamer, 1975). Genuine understanding, Gadamer (1975) argues, entails an ongoing critical reflection on the pre-understandings that influence one's engagement with others and the world in general. Reflexivity not only enables the interpreter to understand a text from an alien culture but also from the interpreter's own culture. Gadamer, following Heidegger, calls on the interpreter to always question her/ his prejudices critically (Gadamer, 1975). Tradition is not simply lying out there but constructed through critical self-reflection, which confirms some prejudices and rejects others (Prasad, 2002). Ricoeur (1981) notes that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics includes critical analysis in its insistence on critically filtering out "unproductive" prejudices. However, unless the interpreter becomes conscious of the "prejudices", the interpreter may not be able to suspend

“unproductive prejudices” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 263). Prasad (2002) argues that unless researchers are willing and able to suspend some of their ‘prejudices’, they may not succeed in developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under interpretation.

Some scholars suggest a critical approach towards the language used in the text. For Habermas (1990), language or linguistic structures continually undergo alteration and can be a medium for “domination, deception, and social power” (pp. 239-240). In a similar vein Gadamer (1975) sees hermeneutical experience, understanding and practical reasoning as increasingly threatened by the emergence of technocratic rationality and putative authority of ‘experts’. Gadamer characterises contemporary culture as having a zealous and dangerous faith in science in which all problems are instrumentally viewed as mere technical problems which can be solved through ‘technical means’. Warnke (1987) writes:

...all problems are viewed as technical problems amenable to technical solutions and dependent on advances in science. Indeed Gadamer argues the “expert” has replaced the “man of practical wisdom”...Gadamer argues that such a society of experts is also a “society of functionaries”. What becomes important is not the capacity to make responsible hermeneutically informed decisions on one’s own but rather the willingness to adapt decisions others have made for one, decisions that, in addition, largely follow the logic of technological imperatives (p 163).

In a similar tone Bernstein (1983) contends that;

...the chief task of philosophic hermeneutics is to correct the peculiar falsehood of modern consciousness and to defend practical and political reason against the domination of technology based on science...the scientism of our age and the false idolatry of the expert...(p.150).

Francis (1994) argues that social practices such as auditing appeal to the rhetoric of science in order to legitimate themselves in the larger social arena, understanding is reduced to the mere application of techniques and the interpreter’s exercise of judgment is under threat from structured methodologies (technocratic rationality).

Critical hermeneutics also includes critique of those factors that distort the “ideal speech situation” (Habermas, 1987). Ideal speech is a situation in which human

beings may arrive at genuine consensus by means of engaging in rational discourse which is totally free of domination and coercion. According to critical hermeneutics, therefore, the task of interpretation is to offer a critique of the ideological elements that distort the ideal speech situation.

2.3 APPLICATION OF HERMENEUTIC THEORY IN THE METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY

This study is concerned with hermeneutical inquiry into the meaning of communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. The philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer (1975) provides the theoretical basis for the choice of my methodology. As a significant contribution to the development of hermeneutic theory in the twentieth century and its foundational influence on contemporary scholars and research (such as Prasad, 2002, Llewellyn, 1993; Palmer, 1969; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Klecun-Dabrowska, & Cornford; 2000; Butler, 1998; Ricoeur, 1981), it seems reasonable to choose the subjectivist approach of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as an appropriate methodology for this study. The principles underlying the thinking of these scholars, such as non-authorial intention, hermeneutical circle of understanding, pre-understandings, fusion of horizons and the dialogical nature of interpretation, are useful in interpreting the multifaceted text or empirical data of this study. When interpreting a social phenomenon which is depicted in text comprised of several documents, any author-intentional approach to interpretation would lead to a methodological dead end (Prasad, 2002). The objectivist approach to hermeneutics does not provide an appropriate methodology basis for this study. This is because the objectivist approach is based on a subject-object polarity assumption and its purpose is to retrieve author-intended meanings.

Hermeneutics methodology is a key feature of the communitarian ideology (Reese, 2001). Members of a community draw on traditions of the community when interpreting a phenomenon. These traditions can be the values and beliefs of the community, its history and cultural background. Each community has its own traditions and its experiences can be distinct from that of another community. The traditions inform the prejudices that originate from the community's interpretation of

a phenomenon such as sustainability or sustainable development. Communitarians believe that a phenomenon takes on concretized meaning only in terms of communal beliefs and values (Francis, 1994). Tradition comes largely from community beliefs and values. A hermeneutical enquiry into a phenomenon would characterize the community as interpreting the meaning of the phenomenon within the concretised application to its situation. According to Burnett et al., (2003, p.3), “Narration, collaboration and social construction function together in the hermeneutic environment in the community.” Since a community exists in a hermeneutic environment it is only appropriate to use the hermeneutic methodology to study that environment. Given the foregoing arguments, it is clear, then, that the Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics offers a suitable theoretical framework on which to build the methodology and the method for research in accountability.

In the following sub-sections I explain the fundamentals of philosophical hermeneutics as a theoretical basis for my interpretive methodology. I define and explain the broader application of key concepts of philosophical hermeneutics such as text, pre-understandings, hermeneutic circle, historicity, contextual understanding, fusion of horizons, language, and dialogue. Together these concepts form the theoretical framework for my interpretive methodology. I also explain how these concepts have been applied in the interpretation of empirical data that I have undertaken in this study.

2.3.1 Text

In contemporary research the application of the term “text” has been extended beyond its original meaning of written text (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). Text has several meanings, including: social actions of individuals, groups, organisations, institutions, and communities (Heidegger, 1967; Ricoeur, 1981); social phenomena of all kinds (Burrell & Morgan, 1979); concepts (Klecun-Dabrowska, & Cornford; 2000); actions of nations (Prasad, 2002; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000); the whole working field of practice (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000); systems development processes (Butler, 1998; Kanungo, 1993; Myers, 1995, Westrup, 1994); electronic communication (Burnett et al., 2003); social interactions (Wilder & Granlund, 2003); policy documents and processes (Klecun-Dabrowska, & Cornford, 2000); interview

data and responses (Simpson, 2005); and literature on the phenomenon being researched (Butler, 1998). Understanding social action, processes, systems and so on can be considered analogous to the reading of text (Ricouer, 1981). These are “texts” in a metaphorical sense (Prasad, 2002) and can be “read”, understood and interpreted in a manner that is similar to reading, understanding and interpreting written texts (Francis, 1994). As a result of this metaphorical transformation of the word “text”, the metaphorical applicability of hermeneutics in research is considerably expanded (Prasad, 2002).

In this study, text includes empirical data consisting of public documents, website material, minutes of community meetings, field notes and transcriptions of interviews. The empirical data are related to the processes and outcomes of collaboration between the Taupo community, public authorities and private entities in formulating strategies and policies for sustainable development. The main emphasis of the collaboration is the protection of Lake Taupo which is a common good of the parties involved in the collaboration. Public documents refer to the outcomes of the processes, including strategies and policy proposals designed by the collaboration. These include documents such as the Lake Taupo Accord, Taupo District Economic Development Strategy, Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy, 2020 Action Plan, Maori Environmental Management Plan and Strategy, Regional Council Policy Proposal on protection of Lake Taupo (or Variation 5) and public submissions on Variation 5. Web-site material refers to research publications, media releases and other material that have been published on the internet by Environment Waikato, Research Institutions and Central Government agencies (such as the Department of Conservation, the Ministry for the Environment, Statistics New Zealand etc.) on the pollution of Lake Taupo, sustainability issues faced by the Taupo community and the processes and outcomes of collaboration. Interview transcriptions contain the views of some who participated in communal processes⁴

⁴ Communal process in this study refers to a broad range of processes in which the Taupo community participated for the purpose of discussing sustainability issues related to the pollution of Lake Taupo. The processes included public meetings organised by Local Government authorities and non-governmental organisations; processes engaging the Taupo community in formulating strategies for the Taupo District; and submission processes to obtain community input on policy proposals to

and whom I subsequently interviewed. Minutes of community meetings which I attended and my field notes provide additional evidence of views of the various parties and the processes which took place. The text consists of a multiplicity of documents and observations with no single author. Therefore, author-intended meaning, as advocated by the objectivist approach to hermeneutics, is not the emphasis of my study. The purpose of interpretation of the text (empirical data) is to explain how the dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good acquire meanings within the context of the processes and outcomes of collaboration in the Taupo District.

2.3.2 Pre-understanding

A central theme of philosophical hermeneutics is the concept of pre-understanding. Pre-understandings or prejudices originate from the tradition, cultural, social and historical background and lived experience of the interpreter and represent the horizon within which the interpreter approaches and understands text (Gadamer, 1975). A researcher is never free from pre-understandings. The implication is that interpretation of text and its meaning is subjective with no certainty attached to any particular interpretation. There may be considerable variability of views from one interpreter to another if readers invoke different frames of reference (Burnett et al., 2003; Llewellyn, 1993). Pre-understanding is constituted by the researcher belonging “... to a history, to a class, to a nation, to a culture, to one or several traditions” (Ricoeur, 1981, p.243).

Gadamer (1975) considers pre-understanding a necessary condition for understanding which means the interpreter must pre-understand the subject and the situation before the interpreter can enter the horizon of its meaning. A partial understanding is used to understand further and the pre-understandings can become altered in the process of interpretation. According to Gadamer, “all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice” (p.239) and a “person who is trying to understand is exposed to distraction from fore-meanings” (p.236). Gadamer (1975)

counter pollution of Lake Taupo. These processes are considered to be like the processes of cooperative enquiry conceptualised in communitarian theory (Tam, 1998).

makes a distinction between “legitimate prejudices” (p.246) or “productive prejudices that make understanding possible” (p.263) and “prejudices that hinder understanding and lead to misunderstanding” (p.263). True understanding requires the suspension of the unproductive prejudices (Gadamer, 1975). This means a researcher employing hermeneutics as a methodology needs to question continually and to evaluate his/her own prejudices (Prasad, 2002).

My pre-understandings stem from seminal and contemporary literature on accountability concepts, communitarian ideology and sustainability paradigms. I consider this pre-knowledge crucial for understanding the meaning of the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. I draw from communitarian literature to understand the concept of community and the ideological elements that are linked to the concept (such as common good, communal values, mutual responsibility, cooperative enquiry, particularism, etc.). Pre-knowledge of the communitarian ideology serves as a starting point to understand the characteristics of the Taupo community and its collaboration with public authorities and private entities. Reading accountability literature helps me to understand the dimensions comprising accountability, beyond the account giving dimension. Extending the concepts of accountability provides possibilities for exploring and uncovering new meanings of accountability under the communitarian framework. The third set of pre-understandings is related to sustainability paradigms and stems from my readings of global discourse on sustainable development and institutional frameworks within New Zealand. Pre-knowledge on the sustainability paradigm is important for my study as sustainability issues are the primary concern of the Taupo District and the focus of processes and outcomes of collaboration (between, community, public authorities and private entities in the district). It is within these processes and outcomes that my hermeneutical enquiry attempts to find new meanings for accountability.

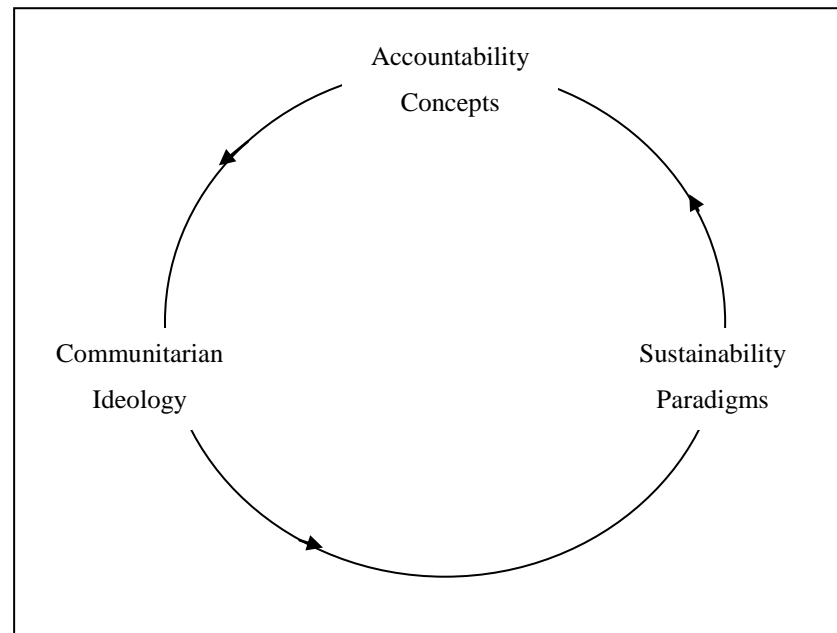
By integrating my pre-understandings (i.e. communitarian ideology, accountability concepts and sustainability paradigms), I have developed a conceptual framework on a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good which, in turn, serves as a conceptual lens for interpreting empirical data. This method of

interpretation encapsulates my understanding within communitarian, accountability and sustainability contexts, that is, theory informs interpretation. On the other hand, the empirical data provides evidence to evaluate my pre-understandings in order to suspend unproductive prejudices from productive ones (Gadamer, 1975). Alternating between my pre-understanding and empirical data results in validation, refutation or amendment of my pre-understandings in the light of new meanings uncovered during the interpretive process. The interpretive process resembles the hermeneutic circle of tacking back and forth or alternating between understanding and pre-understanding.

Figure 2.1 shows that the hermeneutical process adopted in this study starts with pre-understandings and development of a conceptual framework stemming from communitarian ideology, accountability concepts and sustainability paradigms. The development of the conceptual framework is, itself, an interpretive process that alternates between seminal and contemporary literature related to the three aspects of my pre-understandings.

The process resembles a circular process of reading and understanding the concepts and principles and finding a link between these concepts that can develop into a conceptual framework of accountability in the communitarian form. These elements reinforce each other to form a basis for my pre-understandings. At the preliminary stage of developing pre-understandings there is no interaction with empirical data. The purpose of building the conceptual framework is to guide the second stage of interpretation, that is, interpretation of empirical data.

Figure 2-1: Hermeneutical Process of Developing Conceptual Framework



2.3.3 The Hermeneutic Circle

Hermeneutic circle refers to the process of understanding during interpretation of text. According to Gadamer (1976), understanding is a circular process moving constantly from the text (the whole) to its parts and back to the whole. In the reciprocal interaction of the whole and its parts, the whole receives its definition and meaning from its parts and the parts are understood in reference to a whole. The spiral alternation between the whole and parts aims to enhance understanding and produce new meanings (Palmer, 1969). The researcher begins the interpretation of a part and tries to relate it to the whole, upon which new light is shed, and the researcher then returns to the part and, through this process, delves further and further into the phenomenon under investigation. Alternating between part and whole brings progressively deeper understanding of both the part and the whole (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). The whole-part philosophy in hermeneutics requires identifying what constitutes a whole and parts of the text or social phenomenon being researched. These constituents are determined by the researcher (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). In a similar vein, Palmer (1969) maintains that the relationship

between whole and its parts is contextual in that it is seen from a particular standpoint, at a given time (i.e. historical) and for a given combination of parts.

According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p.65), two hermeneutic circles are in action during the interpretive process. The first is the circular movement of understanding between the whole and parts of a text. The second is the movement between pre-understanding of the researcher and understanding obtained from reading the text. There is an expectation of meaning from the context within which the understanding was sought. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), the alternation between the whole and parts and the alternation between the pre-understanding and understanding can both become operational during a hermeneutic interpretive process. The link between the two circles is that any act of interpretation must take place within a circular movement between, on the one hand, the interpreter's prior understanding of the whole and, on the other hand, the examination of the parts (Gadamer, 1975). Meanings of parts of a text are dependent on the interpreter's understanding of the whole text while the meaning of the text as a whole is determined by the interpreter's understanding of the parts. Such understanding is based on lived experience of the interpreter. The interpreter starts with foreknowledge or pre-understanding and, through a process of moving from the parts to the whole and having a dialogue with the text, the interpreter gains a better understanding of the text (Klecun-Dabrowska & Cornford, 2000). The circle enables researchers to become more aware of the concepts and ideas which guide their thinking and of their inherent emancipator/ constraining qualities (Llewellyn, 1993). Awareness of pre-understandings enables a researcher to strive to attain more adequate conceptualizations through, first, critical reflection and, second, engagement of disparate frames of reference (Ricoeur, 1981). Pre-understanding and understanding can be in relation to the whole or parts of the text. The two hermeneutic circles - 'part-whole' and 'pre-understandings' - are complementary (Palmer, 1969; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000)

Meanings are derived by referring backward and forward repeatedly between the frames of references (pre-understandings) of the researcher and the researched. Through this interactive process theory is generated, challenged and reworked. The

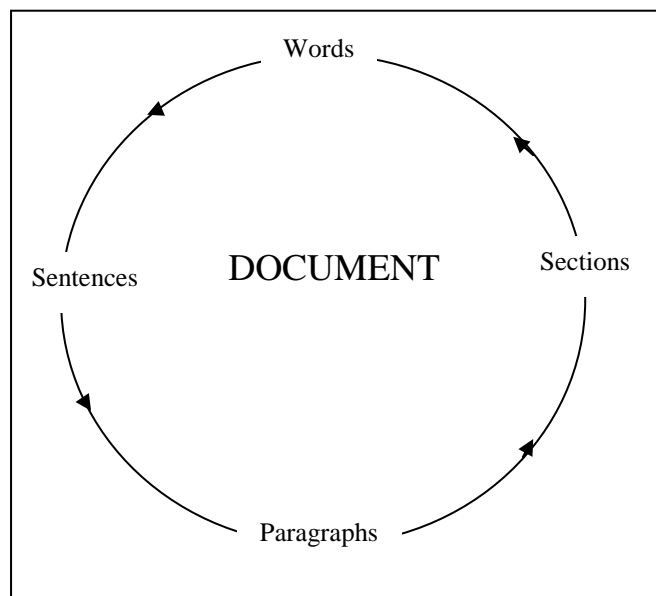
interpreter starts with preconceptions and attempts to interpret a text or social action. In this process the interpreter's preconception may be transformed, new frames of reference will emerge and old ones disappear. Commonalities and divergences between the pre-understanding and the text allow theory development during the interpretive process. Pre-understandings can become altered in the light of new understandings. By means of this movement back and forth, the interpreter can successively come to an understanding of the unfamiliar reference system, something which also leads to the gradual revising and/ or enriching of her/ his own; there is a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1975). The interpretive potential of the interpreter can be made operational, exercised through these hermeneutic processes.

In my research I have applied the hermeneutic circle of understanding in several ways. At a more basic level the hermeneutic circle involves the interaction between the meaning of parts (words, sentences, paragraphs and sections) of a document and meaning of the document as a whole. Figure 2.2 illustrates the hermeneutic interpretive process of alternating between the whole (document) and the parts (words, sentences, paragraphs, sections) of the document. In my study a document is any one of the following:

- A public document (There are 8 public documents in total)
- An interview transcript or set of written notes of responses of a single interviewee (There are 39 transcription documents/ sets of written notes in total, representing responses of 39 interviewees)
- Minutes of a community meeting or forum (Includes minutes of 2020 community forums and LWAG community meetings).
- A field note comprises of my observations made in written form during a particular occasion/ event such as a community meeting or community forum. (There are several field notes)
- A document published on the web-site related to sustainability issues in the Taupo District. (There are several such documents).
- Media releases related to pollution of Lake Taupo and related issues.

In reading each document I tried to link the various parts (words, sentences, paragraphs, sub-sections, sections, etc.) of a document to see if they make sense as a coherent whole and if there are tensions and contradictions between the various parts and between the parts and the objective of each document. For example, in reading a public document such as the Lake Taupo Accord, I attempted to link the meanings contained in the sentences, paragraphs, sections and sub-sections of the Accord to the overall purpose of the Accord.

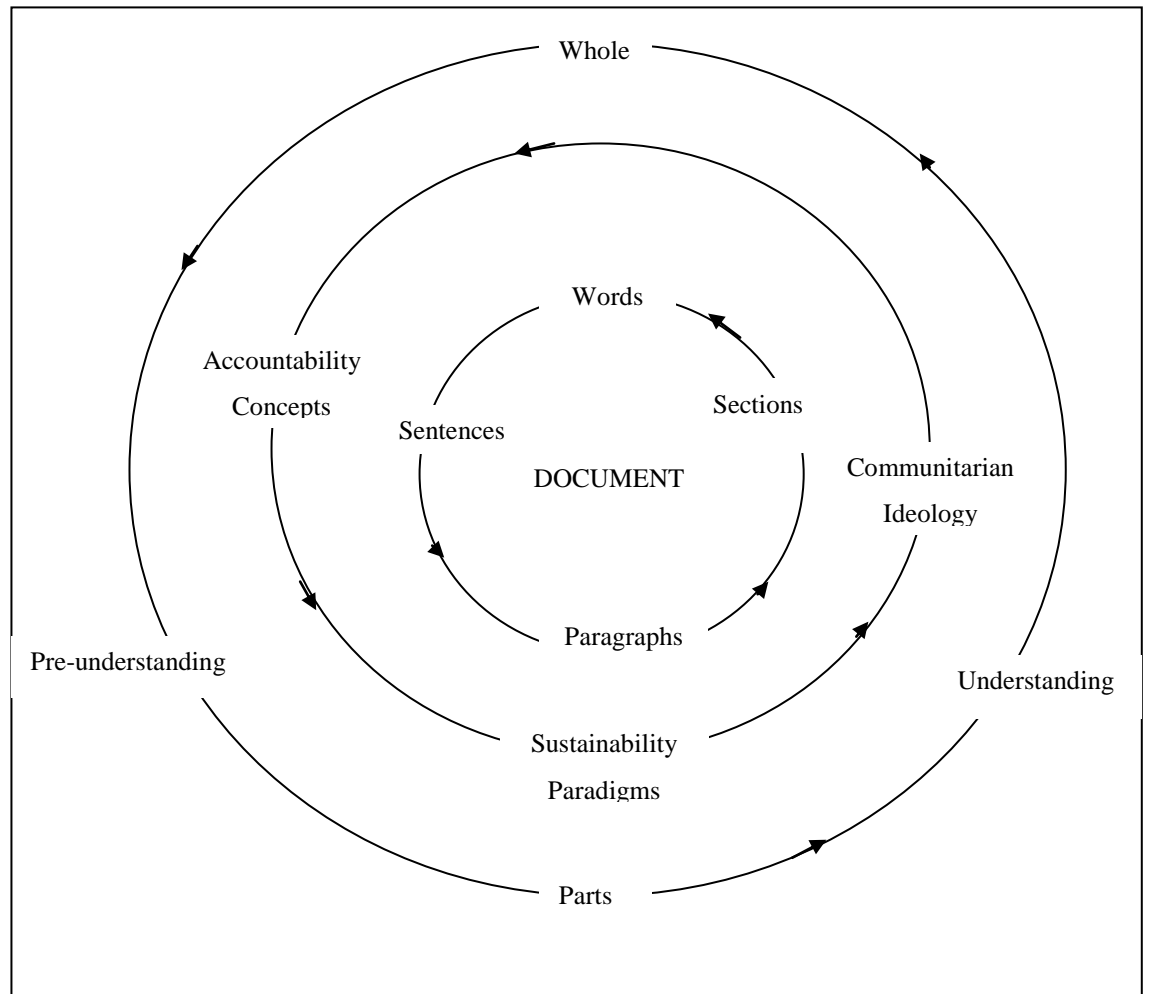
Figure 2-2: Whole–Part Hermeneutical Process in the Interpretation of a Document



It is not possible to set aside my pre-understandings when reading each document. My pre-understandings stem from contemporary and seminal literature on communitarian ideology, accountability concepts and sustainability paradigms. The pre-understandings provide the context for approaching the empirical data. Reading of each document was carried out with reference to my pre-understandings. This is particularly important as the main aim of my interpretation is to understand accountability within the broader context of communitarian ideology, sustainability paradigms and broad conceptualisation of accountability. Hence, another dimension to the hermeneutic circle arises from alternating between my pre-understandings and

the understanding obtained from the whole-part hermeneutic circle. This is shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2-3: Complementary Hermeneutic Circles in the Interpretation of a Document



At another level of interpretation the hermeneutic circle involves alternating between the meanings in different documents (such as field notes, minutes of meetings, public documents and interview transcripts, etc.). This is shown in Figure 2.4. First, there is alternation between different documents within the same data source, for example, reading and alternating between the different minutes of meetings or between the different public documents or between different interview transcriptions. Second, there is also alternation between documents representing different sources of data, for example, alternating between minutes of meeting and public documents,

between public documents and interview transcriptions, between interview transcriptions and minutes of meetings, between public documents and field notes, and so on. In applying all these circles of understanding, there is also constant reference to my pre-understandings and this, in turn, creates several spirals of interactions, that is, alternation between my pre-understandings and the different documents. Such interactions make the hermeneutic process of understanding complex and never-ending. It is a formidable task as there are many possible hermeneutic circles. It is not possible to explore all possible interactions.

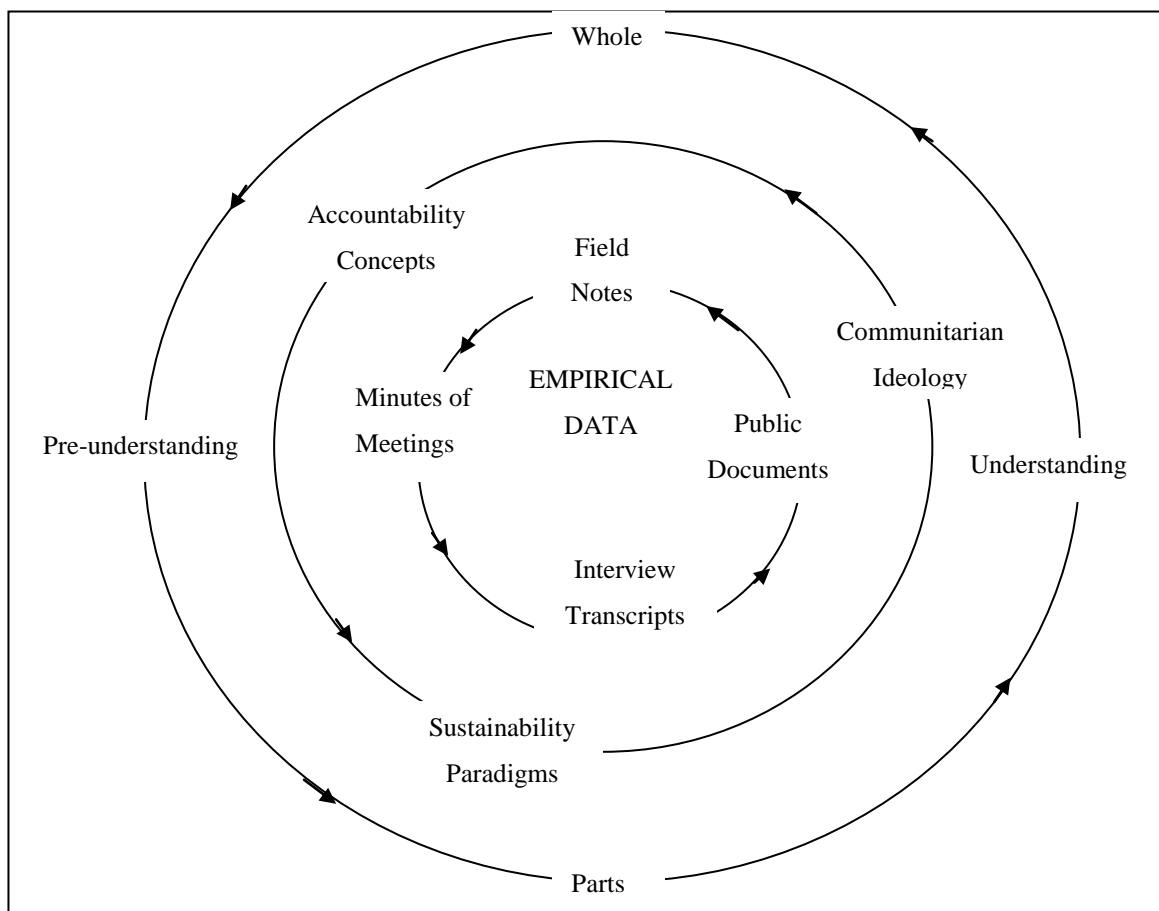
Interpretation commenced when I started to attend community meetings in the Taupo District. Integrating my pre-understandings and observations which I made during meetings provided insights on a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. The integration process was supplemented by reading minutes of meetings and these, in turn, helped me understand the viewpoints of the interviewees. Put differently, meanings and interpretations that develop from understanding observations, in turn, helped me understand the viewpoints of the interviewees. The interviews similarly enhanced my understanding when I revisited the minutes of meetings and field notes. The interpretive process continued into the readings of public documents (strategies, policy proposals and submissions), alternating back and forth between field notes (observations made), minutes of meetings, interview transcripts and public documents. Each stage of interpretation generated sub-interpretations which, together, contributed to the totality of the interpretation. The spiral interaction between the interpretations contributed to my understanding and insights for the theorization of a communitarian approach to accountability. I have created themes in chapters 7 -10 for the purpose of discussion and presenting my interpretive comments.

2.3.4 Historicity and Multifaceted Context for Understanding Text

Historicity generally refers to approaching a text from a historical perspective. Meaning is historical in that it is seen from a given standpoint and at a given time (Palmer, 1969). In the tradition of classical or objectivist hermeneutics, historicism means understanding a text by relating it to the historical setting (including culture, tradition, political) from which the text originated (Dilthey, 1967). Ricoeur (1981)

believes that the interpreter is bound into the socially-constructed world from which the text originated. Although the text can be interpreted in different ways, the social world of the text influences the interpretations (Klecun-Dabrowska & Cornford, 2000). Some scholars contend that more comprehensive interpretations can be developed by defining and understanding the political, cultural, economic context and wider context of institutions and social structure from which the text originated (Thomson, 1981; Kling & Scacchi, 1982; Kling and Iacono, 1989). Gadamer (1975) points out that historical reality is itself a text that has to be understood.

Figure 2-4: Hermeneutical Interaction between Different Documents



Gadamer (1975) recognises a temporal distance between the interpreter and the text in that the interpreter's own historical-cultural environment may be different from the historical/cultural setting to which the text belongs and from which it originated. This implies that meanings that emerge from interpretation of a text are also affected

by preconceptions, experience, and the historical consciousness of the interpreter. Historicity implies that the interpreter attempts to understand the present in the horizon of past and future. While a text originating from the past can be interpreted in terms of the interpreter's present historical consciousness, a past historical event can also provide meaning to a present day text. In a similar vein, Llewellyn (1993) contends that "The past may be re-conceptualised with the ideas of the present but the future cannot be captured if its terms of reference are not yet available" (p.237). According to Llewellyn (1993), "The text or the action may transcend its encompassment within its initial circumstances and develop meanings in other social contexts" (p.238). According to Palmer (1969), meaning is historical, changes with time and is a matter of the perspective from which the text is seen and every act of understanding is in a given context or horizon. Hence, meaning of a phenomenon in a particular social context can be different from that of another social context. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), originality in research can often be achieved by placing things in an entirely new context.

Historicism in hermeneutics implies that history is an important context for understanding text and the researcher needs to be familiar with the historical aspects of the text or phenomenon under investigation (Prasad, 2002). Historically affected consciousness and understanding enable the reader-interpreter to suspend unproductive prejudices in the course of interpreting a text (Gadamer, 1975). This can result in the interpreter altering his/ her prejudices and "what was formerly meaningful becomes meaningless and an apparently unimportant past experience may take on meaning in retrospect" (Palmer, 1969). In that sense historical understanding attempts to bridge the temporal difference between the interpreter and the text, creating a fusion of horizons (Ricoeur, 1974).

The hermeneutic concepts of pre-understanding and historicism imply that understanding and meanings that emerge from interpretation are context dependent. Only within a specific context is a text meaningful (Palmer, 1969) but interpretation of text may take place within multi-faceted contexts ((Walsham & Waema, 1994; Geertz, 1983). An important task of the interpreter is to define the context and explain clearly its relations to the text so that meanings of the text can be more

accurately ascribed. Contextual relations include: the relation of textual units to other textual units; the relation of text to associated texts; the relation of text to its author; and the relation of text to history, culture, politics and statutes. In Prasad's view (2002), a higher level definition of context provides more comprehensive understanding of text. Prasad suggests that the process of interpretation begins with narrowly defined context and gradually moves to higher level definitions with the overall context progressively defined. The choice of levels of context depends on the research question and has an important bearing on the aspects of the text that will receive attention (Prasad, 2002).

Figure 2.5 shows the multi-level contexts that have been used in the interpretation of text (empirical data) in this study. The conceptual framework for a communitarian approach to accountability also provides the theoretical context for interpreting empirical data. The theoretical context forms my conceptual pre-understandings. Context, in this study, refers to various influences, both historical and contemporary factors, which have affected and continue to exert influence on the collaboration between local communities, local authorities and private entities in New Zealand, in particular the Taupo District. The context provides a vantage point for interpretation of text undertaken in this study. The context for this study has been defined at increasingly higher levels. I have used multilevel contexts for the interpretation of text, including both local (New Zealand) and global contexts. From a local perspective, the text is read and interpreted within the context of the historical events in New Zealand such as the Treaty of Waitangi, development of community participation in Local Governments and development of Local Government reforms. Historicity, from a New Zealand perspective, includes the influence of the Treaty of Waitangi and developments in Local Government reforms that were introduced during the 1980s 1990s and early 21st century. These historical perspectives are important for my study as they influenced community participation in Local Government planning and policy making processes. The local context also covers the social, economic, political and cultural factors unique to the Taupo District and its local community. Local context is important for understanding New Zealand communities which have their own histories. The historical information includes the origins and evolution of the community and factors that influenced its development.

Understanding the historical information provides the researcher with a clear idea of the nature of the community as it is today. Meanings that emerge from the interpretation of empirical data have roots in the history of New Zealand, in particular the history of Local Government in New Zealand.

The global context in this study refers to the global sustainability discourse, especially international consensus (such as Agenda 21, The Earth Charter, Rio Declaration, etc.⁵) that has influenced the perception and implementation of sustainable development in New Zealand. Global developments in sustainability discourse can be considered as providing another historical context for the interpretation of empirical data. I believe that by using such multifaceted contexts a comprehensive interpretation of the text (empirical data) can be attained. Text acquires new meanings when interpreted within a wider framework.

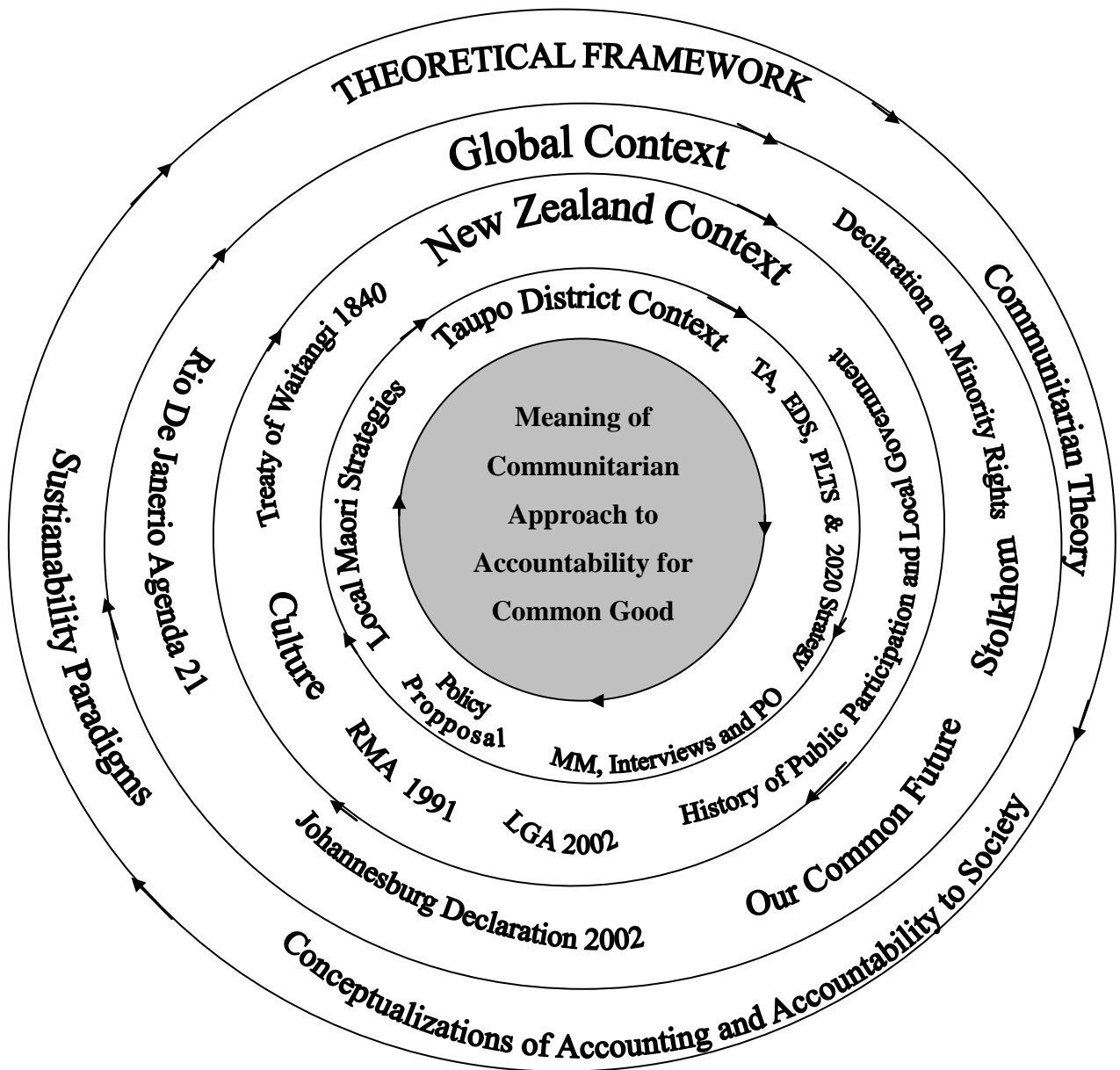
2.3.5 Fusion of Horizons

The concept ‘fusion of horizons’ is linked to the concept of historicity and contextual understanding. A horizon is similar to a context and refers to “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, 1975, p.269). The term ‘horizons of understanding’ refers to the vantage point from which people view the world and points to the contextual nature of all understandings. In relation to the thinking mind or the historical consciousness of the interpreter, to acquire a horizon means “to look beyond what is close at hand – not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 272). The pre-understandings, tradition, culture and the present historical situation of the interpreter form one horizon. Another horizon is that from which the text originates, that is, the past tradition, history, and culture in which the text is situated. Conversely, the text can be a present on-going phenomenon situated in a present historical situation or horizon. To obtain an enhanced understanding of the present ongoing phenomenon the interpreter can place it in a wider horizon by looking at related past historical events and situations. Gadamer (1975) asserts that the “horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past” (p.273). The concept

⁵ Refer to chapter 5 for detail discussion of the global context.

of fusion of horizon suggests a “wide, superior vision” (Gadamer, 1975, p.272) for the interpreter.

Figure 2-5: Multiple Contexts for Hermeneutical Enquiry



According to Gadamer (1975), horizons and fusion of horizons are continually formed during the interpretive process. The interpreter cannot isolate the horizons of the present and those of the past, rather interpretation takes place within the “fusion of these horizons” (Gadamer, 1975, 273). Fusion of horizons requires a heightened awareness of past and present historical perspectives related to the phenomenon, that

is, an “effective-historical consciousness” (Gadamer, 1975, p.274). This means the interpreter needs to approach other traditions with an open mind. Understanding does not mean forcing the meaning of the text to fit into the interpreter’s own prejudices; neither does it imply that the interpreter’s sole purpose is to retrieve the author’s intended meaning. True understanding is obtained by merging the world of the interpreter with that of the text/ author (Gadamer, 1975, Howard, 1982). Through the synthesis of the frames of reference of the researcher and the researched, new research insights – transcending the meanings of the researched and the researcher - are expected to be generated. According to Ricoeur (1993), through the meeting of horizons the meaning of a text “exceeds, overcomes, transcends, the social conditions of its production and may be re-enacted in new social contexts” (p.208).

The meeting of horizons allows interpreters to examine their own prejudices in order to suspend unproductive prejudices and maintain the productive ones, and leads to gradual revising of pre-understandings and obtaining fresh insights on the text (Gadamer, 1975). Fusion of horizons prevents the researcher’s pre-understandings from being an obstacle to understanding a phenomenon. These horizons test and filter the prejudices of the interpreter and help the interpreter to distinguish between unproductive and productive prejudices. The fusion involves a constant alternation between the pre-understanding of the interpreter, the text and different levels of context. The interpreter attempts to understand the tradition, historicity and the contents of the text and to relate them back to present day pre-understandings, historicity, culture, tradition, and so on.

The different horizons used in this study are the different contexts as shown in Figure 2.5. The purpose of the interpretive process is to understand the meaning of “communitarian approach to accountability for the common good” within the context of different horizons such as theoretical, global, New Zealand and Taupo District contexts. This means each of these contexts and their fusion generates the meaning of “communitarian approach to accountability for the common good”. Theoretical, global and New Zealand contexts are drawn from literature and other materials whereas the Taupo District context is represented by the text or empirical data as described in paragraph 2.3.1 above. Fusion of horizons takes place in several ways.

First, there is fusion of concepts and ideas within each horizon. For instance, the fusion of principles of communitarian ideology, accountability concepts and paradigms on sustainability generates a conceptual framework for a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. The fusion of different global agreements, consensus and declarations provides a global institutional framework for sustainable development. The fusion of the New Zealand Local Government Act 2002, RMA 1992, the Treaty of Waitangi⁶ and the history of community development provides an institutional framework for sustainable development in New Zealand. Second, there is fusion of horizons of the different contexts. For example, there is fusion between the conceptual framework and global contexts, between conceptual framework and empirical data, between New Zealand context and empirical data and so on. Third, there is also fusion of three or more horizons. For instance, the conceptual, global, New Zealand contexts are all used in the interpretation of the empirical data. There are many possibilities for fusion of horizons and it is beyond the scope of this study to explore all. The fusion of horizons is related to the mode of interpretive analysis undertaken in this study and as discussed in chapter 3.

The fusion of the different perspectives has several consequences. First, it highlights the similarities between the different perspectives. Second, it brings out the tensions and contradictions between the different perspectives. Third, from the tensions the researcher is able to segregate productive foreknowledge (which enhances understanding) from unproductive prejudices (which obstruct understanding). Fourth, the pre-understandings helped me to understand the empirical data and identify features of a communitarian approach to accountability in the data. Conversely, the empirical data was used to evaluate pre-understandings. This means I try to identify whether the empirical data provide evidence to validate the pre-understandings or whether the data show something else, perhaps something contradictory to the pre-understanding. In this way the empirical data was used to accept, refute or change the pre-understandings.

⁶ See chapter 6 section 6.3 for details.

2.3.6 Dialogue

Meeting of horizons implies a reciprocal relationship between the interpreter and the text corresponding to mutuality of understanding in a conversation between two people (Gadamer, 1975). Hermeneutic methodology recognises the dialectical nature of interpretation, that is, a process where the interpreter dialogues with the text (Bleicher, 1980). The interpretive process and its outcomes are influenced by values, theoretical orientations and historicity of both the interpreter and the author of the text. The researcher and the text enter into a dialectical/ dialogic sphere. Their background life-worlds are not left behind but continue to influence the interpretive process. Under philosophical hermeneutics, the purpose of interpretation is no longer re-enactment of the intentions of the author but, instead the interpreters approach the text with their own pre-understandings in order to fuse horizons. This hermeneutic experience can only be achieved by undertaking a dialogue with the text neither as its master nor by passively surrendering to it, but on an equal footing. There is an opportunity to question, clarify, and even challenge the story presented by the author, with a view to re-authoring possible stories. The interpreter could deconstruct unproductive stories and construct new productive ones. According to Gadamer (1975), the suspension of prejudices “has logically the structure of a question...The essence of the question is the opening up, and keeping open, of possibilities” (p.266).

Dialogue or dialectic is the art of conducting a conversation with persistent questioning, thinking and seeking of truth with openness (Gadamer, 1975). Philosophical hermeneutics assumes dialectic between interpreter and text in the form of question and answer in which the interpreter puts questions to the text, and the text, in turn, puts questions to the interpreter. According to Gadamer (1975, p.333), “the meaning of a sentence is relative to the question to which it is a reply, i.e. it necessarily goes beyond what is said in it.” The questions originally stem from pre-understandings of the interpreter and will be developed or transformed during the process (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). The interpreter moves back and forth between pre-understandings and new understandings. Questions directed at the whole also alternate with questions directed at the parts, and the two kinds can cross-fertilize each other (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). The purpose of the dialogue is to

find those questions to which the text constitutes the answers (Bleicher, 1980, Palmer, 1969).

Meaning of a text emerges through the ‘conversation’ between the text and interpreter, and such meaning is not delimited by authorial intentions (Prasad, 2002). In the hermeneutic dialogue the interpreter becomes a listener/ reader/ receiver and an active producer of meaning. The questions put by the text challenge the truth of the interpreter’s prejudices. Pre-understandings of the interpreter can be altered through dialogue with the text. Butler (1998) suggests several dialectic techniques that are relevant to hermeneutic research. These include the Socratic, Hegelian and reductionist / analytical dialectics. The three forms of dialectic complement each other in a synergistic manner.

The dialectical nature of my interpretive analysis appears in several ways. First, the literature review of accountability concepts posed a primary question: How are the dimensions of accountability applied and interlinked in a real life situation? Secondly, in the dialogue with the ‘text’ I posed some common questions to the documents. These questions are: What are the dimensions of accountability implicated in the documents? How is community implicated in that accountability? What communitarian principles are articulated in the document? How is the common good defined in the documents? Do the documents provide a sense of communitarian approach to accountability for the common good? Thirdly, questions posed to a document also arise from reading other documents: what are the similarities in these documents? What are the contradictions in meanings articulated in these documents?

2.3.7 Language

Gadamer (1975) claims that language is the medium through which understanding takes place. Hermeneutics is concerned with understanding that which is expressed in language (Gadamer, 1975). The link between language and understanding is important because everything is expressed and understood in the medium of language. This includes expressing and understanding: the text and its historicity; the interpreter’s pre-understandings and historicity; the dialogue between the interpreter and the text and the meeting of horizons. The object of interpretation is a linguistic

one (Gadamer, 1975). In Gadamer's philosophy, language has an ontological significance in that the world of the interpreter and the text are constituted in and through our language. The human mode of existence is manifested in language and "Language is the universal medium in which understanding itself is realised" (Gadamer, 1975, p.30). In the process of interpretation, language plays a central role in articulating perceptions of social reality (Lehman, 1999). Language is considered to influence perception of reality in that situations, events, practices and meanings are constituted by language (Crotty, 1998). Language conveys meanings embedded in the experience, beliefs and values of one person – individual, group, community, organisation, society etc. - to another person (Crotty, 1998). The hermeneutic experience of dialogue with the text is achieved through language. Social constructionists and postmodernists believe that human experience is mediated by language and social discourse (Dunne, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Reality does not exist 'out there' but is constructed actively and collectively through language (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Language is used to develop our understanding of ourselves and the world surrounding us (Sampson, 1998). Language use reflects and influences culture in a virtual community (Burnett et al., 2003). Language is the mediator between frames of reference or traditions, and is thus central to the process of understanding. In Gadamer's philosophy, language assumes a supreme role as a medium for dialectical and historical experience of understanding, fusion of horizons, assessing prejudices and disclosing hidden meanings embedded in the historical nature of mankind.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter explains the application of hermeneutic methodology in interpreting empirical data (or 'text'). I use empirical data as a text analogue and it is comprised of documents gathered during the investigation and my observations during community meetings. As the text is broadly defined as consisting of various documents, there is no single author. Although, official documents are written with an intention, the purpose of subjectivists' approach to hermeneutics is to find meanings beyond that intention. Authorial intention, as emphasised in objectivist hermeneutics, is of less relevance than the pre-understandings of the researcher or the contexts within which interpretation takes place. In other words, meaning is

developed within a certain context beyond the meaning intended by the author. The interpretive process adopted in this study aims for theory development and refinement. The methodological choice is based on the premise that the meaning of accountability in a communitarian form is uncovered by looking at the empirical data from different contexts. Key concepts of hermeneutic theory underpinning the methodology include the hermeneutic circle, whole-part philosophy, the concept of pre-understanding, historicity, fusion of horizons, contextual understanding, language and the idea of dialogue between interpreter and text.

My choice of methodology was influenced, in the main, by reading seminal literature on Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and finding in that literature, principles I believe would guide me to explore the meaning of a communitarian approach to accountability. My objective in interpreting 'text' (which is comprised of multiple public documents) is to find a new and extended meaning of accountability. This involved alternating between the 'whole' and the "parts" where the whole refers to the text in its totality and the parts to the individual components like public documents and minutes of meetings. The concepts of hermeneutic circle and pre-understanding were useful for interpretation of the 'text'. The whole-part circle of understanding and the alternation between my pre-understanding and text were useful for uncovering new meanings in the text. Through these processes I wanted to confirm whether the initial pre-understandings could be supported by empirical data; to confirm if the pre-understandings could be rejected; to amend the pre-understandings in the light of new understandings that emerged from reading the 'text'. In other words the pre-understandings served as a lens and provided a vantage point to understand the 'text'; the pre-understandings provided the themes which I wanted to identify in the 'text'; the pre-understandings generated questions which I posed to the 'text' and, in turn, the text posed questions for re-examining my pre-understandings. I used the concept of fusion of horizons in the interpretive process. The purpose was to synthesise the understanding I gained from interpreting a particular component of the 'text' with another component. There was also synthesis with the conceptual pre-understanding during the interpretive process. My research involved studying 'whole' and "parts" with several whole-part relationships. These included community as the whole and its stakeholder groups as the parts; empirical

data in its totality as a whole and the component data such as minutes of meetings, public documents and interview transcripts comprising the parts. On a broader dimension there was also a contextual relationship between the community and the social, cultural and historical environment in which the community exists. Developments in Local Government reforms and even the global discourse on sustainable development affected the community. With such diversity in the empirical data and the need to draw from different local and global contexts, it was reasonable to adopt Gadamer's approach to hermeneutics for the interpretation in this study. A hermeneutic interpretive engagement was deemed the most appropriate methodology to reveal hidden or partially hidden meanings of accountability.

The concepts of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics also underpin the mode of textual analysis undertaken in this study. The mode of analysis refers to the way of understanding textual data and is primarily concerned with textual analysis. In philosophical hermeneutics, understanding and meanings develop in concentric circles (Gadamer, 1975). In the next chapter I describe the method and mode of analysis undertaken in the interpretation of the multiple documents representing the 'text' of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD AND MODE OF ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It has generally been recognised that methods and methodology have distinct meanings in the research process (Scapens, 1990; Llewellyn 1993; Davidson & Tolich, 1999; Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2003). Research methods are techniques and specific methods used for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2003; Crotty, 1998). A methodology provides the philosophical underpinning which informs the methods undertaken in a research (Davidson & Tolich, 1999; Llewellyn 1993). The methodology adopted will shape the research process and the research findings to a far greater extent than will the research methods. Therefore, “interpretive empirical work should be explicitly grounded in a methodology rather than a method” (Llewellyn, 1993; p.233). It is the methodology adopted by a researcher that is the dominant influence on the research process and findings, rather than the methods employed which remain data collection techniques (Doolin, 1998). The objective of this chapter is to describe the research methods and mode of analysis used in this study. In this study, research method refers to techniques for gathering data while mode of analysis refers to the interpretive process that was carried out to make sense of the data. The choice of research method and mode of analysis are linked to the hermeneutic theory discussed in Chapter 2. The interpretive case study method adopted in this study is theoretically grounded in hermeneutic methodology. It involves drawing inferences about CAACG from a real-life context.

3.2 CASE STUDY METHOD

Case studies are generally considered as research methods (Creswell, 2003; Scapens, 1990; Yin, 2002). A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context (Yin, 2002). The unit of analysis can be an organisation, a group of companies or a social action in a particular setting (Scapens, 1990). Different case

study methods have been used by contemporary researchers (Scapens, 1990; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Yin, 2002; Walsham, 1994; Benbasat, et al. 1987). The choice of a particular case study method is “theoretically grounded and contextually informed” (Smith, et al. 1988, p.97) and depends on the underlying philosophical assumptions of the researcher (Myers, 1997). A case study that draws inferences from empirical data is grounded in interpretive epistemology and is known as an interpretive case study (Walsham, 1994; Smith et al., 1988).

The main strength of using a case study approach in research is the abundant variety of evidence that can be gathered from multiple sources including observations, documents, and interviews (Yin, 1994). The approach provides a rich description of an actual situation (Kaplan, 1986). The case study approach is justified as the appropriate method on the grounds that case studies assume prior theorisation (Yin, 1994) and this assumption is compatible with the theoretical underpinnings of the hermeneutic methodology. A case study method also provides a solid basis for the development of theory (Kaplan, 1986). Theories are generated from the specifics of a particular case. The resulting outcomes of the two-way interaction between theory and observation in a case study are that “The theories which provide convincing explanations will be retained and used in other case studies, whereas theories which do not explain will be modified or rejected” (Scapens, 1990, p.270).

My case study examines the collaboration between the Taupo community, public authorities and private entities to formulate strategies and policy proposals for sustainable development of the Taupo District. The focus of the collaboration was on the common good (i.e. Lake Taupo) which has economic, cultural and aesthetic significance for the parties involved in the collaboration. The values of the Taupo community are interlinked to the Lake. The interpretive case study is concerned with interpretive analysis of the processes and outcomes of the collaboration. The interpretive analysis aims to understand the meaning of accountability within the context of local community participation and collaboration with public authorities and private entities in planning and policy making for the sustainable development for the district, that is, a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good is adopted. Conceptual pre-understandings on communitarian ideology, accountability concepts and sustainability paradigms guide

the interpretive process. The evidence gathered from the empirical data forms the basis for the modifications of my pre-understandings.

3.3 TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

The primary sources of qualitative data used in this case study consist of interviews, email messages, participant observation and field notes. Secondary sources include public documents, minutes of meetings, newspaper articles, media releases and web-site material. The interpretation of the qualitative data within the multifaceted context (described in Chapter 2) provides the basis for understanding the meaning of the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. More specifically, the empirical data for this interpretive study consists of the following:

1. The Taupo Accord
2. The Environmental Strategic Plan 2000 of the Maori community of the Taupo District
3. Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2003 of the Maori community of the Taupo District
4. Taupo District Economic Development Strategy (Economic Strategy)
5. Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy (Environmental Strategy)
6. 2020 Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (2020 Action Plan)
7. Minutes of 2020 Community Forums
8. Minutes of LWAG Community Meetings
9. Environment Waikato Policy Proposal or Variation 5
10. Submissions to Variation 5
11. Environment Court proceedings
12. Transcriptions of 40 interviews

3.3.1 Participation Observation in Community Meetings

Field research in this study refers to community meetings in the Taupo District attended by the researcher and interviews with about 40 members of the community. The field research was carried out over a period of about 4 – 5 years, from July 2003 to early 2008. The community meetings were organised by Environment Waikato to engage the Taupo community in debate and dialogue on the pollution of Lake Taupo

and to formulate strategies for sustainable development of the Taupo District. These meetings were related to two major projects, undertaken by Environment Waikato, to design strategies for protection and management of Lake Taupo and its catchments. These projects were known as the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and the 2020 Action Plan. The aim of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy was to develop strategies for protecting the water quality of Lake Taupo as part of a wider sustainable strategy for the catchments of the Lake. The strategy is the outcome of consultation with the Taupo community, local and Central Government agencies and scientific and research organizations. I was not able to attend the public meetings related to forming the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy as most of these meeting took place before I commenced field work in July 2003. Nevertheless, I was able to attend meetings initiated by the Lake and Waterways Action Group⁷ to discuss the community input to the ideas in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. I also interviewed the policy analyst at Environment Waikato who was actively involved in organising the public meetings to draft the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy.

The project to develop the 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action plan commenced in July 2001. The project was undertaken by Environment Waikato in collaboration with the Taupo community (comprised of community based groups such as LWAG, the Maori tribal community groups, Lake Taupo Care, resident associations and various other interested parties) and the Taupo District Council. The aim of the project was to develop an integrated sustainable development strategy to protect Lake Taupo and its catchments, taking into account community values and priorities. Environment Waikato initially engaged the Taupo community to identify values important to the community and prepared scientific and other information. These preparations were carried out in order to facilitate a community forum in the Taupo community, known as the 2020 Community Forum, which was set up in February 2003. The first session of the forum involving members of the Taupo community commenced in July 2003. A monthly debate and dialogue session took place (every last Thursday of each month commencing July 2003 – September 2004) and culminated in Environment Waikato producing the 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan in October 2004. I was

⁷A community based group and advocate of environmental sustainability operating in the Taupo District.

able to attend all the debate and dialogue sessions. Details of the 2020 Community Forum meetings which I attended are provided in Appendix 1. I restricted my role as an observant in order not to influence the session. During the sessions I made field notes on the proceedings and the arguments and information presented by the participants. My role as an observer and researcher was made known to the participants. The field notes were recorded in an unstructured way in order to allow themes to arise naturally. I also received minutes of meetings from Environment Waikato for all the debate and dialogue sessions which I attended. These minutes were useful to verify the evidence I had recorded in the field notes.

Community meetings were also organised by the Lakes and Waterways Action Group (LWAG) on a monthly basis to discuss matters which were of significance to the Taupo community. Set up in 1997, this group has a good representation from various stakeholder groups in the Taupo District. At the same time as Environment Waikato started community discussions through the 2020 Forum, the LWAG held community meetings on similar issues. The main agenda for the LWAG was centred around issues about protecting Lake Taupo and the sustainable development of its catchments. I attended several of the monthly meetings during the period July 2003 – October 2004. A list of meetings attended is provided in Appendix 2. Once again I restricted my role in the LWAG meetings to that of observer. The LWAG is continuing to hold its monthly meetings and has been sending me minutes of its meetings held to-date.

Attending these meetings and forums helped me identify the main players in the debate and dialogue concerning the Lake Taupo issues. I had short discussions during break-times and after the meetings with representatives of various stakeholder groups who attended these meetings. I obtained the cooperation of the participants and they did not see me as an intruder as most of the meetings were open to the public.

3.3.2 Interviews

In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted to elicit the views and opinions of persons representing various stakeholder groups who attended the community

meetings and forums. Some were interviewed twice or three times to obtain updates on the ongoing community meetings and to trace developments in the implementation of strategies for sustainable development. The interview sessions were semi-structured but purposefully left open-ended, requiring anywhere from 40 minutes to two hours to complete. Follow-up telephone interviews for the purposes of clarification and fact checking continued during the period 2002 – 2008. The repeated interviews allowed participants to become comfortable with the researcher and to be frank and open. Additionally, informal discussions were held over tea breaks and at the end of the meetings. These interviews were essential because it was not possible (due to time constraint) for me to attend all community meetings in the Taupo District. The people interviewed are from several private and public organisations, as shown in Appendix 4. These organisations were identified from consultation with Environment Waikato officials and from contacts that I made during community meetings. The interviewees were provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix 5). The consent of each interviewee to participate in the interview was obtained in a consent form (Appendix 6) before the interview commenced. The interviewees were guaranteed anonymity. The whole process of collecting data received ethical consent from the Waikato Management School Ethical Committee (Appendix 7). A total of 39 interviews were conducted (Appendix 4) of which 30 interview responses were transcribed while written notes were the basis for documentation of the remaining 9 interviews. The themes used and questions asked during the interviews are shown in Appendix 8. The persons interviewed can be broadly classified as representing the interests of one or more of the following groups:

- The farming community, especially those involved in animal farming such as Lake Taupo Care and small farming groups
- Local Government authorities
- Maori tribal community
- Residents of Taupo District
- Business community
- Scientific research community
- Environmentalists

- Community groups such LWAG, Taupo Lake Care, Mapara Valley Preservation Society, Acacia Bay Residents' Association, etc.

Semi-structured questions and open-ended interviews were used during the interviews. Semi-structured questions were necessary for this study in order to direct the interviewees to the subject matter under investigation, that is, firstly to examine if the features of the communitarian accountability model conceptualised in Chapter 3 were applicable in the Taupo community and secondly, to explain factors which affect a communitarian approach to accountability. Open-ended interviews were equally crucial to this research to enable new themes to emerge from the interviews. These themes provided explanations for the factors and generated new insights regarding features not included in the original communitarian model. Together the semi-structured questions and the open ended interviews provided some basis for modifying the communitarian model. The main limitation of the interview approach on collecting information is that the interviewees were not equally articulate and knowledgeable about the topic under investigation, especially about their roles in the communitarian accountability process. The interviews were tailored to particular persons and focused on their perspectives. Many of the interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently summarised or transcribed.

3.3.3 Public Documents

During the research process (while attending public meetings and during the interviews), I obtained several public and private documents which provided additional information for my interpretive case study. A list of these documents is provided in Appendix 3. These documents helped me to gain access to the language and words of the participants. They represent data which are thoughtful in that participants have given attention to compiling the documents. The documents provided further evidence of the outcomes of collaboration in the Taupo District such as strategies and policies for sustainable development, emphasis on issues of common concern and communal values. The documents lay the foundations for community discussion at present and in the future.

3.4 MODE OF INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Hermeneutics can be treated as both an underlying philosophy and a specific mode of analysis (Bleicher, 1980). As a philosophical approach it provides the philosophical grounding for interpretivism. As a mode of analysis it suggests a way of understanding textual data and is primarily concerned with textual analysis. The modes of analysis refer to interpretation and analysis of qualitative empirical data. The basic question in hermeneutics is: What is the meaning of this text? (Radnitzky, 1970, p.20). According to Taylor (1976) says that :

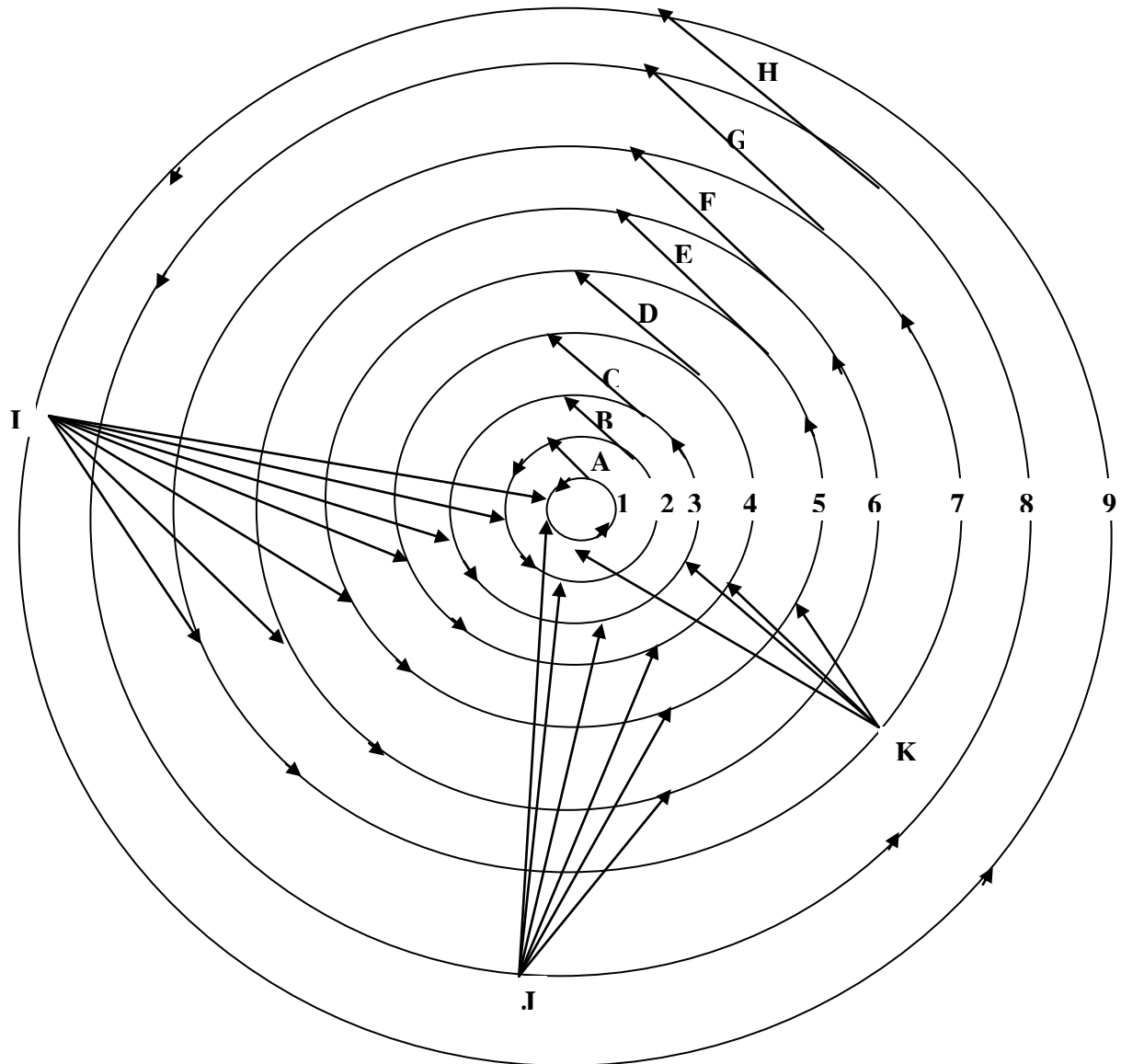
Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object must, therefore, be a text, or a text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory – in one way or another, unclear. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense. (p.153).

Gadamer (1975) asserts that understanding and meanings develop in concentric circles. The horizon of meanings created in one circle forms the pre-understanding of the researcher in subsequent circles and this causes the fusion of horizons of two or more circles. Gadamer (1988) describes the hermeneutic process as expanding in concentric circles to harmonise the meaning of parts to the whole. The idea of concentric circles, as used in this study, is represented in Figure 3.1. Each hermeneutic circle represents the reading and interpretation of a single document or a set of related documents (as in the case of the literature review). Interpretation starts with reading and understanding the words, sentences, paragraphs, sub-sections and sections contained in the document. The words that make up a sentence give it meaning. A paragraph was understood by reading and understanding the individual sentences that make up the paragraph. Paragraphs provide meaning for a sub-section that contains the paragraphs and sub-subsections, in turn, provide an understanding of sections. Understandings obtained from various levels contribute to the meaning of the document as a whole. Alternatively, the whole also provides meaning to the parts. For instance, the meaning of sentences becomes clear when the researcher has an understanding of the objective of paragraph and the primary focus of the paragraph. Similarly, this alternating whole/ part relationship also operates between a sub-section and its paragraphs, sub-sections and sections, and a document and its

sections. While alternating between whole and parts, the researcher is also influenced by foreknowledge of a conceptual communitarian approach to accountability. This means when reading each document the researcher continually makes reference to the conceptual framework. The documents were read and reread to identify the main events, parties, metaphors, idiomatic expressions and themes in the text that are similar and different to the pre-understandings (conceptual framework) of the interpreter. The themes that emerged from reading a document were then used in the reading of other documents.

The dynamic interplay between the pre-understandings and empirical data aims to evaluate the pre-understandings in the light of the empirical data and produces new knowledge and themes progressively as each document is read. Fusion of horizons, for which there are multiple possibilities, takes place in several ways. First, there is the fusion of the researcher's horizon with that of the phenomenon's horizon. Second, there is the fusion of horizon of one hermeneutic process (or circle) with those of other hermeneutic circles. Third, a fusion is also possible between the horizon (s) created by two or more circles and the horizon(s) of other circles or groups of circles. Hence, the hermeneutic circle can be a continuous, never-ending process with meanings created at the end of each process informing the interpretation in other circles. This study only considers some of the possibilities. The following paragraphs provide detailed description of the different hermeneutic circles involved in the mode of analysis undertaken in this study, as represented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3-1: Concentric Circles of Understanding Applied in this Study



► Represents the interpretive process within one circle. This involves alternation between whole and parts and pre-understanding and understanding within a circle

→ Represents fusion of horizons between circles and horizons created by the fusion

3.4.1 Hermeneutic Circle 1

The hermeneutic process commenced with the literature review and development of conceptual framework as represented in hermeneutic circle (process) 1. The conceptual communitarian approach to accountability represents my pre-understanding. Developing the pre-understandings is a hermeneutic process involving the reading of literature on concepts about dimensions of accountability, communitarian ideology and sustainability paradigms, and synthesising these ideas into conceptual framework. As this interpretive study is concerned with a communitarian approach to accountability, I focused on pre-understandings that stem from these disciplines. The conceptual framework provided themes which were used to make sense of the empirical data. The themes included communitarian concepts like community, common good, communal values, cooperative enquiry, particularism, symmetry of power, mutual responsibility and collaboration. Themes of accountability included dimensions such as account giving, information sharing, responsibility, responsiveness, decision making and controllability. In addition, my pre-understandings also include understanding global discourse on sustainable development, Local Government reforms in New Zealand, as well as familiarity with the Treaty of Waitangi. These sustainability and New Zealand perspectives emphasised the importance of community participation in sustainable development and, together with theories on accountability, they provided sufficient foreknowledge for understanding the meaning of “communitarian approach to accountability for the common good”.

3.4.2 Horizon A

The foreknowledge and the themes form horizons (including horizons created by the fusion of one or more of these themes). The horizons informed subsequent interpretive processes. The arrow, represented by A, emanating from circle 1 represents the horizon created in circle 1 which informed interpretive process 2.

3.4.3 Hermeneutic Circle 2

Circle 2 represents a hermeneutic process employed in reading and interpretation of three public documents. These included The Taupo Accord 1999 and two strategies produced by the Maori community, that is, the Environmental Strategic Plan 2000

and the Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2003. Interpretation of empirical data started with these documents because these documents were produced and published earlier than other public documents and before other forms of data were collected. Besides, the three documents provide the underlying principles and terms for community discussions in the Taupo District. The readings of these documents helped me identify the concerns, values and priorities of the Taupo community. “Understanding text requires uncovering values and norms embedded in the surrounding community’s language” (Burnett, Kazmer, Dickey & Chudoba, 2003, p.3). The interpretive process in circle 2 involved alternating between whole and parts of each document and between the three documents. Concurrently there was interaction between these documents and the horizon of pre-understandings emanating from process 1. The three documents were also read with reference to the pre-understandings of particular themes in the communitarian approach to accountability. This resulted in the fusion of horizons between pre-understandings and the three documents represented by arrow B emanating from circle 2.

3.4.4 Horizon B

The arrow represented by B refers to the fusion of horizons of circles 1 and 2. Pre-understanding gained from circle 1 (or horizon created in circle 1 represented by arrow emanating from circle 1) is used in hermeneutic process 2. This resulted in fusion of horizons of hermeneutic circles 1 and 2. This means the foreknowledge and themes arising from hermeneutic circle 1 was used to make sense of the three public documents. Evidence was drawn from the documents to support communitarian, sustainability and accountability themes identified in hermeneutic process 1. Conversely, there was evidence that refuted and challenged some of these themes. Put differently, the validity of the foreknowledge was evaluated in process 2. Arrow B emanating from circle 2 represents all horizons, including new horizons created in process 2. The new horizon represented by B informs hermeneutic process 3.

3.4.5 Hermeneutic Circle 3

Interpretation in circle 3 is related to my observations made when I attended community meetings and subsequent readings of minutes of meetings and field

notes. I attended two types of community meetings over a period from June 2003 to March 2005. I attended the 2020 Community Forum organised by the Environment Waikato and held during the period August 2003 to September 2004. The second type of meetings which I attended were organised by LWAG on a monthly basis. I attended most of these meetings during the period commencing September 2003 to March 2005. Field notes (from observations) and minutes of meetings were subsequently read and interpreted as part of the hermeneutic process 3. The interpretive process in circle 3 consists of alternating between the whole and parts of each document and between the documents. Concurrently there was interaction between these documents and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1 and 2 which resulted in fusion of horizon represented by arrow C emanating from circle 3. Observations made during the meetings supplemented my interpretation of the documents.

3.4.6 Horizon C

The arrow represented by C refers to the fusion of horizons of circles 1, 2 and 3. Understanding gained from previous circles 1 and 2 (represented by arrow B emanating from circle 2) was used in hermeneutic process 3. This resulted in the fusion of horizons of hermeneutic circles 1, 2 and 3. Effectively this means the foreknowledge and the themes arising from hermeneutic circles 1 and 2 were used to make sense of my observations, field notes and minutes of meetings. Evidence was drawn from field notes and minutes of meetings to support my understanding and themes arising from previous interpretive processes. Conversely, there was evidence that refuted and challenged some the themes. Arrow C emanating from circle 3 represents a new horizon which consists of new themes created during process 3 and themes from previous circles 1 and 2. Together these inform hermeneutic process 4.

3.4.7 Hermeneutic Circle 4

Circle 4 represents the hermeneutic process employed in reading and interpreting the Taupo District Economic Development Strategy which relates to the economic development of the Taupo District. The strategy is an outcome of collaboration between the Taupo community, private sector and public authorities and made

available to the public in October 2002. The interpretive process involved alternating between the whole and parts in the document. Concurrently there was interaction between the Taupo District Economic Development Strategy and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1, 2 and 3 (represented by arrow C emanating from circle 3). This means the foreknowledge and the themes arising from hermeneutic circles 1, 2 and 3 were used to make sense of the Taupo District Economic Development Strategy. Evidence drawn from the Taupo District Economic Development Strategy was used to support my understanding and themes arising from previous interpretive processes. Conversely, there was evidence that refuted and challenged some of the themes. This resulted in the fusion of horizons of hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3 and 4 and generated new understandings represented by arrow D emanating from circle 4.

3.4.8 Horizon D

The arrow represented by D refers to the fusion of the horizons of circles 1, 2, 3 and 4. Arrow D emanating from circle 4 represents all horizons, including new themes created during process 4 and themes from circles 1, 2 and 3. These horizons inform hermeneutic process 5.

3.4.9 Hermeneutic Circle 5

Circle 5 represents the reading and interpretation of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. The main emphasis of this document is environmental sustainability. The interpretive process involves alternating between the whole and parts of the document. Concurrently there was interaction between the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1, 2, 3 and 4. This resulted in fusion of the horizon represented by arrow E emanating from circle 5.

3.4.10 Horizon E

The arrow represented by E refers to the fusion of the horizons of circles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Understanding and horizons from previous circles 1, 2, 3 and 4 (represented by arrow D emanating from circle 4) were used in hermeneutic process 5. This resulted in the fusion of the horizons of hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. This meant the foreknowledge and the themes arising from hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3 and

4 were used to make sense of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. Evidence drawn from the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy supported my understanding and themes arising from previous interpretive processes or circles. Conversely, there was evidence that refuted and challenged some of these themes. Arrow E emanating from circle 5 represents all horizons, including new themes created during process 5 and themes from circles 1, 2, 3 and 4. These horizons informed hermeneutic process 6.

3.4.11 Hermeneutic Circle 6

Circle 6 represents the hermeneutic process employed in reading and interpreting the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (or 2020 Action Plan). This strategy incorporates environmental, commercial and social elements of sustainability and communal values related to these elements. The interpretive process involved alternating between the whole and parts of the strategy. Concurrently there was interaction between the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. This resulted in the fusion of the horizons represented by arrow F emanating from circle 6.

3.4.12 Horizon F

The arrow represented by F refers to the fusion of the horizons of circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Understanding and horizons from previous circles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (represented by arrow E emanating from circle 5) were used in hermeneutic process 6. This resulted in the fusion of the horizons of hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. This meant the foreknowledge and the themes arising from hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were used to make sense of the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy. Evidence drawn from the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy supported my understanding and themes arising from the previous interpretive processes. Conversely, there was evidence that refuted and challenged some these themes. Arrow F emanating from circle 6 represents all the horizons, including new themes created during process 6 and themes from circles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. These horizons informed hermeneutic process 7.

3.4.13 Hermeneutic Circle 7

Circle 7 represents the hermeneutic process employed in reading and interpreting the policy proposal (Variation 5) for controlling pollution of Lake Taupo. Variation 5 was proposed by Environment Waikato to amend regional plans. The proposal recommends strategies contained in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and the environmental values stated in the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy. The primary focus of Variation 5 is the protection of Lake Taupo. The interpretation of the policy proposal involved alternating between the whole and parts of Variation 5. Concurrently there was interaction between Variation 5 and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. This resulted in fusion of the horizons represented by arrow G emanating from circle 7.

3.4.14 Horizon G

The arrow represented by G refers to the fusion of the horizons of circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Understanding and horizons from previous circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (represented by arrow F emanating from circle 6) were used in hermeneutic process 7. This resulted in the fusion of the horizons of hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. This meant that the foreknowledge and themes arising from hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were used to make sense of the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy. Evidence drawn from the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy supported my understanding and themes arising from the previous interpretive processes. Conversely, some evidence refuted and challenged some of these themes. Arrow G emanating from circle 7 represents all horizons including new themes created during process 7 and themes from previous circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. These horizons informed hermeneutic process 8.

3.4.15 Hermeneutic Circle 8

Circle 8 represents the hermeneutic process employed in reading and interpreting documentations on public submissions on Variation 5, hearing process and Environment Court proceedings⁸. The documents represent community responses on the policy proposal (Variation 5). The interpretive process involved alternating

⁸ Refer to Chapter 8 section 8.2.1

between the whole and parts of the documents. Concurrently there was interaction between the documents and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. This resulted in the fusion of horizons represented by arrow H emanating from circle 8.

3.4.16 Horizon H

The arrow represented by H refers to the fusion of the horizons of circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Understanding and horizons from previous circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 7 (represented by arrow G emanating from circle 7) were used in hermeneutic process 8. This resulted in the fusion of the horizons of hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. This meant that the foreknowledge and themes arising from hermeneutic circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were used to make sense of the submissions. Evidence drawn from the documents supported my understanding and themes arising from the previous interpretive processes, some evidence refuted and challenged some of these themes. Arrow H emanating from circle 8 represents all the horizons, including new themes created during process 8 and themes from previous circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. These horizons informed hermeneutic process 9.

3.4.17 Hermeneutic Circle 9

Circle 9 represents the hermeneutic process employed in the reading and interpretation of interview transcripts. A total of 40 interviews were conducted and transcribed. Written notes were also taken during the interviews. The interview questions covered several themes (refer to Appendix 8). The interpretive process involved alternating between the whole and parts of each transcription and note, and between the transcriptions and notes. Concurrently there was interaction between the interview transcriptions and foreknowledge obtained from processes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. This resulted in fusion of the horizons of circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

3.5 MULTIPLE HERMENEUTIC CIRCLES OF UNDERSTANDING

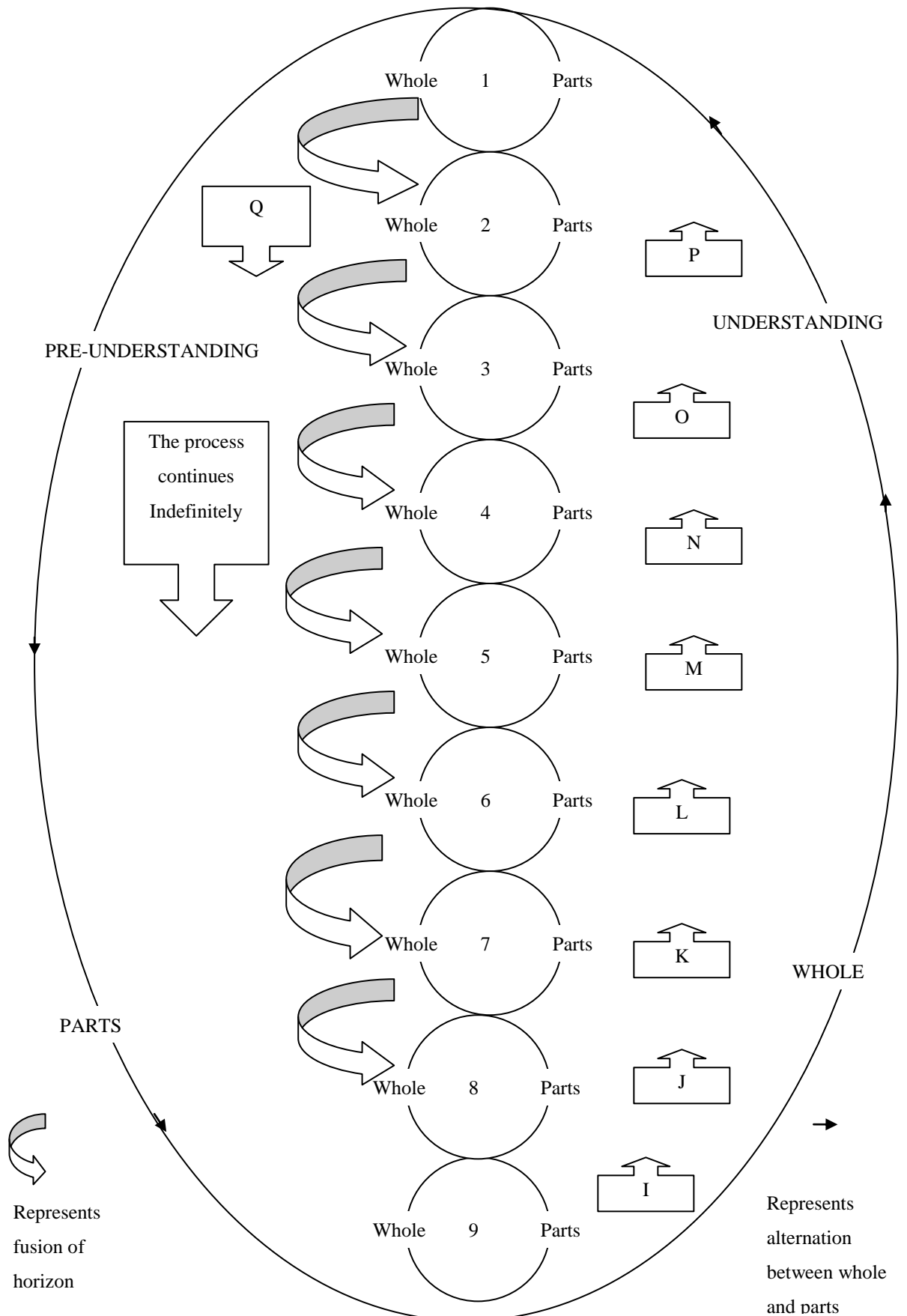
There are numerous other possible interpretive processes and fusions of horizons. For example, alphabet I refers to the fusion of horizons between that of hermeneutic

circle 9 and all other circles. Understanding obtained at point I could be used to revisit or gain new understandings of texts during each of the hermeneutic processes represented by circles 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. In a similar manner, fusion of horizons at any level could be used to revisit all documents interpreted in other processes. For example, understanding obtained at point J could be used to revisit or gain new understandings of texts in hermeneutic processes 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. Another possibility is using understanding obtained at point K to revisit or gain new understandings of texts in hermeneutic processes 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. The process becomes even more complex when new perspectives (arising from new events, policy proposals, strategies, community meetings etc) are introduced into the interpretation. The hermeneutic process is a never-ending interpretive process generating infinite number of fusions of horizons and new understandings. These indefinite possibilities for interpretation are shown in Figure 3.2.

The numerals and letters used in Figure 3.2 represent those used in Figure 3.1. All circles (1- 9), texts, horizons and fusions can be considered as forming a “big” whole. Each hermeneutic circle becomes a part of the big process of interpretation. The interpretive process can continue to points L, M, N, O P, Q and indefinitely. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore all these possibilities. This study only covers some of the possibilities, that is, until circle 9, and reports on the outcomes of the interpretations. The horizons of both the researcher and the phenomenon represented in each circle are shown in Appendix 9.

Discussion of the outcomes of interpretation is presented in the forthcoming chapters in the following manner. Outcomes of Circle 1 are discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In chapter 4 the formation of the conceptual framework for a communitarian approach to accountability is discussed as an outcome of the hermeneutic process of fusing concepts of accountability, communitarian ideology and sustainability paradigms. Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to explaining the institutional framework for sustainable development as part of the pre-understandings and as supplementing the communitarian approach to accountability.

Figure 3-2: Multiple Interpretive Possibilities



These pre-understandings provide different levels of context (as discussed in chapter 2) and the basis to start my understanding of communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. Outcomes of Circle 3, representing interpretation of field notes and minutes of meetings, are mainly discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Outcomes of Circle 3 are also used to reinforce or counteract statements found in other documents. Outcomes of Circles 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 representing interpretation of the foundational documents, strategies and policy proposal, are discussed in chapter 9.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter describes the case study used in studying the dimension of a communitarian approach to accountability in the Taupo District. The chapter also describes the mode of textual analysis comprising a series of concentric circles or interpretive processes. Each hermeneutic circle represents interpretation of a document or a set of documents and involves alternating between pre-understandings, parts and the whole of the documents. The conceptual framework, together with the institutional framework for sustainable development, provided the initial context interpretation. In interpreting a document there is fusion between the conceptual framework and the whole and parts of the document. This means the interpreter attempts to identify similar, different and conflicting themes between the conceptual framework and the document. Such fusion validates or refutes themes in the conceptual framework or even generates new meanings. Meanings created by the fusion form a new set of pre-understandings that are used in subsequent interpretive processes. For instance, meanings gained by interpreting some documents can help the interpreter understand observations made during meetings and these, in turn, helped me understand the viewpoints of the persons interviewed. The interviews, in turn, provided more information when I revisited the documents and minutes of meetings and field notes of my observations. Each stage of interpretation (interpreting documents, observations and interviews) generated sub-interpretations which contributed to the totality of the interpretation. The spiral interaction between the interpretations resulting from observations, interviews and documents contributed to my understanding and theorization of the communitarian approach to accountability.

CHAPTER 4

PRE - UNDERSTANDINGS

Inquiry, as a kind of seeking, must be guided beforehand by what is sought (Heidegger, 1967, p.25)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Pre-understanding is central to philosophical hermeneutics, provides the context for understanding text and must be made as explicit as possible (Gadamer, 1975). It is prior knowledge that, consciously or unconsciously, informs and influences the interpreter's interpretation of text. According to Turner (1975), pre-understanding is manifested in the cognitive interests that motivate the interpreter's exegesis and is comprised of concepts that inform the interpreter's understanding of text. Nebeker (2004) suggests that it is important to explain how the interpreter acquires these concepts and cognitive interests and the factors that influence the formation of the interpreter's pre-understandings. The objective of this chapter is to explain my conceptual pre-understandings regarding dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability. The importance of the conceptual pre-understandings is that they provide a vantage point from which to interpret the "text"⁹.

The development of my pre-understandings started with my interest in environmental and social accounting and my efforts to formulate a research objective in that field of study. I would not rule out peer pressure as one of the factors that caused me to associate myself with certain kinds of knowledge underpinning my pre-understandings. Sustainable development is the primary theme and emphasis for research of the Waikato Management School where I undertook my PhD research, and my supervisory team consists of scholars who have interests in researching

⁹ I have defined "text" in Chapter 3 as empirical data comprising of public documents, web-site material, minutes of meetings and transcripts of interviews.

similar fields of study. Such influence encouraged me to extend my scope of analysis from environmental and social accounting to accountability for sustainable development and to seek new meanings for accountability. To reiterate the research objective I stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this interpretive study was to explain how dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of local community participation in planning and policy making for sustainable development.

This chapter is structured in three interrelated sections. Section 4.2, explains my pre-understandings of accountability as an elusive concept comprised of several dimensions. Drawing from contemporary notions on accountability, I define a narrow sense of accountability as being limited to the account giving process and the broad sense of accountability as embracing several dimensions such as responsibility, dialectical process, relational responsiveness, decision making, controllability and including the account giving dimension. Section 4.3 explains the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good and the principles of communitarian ideology underpinning the approach to accountability. In contemporary literature, the conceptual communitarian approach to accountability has not been presented within a framework of a coherent set of concepts. I have drawn from a nexus of ideas in seminal literature to construct a conceptual framework of the communitarian approach to accountability. In this section I also explain how several dimensions are implicated in the communitarian approach to accountability and the complexity of issues involved in understanding accountability. Finally in section 4.4, I summarise my pre-understandings on the communitarian approach to accountability which, I consider, provide a vantage point from which I approach interpretation of the 'text'.

4.2 THE ELUSIVE CONCEPT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability has often been described as a complex, abstract and contested concept (Arens, 2005; Bovens, 2007; Curtin & Nollkaemper, 2006; Lakoff & Smith, 2007; Walker, 2002; Mulgan, 2000; Behn, 2000; Sinclair, 1995; Uhr, 1993; Day & Klein, 1987). It is commonly referred to as a process of providing an account or a process of being held to account (Arrington, 1990; Roberts & Scapens, 1985, Roberts, 1991) where one is obligated to demonstrate the reasonableness of one's

actions to those to whom one is accountable (Shearer, 2002). Account giving involves providing explanation or justification for one's actions (Bovens, 2007; Lakoff & Smith, 2007; Mulgan, 2000). However, the giving of accounts is only one aspect of an accountability relationship.

Accountability relationship involves interaction and exchange between the accountor or account provider (the person held to account) and the accountee or account receiver (the person to whom accountability is due) (Mulgan, 2000, Gray, 1992). It is a form of principal-agent relationship in that "those acting on behalf of another person or group, report back to the person or group, or are responsible to them in some way" (Hughes, 2003, p.237). An accountability relationship enforces the right of the accountee to receive information and delineates the duty of the accountor to supply information (Gray, 1992; Tricker, 1983; Munro 1997). The accountor has an obligation to explain and justify conduct to the accountee, who has the right to demand explanations, pose questions, pass judgements and impose sanctions on the accountor (Bovens, 2007). Behn (2000) describes the harsh reality of accountability, in practice, as a very linear, hierarchical and unidirectional process involving a superior –subordinate relationship in which the superior holds the subordinate accountable, the subordinate has the duty to explain and justify actions (answerability), the superior punishes or rewards the subordinate for his/her performance, the subordinate has no rights or leverage and can only cringe in fear (p.196). Such a form of accountability not only involves an annual ritual of performance evaluation by hierarchical superiors but people in the organisation can also be evaluated by their subordinates, peers, customers and suppliers. Behn (2000) describes 360 degree evaluation as a system involving multiple evaluations or feedback from everyone a person works within an organisation. It holds people accountable to a variety of stakeholders in the organisation and recognises that everyone has some useful feedback to give everyone else with whom he or she works. Multiple perspectives and feedback provide a richer understanding of an individual's performance and help the individual to gain awareness of his/ her behaviour and possibly change it. It is designed to help individuals improve their performance.

From the above descriptions of accountability, it can be seen that account giving represents only one aspect of the accountability relationship and reflects the role of the accountant. I argue that accountability defined solely in terms of the account giving dimension would resemble a narrow conception of accountability. For a more in-depth understanding of accountability, it is necessary to gain some insights on how broader dimensions are implicated in accountability relationships. Several other dimensions (such as responsibility, dialectical process, decision making and controllability) are implicated in accountability, given that the rights and role of the accountee (to pose questions, pass judgments and impose sanctions) and the interaction between accountant and accountee (dialectical process) are vital parts of accountability relationships. The role of the accountee to pass judgements can be related to making decisions to impose sanctions and control the activities of the accountant. The interaction involving the posing of questions by the accountee and the providing of explanations by the accountant can be in the form of a dialogue representing the dialectical dimension of accountability. Hence, I argue that accountability can be interpreted in a narrow sense (consisting only of account giving) and in a broad sense, depending on the dimensions that are considered as constituting the accountability process. Such complexities can make accountability an elusive concept. Several scholars have extended the concept of accountability to include dimensions such as: responsibility (Mulgan, 2000; Bovens, 2007; Bovens, 2005a; Gray et. al, 1996); moral responsibility (Corbett, 1996; Day & Klein, 1987; Finer, 1941); relational responsiveness (Painter-Morland, 2006); dialectical process (Aucoin & Heintzman, 2000; Mulgan, 2004; Roberts, 2002; Bohman, 1996; Drysek, 2000; Gray, Kouhy & Lavers; 1995); decision making (Bovens, 2007; Lehman, 1999; Behn, 2000; HAP International, 2007); and controllability (Lupia, 2004, Mulgan, 2000; Aucoin and Heintzman, 2000; Bovens 2007; Lehman, 1999). These dimensions are intertwined to form the process of accountability. The following is a discussion of dimensions (beyond the account giving dimension) that constitute accountability.

4.2.1 The Responsibility Dimension of Accountability

Accountability and responsibility are often used interchangeably where accountability is taken to mean a broad sense of responsibility (Mulgan, 2000) and

willingness to act in a transparent, fair and equitable manner (Bovens, 2007). This sense of accountability can differ from one situation to another and there is no general consensus about the standards for accountable behaviour (Fisher, 2004). Gray et al. (1996) define accountability as the “duty to provide an account (by no means necessarily a financial account) or reckoning of those actions for which one is held responsible”. According to Gray et al., (1996), accountability involves two responsibilities: the responsibility to undertake certain actions or refrain from taking actions, and the responsibility to provide an account of those actions. In a similar vein, EdWahoo (2005) contends that “accountability holds people responsible for their actions and provides an impetus for improving their action” (p.1).

Responsibility involves the obligation of one party to carry out certain actions that are required by other parties by virtue of contractual or moral obligation. With responsibility comes the obligation to provide an account of the performance of the responsibility. A person is accountable or answerable for his or her responsibilities (Lakoff & Smith, 2007). When related to a community of people, responsibility has wider implications, that is, responsibility to undertake certain actions for the common good of the community and to provide public explanation for what has happened to everyone affected by one’s actions (Lehman, 1999). Hence, I argue that accountability starts with responsibility and flows on to account giving. To isolate responsibility from accountability fails to explain accountability in a comprehensive manner.

Some scholars have linked accountability to an internal sense of individual responsibility, concern for public interest and inward responsibility to standards and values (Mulgan, 2000). Inward responsibility refers to an inward sense of moral obligation (Finer, 1941) and responsibility of the individual to his or her conscience or moral values (Friedrich, 1940 as cited in Mulgan, 2000). Accountability involves personal responsibility (Sinclair 1995); accountability to inner self or personal conscience (Corbett, 1996; Day & Klein, 1987); and obligation to conscientiously perform duties in accordance with moral values such as honesty and integrity, and to act in a transparent, fair, and equitable way (Bovens, 2005a).

4.2.2 Accountability as a Dialectical Process

Although written reports are common forms of account giving, several researchers have extended the mode of account giving to conversation and verbal forms (Munro, 1996; Willmott, 1996, Roberts, 1996; Boland & Schultze, 1996; Garfinkel, 1967). Mulgan (2000) considers accountability as a dialectical activity involving answering, explaining and justifying by one party while those holding them to account engage in questioning, assessing and criticizing. It also involves open discussion and debate about matters of common concern. Continuous open-ended dialogue between the public and public officials is a form of accountability (Harmon, 1995, as cited in Mulgan, 2000). The public can pose questions and express their views while public officials explain and justify on matters related to public governance and management (Aucion & Heintzman, 2000). The objectives of accountability as a dialectical process are to control the abuse of public authority, provide assurance on the use of public resources and promote learning and continuous improvement. The dialectical form of accountability can also take place in a forum where public officials have a formal obligation to provide information and explanation about performance and actions on a regular basis to specific forums (Bovens, 2007). Bovens conceives the accountability relationship in such forums as a principal (such as a whole community of people, minister, journalists, parliament, a court, audit office) delegating authority to the agent (government departments and agencies and public officials) to carry out certain actions and the agent being responsible for explaining and justifying while the principal can pose questions and pass judgment.

In a broader sense, Mulgan (2000) conceives of democratic dialogue in the public sphere between citizens as a form of accountability. People discuss how a particular state of affairs came about without blaming each other and the purpose is to persuade, build trust, nurture relationships and create awareness, responsibilities and duties through cooperative relationships (Painter-Morland, 2006). The moral attributes of such citizens' dialogue are based on respect and mutual understandings between people who participate in the dialogue. In that respect, Roberts (2002) following the suggestions of Yankelovich (1991), offers the following definition of a dialogue:

Dialogue, then, is a process of mutual understanding that emerges when participants treat each other with equality, not coercion, and when they listen empathically to one another's concerns in order to probe their fundamental assumptions and world views (p.660).

Roberts (2002) envisages cooperative enquiry on issues of common concern and combined efforts to address problems where mutually accepted norms govern interactions between people. The dialectical process allows different voices to be heard and doubts to be expressed. It involves questioning assumptions and sharing information about existing conditions, building understanding of the challenges of the future without blaming one another, mutual listening, learning, changing attitudes and behaviours in a non-threatening environment, coming to terms with contentious issues and collectively making decisions (Roberts, 2002). Transparency in the form of freedom of information is an important prerequisite of the dialectical process (Bovens, 2007). The process is grounded in the principles of deliberative democracy (Young, 2002; Dryzek, 2002; Mulgan, 2000).

Accountability as a dialectical process can be conceived of as a collective form of accountability where people become accountable to each other through a democratic dialogue (Bohman, 1996; Drysek, 2000). People reason together publicly about common issues in a transparent dialectical process which calls everyone to provide accounts (explanation and justification) for their values, views and behaviour and everyone has responsibility towards the common concern (Roberts, 2002). Roberts regards such public dialogue as synonymous with accountability, even though there is no authority (accountee) and subordinate (accountor) relationship requiring account giving. At its broadest, accountability is another form of communication (Gray et al., 1995). In a similar vein, Francis (1991) considering accounting as a moral and discursive practice, writes:

By moral I mean that accounting is a practice involving human agency. Accounting is a transformative practice that has the capacity to change things in the world...By discursive I mean that accounting is discourse. Discourse is defined very broadly as an event in which someone says something about something to someone else. Accounting discourse is not simply reporting the facts...the discursive character of accounting practice is inextricably linked to its moral character (p.5).

Advocates of communitarianism generally believe that accountability involves processes of negotiation, explanation and articulation in a community and provides a sense of belonging and understanding in the community (Macintyre, 1984; Francis, 1991; Wilson 1993). The dialectical nature of accountability opens up a critical dimension to the accountability process. Gray (2002) considers that social accounting, at its best, is designed to open up space for new accountings, in other words, accounting which responds to, even (ideally) resonates with, the concerns and occupations of critical theorising.

4.2.3 Accountability as Relational Responsiveness

Another extension of accountability is to equate it with responsiveness where one party in a relationship responds to the demands and priorities of another party (Mulgan, 2000). Some scholars consider the responsiveness of public officials to the needs of the general public as a form of accountability (Hughes, 2003; Corbett, 1996). Accountability is a democratic dialogue involving citizens making public officials responsive to public views (Mulgan, 2000).

From a broader perspective of responsiveness, Painter-Morland (2006) conceives of accountability as a relational and moral responsiveness of various parties to each other, that is, to be in a relationship in order to act collectively, through narration and discussion, in moral decision making and problem solving without the appropriation of blame. The emphasis on the relational nature of accountability requires the consideration of morality. A moral agent is someone who: is unencumbered by personal bias and social pressures; is not an isolated decision maker but acts in relation to and in interaction with others in participative decision making; is informed by historical contexts, social practices, traditions and common values in moral judgements; retains a sense of critical self awareness but does not appropriate blame during the accountability process; and who is accountable to others in terms of some shared sense of propriety (Painter- Morland, 2006; Butler, 2005 as cited in Painter-Morland, 2006). From this perspective, accountability also entails

responding to the interests and values¹⁰ that emerge through the interaction of individuals in a relationship (Painter-Morland, 2006). This kind of moral accountability requires self reflection as an individual and as a collective to ensure that some form of congruence exists between the values and priorities of the individual and those of the collective. Self-reflection also requires individuals to consider how their responsibility or lack of responsibility to undertake or refrain from undertaking certain course of action affects the well-being of others. Through the process of responsiveness and self –reflection, moral obligations and duties are continually redefined as moral agents participate and respond to accountability relationships to which they are committed (Painter-Morland, 2006).

4.2.4 The Decision Making Dimension of Accountability

The decision making dimension is related to the right of the accountee to impose sanctions on the accountant (Bovens, 2007). The account giving is followed by decisions to impose sanctions or to reward the accountant. The imposing of sanctions I interpret as involving a decision making process to establish controls on the activities of the accountant so that the accountant's future activities will be in compliance with predetermined standards. Such forms of decisions are common in corporations where budgetary controls, such as variance analysis, are used to monitor the activities of responsibility centres (Hongren, 2007). Decision making as a dimension of accountability can have broader implications when people within a community participate with public authorities to make policy decisions on activities that have adverse impacts on the community and its values (Lehman, 1999). The assertion that accountability involves a collective need to penalise violations of the rules (Behn, 2000) can be translated into a communitarian discourse as a collective need to establish policies to safeguard the common good.

HAP International (2007) articulates an evolving definition of accountability that goes beyond the account giving dimension. In the definition from HAP International (2007), accountability is a process through which individuals, organisations and

¹⁰ Frederick (1995) defines values as enduring beliefs about preferable states of existence and claims that values express and articulate those things we care about and that we think create a better world.

states make decisions that affect others and explain their decisions and actions to others. The role of affected parties is to raise concerns about and seek redress for the consequences of the decisions. The aim is to promote responsible behaviour requiring individuals, organisations and states to take into account needs and concerns of affected parties and explain the meaning, implications and reasons for actions and decisions. The role of accountability is to ensure that power is exercised responsibly in the decision making process. Hughes (2003) argues that accountability is required in the way decisions are made and the way policies are devised and administered. Hence, according to Bovens (2007), the line between accountability and policy making can be thin in practice and public participation in policy making processes enhances the legitimacy of the processes.

4.2.5 The Controllability Dimension of Accountability

Accountability and control are intimately linked because accountability is a fundamental means of achieving control and can easily be taken to mean control itself (Mulgan, 2000) or equated with controllability (Lord, 2004). In an agent-principal accountability relationship, “An agent is accountable to a principal if the principal can exercise control over the agent.” (Lupia, 2004, p.35). Accountability as a mechanism for control requires accountors to explain and justify their conduct and the accountee can impose sanctions to control the conduct of the accountor (Mulgan, 2000; 2004). Therefore, controls can be used to direct conduct and behaviour (Bovens, 2007; Scott, 2000) and to make agents act in accordance with wishes of their principals (Mulgan, 2000). For example, accountability mechanisms are essential democratic means of controlling the conduct of public organisations, public officials and the abuse of public authority (Mulgan, 2000; Aucoin & Heintzman, 2000; Bovens 2007). In the public sector, control means calling on public officials to explain their actions and accept sanctions if necessary (Uhr, 1993). Institutions of accountability aimed at controlling public officials include legislatures, courts, interest groups, mass media, communities and non-governmental institutions such as watch dog groups set up for the purpose of scrutinising and monitoring government activity (Bovens, 2005a; Mulgan, 2000; Roberts, 2002; Walker, 2002). Other controls in the public sector include legal regulations and political instructions (Mulgan, 2000). Such public accountability establishes a principal-agent relationship

between citizens (the principals) and a chain of agents comprised of elected parliamentary representatives, ministers, public organisations and public officials (Strom, 2003) where citizens pass judgement on the conduct of government through the electoral process (Przeworski et al., 1999). Lehman (1999) suggests controllability of the activities of corporations, which adversely affect the natural environment, through community participation in deliberations and decision making to decide on the fate of the activities. Lehman suggests that information be provided to empower the community to participate in the controllability.

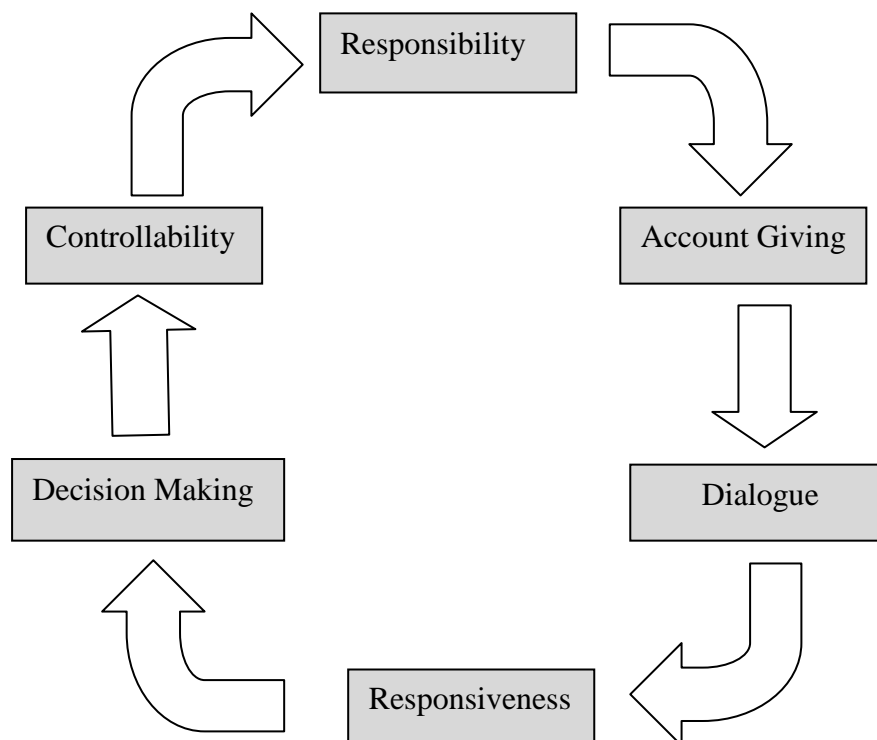
Weber (2003) defines accountability as a set of mechanisms designed to control behaviour, and to ensure promises are kept, duties are performed, and compliance is forthcoming. Persons held accountable have obligations or responsibility to an authority, group, standard, mandate or behavioural norm.

4.2.6 Interrelatedness of the Dimensions of Accountability

From the above descriptions of the dimensions of accountability it can be concluded that these dimensions are interrelated to form a coherent process of accountability as shown in Figure 4.1 below. Responsibility, or moral responsibility, provides a basis for account giving or providing explanation and justification for one's conduct or performance of the responsibility. Account giving leads to dialogue between accountor and accountee where the accountee can pose questions and the accountor provides further explanations and justifications. During the dialectical process the accountor is expected to respond (relational responsiveness) to the demands and priorities of the accountee. In a broader context of relational responsiveness, the parties in an accountability relationship are expected to act collectively through discussion in moral decision making without being encumbered by personal bias, appropriation of blame and social pressures but taking into consideration traditions and common values. Such dialectical and relational responsiveness results in decision making to impose sanctions and policy measures to control activities that have adverse impacts on the common good. The decisions and controls, in turn, provide the basis for new responsibilities for the parties in the accountability relationship. Accountability is an ongoing process with the dimensions becoming continuously redefined as new responsibilities emerge. From a hermeneutical

perspective, it is important to understand each dimension (the part) and the interrelatedness of the dimensions as an accountability process (the whole). The dimensions (parts) give meaning to the accountability process (the whole) and vice versa. In other words, in order to gain a holistic understanding of accountability it is necessary to understand the parts and whole of the accountability process.

Figure 4-1: Dimensions of Accountability



4.2.7 Broad Conceptions of Accountability

A broad conception of accountability to society has been suggested in social and environmental accounting literature (Cooper, 1992; Gray, 1992; Henderson, 1991; Lehman, 1995; Lehman, 1999; Maunders & Burritt, 1991, Harte & Owen 1987; Gray, Dey, Owen, Evans & Zadek, 1997; Owen, Gray & Bebbington, 1997; Gray et al., 1996). These studies generally agree that organisations are accountable to society at large for the impacts of their activities on the natural environment and society, and that accountability involves reporting to communities. Shearer (2002) suggests “radical accountability” (p.566) in which the interest or values of the individual are subordinate to the interests or values of society. Giving an account is one means by

which individuals are constituted as moral agents in communities and develop concern for the common good, human solidarity and basic respect (Schweiker, 1993). Bebbington (1997) suggests the development of new forms of environmental and social accounting which have “enabling, empowering and emancipatory” (p.365) potential to create a “fairer and more just society” (p.365). According to Pallot (1991), fairness in accountability in the public sphere would seem to require that if there is more than one underlying set of values and assumptions in society, more than one should be given visibility during the reporting and deliberation processes.

The concept of 360 degree accountability articulates a mutual, collective responsibility, wherein participating individuals are accountable to everyone else (Behn, 2000). Behn advocates the idea of 360 degree feedback in a wider accountability environment involving the general public and public authorities. Such 360 degree feedback implies that every individual has the responsibility to provide honest and helpful feedback and every individual has the responsibility to act on the feedback he or she receives. Such a mechanism of feedback, according to Behn, produces 360 degree accountability in which each individual:

...would be accountable to all others. Each individual would have an opportunity to provide accountability feedback to every other person in the accountability environment. Each individual would be answerable to every other individual. Each individual could call another individual to account. Each individual could ask another to explain his or her behaviour (p.200).

Behn’s call to rethink democratic accountability in terms of 360-degree accountability involves thinking differently about the dimensions and meaning of accountability. This involves: thinking more about mutual responsibility of everyone in the entire accountability environment to everyone else; thinking less about unidirectional, superior-subordinate relationships and more about webs of mutual responsibility; redefining accountability as shared accountability that binds people in a web of mutual obligations for achieving accountability and promoting performance and responsibility; thinking less of punishing failures and premising accountability on mutual negotiations and cooperation.

Weber (2003) explores the operational dynamics of 360-degree accountability under conditions of decentralised, collaborative and participatory policy making in communities. According to Weber (2003), coalition of the unlike (between citizens, government, regulators, businesses, environmentalists and other interested parties) can produce accountability to a broad array of interests via informal institutions for decentralised, collaborative and participatory governance arrangements and policy making. Weber's depiction of a Grass Roots Ecosystem Management (GREM) resembles "...ongoing, collaborative governance arrangements in which inclusive coalitions of the unlike come together in a deliberative format to resolve policy problems affecting the environment, economy, and community (or communities) of a particular place" (p.3). Weber's theorisation of a broad framework for accountability and its connection to policy making is based on politics and policy making in communities where local economies have been tied closely to natural resource use. It involves collaboration among diverse government, business and community sectors and promotes a strong measure of accountability to future generations.

4.2.8 Narrow and Broad Senses of Accountability

Drawing from the above literature review, I distinguish a narrow and broad sense of accountability in three ways. Firstly, I define a narrow sense of accountability as limited to the account giving process, while a broad sense of accountability includes other dimensions such as responsibility, moral responsibility, decision making, controllability, public dialogue and relational responsiveness. Secondly, I believe that a narrow and broad sense of accountability can also arise from the application of dimensions of accountability within narrow and broad accountability relationships. For instance, the dimensions of accountability can be applied to accountability relationships within corporations or between corporations and their stakeholders where corporations are the reporting entities. I argue that dimensions of accountability have limited meanings and applications when confined to such corporate accountability relationships. For example, responsibility, controllability, dialectic, decision making and responsiveness dimensions have limited meanings when they are applied to the accountability relationship between subordinates (workers) and superiors (corporate managers) of a corporation. The dimensions also have limited meanings when they are applied to accountability relationships between

corporations and their stakeholders. These forms of accountability relationships are the domain of corporations which set the agenda on what to report and how to manage the accountability relationships. Alternatively, I believe that accountability can be extended to a wider environment involving collaboration between a community of people with common interests and common concerns, public authorities and private entities. The dimensions of accountability acquire broader meanings when their application is extended beyond accountability relationships where corporations set the agenda but involved interaction between a community, public authorities and corporations to deliberate on issues of common concern. According to Kearns (1996), “traditional definitions of accountability are too narrow and restrictive to be useful in this dynamic collaborative environment” (p. xviii).

Thirdly, I believe that the subject matter of accountability can also distinguish a narrow and broad sense of accountability. A narrow sense of accountability focuses on the financial bottom line and on corporate financial performance. A narrow definition of accounting limits its role to the dissemination of economic information to providers of capital (Francis, 1991). I argue that the dimensions of accountability acquire limited meanings when the focus is on the financial bottom line of corporations. The dimensions of accountability also have limited meanings when the focus is on the triple bottom line of corporations where corporations are reporting entities. I argue that the dimensions of accountability acquire broader meanings when the subject matter of accountability is on sustainable development emphasising economic, environmental and social issues and involving deliberation and decision making by members of a community in collaboration with public authorities and private entities. In pluralistic societies accounting virtue lies in a capacity to provide information to multitudinous audiences (Francis, 1991).

In summary, I argue that there are serious limitations in conventional wisdom that limits accountability to the account giving dimension, that provides accountability solely in financial terms and that confines the accountability relationship to a limited accountability environment such as to relationships between corporations and their shareholders. I believe that to enhance the meaning of accountability requires defining accountability in a broad sense as comprising of several dimensions,

applying the various dimensions to accountability relationships which arise during collaboration between a community, public authorities and corporations, and extending the subject matter of accountability to economic, environmental and social issues of common concern.

4.3 COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY

An example of a broad conception of accountability is the communitarian approach to accountability (Lehman, 1999). Lehman proposes a communitarian correction to reform liberal accountability models which, he argues, have a tendency to submerge moral and ethical values beneath economic reasoning of optimisation. Lehman (1999) maintains that communitarian ethics rejects corporations as agents of social change and an inappropriate vehicle on which to develop an accountable society. The communitarian approach envisaged by Lehman (1999) suggests interchange, in the form of debate and dialogue, between all levels in a community to consider environmental and social impacts of corporate activities. The purpose is to enhance deliberative democracy by empowering communities to critically examine and make decisions on the legitimacy of corporate activities. I believe that a broad sense of accountability provides a holistic basis for understanding and exploring the meaning of the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. Dimensions of accountability implicated in the communitarian approach include: moral responsibility to protect the values of a community; reporting to community; information sharing in a community; dialectical process involving community dialogue on issues of common concern; cooperative enquiry on the role of corporations and their impact on nature; community participation and collaboration with the state in making decisions on the status of corporate activities; and community participation in monitoring the activities of corporations.

In the following sub-sections (4.3.1 - 4.3.10) I draw on seminal literature to construct a conceptual framework for a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. There is scarcity of literature that presents the communitarian approach to accountability as a framework consisting of a coherent set of features. Therefore, I have drawn from various sources of seminal literature to explain the

communitarian principles underpinning the features of the conceptual communitarian approach to accountability. I believe that communitarian ideology provides the socio-political basis for understanding the communitarian approach to accountability. Such philosophical understanding of accountability is necessary because the concept of accountability is not neutral but embedded within social theoretical traditions (Walker, 2002). I also explain how broad dimensions of accountability relationships and broad subject matters of accountability are implicated in the communitarian approach. The conceptual framework forms my pre-understandings or vantage point for the interpretation of text.

4.3.1 The Community

The concept of community is a key feature of the communitarian approach to accountability. The communitarian approach assumes the existence of a community of people who have common concerns and values and who wish to engage in cooperative enquiry into activities that impact on their common values (Lehman, 1999). It is therefore important to gain understanding of the meaning of community and the significance of its role in accountability.

Communitarian theory emphasises the centrality of community and communal values, upholding the community as the key focus of analysis and the centre of value systems (Frazer, 1998). The ethical stance underpinning the theory places community interest and values before individual self-interest (MacIntyre, 1984; Miller, 1995; Fraser 1998) and directs the attention of individuals towards collaborative action for the common good (Cuthill, 2002; Midgley & Ochoa-Arias, 1999). In the modern day context, emphasis on communities resonates with ideas of devolution of power from the state to Local Governments and local communities and suggests partnerships between local communities and local authorities in planning and decision making (Raco & Flint, 2001).

Modern day communities can be characterised by diversity in which more than one sense of community can prevail. Communities can consist of members with different and overlapping interests and individuals may belong to many different communities, each pulling them in different directions at the same time (Taylor,

2003). Even under such diversity where individuals have significantly divergent interests, needs and values, they also have some significant shared values and goals that bind them as a community (Etzioni, 1998). The social bond and connectedness of the members is strengthened by virtues such as self-restraint, courage, moderation, generosity, fairness and loyalty (Cochran, 1989).

Communitarian ideology is linked to the concept of social capital (Putnam, 1993). Social capital is the social interaction that occurs among voluntary groups and communities (Reid, 2002) and it advocates a sense of obligation and common purpose to communities (Thomas & Memon, 2005). In contrast to the individualist approach of neo-liberalism, in communitarian theory individuals are understood to be constituted through belonging to social groups and communities (Thomas & Memon, 2005). Therefore, engagement in civic life is important to communitarians, but ultimately the community is valued above the individual. For this reason, communitarians endorse the concept of social capital popularised by Putnam (1993). Social capital describes the features of social organisations that encourage mutually beneficial relationships within a community, such as trust, norms and networks, and how these play a definitive role in creating conditions for cooperation and social connectivity (Putnam, 1993).

4.3.2 Communitarian Accountability Relationships

Aristotle, according to Francis (1991), regarded accounting as a political practice that mediates relations between people in a community and how people structure and enact relations with each other in the community. In that political practice the choices in accounting – what we account for, how we account, to whom we account, about whom we account, when we account, etc. – are value choices made with respect to relations between members of a community. The value choices make accounting a political as well as moral practice. Moral choices in relation to accounting refer to issues such as what to account for, when to account and how to account. The usefulness of accounting depends on these moral choices.

Lehman's (1999) communitarian model of accountability assumes the existence of accountability relationships in the public sphere involving the community, state and

corporations (Lehman, 1999). In that relationship, information is provided to the community on the environmental and social impacts of corporate activities. Lehman (1999) claims that accountability formed in the public sphere does not accord privileged status to corporations as reporting entities but the community is to decide on the type of information it requires. The communitarian model also envisages relationships between the community and the state in which the state and community work together in the public sphere to make corporations accountable for their activities and to act in the public interest. The state works in conjunction with the community to develop an active and critically aware society and to create open and transparent democratic discussion (Lehman, 1999). The role of the state in the accountability relationship is to provide regulations and foster public debate and discussion to assess corporate effects on society and nature and to monitor, regulate and improve the quality of information provided to the community (Lehman, 1999). The communitarian approach is consistent with the recommendation in Agenda 21 for implementing sustainable development at grass roots level through collaboration between Local Government and local community.

4.3.3 Common Good and Communal Values

Generally, communitarians recognise a sense of community in which people are bound by shared values, meanings, traditions, purposes, and obligations and the pursuit of the common good (Etzioni, 1995, 1996; Taylor, 1989; MacIntyre, 1984; Sandel, 1982; Barber, 1984; Walzer, 1983, 1990). According to Lovett (1998), the concept of common good refers to something which is of common interest and valued for its service to a community. Communitarians believe that common goods are socially constructed phenomena i.e. common goods are identified through ongoing public dialogue that draws on communal values and culture. The common good is a good to which all members of society have access and cannot be excluded from enjoying (Velasquez et al., 2008). Therefore, establishing and maintaining the common good requires the cooperative efforts of the members (Velasquez et al 2008). In a similar vein, Etzioni (1996) contends that the common good is determined by dialogues between individuals in a community expressing their preferences and values. Examples of common good include the natural environment, such as a clean Lake (Lovett, 1998) and social goods such as education and public

safety (Lovett, 1998), public health systems, legal and political systems, and unpolluted natural environment, and a flourishing economic system (Velasquez et al., 2008). Agenda 21's emphasis on environmental sustainability assumes the natural environment as the common good of international, national, regional and local communities (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004). Taylor (1989) argues that accountability involves recognition of hyper-goods, which are goods shared in the community and which reflect values that are worth pursuing in a democratic society. Taylor (1989) considers the environment as a hyper-good which requires the community's deliberation.

Some scholars draw an analogy between common good and communal values. Common values are embedded in the common good (Lovet, 1998) in that what is good for the community is also good for the individual and the good of all could be promoted by some form of mutually advantageous cooperation (Jordan, 1989). The ethical basis for communal values is that they are derived from shared understanding among socially interacting individuals (Pallot, 1991). Fraser (1998) maintains that individuals derive their values from their communities and that ethical values are not located in the individual but found in the social individual or the community to which the individual belongs. Common values promote cooperation among individuals within a community and provide moral bonds to bring diverse interests together (Tam, 1998). In a similar vein, Daly and Cobb (1994) suggest that the common good binds people who share a common identity, despite some differences they may have.

On the basis of the above insights, I argue that the concept of common good directs the subject matter of accountability on communal values and common concerns of the community. From a communitarian perspective the content of information reported and the subsequent deliberations that take place are dependent on the discourse within which communal values are located. For instance, if the primary values of a community are defined in economic terms, the values attributed to natural assets may also be defined in economic terms by measuring the value of natural assets in terms of contribution to the economic well being of the community. Under such value systems, economic growth may take place without regard to the

exploitation of natural assets. In contrast, a community which attaches spiritual values to natural assets or a community which wants to preserve natural assets for future generations may prioritise environmental values which, according to O'Brien and Guerrier (1995) are "values that propose or support action directed towards environmental care and responsibility" (p.xiv). These contrasting views on common values can be linked to different conceptions of sustainability. A weak form of sustainability prioritizes economic considerations over environmental and social considerations (Hartwick, 1978, 1990; Solow, 1974, 1993). In contrast, in a strong form of sustainability environmental considerations are given the main priority in decision making (Pearce, Anil, & Barbier, 1989, 1990; Pearce & Turner, 1990). Under a strong form of sustainability, the subject matter of accountability which is of concern to communities is environmental assets such as lakes, rivers and forests; these are community assets and accountability is about reporting to communities and deliberations by communities on how these assets are being affected by human activities. The environmental assets are often referred to as natural assets (Jones, 2003; Gray, 1992). Jones (2003) recognises three broad categories of natural assets: wildlife habitats (land and water), flora and fauna. Natural assets, according to Jones, are interconnected in "complex complementary and competing ecosystems" (p.767) and they also interact with manmade economic systems. Gray (1992), in his theoretical framework of natural assets, suggests two classifications: critical natural capital and sustainable natural capital. Critical natural capital consists of those elements of the biosphere, such as the ozone layer, soil fertility, quality fresh water, river and drainage systems and oceans which are crucial for sustainable life on earth. The loss or erosion of critical natural capital may endanger life because this category of assets is irreplaceable. In contrast, sustainable natural capital is replaceable and consists of managed natural assets such as woodlands, forestry, agricultural land, wildlife parks and animal stocks like cattle, sheep and fish. With sustainable natural capital, there is active intervention by businesses, individuals and government authorities who are engaged in commercial and social activities.

GRI guidelines (GRI, 2002) define sustainability reporting in terms of economic, environmental, and social performance of corporations. A broader application of this definition means responsibility, reporting, information sharing, dialogue, relational

responsiveness, controllability and decision making on the environmental, social and economic impacts of human activities on the common good and communal values. In a communitarian approach to accountability, such dimensions of accountability are assumed to be operational during collaboration between community, state and private entities.

4.3.4 Particularism

Communitarians believe that communal values are derived from within the context of a particular community (MacIntyre, 1984; Walzer, 1983, Schilcher, 1999). In suggesting that values are rooted in communal practices, communitarians assume that values are idiosyncratic to a community. Values and the ordering of values may also differ from one community to another. Tam (1998) maintains that values can only be derived from living traditions of communities, and the values of different traditions cannot be compared one with another. This implies that right and wrong, good and bad can only be judged within the terms of a particular community (Macintyre, 1984). Hence, a value which is regarded virtuous in one society may be considered vice in another society. According to O'Brien & Guerrier (1995), values indicate the cultural plurality within which notions of 'rightness' and 'wrongness' are formulated, maintained, contested and changed.

In a similar vein, MacIntyre (1984) cautions that there are too many different and incompatible conceptions of virtue and there is no single core conception of virtue. According to MacIntyre (1984) virtue in the Homeric sense is related to the excellence of physical strength of a warrior and is distinctly different from the Aristotelian meaning of virtue which is related to "practical reasoning and intellectual excellence for human choice and action" (p.182) which an Athenian gentleman with great riches and high social status possessed. MacIntyre (1984) also points out the differences in the meaning of virtues between the Aristotelian philosophy and the New Testament. The New Testament equates virtue with faith, hope, and love, and this meaning of virtue is peculiar to Aristotelian philosophy. The distinction between Aristotle and the New Testament is even more conspicuous when Aristotle considers humility a vice whereas the New Testament praises

humility. The communitarian principle of particularism suggests that virtues and values are constructed within the context of a particular community

4.3.5 Mutual Responsibility

According to Tam (1998), the principle of mutual responsibility requires each member in a community to take responsibility for helping other members develop and realize their potential in the pursuit of the common good. Tam points to four common values, related to human experience, that bind a community of individuals and provide a basis for defining the mutual responsibilities to each other. The first is the value of love which entails experiences of loving, caring, passion, tenderness, friendship, sympathy, kindness, compassion and devotion. The second is the value of wisdom which relates to experiences of understanding, clarity of thought, being able to think for oneself, to weigh evidence and to make good judgements. The third is the value of justice relating to experiences of treating others without discrimination or subjugation. Finally, the value of fulfilment relates to feeling satisfied and taking pride in one's actions and achievements. The recognition of these four values entails a range of mutual responsibilities such as caring for dependents and the neglected, respecting evidence and logical reasoning, treating fairly other members of community, developing one's own potential and ensuring that private interest does not undermine communal values. Weber (2003) maintains that a community that develops a web of cooperative relationships based on trust is likely to develop a capacity for self-governance designed to be accountable to a broad cross-section of interests.

Mutual responsibility requires empowered local citizens to work collaboratively towards the common good (Cuthill, 2002). In the context of sustainable development, mutual responsibility implies collaboration and sharing of responsibility for environmental stewardship among local communities, public and private sectors (Sekhar, 2005). Agenda 21 emphasises several aspects of mutual responsibility, such as: in the exchange of information (Chapter 28); in efforts to implement sustainable development (Chapter 38); in personal environmental responsibility and commitment towards sustainable development (Chapter 36); in

sharing of responsibility, mutual involvement of all parties (Chapter 12); and mutually productive dialogue (Chapter 27).

4.3.6 Symmetry of Power and Deliberative Democracy

According to Tam (1998), communitarians believe in symmetry of power and non-authoritarian processes through which people participate as equal citizens in deciding on outcomes that affect them and “claims regarding what should be done for the good of all can be evaluated openly and effectively” (p.17). Communitarians advocate a process of democracy that goes beyond electoral democracy or aggregative democracy where certain individuals acquire power through the electoral process to decide what is good for society. Communitarians want a democratic political structure that allows members of society to participate as equal citizens in the decision making process. Such a democratic process, according to Tam (1998):

...would enable all citizens to appreciate the dangers and opportunities they share, and come to a considered view that reflects their common deliberations (p. 17)

The aim of the process is to enhance deliberative democracy through inclusion, political equality, reasonableness and public accountability (Lehman, 1999; Young, 2002). Young (2002) points out four fundamental principles that govern deliberative democratic practices and provide symmetry of power. These are the principles of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness and publicity. Inclusion means to include all individuals or groups whose basic interests are affected by a decision in processes to make the decision (Young, 2000). Affected parties are those who are expected to abide by the decision. Inclusion is intended to allow manifestation of interests and viewpoints during the decision making process. Hence, deliberative democracy envisages an all-inclusive community that allows all individuals or groups affected by a decision to participate in the decision making process. Dewey (1927) envisions a polity as a large group that enters into a discussion related to common problems with the intention of arriving at amicable solutions which can be implemented with everyone’s cooperation. Participatory democracy is concerned with consensus decision-making and the right of people to have a say in the important policy decisions affecting their lives (Forgie, 2002). According to Schmitz

(1983), the concept of community and direct participatory democracy may, in a large complex modern society, be more of an ideal than a reality. However, Kamenka (1982) and Nisbet (1953) consider participative democracy as an important vision.

Political equality means inclusion in the decision making process on equal terms, that is, participants have equal rights to express their viewpoints and to question, respond and criticize other affected parties. This right is exercised effectively only if individuals or groups participating in decision making are free from domination or threat from other participants in the process. However, Young (2002) cautions that democratic policy discussions are not free from the dangers of coercion and “distorting influence of unequal power and control of resources” (p.17). In reality some individuals or groups have more influence and power to use the democratic process to promote their own interests while excluding or marginalizing the views of others who are less influential or powerful. Political equality allows the manifestation of all interests and perspectives, and produces decisions on the basis of reasonableness.

Reasonableness calls for an open mind, leaving behind prior norms and indisputable beliefs (Cohen, 1989), willingness to change opinions or transforming preferences, interests, beliefs and judgments which are inappropriate and willingness to face new challenges, fresh insights and new information from differing viewpoints. The purpose is to solve collective problems and achieve concurrence in the decision making process.

In the deliberative democracy, publicity means accountability of the participants in the decision making process to a public which represents a diversity of individuals, experiences, histories, commitments, ideals, interests and preferences (Bohman, 1996). These diversities confront one another in the decision making process. The principles of inclusion, equality and reasonableness require accountability in the decision making process. Under this environment of accountability, participants in public discussion exercise vigilance in putting forward their viewpoints to a public or polity comprised of individuals with diverse interests, in order to obtain the polity’s recognition of their claims and arguments.

Young (2002) believes that the ideals of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness and publicity provide a theoretical linkage between democracy and justice to produce the most just policies. The deliberative model associates the democratic processes with public debate, discussion and exchange of views where participants offer their platforms and try to convince one another. The discussion is primarily concerned with the “problems, conflicts and claims” (Young, 2002, p.22) of interested parties and aims to obtain agreement on policy decisions and to produce the most just policies. Practical reasoning, persuasion and normative evaluation are considered crucial elements in this deliberative democratic process (Cohen, 1989; Spragens, 1990; Barber, 1984; Mansbridge, 1992; Dryzek, 1996; Fishkin, 1995). Decisions are determined not by the criteria of preferences of the majority or preferences with the greatest support in terms of numbers, but by the collective agreement of participants on the proposal which has the backing of the best rationalities. Communitarians believe that deliberative democracy creates an interchange between all levels in society, thereby representing the interests of multi stakeholder groups (Arrington & Francis, 1993). A deliberative democratic system is where all voices are given a fair hearing and civil society is considered the arena for members of the public to lay their claims (Lehman, 1999).

The principles of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness and publicity complement communitarian theory in that these principles advocate public participation in decision making processes. The communitarian notion of accountability in the public sphere resonates with participative democracy that creates exchange between all levels in society (Taylor, 1993). It is possible for social accounting to act as a site where differences can be discussed. (Lehman, 1999) and conflicts adjudicated in the community. In an idealistic participatory democracy all interests can be presented during the processes and it is possible to engage communities in a critical enquiry. For this purpose the state plays an important role in facilitating the processes through the provision of statutes which require public consultation, provision of information to enable communities to engage in critical enquiry, organizing forums which serve as venues for the public enquiries and the establishment of accountability structures to report regularly to communities. The

overall purpose of symmetry of power is to create equal opportunity for all members of a community to participate in dialogue and receive information.

4.3.7 Cooperative Enquiry

The communitarian principle of cooperative enquiry promotes the ideas of open communication and critical deliberation between informed participants to establish validity and to achieve consensus on issues of common concern (Tam, 1998). Such communitarian practices can be traced back to cooperative tenant farming in ancient Babylon over 5000 years ago (Shirley, 1979). Cooperative enquiry includes a range of deliberative mechanisms, such as: citizens' panels, citizens' juries, area-based forums (Newman et al., 2004); web-based dialogue, participative events, seminars, and community level discussions (Jones, 2006); and discussion forums, file-sharing and e-learning (Cheng & Vassileva, 2006). Under the conditions of cooperative enquiry, participants are assumed to have access to relevant information and freedom to express their views and to question the views put forward by others without intimidation. Participants are expected to provide views that are meaningful, moral and ethical and to evaluate the views put forth by other participants (Weber, 2003). According to (Tam, 1998) the fundamental implication of Aristotle's conception of the polis is that knowledge related to political and social matters should be derived from cooperative enquiries by pulling together individuals' beliefs, perceptions and experiences of the world. Virtues and duties for the common good of a community should not be left to a particular individual or a minority of individuals but decided upon collectively by members of a community.

Some scholars regard the process of cooperative enquiry as a means for community empowerment or capacity building (le Compte & de Marrais, 1992; Cuthill, 2002; Taylor 2007). Exchange of ideas can produce knowledge which is far more beneficial to a community than knowledge derived from individuals working in isolation (Urbach, 1987). Cooperative enquiry is a crucial aspect of the communitarian approach to accountability and resembles the dialectical dimension of accountability. It involves negotiation, explanation, deliberation and critical examination of the environmental and social impacts of corporate activities (Lehman, 1999). Weber (2003) suggests that individuals regularly engaged in

community deliberations see their preferences in the context of broader community norms.

4.3.8 Critical Dimension of Communitarian Approach to Accountability

During the 1980s, communitarianism developed into a distinctive critical theory to challenge liberalism and its institutions (Reese, 2001). The primary concern of communitarians during periods prior to the twentieth century was the oppressive nature of authoritative regimes. However, as these regimes were dismantled and gave way to liberal politics and free market economies, communitarian criticisms turned to liberalism and its institutions. During the 1980's communitarian thinkers (such as Gutmann, 1985; Sandel, 1982; Taylor, 1989, 1993; Walzer, 1983, 1990) began to criticise the core liberal principle of individualism. For these and later communitarian thinkers (such as Etzioni, 1993, 1996, 1996a, 1998; Walzer, 1990, Lockhart, 1997) there was growing concern about the adverse effects of individualism and the free market economy on social relationships. Communitarians perceived liberalism as causing excessive individualism (Reese, 2001). Under individualism, selfishness and self interest comes before the needs of others to gradually destroy community life (Marquand, 1988; Selbourne, 1994).

Communitarian thinkers were also concerned that the liberal principles of autonomy and individual rights produce economic imbalance and unbalanced power structure in society. In such a society the economically powerful individuals gain a bargaining position to set the agenda for everyone else. Tam (1998) argues that the assumption that everyone has equal freedom in a free market economy contravenes social reality. According to Tam, a free market system is geared to benefit individuals who are skilled and knowledgeable at the economic game of market transactions. Under such a system, non-economic considerations and individuals who advocate such considerations are ignored and members of society are required to obey economic rules and principles. Such a system works to the disadvantage of those who do not have the skills of market transactions. Omerod (1994) argues that no sophisticated economic modelling can legitimise such a system. Value system under liberalism focuses on measuring material wealth but ignoring environmental and social

considerations which are significant to the well being of society (Doyal & Gough, 1991; Twine, 1994).

Communitarians consider as nonsensical the liberal idea that individuals can autonomously pursue the good, independent of cultural traditions and social roles (Hampton, 1997). Liberals try to understand human beings independently of all activities, desires, ideas, roles and pursuits that characterize human lives in an actual society. Macneil (1986) argues that people are separate individuals but, at the same time, require other human beings even to exist physically and psychologically and, in doing so, they constantly alternate between selfish and self-sacrificing behaviours. Failure to recognise this duality renders much social analysis fundamentally useless.

Communitarian criticism is also directed at the institutions of liberalism such as market capitalism. According to Alexander (1996), market capitalism has caused disparities in economic success and wealth. Hirschman (1977) associates capitalism with inhumane domination and exploitation. Keanne (1988) negatively associates market capitalism as facilitating the interests of the capitalist class. Inequalities brought about by the market economy include class divisions, housing differentials, poverty and unemployment (Alexander, 1998). Lehman (1999) advocates a communitarian correction to modern environmental and social accounting on the basis that the communitarian approach provides a critical perspective in the public sphere to enable the community to evaluate the impacts of corporate activities. A communitarian accountability model adds a critical dimension involving debate and dialogue on activities that have adverse impacts on community values. It is committed to exposing and explaining the effects of human activities on nature, to creating awareness and to engaging the community in critical enquiry. According to Lehman (1999), environmental and social accounting can serve as a site where dominant economic interests can be contested and challenged in the public sphere. This links with the view that accounting can be redeveloped and redesigned as part of the public sphere. Accounting can be constructed as a vehicle that facilitates communication within the community and the development of possibilities for change thereby creating democratic conditions for the development of openness, closeness and transparency. Within communitarian theory a dialectic exists that can

be used to develop a critical and interpretive public sphere in which corporate activities are evaluated.

The critical dimension of accountability also involves critically evaluating the treatment accorded to indigenous communities (Lehman, 1999). A communitarian approach to accountability involves a process of negotiation and explanation concerning what the indigenous community wants. Taylor (1992) expresses concern that not recognising the concerns of a group of people can cause them to “suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror a continuing or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves” (p.25). Therefore, Taylor (1992) suggests that dialectical processes be introduced to give the concerns of indigenous people a fair hearing.

4.3.9 Critiques of Communitarianism and Communitarian Response

Common criticisms of communitarianism include the conceptual vagueness of the term “community”; the exclusionary attribute of communitarian practices; the illiberal nature of communitarian thinking; and failure of communities to flourish on a national scale. Frazer (1998) points out that communitarians are vague in their deployment and discussion of the concept of community. According to Frazer communitarians often switch between a descriptive sense of community and prescriptive sense of community and the term community is more exemplified than theoretically analysed. According to Schmitz (1983) the concept of community in a large complex modern society is more of an ideal than a reality while Archard (2000) contends that liberal political philosophers regard the concept of community as ill-defined and imprecise. Hampton (1997) argues that the concept of community is difficult to define and communitarians do not offer a clear theoretical analysis of the notion of community, how communities function, under what conditions communities flourish and what the consequences of the establishment of communities would be for other aspects of human life. Similarly, Hirsch (1986) contends that the concept of the community is a chimera and discussions of community are overly abstract and ignore “both the conditions under which a community can flourish and the methods by which a community must be fostered, as well as the costs or dangers of such conditions or methods” (p.424). The conceptual

vagueness is matched by the sociological vagueness of a community in that individuals exposed to a range of networks, associations and acquaintanceship enjoy and move between a variety of relationships and networks. Lea (2005) contends that an individual is influenced not merely by the culture of a single community but is subject to the influence of many other groups. According to Lea even relatively homogenous cultural communities espouse very diverse views as to which practices and principles should govern conduct.

Communitarians defend the concept of community on the grounds that vagueness of the concept is a source of its strength as well as its weakness (Frazer, 1998). Community can mean all those who live in a locality, or those who share a particular set of religious or cultural values, or those who share a particular set of political aims, or those who share some other social characteristic. This vagueness contributes to the rhetorical power of the concept in that it can exist in different contexts. Communitarians consider the criticism of the use of the term community does not affect their notion that individuals are deeply affected by the social and cultural structures that generate them; social relationships in some important sense are prior to individualistic aspirations; and social collectives are real, existing features (Frazer, 1998).

Adding to the criticisms on communitarianism is the argument that communities cannot flourish on a national scale (Hirsch, 1986). According to Hirsch (1986) communitarians do not prescribe what relation local communities will have with the state or how conflicts between locality and nation will be solved or even how conflicts between local communities will be settled.

Another criticism charged against communitarianism is that the emphasis on community values can also result in exclusion of people who behave differently to community norms (Nicholson, 1990). A community is built on the notion that members of a community have common and distinctive ways and values. This poses a question as to the relationship of the community to those who do not believe in its common values. This could result in non members being excluded from the policy making processes. Critics also argue that communities tend to be authoritarian and

oppressive (Hirsch, 1986, Townsend & Hansen, 2001) and exclude people who behave differently to community norms (Young, 1990). Some critics point out that communities frequently exclude such people and justify differential treatment and access to them (Townsend & Hansen, 2001, Hansen, 1994; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Werbner & Ranger 1996). In a similar vein, Hirsch (1986) contends that constitutional issues raised by marginalised groups (such as disabled and homosexuals) seeking right of membership cannot be resolved by invoking community sentiment. Hirsch points out that, in the past, marginalised groups have been treated, socially and legally, as less than full members of the community and therefore any strengthening of community sentiment will accomplish nothing for these groups. Hirsch (1986) deems that members of a community must be homogeneous and maintained through a system of moral education. Only individuals who share something (such as a set of values, an ideology or a social position) can become or remain a true community. According to Hirsch homogeneity and moral education can be politically dangerous by encouraging exclusion of outsiders, indoctrination, irrationalism, and compromising privacy and autonomy. Only a community that “ruthlessly engages in the practice of exclusion can be homogenous” (p.435, Hirsch, 1986). According to Lea (2005) communitarianism denies the individual rights of minority groups. Lea contends that the communitarian logic of supporting and protecting the community entails constraints on minority groups to protect the cultural integrity of the community against threats by minority cultural incursions.

Some critics consider communitarian ideas and practices as illiberal and they fear that emphasis on the value of the community could result in undermining individual freedom (Bosanquet, 1983; Frazer, 1998; Friedman, 1962; Hayek, 1949; Hirsch, 1986; Nozick, 1974). Hirsch (1986) points to the incompatibility of strong community and liberal constitutionalism and argues that “the conditions that would bring a community into existence, or maintain it over time, are precisely those conditions that liberalism is designed to avoid” (p. 435, Hirsch, 1986). Hirsch (1986) asserts that communitarianism ignores the crucial distinction in liberal society between membership and citizenship. According to Hirsch membership is a matter of social and psychological identification while citizenship is a formal political status.

Only citizenship can be legislated; membership can be created and sustained only through a process that is personal and social but not necessarily political. Therefore, Hirsch believes that “strong community can only be fostered through illiberal means” (p.426). Advocates of free market capitalism warn that any system to replace the free market approach to production and consumption of material wealth would lead to an authoritarian system of imposing values on individuals and thereby crushing individual values (Bosanquet, 1983; Friedman, 1962; Hayek, 1949; Nozick, 1974). Frazer (1998) cautions that communitarian emphasis on the values of a community will end up diminishing individual freedom.

Proponents of dialogic accounting argue in terms of agonistic democracy that recognises plurality, differences and conflicts in society and critically reflective dialogue (Bebbington, et al., 2007; Brown, 2009; Frame & Brown, 2008). They believe that communitarianism is infiltrated with local reason and can silence minorities without recognising differences in a community (Brown, 2009). According to Brown (2009) agonistic democrats challenge the representation of individuals as “unitary wholes” with characteristics of holistic understandings but recognise both consensual and conflicting perspectives in society. Privileging consensus “creates a democratic deficit which leads to disaffection with politics” (Brown, 2009, p. 319). There is always an element of non-consensus, in that any consensus is not fully inclusive (Brown, 2009).

In response to the primary liberals’ concern regarding diminishment of individual rights communitarians insist that a communal life does not diminish individual rights. In response to criticisms on the authoritative, oppressive and illiberal communities, Etzioni (2001) considers contemporary communities to be relatively democratic providing people opportunities to shift among various communities and be members of different communities at the same time. Etzioni argues that “given the considerable human benefit of community membership, a measure of self-segregation should be tolerated” (p.2338). Gutmann (1985) contends that “Communitarianism has the potential for helping us discover a politics that combines community with a commitment to basic liberal values” (p. 320). Gutmann (1985) believes that it may be possible to find ways to combine communitarianism and

democracy without violating individual rights. Responsive communitarians recognise pluralism in society and attempt to reconcile communitarian and liberal principles. Responsive communities try to avoid any authoritarianism and oppressiveness against the individual (Etzioni, 2001). In a similar vein, Emanuel (1996) believes that consensus is developing among liberals and communitarians on the need for a particular conception of the common good that should inform policies on political issues. Gauthier (2000) points out that the liberal principle of autonomy cannot apply to those who lack the capacity for rational agency or when their actions harm others in society. Gauthier (2000) argues that autonomy should not be understood in terms of purely individualistic concept without regard to community interests and shared values. Gauthier believes that virtue of moral responsibility bridges the values associated with individualism and community based values. Section 4.3.10 below elaborates the ideas of communitarians who promulgate responsive communitarianism.

4.3.10 Responsive Communitarianism

Some communitarian thinkers have been experimenting, at a theoretical level, on a synthesis of communitarian beliefs with those of libertarians (Schilcher, 1999). For example, advocates of responsive communitarianism (Etzioni, 1996a; Reese, 2001; Schilcher, 1999) recognise that societies have multiple and not wholly compatible needs. Responsive communitarians maintain that individuals who are well integrated into communities are better able to reason and act in responsible ways than are isolated individuals. According to Reese (2001), traditional communitarians privilege community over the individual. Communities, in their definition, were villages, small cities, some religious sects, and tribes. In contrast, new communitarians believe in a responsive community that tries to avoid any authoritarianism and oppressiveness against the individual. According to Reese (2001), the responsive communitarians attempt to bring, at a theoretical level, individual autonomy and the common good into a new equilibrium. The fundamental notion underlying responsive communitarianism is Etzioni's (1996) concept of "inverse symbiosis" which encompasses the idea of mutual stimulation between individual autonomy and social order. According to this concept, interaction among individuals in a community will have positive effects for individual autonomy and

social order. It suggests more personal autonomy in societies with strong communities and social orders and more moral order in individualistic societies. Etzioni (1996) believes that it is not only possible but highly necessary to combine some universal principles with particularistic ones. Responsive communitarianism is designed to create a dialectic which generates new possibilities and ways of being in the community.

4.3.11 Decision Making Dimension in Communitarian Approach to Accountability

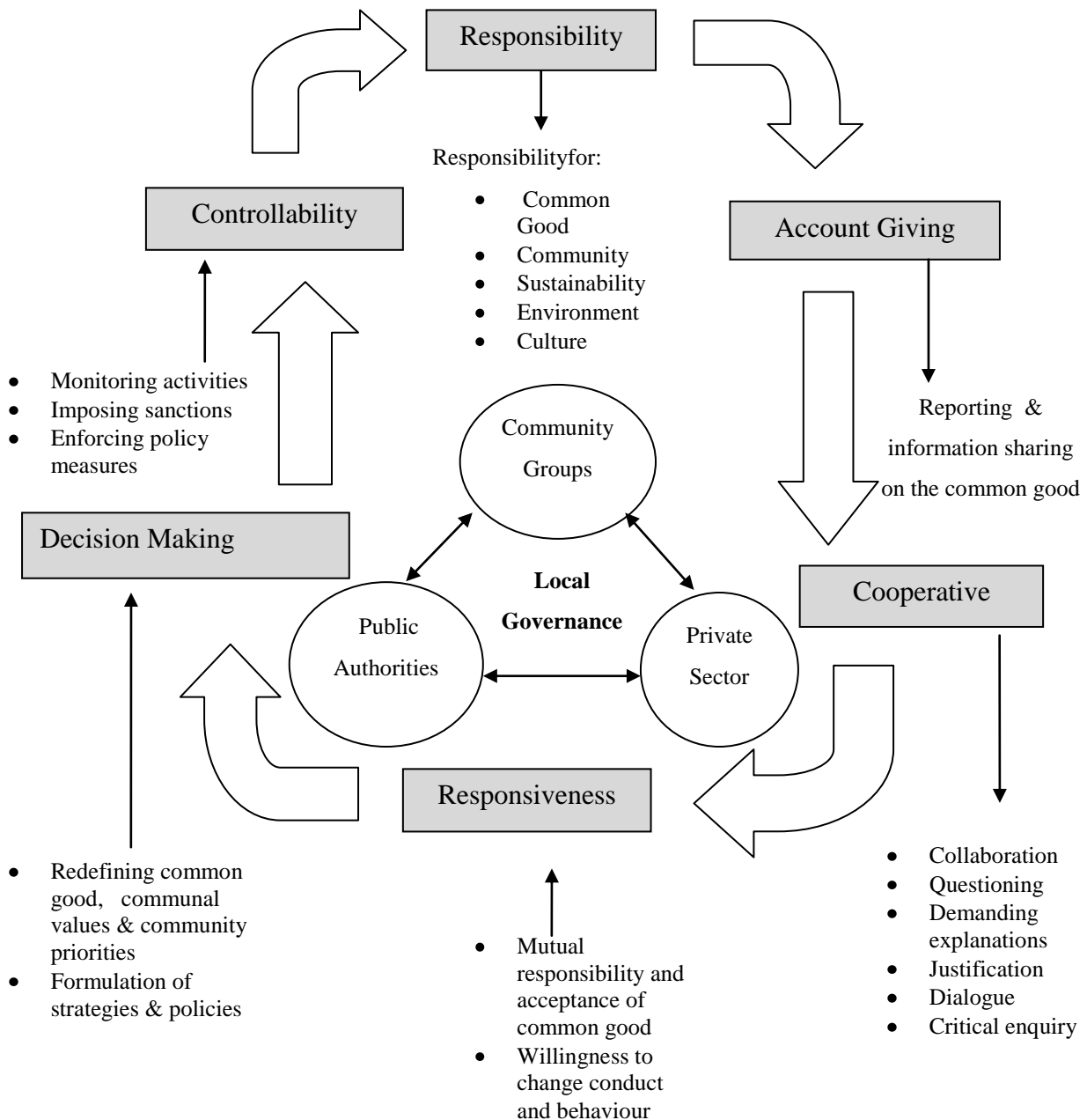
The communitarian thinking is that if organisations do not operate within the boundaries of what the community considers appropriate behaviour, the community may act to remove the organisation's rights to continue operations (Deegan & Rankin, 1997). The decision is related to the legitimacy of corporate activities. Lehman argues that a viable accountability model must provide information of high quality to assist the community to make better decisions and that this involves an interchange between all levels in society as part of a communitarian model (Lehman, 1999). The criterion of authenticity is related to reporting decision useful information and information that critically appraises corporate activities (Francis, 1991; Schweiker, 1993) such as assessment of the impacts of corporate activities on nature (Power, 1997).

Weber (2003) illustrates a communitarian approach, in practice, where several communities in western United States are engaged in resource management or Grass Root Ecosystem Management. The local communities, which are directly and inextricably tied to natural resources, collaborate with public officials, business representatives, and other stakeholders in deliberative decision making, implementation and enforcement processes that focus on environmental protection, economic development and community well-being. According to Weber (2003), Grass Root Ecosystem Management is premised on:

...decentralization of governance, shared power among public and private actors, collaborative, ongoing, consensus-based decision processes, holistic missions

(environment, economy, and community), results-oriented management, and broad civic participation (p.5)

Figure 4-2: Dimensions of Communitarian Approach to Accountability for the Common Good



The link between the various dimensions of the conceptual communitarian approach to accountability is shown in Figure 4.2 below. Central to the communitarian approach is local governance involving collaboration between community, public authorities and private entities for safeguarding the common good. The various dimensions of accountability are interlinked by the concern for the common good.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The communitarian approach to accountability does not exist in a simple and unambiguous manner but is vague. Hence, the starting point in the investigation undertaken in this research is the formulation of prior theory on the communitarian approach to accountability. The use of prior theory is consistent with the hermeneutic perspective of Gadamer (1975). My pre-understandings comprise a framework of concepts related to dimensions of accountability. The pre-understandings were derived from a broad spectrum of literature which I consider necessary to enhance my understanding of the complexity of issues that need to be considered in exploring the meaning of a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. A summary of my pre-understandings is as follows:

1. Accountability can be defined in a narrow and broad sense. A narrow sense of accountability is limited to the account giving process. A broad sense of accountability comprises of several dimensions such as responsibility or moral responsibility, relational responsiveness, decision making, controllability and including the account giving dimension.
2. Narrow and broad senses of accountability can also arise from the application of dimensions of accountability in narrow accountability relationships (within corporations, and between corporations and stakeholders) and in broad accountability relationships (collaboration between community, state and corporations).
3. Narrow and broad senses of accountability can also be defined in terms of the subject matter that is addressed in accountability. A narrow sense of accountability focuses on a single subject matter such as focusing on

economic or environmental issues in isolation. A broad sense of accountability is related to sustainability emphasising economic, environmental and social issues and involving collaboration between community, public authorities and private entities in reporting, deliberating and decision making for sustainable development and for the common good of all.

4. The term ‘accountability’ rather than ‘accounting’ is a more appropriate term for my hermeneutic analysis. The term ‘accounting’ offers a narrow perspective of dimensions involved in accountability. Accounting is limited to the account giving whereas accountability covers broader dimensions such as responsibility, decision making, dialect, responsiveness and controllability, and includes account giving. A narrow understanding of a phenomenon is often caused by the use of terminology. Hence, I use the term ‘accountability’ rather than accounting in my hermeneutical analysis.
5. I understand the communitarian approach to accountability as consisting of the following features:
 - Existence of a community. There are several meanings of community articulated in seminal literature. I do not consider the abstractness of the term ‘community’ as a negative prejudice but something which needs to be clarified through the hermeneutic process of interpreting the ‘text’.
 - Collaboration between community, state and private entities.
 - Common good and communal values are the primary emphasis of the collaboration in terms of responsibility, reporting, information sharing, dialogue , controllability and decision making.
 - Accountability involves responsibility to safeguard the common good and participate in the collaboration. Accountability acquires a 360 degree dimension involving relationships between the community, state and corporations, in which everyone is accountable to everyone else for the common good.

- Accountability involves preparing and disseminating information about the impacts of activities on the common good and communal values. Any party in the collaboration (members of a community, public authorities and private entities) can prepare and disseminate information to other parties.
- Accountability involves processes of cooperative enquiry engaging members of a community, public authorities and private entities. The processes resemble the dialectical dimension of accountability involving deliberations, posing of questions and explaining issues of common interest, such as the impacts of private activities on the common good and communal values. Critical theory implicit in communitarian ideology provides the basis for a critical dimension to a communitarian approach to accountability. The focus is on criticising the adverse impacts of individualism on the common good and communal values.
- Accountability involves decision making by the collaborators on activities that impact on the common good and communal values. The decision relates to imposing sanctions through policy measures to control the activities.
- Accountability involves controllability through reporting and monitoring by the collaborators on activities that impact on the common good and communal values.

On the basis of the above pre-understandings, I believe that to expand the meaning of accountability requires defining accountability in a broad sense as comprised of several dimensions, applying the various dimensions to accountability relationships between members of a community, public authorities and corporations, and extending the subject matter of accountability to sustainability and issues of common concern. My primary pre-understanding is that a communitarian approach to accountability for the common good offers a wider scope for extending the meaning of accountability. It is constitutive of dimensions, accountability relationships and subject matter that, together, provide a framework in which accountability acquires new meanings.

It is not the purpose of this interpretive study to resolve the elusiveness extant in the concept of accountability but, rather, to point out that accountability is constituted by several interrelated dimensions and that accountability can be extended beyond the parameters of the relationship between corporations and their shareholders. Starting with such broad understandings of accountability provides a more comprehensive vantage for hermeneutical exploration of the meaning of accountability. By framing my pre-understandings in these terms, I explicitly made known what I bring to the interpretive process, that is, the vantage point from which I approached the interpretation of the text. The pre-understandings helped me understand the 'text' from a communitarian perspective and to theorise accountability implicated in the text along communitarian lines.

The communitarian approach to accountability for the common good appears abstract and its meaning can become misplaced if it is not related to real life situations. The abstractness needs to be resolved by examining a real life situation of collaboration between community, public authorities and private entities in planning and policy making for sustainable development. I attempted to clarify the abstractness by synthesising horizons (or fusion of horizons), in other words, by synthesising my pre-understandings with the 'text'. Synthesising involves identifying in the 'text' the features of the conceptual communitarian approach to accountability. Synthesis also means finding contradictions between the conceptual framework and the contents of the 'text' and making suggestions to resolve these contradictions. It is possible that during the readings and interpretation of the text new meanings may emerge in support of or in refutation of the communitarian model. The interpretive process can lead to amendments to the communitarian model in the light of new findings.

The set of pre-understandings developed in this chapter was a starting point for my hermeneutic interpretive journey. The development of understanding does not stop at this initial stage. I allowed for the possibility that new pre-understandings or understandings might develop during the hermeneutic process. I approached the text with an open mind, interacting with the text and dealing with questions that

challenged the pre-understandings, and subjecting them to further elimination and development during the interpretation of the text. I employed hermeneutic enquiry as an ongoing process for progressive understanding of the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good.

The conceptual understanding of a communitarian approach to accountability only formed part of my pre-understandings. In this thesis the meaning of accountability is derived from within the context of collaboration between community, public authorities and private entities in formulating strategies and policies for sustainable development. Before approaching the ‘text’ with my pre-understandings on accountability, it is crucial to explain the institutional framework that guides the formulation of strategies and policies for the implementation of sustainable development in New Zealand. The institutional framework, comprising international consensus (such as the 1992 Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, Earth Charter) and New Zealand statutes (such as the Local Government Act 2002 and Resource Management Act, 1991), provides the foundation for community engagement in planning and policy making for sustainable development. Further, the institutional framework addresses the “missing link” that Cooper and Owen (2007) concerned about. Chapter 5 explains the institutional framework for sustainable development in New Zealand.

CHAPTER 5

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT - GLOBAL DISCOURSE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to explain how communitarian and accountability themes acquire meanings within a global context. The global context referred to in this chapter consists of international consensus, declarations and recommendations on sustainable development that are outcomes of international conferences facilitated by the United Nations. Since the 1970s the world's nations have met in several major conferences, under the patronage of the United Nations, to discuss environmental problems and agree on standards for sustainable development. Among the major conferences facilitated by the United Nations were: the Stockholm Conference 1972; Earth's Summit Rio De Janeiro 1992; Earth's Summit Johannesburg 2002; and a series of conferences to discuss the rights of indigenous peoples. Key outcomes of the United Nations' initiatives include: the Stockholm Declaration 1972, Rio Declaration 1992; Agenda 21 1992; Johannesburg Declaration 2002; and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Other major outcomes include the Brundtland Report 1987 and the Earth Charter 1997. Extant studies indicate that in many countries local initiatives to engage local communities in sustainable development have been influenced by the international consensus on sustainable development, especially by the recommendations of Agenda 21 (Gaye , Diouf & Keller, 2001; Joas & Gronholm, 2001; Jonas et al., 2004; Jorby, 2000; Mercer & Jotkowitz, 2000; Ottozimmermann, 1994; Roberts, 2000; Roberts & Diederichs, 2002; Rowe, 2000; Sebek, 1994; Steinberg , Miranda, 2005; Wild & Marshall, 1999; Worthington et al., 2003).

The term 'discourse' has a wide range of possible meanings and significations and it is important to specify the context within which the term is used (Mills, 1997). The etymological meaning of the word is related to the act of communication and

includes: conversation (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990); and a formal and orderly expression of ideas in speech or writing (Longman Dictionary of English Language, 1991). Speech and writing portrays the beliefs, values, experiences and the world views of persons participating in the discourse (Fowler, 1981). Mills (1997) argues that a discourse also comprises of statements which are enacted within a social context and by institutions which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence (Mills, 1997). In this chapter the term ‘discourse’ is used in relation to the global discourse on sustainable development comprising of international conferences, declarations, reports, ideas and consensus on sustainable development and, in particular, the sustainability discourse facilitated and promulgated by the United Nations and its agencies¹¹.

The global discourse on sustainability addresses the complexities of dealing with three key elements of development which are economic growth, environmental protection and the social well being of society (WCED, 1987). These elements are often termed ecological sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability (Grundy, 1993). Ecological sustainability is the “maintenance of essential ecological processes and life support systems upon which all life depends” (Grundy, 1993, p.33). Social sustainability is improving the social well being of human beings and includes: development of intellectuality, health, language, culture, identity, self-worth, status, confidence, versatility; satisfaction of basic needs; equitable distribution of wealth and access to resources; participation in decisions and self-determination (Grundy, 1993). Economic sustainability involves the allocation of finite resources amongst competing ends to achieve social development but without compromising ecological sustainability and the needs of future generations (Grundy, 1993).

Sustainable development is often regarded as a matter of integrating social, economic and environmental considerations for decision making purposes (Mitchell, 1997; WCED., 1987). PCE (2002) describes sustainable development as a journey

¹¹ Such as the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, the World Commission on Environment and Development and Commission on Human Rights

towards the elusive goal of “sustainability”, indicating an unending search for ways to improve the quality of human lives and the natural environment and to prosper without destroying resources and life-supporting systems on which present and future generations depend. Although sustainable development stresses the long term compatibility of economic, environmental and social dimensions, short-term competition is possible between the goals of these dimensions (OECD, 2001). From a communitarian perspective, paradigms on sustainability are influenced by priorities assigned by communities to economic growth, environmental protection and cultural and other social considerations. Lawrence & Arunachalam (2006) provide empirical evidence to show that priorities that define sustainability are affected by the values of a community. The authors argue that the meaning of sustainability is constructed within the context of the beliefs and tradition of a community. They suggest that any initiative towards sustainable development paths is influenced by people’s underlying values and beliefs.

The global discourse is an important context for this New Zealand-based interpretive case study. In particular, understanding the concept of sustainable development as it has evolved from the global discourse is important for this study. New Zealand has participated in global summits on sustainable development such as Earth’s Summit in Rio de Janeiro 1992 and Johannesburg 2002. It has political commitment to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration, Earth Charter and the Johannesburg Declaration (PCE, 2002). Surveys conducted by ICLEI¹² indicate increase in Local Agenda 21 initiatives in all regions of the world. According to the survey, by the end of 2001 over 6,400 local authorities in 113 countries (including 37 councils in New Zealand) had either made a formal commitment to Local Agenda 21 or were actively undertaking the process with the

¹² The International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), or ‘Local Governments for Sustainability’, is an international network supporting sustainable development in Local Government. ICLEI is formally associated with The United Cities and Local Government as well as the United Nations Environment Programme. ICLEI works to build and serve a global movement of local authorities to achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability, with a focus on improving environmental conditions through cumulative local actions. Nearly 500 Local Government associations and individual local authorities from around the world are currently members of ICLEI, including in the UK (International Council of Local Environment Initiatives, 2005)

greatest participation level in Europe. In the UK a strong level of support and guidance from the government has resulted in over 90% of local authorities having now produced Local Agenda 21 documents. With such a high level of commitment in many countries, New Zealand sees itself under pressure to implement Agenda 21 at the local community level and failure to implement Agenda 21 recommendations may affect trade relations with the more enthusiastic countries. The findings of the Ministry for the Environment (2001) indicate that environmental image is a substantial driver of New Zealand's international trade and it risks losing value of exports (especially dairy, tourism and organic produce) if the image is threatened by a decline in environmental quality. Non-compliance to international consensus or agreements could affect the green image of New Zealand and its relationship with other countries. Being a party to the international treaties/ consensus, New Zealand is accountable to the international community for the implementation of sustainable development.

The global discourse has significant influence on Local Government legislations and government policies on sustainable development in New Zealand. Earlier developments in the global discourse (such as the Stockholm Conference 1972, Earth's Summit Rio De Janeiro 1992, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Brundtland Commission Report), foreshadow New Zealand Local Government reforms during the last two decades. The Local Government reforms seek to involve local district communities in Local Government planning and policy making processes for sustainable development and, in a way, promote communitarianism at local district level (Brookers, 2007). The enactment of the Resource Management Act 1991 and its focus on environmental sustainability is a reflection of New Zealand's commitment to the global discourse. Major reforms were also incorporated in the Local Government Act 2002 emphasising the importance of sustainable development, especially environmental sustainability, and the importance of local district communities' participation in planning and decision making for sustainable development that affect them. New Zealand's commitment to the global discourse has also resulted in increasing emphasis on the adoption of a Local Agenda 21 at the Local Government level (PCE, 2002). Knight (2000) reports that, in recent years, several New Zealand local authorities and their district communities have

been collaborating to implement United Nations Agenda 21 recommendations (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a) by streamlining their own Local Agenda to the United Nations, recommendation (Knight, 2000, Burke, 2004; Taupo District Council, n.d.). According to Hughes (2000) the formulation and adoption of such Local Agenda 21 is an ongoing process in several local districts in New Zealand. With such significant influence, the global discourse needs to be considered in articulating the meaning of a “communitarian approach to accountability for the common good” within the New Zealand local governance context. In hermeneutical terms, the global discourse is a “part” of the “whole”¹³ in the circle of understanding as shown in Figure 2.5. The hermeneutic process involved interpreting the global discourse with reference to the theoretical communitarian approach to accountability (CAACG) discussed in Chapter 4. The interpretation is aimed at identifying communitarian and accountability themes in the global discourse.

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 5.2 explains the communitarian themes inherent in the global discourse. Section 5.3 explains how accountability dimensions acquire meanings in the context of global discourse. Section 5.4 provides some reflections and concludes the chapter.

5.2 COMMUNITARIAN THEMES IN THE GLOBAL DISCOURSE

Communitarian themes in the global discourse form the basis for reflecting on a communitarian approach to local governance. The implication is that, implementing sustainable development in accordance with the global discourse requires a communitarian approach to local governance. The following subsections highlight some of the communitarian themes inherent in the global discourse.

¹³ The whole as defined in chapter 2 is the “text” comprising of the theoretical framework; the global discourse; the New Zealand context on community participation in local governance; and various documents related to the Taupo District.

5.2.1 Meaning and Scope of Community in the Context of the Global Discourse

In the global discourse, the term ‘community’ is used in a broad sense to refer to the international community (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.; United Nations, 2000; United Nations Environment Programme, 1972; & WCED, 1987), as well as in a more limited sense to refer to local communities participating in Local Government planning and decision making processes (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a; The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.). The broad sense of community recognises that in the midst of a “magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms” mankind stands as “one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny” (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.). Realising the goals of a sustainable planet requires a sense of common identity as a world community as well as identities as local communities. A community of life is premised on the principle that “all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings” (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter Principle 1a). The community of life is dependent on the “dignity of all human beings and on the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity” (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter Principle 1b). In Agenda 21 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a) the broad sense of community has several meanings, including: a community comprising a group of nations such as the European Economic Community (Agenda 21 Preamble); the international community¹⁴ (Agenda 21, Chapter 28, Chapter 31, 36 etc.) referring generally to the nations of the world or more specifically to nations which participate in United Nations summits and initiatives; and scientific community.

For the purpose of implementing sustainable development at grass root levels, the term ‘community’ is more pervasively used in Agenda 21 to mean local community in relation to a Local Government or a local authority area (Agenda 21 Chapter 28). According to the Earth Charter, local communities vary in size, composition,

¹⁴ The international community also includes United Nations agencies, international organizations, and other appropriate and private organizations (United Nations Department of Economic and Social affairs , Agenda 21, Chapter 34)

structure and organization (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.). Sometimes they are defined by administrative boundaries, while other communities emerge from a shared culture and history. In all cases, they reflect in some way the neighborhoods where people live. This is generally also the level where individuals can be most involved and influential. Values developed at the local community level emerge at national and global levels. The UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) specifically refers to indigenous communities.

5.2.2 The Common Good in the Context of the Global Discourse

Common good typically refers to something which is of common interest and valued for its service to a community (Lovett, 1998). Common good in the global discourse typically refers to renewable and non-renewable natural resources such as air, water, land, flora and fauna and, especially, representative samples of natural ecosystems as well as the wildlife and its habitat (United Nations Environmental Programme, 1972; principles 2, 3, 4 and 5, Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment). Present and future generations depend on the natural resource (United Nations, 1999) to provide physical sustenance for mankind and opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth and economic development (United Nations Environment Programme, 1972). The importance of the natural environment is clearly captured in the Earth Charter:

The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust. (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter Preamble)

The recognition of natural resources as the common good provides a close association between the common good and environmental sustainability. Although the scope of sustainable development as articulated in the global documents covers several areas (such as economic development, social justice, democracy, non-violence and peace), the primary emphasis is on environmental sustainability or

preference for a strong form of sustainability (Pearce, Anil, & Barbier, 1989, 1990; Pearce & Turner, 1990). Emphasis on environmental sustainability is in contrast to a weak form of sustainability in which economic growth takes priority over environmental and social considerations (Solow, 1993; Hartwick, 1990; Hartwick, 1978; Solow, 1974; Widavsky, 1994). The meaning of sustainable development used consistently and pervasively in the global discourse is in line with the definition provided by the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). Sustainable development is defined in the Brundtland Report as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (WCED, 1987 p.43). Environmental sustainability is implicated in this definition in that present and future generations depend on natural resources for survival.

Environmental sustainability is implied in the overarching principle of the Earth Charter (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.) which recognizes that all beings are interdependent and every form of life having value, regardless of its worth to human beings (principle 1). The right to own, manage, and use natural resources carries the duty to prevent environmental harm (Principle 3) and to secure the natural resources for present and future generations (Principle 4). Environmental sustainability also involves the adoption of development plans and regulations that take into consideration environmental conservation and rehabilitation such as safeguarding viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine, protecting endangered species and ecosystems, managing the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life, and managing the extraction and use of non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimize depletion and cause no serious environmental damage (Principle 5). Environmental sustainability entails a precautionary approach, taking action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive. It places the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm (Principle 6). This approach requires decision making that addresses the environmental consequences of human activities, especially the pollution of the environment, and the adoption of patterns of production,

consumption, and reproduction that safeguard the natural resources (Principle 7). Environmental sustainability also recognizes traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection (Principle 7). The emphasis on environmental sustainability is also prevalent in other major global declarations on sustainable development such as in the Stockholm Declaration 1972, the Rio Declaration 1992, Agenda 21 1992 and the Johannesburg Declaration 2002.

Emphasis on environmental sustainability arises from concerns on environmental devastation, rapid depletion of resources and massive extinction of species caused by human activities and their dominant patterns of production and consumption, (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.). There are growing evidence of environmental harm caused by human activities, including: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; and destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources (United Nations Environment Programme, 1972). In a similar vein, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) raises concerns about the “accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development” (United Nations, 1999, p.1). Other common concerns about the global natural environment include loss of biodiversity, depletion of fish stocks, desertification and loss of fertile land, adverse effects of climate change such as frequent natural disaster, and water and marine pollution (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b; Johannesburg Declaration, paragraph 13). Hence, the global environment, its diversity and finite resources are of common concern to all peoples (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.).

5.2.3 Community Consultation and Participation in Sustainable Development

The idea of broad-based consultation and participation is prevalent in processes for achieving global consensus on sustainable development. For example, the Earth Charter is the outcome of a decade-long, worldwide, cross-cultural dialogue about common goals and shared values. It is synonymous with the communitarian concept of cooperative enquiry for the common good (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.).

The drafting of the Earth Charter has involved an open and participatory consultation process in which thousands of individuals and hundreds of organisations from all regions of the world, different cultures and diverse sectors of society have participated (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.). Participation advocated at the international level is also recommended for the implementation of sustainable development at the local level. The Johannesburg Declaration recognises that:

...sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all levels (Principle 26).

For the purpose of enhancing community participation, the Earth Charter suggests the strengthening of democratic institutions, provision of transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice (Principle 13). Meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making requires the protection of rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent (Principle 13).

Agenda 21 recommends the continued, active and effective participation of local groups and communities in the implementation of sustainable development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, paragraph 38.5). Community participation envisaged in Agenda 21 involves the participation of individuals (including indigenous people), social groups and organizations in decisions which affect communities in which they live and work (Agenda 21, Chapter 23). The forms of participation recommended in Agenda 21 include: collaboration between local authorities and their local communities (Agenda 21, Chapter 28); public consultation by local authorities; dialogue in the community; information sharing and accessibility to communities of environment and development information held by local and national authorities.

The need for community participation arises because issues on environment and development have roots in local activities requiring cooperation and partnership between local authorities and their communities (Agenda Chapter 28, paragraph 28.1). Community participation aims to create household awareness of sustainable

development issues and to collate community views for formulating sustainable strategies and policies. Participation helps communities to set their priorities (Agenda 21, Chapter 35). The needs of communities vary and situations are idiosyncratic, so participation may vary from one community to another. Therefore, environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level (United Nations, 2000; Rio Declaration 1992, Principle 10). Effective participation in decision making processes by local communities can help them articulate and effectively enforce their common interest.

Community participation aims to draw out the views of the local people on how to implement and achieve sustainable development. WCED (1987) recognises people are a creative resource and their creativity can be harnessed through participation in the processes of sustainable development (WCED, 1987). Further, participation builds human solidarity through dialogue and cooperation, irrespective of race, disabilities, religion, language, culture and tradition (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b, Johannesburg Declaration, Principle 17). It also enables local communities to collaborate with Local Governments to care for their environments (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter, Principle 13).

Local authorities have a vital role in facilitating community participation in sustainable development. Agenda 21 recognises Local Government as the level of government that is closest to local communities (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Chapter 28). Problems and solutions addressed in Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities and therefore participation and cooperation of local authorities and collaboration with local community will be a determining factor in the implementation of sustainable development. Agenda 21 proposes that local authorities undertake a consultative process with their local population and achieve consensus on a Local Agenda 21¹⁵ (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a Agenda Chapter 28, paragraph 28.2). The consultative process

¹⁵ Local Agenda 21 is defined in ICLEI (2002) as a participatory, multi-stakeholder process to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of a long-term, strategic plan that addresses priority local sustainable development concerns.

recommended involves dialogue with local citizens, local organisations and private enterprises to adopt “a local Agenda 21”.

5.2.4 Mutual Responsibility

The global discourse recognises mutual responsibility as the key attribute of communal relationships. Mutual responsibility means everyone “would be better off if each person took into account the effect of his or her acts upon others” (WCED, 1987, p.47). On the contrary, it does not mean ‘there is one set of villains and another set of victims’ (WCED, 1987, p.47). In a similar vein, the spirit of mutual responsibility is captured in the following pronouncement of the Johannesburg Declaration:

...the children of the world spoke to us in a simple yet clear voice that the future belongs to them, and accordingly challenged all of us to ensure that through our actions they will inherit a world free of the indignity and indecency occasioned by poverty, environmental degradation and patterns of unsustainable development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b, Johannesburg Declaration, paragraph 3).

The Johannesburg Declaration (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b) calls for constructive partnership for the achievement of the common goals of sustainable development (paragraph 16), the building of human solidarity through dialogue and cooperation irrespective of race, disabilities, religion, language, culture or tradition (paragraph 17), and working together to help one another (paragraph 18) which implies a strong communitarian sense of mutual responsibility. The relationship involves social partners and partnerships that respect the roles of each participant (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b, Johannesburg Declaration, paragraph 26). Such collective action and responsibility is central to the implementation of sustainable development and to ensure that natural resources are used to the benefit of all (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b, Johannesburg Declaration paragraph 21).

The Earth Charter (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.) upholds mutual responsibility to one another and to the greater community of life and emphasises mutual understanding, solidarity, cooperation and collaborative problem solving among all people to manage and resolve environmental problems. This mutuality is strengthened by common values and shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for a communal spirit (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Preamble, Earth Charter). The mutual responsibility also arises from the obligation of the present generations to future generations. This responsibility is implicated in the commonly cited definition of sustainable development offered by WCED (1987): "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (p. 43). Joint responsibility to protect the natural environment for present and future generations has also been mentioned in other major international declarations (United Nations Environment Programme, 1972; Principles 1 & 2 Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment; United Nations, 2000, Principle 3 Rio Declaration). The responsibility of the present generation involves transmitting to future generation values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Principle 3 Earth Charter).

5.3 ACCOUNTABILITY THEMES IN GLOBAL DISCOURSE

Communitarian themes inherent in the global discourse provide a premise for understanding a communitarian approach to accountability. The following sub-sections explain how accountability themes acquire meanings within the broader global discourse on sustainable development. The themes were developed by making reference to the theoretical accountability model in Chapter 4.

5.3.1 Broad Sense of Joint Responsibility and Accountability

The global discourse articulates the sense of communitarian relationship involving joint responsibility and accountability where everyone is responsible and accountable for the common good. It is a reflection of 360 degree responsibility and accountability (Behn, 2000). For example, the Stockholm Declaration 1972 proclaims that to achieve environmental sustainability requires acceptance of

responsibility by individuals in all walks of life, by communities, by organisations and by institutions at every level, all sharing equitably in common efforts, and by their values and the sum of their actions they will shape the world environment of the future (United Nations Environment Programme, 1972). The Earth Charter calls for universal responsibility and responsibility to one another and common identity as world community as well as a local community where everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of mankind (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Preamble Earth Charter). The Earth Charter endorses “responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations” (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Preamble to Earth Charter). It involves responsibilities to be undertaken by local communities, the international community, national and Local Governments, and the private sector to protect the natural environment and avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter Principle 6). In the Johannesburg Declaration the emphasis is on collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – at local, national, regional and global levels (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b, Johannesburg Declaration, paragraph 5). The declaration calls for joint action and common determination for environmental sustainability and human development. (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b, Johannesburg Declaration, paragraph 35).

The joint responsibility of the various parties arises from their right to own, manage and use natural resources and carries the duty to prevent environmental harm (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter Principle 2). It involves responsibility to “reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption” (United Nations 2000, Principle 8, Rio Declaration) and to take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Principle 6, Earth Charter). In relation to that, the charter calls for accountability, places the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and makes parties liable for environmental harm (Principle 6). This

is also emphasized in the Rio Declaration which suggests that the polluter, in principle, bears the cost of pollution (United Nations, 2000, Principle 16 Rio Declaration). The Rio Declaration (United Nations 2000) suggests a precautionary approach to environmental responsibility. The principle states:

In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation (Principle 15).

From a communitarian perspective, the sense of joint responsibility arises because the individual has a relationship with the community (Aristotle, 1968; Miller, 1995; Fraser 1998). Communitarian ideology maintains that an individual derives values from the community and owes obligation to the community (Bradley, 1927). Joint responsibility reiterated in the Earth Charter implies a sense of community and provides a basis for establishing a relationship between the individual and the community. The Earth Charter asserts that, in assuming joint responsibility, the individual identifies with the international community as well as with local communities. The individual is a citizen of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked and everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Preamble Earth Charter). To face environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges the Earth Charter recognises a sense of universal responsibility where an individual identifies with the Earth community as well as with local communities (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Preamble Earth Charter)

Joint responsibility and accountability to each other requires a change of attitude and behaviours at every level of society to promote sustainability. The Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) suggests that responsibility requires a change in attitudes, objectives and institutional arrangements at every level to be guided by the principle of environmentally sustainable development. In a similar vein, the Earth Charter calls for a livelihood that is ecologically responsible and changes in values, institutions

and way of living in order to meet responsibility to each other and to achieve sustainability (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d. Principle 3 Earth Charter).

5.3.2 Participation of the Farming Community in Joint Responsibility and Accountability

A major concern in many countries is the impact of farming activities on the natural environment as a result of overexploitation and improper management of natural resources, including land (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, paragraph 32.1). This is a global concern as agriculture occupies one third of the land surface of the Earth and is a central activity for much of the world's population (Agenda 21 paragraph 32.1). Farmers, being primary users of natural resources and stewards of much of the Earth's resources, have responsibility for conserving the natural environment on which they depend for their sustenance (Agenda 21, Chapter 32). Their primary responsibility in sustainable development is to adopt sustainable farming practices and technologies (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.5 c). The accountability of the farming community is implicated in the sense that farmers are accountable for the impacts of farming practices on the natural environment. Farmers owe accountability to the local community, that is, to a community of people with common concerns for the common good.

A communitarian approach to sustainable development and accountability would mean allowing the farming community to participate in the design and implementation of policies directed towards sustainable farming practices. Agenda 21 proposes a farmer-centred approach to attaining of sustainability in countries where agriculture is the central activity and where a significant number of the rural population depend on agricultural activities. Agenda 21 recommends decentralised decision making and delegation of power and responsibility to farmers for environmental sustainability. To enable farmers to assume the responsibility and accountability for the natural environment Agenda 21 (Chapter 32) supports the formation of farmers' organizations and recommends the involvement of farmers and their representative organizations in policy formulation. Several measures have been recommended to help farmers in these roles. They include promoting pricing mechanisms, trade policies, fiscal incentives and other policy instruments that

positively affect individual farmer's decisions about an efficient and sustainable use of natural resources, and take full account of the impact of these decisions on farm incomes, employment and the environment (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.6 b). Legal assistance is to be provided to support the formation of farmers' organisations (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.6 e). Farmers and their representative organizations are to be allowed to participate in formulating policy (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.6 c). Furthermore, researchers are to cooperate with farmers in developing location-specific environment-friendly farming techniques (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.7 a). Such techniques are intended to enhance crop yields, maintain land quality, recycle nutrients, conserve water and energy, and control pests and weeds (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.12 a). Governments and farmers' organisations are to initiate mechanisms to document, synthesize and disseminate local knowledge, practices and project experiences so that the lessons of the past can be utilised when formulating and implementing policies that affect affecting farming (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.8 a). It also involves establishing networks for the exchange of farming experiences with help to conserve land, water and forest resources, minimize the use of chemicals and reduce or reutilize farm wastes (Agenda 21, Paragraph 32.8 b).

The communitarian sense of mutual responsibility to the farming community is implicated in these recommendations. The key to successful implementation of sustainable farming practices lies in the motivation and attitudes of individual farmers and policies that would provide incentives to farmers to manage their natural resources in a sustainable way (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.4). Decentralization of decision making is the key to changing formers' behaviours and implementing sustainable farming strategies (Agenda 21, paragraph 32.4).

5.3.3 Participation of Indigenous Communities in Joint Responsibility and Accountability

Indigenous communities share joint responsibility with non-indigenous communities for environmental sustainability and for making decisions for sustainable development. Indigenous people and their communities are descendants of the original inhabitants of lands which they traditionally occupied and have historical relationship with their lands (United Nations Department of Economic and Social

Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, paragraph 26.1). Over many generations the indigenous people have developed holistic traditional scientific knowledge of their lands, natural resources and environment (Agenda 21, paragraph 26.1). A primary social element and requirement of sustainable development is the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. These rights have been recognised in several international declarations and consensus on sustainable development. The Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) recognises the traditional rights of indigenous people to lands and other resources that sustain their way of life. The Rio Declaration recognises the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous communities and their role in environmental management and development. It also recommends that states recognize and duly support the identity, culture and interests of the indigenous people to enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development (United Nations, 2000; Rio Declaration principle 22). Agenda 21 recognises human rights and fundamental freedoms without hindrance or discrimination against indigenous people (paragraph 26.1). The Johannesburg Declaration 2002 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b) reaffirms the vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development. The Earth Charter recognizes the importance of preserving in all cultures traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d.). Article 12 of the Earth Charter upholds the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. The principle suggests elimination of discrimination in all its forms, and affirms the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources related to their livelihoods. This also includes protection and restoration of outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance. The International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) recognises indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices as important factors that need to be considered in sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment (United Nations, 2007). Article 18 of the declaration recognises that indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters that affect them.

In view of the interrelationship between the natural environment and the cultural, social, economic and physical well-being of indigenous people, efforts to implement sustainable development need to accommodate and promote the role of indigenous people and their communities (United Nation Department of economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, paragraph 26.1). This requires providing indigenous communities with a decisive voice in the decisions about natural resource use in their area. It involves the participation of indigenous communities in formulating decisions and policies on the management of the natural environment (Agenda 21, paragraph 26.3 b). The aim is to allow indigenous communities greater control over their lands, self-management of their resources and participation in development decisions affecting them, including, where appropriate, participation in the establishment or management of protected areas. To this end, Agenda 21 (paragraph 26.3 a) recommends that;

- the lands of indigenous people and their communities should be protected from activities that are environmentally unsound or that the indigenous people concerned consider to be socially and culturally inappropriate;
- recognition of the values, traditional knowledge and resource management practices with a view to promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development;
- recognition that traditional and direct dependence on renewable resources and ecosystems, including sustainable harvesting, continues to be essential to the cultural, economic and physical well-being of indigenous communities
- where appropriate, arrangements be made to strengthen the active participation of indigenous communities in the national formulation of policies, laws and programmes relating to resource management and other development processes that may affect them, and their initiation of proposals for such policies and programmes;
- involvement of indigenous communities at the national and local levels in resource management and conservation strategies and other relevant programmes established to support and review sustainable development strategies, such as those suggested in other programme areas of Agenda 21.

A communitarian approach to accountability also entails accountability to the indigenous community. Accountability to indigenous people arises from the moral obligation to ratify and apply existing international consensus and declarations on indigenous rights, the protection of indigenous intellectual and cultural property, and the rights to preserve customary and administrative systems and practices; incorporation of the views and knowledge of indigenous people in natural resource management and conservation and in the design and implementation of policies and programmes. Although the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is not legally binding on states, it carries considerable moral force (IWGIA, 2007). Some countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States prefer to deal with the issue in their own way instead of strictly adhering to the UN Declarations (Graham, 1998; IWGIA, 2007; Quentin-Baxter, 1998a, 1998b; Solomon, 1998; Te Atawhai Taiaroa, 1998). The United Nation's proclamation of the right of indigenous peoples to self-government in relation to their own affairs (IWGIA, n.d., Article 31 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) is especially troubling to these countries as it challenges the sovereignty of these nations. The solution to these complex issues appears to be an on-going and never-ending dialogue, a living dialogue that will see, from time to time, compromises made between indigenous, non-indigenous communities, and public authorities. It requires changes in regulations, perceptions, values and ways of living in the communities. Issues would arise when the dialogue slows down or comes to a halt, so community participation and collaboration with public authorities become crucial in these circumstances.

5.3.4 Information Sharing and Reporting to Communities

In the context of global discourse, everyone is a user and provider of information considered in a broad sense (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, Chapter 40, paragraph 40.1). Information sharing includes the establishment of networks for the exchange of experiences to help conserve land, water and forest resource (Chapter 32). The emphasis is on reporting to everyone on a wide range of environmental concerns in order to create symmetry of information at local, provincial, national and international levels (Agenda 21, Chapter 41, Paragraph 40.19). The Rio Declaration (United Nations 2000, Rio Declaration principle 10) suggests that each individual shall have appropriate access

to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities. The Earth Charter (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter principle 13) upholds the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities which are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest. The Earth Charter maintains that increased freedom, knowledge, and power carries with it increased responsibility to promote the common good (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d. Principle 2 Earth Charter). Conversely, ignorance or indifference can cause massive irreversible damage to the natural environment (United Nations Environment Programme, 1972, Principle 6, Stockholm Declaration).

Reporting to communities and information sharing is aimed at creating awareness at grass root levels and building the capacity of communities to take part in development and policy decisions that affect them (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Chapter 31 Agenda 21). Information on environmental matters broadens the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting and improving the environment (United Nations Environment Programme, 1972; Principle 19, Stockholm Declaration, 1972). To achieve the objectives of reporting to communities, Agenda 21 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a) recommends a wide range of different types of information to be made available to communities including: local knowledge, practices and project experiences so that local communities can make use of the lessons of the past (Chapter 32); information on detailed concrete cases where environmentally sound technologies were successfully developed and implemented (Chapter 34); information about the sources of available information (Chapter 40); information on the Earth's carrying capacity and the processes that could either impair or enhance its ability to support life (Chapter 35); causes and consequences of environmental change (Chapter 35); environmental impacts of development options (Chapter 35); research results from universities and research institutions (Chapter 35); data on resource depletion (Chapter 35), data on the status and trends of the planet's ecosystem, natural resource, pollution and socio-economic variables (Chapter 35); and various other forms of scientific information (Chapter 35). In this user-oriented

approach, users (including the local community) need to identify their information needs (Chapter 34).

5.3.5 Provision of Scientific Information to Communities

Global discourse on sustainable development emphasises the importance of scientific information as a basis for decision making. The importance of the interface between science and decision-making is well recognised in most international declarations on sustainable development. In particular, scientific information is increasingly being used in the search for feasible pathways towards sustainable development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, paragraph 35.2). Principle 9 of the Rio Declaration recognises the importance of scientific understanding, through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, in order to improve decision making for sustainable development. The application of science and technology enables control of environmental risks and the solving of environmental problems (United Nations Economic Programme, 1972, Principle 18, Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment). Principle 20 of the Stockholm Declaration recommends scientific research for solving environmental problems and for the free flow of up-to-date scientific information. Agenda 21 recommends that scientific information be made available widely and be better understood by the general public and decision makers in making policy decisions on sustainable development (Agenda 21, paragraph 31.1). In a similar vein, the International Conference on the Agenda of Science for Environment and Development into the 21st Century (ASCEND 21)¹⁶ recommends building a scientific basis for sustainable management, enhancing scientific understanding, improving long-term scientific assessment, and building up scientific capacity and capability in sustainable development (Pickering & Owen, 1997). ASCEND 21 also recommends regular appraisal and communication of the most urgent environmental and developmental problems. Scientific information is also recommended as the fundamental basis for the formulation and selection of environmental and development policies and in

¹⁶ ASCEND 21 was convened by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in November 1991. The ICSU is an international organisation consisting of scientific unions and scientific committees primarily concerned with the natural sciences. (Pickering & Owen, 1997, p.671)

working out of long-term strategies for development and in the management of the environment and development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a Agenda 21, Chapter 35).

Agenda 21 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a) proposes two-way communication between the scientific community and the users of scientific information. The users of scientific information are policy makers, professionals in other fields and the local community (Agenda 21, Chapter 31). Information barriers (Parry et. al., 2004), arising from language differences, can be bridged through information sharing between scientists and end users (Agenda 21, paragraph 35.22 d). The scientific community is to be responsive to the information needs and priorities of the local community and undertake research in these areas to generate the required information (Agenda 21, paragraph 35.7 g). Improved communication and cooperation between the scientific and technological community and decision makers is intended to facilitate greater use of scientific and technical information and knowledge in policies and programme implementation. A dialogue with the local community would assist the scientific and technological community in developing priorities for research (Agenda 21, paragraph 31.2).

Agenda 21 calls for the independence of the scientific and technological community to investigate and publish without restriction and to exchange their findings freely (Agenda 21, paragraph 31.1). The process of disseminating scientific information involves open sharing of data and information among scientists¹⁷, the general public and decision makers, and the publication of national scientific research reports and technical reports that are understandable and relevant to local sustainable development (Agenda 21, paragraph 31.4 e). Agenda 21 (Chapter 35) recommends the development of scientific and technological databases and networks, processing of data in unified formats and systems, and allowing communities full and open access to depository libraries of regional scientific and technological information

¹⁷ The scientific and technological community includes, among others, engineers, architects, industrial designers, urban planners and other professionals and policy makers, to make a more open and effective contribution to the decision-making processes concerning environment and development (Agenda 21 Chapter 31 paragraph 31.1).

networks. The process also includes compiling, analysing and publishing information on indigenous environmental and developmental knowledge.

Agenda 21 (Chapter 26) considers research activities as an important mechanism for preparing information for decision making related to sustainable development. Agenda 21 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21 Chapter 35) calls for interdisciplinary research programmes and activities involving environmental sciences, indigenous knowledge, economics, social sciences, culture and so on. This suggests that the interdisciplinary nature of sustainable development requires reporting on interdisciplinary information. It involves the roles of various parties in the preparation of information, including the contributions of scientists, planners, engineers, economists, other professionals and policy makers (Agenda 21 Chapter 31, paragraph 31.1). Agenda 21 (Chapter 35) recommends the following areas be researched and research findings made available to the public:

- Estimation of the carrying capacity of the planet Earth and of its resilience under the many stresses placed upon it by human activities
- Underlying ecological processes
- Application of new analytical and predictive tools in order to assess more accurately the ways in which the Earth's natural systems are being increasingly influenced by human actions, both deliberate and inadvertent, as well as demographic trends, and the impact and consequences of those actions and trends
- Modern, effective and efficient tools, such as remote-sensing devices, robotic monitoring instruments and computing and modelling capabilities
- Scientific assessments of current conditions and future prospects for the Earth's system
- Integration of physical, economic and social sciences in order to better understand the impacts of economic and social behaviour on the environment and of environmental degradation on local and global economies
- Integration of multidisciplinary, physical, chemical, biological and social/human processes which, in turn, provide information and knowledge for decision makers and the general public

- Assessments of the current status and trends in major developmental and environmental issues.
- Research into indigenous people's knowledge and management experience related to the environment (Chapter 26),

5.4 REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Reading and interpreting the global discourse, in particular understanding international declarations and consensus on sustainable development, is crucial for the hermeneutic process undertaken in this study. The global discourse has significant influence on recent developments in local governance in New Zealand, and therefore understanding the global discourse is important for this New Zealand based interpretive case study. Understanding the manifestation of communitarian and accountability themes in the global discourse contributed to the understanding of the communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. The hermeneutic process produced a synthesis of two horizons, that is, synthesis of the theoretical CAACG model and the global discourse. The hermeneutic process supplemented my pre-understandings while identifying themes that challenged the CAACG model.

Themes in the global discourse which support the theoretical communitarian model (CAACG) include: the focus on the common good; joint responsibility for the common good; reporting to communities and creating awareness of threats to the common good; local community participation in planning and decision making; and collaboration between local communities and local authorities for safeguarding the common good. In the context of the global discourse the common good is articulated in terms of sustainable development with a primary emphasis on the protection of the natural environment. Although the global discourse generally acknowledges the need for an integrated approach to development, where economic development, social development and environmental protection are to be considered in decision making, the primary emphasis is environmental sustainability. This emphasis suggests that the global discourse is inclined towards a strong form of sustainability where economic considerations are subdued within environmental considerations. The global discourse points to the need for accountability for environmental sustainability.

Communitarian ideology continues to expand under the global discourse and has become intrinsic to the concept of sustainability. The global discourse promotes a communitarian approach to implementing sustainable development. The scope and meaning of ‘community’ articulated in the global discourse appear to suggest the significance of a local community in the implementation of sustainable development at Local Government level. The Local Government is the level that is closest to the grassroots where action and implementation actually take place. The global discourse recommends local community involvement and the collaboration between local communities and local authorities in implementing sustainable development. Other communitarian themes that pervade the international declarations include: the existence of common concern, common good and shared values; mutual and collective responsibility to promote the common good; community participation in decision making; collaboration between local authorities and their communities; dialogue, consultation and consensus-building; and information sharing to create community awareness of environmental pollution.

The communitarian approach to sustainable development stimulates a communitarian approach to accountability for environmental sustainability. The ideology of sustainable development, as it has evolved in the global discourse, provides a strong theoretical framework for developing the meaning of a communitarian approach to accountability. Behn’s (2000) notion of 360 degree responsibility and accountability becomes intelligible in the context of global discourse. The global discourse implies that everyone is accountable to everyone else for the common good, with joint responsibility and accountability for the natural environment and environmental sustainability. Accountability also involves reporting on environmental and social impacts of human activities to create awareness. In sustainable development, everyone is a user and provider of information (Agenda 21, paragraph 40.1). Information is intended to empower local communities to participate in dialogue, planning and policy making processes for sustainable development. Accountability is implicated in international declarations for joint responsibility to undertake actions to protect the natural environment or to refrain from carrying out activities that degrade the natural environment. The

international declarations stress the moral obligation and mutual responsibility of governments, businesses and local communities to protect the natural environment while promoting economic and social development. The responsibility includes the responsibility of statutory authorities to implement sustainable development, undertake consultation, and promote community participation.

The global discourse strengthens my arguments in paragraph 4.2.8 in Chapter 4. The concept of accountability is not limited to accountability relationships between corporations and their stakeholders, but also involves a wider environment covering collaboration between local communities, public authorities and businesses and, from a global perspective, the international community. The subject matter of accountability is not limited to the financial bottom line but extends to issues of common concern such as environmental degradation, the economic and social development of communities, and the rights of indigenous communities. Reporting is not limited in terms of financial information but the emphasis is more on scientific information as a basis for decision making. Again, accountability is not limited to the process of account giving but includes other dimensions such as dialogue and relational responsiveness at various levels, including local grass roots and international levels. When environmental sustainability becomes collective responsibility, accountability acquires broader meanings than those stipulated in conventional wisdom. Confining the meaning of accountability to “account giving” becomes outdated as there are numerous parties involved – some giving account, some monitoring and some making policies. The global discourse supplemented my earlier theoretical pre-understandings and provided additional insights on the communitarian approach to accountability.

Some themes inherent in the global discourse pose challenges to the communitarian model. The prevalence of indigenous rights can cause segregation of the local community and can result in failure to achieve joint consensus on decisions. Generally, the global discourse regards the values of the indigenous communities as important considerations in any decisions related to sustainable development. For instance, the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People recommends that special consideration be given to the rights and values of indigenous communities

decisions related to development. Providing such special consideration may cause segregation in local communities which consist of indigenous and non-indigenous people. The communitarian approach to local governance and accountability may become challenging in such communities.

Another challenge to local communities is the emphasis in the global discourse on scientific information as a primary basis for decision making. Local communities may not have the ability to comprehend scientific information or to take part in decisions that are made on the basis of scientific findings. There is the risk of scientific knowledge becoming the dominant influence in decision making resulting in asymmetry of power where scientists and groups that employ scientists dominate discussions in the public sphere and steer Local Agenda 21 in a certain direction. Furthermore, it is not clear how sciences can integrate with the traditional knowledge of indigenous people. Modern scientific knowledge may overshadow any other form of knowledge which is not based on sciences.

The global discourse is prescriptive and provides a normative understanding of sustainable development. For this interpretive study, it is important to consider how the recommendations of the global discourse has been incorporated into New Zealand Local Government reforms, in particular to promote sustainable development and local community participation in sustainable development. The next chapter examines some of these issues.

CHAPTER 6:

THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT – EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this chapter is to identify and explain communitarian and sustainability themes that are intrinsic to the system of local governance in New Zealand and to explain how the dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability are manifested in the local governance context. The chapter also explains historical, social, political and economic factors that have influenced and continue to influence local governance in New Zealand.

A growing body of literature suggests that communitarian philosophy and practices in New Zealand are linked to the system of local governance involving collaboration between local communities, local authorities and the Central Government (Burke, 2004; Cheyne, 2002; Cheyne & Comrie 2002; Chile, 2006; Frogie, et al., 1999; Mckinlay, 2006; Richardson, 2005; Reid, 2002; Thomas & Memon, 2005; Thomas & Memon, 2007). Extant studies indicated that the development of communitarian ideology and practices has been influenced by political, economic and social factors which have strong historical roots in the evolution of local governance (Cheyne, 2002; Cheyne & Comrie, 2002; Chile, 2006; Drage, 2002; Freeman, 2004; Richardson, 2005; Thomas & Memon, 2005; Thomas & Memon, 2007). Some of the factors include: the continuing enthusiasm of the general public to participate in Local Government affairs; the influence of Maori tradition in Local Government affairs; statutory work undertaken by the Central Government to introduce legislation and policies for community development; the influences of particular political parties; continuous amendments to Local Government reforms to allow for more participatory democracy in Local Government planning and policy making processes; the burgeoning of community-based organisations; adverse economic

conditions prevailing in the 1980s and 1990s leading to the emergence of the “Third Way” ideology; and the gradual devolution of Central Government’s role in Local Government affairs. Understanding these factors was important for this interpretive study because they provided historicity of understanding (Gadamer, 1975), that is, they represent historical factors that explain the nature and evolution of communitarian ideology within a New Zealand local governance context. Understanding the New Zealand context is part of the hermeneutic circle of interpretation. The hermeneutic process involved the fusion of horizons in which communitarian, accountability and sustainability themes (identified in Chapters 4 and 5) inform the interpretation of New Zealand local governance. Such an approach to interpretation, predicated on Gadamer’s hermeneutic tradition of drawing from multiple contexts (Gadamer, 1975), provided additional insights into the dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability.

In New Zealand, Local Government is an integral part of a democratic system of government (Forgie, 2002; Forgie et al., 1999; Department of Internal Affairs, 2001) and communitarian ideology and practices are considered to be manifested in the system of Local Government (Burke, 2004; Cheyne, 2002; Cheyne & Comrie, 2002; Chile, 2006; Cole & John, 2001; Coulson, 2004; Cousins, 2002; Drage, 2002; Lynch, 2002; Rhodes, 1997; Thomas & Memon, 2005; Thomas & Memon, 2007). Arguments in favour of Local Government are mainly premised on Local Government as a means of democratic decision making that empowers communities¹⁸. Drage (2002) contends that Local Government builds community identity; provides quick responses to local situations; promotes local community participation in decision making, and provides accountability to local communities. Richardson (2005) argues that Local Government has several advantages over Central Government for achieving community priorities including its proximity to communities, its local nature and its ease of identification with the local community. Some scholars (such as Henton, 2002; Keating, 2002) consider local governance as a way to overcome the inefficiencies arising from Central Government control of local affairs and the weaknesses of representative democracy. Thomas and Memon (2005)

¹⁸ “Empowerment is about deciding together and sharing responsibility. It is about getting people’s ideas and working together to determine what the best options are” (Forgie et al., 1999, p.12)

associate Local Government with participatory democracy in that Local Government enables pluralistic communities to exercise their rights as citizens, work together towards common goals and cultivate civic culture and trust. Thomas and Memon, (2007) assert that Local Government provides communities a public space to gather, cultivate solidarity and contribute to the life of their community. According to Hirst and Khilnani (1996), Local Government enables participation in political decision-making for many people.

Local Government is often associated with local governance but the two terms may not be synonymous. Local Government refers to the machinery of Local Government and, more specifically, refers to the organisation of local authorities (Local Government Act 2002 No. 84). The structure of Local Government in New Zealand consists of regional councils and territorial authorities¹⁹. Most parts of New Zealand are under the governance of a district council and a regional council. Local governance is a broader term and refers to the process of governing at the local level and includes not only the machinery of Local Government, but also the community and its interaction with local authorities (USAID, 2000). Local governance, in relation to the regulatory responsibilities of Local Government authorities, refers to the administrative and management activities (including planning and decision making) of local authorities.

In broader terms, the term ‘local governance’ refers to a non-hierarchical mode of governing, where non-state actors participate in the formulation and implementation of public policy (Rhodes, 1997). It is a new mode of governing that is different from the old hierarchical model in which state authorities exercised control over civil society (Mayntz, 2003; Meehan, 2003). Under the traditional “command and control” approach to government (Meehan, 2003, p. 2) authority was centralized and exercised hierarchically, with ministers dominating civil servants and Central

¹⁹ The Local Government Act 2002 provides the following definitions:

- Section 21 Part 3 describes local authorities as consisting of regional councils and territorial authorities.
- Section 5 Part 1 defines a territorial authority as a city council or a district council.

Government dominating Local Government (Richards & Smith, 2002). Contemporary literature suggests a growing switch in several countries, from the traditional hierarchically controlled government to local governance which aims to empower Local Government authorities and their communities (Mayntz, 2003; Meehan, 2003; Richards & Smith, 2002). The switch from government to governance arises from the lack of capacity of the state to act alone in formulating and implementing public policy (Meehan, 2003). The switch resembles a shift from a hierarchical to a more cooperative form of government (Mayntz, 2003) and partnership arrangements across public, private and community sectors (DiGaetano, 2002). It entails democratic participation of communities in problem solving and decision making. When the switch occurs ‘Governments no longer row, they steer’ (Meehan, 2003, p.4).

Traditionally, local governance is intended to devolve more powers from the Central Government to Local Government authorities. With increasing emphasis on community participation in Local Government (especially in Local Government planning and policy making) the scope for local governance has become considerably expanded. According to Thomas and Memon (2005), governance entails “the hollowing out of the state” (p. 10), a term which the authors have used to describe devolution of power from the Central Government to Local Government and local communities. In a similar vein, Meehan (2003) contends that governance covers a range of new arrangements and practices including: fragmentation or sharing of public power between different tiers of governments; formulation and implementation of policies away from the state or the hollowing out of the state; and reliance on partnerships, networks, consultation and dialogue that are central to the ‘Third Way’²⁰ thinking about policy design and delivery (p.2). However, Meehan

²⁰ The Third Way is a term that has been used to describe the initiatives of governments in the West in the late 1990s to renew civil society and foster social inclusiveness involving public participation in the policy process (Thomas & Memon, 2005). The Third Way seeks to revitalise the community, balance the authority of the Central Government and promote democratic accountability at the local level (Thomas & Memon, 2007). Fundamental to the politics of the Third Way is the fostering of an active civil society (Giddens, 1998).

(2003) also argues that while there is a difference between the hierarchical mode of government and local governance, the two forms of activity can coexist. Hence, the switch from government to governance involves not only devolution²¹ of power from the Central Government to Local Government authorities but also takes the form of collaboration between Central Government, local authorities and local district and regional communities in planning and policy making (Drage, 2002; Chile, 2006).

In New Zealand, the shift from government to governance took precedence for several reasons. First, reaction against the socio economic conditions of the 1980s and early 1990s instigated the development of the Third Way ideology (Chatterjee, 1989, Chatterjee 1999). Secondly, the issue of community engagement in Local Government planning and policy making and the existence of multiple communities became relevant to local and Central Governments (Thomas & Memon, 2007). Third, developments in participatory models in Western liberal democracies strongly influenced the switch from government to governance in New Zealand during the 1990s (Thomas & Memon, 2007). Fourth, the increasing role of Local Government in delivering democratic rights at the local level was seen as a significant influence on the switch to governance (Hayward, 1997; Cheyne, 1999; Cousins, 1999; Reid, 2002). Fifth, the move towards local governance was also a result of the growing acknowledgement in the late nineties that a one-size-fits-all national approach to public policy was no longer desirable or appropriate for New Zealand society (Thomas & Memon, 2005, p. 18). The standardised approach to the design and delivery of social services was no longer appropriate when communities were fragmented and diverse and began to be defined in geographic terms (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996; McKinlay, 1999a). In contrast to a “one size fits all” approach to regulation, devolution to lower levels of government can result in greater efficiency (Sharp, 2002). Sharp argues that power concentrated at a national level places the regulator in the position of a monopolist while devolving decision making down to local units of government gives local interest groups relatively more power. Further, Local Government is considered a sphere of government accountable to the local

²¹ Devolution involves transferring decision rights to regional/Local Government (Sharp, 2002).

level, which could act as a check on the power of the Central Government (Richardson, 2004).

Supplementing the literature on New Zealand local governance are the works of scholars who articulate the concept of social capital and the “Third Way” ideology (Chatterjee, 1989; Chatterjee, 1999). Social capital defined as the social interaction and networks that occur among voluntary groups and communities, is a fundamental part of local governance in New Zealand (Richardson, 1998; Reid, 2002). Thomas and Memon (2005), in their study of Local Government in New Zealand, conceptualise governance as involving collaboration between central and Local Government and communities embodied in the ideology of the “Third Way,” a political programme which aims to renew social democracy by including civil society as a partner in local authority planning and policy making. Governance is aimed at promoting alliances, networks and partnerships between Local Government authorities, local communities and Central Government (Thomas & Memon, 2005; 2007). The Local Government Act 2002 captures the essence of the “Third Way” ideology by requiring local authorities to work in partnership with their local communities in planning and policy processes in order to promote the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their local communities (Local Government Act 2002 No, 84). According to Freeman (2004), participation and collaboration in New Zealand local governance is entrenched in planning where local authorities work with local district communities (including indigenous Maori communities), politicians, local businesses and national government (Freeman, 2004). The planning process is intended to transform ideals promulgated at international and national levels into practical strategies at local level.

This chapter is organised in several parts. Section 6.2 provides a brief history of the evolution of communitarian ideology and practices within a New Zealand local governance context. The section also explains factors which have influenced and continue to influence communitarianism²² in New Zealand. Sections 6.3 – 6.5 explain some of the factors that have influenced communitarian ideology in New Zealand.

²² In this thesis communitarianism refers to communitarian ideology and practices

Section 6.6 discusses the development of Local Government reforms in New Zealand with particular emphasis on local community engagement in Local Government planning and decision making processes. Section 6.7 explains the institutional framework for promoting sustainable development in New Zealand. The section suggests a link between communitarian ideology and sustainability paradigms in a New Zealand local governance context. Section 6.8 explains how dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability are manifested in the system of local governance in New Zealand. Section 6.9 concludes the chapter.

6.2 EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Since the 1840s, community participation in local governance has been an important aspect of New Zealand society. Dalziel (1981) attributes the enthusiasm of early British settlers for participation in Local Government affairs to their social status and political awareness in Great Britain. She speaks of “a number of well-educated, politically aware gentry and middle-class families who, had they stayed in Great Britain, might well have been active in local and even national politics” (p.91). The idea of Local Government was first introduced in New Zealand through the enactment of the 1842 Municipal Corporations Ordinance. According to Dalziel (1981) the ordinance was introduced by Governor Fitz Roy in response to tensions that had been emerging between the early settlers and the Crown. The ordinance provided for the establishment of boroughs with elected representatives to administer newly established European settlements.

Other early initiatives to promote Local Government included the introduction of the New Zealand Constitution Act 1846, The New Zealand Constitution Act 1852 and the Municipal Corporations Act 1876. Community participation in Local Government in the nineteenth century was mainly in the form of involvement in elections for local representatives (Cheyne, 2002). However, the early initiatives in self government, such as provision in The New Zealand Constitution Act 1846 and several ordinances during the late 1840s failed to meet the expectations of early settlers (Cheyne, 2002). Factors which caused dissatisfaction among early settlers included: the lack of participatory democracy in the form of local community meetings for addressing political issues; the inexperience of elected members;

restricted powers of provincial councils created under the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852 as compared to the power of the colonial Office to veto any legislation passed by the local council; interference by the Colonial Office in the establishment of local bodies (e.g. the disestablishment of an elected municipal corporation in Wellington in 1842); the appointment of representatives in Local Government by Governor Fitz Roy and the manipulation of those representatives by the governor; and the five-year suspension of the New Zealand Constitution Act 1846 which provided for elected municipal corporations (Cheyne, 2002). With the introduction of more legislation to promote Local Government, such as the Municipal Corporations Act 1876 and the Local Government Bill 1912, the number of local authorities increased rapidly. By 1920 there were 117 municipalities, 129 counties and many districts (Cheyne, 2002). For many years participation in Local Government affairs was mainly through elected representatives. The power and influence of the local ratepayers was limited to their rights to vote in triennial elections. The political representatives consisted of the mayor and councillors who made decisions on behalf of the local community.

6.3 INFLUENCE OF THE MAORI COMMUNITY

Communitarian ideology existed in New Zealand even prior to European colonization and settlement in New Zealand. Pre-colonial Maori community development was community-based and focused on the collective needs of the indigenous people (Chile, 2006). Communitarian ideology is ingrained in the indigenous peoples' traditions and communal way of living. The indigenous people have been practising communal ways of living through their traditional social structures which include: whanau or extended family; hapu or sub-tribes and iwi or a large territorially based social unit areas (An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 2007). These traditional social structures have influenced the manner in which the modern Maori communities have developed and provide a conceptual framework within which the actions (such as planning and decision making) of indigenous communities take place (An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 2007). Such communal structures continue in the present day among the indigenous community (An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 2007). The communitarian tradition of the indigenous Maori community is a significant factor that has influenced and continues

to influence local governance in New Zealand. The traditional knowledge of the Maori community has infiltrated into local governance. Engaging with sustainable development must include engaging with Maori concepts (Wilson et. al., 2000). The indigenous community believes that ecosystems have a spiritual aspect and humans are directly related to non-humans (Wilson et. al., 2000). It also believes that humans and the natural environment are bound together in a family environment by genealogy, ancestry and identity with place, family and tribe (Roberts, et al., 2004; Wilson et. al., 2000), and that Humans have an obligation to build a family relationship with the natural environment. This moral obligation entails reciprocity, obligation to future generations and responsibility for the protection of natural resources. The moral obligation is a key consideration in the decision making of the Maori community and affects the community's participation in Local Government planning and decision making processes.

The Treaty of Waitangi is an agreement reached in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and representatives of the Maori communities (King, 2003; The Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme, 2005). The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document for New Zealanders and a guide to both Maori, public authorities and non-Maori communities in their dealings with one another (Graham, 1998). It signalled the birth of modern New Zealand and was meant to create a bi-cultural community in which both the indigenous people and the new immigrants had equality of access to resources, power and justice. The principles of the Treaty established the obligations of the Crown and Maori to act reasonably, honourably and in good faith. An aspect of the obligation to act in good faith is a duty to make informed decisions through consultation. The principles of the Treaty require consultation on matters which are likely to affect Maori and the honour of the Crown and this requires long-standing grievances to be addressed. To give more effect to the Treaty of Waitangi, the Treaty is recognised in the RMA and the Local Government Act as well as in several other statutes in New Zealand (such as the Environment Act 1986, Conservation Act 1987 & the Fisheries Act 1986) relating mainly to natural resources, environmental legislation and Maori affairs (Rickett, 1989). The Treaty established the accountability of crown entities to Maori communities throughout the country (Wilson & Salter, 2003), and led to more debate

and dialogue and consultation with the Maori tribal communities in New Zealand (Kernot, 1989; Orange, 1989; Wilson et. al., 2000). The clauses on consultation with Maori communities contained in the RMA and the Local Government Act can be attributed to the Government's efforts to address some of the grievances that ensued after the signing of the Treaty. As a result of the Treaty of Waitangi, various statutes in New Zealand recognise Maori communities needing separate consultation (Local Government Act 2002 No. 84; Resource Management Act 1991 No. 69). This has created the formidable task for state agencies and local authorities of dealing with the Maori community separately from other non-Maori communities (Hayward, 2002).

The Treaty of Waitangi recognizes Maori as the ancestral people of the lands in New Zealand and Maori stewardship, custodianship and sovereignty over the land, lakes, waterways, rivers, foreshore, fisheries and natural resources (Solomon, 1998). The custodial rights give the Maori community the right to ensure that the use and management of natural resources is consistent with their customs and the Treaty of Waitangi. This requires participation of Maori Communities in resource management and decision making processes so that consideration is given to the physical and spiritual relationship between Maori and their ancestral lands, water and sacred places. Customary right gives Maori the right to exercise their customs, life principles and culture. The Maori community also claims its customary and custodial rights are consistent with the principle of self-determination (autonomy and self-government) of Article 31 of the 1993 United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Te Atawhai Taiaroa, 1998; Solomon, 1998; UNESCO, 1993). However, the New Zealand Government recognises this right of self-determination only within the territorial integrity of state and its constitutional framework and recognises customary practices that are undertaken in accordance with reasonable limitations required by the state's legal and constitutional framework (Graham, 1998). The government does not want to support rights that would result in the Maori community seceding from New Zealand and establishing an independent state of its own (Graham, 1998; Te Atawhai Taiaroa, 1998; Solomon, 1998). These issues have become the subject of continuous debate between central and Local Government authorities, Maori and non-Maori Communities. Policy changes and

new statutory provisions have been enacted in the past to deal with the differences in interpretation of the rights of the Maori community (Quentin-Baxter, 1998). An ongoing or living dialogue (Kernot, 1989) between the Maori and non-Maori communities and public authorities appears to be a solution to the tensions arising from the principle of self-determination, and such living dialect is a unique feature of New Zealand society. The dialogue needs to happen at the grass roots Local Government level with the support of Central Government. The purpose is to allow the whole community to participate in planning and policy matters that affect their lives. It appears to be the situation that when the dialect ceases, New Zealand may cease to be a single nation. The communitarian ideology - emphasizing the centrality of the community, comprising both Maori and Non-Maori communities, and the participation of the community in decision making - upholds New Zealand as a single nation and inevitably becomes a dominant ideology in New Zealand society.

6.4 INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Initiatives to introduce community development policies and Local Government reforms in New Zealand are associated with particular political parties (Thomas & Memon, 2007; Department of Internal Affairs, 2000). According to Thomas and Memon (2005) Labour governments have sought to bring about various reforms to Local Government, while the conservatives have traditionally thwarted Local Government reforms. Cheyne (2002) observes that community participation in Local Government was mainly promoted by Labour governments which initiated several reforms to Local Government in order to give more powers to local citizens. For example, the Local Government Bill 1936, introduced by the Labour government, provided for ratepayer poll provisions which recognised that local ratepayers should have more involvement in local authority decision-making than just the opportunity to vote in triennial elections. Major reforms in Local Government were also instituted by Labour governments. In 1946, the first Local Government Commission was established by the then Labour government. The duties of this commission were to prepare schemes for the creation, merger, abolition and boundary adjustments of local authorities. The second Labour Government (1957-60) appointed the first ever major inquiry into the structure of Local Government. The third Labour Government (1972-75) continued with reforms of Local Government, and a major new statute, the

Local Government Act 1974, was enacted. The act was a major step forward in providing opportunities for community participation in Local Government. The act made provisions for the creation of community councils which were considered a major step forward in the providing opportunities for citizen involvement in Local Government. The fourth Labour Government (1984 – 1990) invited all local authorities to submit proposals for reform in the interests of creating more efficient units of Local Government. Significant Local Government reforms were introduced in 1988 and 1989. In 1999 the Labour Government's strategy to reform Local Government sought to strengthen community participation in Local Government decision making (Thomas & Memon, 2007; 2005). However, Cheyne (2002) notes the lack of enthusiasm for Local Government reforms by National-led governments.

6.5 ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The history of New Zealand Local Government suggests that the Central Government assumed a dominant role as the provider of an overall framework for community development through legislation and policies that aimed to enhance community participation in Local Government affairs (Chile, 2006). Early Central Government attempts to facilitate community development programmes included the introduction of the Physical Welfare and Recreation Act 1937 and the creation of the Physical Welfare and Recreation unit in the Department of Internal Affairs (Church, 1990). Through these programmes, the government funded community centres which enabled the growth of numerous community-based organisations with nearly 30,000 incorporated societies and over 1000 charitable trusts in 2003 (Chile, 2006). In all of the Central Government's efforts in community development, the Department of Internal Affairs assumed a central role over the last century (Basset, 1997). Other Central Government departments involved in community development work included the Department of Social Welfare, established in 1972, which was transformed into the Ministry of Social Development in 2001, (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) and the Ministry of Maori Development (2008).

Leading up to the 1970s community development was predominantly promoted by the Central Government. However, as early as the 1960s there were already

movements that challenged the idea that Central Government reflected the views of the people and that demanded participatory approaches to decision making (Chile, 2006). Reeder (1993) even suggests that community development in the 1970s was concerned with people's struggle to reclaim ownership and control of their communities from the influences of local and Central Governments and private corporations. With the enactment of the Local Government Act 1974, community development continued within the local and regional governments. The Local Government Act 1974 recognised: the existence of different communities and communities of interest; the identities and values of those communities; and the participation of local persons in local government processes (Section 37 K Local Government Act 1974 No. 66). The act facilitated the devolution of the powers of Central Government to Local Governments and their communities, a process referred to by some scholars as the hollowing out of the state (Thomas & Memon, 2005; Thomas & Memon, 2007). Wilkes (1982) notes the increase in local authority personnel involved in full-time community development work with functions that ranged from identifying social needs to the development of community groups and liaison between the community and larger social structures. The activities of these paid community development personnel came to be understood as professional communitarian practice in contrast to the more generic understanding of communitarian practice as cooperation between a community of people with common goals (Shirley, 1979).

During the 1980s and 1990s the role of Central Government in Local Government affairs was gradually reduced as Central Government concentrated on the providing of legal and regulatory frameworks and core national public goods such as defence, law and order and income distribution (McKinlay, 1999b; Dollery & Wallis, 2001). According to McKinlay (1999b), there was growing acknowledgement by the Central Government that the outcomes it wanted to achieve at the Local Government level depended on its ability to work with local authorities and their communities and not simply on mandates from the Central Government. For the purpose of community development, it has been acknowledged that Central Government has to work in partnership with Local Government which interfaces closely with community organisations, a wide range of non-governmental organisations, and with

indigenous communities (Department of Internal Affairs, 2001). The hollowing out of the Central Government (Thomas & Memon, 2005) provided new responsibilities to local authorities as holders of a democratic mandate to work with their communities to determine the desired outcomes of those communities and to take the lead to realise the outcomes (McKinlay, 1998). The role of Local Governments came to be seen not merely in terms of service delivery but in making policy decisions together with their communities (McKinlay, 1999b). Local Government began to emerge as a venue for political interactions that empowered diverse communities to work together for the common good (Forgie et al., 1999; Reid, 2002).

6.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Local Government became subject to significant reforms during the 1980s and 1990s, largely because of the changing socio-economic and political landscape in New Zealand. Economic and political conditions prevailing during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s have caused the public to lose confidence in the New Zealand government and to seek greater participation in Local Government decision making processes (Perry & Webster, 1999). The adverse economic factors led to restructuring of the economy during the period 1984-89 and there was increasing attention on the public sector, especially on improved performance and accountability (Pallot, 1991). Local Government reforms were introduced in order to reduce the extent of Central Government intervention and to allow for more public participation in policy development processes of their Local Governments (Thomas & Memon, 2007).

The Local Government reforms in New Zealand that led to the enactment of the Local Government Act 2002 broadly reflect the direction of Local Government reform initiatives in other liberal Western democracies (Thomas & Memon, 2007). In western democracies, such as Great Britain, France and Germany, the reforms aimed at democratic renewal, fostering strategic partnerships with communities and improving service delivery (Wollmann, 2000; Cole & John, 2001; Ashworth et al., 2004; Coulson, 2004). The shift from government to governance is embodied in the ideology of the Third Way and forms a fundamental feature of the recent UK reforms (Leach & Barnett, 1997; Atkinson & Wilks-Heegs, 2000). Local Government reforms in Britain, based on the Third Way, might be considered a

significant influence on the communitarian vision that found its way into the 2002 reforms in New Zealand (Thomas & Memon, 2007, 1998; DIA, n.d.). In the late 1980s the idea grew in New Zealand that decisions which affected communities should be made by the level of government which was closest to those communities (Thomas & Memon, 2005). The Labour coalition elected in 1999 acted to address poorer than expected growth concerns about the loss of social cohesion, and reduced confidence in the market in order to achieve sustainable outcomes (Thomas & Memon, 2007). The Labour coalition's initiatives to overhaul the public sector paved the way for the "Third Way" and social democracy that enabled a communitarian ideology to infiltrate Local Government reforms (Richardson, 2004). The post-1999 reforms created space for participatory democracy and strategic planning informed by the sustainability discourse (Thomas & Memon, 2007).

In 1999 the Labour–Alliance coalition embarked upon a comprehensive review of Local Government with the aim of empowering local communities and promoting collaboration between local communities, local authorities, Central Government and other stakeholders in planning and policy matters (Thomas & Memon, 2007). A major review of the Local Government Act 1974 was undertaken by the Labour coalition. Communitarian citizenship and participatory democracy discourses dominated the reform agenda which led to the 2002 Act (Thomas & Memon 2007; DIA, 2000, 2001). The current Local Government Act 2002 (superseding the Local Government Act 1974) is the final outcome of the review and represents a major reform that completed a series of changes (Appendix 10) that had been made to Local Government legislation since the 1970s.

One of the underlying objectives of the review was to promote increased participation of citizens and communities in Local Government to protect the right of local people to be involved in making decisions that affect their lives. In line with the principles-based approach, councils have the opportunity to develop their own consultation mechanisms that best suit the needs of their communities. The aim was to increase the scope of local communities to identify their own priorities, and to develop and pursue different visions for their futures, rather than the "one size fits all" approach implicit in the traditional approach to Local Government (Department

of Internal Affairs, 2001). According to Mitchell & Slater (2003), the Local Government Act 2002 (henceforth referred to as the LGA 2002) provides broadly-based powers and greater flexibility for local authorities to respond effectively to the diverse needs and well-being of their communities. In that sense, Mitchell & Slater (2003) consider the LGA 2002 as a radical shift from the traditional prescriptive nature of previous Local Government legislation. The emphasis was away from local authorities as autonomous and discrete deliverers of services and towards being responsive, collaborative facilitators of community priorities. The purpose of the LGA 2002 was to provide for democratic and effective Local Government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities (section 3). To achieve this purpose, the Act provides a framework that promotes the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities while taking a sustainable development approach (section 3 d); the framework also promotes accountability of local authorities to their communities (section 3 d).

6.7 THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE

An institutional framework is comprised of legislation, rules and policies that influence the decisions of individuals in a community (Sharp, 2002) and that assign primary responsibility and authority to an agency (OECD, 2006). For the purpose of implementing sustainable development, the institutional framework is comprised of rules that are the product of parliament, regional government and the Environment Court and other rules set by government to guide the management of a community resource (Sharp, 2002). In New Zealand, the institutional framework for a communitarian approach to local governance and sustainability is a social construction of reality and a product of history, that is, it is an outcome of political, economic, cultural and social factors (as discussed in paragraphs 6.2 – 6.6 above) that have roots in the evolution of local governance. The institutional framework is comprised of Local Government legislations including the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA 1991) and the LGA 2002. The legislations are premised on sustainability discourse (in particular the global discourse on sustainable development) and communitarian ideology.

The global discourse on sustainable development has significant influence on New Zealand Local Government reforms. New Zealand has continued to show its interest in the global discourse by participating in international conferences such as the Rio and Johannesburg Earth Summits as well as by committing to Agenda 21 (Knight, 2000; MFE, 1995; 1996; Hughes, 2000). Local Government reforms undertaken by the Central Government in the 1990's were in response to the global discourse. The reforms reflected the recommendations of the global discourse by recognising the centrality of community priorities and the role of local communities in planning and decision making for sustainable development.

The global discourse continues to provide guidelines to local authorities and their communities on processes and standards for sustainable development. Under the influence of the global discourse, environmental sustainability (or strong form of sustainability) has emerged as the dominant paradigm underpinning sustainability rhetoric in New Zealand. Several other factors also explain the strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. New Zealanders, in general, attach strong aesthetic values to natural landscapes (Freeman, 2004). In the 1970s the concept of sustainability in New Zealand was strongly influenced by growing environmental awareness promulgated by the primitive conservationist philosophy of critics who campaigned against government development proposals and economic activity that were deemed to exploit natural resources (Dixon et al., 1989). This environmental awareness, together with the 1980 World Conservation Strategy and the 1987 Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* (Grundy, 1993) were some of the early influences on sustainability ideology in New Zealand. Another factor which explains the tendency for environmental sustainability is the heavy reliance of New Zealand's economy on agriculture and natural resources. New Zealand is rich in renewable natural resources on which its primary economic activities, such as farming, fishing and forestry, depend. These economic imperatives have resulted in the enactment of legislations and government strategies and policies for the protection of physical and natural resources from the adverse impacts of human activities. Early attempts to promote sustainability include the New Zealand Conservation Strategy (New Zealand Nature Conservation Council, 1980) and the 1984 Labour Party

Environmental Policy (Horsley, 1988). New Zealand's early statutory commitment to sustainability ideology is manifested in the Environment Act 1987, Conservation Act 1987 and RMA 1991. These three acts provided the initial statutory recognition of sustainable management of natural resources, the needs of future generations and the intrinsic values of ecosystems.

6.7.1 The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA 1991)

The RMA 1991 has been internationally recognised as a groundbreaking environmental legislation for promoting sustainable development planning approaches (Knight, 2000; Freeman, 2004). The RMA provides the legal structure underpinning environmental management and policy and creates opportunities for local authorities and communities to find effective and efficient ways of achieving environmental standards that suit their local environment (Sharp, 2002). Both central and Local Governments in New Zealand have important and complementary responsibilities in implementing sustainable resource management through their planning and management responsibilities under the RMA.

Under the RMA, environmental sustainability is provided for by the requirement for sustainable management of natural and physical resources, in recognition of intrinsic values of ecosystems, and the recognition of conservation imperatives, such as the preservation of coastline, water bodies, outstanding natural features and landscapes, and indigenous vegetation. The underlying purpose of the RMA 1991 is to promote sustainable management, and the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources²³. The basic philosophy underpinning the definition of sustainable management in the RMA is drawn from the Brundtland Report "Our Common Future" (WCED, 1987)²⁴. Section 5 of the RMA 1991 describes sustainable

²³ Natural and physical resources include land, water, air, soil, minerals, energy, all forms of plants and animals whether native to New Zealand or introduced, and all structures made by people which are fixed to land (Section 2 RMA 1991).

²⁴ Sustainable development is defined in WCED (1987) as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

management as managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in a way that enables individuals and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing while sustaining natural and physical resources to meet the foreseeable needs of future generations. Section 5 highlights the importance of environmental sustainability by emphasising responsibilities to safeguard the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems and to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of activities on the environment.

Several other provisions in the RMA also emphasise environmental sustainability. Section 6 of the Act recognises protection of natural and physical resources as matters of national importance including: the preservation of coastal and marine environments, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (section 6 a); the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (section 6 b); the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (Section 6 c); and recognition of the relationship of indigenous cultures and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, and sacred sites (section 6 e). Section 7 of the Act emphasises the concept of guardianship and stewardship of natural and physical resources, implying the responsibility of all persons involved in managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources. In addition, the RMA imposes several restrictions on the use of natural and physical resources, such as restrictions on the use of land (sections 9 & 10), subdivision of land (section 11), the use of coastal marine areas (section 12), use of beds of lakes and rivers (section 13), the use of water (section 14), and discharge of contaminants into water, land and air (section 15). The use of the natural and physical resources is subject to compliance with regional plans or resource consents granted by a regional council.

In the RMA, the paradigm of social sustainability is implicated in the definition of sustainable management as enabling people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well being and for their health and safety (section 5). The meaning of environment as defined in the RMA includes peoples and communities and all natural and physical resources, amenity values, social,

economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions which affect the environment as a whole and which are affected by the environment (Part 1 section 2, RMA). Such a scope clearly encompasses social as well as biophysical values and is equally concerned with the improvement of social well-being as with the protection of natural and physical resources (Grundy, 1993). Social sustainability is also inferred in section 6 (e) which acknowledges the relationship of Maori, their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water and sites. Section 7 (c) recognises the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values²⁵. Section 7 (e) recognises the protection of the heritage values of sites, buildings and places. Section 8 recognises the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. In general the RMA requires these aspects of social sustainability to be taken into account in managing natural and physical resources. Cultural aspects are covered in the RMA through recognition and providing consideration for the guardianship, customary authority, values and practices of the Maori community in the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources (section 7, RMA).

Economic sustainability is inferred in the definition of sustainable management as the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources within the ecological and social constraints imposed by the RMA. Other than meagre references to social and economic sustainability, the primary focus of the RMA is the protection of natural and physical resources with a view to providing for the needs of the present generation and conserving the potential of the resources for future generations. By implication, sustainable management of the environment is not to be compromised by social or economic goals. Clearly, environmental sustainability is the dominant ideology that pervades the RMA.

6.7.2 The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002)

The LGA 2002 is premised on the principles of communitarian ideology and participatory democracy. These ideologies dominated the Local Government reform

²⁵ Amenity values are defined in section 2 of the RMA 1991 as consisting of natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence and cultural and recreational attributes.

agenda of the 1990s that led to the LGA 2002 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2000, 2001). According to Richardson (2005) “Communitarianism is seen in the language of citizen empowerment, community consultation and community well-being employed in the Act” (p. 177). The purpose of Local Government is to enable democratic local decision making and action by, and on behalf of, communities to promote the social, economic and cultural well being of communities in the present and for the future (Local Government Act 2002, section 10). This objective is to be achieved through participatory and democratic planning and decision making processes involving collaboration between local authorities and their communities (sections 14 and 39). To empower local communities, the LGA 2002 requires local authorities to provide for effective, open, and transparent governance structures and processes (section 14). The Act recognises the diversity of New Zealand’s communities. When making a decision, a local authority is required to take account of the views, interests and diversity of its present and future community (section 14 (1) (c)). As part of the participative and inclusive democratic process, the LGA 2002 also requires local authorities to provide opportunities for the Maori community to contribute to their decision-making processes (section 14 (1) (d)). Through these processes, other institutions (such as the LTCCP, annual plan, policy decisions) evolve from within the context of a community (Kasper & Streit, 1998) and become part of the overall institutional framework.

The concept of sustainable development is emphasised throughout the LGA 2002. The Act recommends that local authorities take a sustainable development approach to ensure prudent stewardship and the efficient and effective use of resources in the interest of their district and regional communities (section 14 (1) (g)). The sustainable development approach emphasises the social, economic and cultural well-being of their communities (section 14 (1) (h) (i)] as well as protection of the quality of the environment (section 14 (1) (h) (ii)). The approach applies not only to existing communities but to the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations (section 14 (1) (h) (iii)).

Communitarian theory manifests in the LGA 2002 through provisions that emphasises the centrality of district and regional communities in Local Government.

The primary focus of the LGA 2002 is community priorities and communal processes for community participation in Local Government planning and decision making. The emphasis on the community indicates that a communitarian approach to local governance has a statutory recognition in New Zealand. The communitarian themes in the LGA 2002 are highlighted in the the following paragraphs (6.7.2.1 – 6.7.2.3).

6.7.2.1 Meaning of Community in Local Government Context

Local communities in New Zealand are characterised by their economy, demography, land area and the resource management issues that they face (Thornley, 2007). Most parts of New Zealand are within the district boundary of a territorial authority and also within the regional boundary of one or more regional councils²⁶. This means a district can be under the governance of a district council and a regional council. These classifications have implications for the identity of communities in New Zealand. District communities can be considered as people and their community groups residing within a district, in other words a local district community is comprised of residents in a local district and groups and businesses operating in that district. Regional communities can be described as people and community groups within one region. The communities can be unique and differ from one another in terms of their social, economic, environmental and cultural attributes. Throughout many parts of the LGA (in particular sections 3, Parts 2 and 6, and Schedules 10 and 11) the term ‘community’ is used in a broad sense and refers to the geographic community of interest or population of a local district or region (Brokers, 2007). The broad definition emphasises the sense of common values and shared understanding. Several New Zealand based studies have adopted a similar broad sense of communities. The Manukau City Council in New Zealand defined community as, “a group of individuals who are united by shared characteristics, interests and values’ (as cited in Drage, 2002, p. 84). The Waitakere City Council defined a community as “any group who has an interest in the sustainability of the City”

²⁶ Part 2 Schedule 2 of the LGA 2002 outlines the names of district and regional councils in New Zealand. Part 3 Schedule 2 describes the district and regional boundaries.

(Burke, 2004, p. 11). The report on Future Options to Christchurch City Council, 1999 defined communities of interest as:

...loosely structured communities where people living in a large area feel connected through a shared understanding of geographic, social, cultural, economic or political factors. Communities of interest, therefore, can be large and potentially powerful social phenomenon which, despite artificial divisions or boundaries, persist because of some shared physical and/ or cultural associations.(as cited in Drage, 2002, p.84)

Local communities can also be defined by other less formal criteria such as farming, rural and urban communities, or non-geographically linked communities with strong ethnic ties such as the Maori community, Asian community, Pacific Islander community, etc. These can also be considered as community groups embedded within the broad sense of a local community.

In this thesis I have adopted a broad sense of the wider community as comprised of people and community groups which have interests in the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of an area under a local authority. In the case study the local authorities comprised both the Taupo District Council and Environment Waikato which have Local Government responsibilities and accountability to the broader community of the Taupo district. Whatever the scope of New Zealand communities, the history of community development indicates that communities in New Zealand do not exist independently of the influence of local authorities. Discussion of community engagement in sustainable development and accountability requires an understanding of community involvement in local governance, that is, the participation of communities in Local Government planning and policy making processes.

6.7.2.2 Community Priorities

The LGA 2002 states community priorities (or community outcomes) in terms of social, economic or cultural well-being of current and future communities for which the protection of the natural environment is a crucial aspect (Local Government 2002 No. 84, section 5). The community priorities represent the different elements of

sustainable development and the weighting or emphasis given to the different elements is influenced by the community values and environmental, economic and social issues facing a community (Lawrence & Arunachalam, 2006). The significance of community priorities in Local Government affairs has been reiterated throughout the LGA 2002. Community priorities are incorporated in the statement of the purpose of Local Government (section 10) and implicated in the role of the local authority (section 11). The overarching principles governing the role of local authorities are focused on community priorities (section 14).

Community priorities are crucial considerations in planning and decision making by local authorities (section 77). Once identified, community priorities inform and guide the planning of activities of a local authority (section 91 (2) (e)). Community priorities are the primary components of the Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), which is the main planning document of local authorities (section 93). The linkage of the LTCCP to the Annual Plan of a local authority makes community priorities primary areas of emphasis in the annual plan (section 95).

The importance of community priorities is also emphasised in the decision making processes of local authorities. Local authorities are required to consider the impact of their decisions on community priorities (section 77). In the course of making decisions, a local authority is required to identify practicable options for the achievement of the objectives of a decision (section 77 (1) (a)). More importantly, a local authority is required to assess the impact of those options on community priorities, that is, the extent to which community priorities would be promoted by the options (Section 77 (1) (b) (ii)).

Community priorities are subject matters of accountability. A local authority is required to monitor and report on the progress made in achieving the priorities (Sections 92 & 98). The priorities provide a scope to measure progress towards the achievement of sustainable development in a district and to promote the better co-ordination and application of community resources (Section 91 (2) (c) & (d)).

6.7.2.3 Communal Processes

The centrality of the community is also emphasised in the LGA 2002 through requirements for processes that provide for community participation in Local Government planning and decision making. The processes include: identifying community outcomes (section 91); consultation, submission and hearing processes (sections 82, 83, 84, 85 & 86); and participation of the indigenous community (section 81).

Under Section 91 (1), every local authority must, not less than once every six years, carry out a process to identify community priorities for the intermediate and long-term future of its district or region. The LGA 2002 does not prescribe any particular process for identifying community outcomes but allows a local authority to decide for itself the process used to facilitate the identification of community outcomes (section 91 (3)). However, a local authority is required to take all practical steps to identify groups and organisations capable of influencing the identification or promotion of community outcomes (section 91 (3) (a) (i)) and to secure their agreement on the processes for identifying the outcomes (section 91 (3) (a) (ii)). A local authority is required to ensure that the processes encourage the public to contribute to identifying community outcomes (section 91 (3) (b)). According to Burke (2004), the processes enable local authorities to meet the requirement of the LGA for democratic local decision-making.

In the course of its decision making, a local authority is required to consider the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or to have an interest in, the decision (section 78 (1)). The community views must be considered at various stages of the decision making processes, including: the stage at which problems and objectives related to a particular matter are defined (section 78 (2)(a)); the stage at which practicable options for the achievement of the objectives are identified (section 78 (2)(b)); the stage at which the impacts of those options are assessed and decisions proposals developed (section 78 (2)(c)); and the stage at which the decision proposals are adopted (section 78 (2)(d)). In general, decision making under the LGA is guided by the principles of consultation stated in section 82. The overarching principle is that a local authority is required to have regard to the nature and

significance of the decision and its likely impact from the perspective of persons who may be affected or have an interest in the decision matter. For this purpose, a local authority is required to invite, encourage and provide reasonable opportunities to persons, who will be affected by or have an interest in the decision matter, to present their views to the local authority (section 82 (1)(b) & (d)). These persons are to be provided with reasonable access to relevant information in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons (section 82 (1)(a)). The views presented should be received with an open mind (section 82 (1)(e)). Persons who present views to the local authority should receive clear information regarding the purpose of consultation and the scope of the decisions to be taken by the local authority (section 82 (1)(c)). They are also to be informed regarding the relevant decisions that have been adopted and the reasons for those decisions.

The submission and public hearing processes are other means by which communities in New Zealand can participate in planning and decision making. Section 83 of the LGA allows for submission and hearing processes in relation to proposals for: the Long Term Community Council Plan (LTCCP), and Annual Plan; review or amendment of bylaws; any other plans or policies. Through the submission process, communities can have a say in relation to proposed changes in the plans and policy statements of local authorities. In New Zealand, submission and hearing processes are also endorsed by the RMA 1991 which allow communities to have say on activities that affect the natural environment such as land, beds of lakes and rivers and coastal marine area and on activities that discharge contaminants into the environment. Section 96 of the RMA allows any person to make a submission to a consent authority about an application for resource consent to carry out an activity that affects the natural environment. Clause 6 Part 1 of the First Schedule in the RMA provides opportunities for any person to make submission to the Regional Council on a proposed policy statement or plan that is publicly notified under Clause 5 of the First Schedule. The RMA also allows for public hearing processes to discuss the concerns of the community that are expressed in the submissions. On the basis of the facts and arguments presented at the hearing, local authorities approve or reject a proposed plan or activity. A copy of the decision is sent to all submitters, allowing

them the opportunity of appealing against the council's decision in the Environment Court. Section 120 provides the right of appeal to the submitters. Any appeals against the resource consent decisions or appeals on plans or policy statements are made to the Environment Court. The Ministry for the Environment provide an Environmental Legal Assistance Scheme for appellants. The Environment Court, also known as the Planning Tribunal, is a specialist court set up under the RMA and consists of Environment Judges and Environment Commissioners.

In recognition of the Central Government's commitments to the Treaty of Waitangi, the LGA 2002 sets out certain principles and requirements for local authorities to provide opportunities for Maori communities to participate in Local Government decision-making processes (sections 4 & 14). The Treaty of Waitangi creates obligations for local authorities in relation to facilitation of indigenous community involvement in decision making processes. Under section 81, a local authority is required to establish and maintain processes that enable these obligations to be met. A local authority is required to provide relevant information to the Maori community to develop its capacity to participate in the decision making processes (section 81 (c)). In making any decision in relation to land or water bodies, a local authority is required to take into account the relationship of the indigenous community, their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water sites and vegetation (section 77(1)(c)). One of the principles of consultation, under section 82, is that a local authority put in place processes for consulting the Maori community.

Through these processes, the LGA 2002 aims to promote symmetry of power and non-authoritarian attributes in Local Government planning and decision making. This is reflected in the provisions that allow individuals in a local community to participate as equal citizens in deciding on outcomes that affect them and that allow for open evaluation. The fundamental objective of these processes is to give consideration to community outcomes (section 77) as well as to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or to have interest in, a decision (section 78). As such, these processes reflect a communitarian approach to decision making which enables the negotiation of common values and bonds (Thomas & Memon (2007). Sharing in the decision-making process is expected to create

common values and bonds (Thomas & Memon, 2005; 2007) and this correlation is implicated in the LGA provisions that cater for processes for identifying community outcomes. Secondly, the processes can promote mutual listening and learning, changing attitudes and behaviours in a non-threatening environment, and coming to terms with contentious issues. Thirdly, the processes allow for collective decision making. The communitarian approach is consistent with the recommendation in Agenda 21 for implementing sustainable development at grass roots level through collaboration between Local Government and local community (Agenda 21, Chapter 31). Such processes reflect responsive communitarian ideology which recognises that communities have multiple and not wholly compatible needs (Schilcher, 1999; Etzioni, 2001; Reese, 2001). By recognising the diversity of local communities, the LGA caters for responsive communitarianism (Etzioni, 2001; Reese, 2001). A responsive community tries to avoid any authoritarianism and oppressiveness against the individual (Reese, 2001). It attempts to combine universal principles of sustainability with particularistic values of communities and creates a dialectic which generates new possibilities and ways of being in the community.

6.8 MANIFESTATION OF COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY

The foregoing discussion suggests that communitarian and sustainability ideologies are intrinsic to the system of local governance in New Zealand. The incorporation of these ideologies within the local governance system is supported by an institutional framework that defines key communitarian and sustainability concepts applicable to the Taupo district community. Such an institutional framework can provide a venue for expanding the meaning of “communitarian approach to accountability” within a New Zealand local governance context. The hermeneutic process involves finding in the institutional framework the dimensions of the “communitarian approach to accountability”. The process of theory development involves synthesising the institutional framework with my pre-understandings developed in Chapters 4 and 5. The synthesis of my pre-understandings and the institutional framework allows for one or more of the following possibilities: concurrence with earlier pre-understandings; refutation of the pre-understandings; and discovery of new meanings.

Generally, local governance facilitates the communitarian ideology by emphasising the centrality of local communities, community priorities and communal processes. With such emphasis, several features of the communitarian approach to accountability emerge from within the context of the local governance. The features are discussed in paragraphs 6.8.1 – 6.8.6 below.

6.8.1 Accountability for the Common Good

From a New Zealand local governance perspective, the meaning of common good can be associated with community priorities with a major emphasis on environmental sustainability or strong form of sustainability. The common good can be defined in terms of community priorities, that is, the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities (Local Government Act, 2002, No. 84). The definition links communitarian ideology with sustainability. Local Government legislations (such as RMA 1991 and LGA 2002) tend to emphasize the natural environment as the common good and environmental sustainability as the primary purpose of local governance. The legislations appear to create a common identity, in terms of environmental sustainability, among a community of people despite differences they may have in other respects. The intention of the Local Government legislations is supported by Grundy's (1993) argument that sustainable development provides a legitimate interpretation of the common good and represents an evolving paradigm to promote the sustainable utilization of natural and physical resources and to improve environmental outcomes resulting from resource use.

The emphasis on community priorities assumes that individuals derive their values from their communities and that ethical values are not located in the individual but in the community to which the individual belongs (Fraser, 1998). The common good, stated in terms of community priorities, portrays a socially constructed phenomenon, identified through public dialogue that draws on the diversity of interests in a community. For such a common good, deliberation on the part of the community involves critical enquiry into the impacts of human activities on the natural environment (Lehman, 1999). The natural environment is a hyper-good which

requires the community's deliberation (Taylor, 1989) and the subject matter of accountability in a community. The content of information reported to the community and the subsequent community deliberations that take place depend on how the common good is defined.

6.8.2 Responsibility for the Common Good

Accountability can be linked to responsibility (Boven, 2007; Gray, et al., 1996; Mulgan, 2000) and, in particular, mutual responsibility requires empowered local citizens to work collaboratively towards the common good (Cuthill, 2002). Under the LGA 2002, responsibility towards the common good involves: responsibility to undertake certain actions; responsibility to refrain from undertaking certain actions; and the responsibility to provide an account of those actions. The responsibilities of local authorities include: consultation to obtain the views of individuals when preparing strategic plans for their localities; preparation and dissemination of information to communities to empower and enable participation in planning and decision making processes; preparation and public dissemination of strategic plans; facilitating submissions from communities on the strategic plans; and providing due consideration to the submissions before approving the strategic plans.

Under the LGA 2002, the role of the individual in a community is to participate in collaborative planning and decision making for the common good. The responsibility of the individual implies an inward sense of moral obligation for the common good and accountability to inner self or personal conscience (Corbett, 1996, Day & Klein, 1987). The LGA 2002 promotes this internal sense of individual responsibility by providing opportunities for the community to participate in various processes which are aimed at protecting the common good of the community, specifically, community priorities stated as the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the community. The implication is that the whole community is made responsible through participation in communal processes and through the internal sense of individual responsibility. The LGA 2002 can be considered to draw on the individual sense of internal responsibility in order to promote a communitarian approach to responsibility.

6.8.3 Responsiveness

Painter-Morland's (2006) theory of relational responsiveness becomes meaningful in the context of the LGA 2002. The Act provides for the mutual responsiveness of various parties and allows them to act collectively, through narration and discussion, in decision making and problem solving. Under the LGA 2002, the collaboration between local authorities and local communities is intended to promote a democratic dialogue. This dialectical process aims to ensure local authority officials respond to the needs of the community. Such responsiveness of public officials to the needs of the general public is conceptualised by some scholars as a form of accountability (Hughes, 2003; Corbett, 1996).

Under the LGA 2002, emphasis on community priorities calls for individuals in a community to be unencumbered by personal biasness and social pressures. The implication is that, individuals in a community are not to be isolated decision makers but to act and interact in participative planning and decision making. This kind of moral accountability requires self-reflection as an individual and as a collective to ensure that some congruence exists between the values and priorities of the individual and those of the collective (Painter-Morland, 2006). Through the process of responsiveness and self-reflection, moral obligations and duties are continually redefined as individuals in a community participate in planning and decision making processes and respond to other parties in the community.

6.8.4 Communal Processes and the Dialectical Dimension of Accountability

The communal processes recommended in the RMA 1991 and LGA 2002 promote the idea of open communication and critical deliberation between informed participants to establish validity and to achieve consensus on issues of common concern. The dialectical dimension of accountability (Mulgan, 2004) can be considered as becoming operational and acquiring meaning in the context of the communal processes. The community is given opportunities to discuss how a particular state of affairs came about, create awareness and determine responsibilities towards the common good (or community priorities). The communal processes are intended to address the diversity of interest that exists in a community including those

of indigenous people. The moral attributes of such dialogue are based on respect and mutual understandings and on cooperative relationships in the community

The processes open the venue for questioning, assessing and critical enquiry by some parties and answering, explaining and justifying by others. In other words, the communal processes facilitate the dialectical dimension of accountability (Mulgan, 2004). A range of possible interactions is facilitated by the communal processes. First is the dialogue between the general public and local authority officials. People can pose questions and express their views while the officials explain and justify matters related to proposed policy decisions and strategies.

Second, the responsibility to facilitate communal processes and consult the communities carries with it the accountability of local authorities for carrying out these processes in accordance with the provisions of the LGA 2002. It requires explaining and providing information on the processes carried out. A local authority is accountable to the community for the processes undertaken for consultation. Local authorities are required to provide information on the processes undertaken in consulting the community. Such reporting opens up the venue for dialogue on the authenticity of processes undertaken.

Third, the processes also allow for interaction between different groups in the community and provide for questioning assumptions, sharing information about existing conditions and building understanding of the challenges of the future without blaming one another. During the processes, private entities can be made accountable or answerable for the impacts of their activities. The onus to prove that their activities are socially legitimate rests on these entities. The communitarian thinking is that if organisations do not operate within the boundaries of what the community considers appropriate behaviour, the community may act to remove the organisation's rights to continue operations (Deegan & Rankin, 1997).

The dialectical processes provide for collective accountability where individuals in a community become accountable to each other through a democratic dialogue (Bohman, 1996; Drysek, 2000). People reason together publicly about common

issues in a transparent dialectical process which calls everyone to contribute, explain and justify their values, views and behaviour, and everyone has responsibility towards the common good. The processes provide the possibility of 360 degree accountability (Behn, 2002) to become operational. Under the notion of 360 degree accountability, choices in relation to accountability (Francis, 1991) become more defined. The community needs to make choices in relation to the subject matter of accountability (what the community is seeking accountability for), accountability relationships (who are the parties involved in the various dimensions of accountability), and the timing of accountability (when are the different dimensions of accountability to take place). Community outcomes stated broadly in sustainability terms (economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being) need further deliberation in the community to rank these priorities (Lawrence & Arunachalam, 2006). The processes indicate: the intention to make all parties accountable for the impacts of their activities on community priorities; the intention to develop an active and critically aware community; and the desire to create open and transparent democratic discussion. In Tam's view (1998), the processes can stimulate a sense of mutual responsibility which requires individuals in a community to take responsibility for protecting the common good. The overall implication is that the communal processes resemble the dialectical dimension of accountability.

6.8.5 Mechanisms for Monitoring Community Priorities

Weber (2003) defines accountability as a set of mechanisms designed to control behaviour, ensure promises are kept, duties are performed, and compliance is forthcoming. Local Government legislations in New Zealand provide mechanisms such as the LTCCP and annual plan to control and streamline activities in local districts with community priorities. The mechanisms serve as a means for a communitarian approach to accountability for community priorities. Mitchell and Slater (2003) regard the LTCCP as the key accountability and planning document for local authority activity. The LTCCP provides a long-term focus for the decisions and activities of local authorities and emphasise the sustainability and well-being of local communities (Thornley, 2007). It can be considered as the basis for the accountability of a local authority to its community.

Under Section 93 of LGA 2002, every local authority is required to have a LTCCP at all times that covers a period of not less than 10 consecutive financial years but may be amended from time to time in accordance with the special consultative procedure. The LTCCP states what measures will be used to assess progress towards the achievement of community priorities (Schedule 10 Part 1 (1) (f)); and how the local authority will monitor and, not less than once in every 3 years, report on the community's progress towards achieving community outcomes (Schedule 10 Part 1 (1) (g)). The LTCCP contains information on how the activities of the local authority contribute to community outcomes (Schedule 10 Part 1 (2) (1) (b)), and outline any significant negative effects that any activity has on the social, economic, environmental, or cultural well-being of the local community (Schedule 10 Part 1 (1) (c)). Matters related to the Maori community are also addressed in the LTCCP. Under Schedule 10 part 1 Subsection 5, a LTCCP must set out any steps that the local authority intends to take to foster the development of Maori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority.

6.8.6 Reporting and Information Sharing to Community

Under Local Government legislations, environmental and social reporting is extended to the provision of information to communities. The LGA emphasises the provision of information on the sustainable development of communities, that is, the environmental, social, economic and cultural well-being of communities, while the RMA emphasises environmental sustainability and reporting on the environmental impact assessment of activities. The primary purpose of providing information is to enable communities to deliberate on issues of common concern and participate in Local Government planning and decision making.

The LGA 2002 sets out the processes for information sharing and reporting to local communities. Firstly, relevant information is to be provided when a local authority undertakes consultation in relation to any decision that affects the community (section 82 (1) (a)). In relation to this, a local authority is also required to provide information on the decisions and the reasons for those decisions (section 82 (1) (f)). Secondly, information is to be provided to the public when a local authority uses a special consultative procedure in relation to: adoption of a LTCCP (section 84);

adoption of an annual plan (section 85); adoption, review or amendment of bylaws (section 86); and adoption of a policy proposal (section 87). Primary areas of emphasis are: information on community priorities; processes used to identify and pursue community outcomes; the impact of a proposal on the present and future well-being of communities; and the impact of a proposal on the culture and traditions of the indigenous community. Thirdly, in relation to the special consultative procedures, the local authority is also required to give public notice that a consultation is being undertaken, invite written submissions on the proposal, and receive and make available all written submissions to the public (section 83). Fourthly, a local authority is required to monitor and, at least once every three years, report on the progress made by the community of its district or region in achieving the community priorities (Section 92 (1)). In relation to the procedures for monitoring and reporting, a local authority is required to secure the agreement of the local community (section 92 (2)). This implies that achievement of and accountability for community outcomes are not merely the responsibility of local authorities but are the joint responsibility of the whole community, reflecting the concept of 360 degree responsibility envisaged by Behn (2000).

Finally, a local authority is required to prepare and make publicly available an annual report for each financial year (section 98 (1)). The purposes of the annual report are: to compare the actual activities and the actual performance of the local authority in the year with the intended activities and the intended level of performance as set out in respect of the year in the long-term council community plan and the annual plan (Section 98 (2) (a)); to promote the local authority's accountability to the community for the decisions made throughout the year by the local authority (Section 98 (2) (b)). Information to be reported in the annual reports includes, among others: the activities of the local authority and the community outcomes to which the activities primarily contribute (Schedule 10 Part 3 (15) (a & b)); the results of any measurement undertaken towards the achievement of the community priorities (Schedule 10 Part 3 (15) (c)); and the effects of any activity on the social, economic, environmental or cultural well-being of the community (Schedule 10 Part 3 (15) (d)).

Under the RMA 1991, provision of information to communities is mainly in relation to: formulating district and regional plans and policies (sections 59 – 77); review and amendments of district and regional plans and policies (sections 78 – 79); administration of resource consents (sections 87 – 95); and, administration of submissions on resource consents and proposals for district and regional plans and policies (sections 96 – 98). These processes aim to monitor the state of the natural environment (sections 35) and to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources (section 5). The overarching principles behind the provision of information are found in section 35. Under section 35, every local authority is required to gather information, undertake research and make available information which is relevant to the administration of policy statements and plans, the monitoring of resource consents, and current issues relating to the environment of the area. This enables the public to be better informed of their duties and of the functions, powers and duties of the local authority, and to participate effectively under this Act. Environmental Impact Assessment (Europa, 2004) provides primary information required under the RMA. Local authorities, when preparing policy statements and plans, must state the anticipated environmental results.

The First Schedule of the RMA 1991 provides, among other matters, guidelines for the provision of information to communities in relation to making and reviewing plans and policies and the related submission processes. In particular, a local authority is required to make publicly available: information on a proposed policy or plan (First Schedule Part 1 section 5); information regarding submissions received on the proposed policy or plan (First Schedule Part 1 Section 6); information on the hearing of the submissions (First Schedule Part 1 Section 8); and decisions that were made in relation to the submissions (First Schedule Part 1 Section 11). The Second Schedule of the RMA supplements the First Schedule and provides details on matters that may be provided in proposed policy statements and plans. The main emphasis of the reports is on: the use, development or protection of any natural and physical resources (Second Schedule Part 1 (1); the use, development or protection of coastal marine areas (Second Schedule Part 1 (2); and the effects of any use, development, or protection of physical and natural uses and coastal marine areas on the community [Second Schedule Part 1 (4)].

Another type of information required to be reported to communities under the RMA 1991 is information on applications for resource consents. Resource consent means consent to do something that otherwise would contravene restrictions imposed by the RMA on the use of land, subdivision of land, the use of beds of lakes and rivers, the use of water, and the discharge of contaminants into the environment (section 87). The primary emphasis is on information related to environmental impact assessment. Every application for resource consent must provide an assessment of environmental effects (section 88). Matters to be included in the environmental impact assessment report are outlined in the Fourth Schedule of the RMA. A local authority has a responsibility to publicly notify the information provided in the application for resource consent, including the environmental impact assessment (section 93). The provision of such information allows the community to make submissions on any applications for resource consents (section 96).

The LGA and RMA together form the legislative framework for reporting to communities. Although the dissemination of information is mainly facilitated by local authorities, the community as a whole is involved in providing information through the various submission and hearings processes and through any application for resource consents. Through the collaboration between local authorities and the community, environmental and social reporting acquires a new dimension. It is a holistic and democratic process where anyone can provide information and create awareness in the community. The scope of reporting and information sharing envisaged in the legislations is beyond the scope covered in contemporary corporate social reporting (CSR) practices. Under such practices, corporations hold the privileged position of reporting entities (Lehman, 1999) and they manage reporting practices to suit their profit motives (Amaeshi & Adi, 2006). The Local Government legislations provide a communitarian correction to environmental and social accounting, suggested by (Lehman, 1999), by including the community in the accountability process.

6.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have included the New Zealand local governance context in the hermeneutical circle of understanding. With this inclusion, and up to this stage of

interpretation, the hermeneutical circle of understanding has drawn from three horizons which include: the theoretical framework of Chapter 4; global discourse in Chapter 5; and the New Zealand local governance context. The fusion of these horizons has provided additional insights into the communitarian approach to accountability.

The evolution of communitarian and sustainability ideologies has been influenced by economic, social and political factors (including the global discourse on sustainability) that have historical roots in the emergence of local governance. Understanding these factors is important for the theorisation of a communitarian approach to accountability within a New Zealand context. In particular, the global discourse on sustainable development has had significant influence on the Local Government reforms in New Zealand. Principles of international declarations and consensus have been taken into consideration in the enactment and amendments to legislations such as the RMA and LGA. The global discourse has influenced how sustainability and sustainable development have been defined in New Zealand. The importance of the sustainable development ideology in New Zealand is that the common good is continuing to be defined in terms of sustainable development at national and grass roots community levels (Local Government New Zealand 1999; Grundy, 1993; Wilson, et al., 2000). A 1999 survey conducted by Local Government New Zealand²⁷ found that many local authorities in New Zealand were beginning to use the term sustainable development in their strategic plans and had identified sustainable issues they were facing (Local Government New Zealand, 1999). Some of the local authorities referred to their strategic plans as Local Agenda 21²⁸ or referred to Agenda 21 recommendations in their strategic plans.

²⁷ Local Government New Zealand is an organisation that represents the national interests of councils of New Zealand and provides policy, advice and training to councils (Local Government New Zealand, 2008)

²⁸ According to PCE (2002) a Local Agenda 21 is a strategic plan of a local authority based on the recommendations of Agenda 21. It is a community strategy which includes a long-term vision statement, a prioritised action plan, implementation mechanisms, and monitoring and reporting through the use of indicators. The implementation of Local Agenda 21 involves collaboration between

In response to the underlying factors, central and Local Government authorities in New Zealand have been introducing and implementing Local Government reforms to empower community participation in local governance. A primary feature of the Local Government reforms is the introduction of processes for collaboration between local authorities and local communities in planning and policy making. The primary aim is to promote community priorities and enhance the capacity of local communities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. The reforms have been embodied in an institutional framework for a communitarian approach to local governance and sustainability. The institutional framework comprises of Local Government legislations such as the RMA 1991 and the LGA 2002 and is premised on the sustainability discourse (in particular the global discourse on sustainable development) and communitarian ideology.

The institutional framework suggests that sustainability philosophy is intrinsic to a communitarian approach to local governance in New Zealand. The three ideologies – communitarianism, local governance and sustainability – are principal themes in the LGA 2002. The interrelatedness of these ideologies becomes clearly evident in the LGA 2002 as in the global discourse. The LGA 2002 reflects a synthesis of these ideologies, in that the democratic participation and collaboration between communities and their local authorities aim to promote community priorities, stated pervasively in the Act in terms of sustainable development, that is, environmental, economic, social, and cultural well-being of the community while the primary emphasis in the RMA 1991 is environmental sustainability. The LGA 2002 promotes community participation in local governance for the purpose of enhancing the community priorities. The emphasis in the legislations is in accordance with the recommendations of Agenda 21 for collaboration between local communities and local authorities for the development Local Agenda 21 (Wilson et al., 2000) to fit the unique characteristics of the local community (Knight, 2000 & Hughes, 2000). According to Lynch (2002), “It is axiomatic that the community has a key role in

local authorities, local community groups and the business sector. The purpose is to manage the local environment, and social and economic conditions.

achieving the social, environmental and economic goals and objectives set down in any local authority strategic plan” (p.258).

This chapter suggests that a communitarian approach to accountability is manifested within the context of local governance in New Zealand and embedded in the institutional framework. Local Government legislations build on the dimensions of a communitarian approach to accountability including: mutual and joint accountability for the common good; the dialectical dimension of accountability; reporting and information sharing in the community; and enforcing control mechanism to safeguard community priorities. The conceptualisation of CAACG can be advanced to another level by extending the hermeneutical circle of understanding to a particular local district community in New Zealand. The following chapters (Chapters 7 to 9) discuss how CAACG acquires meaning within the context of the participation of the Taupo Community in local governance of the district. In particular, the emphasis of the hermeneutical interpretation undertaken in the following chapters is on collaboration between local authorities and the Taupo community in planning and policy making to overcome the pollution of Lake Taupo and for the sustainable development of the Taupo district. For the interpretation, I draw on my understanding that I have developed in this chapter and pre-understandings from previous chapters.

CHAPTER 7

THE CASE STUDY FOCUS: THE TAUPO DISTRICT, ITS COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter suggests that communitarian, sustainability and accountability themes are manifested within a New Zealand institutional framework. The institutional framework outlines the basis for a communitarian approach to accountability within a New Zealand local governance context. However, the institutional framework is mainly prescriptive in nature and provides a normative understanding of the communitarian approach. In this chapter I have extended the hermeneutic analysis to the Taupo district and its community²⁹ in order to obtain more insights on the communitarian model. The primary objective of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Taupo district, its communities of interests, and environmental and social issues confronting the community. The chapter provides an interpretation of the issues, and highlights the conflict of interests and prejudices in the community and how dimensions of accountability are manifested in the community.

7.2 THE TAUPO DISTRICT

The Taupo district, located in the centre of the North Island New Zealand (Figure 7.1), is one of the ten districts that make up the Waikato Region (APR Consultants, 2002). According to a 2006 census, there was an estimated population of 32,418 people in the Taupo District (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). The district is comprised of four wards with Lake Taupo situated in the centre of the district, as shown in Figure 7.2. Settlement within the district is mainly concentrated in the principal towns of Taupo, Turangi and Mangakino. A number of smaller lakeshore

²⁹ Defined in terms of community of interests.

or rural settlements have evolved from either Maori settlements, recreational use of the Lake or hydro-electric power schemes (Taupo District Council, 2007). The district's natural resources consist of Lake Taupo, indigenous vegetation, the habitat of indigenous species, and geothermal resources which, together, form the varied scenic landscape with economic and recreational opportunities. Livelihood in the Taupo district is directly dependent on the natural resources which contribute to economic activities of farming, fishing, forestry and tourism.

The district has a total area of some 697,000 hectares of which 61,600 or 8.82% of the total area is covered by Lake Taupo (APR Consultants, 2002). About 635,400 hectares of the land area of the District is used mainly for farming, plantation forests and conservation purposes. Residential and other commercial/ industrial developments account for only a small portion of the total land use in the area. Plantation forestry takes place extensively around the eastern part of the district and continues to support a milling industry. Farming occupies 187,861 hectares or 29.6% of the total land area. The bulk (95%) of the farm land, about 178,193 hectares, is used to raise cattle and sheep. Table 7-1 below provides some statistics of land use in the Taupo district.

Table 7-1: Land Use in Taupo District

| Type of Land Use | Area (Hectares) | Percentage |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|
| Farming | 187,861 | 26.95 % |
| Plantation Forests | 198,509 | 28.48 % |
| Conservation Land administered by DOC | 150,000 | 21.5 2% |
| Designated for Residential Land Use | 1,720 | 0.27 % |
| Designated for Commercial / Industrial Use | 548 | 0.08 % |
| Other uses | 96,762 | 13.88 % |
| Lake Taupo | <u>61,600</u> | <u>8.82 %</u> |
| Total | <u>697,000</u> | <u>100 %</u> |

Source: APR Consultants (2002)

A distinguishing feature of the Taupo district is Lake Taupo, a national icon covering an area of 616 Km² (Taupo District Council, 2007). Prior to the 1950s, a large part of

the catchment of Lake Taupo was mostly undeveloped (Environment Waikato, 1998). The remedy for bush sickness³⁰ opened up land in the catchments of Lake Taupo for sheep and beef cattle farming, leading to an increase in dairy farming in recent years (Taupo District Council, 2007). In the early 1950s, farming was introduced in the catchment (Ward, 1956). From 1970 onwards, increasing areas of land were developed under major development schemes and by 2002 an area of 524 Km² was in pasture, representing about 19% of the catchment area (Vant & Smith, 2004).

The district is governed by the Taupo District Council, with the vast majority of the district falling within the jurisdiction of Environment Waikato. Environment Waikato is a regional council that manages land, water, soil, air, coastal and geothermal resources in the Waikato region of North Island of New Zealand. Together, the Taupo District Council and Environment Waikato form the local authority to carry out the duties of a Local Government in relation to the Taupo district. Their joint purpose being:

...to enable democratic local decision making and action by, and on behalf of communities; and to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future (Local Government Act 2002; section 10)

7.3 THE COMMON GOOD: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAKE TAUPO

Lake Taupo is a common good in the Taupo district with a diversity of interests and values attached to the Lake. The Lake is the largest fresh water lake in New Zealand, and was formed in the crater of a volcanic caldera (Taupo District Council, 2007). It is valued as a national icon and a national treasure in New Zealand. The Lake and its surrounding vegetation and habitat for indigenous species form a varied scenic landscape. The local economy of the Taupo district is inextricably tied to Lake Taupo. The two main rivers connecting to the Lake, the Waikato River and the

³⁰ Bush sickness refers to cobalt mineral deficiency in the volcanic soils around Lake Taupo (Taupo District Council, 2007a; Waitangi Tribunal, 2009)

Figure 7-1: Location of Taupo District and Lake Taupo



Source: <http://www.backpack-newzealand.com/mapofnewzealand.html>

Figure 7-2: Taupo District Ward Boundaries



Source APR Consultant (2002)

Tongariro River, contribute to the natural value, recreational, tourism and economic aspects of the Taupo district (Taupo District Council, 2007). Lake Taupo is the source of the Waikato River and the main source of water supply for the greater Waikato Region (APR Consultants, 2002). The Lake is an integral part of major power generating schemes. Hydro-power operations along the Waikato and Tongariro Rivers contribute to the development of the District.

Generally, amenity values are associated with Lake Taupo (Taupo District Council, 2007a). The RMA defines amenity values as “natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes” (Resource Management Act 1991, part 1 section 2). Amenity values are subjective to each individual in that they may be influenced by particular circumstances and traits and, therefore, consultation is required to find out values that are important to a community (Taupo District Council, 2007). The amenity values associated with Lake Taupo are recreation, natural cultural and historic values (Taupo District Council, 2007).

According to Taupo District Council (2007):

The combined resources of the recreational and scenic appeal of the lakes, rivers, unique thermal areas, proximity to the ski fields and tramping grounds of the Tongariro National park and improved road and air links, account for the strong economic basis in tourism as a major contributor to the local economy. Nearly 700,000 people visit the District each year, including 128,000 international visitors. This strong emphasis is reflected in the relatively large numbers of motels and holiday accommodation within the District and the vast selection of both passive and active recreational pursuits and business operations (p.1).

Several commercial activities in the Taupo district depend on clean and clear water in Lake Taupo. The Lake provides for trout fishing and a wide range of other active and passive recreational activities (Taupo District Council, 2007). Tourism is a major industry in the district (APR Consultants, 2002) and the Lake is the primary attraction for the development of hotels, motels, restaurants, shops which cater for tourists and local residents of the Taupo district. Overnight visitors come to the district for recreational activities such as swimming, boating and fishing. The tourist

industry is important for continuous economic development that provides long-term employment and business opportunities for the district (APR Consultant, 2002).

The Maori community, Ngati Tuwharetoa, of the Taupo District claim custodial and customary rights over Lake Taupo and the surrounding catchments (Environment Waikato, 2004b; Environment Waikato, 2008; Joint Management Agreement, 2008; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia, 1992; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003). According to the 1992 Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia Agreement between the Central Government and the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Ngati Tuwharetoa are the legal owners of the bed of Lake Taupo (Carter, 2007; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia Agreement, 1992 as cited in Hamilton & Wilkins, 2004). The Crown signed a new deed on 19 September 2007 with the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board which vested the bed of Lake Taupo with the Board while guaranteeing public access (Carter, 2007). The Ngati Tuwharetoa own approximately 54% of the pastoral land within the Lake Taupo Catchment. The Ngati Tuwharetoa as guardians of Lake Taupo have a duty to ensure that the “the spiritual health of the environment is protected and maintained” (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003, p.10). The Maori community also believes that it has the responsibility to protect the mauri³¹ of Lake Taupo.

Claims over lands, waterways, lakes, fisheries and natural resources in other regions of New Zealand are also made by Maori communities throughout New Zealand. However, there is much confusion over the interpretation of these rights and what they mean in practice (Quentin-Baxter, 1998a). The main problem is that there are differences in interpretations between the Maori community and the New Zealand Government. To the Maori community these rights arise from the Maori version of the Treaty of Waitangi and provide recognition of Maori ancient occupation of the lands in New Zealand and Maori stewardship, custodianship and sovereignty over the land, lakes, waterways, rivers, foreshore, fisheries and natural resources (Solomon, 1998). For the Ngati Tuwharetoa custodial right also give them the right

³¹ Mauri is an energy which binds and animates all things in the physical world. Without mauri, energy cannot flow into a person or object (The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2007; Maori Dictionary).

to ensure the use and management of Lake Taupo, surrounding catchments and natural resources in that area as is consistent with their customs and the Treaty of Waitangi (Joint Management Agreement, 2008; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia, 1992; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003). This also means active participation of the Maori community in resource management and decision making processes so that consideration is given to the physical and spiritual relationship between Maori and their ancestral lands, water and sacred places. Customary right gives Maori the right to exercise their customs, life principles (mauri) and culture.

The RMA 1991 (Section 7) requires that special considerations be given to the guardianship rights of the Maori community when managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources. The local authorities have a duty under section 8 of the RMA 1991 to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in resource management issues. It has generally been acknowledged that there are different understandings of resource management issues between the Maori community and the local authorities and therefore consultation and collaboration between the parties will provide a basis for achieving understanding (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003).

Environment Waikato is concerned about its resource management responsibility to protect the water quality of Lake Taupo. An official from the regional council expresses this concern:

In Environment Waikato's current Regional Plan, Lake Taupo is listed as an outstanding water body that we need to protect. We published all the information that the Lake is in danger of becoming worse in terms of its water quality and this is obviously inconsistent with our regional policy and therefore we need to find solutions. We need to make a decision to control or limit the amount of nutrients going into the Lake. Indirectly, obviously, it will affect dairy farming in certain areas, intensification of land use in the catchment and it will favour forestry or other low nutrient activities. The decision will make farming uneconomical because of the restrictions on nutrient discharge from the land will be so vigorous that it is not economical and viable to farm some of those areas (Scientist, Interview, July 2003).

7.4 THE TAUPO COMMUNITY

The Taupo district is represented by numerous groups with different interests, values and concerns. The common good, Lake Taupo, provides a basis for defining the Taupo Community. In this thesis the Taupo community is defined as a community of interests in relation to Lake Taupo. The community of interests consists of several parties which have economic, environmental and social values and interests vested in Lake Taupo. Some of these groups include: various local community groups such as the LWAG, Mapara Valley Preservation Society, Acacia Bay Resident's Association, the Boating Association, the Jetski Association and the Wildfowl Association; the local Maori Tribe (iwi), known as the Ngati Tuwharetoa, supported by the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and various other Maori sub-tribal groups; the farming community, supported by Federated Farmers (Federated Farmers, 2009) and Lake Taupo Care; scientists, including research-based institutions such as NIWA and AgResearch that work for local authorities and Central Government departments; environmental lobbyists such as Fish and Game; the Chamber of Commerce (representing the interest's of owners of motels, hotels and other commercial activities in the district); Land Developer's Association; and numerous commercial entities operating in the district such as electricity generators, fertilizer companies and forestry companies. Generally, all local residents of the district are included in the community of interests. Public authorities also have vested interests in Lake Taupo by virtue of their statutory responsibilities and as landowners in the district. The public authorities include: Environment Waikato (Regional Council for the Waikato Region), Taupo District Council (TDC), and Central Government departments such as Ministry for Environment, the Department of Conservation and the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry. A key characteristic of the Taupo community is the diversity of concerns and interests that exists in the community. Some of the interests and values are in conflict as discussed in paragraph 7.6.6. In spite of these conflicting interests, concern for the common good has brought the community into dialogue.

7.5 POLLUTION OF LAKE TAUPO

There is growing concern among the local community and local authorities about the pollution of Lake Taupo, especially the threats posed by animal farming to the water

quality of the Lake (Edgar, 1999). Scientists have identified intensive animal farming in catchment areas as the main source of nitrogen flows into Lake Taupo. Ground and surface water flowing from animal farmlands in the catchment areas transfer high yields of nitrogen to downstream Lake Taupo (Vant & Hoare, 1987; Edgar, 1999; Smith et al., 1993). In the late 1990s, plans for large scale conversion to dairy farming in the Taupo catchment (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 1997) caused concern among the community regarding the potential threat to the water quality of Lake Taupo (Edgar, 1999). Pastoral agriculture in the catchment is mainly related to sheep and beef farming and over the years has shifted to intensive dairy farming (Edgar, 1999). Intensification and conversion to dairy farming (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 1997; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, n.d.a.) have increased nitrogen inflows into the Lake, causing further degradation of lake water quality (Edgar, 1999; Vant & Smith, 2004). Monitoring by Environment Waikato indicates that nitrate-nitrogen has been increasing in concentration in Lake Taupo and the current high quality of water may be degraded over time (Gibbs, 1991, 1995; 1996; 1997; 2005; 2006; 2007; & 2008). Nitrogen inflows into the Lake have increased by 50% to 300% since the 1970s (Petch et al., 2003). Farming contributed 92% of nitrogen entering the Lake, urban run-off and sewage contributed 6%, with forestry and weeds contributing the remaining 2 % (Rasmussen, 2008).

Pumice soils in the catchment areas cause high infiltration of nitrates and nitrogen leaching into ground water that bypass riparian vegetation and flow into Lake Taupo (Edgar, 1999; Environment Waikato, 2001d). According to Green and Clothier (2002), high intensity farms stock 3.6 cows per hectare, receive fertilizer at a rate of 400 kg nitrogen per hectare, exhibit high annual leaching and will pose an increased threat to the quality of groundwater. In intensively grazed grassland a major source of nitrogen leaching is the nitrogen deposited in animal excreta (Ryden et al., 1984). A study conducted by Haynes and Williams (1993) suggests that 60% – 99% of nitrogen ingested by grazing animals is excreted and returned to pasture. A large proportion of the nitrogen is excreted in the urine of the animals (Whitehead, 2000). Dairy cow urine patches may contain as high as 1000 kg nitrogen per hectare (Di & Cameron, 2002, as stated in Di & Cameron, 2003). The high nitrogen loading is susceptible to leaching into underground water and streams that flow into Lake

Taupo. Hadfield et al. (2007) estimate that nitrogen flux of 300 tonnes annually is expected to flow into Lake Taupo while 25,000 tonnes stored in the groundwater system. According to Hadfield et al. (2007):

The Lake is a sink for groundwater migrating indirectly via baseflow dominated streams and to a lesser extent by direct seepage. Land-use impacts are increasing as contaminated water progressively replaces older, higher quality groundwater.....Numerical groundwater modelling predicts nitrogen mass loading to the Lake from current land-use will continue to increase for a substantial period of time (> 100 years) (p.293).

Most of the nutrients enter the Lake through inflowing rivers and streams which drain the catchment area of the Lake (Petch et al., 2003). Water analysis undertaken by the scientists since the 1970s indicates that nitrogen concentrations have steadily increased in 11 major streams flowing into Lake Taupo (White & Downes, 1977; Schouten et al., 1981; Vant & Smith, 2004). It is estimated that the combined nitrogen load from areas of pasture in the catchments drained by the 11 streams (Appendix 11) will be 20% - 80% higher than the current load. The catchment areas drained by major streams form about 54% of the area under pasture in the Lake Taupo catchment with the remaining land (including undeveloped land and land under forestry) drained by other streams (Appendix 12). The 11 streams drained a combined area of 673 km² of which about 42% is under pasture, as shown in Table 7.2. The study indicates that nitrogen loads from previous land development will continue to increase in the future. Nitrogen concentrations are higher in streams draining areas of pasture compared to streams draining undeveloped parts of the Lake's catchment (Vant & Smith, 2004).

Vant & Smith (2004) concluded that there will be moderately large increases in the load of nitrogen from pasture areas in the future as a result of land development that has been taking place during the past 35 - 45 years. In contrast, nitrogen concentrations in streams draining areas of forestry are lower and have not changed since the 1970s (Vant & Smith, 2004).

Table 7-2: Pasture Areas Drained by Streams

| Catchment Site | Area (km²) | Percent of pasture |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mapara | 22 | 88 |
| Whangamata | 31 | 74 |
| Otaketake | 28 | 64 |
| Omoho | 20 | 50 |
| Kawakawa | 11 | 55 |
| Waihora | 60 | 52 |
| Waihaha | 155 | 13 |
| Whanganui | 65 | 34 |
| Whareroa | 59 | 73 |
| Kuratau | 194 | 39 |
| Omori | 27 | 56 |

Source: Vant, B., & Smith, P. (2004). Nutrient concentrations and water ages in 11 streams flowing into Lake Taupo,; Environment Waikato Technical Report 2002/18R.

There is a time lag between what happens on the catchment land and consequent effects on the Lake. Scientists indicate delays between activities that put contaminants into streams and the transport of the contaminants into the Lake. (Edgar, 1999; Vant & Smith, 2004). Scientists from Environment Waikato have estimated the average age of base flow underground waters ranged from less than 30 years to 80 years (Vant & Smith, 2004). The waters have been affected by pasture development over the past 35 to 45 years. According to Vant and Smith (2004):

Nitrogen levels in some pasture streams can therefore be expected to continue for some time to come as older, uncontaminated water...is progressively replaced by newer water that has been affected by past land development (p.1).

Due to the time lag, it is only in recent years that the impact of the large-scale land conversion from the 1950s has been seen in the Lake. Stevenson (2004) reports:

As a drop of water falling in Taupo's catchment can take up to 80 years to reach the lake, we have no idea how bad things are going to get before we, hopefully, begin to make a difference (The New Zealand Herald, 12 August, 2004).

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (2004) has similar concerns and comments on the seriousness of the pollution of Lake Taupo:

The lag time for nutrients to move from soils into these water bodies suggests that any problems will get worse before they eventually improve. For example, the current deterioration in Lake Taupo's water quality is due to increased nitrogen from farming up to 50 years ago. Given that farming has become much more intensive since this time, the medium-term outlook does not look good....The longer it takes to address these problems across New Zealand the more likely it is that serious degradation will result (Summary of key findings).

The increase in nitrogen concentrations has caused the water quality and clarity in the Lake to decline. EW investigations show that increasing levels of nitrogen in the Lake has been decreasing water clarity and stimulating algal growth (Edgar, 1999). Testing of water samples in March 2001 showed that a wide area of the Lake had been affected by toxic algae (Environment Waikato, 2001a). In June 2001, scientists from the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) reported that there were four exotic weeds in Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2001a): lagarosiphon, hornwort, elodea and egeria (Environment Waikato, 2001c). Although some weeds are limited to certain areas of the Lake, there is potential for these to spread to the sheltered and nutrient-enriched areas. Increasing levels of nitrogen are causing toxic algal blooms to occur more frequently (Petch et al., 2003) and slimes and weeds to grow more abundantly near lakeside settlements (Rae et al., 2000). Algae also consume oxygen in the water, making it difficult for other lake life to survive (Lewis, 2006). The deterioration of water quality and clarity is expected to affect tourism and recreational activities such as swimming and fishing.

A scientist and member of LWAG expressed his concern on the lag time:

The water quality in the Lake is going to get worse before it is going to get better because the water is ground water and it takes almost 50 years to get to the Lake so we may only be seeing the impacts of farming of the

1950s and 1960s and if there was increased stocking and increased fertilizers from 1960 onwards and it probably was then, the ground water entering the Lake will probably be bringing more nutrients (Interview, December 2005).

7.6 EMERGING ISSUES AND ACCOUNTABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Several issues have emerged in relation to the pollution of Lake Taupo. The issues include: criticisms at farming activities; calls for policy measures; responses from the farming community; impending policy measures and their impacts; conflicts of interest in the common good; pressures from the international community; conflicting approaches; and limitations of taxonomic information. These issues were widely discussed in the media (newspaper articles); and on the websites of local authorities and Central Government departments, and supported by research carried out by scientists and others who studied the causes and impacts (including environmental economic and social impacts) in relation the pollution of Lake Taupo. The interviews which I conducted in the Taupo district also confirmed some of these emerging issues. Applying my pre-understandings (discussed in previous chapters) I interpreted these emerging issues as portraying accountability for the common good. In particular, the dimensions of accountability (including reporting, dialectical, responsiveness, responsibility and controllability dimensions) can be conceptualised within the context of these emerging issues.

7.6.1 Criticisms Levied Against Famers and Animal Farming

For several years, since 2001, pastoral farming and the institutions that support it have been subject to adverse criticisms. Farmers have been portrayed as being anti-environmental and exhibiting behaviour that contributes to environmental degradation. Criticisms levied against animal farming were mainly in relation to the adverse consequences of increasing nitrogen flowing from farmland into Lake Taupo. The following extract from the New Zealand Herald (12 August, 2004) is typical:

Farming is targeted as the main source of the silt and nutrients that cloud the lake and cause weed, slime and algae to grow (Stevenson, 2004).

Animal farming in the catchments of Lake Taupo has been blamed for affecting the pristine water quality of the Lake. Hadfield et al. (2007) reports:

The near pristine quality of water in Lake Taupo has begun to deteriorate, largely as a result of farming (p.293).

A resident was concerned about the algae bloom in the Lake resulting from farming activities and depriving the community from enjoying the common good:

The public will get upset over the pollution when you start to close parts of the Lake because of the blue/green algae (Interview, January 2006).

In particular, dairy farming is portrayed as a threat to Lake Taupo. The Timaru Herald reported:

...Lake Taupo is also under threat from dairying, with water-clarity levels continuing to fall (The Timaru Herald, 28 August, 2001, p.1).

In a similar vein, the New Zealand Herald reports:

Although this may not sound like an industry out of control dairying is by far the biggest agricultural producer of nitrogen, both through chemical fertilisers and livestock effluent (New Zealand Herald, 11 June, 2001, p.1).

Forest and Bird, an environmental lobby group condemned dairy farming as a:

...substantial contributor to water contamination, generating many “bad bugs” in our water supply (The Timaru Herald, 28 August, 2001, p.2).

A study conducted by Nimmo-Bell (2002) indicated that:

Attitudes towards dairy farming in the catchment are negative and dairying is often perceived as being the cause of the problem (p.12).

Animal farming also contributes to soil pollution. A scientist who is also a member of LWAG expressed concern about the effect of animal farming on soil biology:

...the existing soil biology of many of the soils in the surrounding catchments of Lake Taupo has been killed by use of pesticide and organic fertilizers...so the soils are pretty bad (Scientist and LWAG member, Interview, December 2005).

The rights of farmers in relation to the common good have been questioned and farmers have been portrayed as depriving others in the community from enjoying the common good, as the New Zealand Herald claims:

Water is a vital resource for all members of society. Farmers have no automatic right to pollute, and they have no legal mandate to use water at the expense of others (Neeley, 2001, p.1).

Although animal farming is considered as a primary economic activity, it has been criticised as causing the environmental downfall of New Zealand as the following newspaper article indicates:

The dairy industry is under attack. Environmental groups say farmers are polluting waterways and threatening not only New Zealand's clean, green image, but their own livelihoods. The same industry which helped mould New Zealand's economy could, ironically, lead to its environmental downfall. Dairy, New Zealand's biggest industry, is also becoming its dirtiest as cows graze and pollute lowland streams and rivers with their effluent. One cow produces the sewage waste of 14 people. Multiply that by the entire New Zealand cow population and that's enough excrement for 45 million people – and huge volumes of it is going straight into our rivers and streams. The same streams where we swim, picnic and even drink. (The Timaru Herald, 28 August 2001, p.1).

Farmers have been criticised as being irresponsible and now face accountability for the consequences of their actions. A member of LWAG forcefully criticised the activities of livestock farmers:

Livestock farmers are having a free ride...they do whatever they like and to hell with the consequences...the consequences have now come back to bite them. (LWAG member, Interview December 2005).

Farmers have been portrayed as being anti-environmental and exhibiting behaviour that contributes to environmental degradation, as this newspaper (Waikato Times, 13 November, 2007) extract shows:

Behind the narrow strip of fenced-off grass, the farmers still pour urea on to the pastures and open up more drains which run polluted water straight into waterways (Pearce, 2007, p.6).

One environmental lobbyist said:

...the rural sector's reluctance to clean up its act is ultimately destined to backfire on it ...The "sacred cow" attitude toward agriculture and the environment is past its use-by date as the dairy industry's international reputation depends on it maintaining its clean, green image (The Timaru Herald, 28 August 2001, p.2).

The attitudes of farmers were condemned by another environmental lobbyist:

They seem to have this view that farmers have an undisputable right to do whatever they like on their land, and this is a huge wake-up call (The Timaru Herald, 28 August 2001, p.2).

Farmers have been brought to task and may face adverse consequences if the community decides to take action to restrict animal farming. According to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (2004):

...if the wider community thinks that the environmental damage from farming is unacceptable, farmers risk losing their 'licence to operate' in society (Summary of key messages).

Some want action to be taken against farmers:

Legislation such as the Resource Management and Conversation Act can be used to prosecute farmers dirtying waterways, but is not implemented as often as it should be (The Timaru Herald, 28 August, 2001, p2.).

Regional Councils have also come under criticism for allowing farming operations to get this far as the following report (Waikato Times, 13 November, 2007) indicated:

A farmer-dominated regional council is nothing new. The council has allowed farmers to pollute waterways for years while water quality has got steadily worse. Lake Taupo is just one example of this lack of action (Pearce, 2007, p.6).

Bryce Johnson, the national chief executive of Fish and Game, believes that:

...farmers, and particularly those in the dairy sector, are effectively getting an environmental subsidy from the rest of us. While they are required under the Resource Management Act to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects of their practices, there is little enforcement of the rule (Jamieson, 2007, p.5).

Pollution generated from animal farming is not confined only to the Taupo district but is also a serious issue for the greater Waikato region and for the nation as a whole. The Waikato Times reported:

...the country's farmers were in danger of spoiling New Zealand's water and soil. And as the biggest dairying region of the country, the Waikato has one of the biggest problems....The waste generated by the 3000 dairy herds in the Waikato River catchment is equivalent to the waste from about five million people or nearly 50 cities the size of Hamilton....90 per cent of streams in intensive farming catchments in the Waikato region had moderate to high levels of nitrogen....Nitrogen from fertilisers and cow urine is reaching and poisoning large reserves of our water (Waikato Times, 6 November, 2004, p.14).

This nationwide problem has raised the question of the farming community's responsibility. Bryce Johnson called for accountability of the farming community:

Why isn't the agricultural sector being held accountable for its adverse effects, when it's clearly known it does have adverse effects? The sector needs to take more responsibility and I think the public has every right to expect those parties to clean it up (Jamieson, 2007, p.5).

A member of a community-based group felt that the responsibility of farmers should go beyond self-interest:

...generally we talk about quite a conservative bunch of farmers, we are talking about farmers for who went on that land and they expected to continue to be able to grow livestock and so to the end of their days. They also expected to be able to sell the land and if the land was next door was already a dairy farm why shouldn't they, the new buyer be able to make it into a dairy farm. Well all those things have had to be turned on their heads, haven't they, all those thoughts. So I would have thought one of the things that has to happen is some really probably sensitive discussions, maybe even with one or two farmers at a time around a kitchen table. To talk about okay, well this is not going to be the situation, these are some of the things that we've looked at that could be alternative land use practices. You can keep your livestock on these paddocks, but on these paddocks we believe you have got a variety of different options, growing trees or growing lavender or whatever the other things are. (Interview, December 2005).

7.6.2 Calls for Policy Measures

Since 2000, local authorities have begun to explain to the general public the risks to water quality in Lake Taupo from intensive use of the surrounding land (Environment Waikato, 2000b). In response to the scientific evidence and information reported, there have been calls for urgent action and enactment of policy measures to halt pollution. Although overall tests indicated no health risks were apparent, EW emphasized the need for policy changes to prevent further degradation of the Lake (Environment Waikato, 2001e). Local Government authorities have acknowledged the importance of community consultation, before any changes can be instituted in the Taupo district (Environment Waikato, 2001e). Policy measures and changes to Local Government plans to halt the decline in the water quality in the Lake will have implications for land use, especially farming, around the Lake (Nimmo-Bell, 2002). Councillor Morris McFall called for action, saying:

There are two options, you either ignore the problem or you deal with it. I thought we had moved on so let's get on and do something about it (Sheddan, 2000, p.2)

Although the current water quality in the Lake does not pose serious health risk, calls for action aim to reduce future deterioration of the water quality. According to Brown (2003):

Lake Taupo is still considered healthy, but its water quality has started to slip and the amount of nitrogen entering the lake needs to be reduced to prevent toxic algal blooms from regularly forming in the future (p. A2)

A member of LWAG has expressed concern on the pollution:

We haven't really got the time ...we are talking about what has been happening for the last 80 years and the situation is not improving (LWAG member; Interview, December 2005)

Calls for a sustainable approach to dealing with the pollution issues have been made. According to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (2004), policy measures need to incorporate the elements of sustainability in farming operations and farming activities need to be:

Environmentally sustainable: to maintain and enhance the natural capital on which farming depends as well as other ecosystems influenced by farming.....Socially beneficial: to enhance the quality of life for people in rural communities and beyond, while addressing wider social and cultural concerns.....Economically viable: to ensure farmers have a secure and rewarding livelihood. (Summary of key messages)

To protect the water quality in Lake Taupo, calls have been made to reduce the intensity of land use in the catchment area and this includes imposing restrictions on animal farming. According to Smith et al. (1993):

...There seems to be little prospect of improving water quality conditions in either lowland lakes...without major reductions in the intensity of land use (p.378).

The Dominion Post reported on similar calls by community groups:

Local groups have called for restrictions on farming in the region and a slowdown of urban sprawl as pollution increases in the once-pristine lake

and surrounding rivers - jewels in the crown of New Zealand trout fishing (Trow, 2003, p.2).

Environmental lobbyists were among community groups calling for urgent action. One lobbyist group, Fish and Game, labelled the situation as serious and called for:

...drastic action from the industry, farmers and regional councils (The Timaru Herald, August 28, 2001, p.1).

A similar concern and call for action was expressed by Ecological Foundation representative Guy Salmon:

...the need to take action was urgent as the lake's distinctive clarity would be lost in less than a decade. Action must get started quickly without waiting for final proof of the cause and effect (Environment Waikato, 2000c).

7.6.3 Response of the Farming Community

Generally, animal farmers in the Taupo District were dejected over the criticisms levied against them. Calls for policy measures to restrict animal farming and the uncertainty of continuing farming operations in the district have caused anxiety among the farming community as the following extracts from the media indicated:

Farmers, particularly dairy farmers, are coming under pressure over the impact of their activities on water resources (Neeley, 2001, p.1)

Farmers felt they were being "picked on" while increasing urban development was ignored....Farmers felt they were a small targeted group, which would be walked over by sheer numbers when decisions were being made because they were outnumbered. They were particularly vocal because they were to dig deepest into their pockets and, while others may face increased costs, they did not face losing equity (Environment Waikato, 2000a).

One farmer explained how the image of the farming community has been tarnished over the pollution issue:

Farmers have been demonised....they were hard struggling farmers, they were the cream of farming...suddenly they have become the number one enemy of the world (Farmer, Interview, December 2005).

The farming community, through its association, rejected the criticisms and defended its activities. The Waikato times reported:

Waikato Federated Farmers president John Fisher is rejecting the criticism and says the results of improved farming practices over recent years are yet to filter through (O' Rourke, 2004)

There is a tendency for the Taupo community to be alarmed by the seriousness of pollution of Lake Rotoiti, a dead lake in the neighbouring district of Rotorua. The Taupo community is concerned that a similar deterioration may occur in Lake Taupo if policy measures are not put in place. However one farmer considered the concerns had been blown out of proportion and viewed the criticisms levied against the farmers as a very stressful situation for the farming community:

...a huge stressful situation and it is the way it was presented that farmers were a whole bunch of polluters and we're doing something terribly bad, although all we were doing was farming just as we've farmed all along. It is basically the situation in Taupo where good farming methods are probably not good enough. That's what it boils down to, the standards, because the Lake is so sensitive, I mean what annoys me is we do get lumped with the Rotorua lakes, and you are dealing with a totally different situation in those lakes compared with Taupo. In Lake Taupo the water quality is still high (Farmer; Interview, January 2006).

Farmers have also responded to the criticisms levied against their operations by calling for accountability by other sources of pollution especially sewage flows from urban areas. Sally Millar, representing the Federated Farmers, expressed the farmers' concern through the media:

EW's primary focus had been on regulatory control of pastoral farmers, while other contributors to nitrogen pollution had been ignored. They've discounted input from the Tongariro power scheme – there's a lot of nitrogen coming in from there. Lifestyle block owners and forestry had been left out of the equation. If they're going to capture nitrogen they should capture every little bit they can (Bell, 2005, p.13).

Farmers feel that they have been targeted and local authorities have ignored other sources of pollution. Increasing emphasis on animal farming as the main cause of pollution and lack of emphasis on other causes of pollution have made farmers feel that they are being victimised. A farmer stated:

It has been all along we are bad guys, we are an easy target. The only reason why we ever want to farm is so we can be polluters, that type of thing, you know, which is rubbish... realistically farming is one of the few manageable sources of pollution...other sources of pollution like nitrogen from sewage tanks and urban waste water flows are not taken seriously. (Interview, January 2006).

Another farmer was discontented with the bias shown by local authorities in treating the different causes of pollution:

...they are coming across from a position of almost saying that the only reason they've planted forestry round the Lake is to protect the Lake, which is, they have done it for economic reasons at the time. In the majority of instances, some instances they have to say don't come across to me as being holier than holy but they're the best thing that's ever happened to the environment, get real, yea. So there's that approach and I mean that annoys me rather than, cause that's not realistic (Farmer, Interview, January 2006).

A farmer pointed out that sewage flows from urban areas have caused serious damage to the Lake:

Acacia beaches and Acacia Bay are closed for swimming which is basically related to faecal contamination from urban sewage flows. That is far more serious (Farmer; Interview, January 2006).

One farmer commented that there was bias in the community's views regarding the seriousness of the different causes of pollution. According to the farmer, trout also contribute to pollution of the Lake and disturbance of ecological life in the Lake:

...trout fishing was identified as one of the important things...we have evidence that trout are very detrimental to the Lake ...now you don't talk about that because it is such a high profile thing ...motherhood neighbour pie thing...it is publicly popular...it is beyond criticism ...nobody criticises it ...the basics of it are in the Lake there is evidence to show

from early missionary sayings that white bait and fresh water mussels fed the Maori populationThere were heaps of them ...where are they now?The fresh water mussels relied on a native New Zealand fish to spread the mussels around the LakeThere were parasites under the fish and the fish spread the mussels around....The trout interfered with the lifestyle of the fish and therefore interfered with the musselsThe mussels have a cleaning effect on the Lake...increases visibility by a couple of meters...nobody talks about the impact of trout on the mussels....They introduced smelt ...there has been a major modification of the Lake Taupo underwater ecology and nobody talks about it....What effect does it have on the Lake being clean? (Farmer, Interview December 2005).

Rapid urban development is also a major concern in the community. A member of LWAG had similar concerns on the effect of urbanisation on the water quality of Lake Taupo:

With urban development that is taking place in the district, it is going to take Taupo District Council 10 years to bring the community sewerage system up to a standard proposed by regional plans and in that 10 years they are looking at something like 20-30% growth in urban development. Their schemes are not up to date now and unless they build in extra capacity they are going to lag behind in 10 years' time....Urban nitrogen flow into Lake Taupo is high if you don't treat sewage properly and if you don't treat wastewater to sufficient standards....doubling of the population and industrial areas has increased nitrogen and other wastewater flows into the Lake (LWAG member, Interview, December 2005).

The media have also pointed to urban housing development as a source of pollution of Lake Taupo:

...housing, with its sewage waste and storm water, is also a big contributor (Stevenson, 2004).

The Dominion Post has pointed to tourist activity as a source of pollution of Lake Taupo:

The main culprit was nitrogen from cow manure and fertiliser spread on surrounding farms seeping into the Lake, but tourist activity on the Lake

and untreated waste from surrounding settlements had also been blamed (Trow, 2003).

A local resident pointed to hydro-electric operations in the Lake as a source of pollution:

There is electricity development using the Lake...a hydro resource has irrevocably altered parameters of its environment. The management of the Lake to satisfy this industrial use further impacts on environmental outcomes. Ironically, as important as the Lake is to NZs electricity supply, water quality, beyond grit and /or sediment load and weed debris at dam intakes is of little consequence to this industry (Interview, January 2006).

A representative of a community-based group expressed concerned about the lack of urgency in treating the pollution problem:

Our concern is the deteriorating water quality in the Lake ...rampant development taking place around the Lake can be as polluting as farming and we are taking a long time to agonise about the problem and set the rules and regulation (Interview, December 2005)

7.6.4 Limitation of Taxonomic Information: Validity of Scientific Evidence Questioned

Farmers have raised doubts on the accuracy of scientific evidence that animal farming is the major cause of nitrogen accumulation in Lake Taupo. At a policy committee meeting of Environment Waikato in November 2000, Taupo farmers requested more scientific proof that farming was the major contributor of deteriorating water quality in Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2000c). Of concern to the farmers is the inconclusiveness of scientific findings. John Fisher (The president of Waikato Federated Farmers) expressed his concerns on the findings produced by EW scientists:

...the figures were not conclusive and there were mixed messages being given by the report. More monitoring should happen before knee-jerking actions were made (Waikato Times, April 19, 2004, p.2).

One farmer expressed discontent with the scientific evidence produced by Environment Waikato as being biased and restricting animal farming may deprive the farming community of their livelihood. The farmer commented:

I don't think they've done enough calculations into the impact of farming on the Lake...farming is just targeted as it is the only manageable source...making things work is asking for something reasonable. If you ask for too much you get nothing...you won't give them all your food and starve your whole family (Farmer, Interview, January 2006).

Keith Holmes, a former New Zealand Dairy Board director, argued that:

We still don't know exactly how much nitrogen it takes to grow grass and there's a whole raft of other things we need to get our head around and take ownership of (Taylor, 2005b, p. 15).

According to one resident, more research is required to obtain more comprehensive knowledge of the Lake:

Any research and knowledge obtained is an advance on what is known now but there is almost certainly going to be additional areas of research needed if a complete picture of the Lake and its environment is to be obtained (Interview, January 2006).

Scientific techniques used in measuring nitrogen output from pastoral land in the catchment are also a concern to the farming community. The Waikato Times reported:

Farmers in the catchment are concerned that the overseer computer model which is to be used to measure existing levels is not accurate enough, particularly as their livelihoods are at stake. Taupo Lake Care chairman Graham Law last week raised the prospect of farmers being put out of business "over the margin of error". Lack of detailed scientific backing could lead to legal challenges... (Taylor, 2005b, p.15).

Another concerned member of the community asserted that some issues arose over the scientific model for measuring nitrogen output:

The overseer predicts for a given farm management situation what the nitrogen loading is per hectare but doesn't take into account any landscape modifications such as riparian planting or wetlands which modify the nitrogen loading. Also it doesn't predict where the groundwater is going to go (Taylor, 2005b, p.15).

Regarding the impacts of reducing animal farming in the catchment areas, Williamson and Hoare (1987) point out that it is not yet possible to provide precise predictions of the benefits to water quality from changing agricultural land practices. A similar concern was raised by Edgar (1999) about "the uncertainty associated with quantifying predicted improvements in water quality based on removing point source nutrient loadings to a large lake" (p. 380). Edgar (1999) therefore suggested "a more precautionary approach to setting predicted water quality goals for lake management" (p. 380).

Federated Farmers has asked for more research into the measurement and behaviour of nitrogen in New Zealand pastoral farming (Taylor, 2005b). Farmers want more research to prove that farming is the major contributor to deteriorating water quality in Lake Taupo. However, environmentalists want urgent action without waiting for further research (Environment Waikato, 2000c). Farmers want more research to be carried out to find ways to make farming viable as well as environmentally friendly, and were discontented with the lack of funds devoted to such research activities. An environmental consultant representing the Waikato Federated Farmers pointed out the concerns of the farmers regarding EW's approach:

While the council had set aside more than \$67 million for the purchase, conversion, retirement and resale of land, only \$2 million had been allocated for research and development. They're not looking at research and development, for other ways for farming to continue to be economically viable and environmentally sustainable. If they gave \$20 million to Dexel they might be able to find other ways of stopping nitrogen entering the lake. (Bell, 2005, p.13).

Research is still being carried out to investigate nitrogen contribution from weeds in Lake Taupo. A scientist reported:

Everyone is aware of the negative impact that farming and animal run-off is having on some waterways. However, little research has been

undertaken to investigate the nitrogen contribution from leguminous weeds such as broom.....It is well known that broom fixes nitrogen. But at this stage we are not sure how much nitrogen can be accumulated in plants and how much it releases through litter fall and decomposition (Waikato Times, 17 April 2006, p.5).

One resident pointed out the complexity of issues involved and that need to be taken into consideration in addressing the pollution of Lake Taupo:

The Lake is a complex living body of water. Possibly the most significant factor contributing to its health is its own wind-driven circulatory system which promotes, among other things, water turnover essential to the distribution of oxygen through all water levels. Without understanding how, when and why this circulation occurs, the assumption that to ensure the clarity of the Lake is maintained all that needs to be done is to reduce nitrogen (N) input from 1700 tonnes a year to 1500 tonnes a year or whatever number of tonnes involved is the guestimate for the day, is almost certainly an oversimplification. That N input needs to be reduced, based on what is known at this point of time, there is no doubt: but there are other plant nutrients being accumulated in the Lake that could be also important if the growth of a range of water-living flora is to be contained (Interview January 2006)

Another resident expressed lack of confidence in information on Lake Taupo that had been reported by local authorities:

...the fact is the Lake is both large and complex and knowledge of the Lake is far from complete. Certainly the information or opinions we have been exposed to do not generate, at least for me, any feeling of confidence in any management policy that might evolve in the short term.... Examining the information provided by Environment Waikato and other sources is important. Do we ask the question, “ Has this information, these conclusions, been subject to peer review?” Without peer review are we being regaled by fact or opinion? (Interview, July 2003).

7.6.5 Economic Impacts of Impending Policy Measures

Impending policy measures were worrying the farming community. In particular, the farming community has been concerned about EW's plan to introduce policies to reduce nitrogen flows into Lake Taupo. Generally, farmers are concerned about

impending policy measures to restrict animal farming. A farmer expressed his main concern as:

...introduction of fair policy, sensible policy, sensible administration of the pollution. The last thing you want is a confrontational situation with local authorities (Interview, January 2006).

If EW pursued policy changes to restrict land activities there would be far-reaching and on-going consequences for farmers. There was concern among the farming community that farmland values may drop significantly in anticipation of forthcoming restrictions on farming activities. The farming community felt that EW should present data about nitrogen loading from all activities. However ecologists have wanted urgent action to be taken to tackle the water quality issue instead of waiting for more research results (Environment Waikato, 2000c). An economic impact study carried out by EW showed that any policy change to restrict land use would drastically affect small farms while larger ones would continue to operate with reduced profits (Environment Waikato, 2001f). The apprehension over the impacts of policy changes has placed great stress on the Taupo community, especially over the farmers.

EW's plan to protect the Lake by capping³² nitrogen leaching from farms received criticisms:

The plan will make it virtually impossible to intensify or expand a farming operation....They converted to dairying a decade ago in a bid to gain financial security. It would set them up for life. Now that is all in

³² Nitrogen capping means putting a limit on existing nitrogen outputs from individual properties. The implication is farmers would not be able to increase stock numbers or change what sort of animals they farmed if changes resulted in more nitrogen being produced (Jo-Marie Brown, New Zealand Herald March 26, 2008). The cap is expected to limit the nitrogen inflow at current levels from all sources, and reduce the manageable nitrogen by 20% (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, n.d.). A nitrogen cap effectively gives landowners the right to continue with their current nitrogen outputs (Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy, 2003).

doubt. They love the area but they're not certain they will be able to afford to stay (Taylor, 2005a, p.7).

Generally, farmers in the Taupo district express concern about the effect of policy measures on the viability of farms and being forced to discontinue farming operations in the district. A farmer stated that:

Our main aim has always been to maintain long term viability of our farms... ..damned nuisance if you are actually like living here and you end up forced to pack up, to move somewhere else, because of the pressures (Interview, January 2006).

According to Petch et al. (2003), the economic impact of restricting nitrogen emissions:

...will fall heavily on rural land owners, many of whom lack the resources or desire to fund a change to low nitrogen emitting land uses (e.g. forestry). For many, farming is their lifestyle and livelihood and has been so for decades (p.52).

Nimmo-Bell (2002) estimated a loss of NZ\$175 million to landowners in the Taupo District if there was a policy to reduce nitrogen inflow into Lake Taupo by 20%. This loss was related to value lost to land owners through reduced income. The following detailed estimates shown in Table 7.3 have been reported by Nimmo-Bell.

Table 7-3: Loss From 20% Reduction in Nitrogen

| Land use | Loss (\$ Million) |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Undeveloped land | 12.2 |
| Forestry land | 30.8 |
| Small farms | 33.9 |
| Medium farms | 10.2 |
| Large farms | <u>74.4</u> |
| Total estimated loss | <u>175</u> |

Source: Nimmo-Bell. (2002). Assessing the loss to farmers associated with Nitrogen Output Restrictions in the Lake Taupo Catchment. Client Report to Taupo Lake Care.

Any restrictions imposed on farm land may affect the viability of farming operations and the value of land. According to Nimmo-Bell (2002):

Income losses will be suffered as restrictions require landowners to either reduce stocking rates or the area on which livestock run....When income reductions are experienced there will be a corresponding reduction in the value of land....Many of the smaller farms in the catchment may have their viability threatened. A reduction in N output allowable may force a reduction in stock numbers to a point where the farm is no longer an economic unit. Sale option may be available to these landowners however in many cases this will be forced on the owners and there will be a resultant cost...there is also likely to be social cost associated with being “forced” to act (p.26-27).

Farmers in the Taupo District have invested large sums of money in their farmland over a long period of time, but their investments are at stake and they face an uncertain future under Environment Waikato’s plans to save the Lake. The predicament of a Taupo farmer has been captured in the Waikato Times:

Dairy farmer Graham Law crouches on the deck of his farmhouse, on the northern shore of Lake Taupo holding two large framed photographs. One faded photo shows his 400ha farm near Kinloch bare and dry, the way it looked 23 years ago when he and his wife bought it as a sheep and beef unit. In his other hand is a recent photo of the farm they converted to dairying 10 years ago, heavily fenced and treed and with a new cowshed. The gesture is Law’s quiet way of saying what is at stake here (Taylor, 2005a, p.7).

In a similar vein, Graham Law said:

We love living here. We get a kick out of it. It’s a special place. It’s our life’s work and it’s sort of been tainted (Taylor, 2005a, p.7).

Farmers in the catchment have been developing their farms for many years to make them viable. Forcing the farmers to cut down on operations or sell their farm land will cause discontentment among the farmers. According to Nimmo-Bell (2002):

For many farmers there is strong devotion to their farm business with a total commitment over many years. For many, a majority of assets are tied up in their farms (p.12).

Nimmo-Bell goes on to say:

...farmers in many cases took on properties that were only partially developed and have made them into high producing units they now have. This has often been at a large cost personally and involved investment of all resources. In many cases these farmers represent a lifetime's work and total investment. Restricting the future use and threatening the viability has a major impact on the owners where there is a strong emotional attachment (p.27).

A major concern of the farming community is the drop in value of farmland in the Taupo district. Impending policy measures to restrict animal farming and community awareness of the pollution of Lake Taupo have been cited as factors contributing to a drop in farm values.

Farmers had already experienced a significant drop in land values of about 30 percent in seven months because of a perception that restrictions would be made on farming. Farm sales had stopped and farming families were depressed because of their deep concern about the issue, and the time it would take for decisions to be made. Farmers were sceptical about the statistics, and had the most to lose in the issue (Environment Waikato, 2000c).

According to the New Zealand Herald:

...farm values had dived 30 per cent in the past seven months since the regional authority made the issue public (The New Zealand Herald June 11, 2001).

Kathy Graham from the Waikato Times reported:

A Taupo couple are unsure of their future after their farm's value was slashed by \$2 million because of tough new farming rules around the lake. Sheep and beef farmers Mary and Robbie Dymock have owned the 271-ha Roma farm for 26 years but the property was recently valued by the Lake Taupo Protection Trust at \$2 million less than its rateable value of nearly \$3.2 million (Graham, 2008, p.A11).

Overall, farmers were not happy with the approach taken by Environment Waikato:

Federated Farmers was concerned that EW's approach focused solely on reducing farming activity, rather than finding solutions to allow the continuance of the activities (Bell, 2005, p.13).

One farmer commented on the bleak future facing farmers:

We have spent a lot of money on developing the farm, we have put our life savings into this, now the future is looking a bit bleak. There is no flexibility now with the Resource Management Act (RMA). It really is affecting our business... ..the RMA was effectively squeezing the profitability out of food production, without any real knowledge of the effects on farming or the economy (Graham, 2008, p.A11).

7.6.6 Conflicts of Interests

Conflicts of interest exist in the Taupo community arising from a diversity of interests vested in Lake Taupo. The implication is that that intensive animal farming disadvantages other activities, including tourism, recreation, and fishery, which depend on a clean lake. Although the main concern of the Taupo community is the pollution of Lake Taupo, there are also other concerns and conflicts of interest which add to the complex issues surrounding the environmental problem. Different community-based groups have their individual concerns and interests. A City Planner aptly pointed out:

...people in the Taupo district are concerned about various different things: some might be concerned about productive land being taken out of existence; some will be concerned about the effect on their enjoyment of land; some might be concerned about increased traffic and loss of amenity and some expect the rural area to be quiet and not busy (Interview, September 2003).

On the diversity and conflict of interests, a resident expressed concern on the polarisation of the community and the lack of consensus:

...and you need to get all these interest groups and talk through the issues....talk about concerns...talk about issues and try and reach some form of consensus...that seems to be lacking at present....you have got

several groups that are all going their own way and we'll see you in the environment court ..the community has become polarised (Interview, December 2005).

7.6.6.1 Animal Farming versus Tourism/ Forestry

The main conflict of interests is between animal farmers wishing to expand or increase intensity of animal farming (especially dairy farming) and businesses related to tourism (such as hotels, motels, restaurants), fishing and recreational activities. Farmers are concerned about their livelihood and the economic viability of their farms if restrictions are imposed on pastoral farming in order to reduce pollution in Lake Taupo. Farmers are in a very difficult situation with no compensation rights under the “polluter pays” principle (Environment Waikato, 2000c). They had invested on existing rules and faced significant costs if the policies changed.

Landowners were in a very difficult position with no existing rights or compensation rights, as the “polluter pays” principle applied. They had also acted honestly, investing on the basis of existing rules and faced significant costs if the rules changed (Environment Waikato, 2000c).

In contrast, the tourist industry wants to maintain clean water quality in the Lake to cater for recreational activities like swimming and fishing (APR Consultants, 2002). Operators carrying out activities that depend on clean and clear water quality in Lake Taupo would prefer an environmental focus in future plans and policies for the development of the lands surrounding Lake Taupo. Of concern is the impact of activities occurring on the surface of Lake Taupo on the amenity values of the Lake (Taupo District Council, 2007). Clear water and trout fisheries are important recreational and tourism asset for the district (Hamilton & Wilkins, 2004). Conflict of interests arises because some activities depend on a clean lake while animal farming pollutes the Lake. Tourist-related business in Taupo district relies on a clean lake. The Weekend Herald reported that:

Lake Taupo attracts 730,000 overnight visitors each year, many of whom enjoy boating, fishing or other tourist activities centred on the lake. An estimated one in three jobs in Taupo relies on visitor spending and the

lake's picture-perfect image is used to market the region overseas (Brown, 2003, p.A3).

The viability of tourism-related activities will be affected if farming activities are allowed to continue in the catchments. Hence, while tourist operators and recreation seekers want a clean lake, the interest of the farming community will be inevitably affected if policy measures are directed at halting nitrogen flows. The conflicting interests have been commented on by a member of LWAG:

Continuing animal farming in the district will create good district income, but threaten tourism income because the Lake is going to be polluted. (Interview, September 2003).

Another LWAG member held similar views and considered tourism as a major source of income that would be affected by animal farming causing deterioration of water quality in the Lake:

...I've only just heard in the news the other night they said that for the first time the major earner for New Zealand, the major earner over everything else, is now tourism. Now tourism, it's a higher earner for the country than farming, or forestry or any of those other things that we thought were making us a lot of money, now it is tourism. Taupo is a major tourism centre for the North Island,...Taupo is getting more than its share of tourists. But it won't be like that if the Lake deteriorates to the extent that you can't swim in it and you don't like the smell along the Lake front. People will not come here and that could happen. (Interview, June 2004)

The media has reported on the implications of continuous pollution of Lake Taupo:

The town's economy depended upon keeping the lake clean...the lake was a cash cow for the area, and \$110 million was generated from fishery alone (Environment Waikato, 2000a).

The Dominion Post commented:

It's got huge implications for fishing and tourism. We've got to act fast otherwise the area's reputation will be threatened (Trow, 2003, p.2).

However, one farmer defended the position of the farming community. According to the farmer, farms are also tourist attractions and farms need to be viable in order to continue:

NZ agriculture is worth a lot to NZ. Even the tourism side of things, the lovely farmland and things like that, tourists driving through won't be there unless those farms are viable and economic. (Interview, January 2006)

Another farmer pointed out the contribution of farming to the economy and the need to find sustainable solutions:

We can solve the problem by sustainable farming ...the second thing is it is not just about the environment ...you have to take account of the social and economic things in there in advance...farming earns money and it is worth finding ways for sustainable farming ...farming brings in millions of dollars to the economy ..and everyone goes hey but tourism brings in more ...that's not the question...farming brings in a return and therefore it is worthwhile for the community to invest money in it to keep it going ..there is a benefit in the community in having farming ...one of the benefits is tourism ..tourists like to look at the country sidefarms are major tourist attractions...tourism can get the benefit at no cost. It has to be worthwhile pursuing farming (Interview, December 2005).

Hamilton and Wilkins (2004) point to several cost-benefit analysis studies (McDermott Fairgray Group Limited, 2000; MacKay & Petch, 2001; Hickman, 2002; as cited in Hamilton & Wilkins, 2004) that indicated:

...the benefits of protecting lake water quality, mostly by enhancing tourism, over further development of dairy farming, outweigh the costs by a ratio of 3 to 1 (p.10).

Generally it has been acknowledged that plantation forestry contributes significantly to the economic, cultural, social and environmental wellbeing of the district (Taupo District Council, 2007). One option to help reduce the nitrate contamination of lakes and waterways includes converting large areas into forestry (Lewis, 2006, p.15).

In 1998, tourism contributed NZ\$90 million, forestry NZ\$88 million and agriculture NZ\$18 million to the gross domestic product of the Taupo District (Petch et al.,

2003). A study conducted by Petch et al. (2003) examined the impacts of animal farming intensification versus intensification of other forms of economic activities. Table 7.4 shows their findings.

Table 7-4: Economic Value added between 1999 -2030

| Development Option | Economic value added (NZ\$ million) | Nitrogen emissions (tonnes / year) |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Current (1999) | - | 1100 |
| Moderate ¹ agricultural intensification | 186 | 1350 |
| High ² agricultural intensification | 176 | 1725 |
| Forestry ³ | 190 | 1000 |
| Tourism ⁴ | 272 | 1100 |

¹ 10,000 hectares of sheep and beef converted to dairy with current forestry and tourism growth

² 25,000 hectares of sheep and beef converted to dairy with current forestry area but current tourism growth ceases at 2020 due to a discernible decline in water quality

³ 10,000 hectares of sheep and beef converted to forest with current tourism growth

⁴ Historical tourism growth (4% / year) increased to 4.4% with current agricultural and forestry area.

Source: Petch, T., Young, J., Thorrold, B., & Vant, B. (2003). Protecting an ICON Managing Sources Of Diffuse Nutrient Inflow To Lake Taupo, New Zealand, Diffuse Pollution Conference. Dublin.

Table 7.4 shows the economic value that could be added between 1999 and 2030 and predicted nitrogen emissions for development options in the Taupo catchment. Intensification of animal farming comes at a cost to forestry and tourism. Conversion to dairy farming would mean less land for forestry, and tourism is expected to suffer due to the decline in Lake water quality. Conversion to forestry, compared to high agricultural intensification is expected to increase the GDP of the Taupo District by

NZ\$26 million over the years 1999 -2030. In comparison, maintaining current agricultural and forestry area is expected to increase the growth rate of tourism by 4.4% and increase GDP by NZ\$96 million over the same period. The study conducted by Petch et al. (2003) indicates that animal farming is not a viable option for the district's economy and for the protection of Lake Taupo. The media commented:

At the end of the day, losing nutrients into waterways is not making you money. It doesn't make sense environmentally or financially (Jamieson, 2007, p.5).

A trade-off may be needed between the intensive farming and the recreational value of Lake Taupo. Biological sciences professor, David Hamilton, said:

...the end result would probably be a trade-off between the economic prosperity created by a robust agricultural sector and the requirements of the public to continue to enjoy lakes and waterways for recreation and fishing (Lewis, 2006, p.15).

7.6.6.2 Animal Farming versus Property Development

In recent years there has been a growing trend towards residential and commercial development in the district, resulting in conversion of lifestyle blocks and farmlands to cater for such developments. Developers want to do away with farms and are capitalising on the issue of pollution of Lake Taupo in order to convert farm land to residential uses. According to an interviewee, some developers have funded research projects to prove the harmful effects of pastoral farming (Interview, December 2005).

Halting farming activities may also make available more farmlands for urban development. Developers may find business opportunities in the sub-division of farmland. Sub-division makes more farmland available for development of residential and commercial property. Property developers apparently support less polluting residential development in opposition to farming activities (APR Consultants, 2002). According to a resident "...developers want the Lake view, the

closer to the Lake the better” (Interview, July 2003). The Taupo District Council appears to be pro-development and to be taking the side of property developers:

Driven by property developers keen to cash in on the lake’s attractions, the district council last week produced the document intended to guide land subdivision creating more than 3300 house sites between Acacia Bay and Kinloch over the next 20 years (Stevenson, 2004).

Commenting on the inclination of the Taupo District Council, Taupo West resident Chris Marshall asserted that:

The approach seems to be “where can we stick the development rather than looking at the lake first” (Stevenson, 2004, p.2).

According to one member of a community-based group:

The Taupo District Council is not one of the most environmentally aware ones in the country and it is very pro- development (Interview, December 2005).

There was also acknowledgement from one farmer that urban development is more favourable than farming activities in terms of reducing nitrogen flows into the Lake. The farmer stated:

...pro development and subdivision of farmland for urban development is one solution towards reducing the amount of nitrogen going into the Lake... ...urban development will actually give off less nitrogen than the farm so there will be some gains, and that is a way of farms holding their property values and as a way of perhaps still helping the Lake. So at least it gives, it is a solution towards reducing the amount of nitrogen going into the Lake (Interview, January 2006).

Another interviewee commented on the pro-development inclinations of the Taupo District Council:

The number of subdivisions and so forth is acceptable at all and that comes back to my comment about the District Council. I was talking to... don't know who he is, but he told us about this article in the Herald recently that indicated if the sorts of developments that the developers are trying in Taupo had been tried in Queenstown they wouldn't have even

got off the ground. In other words the development environment in Taupo is far too easy... that we shouldn't be doing any subdivisions around Lake Taupo. Because it is not just, it is that massive population that lakes can't cope, and I just think of people like him and another man, who's I believe a lecturer at (inaudible) University in America, who's name has escaped me. He came down and did a talk about four years ago about stormwater quality. We shouldn't be doing what we are doing, so that's what I feel, it is very hard though because when you are already living here and you love the place, people all say oh well why shouldn't other people have the luck of living here too, yeah I agree, but on the other hand, what's here won't be here if we keep on destroying it (Member of a Community- Based Group, Interview December 2005).

7.6.6.3 Environmental Protectionism versus Intensification of Land Use

There is also a conflict of interest between the objective of protecting the water quality of Lake Taupo and plans to intensify dairy farming in the Taupo District. The regional council, Environment Waikato, wants to prioritise above all else the safeguarding of the Lake (Environment Waikato, 2004b). A study undertaken by Environment Waikato (Edgar, 1999) indicates that there is public concern over the degradation of water quality in Lake Taupo and that intensification of animal farming will only make the situation worse. Edgar (1999) stated:

There is public concern regarding the current state of Lake Taupo's water quality in the face of increasing development pressures. Concerns about rising levels of nutrients in the lake are supported by trend analysis of lake quality monitoring data...One cannot assume that common desires for both environmental protection, and progressive intensification of land use, will lead to sustainable resource management. The environmental effects of dairy farming indicate that encouraging this land-use practice will not lead to the desired community expectation of water quality protection at Lake Taupo (p.375).

A conflict of interest arises between the desire for environmental protection and the objective of intensification of land use. Edgar (1999) made the following comment:

One cannot assume that common desires for both environmental protectionism, and progressive intensification of land use, will lead to sustainable resource management. The environmental effects of dairy farming indicate that encouraging this land-use practice will not lead to

the desired community expectation of water quality protection at Lake Taupo (p.375).

Edgar (1999) maintained that:

...water quality protection at Lake Taupo, and the introduction of dairy farming, are neither compatible nor sustainable in the long term. In essence, water quality protection and the intensification of land-use development in the Taupo catchment are mutually exclusive (p.381)

In a similar vein, Hamilton & Wilkins (2004) pointed out that:

The need to constrain nutrient inputs to Lake Taupo suggests that the pattern of development that has evolved in the lake catchment is not compatible with maintaining the present level of lake water quality and clarity....The wider implication that rises...is that development and direct economic returns from land developed around lake catchments may be constrained by the need for sustainable development that balances lake water quality against land use and economic returns (p. 10).

7.6.6.4 Farming Community versus Environmental Lobbyists

The conflict of interest between environmental lobbyists and the farming community has been widely publicised in the media. A row broke out between environmental lobbyists and Federated Farmers over – environmental protectionism versus farming. Environmental lobbyists have been pushing for all rivers and wetlands to be fenced off from cattle (The Timaru Herald, August 28, 2001), but Farmers condemn these views as extreme. Federated Farmers claims that the lobbyists are using “environmental terrorism” to promote their own interests. Federated Farmers believe that:

...dairy pollution is a myth because farmers are already doing everything possible to maintain the environment (The Timaru Herald, August 28, 2001, p.2).

One farmer argued that dairy pollution does not exist and said that:

I think all of this is just a beat-up because we are always trying to maintain the clean, green image. It's a thinly veiled threat of environmental terrorism (The Timaru Herald, August 28, 2001, p.2)

Fish and Game, an environmental lobbyists' association, wants to protect trout fishing and has criticised farmers for polluting Lake Taupo. In response to this, a dairy farmer claims that dairy pollution does not exist. The farmer accused Fish and Game of:

...of trying to paint the dairy industry as polluters because it is pushing its own political agenda to protect marine populations. Depleted trout numbers mean reduced profits for the organisation through fewer fishing licenses (The Timaru Herald, August 28, 2001, p.2).

The conflict between farmers and green lobby groups appears to be never ending, as summed up humorously in this way:

The perennial battle between farmers and the green lobby took another significant twist ...a fight no one can win until scientists develop a cow that doesn't pee (Waikato Times, November 6, 2004, p.1).

7.6.6.5 Conflict of Interest in the Maori Community

A conflict of interests is also apparent in the Maori community. Maori culture shows strong preference for environmental sustainability (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003). However, Maori own large areas of farmland in the Lake Taupo catchments, so there is a conflict of interest between Maori traditional beliefs and the economic objectives of Maori farmers in the district. The conflict arises between the objectives of Ngati Tuwharetoa as the guardians (kaitiaki) of Lake Taupo and as landowners in the catchment. As guardians, the community has responsibility to ensure that the physical and spiritual health of the Lake is protected (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003). It has been acknowledged that the cultural and spiritual values of the Maori community can be lost or damaged if development and activities are undertaken without considerations for the special relationship of the Maori community, their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water and other natural resources. Section 6 of the RMA requires that the relationship be recognised as a matter of national importance (Iwi Environmental Plan). Pollution of Lake

Taupo has implications for the values of the Maori Community. According to an interviewee:

...polluting the Lake is like polluting a person...sewage inflows into the Lake is like pouring sewage on a person (LWAG member, Interview, July 2004)

However, a clean Lake could mean compromising the economic interests of Maori farm owners (including farms owned by Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board). Hamilton and Wilkins (2004) commented:

Tuwharetoa and their economic authorities are in a difficult position, however, as both kaitiaki of Lake Taupo and as major stakeholders in the catchment, with commitments to the future wellbeing and prosperity of their iwi³³ (pp.17-18).

They go on to state that:

Nitrogen inputs to the lake, particularly those that are a direct result of human activities...are considered to degrade the mauri of the water, and are highly objectionable to Ngati Tuwharetoa (Nepia, 2004 as cited in Hamilton & Wilkins, 2004; p.20).

According to a Maori landowner:

...the Tuwharetoa iwi, which owns the bulk of the land around the Lake edge, is in a tight spot (Stevenson, 2004).

One interview participant sympathised with the dilemma faced by Maori farmers:

...I think the ones who have their economic future tied into farming will be very much affected, particularly the Maori people. I feel that a lot of the other farmers could sell up and move on and go and do their thing somewhere else. But the Maori farmers have got no other options because they have no other land apart from their family land around the Lake ...what it is today is where they are going to be in the future, so there needs to be some way where the government can say we'll plant a forest here and give you the nitrogen credits so you can actually go dairy

³³ Tribe (Maori Dictionary, 2009)

farming on a small scale here so they have actually got a possibility of actually earning a reasonable livelihood from their land. They can't go to Matamata or go to somewhere else and farm because their lands means more to them, and they can't sell it anyway because these are tribal lands (Maori participant, Interview, December 2005).

7.6.6.6 Conflict of Aesthetic Values of Farmland versus Environmental Values of Lake Taupo

Aesthetic values attached to farmland appear to be in conflict with environmental values attached to Lake Taupo. A 1999 survey undertaken by EW indicates a strong preference for environmental value, and environmental protection was rated more important than economic development (Stewart et al., 2000). The most highly valued feature of Lake Taupo is its clean and clear water. Aesthetic and ecological values such as the natural unspoilt character appear to be more favoured over the amenity and utility values (such as tourism and hydropower) of Lake Taupo.

In contrast, a study conducted by Nimmo-Bell (2002) among the farming community in the district shows that landowners in the catchment attach aesthetic values associated with living and farming in the catchment. According to the study:

Farmers do not want to see large areas of forestry from an aesthetic viewpoint. Aesthetic values of the area are important to those who live there (p.12).

According to Nimmo-Bell the aesthetic value to farmers:

...is derived from the surrounds in which they live and work and any degradation of the surrounds will see a loss in value to the landowners....many of the landowners spoken to saw a significant reduction in enjoyment should large areas of surrounding land be planted in forestry (p.26).

Nimmo-Bell also pointed out the owners' attachment to their land:

In many cases (both Maori and others) the association with the land is much stronger than financial returns and there is an emotional and cultural 'attachment' to the land (p.13).

Further, there is also the issue of Maori values to consider. According to Nimmo-Bell:

Maori Landowners have a strong “attachment” to the land. The land is generally held in multiple ownership and the Trustees are seen as the custodians for future generations. The land is seen as the basis for the Maori people, both financial and cultural. Restricting the use of the land impacts on the cultural value to the people (p.28).

7.6.6.7 Conflicting Approaches to Dealing with Pollution of Lake Taupo

There are also conflicting approaches to address the pollution of Lake Taupo. Edgar (1999) points out that two models have been used for developing a lake management plan. The traditional top-down model represents a “legislative-duty approach” (p.379) where local authorities propose rules and the community responds to the proposals. Under this approach, local authorities are at the top and the community at the bottom of the model. The local authorities set an outcome and the community negotiates around the pre-determined outcome.

The alternative is the “bottom-up model or equal participation approach” (Edgar, 1999, p.379). Under this approach, local authorities facilitate decision-making processes and they are considered equals with the community in the process. The purpose is to reach a negotiated outcome among the stakeholders in the community. Edgar argues that approach is more consistent with the processes in the Taupo District where local authorities place considerable emphasis on the community determining the outcomes for the management of Lake Taupo.

Several people interviewed were concerned about the undemocratic approach of the regional authority (Environment Waikato) in dealing with the pollution issues. One stated:

Environment Waikato is trying to impose a top down approach and the farmers and land owners are concerned about what’s going to happen. They have been told about it but they feel they haven’t been really called in as part of the process to solve the problem (Farmer, Interview December 2005)

Another interviewee agreed, saying:

Environment Waikato has been trying to apply the kind of top down approach - we will set the rules and this is how life will be and the consultation is more going around and telling people informing people so it is not being a consultation. They can say it is consultation but I don't believe it is (LWAG member, Interview, December 2005)

7.6.7 Pressure from International Community

New Zealand farmers are accountable to the international community for the integrity of the environment in which farming activities are undertaken. According to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (2004):

Most New Zealand farmers produce food... for overseas markets. They therefore need to be responsive to the concerns of people living overseas as well as in New Zealand. There are rising concerns in many parts of the world about the...integrity of the environment in which it is grown....Many consumers are willing to pay a premium for food that is produced in a responsible way. It is also possible that new trade restrictions will develop on the basis of production methods – including environmental impacts (Summary of key findings).

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment made more comments via the media:

...consumers in our overseas market make choices based on environmental considerations, and it will certainly become a political issue with all New Zealanders who want clean water for health and recreational reasons (Morgan, 2004, p.5)

Agriculture Minister Jim Anderton expressed similar concerns:

Managing nutrient flows into water is absolutely crucial for the reputation of our exports and as a 100 per cent tourist destination (Waikato Times, March 17, 2007, p.A3).

In Europe, high environmental standards are being set, particularly for agriculture, in Europe. These countries have begun to expect similar standards from the countries they traded with (Environment Waikato, 2000a). In response to such expectations,

Environment Minister, Marion Hobbs, raised the importance of complying with high environmental standards demanded by the international community. Such standards require sustainable management of natural resources, including managing land use in the catchment of Lake Taupo in a sustainable way. Marion Hobbs asserted that:

It is very important that land use in the catchment is managed in a sustainable way for two reasons. Firstly, we must protect the environment. For Lake Taupo, this means maintaining the clear clean water and preserving increases in nitrogen in nitrogen and algae and weed growth. Secondly, if we want to continue trading, many markets in the world are now demanding proof of clean production. So environmental outcomes are aligned with trade opportunities (Environment Waikato, 2000b).

New Zealand's commitment to the international community arose from international consensus on sustainable development (Chapter 5). The commitment reflects accountability to the international community. A broader accountability is also implied: that between the Taupo community and the international community.

7.6.8 Mutual Responsibility

Mutual responsibility arises from joint ownership of the common good and the need to protect it. One interviewee commented on the mutual and joint responsibility of the community to protect the common good:

...if you really value something then you look after and be responsible for protecting Lake Taupo. Legislatively, it's Environment Waikato and Ministry for the Environment responsibility, but morally I think it belongs with everybody, yes it is joint responsibility.... Anybody who values the Lake, anybody who looks across that Lake and sees the mountains and says what a beautiful piece of water, they still have a responsibility. That's my belief (LWAG Member, Interview December 2005).

Mutual responsibility also entails members of a community taking responsibility to help other members develop and realize their potential in the pursuit of the common good (Etzioni, 1995; Jordan, 1998). Despite the criticisms and counter-criticisms, a sense of mutuality prevails in the Taupo community. Although criticisms have been

levied against the farming community, there are groups which sympathise with the concerns of the farmers. A member of LWAG sympathises with farmers' concern:

...only recently over the last ten years has it become viable to make the land over here as a viable dairy farm....three or four things need to be in our favour ...one, we need dairy products to be sold overseas...we need markets for them....two, we need cheap fertilizer and lots of it....and three, we need reasonably good weather....at present farms are semi viable anyway ...to put restriction on it stops viability almost entirely (Interview, December 2005).

A sense of mutuality involves realisation of the contribution of farming and the willingness to help the farming community to improve farming methods:

Before putting too much pressure on the farming sector, the people of New Zealand must realise how critical farming is to this nation. About 60% of our export receipts are from farming and any move forward for the economy must necessarily include farming. Also making large-scale changes is not cheap and if people want fewer environmental effects, they may have to bear the cost at the supermarket. But more research needs to be done to find new farming methods that are going to make a difference in the future. (Jamieson, 2007, p.5).

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Morgan Williams, set aside the prejudices casting farmers as villains. He contended that:

...it is unfair to say they are the problem. They are at the bottom of the pile of a cascade of influences that start way out at our trading interfaces – supermarkets and food processors....The farmers and their business responses are the product of a stream of signals directed at them, including the market and investment needs, their land values and the cost-effectiveness of nitrogen in increasing dry matter production (Morgan, 2004, p.5).

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment believed in redesigning of farming practices and systems, and felt that farmers play a crucial role in environmental sustainability:

All farmers should be using nutrient management plans that balance nutrient inputs with plant uptake and keep nutrient seepage into the environment to a minimum....The future productivity of farming has to

be about putting a very clear focus on maintaining our natural capital – the soils, the water, the biodiversity. That has to be central to the thinking – not just put to the side while the main talk is about how we manage the impacts of nitrogen on water and soil. We have to turn it around and examine how we create our farming systems and evolve them so they don't make a mess in the first place....we should think of farming and the environment as a big musical work. At the moment the bars and stanzas and the notes are there but they're not all coming together to make a great symphony (Morgan, 2004, p.5).

In a similar vein, Agriculture Minister Jim Sutton said:

...it might not necessarily be a case of getting rid of dairy farms in the catchment, but of people voluntarily stopping conversions now they realised the consequences to the environment....Naturally they do not want to be seen fouling the lake....farmers should not be cast as villains. Past changes had been made in the belief that they were environmentally friendly (MacBrayne & Brown, 2003, p.1)

One resident felt the blame should not be appropriated to the farmers because they can help solve the problem.

...farmers are not the problem but farmers are the key to the solution ...just putting in rules and regulation is not necessarily the whole solution; you have to get the farming community on board to be part of the solution and work collectively on ways to achieve nutrient reduction in the Lake....farmers are aware of the problem and they want to solve as much as anybody else (Interview, December 2005)

A sense of mutual responsibility also exists in the farming community. According to a representative of Taupo Lake Care;

Farmers want to do their level best to protect the lake but we need assistance, we need time, education, research and development to do that (Brown, 2003, A3).

Mutuality can be cultivated through dialogue and education. According to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment:

...the first step must be for the farming sector to start talking about the problems....the risks of the trend to intensive farming do not appear to be

widely understood or accepted by farmers....create mechanisms, forums and seminars to bring sector interests together to help them work through issues (Morgan, 2004, p.5).

7.7 ACCOUNTABILITY IMPLICATIONS

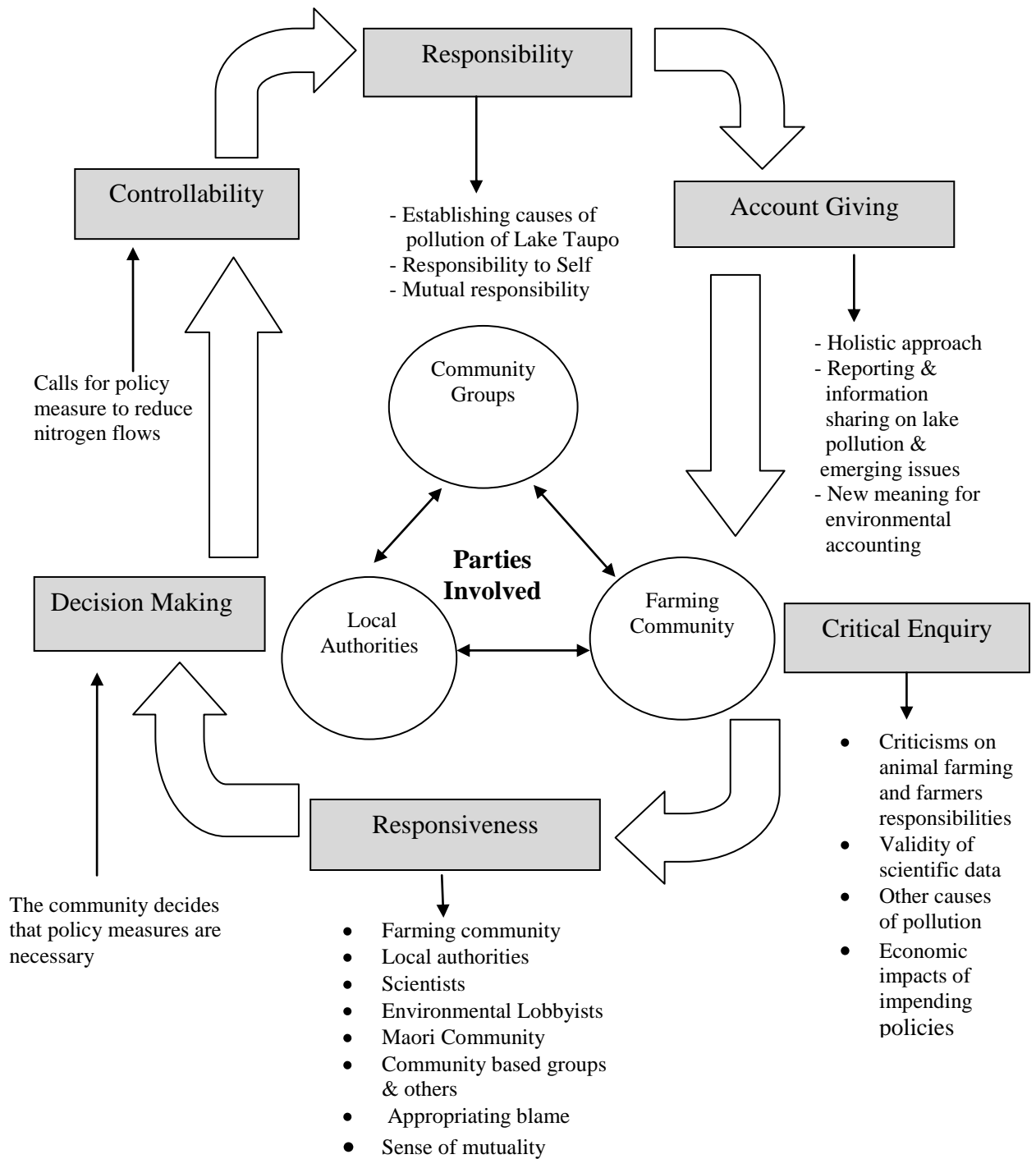
The foregoing discussion explains the issues surrounding the pollution of Lake Taupo and the implications for the Taupo district and its community of interest. In this section I provide an interpretation of the issues. I interpret the issues with reference to my pre-understandings developed in previous chapters. In particular, I have used the assumptions in the accountability model in Figure 4.2 (Chapter 4). The interpretive process is a “fusion of horizon” involving synthesis of my pre-understandings and the issues in the Taupo district. It also reflects a synthesis of my pre-understandings with the text. Text³⁴ at this stage of interpretation refers to views expressed and information provided by interview participants, scientists, media and various website sources. My interpretation suggests that several dimensions of accountability are manifested in issues currently emerging in the Taupo district. These dimensions are shown in Figure 7.3. Features of a communitarian approach to accountability are also identifiable, in particular the common good and a community of interest become defined within the context of issues emerging in the Taupo district.

Lake Taupo can be considered as the common good in the Taupo district. As discussed in section 7.5, a diversity of interests and values are inextricably attached to the Lake. The common good provides a basis for defining the community of interest in the Taupo district. Current issues of concern in the district reflect a community of interest requiring accountability for the common good, that is, accountability for pollution of Lake Taupo. Accountability can be conceptualised as consisting of several dimensions. The first is the responsibility dimension which involves establishing the causes of the pollution of Lake Taupo and the parties responsible for the pollution. Animal farmers have been identified as the main polluters. Other causes, such as storm water and sewage flows from urban sources

³⁴ The text used at this stage of interpretation represents only part of the overall text used in this thesis. The remaining of the text such as public documents are interpreted in the following chapters.

and forestry, are considered less serious. Calls for more responsible behaviour on the part of animal farmers have been made.

Figure 7-3: Accountability Implications



Another aspect of responsibility that emerges is the tension between responsibility to self and responsibility to the other (Shearer, 2002). Conflicting interests and values vested in the Lake highlight this tension. In particular, farmers' economic interests appear to be in conflict with the interest of several other parties. Tensions also exist within the Maori community, especially between traditional values and economic interests. A sense of mutuality and need for moral responsibility expressed by some members of the community appears to be the way forward to overcome the tension.

Secondly, the account giving dimension, can be related to reporting and information sharing on the pollution of Lake Taupo and the emerging issues. An accountability relationship is implied in the Taupo District. Farmers and other polluters have the obligation to explain and justify their conduct while the community of interests has the right to demand explanations and pose questions. The responses of the farming community can be conceptualised as indicating the obligation of the farming community to explain and justify conduct. The democratic element in the relationship allows the farmers to justify farming activities as well as point out other causes of pollution. The transparency of the causes and impacts becomes enhanced through critical enquiry and responsiveness. The accountability relationship reflects a form of democratic accountability where participation in critical enquiry is facilitated through the media and through freedom of publication and information sharing.

The media is an important source for reporting and information sharing. Other sources include website publications by local authorities, and reports prepared by scientists and community-based groups (such as LWAG and farmers' associations). Environmental reporting mainly takes the form of scientific findings on the causes and environmental impacts of pollution. Economic and cultural impacts of existing land use patterns have also been reported. The impacts of impending policy measures have also been widely published. The wealth of information reported reflects the transparency in the community. Environmental reporting and account giving acquire new meanings in the light of the reporting and information sharing in the Taupo community. Evidence from the Taupo district indicates that environmental reporting is not the privilege of private sector corporations (Lehman, 1999).

Environmental accounting acquires a more holistic approach by involving a community of interest in the reporting and sharing of information. Under this holistic approach, several parties are involved in the reporting, and various impacts and issues are covered. Environmental accounting involves scientific and other research and reporting on the findings to the public. Environmental accounting is a democratic forum where electronic and non-electronic media facilitate accessibility to information and discussion of emerging issues.

Thirdly, the dialectical dimension of accountability is portrayed in Taupo district as a dialogue between several parties. It involves critical enquiry and responsiveness. The dialogue involves questioning, assessing and criticizing by some and answering, explaining and justifying by others. It is open discussion and debate about matters of common concern. The media play a key role in such dialogue. In the Taupo district the dialogue occurs primarily between the farming community and the rest of the community. Animal farmers have commonly been criticised for polluting Lake Taupo. Much of the criticisms levied against the farmers have been based on scientific information. The critical dimension of accountability also entails evaluating the validity of evidence provided on the pollution of Lake Taupo. The validity of scientific information has been questioned, especially by farmers and calls for more research have been made. Scientists have also come under critical enquiry, with calls explain and justify the validity of their findings.

Conflicts of interest and values appear in the community dialogue. The dialectical process allows different voices to be heard and doubts to be expressed. It is a collective form of accountability where people become accountable to each other through a democratic dialogue (Bohman, 1996; Drysek, 2002).

The decision making and controllability dimensions of accountability have not become apparent at this stage of interpretation. However, calls made by the community for policy measures to impose restrictions on animal farming can be interpreted as involving the controllability dimension. Democratic institutions (such as freedom of speech and participatory local governance) allow the community to make suggestions for improvement. Discussion on the controllability and decision

making dimensions of accountability, as they relate to the Taupo district, is covered in chapters 8 and 9 when communal processes and public documents are brought into the interpretive process.

7.8 FILTERING OF PREJUDICES

The discussion on emerging issues in the foregoing paragraphs indicates the prevalence of prejudices in the Taupo community. These prejudices, if not evaluated, may affect the conceptualisation of accountability. According to Gadamer (1975), the prejudices or pre-understandings of the researcher define the limits of the researcher's horizon of understanding. Although prejudices are considered necessary conditions of all understanding, Gadamer suggests that the interpreter filters the prejudices and distinguishes between "productive prejudices that make understanding possible" (p.263) and unproductive prejudices "that hinder understanding and lead to misunderstanding" (p. 263). True understanding requires the suspension of the unproductive prejudices (Gadamer, 1975). Therefore, it is necessary to filter the prejudices inherent in the Taupo community. Such filtering is part of the hermeneutic process and aims to advance the conceptualisation of accountability. The rest of this section explains and distinguishes the unproductive and productive prejudices inherent in the Taupo community. The unproductive prejudices are eliminated while the productive prejudices are maintained to advance the theorisation of accountability.

7.8.1 Unproductive Prejudices

My initial understandings of the emerging issues surrounding the pollution of Lake Taupo were based mainly on matters raised and evidence provided by scientists, media, local authority websites and the views of some interview participants. It was necessary to re-examine these views in order to identify the unproductive prejudices manifested in them. Several unproductive prejudices became clear in reading these views. The unproductive prejudices include: a superficial understanding of the underlying causes of pollution of Lake Taupo, that is, attributing the cause of pollution mainly to animal farming; appropriating blame to the farming community for the pollution of Lake Taupo; considering the farming community to be mainly

responsible and accountable for the pollution of Lake Taupo; and maintaining a predominantly environmental rather than sustainability focus in dealing with the pollution.

A superficial understanding of the causes of pollution appears to hold the farming community mainly responsible for the pollution of Lake Taupo. Scientific evidence on pollution attributes the causes of pollution primarily to animal farming. On the basis of the scientific evidence, the Taupo community is demanding accountability from the farmers. Accountability takes the form of demanding farmers take responsibility for the pollution and control animal farming in order to prevent water quality in the Lake from degrading further. Farmers appear to be brought to task and to have become accountable for their future activities.

Further investigation reveals that other underlying factors that have contributed to intensive animal farming in the Taupo district implying the responsibility of several other parties. Government policies in the post-war period and during adverse economic times promoted intensive³⁵ animal farming in the Taupo district, as in many other parts of New Zealand. This strong emphasis on intensive animal farming and the lack of focus on the environment have also contributed to the pollution of Lake Taupo. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (n.d. b):

In many cases, environmental problems associated with agriculture can be attributed to conflicting government policies. For example, government-funded price support programmes can undermine environmental objectives by encouraging over-intensive use of chemical inputs and other physical resources (p.1).

³⁵ Intensive agriculture employs large amounts of labour and capital, enables one to apply fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides and to plant, cultivate, and often harvest mechanically (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008). According to Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (2004), intensive farming refers to increasing use of inputs such as fertiliser to grow more food from the same area of land. Dairy farming has become more intensive via the use of more inputs such as nitrogen fertiliser and by increasing the number of stock per hectare of land; the purpose is to increase milk production volumes. Intensive sheep and beef farms have also used more inputs to increase the weight of animals rather than increasing stock numbers per hectare.

Prior to 1984, New Zealand government policies on farming were aimed at insulating New Zealand agriculture from international market signals (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; n.d.c). Such policies significantly influenced New Zealand farming practices. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (n.d.c), government assistance was of three types: price support policies; support on inputs; and assistance to produce more output. Price support policies included: fixed exchange rate mechanisms to isolate New Zealand from exchange rate fluctuations; government-funded income stabilisation measures and supplementary minimum prices; and through setting up producer and marketing boards to promote and sell agricultural products overseas. The government also provided direct subsidies on fertilisers used. So Farmers used more of the subsidised fertilisers, resulting in more farm outputs. Other government assistance to increase farm output included subsidies for land development and irrigation which, at the time, increased production. Farmers were also encouraged to develop marginal land which was not suitable for farming. In addition, cheap government-subsidised interest rates and taxation advantages encouraged farmers to borrow, to invest more and to increase production. Other government assistance included: government payment for inspection and certification of products for export; government funding of agricultural research; and government help to farmers to reinstate their farms after a natural climatic disaster.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (n.d.c) reported that the overall effects of government policies for New Zealand farming were profound. Farmers responded to such government support by increasing production. There was increasing conversion of hill country to farmland because farmers were paid to do so. Farmers increased the use of fertiliser and bought more plant and equipment than was necessary. Farmers also became highly dependent on government support and this dependency posed serious risks to farmers, as any change in government policies could adversely affect their livelihoods, as happened in New Zealand. Hence, past government policies can be considered as a contributing factor in the intensification of land use in many rural areas, including the Taupo district. Ignoring this historical perspective on government policies and blaming the farming community for pollution of Lake Taupo can be considered an unproductive prejudice.

Such historical perspectives provide a new perspective to understanding accountability in that the historical events identify the parties responsible for the harms caused to the natural environment such as Lake Taupo. Such factors indicate that the farming community alone cannot be made responsible and accountable for the increase in nitrogen flowing into the Lake. By allowing for intensive animal farming, central and Local Government authorities have also been responsible for the pollution. According to a local resident:

I believe that what we have today with the Lake and its Catchment is largely a result of significant decisions taken in Wellington by various governments and administrations over a period of more than a century....Environmental factors impacting on present day water quality by and large are the result of decisions and actions or inactions taken over a century. Some are simply a by-product of legislation enacted by various governments (Interview, January 2006).

Another interviewee provided additional insights the responsibility of the government:

The government's decision taken in the 1940s to settle returning servicemen from the war on farms led to a huge effort being made to create farms from this previously "bush sick" scrub and cut-over bush land that had been previously deemed only suitable for plantation forestry. By 1960 most of the available area was in grass with settlement well under way (Interview January 2006)

The pollution of Lake Taupo only came to be seen as a serious environmental problem in the 1990s even though evidence on the pollution was known some three decades ago (Rae, et al., 2000). This is due to the promulgation of the sustainability discourse, in particular environmental sustainability, in New Zealand. Since the 1990s, environmental issues within the context of sustainability have become an important policy issue in New Zealand. The enactment of the RMA in 1991, reforms in Local Government legislation and the enactment of LGA 2002 have contributed significantly to the strong emphasis on sustainable development, in particular environmental sustainability³⁶. Further developments in the global discourse on sustainable development brought about greater awareness of environmental pollution and increasing international pressure on central and Local Governments to lessen the

³⁶ See Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion.

adverse impacts of economic activities on the natural environment. Concerns for the pollution of Lake Taupo, an issue which remained dormant for many years, came to the forefront when New Zealand became a party to international consensus on sustainable development such as Agenda 21. The global discourse has heightened the emphasis on environmental sustainability and the need to bring local communities into the accountability equation, creating awareness among local communities on environmental issues faced by them and engaging local communities in cooperative enquiry to question and demand explanations as well as assume joint accountability for environmental sustainability. Policy changes introduced by the Labour government after 1999 began to place increasing emphasis on sustainable development (Department of Internal Affairs, 2001). The global factors and changes in government policies explain both the emergence of greater awareness and urgency to address the pollution of Lake Taupo and how the pollution came to be “seen” as an environmental problem only during the late 1990s, even though the pollution had started ever since animal farming was introduced in the catchment areas of Lake Taupo. Scientific evidence (Rae, et al., 2000) gathered over the past 30 years indicates that the water quality of Lake Taupo has been declining over that period

Understanding the causes of pollution on the basis of unproductive prejudices (such as scientific evidence and views that criticise animal farming for the pollution) inhibits understanding of the meaning of accountability. Such prejudices are unproductive as they place a heavy burden of accountability on the farming community while excluding other parties in the community from accountability. Limiting accountability to the farming community limits the scope of a communitarian approach to accountability in that other parties in the Taupo community appear to be excluded from accountability. Such a narrow conception of accountability violates the communitarian principle of mutuality where people in a community help each other and assume joint accountability. In order to obtain a more holistic understanding of accountability, it is important to suspend the prejudices which assign accountability mainly to the farming community. Joint responsibility needs to be included in the accountability equation.

7.8.2 Productive Prejudice: Holistic Approach to Sustainability

Suspending the unproductive prejudices discussed above requires a more holistic approach to addressing the pollution of Lake Taupo. A paradigm shift to eliminate the unproductive prejudices entails approaching the environmental problem by recognising the diversity of interests (including the interests of the farming community). The holistic approach entails a shift from a mere environmental focus (or strong form of sustainability) or a mere economic focus (weak form of sustainability) to an approach to development that takes into consideration the well being of farmers and is sensitive to Maori culture. Such an approach involves bringing the community of interest together in dialogues and collaboration in planning and policy making processes. The issue at hand was not merely an environmental issue. The task of the policy makers (EW in the capacity of Regional Council) and strategic planners (such as Taupo District Council) was to consider economic and social factors when addressing the environmental issues affecting Lake Taupo. The question is whether the economic should be addressed within the broad environmental domain or whether environmental considerations are subservient to economic considerations. The residents of the Taupo district believe that solving the pollution of Lake Taupo requires consultation with farmers (Environment Waikato, 2000a). At several public meetings in Taupo it was pointed out that any measures to maintain a clean clear Lake should consider farming needs and practical issues (Environment Waikato, 2000a). Taupo farmers feel that EW and the farming community should agree on a strategy to address the environmental issues in Lake Taupo before any strategy is implemented (Environment Waikato, 2000c)

Accountability under the more holistic sustainable development approach becomes a joint responsibility in which mutuality is a prime consideration. A holistic approach involves community participation in planning and policy making to address the various issues that have emerged in the Taupo district and, in particular, to find solutions to protect Lake Taupo. Marian Hobbs, Minister for the Environment, pointed out that:

Meaningful democratic participation at the local level is a principle embedded in the Resource Management Act. And it is plain good sense

that resource management decision-making should be devolved to local communities as much as possible. But as in any democratic system, there are some hard truths. One is that we can't always get what we personally want. We sometimes have to compromise, or at least be patient. And democratic process depends on people taking part and being well-informed. Education is always going to be a vital part of the equation (Hobbs, 2003).

The sense of mutuality results in calls for joint responsibility. From a communitarian perspective, mutuality (Tam, 1998) and helping members of a community to achieve accountability are important. Such productive prejudice leads to new understanding of the joint accountability and responsibility for the common good: Lake Taupo. It creates a sense of communitarian approach to dealing with the pollution. Collective action is the key to a holistic approach to addressing the pollution of Lake Taupo as indicated in the following media extracts:

It's the whole community collectively coming together and saying this is what we have to do and everyone has to play their part – urban and rural people. Can you afford to give those lakes to your children and tell them it's their problem? (Jamieson, 2007, p.5).

The issue was not one of “townies against farmers” as everyone was concerned about the lake (Environment Waikato, 2000a).

Eliminating the unproductive prejudices helps in theory development and in this thesis it helps in the conceptualisation of CAACG. The communitarian approach entails achieving joint accountability rather than appropriating blame. Mutuality recognises the diversity of interests and promotes joint accountability. In the case of the Taupo district, a productive prejudice can be considered as a view that promotes the sense of mutuality that exists in the Taupo community. This sense of mutuality may strengthen accountability for the common good, in spite of conflicting interests.

7.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided background information about the Taupo District, its community of interest, and current environmental, economic and social issues facing the district. Pollution of Lake Taupo is the primary concern of the community as diverse and often conflicting interests and values are manifested over the Lake. The

background information provided the context for hermeneutic exploration of the meaning of accountability and, in particular, the meaning of “communitarian approach to accountability”. Sources for the background information formed part of the text used in this interpretive study and included the media, website material, responses from interview participants, and scientific and other findings. The text was interpreted with reference to my pre-understandings developed in previous chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). The pre-understandings served as a lens for the interpretation of the text. The fusion of my pre-understandings with the text revealed accountability implications inherent in the Taupo community.

A qualification needs to be mentioned at this juncture. The interpretation provided in this chapter is only the early stage of interpretation and, as such, the theorisation of accountability and interpretive comments discussed in the forgoing paragraphs reflects the outcome of only part of the interpretive process discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The interpretive process needs to proceed by including other empirical data (such as public documents and other components of the text) in order to provide more comprehensive interpretation and to advance the theorisation of accountability. The accountability model suggested in Figure 7.3 needs to be developed further by eliminating the unproductive prejudices, in the light of other sources of data that are included in the hermeneutic process.

Of significance to the interpretation is information on communal processes which took place in the Taupo District and the implications those processes bear upon a communitarian approach to accountability. In order to advance the theorisation of CAACG, it is important to understand the communal processes in the Taupo district. The communal processes involve community participation and collaboration with Local Government authorities in planning and policy making processes for the sustainable development of the district. The next chapter explains some of the communal processes that took place during the period 1999 – 2008. The processes provide more understanding of how accountability, in particular CAACG, is manifested in the Taupo community.

CHAPTER 8

COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNAL PROCESSES

“It is all very well that we go our separate ways,

But our strength is in working together”

*(Proverb from Nga-ti Tu-wharetoa ancestor Tamamutu, Taupo District
Council (n.d. p.1)*

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Taupo community³⁷ is characterised by a diversity of interests and values. Although there are differences in the community, there are also common concerns and values. A farmer from the Taupo district acknowledges that, “...in some ways and in some things we have got similar goals and in others we are quite different” (Interview, January 2006). The interests and values of numerous groups and individuals in the community are inextricably attached to Lake Taupo. The Lake represents the common good contributing to economic, aesthetic, cultural and environmental values of the community. The main concern of the community is the pollution of Lake Taupo. In spite of differences, people in the Taupo community are willing to come together to discuss their common concerns, identify common values and engage in cooperative enquiry on issues that threaten the common values (Environment Waikato, 2004b).

In response to the community concerns, local authorities in the Taupo district have initiated several communal processes (since 1998) to formulate strategies and

³⁷ Defined as a community of interests in Chapter 7 section 7.4.

policies for the sustainable development of the district. The local authority initiatives were also driven by New Zealand's commitment to international consensus on sustainable development, such as Agenda 21, and the desire to adopt a local agenda 21 for the district (Burke, 2004; Knight, 2000). The communal processes involved community meetings, forums, workshops, consultation, focus group discussions, surveys, submissions, hearings of submissions and Environment Court proceedings. These processes reflect local governance in the district involving collaboration between local authorities and the community. The primary purpose has been to collate community views for developing strategies and policies for the protection of the common good (Lake Taupo) and community values attached to the common good. Concurrent to the local authority initiatives, were other processes organised by community-based groups, such as: LWAG; farmers' associations (such as Taupo Lake Care and Taupo Federated Farmers); Maori community groups and associations (like Ngati Tuwharetoa and Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board); and other interest groups (such as Acacia Bay Residents Association; Mapara Valley Preservation Society and Lake Taupo Development Company).

The objective of this chapter is to interpret the communal processes with reference to my pre-understandings. The chapter explains how dimensions of accountability acquire meanings within the context of these communal processes. The purpose is to provide additional insights into the meaning of CAACG. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate all processes undertaken by the local authorities and community-based groups. The primary emphasis is on planning and policy making communal processes undertaken during the period 1998 - 2008. In particular, this chapter will focus on: community surveys conducted by EW; the 2020 Community Forum; the LWAG community meetings; submissions and hearings; and Environment Court proceedings. These processes were chosen as the focus of interpretation for three main reasons. Firstly, the processes allow for inclusion (Young, 2000) in that all interested parties were allowed to participate and the processes provided for inclusive debate and dialogue. Secondly, the processes were the primary venue facilitating decision making by the community. They served as the primary means for: identifying community concerns; establishing communal values; and formulating strategies and policies for the Taupo District. The processes

reflect local governance in which the community and local authorities collaborated to discuss and make decisions. Thirdly, I was allowed to attend the 2020 Community Forums and LWAG community meetings. This enabled me to make detailed observations and field notes. I also gained access to website information on the policy making processes that took place during the period 2005 – 2008.

The discussion in this chapter begins with the definition and a brief description of the communal processes, in section 8.2, that were the subject of hermeneutic analysis in the rest of the chapter. The discussion then proceeds to explain, in sections 8.3 – 8.8, communitarian and accountability themes that are manifested in the communal processes. The hermeneutic analysis in these sections involved understanding the communal processes with reference to my pre-understandings developed in previous chapters. Before concluding, the chapter provides some critical reflections by highlighting symmetries and asymmetries inherent in the communal processes which pose challenges to the communitarian approach to accountability.

8.2 COMMUNAL PROCESSES IN THE TAUPO DISTRICT

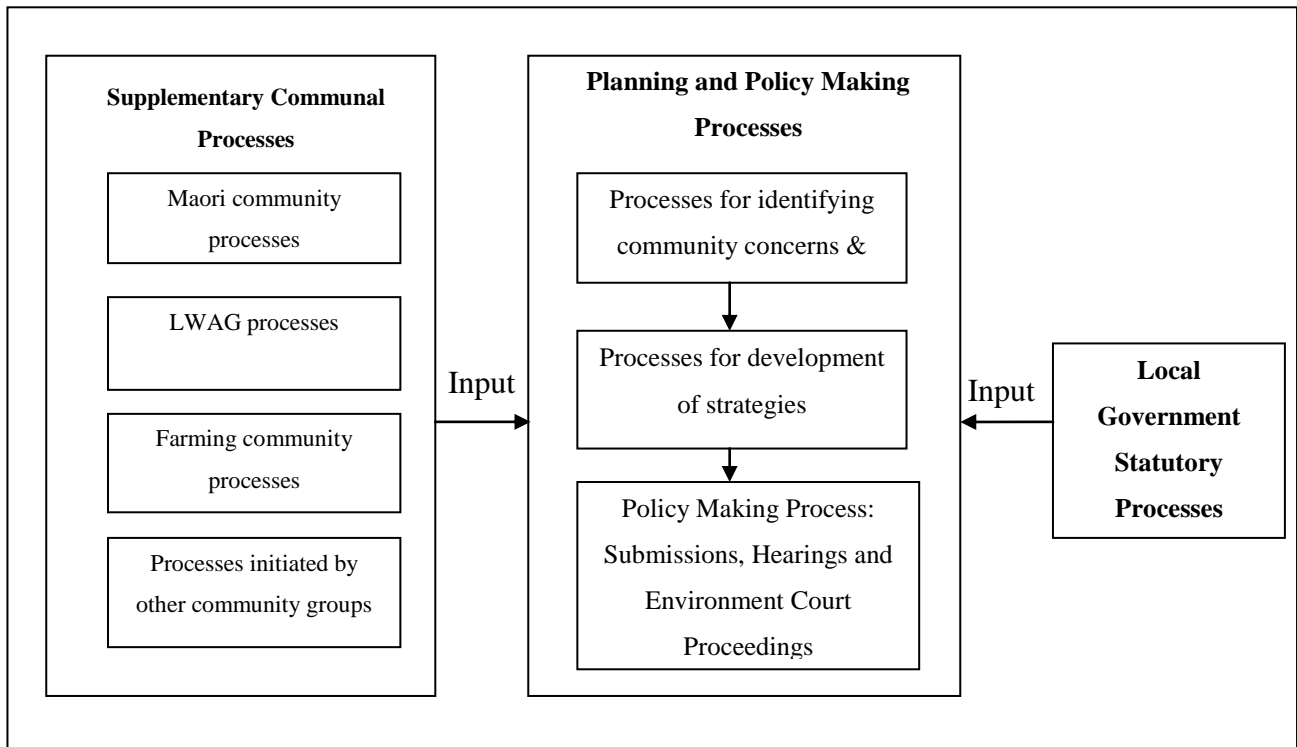
Communal processes, in this study, refer to the processes initiated by local authorities and community-based groups. From my field work in the Taupo district, I have classified the processes into two categories: planning and policy making processes, and supplementary communal processes. The processes are shown in Figure 8.1. Statutory Local Government processes (such as preparation of information and reports for the community, and administrative procedures for submission and hearings in accordance with LGA 2002 and RMA 1991) complemented the communal processes.

8.2.1 Planning and Policy Making Processes

Planning and policy making involved three interrelated processes including: processes for identifying community values and concerns (Figure 8.2); processes for developing sustainability strategies; and processes for formulating policies for sustainable development (Figure 8.3). Community values and concerns were initially identified during the drafting of the community accord (The Lake Taupo Accord,

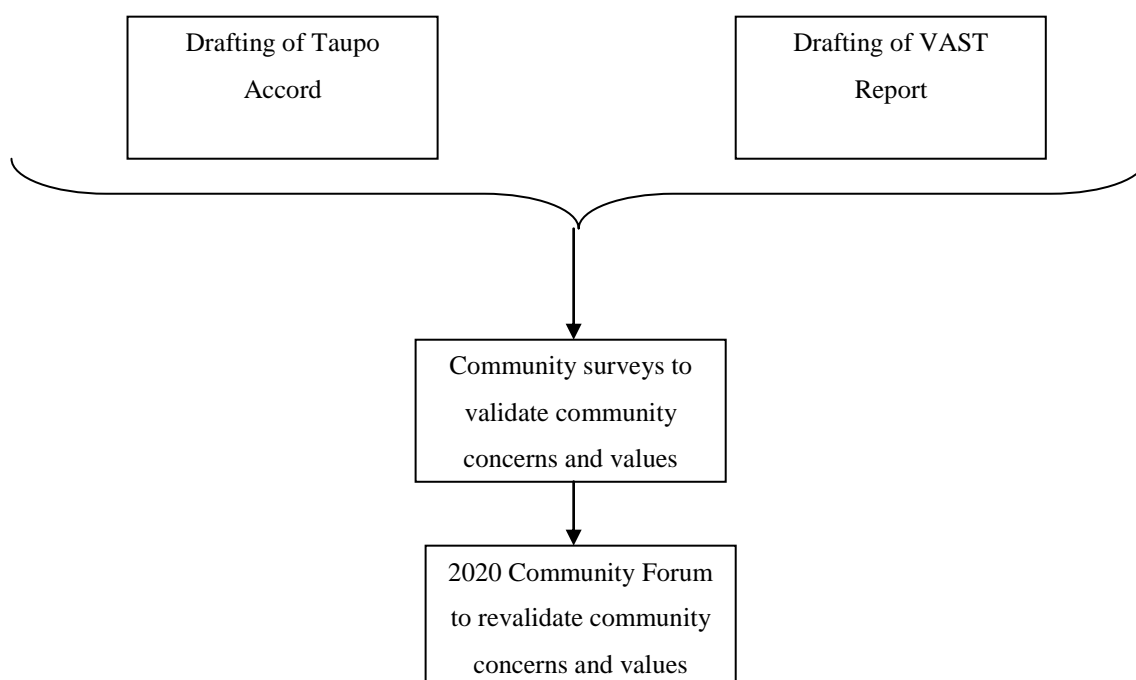
1999) and the VAST (Vibrant and Sustainable Taupo District, 2000) report and validated through community surveys (Environment Waikato, 2004a; Sanders, 2001; Stewart et al, 2000; Stewart et al, 2001a; Stewart et al., 2001b; Stewart et al., 2004) and the 2020 Community Forums (Environment Waikato, 2004b). The implications of the processes to the CAACG are discussed in section 8.4.

Figure 8-1: Communal and Statutory Processes in Taupo District



The community values and concerns formed the basis for the formulation of strategies and policies for the sustainable development of the Taupo District (Environment Waikato, 2003; Environment Waikato, 2004b; Environment Waikato, 2005). Key strategies that were developed during the period 2000 – 2004 include: the Economic Development Strategy (APR Consultants, 2002), the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy (Environment Waikato, 2003), and the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy or 2020 Action Plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b). The strategies reflect the three elements of sustainable development and were developed through three different processes with community participation in all the processes.

Figure 8-2: Processes for Identifying Community Concerns and Communal Values



The process to design an Economic Development Strategy for the District commenced in July 2001 (APR Consultants, 2002). The strategy is expected to be an important source of reference for developing LTCCP (Section 7.2.1 Local Government Act, 2002) and annual plans (Section 7.2.2 Local Government Act, 2002) of the Taupo district. The economic strategy is also expected to influence the future economic development in the Taupo District (APR Consultants, 2002).

The process to develop the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy was in response to community concern about pollution of Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2000a; 2001a; 2001b; 2001c; 2004a; Stewart, et al., 2000). With scientific evidence on pollution and causes of Lake Taupo (Gibbs, 1991, 1995; 1996; 1997; Edgar, 1999; Rae, et al., 2000), Environment Waikato undertook a consultation process in 2001 involving Central Government, the Taupo District Council, Ngati Tuwharetoa and other landowner groups operating in the catchments of Lake Taupo. The outcome of the process was the release of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy in 2003 (Environment Waikato, 2003).

The process to develop the 2020 Action Plan commenced in July 2001 and aimed at developing strategies for managing the catchments of Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2001g). The project was a partnership between Central Government, Local Government and community-based groups (Environment Waikato, 2001g) aiming to develop a strategy for the sustainable development of the Taupo Taupo district while protecting the natural environment especially the water quality in Lake Taupo. A series of forums (2020 Community Forums) was organised by EW to obtain community input for the development of the 2020 Action Plan. The forums were held between June 2003 – September 2004 and an independent coordinator was appointed by EW to conduct the forums. The forums were wide-ranging in representation with participation from numerous community groups, individuals and public authorities (Minutes of 2020 Community Forums held between June 2003 – September 2004). This was in line with the requirement of the LGA 2002 of reaching as many groups as possible (Sections 14, 78, 81, 14, 78, 81, 91 LGA 2002). The minutes of the Forum stated:

The primary objective of the 2020 Community Forum was the development of a sustainable development strategy that is supported by the community including the indigenous Maori Community to guide the decision making of all people including the government in the Lake Taupo catchment area.....It is expected that the strategy would result in the sustainable management of natural lake resources based on community and Maori values. There was a need for community involvement in developing the strategy and the Forum was a way to tap into this.....Government agencies could not prepare the strategy alone as they need community input (Minutes of 2020 Community Forum held on 5 June 2003).

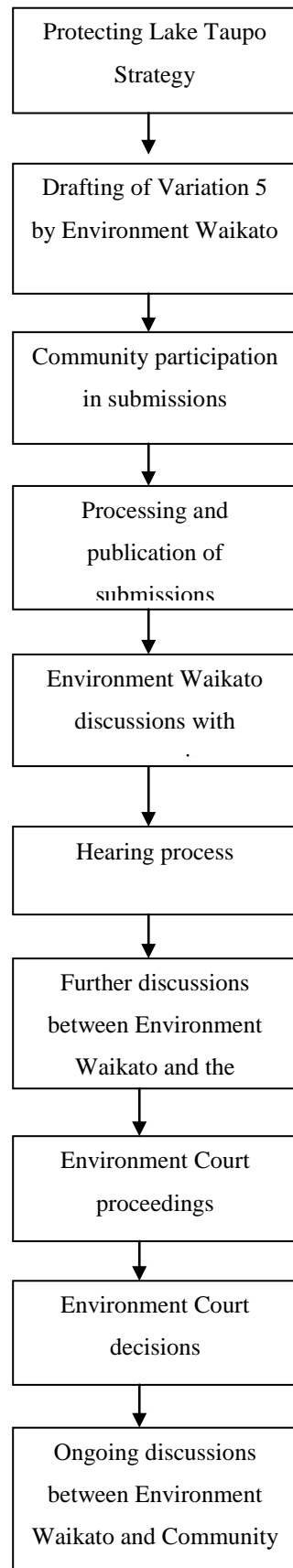
The forums obtained community feedback on several issues including: re-confirmation of community concerns and communal values identified in earlier processes; actions that need to be taken for sustainable development of the Taupo District; confirmation on the information needs of the community; and feedback on the draft 2020 Action Plan. The 2020 Action Plan is the final document that represents the three years of collaboration between the various groups involved. The plan was expected to influence environmental, social and economic decisions made by public agencies, the Maori community, organisations, community-based groups and individuals who have interests in the Lake Taupo catchments. Communitarian

and accountability themes manifested in planning and policy making processes are discussed in section 8.5 – 8.8.

The policy making process (Figure 8.3) followed the release of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. Environment Waikato proposed new land use rules to reduce (cap) the amount of nitrogen leaching from rural and urban properties into Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2005a). The proposed rules were in the form of variation to regional plan, known as Variation 5, and were publicly notified, pursuant to Clause 5 of the First Schedule to the RMA, on 9 July 2005 (Environment Waikato, 2005b). The policy making process has implications for the dialectical dimension of accountability as discussed in sections 8.5 -8.8.

The community was given until 2 September 2005 to lodge submissions with Environment Waikato (Environment Waikato, 2005a; Environment Waikato, 2005b). A total of 136 submissions were received by the Waikato Regional Council pursuant to Clause 6 of the First Schedule to the RMA. Following this, the Hearings Committee heard evidence and submissions from 69 submitters (Environment Waikato, 2007c). Several submitters were represented by legal counsel and in total the Hearings Committee heard evidence from 123 witnesses. The submitters who appeared before the committee consists of community groups like LWAG, Ngati Tuwharetoa, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Taupo Lake Care, Fonterra and several other groups. Several witnesses (such as scientists, lawyers, planners, farmers, foresters, university professors, financial experts, economists etc.) gave additional evidence at the request of the Hearings Committee.

Figure 8-3: Policy Making Process



Following the release of the decisions made by the Hearings Committee, a number of parties lodged appeals to the Environment Court on the decisions. Prior to Environment Court proceedings, Environment Waikato officials worked with the appellants to resolve these appeals. A new version of Variation 5 was prepared by Environment Waikato indicating changes that were made as a result of the Hearing Committee's decisions and indicating those parts of the variation that have been appealed (Environment Waikato, 2007b). The RMA 1991 provides the Environment Court with the power to modify, delete or replace a proposed provision to a regional plan if it determines that the provision "renders any land incapable of reasonable use, and places an unfair and unreasonable burden on any person having an interest in the land" (Section 85(3) Resource Management Act, 1991). Following the Environment Court decisions (Maki, 2008) further discussions were held between Environment Waikato and the community, especially farmers who would be most affected by the impending policy measures.

8.2.2 Supplementary Communal Processes

Community-based groups (such as Lakes and Waterways Action Group, Farming Groups and Residents' Associations) organised their own regular meetings and invite other groups to participate in their meetings. The LWAG organises meetings on a monthly basis to discuss issues of concern to the community. Set up in 1997, this group has representation from various groups in the Taupo district. The LWAG meetings were open to public at large and participants included local residents, representatives from other community based groups, commercial entities and local authorities and several Central Government departments. The meetings are ongoing with minutes of meetings circulated to all attendees. The agenda at these meetings covered several issues including: pollution of Lake Taupo; draft submissions on strategies and policy proposals; and discussion on scientific findings. A member of LWAG commented on the purpose of LWAG meetings:

... we actually inform people and get them current...get them to understand some of the future problems or even the problems today that face Taupo (Interview, June 2004).

The farmers in the Taupo district are represented by different associations and each association also conducts separate meetings. The meetings were organised by Taupo Lake Care, Federated Farmers, the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and various other farming groups (such as a conglomeration of a few farmers) to discuss current issues in the Taupo district that affect them. The meetings organised by the farming community were generally not open to the wider community and participation is by invitation. However, local authorities are often invited to the meetings as the farming community wants to defend the interests of farmers, especially in view of the impending policies measures that would have significant economic consequences for farmers. According to a farmer:

TLC have their own meetings ...mainly represented by the farmers...a lot of Maori incorporations are there ...90% of the farmers in the catchments and also the non-maori farmers.... Environment Waikato policy has implications for the livelihood of farmers....there were different levels of meetings ...we have our own group meetings...some of them are for specific topics example when EW wants to make a presentationWe've teams working with Environment Waikato, MAF policy makers, TDC, Ag Research, Dixtel. NIWA is a science information source... but it has been mainly us and Environment Waikato....LWAG was not involved in the TLC meeting....It is a meeting of the farming community to come up with something that is workableit is the farming community that will solve the problems of the farming community (Interview, January 2006).

Meetings were also held by residents association of some housing areas. The Chairman of Acacia Bay Residents' Association commented on meetings held by his association:

We have a monthly meeting of the Residents' Association executive and at that meeting I will report to the group on any meetings I've attended and what I thought the outcome was and who else was there and we report to the community twice a year, in a newsletter....we do occasionally hold public meetings so people can hear views, like when there was a proposal for a development beside the riverbankwe did hold a meeting at which we invited the developers, the council, Environment Waikato, to speak from their perspective, not to promote their point of view but merely to provide information....What we said was there will be people in this room who oppose it and who support it, we're not here to argue its merits, we are here to provide you with information, from the developers, from the council, from Environment Waikato,

anybody else, so that when you make a submission either for or against it is a well informed submission. That's what we saw our role as (Member of Accia Bay Residents Association, Interview, December 2005)

8.2.3 Statutory Local Government Processes

The Local Government Act 2002 requires local authorities, in the course of decision making, to consult and give consideration to the views of the community likely to be affected by or to have an interest in the decisions. Clause 91 of the Act specifically requires a local authority to establish and carry out a process in order to identify community priorities for the intermediate and long-term future of its district or region. The purpose of this process is to provide opportunities for communities to discuss the relative importance and priorities in relation to present and future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community. The statutory processes are described in Chapter 6.

8.3 THE MEANING OF COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNAL PROCESSES

The term “community” acquires meaning within the context of the communal processes in the Taupo District. The Taupo community is characterised by a community of interests consisting of individuals or groups who attended the communal processes. The scope of the community of interests is affected by several factors including: the period during which the communal processes took place; issues of common concern during that time period; individuals and groups who participated in the communal processes to discuss the common issues; initiatives undertaken by community-based groups and local authorities to bring together the community of interest; individuals and groups affected by particular planning and policy decisions; the capacity of individuals and groups to participate in the communal processes; and the willingness of individuals and groups to assume mutual responsibility to participate.

The community of interests can vary with the factors, that is, a different community of interest can come into existence at a different time period, for a different issue of common interest and different policy decision. In this thesis the community of

interests is defined by several factors including: the period 1998-2008, the issues discussed in Chapter 7 such as the (pollution of Lake Taupo, sustainable development and conflict of interests etc); the individuals and groups who participated in the processes. The same community of interests or parts of it could have been a part of a community of interest for issues which arose in prior periods and can also form the community of interests for another time period in the future. Even during the period 1998-2008 there are other issues of common concern, such as sub-division of land surrounding Lake Taupo (Taupo District Council, 2006, 2007, 2008a 2008b); Taupo Trout Fishery (Department of Conservation, 2006) and development of infrastructure and geothermal operations in the district (Environment Waikato, 2007f) which attracted a community of interests partly different from the community of interest concerned with the pollution of Lake Taupo. Hence, the meaning of community of interests can vary and the community of interests becomes redefined as new issues of common concern emerge. Such characteristics of modern day communities make the concept of community complex where more than one sense of community can prevail at different periods of time.

The scope of the community of interests may differ for different communal processes making the structure of the community very complex. This complexity was apparent in the processes shown in Figure 8.1 – 8.3. For example, key community-based groups involved in the drafting of the Lake Taupo Accord were the farming community, the Maori community (Ngati Tuwharetoa), LWAG, land developers, Taupo Chamber of Commerce, the Forestry Industry, electric power generators, local authorities, Central Government agencies (such as Department of Conservation and Department of Internal Affairs) and other community-based groups. This composition was slightly different from the composition of groups which participated in the process for the development of the Economic Development Strategy which included: the farming community, the business sector, Maori tribal groups and trust boards, Central Government departments, (Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, research institutions and numerous other community groups. Lake Taupo Development Company (an organization funded by Taupo District Council and the Lake Taupo Development Trust) provided the administrative support and coordination for the process. The parties involved in the formulation of

the protecting Lake Taupo Strategy were Environment Waikato, the Central Government, the Taupo District Council, Ngati Tuwharetoa and other landowner groups. The participants of the LWAG community meeting and 2020 Forums are provided in Appendixes 1 and 2.

The policy making processes have expanded the scope of the community of interests. There were more participants (123 participants) involved in the hearings process than in LWAG community meetings and 2020 Community Forums. Variation 5 has environmental, economic, social implications and it is crucial for the parties affected by the policy to put forward their views to the Hearings Committee. Fifteen parties participated in Environment Court proceedings and the court heard evidence from twenty-two witnesses (Environment Court, 2008). The parties included: the appellants, the respondent and other interested parties (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008). The appellants were Carter Holt Harvey Limited, Environmental Defence Society, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Lake Taupo Forest Trust, Lake Rotoaira Forest trust, Lake Taupo Forest, Management Limited, Taupo Lake Care Incorporated, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board. Waikato Regional Council took part as a respondent. Other interested parties (Section 274 RMA) included: Fontera Cooperative Group Limited, Ngati Tuwharetoa Agricultural Group, LWAG, Taumata Plantations Limited and CGE Burgess Family Estate.

Local authorities in the Taupo district assumed a crucial role in the community, especially in facilitating the 2020 Community Forums, and policy making processes. In endeavouring to formulate and adopt a local Agenda 21 for the district, the local authorities have become interlinked with the community and have become part of the community of interest. This is unavoidable as implementation of sustainable development takes place at grass roots level close to the Local Government (Agenda 21).

The foregoing discussion suggests that the meaning of community in the Taupo district is related to the participatory democratic principle of inclusiveness. Although participation does not involve the entire 33,000 (Statistics new Zealand, 2006) of the Taupo populace, the inclusive nature of the participation implies that no one has

been deprived participation. This inclusive attribute provides a valid meaning for community because anyone can be included in the community, not only the residents in the Taupo District but anyone who is willing to: share common concerns and values attached to Lake Taupo; take ownership of the environmental issues; participate in communal process; assume mutual responsibility and joint accountability for the common good.

The inclusive nature of participation allows diversity of interests to be represented in the communal processes and this in turn has implications for a communitarian approach to accountability. Firstly, multiple accountability relationships were formed depending on the party which pose questions (the accountor) and the party which provides justifications and defends its activities (the accountee). Secondly, the subject matter of accountability becomes diverse with multiple interests expressed at the meetings. Nevertheless, the core issue of concern is the pollution of Lake Taupo. Thirdly, there can be conflict of interests as discussed in Chapter 7 (paragraph 7.6.4.5) and resolving the conflicts may pose a challenge to the community and local authorities. Under such a situation mutual and mutual responsibility for the common good (Lake Taupo), rather than self-interest, becomes fundamental for a communitarian approach to accountability

8.4 COMMUNAL PROCESSES AS A VENUE FOR IDENTIFYING THE SUBJECT MATTER OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The subject matter of accountability generally refers to the issues for which people and organisations are held accountable (Behn, 2000; Boven, 2007; Mulgan, 2000; Shearer, Grey et al, 1996). The subject matter of accountability can be described in terms of the question: accountability for what? (Gray, 1992). The question is “about what is account to be rendered?” (Bovens, 2007, p.454). In other words, accountability is concerned with “the aspect of the conduct about which information is to be provided” (Bovens, 2007, p.454). My proposition is that, in the communitarian approach the subject matter of accountability is related to community concerns. I consider the subject matter of accountability as the matters of concern to the community that provide a basis for reporting, dialogue, planning and policy decisions. The subject matter includes matters that are reported, discussed and

resolved. The processes for identifying the subject matter included: establishing community values; determining issues that affect the community values; identifying community concerns and information needs. In the Taupo District the subject matter was identified through various processes as shown in Figure 8.2. The process started with a series of community meetings initiated by LWAG during the period November - December 1998 at which community groups identified values³⁸ associated with Lake Taupo and activities that were potentially a threat to those values (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999). Officials from Taupo District Council (TDC) and Environment Waikato prepared an analysis of the values and threats, and the results of their analysis are contained in the Lake Taupo Accord. Another related process was the attempt by several community-based groups to prepare the VAST³⁹ report (Vibrant and Sustainable Taupo District, 2000) in collaboration with local authority and Central Government representatives. The process is the beginning of the formulation of a local Agenda 21 for the Taupo district (Vibrant and Sustainable Taupo District, 2000).

8.4.1 Community Surveys

Following the drafting of the Taupo Accord and VAST report several community surveys were undertaken by Environment Waikato to collate the views of the wider community on common concerns and values (Stewart, et al., 2000, Stewart, et al., 2001a; Stewart, et al., 2001b; Stewart, 2004). The primary objectives of the surveys were: to assess how well the community concerns and values identified in the Lake Taupo Accord and VAST reports reflect the views of the residents or wider community of the Taupo district; to determine community awareness and involvement in the process for the development of strategies for sustainable development; and to determine the changes in attitudes and perceptions of the community regarding the environmental issues facing the Taupo district. During the design phase of the questionnaire, local authority officials and members of LWAG were consulted.

³⁸ Detailed discussion on the threats and values is provided in Chapter 9.

³⁹ Vibrant and Sustainable Taupo District

Various themes emerged from the findings of the surveys (Sanders, 2001; 2000, Stewart, et al., Stewart, et al., 2001a; Stewart, et al., 2001b; Stewart, 2004), confirming the community values that were attached to Lake Taupo. These include: clean and clear water in the Lake; a weed-free lake and foreshore reserves; the aesthetic and ecological features of the lake; the lake's amenity and utility values for commercial purposes such as tourism and hydropower; the cultural values of the Maori community attached to the Lake and its natural environment; recreational opportunities, and safe swimming. The surveys indicated that a strong ethic of environmental protection was evident in the community. Environmental protection was rated as more important than economic development. Generally the residents did not agree to sacrificing environmental quality for economic growth. The findings of the surveys were a validation of the Taupo community's concerns and values identified in the Taupo Accord and VAST report. The community surveys show that the local Taupo community and the wider Waikato regional community support the values contained in the Lake Taupo Accord (Sanders, 2001).

Common concerns of the community included: the pollution of Lake Taupo and deteriorating water quality of the Lake; weeds proliferating around the Lake margins; increasing nitrogen levels in the Lake and fluctuations in lake levels (Environment Waikato, 2004; Stewart et al., 2000). In particular, the community was concerned that: too much nitrogen entering streams and the Lake can cause nuisance weed growths; animal farming is a major source of nitrogen flowing into the Lake; allowing pollutants to leach into the ground can affect the water quality of Lake Taupo and sewage spills can make the Lake waters unfit for swimming.

8.4.2 Validation of Subject Matter of Accountability

The revalidation of community concerns and values continued through other processes conducted by Environment Waikato including community participation in risk assessment (Huser, et al., 2002) and revalidation carried out during the 2020 Community Forum⁴⁰. At the 2020 Community Forum (on 30 October 2003), EW provided participants a report (Appendix 13) on the summary of threats to

⁴⁰ See section 8.5 for details.

community values identified in the previous communal processes. The report provided the basis for a dialogue to reconfirm community concerns and threats to community values. Participants of the 2020 Community Forums reviewed the list of threats to Lake Taupo, prioritised the threats according to what each group sees as important and suggested solutions to overcome the threats. It was a process for interaction and exchange of ideas, promoting joint responsibility in identifying common concerns. Several threats to community values were reconfirmed at the meeting (Minutes of Meeting of Community Forum held on 30 October 2003). First, pastoral farming caused increasing nutrient input into the Lake, giving rise to degradation of water quality, algal blooms, threats to the health of people swimming in the Lake, a degraded environment for locals and a risk to future development. Lack of statutory regulations and policies regarding these pollutants was a major concern identified at the meeting. Second, threats from economic development arising from uncontrolled development included input of nutrients from sewage disposal and storm-water run-off into Lake Taupo from urban areas that caused localized degradation of the Lake and foreshore, for example, increased unsightly and smelly weed along the lakefront and degraded lake water for swimming along the lakefront and other areas. The growing population of residents and tourists also increased nutrient input into the Lake and degraded were values listed as important by the community, covering recreational activities, outstanding scenery, wilderness areas and cultural values. Large urban developments such as at Kinloch, Wharewaka Mile Bay, and Mapara Valley, and the lack of monitoring of the tourist industry which brought tourists in large numbers to Taupo district were also considered threats to community values. Finally the uncertain roles and responsibilities of various statutory authorities in monitoring the Lake water quality were identified as a threat.

8.4.3 Quality of Life Risk Assessment

Based on the community feedback, the threats were analysed and categorised by EW analysts into seven groups (Appendix 14). Following this, another community exercise called “Quality of Life Risk Assessment” was conducted by EW at the Community Forum held on 12 February 2004. The purpose was to allow the community to prioritise the seven categories of threats in relation to its values. A risk

assessment ballot form (Appendix 14) containing the list of threats and a lickert scale (from 5 – 1) was used to help the community rank the threats from greatest threat “5” down to the lowest threat “1”. This risk assessment form (Appendix 14) was distributed to members to complete and return. To achieve more inclusive participation in the process and to get the views of a wider sector of the community, the risk assessment forms were sent to clubs and schools in the Taupo district.

The feedback from the “Quality of Life Risk Assessment” exercise was further analysed by EW analysts to identify the top threats. The results were distributed at the 2020 Community Forum meeting held on 6 May 2004. The threats to community values were prioritised as High, Medium or Low. The results (Appendix 15) indicate that the following are considered as High threats to the community’s enjoyment of Lake Taupo and the natural environment of the Lake area: sewage pollution in the water; toxic algal blooms; declining water clarity; and weed growths along the shoreline. Medium threats are: overdevelopment of Taupo lakefront; noise pollution; invasive pests and weeds; etc. Low threats are: cultural values attached to the Lake; conflicts between recreational users; and pressures on recreational facilities. The prioritising of threats by the community in the Quality of Life Risk Assessment coincided with the results of the October 2003 survey undertaken by EW.

Reporting on the threats and the community concerns can be considered as the primary subject matters of the communitarian approach to accountability. Prioritising community values is in compliance with the LGA 2002 requirements to determining community economic, social and environmental priorities of the community. The values of the community can be considered as the benchmark for measuring the social and environmental performance all activities in the Taupo District, in particular farming activities which have been the subject of scrutiny in recent years. The accountability implications is that activities that adversely affect the community values need to be reported to the community for the community to deliberate and set plans and policy decisions to control such activities.

8.4.4 Identifying the Information Needs of the Community

Processes for identifying the information needs of the community were undertaken during the 2020 Community Forum on 6 May 2004 and at the LWAG Community meeting on 26 May 2004. A representative from NIWA was appointed by EW to coordinate the identification of knowledge gaps. The representative stated that:

2½ years ago knowledge gaps were identified. They have since gone back and identified: what knowledge gaps have been filled since; what research will be undertaken in the next 2 years; and what new research has been identified in the last 2 years (Minutes of Community Forum held on 6 May (2004).

During the process a handout (Appendix 16) was distributed giving a list of research items that were pre-identified by EW. Participants were asked to assign their own priorities to each of the items and to assign them high (3), medium (2) and low (1) ranking and add anything that might have been missed. A report, the 2020 Research Plan, was produced, which included the feedback from the Forum and the LWAG community meetings. According to the report, high priority research and information needs of the community include: predictions of nitrogen loads entering Lake Taupo in the future; determination of nutrient loads under different land management practices; the relative importance of phosphorous and nitrogen loads to the Lake; effectiveness and economics of nitrogen load reductions; mechanism for removing nutrients from Lake Taupo; impacts of increased tourism; relationship between algal populations and water clarity in Lake Taupo; impacts of invasive aquatic weeds on biodiversity, etc. The Research Plan was to form the basis of further research and provides guidelines for researchers and agencies to undertake, commission or fund relevant research that is targeted to the needs of the Taupo community (Minutes of Community Forum held on 17 June 2004).

The participants were informed that there was a lack in research on issues related to indigenous Maori community and the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board is committed to develop a research strategy for indigenous issues. An EW official stated that the Research Plan was not a static document. It is planned as part of implementing 2020 to undertake an annual review and make amendments as required (Minutes of Community Forum held on 17 June 2004).

The process for establishing information needs of the community can be considered as the process for identifying the subject matter of accountability i.e. matters that need to be reported to the community to enable the community to participate in the dialectical dimension of accountability and in planning and policy making processes

8.5 THE DIALECTICAL DIMENSION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNAL PROCESSES

Advocates of communitarianism generally believe that accountability involves processes of negotiation, explanation and articulation in a community and provides a sense of belonging and understanding in the community (Macintyre, 1984; Francis, 1991; Wilson, 1993). The dialectical dimension of accountability provides insights into the communitarian principle of cooperative enquiry promoting the idea of open communication and deliberation between informed participants to achieve consensus on issues of common concern (Tam, 1998). In this section, I explain how cooperative enquiry and the dialectical dimension of accountability acquire meanings within the context of the communal processes in the Taupo district. Cooperative enquiry held in the Taupo district is in the form of a series of dialogues⁴¹ between various community-based groups, local authorities, Central Government authorities, private enterprises, farmers, scientists and indigenous community groups. The dialogue involves deliberation and critical examination regarding the impacts of farming and other activities on the water quality of Lake Taupo. The dialogical process aims at allowing different voices to be heard and doubts to be expressed. It involves: questioning assumptions and sharing information about the pollution of Lake Taupo; building understanding of the challenges of the future; changing attitudes and behaviours in a non-threatening environment; and negotiation and collective planning and policy making all with the aim of protecting Lake Taupo. The dialogues in the Taupo Community also resemble the dialectical dimension of accountability (Mulgan 2000). The dialogues took place at various community meetings organised by community-based groups (such as LWAG, Taupo Lake Care, Acacia Bay Residents' Association, Mapara Valley Preservation Society, Federated Farmers, Indigenous Maori community groups, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, etc.)

⁴¹ Ellinor and Gerard (1999)

and by local authorities (such as the 2020 Community Forum). The dialogues involved reporting and providing explanations by some groups and the posing of questions by other groups. The purpose is to create awareness of the pollution of Lake Taupo and to identify responsibilities and solutions to reduce the pollution. The discussion that follows illustrates some of the many dialogues that happened in the Taupo District during the communal processes and explains the manifestation of the dialectical dimension of accountability within the dialogues.

8.5.1 Dialogue between the Community and Farmers

Community meetings have become venues for reporting and debating on the impacts of animal farming. Accountability resembles critical enquiry of activities that pollute Lake Taupo. The critical dimension involves debate and dialogue on activities that have adverse impacts on Lake Taupo and community values attached to the Lake. The virtues of animal farming were challenged while representatives of the farming community provided justifications in a bid to gain community support on the legitimacy of farming. Some of the criticisms levied on the farmers were discussed in Chapter 7 and similar criticisms ensued during the LWAG community meetings and during the planning and policy making processes.

Issues were raised at a community meeting (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004) regarding nutrient input from wrong and unsustainable land use and that effluent containing nitrogen discharge anywhere in the catchment finishes up in the Lake. An EW official responded that the issue is contamination of water from utilisation of land for pastoral farming, not unsustainable land use as such. Policy measures would seek to set conditions for the management of nitrogen in the catchment areas (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004). Suggestions were made for conversion of farmlands to pine forestry:

As animal farming is a major source of nitrogen entering into the lake, the community discussed other land use options for animal farmers including conversion to pine forestry. An official from EW explained that such changes will require the support of the community. A member of LWAG suggested that compensation be considered for loss of pastoral land use into forestry (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 25 February 2004).

LWAG, in its report to the community, raised concern as to the intention of the strategy to retire all of the catchment into pine forestry if it becomes uneconomic to continue farming. LWAG believes that there has not been a call anywhere else in New Zealand on such a scale for farming individuals and organisations to give up capital. LWAG believes that the success of strategy depends on an equitable resolution being made on the conversion issue. However, a participant at the LWAG meeting expressed urgency on the purchase of farmland by the government and conversion to pine forestry:

If money was available now, land purchase could begin. Why wait another 3-4 years? John believed TDC should begin to recognise their economic responsibilities in their annual plans... farmers having opportunity to put stock levels up before nitrogen cap is in place,,, Could the Council sell their plantation forest and purchase critical pasture land? Government funds are not available for the purchase and conversion of farmlands until rules were in place....that was problematical, causing delay in nitrogen reduction (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 25 February 2004).

One member of the community associated the increase in nitrogen levels in Lake Taupo to the growth of pastureland in the Lake Taupo catchments. The participant commented:

Since pasturelands increased in the 1950's we had seen a rise in nitrogen levels in the groundwater, streams and Lake which continued to rise (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 25 February 2004).

Another member wanted urgent action to convert farmlands to other less nitrogen producing land-based activities. He suggested that:

...money be advanced by the government early so as to secure land conversion as soon as possible (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 June 2004).

Farmers' expressed the following concern during a LWAG Community meeting:

The farming community believed that landowners should be key partners in finding solutions to the pollution issue. However the farming

community felt that EW may not entirely trust farmers in that regard. Taupo Lake Care felt that nitrogen-reducing targets that are both realistic and achievable are required. Taupo Lake Care would like to see more incentives in place to address land use conversion issues and a realistic timeline for making changes...Taupo Lake Care is in negotiation with local authorities for increased incentives/subsidies – the long term benefits of which would be for the district as a whole. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 November 2003).

Generally, animal farmers in the Taupo District are hesitant to change to other land uses as such change has grave economic implications for them. However, the farming community shows reasonableness (Young, 2002), by taking action to change its priorities which are inappropriate, and willingness to face new challenges.

Dairy farms in the catchment which have existed since 1966 are currently not expanding their operations. Some landowners were currently converting to deer from beef/sheep in an effort to reduce nitrogen loads. Awareness of the nitrogen-related pollution of Lake Taupo has meant planned dairy conversions have been sold or unconverted....there was a will to change...The dairy sector was working on systems to convert nitrogen to ammonia and discharge to the atmosphere instead of to the soil. For farmers, intensification is seen to be more viable than diversification. Farming viability/inequity of effects on different landowners problems are still to be addressed (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 November 2003)

A consultant appointed by Taupo Lake Care reported that any changes to farming practices would be a great burden to the farmers. Matters raised by the consultant include the following:

- Farmers do not have time to change their thinking
- Software was needed to give an assessment of nitrogen flowing out from farmland
- Change of ownership of land is a consideration
- Farming is about producing profit – reducing production would reduce profit.
- In farming, the drive is for highest and best use. Landowners are being asked to abandon this fundamental principle.
- In the 1960s and 1970s farmers were encouraged to increase productivity with no understanding of what spill-over effects there might be in the future. We are now understanding those effects.

- The issue is how to make the changes necessary at a minimum cost and still allow landowners to run viable businesses and maximise their own profitability.
- Government will not pay lost opportunities.

(Minutes of 2020 Community Forum held on 17 June 2004).

The farming community is also discontented with the nitrogen-restricting policy proposed in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and in Variation 5. The proposed Nitrogen capping limits the nitrogen output in the catchments of Lake Taupo to existing levels. Any increase in nitrogen output would result in penalties or tax payments. The Chairman of Taupo Lake Care reported inequities in ‘N’ restrictions proposed by EW.

Nitrogen cap would cause at least \$150,000,000 in lost income opportunities. Another big issue is that fixing forestry and undeveloped land at its current nitrogen output prohibits future development....statistics show loss value over time with nitrogen cap of up to \$112 million for 20% reduction on sheep and beef farms. The proposed Environment Waikato strategy does not adequately address forestry and undeveloped land or the nitrogen cap issues.landowners were the most affected parties, impacting directly on individual livelihoods and land values. The issues are complex and Taupo Lake Care believed that it had a good understanding of the difficulties involved (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 November 2003).

The dialogue which started at the LWAG community meetings and 2020 Community Forums continued during the policy making processes. The following dialogues/ debates happened during the submissions, hearings and Environment Court processes.

8.5.1.1 Debate on the Legitimacy of Farming Activities and the Legality of Variation 5

Several submissions on Variation 5 questioned the legitimacy of farming activities while the legal validity of Variation 5 was challenged by some pastoral farmers (Environment Waikato, 2007c). The issue was whether nitrogen leaching from land use activities including pastoral farming (both from fertiliser application and animal defecations) is a discharge of a contaminant (entering water) in contravention of

section 15(1)(b) of the RMA (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.9). While the spreading of fertiliser has been accepted as requiring some form of control, animal waste excretion has not been accepted as such. This has probably been because animal waste has either not been viewed as a discharge or it has been thought to be incapable of control. Some submitters argued that the discharge of nitrogen from stock to land where it might enter water has required resource consent under RMA. To date no discharge permits have been issued to farmers owning animal stocks in the Lake Taupo catchment. Hence, it was argued that farmers do not have any existing use rights under section 20A of the RMA because this discharge has never been lawfully established (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 21).

Taupo farmers believe that they were operating within the proposed activity rules of Variation 5. The rules were broad enough to allow for animal defecations onto land. They considered farms and the infrastructure that service them as physical resources to be managed long with all the other natural and physical resources of the catchment for the purpose of sustainable management (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 22). A representative from Taupo Lake Care made submissions in defence of the legitimacy of farming activities in the Lake Taupo catchments and pointed out the discharges caused by other land-use activities in the catchment:

...if there has been a breach of section 15 of the RMA, as regards nitrogen discharges, this applies to all land uses in the Catchment that result in such a discharge... the general understanding of those who had been contributing nitrogen to the Lake, including the farmer....was that they have been acting lawfully....for years people have assumed they were operating lawfully (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 22).

The legality of Variation 5 was also debated during the hearings process that ensued the submissions:

Under the Variation the Council has retrospectively authorised and given priority to pastoral farmers' discharges....Any priority for existing nitrogen discharges must be based on a statutory right...However, in the Taupo situation, farmers have no priority to continue existing levels of discharge because they have no statutory rightsit is going too far to say that Environment Waikato can decide through its plan, who will have priority to discharge where there is no pre-existing statutory right....Even

if farmers feel they have a legitimate expectation to continue farming at their current level, they do not hold resource consents for that activity (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 21).

The Hearings Committee considered the arguments and suggestions put forward by the submitters before concluding the discussion with recommendations (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 22-23). The Committee noted that Variation 5 permits the application of fertiliser and spreading animal waste on land. If there have been unlawful discharges of nitrogen in the past this unlawfulness applies to all land uses in the catchment that result in such a discharge and not merely confined to pastoral farming. The Waikato Regional Council has sought to control such nitrogen leaching activities by proposing Variation 5. In terms of section 15(1)(b) of the RMA, all discharges of nitrogen as a contaminant from land use activities in the catchment have probably been unlawful since the passage of the RMA and have been so under the Water and Soil Conservation Act 1967 (Environment Waikato, 2007c). The Hearings Committee accepted that:

...none of these nitrogen leaching activities have existing use rights either under section 10 or section 20A of the RMA (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 22).

However, the committee did not accept that:

...the Waikato Regional Council is unable to make lawful that which has hitherto been unlawful through the exercise of its functions and powers under the RMA....It is well established that a consent authority can legitimise an unlawful activity by granting a retrospective resource consent and this Committee knows of no case or rule of law which holds that the same cannot be done through a district or regional plan (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 23).

The committee did not accept that the provisions of Variation 5 are unlawful and create discharge rights in priority for any particular group. The committee is of the opinion that:

...the Variation does no more than make lawful that which was hitherto unlawful...and in so doing simply maintains the status quo....When the relevant rules are carefully examined it can be seen that what they do is

permit or allow by way of resource consent, certain land uses that are described in such a way as to include a nitrogen leaching element. These rules have been propounded by Waikato Regional Council pursuant to its function in terms of s30(1)(c)(ii) of the RMA to control land use for the purpose of maintaining the water quality of Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2007c; pp. 23-24).

For all the reasons set out above the committee concluded that:

...the relevant provisions of Variation 5 that provide for the control of land uses are lawful (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 24).

8.5.1.2 Debate on Resource Consent Requirements for Farming Activities

Another issue of concern to some submitters is the rule in Variation 5 requiring resource consents for the activities carried out in farmlands. It is proposed in Variation 5 that resource consent cap farmers at their average nitrogen leaching between July 2001 and June 2005. A submitter was concerned about the costs of the land use consent process:

...farmers were already contributing through rate increases as a result of the proposal to protect Lake Taupo and that these extra costs will impact severely on his net income...farming remain a permitted activity and that any costs be covered by the Waikato Regional Council (Environment Waikato, 2007d; p. 174).

Requests from several other submitters include:

...the consents be made non-notified and that all costs associated with resource consents should be borne by the Waikato Regional Council....consents should not be required until research into nitrogen reducing activities has been undertaken so as to avoid farmers having to make reductions. (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 166-205).

The Hearing Committee concluded that landowners farming at higher stocking rates than allowed are more commercial in nature and must apply for resource consent to continue their current practice. The committee was informed that the Waikato Regional Council intends to contract a small pool of nutrient management advisors to work with farmers to establish a benchmark or nitrogen discharge allowance (Environment Waikato, 2007d, p. 176). The Hearing Committee advised the

contracting of the nutrient management advisors to assist in the establishment of a nitrogen discharge allowance and to ensure that the overseer model is consistently applied to each farm.

8.5.1.3 Debate on Classification of Farming as a Nitrogen Leaching Activity

The farming community represented by Federated Farmers New Zealand (Federated Farmers New Zealand, 2009) and Fonterra Cooperative Group Limited is generally unhappy over the emphasis on farming activities as a nitrogen leaching activity. Variation 5 stated that:

Farming activities which result in nitrogen leaching are managed to maintain the 2001 water quality characteristics of Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2007b, p.7).

The farming community wanted other parties to be accountable for their land-use activities as well. Federated Farmers proposed the deletion of the emphasis on farming in the objective of Variation 5. The position of Federated Farmers New Zealand, supported by Fonterra Cooperative Group Limited is as follows:

The objective should refer to “activities” generally, rather than focusing on farming, which is only one of the manageable sources of nitrogen....reference to “farming” be deleted but considered that adding a reference to “forestry” would be an acceptable alternative on the basis that forestry in the catchment was second to farming in terms of “manageable” nitrogen contribution....farming contributed 92% and forestry 1% of the manageable load...farming was not the only activity contributing manageable nitrogen (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008, p. 37).

The Environment Court made an interim decision on this issue:

...Pastoral farming accounts for 92% of this nitrogen, forestry 1%, gorse and broom 1 % and urban run-off and sewage 6%.....Whilst there are several sources of manageable nitrogen, it is clear from the evidence that farming is by far the dominant source. We note that Objective 3 deals with wastewater discharges and the near shore effects of nitrogen and pathogens on lake water quality. The matter of higher nitrogen leaching from some forestry and gorse and broom has been included within what

is regarded as the manageable load during the course of the hearing....the supporting explanation of the Principal Reasons...put forward by the Regional Council, most accurately recognises the opportunities to manage the nitrogen load to the lake in the Lake Taupo catchment, and is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008, pp. 36-37).

The Environment Court decided on a very slight change to the wording of Objective 2 to encompass the broader land use activities that contribute to the manageable load of nitrogen while retaining the focus on farming activities. The following wordings were suggested:

Land use activities which result in nitrogen leaching, particularly farming, are managed to facilitate the restoration of the water quality characteristics of Lake Taupo to their 2001 levels (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008, p. 37).

8.5.1.4 Debate on Classification of Farming as Permitted/ Controlled Activity

According to Variation 5 high nitrogen leaching farming activity in excess of 8 kilogram hectare per year is a permitted activity until July 1 2007 after which it will be a controlled activity (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.21). Several parties (such as Federated farmers, Fonterra, Taupo Lake Care and Ngato Tuwharetoa Agricultural Group) sought to classify farming activities as permitted activities instead of controlled activities. Others (such as Waikato Regional Council and several others) proposed the classification of farming activities as controlled activities (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 40).

Waikato Regional Council does not consider that stating farming as a permitted activity was the most appropriate way to achieving the objectives and policies of Variation 5 and supported the controlled activity status for farming (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 43). A planning expert who presented evidence in support of Waikato Regional Council listed the criteria for a permitted activity including: clear and certain; not contain subjective terms; be capable of consistent interpretation and implementation by lay people without reference to council officers; and not retain later discretions to council officers (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008, p. 43). According to the planning expert:

Permitted activity rules can play a useful resource management purpose for authorising simple activities that are undertaken on a routine and frequent basis and where the effects of those activities are demonstrably minor and the risks to the environment if they are misused are small (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 44).

Some parties criticised the farming community's intentions:

...the farming groups may be endeavouring to shoehorn this complex process into a permitted activity regime (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 51).

Also of concern is that the RMA:

...does not provide for charges for monitoring to be imposed on a permitted activity, but does for a controlled activity. The Council was also concerned to be able to efficiently recover the Council's costs of administering the rule (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 49).

However, Federated Farmers and other farming groups sought the permitted activity classification for farming and proposed that farmers should not be required to obtain resource consents to undertake farming in rural areas (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 45). In support of this proposal the following argument was presented:

...given New Zealand's pastoral heritage, the permissive presumption is an obvious and appropriate starting point for the activity of farming in rural areas. The reality is that farming, like many other businesses/industries in rural areas, requires resource consents for many of its activities and structures, where it has been considered appropriate, taking into account the actual and potential effects of those activities....no reason for farming to be treated differently from other activities. (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; pp.45-46).

The Environment Court noted that according to Section 77B of the RMA, a permitted activity requires no resource consent if the activity complies with any standards, terms or conditions specified in a policy. Therefore it is necessary for any such standards, terms or conditions to be included in the policy and to be stated with

sufficient certainty such that compliance is able to be determined readily without reference to discretionary assessments.

The Environment Court also noted that implementing rules related to permitted activities and monitoring of permitted activities was very complex that require detailed processes and information requirements and data to be recorded by Environment Waikato ((Environment Court New Zealand, 2008, p. 47). Aspects of permitted activity that are of concern to several parties include certainty, objectivity, comprehensibility, public records and cost recovery (Environment Court New Zealand pp. 46-49). In these circumstances the Environment Court considered that:

...the mandatory record keeping requirements...that apply to a controlled activity, being a resource consent, already exist, and are well tested and understood by the Council and the community, such that they are clearly the more efficient and effectivethere is already a comprehensive regime ...that can be applied to a controlled activity as a resource consent. We consider it to be more efficient and effective to use that, rather than to devise alternative ...systems which are not already in place nor familiar to the local community (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; pp. 48-49).

The Environment Court concluded that for Variation 5:

...a controlled activity is the most appropriate type to implement the objectives and policies of the plan and to assist the Regional Council to carry out its functions to achieve the purpose of the Act (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 51).

8.5.1.5 Debate on Non-Complying or Discretionary Activity Status

According to Variation 5, the use of land in the Lake Taupo catchment for activities that cause excess nitrogen leaching than that permitted under the variation is classified as a non-complying activity (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.27). Several appellants (such a as Taupo Lake Care, Tuwharetoa Agricultural Group and Fonterra) want such activities to be provided discretionary status while federated Farmers requested the classification of restricted discretionary (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008, p. 53). However, a representative from Environment Waikato

argued that such an activity should be classified as non-complying rather than discretionary because:

...it requires a more rigorous consenting process and, as a result, will better achieve the objective of protecting the water quality of Lake Taupo....Maintaining the cap is of fundamental importance to protecting the water quality of Lake Taupo and that is most appropriately achieved with a non-complying default rule....A discretionary activity default rule indicates that activities are generally appropriate, and this is the wrong signal to be sending in the Lake Taupo catchment (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 53).

Environment Waikato is concerned that classifying the activities as discretionary could lead to:

...a series of consents allowing small increases in the nitrogen leaching levels. Considered individually each application would likely be assessed as being of minor or less than minor effect. It was the cumulative effect that was of concern...the cumulative effect of even small increments across the catchment could have a significant impact on the Lake (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 55).

The Environment Court noted the principal difference between a discretionary activity and a non-complying activity. Under a non-complying activity the Regional Council's power to consent is restricted by the conditions set out in section 104D of the RMA and an application for non-complying activity would be publicly notified (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008).

The Environment Court accepted the explanation provided by Environment Waikato that:

...categorising an activity as non-complying sends a signal that the activity is not generally condoned and that a strong case needs to be made to support it (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 55).

The Environment Court recommended the non-complying classification on the basis that such a classification is most appropriate to implement the objectives and policies of Variation 5 and to assist the Regional Council to carry out its functions to achieve the purpose of the RMA (Environment Court New Zealand, 2008; p. 56).

8.5.1.6 Debate on Mechanisms for Allocating Nitrogen Discharge Rights

Several mechanisms for nitrogen allocation were proposed in Variation 5 and a number of parties made submissions and called detailed expert evidence on this issue. One of the proposed mechanisms was grandparenting, which allocates the right to leach nitrogen on the basis of historical levels (Environment Waikato, 2005a; p.22). Under grandparenting, nitrogen discharge allowances for farmland would be based on the average quantity of nitrogen leached from that land between July 2001 and June 2005 (Environment Waikato, 2005a; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2005). For all other land (e.g. forestry and undeveloped land) discharge allowances would be set at a specified flat rate. Grandparenting is expected to result in the least social and economic unrest for land owners, and in terms of land use, initially maintains the status quo (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2005). MAF proposed that a variation of grandparenting be adopted, where owners of land with manageable discharges receive an initial allowance less than 100 percent of their allowable allocation. The actual percentage would be determined on the basis of best farming practices and what can realistically be done at minimal cost to farmers. The balance of the farmers' nitrogen allocation would be held by Environment Waikato and made available for trading. Grandparenting is aimed at reducing current nitrogen leaching from catchment areas by 20%.

Based on the recommendations of scientists the Waikato Regional Council determined that:

...Lake water quality can be maintained at its current level provided that nitrogen leaching from the land is capped at current levels, and 20 per cent of manageable nitrogen from the Catchment is removed... any activities which result in additional nitrogen leaching into the Lake (that is, nitrogen leached above the cap) and therefore are likely to have an adverse effect on the quality of the Lake, are considered as non-complying activities (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.30).

Grandparenting was supported by the farming community in general. According to a representative of Taupo Lake Care, under grandparenting “farmers can carry on

tomorrow, doing what they were doing today. Their gross income (before costs) has not changed” (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p29).

However, several parties presented substantial arguments against the whole concept of grandparenting as it is applied in the variation. The foresters argued that:

.....grandparenting land use discharges is inconsistent with the purpose of the RMA. In particular, the point was made that if the Council is not prepared to restrict future residential development, why do that for forestry? The Committee understood this to be a reference to the inability of forestry landowners to change to other nitrogen leaching land uses as a permitted activity, while new residential development may be possible as a permitted activity (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p30).

Some parties questioned the legal validity of grandparenting:

Waikato Regional Council cannot provide for grandparenting of nitrogen discharges in Variation 5 because there is no power in the RMA to do so (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p. 20).

A number of parties raised concerns about equity and fairness of the grandparenting method. They argued that Variation 5 should be altered so that polluters should pay. To these submitters grandparenting approach penalises those who have not caused the problem (such as those who have limited nitrogen use in past land use practices) and rewards those who are causing the problem. The submitters argued that:

...grandparenting does not accord with the purpose of the RMA because it does not recognise the polluter pays principle and indeed rewards the polluters at the expense of the non polluters. This is said to be unfair and inequitable....“equity” and “fairness” and indeed “natural justice” ...must necessarily form the basis for decision-making....Maori have given much land for reserves and should not be required to cap nitrogen....the approach impacts unfairly on Ngati Tuwharetoa interests in that the Variation will result in 78 per cent of Ngati Tuwharetoa interests lands not having any flexibility with respect to future land use options....the approach penalises the owners of land for their historic role in protecting the ecology of the Lake....past actions of the Crown that, so it was claimed, have prejudiced them in the ongoing development of their lands....multiple ownership, which it was said makes it more difficult if not virtually possible to sell land for alternative low nitrogen leaching activities (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p45).

A member of the community pointed out the disadvantage of grandparenting to forest owners and other landowners. The submitter pointed out the distinction between ongoing costs to farmers and costs to other landowners in the catchment:

... farmers who are already emitting at high rates will face only a small reduction in land value based on the loss of potential to increase nitrogen leaching activities from high levels to even higher levels (a dairy farm example of increase from 25 to 28 kilograms of nitrogen per hectare per year was given)....forest owners will face an immediate reduction in land value based on the loss of potential to increase from 2 to 28 kilograms of nitrogen per hectare per year....loss in land value would affect foresters' ability to borrow against their businesses....forest facing restrictions on converting to higher valued use such as dairy farming....affected the financial performance of the business....a grandparenting approach removes development opportunity and lowers land value and this will act as a barrier to economic development (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p36.).

In regard to grandparenting proposed in Variation 5, a submitter levied criticisms on the Waikato regional Council. The submitter:

...questioned whether Waikato Regional Council is able to assert that the objectives in the Variation were the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act....social and economic costs to users other than pastoral farmers had not been assessed (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.37).

Several other methods for allocating nitrogen allowances were suggested by other submitters (Environment Waikato, 2007c). The methods include: allocation through a mechanism of auctioning proposed by Environmental Defence Society; tendering of nitrogen discharge allowances as an alternative to grandparenting proposed by Carter Holt Harvey Limited; averaging nitrogen allocation across all land in the catchment proposed by several submitters including Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board Kaingaroa Timberlands Management Ltd, New Zealand Institute of Forestry Inc., LWAG and Forest Managers. However the submitters did not pursue their submissions during the hearing process and therefore their proposals were not considered by the hearing Committee.

The averaging method was another mechanism that was discussed during the hearings. Averaging involves the allocation of the right to nitrogen leaching from catchment lands based on the averaged amount of nitrogen entitlement per hectare of land across the catchment. Submitters generally considered “an averaging arrangement equitable in the distribution of rights to nitrogen” (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.25). The Hearing Committee noted that there were varying assumptions used in the different averaging methods proposed by submitters (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.25). However, some submitters like Taupo Lake Care, Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd and farmers in general were against the averaging method. Taupo Lake Care provided evidence about cost implications of the averaging method to farmers. The following arguments were noted during the hearings process:

...averaging alternative...would redistribute wealth to landowners of forests and undeveloped land....it would make farming unviable and insecure, significantly disadvantaging farmers with farming becoming uneconomic purchasing nitrogen would be expensive and there would be no guarantee that a buyer could find a willing seller to trade with (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.26).

Recognising the importance of these matters and the diverse views expressed on nitrogen allocation methods, the Hearing Committee sought the assistance of a number of other experts who provided evidence on the impact of the different mechanisms for allocating nitrogen on forestry, farming and other land uses. After considering all the arguments and evidences put forward by submitters, the Hearings Committee concluded that grandparenting was the most appropriate mechanism (Environment Waikato, 2007c).

8.5.1.7 Demands for Compensation by Farming Community

The dialectical form accountability relationship provided farmers the opportunity to seek for remedies and call for joint responsibility and sacrifices to protect Lake Taupo. Pastoral farmers in particular felt aggrieved that they had been encouraged by successive governments to develop their land only to be told now that they are a major cause of deteriorating water quality in the Lake. In a similar vein, the Maori

Community from the forestry sector and pastoral farming felt aggrieved at what they saw as unduly restrictive controls in Variation 5 on their land uses which they described as a form of confiscation. Both pastoral farmers and production foresters requested for some form of compensation because of the restrictions being placed on them through Variation 5. Many submitters expressed the view that this was a national problem and should be dealt with at the national level.

...if the nation needs to have the waters of Lake Taupo maintained at their current high levels of quality for tourism purposes, for example, then the nation should pay (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.9).

Several farming groups requested for compensation for the impact of Variation 5 on the economic viability of their businesses. The submitters include: Whakarawa Farm Trust, Lake Taupo Forest Trust, Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust, Lake Taupo Forest Management Ltd, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Ngati Tuwharetoa Agricultural Group, Federated Farmers of New Zealand and Wairarapa Moana Trust. They sought compensation for loss of future production increases and loss of capital value. Some submitters requested that compensation should be enduring, that is, not just a one-off payment. Many submitters requested monetary compensation. A submitter commented that

...farmers were being asked to make sacrifices on behalf of the whole community with no compensation. They requested direct payment of compensation to farmers, paid for by the New Zealand community as a whole presumably through Central Government taxation. They did not see the use of the public fund as being appropriate for this purpose (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.100).

Some farming groups requested that:

...public fund be made available to compensate landowners for income foregone....that compensation be provided in the form of land (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.100).

8.5.1.8 Farmers Discontentment with Environment Court Decisions

The Environment Court released an interim decision 12 November 2008. The interim decision approach taken by the environment court provides opportunities to the community for making further appeals. Appeals can be made to the High Court under Section 299 of the RMA. Federated Farmers decided not to lodge an appeal in the High Court to challenge the decision made the Environment Court (Federated Farmers, 2008). Its President Don Nicolson expressed discontentment at the Environment Court's decision:

The decision not to appeal was taken with a heavy heart. The implications of the Environment Court decision is gut wrenching for the farmers affected by it..... Federated Farmers senior policy analysts have reviewed the decision alongside senior legal counsel from Simpson Grierson. Our legal advice is that an appeal to the High Court, while possible, would be unlikely to succeed. Even if it was successful, it would be unlikely to result in any significant change to the Variation. We have reluctantly accepted that advice..... Overall we are very disappointed at this outcome (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1)

Federated Farmers criticised Waikato Regional Council as lacking insights at the grievances of the farming community.

Councillors, lawyers and council officers lose sight of the fact that these are real people who have invested their blood, their sweat and their tears into their farms. They are decent people who care about their lake and who now face an uncertain future (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1)

Federated Farmers was concerned with the financial implications of the Environment Court's decision on the farming community:

We are also concerned about the significant financial implications this decision foists onto affected farmers. It highlights a concern we have that farmers are being adversely impacted by planning provisions without compensation..... If these farms were needed for a new airport they would receive full compensation. Yet this decision under the RMA gives councils around Taupo the mandate to dictate stock levels, wiping thousands off the value of each hectare. What do farmers receive for this? Nothing. (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1).

Several members of the farming community expressed deep concern for affected farmers:

I remain shocked. I think some people think it only affects farms backing onto the Lake, when in fact, it impacts farms many kilometres from the Lake with no line of sight to it. It leaves families in limbo and with no prospect of fair compensation. These are young smart farmers that will now be selling up to move to Australia. As a profession and a country we can't afford to lose these talented people and their familiesI think it is a sad indictment on the last government and its priorities that it could afford to buy a high country lease in the South Island for \$40 million, land the government already owned, but it did nothing to compensate farmers for slashing the value of their farms. I just want to know what the new government will do about it (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1).

The RMA also came under severe criticism by Federated Farmers:

...the decision showed up all that was bad about how the Resource Management Act (RMA) has evolved. "Farmers need to and do care for their environment. It's their future. They operate in the natural elements everyday and harvest the land for the benefit of the community.....The Lake Taupo decision shows the sustainability ethic in the RMA has become inherently imbalanced. Economic, social and environmental issues need to be in balance and without it, the lives of real people are being seriously impacted. I hope the new government is listening as they move to review the RMA (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1).

Federated Farmers expressed its intention continuing to protect the interests of the farming community:

The review makes it clear the implications of this decision will be confined to the Lake Taupo Catchment only. This will provide some degree of comfort to farmers in other areas. This decision has absolutely no bearing on any other part of the country. If other councils think about using this decision in their plans, the Federation was ready for a major fight (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1).

Accountability also involves the accountability of community-based groups to their members. In particular community based groups explain to their members the actions they are taking to protect the interests of their members. Such accountability relationship exists between Federated Farmers and the farming community in the

Taupo district. Federated Farmers expressed its intention of taking a proactive approach to help the farmers:

...we will advance their interests to get practical and workable solutions for them..... Federated Farmers is now providing direct policy support in caucusing with Environment Waikato to limit individual effects of Variation 5. The Federation is also attempting to promote more flexibility around district council subdivision rules for affected farms. Additionally, the Federation is providing support in negotiating with Environment Waikato on a number of other issues (Federated Farmers, 2008; p.1).

8.5.2 Dialogue between the Community and Indigenous Groups

The critical dimension of accountability also involves a process of negotiation and explanation concerning what the indigenous community wants and to give the concerns of indigenous people a fair hearing (Lehman, 1999; Taylor, 1992). In the Taupo district the Maori community is represented by various organisations, the principal organisations being the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and the tribal community group Ngati Tuwharetoa. A representative of the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and Ngati Tuwharetoa was invited by LWAG for a dialogue on 29 October 2003. The dialogue involved reporting and questioning. The Maori representative reported on the activities, roles and responsibilities of the community and its stance on current issues of concern to the community. Members of the meeting posed questions to the representative. The Maori representative reported that:

...there are over 140 sub-tribes of the Maori community in the Taupo District. The Tuwharetoa Trust owns the lake bed through a statutory arrangement with the Crown. Tumu Te Heuheu is the Paramount Chief of the Ngati Tuwharetoa Maori tribal community. Tuwharetoa Economic Authority has a largely commercial approach to its property and its trustee groups. The Trust Board has been monitoring the economic development of the indigenous community for the last 50 years (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

A scientist asked how the Trust works in regard to the 140 sub-tribal groups. The Maori representative described it as:

.....a 'patchwork quilt' of separate independently administered groups each represented on the Board (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 24 September 2003).

The indigenous community has formulated its own plans to protect the Lake Taupo and indigenous values attached to the Lake. The Maori representative reported the following:

The future economic plan of the community includes diversification. In 1999, tribal consultation resulted in the setting out of environmental and cultural benchmarks. In 2003 Tuwharetoa Trust Board have now published its new Environmental Management Plan which provides more detail than the previous plan. It signals the directions Tuwharetoa are heading environmentally. The Tuwharetoa Environmental Management Plan (TEMP) is to be reviewed every three years. An Action Plan will be implemented jointly with local and Central Government authorities....TEMP matches well with the community values previously identified. The plan provided for water, land, air, geothermal, guidelines/benchmarks to be taken into consideration and acted upon by sub-tribal groups. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

A local resident questioned the relevance of the plan of the indigenous community and its relation to the current water quality issues. The Maori representative replied that:

.....the tribal elders had good sense when opting to plant pines, otherwise we would now be seeing even more degradation (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 24 September 2003).

A member of LWAG asked if the Trust's environmental plans would in some way be expected to influence other land users. The Maori representative explained that:

.....it is illegal for the Trust Board to influence other entities other than its Trustees. However, he would expect a 'flow-on effect' (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

The indigenous community owned about 55% of farmland in the Taupo District. A local resident raised issues on land use by the indigenous community. The Maori representative agreed with the local resident that some land use by the indigenous

community was seen by the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board as inappropriate. The chairman of LWAG enquired about the indigenous community's stance on issues related to conversions of dairy farming to protect lake water quality. In response the Maori representative assured the community that:

Tuwharetoa Trust Board would certainly place preservation of Lake Taupo above economic advantage. The Board has a responsibility to its people. Despite the challenges and difficulties of negotiating an economic solution to the environmental problem, he feels the Board's best judgment call will effectively arrest further deterioration. The Crown will play a pivotal part in this. The Tribe prides itself on being a good custodian. However, the financial risks are considerable when looking at the upcoming decisions and necessary changes. The current Trustees realise their responsibilities to their grandchildren and future generations regarding the lake. Te Heuheu is an ambassador to the World Heritage Commission and is therefore responsible for the way our environmental standards are seen internationally. Marlon reiterated his great faith in the Chief's bottom line decisions. He believes that the Trust's priorities have so far been developed with the best advice at hand, and that the hard work will continue to develop environmentally-sound directives (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

The economic activities of the Maori community were queried. A participant asked if there were any non-land-based Trusts. The Maori representative said "there are investment portfolios which form a large and critical part of their economic base" (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 24 September 2003). Discussion followed on the current feeling among Maori farmers regarding their environmental responsibility. The Maori representative commented that:

.....the Trust is aware of the high risk of public opinion pointing the finger at farmers and the effects of this especially in the light of forthcoming Tuwharetoa negotiations with the Crown. ...local farmers have been very proactive environmentally and were unlucky to be farming in a uniquely sensitive catchment. He believes that the public should acknowledge the benefits environmentally to the district of such a deal that it will be a bonus for the lake in the long-term (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

A concern raised at the meeting was the integration between the indigenous and non-indigenous communities in the Taupo district. This arose from the realisation in the

community that segregation does not help in the quest for solutions to the environmental issues facing the community. The non-indigenous people want the Maori community to be part of the Taupo community (or Community of Interest) and want to learn more about the Maori community. A member of LWAG asked “if there was a way to access more of the tribal/cultural land use history” (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003). However, the Maori representative said that “running workshops are not currently an option for the Trust as it is too time consuming” (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

The chairman of LWAG commented on LWAG’s recognition of a ‘common ground’ with Tuwharetoa’s environmental objectives. A LWAG member asked if LWAG could develop a relationship with the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board. The Maori representative replied that the trust preferred to deal with local authorities and the Crown as such dealings were more beneficial for the Maori Community (Participant observation at LWAG Community Meeting held on 24 September 2003). In addition the Maori representative explained:

...the current situation with the Trust Board members being bogged-down in their work with a variety of complex issues which are extremely time-consuming. He says they are under-powered in the Human Resources area. However, there may be ways to work together if the approach is well planned and the time is right..... he would be happy to come again to LWAG meetings if LWAG wished (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 29 October 2003).

The dialogue between the representative of the Maori community and the Taupo community reflects the dialectical dimension of accountability where the subject matter of cooperative enquiry was on the role and responsibility of the Maori community in the protection of Lake Taupo. The Maori community can be seen in the dialogue as giving an account of its activities and contributions to the environmental sustainability of the Taupo district, in particular to protecting Lake Taupo. Such dialogue provided information about the Maori community which may have been useful for other community based groups to participate in other processes

such as the 2020 Community Forum and in policy making processes (submission, hearing and Environment Court processes)

8.5.3 Dialogue between the Community and Scientists

The scientists were not spared from accountability. Dialogues between scientists and the community prevailed in most community meetings. Such dialogue implicates accountability in that the scientific findings were under critical enquiry and scientists were made accountable for the accuracy of their findings. Generally, scientists were concerned about nitrogen flows and how to overcome the nitrogen flows and do not support the idea of putting a dollar sign into the issues, implying that environmental protection should be done at any cost. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 17 December 2003). However, the farming community was critical of the scientific evidence on nitrogen output from farmlands. During the community meeting on 26 November 2003, the accuracy of science/computer modelling used to measure nitrogen output in the catchments was questioned. According to the representative of Taupo Lake Care, nitrogen loading per farm cannot be measured adequately by scientific models. Scientific evidence on algae blooms was also questioned at the 2020 Community Forum held on 17 June 2004. A participant of the 2020 Community Forums queried the possibility that the algal bloom count for drinking water may need revision and requested more accurate information about algal content in drinking water (Minutes of Community forum held on 17 June 2004). Some members of the community raised concern on differences in the scientific findings of NIWA and Environment Waikato reports, that is, differences up to 30% regarding nitrogen loading into Lake Taupo.

There were concerns about the lack of peer review of information produced by scientists. A representative of Federated Farmers challenged the evidence produced by scientists and pointed out that it is difficult to measure nitrogen flows into the Lake (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004). According to the representative the findings of EW scientists include anomalies. The representative was concerned about lack of peer review of science. According to a scientist from Environment Waikato “It is difficult to translate science for lay people’s understanding” (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May

2004). The scientist affirmed that there have been “considerable peer reviews of the science and peer reviews of peer reviews” (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004).

A farmer asked why in the environmental impact report from the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Science described nitrogen levels in groundwater as higher than in rivers (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 27 August 2003). The farmer was concerned that LWAG had not always received updated scientific information. A Maori farmer was concerned about phosphorous levels in the Lake, especially regarding recent algal blooms in bays. He has not received an answer for his recent query from Environment Waikato. A scientist felt what was needed was a process to identify priority issues and to know who was best able to provide the technical information requested. Several suggestions were made to deal with the criticisms on scientific information. The suggestions included:

... specific science questions be presented to LWAG within the next few days, with a view to asking scientists from Environment Waikato to answer the questions and meet specific information needs of the community. It was suggested that at the next meeting the participants be grouped into small focus to formulate questions and identify possible expert to answer them (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 27 August 2003).

Following the suggestions made at the community meeting on 27 August 2003, LWAG organised a list of speakers on science topics for the year. A scientist gave a presentation on pastureland soil remediation and its effect on lake water quality (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 31 March 2004). The scientist:

...outlined the current thinking on alternative land uses....two products developed by fertiliser companies which interrupted the nitrogen cycle by killing a soil micro organism, slowing the passage of nitrogen through the soil. These products were used on a trial basis in some parts of the district. Some claimed a 60% reduction in nitrogen as a result of using the fertilizers. Others claim only 20%, reduction (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 31 March 2004)

However, the scientist expressed concern over the usage of the products. He was:

...concerned with long term effects of those products which had not been trialled over time, as they would interrupt a natural life-giving cycle and interfere further with soils already stressed by chemical applications... conversion to low nitrogen land use would require detailed soil/climate study. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 31 March 2004).

The scientist believed that:

.....the answer lies in the soil. Bringing in organic matter improves solid depth and quality, mitigating nitrogen loss. Dairy effluent mixed with untreated sawdust could be composted and applied to pasture. Both these materials were readily available and should have been no less expensive to apply than fertiliser... NZ soils were forest soils and fungal-dominated.... Results in NZ are very encouraging. There is a laboratory in Cambridge set up to test local soil types for this process (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 31 March 2004).

The scientist agreed to:

...do research trials to see if that technique could improve plant growth, increase disease resistance and reduce nitrogen. In the Taupo district he was hopeful that that innovative technique would help solve the pastoral farming sectors' challenge to reduce nitrogen loss to groundwater. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 31 March 2004).

Generally, the information provided by the scientists was acknowledged as being useful for the community. In particular, it was suggested that members of the community further utilised scientific information in debating the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and impending policy decisions to restrict animal farming in the catchments of Lake Taupo. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 31 March 2004). The above are only some of the many dialogues that happened in the Taupo District. The above illustrations show some of the ubiquitous dialogues that have created a dialectical form of accountability relationship between the scientists and the community.

8.5.4 Dialogue between Community and Environmentalists

The Environmental Defence Society (EDS), established in 1971, is a not-for-profit environmental advocacy organisation comprised of resource management professionals, lawyers and scientists committed to improving environmental outcomes within New Zealand (Environmental Defence Society, n.d.). Their aim was to bring together the disciplines of science, law and planning in order to advocate for the environment. More recently the EDS has become increasingly involved in providing support and capacity building for individuals, community organisations and councils, in undertaking research and policy analysis on key environmental issues, and in profiling key issues through seminars and conferences. In its research and policy work EDS seeks to build constructive partnerships and relationships with business, government and other groups in the community. A dialogue was held between the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) and the Taupo Community on 28 July 2004. A representative from the EDS began the dialogue by presenting some background information about the EDS and how they operate as a network:

EDS have re-emerged more recently to provide expertise and specialist knowledge for developers, district councils and local people dealing with environmental issues and their interface with the RMA (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004).

One interviewee commented on the composition of the EDS:

...they are a group of partners and lawyers based in Auckland that although it is voluntary ...they are not short of expertise (Member of LWAG, Interview, December 2005).

The EDS representative reported on the concerns and stance of EDS on environmental issues in the Taupo district:

Regarding the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy, EDS is supportive of the work of LWAG and also the EW initiatives aiming at reducing nitrogen output in the catchment. Its members feel it is important to involve local groups and also vital to bring good technical information to bear on the environmental issues. EDS notes the high level of community support for the EW goal which is pleasing. It is however concerned with the

recent science report by David Hamilton stating that 20% reduction may not be enough to restore lake water quality to its current standard. EDS feels that it is essential to set a realistic goal – to do things right to begin with. EDS is also concerned with the cost analysis of the strategy and believes that we need to adapt our economics towards mitigation of pollutants and recognise particularly the discharge of nitrogen as pollution. EDS feel that a 5% reduction of N output should be aimed at by landowners. This would have a significant effect on the overall achievement of nitrogen reduction targets. To achieve stability in our environment more discussion needed (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004).

The farming community also came under criticism by the EDS which questioned the economic analysis done by a consultant employed by the farming community. The EDS is critical of the projections made by the consultant (Nimmo-Bell). The representative from EDS commented:

The farming sector has done cost analysis through Nimo-Bell and other agencies...the findings of these reports on land values and projected revenue losses are questionable and exaggerated and don't help the nitrogen strategy debate. the figures may be badly wrong...EDS has reviewed the findings and has aimed at getting a more accurate projection of likely costs to farmers.....contrary to farmers' predictions, land values have continued to increase i.e. 60% in 3–4 yrs. EDS recognises problems and feels there should be clear incentives to diversify land use and reduce nitrogen through effective and balanced use of “stick & carrot” strategies. They would like to see the strategy include a nitrogen reduction target of 5% for pastoral lands (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004).

Government-owned pastoral land in the Taupo district also came under scrutiny. A member of LWAG asked EDS about its views on government-owned land in the Lake Taupo Catchment. The EDS representative argued that “Government land be treated the same as other pastoral land” (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004). The dialogue with the EDS resulted in more criticisms levied against the farming community. EDS itself did not come under attack by the community. It appears that its role as an advocate of environmental protection has the approval of the community indicating a strong environmental ethic in the community. The subject matter of accountability is focused on environmental sustainability. The role of EDS is about reporting about the activities which have

environmental consequences. The dialogue between the community and EDS appears to bring other groups into the accountability process.

8.5.5 Dialogue between Community and Lakes and Waterways Action Group

LWAG was itself subject to community enquiry on its role in the community, particularly in protecting the common good and the community values attached to the common good. An official from EW acknowledged the role of LWAG “in advocating for benefits of upholding lake water quality values” (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 July 2003). Such recognition from the regional authority indicates the importance of community-based organisation in dealing with issues regarding the common good (Lake Taupo). A member of LWAG suggested that:

LWAG should have an ongoing role in monitoring and reviewing strategy effectiveness regarding sustainable development in Taupo district (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 July 2003).

However, LWAG appears to lack its own strategy and is not focused in its endeavours to contribute to finding solutions to the pollution issues and in dealing with local authorities. Its endeavours are driven by the endeavours taken by local authorities. Discussions in the LWAG community meetings mainly revolved around issues raised by local authorities at a particular time. LWAG appears to adhere to the agenda set by the local authorities. Issues discussed in most LWAG meetings relate to local authority proposed plans and policies. A member of LWAG commented:

...we generate lots of ideas, but do we have people to do it? ...we should concentrate on what we can do. We are advocates for the environment and want to involve the community (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 July 2003)

Several suggestions were made to enhance the role of LWAG in the community including: developing its own strategic plan for the Taupo district; more LWAG representation at the 2020 Community Forum; writing regular press releases to develop a profile with the community; becoming more independent of local

authorities; having a clear mandate in managing lake water quality; and providing information to the community on the water quality issues of Lake Taupo.

Following the suggestion for a strategic plan, a group of LWAG members prepared a draft strategy for LWAG and presented it at several community meetings in the second half of 2003. The strategy was adopted by LWAG in January 2004. The purpose of the strategy was to serve as a checklist for evaluating the plans and policies of local authorities. The LWAG Strategy outlined the vision and goals of LWAG and the means to achieve the goals. The vision of LWAG is:

To be a leading advocate for the protection of Lake Taupo and its waterways and other local catchment environments (LWAG Strategy adopted in January 2004).

The goals of LWAG are (LWAG Strategy adopted in January 2004):

1. Seek the enhancement of water quality within the Lake Taupo Catchment area
2. Unite people for the benefit of protecting Lake Taupo's natural environment
3. Advocate for "Sustainable Development Thinking" with regards to any development within the Lake Taupo Catchment.

The steps taken by LWAG in the implementation of its strategic plan were reported to the community (LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004). A member of LWAG reported that some members of LWAG "have agreed to take a role in leading the strategy. They are working in pairs to focus each of the three major goals of the plan" (LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004). In relation to the first goal - "Seek the enhancement of water quality in the Lake Taupo Catchment"- the meeting was informed regarding the on-going initiatives of LWAG submissions on local authority proposal for a sewage scheme in Kinloch and Turangi. LWAG believed that the proposal for a sewage scheme in Kinloch would add 50% more nitrogen to the ground water which, in turn, would have adverse effects on the water quality of Lake Taupo and that it was important that Taupo District Council demonstrate a higher level of treatment. Conventional septic tanks were recognised

to have effects on the water quality of Lake Taupo and therefore LWAG advocated the use of high-tech septic tanks as a condition on resource consents.

In relation to the second goal - "Unite people for the benefit of protecting Lake Taupo's natural environment" - the meeting was informed of the increasing level of awareness and LWAG's initiatives in hosting the upcoming Lake Water Quality Expo. LWAG was taking steps to obtain funds for the proposed expo. A member reported that some private companies had pledged funds for the expo, expected to cover most of the funding required.

In relation to the third goal - "Sustainable Development Thinking" - the community was advised LWAG intended to hold a meeting to start the thinking process on sustainable development in the Taupo District. A member reported that

...the strategic plan as it currently exists provides plenty of scope to focus on both the local area but also allow focus on, and gain benefit from national and international linkages and partnerships. Gifford expressed the concern that focus to-date on protection of the lake focused on closing down or changing existing operations as opposed to continuation in a sustainable manner, and he hoped that this group could take that approach (LWAG Community Meeting held on 28 July 2004)

Such reporting of LWAG is expected to be on-going. The reporting implies accountability of LWAG to the community, that is, reporting its actions on the goals that it has set. Through this process LWAG also acts as a watchdog of the activities undertaken by local authorities by evaluating plans and policy proposals from local authorities. LWAG also appears to be the accountant, answering questions about its role in the community while other groups in the community appear to assume the role of accountee, asking questions and receiving information about LWAG. The continued support of the community for the activities of LWAG depends on LWAG being able to defend its current role and make amendments to its role in future. The dialogue between LWAG and the community resembles another aspect of the communitarian approach to accountability.

8.5.6 Dialogue between Community and Public Authorities

The participation of local and Central Government officials in the communal processes stimulated dialogues with the community and expanded the dialectical dimension to include the accountability of public authorities. The dialogues with the local authorities provided opportunities for members of the Taupo community to express their views, and to identify and prioritise concerns and threats to community values, pose questions to the local authorities, and obtain information from the authorities. A local resident who regularly participated in both the LWAG community meetings and 2020 community forums considered the meetings as:

...opportunity for the community to talk with the agencies, like Environment Waikato, Department of Conservation and NIWA and to get an exchange of information (Interview, December 2005).

The dialogues support the idea of the dialectical dimension of accountability between the community and public officials (Harmon, 1995 as cited in Mulgan, 2000; Aucion and Heintzman, 2000). In that relationship the community poses questions and expresses its views on the issues while public authority officials provide information, explanations and justifications in response to the issues raised by the community. Accountability as a dialectical process acquires meaning within the dialogue. The dialogues between the community and public authorities, as discussed in the following sub-section, only illustrate some of the many issues of common concern to the community. The dialogues can be considered as reflecting the dialectical dimension of accountability, in which the community is the accountee posing questions and suggestions while public officials represent the accoutor reporting and responding to the community. Some of the issues were raised and debated during the dialectical process are discussed bellow.

8.5.6.1 Local Authorities queried on Pollution of Lake Taupo

Local authorities also came under critical enquiry on the pollution of Lake Taupo. Several participants were concerned about nutrient input from wrong and unsustainable land use and that effluent containing nitrogen being discharged into the Lake. The main concern was contamination of water from utilisation of land for pastoral farming (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004). A

participant of the joint LWAG- 2020 Community Forum raised several concerns regarding toxic blue green algal blooms in Lake Taupo:

Is there a chance you can stop the blooms? If so, how? Is there a way to predict occurrence? How high is the threat/ probability of it occurring? Would be good to have information on this issue to make it clearer to the community.....Blue Green Algal blooms are new to Taupo, may be localised, the current monitoring may miss the blooms that may be briefly seen and fairly localised...need to collect samples and report on extent of blooms (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

An EW official provided the following explanation:

The factors controlling excessive growth of blue-green algae are complex and not fully understood. The availability of nutrients and their respective levels, e.g. ratios of nitrogen to phosphorous, play an important role. EW, NIWA and the University of Waikato are currently undertaking research to improve our understanding of these factors.....all algal blooms are by definition sporadic, and this provides special challenges to monitoring programmes. Community involvement should be encouraged. EW regularly reviews the details of its deep-water monitoring with NIWA (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

Some participants suggested urgent action to upgrade sewage systems in the catchment, to strip nitrogen from sewage effluents and to enforce standards. The response of EW official was as follows:

EW is currently setting standards for on-site sewage discharge through the Waikato Regional Plan. Taupo District Council is also upgrading infrastructure to improve management of sewage actions (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

A member of LWAG was concerned with the suggestion by Environment Waikato for pollution trading, stating "...you cannot expect to trade pollution rights and improve water quality" (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004). A resident was concerned with the 20% target for nitrogen reduction proposed by Environment Waikato as being too low and suggested a figure closer to 50%/. An EW official responded:

Ministry for the Environment is looking at the nitrogen credit system. The total nitrogen allowed would be allocated and used as a base-line for any trading, according to defined principles (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004).

8.5.6.2 Discussion on the 2020 Action Plan

Discussion on the 2020 Action Plan, during LWAG community meetings and in the 2020 community forums, were aimed at obtaining community feedback on matters to be included in the strategies. At the same time, the dialogues stimulated the dialectical dimension of accountability in which, the community (as accountee) posed questions and queried the strategies of the local authorities while the local authority officials (accountor) provided explanations, reports and justifications for their proposed strategies.

A draft 2020 Action Plan was produced by EW by incorporating information from various sources, including the community values identified in the Lake Taupo Accord, community surveys⁴², various community workshops and assessments such as prioritizing threats, Quality of Life Risk Assessment, and identifying performance indicators. Discussion on the Draft 2020 Action Plan was the final stage before the plan was approved by a Joint Management Group⁴³. Several 2020 Forum meetings and LWAG community meetings were committed to discussion on the draft report and the aim was to obtain final feedback for the community on the draft. At the forum meeting held on 1 April 2004 a representative from EW presented an overview of the Draft Action Plan.

This is a first draft ... Initial discussions have been held with organizations for their feedback.....There has been general acceptance so far but agencies and community groups still need to take an in-depth look at the Plan and give their feedback.....There will be flexibility for

⁴² See discussion in paragraph 8.4.1

⁴³ The Joint Management Group was set up for the purpose of monitoring progress in the formulation of the Action Plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b; Joint Management Group, n.d.; Joint Management Group, 2007))

something extra to be included in the plan (Minutes of Community Forum held on 1 April 2004).

Following the introduction of the draft plan to the community, several community meetings and workshops were held to discuss the draft. A joint workshop (LWAG and 2020 Community Forum) was held on 21 April 2004 to get community feedback on the draft Action Plan. The workshop was organised and run by LWAG instead of at the 2020 Community Forum. The venue and agenda set by LWAG appears to have been a more appropriate for several reasons. LWAG allocated more time for the discussion compared to the 2020 Community Forum which was restricted to an hour discussion for each forum. Second, the LWAG meeting can be considered as being more independent of the local authorities as it was organised by a community-based group and the agenda and proceedings of the meeting was controlled by LWAG members. The local authorities had little influence on how the discussion was conducted. The centrality of the community (Aristotle, 1968; Etzioni, 1993; Etzioni, 2001; Tam, 1998) has been reinforced by allowing LWAG to conduct the discussion on the draft 2020 Action Plan.

At the joint workshop the facilitator of the 2020 Community Forum briefed the community on the progress made to-date in the development of the Draft 2020 Action Plan. The Draft Action Plan identified community values, priority threats to community values, actions that were needed to contribute to the community values, and indicators to measure performance of the actions. A set of indicators was stated for each value (Minutes of Joint Workshop held on 21 April 2004). Extracts of the Action Plan containing a list of actions and indicators were put up on boards and the participants at the workshop were given the opportunity to make their comments/suggestions, add to or change and give feedback on the proposed actions and indicators. The responses from the participants were collated and analysed by EW. The community feedback on the draft comments were circulated to the community and more discussions for revision of the Action Plan occurred at subsequent meetings. Some of the comments made by members of the community and the responses from EW officials are summarised in Appendix 17.

Concerns were raised regarding the involvement by local and Central Government agencies in the actions and responsibilities identified in the draft 2020 Action Plan. There appears to be more involvement by local and Central Government agencies in the actions and responsibilities identified in the draft 2020 Action Plan. A suggestion was made for more community involvement in monitoring the Plan. The response of an EW official to these concerns was as follows:

The emphasis on government agencies is because they are the one with the statutory responsibilities for certain actions and associated funding resources. Through the elected members, councils represent the community.... Governance body for implementation of 2020 Action Plan currently under discussion.....LWAG may assume a watchdog role and assist in monitoring and reporting progress of the plan (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

Another participant questioned the relevance of the roles of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) in implementing the 2020 Action Plan: “Why is DIA involved at all? Control should be restricted to Taupo District Council, Environment Waikato, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board. There is no reason also for DOC to control the Lake Taupo Fishery” (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004). The response of EW official was as follows:

DIA is the Crown’s representative...for managing issues of Lake Taupo. It is responsible for funding harbourmaster and associated activities.....We cannot seek to change which agency is responsible for which activity in the Lake Taupo area through this action plan. It would need to be done as direct lobbying to Central Government and Ngati Tuwharetoa. Refer also to the 1946 Fishing Regulations for Lake Taupo (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

Concerns were also raised on the monitoring of the 2020 Action plan. A resident questioned: “What happens if the actions identified in the 2020 Action Plan are not implemented?” The response of the EW official was:

There are a number of planning, review and reporting stages built into the implementation of the plan. It is a non-statutory plan so there is no compulsory mandate...the Local Government Act which strongly encourages integration between agencies would assist as a driver to

seeing this work undertaken... community groups would have a watchdog/ supportive role with respect to the actions in this plan (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

A governance body was proposed in the 2020 Action plan to monitor the progress of the implementation of the plan. A question was raised regarding the statutory status of the governance body. EW responded:

The governance structures will be a non-statutory body. Its powers will come from joint agreement from the funding agencies to support the work identified in the 2020 Action Plan and to aim to protect Lake Taupo and other values important to the Taupo community (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004).

There was also concern about the continuity of the 2020 forums and community involvement of community involvement in the implementation of the 2020 Action Plan. The LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004 was informed that a new governance body would be established for community involvement in the implementation of the strategy. An official from EW reported that:

...the Governance Body will be expanded to include LWAG, Lake Taupo Dev. Co, Economic Authorities, Dept Internal Affairs, DOC, Power Generators – all to be effective in progressing project. The governance body will be funded by EW, TDC and other groups eg DOC work programmes. There will be a part-time paid co-ordinator to liaise with groups implementing plan, co-ordinate reporting of progress etc. Reporting to community as well as the governance body will be on-going (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004).

Questions were also raised regarding reporting on the progress in the implementation of the 2020 Action Plan and a suggestion was made by a participant to report through the media. The participant suggested that

Regular media and press releases to keep the 2020 Plan in the public eye. Community involvement to be published so that people feel empowered (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004).

An official for EW responded that the annual report was to be distributed to members of the Governance Body and to the community and also noted the need to

highlight community involvement in actions (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 April 2004). More discussion on the Draft 2020 Action Plan followed in subsequent community meetings. At the LWAG Community meeting on 26 May 2004, the 2020 Forum coordinator reported that the Action Plan was still in draft form and the completed Plan was due to be formally released in two months time. EW is looking at outcomes of the 2020 project for drafting regional policy rules.

The 2020 Forum on 17 June is the last opportunity for feedback to the Action Plan – all are encouraged to attend or get feedback to June at EW office by 15th June. The official launch of the Action Plan is in two months' time at the Hirangi Marae where Marion Hobbs will be present. EW are being formally asked to adopt Action Plan on 9th June and TDC to give formal approval on 29th JuneThe Action Plan is non-statutory except where actions are adopted into LTCC Plans. Various council resolutions will help to ensure outcomes. It is largely a community-based Plan which has measuring/assessment mechanisms built in with a three year review of outcomes, plus on-going annual reviews...it is easier to review and change a non-statutory plan (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 26 May 2004).

8.5.6.3 Dialogue on the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy

The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy represents a framework of ideas that is being used to engage the wider community in developing more specific solutions for protecting Lake Taupo and maintaining the local economy and community (Environment Waikato, 2003). The Strategy proposes a 20 percent reduction in nitrogen entering Lake Taupo from rural sources. To achieve this, the strategy suggests: changes in farm management and transition to more sustainable land-use; upgrading sewerage systems; the establishment of a joint public fund to achieve permanent nitrogen reduction from farmlands; contributions from local and regional rates and Central Government taxes for the establishment of a public fund; research into low nitrogen land uses; and new environmental rules.

During several LWAG Community meetings discussions were held with EW officials. At the LWAG community meeting held on 30 July 2003 scientist from Environment Waikato reported that:

...the strategy aimed at maintaining the water quality of Lake Taupo at least in its current form. The strategy was formulated over a period of three years and was a response to the concerns raised by LWAG and based on the results of the Lake Taupo Accord. The Central Government has agreed to be a partner in the process towards improving Lake's water quality. A strategy to be published in September 2003 will be open for public comment. Media releases are drawing in public consciousness. There will be a public launch of Environment Waikato's proposals in September and ongoing debate in following weeks. The way forward will be found through community goodwill. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 July 2003).

A report consisting of LWAG comments on the strategy was presented at the meetings held on 21 January 2004 and 25 February 2004. EW was invited for the deliberation. The report supports a fifteen year period for the implementation of the strategy and the public funding for the protection of Lake Taupo. During the meetings, the community deliberated on various issues highlighted in the report and on the concerns of the community regarding the Strategy. According to the LWAG report, two fundamental questions need to be addressed: Will the strategy enable the Lake, in which water quality plays a dominant role, to be handed on to the next generation in an unimpaired condition? and Given the size of the Lake, and the enormity of the identified problems, will action being proposed be sufficient to restore the Lake even to current water quality standard? Some of the issues that were discussed are as follows.

A concern expressed in the LWAG report is whether it is the intention of the Strategy to retire all of the catchment into pine forestry if it becomes uneconomic to continue farming. LWAG believes that there has not been a call on such a scale for farming individuals and organisations to give up capital anywhere else in New Zealand as a result of the Strategy. LWAG believes that the success of Strategy depends on an equitable resolution being made on the conversion issue. A LWAG member expressed urgency on the purchase of farmland by the government and conversion to pine forestry:

If money was available now, land purchase could begin. Why wait another 3-4 years? John believed TDC should begin to recognise their economic responsibilities in their annual plans... farmers having opportunity to put stock levels up before nitrogen cap is in place, could

the Council sell their plantation forest and purchase critical pasture land? Government funds are not available for the purchase and conversion of farmlands until rules were in place ... that was problematical, causing delay in nitrogen reduction (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 25 February 2004).

The effectiveness of the proposal in the Strategy to reduce nitrogen flows by 20% was questioned:

Since pasturelands' increase in the 1950's we had seen a rise in nitrogen levels in the groundwater, streams and lake which continued to rise. The community is concerned at the proposed 20% reduction and its effectiveness. (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 25 February 2004).

The discussion on the Strategy continued in several other LWAG community meetings especially in regards to the allocation and usage of public funds for protecting Lake Taupo. A LWAG member suggested that:

...money be advanced by the government early so as to secure land conversion as soon as possible (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 June 2004).

In response to the issue raised, an official from EW provided the following reply:

...some parts of the protecting Lake Taupo Strategy will begin immediately due to ratepayer funds being budgeted now (Minutes of LWAG Community Meeting held on 30 June 2004).

Following the EW strategy on protecting Lake Taupo, the community was informed that policy proposals in the form of variation to the Regional plan are being drafted by EW for nitrogen emissions. The variation rules go out to the public in October 2004 and EW hopes to adopt the policy measures by end of Sept 2004. There will be rules applying to farming & urban wastewater as outlined in the EW strategy.

8.5.6.4 Critical Enquiry on Farming Activities of Central Government

Central Government activities in the Taupo District were also subject to critical enquiry during the hearing process. Several groups were concerned about farm-land owned by the Central Government in the catchments of Lake Taupo. The Central Government's policy on farmland development in the 1950's is considered a primary cause of the pollution of Lake Taupo (Minutes of Joint LWAG and 2020 Forum 21 January 2004). Land in the catchment of Lake Taupo was originally developed by Central Government in the 1950's to satisfy demand for farmland and to support land settlement schemes promoted and financed by Central Government. Since the 1950's the land has been progressively developed and increasing amount of fertilizer applied to promote grass growth. LWAG raised the question as to whether farmers who are forced to change their farming practices and land-use should be compensated for loss of income.

At the hearings process several groups raised their concern about what they saw as a lack of action or insufficient action on the part of the Crown which historically has been a major participant in the development of the Lake Taupo catchment through such agencies as the Lands and Survey Department and in more recent times Landcorp (Environment Waikato, 2007c). Some submitters want the lack of action by Central Government acknowledged in Variation 5. A submitter representing New Zealand Forest Managers presented evidence by quoting extracts from articles published some 40 years ago highlighting that the need to protect Lake Taupo was clearly recognised and understood 40 years ago.

...authorities were aware of environmental concerns associated with farming activities in the Lake Taupo Catchment some 40 years ago but lacked the resolve to take action (Environment Waikato, 2007d, p.6).

Another submitter pointed out that:

...the Crown has been aware of the...issue for at least 40 years yet has continued to promote development of farming activities in the Catchment (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.167).

Some suggestions were made for the Central Government to take action:

...the Regional Council should seek leadership from the Crown to solve the problem of the contribution of its businesses to excessive nitrogen levels within the Taupo Catchment....Government-owned pastoral blocks be immediately converted to low nitrogen leaching land uses without reducing the Public Fund (Environment Waikato, 2007c, p.167).

The response of officials representing the Central Government on these concerns was as follows:

...although there had been concern from local councils and Ngati Tuwharetoa about sediment and fertiliser entering the Lake since the 1960s, the link between stock urine and nitrogen leaching under pasture was not widely recognised until the 1980s....action on Lake protection was undertaken between 1960 and 2000 however, in line with the understanding of environmental issues at the time, this action was focussed on community wastewater upgrades and improving land and soil stability through extensive land retirements in the Catchment's control scheme. It was not until 2000 that there was clear evidence that pastoral derived nitrogen....was a threat to water quality in the Lake. The recent gains in scientific understanding, visual decline of the Lake and the probability of a much greater intensification of rural land in the Catchment were the first set of strong drivers to enable Waikato Regional Council to take action regarding non-point source discharges to the Lake. These drivers or understandings did not exist in the previous 40 years. It is therefore not considered appropriate to state in the introduction and background that there has been a lack of action over the last 40 years (Environment Waikato, 2007d, p.6).

Some submitters raised the issue of land owned by the Central Government (through Landcorp) in the Lake Taupo Catchment. Landcorp has owned approximately 8000 hectares of pastoral farm land in the catchment (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.8).

The submitters considered that:

... if this land could have been retired from farming this would have gone a long way to achieving the primary objective of maintaining the water quality in Lake Taupo as well as providing some form of atonement by the Crown for its past actions (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.8).

The Hearings Committee noted that the government regards the state owned enterprise Landcorp as being an independent commercial entity and is considering to retire the farm land owned by Landcorp. The government considers that its contribution to the public fund to restore the water quality of Lake Taupo is made, at least in part, in recognition of the past actions of the Crown in the catchment. However, some submitters were concerned that the government may retire the Landcorp land by using the government's contribution to the public fund. The committee's view on this matter is:

While the Committee is not in a position to make any recommendations on this particular matter it does want to take this opportunity to record that on the basis of the evidence it heard it seems that the opportunity to take a significant step towards the primary objective may have been lost if the Landcorp land is sold for ongoing pastoral purposes (Environment Waikato, 2007c; p.9).

8.5.7 On-going Communal Processes

As for the implementation of Variation 5, discussion is still going on between the community and Environment Waikato to finalise the wording and of the variation. According to a policy analyst from EW:

We are in the last stage of finalizing Variation 5. Federated Farmers and Environment Waikato's consultant planners got together and worked out some details in the wording of the rules, as directed by the Court in the interim decision last November. The final wording of the rules will be sent to all the parties in the appeal process and then to the Environment Court. Once the final decision is released, hopefully by the middle of this year, Environment Waikato can approve the insertion of the Variation as a chapter in Section 3 of the Waikato Regional Plan (WRP). The new chapter 3.10 of the WRP will be on the website and also sent to all current holders of hard copies of the WRP (Email Message May 2009).

The Policy Analyst also provided updates on the progress towards monitoring the farm activities in the catchment of Lake Taupo:

Substantial progress has been achieved on the first step in the resource consent process required of farms. This is to 'benchmark' historical nitrogen leaching on each farm, after which a consent is granted giving a Nitrogen Discharge Allowances

(NDA) that caps nitrogen for that property. Overall we now have data for 91 per cent of the total pastoral land area (82774 ha). Landowners have been recently reminded that Environment Waikato staff s have expertise to assist them to develop a Nutrient Management Plan to meet their finalised ('benchmarked') NDA. The Lake Taupo Protection Trust has been active in the catchment, working toward meeting its goal of permanently removing 20 per cent of total annual manageable load of nitrogen leached from pastoral land by 2020 (Email Message May 2009).

8.6 LOCAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS AS PART OF COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Local governance institutions, such as Joint Management Group (JMG) and Lake Taupo Protection Trust have been established as control mechanisms to monitor the implementation of strategies and policy measures to protect Lake Taupo and community values. These institutions can be considered as control mechanisms under the communitarian approach to accountability. The JMG (Environment Waikato, 2004b; Joint Management Group, n.d.) was set up to monitor the implementation of the 2020 Action Plan. Members of the JMG comprises of representatives from Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, Department of Conservation and Department of Internal Affairs. All these agencies have accepted responsibilities as action managers to undertake actions identified in the 2020 Action Plan. There is a commitment from the JMG and the key agencies to involve the community and Ngati Tuwharetoa in the implementation of the Action Plan. The terms of reference for the JMG require it to have representation from the Tūwharetoa Economic Authorities, LWAG and Lake Taupo Development Company. Joint Management Group meetings are held quarterly and the administration of this group handled through a coordinator appointed by EW. Each agency allocated funds for implementation of the Plan through their planning and budgetary processes. The agencies have identified actions they plan to undertake each year and timeframes and resources for undertaking their actions. The agencies are expected to report to the 2020 JMG on the actions they have completed in the past year. The report is to be made public. The first report of the JMG was published in 2007 (Joint management Group, 2007). Through such

reporting the parties responsible for the actions are made accountable to the community.

Another control mechanism is the Lake Taupo Protection Trust (Environment Waikato, 2007e). A key outcome of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy is the establishment of the Lake Taupo Protection Trust, set up in February 2007 to administer the \$81.5 million in order to protect Lake Taupo's excellent water quality, which is under threat from the effects of past and current land use activities (Environment Waikato, 2007e). Trust funding comes from the Ministry for the Environment (45%), Environment Waikato (33%) and the Taupo District Council (22%) to be provided over 15 years and reviewed after 5 years (Environment Waikato, 2007e). The Trust will be accountable to a joint committee, which includes members of the three funding parties – Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, Central Government, and Ngati Tuwharetoa (Environment Waikato, 2007e).

The Trust is charged with developing a programme of work that will reduce the amount of manageable nitrogen leaching into the lake by 20 per cent (Environment Waikato, 2007e). Environment Waikato Chairman Jenni Vernon said:

...the Trust would use the funds to encourage and assist land-use change, and to purchase land/nitrogen in the Lake Taupo catchment, as well as other initiatives to assist landowners to reduce the nitrogen impact of their activities on the lake (Environment Waikato, 2007e).

The JMG and Lake Taupo Protection Trust can be considered as key outcomes of the communal processes. The establishment of these mechanisms continue to provide opportunities for the Taupo community to participate to protect the common good.

8.7 MANIFESTATION OF COMMUNITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE COMMUNAL PROCESSES

New Zealand's commitment to international consensus on sustainable development⁴⁴ has necessitated the development of such communitarian accountability relationships in the Taupo District. Issues on environment and development have roots in local activities requiring cooperation and partnership between local authorities and their communities (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a; Agenda Chapter 28, paragraph 28.1). Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level (Rio Declaration 1992, Principle 10). Agenda 21 recommends the continued, active and effective participation of local groups and communities in the development and adoption of a Local Agenda 21⁴⁵ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a Agenda Chapter 28, paragraph 28.2). The Agenda recognises Local Government as the level of government that is closest to local communities (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a Chapter 28) and recommends collaboration between local authorities and local communities in the implementation of sustainable development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004a, Agenda 21, Paragraph 38.5). The responsibilities of local authorities also involve the strengthening of democratic institutions, provision of transparency and inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Earth Charter Principle 13). This included facilitating participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making and the protection of the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent. Local authorities and the community in the Taupo district are accountable to the international community for the implementation of these recommendations. The efforts of local authorities to engage the Taupo community in planning and decision making for Lake Taupo can be interpreted as endeavours to fulfil New Zealand's commitments to Agenda 21. There is obligation for local and Central Governments to report to the United

⁴⁴ See Chapter 6 section 6.7 for a detailed discussion.

⁴⁵ Local Agenda 21 is defined in footnotes 2 and 28

Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs⁴⁶ on progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21. The collaboration is complemented by the judiciary (Environment Court) and legal provisions in the RMA 1991 and LGA 2002⁴⁷ which require local authorities to engage local communities in planning and policy making processes (Kate & Marta, 2003; PCE, 2002).

The community dialogues, conceptualised as the dialectical dimension of accountability, imply that accountability relationships are manifested in the communal processes. Individuals and groups in the community can be considered to be in various accountability relationships during the communal processes. The communitarian relationship entails the roles of multiple parties (community-based groups, local authorities, scientists, Central Government, business sector), resembling constructive partnership for the achievement of common goals (Johannesburg Declaration United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2004b) paragraph 16) strengthened by shared vision of basic values that provide an ethical foundation for a communal spirit (The Earth Charter Initiative, n.d., Preamble, Earth Charter). Communitarian accountability relationships arise out of the mutual responsibility of the community to participate voluntarily in the communal processes, act collectively through dialogues and share responsibility for environmental stewardship (Sekhar, 2005). Individuals and groups which comprise the Taupo community demonstrate mutual responsibility by participating in cooperative enquiry, planning and policy making processes. Mutual responsibility⁴⁸ of the Taupo Community is about protecting Lake Taupo and community values associated with the Lake. A retired professional planner, representing himself and several community based groups, has attended several community meetings out of concern for the natural environment and to provide his views on natural resource management issues (Interview, December 2005). Another long time resident of the Taupo District commented that:

⁴⁶ See Chapter 6 section 6.7 for details

⁴⁷ See Chapter 6 section 6.7 for details.

⁴⁸ As defined in Chapter 4 section 4.3.5.

Well I am a long term triple resident, been here 30 years, been coming to Taupo since I was a child, which is 50 years plus. So there is a huge sense of belonging here, I was chair of the Conservation Board for six years and one of the things that we as a group became very aware is that the Lake water is not clear....we as a group started talking to EW and to begin with, they were quite defensive. In those days there was no algae....it would have been about in 1994 that we started that concern and then it has grown from that. I was a member of the Forest and Bird Committee for 18 years, so there is a long history of care and concern about the Lake and the environs (Laura Dawson Representative of (Member of a Community-Based Group, Interview December 2005).

Mutual responsibility will develop when the common good is under threat (Jordan, 1989). A member of LWAG commented that:

Faster action will be taken when the problem gets more serious and something happens adversely to the Lake like algae blooms or whatever. For instance, in Rotorua where Lake Rotiti died and became unuseable the regulations to limit nutrients in the Lake has already been signed off and things have moved faster there because there is visibly a problem the Lakes turned green and died....if they realise if there is a problem then they will listen to the politician or the council (Interview December 2005)

The seriousness of the pollution of Lake Taupo makes it imperative for the community to participate in the planning and policy making processes. According to a member of LWAG:

...the pollution of Lake Taupo is a problem that the community has to own.....It has got to the stage where people have hard decisions to make with regards to where we stand on policies and development proposals (Interview, December 2005).

Participation in the processes also depends on whether people believe that they are making a difference as commented by one interviewee:

I think people will come if they believe it is worth the while so probably the main thing is for them to know that they are making a difference....if they can't see that they are adding value by being there they don't really want to be there...so they got to see this is going to lead to some kind of action....and they got to know that if they miss out being there the

community might not be represented so there need to be some sense of a being part of the process because the outcome is going to be influenced by their involvement ...if people can see that connection and they know that what they are doing is turning up for is not a nice little chat but actually turning at the meeting to make a difference I think they want to be there more often....they got to believe an action strategy of something that will flow out of it (Consultant and Facilitator of Community Meetings, Interview January 2006).

The communal processes can be considered as attempting to create equilibrium between the interests of the farming community and those of other parties in the Taupo community. The dialectical process has generated ideas on the possibilities and ways for the farming community to exist in the larger community. The processes provide a venue for communicating with farmers and persuading them of the need to change their farming techniques or change the land use so as to reduce nitrogen flowing into Lake Taupo. The cooperative processes enable farmers to understand themselves in the context of community rather than as autonomous individuals. They also begin to see their own preferences in a broader community context. The communal processes enhanced mutual responsibility by transforming individuals on how they view the common good. Transformed individuals are more likely to view issues from broader perspective of the community. A consultant and facilitator of community meetings commented:

...as the year went by there was less disagreement in the group or in other words there was more understanding within the group and that was the understanding of the developers or the farming sector who potentially have an impact but they can understand the concerns of the other interest groups. ...there was less heated debate once you had a greater understanding (Interview January 2006).

Collaboration aimed at deriving a common set of values from the diverse interests can be seen as a form of responsive communitarianism (Reese, 2001) in which “inverse symbiosis” (Schilcher, 1999) becomes operational. This means that the collaborating parties recognise the existence of multiple and not wholly compatible needs and attempt to strike an equilibrium between individual interests and the concern for common good.

The accountability relationship in the Taupo community can be explained by using the concept of 360 degree accountability Behn (2000). The 360 degree accountability relationship occurs under conditions of decentralised, collaborative and participatory policy making in the community. Under such conditions, responsibility has wider implications i.e. responsibility to undertake certain actions for the common good of the community and provide public explanation for what has happened to the common good. It implies mutual responsibility of everyone in the community to protect the common good. The communal processes bring the whole community into the accountability equation. The collaboration between community groups, local authorities, Central Government, businesses, environmentalists and other interested parties can be considered to have developed into 360 degree accountability relationships that is accountable to a broad range of interests via formal processes and institutions (such as submissions and hearings processes and environment court proceedings) and non-statutory processes (2020 Community Forums and LWAG community meetings).

A 360 degree accountability process implies that everyone is subject to critical enquiry on the adverse impacts of their activities on community values. Even the State (Central Government) is not spared from criticisms. The 360 degree accountability relationship is characterised by mutual and collective responsibility in a community where everyone has responsibility (implied or legal) to participate in cooperative enquiry, share information, provide feedback and act on feedback provided by others during community meetings. The accountability relationship emphasises the interaction between individuals, community groups, local authorities, scientists, Central Government and private enterprises. Accountability as a dialectical process can be conceived as a collective form of accountability where people become accountable to each other through a democratic dialogue (Bohman, 1996; Drysek, 2000). The community reason together about issues of common concern in a transparent dialectical process which calls everyone to assume responsibility towards the common good. Accountability is not simply reporting the facts but a discursive practice (Francis, 1991). The dialectical form of accountability has “enabling, empowering and emancipatory” (Bebbington, 1997; p.365) potential to create a critically aware community in the Taupo district.

The community and local authorities, in the Taupo District, work together to make land-owners such as farmers, foresters and land developers accountable for their activities and to act in the interest of the common good (Lake Taupo) and community values. The communitarian accountability relationship in the Taupo District emphasises the rights of the community to participate in dialogues, planning and policy making, that is, the rights of the accountee to pose questions, pass judgement and sanctions. The accountors are the polluters (such as farmers, foresters, urban developers, recreational users etc) who have the social obligation to explain the legitimacy of carrying out their activities in the Lake Taupo catchment and how impending policy measures may affect them. Accountability of the farming community entails self-reflection on farming activities and responding to the common concerns and values. Congruence may or may not exist between the values and priorities of the farmers and those of the community. Self-reflection (Painter – Morland, 2006) requires farmers to consider how their responsibility or lack of responsibility to refrain from animal farming affects the common good and the common values of the community.

Radical accountability (Shearer, 2002) portrayed in the Taupo Community indicates that the interest and values of the polluters are subordinate to the community values and concern for the common good. Through the community surveys and subsequent discussions (2020 Community Forums⁴⁹) more than one underlying set of values and assumptions in community have been given visibility during the reporting and deliberation processes. In addition, the communal processes can be considered as promoting accountability relationship between current and future generations which will inherit stewardship of Lake Taupo.

8.8 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTING IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNAL PROCESSES

Environmental and social accounting acquires new meanings within the context of the communal processes in the Taupo District. The scope of environmental and social accounting becomes considerably expanded and stretches beyond

⁴⁹ See paragraph 8.5 for details

contemporary corporate social reporting practices in which private corporations assume the primary role of reporting and providing information to their stakeholders (Amaeshi & Adi, 2006; Lehman, 1999). In the context of the communal processes, environmental and social accounting can be defined as the reporting and critical enquiry on the impacts of human activities on Lake Taupo and community values attached to the Lake. A communitarian approach to environmental and social accounting involves identifying information needs of the community as the subject matter of accountability as discussed in paragraph 8.4. Multiple interests are involved and different groups report and debate on the pollution of Lake Taupo and ways to protect the Lake. The reporting and information sharing was a crucial aspect of community meetings in the Taupo district. Information was provided during community meetings in order to create awareness and build the capacity of the community to participate in critical enquiry on common issues. An interview participant sees community meetings as “a way to get information out to the people in the community....so that they are better informed when coming to making submissions” (Interview, December 2005). The community was well informed through the 2020 Community Forums as the following comments from an interviewee suggested:

I would say the community was very well informed...there is a lot of technical information...the presentation in power point or shorter summary notes had a lot of information that you can take away....its always pitched at two levels...the very technical or scientific information was available, presentations tried to highlight the key issues in a simpler way it means there is always more information for those who were interested they could take the reports or they could access them over various websites if they wanted....if they simply wanted the summary which is a simple one they can take that away....There were a number of brochures that were prepared that were very simple and easy to read....a series of brochures that highlighted all the key issues with photographs, pictures and so on (Interview January 2006).

The main objective of the 2020 Community Forums was to facilitate the provision of information and exchange of ideas. One interview considered the forums as:

...a way to give information to reach a wider sector of the community that was genuinely interested in the information....The forum provided opportunity for updates on key research for the Taupo district. The

updates were presented by scientists or key specialists or representatives from local Maori community, Ministry for the Environment and from Environment Waikato....a lot of information was provided and a lot of opinion, issues and concerns were given back to the people attending the meeting (Consultant and facilitator of Community meetings; Interview January 2006).

The forum also empowered the community by providing information and allowing representatives of various groups to report on the views of their groups. The interviewee commented

One objective of the forum was to empower everyone that was there with information. Presenters gave updates on the latest of the scientific research and the findings of their investigation. The information presented to the forum can then be taken back by the participants and representatives to their groups and share with their groups. The representatives came back and reported at the next forum....so there is a cycle developed through giving out information to the stakeholder representatives, they would share it with their groups and they will bring comments back to the next meeting (Interview January 2006).

Local authorities, by virtue of their statutory obligation to provide information to the community, have become the primary providers of information during the community meetings. According to a community survey (Stewart et al., 2004) the Taupo District Council and Environment Waikato are considered the primary providers of information on environmental issues. A local resident commented on the primary and secondary providers of information:

Taupo District Council, Lakes and Water Action Group and Environment Waikato, I probably should have said Environment Waikato first because they have been the central promoters and the rest of us have hung off them (Member of Acacia Bay Residents Association, Interview December 2005).

Information provided by the local authorities was mainly taxonomic in nature and covered a wide range of issues related to the pollution of Lake Taupo. LWAG community meetings and the 2020 Forums have a good representation of scientists who updated the attendees on their scientific findings. The scientists were mainly from Environment Waikato and research based institutions such as IGNS, NIWA,

New Zealand Hydrological Society and Ag Research which are appointed by local and Central Government authorities. Information provided to the community included details of: the environmental problem such as scientific evidence on the concentration of nitrogen in the Lake, significant nitrogen sources from human activities, the impacts of the nitrogen entering the Lake, estimates on manageable nitrogen load; reports on Taupo Community values, threats to community values, environmental management plan, risk assessment of threats to quality of life and communal values; survey findings; assessment of loss to farmers associated with nitrogen output restrictions in the catchments, etc . The type of information provided depends on the agenda and items discussed during a particular communal process such as: information on the findings of community surveys; information about the 2020 Action Plan; Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy; community submissions on Variation 5, the outcomes of the hearings process; and Environment Court proceedings. Information provided during earlier processes helped the community to participate in subsequent processes.

Information was disseminated to the community by various means including: reports and handouts distributed during 2020 Community Forums and LWAG community meetings; information published via the EW, MAF, DOC and MFE websites; information distributed during the science expo; and presentation by scientists during community meetings. The agenda for discussion and briefing papers were distributed a week in advance of the 2020 Community Forum meetings and minutes of each forum meeting were distributed within a week afterwards. The distribution was done by a combination of mail-out and/ or email distribution. Dissemination of information was also made through media releases; linkage to websites; presentation at school assembly and clubs; hard copy newsletter; articles in the local newspaper. According to a community survey (Stewart et al., 2004) the most effective means for disseminating information were local newspapers, direct mail-outs to households and local radio stations.

Community groups such as farmers association – Lake Taupo Care, Federated Farmers and Fonterra – and LWAG also provided information to the public but information from these sources were minimal when compared to the abundance of

material provided by local authorities, in particular by Environment Waikato. Community based groups such as LWAG, TLC and Maori community lack the resources to provide information. Information provided during these processes was primarily taxonomic information which a non-scientist or layman may not understand. The following are comments from a participant who regularly participated in the community meetings:

I think understanding the information is difficult for average person who hasn't done a lot of reading and a lot of it is quite technical and the information need to be broken down a little bit and if its simplified and that is quite a bit of a problem because a lot of information out there is quite technical. I think with a sharing of information amongst the people who are there, one of the disappointing things is the lack of follow through. Once people who are in the room are given this information, what next, where do they take that, or do they just drop it, and I have to confess I've probably been guilty of that myself. Time gets in the way, you go along, and think that's really interesting but you don't follow through with it (Interview, December 2005).

Reporting and information sharing have mutual responsibility connotations. It is the responsibility of the individual in the community to be informed and make intelligible the information provided. It becomes a mutual responsibility to understand and use the information for critical enquiry and for making suggestions during the communal processes. One interviewee commented on the mutual responsibility of individuals and groups of the Taupo Community:

Whether they're well informed or not I am not certain, they have had the opportunity to be informed. The material has been there, with the combination of those bulletins, those coloured brochures, plus the internet and the councils website. If anybody was at all interested the information was there. It's a balance isn't it, how much do you shove this stuff down peoples' throats when they're not particularly interested and to what extent do you make it available and those who are interested go for it (Member of Acacia Bay Residents Association, Interview December 2005).

Reporting and information sharing in the Taupo district provide new insights into the nature environmental and social accounting in terms of the subject matter and the parties involved in environmental and social accounting. For the Taupo community,

the main subject matter is on environmental pollution (the pollution of Lake Taupo) and the consequential impacts on economic, cultural and social values of the community. Reporting is a collective responsibility involving several parties including: community groups (especially LWAG, TLC, Indigenous Community Group Ngati Tuwharetoa), local authorities (EW and TDC); Central Government agencies (especially, DIA, DOC, MAF and MFE); and individuals who want to protect Lake Taupo and community values associated with the Lake. The collective responsibility implies that reporting and information is not merely provided by the polluter but also by others in the community (such as LWAG) and local authorities who want the polluter to change to other land uses and improve farming practices. The aim of reporting is not for appropriating blame but to protect the common good and to make collective decisions. The information creates awareness of the community on the pollution of Lake Taupo and helps the community to participate in planning and policy making processes. The collective reporting and information sharing process opens up new avenues for environmental and social accounting. It entails capacity building of the community with knowledge to enable participation in planning and policy making for Lake Taupo. The processes in the Taupo District show that environmental and social accounting has extended beyond the parameters of private corporations and does not accord private corporations the privileged status of “reporting entities” (Lehman, 1999).

8.9 SYMMETRIES AND ASYMMETRIES IN COMMUNAL PROCESSES

According to Tam (1998) communitarians believe in symmetry of power and non-authoritarian processes through which people participate as equal citizens in deciding on outcomes that affect them and “claims regarding what should be done for the good of all can be evaluated openly and effectively” (p.17). Communitarians want a democratic political structure that allows members of society to participate as equal citizens in the decision making process. The processes in the Taupo District provides for inclusiveness in that anyone can participate whether they are affected or not affected by impending strategies and policy decisions. Community deliberation in the Taupo District can be considered a democratic process with public debate, discussion and exchange of views where participants offer their platforms and try to

convince one another. The dialogue of the community with various groups can be seen as attempts to convince the community on particular viewpoints and legitimacy of activities. The discussion can be seen as being primarily concerned with “problems, conflicts and claims” (Young, 2002, p.22) of interested parties. Community participation involves identifying their concerns and values, suggesting solutions and helping local authorities to implement or enforce decisions. From this perspective residents are treated as coequal to Local Government representatives and experts.

Communitarians assume that there is power and information symmetry between different groups of participants engaged in a debate and dialogue session (Tam, 1998). The Taupo Community obtained access to information on current environmental and social issues facing the Taupo District through the communal processes. Through such accessibility the rights of the community to receive information is reinforced. The planning and policy making processes allow any individuals and groups to express their concern and provide explanations to convince others about their values and interest. The processes seek to give local residents a direct stake in planning and policy making of the district. There appears to be no marginalization of any group as far as freedom of expression is concerned. However, there were aspects of both symmetry and asymmetry in the communal processes.

The processes facilitated by LWAG appear to be more democratic than processes facilitated by local authorities. Community meetings organised by LWAG were very inclusive and represented by various groups. A farmer commented on the LWAG community meetings:

I think the best thing that has happened in Taupo is LWAG...they have brought a whole lot of groups and people together to talk about common solutions ... LWAG far more representative of the community ...people speak out at the LWAG than the 2020 Forum...I felt that it was a far more even handed basis that anybody could go along and get heard...I always felt that .. it was always very inclusive and very open ...and it still is anybody in the street can walk into the meeting and have a say (Interview December 2005).

The 2020 Community Forums reflect a form of participatory democracy as commented by a consultant:

It was very participative...people will have an opportunity to have a say... it was a good forum to be listened to...it was a good forum for people to understand where opposing views were coming from...it is very effective (Interview January 2006).

The 2020 Community Forums were representative of a community of interests:

The forum was very representative of key groups but is wasn't representative of the whole community...the wider community around the Lake Taupo was huge so it didn't have every residential area represented but it had groups that were very interested in water quality as much as it had groups interested in the farming sector and development sector ...it had a wide representation I wouldn't say representation of every sector that would be very difficult to achieve (Consultant and facilitator of Community Meetings, Interview January 2006).

The 2020 Community Forums were coordinated by an independent person:

I was an independent facilitator of the 2020 Forum and my duty is to oversee the forum. I monitored the meetings taking place instead of the presenters trying to present and run the meeting...so there was an independent person.. I never took sides ..I was simply there to introduce people and relay the feedback. I did not have any involvement in the project up to that time. I was totally independent and neutral and had no experience in it no conflict of interest ... I have no vested interest totally neutral and able to facilitate that approach that style so that was my...My aim was to ensure that every forum was run well gave everybody an opportunity to have a say to make sure that it is working and information was shared and was given to everybody and when discussion was needed then I can help to facilitate that (Consultant and Facilitator of Community Meetings, Interview January 2006).

Although, generally there was symmetry of power and information, some participants and certain ideologies appear to be dominant in the communal processes. Several factors appear to impinge participatory democracy in the processes. The community participated in planning and policy making processes that were mainly facilitated by local authorities, especially by EW. The community was guided by local authorities into making decisions on the strategies and policies to protect Lake

Taupo. The approach taken by EW in formulating policy measures (Variation 5) sometimes appears to be authoritarian. According to a member of LWAG, EW is having a top down approach to controllability. A top down approach can off-set symmetry of power in not providing the community an opportunity to find solutions beyond the regulations. The member commented on the approach taken by EW:

EW adopted a leadership style which is more of a top down approach and went around telling people what they thought the regulation is going to be ...the farmers are not trying to avoid the situation...I think the Federated farmers want to consider other options and not just rules and regulations (Interview, December 2005).

With such a significant role, collaboration became defined within the context of planning and policy making processes of Local Government. The scope for local residents and community based groups to exercise real influence and act independently of the authorities appears to be limited portraying a kind of pseudo-participation. There appears to be few interactions between various community-based groups other than during forums and public meetings facilitated by the public authorities. The influence and position of public authorities remain strong. Collaboration may serve as a venue for new forms of control by local authorities and Central Government agencies. EW appears to be in control of information and the agenda to find solutions for protecting Lake Taupo. A scientist and a member of LWAG is not happy with the approach taken by Environment Waikato:

...the facts and reports the EW put out may always make it seem they are going to solve the problem and people don't need to worryLWAG is not convinced of that ...so although because of their size they are the group disseminating information we feel that maybe they also tending to make it appear that they have the situation under control through regulation and that is what the problem is (Interview December 2005).

The groups that participated in the 2020 Forums tried to influence each other. The facilitator of community meetings commented that:

The forum had a very diverse groups they probably were all keen to influence each other but I would say they all remained very strong in their opinions and views (Interview January 2006).

Asymmetry of power appears in the submission process. Some parties are more empowered to make submissions because they have better skills, such as legal expertise, and resources. A member of LWAG commented:

...the Environmental Defence Society has written a very powerful submission and they are a group of partners and lawyers based in Auckland that although it is voluntary ...they are short of time they are not short of expertise and they have stated that they think documents like the Taupo District Plan and EW variation should be rewritten (Interview December 2005).

Local authority officials come to the community meetings with mindsets:

EW staff have a mind set...the mind set was farming was bad and they brought their mind set to the community meetings and how do we get rid of farming...they had an unconscious agenda ...a mindset...and the rest was really a lip service that was paid...make the community to come along they can do a little bit and pieces alter that from here and there (Farmer, Interview December 2005).

A resident points out to biasness in the solution recommended by Environment Waikato:

...if we can change the soils to absorb more nutrients then there would not be a problem people can continue farming and some methods that have been tried overseas called biological soil remediation would appear to be potentially a very good solution to the problem and the existing soil biology of many of the soil have been killed by overstocking use of pesticide and organic fertilizers so the soils are pretty bad and if they can be inoculated with bacteria and fungi you can bring these back to life then those organisms in the soil will assimilate (absorb) the nutrients ...the main part of the problem for farming is the urine patches from the large animals....and people say that soil biology is not going to help with that but the actual fact if the soil biology can have grassroots go down to significant depths then it would help because the roots will be there to help absorb the nutrients even in these high urine nitrogen concentrated patches...what I am trying to say is that working on the soils could be a solution to allow them to do some farming leaving out high density dairy

farming but you could allow farming to continuethese options are not being considered now they are looking at simple farming things like removing stock from the catchments and....nothing is wrong with that except that they should be looking at a variety of techniques and they have not considered these biological soil remediation ...probably it is not promoted by fertilizer company it is relatively new it needs to be tried in this area to be provenEW don't feel it is their responsibility to try these techniques....(Interview December 2005).

A farmer commented on the lack of democracy in the planning and decision making processes facilitated by the local authorities:

...that there is lack of democracy in the processes. You don't know whether your comments are heard or how decisions are made (Interview December 2005).

Practical reasoning (Cohen, 1989; Barber, 1984; Mansbridge, 1992; Dryzek, 1996; Fishkin, 1995) of scientific information has become dominant in the communal processes. The dominance of scientific information appears to create asymmetries in favor of scientists and local authorities which employ. The asymmetry continues in spite of concerns by some members of the community on the accuracy of scientific findings. Such asymmetry defies participatory democracy, in particular the Young's (2000) principle of political equity. When science and environmental sustainability become the dominating rationalities it may be difficult to give the voice of the community a fair hearing. Political equity may be affected by the incapacity arising from lack of knowledge and incomprehensibility of issues. Participants have rights to express their viewpoints and to question, respond and criticize other affected parties. However their ability of capacity to exercise these rights is affected by the participants' ability to understand the issues especially when the issues are often stated in terms of scientific information. Those who understand, especially scientists, tend to dominate the discussions at community meetings while others are just passive participants limiting their role to listening and observation. They are educating themselves and may not contribute much to the planning and decision making process. Hence the community meetings are not free from the influence of the taxonomic information and scientists. Political equality (Young, 202) becomes questionable in such situations. The policy making processes (submissions, hearings and environment court proceedings) may not result in symmetry of power if one

party has more resources than another. Hence not all interests are articulated and represented clearly. The Chairman of LWAG commented:

I have been going through the variation 5. There is something like a 136 submissions varying from Carter Holt Harvey, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, LWAG, DOC right down to individualsyou kind of wonder how much the individual is listened to ...you are judged against submissions written by legal teams e.g. the Carter Holt Harvey submission very competently done using a lot of language which ordinary person may not use or may not be familiar with ...what the ordinary person say in the individual submissions looks very different to these professional submissions ...they haven't got the resources and it takes a heck a lot of timelarger corporate body have the support of legal people ...and that makes it different and those submissions will appear more powerful or more credible ...I don't think community can have the impact of the larger organisations because of their resources...the larger organisations don't see the need for the community involvement in their submissions it would just be an extra level of complication because they may not get agreement in all their points (Interview December 2005).

Some group appear to dominate discussions at community meetings. A resident and member of a community based group commented that:

I think it is very difficult to have people coming from such disparate perspectives in the same room and trying to find a common ground, and I guess one of the ones that comes to mind is the Federated Farmers fellow who's got a very persuasive manner and people listen to that strong stance that comes through and those who are less articulate or who are less outward, their point of view perhaps is not taken into account so much. I don't want to single one person out but that personality does come to the fore a bit (A member of a Community-Based Group, Interview December 2005).

Community participation in local governance is affected by inequities and segregation between Maori and non-Maori community groups. There are inequalities in bargaining positions different parties bring to the dialogues. The Maori community claims custodial and customary rights over Lake Taupo and the surrounding catchments (Environment Waikato, 2004b; 2008; Joint management Agreement, 2008; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia, 1992; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; 2003). The Local Government Act 2002 requires consultation with the Maori Community on

matters related to natural resource management. The Maori Community prefer to deal with local and Central Government authorities, rather than with the district community at large, as this a better way to promote their interest and values (Field Notes, LWAG Community Meeting).

8.10 REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter explains how communitarian and accountability themes acquire meanings in the context of communal processes in the Taupo District. Communal processes in the Taupo District consist of a series interrelated processes of collaboration between community groups, public authorities and private businesses for planning and policy making for the sustainable development of the district. The primary focus was the protection of Lake Taupo (common good) and community values attached to the Lake. The communal processes reflect the hermeneutic concept of parts and whole. The meaning of the communal processes as a whole is derived from meanings that emerge from the interpretation of the component processes. The purposes and meanings of each process can be understood in terms of the totality of the communal process. The communal processes reflect a switch from government to governance (Mayntz, 2003; Meehan, 2003; Richards and Smith, 2002). The switch resembles a shift from hierarchical to a more cooperative form of government (Mayntz, 2003) and partnership arrangements across public, private and community sectors (DiGaetano, 2002). It entails democratic participation of communities in problem solving and decision making. The communal processes (such as LWAG community meetings and dialogues between the community and local authorities) are on-going and expected to continue in the future. LWAG community meetings continue to be held on a monthly basis and focus on environmental issues affecting the community. The idea of a continuing forum and a Joint Management Group to monitor the implementation of the 2020 Action Plan was suggested at the 2020 Community Forums. A participant of the 2020 Forums was of the opinion that:

...it was critical that the Forum continues to meet as part of implementing the Plan. The Joint management Group will also have wider membership (Minutes of Community forum held on 17 June 2004).

In the context of the communal processes, the scope and meaning of the Taupo community, defined in terms of a community of interests, is not static but is variable depending on which group and individuals participated in the processes. Public authorities (local and Central Government authorities) are part of the community of interests. The public authorities, in particular local authorities are key players in the communal processes. They undertake community surveys and facilitate the planning and policy making processes. Major scientific researches are funded and carried out by the authorities or by research institutions on behalf of the authorities. Without the assistance of local authorities it may be a formidable task to bring the community, segregated by diverse interest and values, to cooperative enquiry and as such public authorities have become part of the community. The inclusion of the public authorities as part of the community defies the concept of a community existing separate and independent from the state (Alexander, 1998).

The key interpretive comment that flows in this chapter is that communal processes serve as a venue for cooperative enquiry and the dialectical dimension of accountability. The meaning of cooperative enquiry that emerges within the context of the communal processes is a series of dialogues between the parties. Cooperative enquiry was facilitated through the 2020 Community Forums, LWAG Community meetings, submissions and hearings process and Environment Court proceedings. The dialogues involved: critical enquiry by a community of interests on activities that have adverse impacts on Lake Taupo and community values; providing explanations and justifications in defence of the legitimacy of activities carried out in the Lake Taupo catchment; information sharing and exchange of ideas; and discussion and negotiation on future plans and policy measures to protect the Lake. The dialogues illustrated in this chapter indicate that different parties are being subject to critical enquiry by the community including farmers, scientists, local authorities, Central Government, foresters, recreational users, tourism industry. The dialogues facilitate communication in the community, create conditions for the development of openness and transparency and the possibilities for change.

Accountability as a dialectical process acquires meanings in the context of the community dialogues. There was questioning by some parties and answering and

reporting by other parties. Also, the meaning joint accountability or 360 degree accountability emerges when several groups and individuals in the community participate in the dialogues, providing information and creating awareness in the community. Accountability in the Taupo district can be portrayed as a collective responsibility towards the common good. Individuals and groups come together and discuss common issues collectively, seeking explanations and debating on the issues. It has become the mutual responsibility of people in the Taupo community to participate in the processes, to be answerable and responsible for safeguarding the common good. The way to discharge the mutual responsibility is by participating in the communal processes.

Environmental and social accounting acquires new meanings within the context of reporting and information sharing during the communal processes. It is joint accountability where several parties in a community of interests were involved. Responsibility to report and provide information on Lake Taupo is not merely the responsibility of the polluter as implied in contemporary corporate social reporting practices, but it is the mutual and joint responsibility of the community and the statutory responsibility (under RMA 1991 and LGA 2002) of public authorities. Environmental and social accounting is not merely about quantifying in monetary terms the environmental impacts of human activities, but involves providing taxonomic/ scientific information on the impacts and presenting arguments during various processes (such as submissions, hearings and environment court proceedings) in support or against proposed policy measures.

Tension between economic and environmental interests in the Taupo District may pose a challenge to the communitarian approach to planning and policy making and by implication pose a challenge to CAACG. The tension is mainly between the environmental objective of local authorities (especially EW) versus the economic interests of farmers, urban developers, foresters and the Maori Community. EW appear to emphasise more on the disastrous effects of farming on Lake Taupo and the way forward is to restrict animal farming. Community groups such as Taupo Lake Care, Federated Farmers and the farming community in general are not convinced by scientific evidence and do not see restricting animal farming as a way

forward for protecting Lake Taupo. There are also tensions between the economic interest of some parties who depend on a clean Lake (such as tourist operators, hotel and motel operators, fishery and recreational providers) versus the interests of the farming community. Environmentalists (such as Environmental Defence Society, Fish and Game) are strong advocates of protecting Lake Taupo at any cost. Such conflicting interests may cause segregation in the community.

Segregation in the Taupo Community also appears in another way i.e. segregation between the Indigenous Maori Community and the rest of the community. The segregation is inevitably brought about by RMA, LGA and Treaty of Waitangi, which accord special privileges to the Maori Community. The indigenous community has representation in the JMG (for implementation of the 2020 Action Plan) and in the Lake Taupo Protection Trust (for implementation of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and rules in Variation 5). Other community groups are not given representation in these committees but are represented by local authorities. While accountability to the Maori community can be achieved through its representation, other community groups are not assured of their participation. Hence, there is clear marginalisation of other community groups in the JMG and Lake Taupo Protection Trust. The marginalisation may restrict other community groups from participating in the dialectical dimension of accountability. If not corrected, the marginalisation may pervade future committees that may be set up in the Taupo District.

The communitarian approach in the Taupo district relies on institutional structures such as RMA, LGA, Local Government institutions and Environment Court to guide the community in planning and policy making. The danger of relying on these institutions is that they may be driven by local authorities wanting to push through their own agenda. The agenda of Environment Waikato is driven by its primary motive of protecting the natural environment. The RMA is mainly about environmental sustainability. The Environment Court often made references to RMA 1991 in its deliberations and decision making.

In view of the above challenges, it is necessary to examine some of the assumptions underpinning the CAACG model developed in chapter 4. The assumptions are my prejudices which I have brought to the interpretation of the communal processes. First, the process of cooperative enquiry is not a simple process as portrayed in the CAAAG model in Chapter 4. My interpretation reveals that process of cooperative enquiry is very complex comprising of numerous interrelated processes. Second, the original CAACG model does not assume multiple interest and segregation in community. Third, the scope of a community, defined in terms of a community of interest, is not static but changes with different community of interests coming into existence for different communal processes. Fourth, symmetry of power may be affected by the influence of local authorities in the communal processes. Fifth, there is segregation in a community as opposed to a united community. The interpretation of the communal process in the Taupo District stands to correct some of my prejudices embedded in the CAACG model.

Major outcomes of the communal processes include a Community Accord (Taupo Accord, 1999); Economic Development Strategy (APR Consultants; 2002a & 2002b); Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy (Environment Waikato; 2003); Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy or 2020 Action Plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b) and policy proposal for protection of Lake Taupo (Environment, Waikato; 2005a). The next stage in the hermeneutic process is to interpret these outcomes (strategies and policies) of the communal processes. The interpretation of the strategies and policy proposal is covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9

ACCOUNTABILITY ACQUIRES MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The communal processes discussed in Chapter 8 resulted in the release of several documents that contain strategies and policy measures to protect Lake Taupo and community values attached to the Lake. The documents, referred to in this interpretive study as community documents, include: the Lake Taupo Accord (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999); the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy (Environment Waikato, 2003); the 2020 Action Plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b); Taupo District Economic Development Strategy (APR Consultants, 2002); and Variation 5 (Environment Waikato, 2005). The Maori community produced its own strategy known as the Environmental Strategic Plan 2000 (hereinafter known as the Maori Strategy) which complements the community documents and as such I consider it as part of the community documents. The primary focus of the community documents is environmental sustainability with emphasis on the protection of Lake Taupo and community values attached to the Lake. The documents articulate the community's vision for sustainable development for the Taupo District and set out to reform land-use activities in the catchments of Lake Taupo. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the hermeneutic analysis of the community documents. I approached the reading and interpretation of the community documents with prior understandings of concepts and issues presented in chapters 4 - 8. This chapter discusses how communitarian ideology, the paradigm of environmental sustainability and dimensions of accountability are manifested in the community documents and how CAACG acquires meaning in that manifestation. The chapter also highlights contradictions within and between the community documents and potential tensions that could arise from the strategies and policy measures proposed in the documents.

The chapter is organised as follows. Section 9.2 briefly discusses the community documents that were examined in this study. Section 9.3 explains the manifestation of accountability themes in the community documents. Section 9.4 explains how mutual responsibility and joint accountability are implied in the community documents. Section 9.5 reflects on the tensions, contradictions, asymmetries inherent in the documents and factors which pose challenges to the communitarian model while section 9.6 concludes the chapter.

9.2 THE COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

The sequence of communal processes (discussed in Chapter 8) is linked through the community documents as shown in Figure 9.1. A strategy resulting from a communal process forms the basis for dialogues in subsequent communal processes. For instance, the Taupo Accord and the Maori Strategy form the basis for the development of subsequent community strategies and as such they can be considered as foundational documents. Environmental concerns and values stated in these foundational documents have been reiterated in all other community documents. Economic values proclaimed in the Taupo Accord form the basis for strategies proposed in the Taupo District Economic Strategy. The various means to attainment of environmental values is proposed in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy which in turn sets the context for the development of Variation 5. The variation is the basis for discussion in the submissions, hearings and environment court proceedings.

Some community documents (such as the Taupo Accord and 2020 Action Plan) provide a holistic view of community values and concerns while other documents (such as Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy, Maori Strategy and Taupo district Economic Development Strategy) emphasise particular issues. In my hermeneutic process of interpretation, I have taken all these documents as representing a “whole” and each document as a part of the whole. Each of the documents contributes to some aspect of my understanding of the community and CAACG. Meanings manifested in each document can be understood in the light of meanings in other documents and together they contribute to the meaning of CAACG. For instance, detailed coverage of environmental concerns, values and actions in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and Variation 5 helps to understand the brief coverage of similar values in the Taupo Accord and 2020 Action Plan. Similarly, cultural values

stated in the Taupo Accord and 2020 Action Plan can be understood in the light of the Maori Strategy. Commercial values stated in the Taupo Accord and 2020 Action Plan are further expounded in the light of the vision for economic development articulated in the Economic Development Strategy. In unfolding the meaning of CAACG I consider the documents as complementing each other.

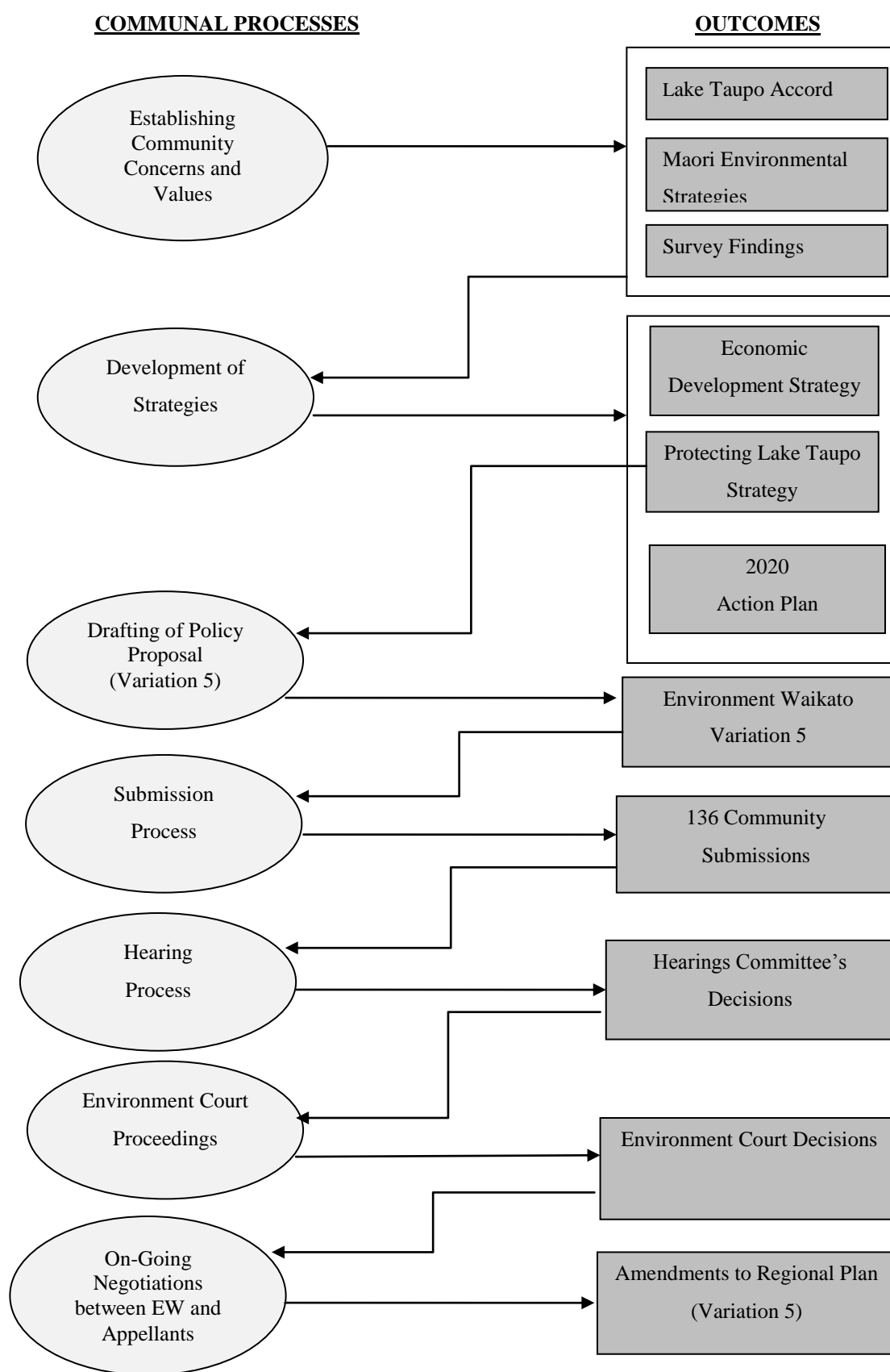
The hermeneutic enquiry of the community documents entails reading and understanding the community documents with reference to my pre-understandings of communitarian ideology, sustainability paradigms and accountability dimensions and in particular with reference to my pre-understandings including: the CAACG model developed (Chapter 4); the global discourse (Chapter 5); and the New Zealand local governance context (Chapter 6). In addition, the understanding obtained from interpretation of communal issues and processes (in chapters 7 and 8) provides some insights into the meanings embedded in the community documents.

My interpretation of the community documents suggests that communitarian, sustainability and accountability themes are manifested in the community documents. Together these themes articulate the meaning of CAACG. The hidden meaning of CAACG can be revealed through a hermeneutic enquiry of the community documents.

9.2.1 Lake Taupo Accord 1999

The Lake Taupo Accord is a voluntary and non-statutory agreement between various groups in the Taupo District. The parties consenting the terms of the Taupo Accord consist of a number of non-governmental organisations such as LWAG, farming community of the Taupo District; statutory authorities and their agencies such as the Taupo District Council, Environment Waikato, Department of Conservation, Department of Internal Affairs; and associations representing private businesses in the district such as Taupo Chamber of Commerce, land developers, electricity generators, forestry industry and road management agencies.

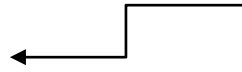
Figure 9-1: Communal Processes and Outcomes



Some symbols used in Figure 9-1 refer to the following:



Refers to a process leading to an outcome



Refers to outcome(s) forming a basis for discussion in a subsequent process

The Taupo Accord is a holistic document in two ways. First, it emphasises the environmental, social, cultural and economic values of the community. Second, it is an agreement of the wider community of the Taupo District. The Taupo Accord represents the endorsement of the Taupo Community on several issues including: the values of the community; threats to the values; community principles to guide future courses of action to protect the values; and the responsibilities of various parties to safeguard communal values.

9.2.2 The Maori Environmental Strategic Plan 2000

The Environmental Strategic Plan 2000 (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000) is a collection of the views, issues and values of the Maori Community (Ngati Tuwharetoa) regarding the indigenous community's relationship with Lake Taupo and its catchment areas. The plan provides a basis for the Maori Community to exercise its guardianship over the Lake and its surrounding areas for the benefit of current and future generations of the community. It also aims to develop longterm strategies towards achieving the social, cultural, spiritual and economic needs of the Ngati Tuwharetoa. The plan also identifies actions that need to be taken to exercise the Maori Community's rights of authority and guardianship over the land, waterways, sacred places, forests, fisheries, minerals, geothermal resources, airspace and flora and fauna in the Taupo District. Although the Maori Strategy focuses on the values and interests of the indigenous community, it is important for the wider community to acknowledge the indigenous strategy in line with the Treaty of Waitangi⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ Refer to Chapter 6 section 6.3 on the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi to the communities around New Zealand.

9.2.3 The Taupo District Economic Development Strategy 2002

The Taupo District Economic Development Strategy (APR Consultants, 2002) acknowledges all the values stated in the Lake Taupo Accord and supports activities that protect and enhance Taupo District's lakes and waterways. The strategy asserts that future economic developments in the district should ensure that the environment is protected but not to the extent that growth is stifled unnecessarily. The strategy has identified strategic objectives, high priority actions, lead agencies to implement the strategy and the time frame for implementation. Areas covered in the strategy include business development, Maori economic development, agriculture, education, energy, forestry and tourism.

9.2.4 The 2020 Action Plan 2004

The 2020 Action Plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b) is a non-statutory plan aiming to protect community values attached to Lake Taupo. The plan focuses on social, cultural, environmental and economic values endorsed by the community in the Taupo Accord and community surveys. The plan sets out new actions to be undertaken by local authorities, Central Government agencies and the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board to help protect or enhance those values identified.

9.2.5 Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy 2003

The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy (Environment Waikato, 2003) comprises of a framework of ideas that are intended to assist the Taupo community in developing more specific solutions to reduce the amount of nitrogen flowing into the Lake. To achieve the 20% reduction in nitrogen load the strategy suggests changes to farm management and land uses in the surrounding catchments of the Lake. The strategy recommends conversion of the use of land from animal farming to other activities that yield low levels of nitrogen while providing returns comparable to traditional farming returns. The alternatives include forestry and switching to horticulture. The strategy also proposes rules to implement a nitrogen cap in the catchments. These rules require that existing land uses do not increase their nitrogen leaching above current levels. A nitrogen tax is being considered on activities which cause increases in nitrogen flows compared to existing levels of flows. The strategy provides

guidelines to monitor future activities in the catchments in that it serves as a document for the community to compare future activities with the options proposed in the strategy.

9.2.6 Variation 5

Variation 5 (Environment Waikato, 2005) is an offshoot of the The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and contains policy measures for implementing the recommendations made in the strategy. The purpose of the variation is to protect water quality in Lake Taupo by managing land use and nutrient discharged to land in the catchments where it may enter surface water or ground water and subsequently enter the Lake.

9.3 MANIFESTATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY THEMES IN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

The Taupo community documents portray accountability by: defining the community values; reporting on community concerns regarding impacts of human activities on the values; assigning responsibilities to protect the values; suggesting controls on activities that adversely affect the values; outlining indicators to monitor the values; and reporting to the community. Features of CAACG that are revealed through the reading and interpretation of the community documents include the following:

- Accountability for Environmental Values
- Accountability for Economic Values
- Accountability for Cultural values
- Accountability for the Common Good
- Joint Responsibility and Accountability

The discussion in the following subsections 9.3.1 – 9.3.4) explains how accountability is implicated in the community documents.

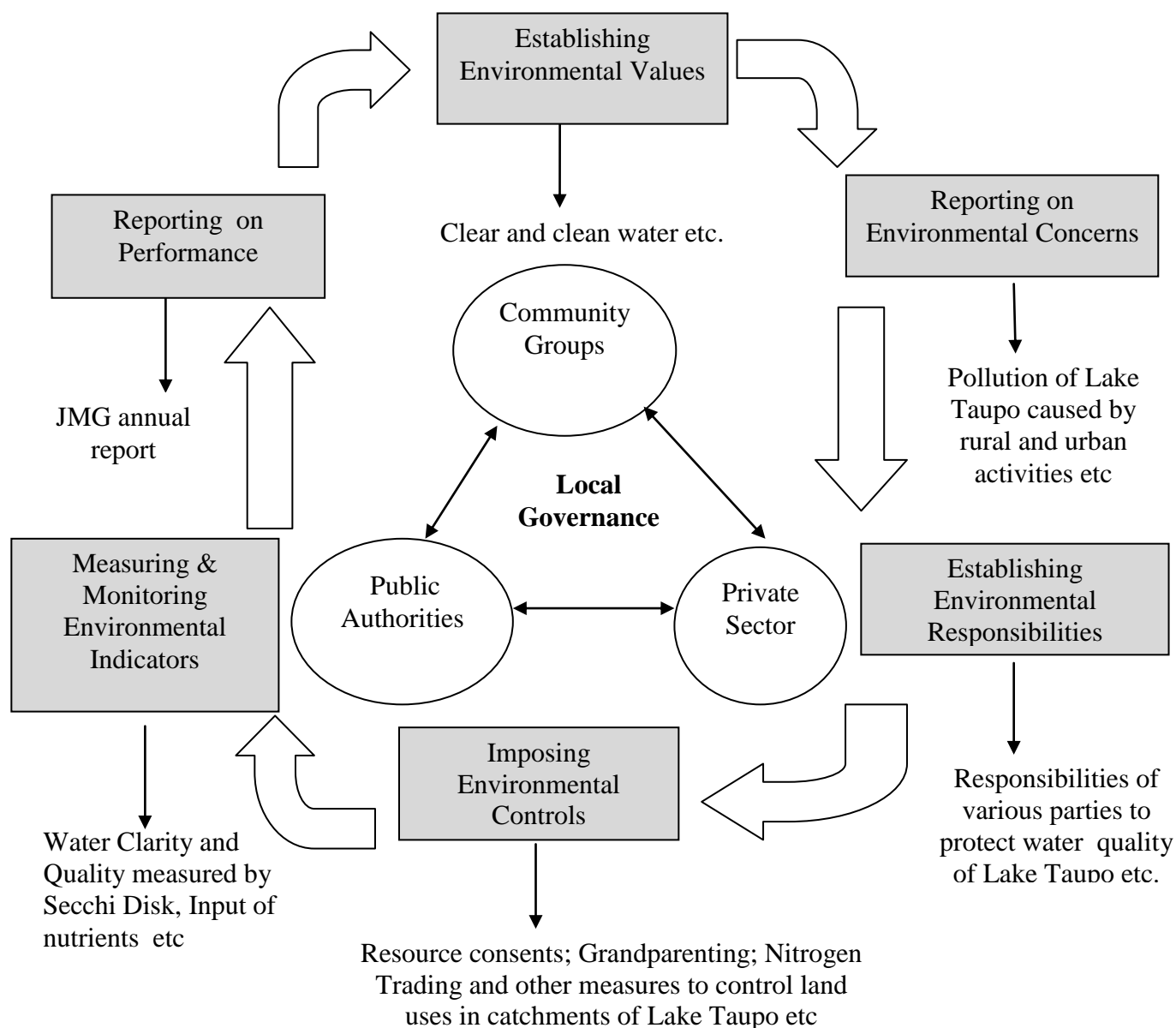
9.3.1 Accountability for Environmental Values

Accountability for environmental values implicated in the community documents (such as in the Taupo Accord, 2020 Action Plan and Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy) consists of the following features: establishing environmental values; reporting on issues arising from pollution of Lake Taupo; establishing responsibilities to protect the Lake; measuring and monitoring environmental indicators; and reporting to community through the Joint Management Group (Joint Management Group, n.d.; Joint Management Group, 2007)⁵¹. The link between these features is illustrated in Figure 9-2 and details provided in Appendix 18. Each feature represents a “part” that contributes to the understanding of the meaning of the “whole”, which is, accountability for environmental values. The meaning of each feature is enlightened by the meanings of other features and together they contribute to the meaning of the whole. For instance environmental concerns can be understood in the context of how pollution (Environmental concern) affects environmental values of the community. Environmental values of the community refer to the community’s desires for clear and clean water in Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2003, 2004b). The high water quality is important for several reasons including: to maintain a range of ecosystems and natural habitats which support flora and fauna in the Lake; for trout fishing; for supporting recreational activities such as swimming; for safe drinking water that continues to meet the New Zealand drinking water standards; and for maintaining weed-free Lake to reduce harm to the ecosystem. The aesthetic values of the community are linked to its environmental values and include the community’s priority to preserve the extensive scenic lakeshore reserve, wilderness areas and geological features of Lake Taupo and the surroundings of the Lake (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999; Environment Waikato, 2004b). In essence, the environmental values define the qualities of the common good (Lake Taupo) that provide current and future benefits to the community. Environmental concerns of the community are mainly about pollution of Lake Taupo and the impact of the pollution on the environmental values of the community. The environmental concerns of the community have resulted in the assignment of responsibilities to various parties to take actions to protect the quality of water in Lake Taupo. The

⁵¹ Refer to paragraph 8.6 in Chapter 8.

responsibility of the community also includes imposing controls on activities in the catchment areas of Lake Taupo.

Figure 9-2: Accountability for Environmental Values of the Community



The 2020 Action Plan recommends the use of several monitoring indicators to measure and report on the progress made in carrying out the responsibilities. The list of indicators is shown in Appendix 19. Community surveys to be undertaken every three years will continue to measure community awareness of environmental and social issues and community environmental views and attitudes. Number of

complaints on water pollution has been suggested to measure community satisfaction with the environment. Water clarity and quality is to be measured by various ways including: the use of Secchi Disk for measuring water clarity ; estimates of nitrogen outflow per year from various sources; algal biomass, oxygen depletion rate; percentage of dwellings on reticulated wastewater; volume of sewage and storm-water treated by Taupo District Council etc.

Accountability of various parties arises from their responsibilities to undertake certain actions to protect Lake Taupo and its surrounding environment. The account giving is in the form an annual report. The Taupo Accord recommends annual reporting back to the wider community on the progress made on activities that statutory, private enterprises and community groups have committed to undertake:

An annual report back to the wider community in September of each year will provide the opportunity for signatory parties to demonstrate progress they have made with whatever activities they have committed to undertake. It will also provide an opportunity for groups to re-commit to the Accord by identifying what they will be working on over the next year....The annual report back will give management agencies an opportunity to demonstrate how their policy decisions and activities over the previous year have reflected the protection and improvement of community identified values for the Lake and catchment (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999, p.40)

The 2020 Action Plan has assigned the task of annual reporting to the JMG. The last annual report released by the JMG outlines the progress that has been made on the actions assigned to the various parties in the 2020 Action Plan (Joint Management Group, 2007). The achievements of the organisations in implementing the actions are highlighted, as are the challenges that have emerged over the period under review. Conclusions about how these challenges can be addressed, and the implementation of the Action Plan moved forward, are drawn. Details about the status of each individual action are contained in the report. An extract of the report is annexed in Appendix 21 (Joint management Group, 2007).

9.3.2 Accountability for Economic Values

The features of accountability for the economic values of the community are shown in Figure 9.3 and consist of: defining economic values of the community; identifying community concerns regarding the local economy; establishing responsibilities to enhance the local economy; establishing environmental controls for economic activities; measuring progress on responsibilities by using indicators; and reporting through the JMG. The economic values are stated in terms of Eco-Development i.e. growing and diversifying the economy while protecting the environment (Environment Waikato, 2004b). The economic values of the community portray a strong form of sustainability i.e. “economic development that builds on the community values and does not negatively impact on them” (2020 Action Plan, 2004; p.25).

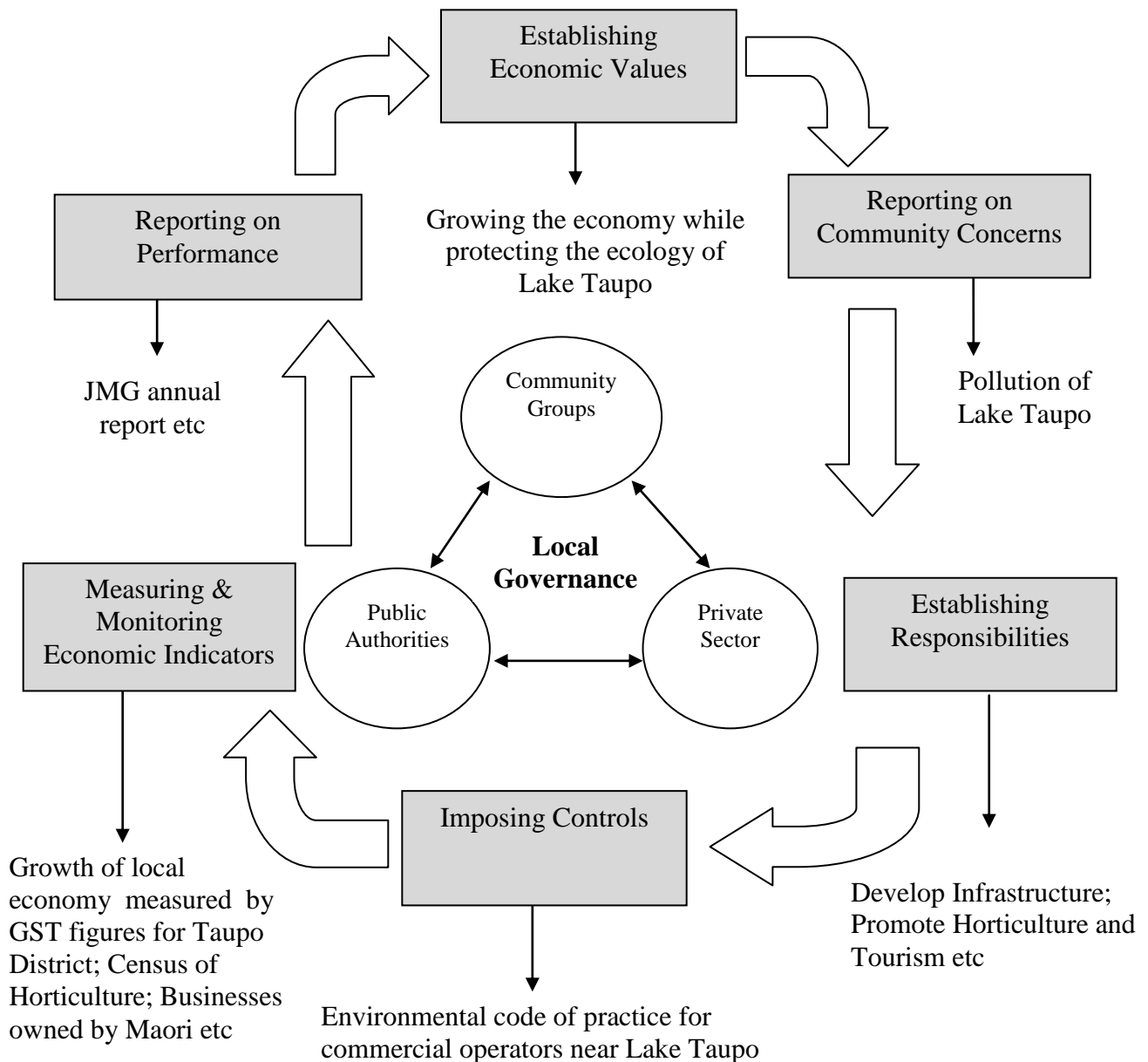
Several economic activities in the Taupo District depend on clean and clear water in Lake Taupo. Commercial activities, such as tourism, hotels and motels, fishing and recreation depend on a clean Lake. Tourism is a major industry in the district (APR Consultants, 2002) and the Lake is the primary attraction for the development of hotels, motels, restaurants, shops which cater for tourists and local residents of the Taupo District. The tourist industry is important for continuous economic development that provides long-term employment and business opportunities. In recent years there has been a growing trend towards residential and commercial development in the district resulting in conversion of lifestyle blocks and farmlands to cater for such developments. These types of land development and tourist activities which depend on a clean Lake are considered a lesser threat to the water quality in the Lake as compared to livestock farming.

The importance of the natural environment for the local economy is highlighted in the Taupo District Economic Strategy:

A key strength for the Taupo District that provides the area with a competitive advantage is the natural environment. The district's attractive environment and associated activities draw visitors to the region and make it relatively easy to attract people to work there. The environment is a critical component of marketing and promoting the district...Any land-based developments in the district must not damage the sensitive

environment...Hence, the costs and benefits of future developments in the district should be identified to ensure that the environment is protected, but not to the extent that growth is stifled unnecessarily (APR Consultants, 2002; p.8).

Figure 9-3: Accountability for Economic Values of the Community



A similar emphasis is provided in the the 2020 Action Plan:

The tourism industry based on the Lake's natural features and values and the hydropower schemes of the Tongariro and Waikato Rivers, provide national economic benefit (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p.25).

The 2020 Action Plan reports the primary threats to the economic values (or community concerns) as the pollution of Lake Taupo caused by activities in farmland. Actions suggested in the Economic development Strategy include the development of horticulture to diversify land-use options in order enhance land based returns while protecting the environment. Horticulture development is to be supplemented by the development of physical infrastructure. Economic indicators to measure progress made in achieving economic values include net Goods and Services Tax for the Taupo District, Taupo Growth Index, number of businesses by sector, sales and staff growth etc. (APR Consultant, 2002; Environment Waikato, 2004b). Other features of accountability for economic values are shown in Figure 9-3.

9.3.3 Accountability for Cultural Values

The historical background of the Taupo District is linked to ancestors of the Maori community. The 2020 Action Plan provides a brief historical account of the discovery of Lake Taupo and its surrounding catchments by the Maori Community:

Tia was one of the great rangatira⁵² who came to Aotearoa⁵³ in the great migrations from Hawaiki.....During his exploration of this new land he found himself and his followers camped beside a great body of water in a place know as Hamaria. It was while at this camp site that Tia noticed some distance away a rocky cliff which faced the lake. It appeared to Tia that this cliff face resembled the cloak he wore about his shoulders.....This type of cloak was called *taupo*, and was made of closely woven material with an outer covering of flax leaves, coloured yellow and black and was used as protection from rain.....Tia went to the bottom of the cliff where he recited incantations, Tia removed his cloak and fastened it to the cliffs and named them Taupo-nui-a-Tia ‘the great cloak of Tia’. The name Taupo-nui-a-Tia now refers to the Lake itself and the vast surrounding catchment (Environment Waikato 2004b).

Generations of people belonging to the Ngati Tuwharetoa have lived within the Taupo area and as a result have developed a culture that reflects “a special and

⁵² Chieftain (Maori Dictionary, 2009)

⁵³ North Island New Zealand or generally refers to New Zealand

unique relationship with the environment” (Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy; p.7, 2003). The Ngai Tuwharetoa are recognised as Treaty of Waitangi partners with the crown and “hold legal title to the bed of the Lake and its tributaries” (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.7). Accordingly, the indigenous community has guardianship over Lake Taupo. The 2020 Action Plan states that:

...Ngati Tuwharetoa assert their custodial and customary right of tino rangatiratanga⁵⁴ over Taupo...and will collectively sustain and protect the mauri⁵⁵ of these tribal taonga⁵⁶...Ngati Tuwharetoa hold a holistic view of the environment, which is at the very core of all Ngati Tuwharetoa decision-making with respect to environmental management (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p.15).

Cultural values are related to the custodial and customary rights of the indigenous Maori community over Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2004b; Environment Waikato, 2008; Joint Management Agreement, 2008; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia, 1992; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003). The indigenous custom recognises the water of Lake Taupo as a source of life giving energy. Custodial rights recognise the Maori Community as the trustee or custodian of the Lake. The rights give the indigenous community the right of self-determination over Lake Taupo and the surrounding lands (Environmental Strategy Plan 20000. In essence the cultural values have a strong environmental emphasis and aim to protect Lake Taupo from pollution.

The main concerns of the Maori Community are: pollution of Lake Taupo caused by farming and urban activities; adverse impacts on mauri (refer to footnote 55) through mixing waters from other catchments; lack of partnership between Ngati Tuwharetoa and government agencies in the management of the natural resources in the Taupo district; the recognition and protection of customary and custodial rights; and lack of knowledge and protection of sacred places of the Ngati Tuwharetoa. The indigenous

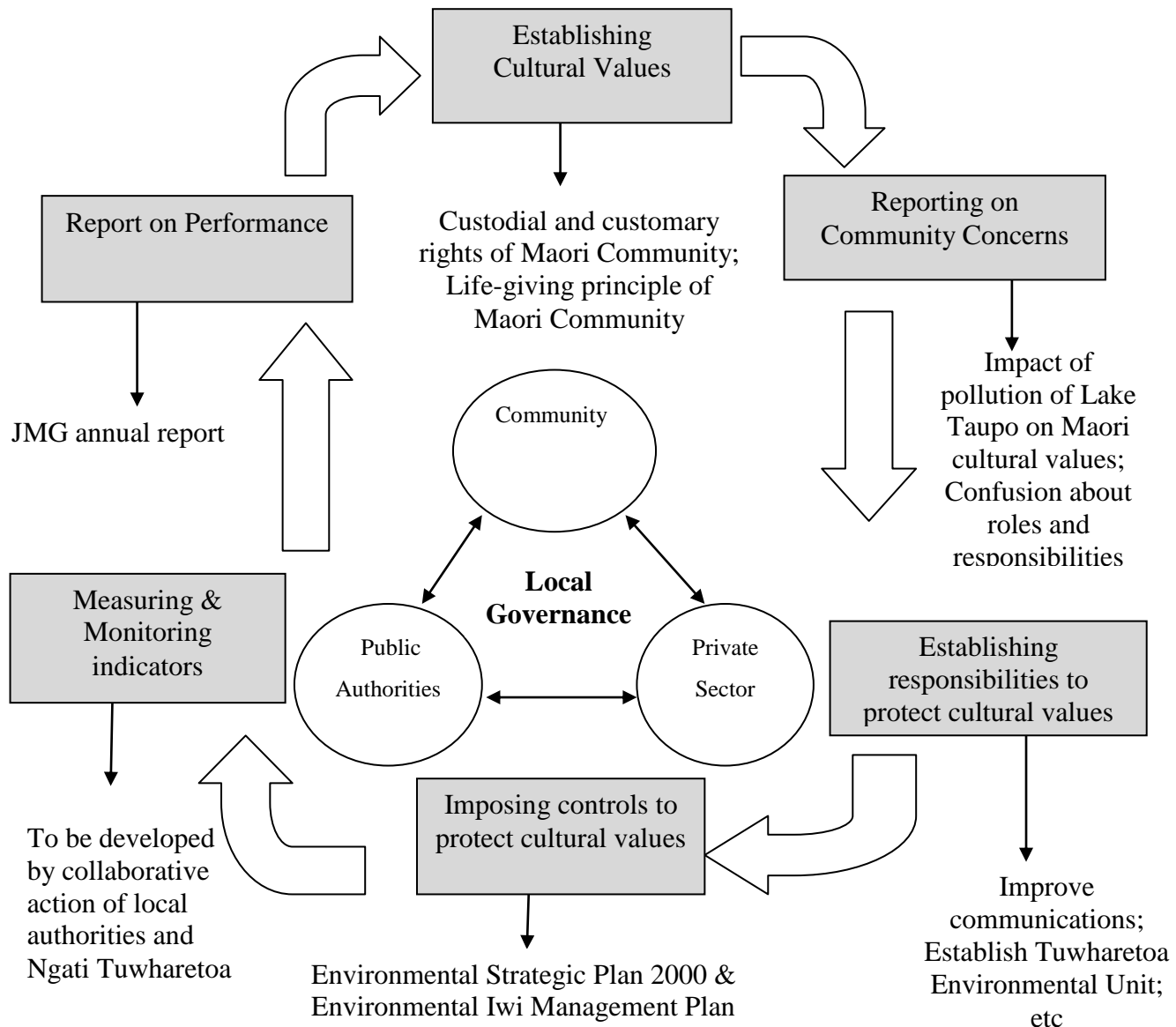
⁵⁴ Self-determination (Maori Dictionary, 2009)

⁵⁵ life principle, special nature, a material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁵⁶ Property of the Maori community consisting of land, waterways, sacred places, forests, fisheries, minerals, geothermal resources, airspace s, flora and fauna

wants to improve communication with public authorities and the community in general and be provided a role as Treaty⁵⁷ partners in resource management decision making processes.

Figure 9-4: Accountability for Cultural Values of the Community



⁵⁷ Refers to Treaty of Waitangi. See Chapter 6 paragraph 6.3

To consider the cultural values and concerns of the indigenous community a dialogue needs to take place between the Maori, Non-Maori Community Groups and the public authorities⁵⁸. The controls, actions and responsibilities to protect the cultural values are to be developed through three yearly Environment Management Plans of the Maori Community and through the Tuwharetoa Environmental unit. Other features of accountability for cultural values are shown in Figure 9.4.

The cultural values of the Maori Community are further expounded in the Maori Strategy. The primary objective of the strategy is to allow the Maori Community: to assert and exercise self-determination of the Ngati Tuwharetoa over the taonga⁵⁹; to exercise guardianship over the taonga in accordance with the customs of the Ngati Tuwharetoa; to be decision makers over the management of the taonga; and to use the taonga in accordance with the customs of the Ngati Tuwharetoa.

9.3.4 Accountability for the Common good

The common good, Lake Taupo, can be considered a natural asset (Gray, 1992 & Jones 2003) with potential benefits for the Taupo Community: The Taupo Accord states that:

Its ease of access for all the public to enjoy, its importance as a source of water for: human consumption; passive and active recreation; unique landscape; internationally renowned trout fishery; and its economic value; places it high among the Nation's assets. There are many opportunities and challenges to be faced by the community in relation to the continued use and enjoyment of the lake, much of which is reliant upon there being a healthy natural environment. The need to protect the uniqueness of Lake Taupo and its surrounds has been acknowledged over the years. The Taupo Accord established a clear undertaking by the signatories to protect, to the best of their ability, the community values identified for Lake Taupo (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999, p. 2).

The potential benefits of the Lake have been stated in the community documents in terms of community values. The values are environmental, economic and cultural

⁵⁸ Refer to the issues discussed in chapter 6 paragraph 6.3

⁵⁹ Taonga includes the land, the waterways, sacred places, forests, fisheries, minerals, geothermal resources, airspace and flora and fauna (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000).

values attached to Lake Taupo. They represent the benefits which the community derives from Lake Taupo (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999; Environment Waikato, 2004b). The strong association between community values and the common good, suggests that accountability for the common good can be interpreted as accountability for the community values attached to Lake Taupo. In the context of the community documents, the meaning of accountability for the common good can be derived by fusion of the meanings of accountability environmental values, accountability for economic values and accountability for cultural values. Figure 9.5 captures the features of accountability for the common good. The features reinforce each other and together contribute to the meaning for CAACG. They reflect the dimensions of CAACG presented in chapter 4.

The community documents portray a strong link between protecting the common good (Lake Taupo) and sustainable development. The sustainability discourse that pervades the community documents suggests that the philosophy of environmental sustainability is embedded in the meaning of common good. The principles of the Rio Declaration and the recommendations of Agenda 21 underpin several themes contained in the Taupo Accord. The themes include enhancement of the natural environment, community vitality and the district economy. The Taupo Accord calls for efforts to protect the Lake and community values that are ecologically sound, scientifically supported, economically feasible and socially accepted. It articulates the community as being reliant on a natural environment and that economic and social systems are inextricably linked to the natural environment. Such systems affect the well being of the Lake which in turn affects the community values.

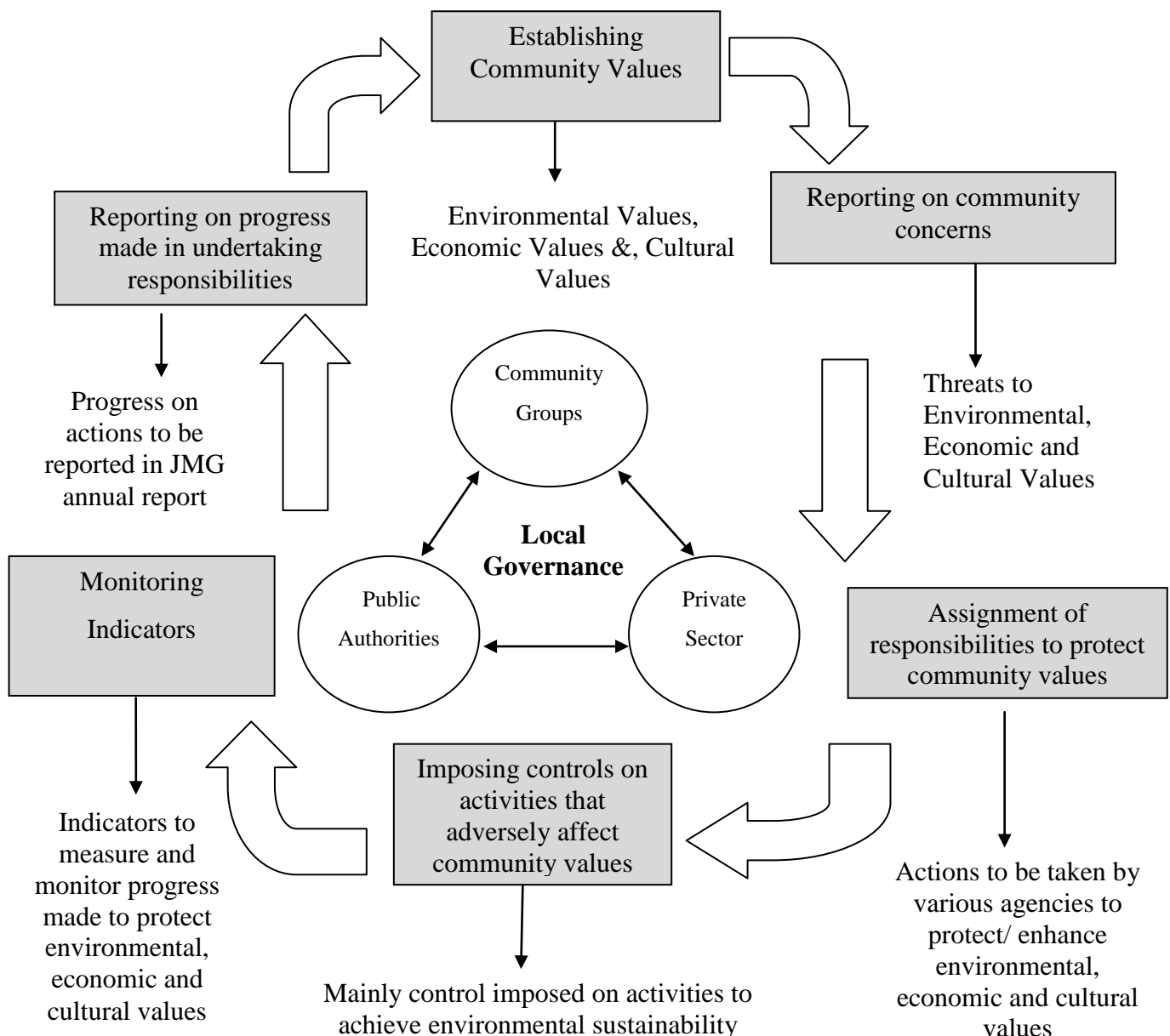
Environmental sustainability is the point of concurrence in the community documents. The various strategies and policy measures stated in the community documents are directed towards protecting Lake Taupo. The Hon. Marian Hobbs, Minister for the Environment commented:

Reducing the amount of nitrogen entering the lake can only be achieved by people changing what they do on their land (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.1).

The 2020 Action Plan states that the community has:

...been aware of the need for the area to develop sustainably to protect the health of lake Taupo and its surrounding area (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p.5).

Figure 9-5: Accountability for the Common Good



The strong link between community values and Lake Taupo implies that environmental sustainability is the overall objective of the community. The link

between community values, the common good and sustainability is clearly articulated in the 2020 Action Plan. A joint Statement made by Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board Chairman Tumu Te heuhue and Environment Waikato Chairman Neil Clarke states that:

The Taupo community has identified...key values they want to protect for the future of Lake Taupo. These values form the foundation for this plan. All of us are responsible for key actions in the 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan and are working together to protect the lake for future generations (p. 1).

Even the Taupo District Economic Strategy is based on the vision of “supporting activities that protect and enhance the health of Taupo district lakes and waterways” (APR Consultants, 2002; p.9). The vision for economic sustainability is based on three key factors i.e. community, economy, and environment. The Taupo District Economic Strategy states that:

...the community, economy and environment are enhanced through: community partnerships resulting in a commitment across the district to work together; innovation and diversification in the economy; supporting activities that protect and enhance the health of Taupo District lakes and waterways (APR Consultants, p. v).

The Economic Strategy articulates the complementary nature of environmental and economic considerations in promoting sustainability. It suggests diversification of land-use options and enhancement of land-based returns “while protecting the environment” (p.vii) and “development may take place subject to meeting specific environmental thresholds” (p.vii). In this regard, the strategy suggests the development of forestry and tourism related industries as high priority options. In spite of recognising pastoral agriculture (animal farming) as a major industry of the district, the economic strategy does not support the expansion of this industry due to its adverse impacts of animal farming on the water quality of the Lake. The strategy states that:

Any land-based development in the district must not damage the sensitive environment, or the perception of the district and its brand

“Lake Taupo Think Fresh”... the costs and benefits of future developments in the district should be identified to ensure that the environment is protected, but not to the extent that growth is stifled unnecessarily (APR Consultants, 2002, p. 8).

The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy provides inferences to environmental sustainability. The strategy suggests “new ways of living in the catchment that will sustain both the health of the Lake, and the viability of the surrounding community” (Environment Waikato, 2003, p. 3). Environmental sustainability requires sacrifices because “changes to protect the Lake will come at an initial cost to the local, Regional and national communities” (p.3) and there will be “significant cost to private landowners in the form of lost opportunity as a result of proposed nitrogen restrictions” (p. 6). Achieving environmental sustainability “...will inevitably mean some changes to lifestyles and farming systems for many people who live and work in the catchment” (p.11). However, the benefits of environmental sustainability outweigh the costs of doing nothing:

The benefits of taking action and ensuring a sustainable future for the Taupo catchment far outweigh costs of doing nothing and facing an irreversible decline in Lake water quality (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.1).

The Maori Strategy also has an environmental focus. Protection of the cultural values of the Maori Community can be achieved through protection of Lake Taupo and its natural surroundings. The Maori strategy aims to make choices for Lake Taupo and the surrounding lands that are “environmentally friendly” and consistent with the culture of the Ngati Tuwharetoa. The community respects the “mauri⁶⁰ and wairua⁶¹ of taonga” (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000, p.6). Hence if the natural environment has a soul or spirit it need to be free from pollution. The strategy asserts that the aim of self-determination of the Ngati Tuwharetoa over the taonga is to ensure that developments in the Taupo District: do not cause negative effects; are consistent with the culture of the Ngati Tuwharetoa; benefits current and future generations; and preserves the mauri and wairua of the taonga.

⁶⁰ Life giving principle (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁶¹ Spirit or soul (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

In summary, environmental sustainability discourse that pervades the community documents is driven by the common good where economic and cultural values are in harmony with environmental values of the Taupo community. In that harmonious relationship accountability for the common good acquires the same meaning as accountability for the community values or accountability for environmental sustainability.

9.4 MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND JOINT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Taupo Accord proclaims several community principles that articulate a sense of joint responsibility and accountability to guide the actions of the Taupo Community. The strategies and policy measures suggested in other community documents are based on these community principles. The principles are shared responsibility, shared ownership, transparency, inclusiveness, appropriate decisions, and adaptability (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999; p. 6). Shared responsibility assumes joint responsibility of the community, Central Government and local authorities to promote the well being of the community. Shared ownership of common issues and solutions implies that the interests of the parties have been affected by the issues and they have the right to participate in finding solutions to overcome the issues. Transparency requires that processes are visible respecting the interests and mandates of all parties. Inclusiveness acknowledges the stake of all parties in the management of the Lake. The principles of inclusiveness and transparency uphold participatory democracy, symmetry of power and information in the community. Appropriate decisions refer to delegation of authority to the community to make decisions related to the Lake. Adaptability recognises the need to adapt to changes and priorities when circumstances change over time. The community principles reflect the communitarian ideology of acting collectively for the common good and imply a sense of joint responsibility and accountability. They imply that the community and the public authorities have stewardship over the common good and have responsibilities to take actions in a collaborative manner to protect and enhance the common good. The philosophy of sharing power, information, responsibility and ownership over the common good implies a sense of 360 degree responsibility and accountability (Behn, 2000). The Taupo Accord binds the various stakeholder groups

of the Taupo Community and captures the spirit of collectivism to address issues of common interest i.e. pollution of Lake Taupo. It recognises this spirit of communalism and the importance of involving

...all parts of the community in addressing issues that may threaten community identified values. It also recognises the community's wish and ability to contribute positively towards the overall management of the lake... Supporting the Accord is voluntary.....It is about recognising the community held values and working together to protect them....Accord seek to build effective partnerships among statutory management agencies, tangata whenua and with the communities living in the Lake Taupo catchment (Lake Taupo Accord , 1999, p4.).

The Taupo Accord also recognises the “commitment, capacity and capability” (p.2, Taupo Accord) of the Taupo community to be involved in the processes of “ownership, management and control” of activities affecting Lake Taupo (p.2, Taupo Accord). Various agencies are responsible for the management of activities and resources in and around Lake Taupo. Partnership between the agencies and the community forms an integrated approach for the management of the Lake.

Many communities are seeking a greater role in the management of their own-affairs, including involvement in decisions which affect them. They are also seeking co-ordinated government (agency) support for their community-based initiatives (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999 p.4).

Joint responsibility is also implied in the 2020 Action Plan and Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy:

The future of Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia is protected through the actions in the Plan, but more importantly through the commitment of agencies, iwi⁶² and individuals in the community to work together (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p.10).

The Taupo community has given a clear message that they want the water quality of the Lake to be protected. They also agree that the responsibility for action is a shared one. Protecting Lake Taupo is not just a local issue; the Lake is a treasure of national significance that requires a

⁶² Maori tribal community (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

concerted approach by all stakeholders (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.10).

The Taupo District Economic Development Strategy recognises the importance of collaboration in the community in the implementation of the strategy:

Partnerships and cooperation underpin this strategy and its implementation. These partnerships have occurred and will continue to occur between a raft of groups and agencies, such as community, business, indigenous community, central and Local Government, and business development agencies (APR Consultants, 2002, p. iii).

The collaboration is motivated by joint ownership of issues. Ownership of issues implies accountability for the issues and the right to plan and make policies to deal with these issues.

Central and Local Governments, Tangata whenua⁶³, organisations and citizens share ownership of issues as well as their solutions. (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999, p.6).

Generally, the strategies seek to overcome the problem of fragmented management and control of Lake Taupo. At present the management of the Lake is divorced from the community who must live with any consequences of management decision. There is no coordination among government agencies responsible for the management of Lake Taupo (Taupo Accord, 1999). The people were seeking greater role in the management of the Lake as any decision on the management of the Lake will affect their livelihood. Collaboration between the community, statutory bodies and commercial enterprises is an important aspect of the mutual responsibility and the resulting accountability that is implicated.

A number of individual agencies or groups own, manage or control parts, activities or functions in regard to Lake Taupo. Experience shows that those who must live with any consequences of management actions are best able to address and balance the often conflicting challenges and opportunities. The central and Local Government agencies and communities are addressing these challenges and opportunities in various

⁶³ Indigenous people of the land (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

ways, many requiring the co-operative efforts of all. Effective effort includes actions that are ecologically sound, scientifically supported, economically feasible and socially acceptable (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999. p. 4).

The 2020 Action Plan identifies specific actions to be carried out by various parties to protect or enhance each of the community values. Potential actions expected from these organisations are outlined in Appendix 20. The responsibilities of the parties arise from requirements of statutes as well as mutual obligation to protect the common good. Responsibilities of local authorities arise from statutes, such as the LGA 2002 and the RMA 1991⁶⁴. The Taupo Accord reinforces these statutory requirements by establishing specific commitments of the Taupo District Council and Environment Waikato to the community. Commitments of the Central Government are expected to be fulfilled through its agencies, such as Department of Conservation and Department of Internal affairs owning land or operating in the Taupo District.

The responsibility of private enterprises involves the adoption of sustainable management practices giving consideration to community identified values (Taupo Accord, 1999). For example electricity generators are required to share responsibility with Environment Waikato for managing Lake levels. Forestry companies are expected to maintain vegetation cover in their lands, maintain riparian margins, carry out earthworks to prevent erosion and avoid using agrichemicals in a manner that contaminates catchments waterways and the Lake. Land developers are responsible to include streamline and lakeshore reserves in development proposals, undertake landscaping compatible with surrounding natural environment and develop appropriate sewage treatment facilities to avoid contamination of the Lake. The Maori community and their organisations own a significant portion of land in the Taupo District. They are expected to adopt sustainable farm management practices and consider the impacts of their activities on Lake Taupo. Similarly, the farming community in general, consisting of individual farm owners, farm operators, represented by Federated Farmers, are expected to adopt sustainable farming practices.

⁶⁴ Refer to Chapter 6 section 6.7 for detailed discussion.

The communitarian principle of mutual responsibility requires members of a community to take responsibility for enabling each other to pursue common values (Tam, 1998). Mutual responsibility involves: caring for others, treating others fairly, being able to relate to others without any sense of discrimination or subjugation and knowing that reciprocal relationships are respected (Tam, 1998). Such a sense of mutual responsibility is portrayed in the community documents. For instance, the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and Variation 5 suggest mechanisms such as grandparenting and nitrogen trading for helping farmers to control nitrogen output in their land. Mutual responsibility to help farmers cope with the restrictions is implied in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. To spread the burden of change more evenly across the community, the strategy proposes “a more flexible, constructive and co-operative approach” (p.13). Mutual responsibility requires sacrifices of the community as a whole and not just penalising the farmers and imposing restrictions/regulations on them. The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy states:

The partners in this Strategy have identified a range of opportunities to reduce nitrogen loads to the Lake... (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.13).

Some of the ways suggested in the Strategy include:

- Establishment of a joint public fund from local and regional rates and Government taxes to help convert pastoral land to low-nitrogen land uses in the most cost-effective way. The joint fund would be set up to ensure that 20% of the nitrogen from pastoral land is permanently removed. This could be achieved through land purchase, covenanting, joint ventures and land swaps. For example, some of the private land in the catchment could be purchased from willing sellers. The land could then be: changed to a low-nitrogen land use, then on sold with nitrogen restrictions; retained as a public forestry investment; or retained for public use, recreation and biodiversity
- Assisting in research and development of low-nitrogen farming practice, and providing information and advisory services for landowners.

The joint responsibility implies accountability of the people and various parties in the community. Accountability for community values starts with taking responsibility to reduce nitrogen from activities in the catchment of Lake Taupo.

9.5 REFLECTIONS

9.5.1 Tension between Environmental and Economic Considerations

The community documents articulate a sense of environmental sustainability where the economic interest of animal farmers and other landowners in the Lake Taupo catchments are subservient to protecting Lake Taupo. There is tension between the environmental sustainability objective inherent in the strategies and policy proposal and the economic interests of the farming community. The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy considers several economic interests as “barriers to change” (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.13) that is barriers to changes in catchment activities to protect Lake Taupo. Challenges to implementation of policy measures and strategies to protect Lake Taupo arise because changes to farming practices and conversion of pastoral land will affect farmers’ businesses. The following extract from the strategy indicates some of the challenges:

Nitrogen restrictions make some pastoral farming systems uneconomic. Farm income will be reduced over time if farms are ‘locked in’ to current levels of farm intensity or forestry land use, and new, low-nitrogen farm systems have not been developed.....Income will reduce further if farms have to reduce current nitrogen losses by ‘downsizing’ current operations, which may require, for example, reducing current stocking rates. In some cases, income would be reduced to levels where less developed and smaller farms run at a loss. Farm losses can be in the form of loss of capital value of a property and loss of future income. Farmers in the catchment estimate the losses from nitrogen restrictions to be upwards of \$160 million (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.13).

The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy also portrays tension between its environmental sustainability objective and the economic interests of the Maori Community. The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy recognises that Maori landowners face particular challenges. Maori landowners are not able to sell their land in the Lake Taupo

catchments and move their business outside the catchment. The following extract addresses the issue:

Tuwharetoa economic authorities are the largest landholders in the catchment. The Te Ture Whenua Maori Land Act creates significant barriers to selling Maori land, cutting off the option of selling and moving capital outside the catchment. Selling land may not be appropriate for Tuwharetoa as kaitiaki⁶⁵ of the Lake and its catchment.... The restrictions on the sale of Maori land under the Te Ture Whenua Maori Land Act makes accessing capital from banks particularly difficult (Environment Waikato, 2003, pp. 13-14).

The environmental sustainability objective also affects the rights of Maori community under the Treaty of Waitangi. The Forestry and farming activities of the Maori community are an important source of income and employment for the indigenous community (Environment Waikato, 2003). If land-use options are severely curtailed, the Maori will suffer loss of income from their land. Land-use restrictions are also deemed restriction on rights given to the Maori Community in the Treaty of Waitangi. This is because Maori owners of forestry and undeveloped land who cannot sell their land could be restricted to those land uses in perpetuity.

Variation 5 recognises the importance of environmental and economic considerations for the Taupo District and seeks to address the challenges posed by the conflicting objectives of protecting water quality of Lake Taupo versus expanding animal farming. According to the Chairman of Environment Waikato:

Water quality and sustainable agriculture are equally important to the economy at local, regional and national levels – it's our challenge to make decisions that protect water quality while recognising and providing for existing and future land use....We believe these new rules do just that – land owners will be able to farm today they way they farmed yesterday....By allowing for nitrogen offsets, our decision also provides flexibility should people want to change the way they use their land in the future....This means a farmer or forester, for example, can change the way they use their land if they have negotiated and confirmed decreases in nitrogen elsewhere in the catchment....It is only in recent years that we have had the information to make

⁶⁵ Kaitiaki means custodian or guardian (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

this possible. Technology, such as the Overseer nutrient budgeting model and knowledge of nutrient losses from farms has progressed to a stage where we can use and enforce rules to reduce pollution in a specific water body....In Taupo we have detailed understanding of factors such as catchment conditions, the impact of agricultural nutrients on water quality and the nutrient limits or targets (Environment Waikato, 2007a).

Variation 5 appears to give some leeway by allowing animal farming activities to continue but subject to restrictions imposed by the grandparenting and resource consents. The nitrogen flows from farmlands and other land uses have been capped at existing levels. Increasing animal stocks may not be possible without purchasing nitrogen credits, though continuing with existing stock numbers is allowed by Variation 5. Perhaps this is another way of eventually making animal farmers to terminate their operations or switch to horticulture and other activities that produce lower levels of nitrogen.

9.5.2 Contradictions Portrayed in the Community Documents

The concept of community permeates the community documents, but the documents do not provide a clear definition of the term community or description of what it represents. Hence, the term “community” is not consistently used in the community documents. The documents tend to switch from a broad sense of community to a narrow sense of community and vice versa. The Taupo Accord embraces an all inclusive concept of community compared to other community documents. The Taupo Accord suggests a greater role for the wider community to engage in the policy making and monitoring process. The Lake Taupo Accord (1999) recognizes:

...the commitment, capacity and capability of the community to help protect Lake Taupo. Individual agencies involved in the ownership, management or control of activities in regard to Lake Taupo have accepted the communities desire to be more closely involved in the process (p.2)

...all parts of the community in addressing issues that may threaten community identified values. It also recognises the community's wish and ability to contribute positively towards the overall management of the lake. (p.4)

The broad sense of community is also implied in the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy:

Environment Waikato is working in partnership with Taupo District Council, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Central Government to find solutions that protect Lake Taupo and maintain the local economy and community. Input from these partners and other stakeholders in the Lake Taupo catchment has contributed to developing this Strategy. This Strategy represents a framework of ideas that will be used to engage the wider community in developing more specific solutions (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.1)

This Strategy is the result of several years of investigation and consultation which has involved local and Central Government agencies, tribal authorities, community and sector interest groups and scientific and research organisations (Environment Waikato, 2003, p.6).

However, a narrow sense of community is implied in the following in the joint statement of Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board Chairman Tumu Te heuhue and Environment Waikato Chairman Neil Clarke:

The strategy represents..commitment from the following groups: 2020 Joint Management Group and Project Team, 2020 Forum, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, Department of Conservation, Department of Internal Affairs and the LWAG (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p. 1).

For the purpose of implementing the 2020 Action Plan, the scope of the community appears to be reduced to a few parties in the Taupo district as the following statement implies:

The implementation of the 2020 TAP will be the responsibility of the 2020 JMG. The members will include representatives from Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, Department of Conservation and Department of Internal Affairs. All these agencies have responsibilities for actions in the plan. (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p.10).

Generally, the community documents make a distinction between the Maori community and the Taupo community and appear to indicate that there are two communities in the Taupo District. The following citations illustrate the segregation:

Ngati Tuwharetoa and the Lake Taupo...community have, for a long time, been aware of the need for the area to develop sustainably to protect the health of Lake taupo...and its surrounding area (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p. 5).

The new actions are focused on the key statutory agencies, which include Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, Department of Conservation and Department of Internal Affairs. Between them these agencies have the mandate to address these actions, on behalf of the community and Ngati Tuwharetoa.....There is also a commitment from the 2020 JMG and the key agencies to involve the community and tangata whenua in the implementation of the 2020 TAP, by taking ownership of the plan and being part of the solutions. 2020 TAP is a community and Ngati Tuwharetoa-owned plan (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p. 9).

9.5.3 Asymmetries: The Supremacy of Public Authorities

The community documents appear to portray the centrality of the Taupo Community by implying that some form of power inherent in the Taupo Community to assign responsibilities for safeguarding communal values. However, the community of interest is itself segregated by diversity of interest and segregation between Maori Non-Maori groups. The community of interest has been brought together by local authorities via the 2020 Community forum and statutory processes (such as submissions, hearings and Environment Court proceedings). The community of interest depends on local authorities for information and facilitations of community meetings. Under such conditions, asymmetry of power is in favor of local authorities. The community documents provide a false sense of the centrality of the community.

Implementation and effectiveness of the strategies and policy measures stated in the community documents depends heavily on the role of local authorities, and Central Government agencies. Generally, the community documents recognise them as the main parties to help the community safeguard its values. With such responsibilities

and influence vested in the local authorities, communal processes may provide a venue for the authorities to promote their own agenda. The efforts of local authorities and the Central Government to create public awareness of the pollution of Lake Taupo can be aligned to their efforts to construct “green” identity (environmentally friendly identity) for themselves. According to Porter (2005), identity and identity dynamics are masked “beneath layers of economic, management and scientific talk” (p.1) and identities are threatened by sustainability discourse, in particular by environmental sustainability. Porter articulates that organisations identify themselves with the natural environment in order to establish a positive identity and that fear of identity loss, rather than concern for environmental degradation underlies sustainability debate. The local authorities of the Taupo District and the Central Government can be seen to be constructing a “green” image for themselves in their efforts to create public perception of the pollution of Lake Taupo. Their identities will then be in harmony with the clean green image of New Zealand. Their efforts can also be seen as creating accountability to the international community and as complying to the recommendations of international consensus on sustainable development such as Agenda 21, Earth Charter and Johannesburg Declaration.

The influence of the statutory authorities and the Maori Community remains strongly in ongoing implementation and monitoring processes. Although the Taupo Accord suggests broader participation in terms of taking responsibility for the protection of Lake Taupo, the 2020 Strategy has narrowed the responsibility to the role of 6 agencies i.e. Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, Department of Conservation, Department of Internal Affairs and the JMG. The JMG is mainly represented by officers from the statutory agencies and the Maori community. A member of LWAG represents the rest of the community of interest in the JMG. The coordinator for implementing the 2020 Strategy is an EW officer. EW and TDC provide financial and other resources for the implementation and have assumed a key role in the implementation. Community involvement in the implementation is grossly overshadowed by the statutory authorities. The authorities control the JMG committee and its processes:

The 2020 JMG meetings will be held quarterly and the administration of this group will be handled through the 2020 coordinator. Taupo District

Council and Environment Waikato have allocated funding for implementation through their 2004 Long-Term Council Community Plans (Environment Waikato, 2004b, p.10)

9.5.4 The Segregated Community

The objectives of the Maori Strategy may not provide a sense of a unity in the Taupo Community. Separate processes are required for dealing with Maori concerns and values. The Maori Strategy emphasises collectivism among the indigenous people. Several clauses of the Maori strategy are not in line with the communitarian spirit of collectivism involving everyone in the community of interest. The Maori Strategy articulates the joint responsibility of the indigenous community towards protecting its taonga. The strategy does not appear to advocate joint responsibility of both Maori and non-Maori people and community groups as a single community of interest.

The Ngati Tuwharetoa Environmental Strategic Plan has been developed by the collective input of nga hapu o Ngati Tuwharetoa⁶⁶, and provides a collective and unified statement on nga hapu o Ngati tuwharetoa positions regarding the relationship with Taonga⁶⁷ (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; p.1).

The indigenous community expects to use the Maori Strategy “to achieve the exercise of Kaitiakitanga⁶⁸ over taonga⁶⁹” (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000, p.1). The strategic plan is based on the customs of the Ngati Tuwharetoa. How the customs are interpreted and practiced to exercise guardianship will be determined by the Ngati Tuwharetoa in a manner appropriate to its needs as custodian of the taonga.

The meaning of sustainability for the indigenous community is related to the needs of the present and future generations of the indigenous community and not for the Taupo Community as a whole. The purpose of the Maori Strategy is to assist in

⁶⁶ Tribal community of Ngati Tuwharetoa (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁶⁷ See footnote 56

⁶⁸ Guardianship (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁶⁹ See footnote 56

“...developing long term strategies towards meeting the future social, cultural, spiritual and economic needs” (p.1) of the Ngati Tuwharetoa community.

Similar emphasis on Maori economic development, culture and guardianship in other community documents may obscure the importance of Non-Maori people and Non-Maori community groups. Such segregation between Maori and Non-Maori interests can be a barrier to a communitarian approach to planning, decision making and accountability. The Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy recognises the supremacy of the the Ngati Tuwharetoa in the Lake Taupo Catchment:

Tuwharetoa is the iwi⁷⁰ with mana whenua⁷¹ in the Lake Taupo catchment. Generations of Tuwharetoa have lived within the Taupo rohe⁷², and as a result, have developed tikanga and kawa⁷³ that reflect a special and unique relationship with the environment. Taupo... is their taonga⁷⁴. Tuwharetoa are Treaty partners with the Crown and hold legal title to the bed of the Lake and its tributaries. Accordingly, Tuwharetoa are the kaitiaki⁷⁵ of the Lake (Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000, p.7).

Emphasising and categorising Maori interest as a separate development strategy may cause the segregation of the Maori community from the rest of the Taupo Community and result in disintegration of community spirit. This may hinder a collective effort to address an issue for the benefit of the Taupo community as whole. The Maori community has been provided a significant role in the implementation of the strategies. The community is mainly represented by the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board which serves as the guardian for protecting Maori custodial and customary rights over Lake Taupo (Environment Waikato, 2004b; Environment Waikato, 2008; Joint Management Agreement, 2008; Lake Taupo-nui-a-Tia, 1992; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2000; Ngati Tuwharetoa, 2003). The rights imply that it is necessary to get the consent of the Maori Community on decisions that have

⁷⁰ Tribe (Maori Dictionary, 2009)

⁷¹ Territorial rights (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁷² Boundary (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁷³ Customs (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

⁷⁴ See footnote 56.

⁷⁵ Custodians (Maori Dictionary, 2009).

implications on the natural resources, environment and economic development and the culture of the Maori community. Such a requirement is consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi, Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 2002. The Treaty and statutes have created two communities in the Taupo District – the Maori community and a community representing the non-Maori people and groups. This social phenomenon permeating New Zealand society as a whole is a big challenge to the communitarian approach to planning and decision making. Communitarian approach to joint responsibility and accountability may be affected by this segregation. Intervention of local authorities with the support of the Central Government is important to bring together the Maori and Non-Maori communities for a communitarian approach to planning, decision making and accountability for the common good. However, such dependence on public authorities serves to enhance the centrality of the authorities and not the community.

9.5.5 Marginalisation of Non-Maori Culture

Cultural values in the community documents refer to the cultural values of the Maori Community. The cultures of non-Maori people and groups are not recognised in the documents. The cultural values of the Maori community appear to take precedence in the documents due to the recognition of the customary and custodial rights of the community. The Taupo Community, as with other district communities throughout New Zealand, represent a cosmopolitan mix of migrants who have different cultures inherited from their home countries. The multiplicity of cultures (such as European culture and Maori traditions) is one of the challenges to the communitarian approach to accountability, especially if the cultures portray conflicting values.

9.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discuss my interpretation of the community documents and how CAACG acquires meaning through the manifestation of communitarian ideology, environmental sustainability paradigm and accountability dimensions in the documents. Communitarian ideology is manifested in the community documents through clear proclamations of common concerns, community values and responsibilities for protecting Lake Taupo (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999; Environment

Waikato, 2004b). Common concerns are about the pollution of Lake Taupo and the resulting impacts on community values. Communal values are the benefits of Lake Taupo (the common good) to the community. The mutual responsibility of the community is about actions that need to be undertaken by various parties in the community to protect the common good (Lake Taupo Accord, 1999). Sustainability discourse, in particular environmental sustainability, runs through the community documents. Sustainability is a discourse about the community, economy and environment where economic considerations are subservient to environmental considerations. The protection of the common good and the values of the community are inextricably tied to the sustainable development of the Taupo District.

The community documents, while not explicitly defining CAACG, are important for developing the meaning of CAACG. The documents provide a vision of the concerns and values of the community and the common good. The documents contain recommendations regarding the responsibilities and actions of various parties towards the common good. The subject matter of accountability is about Lake Taupo and its association with community values and environmental sustainability. Accountability dimensions portrayed in the community documents include: the identification of the community values and community concerns; assignment of responsibilities for protecting the community values attached to Lake Taupo; using monitoring mechanisms to measure the progress towards protecting or enhancing the community values; and annual reporting to the community. Taken together, the manifestation of communitarian ideology, sustainability paradigms and accountability dimensions in the community documents articulate the meaning of CAACG in the Taupo District.

The communitarian approach may be challenged by the contradictions and tensions inherent in the community documents, such as the tension between the economic interests of the farming community and the environmental sustainability objective of inherent in the community documents. Another challenge is the issue of segregation of Maori and Non- Maori community groups. The issue is a complex one with historical roots traced to the Treaty of Waitangi. The way forward to overcoming the issues facing the Taupo Community is ongoing dialogues between the Maori and

Non-Maori community groups and local authorities. Put differently, the way forward is communitarian approach to planning, decision making and accountability where cooperative enquiry and dialogues provide a means for Maori and Non-Maori groups to come together and address their concerns and find solutions. Discontinuity of the communitarian process may result in disintegration and animosity between Maori and Non-Maori groups. The nation is built on the foundation of communitarian ideology and pursuing this ideology at every level of society is the way forward.

CHAPTER 10

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

“Sad is the day for any man when he becomes absolutely satisfied with the life he is living, the thoughts he is thinking, and the things he is doing, when there ceases...a desire to do something larger which he seeks and knows he was meant and intended to do” (Philips Brooks as cited in RBG New Zealand 15 November 2009, p. 12)

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has theoretically and empirically explored the nature of accountability within a communitarian context. The study was motivated by current discourses that promulgated grass-root community participation in sustainable development. Prominent among these discourses are the international declarations on sustainable development (such as Agenda 21, Earth Charter and Johannesburg Declaration) that recognise the importance of community participation in planning, decision making and implementation of sustainable development. The study was also inspired by extant case studies which illustrate collaboration between public authorities and local communities in many countries. The studies indicate that the collaboration is an important aspect of local governance process that aims to develop and implement plans and policies for sustainable development. Adding to the sustainability discourse are scholarly works that suggest, at a theoretical level, a communitarian approach to environmental and social accounting (Lehman, 1999). However, there are no extant studies to date that have empirically grounded the theorisation of the communitarian approach to accountability. In that respect, this study has made a substantial contribution to literature by exploring the communitarian approach to accountability in an empirical setting. This chapter concludes the thesis by reflecting on the methodological choice of the researcher and the communitarian approach to accountability (the CAACG model). The chapter also discusses the contribution and limitations of this study and finally offers suggestions for future research directions.

10.2 REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE

This study adopts the hermeneutic tradition of Gadamer (1975) as a starting point for philosophical thought. However, the researcher may not have been completely faithful to Gadamer's philosophy especially in failing to set aside the so to speak "author's intended meaning" inherent in the text. It is difficult to confine the hermeneutic analysis purely on the basis of Gadamer's philosophy. This is because it is impossible to constrain the mind entirely to the interpreter's subjective understanding of the text without the interpreter perceiving some external objectification of reality in the text. For instance the community documents and the communal processes in the Taupo District have certain intentions. The researcher found it necessary to retrieve the purpose and understand the meanings intended in these processes and documents before understanding them from the perspective of his pre-understandings. Objectivism may also have been implied when the researcher attempted to understand the communal processes and their outcomes from the perspective of the groups involved in the collaboration (such as Taupo community, local authorities etc). Some readers may argue that the perspectives of these groups portray their subjective experience and therefore meanings derived for these perspectives are subjective interpretations. However, the views of these groups (captured in interview transcripts) are not the subjective experience of the researcher and in trying to understand the meaning intended by these groups the researcher is retrieving the "author intended" meaning. In retrieving and presenting the "author intended" meanings the researcher has indulged in the objectivist approach to hermeneutics and the researcher's interpretive comments could have unavoidably displayed objectivism. Therefore, the interpretation may at times appear to be an overlap between the objectivity portrayed in the processes and documents and the interpretive comments resulting from subjective experience of the researcher. Hence, in reading the text the researcher may not have completely avoided the philosophical stance of objectivist hermeneutics (such as Betti, 1980; Schleiermacher, 2002; Dilthey, 1976). The researcher rests his case with scholars who reject the subjective-objective dichotomy and recognise the approaches of both objectivist and subjectivist as important research paradigms (Bernstein, 1983, Boland, Jr. 1989; Boland & Pondy 1983; Gadamer, 1975; Morgan, 2006). According to Boland, Jr (1989) such objective-subjective distinctions are not meaningful and it is a mistake

to suggest that objectivist and subjectivist researchers are different and that they “focus on one realm of experience or another” (p.591).

In progressing from the recovery of author intended meaning to uncovering “non-authorial” meanings, the hermeneutic task shifts from the epistemological stance of Dilthey (1976) to the ontological position of Gadamer (1975) and his predecessor Heidegger (1967) who questioned the nature of the existence of the interpreter. The ontological question can be phrased as “what is the mode of being of that being which exists only in understanding?” (Ricouer, 1981; p.54). It is an enquiry into the temporal⁷⁶ distance between the researcher and what he encountered in the text. The temporal difference arises from “being in the world” (Heidegger, 1981). The researcher’s worldly experience, culture, pre-understandings, historical background etc is his “world”. For the researcher, his “world” precedes the object or text which the researcher attempted to interpret. The text originated from a different “world”. The temporal distance between the researcher and the “text” arises mainly from difference in tradition. The tradition inherent in the text portrays the history, politics, economics and culture of New Zealand, in general, and of Taupo district, in particular. The researcher’s tradition or “being” is marked by the social-political, economic and cultural conditions that prevailed in his country of origin. The researcher is not exposed to the communitarian experience in his country of origin. In that respect the ‘text’ is alien to the researcher. To overcome the methodical impasse implied in the temporal distance the researcher filtered his prejudices in two ways. First the researcher found it necessary to set aside his previous experience which is deficient in communitarian tradition. The researcher considers his experience as a negative prejudice which may hinder understanding communitarian processes manifested in the Taupo District. Second, the researcher sought to obtain pre-understandings from extant literature. In the subjective analysis, the communitarian model provided the “theoretical lens” in reading the text. The researcher has extended his understanding by approaching the text with his pre-understandings and finding in the text manifestation of the communitarian approach to accountability. The researcher’s “world” becomes enhanced in the light of the pre-

⁷⁶ In this case study the temporal distance is defined more in terms of differences in culture and background rather than a timing difference.

understandings which he brings to the hermeneutic circle of understanding. Understanding at the subjective level is affected by the researcher bringing his pre-understandings to the interpretive process (Ricouer, 1981).

Adoption of Gadamer's philosophy implies that the researcher has to make a number of choices. The choices made by the researcher have been discussed at length in chapters 2 and 3 and include choices regarding: the "text" and its "parts"; the pre-understandings of the researcher; and the different contexts drawn into the interpretive analysis. Such choices influenced the interpretive findings of the study and therefore it is important to reflect on these choices made by the researcher. The "whole" and "parts" used in this interpretive study represent certain processes, strategies and policies of the Taupo District. It is important to note that "the concept of the whole is relative" (Gadamer, 1975; p.167) and understanding will be affected when the "whole" and its "parts" are changed or new parts are brought into the hermeneutic circle. At the time of completion of this thesis several communal processes were still continuing, such as: EW meetings with community groups especially with the farming community; JMG meetings; Protecting Lake Taupo Trust meetings; and meetings of various community groups such LWAG, Lake Taupo Care, Maori Community etc. Minutes of meetings and reports continue to be prepared and circulated to participants and to wider community and sometimes through websites (Environment Waikato, 2007e; Joint Management Group, 2007). New planning documents continue to be published including the LTCCP, annual Plan of the Taupo District Council. Variation 5 has not been finalised as discussion between local authorities and the farming community are still ongoing. Interpretation of the ongoing communal processes and documents that have not been included in this study can provide additional insights into the communitarian accountability model. Hermeneutic enquiry into such processes and documents involves redefining and expanding the text as a bigger "whole" with additional "parts". Inclusion of these "parts" in the hermeneutic process will start another hermeneutical circle of understanding which in turn may provide new insights into the communitarian model.

In a similar vein, bringing new contexts into the interpretive process may affect the researcher's understanding of the communitarian model. For instance, a new context can be the policies of the new coalition Government (formed in October 2008) led by the National Party. The National Party has traditionally opposed to communitarian approach to local governance (Cheyne, 2002). The recent plan to convert Auckland to a "super-city" (Centre for Resource Management Studies, 2009; ESL News New Zealand, 2009; Singh, 2009; Trevett, 2009) is an important political context that should be noted. The effectiveness of the communitarian model can be challenged when the political factor is included in the hermeneutic circle of understanding. Understanding can be affected in the "constantly expanding" (Gadamer, 1975, p.167) hermeneutic cycle. The hermeneutic process is not finite and there is no definite point at which understanding becomes complete.

Readers of this thesis need to be aware that the thesis does not make a clear distinction between philosophical and critical hermeneutics. The distinction is often highlighted in scholarly works that provide in-depth analyses of the Gadamer - Habermas debate (How, 1995; Prasad, 2002). Due to space and time constraints it is beyond the scope of this study to cover the complex philosophical issues addressed in the Gadamer-Habermas debate. Instead the researcher sought solace in the recommendations of Ricoeur (1981) that both philosophical and critical approaches to hermeneutics are necessary. In employing both the approaches the study has offered critical reflections on the researcher's pre-understandings and the CAACG model as well critically examining prejudices inherent in communal processes and community documents. These reflections are provided in chapter 7, 8 and 9. The study has critically examined the prejudices as required by Gadamer. The study has also applied the approach of critical theorists in critically reflecting on the existing social order inherent in the Taupo Community, such as segregation between Maori and Non-Maori groups. The following section summarises and provides more reflections on the communitarian model.

10.3 REFLECTIONS ON THE COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COMMON GOOD (CAACG)

10.3.1 The Theoretical Model

This study has attempted to understand the communitarian approach to accountability (CAACG) at two levels - a theoretical level and an empirical level. The theoretical model discussed in chapter 4 (Figure 4.2) is premised on a synthesis of concepts drawn from communitarian, accountability and sustainability philosophies. The model supports the theory that accountability acquires meaning in the context of local governance, defined as collaboration between a community, public authorities and private sector for the common good. The abstraction of the theoretical model is found in the concepts that constitute the model such as the ambiguous concept of community and its relationship with the common good, the meaning of local governance, and the ways in which the dimensions of accountability can be mobilised for protecting the common good. The theoretical would remain abstract if its concepts are not supported by empirical data. Hence, at the second level of understanding (or empirical level), the theoretical model with all its presumptions was used as a set of pre-understandings to understand accountability that is implied in planning and policy making for the sustainable development of the Taupo District.

10.3.2 Understanding the Communitarian Model at the Empirical Level

At the empirical level the researcher sought to understand the concepts embracing the theoretical model as well as provide critical reflections on the concepts. The researcher has attempted to interpret the “text” with reference to the theoretical model. The interpretive analysis entails identifying the features of the theoretical model in the “text”. The purpose is to determine whether evidence derived from the “text” supports or refutes the concepts or provides additional insights into the communitarian approach to accountability. The interpretive analysis indicates that the dimensions of accountability become operative in joint efforts in planning and policy making for sustainable development of the Taupo District. Accountability in the community denotes a mutual responsibility on the part of members of the community to participate in a network of interactive relationships. The purpose of

the relationship is to share information, discuss and find solutions on issues that affect their common good.

This study defines common good in terms of an environmental asset (Jones, 2003; Gray 1992) which serves the interest of the community. Multiple interests are vested in Lake Taupo. The values of the community define the characteristics of the common good (Lake Taupo). The Lake provides economic, recreational, cultural, aesthetic and social benefits to the community. The benefits that can be derived from Lake Taupo are considered the environmental values of the community. These environmental values make the Lake the common good. The environmental, economic and social values of the Taupo community are in harmony with environmental sustainability. As such a communitarian approach to accountability for common good acquires the same meaning as accountability for the community values or accountability for environmental sustainability.

The concept of community is defined within the context of the communal processes in the Taupo District. A community represents a community interests. It comprises of individuals, representing various interests, who participate in the communal processes (discussed in Chapter 8). Different communal processes occurring at different time periods may have similar or different communities of interests. The evidence refutes the simplicity of the community portrayed in traditional concepts of community (such as in Ahrne, 1998; Alexander, 1998; Aristotle, 1968; Keanne, 1988). The complexity of the community of interest in the Taupo District is compounded by the existence of multiple interests and segregation in the community. Nevertheless, common values attached to Lake Taupo create unity in the community. For instance, the Taupo Community shows a strong preference for protecting the natural environment. The community surveys (see Chapter 8) undertaken by Environment Waikato indicate that the community prefers environmental protection over economic development. Such a preference is also shown in the strategies and policy measures that have been developed through the communal processes. The existence of such values makes economic and social considerations subservient to environmental considerations, implying a strong form of sustainability (Pearce, Anil, & Barbier, 1989, 1990; Pearce & Turner, 1990).

The communitarian model portrays the mobilisation of participatory democracy in practice. Although the influence of public authorities can be strongly felt in the communal processes, the community is still provided the opportunity to participate and engage with the institutions of government. Accountability in the broader sense involves joint accountability is a non-contractual voluntary relationship which extends responsibility to the wider community of interest to safeguard the common good. Such joint accountability enables a community to ‘give an account of itself’ in new ways and to continually reinvent itself through relational responsiveness. It is only through interaction that a community discovers the true nature of its moral obligations. The mutual responsibility is grounded in virtues of trust, civility and respect for one another aiming to protect the common good. The communitarian approach is not intended to appropriate blame to any one individual or a group. Holding the farmers solely accountable for the environmental problem and assigning them the responsibility of resolving the problem is not the way forward. The problem requires the collective action by the whole community and collaboration with local authorities and private sector. Utopian as it may sound, in my opinion the broader conceptualisation of accountability or joint accountability to a community is what is required in a world faced with serious issues such as global warming, draught, etc. The aim to protect the common good prevails over self-interest of individuals, in particular where self-interest has disastrous impacts on the common good.

10.3.3 The Broader Scope of Environmental and Social Accounting

This thesis attempts to explain the enabling potential of social and environmental accounting by using the communitarian ideology. This study employs the communitarian theory to explain the enabling potential of environmental and social accounting.

The communitarian model portrays the interdisciplinary nature of accounting information. Reports provided to the community cover a wide range of taxonomic, scientific, cultural, social and economic information. Accounting is an interdisciplinary practice that requires the skills of professionals from various

disciplines. The communitarian model represents a holistic approach to environmental and social accounting. It advocates the role of the community as a watch dog on activities that adversely impacts the common good. In this process members of civil society are engaged to decide on the fate of activities that have negative impacts on the common good. Accountability can be enforced when individuals representing various groups and interests take part in community deliberations. Accountability is a dialectical process involving processes of negotiation, explanation and articulation in a community and provides a sense of belonging and understanding in the community (Macintyre, 1984; Francis, 1991; Wilson, 1993). Such accountability also entails some parties in the community posing questions and some others answering and providing justification for conduct.

10.3.4 Critical Reflections on the Communitarian Model

This study shows that the community is not completely divorced from the state. Local governance involving collaboration between local authorities and local district communities refutes the idealistic notion of community where the community acts independently and without interference from the state (Alexander 1998). The state (or Central Government) acts with Local Government authorities to empower local communities to participate in planning and making policy decisions that affect them. Local authorities are the primary facilitators of processes. Crucial aspects of the facilitation provided by the authorities include: creation of public sphere for cooperative enquiry; facilitating community participation in planning and policy making; dissemination of information; undertaking research and surveys; providing expertise for analysis and financial resources for implementing policies and strategies. Without the facilitation offered by the local authorities, the ability of the Taupo Community to participate in the process would be inhibited. The local authorities have brought parties with multiple interests and values, including Maori and non-Maori participants, to the public sphere to create awareness of pollution of Lake Taupo and discuss and agree on common values and strategies for the sustainable development of the district.

The scope for local residents and community based groups to exercise real influence and act independently of the authorities appears to be limited portraying a kind of

pseudo-participation. They depend on the authorities for information and facilitation of the communal processes. Generally, community based groups in the Taupo District lack effective organizational, administrative and technical skills to undertake participation without the help of the public authorities. Lack of financial resources and expertise inhibited their efforts in preparing and reporting information to local residents and participating in submission processes. They may lack the knowledge and competency to take part in the discourse, to question any assertion, introduce any assertion and express their view points. Lukewarm response by some local residents to participation can be attributed to the lack of knowledge on issues and unwillingness to assume mutual responsibility to participate in the processes

Local governance intended to empower communities may result in processes that recentralise the position of local authorities. The local authorities have vast powers under the Local Government Act 2002 and Resource Management Act 1991, vast amounts of resources including financial and research skills and the ability to produce information. The planning and policy making processes were created and defined by public authorities as opposed to being created and defined by the community. Strategies and policy measures assign key roles and responsibilities to public authorities. The existence of Central Government influence in Local Government affairs is apparent in the powers given to the Ministry of Local Government to interfere in Local Government affairs (Department of Internal Affairs, 2009). The existence of such influence casts doubts as to whether devolution of decision making to local communities has actually happened in New Zealand.

The ability of the general public to understand taxonomic information is questionable. This may give more power to certain groups like scientists and groups that employ scientists to influence local government policies. It also leads to asymmetry in that science is seen as more important than other disciplines. It is not clear how science can integrate with traditional knowledge of indigenous people. Modern scientific knowledge may overshadow any other form of knowledge which is not based on modern sciences. Plans and policy decisions are formulated on the basis of scientific information. Under such circumstances scientific knowledge becomes the absolute truth overwhelming the importance of dialogue. Taxonomic

information may pose a threat to symmetry of knowledge and participation in the dialectical process when some members of a community lack the ability to understand scientific information.

Reporting is carried out by public authorities on the basis of scientific research and findings but such emphasis may pose a challenge to communitarian approach to accountability. The local community may not have the ability to comprehend scientific findings or to take part in decisions that are made on the basis of scientific findings. There is the risk of scientific knowledge becoming the dominant influence in decision making. It may result in asymmetry of power where scientists and groups that employ scientists dominate discussions in the public sphere. These influences may steer local Agenda 21 in a certain direction. The contradiction in global discourse is that, on the one hand it recommends community participation and, on the other, it gives undue emphasis to the sciences. This is reflected in the great emphasis placed on the sciences to provide data for policy decisions, assessment and controllability.

Symmetry of power is affected by this lack of inclusion in the aftermaths of the strategy making processes. The communitarian approach in the Taupo District appears to taper after plans and policies have been made. There is lack of community participation in the implementation stage. The 2020 Community Forums ceased in September 2004 although suggestions were made that the forums be continued. The main players in the JMG and management of Lake Taupo Protection Trust fund are local authorities and Maori community groups. The local authorities have assumed greater roles in implementing of the 2020 Action Plan, Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and making policy measures. They remain more powerful than the community. LWAG continues to hold monthly community meetings, but it appears to be a lobby groups depending on the local authorities for information.

The policies of the new coalition Government led by the National party pose some challenges to the effectiveness of the communitarian model. The present Cabinet is proposing to review the Local Government Act to eliminate requirements for local authorities to pursue community outcomes such as social environmental and cultural

well-being of the community (Trevett, 2009). The Green Political Party considers the proposal as an attempt to inhibit local democracy in New Zealand (Trevett, 2009). Aspects of the proposal that may frustrate the communitarian approach to attaining environmental sustainability include: emphasis on economic and fiscal outcomes and financial disclosures; lack of emphasis on social, environmental and cultural priorities of local communities; suggestion to thwart community processes; lack of emphasis on community consultation in developing policy options; and more powers and greater role for the Central Government in Local Government affairs (Department of Internal Affairs, 2009). However, the Minister of Local Government claims that the purpose of the review is to enhance local authority transparency, accountability and financial management mechanisms. The proposal “encompasses mechanisms for strategic planning, financial management, accountability to ratepayers and citizens, and ratepayer and citizen participation in decision-making” (Department of Internal Affairs, 2009). In a way the review is intended to curb the powers of local authorities. It may be early days to come to a conclusion on the impact of the proposed review on capacity of local community groups to participate in planning and policy making processes. The review is yet to be undertaken and implemented and therefore its impacts are yet to be ascertained. However, basing on past historical records of previous governments led the National Party to thwart communitarian developments in New Zealand (Cheyne, 2002) it may not come as a surprise if the current proposal to review the Local Government Act approaches in that direction.

The coalition government led by the National Party is proposing to replace Auckland’s seven local council and one regional with a single only one council (ESL News New Zealand, 2009). The proposal to convert Auckland to a “super-city” raises concerns of communities that they would be forgotten in one super-city (Singh, 2009). There are concerns that bureaucratic power in a “super-city” would be centralized and concentrated in the hands of a few bureaucrats. It is easier for a small council to engage with its local community than a larger one (Singh, 2009). Such developments in New Zealand raise doubts as to the applicability of the communitarian model in large communities that would be created under a “super-city”. There is also the question as to why the larger bureaucracies are created in the

first place. With lack of emphasis on community, social and environmental priorities of the community all the efforts that have taken place thus far may go to waste. The local community may become confused with different governments emphasising different agenda.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, although not legally binding on states, carries considerable moral force (IWGIA, 2007) and may pose a challenge to the communitarian approach to accountability. Accountability to indigenous people arises from the moral obligation to ratify and apply existing international consensus and declarations on indigenous rights, the protection of indigenous intellectual and cultural property, and the rights to preserve customary and administrative systems and practices; incorporation of the views and knowledge of indigenous people in natural resource management and conservation and in the design and implementation of policies and programmes. Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration, which proclaims the right of indigenous peoples to self-government in relation to their own affairs, is especially troubling to some countries as it challenges the sovereignty of these nations. Providing such special considerations may cause segregation in local communities that consist of indigenous and non-indigenous people. The communitarian approach to accountability may become more challenging in such communities. Lack of trust between indigenous and non-indigenous people can lead to asymmetries of information and decision making and under such situations the application of the communitarian model becomes challenging. Some countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States prefer to deal with the issue in their own way instead of strictly adhering to the UN Declarations (Graham, 1998; IWGIA, 2007.; Quentin-Baxter, 1998; Solomon, 1998; Te Atawhai Taiaroa, 1998). The solution to these complex issues appears to be an on-going and never-ending dialogue, a living dialogue that will see, from time to time, compromises made between indigenous, non-indigenous communities, and public authorities. It requires changes in regulations, perceptions, values and ways of living in the communities. Issues would arise when the dialogue slows down or comes to a halt, so community participation and collaboration with public authorities become crucial in these circumstances.

10.3.5 In Defence of the Communitarian Model of Accountability

The critical reflections above may appear to cast scepticism on the significance of the communitarian model. I defend the communitarian model on the several grounds. First, communitarian practices have a long history in New Zealand and can be traced to the culture of early Maori settlers and subsequently to Local Government systems established by European settlers. Chapter 6 provides a lengthy account of evolution of communitarian ideology in New Zealand. The ideology has continued to manifest itself in present day initiatives to find solutions to environmental problems. It is also supported by international consensus on a communitarian approach to achieving environmental sustainability. The planning and policy making processes in the Taupo District are a reflection of the historical past and the global discourse. The communitarian tradition cannot be easily dismissed in New Zealand. I believe that communitarian ideology will continue to gain stronghold in New Zealand. Although current political factors appear to suggest the contrary, the continuing influence of these factors is temporal. Attempts to erode the communitarian tradition may face objections from communities. Already there are strong objections to plans by the current coalition Government, led by the National Party, to dismantle communitarian processes and establish a super city in Auckland.

Second, in view of the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications for the Maori and Non-Maori community groups, the communitarian approach offers the way forward for keeping the community groups united. The communitarian process is marked by ongoing dialogues aimed at promoting mutual responsibility, trust and goodwill, especially between Maori and Non-Maori communities. The foundation of the nation depends on the communitarian ideology continuing to operate at the grass-root community levels. Local governance involving collaboration in planning and policy making can be considered as the venue for mobilising the communitarian ideology. Halting the communitarian process may bring about civil unrest in the country.

Third, recommendations of the sustainable development strategies (such as the Economic Development Strategy, Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and 2020 Action Plan) are expected to be incorporated in District and Regional Plans. Variation 5 (amendments to Environment Waikato Regional Plan) is an important strand of the

Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and is expected to bring significant controls to land-use practices in the catchments of Lake Taupo. The Lake Taupo Protection Trust (Environment Waikato, 2007e) is another significant outcome of the communitarian approach to planning and decision making. The establishment of the Lake Taupo Protection Trust has led to the allocation of funds by local, regional and Central Government authorities to implement the objectives of the trust (Environment Waikato, 2007e). The Joint Management Group (Joint Management Group n.d., Joint Management Group, 2007) is another significant outcome of the communitarian approach. The Joint management Group has been set up to monitor the actions identified in the 2020 Action. Strategies contained in the Action plan are also expected to be pursued through Taupo District's Annual and Long Term Community Council Plans.

Fourth, the communitarian model is not unique to the Taupo District. Its application is prevalent in other local districts in New Zealand (Knight, 2000; Burke, 2004). The communitarian approach to planning and decision making for sustainable development is also being practiced in other countries. In contrast, communities which want economic growth to increase productivity and employment, such as communities in third world countries, may be less enthusiastic about environmental considerations which mean less development. This raises important questions – What does it mean for sustainability if community values are hostile to the natural environment? In such a situation can the communitarian approach do justice to the natural environment? The significance of the communitarian approach is that it facilitates democratic participation of communities in decision making on issues of common concern. The process provides a means for the community to arrive at a mutual understanding of how it views sustainability.

The communitarian approach to sustainable development has also been adopted in several other districts in New Zealand (Burke, 2004; Department of Internal Affairs, 2007; Knight, 2000; Thornley, 2007). In the nearby District of Rotorua similar planning and policy making processes are being undertaken to halt the pollution of twelve lakes in the district (EBOP, 2009a & 2009b). The Lakes are in a state of long term deterioration, primarily due to excess nutrient inputs entering the Lakes from

animal farm lands and waste water from urban areas. Community outcomes process are of critical importance if district and regional councils are to fulfil one of the prime requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 i.e. to enable democratic local decision-making by local communities (Burke, 2004). Over the last few years collaboration between Local Government, Central Government, Maori community groups and business and community sector groups have continued to strengthen in several local districts in New Zealand (Department of Internal Affairs, 2007). There have been initiatives in several districts in New Zealand have embarked on “The Quality of Life Project” to measure and monitor community well-being (Thornley, 2007). The project was in response to concerns on the impact of urbanisation on the well-being of communities, in several urban districts (such as in Auckland, Christchurch, Manukau, Wellington and Waitakere). The districts have developed social, economic and environmental indicators to measure, report and monitor the well-being of their communities (Thornley, 2007). The aim of the Quality of Life project is to provide information to decision-makers to improve the quality of life in the urban areas. Several other local districts have also used a communitarian approach to develop their local Agenda 21 as a blueprint for sustainable development (Knight, 2000). In some districts (such Waitakere, Manukau, Tauranga, Wanganui, Kapiti Coast, Canterbury, Christchurch, Taranaki, Invercargill and Queenstown) there were collaborative initiatives between local authorities, local community groups and business enterprises to identify community priorities which were subsequently incorporated in LTCCP’s (Burke, 2004)

Some readers may argue the theoretical model, embraced by such mega concepts, is complex and tend to reject it as being very abstract and not applicable in real life situations. However extant studies have illustrated that communities around the globe are experimenting with such concepts in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. Most of these studies explicitly focus on the idea of community involvement in sustainable development. The endeavours of these communities can be understood from an accountability perspective where achievement of sustainability becomes a joint responsibility and where members of these communities are accountable to each other for their mutual benefit and common good. The readers may also reject the communitarian model as utopian requiring

significant sacrifices of everyone in the community. However, the communitarian model is becoming popular in several other countries. Some local authorities in the United Kingdom (such as Kirklees, Leicester and Mendip) have adopted a participatory approach in engaging local communities in developing their Local Agenda 21 (Wild & Marshall, 1999). The purpose of the initiatives is to create communities in which people feel involved and committed in local governance. The Community-Based- Resource-Management programme in the Palawan Islands, Philippines, represents a joint initiative and multiplex relationships of local communities, government and nongovernmental organizations (Austin & Eder; 2007). The cooperative grass-root ecosystem management in several Western United States communities (such communities in the Henry's Fork Watershed, Idaho; Applegate Valley, Oregon; and the Willapa Basin, Washington) portray the operational dynamics of accountability under conditions of decentralized, collaborative and participatory policy making (Weber, 2003). In these communities, grass-root ecosystem management is an ongoing collaborative governance arrangement in which "coalitions of the unlike come together in a deliberative format to resolve policy problems affecting the environment, economy and community (or communities) of a particular place" (Weber, 2003; p.3). Empirical evidence provided by Weber (2003) suggests that it is possible for a communitarian approach to local governance and accountability to help resolve conflicts of interests and solve environmental problems.

10.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This thesis contributes to extant literature in a number of ways. First, it adds to communitarian literature by providing empirical evidence in support of the functioning of the communitarian ideology in practice. Communitarian concepts such as community, common good, cooperative enquiry and mutual responsibility become enlightened on the basis of the empirical evidence derived from the Taupo District. Second, the thesis complements the sustainability discourse by illustrating the processes and outcomes of community participation in planning and policy making for environmental sustainability of the Taupo District. Third, the thesis contributes to expanding the meaning of accountability. The thesis constructs a theoretical model of accountability and explains how the dimensions of

accountability have been mobilised in the communitarian approach to planning and policy making for environmental sustainability. The model complements calls by researchers to consider accounting and accountability as a social phenomenon involving the wider community and to construct critical and democratic pathways to accountability and strategies for sustainability (Gray et al. 1996, Lehman, 1999). In particular the study responds to Lehman's (1999) critique of libertarian models of environmental and social accounting that provide corporations the privileged status of reporting entities. The communitarian model in the Taupo District suggests that the scope of environmental and social accounting can be expanded beyond contemporary Corporate Social Reporting practices. The communitarian approach involves: creating awareness and reporting to communities on environmental issues affecting community values; a dialectical dimension of accountability engaging communities to deliberate on environmental impacts of human activities; decision making to halt degradation of the environment; and monitoring by the community. This study is the pioneer in empirically grounding the theorisation of a communitarian approach to accountability.

The findings of the study may interest local government policy makers. The sense of joint accountability and the common good that emerges from the empirics points a way forward for planning and policy making processes that could consider the community (or community of interests) as a significant player in the process. The study suggests that the communitarian approach to accountability could resolve environmental issues while recognising that there are conflicts and differences in the community and as a result policy decisions concluded may not reflect the undivided consensus of various groups in a community of interest. Policy makers need to acknowledge the differences and find ways to address them by engaging the groups in further discussions. An approach to alleviate the differences could be through education and creating more awareness of the impacts of human activities on the natural environment and the sustainability of future generations. The moral undertone created by such awareness may appeal to the polluters and help them see the benefits of changing attitudes and activities and strive for the common good and what the community wants.

10.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the conclusions of this interpretive study are regarded as major contributions to communitarian, sustainability and accountability literature, it is important to note that the conclusions might be challenged by researchers on several grounds. First, researchers who are ardent followers of liberalism (Rawls, 1999) may find the communitarian approach a violation of the key liberal principles of individualism and may adamantly argue that the concept of community is a myth. Second, researchers who make methodological choices on the basis of objectivists approach to research may be estranged by the epistemological and ontological choices inherent in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Third, readers may bring their own life experience and prejudices which may conflict with that of the researcher and therefore their interpretation of the empirical data may result in different interpretive findings and critical reflections. Finally, critical theorists may amuse themselves with the critical reflections offered in the thesis and be less enthusiastic about the nature of the communitarian model of accountability that was the result of applying my pre-understandings to the empirical data.

The researcher only attended community meetings organised by LWAG and the 2020 Community Forums and his interpretation of the communitarian process could have been influenced by observations made during these processes. The community forums represent the final process in the formulation of the 2020 Action Plan. The researcher was not able to attend several other processes that preceded the community forums as well as process related to other strategies such as the Taupo District Economic Development Strategy (APR Consultants, 2002) and the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy (Environment Waikato, 2003). Information on these community processes were mainly obtained from secondary sources such as community documents, website sources and interviews.

It is not possible to capture all the communal processes which took place in the Taupo District during the period 1998- 2008. For instance there were numerous Local Government processes that were going on during this period such as processes that engaged the community in developing the Taupo district Annual plan and the LTCCP.

This study emphasises the pollution of Lake Taupo as the primary issue of concern to the Taupo Community. Several other issues discussed during the communal processes have not been included in this study. Some of these issues include subdivision of land in the catchment areas of Lake Taupo and the impacts of geothermal operations on community values (Chague-Goff et al., 2009; Environment Waikato, 2007f). Inclusion of such issues is deemed unmanageable within the time frame and resources available for data collection and analysis. The study is also limited to researching the processes and outcomes in the Taupo District. For the same reason, processes in other parts of New Zealand or in other countries have not been included in this study. Hence it is not clear whether the findings of this study are applicable to other communities.

It was difficult to access the Maori Community authorities due to protocol requirements and the availability of time. The views of the indigenous groups were mainly sought from Maori farmers and representatives who attended the LWAG Community meetings and from minutes of the meeting and Maori Strategies. Views of the Paramount Chief of Ngati Tuwharetoa (Te Heuheu Tukino VIII, Tumu) and his officials would have provided additional insights on the communitarian approach to planning and policy making.

10.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The growing importance in New Zealand of community participation in implementing sustainable development provides ample opportunity for future research to address issues related to community engagement in accountability. I encourage researchers interested in communitarian thoughts to continue exploring ways to constitute a community-centred approach to accountability. Ongoing communal processes in the Taupo District are expected to continue in the long-term. The processes provide opportunities to continue researching the communitarian model. Another research direction is examining the application of the communitarian model in other districts of New Zealand and communities in other countries.

The parts examined in this study are limited to certain processes and documents, website material etc. There are other parts which this study has not considered, such as: the view points of private organisations operating in the Taupo District; view points of neighbouring communities of interests such as the Rotorua community of interests (Environment Bay of Plenty, 2009a, 2009b); and other documents such as Taupo District Annual Plan (Taupo District, 2008a, 2008b) and Waikato Regional Plan (Environment Waikato, 2007f). Examining the entirety of all these parts is a colossal task and beyond the capacity of the time, financial and other resources that were available for this study. I encourage future research to bring in this other factors or parts in a hermeneutic study to obtain more insights on the communitarian model.

Evaluating the communitarian model of accountability using the Habermas theory of “ideal speech situation” (Habermas, 1976, 1979, 1987, 1990; Habermas & Rehg, 1996) provide another venue for critical interpretation. Habermas theory can particularly be relevant for assessing if conditions of ideal speech situation (such as inclusiveness, equal rights to participation, participants orientation towards reaching understanding and absence of coercion) exist in the dialectical dimension of accountability. This study has not attempted to do such critical theorising. I encourage future research in this direction. This study can be taken as starting point for further empirical research on a communitarian approach to accountability. Research questions to be asked for future research include:

- What steps can be taken to strengthen mechanisms of a communitarian approach to accountability?
- How has the communitarian approach helped to improve the environment, economy and the community?

10.7 CONCLUSION

In order to advance the communitarian approach it is necessary to overcome some of the tensions and contradictions discussed in chapter 9. While community consultation appears to be on the agenda of Environment Waikato and Taupo District Council, there is still much that can be done to engender greater participation and empower the community. One way is through promoting education for sustainability. Education facilitates community empowerment by developing

citizens' understanding of their rights and responsibilities of the common good. (Higgins 1999). Environmental education and public awareness campaigns are useful tools for providing the community with essential knowledge regarding environmental and social issues affecting the community.

Empowered local citizens and community groups are setting the agenda for a new set of social norms and values for citizenship, collaborative action and a sustainable community (Cuthill, 2002). Through their participation they are actively making private and public organisations more accountable to society and actively involved in defining and implementing sustainable development. Therefore public and private sector organisations can no longer afford to ignore the role of the local citizen and community based groups in local governance and forming strategies for sustainable development. This study could assist local authorities and Central Government agencies seeking to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21 on community participation in sustainable development. The study provides ideas, methods and insights which the authorities may find useful in implementing provisions of Local Government Act 2002 and Resource Management Act 1991 to include community consultation in their planning and policy making processes. It provides useful insights suitable for community groups as well as local authorities, Central Government departments and agencies and private corporations. Private corporations may want to consider including public participation as part of their corporate governance strategy.

I believe this study will be of interest to policy makers and businesses attempting to engage communities in planning and decision making. In particular the communitarian approach illustrated in this chapter could be useful to Central Government agencies and local authorities attempting to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21 at grass root community level. Government and private organisations seeking to implement sustainability and sustainable pathways could find the cooperative enquiry process a useful approach. I hope that the theorisation developed in this paper will stimulate policy responses in private and public organisations to recognise the community as an important stakeholder in planning and policy making for sustainable development.

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<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter28.htm>
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter31.htm>
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter32.htm>
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter35.htm>
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter36.htm>
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Appendix 1: 2020 Community Forum Meetings

| Date | Venue | Participants |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 5 June 2003 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment Waikato - Toi Te Ora Public Health - Lake Taupo Development Company - Waiariki Institute of Technology - Lakes District Health Board - Department of Conservation and TREET Trustee - LWAG - Ratepayers Association - Taupo Nui-a-tia College - Taupo Lake Care - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Tuwharetoa Management Board - Taupo District Council - Federated Farmers - Tauhara College - Taupo Police - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 7 August 2003 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment Waikato - Tourism Lake Taupo - Taupo District Council - Toi Te Ora Public Health - LWAG - REAP & TREET Trustee - Lake Taupo Development Company - Lakes District Health Board - Taupo College - NIWA - Genesis Power - Taupo Lake Care - Tauhara College - IGNS - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 18 September 2003 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 30 October 2003 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Support Services - Cheal Consultants - Lakes & Waterways Action Group - Lake Taupo Development Company - Lakes District Health Board - Lakes & Waterways Action Group - Genesis Power - Taupo Nui-a-Tia College - Environment Waikato - Federated Farmers - Taupo College |

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheal Consultants - Tauhara College - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 11 December 2003 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment Waikato. - Ratepayers Association - Taupo Lake Care - NZ Farm and Forestry Association - Federated Farmers - Lake Taupo Development Company - School Support Services - Tauhara College - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 12 February 2004 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism Lake Taupo - Lakes and Waterways Action Group - REAP & TREET Trustee - Lake District Health Board - Genesis Power - Cheal Consultants - Observer from Japan - Environment Waikato. - Ratepayers Association - Taupo Lake Care - NZ Farm and Forestry Association - Lake Taupo Development Company - School Support Services - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 1 April 2004 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism Lake Taupo - LWAG - Genesis Power - Environment Waikato. - Taupo Lake Care - NZ Farm and Forestry Association - Lake Taupo Development Company - School Support Services - University of Waikato - IGNS - Lake Taupo PHO - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
| 6 May 2004 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment Waikato - LWAG - Ratepayers Association - Genesis Power - Tahura College - Lake Taupo Development Company - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators |

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 17 June 2004 | Acacia Bay Community Hall Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment Waikato - Toi Te Ora Public Health - Lake Taupo Development Company - LWAG - Taupo Lake Care - Tourism Lake Taupo - Taupo District Council - School Support Services - Genesis Power - Mighty River Power - Geological and Nuclear Sciences - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|

Appendix 2: Public meetings organised by LWAG

| Date | Venue | Participant Organisations |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 30 July 2003 | Taupo District Council Building, Lake Terrace Road Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Advocates of Tongariro River - Maori Trust Board - Ratepayers / Residents Taupo - Puketapu Group - Mighty River Power - NZ Forest Managers - Taupo Fishery Advisory Council - Environment Waikato - Department of Conservation - IGNS - Department of Conservation and TREET Trustee - LWAG Facilitators |
| 27 August 2003 | Taupo District Council Building, Lake Terrace Road Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Advocates of Tongariro River - Maori Trust Board - Ratepayers / Residents Taupo - Ratepayers / Resident Turangi - Puketapu Group - NZ Forest Managers - Taupo Fishery Advisory Council - Environment Waikato - Department of Conservation - Department of Conservation and TREET Trustee - University of Waikato - Tokaanu - Visitor / Observer - Federated framers - Harbourmaster - Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee - Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board - LWAG Facilitators |
| 24 September 2003 | Taupo District Council Building, Lake Terrace Road Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo District Council - TREET / Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board - Department of Conservation - Environment Waikato - University of Waikato - Advocates for the Tongariro River - IGNS - NZ Forest managers Ltd. - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Tokaanu Resident - Federated farmers - Turangi Residents |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maori Trust Board - Puketapu Representative - LWAG Facilitators |
| 29 October 2003 | Taupo District Council Building, Lake Terrace Road Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo District Council - University of Waikato - Advocates of Tongariro River - NZ Forest managers Ltd. - Department of Conservation - Reids farm - Federated Farmers - Tokaanu resident - IGNS - Maori Trust Board - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Environment Waikato - LWAG Facilitators |
| 26 November 2003 | Turangi Senior Citizens Hall, Turangi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo District council - University of Waikato - Advocates for the Tongariro river - NZ Forest Managers ltd. - Federated Farmers - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Taupo Residents - Taupo Lake Care - Puketapu - Turangi Chronicle / daily Post - IGNS - LWAG Facilitators |
| 21 January 2004 | Taupo District Council Building, Lake Terrace Road Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Advocates of Tongariro River - Taupo Residents - Turangi Residents - Puketapu Group - NZ Forest Managers Ltd. - Environment Waikato - University of Waikato - Tokaanu Resident - Federated Farmers - Harbourmaster - Taupo District Council - IGNS - LWAG Facilitators |
| 25 February 2004 | Taupo District Council Building, Lake Terrace Road Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo District Council - Advocate for Tongariro River - NZ Forest managers Ltd. - NZ Farm forestry Association - Puketapu Group - Taupo Resident - IGNS - Mighty River Power |

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo Fishery Advisory Council - University of Waikato - LWAG Facilitators |
| 31 March 2004 | Taupo Yacht Club, Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo District council - Advocates of Tongariro River - Tokaanu Resident - NZ Forest managers Ltd. - NZ Farm and Forestry Association - Puketapu Group - IGNS - Taupo Residents - IGNS - University of Waikato - 2020 Forum Facilitators - LWAG Facilitators |
| 26 May 2004 | Taupo Yacht Club, Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee - Environment Waikato - University of Waikato - Puketapu Group - GNS - Mighty River Power - Federated Farmers - Advocates for the Tongariro River - Department of Conservation - NZ farm Forestry Association - Lake Taupo Development Company - 2020 Forum facilitators - LWAG Facilitators |
| 30 June 2004 | Taupo Yacht Club, Taupo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GNS - NZ Farm Forestry Association - Advocates of Tongariro River - Ratepayers / Residents Taupo - Puketapu Group - NZ Forest Managers Ltd. - Environment Waikato - University of Waikato - Taupo District Council - Harbourmaster - Mighty River Power - Environmental Defence Society - LWAG Facilitators |
| 28 July 2004 | Taupo Yacht Club, Taupo | No list of attendees taken |

Appendix 3: Public Documents

| Title of Document | Prepared By |
|--|---|
| 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan – An Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy for the Lake Taupo Catchment | Environment Waikato in Consultation with Taupo Community |
| Protecting Lake Taupo – A Long Term Strategic Partnership | Environment Waikato in consultation with Taupo Community |
| Taupo District Economic Development Strategy – Draft For Public Comment | Lake Taupo Communities Economic Partnership Steering Committee in consultation with certain sectors of the Taupo Community |
| Taupo District Economic Development Strategy | Lake Taupo Communities Economic Partnership Steering |
| Taupo Land Use Study | Lake Taupo Development Company |
| Environmental Iwi Management Plan | Ngati Tuwharetoa |
| Environmental Strategic Plan 2000 | Nga hapu of Ngati Tuwharetoa |
| Lake Taupo Accord | Prepared in consultation with Taupo Community and signed by Environment Waikato, Taupo District Council, LWAG, Department of Conservation, Department of Internal Affairs |
| LWAG Strategic Plan | LWAG in consultation with the Taupo Community. |
| 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Communications and Dissemination Tools Report | Environment Waikato |
| 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Risk Assessment Report | Environment Waikato |
| Materials distributed at the Science and Community Focus Day on 20 November 2003 Great Lake Centre Taupo | Environment Waikato |
| Minutes of 2020 Forum Public Meetings | Environment Waikato |
| Minutes of LWAG Meetings | LWAG |
| Website material on current issues related to Lake Taupo | Environment Waikato |
| Environment Waikato Press Releases on Lake Taupo | Environment Waikato |

Appendix 4: List of Interviews Conducted

| Date | Interviewee Details | Venue |
|--------------------|--|--------------|
| August 1, 2002 | Environment Waikato Officer | Hamilton |
| February 27, 2003 | Scientist | Hamilton |
| July 1, 2003 | Scientist | Hamilton |
| July 30, 2003 | Resident | TaupoTown |
| August 7, 2003 | Consultant of 2020 Project | Taupo Town |
| August 7, 2003 | Environment Policy Planner | Taupo Town |
| August 25, 2003 | CEO of Private Corporation | Taupo Town |
| August 27, 2003 | LWAG Member | Taupo Town |
| September 9, 2003 | Consultant Economic Strategy | Rotorua |
| September 17, 2003 | Scientist | Hamilton |
| September 18, 2003 | City Planner | Taupo Town |
| September 24, 2003 | LWAG Member | Taupo Town |
| February 2, 2004 | LWAG Member | Taupo Town |
| February 11, 2004 | Consultant Planner | Taupo Town |
| March 31, 2004 | Maori Farmer | Taupo Town |
| June 6, 2004 | LWAG Member | Taupo Town |
| June 30 2004 | Maori Resident | Taupo Town |
| November 30, 2005 | LWAG Member | Taupo Town |
| December 12, 2005 | Department of Consevation Officer | Taupo Town |
| December 12, 2005 | Scientist and Member of LWAG | Taupo Town |
| December 15, 2005 | Environment Waikato Councillor | Hamilton |
| December 16, 2005 | Farmer | Rotorua |
| December 16, 2005 | LWAG Member | Taupo Town |
| December 16, 2005 | Member of Acacia Bay Residents Association | Taupo Town |

Appendix 4: List of Interviews Conducted

| | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| December 19, 2005 | Maori Participant | Taupo Town |
| December 19, 2005 | CEO of Private Company | Taupo Town |
| December 19, 2005 | Reesident | Taupo Town |
| December 19, 2005 | Resident | Taupo Town |
| December 19, 2005 | Member of LWAG | Taupo Town |
| December 19, 2005 | Member of Community based Group | Taupo Town |
| January 4, 2006 | Consultant and facilitator of community meetings | Tauranga |
| January 11, 2006 | Scientist and LWAG member | Taupo Town |
| January 11, 2006 | Resident | Taupo Town |
| January 11, 2006 | Farmer | Taupo Town |
| January 12, 2006 | Taupo District Council Policy Analyst | Taupo Town |
| January 12, 2006 | Resident | Taupo Town |
| January 14, 2008 | Policy Analyst Environment Waikato | Hamilton |
| April 29, 2008 | Policy Analyst Environment Waikato | Hamilton |
| May 20, 2008 | Environment Waikato Officer | Hamilton |

Appendix 5: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Community Participation In the Sustainable Development of the Taupo District

My name is Murugesh Arunachalam and I am a doctoral student in the Accounting Department, Waikato Management School of The University of Waikato and the main researcher of this study. Together with me in the research team are my supervisors Professor Stewart Lawrence, Dr. Martin Kelly and Dr. Joanne Locke. This study will be completed using my personal resources and support of The University of Waikato. The results of this study will be publicly available in the form of a PhD thesis, conference papers and journal articles.

Brief outline of the research

The project examines issues related to the pollution of Lake Taupo and community participation in processes which address these issues. The primary objective of this research is to obtain an understanding of the community discussions and consultative processes. The purpose is to identify factors that impact on these processes and how the values of the Taupo community have evolved over this period.

Participant's role and consent

You are invited to take part in an interview session conducted by me. In the interview, which will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes, you will be asked for your views on issues related to this study. The interview will take place in your office or at a venue acceptable to both of us. With your permission the interview will be recorded using a voice recorder. If you require, the recorded discussion will be transcribed and made available to you. You will be asked to sign a Consent Form before the interview commences. However, you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time or refuse to answer any specific questions. You are also free to ask questions at any time before, during and after the interview.

Confidentiality

Where information collected in interviews is transcribed, pseudonyms will be used for participating individuals. The transcription will be done using the University's secretarial services. Pseudonyms will also be used in reporting the findings of the study and quoting your views. You will be invited to comment on any material from the interview to be quoted in the PhD report, conference papers or refereed journal articles. Quoting your views in the reports will only be done with your consent. Evidence collected in this study will be retained indefinitely, stored in a cabinet so that it is not accessible to anyone else. The evidence may be used as a basis for further research. The voice recordings will be erased after they have been transcribed or information used as a basis for analysis and writing the reports. In addition, if you would like to receive a copy of the summary findings from this research, please let me know during the interview or contact me at a later date.

Contact details of principal researcher

Name : MURUGESH ARUNACHALAM

Telephone No. : 07 85562889 Ext. 7007 email: murugesh@waikato.ac.nz

Contact details of supervisor

Dr. Stewart Lawrence (Chief Supervisor)

Accounting Department, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato.

Telephone no. 07 8384466 Ext. 8794 email: stewartl@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix 6: Consent Form

Consent Form for Participants

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Community Participation in the Sustainable Development of the Taupo District

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Information Sheet for Participants** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet** form.

I agree to the interview being recorded using a voice recorder.

☐ Please tick here

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Family Name : ARUNACHALAM

Given Name : MURUGESH

Correspondence Address: Department of Accounting, Waikato Management School, The University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton New Zealand

Telephone No. : Office 07 8562889 ext. 7007 Home 07 8537735,

E-mail Address: murugesh@waikato.ac.nz

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Professor Dr. Stewart Lawrence

Accounting Department, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato.

Telephone no. 07 8384466 Ext. 8794

E-mail Address: stewartl@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix 7: Ethical Approval

Research Office
Waikato Management School
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton
New Zealand

Amanda Sircombe
Research Manager
Phone +64 7 838 4376
Fax +64 7 838 4063
Email amandas@waikato.ac.nz
www.management.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
Te Rauapa

MEMO

| | |
|----------|--|
| To | Muruges Arunachalam, Department of Accounting |
| From | Amanda Sircombe, Research Manager |
| Date | 28 th November 2005 |
| Subject: | Waikato Management School Ethical Application |

Dear Muruges

Ethical Application WMS 05/88

"A Communitarian Approach to Accountability for Sustainable Development: Theory Development and Application in a New Zealand Context"

As per my earlier email, the above project has been granted Ethical Approval for Research by the Waikato Management School.

Best wishes for your research

Regards

Amanda Sircombe
Research Manager

Appendix 8: Interview Questions and Themes

Issues for Discussion

This research examines community participation in forming strategies for sustainable development. Crucial aspects of community participation are information sharing and debate and dialogue on issues of common concern to a community. These processes aim to empower communities to participate in a critical enquiry on issues which are affecting common values. The purpose of my study is to obtain an understanding of the community participation processes, their effectiveness and the factors that influence the processes. Issues which I would like to discuss with you are the following:

1. In recent years there has been a lot of publicity regarding the pollution of Lake Taupo.
 - In your opinion what are the main causes of the pollution?
 - Where would you rank livestock farmers?
 - Are there any related issues which need serious consideration by the communities in the Taupo District?
 - Who in your opinion should be responsible for protecting the water quality in Lake Taupo?
 - What do you believe the best way forward?
2. A common theme in community meetings is “the sustainable development of the Taupo District”.
 - What are your views on the sustainable development of the Taupo District?
 - How does sustainable development help resolve the pollution of Lake taupo?
3. You are a regular participant in community meetings in the Taupo District. Some of these meetings are organised by Environment Waikato and LWAG. There are also meetings organised by different stakeholder groups in the Taupo District.
 - How many types of community discussions have you attended?
 - Why do you attend these meetings?
 - When you participate in the community meetings who are you representing?
 - In your opinion are these community meetings working well? Are these meetings important?
 - What can be achieved from the community discussions?
 - How do the community discussions affect you or the group you are representing?
4. Information sharing is a common feature of the community discussions.
 - In your opinion are the communities in the Taupo District well informed regarding the pollution of Lake Taupo?
 - What sort of information have you received?
 - Are communities provided with sufficient and relevant information? Do you understand the information provided? What information do you find useful? What can be done to improve the quality of information provided?
 - Who are the primary providers of information and why do they provide information?
 - Do you or the group you are representing provide information to other members in the community?

5. Participants in the community meetings often engage in a debate over issues relating to the pollution of Lake Taupo.
 - What are your main concerns which you would like other participants to know?
 - In your opinion are communities capable of critically examining issues related to the pollution of Lake Taupo?
6. There are some who actively participate in the community discussions.
 - In your opinion what are the primary influences on these community discussions?
7. What do you think should be done to enhance community participation in public meetings?

Appendix 9: Horizons in Hermeneutic Circle of Understanding

| Hermeneutic Process | Researcher's Horizon | Phenomenon's Horizon | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | Whole | Parts |
| Circle 1 | Cognitive interest in environmental and social accounting and peer pressure. | Communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. | Pre-understanding of communitarian ideology, concepts of accountability, paradigms on sustainability, global and New Zealand institutional framework on sustainable development. |
| Horizon A: Fusion of horizons results in development of conceptual framework on communitarian approach to accountability for the common good as an outcome of circle 1. The framework is used as a basis to understand documents in hermeneutic process 2. | | | |
| Circle 2 | Conceptual framework on communitarian approach to accountability for the common good. | Three Documents – Taupo Accord 1999, Environmental Strategic Plan 2000 and Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2003 | Words, sentences, paragraphs and sections in the documents |
| Horizon B: The framework was the starting point for understanding the documents. The interpretation of the documents using the framework as a basis produced new understandings (fusion of horizons) about the nature of the Taupo community- its values, the stakeholders, values of the tribal community, accountability relationships etc. - used as a basis to understand communal processes in the Taupo District. The documents provided my initial exposure to issues regarding the pollution of Lake Taupo. They explain political, ecological, social and economic foundations of the Taupo community. and provided understanding of how dimensions of accountability implicated are in these documents. | | | |
| Circle 3 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle 2. | Communal processes in the Taupo District (community meetings and enquiry on pollution of Lake Taupo). | Observations during community meetings and subsequent readings of minutes of meetings and field notes. |
| Horizon C: Fusion of horizons resulted in recognition of communal processes as the venue for a communitarian approach to accountability in the Taupo District, definition of Taupo community, identification of members and sub-committees which form the Taupo community, subject matter of accountability, a new understanding of accountability relationships (identification of accountor and accountee) under communitarianism and recognition of socialising form of accountability, information sharing and dialectical nature of accountability | | | |
| Circle 4 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle | Document– Taupo District Economic Development Strategy | Words, sentences, paragraphs and sections in the document. |

| Hermeneutic Process | Researcher's Horizon | Phenomenon's Horizon | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | | Whole | Parts |
| | 3. | | |
| Horizon D: Fusion of horizons conceptualised accountability for economic sustainability through communal processes. Understanding of how dimensions of accountability were implicated in these documents. | | | |
| Circle 5 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle 4. | Document – Protecting Lake Taupo Strategic | Words, sentences, paragraphs and sections in the document. |
| Horizon E: Fusion of horizons conceptualised accountability for environmental sustainability through communal processes. Understanding of how dimensions of accountability were implicated in these documents. | | | |
| Circle 6 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle 5. | Document - Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (2020 Action Plan) | Words, sentences, paragraphs and sections in the document. |
| Horizon F: Fusion of horizons conceptualised accountability for communal values and sustainable development through communal processes. Understanding of how dimensions of accountability were implicated in these documents. | | | |
| Circle 7 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle 6 | Document - Policy proposal Variation 5 | Words, sentences, paragraphs and sections in the policy proposal document. |
| Horizon G: Understanding of how dimensions of accountability were implicated in these document especially the decision making dimension. | | | |
| Circle 8 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle 7 | Documents – submissions, hearings and Environment Court proceedings | Views of public on policy proposal |
| Horizon H: Understanding of how dimensions of accountability were implicated in these documents, especially the dialectical dimension | | | |
| Circle 9 | Cumulative perspectives resulting from fusion of horizons created in hermeneutic circle 8 | Interviews | Views of 40 members of the Taupo community on communal processes and pollution of Lake Taupo. |
| Responses from interviews reinforced earlier interpretations as well as resulting in new meanings. The interpretive process can continue indefinitely | | | |

Appendix 10: Amendments to Local Government Act 1974

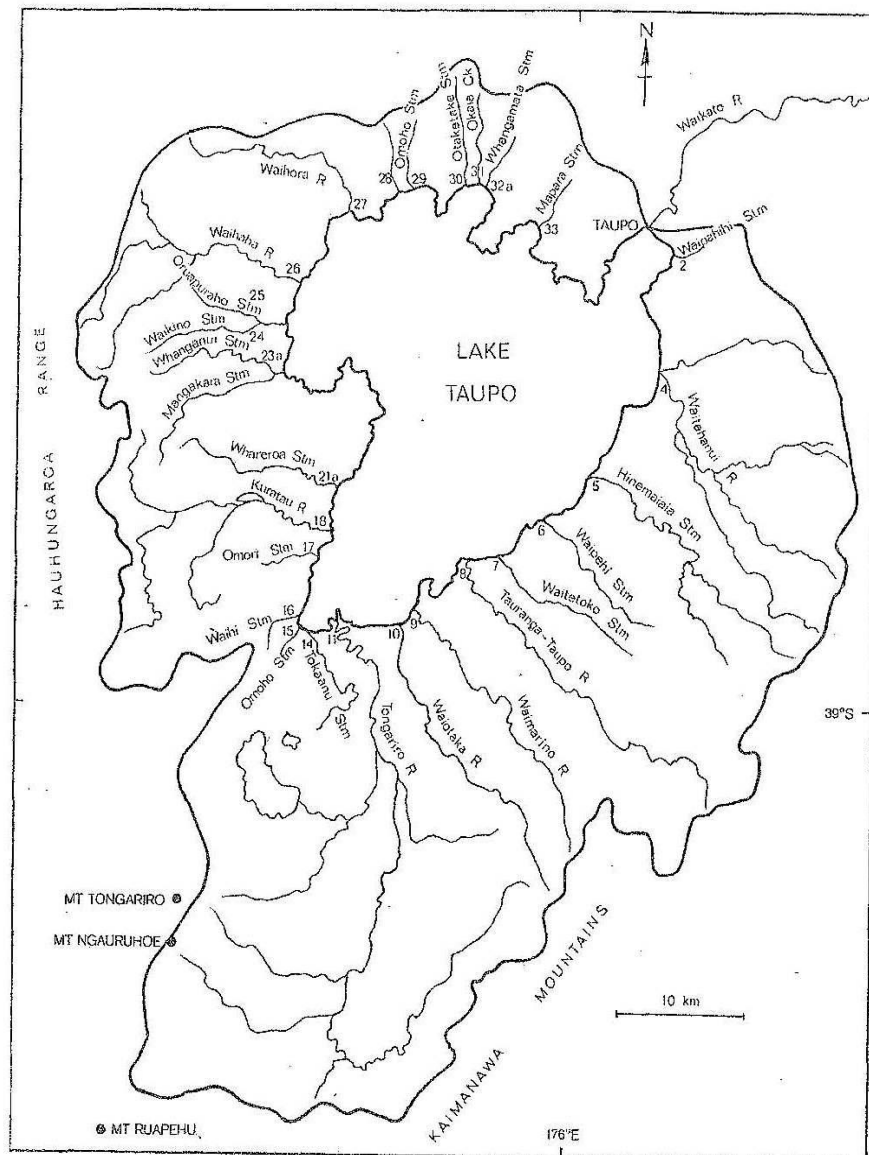
- 1 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1976](#)
- 2 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1977](#)
- 3 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 3\) 1977](#)
- 4 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1978](#)
- 5 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1979](#)
- 6 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1980](#)
- 7 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1981](#)
- 8 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1981](#)
- 9 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1982](#)
- 10 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1982](#)
- 11 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1983](#)
- 12 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1984](#)
- 13 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1985](#)
- 14 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1986](#)
- 15 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1986](#)
- 16 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 3\) 1986](#)
- 17 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1987](#)
- 18 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1987](#)
- 19 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1988](#)
- 20 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1988](#)
- 21 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 3\) 1988](#)
- 22 [The Local Government Amendment Act 1989](#)
- 23 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 2\) 1989](#)
- [The Local Government Act First Schedule Order \(No. 2\) 1989](#)
- [The Local Government Act First Schedule Order \(No. 3\) 1989](#)
- 26 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 3\) 1989](#)
- 27 [The Local Government Amendment Act \(No. 4\) 1989](#)
- 28 [The Local Government Reform \(Transitional Provisions\) Act 1990](#)

Appendix 11: Streams Polluting Lake Taupo



Source: Vant, B., & Smith, P. (2004). *Nutrient concentrations and water ages in 11 streams flowing into Lake Taupo*,; Environment Waikato Technical Report 2002/18R.

Appendix 12: Streams Flowing into Lake Taupo



Source: White, E., & Downes, M. T. (1977). Preliminary Assessment Of Nutrient Loads On Lake Taupo, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research* 11(2), 341-356.

Appendix 13: Summary of Threats to Community Values

Table 2: Summary of Threats to the 2020 Community Values

| Risk Category | Specific Threat |
|--|--|
| ECOLOGICAL: <i>Water Pollution</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient enrichment from farming (run-off into the lake) • Sediment loading (ash) from large volcanic eruption • Nutrient enrichment from sewage • Nutrient enrichment from forestry • Bacterial contamination of water • Chemical contamination of water |
| ECOLOGICAL: <i>Loss of habitat and desirable species</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal and plant pests threaten native vegetation and desirable fish species (competition) • Introduction of new species affect ecological processes such as food web, distribution of species etc • Nutrient enrichment causes reduction in trout growth & numbers • Impacts on invertebrates (rivers and streams) |
| HUMAN HEALTH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathogens in water • Beach litter • Toxic algal bloom • Chemicals |
| QUALITY OF LIFE¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to volcanic heritage • Restrictions to access • Loss or damage to property or infrastructure • Threats to human safety and security • Threats to aesthetic values • Threats to quality of recreational resource |
| THREATS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT² | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to business development • Threats to diversification of land use • Threats to energy generation • Threats to 'added value' developments for primary industries • Threats to tourism expansion • Threats to community development |
| THREATS FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to water quality • Threats to the recreational resource • Threats to habitat and ecological values • Threats to aesthetic qualities |
| INSTITUTIONAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of legal protection • Limited funding • Uncertainty of who should pay • Uncertain roles and responsibilities |

¹ This includes threats to amenity values, aesthetics, access to lakes and rivers/streams, recreation, human safety (bodily harm), equity and natural heritage.

² This includes threats to the local, regional and national economy.

³ This includes threats from local development.

Appendix 13: Summary of Threats to Community Values

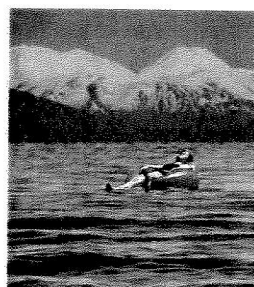
| | |
|---|--|
| NGATI TUWHARETOA⁴ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion in the roles & responsibilities of Government Agencies in the management of the natural resources with the Ngati Tuwharetoa rohe. • Lack of partnership between Ngati Tuwharetoa and Government Agencies in the management of natural resources within the Ngati Tuwharetoa rohe. • Intellectual and cultural property rights of tangata whenua need to be protected. • Adverse effect of Mauri through the mixing of waters from other catchments. • Discharge of human sewage and storm water into water bodies. • Need to ensure the protection of both hapu and tribal waahi tapu, whilst keeping their exact nature & location confidential to kaitiaki. • Lack of knowledge on the status or condition of waahi tapu areas. • Confusion in the roles & responsibilities over who is responsible for enforcing the harvest of indigenous species, this confusion results in insufficient protection of mahinga kai. • Ad hoc implementation of Crown Minerals Act 1991 & RMA 1991 by agencies in the area of mineral exploration. • The management of geothermal resources is controlled by statutory authorities as opposed to nga hapu o Ngati Tuwharetoa. |
|---|--|

Appendix 14: Analysis of Threats to Community Values and Ballot Form



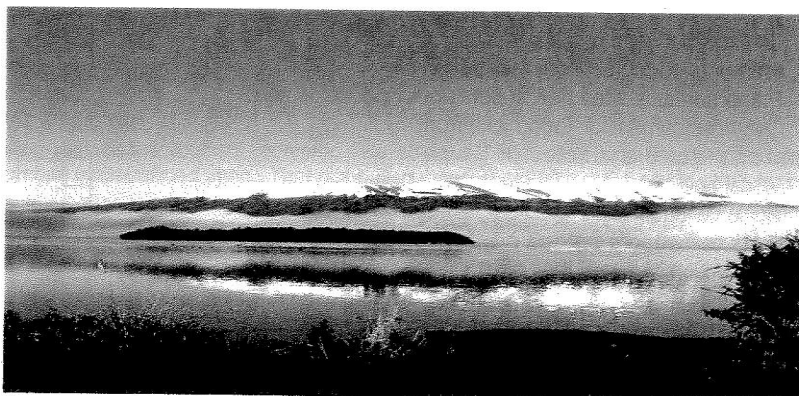
2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia: Quality of Life Risk Assessment

Please consider the impact that each of the 'threats' listed below has on your enjoyment of Lake Taupo and the natural environment around the Lake.



Voting system

You have **10 votes** to cast. Please tick the top 10 'threats' that affect your enjoyment of Lake Taupo and the natural environment of the lake area. Then please number your top 5 - the greatest threat '5', down to the lowest being '1'.



For any enquiries, please contact June Louisson – Phone: 07 3786539.
Completed forms may be posted to P O Box 501, Taupo.

Can you tell us a little about yourself to help us analyse the results?
(Please circle)

Are You: Male / Female

Age Range: 13 -18, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80+.

Appendix 14: Analysis of Threats to Community Values and Ballot Form

| Impacts on Quality of Life: main themes | Tick |
|---|--------------------------|
| Deterioration of the natural environment | |
| ▪ Sewage pollution in the water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Heavy weed growths along the shoreline | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Declining water clarity in Lake Taupo | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Invasive pests and weeds | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restrictions to recreational access | |
| ▪ Lack of legal access to rivers, streams and the lake | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Lack of access facilities (eg boat ramps, changing sheds for swimmers, walkways) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Low lake levels limiting swimming and boating access | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Threats to property/infringement of property rights | |
| ▪ Thefts from/ vandalism to parked vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Trespassers on your land | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ High lake levels causing erosion damage to lakeshore property (land, walkways, structures) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Safety threats | |
| ▪ Toxic algal blooms making the lake unsafe for swimming or drinking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Injuries associated with boating (eg collisions with other boats, kayaks or swimmers) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Beach litter (eg broken glass) causing injuries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Population pressures | |
| ▪ Overcrowding and congestion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Conflicts between recreational users | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Pressures on recreational facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Inappropriately-sited new subdivisions or developments | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Overdevelopment of Taupo lake front | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Loss of 'natural character' of Taupo | |
| ▪ Visual pollution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Noise pollution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Threats to Taupo's unique heritage | |
| ▪ Destruction of waahi tapu sites | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ▪ Destruction of unique geological features (eg hot springs) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have we left out anything important that affects your enjoyment of Lake Taupo and the natural environment around the Lake? | |
| Please tell us about it here. | |

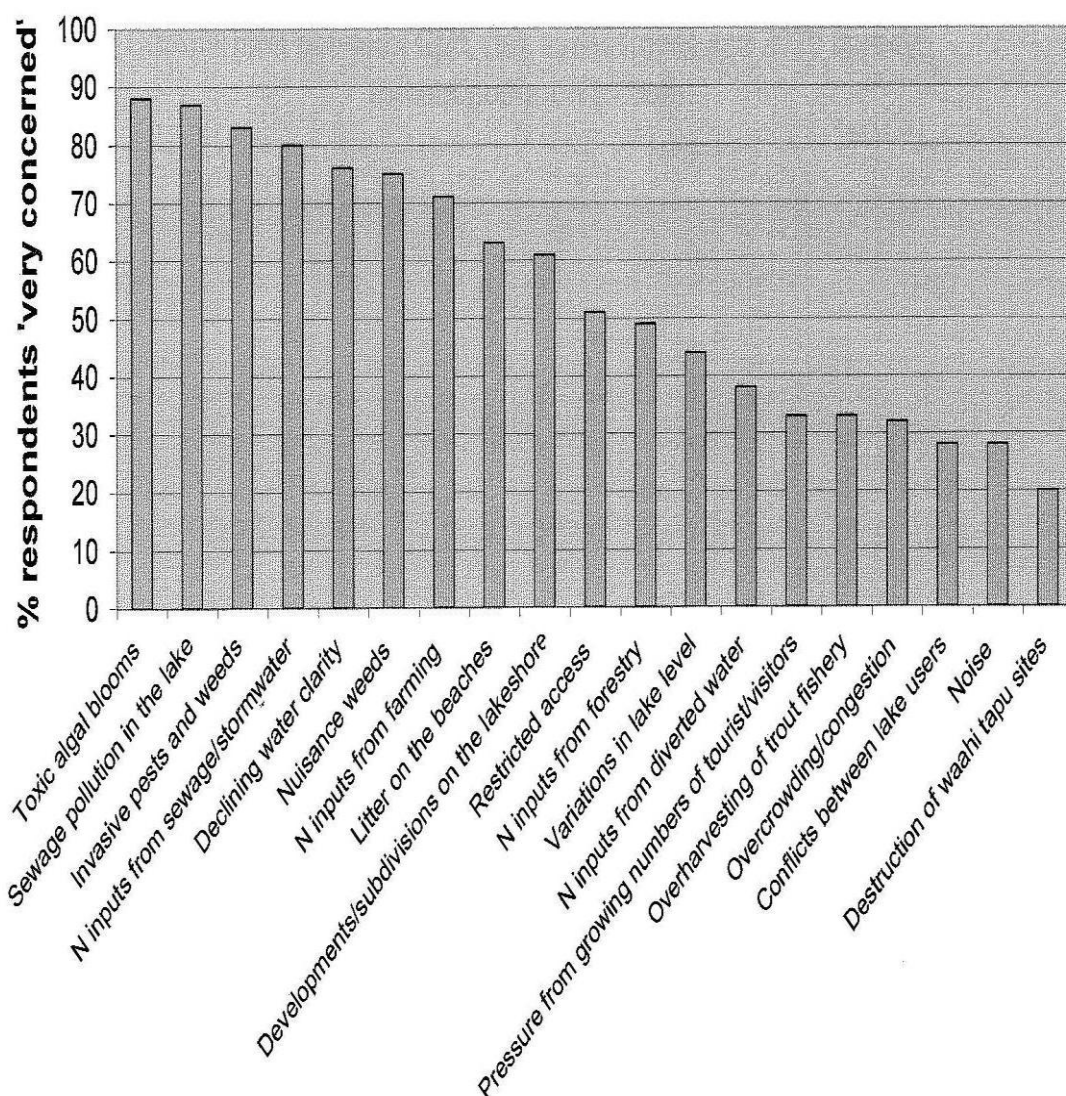
Don't forget to rank your top '5' threats

Appendix 15: Findings of Risk Assessment Ballot

QUALITY OF LIFE RISK ASSESSMENT RAW DATA

| Threat | Total score (n=73) |
|---|-----------------------|
| <i>Deterioration of the natural environment</i> | |
| Sewage pollution in the water | 386 |
| Weed growths along the shoreline | 289 |
| Declining water clarity | 315 |
| Invasive pests and weeds | 142 |
| <i>Restrictions to recreational access</i> | |
| Restrictions to legal access | 101 |
| Lack of access facilities | 30 |
| Low lake levels limiting access | 22 |
| <i>Threats to property/infringements of property rights</i> | |
| Thefts/vandalism | 99 |
| Trespassers | 7 |
| High lake levels causing erosion to lakeshore property | 20 |
| <i>Safety threats</i> | |
| Toxic algal blooms | 370 |
| Boating injuries | 15 |
| Beach litter | 94 |
| <i>Population pressures</i> | |
| Overcrowding and congestion | 59 |
| Conflicts between recreational users | 24 |
| Pressures on recreational facilities | 22 |
| Inappropriate sites for new subdivisions | 155 |
| Overdevelopment of Taupo lakefront | 126 |
| <i>Loss of 'natural character' of Taupo</i> | |
| Visual pollution | 83 |
| Noise pollution | 62 |
| <i>Threats to Taupo's unique heritage</i> | |
| Destruction of waahi tapu sites | 36 |
| Destruction of unique geological features | 59 |

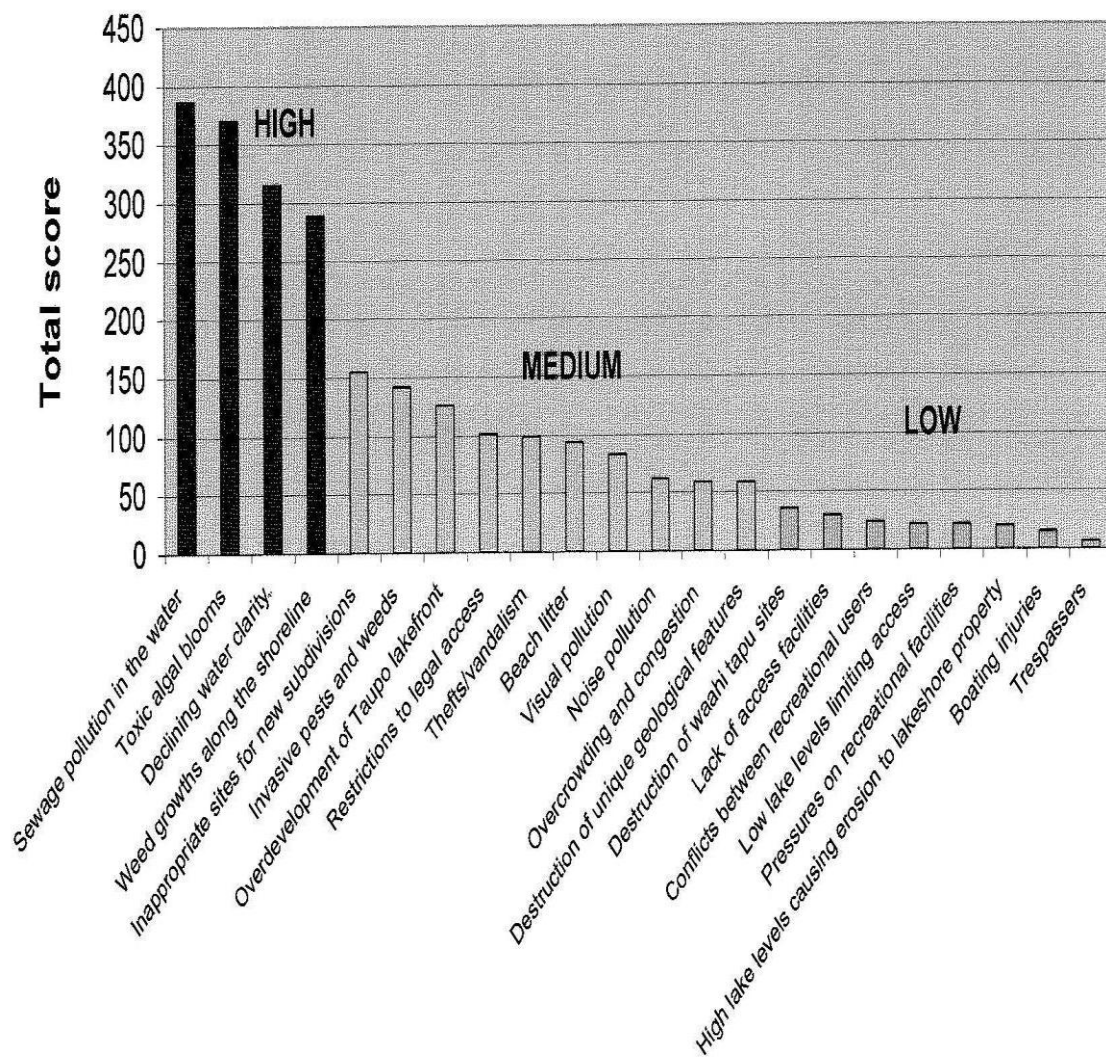
Appendix 15: Findings of Risk Assessment Ballot



2020 Survey: Respondents' level of concern about issues affecting Lake Taupo (n=451)

Appendix 15: Findings of Risk Assessment Ballot

Ranking of Quality of Life threats (n=73)



Appendix 16: Research Priorities of Community

Diverse Plants and Animals

- ☐ Establish biodiversity of poorly studied habitats such as wetlands, seeps, springs and interstitial littoral habitats
- ☐ Determine impacts of movement of aquatic invertebrates as a result of power schemes
- ☐ Determine the impact of alien species on geothermal stream invertebrates
- ☐ Determine factors controlling smelt populations and hence the trout populations of the Taupo Catchment
- ☐ Develop a detailed understanding of the ecology of remnant Koaro to enable the development of a conservation strategy for this species
- ☐ Establish the impact of catfish on koura (crayfish) and morihana (goldfish)
- ☐ Develop methods for preventing pest fish spread
- ☐ Determine the impact of pest fish on biodiversity in geothermal waters

Good Trout Fishing

- ☐ Determine what limits the number of juveniles reared in streams
- ☐ Determine the contribution of trout that enter the lake at <90 mm make to the Lake Taupo fishery
- ☐ Assess the impacts of changes in water quality on smelt and trout populations
- ☐ Determine the factors that impact on juvenile trout survival in Lake Taupo
- ☐ Determine the dynamics of smelt population and how changes in food web structure will impact on smelt and trout

Recreational Opportunities

- ☐ Establish the recreational carrying capacity for Taupo
- ☐ Determine the relationship between pressure indicators such as boat ramp permits and fishing licenses to actual use
- ☐ Determine the impact of active recreation on the passive use on the Lake and its catchment
- ☐ Determine the potential environmental impacts of the recreational use, in addition to littering, destruction of native forest, and introduction of aquatic weeds

Foreshore Reserves

- ☐ Determine the impacts of use of reserves on reserves and the surrounding environs

Outstanding Scenery

- ☐ Determine how to assess the visual quality of water and how this relates to measurements of water clarity

Geological Features

- ☐ Determine fundamental processes controlling eruptions and earthquakes

Appendix 16: Research Priorities of Community

Clear Water

- ☐ Develop relationship between other water clarity variables and secchi depth
- ☐ Determine factors affecting the water clarity of Lake Taupo (i.e. algal populations and sediment loads)
- ☐ Determine nutrient release from sediments in Lake Taupo
- ☐ Determine relationship between nitrogen dynamics and water clarity
- ☐ Determine relationship between blue-green algal populations and water clarity

Safe Swimming

- ☐ Investigate impacts of increased tourism and settlement (i.e. nearshore sewage treatment plants and stormwater runoff) on swimmer safety
- ☐ Determine implications of disease causing organisms such as enteroviruses and adenoviruses, in recreational waters
- ☐ Developing an assay for pathogenic organisms in freshwater

Weed-free Lake

- ☐ Determine the impacts of invasive aquatic weeds on biodiversity
- ☐ Assessment of the potential for increased shoreline stranding of aquatic plants
- ☐ Determine the impact catfish on ecosystem function and biodiversity
- ☐ Develop management techniques to protect and manage representative aquatic plant community and habitat types

High Quality Inflowing Water

- ☐ Determine nutrient load under different land management practices
- ☐ Determine the effectiveness and economics of nitrogen load reductions
- ☐ Development of nitrogen load predictions for Lake Taupo
- ☐ Determine the relative importance of P and N loads to the lake
- ☐ Assess the potential importance of subsurface (below plant root zone) N attenuation

Appendix 16: Research Priorities of Community



Table 6: High Priority Research Needs.

| ID | Overall |
|--|---------|
| Code Research Need | Score |
| IF3 Predictions of nitrogen loads entering Lake Taupo in the future | 90 |
| IF1 Determine nutrient load under different land management practices | 88 |
| IF4 Determine the relative importance of P and N loads to the lake | 87 |
| IF5 Assess nutrient removal through wetlands, filter walls, instream management and in ground below the root zone | 87 |
| IF2 Determine the effectiveness and economics of nitrogen load reductions | 82 |
| DW1 Epidemiological study of campylobacter and salmonella in rural water supplies compared with Taupo water supplies | 68 |
| SS1 Investigate impacts of increased tourism and settlement on swimmer safety (ie nearshore treatment plants and stormwater) | 64 |
| FR1 Determine the impacts of use of reserves, on reserves and the surrounding environs | 60 |
| CW5 Determine relationship between blue-green algal populations and water clarity | 59 |
| W1 Determine the impacts of invasive aquatic weeds on biodiversity | 59 |
| CW3 Determine nutrient release from sediments in Lake Taupo | 58 |
| SS3 Developing an assay for pathogenic organisms in freshwater | 56 |
| SS2 Determine implications of disease causing organisms such as enteroviruses and adenoviruses, in recreational waters | 55 |
| DW2 Determine the relationship between algae concentrations and the depth of water to assist in positioning drinking water intakes | 55 |
| DW3 Investigate the relationship between algal species, biotoxin production and taste and odour problems in Taupo water supply | 55 |

Appendix 16: Research Priorities of Community



Table 7: Medium Priority Research Needs.

| ID | | Overall |
|------|--|---------|
| Code | Research Need | Score |
| RC1 | Establish the recreational carrying capacity for Taupo | 54 |
| T4 | Determine the factors that impact on juvenile trout survival in Lake Taupo | 53 |
| T3 | Assess the impacts of changes in water quality on smelt and trout populations | 51 |
| W3 | Determine the impact of catfish on ecosystem function and biodiversity | 51 |
| RC4 | Determine the potential environmental impacts of recreational use (in addition to littering, destruction of native forest, aquatic weed introductions) | 46 |
| W4 | Develop management techniques to protect and manage representative aquatic plant community and habitat types | 43 |
| W2 | Assessment of the potential for increased shoreline stranding of aquatic plants | 40 |
| D5 | Develop a detailed understanding of remnant Koaro ecology to enable development of a conservation strategy for this species | 38 |
| D6 | Establish the impact of catfish on koura (crayfish) and morihana (goldfish) | 38 |
| D7 | Develop methods for preventing pest fish spread | 38 |
| D8 | Determine the impact of pest fish on biodiversity in geothermal waters | 38 |
| CW1 | Develop relationship between other water clarity variables and secchi depth | 37 |
| CW2 | Determine factors affecting the water clarity of Lake Taupo (ie algal populations and sediment loads) | 37 |
| CW4 | Determine relationship between nitrogen dynamics and water clarity | 37 |
| D3 | Determine the impact of alien species on geothermal stream invertebrates | 36 |

Appendix 16: Research Priorities of Community

Table 12: 2020 Forum Low Priority Research Needs.

| Code | Overall Research Priorities | Forum Rank |
|------|--|------------|
| SS3 | Develop an assay for pathogenic organisms in freshwater | 15 |
| T4 | Determine factors that impact on juvenile trout survival in Lake Taupo | 15 |
| D6 | Establish the impact of catfish on koura (crayfish) and morihana (goldfish) | 15 |
| RC2 | Determine the relationship between pressure indicators such as boat ramp permits and fishing licenses to actual use | 14 |
| RC4 | Determine potential environmental impacts of recreation (in addition to littering, destruction of native forest, aquatic weed introductions) | 12 |
| D5 | Develop a detailed understanding of remnant Koaro ecology to enable development of a conservation strategy for this species | 12 |
| T1 | Determine what limits the number of juvenile trout in streams | 12 |
| GF1 | Determine fundamental processes controlling eruptions and earthquakes | 11 |
| T2 | Determine the contribution of trout that enter the lake at <90 mm to the Lake Taupo fishery | 11 |
| D3 | Determine the impact of alien species on geothermal stream invertebrates | 9 |
| D8 | Determine the impact of pest fish on biodiversity in geothermal waters | 9 |
| D2 | Determine impacts of movement of aquatic invertebrates as a result of power schemes | 9 |

¹ From analysis presented earlier in this report

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback



May 26, 2004

2020 TAUPU-NUI-A-TIA ACTION PLAN (2020 TAP) Workshop: LWAG & 2020 Forum, April 28, 2004 – Feedback from the 2020 Team

Feedback on Community Comments on the various Community Values and Suggested Actions
(NB: Left-hand comment is made by community representatives at the above meeting; the right hand response column is the 2020 team response to the comments made.)

Abbreviations: NTMTB = Ngati Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board
TDC = Taupo District Council
2020TAP = 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan
DIA = Department of Internal Affairs.
EW = Environment Waikato
DOC = Department of Conservation
LWAG = Lakes and Waterways Action Group

Overriding Issue: Relationships Between Agencies and Groups

| Comment | Response |
|--|---|
| There should be more community involvement in Governance body. There appears to be more involvement by government agencies. | Governance body for implementation of 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan (TAP) currently under discussion with existing Joint Management Group. The emphasis on government agencies is because they are the ones with the statutory responsibilities for certain actions and associated funding sources. Through the elected members councils represent the community. LWAG is currently also represented on the Joint Management Group and it is intended to retain LWAG and the 2020 Forum as conduits of information to and from the agencies involved during the implementation of the 2020 TAP. LWAG/2020 Forum may also assume a watchdog role and assist in monitoring and reporting progress of the 2020 TAP. |
| Will there be a forum to monitor the action plan where the community can get involved. | |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

| Comment | Response |
|--|---|
| TREET is proposing an Environment Centre in Taupo. This could become the main site of coordination for many environmental initiatives around Lake Taupo. | Agreed. 2020 supports the Taupo EcoCentre, for which funding of \$20,000 for 2004/05 has just been approved. 2020 is represented on the Taupo EcoCentre Committee (Beat Huser). Also refer to actions under Commercial Value 13. |
| Also TDC has an "Arts Coordinator" and a "Safer Amenities Coordinator" – Where is their Environmental Coordinator? There is a need for an "Environment" Officer in TDC to monitor effects from activities around the lake and rivers – both present and future! | The issue of an environmental co-ordinator was raised by the Joint Management Group of the 2020 Project in their submissions to TDC on its Long-term Council Community Plan. EW has staff in Taupo responsible for monitoring activities for which it has statutory responsibilities eg water discharges, riverbeds, soil erosion etc. |
| Do you think that reviewing the policies and plans every 2 years is too quick? It may not give enough time for the actions/ policies to take effects, things take time. Maybe 5 years? | Agreed. Focus put onto review of actions in terms of meeting values. This would assist in identifying any policy gaps. Regular review of 2020 TAP includes two aspects: 1) an annual check whether actions have been undertaken; 2) measuring weather the identified values and outcomes are achieved (using indicators). Review of the 2020 TAP also needs to be coordinated with reviews of district/regional plan as well as council's Long-term Council Community Plans. |
| Regular meetings a good idea. | Noted |
| Provide opportunities for landowners as users to have input to Water Quality. | Noted. Refer to EW's Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. Refer to Value 1: Clear Water. |
| What about other Govt agencies – SOEs, Genesis, Mighty River Power, Department of Health – are they responsible for closing waterways re: cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), water quality issues, faecal coliforms etc? | It is recognised that other agencies also have a role to play in managing the issues of Lake Taupo and inflowing rivers and streams. Discussions are currently being held with respect to their representation in the proposed Governance body. However it is also considered that they do not have as strong a mandate for managing the issues raised through the action plan as those five key bodies identified (NTMTB, EW, TDC, DIA, DOC). The Department of Health is responsible for issuing health warnings for bathing beaches and water supplies, under the Public Health Act. |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

| Comment | Response |
|--|---|
| What happens if the actions identified in the Action Plan are not implemented? | There are a number of planning, review and reporting stages built into the implementation of the 2020 TAP (this section). It is a non-statutory plan so there is no compulsory mandate. However we would anticipate that the Local Government Act which strongly encourages integration between agencies would assist as a driver to seeing this work undertaken. Likewise we would anticipate that the community groups would have a "watchdog/ supportive" role with respect to the actions in this plan. |
| Indicator: What if actions are not implemented? | Added as an indicator (number of actions committed to each agency achieved). |
| Why is DIA involved at all? Control should be restricted to TDC/Environment Waikato/NTMTB. | DIA are the Crown's representative (as a result of the agreement between the Crown and Ngati Tuwharetoa, vesting the lake bed with Ngati Tuwharetoa) for managing navigation issues on Lake Taupo. They are responsible for funding the harbourmaster and associated activities. |
| There is no reason also for DOC to control the Lake Taupo Fishery. Fish and Game Councils have shown themselves competent elsewhere. | We cannot seek to change which agency is responsible for which activity in the Lake Taupo area through this action plan. It would need to be done as direct lobbying to Central Government and Ngati Tuwharetoa. Refer also to the 1946 Fishing Regulations for Lake Taupo. |
| Relationships – Where are the links to education as peoples behavior will not change long term with rules only? | Agreed. Additional references to education added to the various values. The 2020 project has put a lot of effort into education by collating and making the currently available information available and accessible to agencies, interested groups and the general public (e.g. Fact Sheets, 2020 website: www.taupoinfo.org.nz ; Teacher Workshop, 2020 Forum). The new Taupo EcoCentre will continue this important education role. |
| What statutory status will the governance have? | The Governance structures will be a non-statutory body. Its powers will come from joint agreement from the funding agencies to support the work identified in the 2020 TAP and to aim to protect Lake Taupo and other values important to the Taupo community. |
| Annual report – who will this go to and how will it be reported in the public area? | Noted. Added suggestion that it is distributed to Governance body/agencies and then to community/public. |
| 2020 website – need to have other media as not all have internet access? | Noted. Added into plan. |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 1: Clear Water & Value 5: High Quality Inflowing Water

| Comment | Response |
|--|---|
| Nutrient input arises from wrong and unsustainable land use. Because of the volcanic origin, which has produced soils that contain no "chemical"; charges, therefore such soils have no capacity to deal with nitrogen inputs at all. Land based systems – effluent containing N discharged anywhere in the catchment finishes up in the Lake. | Noted. Being addressed as a part of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy. Refer also to actions under this section (Clear Water). The issue is contamination of water from utilisation of land for pastoral farming, not unsustainable land use as such. Rules in the proposed plan will seek to set conditions for the management of Nitrogen usage. |
| Schools would love to get involved with some actions – develop protocols for sampling that students could follow to collect reliable data. | Added. Also reference made to regular annual teacher education workshops under "relationships" section. |
| Areas of large numbers of small rural blocks, and the likelihood of further intensive subdivision eg. Kinloch valley. | Being dealt with as overall part of TDC growth strategy and more specifically through structure plans. Review of District Plan re: rural sector is underway. Structure plan does refer to reticulation at Kinloch. |
| Look at whether a reticulated sewage scheme might be a better idea than wholesale septic tanks plus the economics might be closer than you think in light of the higher cost of future septic tanks | |
| Septic tanks – upgrade – adopt disposal away from lake – strip N. | Refer to actions. TDC's Draft Long-term Community Council Plan includes provisions for up-grading existing sewage schemes. |
| Take urgent action to upgrade sewage. Take urgent action to strip N from sewage effluent. Set and enforce standards. | Refer to actions. EW is currently setting standards for on-site sewage discharge through the Waikato Regional Plan. Enforcement requirements acknowledged. TDC is also upgrading infrastructure to improve management of sewage (refer to LTCCP). |
| Remove stormwater. | TDC has plan to reduce adverse effects of stormwater into the Lake, through managing catchments. Stormwater cannot be totally removed. |
| Are volcanic soils that are free draining able to remove even low N inputs before they enter groundwater. | Generally such soils don't remove much ie it's less than in other soils and it depends on the time of the year (ie related to water table and rainfall) and on vegetation cover. |
| Prohibit sewage from all boats – commercial and recreational. | The Waikato Regional Plan already has a rule to achieve this. Refer to actions re: implementation of this rule. |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

| Comment | Response |
|---|---|
| Provide sealed vault toilets at convenient sites around the lake for use by boats and day-trippers. Everywhere there is a roadside rest area – otherwise they will use the bushes. | Both TDC and DOC operate long drop toilets on the edge of the Lake – refer actions. TDC currently provides an overview of required services and has service level agreements for such facilities. If further facilities are necessary, there is a TDC process in place to address this (through public input into Asset Management Plans and LTCCP). |
| Stock trucks travelling around Lake Taupo South must empty stock effluent tanks at Depot in Oranui first, Environment Waikato need to introduce rules to ensure compliance. | Use of effluent tanks and their emptying is a voluntary practice. The transport legislation does not allow any regulation of this matter. |
| All newer residential developments have upgraded "adequate" provision for treatment of sewage and stormwater – How long will it take for sewage and stormwater to be managed to an upgraded standard. | New areas are sometimes linked to older areas, ie where community schemes exist and there is capacity in the system. Three settlements Tauranga-Taupo, Hatepe and Little Waihi aren't sewered. However the LTCCP sets out a capital works programme for upgrading these areas. |
| Being the top predator in the Lake = how much in the way of natural contaminants (heavy metals) – volcanic activity, soils accumulates in trout flesh? | Surveys have been done and none of the tests for over 100 contaminants have exceeded the human health guidelines for the consumption of fish. It is a low risk. Regular ongoing monitoring for contaminants in fish is costly, but could be useful as an early warning sign to detect any increases of contaminant levels over time. Refer also to Value 7. |
| Follow the Kyoto model and tax nitrogen polluters, and allow trade in pollution rights. | Noted. Nitrogen trading is being discussed as a part of the "Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy". |
| Buying and retiring land pushes up the price of the remaining land thereby rewarding the remaining polluters. | |
| Stormwater issues include Taupo District Council drains in the industrial area. – Requires monitoring of industry compliance. A manual outlining compliance rules, timescale/strategy to be agreed between industry and Taupo District Council officer. Monitoring. | TDC monitors all stormwater discharge areas and has their own laboratory testing person. TDC also has a trade waste bylaw that controls the release of contaminants from industrial/commercial enterprises into stormwater. EW also has a role in monitoring TDC's compliance with the consent conditions. |
| Requires Taupo District Council officer as Environmental watchdogs. We don't have one. | The issue of a watchdog role was raised by the 2020 Joint Management Group in their submission to TDC on their Long Term Council Community Plan. EW has monitoring staff for water quality issues. |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 2: Safe Swimming

| Comment | Response |
|---|---|
| Navigation safety regulations enforced keep Whakaipo Bay water ski lane free!! Need safe bay for kids to kayak. Conflict of use, eg: Jetskis vs swimmers along the lakefront. | Lake Taupo Navigation Safety Bylaw is currently being drafted and a public submission stage will occur in June. There is also Lake Taupo Facilities Planning and Development Forum which involves a wide range of stakeholders who meet regularly to discuss issues the public have raised. Added (to Value 3: Weeds). Currently EW advises TDC and the District Health Board (Medical Officer of Health) when algal blooms occur. |
| Prompt communication re toxic algae bloom. | TDC sets out a service level agreement for services in its Asset Management Plans. These can be discussed through public process of LTCCP. While the philosophy referred to works well in the wilderness areas, Lake Taupo waterfront has a high level of visitor pressures. |
| Remove all litter bins, they only encourage people to think litter is someone else's (the councils) problem. The philosophy/ belief should be we are all responsible for our own litter; it works reasonably well in wilderness places. | Agreed. Therefore EW guidelines/targets are stricter than the National Guidelines for Freshwater Bathing set by Ministry for the Environment. |
| Note - Water Quality fails a long time before minimum bathing standards are reached. | Currently being addressed. Refer to comments under Value: Clear Water and Value: Foreshore Reserves. |
| Require all boats to have holding tanks – commercial, recreational and those with overnight capacity. | Refer to comments under Value: Clear Water re: toilet assets. |
| Toilets (Eco type) in remote spots ie Waihana, with tanks to accept port potties, this will stop emitting same into Lake Taupo. Department of Conservation and Environment Waikato to discuss with Taupo District Council. | Added. See also Values 8 & 9 (Recreation & Foreshore Reserves). |
| Schools could do this very well (litter survey on beaches). | Swans are managed through Fish and Game. They monitor population numbers & culling. However, the number of black swans is determined by the available habitat they prefer and culling will not be successful as other birds continue to move in from other areas. Shags are a native species. Shags have full protection and game birds partial protection under the Conservation Act. |
| Culling of excessive birds/shags etc. | |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 2: Safe Swimming

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|---|--|
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| Prompt communication re toxic algae bloom. | Added (to Value 3: Weeds). Currently EW advises TDC and the District Health Board (Medical Officer of Health) when algal blooms occur. |
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Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 3: Weed Free Lake

| Comment | Response |
|--|---|
| Existing weeds/new weeds (biggest risk = spread). | Added action re: surveillance. |
| Control of weeds in moorings/marinas and harbours. Keep boat ramps weed free. | Currently undertaken by marina owner/ harbour master. |
| Wash down facilities at boat ramps which do not drain into the lake. | Refer to actions. |
| Stormwater – sediment – diquat – control (harbour can be closed; Kinloch). | Stormwater controls refer to Value 1: Clear Water |
| Swans are also harvesters, they do not add nutrients, they recycle it. Delete annual reporting on black swans. | Noted. Deleted. |
| 2020 Weed group ongoing management issues discussed. | Noted. |
| Keep abreast of research/methodology for weed eradication nationally and internationally. | Added. |
| Weeds - eliminate N input. | Refer to the "Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy". |
| Apparently new algae species have arrived in the Tokaanu tailrace. Where have they come from? Do birds bring in new species? | EW is not aware of any new algal species being transported in the Tokaanu tailrace. Algal spores are very small and light, and are carried around the world in the jetstream. |
| Where are Pest Fish? Advocacy about their spread/invasion is also important. Koi carp, Gambusia, rudd eg. | Added to Value 6: Diversity |
| Weed clean up plan. When weed is dumped on the foreshore through bad weather, it smells horribly otherwise. | TDC currently has a strategy for addressing this. |
| "monitor health effects of algal blooms". | Added. |
| Put link to water quality ones. | Added |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 4: Safe Drinking Water

| Comment | Response |
|--|--|
| Stormwater – land based treatment. | Refer to actions. TDC is also addressing catchment issues to reduce adverse effects on water quality and improve treatment options. Not possible to reduce all stormwater into the Lake. |
| Stormwater treatment is essential – as is removal/ treatment of road run-off. Imperative that work begin at older settlements now not in the "near" future. | Refer to the TDC Long Term Council Community Plan for outline of intended works. |
| Stormwater – diversion – build a tunnel along the lakefront to the Harbour entrance. Drain the stormwater into the Waikato. It keeps arsenic, mercury and those other lovely things company. | Refer to actions. Also to above comment on improving catchment issues, ie management focused on inputs rather than end of pipe measures. Do not support transferring the problem to another water body. |
| Toxic blooms emanate from the blue green nitrogen fixing types. Is there a chance you can stop the blooms? If so – How? | The factors controlling excessive growth (=blooms) of blue-green algae are complex and not fully understood. The availability of nutrients and their respective levels (e.g. ratio of nitrogen to phosphorus) play an important role. EW, NIWA and the University of Waikato are currently undertaking research to improve our understanding of these factors. |
| Toxic blooms – only in certain ideal conditions (is there a way to predict occurrence?) – How high is the threat/probability of it occurring – Would be good to have info for this to make it clearer to community | The 2020 Research Plan has identified this as a significant knowledge gap and hence a priority research need. |
| The "Annual Community Challenge" - Drink a glass of lake water. Soon see how perception changes! | Added. |
| Need to look at other options to clean water to drinking standard without chemicals that go into the lake and river (TDC). | At present chlorinate the water, but in the process of implementing a drinking water supply up-grade over the next 8 years (refer to the LTCCP). Best practice options will be used in these up-grades to achieve drinking water standards. |
| Encourage people to collect rainwater as a way to live sustainably in the catchment. | Agreed. This is a part of a low impact urban design philosophy. While it is not mandatory, Council is promoting low impact approaches relating to drinking water, stormwater and sewage. |
| Reduce the need for chemical treatment of water via town supply. Also – what about all the people who waste water – sprinklers etc. | TDC is also looking into water conservation options/ tools as a part of the wider water conservation programme. |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 6: Diverse Plants and Animals

| Comment | | Response |
|---|--|--|
| Identify key ecological areas etc and do something. | | Agreed. Refer actions under Values 10, 11, 12: Wilderness, Scenery, Geological Features. |
| Do we know what flora and fauna is currently in the lake and catchment – Should we be completing an inventory (if not already done) to identify significant plants and animals along with ecological areas. | | Agreed. Refer actions under Values 10, 11, & 12: Wilderness, Scenery, Geological Features. |
| Add endemic species to ecological areas and land features. | | Added. |
| Native fish will breed. Need to select sites with no trout. They won't last long with trout in catchments. Would need to select the right place. Feasibility trial for native fish breeding – Good idea | | Noted. Occurs naturally where waterfalls prevent the upstream migration of trout eg waterfall on the Tauranga-Taupo River. |
| Removal – management of pest species eg catfish. | | Added. Not feasible to remove all pests (e.g. catfish). |
| Establish effect trout have on native species. | | Added. |
| I think the primary focus should be on indigenous biodiversity – both flora and fauna (eg native birds). | | Agreed. However, RMA requires wider focus of other matters also listed in the actions. |
| Re: Indicators: Monitoring/ecological surveys within riparian zones – give an indication of potential of the riparian area/its success. | | Added. Condition/health of riparian areas. |
| Invertebrate sampling - indicator of health, food source, and wider aspects of water quality. | | Agreed. Part of regular monitoring of rivers and streams (not Lake). |
| Anabaena and other species of blue/green algae fix their own nitrogen. Would the reduction of nitrogen inputs alter the frequency of blooms? First occurrence of blooms happened in 1966 at Kinloch when nitrogen inputs less than what they are today. | | The link between catchment loads of N and fixation of atmospheric nitrogen gas by blue-green algae is complex. In theory, blue-greens could overcome any catchment nitrogen reductions by fixing nitrogen gas – this is giving these algae a competitive advantage. However, the exact conditions under which this might occur are unclear. EW is not aware of a bloom at Kinloch in 1966. No details of this seem to be documented. |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 7: Good Trout Fishing

| Comment | Response |
|---|---|
| Don't limit riparian management to spawning areas. Other Native species such as Whio (Blue duck) benefit in the mid to upper catchments as well. | Focus in this value is on trout – however point added to Value: Diversity. Suitable blue duck habitat already has some form of protection. |
| Protection of habitat and riparian margins should be a priority in all areas of the catchment – not just key spawning areas. | Refer to Actions in Value 6: Diversity. Most are already protected as part of the Lake Taupo Catchment Control Scheme/Project Watershed, and via land use controls in Regional Plan and the resource consent process. |
| Link clean streams project to education programme in schools and wider community. | Added to Value 6: Diversity. |
| "Clean Streams" is limited to voluntary riparian plantings on private land. | Correct. |
| How can farmers be encouraged to protect wetlands – stream tributaries? - RMA by-laws, Environment Waikato rules? | See Actions Value 7: Trout Fishing. A number of incentives are available. |
| License sales will be influenced by: Floods ¼ years previously Economic climate Accessibility issues. | Noted. |
| Habitat of native fish and smelt also need to be protected. Pest fish species need monitoring. | Refer to Value 6: Diversity. Eg. Catfish included in monitoring programme. |
| Flood protection protects houses and property not fish. Ongoing machinery in river bad for fishery. | Refer to actions Value 7: Trout Fishing. Consents are also being applied for and concerns should be addressed through that process. |
| Threat – Overuse of ground water by bores for subdivision and water taken from streams causes spawning streams to diminish and dry. | Current issue with the Whangamata Stream is being investigated. We have also just been in a rainfall deficit period. Rainfall is necessary for recharge. |
| Encourage feedback from trout fishermen regarding their views re – good trout fishing. | Added as indicator for Value 7: Trout Fishing. |
| Trout health and size as an indicator - Food source – invertebrates relates to diverse plants and animals. Looking into food chain – algae – inverts – trout. Is there competition/other fishes affecting health or size. | Noted. Surveys and research undertaken by DOC are looking at food chain factors affecting health and size of trout, and the effects of competition. These investigations will underpin the findings of the indicator "Trout Health and Size". |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 13: Commercial Opportunities

| Comment | Response |
|---|--|
| Tourism operators to be licensed and to pay a fee towards the cost of managing the reserve they use for nothing. | Both TDC and DOC have a concessions policy and charges for use of public space for commercial purposes. ✓ |
| Business encouraged to adopt principles of sustainability eg Green Globe 21 Could be coordinated through EcoCentre Taupo (proposed environment centre). | Noted. Refer to actions. ✓ |
| Encourage the psyche that this is part of the attraction for people to go with these operators. | Added. ✓ |
| How many commercial operators can we "tolerate" on Lake Taupo before we have adverse effects (more eco operators & less polluting operators). | Noted – refer to actions and research needs on carrying capacity. ✓ |
| How does growth of tourism expect to be able to maintain the values of (a) wilderness experience (b) recreational opportunities for those who live locally – the more guiding companies and tourists coming to Taupo, the more these values will be eroded. | Noted – refer to actions and research needs on carrying capacity. ✓ |
| Development that is dependent on/predicated on the values (eco-tourism type ventures) – business will then have a vested interest in the values. | Agreed. Refer to support in actions under Value 13: Commercial Opportunities. ✓ |
| "Appropriate" opportunities – review the L Taupo regulations and limits to Commercial use. | Lake Taupo Regulations are currently being reviewed and will have their own public process for submissions to be made. ✓ |
| Consider scope and scale – Recall the Big "CAT" too large for this lake. | Noted. ✓ |
| Impact reports both positive and negative on each opportunity. But not at a prohibitive costs. | This is a requirement of the RMA. ✓ |
| Annual Environmental Expo. | Added to "Relationships" section. ✓ |
| Look at a future date to stop two strokes motors being used on Lake Taupo. | Strong overseas trends to phase-out (and even prohibit) two-stroke motors due to their polluting characteristics. New Zealand will follow this worldwide trend of two-stroke motors being phased out of production by manufacturers. ✓ |
| Develop plan of win/win opportunities for operators and the environment. Promote plan and opportunities. | This plan has been developed under a sustainable development framework win/win is our motto. ✓ |

Appendix 17: Summary of Community Feedback

Value 14: Cultural Values

| Comment | Response |
|---|--|
| 1. Confusion on roles and responsibilities Re: establishing an Env Unit: A very good idea. Would like to see this go beyond fresh water issues and into all environmental issues within the area. | Noted. |
| Communication and education re cultural values - Cultural values more visible please. | Noted. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Environmental Unit will assist with this significantly. It is anticipated that the Environmental Iwi Management Plan and better communication through the Action Plan will establish more visibility of cultural values associated with the Lake. |
| 2. Lack of partnership between Ngati Tuwharetoa and government agencies. Protect cultural landscapes and cultural heritage. | Noted. Refer to comment above. Also added to Values: 10, 11, & 12 (Wilderness, Scenery, Geological Features). |
| 3. Intellectual and property rights protected. Less lead input. | Noted. Refer to Value 1: Clear Water, especially management of stormwater. Fish and Game are addressing issues of shot and sinkers. It was identified as a low risk in the Risk Assessment undertaken as an earlier part of this project. Since this year lead is prohibited for duck shooting near lakes and other waterways. |
| 4. Adverse effect on Mauri through mixing of waters from other catchments. DOC would really like to have a key environmental person to direct all issues about species etc. | Noted. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Environmental Unit will assist with this significantly. |
| 5. Discharge of Sewage and stormwater. | No comments made. |
| 6. Protect both tribal and hapu waahi tapu. | |
| 7. Lack of knowledge on status or condition of waahi tapu. Shouldn't information be shared to increase understanding? | Noted. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Environmental Unit will assist with this significantly. |

Appendix 18: Link Between Dimensions of Accountability for Environmental Values

Features of Accountability for Environmental Values of the Community

| Definition of Environment Values | Community Concerns | Responsibilities to Protect Environmental Values | Controls | Indicators | Parties Assigned Responsibilities |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| Clear and high quality water in Lake Taupo | Pollution from farming and sewage systems toxic algal blooms and weed growth | Implementation of Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and Variation 5; Manage storm-water and sewage systems; Water quality sampling; | Variation 5 controls including: grandparenting, nitrogen trading, resource consents etc. | Water clarity and quality measured by Secchi Disk; Input of nutrients into Lake Taupo; dwellings on reticulated sewage; Volume of treated sewage and storm-water; water quality for ecological health measured by Black disk, Water quality for recreation etc. | Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board; Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation; and Department of Internal Affairs |
| Diverse flora and fauna in Lake Taupo | Water pollution, animal pests and weeds threaten survival of flora and fauna | Pest management strategy, Implementation of Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and Variation 5. | As stated in Regional Pest Management Strategy and Variation 5 controls. | Water quality for ecological health, Input of nutrients; Number of catfish; Number of native fish; Sediment loads etc | Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board; Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation; and Department of Internal Affairs |
| Good trout fishing | Water pollution, and loss of habitat for trout spawning | Plans for improving habitat for trout spawning, standards to protect trout habitats etc | Taupo District Plan Waikato regional Plan | Angler satisfaction; trout health and size; Expenditure by overseas trout anglers; | Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation; |

Appendix 18: Link Between Dimensions of Accountability for Environmental Values

Features of Accountability for Environmental Values of the Community

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Recreational opportunities and foreshore reserves | Pollution from farming, sewage systems toxic algal blooms and weed growth | Develop foreshore management strategy, Promote increased awareness of personal responsibilities for cleanliness of foreshore; Implementation of Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy and Variation 5. | Variation 5 controls; Lake taupo Conservation Strategy; etc. | Public satisfaction with access to waterways, facilities, and recreational. | Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board; Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation; and Department of Internal Affairs |
| Safe drinking water | Pollution from farming, sewage systems toxic algal blooms and weed growth | Safe reticulated drinking water; cover outdoors water tanks; Epidemiological study to determine bacteria content in water supplies, investigate relationship between algal species and problems in water quality; | Variation 5 controls; new Zealand drinking water standards | Faecal organisms, drinking water contaminants and Toxic algal blooms | Taupo District Council |
| Safe swimming | Pollution from farming, sewage systems toxic algal blooms and weed growth; beach litter; overcrowding etc | Managing water quality and activities on the Lake; Promote personal responsibility for removing beach rubbish. | Lake Taupo regulations; Waikato Regional Plan, Variation 5 Controls, etc | Water clarity measured by Secchi Disk; Toxic algal blooms; Rubbish on beaches etc | Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board; Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation; and Department of Internal Affairs |

Appendix 18: Link Between Dimensions of Accountability for Environmental Values

Features of Accountability for Environmental Values of the Community

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Weed-free Lake | Pollution from farming, sewage systems toxic algal blooms and weed growth; loss of habitat; | Review Pest management Strategy; Create awareness; Weed sampling; | A community weed group; Surveillance monitoring programme; Variation 5 controls | Distribution of weeds; Occurrence of new weeds; Toxic algal blooms. | Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation; and Department of Internal Affairs |
| Aesthetic Features – wilderness areas, outstanding scenery and geological features. | Water pollution from sediment loading from large volcanic eruption; Urbanisation; visual and noise pollution; overcrowding and congestion; | Develop national guidelines for the protection of natural landscapes; Strategic overview of protected areas; Identify mechanisms for protecting land and water resources etc | Conservation Management Strategy; Lake Taupo Conservation Strategy; Taupo District Plan; Regional Pest Management Strategy etc | Threats from pests; protected landscapes and sites Area of significant natural features fenced; Area of land in natural state etc | Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board; Environment Waikato; Taupo District Council; Department of Conservation |

Appendix 19: List of Indicators



Feedback on Proposed Indicators for 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan

2020 Forum Workshop - May 6, 2004

For each of the 2020 Value a number of indicators will be used to track progress and assess the success of the 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan. A draft set of indicators had been devised for each value after discussion with agencies.

Monitoring is very costly and therefore it may not be possible to monitor all the proposed indicators. Forum members were asked to indicate which indicators they considered where of high, medium and low importance. These were then collected and the results summarised here.

The revised list of indicators to be included in the 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan is also attached.

| Value | Suggested Indicator | Importance | | |
|--|--|------------|--------|-----|
| | | HIGH | MEDIUM | LOW |
| 1. CLEAR WATER | 1. Water clarity | 8 | 2 | - |
| | 2. Water quality for ecological health (Lake) | 9 | 1 | - |
| | 3. Input of nutrients into the Lake | 8 | 1 | - |
| | 4. Volcanic activity | - | 1 | 9 |
| 2. SAFE SWIMMING | 5. Water quality for recreation | 9 | 1 | - |
| | 6. Toxic algal blooms | 8 | 2 | - |
| | 7. Amount and type of rubbish on beaches | 1 | 7 | 2 |
| | 8. Boating offences | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 3. WEED FREE LAKE | 9. Distribution of weeds | 4 | 6 | - |
| | 10. Occurrence of new weeds | 6 | 4 | - |
| 4. SAFE DRINKING WATER | 11. Faecal organisms | 8 | 2 | - |
| | 12. Drinking water contaminants | 7 | 3 | - |
| | 13. Toxic algal blooms | 8 | 2 | - |
| 5. HIGH QUALITY INFLOWING WATER | 14. Water quality for ecological health (streams & rivers) | 7 | 3 | - |
| | 15. Input of nutrients into the Lake | 8 | 2 | - |

Appendix 19: List of Indicators

| Value | Suggested Indicator | Importance | | |
|---|---|------------|--------|-----|
| | | HIGH | MEDIUM | LOW |
| 6. DIVERSE PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN LAKES AND RIVERS | 16. Water quality for ecological health (Lake) | 8 | 2 | - |
| | 17. Water quality for ecological health (streams & rivers) | 6 | 4 | - |
| | 18. Input of nutrients into the Lake | 6 | 4 | - |
| | 19. Protection of significant ecosystems | 6 | 4 | - |
| 7. GOOD TROUT FISHING | 20. Angler satisfaction | - | 9 | 2 |
| | 21. Trout health and size | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| | 22. Overseas trout anglers | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| 8. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES | 23. Public satisfaction with access | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| 9. FORESHORE RESERVES | 24. Public satisfaction with facilities | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| | 25. Public satisfaction with range of recreational opportunities | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| | 26. Public satisfaction with development design | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| 10. WILDERNESS AREAS | 27. Threats from pests | 6 | 5 | - |
| 11. OUTSTANDING SCENERY | 28. Protected areas/sites | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| | 29. Public satisfaction with wilderness experience; natural character and vistas; condition of geological sites | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 12. GEOLOGICAL FEATURES | | | | |
| 13. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES | 30. Development that contributes to 2020 values | 8 | 2 | - |
| | 31. Employment that contributes to 2020 values | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 14. CULTURAL VALUES | 32. Ngati Tuwharetoa awareness of roles and responsibilities of agencies | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| | 33. Evidence of partnerships | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| | 34. Ngati Tuwharetoa involvement in decision-making of resources | 8 | 2 | - |
| | 35. Use of Genesis & MRP Mitigation funds | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | 36. Waahi tapu sites | 5 | 5 | - |
| | 37. Species diversity and robustness | 6 | 3 | - |
| | 38. Condition of geothermal sites | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Implementation | 39. Number of actions carried out by each agency (as proportion of total) | 6 | 1 | 1 |

Note:

#2 and #16 are the same
#14 and #17 are the same

#6 and #13 are the same
#3, #15 and #18 are the same

Appendix 20: Actions to Protect Community Values

| Community Document | Responsibility/ Action Required | Parties Assigned |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 2020 Action Plan | Reduce manageable nitrogen input into the lake by at least 20 percent | TMTB, EW, and TDC |
| 2020 Action Plan | Minimise any direct discharges to the Lake which contain chemical or bacterial contaminants | EW & TDC |
| 2020 Action Plan | Avoid new stormwater outlets into the Lake (direct discharges) and work towards retaining stormwater in the catchment areas. | EW & TDC |
| 2020 Action Plan | Require boats operating in Lake Taupo to have sewage holding tanks that can only be discharged into shore-side facilities. Develop and implement an education promotion for boat owners to take responsibility for their boat sewage. | EW, TDC & DIA |
| 2020 Action Plan | Develop guidelines for stormwater management in industrial areas. | EW & TDC |
| 2020 Action Plan | Establish a surveillance/monitoring programme to monitor the occurrence, type and distribution of existing weeds and to identify the risk of potential and actual new plants establishing in the Lake (including what threats exist from neighbouring lakes). | EW & DOC |
| Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy | Upgrades to sewerage systems | EW & TDC |
| Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy | Changes in farm management to reduce the amount of nitrogen leached from farmland | Farmers |
| Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy | Changes in rural land use | Landowners |
| Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy | Establish a joint public fund to achieve permanent nitrogen reduction on farmland | EW, TDC & CENTRAL GOVERNMENT |
| Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy | Nitrogen credit trading system | EW |
| Taupo Accord | Management of land use through regulation and education on best practice land-use guidelines | EW, TDC, DOC, federated farmers, land developers, contractors, Forestry Industry, and community. |

Appendix 21: Extract of Joint Management Group Annual Report

| VALUE: CLEAR WATER AND HIGH QUALITY INFLOWING WATER | | | | |
|--|-----------|--------------------|---|--|
| Action | Reference | Agencies | Status | |
| Reduce manageable nitrogen input into the Lake by at least 20% through the work of the Protecting Lake Taupo Strategy & through a variation to the WRP (including a new regime for controlling diffuse run-off of nutrients from all land and higher standards for wastewater disposal). | p. 30. | TMTB/TAMU, EW, TDC | Ongoing, in final stages of First Schedule RMA process. Council adopted decisions on the proposed variation to the Waikato Regional Plan – Lake Taupo Catchment (referred to as RPV5) in March 2007. Nine appeals have been lodged, and EW is currently in the process of settling these. If there are appeals that cannot be settled, the Environment Court has five weeks set aside from April to June 2008 to hear them. It is anticipated that the variation will become operative in early 2009. Outside of this RMA process, but referred to in the variation, the Lake Taupo Protection Trust has a goal of permanently removing 20% of the manageable nitrogen from pastoral land. It is likely to wait for the outcome of appeals before it begins to purchase nitrogen using the public fund. | |
| Consider expanding existing services to a mobile household hazardous waste collection service (Hazmobile) for old paints, oil chemicals, batteries, etc. | p. 30 | EW, TDC | No progress on this action specifically. However, EW is supporting the Agrecovery programme, a national agricultural container collection and processing scheme. There is a collection site for these containers at the Taupo landfill. | |

Appendix 21: Extract of Joint Management Group Annual Report

| Action | Reference | Agencies | Status |
|---|-----------|----------|--|
| Minimise any direct discharges to the Lake which contain chemical or bacterial contaminants (excluding natural discharges & stormwater). | p. 30 | EW, TDC | Ongoing. There is ongoing issuing of consents for direct (point source) discharges and effects on lake water quality are considered as part of the resource consent process. There is some control over non-point source discharges through land use consents (eg) to mitigate the effects of sediment from earthworks on the lake. Other methods include general education and advocacy. |
| Manage stormwater catchments to reduce contaminants in run-off from entering the Lake (such as increasing range/type of settling ponds, treatment of road run-off, catchment reconfiguration to divert stormwater out of the catchment, educating people on use of stormwater drains, managing industrial and subdivision sites to avoid stormwater run-off). | p. 30. | EW, TDC | Ongoing. TDC has a comprehensive stormwater consent from EW. The conditions of the consent cover a range of matters including the quality of the stormwater discharge and the development of stormwater management plans. An example is the recently developed stormwater management plan for Acacia Bay. This includes many measures for reducing contaminants in run off to the Lake. |
| Avoid as far as practicable any new stormwater outlets into the Lake (direct discharges) and work towards retaining storm water in catchment areas. | p. 30. | EW, TDC | Ongoing. TDC's consent covers existing and new growth areas. The consent conditions include avoiding direct discharges to the Lake as far as practicable. EW is encouraging TDC and developers to develop storm water management plans and implement storm water improvement initiatives through these plans. |

Appendix 21: Extract of Joint Management Group Annual Report

| Action | Reference | Agencies | Status |
|---|-----------|--------------|---|
| EW and TDC should agree on each agency's responsibilities for managing septic tanks and long drops, as a part of the Taupo variation to the Waikato Regional Plan. This includes monitoring and ensuring sub-standard septic tanks are upgraded or replaced. | p. 30 | EW, TDC | Some progress. RPV5 contains a number of provisions relating to domestic on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems (septic tanks). Method 7 and rules in section 3.10.6 of RPV5 set out some respective TDC and EW responsibilities for managing these systems in the catchment. For instance, owners of systems in the near shore zone which pose highest risk to the Lake have new reporting requirements to TDC. New systems are being monitored as part of the building consent process. However, work is still in progress to investigate ways of cost-effectively managing existing systems. |
| TDC and DoC to identify any long-drops (on-site sewage treatment systems) that need to be removed or upgraded to a sealed vault system to avoid impacts on groundwater. | p. 30 | TDC, DoC | Ongoing. DoC has no long drops around Lake Taupo. All toilets are sealed vault units. TDC is in the process of identifying the long drops it has around the lake that need to be removed or upgraded. A programme will then be produced for replacing them, as budgets allow, over time. |
| Consider the need to prohibit boat scrapings and maintenance discharges from entering the Lake. | p. 30 | EW, DIA | No progress on EW's part. Not an immediate priority. |
| As part of implementing the EW rule prohibiting sewage discharges to the Lake, require boats operating in Lake Taupo to have sewage holding tanks that can only be discharged into shore-side facilities, chemical toilets if capable of overnight stays or alternative receptacles if used as day trip boat. | p. 30 | EW, TDC, DIA | No progress. There are no resources (staff or financial) dedicated to this action. |

Appendix 21: Extract of Joint Management Group Annual Report

4

| Action | Reference | Agencies | Status |
|---|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| Develop and implement an education promotion for boat owners to take responsibility for their boat sewage. | p. 30. | TMTB/TAMU, EW, TDC, DIA | Ongoing. EW sent letters to berth owners in April 06 and produced a flyer to raise awareness of the effects and rules associated with boat sewage. The flyer was passed on to the Harbour Master with the intention that all people who buy a ramp permit receive a copy. Flyer content sets out issue of boat sewage contaminating the Lake, and states that discharging boat sewage into the Lake is prohibited. The flyer also shows the locations of pump out and port-a-potty disposal facilities around the Lake. |
| Assess whether current boat sewage discharge facilities are sufficient and provide further sewage pump out facilities at key boat launching/mooring areas, if required. Clarify which agency will be responsible for maintaining the services provided. | p. 31. | TMTB/TAMU, EW, TDC, DoC, DIA | Ongoing. A new pump-out facility has been installed at the Taupo wharf, and an existing one has been made available for use at Kuratau but is not yet operational. TDC has proposed to provide a discharge facility as part of the concept plan for the improvement scheme at Pier 87/Nukuhau Boat Ramp Reserve. The Harbour Master supplies and maintains all the existing discharge facilities, except for power and water supply at Kuratau, which the Harbour Master considers should be the responsibility of the TDC. |
| Undertake a literature review to identify how boat sewage is managed in other Lakes (such as Lake Tahoe, Great Lakes and Scandinavia). | p. 31 | EW | Completed. EW informally reviewed the literature relating to boat sewage management in other lakes in 2005. A formal literature review was not produced |