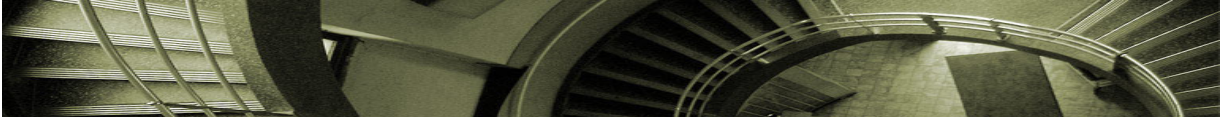


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### Abstract

Community engagement and community development have become not only a significant issue but also a significant field of practice for corporations operating a local milieu, as one of their corporate social responsibility policy. Yet, it is unclear when different community development processes are appropriate, how they can be implemented and their efficiency be measured. Furthermore, it is essential for managers to understand what a community is and how their companies can contribute to its development before engaging in this endeavor.

The main objective of this paper is to propose conceptual clarifications of the definition of 'community' on a set of practices which have increased in importance over the last few years. After identifying how sociological tradition differs from the management tradition, when it comes to defining community and discussing the differences between development in and of community, it is possible for managers to identify how to engage with the community in order to establish a long-term co-profitable relationship that will contribute to the development and empowerment of the communities.

**Keywords:** community engagement; community development; community involvement; Corporate Social Responsibility; stakeholder.

### Resumen:

Participación de la comunidad y desarrollo de la comunidad se han convertido no sólo en un problema importante, sino en un campo importante de la práctica para las empresas que operan en el ámbito local, como una de sus políticas de responsabilidad social corporativa. Sin embargo, no está claro cuándo los diferentes procesos de desarrollo comunitario son apropiados, cómo pueden ser implementadas y cómo podemos medir su eficiencia. Además, es esencial para los gerentes entender lo que una comunidad es y cómo sus empresas pueden contribuir a su desarrollo antes de participar en este esfuerzo.

El objetivo principal de este trabajo es proponer precisiones conceptuales de la definición de "comunidad" en un conjunto de prácticas que han aumentado en importancia en los últimos años. Después de identificar cómo la tradición sociológica difiere de la tradición de gestión, en lo que respecta a la definición de la comunidad y discutir las diferencias entre el desarrollo en y de la comunidad, es necesario que los administradores identifiquen la manera de comprometerse con la

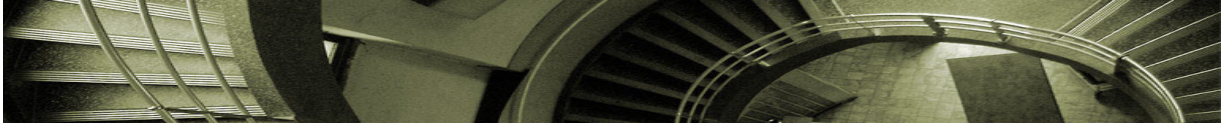
comunidad con el fin de establecer una cooperación a largo plazo, relaciones rentables que contribuyan al desarrollo y el empoderamiento de las comunidades.

**Palabras clave:** participación de la comunidad, desarrollo comunitario, participación de la comunidad, responsabilidad social corporativa.

### Résumé :

L'engagement de la communauté et le développement communautaire sont devenus non seulement une problématique majeure, mais également un important champ d'intervention pour les entreprises qui les considèrent comme partie intégrante de leurs politiques de responsabilité sociale à l'échelle locale. Pourtant, nous avons peu de connaissances sur la mise en œuvre et l'efficacité du processus de développement communautaire. Il apparaît essentiel pour les gestionnaires de mieux comprendre les attentes des communautés, ainsi que la manière dont les entreprises peuvent contribuer à leur développement avant de s'engager dans des politiques de RSE. L'objectif principal de cet article est d'éclairer dans une perspective conceptuelle la notion de "communauté" sur un ensemble de pratiques en forte croissance ces dernières années. Après avoir identifié comment la tradition sociologique diffère de la tradition managériale, lorsqu'il s'agit de définir le sens communautaire et de différencier le développement dans et de la communauté, il est possible pour les gestionnaires d'envisager un engagement avec la communauté sur le long-terme, dans une relation qui soit bénéfique pour toutes les parties, contribuant au développement et au renforcement de la communauté.

**Mots clés:** Engagement de la communauté; Développement communautaire ; Implication de la communauté ; Responsabilité sociale de l'entreprise; Partenaires.



## COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

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### COMMUNITY

Community is increasingly mentioned and recognized by corporations as a high priority stakeholder (Carroll 1999; Jackson and Nelson 2004; Warhurst 2004; Freeman 2005; Raufflet, Berranger et al. 2008; Kobeissi and Damanpour 2009; Zandvliet and Anderson 2009). Nevertheless, there is a lack of a systematic theory and a clear understanding of the concept of ‘community’ and how it develops. Furthermore, community development has distinctive origins and distinctive effects that cannot be understood apart from an understanding of the elemental bond of the interaction among people who live together (Wilkinson 1991; Boehm 2005; Theodori 2005).

To identify corporate strategies that contribute to the improvement of the community well-being, it is necessary to first understand the sociological concept of a community. Only then, it will be relevant to discuss the managerial perspective of how communities not only can, but also must, influence the decisions and operations of the companies.

Thus, before become involved in the community, two sets of questions should be made. First, what is the concept of a community? How does the sociological tradition differ from the management tradition when it comes to defining a community? Second, how can a community be developed? How does the development in community differ from the development of community?

This paper proposes a synthesis of what sociological thought has to offer to the understanding of ‘community’ and what management research has to offer in terms of community development. This combined analysis will allow managers to identify community engagement strategies in order to establish long-term co-profitable relationship that will contribute to the development and empowerment of the communities.

## COMMUNITY IN THE SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION

### Community and Society

According to Winter (2007), analyzing social formations in terms of *Vergemeinschaftung* (‘Communitarisation’) and *Vergesellschaftung* (‘Socialization’) helps to identify the differences between community and society.

‘Communitarisation’ designates traditionally and affectionately motivated social actions that are oriented primarily towards a peaceful exchange in a *Gemeinschaft* (‘community’). ‘Socialization’ represents limited and purely rationally motivated collaboration among competitors in a same *Gesellschaft* (‘society’). These two concepts were modeled by Weber (1971) upon the formulation introduced by Tönnies in 1887 in his book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*.

According to Tönnies, individuals living in a ‘community’ (*Gemeinschaft*) are regulated by dense bonds and obligations, interdependence and ‘shared mores’ among people who know one another. Those relations are forged by relatively simple social institutions, i.e., personal relationships and strong families’ ties (Tönnies, 1988; Tönnies, 2001; Waddell, 2005; Winter, 2007; Verity and Jolley, 2008).

In the words of Tönnies,

“The prototype of all unions of *Gemeinschaft* is the family. [...] The three pillars of *Gemeinschaft* – blood, place (land), and mind, or kinship, neighbourhood, and friendship – are all encompassed in the family, but the first of them is the constituting element of it” (Tönnies, 1988: 192).

Tönnies continues,

“The associations of *Gemeinschaft* are most perfectly interpreted as friendship, *Gemeinschaft* of spirit and mind based on common work or calling and thus on common beliefs. Among the numerous manifestations of *Gemeinschaft* association are guilds, fellowships of the arts and crafts, churches and holy orders. In all these the idea of the family persists. The prototype of the association in *Gemeinschaft* remains the relationships between master and servant or, better, between master and disciple [...]”(Tönnies 1988: 192)

Distinctively, Tönnies (1988: 2001) argues that a ‘society’ (*Gesellschaft*) is maintained through individuals acting in their own self-interest, and their environment is dominated by ties that are utilitarian and based on external characteristics such as language. Thus, the affinities are characterized by secondary relationships between formal institutions rather than by family or community ties. As a result, these relations tend to be episodic and contractual and aim to the achievement of desired ends, mirroring the capitalist market contracts. In such a way, the essence of ‘society’ is rationality and calculation (Tilman, 2004; Waddell, 2005; Verity and Jolley, 2008).

According to Tönnies,

“The relationship of the first type [*Gemeinschaft* or ‘community’] comes under the family law and law of possession; the others [law of *Gesellschaft* or ‘society’] belong to the law of contracts and property law.”(Tönnies 1988: 192).

Tönnies continues,

“The theory of *Gesellschaft* takes as its starting point a group of people who, as in *Gemeinschaft*, live peacefully alongside one another, but in this case without being essentially united – indeed, on the contrary, they are here essentially detached. In *Gemeinschaft* they stay together in spite of everything that separates them; in *Gesellschaft* they remain separate in spite of everything that unites them.

[...] Nothing happens in *Gesellschaft* that is more important for the individual’s wider group than it is for himself. On the contrary, everyone is out for himself alone and living in a state of tension against everyone else. The various spheres of power and activity are sharply demarcated, so that everyone resists contact with others and excludes them from his own spheres, regarding any such overtures as hostile. [...] Nobody wants to do anything for anyone else, nobody wants to yield or give anything unless he gets something in return that he regards as at least an equal trade-off. [...] all goods are assumed to be separate from each other, and so are their owners. Whatever anyone has and enjoys, he has and enjoys to the exclusion of all others – in fact, there is no such thing as a ‘common good’. Such a

thing can only exist by means of a fiction on the part of the individuals concerned” (Tönnies 2001:52-53).

### **Natural will and Rational will**

Ferdinand Tönnies was a sociologist who, nowadays, is more ritualistically cited than actually read (Inglis, 2009) and a few researchers still use Tönnies’s conceptualization of *Gemeinschaft* (‘community’) and *Gesellschaft* (‘society’) as a reference point to their analyses (Verity and Jolley, 2008). However, several recent studies and researches often omit to mention the crucial fact that such types of social formations are themselves derived from two forms of ‘will’: ‘natural will’ and ‘rational will’.

These ‘wills’ are the ways individuals conceptualize the world around themselves and how they act within, especially when they are relating to others. On the one hand, ‘natural will’ (*Wesenwille*) involves a judgment as to the intrinsic value of an act rather than its practicality. It is characterized by strong affection and group oriented feelings that constitute a ‘community’ social order. On the other hand, ‘rational will’ (*Kürwille*) involves a conscious choice of specific means for the pursuit of a specific end that involves high level of individualistic calculation which constitute the social order of ‘society’ (Mitzman, 1987; Tönnies, 1988; Verity and Jolley, 2008; Inglis, 2009).

Moreover, after observing the European historical processes of change that culminated in the development of European modernity<sup>1</sup>, Tönnies noted in 1887 that ‘societies’ and, consequently, the ‘natural will’ are proliferating as the dominant social formation, in consequence of the expansion of ‘rational will’ (Tönnies, 1988; Tönnies, 2001). According to Inglis (2009), Tönnies suggested that, even if the roots of economic

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<sup>1</sup> The transition from early Roman history to the period of the Roman empire, and the transition from feudalism to ‘modernity’ in northern Europe from circa the sixteenth century. For Tönnies, these periods of transition were similar because “they involved shifts from *Gemeinschaft*-like to *Gesellschaft*-style social conditions, from a situation whereby tightly-bound, affectively-based groups were the main sorts of social actors, to one where rationally-calculating, selfish individuals occupied centre stage in the social order” Inglis, D. (2009). “Cosmopolitan sociology and the classical canon: Ferdinand Tönnies and the emergence of global *Gesellschaft*.” *The British Journal of Sociology* **60**(4): 813-832.

globalization are attitudinal rather than technologically-driven, the global spread of ‘rational will’ creates an even more world-spanning condition for ‘society’.

### **Moral person and Community**

In more recent years, the sociologist Philip Selznick presents his parallel and cumulative theories of the moral person, institution and community which are closely connected due to the interdependence of well-being and morality (Selznick, 2008).

For Selznick (1994), morality is a feature not just of individuals (socialization) but also of institutions (institutionalization). While socialization considers the transformation of human animals into moral persons, institutionalization forms groups and practices. Moreover, the author adds that community is not based on shared identity, shared purpose, or shared understanding of a common good<sup>2</sup>. Community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons, who are its members; and in this framework within which plurality may flourish.

### **Variables for the conception of community**

Sociologists often argue that a community necessarily implies locality, primarily because common residence is, in general, the most congenial condition for forming and sustaining a community life (Selznick 1994). However, Selznick (1994) outlines that communities can be formed as a result of seven inter-related variables: historicity, identity, mutuality, plurality, autonomy, participation, and integration.

Nevertheless, Selznick recognizes the importance of Tönnies’s book, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1887, to understand the two normal types of human association. However, Selznick points out that *Gemeinschaft*, usually translated as ‘Community’, just refers to a kind of community: the one that “fully realizes values of historicity and mutuality, and does so even at a considerable cost to personal mobility and autonomy” (Selznick 1994).

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<sup>2</sup>Community of practice and virtual advocacy group are new contemporary forms of community that have strikingly different implications for stakeholder theory and practice. Thus, that will not be explored in this present research. Lave, J. and E. Wenger (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge University Press.

For Selznick, the most fully developed community will have a rich and balanced mixture of all these elements

<b>Historicity</b>	a shared history and culture. Communities are stronger when they share history and culture and weak when based on general interests and abstract ideas.
<b>Identity</b>	a sense of shared identity.
<b>Mutuality</b>	Communities spring from, and are maintained by interdependence and reciprocity.
<b>Plurality</b>	community members are also members of other communities. Communities draw much of their vitality from ‘intermediate associations’ such as families, churches, and other peripheral groups.
<b>Autonomy</b>	within the emphasis on group identity, it is important that communities and its members respect and protect each individual's identity.
<b>Participation</b>	within social participation in the community, participants can select the level of intimacy appropriate for any relationship with another participant or with the group.
<b>Integration</b>	all of the above elements in a community should integrate, and be supported by community norms, beliefs and practices.

**Table 1 - Seven interaction variables for the conception of a community (based on Selznick (1994))**

However, Selznick highlights that several communities in reality will emphasize some of these features rather than others. Different types of communities – religious, political, occupational, institutional, international – will bear different mixes of the seven main elements, and the complex interaction of these elements will produce the unique characteristics of the community.

## COMMUNITY IN THE MANAGEMENT TRADITION

For long, top management have been looking after the health of the corporation by balancing the multiple claims of conflicting stakeholders, which included the communities (Freeman, 2005). In today’s society, the survival of a company depends on the equilibrium of conflicting perspective of an entire system of social actors and the objectives of the corporation. One of the major stakeholders that the companies are focusing their engagement initiatives on is ‘community’ (Carroll, 1999; Jackson and



Nelson, 2004; Warhurst, 2004; Freeman, 2005; Raufflet, Berranger et al., 2008; Kobeissi and Damanpour, 2009; Zandvliet and Anderson, 2009).

Management researchers normally agree with their sociological colleagues that ‘community’ is an extremely elusive construct and this term is used in a variety of ways across the literature (Theodori, 2005). Generally speaking, community refers to individuals that share common bond or tradition, who support and challenge each other to affirm, defend and advance their values and self-interests. By acting powerfully and collectively, a community can also be perceived as groups of individual, such as NGOs or community associations, organized to represent a community’s shared interests (Miller, 2002; Crane, Matten et al., 2004; Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi et al., 2008; London Councils, 2010).

### **Geography-based and affinity-based communities**

Bowen et al. (2008) in a systematic review of the management literature argue that a community is defined by its geography, economics or social situation. On the one hand, according to the authors, “the communities primarily characterized by geography represent people residing within the same geographic region, but with no reference to the interaction among them”. On the other hand, the communities primarily identified by identity and regular interactions, regarding their situation, represent “a group who shares a sense of belonging, generally built upon a shared set of beliefs, values or experiences; however, the individuals need not live within the same physical locality” (Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi et al., 2008).

In this same line of thought, Theodori (2005) regroups the vast concept of community under two labels: ‘territory-based’ and ‘territory-free’. The first community label, ‘territory-based’, refers to geographically localized settlements, shared territory, common life, collective actions, and mutual identity. The second label, ‘territory-free’, is related to social groupings or networks community types such as “the business community”, “the

farm community”, “the Hispanic community”, “the academic community”, “the prison community”, “the Baptist community”, and even “the Internet community”.

Waddell (2005) highlights that communities of interest, who share the same affinities or situation, may or may not be geographic delimited. Thus, geography and affinities are not self exclusive, since a community can be place-based, formed by social relationships based on share affinities or by the combination of both place and affinities.

### **Social and community fields for social interaction**

In contrast to Bowen *et al.* (2008), Theodori (2005) observes that the interaction among people is extremely relevant to the establishment of a geographic community. For the author, the place itself is not the community. On the contrary, social interaction, the linking element of a community, delineates an area as shared territory, contributes to the wholeness of local life, gives structure and direction to collective actions, and is the source of mutual identity.

Therefore, according to Theodori (2005), geographic shared spaces or ‘locality’ serve as the setting in which a population meets its daily needs and encounters shared problems. This geographic dimension can be deeply analyzed as ‘Social Fields’ and ‘Community Field’. In the first, sequences of actions are carried on by actors generally working through various associations to engage in special interests. In the second, the actors and associations pursue general community interests rather than an interest solely in specific goals. In short, shared spaces are where social interactions occur, and those interactions are a substantive element for creating and maintaining a community.

In all, there is no strong consensus in Management on the meaning of “community”.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Like community, ‘community development’ is neither a term that has a unique definition nor a recent issue. In 1968, Biddle and Biddle presented a list of seventeen different and even contradictory definitions. Nine years later, Simpkins highlighted that there was still a lack of a concrete definition of community development, a term that is frequently treated as modernization, urbanization and industrialization. In 2004, Hudson argued that “located within definitions of community development are multi-variant worldviews and philosophies containing social justice values and principles, ideas about economic development, community consultation strategies, methods for programs and other work based practices and so on” (Biddle, 1968; Simpkins, 1977; Hudson, 2004).

Yet, even without a conclusive definition, community development advocates seem to agree that the community development is a process that goes well beyond local accumulation of wealth and regional income-related variables growth. It involves assisting the people to collectively respond to events and issues that affect them and to undertake collective action (Twelvetrees, 1989; Sen, 1999; Gilchrist, 2003).

Thus, since business and society are not distinct entities; both societal actors should settle their individual and collective interests and forge mutually beneficial and trustful relationships in collaboration initiatives (Muthuri, 2007; Kobeissi and Damanpour, 2009).

In this matter, the managerial challenge is not to come up with a definition for ‘community development’, but to deliver effective development assistance when addressing social, political, economic and environmental issues. In practical terms if a community-driven development is to be effective in delivering a development assistance, companies, acting as ‘facilitators’ or ‘developers’, need to evaluate pre-existing capacities for collective action since the achievements of a community driven development are fundamentally tied to the community’s capacity for collective action (Beard and Dasgupta, 2006).

## **The concept of Community Development**

As defined on the handbook prepared by a study conference on community development held in 1957, community development is

“[...] a process of social action in which the people of a community organize themselves for planning and action; define their common and individual needs and problems; make group and individual plans to meet their needs and solve their problems; execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources; and supplement these resources when necessary with services and materials from governmental and non-government agencies outside the community” (Great Britain. Colonial Office 1958)

Accordingly, community development is a process of building and strengthening the community as a social characteristic of the local people. It is mainly rooted in place-based communities since ‘natural will’ occurs predominately, if not exclusively, in direct and continuing contacts among the people who live in the same place (Tönnies 1988; Wilkinson 1991; Summers 1992; Theodori 2005; Muthuri 2007).

## **The process of community development**

According to Muthuri (2007), development is conceived as both an outcome and a process of social interactions. As an outcome, it describes the result or tasks accomplishment of Corporate Community Involvement (CCI3). As a process, community development implies changes at individual, organizational, and/or societal levels with those involved in CCI purposely seeking to improve their own capacity to do things.

Likewise, Wilkinson (1991) argues that development is a process rather than an outcome of social interaction. Such development exists only because actions are undertaken with positive purposes. In the words of Wilkinson, “[t]his is the case because, in interactional terms action is what produces structure, and not the opposite” (Wilkinson, 1991:94).

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<sup>3</sup> Corporate community involvement (CCI) refers to the provision of goods and services to nonprofit and civic organizations by corporations and is commonly treated as a simple peripheral component of corporate strategy or even as falling outside legitimate business endeavors. Voort, J., K. Glac, et al. (2009). ““Managing” Corporate Community Involvement.” *Journal of Business Ethics* 90(3): 311-329.

Similarly to Theodori (2005), Wilkinson (1991) proposes that community development involves purposive, positive and structure oriented actions. Moreover, the latter adds that community development exists in the efforts, as well as in the achievements, of people working together to address their shared interests and solve their common problems.

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**Principles, from an interactional perspective that underlie the process of community development**

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*Community development is **purposive**:*

Unintentional actions can influence people's interaction to initiate and maintain a community.

*Community development is **positive**:*

The purposive intentions of the actors revolve around a shared commitment to improving their lives.

It is not positive because people think it will improve their lives; but because it in fact contributes to social well-being.

*Community development exists in the **efforts** of people and not necessarily in the goal achievement:*

Simply stated, community development is a purposive action undertaken with positive intentions to improve the community structure. In sum, by this concept, trying is enough to qualify it as a community development.

*Community development is **structure oriented**:*

The purposive and positive actions of actors are direct attempts to establish and/or strengthen the community as an interlinking and coordinating structure of human relationships.

Structure orientation is the central quality of community leadership.

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**Table 2 - Principles, from an interactional perspective that underlie the process of community development, based on Wilkinson (1991) and Theodori (2005)**

**Development in and of community**

As Theodori (2005) suggested, when studying the concept of local development, it is important to distinguish between two types of development commonly referred to as 'development in community' and 'development of community'. Both forms of development are not only exclusionary both also affect the well-being of the local population.

‘Development in community’ refers to an approach that brings improvements, mainly infrastructural enhancements, in the community. Companies act as ‘developers’ and communities as ‘beneficiaries’. Examples include economic growth, modernization, improved service delivery, and business retention, expansion, and recruitment. With ‘development in community’, the ‘development’ is conventionally a process applied to, or undergone by ‘others’ never by the ‘developers’. Thus, the community becomes merely a setting or location in which various improvements occur (Judge, 1984; Wilkinson, 1991; Theodori, 2005; Waddell, 2005).

‘Development of community’ is a much broader process than improvements in the community. This second type of development consists of establishing, fostering, and maintaining processes in the community that encourages communication and cooperation between and among individuals, informal groups and formal organizations. With ‘development of community’, companies assume the role of ‘facilitator’ that involves purposive, positive, structure-oriented joint-efforts by people, from the community and the company, in a locality to articulate and to sustain a community field. Thus, the company creates a learning environment where not only the community, but also the company is able to evolve, to adapt, and to built the capacity needed to generate its own answers in a more inclusive sense (Judge, 1984; Theodori, 2005; Waddell, 2005).

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity building refers to the process of assisting a community to develop a certain skill, competence or ability that will allow them to better respond to their own needs (Hudson, 2004; Alim, 2007). Capacity building involves the training of research and development agents to support the community members and policy makers. Thus, capacity building may also have a transformational impact on cultural norms and expectations (Alvord, Brown et al., 2004; Jama, Mohamed et al., 2008).

Nonetheless, capacity building is a long-term, continuing process that goes beyond the conventional perception of training. The central concerns of capacity building is to

empower community members to manage changes, to resolve their conflicts, to enhance coordination, to foster communication, and to ensure that data and information are shared (Alim, 2007). For that, it requires substantial commitment from local authorities and policy-makers, local citizens and community groups, which, in turn, can generate social inclusion and further enhance their capacity to be directly involved in decision-making (Muthuri, Matten et al., 2009).

Furthermore, according to UNESCO (2006), capacity building includes:

- Human resource development: the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively;
- Organizational development: the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community);
- Institutional and legal framework development: making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels, and in all sectors, to enhance their capacities.

As it is firmly linked to the concept of development of community, which demands local resources and community participation (Hudson, 2004; Theodori, 2005), this participatory engagement may “help reduce inequalities in the distribution of power and encourage responsiveness to individual and collective needs” (Stoker, 1996). Similarly, but with a managerial perspective, Alvord et al. (2004: 277) propose that capacity building initiatives “strengthen local capacities for self-help and then scale up coverage to a wider range of clients; package dissemination initiatives scale up coverage with services that can be delivered by low skill-staff or affiliates to individuals or small groups; movement-building initiatives expand their influence by alliances and campaigns to shape the activities of decision makers”.

Even if there are examples of successful capacity building (Andrews, Cowell et al., 2006), there are also many others where a lack of technical, business or regulatory skills

resulted in a failed attempt to transfer knowledge. In all, according to Stern (2007), capacity building results from the process of understanding local environmental and social policies, adapting procedures to local circumstances, and developing a process to meet lending criteria that may help tackle gaps in the domestic market.

## **DISCUSSION**

Management decisions are made in the attempt to balance the multiple claims of conflicting stakeholders, which includes the ‘community’. This stakeholder group is a social construction that shares the same affinities, situation or locality, and persists as long as the local citizens ensure its survival. Yet, it varies across local societies and within the same local society over time (Freeman, 2005; Theodori, 2005; Waddell, 2005).

Moreover, a socially responsible company includes in its strategies community development activities. These become a process that assists people to collectively respond to events and issues that affect them and to undertake collective action. Since business and community are not distinct entities, managers try to reconcile the corporate interests with the collective and societal issues to forge mutually beneficial and trustful relationships in collaboration initiatives (Twelvetrees, 1989; Gilchrist, 2003; Muthuri, 2007; Kobeissi and Damanpour, 2009).

In this matter, the community development has become a significant issue as well as a significant field of practice for corporations operating a local milieu, as one of their corporate social responsibility policies.

On the one hand, the community development seems to be considered a best practice that socially responsible companies can adopt to manage their social impacts. Moreover, studies demonstrate that community development initiatives and investments are vital for the establishment of a cordial relationship between responsible companies and their host communities (Eweje, 2006). On the other hand, it is still not clear when and which



different community engagement processes are appropriate, how they should be implemented nor what measures and methods of measurement are appropriate, accurate or legitimate (Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi *et al.*, 2008).

As an active player in such an unpredictable and changing environment, managers must be able to understand the difference between community and society, and to intensify the particularity of geography-based and affinity-based communities. With this understanding, managers will be able to establish community development strategies that will not focus on the development in community but on the development of community. As a result, companies have a greater chance to produce long lasting results and establish a long-term relationship with the community.

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