

# Local Worlds

Rural Livelihood Strategies in Eastern Cape,  
South Africa

Flora Hajdu



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*'It's not the kings and generals that make history,  
but the masses of the people;  
the workers, the peasants, the doctors, the clergy'*  
Nelson Mandela

*'None but ourselves can free our minds'*  
Bob Marley



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# Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BIF	Bio-Intensive Farming Systems
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GM (O)	Genetically Modified (Organisms)
GPS	Global Positioning System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRP	Poverty Relief Programme
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SL	Sustainable Livelihoods (approach/framework)
TB	Tuberculosis
VAT	Value-Added Tax
WFS	World Food Summit
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## South African Institutions

CROP	Community Resource Optimisation Programme (NGO)
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DLAA	Department of Land and Agricultural Affairs
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
IDT	Independent Development Trust (NGO)
PLAAS	Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (at UWC)
SDI	Spatial Development Initiative
TRACOR	Transkei Agricultural Corporation
Unitra	University of Transkei
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WFW	Working for Water

# South Africa-specific and *isiXhosa* Words

Note that the prefix ‘ama-’ denotes the plural form of a word in *isiXhosa*. For example, *igqirha* is *amagqirha* in plural; *ilima* is *amalima* and so on.

ewe	Yes
igqirha	‘Traditional healer’, ‘witch doctor’
ilima	To cultivate <i>or</i> a co-operative “work-party”
ilobola	Bridewealth; livestock or money that a man has to pay to the family of the woman when marrying.
inkonkoni	<i>Aristidia junciformis</i> , grass that is poor quality for grazing.
iqunde	<i>Themeda triandra</i> , grass particularly good for grazing.
isihlava	Stockborer, insect that attacks maize.
isiXhosa/ amaXhosa	<i>IsiXhosa</i> is the language spoken by the <i>amaXhosa</i> people.
ityala	Debt
ixhwele	Herbalist
kraal	Enclosure for animals close to the homestead.
madumbe	Taro ( <i>Colocasia esculenta</i> )
makoti	A newly married woman.
molo	Hello
muti	Medicine or object that fulfils a magic purpose, e.g. protects the user against witchcraft.
pap	Maize porridge cooked stiff.
rhoqo	Very often/all the time
samp	Stamped or crushed maize.
sgwamba	Maize porridge cooked stiff and mixed with herbs.
shebeen	Informal local ‘bar’, or a homestead where beer and liquor is sold and drunk
spaza	Informal local shop; a homestead or a separate house where groceries are sold.
ukuhlalisana	A ‘living together’ relationship
ukuthwala	Forced taking of the bride without informing the parents, bridewealth payments often follow later.
ukwakha umzi	‘Building the homestead’
umngalelo	Collective savings association.
umqungu	<i>Cymbopogon validus</i> , grass used for thatching.

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## Preface

Riding along in Nkosinathi's taxi on the familiar bumpy road from Lusikisiki to Cutwini I notice that I'm starting to feel like I'm on my way home. I smile as we pass a seemingly insignificant tin shed. The keen observer might notice that the word "Hollywood" is carefully painted on its wall. This is Hollywood spaza, the most popular spaza-shop in the area. Inside those tin walls, you can buy everything from groceries to soft drinks and sweets and there is a TV with a video, and even a billiards table. The proprietor of this fine establishment is a young man with an exceptional sense for business. I always jokingly call him "Mr Hollywood", when I sometimes stop here for a soft drink.

I'm sitting in the front seat, next to a girl of my own age who is wearing a blue print ruffled dress and a headscarf. This is a sign that she is *umakoti*, a newly married woman. I ask her what she was doing in town? She stares at her hands and mumbles shyly that she went to see the doctor because she has a headache. We are now driving through the greenery of Mazizi Tea Plantation. Nkosinathi is driving slowly and carefully, but the car still gets stuck in the mud, so he gets out to assess the situation. When we are alone in the car the young *makoti* suddenly turns to me and confesses in broken English that she was at the doctor because she wants to get pregnant. But the doctor could not help her. She anxiously tells me how she has been lying "next to" her husband for almost a year now, without becoming pregnant and how her mother-in-law is starting to make snide remarks. Do I know what she has to do in order to get pregnant? I say that I'm sorry but to my knowledge there's nothing she can do to speed up this process. I tell her to try not to worry, because I think it is normal for these things to take some time. She seems a little disappointed that I couldn't give her more concrete advice. Maybe it's because I'm well-educated, but more probably it's because I'm *umlungu* – a white person – that people often expect me to know all the answers. Nkosinathi now gets back into the car, and having put some branches under the wheels, he manages to drive the heavily loaded taxi out of the mud.

As we drive over a hilltop, I can see Cutwini sprawling out beneath us. The village is surrounded by emerald-green grass, stretching towards the horizon to the east. The grazing lands are so plentiful that even people from the nearby village Mbotyi are sometimes allowed to graze their cattle here. Behind the village, the glistening blue sea extends uninterrupted towards the south, all the way to Antarctica. To the west is an impenetrably dense, dark

green forest. The village looks small amongst these vast spaces. Cutwini has become like a second home to me. I have a family here.

As we drive up to Nkosinathi's homestead, everybody comes running outside to greet me. Makhulu, grandmother, is crying when she embraces me. She has about 50 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and she has now adopted me as well. I start crying too. The kids are quietly fighting over who gets to carry my bags into the house where I'm always staying. I sit down on a bench in the kitchen, and Nondumiso, who has a sixth sense for people's needs, has already put the tea-kettle on the paraffin stove. She's one of those grandchildren, and has by now seven children of her own.

I now begin inquiring about everyone's health, starting with the grandmother and finishing with the youngest children. I question the children about how they are doing at school. Are they studying hard? I try to look at them sternly, like Strict Auntie Flora, who is supervising their education. To prove their progress, they start showing me schoolbooks, notes, drawings. I get questions about my parents and life back home in Sweden. I look nice, says Makhulu, much fatter than last time! Nkosinathi laughs as he translates this flattering; he knows I always find it hard to look happy at this particular type of kind remark.

I have not always been able to sit at leisure with the family in the kitchen. My first meals were served at the table in the dining room/lounge, while the rest of the family talked and laughed happily in the kitchen. I protested at this, and insisted that I didn't like eating alone, which led to Nkosinathi joining me at the table. One morning, I simply went into the kitchen and sat down like everybody else to eat my maize porridge. Nondumiso conceded to this with a smile. I started to feel much more like one of the family then, when I, like everyone else, did not use the lounge.

Meanwhile Nondumiso has been roaming about making dinner. Everyone is happy because I brought meat from Lusikisiki. I'm told there have been twelve funerals since last time I was here. Oh, so who has died? In which homesteads? I quickly pull out my paper copy of the GIS map and hand it to Nkosinathi, who starts pointing out the homesteads. Oh, that guy! What happened? When?... But you know I wanted to make an interview with that homestead, is that still OK? I ask him. Yes, it is fine, he says, don't worry, I make sure you don't ask any inappropriate questions.

I note down the household numbers on my notepad and start asking questions. Nobody seems surprised at this, they are used to me asking many questions all the time. Nkosinathi sometimes jokingly calls me "Miss Why". Tomorrow I will meet with another assistant, Xolani, and ask him these same questions again, patiently cross-checking the answers. I note that out of 12 people dying in the last 8 months, two have been elderly, one was a child, and the rest have all been between 20 and 40 years. This is the sad and ugly face of HIV.

As it is approaching 9 pm and Babes, the youngest girl, is starting to fall asleep in my lap, I decide to call it a night. As I lie in my bed and look up at the perfectly round inside of the grass roof and smell the faint scent of fresh cow dung on the floors, I try to imagine my home in Sweden, but it seems very far away, and of no consequence to me now. Whenever I come here, I experience a sense of belonging, and I never miss my home, while when I'm home, I often miss this place. It is so very peaceful and quiet, as if time has slowed down to a very comfortable pace, making it impossible to feel stress and anxiety.

The next morning I wake up early, without the use of an alarm clock, to the sounds of early-morning activities. Roosters are crowing, children playing behind my house, and cars are driving past the homestead – it is the taxis that are already going to Lusikisiki town with dressed-up villagers going to shop groceries, visit relatives, take care of bank business, and many other activities that can be done in town only. The taxi that Nkosinathi drives belongs to his uncle, but today he has organised for someone else to drive it while he works for me. I step outside my rondavel and look at the view of the hill that I have looked at so many times before<sup>1</sup>. The sun is shining with slanted golden rays as I make my way through the maize garden to the pit toilet. Nondumiso is of course already up and has been carrying water from the spring, laboriously on her head, so that everyone in the household can wash themselves. She takes great pride in keeping an immaculately clean and perfect household.

As I come out of my rondavel after the morning wash, I find Bongani sitting quietly outside it, smiling. Just like Nkosinathi, he speaks very good English, but was shy in the beginning to talk to me. He is now one of my best interpreters. It is time to start working. I'm going to revisit some of the homesteads from the village survey to ask follow-up questions. I talk to Nkosinathi and Bongani about the purpose of the interviews. They suggest we start with a woman who they know should be at home at this time in the morning.

Walking slowly through the village, stopping every few metres to greet people on the way, we reach the chosen homestead. '*Molo Flora!*' the woman shouts when she sees me, 'you are back!' '*Ewe, Mma... unjani?*' I ask. She says she is just fine. I ask if it is OK if I talk to her for a while? She says that's fine, but she is going to do some chores while I'm talking. This is common – women often tend to sweep, cook, wash dishes and dress children while talking, while men usually focus fully on answering questions. We sit down outside in the shade while she is washing the morning's dishes in a plastic dish, using the ubiquitous 'sunlight' soap and water from the spring. I start asking about how she has been since last time I saw her, is her son still working in Durban, has she started receiving her pension, is her garden do-

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<sup>1</sup> This view is the picture on the front cover of the thesis.

ing fine? Asking questions about livelihoods tend to feel like a normal conversation to the interviewed person, and people often say that they could talk for hours about these things that they worry about all the time anyway.

When walking through the village after that interview, I think about that fieldwork has not always been this easy. Though everyone in the village knows me by now, people were afraid of me in the beginning, and children started crying and running for shelter when they saw my ghost-like pale appearance. Bongani tells me that parents sometimes tell their children that if they are not good, the *umlungu* is going to come and take them. So don't pay any attention to them, he says, it is only those children who feel guilty that are now afraid. There are many images and stories about the strange, pale *umlungu*. Sometimes people ask me to pick out lotto numbers for them, because *umlungu* is supposed to be lucky. Witchcraft is also not supposed to work on me. However, one of the first *isiXhosa* sentences I learnt works as a good icebreaker if people seem very suspicious of me: '*Kutheni ndibisa umlungu, ungandibisi usisi (okanye intombi)?*'<sup>2</sup>.

At this time, I reflect that fieldwork entails so much more than what I will be able to describe in the thesis through dry and distanced academic language. It is emotional, fun, exciting, frustrating, hard and rewarding at the same time. It is an experience that you emerge yourself in and that changes you forever. A process where you have to give of yourself to get something back. And that is when I decide that I have to write this preface.

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<sup>2</sup> "Why do you call me 'white person', instead of calling me sister (or daughter)?"

# 1. Introduction: A World in Local Livelihoods

The view that was through others conveyed to me when beginning this research project in the former homeland Transkei in South Africa, was that many soaring conflicts regarding natural resources were taking place in the region (these conflicts have been recorded by e.g. Cousins and Kepe, 2004; Fay *et al.*, 2002; Fay, 2003; Kepe, 1997, 1999). Reading up on the body of literature on the Transkei, the impression that this was a region encumbered with a conflict between local human interests and environmental<sup>3</sup> carrying capacity, with intense competition over resources and degradation as a result of this conflict, was further reinforced.

The Pondoland study area in Transkei was recommended by many researchers as well as NGO-workers, especially since there had not been much other research done here. Also, the area was supposedly more isolated than many other parts of Transkei and therefore it was assumed that people would be more dependent on natural resources here, at the same time as several big developments had been proposed for this area, which could unleash conflicts over these resources (big developments planned are listed on page 88). The research project thus had the initial aim of focusing on the assumedly problematic human-nature interaction in the Pondoland study area.

During pilot interviews in the study area, I therefore focused mainly on questions around natural resource use. Soon however, I noticed that people seemed more concerned about other aspects of their livelihoods – finding jobs was one major concern, governmental pensions and grants another. For example, I would be asking about agriculture and wood collection and many people would answer the questions politely, but without showing much enthusiasm, only to go on to spontaneously and anxiously start asking me if I could give them suggestions about how to find a job or how to apply for pension. It thus slowly became apparent to me that the people in the study area did not feel that natural resource use was particularly problematic or

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<sup>3</sup> The use of the term 'environment' sometimes attracts comments and questions. The word 'environment' has two different meanings - it can mean "surrounding, milieu, setting" as well as "nature, ecosystem, natural world". This can be confusing, since 'environment' in the first sense includes cultural and social surroundings, while 'environment' in the second sense excludes the same. 'Environment' as it is used in this thesis, stands for the second meaning, i.e. "nature, natural world" unless it is specified otherwise, e.g. "cultural environment".

conflict-filled for them, and that they in any case had more pressing livelihood concerns than natural resource use.

At the same time, the physical geographer who was working in the same study area was noticing surprisingly little changes in vegetation patterns through aerial photo analysis. Comparing our results, we could conclude that natural resource use in the area was not burdened with significant problems and that the environment was not particularly degraded (Haag and Hajdu, 2005). Combined with the fact that the local people did not even seem to regard natural resource use as a crucial part of their livelihoods, I began to sense the need to refocus the project. Indeed, in such a case it is the duty of a researcher guided by the principles of livelihoods approaches, participatory research and Grounded Theory methodology (like I am) to refocus.

The result of this process was that I began questioning the hopeless and homogenous images of Transkei conveyed through the literature and popular discourse and so the aim and focus of this project came to change from being another study on environmental conflicts in Transkei to being a project on diverse aspects of local livelihood strategies and a contribution to a nuancing of the discourse on environmental problems in the former homelands.

## The Focus on 'Local' and 'Livelihoods'

The main focus of this study is thus the local level and the topic of livelihoods, but it also contextualises these issues broadly, in terms of various national and global ideas, movements and policies that have implications for the study focus. The term "local world" symbolises to me the complexity of a local system, at the same time as it suggests a certain local outlook towards what is outside of one's world. Usually, "the World" refers to our Earth and it has a connotation of it being a highly complex system, affected by things from outside that we cannot influence. The allegory of local "world" is thus meant to imply that local worlds are highly complex, but that the people who live in these worlds depart from their families and villages and often view national laws and policies, or global movements, as something that is affecting them but that they cannot affect in return. This study aims to grasp a piece of this local perspective, as well as point to pieces of the outside world that are reflected in local livelihoods.

The focus on livelihoods comes naturally once one has decided to do research in local communities that focus on the issues that are most important to the people there. As I will discuss later, people tend to have a pragmatic view and focus on their own needs firstly, which leads to livelihoods – the means of meeting these needs – becoming a natural focus.

An important distinction in the way I have focused on local livelihoods lies in that I have chosen to have a broad view, including all aspects of livelihoods in the two villages, rather than a particularistic approach that probes

one or a few livelihood activities. Most livelihood studies in Transkei have tended to focus on only on a limited part of local livelihoods, and thus I identified a focus on a broad and contextualising view of livelihoods as an appropriate niche for my study. Through this perspective, it becomes possible for me to contribute to an understanding of how various livelihood activities relate to each other and how important they are relative to each other locally.

Due to factors that will be discussed later, I ended up doing household surveys with all the 233 households in the two study villages, a set of data that I came to use for extensive analysis of various aspects of local livelihoods – from investigating the existing livelihood opportunities and their varying degree of importance for local households, to looking at factors behind livelihood choices and strategies, and how family types and life cycles influence these. I found the State and Transition matrix a fruitful way of illustrating the dynamism in livelihood strategies, while the models I created to illustrate the processes of livelihood choice in the villages fit well into the Sustainable Livelihoods framework.

The survey data are quantitative, in the sense that it is possible to calculate village averages and percentages from it, which I have done in order to illustrate various livelihoods related issues. However, it is data of high qualitative content, complemented with in-depth interviews made over several years. These data are used to probe local thinking around various issues, such as strategic thinking around livelihood choices, issues of vulnerability, coping strategies used at difficult times as well as attitudes to money, saving and borrowing.

When discussing with local people about their livelihoods, I furthermore started to notice the many ways in which these were linked to other levels than the local, and how various policies from outside were having major impacts in people's lives. This led to me to start making interviews with local officials and implementation agents, and to follow the hierarchy of policy implementation from the bottom up through interviews. This entailed a widening of the scope of the study to include various national and even global contexts that have, through complex interconnections, effects in the study area.

## Research Themes

This study covers and contributes to the following problem areas or themes:

- In using a critical perspective that acknowledges complexity and heterogeneity, the study challenges various narratives, prejudices and oversimplified explanations concerning both livelihoods as well as the state of the environment in Transkei. These results, as will be shown, can be viewed

in the context of a general tendency to create narratives and over-generalise across regions and even continents.

- In the specific context of research on livelihoods in Transkei, this study comes to conclusions about livelihoods in the studied villages that differ in several ways from the conventional views about livelihoods in Transkei. These differences are probably to a certain extent due to the broad and comprehensive nature of this study when it comes to local livelihoods, but they are also evidence of heterogeneity in the region and of various recent changes that have affected livelihoods. In this way, the findings contribute to nuancing the image of the region, especially by pointing to three key issues:
  - The significantly higher importance of jobs compared to all other types of livelihoods to people in the study area.
  - The proportionally much higher importance of local jobs as compared to labour migration in this area.
  - The important role of informal jobs, and the high status and monetary security that many informal businesses provide.
- In a broader context of rural livelihoods studies, the various approaches used to analyse local livelihoods in the area and some of the conclusions drawn should have some general applicability. Important areas investigated are:
  - How livelihood options and strategies can be analysed through inspiration from the Sustainable Livelihoods framework.
  - Patterns of diversification in livelihood activities and how these can be explained through household life cycles, as well as family sizes and types.
  - Changes and transitions in livelihoods and how these can be analysed through a state and transition analysis.
  - The strategies involved in choosing between livelihood activities and the role that personal preferences and various psychosocial factors have in choices processes.
  - The relationship between livelihood activities and feelings of livelihood security.
  - The concept of ‘multiple livelihood strategies’ and how it may complicate the analysis of local livelihoods in certain areas.
- In the context of research on poverty, vulnerability and the processes that affect these states, this study addresses issues such as:
  - The factors that affect vulnerability in the study area.
  - Local coping mechanisms in times of crisis or change.
  - How poverty in itself can act as a barrier to securing a livelihood.

- The social and cultural embeddedness of money and how it affects local attitudes to saving and borrowing.
- In the context of research on the tension between global and national processes of planning and policy-making and local levels of implementation, this study contributes with insights gained through viewing certain implementation processes ‘from below’ in the study area. The study points to how local perceptions are very different from those higher up in the system and illustrates how difficult it can be to integrate these levels of knowledge and experience. It addresses important issues such as policies for job creation and sustainable livelihoods as well as local participation in policy making. In the South African context, four specific policies are in focus:
  - The poverty relief programme ‘Working for Water’.
  - The poverty relief programme ‘Working for the Coast’
  - Marine resource use restrictions
  - Forest resource use restrictions

## Notes on the Writing

This work is rooted in the Environment and Development-related branches of Human Geography and Anthropology, but it also branches out towards Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Physical Geography and Environmental History. Readers are expected to be from different worlds - academic scholars from various disciplines as well as policy makers and local administrators, NGO’s and local people. My firm belief is that complicated issues can be fruitfully analysed and discussed without overusing complicated language, which I have accordingly had the ambition to do. Prospective readers also range from people who have studied the area well and know a great deal about it, to people who have never been to South Africa and know next to nothing about the country. Therefore, the former category of readers will be required to have some patience at times when South Africa-specific issues are introduced.

In conducting research in and about South Africa, I unfortunately have to discuss the issue of racial terminology. The social construction of the idea of ‘race’ has been a crucial aspect of the making of South African society, and these arbitrary racial categories have eventually become real in that they have had profound impacts on people’s lives for several centuries. Caruthers (2002) points out how South African historians and social scientists have for many decades been preoccupied with race relations and the ramifications of apartheid to the extent where other interesting research topics have been left largely unexplored. South African research is today still in many instances muddled with constant references to races, sometimes of question-

able importance to the topic. Though it would indeed be difficult, and not very productive, to conduct the present type of research in the country while attempting to exclude all aspects of the race issue, I have nevertheless tried not to become too entangled in these aspects, and avoided constant references to race when these are not explicitly warranted. When these references are used, by necessity, it should of course not in any way be seen as a legitimisation of racist typologies.

## Disposition

This thesis consists of nine chapters. After this introduction follows a chapter outlining the various contexts of this study. After discussing the broad positioning of the study in terms of theoretical and methodological standpoints, the discussion turns to the concept of local worlds and the links that these have to national policies and through them to various global influences. Policies discussed include agricultural policies, policies for job creation, conservation and poverty relief, while global influences relate more to conceptual matters, such as the Western view of Africa, the preoccupation with ‘development’ and the degradation narrative. In the last part of this chapter, I outline livelihoods approaches and how these have been used to better understand local perspectives in the study area.

The third chapter of this thesis introduces South Africa and the study area. After a short discussion on South African history and geography, attention turns towards various current policies that affect livelihoods in the study area. After this, I focus on the region of Transkei, and discuss the distinctiveness of this area and its history. Finally, the study area in terms of both Pondoland and the specific case study villages is described.

In the methodological chapter (chapter four), I go into details about how the field data were collected, analysed and presented. This involves discussions on various definitions adopted for data collection, and details on how household surveys, interviews and other forms of data collection were performed.

Chapter five is a mixture of background information and results from the study area in terms of various factors that influence life and livelihoods in the two villages. Both household-level and village-level institutions that affect livelihoods are probed, and a framework of ‘family types’ is introduced that is later used to explain certain livelihood strategies in chapter 7. Furthermore, basic needs such as food, energy, healthcare, education and transport are discussed based on facts from the villages.

Chapter six introduces a framework for analysing livelihood strategies, based on basic needs and various categories of livelihood activities, and inspired by the sustainable livelihoods framework. In this chapter, the various livelihood activities in the villages are introduced and discussed, and a calculation of the relative importance of these different livelihood strategies is

presented. Based on this calculation, various conclusions, for example on the significance of jobs contra natural resource use, and labour migration contra local jobs, are drawn and discussed in relation to other research.

Analysis of livelihood strategies, in terms of how local people think and feel when it comes to livelihood choices and how family structure and life cycle affects choices, can be found in chapter seven. Dynamics in livelihood strategies are analysed through a state and transition analysis. Conclusions about livelihood diversification and the factors that affect these processes, as well as about the concept of ‘multiple livelihood strategies’ are drawn in this chapter.

Chapter eight provides wider contexts for the livelihoods analysis, through focusing on the issues of poverty and vulnerability in the first part of the chapter and on national policies and the impacts of these at local levels in the second part. The focus on poverty puts the spotlight on those families in the villages that need it the most – i.e. the poor and vulnerable families. Factors connected to vulnerability, livelihood opportunities and coping strategies are analysed from a local perspective. The policy focus connects to the theoretical chapter and discusses how local livelihoods are parts of much wider contexts in terms of various national policies. The effects that these policies have on livelihoods in the study area are discussed.

Finally, in chapter nine, I summarize some of the issues that have emerged throughout the thesis and point to how all these different issues are interconnected in various ways. The most important conclusions that have been reached in various chapters are thus connected to each other and discussed in a wider context.

I would also here like to draw the attention of the reader to the CD that accompanies this thesis, where the questionnaires used in the village surveys, as well as extra material such as photos from the field area, maps and aerial photographs are provided.



## 2. Local Livelihoods in Dynamic Contexts

This study focuses mainly on local worlds and livelihood strategies in rural villages in the former homeland Transkei in South Africa, and the complex and dynamic local, national and global contexts of which these worlds are an integral part. These topics will be introduced in this chapter, which is divided into three parts. The first part discusses current theoretical and methodological challenges for research on environment and development-related issues in a rural African context and how I have chosen to tackle these challenges. The second part problematises the concept of locality and the local perspective and puts it into broader contexts. The tension between local perceptions, the various national policies that affect local people's livelihoods and the global influences that in turn affect national policies is here discussed. The third part of this chapter discusses the livelihoods approach and how I have utilised it in order to understand local people's perspectives in the two studied villages.

### Complex Approaches in a Complex World

The world is today becoming increasingly complex. We are faced with "broad and unique global environmental challenges [...] that are characterised by complex technological, social and ecological systems interacting at variable spatial and temporal scales" (Rudd, 2000:131). Many authors have pointed at the complex nature of problems in the environment-development sphere and stressed that these problems need integrated solutions (e.g. Cortner, 2000; Décamps, 2000; Gibbons *et al.*, 1994; Hurni, 1999; Kinzig, 2001; McNeill, 1999; Moffat, 1998; Nowotny *et al.*, 2001; Varis, 1999). It is, however, not an easy task, for neither researchers nor policy-makers to handle these complex issues. Svedin (1999) summarizes the challenges that make these issues particularly difficult:

what are the challenges that we are facing in our contemporary society? [...] It is the separation between the different conceptual worlds of phenomena: those in the societal realm and those in the natural world. It is the separation of ideas in the academic world from the thoughts currently informing the world of action. It is the separation of the phenomena of the very micro level from those at the macro level. (*ibid*:171)

The answer to the problems created by these different types of separation is thus, according to many authors, integration, in various forms and on several levels. Scoones (1999) points out that

the increasing recognition of the need to go beyond the restrictive nature-culture divide pushes us to challenge other unhelpful dichotomizations and so encourages a more integrative style of enquiry. Such an approach [...] looks at scientific and local knowledge together, and integrates the natural and the social in exploring environmental change. [...] it is the interaction between these two perspectives - socially constructed perceptions and representations and real processes of biophysical change and ecological dynamics - that is key to policy and practice. (*ibid*:507)

When it comes to research, the implications of the integrated perspective that both Svedin (1999) and Scoones (1999) call for is a challenge for researchers who are used to discipline-specific modes of thinking. Researchers from different disciplines need to meet and attempt to connect and combine the ideas and results from their respective fields, as well as target new areas of research that have previously fallen in-between disciplines. Gibbons *et al.* (1994) speak of the emergence of a whole new process of knowledge creation - “mode 2” - where co-operation and interdisciplinarity<sup>4</sup> are cornerstones. In a later work, some of these authors also address the dynamic relationship between science and society (Nowotny *et al.*, 2001) and discuss other types of reforms that the research community has to go through in order to achieve greater integration on various levels. Authors like Décamps (2000) also point out that research is increasingly expected to answer to society’s needs, and that there will have to be improvements in the communicating of research results to the general public. Indeed, conducting research in the environment-development sphere is a heavy responsibility for the individual researcher.

The research task becomes even more complicated when it comes to research that, like the present study, is preformed by a researcher from a Western<sup>5</sup> country but addresses issues in rural Africa. Many authors have pointed to the history of research and interventions by Western agents in Africa, which have been guided by problematic views of the continent and its people. In the West, Africa has often been represented as the ultimate ‘otherness’, defined mainly in terms of what it is lacking there in contrast to the West (*c.f.* Appiah, 1992; Eriksson Baaz, 2001; Hall, 1992; Mbembe 2001;

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<sup>4</sup> The word that Gibbons *et al.* use here is actually *transdisciplinarity*, but they seem to mean the same concept as the other authors have referred to, so for the sake of simplicity, the word *interdisciplinarity* is used here instead

<sup>5</sup> With ‘West’ I refer here to the cultural sphere that is constituted mainly by Europe and North America. I do recognise that this is far from a homogenous and bounded sphere and that there are problems connected to this conceptualisation. Nevertheless, it is a useful concept for some of the points I want to make and I will therefore use it for lack of a better alternative.

Nyamnjoh, 2000; Palmberg, 2001b) and seen as a continent almost without culture and history (Palmberg, 2001a), lagging behind on an evolutionary scale compared to the West (Eriksson Baaz, 2001). This view of Africa as inferior to the West has led to 'top-down', interventionist research and planning in various spheres, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Connecting this view of Africa the West with the problem of discipline-specific approaches, Hjort af Ornäs and Svedin (1992) point out that the strict division of our complex world into exclusive disciplines is an approach that is strongly biased by Western cultural ideas, which historically have had a preference for simplified, dichotomous representations of phenomena. Van Binsbergen *et al.* (2004:35) give several examples of such "facile binary oppositions" that have been constructed between the West and Africa, such as rich-poor, order-chaos, democracy-tyranny, developed-underdeveloped, civilized-uncivilised and scientifically rational-superstitious and magical. A Western researcher studying local perspectives and behaviour in rural Africa thus has to be aware of how her own perspective and biases affect the results of the research.

Theoretically and methodologically, insights about complexity in the world and the problematic Western view of Africa have led to the emergence of various approaches and methodologies that I have used as inspiration to structure my own approach to the research project. The general guiding principles of constructivism, interdisciplinarity, and relativism have been helpful as well as the more specific methodologies of Grounded Theory and participatory research. These concepts and how they have influenced my research will now be discussed.

## Constructivism and Interdisciplinarity

The recognition that the world is complex and thus needs to be studied while recognising this complexity has reflected on methodologies in the form that authors increasingly advocate flexible, learning process approaches, the "courage to rethink processes" (Goldman *et al.*, 2000:4), and cross-disciplinary endeavours. Meppem and Bourke (1999) point out that it is important that a constructivist approach should underlie the way the environment and development discourse is approached, since this reminds researchers that we are not discussing 'truths', but are theorising, interpreting and creating different narratives. Meppem and Bourke (1999) criticize the current situation from this viewpoint

the scientific/economic narrative, which dominates the environmental debate, is supported by self-referential analytical and instrumental tools, models and surveys, which consciously and coercively attempt to verify the certitude of their own a priori 'truth claims'. (*ibid*:391)

Meppem and Bourke (1999) also argue that it is not possible to solve the problems in the world by relying on the same ways of thinking and knowing that created these problems. New or alternative ways of thinking need to be explored, and the current disciplinary divides constrain a holistic view of the world. Cross-disciplinary approaches therefore are more likely to generate solutions to the existing problems.

I have used a constructivist approach in that I reflect over knowledge as constructed and over narratives that may dominate a discourse. However, the departing point for my research is local perspectives, and from this perspective it would involve some arrogance to treat people's situations, which constitute concrete realities for them, only in terms of constructions and narratives on a meta-level. In my view, both this concrete and the constructive viewpoints could and should co-exist in a research project.

When it comes to interdisciplinarity, it is of course very difficult for me as a single researcher to be interdisciplinary. Though McNeill *et al.* (1999) point out that some of the best interdisciplinary research happens "within one person"; time and previous knowledge of a topic are essential factors. The efforts I have made have included taking interdisciplinary courses, reading literature from various disciplines, attending conferences and seminars of other disciplines and having supervisors from different disciplinary backgrounds. I have thus come in contact with many disciplines that are close to my own field (Human Geography), which have included Anthropology, Physical Geography, Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Environmental History, and the general Environment-Development related discourse, to which researchers with different disciplinary backgrounds contribute. I do feel that these efforts have broadened my research perspective and helped me to put my findings into context.

## Anthropological Methods and Relativism

The problematic position of a Western researcher in Africa, discussed above, has been debated for decades within anthropology. I have used various anthropological principles for ensuring that my fieldwork is of good quality. For example, I have spent a long time in field, stayed with local families in the villages and used local assistants and interpreters. Another very important anthropological principle is that the researcher needs to reflect on her role and position as an outsider and her biases and preconceived notions that influence all interactions with local people. The discussion on enculturation and ethnocentrism relates to this discourse.

Renteln defines *enculturation* as: "the idea that people unconsciously acquire the categories and standards of their culture" (1990:74), which results in individuals having automatic, culturally bound judgements that they are largely unaware of. This leads to *ethnocentrism*, i.e. that individuals of a specific cultural sphere tend to scale and rate other groups against their own

moral systems, which are regarded as superior. Ethnocentrism is thus a universal cultural trait that renders objectivity in judgements outside of one's own cultural sphere impossible.

Cultural relativism has been the proposed solution to the ethnocentric bias, but it is a method that has been criticised for being impossible to work with theoretically (e.g. by Tambiah, 1990). Renteln (1990), however, provides a very useful reading of relativism as a method. She points out that relativism is essentially about the recognition of enculturation and ethnocentrism, and not neutrality or tolerance, as many have tended to interpret it. The conclusion of some authors that relativists, because they are aware of their own ethnocentrism, should therefore be more tolerant, or even neutral, towards other cultural norms and beliefs is firmly rejected by Renteln (*ibid*) who argues: "Relativists, like everyone else, are ethnocentric ... and remain true to their own convictions" (*ibid*:77). However, she also states that: "there is no reason why the relativists should be paralysed as critics have often asserted" (*ibid*). According to Renteln, relativists may criticise activities and beliefs rooted in other cultural spheres than their own, but will at the same time acknowledge that the criticism is based on their own ethnocentric standards. Perhaps the criticism will then lose some of its force, but it does not have to be rendered impotent. She also points out that it is better to acknowledge that a criticism has certain weaknesses than to rely on false claims of universality to give the criticism unwarranted strength.

I have in my fieldwork and research tried to assume a relativist standpoint, in Renteln's interpretation. Thus, I am aware that my own cultural beliefs are influencing my interpretations of studied phenomena in South Africa. My personal beliefs about e.g. the non-existence of witchcraft, the importance I subscribe to schooling, the conviction I have that it is necessary to spread medical information about HIV, are all there because of the cultural environment I grew up in, and they are influencing this study. Having assumed a relativists standpoint, I have a responsibility to continuously examine my own views and reactions and reflect over how these are affected by the process of enculturation.

I have found that it is helpful in this process to focus on my role in field as an observer and a listener, a conveyor of information, rather than someone whose role is to pass out judgements and provide solutions. I thus have to try to put myself in the position of the people I am interviewing, try to see things from their perspectives, and convey that information to others.

## Grounded Theory

This study has been inspired by the Grounded Theory methodology, which was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 and later refined by Glaser (1978) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Grounded Theory has mainly been used in the fields of sociology and economy (Guvå and Hylander, 1998), but

in Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasise that the method is more than just a sociological method and can be used successfully by researchers of many different disciplines.

This methodology prescribes that the researcher should not start with pre-determined categories, but formulate these in the process of data collection, and that the research should be a deductive process where a theory or hypothesis is not either accepted or rejected, but reformulated and refined continuously. Glaser and Strauss (1976) further argue that many good empirical studies tend to draw grand conclusions that are very weak, instead of settling for drawing less grand, but well-grounded conclusions. The theories generated with the Grounded Theory methodology are therefore usually on a medium scale. The strength in the theory lies therefore, according to the authors, precisely in that it is well grounded and on a scale appropriate to the studied phenomena, resulting in a theory that both has substance and is reliable.

Grounded Theory has been interpreted in somewhat different ways, and some have interpreted it much more strictly than others. The original methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1976) includes a strict, rule-bounded methodology that needs to be followed in order to meet 'scientific' criteria. Guvå and Hylander (1998) point out that Grounded Theory thus is paradoxical, as it is presented as both a creatively theory-generating approach, as well as a strict and rule-bounded methodology. However, social scientists today tend not to worry as much about positivistic 'scientific' criteria, and can therefore use the theory in a more flexible manner. Goldstein-Kyaga (2000) argue for using only parts of Grounded Theory, combining it with other methods, and developing it to fit the purpose of the researcher's specific research topic.

Grounded Theory is an interesting and inspiring methodology for researchers who, like myself, embark on a journey into unknown territories, where listening to the research subjects is a prerequisite for achieving an understanding of situations that are unfamiliar to the researcher. Without the possibility to change research questions and foci, and the flexibility to generate theory creatively and continuously, the study of local, small-scale worlds becomes very difficult, even meaningless. I have thus used Grounded Theory as a research approach and an inspiration to create the research process as I go along, but I have avoided becoming bound by the strict methodological criteria it prescribes.

## Participatory Research

Participatory research, the origins of which can be traced back at least 50 years (Davis and Reid, 1999), has lately become increasingly popular with researchers, and especially when it comes to research in the environment-development sphere and in 'developing countries'. The principles of partici-

patory research have been important inspiration points for this research project, and have helped me to ensure the good quality of the fieldwork.

The most important aspect of participatory research is perhaps its actor-oriented approach, where people are regarded as agents rather than objects, capable of analysing their own situations and designing their own solutions. Participatory research has been used in many different research areas, such as sociology (e.g. Stoecker, 1999; Williams, 1999; Yeich, 1996), health research (e.g. Davis and Reid, 1999; Dickinson *et al.*, 1998; Rispel *et al.*, 1996), feminist research (e.g. Joyappa and Martin, 1996), and of course anthropological and environment/development research (e.g. Micaels, 2001; Taylor, 1999; Davis and Whittington, 1998; Goebel, 1998; Lykes, 1997).

Participatory research in practice means that the research subjects are actively involved in the research process, which is conducted on their terms and seeks to address their problems. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) lift out the issue of respect and understanding for local people: “ultimately, participatory research is about respecting and understanding the people with and for whom researchers work” (*ibid*:1674). Davis and Reid (1999) also stress the issue of relevance in participatory research:

At its essence, participatory research seeks to improve the quality of life of the people studied by involving them in the research process and by using their knowledge in the search for relevant solutions to relevant problems. (*ibid*:757S)

The participatory methodology, just like Grounded Theory, thus requires the researcher to continually adapt their approaches and learn cumulatively from their experiences. A difference between the methodologies, however, is that participatory research stresses the need to use categories provided by informants and to recognize the critical importance of local knowledge in the research process (*c.f.* Chambers, 1994, and for South Africa e.g. Binns *et al.*, 1997; Malan, 2000).

Participatory research is often equated with Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, but there are important distinctions between these methodologies. PRA was developed in the 1980s, through combining methodologies from participatory research, anthropology, and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) were combined. Chambers (e.g. 1994) among many others has written extensively on this form of participatory field evaluation, which has been useful in various development projects and planning. PRA has, however, often proven to be a somewhat blunt and too ‘quick’ tool for academic research (*c.f.* Goebel, 1998). In this project, I have used participatory research but I have not seen the need for using specific PRA techniques. Since I have been able to communicate easily with people in the study area, and have had quite a lot of time for fieldwork, I have found interviews, discus-

sions and participation in activities to be the most straightforward tools for collection of data.

According to some authors, participatory research implies much more than mere academically useful results. Davis and Reid (1999) claim that participatory research entails a commitment to action, which means that:

the researchers cannot simply walk away after completing the research and collecting and analysing the data. They must follow the process through to the accomplishment of some action for the community, such as changes in policy, programs, services, regulations, or the allocation of resources. This approach not only strengthens intercultural bonding between researchers and communities but ensures that neither party will feel short-changed at the end of the process. (*ibid*:757Sf)

This commitment to action is then again not always easy to put into practice. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) observe that it can be very difficult to reconcile the needs for action with ‘academic’ criteria for research. Many times, researchers may have good intentions but lack the funding to respond to the needs and requests of the communities, which might put stress on the researchers who find themselves in-between the widely different demands of local communities, funding agencies and the academia. I encountered this problem myself – being a PhD student with a very modest budget and working alone in the project, my resources for action in the communities were limited. I had to settle for small things, like providing some employment for local assistants and paying local families for providing accommodation for me, donating my aerial photographs to the local NGO and printing out the village data and maps and giving to the local communities. These things are, however, very far from the type of ‘action’ often advocated in texts on participatory research.

Participation in itself may also be easy to discuss in principle, but difficult to achieve in practice (*c.f.* Jassey, 2004). As will be further discussed later, people in the studied villages are used to outsiders coming to tell them what to do rather than asking for their opinions, and it would be naïve to think that local people would ever stop conceptualising the research project that I brought to their village than anything else than ‘my’ project, whether they are a very active part of it or not. To me, the high-aiming principles of participatory research seem sometimes like an idealised wish list rather than something that is actually realisable. In this project, I have had the principles of participatory research in mind and used them as loose guidelines for my methodology, but I can certainly not claim to have adhered to them, which I suspect that no researcher can.

## Local Worlds and Planning from Above

After having settled the more general theoretical and methodological standpoints that this study is based on, I will now turn the attention towards local worlds as a general point of departure for my research. These worlds are part of various complicated contexts and affected by planning from above, which entails both national policies and the global influences that affect these policies. These contexts of local worlds will here be probed to some extent, while the next section on livelihoods approaches will more specifically describe how the local perspectives have been investigated in the study area.

### Beginning with the Local Perspective

The present study should be seen in the light of the increased attention that has recently been given to local perspectives. It will focus mainly on the local level, but highlighting the linkages between this level and national-level policies. A crucial aspect of the study is thus the fact it views these linkages ‘from below’, starting at the local level.

In the social sciences, the concept of locality has given rise to debates about how it should be defined, especially in terms of boundaries (O’Riordan and Voisey, 2001). ‘Locality’ has been compared the term to ‘community’, which has similarly been used by social scientists to explain differences between places at different times. However, both of these concepts seem difficult to define in practice. O’Riordan and Voisey (2001) start by pointing out that the various terms relating to the local (locality, localism, localisation), all point to a place, and almost by definition, to the distinctiveness of that place. In this study, I use the term local use in this specific sense of indicating the distinctiveness of a locality. Thus, when I refer to ‘local people’<sup>6</sup>, this should not be seen as a homogenous category across the world, on the contrary, by using this term I am trying to put special emphasis on the potential distinctiveness of the people in particular localities – potential because I do not want to be deterministic on the other hand and claim that every locality is unique and can have no similarities with other localities.

There are two ways to approach research on the issue of the global-local continuum, as noted by Hjort af Ornäs (1998). On the one hand one can take a point of departure in global environment and development issues, a perspective from which local circumstances constitute various consequences of

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<sup>6</sup> “Local people” should also not be conceived of as a homogenous unit *within* a specific locality. There are great individual differences between people, and also significant divides in the community based on gender, age, family groups etc. Stratification and power relations within local communities are furthermore very important parts of livelihoods analyses. I will make references to local divisions, the stratification issue and individual differences between people several times in this study and include these issues in the analysis.

policy decisions and lessons to be learned from for future policy. On the other hand, the point of departure can be the local reality, where global processes and specific policies are a part of given circumstances that are handled in different ways. On a local level, feelings of security and assurance become central (*c.f.* Hjort af Ornäs, 1996). This divide between levels is exemplified through the South African policies of natural resource use restrictions, which will be further probed as a special case study for this project. In this case, policies that on a national level have been developed in order to protect marine life, which is globally becoming increasingly threatened, are on a local level felt mainly as a fear of encountering a patrolling ranger when one goes fishing. The fact that local people have not understood the regulations and try to circumvent them in different ways, is again on the national level viewed as an 'implementation problem' that needs to be evaluated and will probably lead to heavier restrictions.

Most research has so far taken the top-down approach to study global-local connections, i.e. they have started from the global or national level. Fay (2003) points out that research more often focuses on what is in laws and policies instead of what is happening in reality when these are implemented, even though realities often are far removed from the statements in documents. In Hjort af Ornäs (1989), however, the author looks at micro/macro relations represented by people who struggle to secure a livelihood under hard circumstances and the nations that harbour these people. By providing detailed case study examples, he illustrates the complexity of livelihood systems and strategies. A point that is made is that there needs to be an understanding about these micro-issues at the macro level in order to have the capability to conduct relevant and successful assessment or planning. In *Multilayered Governance*, Karlsson (2000) studies the issue of pesticide use on three levels - the global, national and local levels and shows how conceptualisations of the issue are widely different depending on the perspective.

How is locality then best analysed? It has been stressed (e.g. by Kraidy, 1999) that ethnographic methods lend themselves specifically well for the task of understanding lived experiences at local levels. It is, however, important to note that that the local community should not in this analysis be seen as an isolated island or a dichotomous construction between the local and the state and/or global processes – a standpoint that e.g. Agrawal and Sivaramakrishnan (2000) point out as problematic. Rather, the local here represents complex and diverse social formations, identities and perspectives in a constantly changing interaction with ecological processes and socio-economic institutions and processes on different levels.

In this research project, my point of departure has been the local worlds of two villages in rural South Africa, and I have employed a wide range of ethnographic methods in attempting to grasp various local realities. The main focus has been on local livelihoods and issues connected to these, as seen from the perspective of local people. Issues that come from outside or above

and affect local livelihoods have thus firstly been identified at the local level, and then followed upwards through the implementation hierarchy, which has given a completely different perspective than if these issues had been firstly identified at a global or national level.

## Conceptualisation of Local Worlds in Planning Contexts

Local worlds tend to be far removed from the worlds of decision-makers and planners. As O’Riordan and Voisey (2001) point out, the people planning national policies are influenced by discussions in the international arena and have to adopt a global-national perspective, e.g. on issues such as sustainability. Such global-national perspectives often stand in contrast to local circumstances and the way that local people perceive their situations. This poses a problem as it is ultimately on the local level that policies are implemented and impacts felt. Hjort af Ornäs and Lundqvist (1999) write:

there is usually a [...] profound difference between local conceptualisations and those representing values and approaches at higher levels in society. At the aggregate, policy-making level, problems are not experienced personally, but are ‘approached’ through professional obligations and interests. This is, of course, fundamentally different from the perception of people who are directly affected. Moreover, it is ironic that problems which constitute concrete threats and worries at one level, offer jobs and career opportunities at another level (*ibid*:6f).

The gap in experience and perception and the unequal power relations between policy-makers and local people create, when policies are implemented, a feeling among local people that they are not in control of their own fate. It decreases their willingness to accept and participate in policy decisions. In this study I will show in that the paths of communication from local people to decision-makers often are muddled or even non-existent. Feedback mechanisms tend to be weak, and local people who are affected by different policies and projects can in general influence the construction of these projects very little. Due to this common problem, I argue that the responsibility for correctly understanding local worlds and incorporating the needs felt locally into the policies that affect those localities, must lie to a large extent on policy-makers, researchers and global institutions. However, the understandings of local worlds at national and global levels are often weak, and there is arbitrariness in the understandings of local people’s needs and actions, which are often constructed to serve various interests, be they professional, political or research-related.

This study takes an empirical point of departure in the locally perceived experience, but it probes the gap between local perceptions and national policies. The ways that local worlds have previously been misconceptualised, why this has occurred and how it has led to past policies failing, is

therefore important for this study. I will therefore in the following sections go into some details on this topic, which is furthermore relevant since I will show that many of the same mistakes and misconceptualisation are still being made today.

### **Viewing Local Worlds Through the Biased Western Eye**

I previously touched on the fact that Africa historically has been represented through a Western perspective and viewed as ‘inferior’ compared to the West in various ways. This situation still exists in very real ways today. As van Binsbergen *et al.* (2004) point out, Europe and the United States are at a core of a hegemonic “North-Atlantic” cultural sphere where the blueprints of the ‘right’ global economy, politics, morality and ethics is being powerfully forged and disseminated across the world. This is a paradigm that according to Nyamnjoh (2000:5) is highly “impatient with alternative systems of thought and practice”.

Eriksson Baaz (2005) shows that the idea of ‘evolutionary development’ still lingers in many discourses and conceptions about African localities. According to this idea, Europeans have reached further on an evolutionary scale of development compared to Africans. Thus, African realities today are seen as reflections of realities in the Western past, and due to this “time lag”, Western people can relate to the African reality since it has once been experienced in the West, and they also know what to do in Africa today in order to achieve certain ends. An example of these ideas is that small-scale farming methods in Africa today are often compared to farming in Europe before the industrial revolution, and that it is assumed that the same things that led to the ‘effectivisation’ of European agriculture can be applied to African agriculture with the same result. In this line of reasoning, factors such as the radically different soils, geology, climate, infrastructure, social and cultural practices of various African localities are thus disregarded.

This conception that “Western is better” is not only widespread in the West, but within African states as well, and is applied often and on all levels – in e.g. economy, politics, development programmes, education, healthcare, religion, popular culture and lifestyle. Nyamnjoh (2000:5) argues that “this has meant that “development to the Africans thus entails self-denial [...] and glorification of everything Western”. This belief manifests itself continuously when discussing with people also in South Africa, whether it is about genetically modified crops that are assumed to be superior to locally bred varieties, or any other commercial products or ideas that come from that glorious place, ‘overseas’.

However, authors caution against viewing this ‘westernisation’ as a simple process of cultural domination, which tends to reproduce the view of Africans as ‘passive victims’ of oppression (*c.f.* van Binsbergen *et al.*, 2004; Nyamnjoh, 2000). The result has been a more nuanced view, where both power relations and the individual's active choices are acknowledged (e.g.

Hall, 1992). The notion of 'cultural hybridisation' has come to question notions of separately bounded cultures that can be 'spoiled' through contact with other cultures<sup>7</sup> (Eriksson Baaz, 2001).

Africa-centred approaches, such as Pan-African or Afrocentric theory, call for Africans to depart from their own philosophical traditions, and to acknowledge Africanness as something positive instead of debasing it simply because it does not fit the Western blueprint. Pan-Africanist thinking, however, sometimes implies that there is some central body of ideas that is shared by Africans generally. This is an idea that has received much critique (*c.f.* Appiah, 1992; Eriksson Baaz, 2001), pointing out that the idea is inherently racist in this regard, and reproduces a racial identity that instead ought to be dissolved. The Afrocentric idea should be capable of questioning North-Atlantic hegemony without suggesting an African equivalent, and instead advocate that individuals and societies in Africa depart from their own current ideals and perceptions of what is right, no matter what roots these ideas may have, and build on these.

The discussion on what is 'traditionally' African is related to this discussion, and is entangled in a complex web of connotations of backwardness at the same time as it is sometimes lifted out as a symbol of African pride. The word "traditional" has in the African context come to mean something that is ancient, unchanged over time, old-fashioned, but exotic and romantic. Supposedly 'traditional' practices are often seen as primordial cultural customs that are today still remaining from lack of contestation, and Feierman (1990) shows how especially African peasants have usually not been seen as active cultural creators in academic writing. In planning, 'traditional' practices are sometimes treated with uneasy ambiguity, as Bentley (2004) and Ntsebeza (1999) points out when it comes to 'traditional leaders' in South Africa.

This meaning of 'traditional' does not hold, however, if cultural practices are seen as fluid and are continuously reinvented. Ferguson (1990) argues that such practices should instead be seen as dynamic parts of current social life, which are challenged, defended and re-established in everyday life, due to very real contemporary social forces. He exemplifies this with the issue of livestock practices in Lesotho, an example that is more thoroughly discussed on page 152.

Africa has thus been influenced by Western thinking over a long time and on many levels and moreover, African states and institutions are still financially tied to Western ideas, e.g. through the many conditionalities that Western countries tie to their development aid money. In the following chapter, the problematic biased Western viewpoint will be illustrated when prob-

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<sup>7</sup> Over the past decade, debates within anthropology have led to a general rejection the idea that separate and bounded 'cultures' exist. Today, anthropologists prefer to talk about 'cultural' phenomena, and recognise that these are continuously changing and should be conceptualised as "dynamic processes of meaning-making and the construction of social difference" (Löfving, 2005).

ing the relationship between international organisations and development aid, national policy-making and local reactions to policies in the African context.

### **Implementation of Western Ideas in African Localities**

Seemingly isolated local worlds in Africa are thus very much parts of global agendas in terms of aid and development strategies as well as through various national policies that are, as discussed, often influenced by global goals and Western ideas. The notion of 'development' has been the Western idea that has had most profound impacts on local areas across Africa. This notion, as it has been most commonly defined and interpreted, was elaborated after the Second World War, when it rapidly became synonymous with economic growth and the implementation of macro-economic policies. That development in the 'Third World' was to be accelerated through aid from the 'First World', was decided at the Bretton Woods conference in the US, and the task of forming the basis for such a world order was given to three newly conjured organisations; these have, after some transformations, come to be known as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the World Bank (Friman, 2002). As Lopes (2005) notes, this process led to obvious biases:

the Marshall Plan, the beginning of the Cold War, the highly politicised environment and the existence of colonial powers all contributed to the shaping of current development cooperation architecture. The creation of a long-lasting Northern-dominated paradigm was an obvious outcome of history (*ibid*:7).

Over the decades, the idea of development and development aid has grown to become a substantial global industry, as is shown by Ferguson (1990) in his comprehensive anthropological analysis of the 'development' apparatus, *The Anti-Politics Machine*<sup>8</sup>. Ferguson argues that development efforts have been mainly directed at 'projects' of different kinds, and especially rural development projects (which will be discussed in more detail shortly). Along with many other authors (e.g. Nyamnjoh, 2000; Oyugi, 2004; Rajbhandari, 2002), he points out that the 'development' project so far has failed in many substantial ways.

Many authors have probed the problems of 'development' and why it has proven to be so difficult to apply at a local level (*c.f.* Abram and Waldren, 1998). According to Eriksson Baaz (2005), many post-development texts identify lingering Eurocentrism and cultural imperialism as the key issue. In line with the previously discussed evolutionary ideas, a strong focus in development projects has been put on technical transfers of expertise from the

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<sup>8</sup> As Lipton (1993) argues however, parts this quite famous critique of the development industry in which grand and conspiratory conclusions are drawn is built on a selective analysis of a very limited case study.

West. The understanding of 'capacity' has thus for a long time been influenced by the concrete worlds of various forms of engineering and a vertical, sector-specific transfer of technology in fields such as water management, energy generation and health systems has come to dominate. Meppem and Bourke (1999) have named it "technofix" – a fix-it mentality focused on simple solutions, which does not recognize the complex and interconnected nature of environments, societies and values discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

As pointed out before, the tendency to conceptualise Western ideas as 'better' than local ideas is also reproduced by various African institutions and agents. The problems discussed above are similarly not only a phenomenon present in the world of international aid, but exists also on national levels. For example, various recent 'development' policies of the South African government have been criticised for being too neo-liberal and focused on 'technofix' (Kepe 2001a, 2001b; Cousins and Kepe, 2004), which I will return to in the analysis of results from the study area.

The problems with the local implementation of policies for development discussed above will be illustrated more concretely in the following sections. The specific problems connected to agricultural policies, policies for local job creation and policies for conservation/restriction of natural resource use will be described and discussed. These three types of policies are all represented in the South African study area and have had significant effects on local livelihoods there. In Chapter 8 I will analyse these South African policies in more detail and put them in relation to the theoretical discussion in this chapter.

### *Agricultural Policies*

As Ferguson (1990) describes, agriculture has probably been the livelihood activity targeted most often by interventionist 'development' policies. This fact is strongly connected to the Eurocentrism and evolutionary development idea discussed above, where it has been assumed that the industrialisation of agriculture that took place in Europe could be easily reproduced in Africa through technological transfer. This idea, connected to a belief in 'technofix' in terms of the 'Green Revolution' type of new seeds and techniques, led to agricultural development through 'effectivisation' being heavily promoted over decades in Africa by institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, a policy that has proven to be fundamentally flawed and misguided (e.g. Scoones and Woolmer, 2003). Many authors (e.g. Pretty, 2002; Rajbhandari, 2002) have argued that these systems did not benefit the poor and marginalized people, and have instead created environmental pollution, soil structure degradation and depletion of plant genetic resources. Nevertheless, these ideas have still not been abandoned, and today, agricultural development policies are still being implemented across the continent as well as in rural

Transkei. Recently, the controversial genetically modified (GM) crop systems have been introduced into these policies.

Many interventionist agricultural policies depart from a comparison between subsistence agriculture and commercial agriculture in terms of effectiveness and yields, and thus draw the conclusion that subsistence agriculture is ineffective and should be improved through mechanisation, new seeds, fertilisers and pesticides. Industrial farming systems where the cultural embeddedness of food and food production has been lost are, however, not necessarily more effective, argues Pretty (2002), who shows that sustainable agriculture, founded on ecological principles and in harmony with people, their societies and cultural beliefs, has proven successful. Citing a survey looking at more than 200 sustainable agriculture projects in Asia, Latin America and Africa, he shows how food production close to doubled on average in these projects, along with other benefits, such as increased diversity in farming and food consumption. These small-scale agro-ecological projects focused on factors like soil health improvements, erosion control, increased efficiency in water use, and pest and weed control with low or no pesticide use. Rajbhandari (2002) also points to success stories at micro level with bio-intensive farming system (BIF) that promote for example organic manure, scientific crop rotations, mixed and inter-cropping and conservation of local plant genetic resources.

Another aspect of this massive focus on agricultural development is that it focuses on the 'technical' instead of the (uncomfortable) political part of the problem. Thomson (2001) points out that the main achievement at the World Food Summit was the mainstream acknowledgement that food security is not so much a question about availability of food, but about household access to it. This means, as writers within political ecology have also argued (*c.f.* Bailey and Bryant, 1997; Neumann, 2005), that the problem is not that there are too many people in the world, nor is it that agricultural productivity is too low, but rather that the distribution of resources in the world is unequal. It also means that world food production could well ensure food security for the world's population, if the resources were more evenly distributed, and that approaches to control population growth or to increase yields through modification of crops have not targeted the most difficult and crucial aspect of the problem.

### *Policies for Local Job Creation*

The failure of many agricultural policies and the realisation that poor people do not depend on agriculture alone has led to an increasing focus job-creation as a development policy. Most of these policies have focused on local capacity building and job creation in the form of small businesses. The idea of microfinance has in this context received much attention and been hailed as a highly effective poverty alleviation strategy. Microfinance programmes build on the idea that poor people can be given small loans, with

which they can start up livelihood activities and then eventually repay the loans with low or no interest. This belief in this strategy is so strong the United Nations even declared 2005 the 'year of microcredit', and there is talk of a "microfinance revolution" (e.g. Swain and Liljefrost, 2005). Authors such as Copestake (2002) point to the fact that microcredit is seen as a market-friendly method for poverty reduction as one of the main reasons behind its popularity.

There are, however, authors who point to problems of microfinance. Copestake (2002) found in a survey of a microfinance programme in Zambia that only a minority of the credit clients (most of whom had been doing comparatively well before the credit was given) were successful in their businesses and had no problems repaying their debts, while around half of the clients "struggled to service their debts and exited within a year of joining, probably financially worse off as a result of taking loans" (*ibid*:753). Mosley and Rock (2004) agree that microfinance generally does not reach the poorest parts of the population, though they point to the fact that it may have important 'spin-off' effects, for example through reciprocal institutions in society.

As I will also show, one problem is that when money in a poor household has been secured, even if it is through a loan, there is a risk that it will be spent on more pressing necessities than to start up a business, e.g. schooling for children, medicines for sick people and funerals for deceased relatives (see also e.g. Liljefrost, 2005). To avoid microcredit clients who cannot repay their loans, much discussion in the literature on microfinance has centred on what type of poor people are 'appropriate' loan takers. Microfinance strategies have accordingly received criticism for "compartmentalizing" poor people, and portraying them as belonging to different homogenous categories that are to be targeted through different measures. These categories are then discussed as if they actually existed, instead of just as constructions to aid analysis and adjustment (Liljefrost, 2005).

Another problem with microfinance is that the projects often have quite rigid views of what a small business should look like and lack insight into local social and cultural aspects of the issue. In this study, I will show that a microfinance project failed to recognise existing flourishing or emerging small businesses that built on local knowledge of what was an economically feasible business idea in the village, and instead promoted ideas that might sound good in theory but that did not work for various reasons in reality.

As various development projects over the past decades have failed, and as it has increasingly been accepted that this is often due to a lack of local perspective and a Eurocentric 'technofix' mentality, researchers have increasingly argued that the power over their own development should be transferred to local people themselves. The responsibility for devising ways of getting out of poverty, be it through starting up businesses, investing in agriculture, education or something else, would thus lie with local people. Han-

lon (2004) quotes Meghnad Desai at London School of Economics who comments: “We are not giving enough attention to how poor people get themselves out of poverty. We always assume that we must do it for them” (*ibid*:382). Accordingly, development initiatives have increasingly shifted focus from agricultural projects tightly controlled from outside, through microfinance that in theory builds on local ideas, towards various forms of unconditional income transfer, such as pensions and welfare grants. In South Africa, the non-contributory pension system has proven a highly effective measure of poverty relief and has stimulated rural businesses and increased the quality of life for many rural families (the pension system will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter).

Hanlon (2004) takes this one step further and argues that money set aside for rural development (from development aid funds, or in South Africa’s case, from the state budget) would best serve its purpose if it were used as a simple, unconditional income transfer to every citizen of a country. This idea, conceptualised as a ‘Basic Income Grant’, is currently discussed in South Africa. He argues that such a procedure, even though it transfers money also to the non-poor, still keeps administrative costs significantly lower than in current poverty relief related projects, while ensuring that all poor people are targeted<sup>9</sup>. Bentley (2004) also point to the additional advantage that such a grant would empower women, since the resources are distributed to men and women equally.

However, the idea of an income transfer to poor people meets massive resistance through the aid dependency discourse, which is one of the most powerful contemporary ideas in development aid, as Eriksson Baaz (2005) shows. According to this discourse, development aid has created a culture of passivity and dependence, since people become used to “just getting money for nothing”. Eriksson Baaz shows how poor people in Africa often are constructed as ‘passive’, in a previously discussed binary opposition to ‘active’ Westerners, and thus can be blamed for their own poverty. She thus points out that there is thus a Eurocentric paternalism hiding in the aid dependency discourse as well.

### *Policies for Conservation and Resource Use Restrictions*

Policies of nature conservation and restrictions in local natural resource use have affected local livelihoods across Africa for more than a century, and continue to do so today. As with other policies discussed above, conservation in Africa has built on ideas and methods transferred from the West, as Pimbert and Pretty (1997) point out. The felt need that led to the rise of na-

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<sup>9</sup> Hanlon (2004) also cites examples of such transfers working successfully in Mozambique, and shows that the distributed money had a stimulating effect on both the local and national economy, and that people used the money prudently, even though there were no criteria attached to receiving it.

ture conservation in the USA was to protect nature in National Parks in order to prevent large-scale exploitation in the form of mining and logging. The idea was transferred to developing countries, where it was translated into nature needing protection from the 'harmful' effects of local use, by 'uneducated' people.

Maddox (2002) point out that ironically, conservation in Africa in fact often meant that resource use rights were transferred from African communities towards extractive firms. Conservation efforts in Africa have, perhaps due to this paternalistic view of local people's knowledge, been enforced with tremendous rigour, and especially so in South Africa, as Carruthers (1997) and Beinart (2003) argues. The policies have had highly detrimental effects for local communities, who have been chased from their lands and livelihoods without compensation due to the idea of nature conservation (Pretty, 2003). Paternalism when it comes to African resource users becomes especially clear when local people who might depend on resource use for their survival are denied user rights in the name of conservation at the same time as the resource use and negative environmental effects of tourists and 'recreational' users is disregarded (Pimbert and Pretty, 1997).

Berger (1996) also gives an example of how conservation efforts ironically led to decreased biodiversity, since the ecosystem that needed to be "protected" in fact had co-evolved together with human beings. This image, that some landscapes in Africa have evolved without the influence of humans and thus represent 'true wilderness' is often constructed and reinforced even today, as Dahlberg (2005) shows in the case of the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Several authors discuss the history of the myth of "Wild Africa" and the psychological function of African environments in the European mind, and point out that Europeans have preferred to see these environments a special kind of 'Eden', that can be visited on exciting wilderness safaris, rather than as a complex and changing environment in which people actually live (Adams and McShane, 1996; Anderson and Grove, 1987).

Pretty (2002) points to the fact that this myth, that 'true wilderness' is untouched and unshaped by humans, not only leads to skewed ideas about conservation, but also implies that nature in for example agricultural lands is largely worthless. Pretty (2002) goes on to stress that the reasoning thus seems to be that if 'real' nature is protected in 'untouched' pockets, then environmentally damaging activities, such as industrial logging and intensive agriculture in other places, can be safely ignored. These issues are connected to the African degradation narrative that will be discussed in the next section.

## The Degradation Narrative

In this study, I will argue that the African degradation narrative affects the view of local livelihoods and the state of environmental resources in the study area. This narrative sums up much of what has previously been discussed in terms of constructed narratives, Western ethnocentrism biasing the view of African localities, worries over nature conservation and failed implementation of various policies in Africa.

Much of Africa is still today portrayed in the West as environmentally degraded. In the last decade, however, a new generation of empirical researchers have re-examined many of the narratives of past environments and present degradation in different parts of Africa, challenging firmly held beliefs and dispelling myths surrounding these issues (e.g. Fairhead and Leach, 1995, 1996; Leach and Mearns, 1996; McCann, 1999; Ovuka, 2000). They recognise a “degradation narrative” in Africa, which according to Hoben (1995) is partly rooted in an old, resilient myth about Africa’s past and present – i.e. that people lived in harmony with nature in the past and due to bad practices, colonialism, overpopulation (the explanations vary) they are presently degrading their environment.

This generalised environmental degradation is often connected with a view of the local population as highly dependent on environmental resources and a tendency to blame poverty on environmental degradation and local incompetence in land use (Kepe, 2005b). Local people are seen as overexploiting the resources because of ignorance, and/or because they are in dire need and can thus not be expected to care for conservation ideals (e.g. Moffat, 1998). In fact, this idea of the connection between poverty and degradation is so strong that degradation of natural resources is often simply assumed in areas of widespread poverty, as Farrington *et al.* (1999) show in their study area.

Maddox traces this narrative of environmental degradation caused by African land-use practices and growing populations back to the views of early British colonial officials. Anderson and Grove pointed out, already in 1987, how Western media was creating the image of an 'environmental crisis' in Africa, adding "well-managed – environmentally degraded" to the binary oppositions constructed between Europe and Africa discussed above. Today, the narrative fills the function of focusing the problem and its solution on local, technical solutions, instead of acknowledging its uncomfortable political and structural connotations (Bailey and Bryant, 1997; Neumann, 2005).

The perhaps most well known example of the body of literature on the "African degradation myth" is Fairhead and Leach’s work from 1996 entitled *Misreading the African landscape*. They show how the savannah landscape in their West African study area has been misread by administrators, policy-makers, scientists, development agencies and NGOs. These actors have conveyed the image of the savannah landscape as degraded in a massive body of

scientific texts, policy documents and popular media, resulting in these images' perpetuation in the everyday discourse on the environment. A firm conviction on many levels holds that the area has been originally covered by a dense forest, which the inhabitants have converted into a savannah through their practices of e.g. shifting cultivation and fire management. Fairhead and Leach (1996) show that the local population "provide quite different readings of their landscape and its making [...] representing their landscape as half-filled and filling with forest, not half-emptied and emptying of it" (*ibid*:2). Through air photography, archival and oral sources they show that forests may be the result of human settlements in the first place rather than in danger of disappearing because of them, thus challenging the dominant degradation narrative in their study area.

Another example in the same field of research is Dahlberg's work (1996, 2000). She challenges another dominant degradation narrative in Botswana, which states that environmental degradation is taking place through bush encroachment on former grazing areas, due to overgrazing. Showing that the bush vegetation is in fact growing on former agricultural plots that have been left to fallow, she points out that this is a natural process of forest regeneration where the initial dense bush is later replaced by a more varied vegetation pattern. This relates to a long-standing debate started by Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons* in 1968 (see also Hardin, 1999) where the 'traditional' system of communal tenure for grazing lands has been blamed for causing degradation. This issue is by Agrawal and Sivaramakrishnan (2000) taken as an example of a simplified analytical model, where pastoralists are assumed to want to increase their herds to unsustainable extents, in pursuit of short-sighted winnings. This analytical model, however, assumes a perspective of pastoralists without considering their links with various environments, agricultural worlds, and social contexts. Ovuka (2000) also contradict Hardin's opinion, and range ecologists Homewood and Rodgers (1987) have long argued that rangelands with communal tenure in Africa are not generally degraded, contrary to still widespread perceptions.

### **Degradation Narratives in Transkei and South Africa**

In South Africa, the former 'homelands' are usually described as severely overpopulated and environmentally degraded. There is plenty of literature on this issue (some of which will be related in more detail in the section on Transkei, page 77), written by both researchers and governmental bodies that seek to address the problems today. Environmental degradation and conflicts over resources due to overpopulation, over-utilisation of land as well as a lack of capable management and planning, are all commonly recurring themes in this literature (e.g. Crais, 2003; DEAT, 1996a, 2003; Durning, 1990; LAPC, 1995; McAllister, 1992; Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs, 2001; Sowman 1993).

Though environmental degradation in some areas of the homelands is a well-established fact, degradation tends to be exaggerated and generalised to all areas of all homelands. Thus, Transkei is often regarded as generally degraded, though this particular homeland has not been as overpopulated as many other homelands, and though there are regions, such as Pondoland where this case study is located, that are fairly sparsely populated and endowed with plentiful natural resources in the form of forests, ample rainfall and good grazing lands (Beinart, 2002a). From this perspective, Bundy's (1972) claims that the homelands with time deteriorated "into eroded, overstocked and overcrowded rural ghettos" (*ibid*:369) and Nel and Davies' (1999) description that "the former Homelands are characterized by extreme overcrowding and frequent environmental collapse" (*ibid*:260) both seem slightly exaggerated and overly negative in a generalising way.

The explanation given to degradation often carries a connotation in line with the paternalistic view, discussed above, of local people as unsustainable land users. Hoffman *et al.* (1999) in their report on *Land Degradation in South Africa* write:

In the communal areas, the status of livelihoods and policy for most of this century has meant that field crop cultivation, livestock raising and the collection of fuel and other plant material have all been conducive to land degradation. Only as the 20<sup>th</sup> century draws to a close, and 'underfarming' becomes more prominent in some communal areas, is the role of the rural poor in South African land degradation starting to diminish (*ibid*:216).

Several authors (e.g. Maddox, 2002; Beinart, 2002b) also point to a powerful popular opinion in South Africa that blames the land degradation entirely on mismanagement of land on the side of the local farmers. Maddox point to how many South Africans are of the opinion that "black people don't really know how to farm" (Maddox, 2002:251), a view that I myself often encountered among many South Africans – usually those who had never themselves been to the rural homelands.

This 'typical' view of poor people's role in land degradation often comes with a South African twist. In the case of South Africa, much of the research on environmental history that took place around the time of its transition to democracy came to the politically important conclusion that it was apartheid policies, such as the idea of homelands and the migrant labour system, that had led to degradation (Carruthers, 2002; McCann, 1999). The point that apartheid policies led to land degradation thus had a clear political relevance in these times in South Africa, as there was a strong societal need for scientific proofs of the fact that apartheid was 'bad' in many different ways and needed to be abolished. Today, however, the days of apartheid are over and very few persons doubt the correctness of its abolishment. The old explanations of apartheid-related environmental degradation were undoubtedly dis-

trekking to the government of that time, and were also a part of a political pressure put on the ruling elite to address pressing issues. Today, however, in the face of many local needs and a political pressure to address the situations in the former homelands, the fact that the degradation narrative blames the problems on past policies has become politically comfortable for the current government.

This process in South Africa that recreates and reinforces the view of the homelands as generally degraded can be connected to an example that Fairhead and Leach (2003) provides. They show how “truths” about a region, that may initially come from very questionable sources, through the co-production between media, educational material and policy can become an intertextual field of taken-for-granted truth in which the need to assert the truth scientifically no longer exist. They point to the fact that media and educational reporting in itself invites to simplification, to the creation of “juicy” stories, with clear-cut heroes and villains. Thus, penetrating and complex academic analysis is discouraged and excluded from the world of rapid policy-making, where simple solutions are in high demand.

Maddox (2002:254) argues further that scholars often “believe the narrative instead of the evidence” when it comes to degradation and its causes, and shows how scholars may selectively choose the evidence that supports the narrative and ignore evidence that counters it. The falsification is thus repeated and regenerated – while a generalised view of human-environmental interaction seems to have influenced the way in which historiography about Transkei has been written, this same historiography now influences the research on Transkeian degradation, where the degradation is taken as a predetermined ‘fact’.

As described in the introduction, I had the expectation that I would find severe degradation and conflicts over natural resources in the study area when I initiated this research project. I found neither, and furthermore, I also found that people’s dependence on natural resources is relatively low. As I will show, the effects of the natural resources use that does take place in the studied villages cannot be obviously correlated with environmental degradation or deterioration. Indeed, both colonial and apartheid policies had severe detrimental effects the study area, especially on people’s livelihoods and self-esteem, but I found no evidence to support a homogenous and hopeless picture of Transkei as a place of desperate poverty, severe degradation and soaring conflicts over resources.

Many researchers in South Africa have recently changed their views on degradation-related narratives in several important ways. McAllister (2002) points to the example of ecologists, who in the past have considered grasslands in Africa to be a ‘non-natural’ state of vegetation that would revert to forest if it were not for anthropogenic factors like grazing of cattle and human-induced fire management. However, McAllister (2002) writes that

there has been a growing school of thought that maintains that the grasslands are, in fact, an ancient vegetation form that covered as much as 60 per cent of Africa. [...] The famed African savannahs are thus probably no more than grasslands invaded by trees (*ibid*:160,168).

Looking specifically at the South African grassland biome, that covers 27% of South Africa, he shows that these vast grasslands have probably been around since before humans could have a major impact on the vegetation, and are mainly climatically controlled. Ekblom (2004) similarly argues that the preoccupation with local human use of landscapes sometimes leads to the neglect of larger-scale factors in the analyses of landscape change.

Kepe and Scoones (1999), reviewing archaeological and written sources, agree that the grasslands have dominated in the study area of this project, Pondoland, for at least 2000 years. Kepe (2005b) furthermore shows that grass burning in the study area has many functions, both ecological and social and is not as bad a practice as many conservationists declare, and the same was shown by Kull (2004) in Madagascar.

On the related topic of deforestation, Beinart (2002b) writes:

The notion that Africans have deforested the areas they occupy remains a powerful one in South African literature, especially with respect to the former African homelands. It may be correct, and pockets of dense indigenous forest have certainly been reduced in some areas. But there is limited systematic study of vegetation in these areas of South Africa over the long term.[...] South Africa as a whole is almost certainly more treed now than it has been for some centuries, because of widespread planting of exotic species in many different locales (*ibid*:21).

Again, this contrasts with the general worrying in South Africa over the loss of forests, which is manifested e.g. in the South Africa Yearbook 2002/03, where it is stated: "Forests in [...] the former Transkei area of the Eastern Cape are generally small, and those that are easily accessible have been heavily exploited in the past".

Because of the degradation narrative, even small changes in the environment tend to be regarded as 'negative trends', and further examination departs from this assumption. Dahlberg (1996), however, points out that in her study area, "instead of increasing degradation, what emerged was a picture of fluctuating environmental conditions" (*ibid*:13). Many changes were caused by isolated events, while long term trends had a small and uncertain environmental impact. Dahlberg (*ibid*) continues:

environmental conditions were hardly ever found to fit definitions which describe degradation as an effectively irreversible process. Instead they were found to constitute stages in environmental cycles caused by human land use in conjunction with natural variability (*ibid*:14).

Beinart (2003) supports this argument when stating that “measuring change in terms of movement away from a pristine environment, and calling all change degradation, is of limited value. Human survival necessitates environmental disturbance, nor is nature in itself static” (*ibid*:390). Beinart (*ibid*), however, also points out that this should not be seen as a reason to stop talking about environmental degradation, as if it would always be entirely a social construction. Indeed, degradation occurs and is a problem in many places, and there is a need for a way to make judgements about non-desirable environmental transformations. The problem is that the degradation discourse has come to be used for so many other purposes, as Maddox (2002) puts it:

Degradation narratives have several important functions even today. They serve both within African societies and internationally to sanction the appropriation of resources by states from local communities. [...] At the same time, they justify international organisations that take control over resources from African states. In a different context, governments of developed nations use these types of degradation narratives as a stick with which to beat their underdeveloped counterparts. (*ibid*:253f)

This discussion has shown that there are reasons to treat the Transkeian degradation narrative with caution and examine the facts in this study before drawing conclusions about the presence, extent and nature of environmental degradation in the study area. I will return to this issue in later chapters. The degradation discourse and the problems of aggressive nature conservation strategies in Africa also have ties to the previous discussions on the imbalance between Africa and the West, the issues of policies for development and the simplifications of complex social and environmental problems, as well as to the ensuing discussion on local livelihoods.

## Livelihoods Approaches for Local Analysis

This study focuses on various aspects of rural people’s livelihoods in the studied villages, and uses methods and concepts inspired by the broad range of livelihoods approaches currently available. The household has been used as an analytical unit, and the focus has been on identifying what local livelihood opportunities exist in the study area, their relative importance to local people and the ways that people combine and choose between these activities. The local perspective – i.e. understanding how people think, feel and perceive their situations when choosing between available livelihood options has been central to the study. Concepts such as sustainable livelihoods, livelihood diversity, vulnerability, and poverty have all been valuable tools for analysis. This section will give an introduction to various livelihoods approaches, focusing on those aspects that have been used in this study.

## Introducing Livelihoods Approaches

Approaches with a livelihoods perspective on poor rural people's situations have gained increasing popularity since the early 1990's. According to de Haan and Zoomers (2005), a reaction against previous conceptualisations of poor people as 'powerless victims' was at the core of this development, which led to a more actor-oriented perspective that recognised that poor people make their own history and through active choices and strategies provide for their own sustenance. Thus, livelihoods approaches are strongly connected to the participatory approaches discussed previously, and they emphasise local knowledge and empowerment.

An important part of the local livelihoods perspective is that it entails trying to see the issues from the perspective of the local people, focusing on what is most important for them – their everyday livelihoods. This phenomenon is what Moffat (1998) refers to as “the reality of the stomach” – people who feel insecure with respect to basic needs tend to view every project or policy that affects their lives through assessing if the particular policy is likely to affect their own struggle for survival negatively or positively. De Haan and Zoomers (2005) point out that this, the frustration with a failure in devising effective poverty alleviation policies and a realisation that methods need to support people in their daily lives and needs in meaningful ways instead of providing ready-made interventionist instruments, was an important reason for the development of the livelihoods perspective.

Chambers and Conway's (1992) definition of a livelihood has come to be used (with minor modifications) by many authors: “the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living” (*ibid*:7).<sup>10</sup> A central part of the livelihood concept is that it includes non-material aspects of well-being, and that it is dynamic. Local situations in terms of available livelihood options are continuously changing, and this includes seasonal fluctuations and other recurring changes as well as sudden and unique changes.

Since livelihood studies focus on how people are playing active roles in making decisions concerning their livelihoods, the concept of *livelihood strategies* has become popular. However, as de Haan and Zoomers (2005) point out, livelihood activities cannot be automatically classified as strategic. For one, the question of intra-household differences in opinions about livelihood choices should not be forgotten. Secondly, much human behaviour is not conscious or intentional and many actions are often unreflecting or coincidental. It is therefore important to include this dimension – the lack of a strategy – when investigating livelihood strategies.

It is furthermore important to point out that it is not only local people's perceptions about their livelihood situations that should be analysed in a

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<sup>10</sup> The capabilities concept is here adapted from Sen (1993) and is discussed more in a following section on poverty and vulnerability.

livelihoods analysis. Poor people may perceive some parts of their situations as static, when these can in fact easily be changed through policies. An example of this is that though people interviewed in the study agreed that the high costs of school uniforms were a major cause for poor children not attending school, they could at the same time not conceive of a situation where school uniforms would not be required for schoolchildren. According to the perceptions of local people, education was inseparably linked with uniforms; it has always been that way. However, many countries do not use uniforms in the educational system and the mandatory uniforms in South Africa are a state policy that can be easily changed if policy-makers should decide so. Thus, while it is important to understand local people's perceptions of their own situations, the researcher needs to complement the analysis with information about some of the wider contexts that local realities are situated in. In this study, this will be done through analysing the various policy contexts that the local worlds in the study area are a part of, in chapter 8.

### **The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**

The concept of Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) and the sustainable livelihoods framework was developed during the 1990's (*c.f.* Chambers and Conway, 1992; Farrington *et al.*, 1999; Scoones, 1998) and has become widely adopted by bilateral and multilateral agencies and NGOs. The framework is geared at poverty alleviation and is a tool for rural appraisal, project designing and policy-making. Baumann and Sinha (2001) explain:

To achieve sustainable livelihoods is a developmental *objective*. SL is also an *analytical framework* that provides a way of understanding the factors influencing people's ability to enhance their livelihoods. It is also an *approach* to poverty eradication. (*ibid*:1)

The sustainable livelihood framework can be illustrated as in *Figure 1*, which is used at the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID), (*c.f.* Farrington *et al.*, 1999). The assumption here is that people draw on different livelihood assets, which are filtered through structures and processes and become livelihood strategies in pursuit of various livelihood outcomes. These outcomes include not only monetary outcomes, but also for example a sense of being empowered to make better choices. As illustrated by the figure, the way that people make these choices and reinvest in asset-building is driven partly by their own preferences and priorities, but people are also influenced by the vulnerability context they are in. The framework furthermore identifies different types of capital assets that people can build up or draw on, such as human capital and physical capital. Later, *political capital* was added to this framework (Baumann and Simha, 2001).

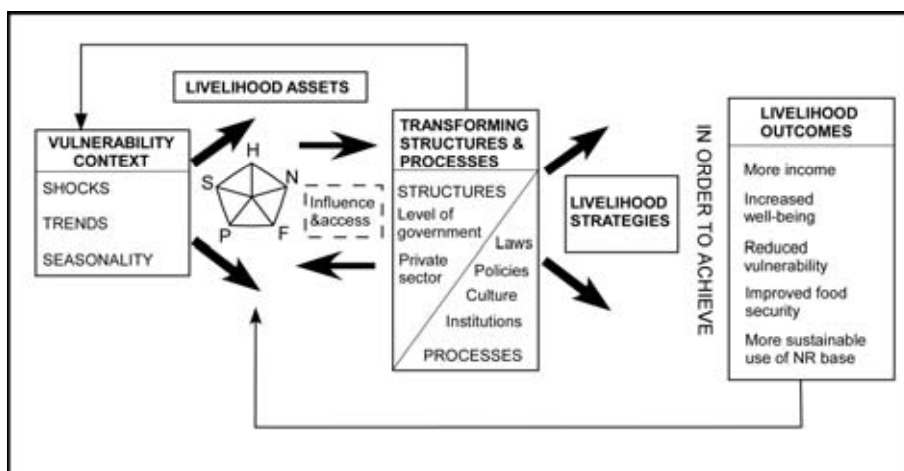


Figure 1. An illustration of the Sustainable Livelihoods framework, adapted from Farrington *et al.* (1999). The letters H, N, F, P and S stand for human, natural, financial, physical and social capital.

Farrington *et al.* (1999) describe that holistic understanding of poor people's situations is at the core of the SL approach. It starts with an analysis of people's livelihoods and how these have been changing over time, it involves the people and it also focuses on the impacts of different policies on people's livelihoods. The relationship between local-level "micro" issues, and macro-level, regional and national concerns is a key area of investigation. Also, the approach recognises multiplicity in influences on actors, livelihood strategies and outcomes and does not attempt to oversimplify and generalise. Research and policy-making based on the SL approach should allow for dynamic processes of learning on the part of researchers and policy-makers.

The question of how to interpret the "sustainable" part of "sustainable livelihoods" is of course crucial to the concept, and Farrington *et al.* (*ibid*) point out that there has been a long tradition of viewing sustainability within the narrow context of natural resource management, where preservation of resources is the aim. However, when it comes to livelihoods, it is important that social institutions and people's capacities to generate new activities are sustained as well as the natural resource base. Scoones (1998) writes: "A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base" (*ibid*:1). This is how I have chosen to interpret sustainable livelihoods in my own work. Unsustainable livelihoods in this context might thus be conceptualised as livelihoods that undermine their own existence in different ways - this would include for example labour that damages the labourer or puts him or her at risk.

I have found some inspiration in these general outlines of the SL approach. My study been conducted with the aim to acquire a holistic understanding local people's situations in the study area, and it analyses people's livelihoods, the components they are made up of, changes over time and strategies involved. It was conducted in a participatory manner, it recognises multiplicity and it does not attempt to oversimplify the results. The relationship between local-level issues and macro-level and national and global concerns is also analysed, but to a limited extent.

The framework in *Figure 1* illustrates well the context that local people in the study area a part of, though I have made a slightly different illustration (*Figure 7*), which departs from local people in my study area and their own view of their livelihoods.

### **Basic Needs and Livelihood Security**

The concept of basic needs has become closely connected to the discussion on livelihoods. In this study, I have used the concept in a limited way, addressing only the issue of the connections between certain basic needs and specific livelihood activities. This is because some of the needs can only be satisfied through certain activities, which affect people's livelihood choices. For example, the need for education requires money for school fees and uniforms, which means that people will have to rely on at least one livelihood activity that generates money if this need is to be fulfilled. In the study area, this was done through asking key informants to list the basic needs in the village and how they were met through different livelihood activities (see Table 6). The purpose of assessing needs was thus not primarily to measure whether they were met or not, but to see the connections between certain needs and certain livelihood activities.

Connected to the issue of basic needs is the concept of livelihood security. The issue of food security, which is a form of livelihood security focused only on the food component of basic needs, has at the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996, been defined as when "all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritional food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for and active and healthy life" (cited in Thomson 2001:24). Livelihood security could thus similarly be conceptualised as an ability to safely meet basic needs at all times.

The concept of environmental security, a form of livelihood security connected to the environment, has often been used in a large-scale sense, related to global change and threats against the nation-state (see Hjort af Ornäs and Ström, 1999). However, there exists a different, small-scale conceptualisation as well, where Hjort af Ornäs (1996) speaks of environmental security as being "between knowledge, values and social institutions" (*ibid*:2) In this sense, the concept is concerned with perception, the *sense* of security that people have when relating to their environment and natural resources.

Livelihood security was in this study, inspired by the two definitions cited above, conceptualised as a feeling – i.e. the confidence and feeling of security that local people have in that they will be able to fulfil their basic needs both today and in the future. The focus is thus on subjective judgments by the people themselves, rather than on ‘objective’ measures of actual livelihood security. The feelings were assessed through a series of questions at the end of the household survey. While most of the examination of livelihoods and livelihood strategies is based on more factual questions, the questions about feelings of livelihood security are intended to leave more room for subjective judgements. Livelihood security as a concept is thus only used in a small part of this study, and defined as a feeling it is used to complement the more tangible factors of livelihoods that this study mainly focuses on.

### Diversification and ‘Multiple Livelihood Strategies’

An important part of livelihoods research has been to determine not only what type of livelihoods that rural people in developing countries have, but also the relationship between various livelihood activities and the strategies that local people use when combining and choosing between these activities. Ellis (2000) sums up research around ‘livelihood diversification’ in the 1990’s and notes a key insight from these studies:

[For many rural households in developing countries] farming on its own does not provide a sufficient means of survival in rural areas. For this reason most rural households are found to depend on a diverse portfolio of activities and income sources amongst which crop production and livestock production feature alongside many other contributions to family well-being. (*ibid*:3)

The realization that rural households in Africa are relying on more than just agriculture for their livelihoods has come slowly, and Ellis claims that this has to do with the massive policy focus on agriculture while other livelihood activities have been ignored. Bryceson (2004), however, claims that a rapid deagrarianisation and depeasantisation is now occurring in Africa, which is affecting rural livelihoods on a large scale. She also points out that this has long been the case in Southern Africa, where migrant labour has been an important income for rural dwellers. It is thus here especially important to probe the interaction between various types of livelihood activities and not only focus on agriculture. The villages studied in this project are perhaps extreme examples of this point. I will in this study show that job incomes are on average more than 20 times more important to local livelihoods than agricultural activities in both the studied villages. Thus, I will focus on ‘diversification’ in terms of looking at how households combine various types of livelihood activities, but I will avoid focusing on agriculture as some sort of ‘baseline’ activity.

Even though livelihoods approaches are supposed to focus on how people actively make their own choices and provide for their own sustenance, there has been a widespread underlying connotation of involuntariness on the behalf of people engaging in diversification activities. One example is that diversification activities are often seen as arising because households can “no longer” survive on agriculture, instead of having been present in African rural areas for a long time as a result of active choice on the part of rural dwellers. Diversification activities are also often discussed as being more or less unwilling risk-coping strategies, rather than activities that rural people want to or like to engage in for various reasons. In this study, I will probe local thinking and reasoning around livelihood strategies and choices, and show that there are many different social, economical, cultural and personal reasons why people want to have jobs, or do not want to focus on agriculture in the studied villages.

One especially important part of the explanations to why families choose to focus on certain livelihood activities can be related to family life cycles (Murray, 1981; Fay *et al.*, 2003), and I use examples of ‘typified families’ to illustrate how the life cycle influences livelihood activities (see p. 109). Ellis (2000), however, cautions against superficially attractive typologies of livelihood diversifications that simplify the complex causes and motivations for undertaking various activities. I do not ignore this caution, but choose to complement the analysis of these illustrative families by making probing interviews that reveal various complex motives and choice contexts.

In the context of the results that are reached in this study, I will also critically discuss the concept of ‘multiple livelihood strategies’. The issue of multiple livelihood strategies is theoretically related to early studies of survival and coping strategies in drought-prone areas of the Sahel (e.g. Franke and Chasin, 1980; Dahl and Hjort af Ornäs, 1991). Because of the high risk of harvest failure, people focused on many activities in addition to agriculture, and it therefore became crucial for researchers to grasp the full diversity of these different local livelihood strategies. A key insight was that various small livelihood contributions that may seem negligible when viewed alone, could make up a whole that manages to secure people’s livelihoods in challenging times. As a result, the definitions of livelihoods are usually very expansive, including social institutions, non-monetary incomes and small scale coping strategies.

The research on multiple livelihood strategies, however, has come to generalise about a multiplicity of livelihood activities all over rural Africa. Researchers have almost tended to assume that *all* poor families have diverse survival strategies, for example, Shackleton *et al.* (2000) claim that “the livelihoods of the poor are complex and dynamic, typified by a diverse portfolio of activities...” (*ibid*:1). This type of statement does not acknowledge that multiple livelihood strategies may be of different use and importance in different parts of Africa, and cannot be assumed to be as crucial a factor for

rural people all over the continent as it might be in the Sahel. The massive attention given to the issue of multiple livelihood strategies may in fact have resulted in and over-emphasis on small-scale strategies, which in some localities only fulfil a marginal function in people's livelihoods. This is problematic because it means that people's most important livelihood activities might have been neglected in research. I will in later chapters further expand on my critique of the concept of multiple livelihood strategies based on my empirical findings.

## Poverty, Vulnerability and Policies

Though livelihoods has been the main focus of this study, and I have primarily used livelihoods approaches in the analysis, I have also felt a need to complement these approach with a focus on poverty and vulnerability. This is because the livelihoods approach has been criticised for not yet sufficiently recognising power relations, and thus not fully conceptualising the "access to resources" aspect of local livelihoods. Murray (2000) for example points out that the 'vulnerability context' in the SL framework does not seem to allow for sufficient attention to critical situations such as rampant inflation or conflict. These issues will be discussed in terms of policies that affect livelihoods in the study area. The framework furthermore does not put enough emphasis on local power relations, according to de Haan and Zoomers (2005: 34) who assert that "livelihood activities are not neutral, but engender processes of inclusion and exclusion". Issues of local social stratification and elite capture of resources (*c.f.* Platteau, 2004) are therefore important when considering livelihood options, because some possibilities that might be available to people in theory can in fact be unavailable due to local power structures.

The recent focus on poverty, and on the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society, has become central in both development activities and research (Bryceson, 2004; Narayan 2000a, 2000b and 2002). According to Sen (e.g. 1983, 1992, 1993) the definition of poverty should rest on a person's *capability* to meet certain needs, for example to avoid starvation or to have access to shelter, his conceptualisation of capabilities that has also influenced definitions of livelihoods. The focus on capabilities rather than on income has the advantage, according to Sen, that it does not depend on one's situation vis-à-vis others, nor on other contextual factors – a person who is incapable of securing adequate amounts of food is starving, no matter if the incapability is due to lack of monetary resources or to other factors, e.g. a lack of transport to the market.

Supporting Sen's arguments, Chambers pointed out in 1987 that poverty means much more than income-related aspects to poor people themselves. Being poor can for example be expressed as being vulnerable and insecure, lacking "voice", lacking education and having poor health. These insights

point to a need understand poor people's situations holistically, and the 'basic needs' perspective and the sustainable livelihoods approach are both examples of attempts to do so. Another example is the increased focus on vulnerability, which is supposed to help identify certain vulnerable groups in society and factors that contribute to their susceptibility to change and external stress.

Kelly and Adger (2000:325) defines vulnerability as the "capacity of individuals and social groups to respond to, that is, to cope with, recover from or adapt to, any external stress placed on their livelihoods and well-being." In the context of research on climate change, vulnerability studies have been important for assessing differential responses to this specific form of external stress (e.g. O'Brien *et al.*, 2004). Commonly defined vulnerable groups in this context are e.g. widowed or divorced women, disabled and elderly persons, orphaned children and refugees (Bohle *et al.*, 1994). Factors that contribute to being vulnerable are thus e.g. a lack of social networks, social stigma, experience of traumatising events and a general lack of voice and empowerment.

In this study, I complemented the analysis on local livelihoods with in-depth interviews with many of the households that in the general livelihoods survey were identified as lacking a major livelihood. These households were thus interviewed again, two years after the survey, in order to assess changes in their situation. In this way, some of the causes of livelihood vulnerability could be traced and certain vulnerable groups identified. Furthermore, I targeted issues of how poverty can limit available livelihood options and affect livelihood strategies, and how local perceptions of money, saving and borrowing are socio-culturally embedded. These perspectives are to be seen as complements to the livelihood analyses.

As mentioned before, I look in this study at various national policies that affect local livelihoods 'from below'. Some of these policies are poverty relief programmes, with the aims of creating jobs and building capacity locally. These policies should be analysed not only from a livelihoods and policy perspective, but also from a poverty perspective. Recent research has indeed shown that the poor are very difficult to target through policies. The Chronic Poverty Report 2004-05 (CPRC, 2004) argues that the chronically poor<sup>11</sup> are those who are least likely to benefit from economic growth and are very difficult to target with development aid projects and poverty relief programmes. These people are destitute and they often suffer from diseases and disabilities and other conditions that make them invisible in society. This research also draws attention to the fact that poor people are a heterogeneous group and that there are dynamics in the processes of poverty.

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<sup>11</sup> The "chronically poor" are defined as those who are not only poor, but poor for much or all of their life, and who tend to transfer poverty on to their children.

While pointing at the heterogeneity within the category of 'poor people', Hossain distinguishes between those poor who people in general think should receive assistance, and those whom it is "permissible to neglect" (2005:965). In an earlier work, Hossain and Moore (1999) showed how the notion of poverty can be constructed so as to include some, namely the "deserving poor" who share the same values as the non-poor, and exclude others. There is still a common notion that "honest and hard-working" poor people deserve pity and help, while poor people who drink, use drugs, or do nothing to help themselves, though these could all be viewed as results and symptoms of poverty and destitution, can be "rightfully" ignored. In different societies, those groups of poor who can be ignored without moral repercussions may include for example divorced women, children who have run away from their parents, disabled or mentally sick people, and "untouchables" of low caste. In South Africa, there are strong popular tendencies to want to ignore those who drink or use drugs, but also street children and people who beg for money. These tendencies can be connected to earlier-mentioned paternalistic opinion that poor people are 'lazy' and 'stupid' and the common and psychologically comfortable attitude of blaming poverty on the poor themselves.

Hickey and Bracking (2005) point to the fact that politics is a key element in bringing about a change in the poverty situation. Currently, however, poverty is institutionalised and legitimised in existing social and political norms and systems. They write:

the way in which poverty is currently represented within academic and policy discourses tend to offer apolitical readings of poverty and the means of its reduction [... however,] long term poverty is inherently socially constructed and tolerated, and also institutionalized within political processes and discourses (*ibid*:859).

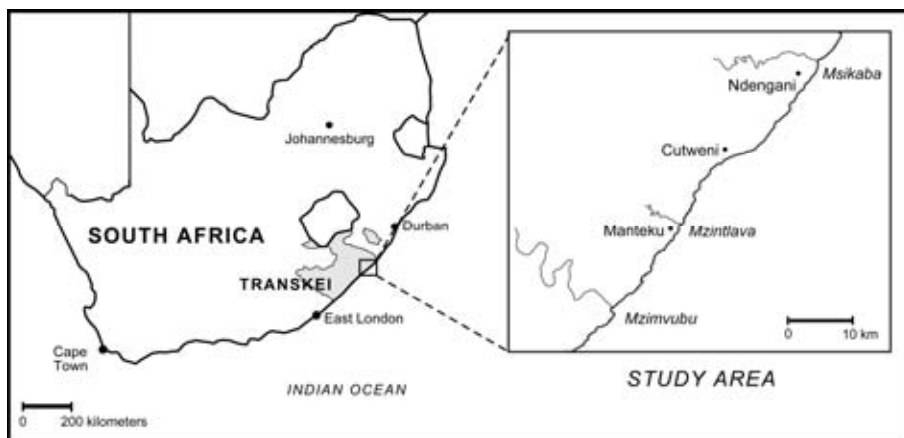
Ferguson's (1990) came to a similar conclusion when he pointed to a tendency among development aid agencies to want to portray aid as something apolitical, which according to him because it is of no use for such an agency to acknowledge that a problem is political and structural, so it therefore focuses on technical solutions. Bryceson (2004) argues in a similar way when pointing out that the structural, political causes of poverty need to be uncovered if poverty alleviation strategies are to be successful, and she also adds that this needs to be done at international, national and local levels alike.

This discussion ties in with other issues discussed throughout this chapter, such as the need to see complex processes and interactions, the tension between the local and national level of experience and the unequal power relationships between the West and African nations. All these issues constitute important factors of the ensuing analysis of local livelihoods, in broad and dynamic contexts, in the studied villages.

### 3. South African Perspectives

This study is not only part of various theoretical and methodological contexts, but also of contexts specific to South Africa, to the region of Transkei and the area of Pondoland. Some of the issues related to these geographical entities have already been touched upon in the previous chapter, but in this chapter I will give a broader background to the study in terms of its South African setting.

South Africa is shown on the map in *Figure 2*, and the locations of Transkei and the study area are also indicated. I will first briefly introduce South Africa's, as well as some important national policies and development initiatives that have affected and still affect the daily lives of local people in the study area. The former homeland Transkei, now part of the Eastern Cape Province, and the historical details that have affected livelihoods here are also described, based on literature on the region. Finally, zooming in on the field study area, the Pondoland region is described geographically and the field study villages, Cutweni and Manteku are introduced and briefly compared.



*Figure 2.* Map of South Africa, with the region Transkei marked and the study area, which lies in the coastal area between the Umzimvubu and the Mtamvuna Rivers, marked.

## Politicised South African Narratives

South Africa is a vast and diverse country that is unique in many ways. It resists categorisation as a “developing country” and is not very representative for a Sub-Saharan African country either. It has a large economy, but this wealth is extremely unevenly distributed among its population, causing some areas and people to enjoy the highest standards of 'Western' commodities, while in other areas people barely have the necessities of life. Statistics show that the part of the population historically categorised as ‘black’ and therefore consistently discriminated against, still, more than a decade after the transition to democracy, are in a much worse situation than the rest of the population in many aspects of life – for example, they are poorer, have less access to necessities like education and healthcare and have almost six times higher unemployment rates. Everything in South Africa - the landscapes, the history, various social norms and rules - are thus 'politicised', and it is therefore crucial for this study that South Africa's geography and history is described with a critical perspective.

History is intimately linked to politics, since it is a selective narrative, written by those in power and is often used as an instrumental tool for achieving various ends in the present. It is, however, often also a significant part of national and ethnic identities and self-perception (*c.f.* Hall, 2002) and cannot thus be lightly dismissed. South African historiography, furthermore, has long been formulated in a colonial context where the African was represented as the “other” and history was used as a tool in the subjugation of African people. As Sinclair *et al.* (1993) describe, European researchers and writers of history have many times tried to alter findings about Africa to suit their images of underdeveloped Sub-Saharan African pre-colonial societies. One of the more well-known examples of this is the magnificent stone-town ruins of Great Zimbabwe, which were long attributed to e.g. Phoenicians instead of Africans.

The South African preoccupation with the concepts of race and ethnicity is reflected in historiography even today. For example, most descriptions of South African pre-colonial history still firmly hold that the recognized ethnic groups of today were present in their current groupings already during the pre-colonial times and that these ethnic groups were linked to certain territories. It is assumed that the different groups were separated from each other culturally and geographically, and had certain characteristics, for example their livelihood strategies, that distinguished them from each other.

These issues affect matters in the area studied in this project, where the Bantu-speaking *amaXhosa* (today the dominant ethnic group in the former Transkei area where the studies have been conducted), are often represented as having been “agro-pastoralist“, in contrast with their “hunter-gatherer” neighbours, the San/Khoi Khoi. These allegedly distinct ethnic groups were supposedly kept apart due to climatic conditions – i.e. the spatial and tempo-

ral rainfall variations that favour agricultural activities in the *amaXhosa* “territory”. However, archaeological evidence have later shown that there was significant interaction between different population groups in pre-colonial Southern Africa, and that subsistence strategies were fluent and changing (Mitchell, 2003). It is thus much more probable that the San and the *amaXhosa*, if they can even be conceptualised as two distinct ethnic groups so far back in time, had a close relationship with each other that involved both trading and extensive intermarriage. Beinart (1982) also discusses how people in the study also after colonisation alternated between hunting, agriculture and pastoralism, depending on various factors in their environments and societies, and thus had dynamic and heterogeneous livelihood strategies.

The neat bundling of divergent ethnic groups into distinct categories, with claims to specific parts of the land, was very convenient for both the colonial regime as well as for the subsequent apartheid government, which both had much to gain from keeping African groups separated and clustered into specific areas. In addition, this meant that the apartheid ideology of “separate development” (explained in more detail in the next chapter) could be applied also to the ethnic groups within the African population, which gave increased legitimacy to the apartheid policies. Thus, caution is warranted both when discussing South African history and the various ethnic groups that exist in the country today<sup>12</sup>.

## A Brief Historical Introduction to South Africa

South Africa has gone through a long and complex process, from the pre-colonial era, through colonisation and apartheid to democracy, and though the eventful past has indeed influenced the challenges of today a great deal in this country, these events are much too complex to go into details on here. Many authors provide in-depth analyses of the history of the country, some with a geographical (Christopher, 2001) or an economic (Feinstein, 2005) perspective.

Keegan (1996) describes the colonial period, with the Dutch slowly settling in the area around Cape Town during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, while the British subsequently started taking control over the area in 1795 and expanding the colonial rule northwards and eastwards. The tension between these two European groups mounted, and in the 1830’s, some 15 000 Dutch Boers (who later started calling themselves ‘Afrikaners’ in order to underscore their close connection to the continent) left the Cape area and settled in the

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<sup>12</sup> It would however be very difficult to completely avoid references to ethnic groups in this study, since researchers and people themselves continuously refer to these groupings. Another important part of the issue is that although the concept of ethnic groups can be questioned in theory, it is a concept that matter to people's identities in reality and since this research departs from people's perceptions, I cannot disqualify concepts that are important to people on a theoretical basis. I will therefore use the terminology, but with caution.

areas that are now the Orange Free State and the Northern and North-West Province<sup>13</sup>.

The annexation of the areas lying eastward of the Cape Colony, which at the time were inhabited by the *amaXhosa* people, was a gradual process that begun in the 1830s. Many costly wars, negotiations and treaties followed, but the British colony persisted in trying to annex these areas, and the process finally culminated in the critical episode of the Xhosa cattle-killings, an event that has been described and thoroughly analysed by Peires (1989). In 1857, in the coastal village Qolorha in Southern Transkei, a young girl prophesised that the ancestors would arise and drive away the British soldiers if the *amaXhosa* people killed all their cattle and refrained from cultivating their land. The issue soon caused a sharp divide between “believers” and “unbelievers”. In the end, it led to devastating consequences – large amounts of cattle were killed, approximately 20 000 people died from starvation and another 30 000 survivors had to seek out wage labour to sustain themselves (Bundy, 1972; Beinart, 1982). This led to the final capitulation of the *amaXhosa* people and most of the area that is today Transkei was thus incorporated into the British colony.

There was one important exception however, and that is the area where this study has been located. This area lies in the coastal northern parts of Transkei, and is often referred to as Pondoland, after the ethnic group *Mpondo*. According to the official classification, the *amaMpondo* is a sub-group to the *amaXhosa*. Peires (1982), however, comments that several of the ethnic groups categorised as ‘sub-groups’ to the *amaXhosa* in fact do not always see themselves as Xhosa. People in the study area are indeed sometimes ambivalent about their ‘Xhosa’ identity – in certain ways they embrace it, while in other way they point out that they are only *Mpondo*. A fact is also that the history of the Mpondo in Pondoland differs from the rest of Transkei in some significant ways.

Stapleton (2001) describes how Faku, the paramount Chief of the Mpondo Kingdom between 1815 and 1867, in the late 1830’s attempted, with some success, to play the two colonial neighbours, the British Cape Colony to the south and the Boers to the north in Natal, against each other. The British, however, succeeded in occupying and annexing the Natal region in early 1840, and in 1844 Faku signed a treaty with the Cape Colony that recognised his authority. The *Mpondo* never participated in the 1857 cattle killings, and Pondoland was thus the last area to fall under colonial rule, as late as 1894.

The Anglo-Boer war, which took place between 1899-1902, was connected to the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand (an area under Boer

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<sup>13</sup> This movement was later given the name ‘The Great Trek’ and is often in South African historiography portrayed as a unified, political and ideological movement of rebellion with an expression of proto-nationalist Afrikaner sentiments (Keegan, 1996).

control) in 1886. The British colony wanted to control this area and declared war when negotiations with the Boers in Bloemfontein collapsed in 1899. After this war, South Africa was under British control, until it gained its independence from colonial rule in 1948. At this time, the Boer-dominated National Party won the first elections (where only men of European descent were allowed to vote) and started imposing its ideology of 'separate development'. This meant that the population was categorised according to 'race' and were given widely different rights depending on these categorisations.

The population categorised as 'black' were furthermore divided according to ethnic groups, as discussed previously, and were assigned certain territories, the so-called homelands. Many of these areas had been 'Native Reserves' during the colonial government, but the Group Areas Act of 1951 induced forced relocalisations of people into the designated homelands. The homelands were then first given 'self-government' and some were later given 'independence', however, they were hardly recognized by any countries outside of South Africa.

The populations of the homelands lost their South African citizenship through this process, hence relieving the government of economic and political responsibility for them. Yet, the homelands remained easily accessible labour reserves, when labour was needed in mines and at plantations (McAllister, 1992). The homelands are still very distinct regions within the country, where proofs of government neglect can be seen in terms of for example bad infrastructure and poor facilities. As discussed previously, the homelands are today among researchers, governmental bodies and in popular opinion seen as severely degraded, overpopulated and the scene of soaring conflicts over environmental resources (see e.g. Crais, 2003; DEAT, 1996a, 2003; Durning, 1990; LAPC, 1995; McAllister, 1992; Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs, 2001; Sowman 1993).

Decades of resistance against apartheid, through both peaceful and violent means, demonstrations and brutal incidents like the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 shaped the lives of many South Africans in what has become known simply as "the struggle". These protests, together with an increasing worldwide awareness of the horrors of apartheid and consequent boycott of South Africa and its products led in the end to the release of political prisoners like Nelson Mandela and subsequently to the surprisingly peaceful transition to democracy, marked by the elections of 1994. With the African National Congress (ANC) winning a landslide victory and Mandela elected president, the long road towards rebuilding and remodelling the country into a modern democracy could be embarked upon.

What has thus this history come to mean to South Africans? Indeed, it has resulted in a mixed population that often perceives itself in terms of rigorous categories, and has been traumatised by a history of deeply rooted antagonisms. As everything connected to pale skin colour and European descent used to be seen as good, advanced, developed and clever, while dark skin

colour and African descent was seen as backward and stupid, feelings of superiority and inferiority became deeply engrained in people's minds. These self-images are important to remember when discussing both research methods, 'participatory' policy making and the democratic process in general, and I will come back to them in this study.

However, oppression also fostered resistance in different forms. McAllister (1992:204) talks about an 'ideology of resistance' forming during the colonial period, which manifested itself in a strong adherence among rural dwellers to the rural agricultural lifestyle. Beinart and Bundy (1987) discuss 'hidden struggles' in rural South Africa and show how rural dwellers, contrary to popular belief, were very much part of modern political processes already during colonial times. Authors like Redding (1996) and Beinart (2002a) discuss important manifestations of political resistance during apartheid times, such as the Pondoland Revolt in the study area (more about this particular event later). During apartheid times, people also often protested against oppression through passivity and 'slow-working'.

At the time of writing, however, South Africa has been a democracy for roughly 12 years and a reconciliatory spirit is now pervading many parts of the society, often referred to as the "new" South Africa affectionately named the 'rainbow nation' by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Journalist and historian Max du Preez (2004) reflects on why it is crucial for South Africans to learn about their history in order to come to terms with it:

For generations, South African history was used to divide people. [...] Many historical resentments still lurk under the surface of ethnic, racial and regional attitudes today. At the same time, history is not about forgetting. [...] So how can we remember in a way that doesn't paralyse us; a way that doesn't make us resentful of others and blindly glorify our own? For me, it's about seeing the characters who populate our past as human beings first, and as members of racial, ethnic or class groups second. To try to understand what the actors of our past were like as people and to judge their actions in terms of ordinary human behaviour. Most of all, to read history with an open mind rather than with a view to justify our prejudices or narrow nationalism (*ibid*:233).

As this quote reflects, South Africans are today faced with a great task in coming to terms with their histories and the constructed ethnic and geographical divides that have been imposed upon them over several centuries. The present study can be seen not the least in such a broad context – as an attempt to contribute in focusing on the perspectives of a part of the population that has been historically and geographically neglected.

## Policies and Projects in the “New” South Africa

The transition to democracy in South Africa in 1994 meant that many aspects of the society needed to be fundamentally transformed. A new constitution was written (approved 4<sup>th</sup> December 1996), along with new legislation and policies, and new departments, institutions and programmes were created. As pointed out by several authors, these new policies often include rhetoric in line with recent research and findings, such as a stress on “participation” and “stakeholder consultation”. However, the structures and mechanisms of policy implementation are often weakly defined, which leads to problems with achieving the goals of policies (*c.f.* Cousins and Kepe, 2004; Bentley, 2004; Goldman *et al.*, 2000).

South Africa has a federal system with three spheres of government: national, provincial and local, which are all to a certain extent independent from each other. Provincial governments are responsible for many of the common rural services, though the idea is that some of these service delivery functions should gradually be delegated to local governments (Goldman *et al.*, 2000). The government also relies to a high degree on local NGOs, for example when it comes to implementation of governmental poverty relief programmes. Some of the policies that have impacts in the study area on local livelihoods will here be shortly reviewed.

### South African Poverty Relief Programmes

The Department of Social Development manages the Poverty Relief Programme, which is funded through a special allocation from a governmental poverty relief fund, and other government departments have been able to apply to this fund to launch various poverty relief projects. I will here discuss two of these programmes – the Working for Water Programme (WFW), administered through the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and the Working for the Coast Programme (Coast Care) administered by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT)<sup>14</sup>. The programmes implemented by selected NGO’s locally, but follow the same guidelines all over South Africa.

The Working for Water Programme was launched in 1995. The people working for this programme are supposed to clear alien vegetation in certain areas, using tools like chainsaws and herbicides. Alien vegetation is considered a big problem in South Africa, where the indigenous flora is often out conquered by invading plants, and the water consumption of alien plants can cause problematic water-shortages in dry areas. Water is thus released when the alien vegetation is cleared – hence the name of the programme.

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<sup>14</sup> For information on the internet, see <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/>, and [http://www.environment.gov.za/ProjProg/CoastCare/working\\_for\\_the\\_coast](http://www.environment.gov.za/ProjProg/CoastCare/working_for_the_coast).

The WFW programme works through employing local contractors, i.e. men and women from the local communities who are given both training and equipment. Every contractor is then supposed to recruit ten members from their community, based on certain criteria, and sign a contract for the clearing of a certain area.

The Working for the Coast programme, commonly known in the area as Coast Care, was launched by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in 2000 as a cleanup project for the country's coasts. It also employs local people, who are given on-site environmental education and are supposed to cleaning coasts and beaches and help out with maintenance of tourism facilities. This programme works with teams of 10 local persons and one local supervisor, and field managers who are responsible for several villages.

Both these poverty relief programmes are supposed to create wage-work especially for vulnerable groups, and thus their criteria for who should be employed favour households with no other incomes, as well as women and young, elderly or disabled persons. The programmes provide training for their workers on important issues like reproductive health and HIV/AIDS as well as education for capacity-building, for example in business management.

As I will argue based on results from the study area, these programmes have mixed results. Indeed, they are important for local job creation, and the income from the programmes make important contributions to the livelihood security of many vulnerable families. However, the capacity building part of the programmes are sometimes questionable, as are their nation-wide focus on alien vegetation and cleaning of coasts, even in areas where these tasks are not particularly needed. I will thus come back to these issues and discuss them in more detail.

## The Social Grant System

A key initial strategy of the government for direct poverty relief has been to establish a system of basic social grants<sup>15</sup>. The improved old-age pension, the most important of these grants, means that every man above 65 and woman above 60 (whose financial resources are below a certain level) can apply for a monthly pension. In 2002, at the time of data collection, the pension sum was at R600 per month, but it was subsequently raised several times and in 2005 it was at R780 per month. Another form of governmental grants is the disabled grant, given to those who have been assessed as temporarily or

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<sup>15</sup> Certain grants, like pension and disabled grant have existed previously to a limited extent. The pension was however made non-contributory, meaning that poor people who had not contributed to society through paying taxes through their wages were eligible for pension as well. The grant system was thus significantly improved and reformed in its outreach, as well as in its payable amounts.

permanently disabled. It is the same amount of money as the pension on a monthly basis. People in the villages can also apply for the child grant, which was introduced in March 1998. This law states that the caregiver (which does not have to be a biological parent) of every child up to and including 6 years of age is entitled to the amount of R180 per month (this sum has also been increased over the years; it was R110 in 2002).

The implementations of these reforms have been lengthy processes, however. For example, information about the pension application procedure had to be spread to isolated areas, elderly people living far from towns had to get identity documents, and the proper infrastructure for application and payment of grants had to be put in place so that it could be accessed by everyone. Other application procedures are more complicated, which I will discuss in the case of a new 'foster care grant', available to guardians of children whose parents have deceased (a common situation due to the AIDS epidemic). This grant requires a court order assigning guardianship of the child to the guardian, which is very complicated to arrange.

However, once the initial confusion surrounding a grant has been resolved, and the infrastructure to administer it are in place, the grant system works quite well and is a very important part of local livelihoods in the study area. I will argue based on my findings that so far, grants can be viewed as one of the most successful poverty relief strategies of the government.

## Restrictions on Local Natural Resource Use

South Africa has a historically strong, at times bordering to fierce, commitment to nature conservation, which Carruthers (1997) describes with phrases like "paramilitary wildlife management" and "anti-human ecology". Beinart (2003) traces the complex development of conservation thinking in South Africa between 1770 and 1950, trying to find an answer to why the South African government has persisted in creating conservation schemes and implementing them, at times with "crusading zeal", even though these interventions usually stimulated hostility in the rural communities affected by the policies and mobilised them against the state. There are many complex causes for these policies. Of particular significance for the current study is the fact that these authoritarian approaches to environmental management are based on a view of local people as incapable of managing their environments (Jones, 1999), as discussed previously in connection with conservationism in Africa (page 48). Though local involvement is today often stressed in approaches to environmental management in South Africa, these intentions are not always followed in practice, as this study will also show.

I have investigated restrictions in two types of natural resource use – marine resource use (which in this case includes fish, crayfish and mussels) and forest resource use (i.e. firewood). The use of these two types of re-

sources is restricted through legislation, of which I will provide a short description here.

The DEAT Chief Directorate: Marine and Coastal Management is the central governmental agency primarily responsible for implementing the restrictions in marine resource use detailed in the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998a). The Act states that no fishing whatsoever is allowed without a permit, which is true for commercial, recreational and subsistence fishing. There is furthermore a long and complicated list of restrictions to be adhered to when fishing, collecting crayfish or mussels. For example, fish are divided according to species into “specially protected” (which may not be caught at all), “critical” (catch is limited to a total of two fish per person per day), “restricted” (total of five fish per person per day), “exploitable” (total of ten fish per person per day) “recreational” (total of ten fish per person per day but no more than five of any one species) and “bait” (unlimited fishing allowed). In addition, there are size or weight restrictions on all fish, for example Silverfish (25 cm), Squaretail Kob (35 cm), Kob (40 cm) and Snoek (60 cm) to name but a few.

As I will show, it would be quite impossible for people in the study area to adhere to all these restrictions. Nature Conservation rangers, who are supposed to hold meetings with local communities to inform about and explain these laws, tend to put more energy into enforcement than information, and there is a lot of local confusion about these regulations.

In the case of forest resource use, The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) have developed several policies for the protection and management of South Africa’s forests. From a governmental perspective, several objectives are to be consolidated: while conservation is important, especially of forests termed ‘natural’ or ‘indigenous’, there is a demand for industrial wood in the country as well as a local demand for firewood. Close to the villages in the study area, there is both a State forest and ongoing commercial logging and forestry, as well as indigenous protected forest and a newly designated community forest. The institution of community forestry is designed and applied to meet local social, household and environmental needs and to favour local economic development, according to the South African government (DWAF, 1996).

Because of these different types of forests in the study area, different rules apply on firewood collection (which is usually conceptualised as the collection of dry wood only). Some areas are completely restricted, while in others, women are allowed to collect “one headload” of wood on designated weekdays, and in yet others collection of dry wood is unlimited. As I will show, the rules around firewood collection are not particularly well understood in the villages, though this issue does not cause as much problems as the marine resource use restrictions.

## Environment and Tourism

Since international tourists largely abstained from travelling to South Africa during the apartheid years, the international tourism industry in the country basically started after the first democratic elections in 1994. In the first few years, South Africa had to fight its negative reputation, until tourism suddenly began increasing (DEAT, 1996b). During the seven years after my first visit in 1999, I personally saw and experienced, along with people in the fairly isolated villages where the case study was done, the magnificent boom in the tourism industry. Between 1994 and 2002, foreign arrivals for holiday purposes more than doubled (Statistics South Africa 2004), and in 2002, tourism was South Africa's fastest growing industry, contributing about 4.9% of GDP (South Africa Yearbook, 2002/03).

Tourism is believed to be a great economic and development opportunity for South Africa today, and is seen as such an important driver of environmental protection that the government has merged the two issues under one department – the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). The tourism sector was identified by this department (DEAT, 1996b) as a key to helping boost economic growth and employment, supporting rural communities and conserving the environment. In this document, it is explained that tourism is regarded as an especially favourable form of development for several reasons. Since many rural areas are seen as having significant tourism potential, it is hoped that development could be brought to these areas through tourism. Also, the mixing of ideas through the interaction with tourists from different parts of the world is hoped to provide an atmosphere of tolerance for cultural diversity and help eradicate lingering racist ideas. Through promoting mainly ecotourism, the government is also hoping that tourism will bring ecological benefits, and that it will be possible to protect and preserve certain areas, while at the same time achieving important development goals.

However, many studies have shown that tourism is not an easy solution to local development needs and that there are many problems that need to be resolved. Various negative environmental and social effects of tourism have been pointed out by many studies the overuse of resources, the increased needs for water, food and commodities and the creation of garbage due to tourism have been shown by many studies (Ashley *et al.*, 2000; Boonzaier, 1996; de Kadt, 1979; Gormsen, 1997; Knight *et al.*, 1997; Place 1995, Wagner, 1981). It has also been shown that “eco-tourism” is not necessarily environmentally friendly (Pleumarom, 1994; Whinney, 1996) and one problem that remains is the fact that National Park-based tourism has a history of expelling local people without proper mitigation in the name of conservation (Pimbert and Pretty, 1997; Price, 1996, see also the discussion on page 48). There is also the problem that the net benefit of tourism, after considering

investments, foreign-owned facilities and extensive leakage due to e.g. imports, may not be as high as expected (Ashley *et al.*, 2000; de Kadt, 1979).

Some of the initial tourism promotion initiatives in poor regions in South Africa have indeed not been very successful. An initiative that has received much criticism is the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative, launched in 1998 along the Transkei coast (Cousins and Kepe, 2004; Kepe *et al.*, 2001b; Kepe, 2001b). The Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) is according to these authors part of a larger, neo-liberal governmental policy that is “top-down” and has a core goal of stimulating private sector investment and growth instead of focusing on the distribution of the benefits of growth. The authors point to the fact that the programme is not adapted to local conditions, despite a language of “empowerment” incorporated into its goals. They criticize the SDI for indiscriminately promoting tourism and private investment in the selected areas, with the idea that this would unproblematically lead to local development. However, they state that “growth in upmarket, private sector tourism is offering few local opportunities and may impact negatively on existing livelihood activities. It is unlikely to reduce poverty without parallel initiatives to improve skills levels, infrastructure, and access to opportunities” (Kepe *et al.*, 2001b:1).

Another important point in this context is that the government tends to focus on international tourists, though it is still tourists from within South Africa who dominate the market in many destinations, as Kepe’s (2001c) study of tourists to the Mkambati Nature Reserve (see map in *Figure 4* over the study area), clearly shows. This picture does not fit into the expectations of ecotourism effects, as Kepe points out: “foreign visitors - more than those from within the country - are seen as a prerequisite for successful ecotourism. Hence all the expectations about ecotourism boosting foreign exchange reserves” (2001c:156). His study further shows that tourists from within South Africa are not particularly interested in visiting, interacting with or buying things from local communities during their visit to the Nature Reserve. The increased tourism to nature reserves in the area is thus unlikely to benefit local development in any major way.

An EU funded community tourism initiative has been launched in the study area and has affected livelihoods here. In the beginning, this project was launched as a support programme to the Wild Coast SDI, and the first stage of this initiative was to create a community-based horse-riding and hiking trail for tourists along the northernmost part of the Transkei coast, just north of the study area. This project, “Amadiba Adventures”<sup>16</sup> has won wide recognition for its positive impact on the local communities in this area. This initiative was followed up by a second stretch of horse and hiking trail, Amampondo trails, based on the same project set-up. This trail runs along the coast from Mkambati Nature Reserve to Port St Johns, right through the

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<sup>16</sup> Homepage: <http://hikingtrails.wildcoast.org.za/ht/13.xml>

study area (see map in *Figure 4*). In 2002, this project was in a pilot phase that was lengthily extended until the final launch of the project in 2003. In 2005, the project was still encountering severe problems and had not led to any substantial amounts of work opportunities in the villages in the study area, an issue I will come back to.

## Rural Livelihoods in Transkei

As touched on before, the former homeland Transkei<sup>17</sup> is still a distinct region and has as such been studied by many researchers. The literature on the dynamics of rural livelihoods in Transkei is contextually highly relevant for my study, and I will therefore here go through some of this literature, focusing on important details relating to this study.



*Figure 3.* Map showing the former homelands of South Africa (Adapted from Ramphela, 1991).

*Figure 3* is a map showing all the former homelands in South Africa, of which Transkei was the largest., covering 41 000 km<sup>2</sup> and including the two outlying districts of Herschel and Umzimkulu. Transkei was designated for the ethnic group *amaXhosa* who speak the language *isiXhosa*<sup>18</sup>. In 1994,

<sup>17</sup> Transkei is no longer a political entity in South Africa, but it is in many ways still a distinct region, to which I often need to refer to. I will however, for the sake of simplicity, refer to Transkei without always writing "former Transkei".

<sup>18</sup> See my earlier reservations about the ethnic group terminology, especially when associated with group 'territories' on page 66.

when the former homelands were integrated back into South Africa, Transkei became incorporated into the newly conjured Eastern Cape Province. This is today South Africa's second largest province in terms of land area (169 580 km<sup>2</sup>) and third in terms of population, an estimated 6.4 million in 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2004).

## Changes in Rural Livelihoods during Colonial Times

Both Feely (1987) and McAllister (1992) describe rural life in what was to become the "Transkeian Territories" before it was gradually integrated into the Cape colony. McAllister points out that the dominant settlement pattern during these times was one of scattered homesteads, where closely related families would live in small clusters with a "strong ethic of mutual assistance" (1992:218), while other neighbours would be further away. Livestock were grazed and fields were cultivated close to the homesteads. Sorghum and pumpkins were important crops, and milk was an essential protein supplement. Having fields and cattle nearby was thus more important for people, even if it meant that they sometimes had to walk far when they needed to visit neighbours or relatives or attend village meetings. One of the studied villages, Ndengane, displays this type of scattered settlement pattern.

Slowly, the way of life described above was to change in many areas due to various factors. McAllister (*ibid*) describes the gradual transformation of the settlement and agricultural patterns in Transkei. Claiming that there was a gradual shift in focus from cultivating fields to cultivating gardens, he highlights how this was connected to colonisation. Gardens, fenced and cultivated next to the homestead, are usually intercropped with maize, beans, vegetables and fruit trees, while fields are further from the homestead, in low-lying areas and are usually monocropped with maize. Gardens are also generally more fertile due to manuring (gardens are also sometimes rotated to include fertile old *kraal* sites) and easier to work on during spare time (since fields are further away). During the colonial period, the restrictions on movement and the pressure from the expanding colony lead to land shortage. At the same time, the growing availability of wage work in mines and plantations, meant that villages came to consist mostly of women, children and elderly people while the men were away wage-working most of the year. These factors led to that it became easier for people to focus on cultivating the garden, since it was easier to work, fence and watch over. Thus, gardens became bigger and more important for livelihoods, which they still are in the study area.

The transition to colonial rule had many radical implications in all areas of the society, such as the local economy, agricultural practices and social structures. These changes are thoroughly discussed by a number of authors, such as Hunter (1936), Beinart (1982), Bundy (1979), Peires (1982), McAllister (1992), Crais (2003), and Fay (2003). Bundy (1987) point out

that though travellers, administrators and missionaries often thought otherwise, “life in the homestead of even the most geographically remote and culturally traditionalist family was shaped and shaded by magisterial rule and a monetised economy” already in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, several authors argue that the impact of annexation was felt less in Pondoland than in the neighbouring areas and that people here were able to retain a higher level of economic independence (Beinart, 1982; Kepe, 2005b; Stapleton, 2001).

One big impact by colonial rule on livelihoods were cattle diseases that spread due to the introduction of European stock, which caused much damage to herds during these times. Lungsickness had been devastating the herds during the 1850s and was a contributing factor behind the readiness to kill cattle in 1857 cattle-killing movement. The Rinderpest epidemic of 1896-97 and the East Coast fever (1912-13) killed over 80% of the cattle in some districts (Beinart, 1992; Bundy, 1972). Recovery was partly possible due to an increased involvement in wage labour, using the incomes to restore the herds (McAllister, 1992).

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, a quite dramatic shift in livelihoods occurred in the Eastern Cape area as the population turned from cultivating sorghum to maize as their staple crop. Crais (2003) describes this transformation:

Everywhere in the Eastern Cape, in the face of colonial conquest people turned towards the cultivation of maize [...] in Pondoland maize production roughly tripled in the seventeen years after annexation. The shift towards maize had been completed for the entire region by the end of the 1920s when it is fair to say that the Eastern Cape had become a monocrop economy (*ibid*:19).

This new crop presented several challenges that speak against it (listed in full by Crais, *ibid*). It is difficult to store, and more susceptible to insect infestations and rotting, more vulnerable to drought, has lower tolerance for variability in rainfall and is harder on the soils than sorghum. Furthermore, although it provides as much as 20% more calories, it lacks important vitamins, provides less protein and lacks essential amino acids such as lysine<sup>19</sup>. It is much harder to digest and is particularly insufficient as a staple diet for children.

Thus, Crais (*ibid*) points out, this shift seems paradoxical, especially in the context of high insecurity at the time due to colonial conquests and the fact that this was a period of climatic instability marked by recurring droughts. The explanation according to Crais is that maize has a much

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<sup>19</sup> A lack of these amino acids can lead to serious deficiency problems such as weakened immunity system, increased susceptibility to pneumonia-causing bacteria and viruses, and mania, depression, diarrhea and reproductive disorders (Crais, 2003).

shorter growing season, contains more calories and is possible to consume before reaching full maturity (this is called eating “green mealies” and is widely practiced as a coping mechanism in difficult times in the study area still today). McCann (2005) also points out that maize in general is less laborious than sorghum, though it needs inputs of intensive labour during certain critical periods<sup>20</sup>. Thus, planting maize instead of sorghum was a decision by people who had been displaced by conflicts, who were not certain if they would be able to devote time to their fields, but needed to attain food quickly. McAllister (1992) also draws a parallel to the increased reliance on gardens at the time and points to the fact that maize, unlike sorghum, allows for intercropping with subsidiary crops such as beans.

Because of all the weaknesses of the crop, people would perhaps have been better off shifting back to sorghum again, but Crais (2003) comments:

what happened in the Eastern Cape, and indeed elsewhere on the continent, is that a short-term strategy became a long-term historical pattern. This shift corresponds with the move from a world of conjunctural instability to systemic insecurity (*ibid*:23).

The better food security that maize brought was thus bought at a high price, according to Crais (*ibid*), who comments: “in general wherever maize cultivation increased hunger and malnutrition followed” (*ibid*:23)<sup>21</sup>.

According to McAllister (1992), different pressures on Transkei agriculture by the colonial government had the effect that by 1935, migrant labour started increasing significantly, and beginning in 1940, agricultural production dropped. When villagisation was introduced (beginning in 1945, see further discussion below) the new, condensed housing pattern meant that the gardens could not be made much bigger than a few thousand square meters, which corresponds to around 2-4 months of maize and vegetable supply (this is also illustrated by the map in *Figure 8*). Those who had big gardens instead of fields at their old homestead sites were often also not allocated fields in the new site, even though the garden size had to be significantly reduced. Consequently, most of the yearly food supply had to be bought.

The people in the rural homelands were thus, through a number of political changes and new laws, induced to rely on monetary incomes for a large part of the year, with agriculture and natural resource use as a supplement and safety-net rather than a major livelihood activity. As will be shown later with examples from the study area, this tendency has increased even further during recent years.

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<sup>20</sup> These periods of intensive labour in maize cultivation are often solved through the organisation of *ilima* ‘work-parties’ (McAllister, 2005), which will be discussed in more detail later.

<sup>21</sup> However, Pondoland is one of the few areas in Transkei where there is sufficient rainfall to sustain a good maize production (Crais, 2003). The cultivation of maize has in the study area thus perhaps not had quite the a negative influence it has had in other parts of the region.

## Apartheid Policies Impacting on Rural Livelihoods

Since colonial times, the South African government has thus attempted to intervene in local people's livelihoods in various ways, and these interventions continued in apartheid times and at the time when Transkei was an 'independent republic'. Laws and programmes intended to govern land occupation, settlement patterns, agricultural practices, forest and marine resource use, livestock keeping, management of grazing lands and practices like burning and hunting have been the rule in most parts of rural Transkei. Many authors show how these policies have greatly disrupted and disturbed local livelihoods (e.g. de Wet, 1995; Fay, 2003; McAllister, 1992). Beinart and Bundy (1987), however, also show that there has been fierce resistance to governmental interventions in local livelihoods.

The homeland system, based on existing 'Native Reserves' during colonial times, produced many local problems, in both the environmental and social domains. As discussed previously (p. 51), there is plenty of literature written on the issue of how this system led to overcrowding and environmental deterioration. In terms of local livelihoods, the homeland system became intimately linked to the migrant labour system, an institution that had been present since colonial times, but was increasingly controlled politically by the apartheid government. Various policies regulated that migrant labourers could not have permanent homes close to their working places and were forced to return to their rural homelands at vacation times, creating, as authors have argued, 'labour reserves' in the homelands as well as in Lesotho (Donaldson, 1992; Ferguson, 1990; Murray, 1981).

McAllister (1992) describes the effects that the migrant labour incomes had on rural livelihoods:

In time the two types of economic activity became intertwined, with rural production dependent on the cash inputs of labour migrants, and the migrant labour system being 'subsidised' by the fact that migrants had a rural base to fall back on for social security and in hard times (*ibid*:204).

McAllister (*ibid*) goes on to note that rural production is still very dependent on cash inputs, and is therefore usually part of a mixed survival strategy with both jobs and agriculture. An implication of this, substantiated by findings in my study area, is that the poorest categories of the population often feel that agriculture is not a survival strategy suitable for them, since they do not have the monetary resources to make the necessary investments.

The migrant labour system divided families and put significant strain on social networks due to the long times that family members spent separated from each other (Murray, 1981). Since men were migrant labourers to a larger extent than women, female headed-households became very common. Works such as Ferguson (1990) also show the effects of the migrant labour system on social structures in the rural areas, where the able-bodied were

away working, while those at home were old, young, sick or disabled. Authors also have argued that this led to a paradoxical labour shortage in these overcrowded homelands, and that many natural resources due to this situation were under-utilised, at the same time as people were struggling for their daily subsistence (Durning, 1990).

The rural areas of the homelands were, beginning in 1945, subjected to “Betterment” schemes (McAllister, 1992). This meant that outside experts made up plans for rural areas, and moved people from their original settlements (which were usually dispersed) into nucleated villages. People were also allocated specific areas as gardens and fields. The effects of Betterment policies in the homelands have been studied by many authors (e.g. de Wet, 1995; Fay, 2003; McAllister, 1992).

De Wet (1995) sets Betterment policies into an African perspective when he identifies over twenty settings where different forms of “villagisation” have been implemented all over Africa. Villagisation policies thus seem to be a part of African history in many places, and have often been connected to governmental initiatives to give people better access to services. In South Africa, the government rhetoric connected to the Betterment policy also included that it would give people better access to services – the new villages were supposed to be close to roads and have water taps, schools, clinics and other facilities. In many places, these services were never implemented, as has been the cases in many other villagisation schemes in Africa (de Wet, 1995; McAllister, 1992), though there are of course exceptions.

Villagisation schemes, Ferguson (1990) argues, are often political attempts at controlling the population though they are seemingly aimed at development. De Wet (1990) claims that villagisation is often based on an assumption that rural people are ecologically naïve, and need help to use resources effectively and avoid problems like erosion and overgrazing. He shows how Betterment in South African homelands, following this assumption, was connected to other rural development schemes attempting to regulate maize production, irrigation and cattle production. However, as Fay (2003) points out, the previous “dispersed settlements and flexible land use [were] more compatible with local socio-ecological conditions than planners’ visions of villages and zoned land use. Villagisation proved an ineffective strategy of social control, and created antagonisms that undermined the state’s capacity to rule” (*ibid*:vi).

McAllister (1992) describes some of the socio-economic effects of Betterment on families and villages. For a family, moving from an old homestead site meant abandoning a site of emotional and religious significance, and it was also associated with significant costs for rebuilding houses, erecting new fences, ploughing and manuring new gardens etc. McAllister goes on to point out how social networks within the village degraded as a result of Betterment, as people sometimes found themselves removed from friends, relatives and neighbours, and resettled in villages with strangers. Hostility

and suspicion between neighbours was a common result, and as some local structures of power had been overthrown by the relocalisations, the new villages often had difficulties to deal with these arising problems. A focus on the homestead and the immediate family instead became more common.

Betterment was thus supposed to result in more efficient agriculture and natural resource use, but it had the opposite effect. Population concentration in the villages led to overuse of nearby natural resources. De Wet (1995) shows that planners rarely conducted research in the affected communities and that implementation was very “top-down”, so the new village sites were sometimes far from often-used resources or in other ways unsuitable. McAllister (1992) lists several reasons for people becoming increasingly sceptical to relying on the environment for their livelihoods. The loss of local knowledge, accumulated over generations, when people were moved from the resources they knew well is one important reason. The relocalisations also led to people feeling insecure about their land tenure situations, dreading further removals, and continuous government interference in land use practices further discouraged the people from cultivating the land. Agriculture thus dwindled, due to economic hardship, unsuitable allocated lands and loss of knowledge.

It is important to note that Betterment was not implemented everywhere. In some areas, like in the village Ndengane in the study area (see the map in *Figure 4*) people successfully resisted this policy and continued to live in scattered villages. In other areas, like the studied village Cutwini where Betterment was implemented several decades ago, some families have recently moved back to their pre-betterment sites, resuming a scattered settlement pattern. Fay (2003) noticed this trend of what he has termed “reverse resettlement” in Hobeni, Xhosa District in Southern Transkei, where it seems to be a stronger trend than in Cutwini.

Another important point here is that the nucleated villages are today not seen as a problem by all their inhabitants. Many of today’s younger generation who grew up in villages like Cutwini stated in interviews, when comparing their village with villages having a scattered settlement pattern, that they are positive to the livelier feeling of the clustered villages and the proximity to neighbours, and that they would not like to live more spread-out. This opinion also coincides with the younger generation’s increasing focus on jobs and diminishing interest in agricultural activities, explored in much detail later. As will also be further explored, the village structure has in some areas led to closer ties between unrelated neighbours and friends, which is seen by some as a positive outcome. For these reasons, the degree to which Betterment could, and should, be “undone” today is of course limited.

Another large intervention into local agricultural practices in Transkei was when the parastatal Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR) had projects in the area during the time of Transkei’s ‘independence’. The aim of these projects was again to improve local agricultural practices, and they

also involved outside experts who came to the villages, bringing hybrid seeds, pesticides and fertilizers, and encouraged people to abandon their old, locally bred seeds and use the products provided by TRACOR. The corporation also brought equipment like tractors to help people to plough their fields. The local farmers usually did not feel that they were given a choice to be a part of the project or not, as it was presented as compulsory. TRACOR was subsequently liquidated, but by that time, local people had lost most of their old seeds and most people today have to buy new hybrid seeds at local shops instead. The soil had furthermore become used to fertilizers, so people today therefore complain that they have to invest much more money than previously in order to plant in their gardens and fields. This is a major problem today, and will be discussed in more detail later.

## Pondoland and the Case Study Villages

After thus introducing selected historical and political aspects of South Africa and Transkei, it is now time to ‘zoom in’ on the study area, Pondoland, the location of which can be seen in *Figure 2*. I will describe the geography of Pondoland and certain specific historical circumstances that sets the area apart from other parts of Transkei. Finally, I will describe the two main case study villages, Cutwini and Manteku, and discuss similarities and differences between them.

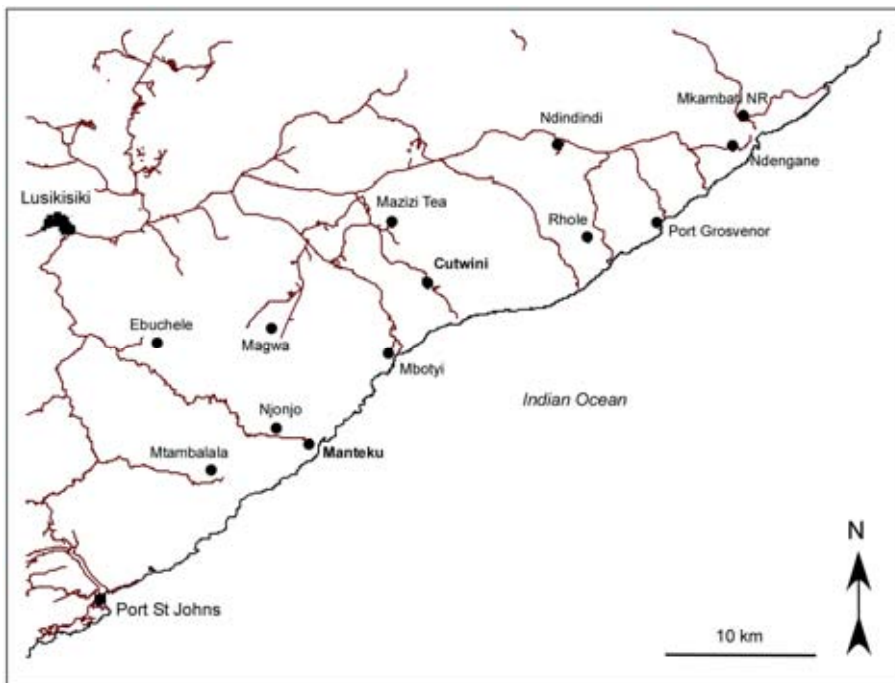
The studied villages are situated within the coastal belt of the southern part of what has historically been known as eastern Pondoland, and can be seen on the map in *Figure 4*. The area north of the Umzimvubu River used to be the Lusikisiki District, but was during the demarcations in 2000 split up, and belongs now to partly to the Qawukeni Local Municipality and partly to the Port St Johns Local Municipality, both situated in the larger O. R. Thambo District Municipality<sup>22</sup>.

The Egosa fault that is marked on the aerial photograph in *Figure 5* marks a divide in the landscape of Eastern Pondoland, which according to Haag (2002) can be divided into two distinct ‘land systems’ with different topography, geology and vegetation pattern. The difference between these two land systems can be observed by comparing the two aerial photographs in *Figure 5* and *Figure 6*. The photograph in *Figure 5* depicts the area north-east of the fault, where the village Cutwini lies. This area is known as the Lambasi coastal plain and Haag (2002) describes it as consisting of an up-lifted plateau of Table Mountain sandstone with narrow incised river valleys, a high cliff along the coast and small pocket beaches at river mouths. The soil here is sandy and shallow and the vegetation consists mainly of vast

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<sup>22</sup> Data from the Municipal Demarcation Board, South Africa, maps over the municipalities can be viewed at [www.demarcation.org.za](http://www.demarcation.org.za).

grasslands. The photograph in *Figure 6* depicts the southernmost area, where the studied village Manteku lies. This area has a dissected coastal landscape, and a more diverse geology, which makes for richer soils and a more variable vegetation pattern. Beaches and silty river estuaries are also more frequent and larger, and the coast is less steep.



*Figure 4.* Map showing the study area, coastal Eastern Pondoland, with the road network marked. The two main case study villages, Cutwini and Manteku, along with other towns, villages and important locations that are mentioned in this study are marked on the map.

The subtropical forest that spreads out along the Pondoland coast (and a few kilometres inland), from about 50 kilometres south of Port St Johns and up to this fault, has earlier been regarded by botanists as a last remnant of a forest that used to extend both inland and northwards to Natal. It was assumed that these forests were cleared by African settlements, but as discussed earlier, these claims have been rejected recently, and the forests in these areas are now attributed to these favourable soil and climatic conditions (Beinart, 2002b; McAllister, 2002).

Beinart (2002a) shows that the Lambasi plains were historically well reputed for their vast grasslands, and were used as a winter (dry season) grazing ground. Residence and cultivation was not permitted here until some people started building homesteads in the late 1930's, while taking precau-

tions so that the buildings would not be visible from main transport routes. Several attempts to rid the area of these settlers were made, but these attempts were resisted and Beinart shows how the issue of these attempted removals was one of the factors behind the intensity of the Pondoland revolt of 1960 in this particular area. Interviews in the study area suggest that the southernmost coastal area of the Lambasi plain was around 1965 resettled into one village, Cutwini, while another village further north, Ndengane, resisted resettlement and still has a scattered settlement pattern (these villages are marked in *Figure 4* and photographs comparing settlement pattern between the different villages can be found on the CD).

The forests in Pondoland were already in colonial times recognised as among the largest and densest indigenous forests in South Africa (Beinart, 2002a) and this coupled with the earlier discussed conviction of botanists that such forests represented the scattered remains of much larger forests that had been cleared by local people, led to wide-ranging policies of forest conservation since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These policies implied removal of settlements from proclaimed zones and various regulations against the use of forest products. Still today, there is much concern among conservation organisations and state actors about local firewood use in these areas (*c.f.* Hoffman *et al.*, 1999).

Agricultural conditions in Pondoland are favourable from a climatic point of view. The climate can be described as sub-tropical, and rainfall is abundant (annual mean is approximately 1200 mm<sup>23</sup>), even though drought periods occur. The temperature varies from 13°C to 35°C, with a mean of 20°C (Dye, 1998; Kepe, 2001a). The soils, especially on the Lambasi plains, can be regarded as less favourable for agriculture due to their sandy and nutrient poor composition (Rust, 1998). Maize, however, though it has earlier been described as a highly problematic crop, is quite tolerant in terms of soils and the rainfall in Pondoland is sufficient to support a good maize production (Crais, 2003). Beans, the necessary protein and lysine complement of a maize diet, also grows well in the area.

Eastern Pondoland has indeed been historically well reputed for its agricultural productivity. Beinart (2002a:76) describes how this area in the 1960s was "perceived of as among the most traditionalist in the [Transkeian] Territories, where rural smallholder production had to some degree survived alongside migrant labour". Possibly as an effect of this agricultural productivity, the coastal populations of Pondoland focus less on marine resources than other Transkei coastal populations. It has been estimated that, contrary to other coastal areas of Transkei, shellfish are relatively unimportant in the

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<sup>23</sup> This figure is based rainfall data for Mkambati plantation (latitude 31°16', longitude 29°57', 195 m.a.s.l.), which is situated 20 km north-east from Cutwini. The calculations are based on daily recordings for the period 1926-2002 provided by the South African Weather Bureau (Haag and Hajdu, 2005).

diet of the population northeast of Port St Johns (i.e. eastern Pondoland), supplying between 0-1% of the annual protein requirement (Hockey and Siegfried, 1988).

As indicated earlier, Pondoland resisted inclusion into the Cape Colony longer than any other region in Transkei. The reluctance to accept outside intervention in local livelihoods and natural resource use was also demonstrated in 1960, when there was a revolt in eastern Pondoland, described by Beinart (2002a:76) as “one of the most intense political conflicts in the South African countryside during the apartheid era and indeed during the century as a whole”. Beinart claims that the rebellion was a reaction to various state interventions over a long period of time, like new laws and proclamations attempting to govern land occupation, forests, pastures, burning, hunting, and so on. During the rebellion, local African agents of the government were hauled before rebel courts and killed or forced to flee. The state reacted forcefully and within a few months the rebellion had been quenched, with considerable loss of life.

Pondoland thus has several characteristics that distinguish it significantly from the rest of Transkei. Not only has it historically and culturally been a distinct entity, but the grazing and farming potential seems in general to be better here than in many other parts of the region. These distinctions suggest that results from a study area in Pondoland cannot be indiscriminately applied to other areas of Transkei, a point I will return to.

The map in *Figure 4* shows the road network in the study area and the relative locations of the studied villages. The coastal villages are quite isolated from each other since the road network connects them mainly to inland villages. Lusikisiki is the only town in the area, and is a main hub of economic activity despite its limited size. It consists of one main road and a clutter of small shops, street vendors and big supermarkets. People from the whole district come here to buy groceries, paraffin, furniture, clothes and other necessities and to visit clinics, pharmacies and banks.

Port St Johns, further south across the Umzimvubu River, is a quite big, tourism-oriented town. The road from Port St Johns to Lusikisiki was only tarred in 2003, after about three years of roadwork. Other roads in the district are gravel roads or dirt tracks, which during rainy days can become impassable to most cars. The 27 kilometres between Lusikisiki and Cutwini usually took between 1–1½ hours for the local taxi, and “improving the road” was the first point on the development “wish-list” in the community.

Previous development initiatives in the study area have included the large tea plantations (1800 ha in all) at Magwa and Mazizi. The Magwa Tea Estate was established in 1965 and followed in 1983 by the smaller Mazizi estate (interview Pangwa and Mhlanga, 2005). Several of the people living in the village Cutwini claim to have been moved by the government from their previous homestead sites in order to give space for the tea plantations. The plantation is now a major employer in the village.

Recently a number of other land use options in the area have been proposed. These include ecotourism projects such as the 'Amampondo trails' discussed before, the Pondoland National Park (Cousins and Kepe, 2004) and dune mining in Xholobeni (Mineral Commodities, 2003)<sup>24</sup>. In addition, several governmental poverty relief programmes that focus on job creation are present in the area.

The coastal area of Pondoland was initially chosen as a study area because I was working together with a physical geographer who had a coastal interest, and the study area was further narrowed down into a couple of villages using information from air photo series (1937- 1995) and discussions with researchers and local NGO's. The aim was to choose villages that had different settlement patterns and histories. Thus, Cutwini, a Betterment village where people were resettled in 1960's, Manteku, a village that had been only partially, and voluntarily resettled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Nden-gane, a village that had completely resisted resettlement and had a scattered housing pattern, were chosen as field study villages. It was also considered interesting that the physical geography, in terms of soils, vegetation and coastal morphology varies between the villages.

However, due to time limitations described in more detail in the next chapter, I ended up focusing mainly on Cutwini and Manteku, which were studied in-depth, through interviews with every household. I visited Nden-gane on several occasions, made key informant interviews and observations, but no household survey was made here. I will therefore only refer a few times to Ndengane, while Cutwini and Manteku will be my main case study villages. These two villages will therefore now be shortly described and compared.

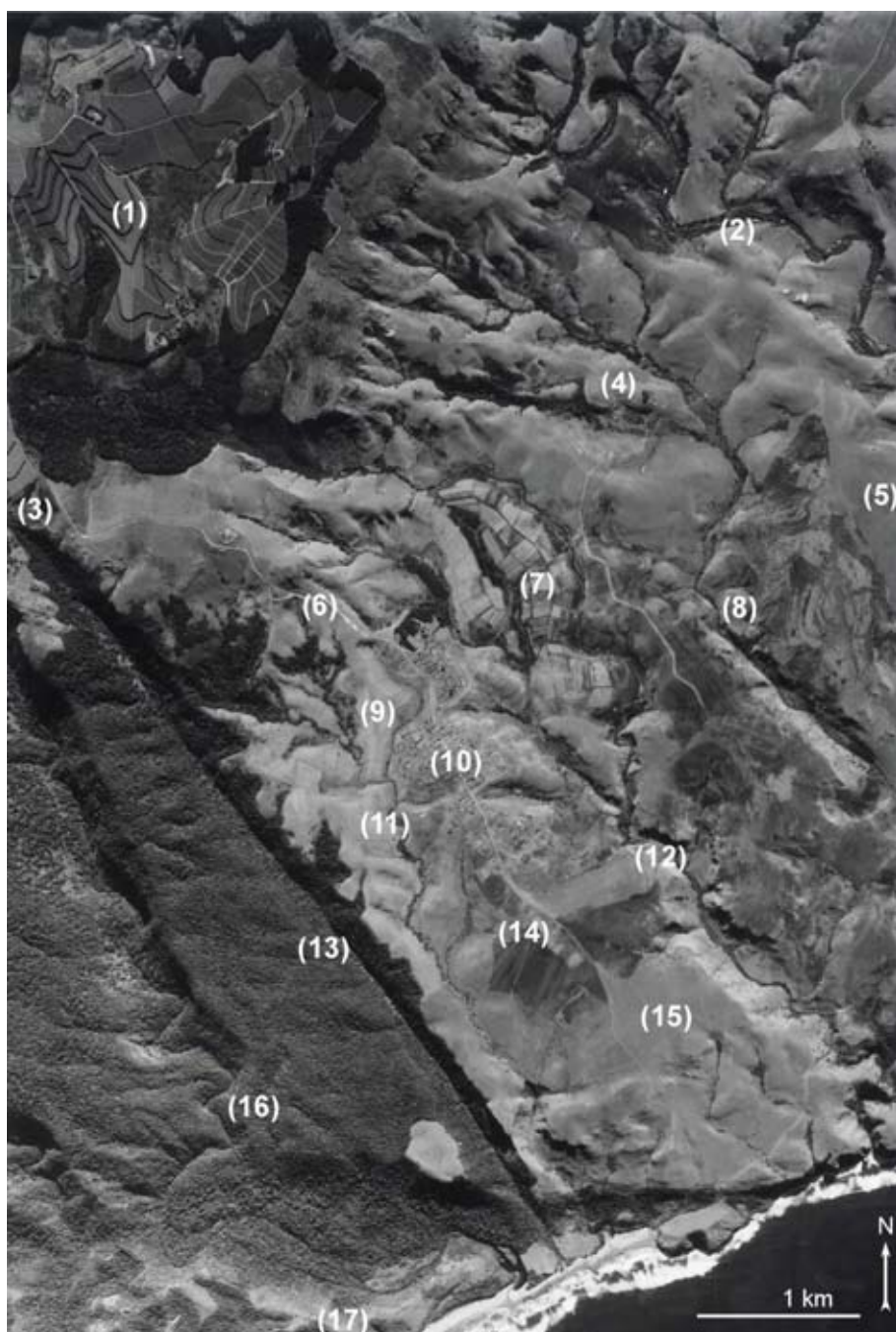
### Cutwini<sup>25</sup>

Cutwini is located 2-3 km from the coast and approximately 27 km from the closest town, Lusikisiki. The aerial photo in *Figure 5* shows the village and the surrounding area, with numbered markings indicating different features (numbers referred to in brackets in the text below). To the west of the village, running from inland [3] towards the coast is a steep escarpment (the Egosa Fault) and a big forest [13]. To the east, there are largely uninhabited grasslands stretching for several kilometres before the next village, and to the north there are steep slopes and eventually the Mazizi Tea Plantation [1], a provider of many jobs in the village.

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<sup>24</sup> The National park was proposed as a means to stop the dune mining development, see: [http://www.greenclippings.co.za/gc\\_main/article.php?story=20031002151253401](http://www.greenclippings.co.za/gc_main/article.php?story=20031002151253401)

<sup>25</sup> A general GIS village map over Cutwini is available on the CD.



*Figure 5.* Aerial photograph over the village Cutwini and its surroundings. The photograph from 2002 was supplied by Surveys and Mapping, Cape Town, and own markings were added. The numbers are explained in the text. The aerial photograph is also available on the CD.

The Cutwini River [12] runs east of the village. To the west, three rivers run close to each other [11, 13, 16] and combine to form a small beach on the coast, to the south of which is the village Mbotyi [17]. Except for this beach, the coast is very steep and rocky. Maize fields surround the village [7, 11], and grazing lands [5, 15] extend to the south and east. A single gravel road [6], coming from Lusikisiki, enters the village, passes through it and ends a few hills from the sea. No bus traffics this road, but villagers can get into town through informal 'taxis'.

Cutwini is a village created by Betterment policies, and the grid pattern of planned resettlement is visible on the aerial photograph [10]. This forced relocalisation is still vividly remembered by the older generation. There were very few homesteads at the site of the current village before relocalisation, and the bulk of the village was moved between 1958-69<sup>26</sup>, from the Bhobe and the Magwa/Mazizi area (where a tea plantation was made). The government continued to move people to Cutwini at a slower rate, with occasional relocalisation occurring as late as 1988. Out of the homesteads present in Cutwini today, 39% claim to have settled in their current location due to Betterment relocalisation.

The first homestead in Cutwini to be created 'voluntarily', through a couple building a new homestead after marriage, was established in 1970. Since the early 1980's, the trend has been that 1-3 new homesteads are built in the village each year due to the "marriage" reason, and today these homesteads make up 20% of all homesteads. Another 10% of the homesteads have been built by unmarried women. Before the 1990's, it was very uncommon for a girl to move away from her parent's home without marrying, but during the last decade it has become more common (see page 119.)

Since the 1980's, people have started moving to Cutwini from outside, mostly from neighbouring villages and from Lusikisiki. These new homesteads account for 17% of the current households, and the reasons for moving are that people want to be close to relatives (Cutwini is in some cases their home village) or work opportunities, or that they simply "like the place". Quite a few families (6%) have also moved to Cutwini because it has good grazing opportunities (which confirms the earlier mentioned grazing potential of the Lambasi plains, on which Cutwini lies).

Today, Cutwini consists of three nucleated areas stretching along the road [the number 10 is centred on the largest of these], a small satellite area [14] and a few scattered homesteads [4] and [2], in the area referred to as Bhobe. On the more detailed map in *Figure 8*, the village school for grades 1-9 is marked. Children in grades 10-12 have to go to school in a village close Lusikisiki. Cutwini is quite spatially isolated from the rest of the villages in

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<sup>26</sup> A GIS map showing when every household moved to their current homestead site in Cutwini is available on the CD, as well as additional data on previous residence and reasons for movements.

the same ward, and the Chief in charge of the Lambasi area lives inland and visits Cutwini only rarely. Cutwini consisted in April 2002 of 146 inhabited homesteads, and had a population of 944 persons.

## Manteku<sup>27</sup>

The second case study village, Manteku, can be seen on the aerial photograph in *Figure 6*, with the same type of markings here as on the Cutwini photograph. The village lies close to the sea, by the Mzintlava River estuary [6], and it extends south-west along the coast from this river to the Dakana River [11]. The area on the other side of Dakana [10] is also counted as part of the village, although there are no settlements here today. Inland, Manteku extends with settlements to the forest edge but the forest [5] is also utilised by the villagers, as well as the large, open and grassy areas [4] on top of the hills beyond the forest.

Compared to Cutwini, Manteku's topography is much more rugged, and gardens usually have to be made on sloping land. Due to this rugged topography, fields are located on the flatter areas of the Mzintlava River floodplains [3]. Grazing lands are not as widely available close to the village as in Cutwini. Marine resources are much more readily available in Manteku than in Cutwini, since the village is closer to the sea. The tea plantation that offers many jobs in Cutwini is too far from Manteku to provide any jobs, but instead, Manteku has holiday cottages in the village where people can find occasional employment (these can not be seen on the photographs).

Although the road [7] from Lusikisiki is very long and in bad shape, a bus runs on it most days, as well as several 'taxis'. The village has a relatively close contact with other villages further up this road, and with the bigger village Mtambalala [9] to the southwest, so Manteku is thus less spatially isolated than Cutwini.

Manteku has a more scattered settlement pattern than Cutwini, but the homesteads are still close to each other in a clearly defined village. Betterment has not taken place here in the same way as Cutwini, but some sort of removals from the area across the Dakana River [10] has taken place, as remembered by the elderly people in the village. About 10% of the households claim to have been told by either the government or the chief to move to their current settlement site. Another 9% claims to have made the same move by their own free will because the new homestead site would be closer to the road and to shops. These movements have, however, been spread out over time, so there has been no period of intense villagisation as in Cutwini. Most homesteads were moved between the 1950's to the 70's, although there are examples of removals until as late as 1993.

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<sup>27</sup> A general GIS village map over Manteku is available on the CD:

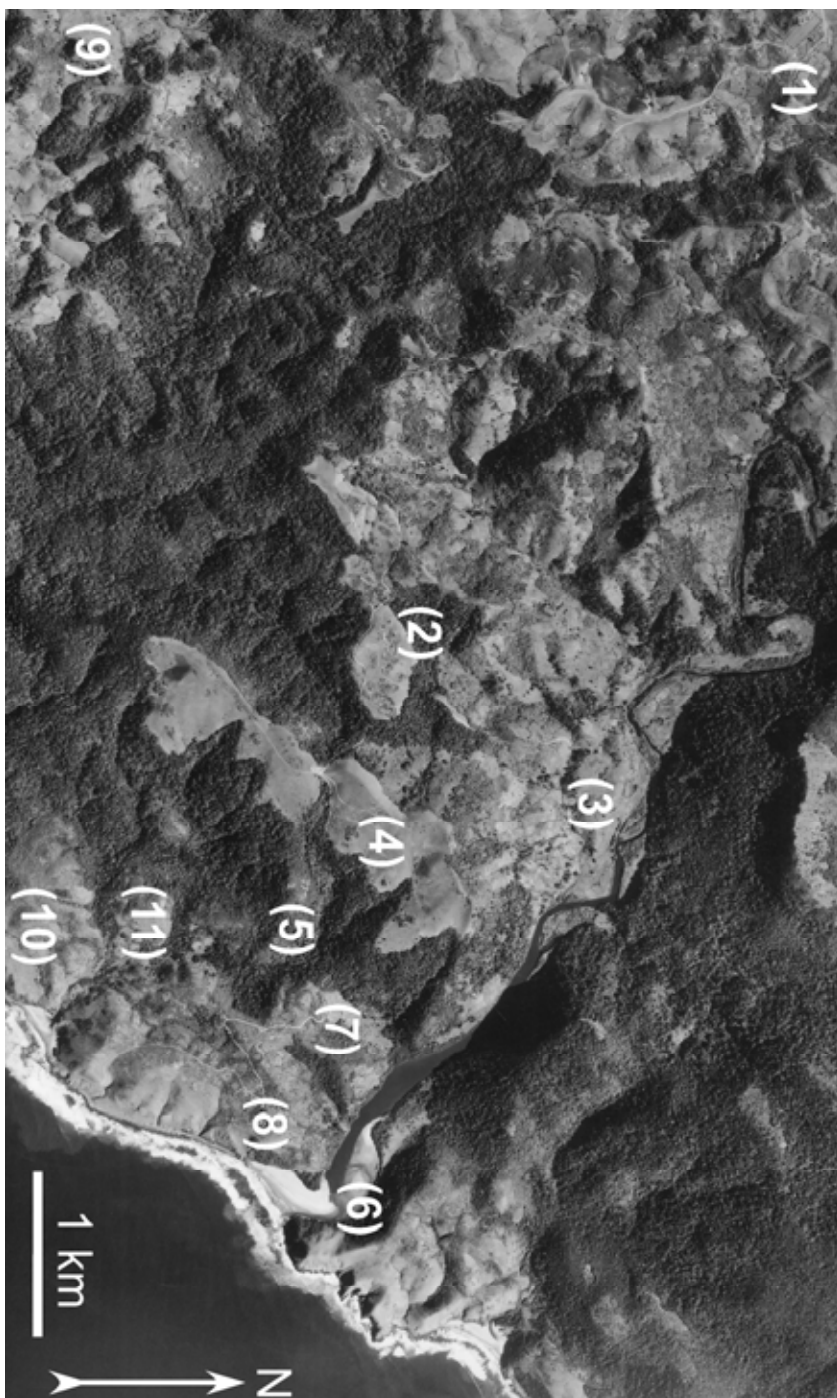


Figure 6. Aerial photograph over the village Manteku and its surroundings. The photograph from 2002 was supplied by Surveys and Mapping, Cape Town, and own markings were added. The numbers are explained in the text. The aerial photograph is also available on the CD.

Inter-village movements due to marriage are the most common reason for current settlement in Manteku (23% of the households). Another 13% of the households consist of women who have moved away from their parents without being married or built their own homesteads after a divorce. There has also been some movements within the village due to people not being happy with their homestead sites – because of bad soil, water logging or extreme wind.

A high number of households (25%) consist of people who have moved in to Manteku from different areas within the district. These moves have usually taken place during the 1990's or early 2000's, and these families state that they want to live in Manteku because they have relatives here or because it is close to the sea and has good soil for agriculture.

The Chief over Manteku resides in Ebuchele [1] up the road, and this is also the village where children have to go for schooling from grades 10-12. Grades 3-9 go to school in Njonjo [2], while a recently built grade 1-2 is present in Manteku. In October 2002, Manteku consisted of had 86 inhabited homesteads and 588 residents.

## Cutwini and Manteku Compared

Similarities and differences between Cutwini and Manteku have important implications for this study, and therefore I will devote some space for a comparison of the two villages.

Firstly, it is important to note that both villages are quite small as compared to many other villages in the region, especially those that lie closer to town. Cutwini is certainly a bit bigger than Manteku, but it also has more space in terms of grazing and agricultural lands. Though Manteku has closer neighbours and better infrastructure than Cutwini, both these villages are also quite geographically isolated, at the end of long roads that are in bad shape. This has also meant that both villages have not yet been part of many 'development' initiatives, such as electrification and water and sanitation facilities. The proximity to the sea is also a similarity between the two villages, though this proximity is more marked in the case of Manteku, where the coast and river estuaries is much more accessible than in Cutwini.

The immigration of families from the surrounding areas to both villages is perhaps somewhat surprising, considering that these villages are generally regarded as "underdeveloped" by people in the area (meaning that they have less access to facilities than most surrounding villages). Cutwini's main asset is stated to be its vast grazing lands, while Manteku's is its proximity to the sea, which is an important difference between these two villages. As will be shown later, domestic animals is the most important natural resource-based part of people's livelihoods in Cutwini, while marine resource use is the most important type natural resource use in Manteku.

Due to the proximity to the tea plantation, which has a capacity for employing many persons, Cutwini has had an important job opportunity close by, which is lacking in Manteku. As will be shown later, this opportunity for work at the tea plantation, though it has often been erratic and badly paid, have led to quite a different social pattern in the two villages, where Cutwini experiences less inequality in terms of differences between the poorer and richer households in the village.

Another important distinction between the two villages is that Cutwini is a “Betterment” village, with grid-patterned settlement and an organised growth pattern, while Manteku has grown much more “organically”. The traces of Betterment are very slowly being erased in Cutwini due to the free-will movements of late, however, many people in Cutwini still claim to be afraid of moving away from their assigned plot or making their gardens bigger than the assigned space. In Manteku, forced removals were of a much smaller scale and are more or less forgotten in the village at this point. People thus move around and make gardens much more freely than in Cutwini.

The atmosphere in the two villages is quite different. Perhaps due to the equality aspect mentioned above, or due to the dense settlement pattern, Cutwini is a village generally characterized by a harmonious atmosphere and good relationships between families. Manteku, on the other hand, has an atmosphere that is more characterised by suspicion and slight hostility between families. Thus, Cutwini was a village that was very easy and smooth to work and live in, while there tended to be various problems, such as competition over employment opportunities, accusations of witchcraft and occasional theft in Manteku. In the next chapter, I will describe the in more detail the processes of collecting field data in these two villages.

## 4. Processes of Field Research

After thus having introduced South Africa and the study area, it is now time to give the reader some details about how I have collected the field data that has been the basis of this study. I have between the years 1999-2006 visited South Africa ten times and spent a total of over 16 months in the country. Of this time, approximately 10 months have been in Transkei and 8 months in the specific study area of Eastern Pondoland (see *Figure 4*). A basic chronology of these field visits is given in Table 1, together with short details on the places I visited and the work that was accomplished during each field period.

In the beginning of the project, much time was devoted to building contacts at universities and different research institutions in South Africa, participating in conferences, talking to other researchers and selecting a study area. Fieldwork was initiated in 2001, when pilot interviews were conducted in both of the main study villages, Cutwini and Manteku. In 2002, household surveys were conducted during two intense fieldwork periods, in Cutwini in April and in Manteku in October. Follow-up interviews were made mainly in Cutwini in 2003 and both villages were revisited during 2005. Furthermore, a short field visit was made to Cutwini in January 2006, after which I visited several other villages in the area while supervising the first fieldwork of another PhD project on a food production project with genetically modified maize in this region.

The NGO PondoCROP helped me with initial contacts in the villages (in the form of phone numbers to people who could help me), and I went by myself on the first introductory fieldwork visit, contacted these people and paid them to help me with interpretation and transport. Cutwini was the village where initial contacts went most smoothly, and here I quickly found many assistants and interpreters who were eager to participate in the project and good at speaking English. Thus, this village became the main fieldwork village, where I spent most of the field time and where I made the most interviews. Manteku, where I after some time also established good contacts and found excellent assistants, became the secondary fieldwork village.

The household survey was performed in both Cutwini and Manteku in 2002. My original intention was to perform a household survey in a third village, Ndengane, as well. However, I realised after the two first surveys that there was not enough time or money to complete a third survey. Furthermore, the amount of information obtained from the first two surveys was

already a bit too much to handle in terms of data processing and analysis. Thus, I ended up only making some key informant interviews in Ndengane, but I visited the area on several occasions and got a fairly good understanding of it. I will mention Ndengane on some occasions in this thesis, but I have avoided making detailed comparisons between Ndengane and the other two villages or drawing any conclusions based on the Ndengane data, due to the much lower quality of the data from this village.

Table 1. *Visits to South Africa, time and purpose of visit, where time was spent and what was accomplished. See list of abbreviations for names of universities.*

<b>Time and purpose</b>	<b>Where the time was spent</b>	<b>What was accomplished</b>
<b>Nov 1999</b> Master's thesis field research	Mainly at Unitra, but field visits to Port St Johns, Coffee Bay, Dwesa-Cwebe on the Wild Coast	First contacts with Unitra, interviews on tourism development with local people and hotel owners
<b>Sept-Oct 2000</b> Introductory visit	Unitra, Rhodes University, UCT, UWC, participation in IAIA Conference, field visits to Mbotyi (in study area), Coffee Bay, Centani District.	Established contact network at different universities and research institutions in SA, selected study area
<b>May-Aug 2001</b> First fieldwork period	UWC, Unitra, fieldwork in Nden-gane-Rhole, Cutwini and Manteku.	Participated in 8-week course at UWC, facilitated a Memorandum of Understanding between Unitra and Linköping University, initiated fieldwork
<b>March-April 2002</b> Second fieldwork period	Unitra, fieldwork in Cutwini and Manteku	Household surveys in Cutwini, preparations for survey in Manteku
<b>Aug-Nov 2002</b> Third fieldwork period	Fieldwork in Manteku, Cutwini, Ndengane, Msikaba Nature reserve, Lusikisiki	Households surveys in Manteku, interviews in Cutwini and Ndengane, snowball interviews at district level
<b>June-Aug 2003</b> Fourth fieldwork period	Fieldwork in Cutwini and Nden-gane, interviews in Umtata, and Bisho, East London	Follow-up interviews in Cutwini Snowball interviews in Umtata and Bisho, Conference in East London.
<b>October 2003</b> Conference	Cape Town	Participation in two conferences.
<b>Feb 2004</b> Conference, interview	Cape Town	Participation in conference, Snowball interview in Cape Town
<b>Feb-May 2005</b> Fifth fieldwork period	Cape Town, UWC, Fieldwork in Cutwini and Manteku	Visits to UWC, archive research in Cape Town, Final, clarifying interviews in both villages
<b>Jan 2006</b> Short fieldwork and supervision	Field area: Cutwini, Xhopoza, Flagstaff, Umtata, Grahamstown	Final field visit to Cutwini, interviews in Flagstaff area within another PhD project (where I am supervisor).

# Collecting the Field Data

## Participation and Observations

Participation in local life in the two villages was a crucial part of the field research. As a researcher in field, I constantly live with the project, observe what goes on around me and participate in activities. Living in a local family, with constant access to an interpreter, I might ask about crucial information while eating my breakfast porridge, or while getting a ride to town in a minibus-taxi. Much of the time, the assistants might not even perceive me as working, since we are not performing interviews and I am not taking notes, but much of the knowledge I accumulated over the months I spent in the area was collected through participant observation and informal discussions. For example, the information in *Box A* on the costs of building a house was gathered when Bongani, my friend and assistant, came to me and asked me to help him make an economic plan for the house he was planning to build. Another example is that much of the information on the costs of certain foodstuffs and the strategic economic calculations that people make when deciding what to buy and what to eat was collected through me being an active part in shopping for groceries and cooking food.

Participation on my part thus entailed doing all sorts of things. As mentioned, I lived for months with local families in both villages, ate my meals with them and took part in their daily life. I thus participated in daily chores like fetching water, cooking and grocery shopping in both *spaza*-shops and in wholesale stores. I visited schools, clinics, traditional healers, helped repair a house, sold goods in a *spaza*-shop, attended various village meetings, funerals, initiation ceremonies, church services, local bars and TV-nights. I discussed every possible subject with the local people over these months, from issues of witchcraft, local gossip, HIV, and the progress of the village football team to how to raise children, the war in Iraq, TV soap operas, the progress of the various South African football teams and all kinds of aspects on South African past and present politics.

Most of the assistants spoke good English, so the communication was usually not a problem, and after a while they learnt to interpret so well that I could feel like I was having a conversation with someone directly, though we were using an interpreter. Learning *isiXhosa* fluently proved difficult for me, but I quickly gained a vocabulary and knowledge of the language that enabled me to understand the essence of conversations and judge if the interpreter was making mistakes or neglecting to interpret certain things. My knowledge of local norms, rules and customs also grew over the years, and by 2003 I felt I had quite a thorough local knowledge of how to behave and interpret people's behaviour.

## Initiating Fieldwork

During my first fieldwork in the area, I explained at village meetings who I was and the type of project I wanted to do. In both villages, I had to explain that I did not come from the South African government and that it was not in my power to create jobs for people. I was, however, in both villages welcomed by the local people and allowed to proceed with the project. I showed the people at the meetings the topo-cadastral maps from 1982 (scale 1:50 000) and aerial photographs taken in 1995 (enlargements, scale 1:10 000 and 1:5 000) of their village. People had never seen these maps or photographs before, but could easily identify their homesteads and other structures or features in their surroundings, especially on the aerial photograph enlargement, where even single buildings are visible.

Considering the criteria put on a PhD project to produce new knowledge, I had limited potential to make the project useful from a local perspective. Attempting to make a compromise, I suggested I make updated GIS maps of both villages, and collect social information on the households, both of which I would subsequently give to the villages. People readily agreed to this. When looking at the existing maps and photographs, people had been upset when noticing that all the households in the villages were not visible on the maps, so they did see the use of an updated map, and they also expressed a belief that if they were in possession of up-to-date social information and maps of their village, this might facilitate them communicating their needs to decision-makers such as the district councillor. In both villages, people were in fact anxious for me to promise to put every homestead on the map and not to leave out any households when making interviews.

It was also at this time that I asked the meeting which way they thought it was most appropriate to collect the data – interviews with individuals, groups, households or something else? People suggested that interviews with households would be most appropriate. As it was very important to the villagers that every household was interviewed, sample-based data collection was excluded, and it was in both villages decided that I should interview every household (233 households all in all). I asked for and was appointed four persons, whom I will in the future refer to as assistants, to work with.

## Working with Assistants

Though I call the local persons I was working with “assistants”, they were actually doing much more than simply assisting me. I quickly became friends with these assistants, and they were involved in constructing the project from the beginning and were very active in coming with ideas, suggestions, critical questions and comments throughout the process. They helped constructing the questionnaire, doing the survey, learned how to take GPS waypoints, helped analyse and discuss the resulting data and the GIS maps.

Some of the assistants also doubled as interpreters, field guides, and facilitators in visits to other villages and chauffeurs.

The assistants were all local persons who were in need of temporary employment when I was in the villages, and they were between 20 and 40 years old. They were furthermore socially skilled people, who were liked and trusted by their communities, and were good at speaking English. Over the years I sometimes had to choose new assistants, since some of them got permanent jobs or moved away. Two of my assistants died, tragically, in-between my field periods. In Cutwini, I had five assistants altogether, four male and one female, while in Manteku I had six assistants, three female and three male. In Ndengane, where I did some short fieldwork, I had two female assistants.

## Definitions Adopted for Data Collection

As mentioned above, it was decided at a village meeting that I should work with the household level of analysis and that I should interview every household in both villages. In livelihoods studies, researchers have also started using mainly the household as an analytical unit (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005). I usually refer to the people living in the same homestead as one household, because the homesteads are often fairly self-relying units, even though members do sometimes reside at several homesteads or can decide to move from one homestead to another. At times I use “family” and am then referring to a household.

The question of how to determine who should and should not be counted as a resident of the village was lengthily debated with the local assistants. This question becomes tricky especially when it comes to persons who have moved to towns to get education or search for a job. This is because recent changes in South Africa have led to muddling in the category ‘migrant labourer’ (a fact that is discussed in more detail on page 140). A ‘typical’ migrant labourer is a person who spends most of the year away from his or her family, but lives in a temporary homes, visits the village on vacations and sends as much money as he or she can spare home to the family in the village. We agreed that these persons be registered as living in the households and that their income should be counted towards the income of their households (though I made a note that that person only stayed in the village physically on a monthly or yearly basis). However, persons who do not have their immediate families (i.e. husbands, wives or children) or their permanent homes in the village, or persons who did not send any money back to their families in the villages, were on recommendation from the assistants not counted as residents of the village. Grown-up children who have moved to towns to work can and do however make pointed contributions to the livelihoods of their previous homes, for example in the form of a monetary contribution to the school fees of their younger siblings or relatives. I have ac-

knowledge such contributions when discussing livelihoods and coping mechanisms, but thus not counted them as contributions to daily livelihoods.

Household boundaries can also be fluid in that people sometimes move back and forward between homesteads when there is a need for it, for example to take care of children or elderly people, or to look after a homestead if the owner is away. If there was such a situation, people were asked to choose which homestead they wanted to be counted as a part of. Three persons were counted as belonging to more than one households – these were men with several wives, who would claim to be present in up to four households on a daily basis. I have, however, compensated so that these persons would not be counted several times when making various calculations.

Some households included tenants – these persons do not originally come from the village but have to live there during weekdays because they have work there (e.g. teachers, taxi drivers or bus conductors). Tenants were counted as parts of the households that they lived in.

In both villages, some existing homestead sites were uninhabited at the time of data collection, though people stated that the homestead belonged to a family that would move back to the village eventually. In these cases, the homestead site was recorded on the map, but no interview with household members were made. These homesteads are marked as “empty homesteads” on the maps.

## The Household Survey

Most of the information cited in tables and diagrams in this thesis was collected through the household survey that was conducted in Cutwini and Manteku. The survey consisted of two main phases – a questionnaire development phase and the survey phase, with a short evaluation held immediately after the survey.

### Creating the Questionnaire

The assistants and I together developed survey questions targeting all the different issues of interest in the village (the questionnaires are available on the CD). I came with most of the ideas and suggestions, but the assistants gave me a lot of feedback and came also with their own ideas. The questions were tested in pilot interviews, revised and retested. The questionnaire development took place firstly in Cutwini, while in Manteku I started with the Cutwini questionnaire and adjusted it to suit the local situation in Manteku<sup>28</sup>.

The questions focused mainly on various parts of local livelihoods. Quality checks were build in through triangulation of some of the most important

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<sup>28</sup> A detailed description of the changes that were made to the questionnaires between the two village surveys, and the reasons why these changes were made can be found in a separate document on the CD.

questions, and through discussions around *how* to ask questions. The assistants themselves pointed out to me that the questions had to be of different nature – while some had to be specific, with different answer alternatives, others should be more open-ended. For every question, we thus reasoned about how we should manage to get reliable answers.

In the end, the questions were written down in the form of a questionnaire, in both English and *isiXhosa*. The questionnaire was intended to be used by the assistants during the interviews for recording the answers, i.e. the household members would not fill in the questionnaire themselves. The aim was that the four assistants should be able to ask the questions in the households and fill the answers on the questionnaire by themselves, without having to translate everything into English, and without me having to be present during the entire interview<sup>29</sup>. In order to facilitate this, we tried to create a user-friendly questionnaire that would be easy for the assistants to handle. Of course, questions with answer alternatives are easier to handle than open-ended questions, but a good hybrid approach proved to be that the interviewer asks the question without giving alternatives while the questionnaire nevertheless has the most common answers pre-printed on it, thus limiting the need for writing to those instances when the answer is uncommon. The extensive pilot interviewing in the questionnaire development phase was of course a prerequisite for knowing these "common answers". The pre-printed answers on the questionnaires should thus not always be viewed as questions with answer alternatives.

### **The Survey Process**

The survey process started with a two-day training of the assistants, when we again went through the questionnaire, discussed how to put the different questions, what to do when problems arose and so on. The assistants also did their first interviews in pairs, with me and the other two assistants present in order to ensure that the assistants asked the questions in a similar manner. The questionnaire was brought from Sweden and could not be altered once in the village, thus the discussions with informants sometimes altered the question without it being altered on the questionnaire.

Due to an effective interview procedure<sup>30</sup>, four interviews could take place simultaneously, making it possible to do in-depth interviews with

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<sup>29</sup> I was inspired to this idea by Jonathan Duncan, University of Natal, who kindly helped me by detailing the type of working methodology he had been using in his Master's project in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal Province (Duncan, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> The interviewing process went as follows: I was introduced by assistant A to household 1. After formal greetings, the assistant was left by him- or herself to ask the questions and fill the answers on the questionnaire, while I proceeded to household 2 with assistant B, and so on. After leaving assistant D at household 4, I went back to household 1, where the interview was usually about to finish, checked through all the answers on site, asked follow-up questions etc. After this, I would proceed with assistant A to household 5 and continue like that.

every household in the whole village in just 7-9 days. I found the method with assistants highly efficient and rewarding for everyone involved. I was given the chance to introduce myself to every household, at the same time as the assistants were given some freedom in their work.

While the villages consist of almost equal amounts of men and women, as many as 69% of the persons interviewed in the household surveys were women. This is perhaps natural as women tend to spend more time around the house and are more likely to be at home on a spontaneous visit than men. Also, when men were interviewed they often had difficulties answering some of the questions, since many of them concerned typically female tasks like fetching firewood or water. It was not uncommon that wives would be called for when such questions were asked, or for that matter, that women called their husbands or young sons when questions about for example fishing and collecting crayfish were asked.

The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to 1.5 hours each. People were not 'warned' before we arrived at their homesteads, but if they were not at home or wanted us to come back at a more convenient time, we would do so. Usually, everyone who was at home at the time of the interview would gather to answer questions.

## Qualitative Interviews

Except for the household surveys, which were as described above conducted mainly by the assistants, I made many in-depth, qualitative interviews myself over the years. During most of the interviews I had to use interpreters, but sometimes the interviewed person would know enough English to understand the questions and answer by themselves. The interviews had various purposes – I made follow-up interviews with selected households to assess their livelihood situations and how these changed over time, key informant interviews with local people who were involved in various livelihood activities or possessed knowledge about certain things, and interviews with various officials, NGO representatives and researchers. Names, positions and dates are listed on page 256 for some of the key informant interviews and interviews with officials, NGO representatives and researchers, while I do not list names of persons interviewed in the household survey or follow-up interviews.

### **Follow-up Household Interviews**

What I have here chosen to call follow-up interviews are the in-depth qualitative interviews that I made in July 2003 in Cutwini and April 2005 in Manteku, assisted by interpreters. These interviews were made with local families who had in 2002 participated in the household surveys, in order to gain more in-depth knowledge of their livelihood strategies and how these had changed over time. The time elapsed between the household survey and

the follow-up interviews were 15 and 16 months in Cutwini and Manteku respectively.

Most of the follow-up interviews were made in Cutwini, where 20 % of the households were selected for interviews, based on their answers to the 2002 survey. The criteria for selection were that the interviews should include households that had different types of livelihood strategies, and thus random selection was made from every type of 'livelihood package' or 'family type' identified in Table 18.

The 12 households identified in Cutwini as having no major livelihood activities at the time of the survey (type H families, see next chapter), and thus potentially vulnerable, were all interviewed since I wanted to include a vulnerability perspective in the analysis. In Manteku, about 6% of the households were interviewed, and again, the selection was made to include families in different livelihood situations, and especially those who had not had any major livelihood activities at the time of the survey.

### **Key Informant Interviews in the Villages**

Local key informants consisted of persons who filled certain posts in the community, like for example headman or committee members, or who were in one way or another involved with livelihood activities that I wanted to look closer into. Many of these key informants were repeatedly interviewed over the years, and I often observed them in their livelihood activities. They included for example persons who were farming a lot and had a lot of cattle, the person in charge of cattle dipping, and certain fishermen. I also interviewed pensioners and observed them collecting their pension.

When it comes to jobs, I interviewed people working on various levels (i.e. workers, supervisors, contractors etc.) in all poverty relief programmes that had projects in the villages, and attended some of their work and training. I interviewed and observed locally employed persons such as teachers, nature conservation rangers or administrative clerks at the conservation offices, and tea plantation workers. Informally employed persons such as traditional healers, taxi drivers, *spaza* owners, roofers and house builders were also repeatedly interviewed. Outside of the field area, I also visited and interviewed labour migrants. I thus visited a middle-aged married man in his housing (a male-only hostel provided by the company) in a mine in Mpumalanga Province, the home (a shared house in a housing project) of a middle-aged unmarried woman with children who works as a domestic worker in Durban and the home (a small tin shed in the squatter town Khayelitsha) of a young unmarried man who works with different part-time jobs in Cape Town.

### **Interviews with Local Officials, NGOs and Researchers<sup>31</sup>**

In order to absorb as much information as possible on existing knowledge about local situations in the field area, I interviewed/discussed with 23 different researchers with various backgrounds at different universities and research institutions, as well as the representatives of four different NGOs that were working in the area. Several of these were recurring contacts. I also interviewed a local ward councillor to get insight into the democratic processes of development initiatives in the area.

In the case of local job opportunities, I interviewed the estate and production managers at the big local employer close to Cutwini, the Mazizi Tea Plantation. For poverty relief projects, I interviewed local project managers for Working for Water and Working for the Coast programmes, as well as representatives of the NGOs that were in charge of implementing these programmes regionally. In the case of Working for Water, I also interviewed the national programme leader for this project. In the realm of nature conservation, I interviewed two rangers, several administrative clerks and the reserve manager of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. At the regional level, I interviewed various officials in Umtata and Bisho.

Except for researchers and certain NGOs, I used the ‘snowball technique’ (e.g. May, 1997) for identifying persons who were to be interviewed. This meant for example that if local people complained about rangers who implemented natural resource restrictions, I would seek out these rangers and interview them, ask them who it was that was above them in the chain of command, and go to interview that person, and so on. I thus followed four chains of command – the one for marine resource restrictions, forest resource restrictions and implementation of Working for Water and Working for the Coast programmes. For the Working for Water programme, this chain was followed up to the national level, while it was followed to the regional level for the other three policy chains.

### **Collection of Spatial Data**

As mentioned, I brought topo-cadastral maps and aerial photographs over the villages and their surroundings with me on my first fieldwork. As it was decided that the collection of social data should take place on the household level, I chose to mark every homestead on the map. Here, I needed further assistance, as it was very difficult for me to determine which buildings belong to which homestead from the aerial photograph. With the help of the assistant’s knowledge of their village, however, we were able to draw the boundaries of homesteads on a photocopy of the aerial photograph and mark other changes that had taken place since the photographs were taken.

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<sup>31</sup> The names of the people interviewed can be found on page 256

During the second fieldwork, more corrections to the map were made and some information was added, such as the location of the different springs where people fetch water. In the map-related fieldwork, the local assistants also played a vital part. They participated in everything from marking new homesteads, boundaries or natural features on the photographs, to actually walking to a certain location to take a GPS waypoint.

## Analysis and Presentation of Results

Between the fieldwork periods, I worked in Sweden with creating the digital maps in a GIS program (Arc View version 3.1) with the help of GPS-points taken in the field and processing the social data in a database (Access 2000). The buildings that belonged to the same homestead were all grouped together to one unit with a unique colour and number on the map, and thus, the database could be linked with the GIS map to illustrate certain social issues spatially on a household basis.

Alcorn (2000) gives a comprehensive review of the use of maps and mapping and various methods that can be used to achieve various results. GIS has been used in many projects to visualise data in developing countries (*c.f.* Haag and Haglund, 2000; Mohamed and Ventura, 2000; Strömquist and Larsson, 1994; Zhou, 1998) and authors like Blumberg and Jacobson (1997), Liverman *et al.* (1998) and Fox *et al.* (2003) have shown that it is possible to link remote sensing and GIS to social data and household surveys in various fruitful projects. There is, however, an ongoing discussion on whether ICT could be a tool for poverty reduction or if it is a 'technical trap' that excludes the poor because of its high-tech features (*c.f.* Hellström, 2005).

In this project, the GIS maps were mostly used for reference in the villages and for locating households that I wanted to do follow-up interviews with. On certain occasions, the maps were used for spatial analysis, like in the case of garden size and yields in the Betterment village Cutwini (see *Figure 8*). Most importantly, the maps were given to the communities and by them used when discussing village matters with their councillors, municipal boards, local NGOs and so on.

The social data were analysed for various purposes, and is presented in tables and diagrams throughout the thesis. Social data were also compiled into lists and given to community representatives.

When interview data are presented, I often use quotes to illustrate local perceptions and give 'local flavour' to the analysis. Most of these quotes have been interpreted from *isiXhosa*, and I have also taken the liberty of 'cleaning up' in the quotes, e.g. taken away 'eeeh's and interruptions. Since I do not use a tape recorder when interviewing, I also have to rely on my notes when quoting people, so thus the quotes should not be regarded as meticulously exact in the same way that quotes of academic text are.



## 5. Village Life in Cutwini and Manteku

In this chapter, the results from the household surveys are discussed<sup>32</sup>, interwoven with descriptions of important aspects of life in the villages. These facts are essential as a base for the following investigation of the various livelihood activities in the villages. An analytical framework in terms of family ‘types’ is introduced early on in this chapter, and will be referred to throughout the rest of the thesis. In this chapter, the results from the surveys, together with information obtained through interviews and observations are presented and compared with the findings of other researchers. The focus is on the two main case study villages, Cutwini and Manteku, and how these compare to each other and to other villages in Pondoland and Transkei. Those who are very interested in the village-specific data can find more information and data on the accompanying CD.

### Households, Families and Homesteads

The household has been used as the main analytical unit in this project (the process behind this decision is recounted on page 98). The term ‘homestead’ has been used to indicate the place where a family unit lives, and the term ‘household’ (sometimes shortened hh) to indicate the economic unit itself. ‘Family’ is a term for the people who live in the household. Following the definitions adopted (see page 99), Cutwini consists of 146 homesteads while Manteku is smaller with only 86 homesteads. To facilitate comparison between the two villages, the data are always presented as a percentage of the total households in each village, instead of as absolute numbers. I will here discuss various aspects of homesteads, households and families.

### Size and Composition of Households

Households usually consist of persons who are in some way related to each other. In Cutwini and Manteku, average household size is 6.5 and 6.8 respectively, which is close to the numbers cited by Beinart (1992) for Port St Johns, though it seems that average household size varies a lot between vil-

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<sup>32</sup> Note that issues on survey design, how questions were put and so on have been discussed in the previous chapter on methodology.

lages and cannot be generalised across regions. The largest households comprise around 15 members in both villages, while there are also a few households in each village with only one or two household members. Anything between three and 11 household members is common.

The person who has selected the homestead site and erected houses there is commonly conceptualised as the head of a household<sup>33</sup>. If a married couple lives in a household, the man is usually conceptualised as the head, while his wife becomes the head if he dies. This role is usually passed on to the oldest son after the death of both parents. Younger sons are therefore encouraged to build their own homesteads after marriage, while the oldest son often chooses to remain at home with his wife and children. A woman who builds her own homestead is normally thought of as the head of that household, even if she has a boyfriend who lives there with her (see the later discussion on 'living together' relationships).

Common family constellations include 'nuclear households', consisting of a married couple with children, as well as 'three generation households', where also grandchildren are present. Due to the difficulties of getting married (discussed below on page 120), the alternative family type where a woman or man lives together without being married also exists, though it is still not particularly common, as well as women living alone with their children (which is quite widespread).

When unmarried men and women have children while still live with their parents, they can create another quite common family constellation if they migrate to towns and leave their children in the villages. The household in the village thus comes to consist only of grandparents with grandchildren, with the middle generation entirely missing. This type of family usually depends on the pension of the grandparent.

There may also often be additional persons, who are more or less distantly related, or not related at all, living in a household. It is for example common to live with a sister/brother or with the children of various relatives on a more or less permanent basis. In addition, several families rent out rooms to persons who need to live in the village on a temporary basis.

A common perception in literature on the former homelands is that there are a much higher percentage of women than men in villages, due to the effects of labour migration (see discussion on page 169). However, in Cutwini and Manteku the female-male ratio is very even, with 51% of the population being women (and this ratio remains the same even if children under 18 are excluded. If counting only the adult population that is present in the villages on a daily or weekly basis (thus excluding the labour migrants), the

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<sup>33</sup> There are some interesting aspects of this rule. An old widow or widower would for example rarely move in with their child or grandchild and thus accept not being the household head, they would stay in their own homestead and one or more relatives would have to move in with *them* to look after them.

population consists to 54% of women, which is still not a particularly uneven distribution. These results, along with other ones that contrast against common descriptions of the former homelands, will be discussed at length in later chapters.

## Household Life Cycles and Family Types

I have found that much of the daily activities in the villages and the livelihood strategies of households can be understood in terms of family composition and life cycle, a fact that has also been pointed out by many other authors<sup>34</sup> (Fay *et al.*, 2003; Murray, 1981). I will therefore start by giving some examples of real-life families from the two villages and point out various facts that make them behave in specific ways. These family ‘types’, which I have categorised by letters for the sake of simple reference, will then be referred to at times throughout the following analysis. These ‘types’ should be understood as illustrative examples rather than as strict typologies or categories that actually exist and are somehow ‘rule-bound’. Indeed, I make a point of often stressing that there are significant individual differences in both behaviour and family composition, as well as hundreds of other factors except for family ‘type’ that influence behaviour.

Table 2 illustrates the common family types identified through the livelihoods analysis and the various stages they are in, in terms of family life cycle, family size and constellation. The typical livelihood activities that the family engages in are also indicated, as well as the percentage of households (an average of Cutwini and Manteku) that can be classified as belonging to one specific category. These data will later be broken up, in Table 18, along the livelihood activities listed, and the ‘transitional phase’ (family type H) will be discussed in more detail in the later livelihoods analyses (Chapter 7).

The family life cycle in these villages begins when a young couple or a single person establishes a homestead on a new site (or on an old, inherited, site). This ‘type A’ household typically relies on jobs. As the founder(s) of the household grow old and start receiving pensions, some of their children might start working, and the family now becomes a ‘Type E’ family. Eventually, the children might get children of their own and move away to look for work. The grandparents are then often left with their grandchildren and support them only through pensions, an old family (Type B)<sup>35</sup>.

Whether a family engages in agriculture as an important livelihood activity depends a lot on the personalities of the household members, but it is also

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<sup>34</sup> The issue I am referring to is usually conceptualised as the ‘developmental cycle’, though I find the terms ‘household life cycle’ or ‘family life cycle’ more illustrative, especially since I want to avoid confusion with earlier discussions on ‘development’ in terms of a Western idea that has led to state interventions.

<sup>35</sup> The family life cycle has been conceptualised in a similar way, though with four different stages and some other significant differences, by Fay *et al.* (2002).

connected to family size. Therefore, bigger families who have more available labour tend to rely to a larger extent on agricultural activities, and have also more scope for diversifying among livelihood activities in general.

Table 2. *Common family types and their characteristics in terms of family constellation, size, stage in the life cycle and typical livelihood activities. The percent of total households for each family type is shown, averaged between Cutwini and Manteku.*

Family 'type'	Common family constellation	Life cycle stage	Typical livelihood activities	Percent of hh (average)
A	Couple (or single person) with children	Middle sized, young family	Job(s)	46%
B	Grandparent(s) and grandchildren, middle generation missing	Middle sized, old family	Pension(s)	19%
C	Often unmarried woman and young male children	Small, young family	Marine resource use	4%
D	Couple (or single person) with grown-up children	Big, middle-aged family	Job and agriculture / fishing	12%
E	Grandparent(s), grown-up children, grandchildren	Middle sized, old family	Job and pension	5%
F	Grandparent(s), grown-up children, oldest son and his wife, grandchildren.	Big, old family	Pension and agriculture (or fishing)	4%
G	Grandparent(s) and many grown-up children	Very big, old family	Job, pension and agriculture	1%
H	In-between phase that all families go through	Transition between family B and A	Nothing	9%

Below follows examples from Cutwini and Manteku of typical families in each 'family type'. These examples illustrate how family size and composition, household life cycle and livelihood activities all affect each other.

**Family A.** This family lives in Cutwini and consists of a single mother with one grown-up son and one grown-up daughter and two younger children. The grown-up daughter also has a newborn child. The mother works at the tea plantation, and the grown-up daughter helps out around the house, while the grown-up son is looking for work, but have not found anything for several years. The family has a small garden and a few chickens, but they do not have the money to invest in making a bigger garden, and they do not use any marine resources.

**Family B.** A grandmother with her five grandchildren lives in this household in Cutwini. The children are between three and seventeen years old, and they all help around the house. Most of them also go to school. The children's

parents have all moved away to the cities and are working or trying to find work. The household survives mainly on the grandmother's pension, but sometimes one of the parents comes back to the village to visit, and brings some gifts or money.

**Family C.** A family consisting of a young widowed woman and her three children, two boys and a small girl, lives in Manteku. The woman does not have a job, and the family survives on a child grant that she receives for her young girl. The two boys go to the sea to catch crayfish every day and this is an important part of the family diet, which otherwise consists of maize porridge and a few types of vegetables. Sometimes the boys walk all the way to town to try to sell the crayfish to get money for food. The woman collects mussels and tends a small garden, but there is not enough money to plant many crops. The boys do not go to school since there is not enough money for fees and uniforms.

**Family D.** This family that lives in Manteku consists of a young couple with their four young children. Their only income is the work they can find at holiday cottages, which brings only a small sum of money each month. The man looks after the cottage for a family from Durban, a job that only takes about one hour per day and for which he gets a small sum of money every month. The rest of the day, he often goes to the sea with his fishing rod to try to catch some fish. If he has a lot of luck fishing one day, he might go to town and sell the fish, but this happens fairly rarely.

Another type D family lives in Cutwini. They are also a young couple with five children, but the man in this family has managed to secure a job at the Ntsubane State Forest. The family lives well off this income, and has invested money into making a big garden and a field, and bought some cattle and sheep.

**Family E.** This is another big family that lives in Cutwini, and it consists of a grandmother and grandfather, one grown-up son and two grown-up daughters, the wife of the son, and seven grandchildren. The grandfather and his son are usually busy planting in the garden and looking after the livestock, while the women of the family look after the household. The son and the daughters are sometimes looking work, but have not found anything yet. Their two brothers went to Durban to look for work two years ago, but only one of them has found a permanent job. The family survives on the grandfather's pension and the income they get from their fields and livestock.

**Family F.** This is a big family, with a grandmother, her three grown-up children and eleven grandchildren, living in Manteku. The grandmother's pension is an important income, and two out of three of her grown-up children have managed to secure jobs, one of them in the Coast Care project and the

other one at a road-building project in a nearby village. With all these incomes, the family feels fairly secure. They do not make a big garden, and nobody in the family likes to go fishing. Those family members who do not have jobs use their time to try to search for work or make themselves useful in the house, and the children are attending school.

**Family G.** A family in Manteku consists of a husband who works at the nature conservation offices, his wife who does not work, his mother who has moved in with them after her husband died and is receiving pension, and his five children and two grandchildren. The family uses the income from the job and the pension to invest in making a big garden where they grow many different kinds of crops and fruit trees. The mother, wife and the grown-up children are all helping with the agricultural activities, and the children are all schooling. Some of the older children have in fact continued to college and have secured jobs in Durban and Umtata.

**Family H.** In this household in Manteku lives a fifty-two year old man with his young wife and their three children. They have also taken in the child of the wife's sister, because her mother died recently. The household has no main income, since the man was retrenched a couple of months ago and is surviving on the two child grants they have. The man had at the time of the interview just borrowed enough money to travel to KwaZulu Natal and look for work at the same sugarcane plantation where he knew that some other men from the village were working.

## The Homestead

The homestead is the site for daily activities in the households, and the way the appearance of the homestead, in terms of the shape the houses are in, the materials used and the furniture indoors, is an important issue for people and has various implications. Many authors have pointed to the “*ukwakha umzi*” ideal (e.g. Ainslie, 2003; Fay *et al.*, 2003), which states that “building the homestead” is an important form of investment for family members.

A homestead usually consists of a grassy area with several houses and a garden just in front or behind these houses (see photographs on the CD). The average number of houses per homestead is 3.3 in Cutwini and only 2.5 in Manteku. Thus, though Manteku has a slightly higher average number of persons living in each household, the number of houses per homestead is still markedly lower here. Homesteads with only one house are also fairly uncommon in Cutwini (6%), but much more common in Manteku (23%), which is an indication of the fact that Manteku has relatively more poor families, who cannot afford to build many houses.

Beinart (1992) made the observation that the building and maintaining of houses is taking an increasing share of household incomes in Transkei, espe-

cially in Betterment villages. My own findings agree with his interpretation. Just as he points out, people seem less and less inclined to build their houses

**Box A. The Costs of Building a House**

Costs of building a two-roomed brick house with metal roof, data from 2005.

Bricks	4000 R
Bricklayer wages	2000 R
Windows	180 R
Door	300 R
Cement	1500 R
Roof	670 R
Rafters	360 R
Paint	600 R

**Total costs: 9610 R**

out of mud, grass and poles as has been done earlier, perhaps partly due to that some of these materials, like poles, are no longer available for free. Building a house with cement blocks and metal roofing, however, costs significant amounts of money (see *Box A*). Considering that Manteku has a very good availability of thatching grass, the fact that 36% of the homesteads here had a house with a metal roof shows the willingness to spend money on this comparative “luxury”.

Houses can be either rondavels, which tend to have grass roofs, or rectangular houses, which usually have metal roofs, but people are experimenting with several hybrid types – like hexagonal houses with metal or tiled roofs and square houses with grass roofs (See the CD for photos of various types of houses). Rectangular houses are becoming increasingly popular because they can house several rooms in one house, and also because they can have a porch, which has the advantage that chores can be performed here if the sun is too hot or when it is raining. However, even if rectangular houses with metal roofs are becoming increasingly popular, the most common type of house is still a rondavel with grass roof (83 % of the houses in Manteku), and it is very unusual for a homestead to only have metal-roofed houses. An informant explained the reason for this:

The first house that you build in a new homestead must be a rondavel. The ancestors will come and live in that house after you have made a ceremony, and if you want to hold some feast in your homestead, you will hold it in that rondavel. You can light a fire on the floor when it has a grass roof and do everything you need for ceremonies. That is why everyone is still building rondavels in their homesteads.

People seem to spend significant amounts of money not only on building houses but also on furnishing them. Furniture is a high priority, and a bed is the first piece of furniture that people want to have - in Manteku 71% and in Cutwini 98% of the households have beds. Many families also have cupboards, wardrobes, tables and chairs, and those families who can afford it have living-room furniture like sofas, bookshelves and coffee tables. Some families also have well-equipped kitchens with cupboards and gas-stoves, though this is only about 2-3% of the households. Most families cook over

open fire, which is either made on the floor inside the house or sometimes in a separate “kitchen” house.

Radios are common even in relatively poor households, while TV’s and fridges are not as common because neither village has electricity yet and power supplies (for example in the form of car batteries) are expensive. Fridges are usually only acquired by those who have *spaza*-shops and want to sell cold drinks and meat. The need for a TV in every household is also reduced by the fact that people can watch TV in other households, at relatives’, neighbours’ and friends’ houses and therefore do not feel the need to have their own TV.

Toilets (in the form of pit toilets in the garden) are either bought in plastic form from town for a considerable sum of money, or put together by leftover pieces of wood and metal. These are much more common in Cutwini than in Manteku. The reasons for this might be differences in opinions about toilets in the villages, as well as differences in natural surroundings. The opinion in Manteku is that toilets are unnecessary since there are plenty of bushes around, while in Cutwini, because of the Betterment village structure and the comparative lack of bushy vegetation, toilets are more favourably viewed.

The main differences between Cutwini and Manteku in terms of households and homesteads are that Manteku has larger households and comparatively less ‘modern’ houses and furniture. As discussed earlier, income is more evenly distributed among the households in Cutwini as compared to Manteku, which is probably the reason why Manteku seems like a poorer village when it comes to a village average of the quality of houses and the amounts of furniture and other appliances and possessions.

## Village-Wide Institutions

Above I have focused on families and households, arguing that the household is the main economic unit in the village and that livelihoods should be analysed using the household as a base. Households, however, certainly do not exist in a social vacuum – rather, they are parts of the many complicated social relations, institutions and networks that make up a rural village. In this section, I will devote some time to discuss the village-wide contexts that each household is a part of.

## Social Networks – Relatives, Neighbours and Friends

Families in the villages exist within complex networks of social structures, where relatives, neighbours and friends make the struggle for daily livelihoods a little easier in many ways. There are a number of social institutions that help families through tough times when securing a livelihood is especially difficult. Without these safety nets, livelihoods would be much more

insecure. Even though the immediate family within each household has increasingly become a focus for livelihood activities, relatives remain an important feature in daily life and an essential safety-net in difficult situations.

Clan membership is counted along male lines, and “agnatic clusters”, or strongly bonded families of related kin, dominate certain villages (Fay, 2005). In both Cutwini and Manteku, there are a few such agnatic clusters. Kinship networks in the villages were assessed through asking each family how many other households in the villages they were related to. Results are presented in Table 3. In both villages, it is fairly uncommon to have less than 3 or more than 20 households with relatives. Cutwini seems to have more related families in general, but since Manteku is a smaller village, it is not surprising that the absolute numbers of related households also are smaller. Note that people were allowed to themselves define what they considered to be a relative, which probably has led to different conceptualisations in different households and do not give clues as to the prevalence of “agnatic clusters” (though it still gives an indication of the general extent of a household’s social network).

Table 3. *Kinship networks in Cutwini and Manteku. Answers to the question “In how many other homesteads do you have relatives?”<sup>36</sup>”.*

Number of households with relatives	Cutwini % of total hh	Manteku % of total hh
Few relatives in the village (0-2 other hh with relatives)	5 %	16 %
Average number of relatives (3-9 other hh with relatives)	49 %	55 %
Many relatives in the village (10-20 other hh with relatives)	29 %	24 %
Very big kinship network (more than 20 other hh with relatives)	16 %	5 %

Many informants have, however, during interviews underscored the relative independence of the household units, and the problems of relying on relatives, especially economically. Consider the following comments:

Yes, maybe I will borrow some cooking oil or a candle from my neighbour if I have a shortage, and maybe I will go to my uncle to ask for help if I find myself in a very difficult situation [...] but these are not things that I do every day. Most of the time, I have to depend on myself alone to provide for my children and everything that they need.

We can’t ask [relatives] for help with money, everyone has their own people to look after

<sup>36</sup> *Xa uqikelela ingaba mingaphi imizi ohlobene nayo kulelali?* in isiXhosa.

I have a pension, so if I have a problem with money, I can't ask anyone for help, they know I have money from my pension.

We can't turn to relatives, people in these days, they don't want to help each other.

If you send your children away to stay in another homestead [i.e. with relatives], they [the people of that homestead] are going to think you don't want to work or plant in your garden.

While the importance of relatives has thus declined in favour of a focus on the immediate family, neighbours have become increasingly important, not only for friendship and everyday socializing, but also for safety-net purposes and as additional working-force in labour-intensive times (McAllister, 1992). As discussed previously, maize is a crop that requires high inputs of labour at specific times (particularly for weeding), and at these times, as well as other times if there is a need for labour, an *ilima* work-party can be organised. This means that the household in need of labour brews *umqombothi* beer, while relatives, neighbours and friends come to help with the work that is needed, after which everyone drinks beer together. These parties are important features of social life in the villages as well as a crucial part of the agricultural cycle (see Fay, 2003), and McAllister (e.g. 1992, 2005) has shown that neighbours have played an increasingly important role over time in these.

When asked how many of their neighbours they were good friends with, the majority of the households in both villages answered "all of them". There is a difference between the villages, however, in that as many as 90% of the families in Cutwini claimed to be good friends with at least half of their neighbours, while this figure is only 78% for Manteku. When asked whom they would turn to if they were in an economic difficulty, 47% of the households in Cutwini answered they would turn to a relative, while 43% said they would turn to a neighbour (who is not a relative). In Manteku, a much higher 62% would turn to a relative, while only 32% would turn to an unrelated neighbour. Thus, in Cutwini, people are not only in closer contact with their neighbours, but are also more likely to rely on them for help and support in economic difficulties.

The reasons for this reliance on neighbours in Cutwini is by many villagers attributed to the spatial proximity to them (with Cutwini being a Betterment village). One woman put it like this:

My neighbour sees me every day and she can hear me when I'm crying at night so I have to turn to her when I have a problem, she knows me better than my relatives.

In other Betterment villages, however, the spatial proximity has been reported to cause hostility between neighbours. It is likely that factors like the more equal economic situation and the general good atmosphere in the village reinforce the good contact between neighbours in Cutwini.

Neighbours have nevertheless not replaced relatives as the most important form of social safety-net, which is demonstrated by the answers to a follow-up question on whether people thought that the persons they turned to for help would actually be able to help them. While the majority of the households were quite certain that they would indeed receive some help if they were in an economically difficult situation, the certainty of receiving help tended to lessen considerably if the person asked for help was a neighbour or friend instead of a relative. A woman commented on this:

Its more difficult to turn down a relative than a neighbour [when he/she is asking for help], because the relatives are your blood and you are supposed to help them. With the neighbours you can help them if you can but nobody is going to talk [badly about you] and say that you are a bad person if you can't.

Thus, there are certain social norms and rules connected to relatives that do not apply in the same way to neighbours and friends. This issue is also connected to the special status that money has in the villages, discussed further on page 203. People can usually go to a neighbour or a friend and receive food if they are hungry, but asking for money outside of one's own household is more uncommon, and is usually only done in emergencies

## Local Stratifications in Society

As mentioned briefly before, many researchers have underscored how important it is not to neglect to look at local stratifications that exist along various lines in a society when analysing local livelihoods (e.g. de Haan and Zoomers, 2005; Platteau, 2004). Stratification issues may explain many otherwise perplexing phenomena, and are essential parts of local realities.

It is, however, important to as a researcher try to conquer your own biases when it comes to which stratifications to look at, and to listen carefully to local opinions on this issue. Goebel (1998) gives an interesting example of this from her own research in Zimbabwe. She writes that she, and other "western" feminists with her, tend to focus on gender relations in their research and therefore neglect other important divisions in the societies they study, such as clan, wealth, relationship to the ruling party or witchcraft. She writes: "These other relations of power were hidden (to me) in the PRA process. My own interests and knowledge base meant I investigated gender with more vigour than other power relations" (*ibid*:285). However, she continues, scholars who have managed to free their minds of presuppositions

have uncovered other power differentials and complexities that were hitherto unimagined by western scholars.

Some of the most stratifications and divisions that I found to be present in the studied villages, and which I will come back to when discussing various issues concerning local livelihoods, are:

- **Age** is perhaps the most important type of stratification in the villages. Even inter-family relations are strictly hierarchical based on age, where the older you are, the more respect you deserve. There are also for example very strong cultural norms against discussing certain things with people who do not belong to your own age group, and many different customs that people have to observe to ‘show respect’ to older persons.
- **Gender** is also an important factor of stratification, and will be discussed more below.
- **Clans** and **kinship** are important stratifications in the communities, and have far-reaching implications for marriage, social relations and important obligations.
- **Life cycle** is important as well, as has been discussed above. Where you are in your life cycle and what rituals you have partaken in have implications for your status in society. For example, a man of the same age and the same clan as another man may still be worthy of more respect if he is married, or if he has built his own homestead. The same is true for women, where the status of *umakoti*, i.e. a newly married woman, is considered highly desirable.
- **Position in the family** is important, for example the oldest brother has certain responsibilities, while an in-law, such as a *makoti*, has specific duties.
- **Educational level** is a very common stratification in the villages, where ‘educated’ members of the communities (such as the teachers, nurses or others who have completed higher education) tend to stick together and may treat others with condescension.
- **Religion** is an important divide, especially since there tend to be at least 4-5 different churches present in each village.
- **Personal interests** and participation in various activities is finally also a cause of divide within the communities – for example people who like to drink beer at the shebeens and people who like to go to church seldom mix, old men who own cattle like to sit together and talk about livestock, ignoring those who do not own cattle, and those who are members of the same committees or work in the same projects also associate more with each other. The village football team and the school choir are other examples of this.

There are also a few households in both villages that compared with the rest of the village are well-off, though this does not necessarily mean that they associate more with each other. These families usually have one or two fairly

well-paying jobs and/or a flourishing taxi or spaza-business. People from these households thus often invest in things that are good for the entire village; such as taxis and *spaza*-shops, and they might contribute to community needs such as building of schoolhouses. The “rich” households also usually organise more work-parties and other celebrations, where the rest of the village share in food and drinks. The people who in this way share their wealth with others are thought of as good members of the community, important people whom you can ask for assistance. This corresponds with Ferguson's (1990) description of men who have lots of cattle in villages in Lesotho – men who are highly respected because they are able to help others in need. Conversely, those rich families that do not share of their wealth are considered very selfish.

### **The Status of Women**

It is different now, since '94 [the first democratic elections] ... they say that women and men are equal now. So it's not easy for a man to just beat his wife, she will complain and they can take him to jail for that. And the women are independent. They are building their own homesteads and standing alone.

As the quote above from an unmarried male informant suggests, the status and situation of women in the studied villages have been undergoing some major changes in the last 10 years. Women have to an increasing extent built their own homesteads without getting married, and are working and supporting their children without the help of men. It is also increasingly accepted that a woman who is not happy with her husband's behaviour can leave him and move back home with her parents.

Gendered division of labour has also become less rigorous over the years, according to informants. Water fetching, firewood gathering, gardening, cooking, washing, cleaning and minding children are every-day chores that are usually performed by women, but may today in many households be done by men as well if the situation requires it. Indeed I have myself observed men performing all of these chores during my visits in the villages. The more conventional male activities (apart from wage-working) include fishing, collecting crayfish, minding livestock, ploughing fields, and building houses and *kraals*. All of these activities could nevertheless be performed by women if there are no men available to do them.

According to this division, however, and especially considering that around half of the households do not use marine resources or own livestock, it is the women who perform the majority of the household chores. In many instances women perform wage-work as well, and thus they have a larger workload than men in general. This situation may become even more skewed since the wage-work opportunities available consist to a high degree of jobs that are considered suitable for women, such as work at the tea plan-

tation in Cutwini or work at the holiday cottages in Manteku (which usually includes household work and child-minding). Men living in the villages are sometimes frustrated by the lack of jobs and state frequently that they feel useless because they are unable to fulfil the role of being a family provider. This is also a reason behind their decisions to move to the cities in search of work, though many of them say that they would prefer to stay in the villages.

Though the status of women in South Africa thus has been changing recently, they are still as a group far from being empowered and equal to men, as shown by many authors. Women in South Africa comprise the majority of the impoverished and least empowered part of society according to Bentley (2004), who also points out that women experience “economic disenfranchisement and staggering levels of violence” (*ibid*:248).

### *The Institution of Marriage*

The status of women is closely connected to the institution of marriage, which has also been changing recently. Bank (2003) shows how, due to the increasing difficulties of raising *lobola* (bridewealth) and a general wish to be independent from parents, young men have increasingly been avoiding marriage. It used to be self-evident that the aim of getting married one day should fill a young man’s life along with the quest for raising *lobola*. However, many young men today refuse to toil and save for years and years before they can get married, even though being unmarried means having a lower status in the village. The following quote from a young man illustrates how many men think today:

I don’t want to marry that girl if I have to pay *lobola*. Why should I work and work just to give that money away? If I marry her, I need that money to build a homestead and support our children. Her parents already have cattle and they have their pensions. It’s just a stupid old rule [...] her parents are unreasonable.

This quote brings to mind the reasoning of Ferguson (1990) when he shows how the *lobola* institution is a constant issue of renegotiation in Lesotho. He argues that the institution serves as a money transfer between the older and younger generations, and that it is thus kept because it serves an important function in society as it gives old-age security. Using the same reasoning in South Africa, one can argue that this practical use of the institution of *lobola* is becoming obsolete through the introduction of the pension system. Today, the *lobola* system puts pressure on a younger generation that finds it increasingly difficult to get jobs, and transfers money to an older generation that already has security through their state pensions. This should therefore lead to changes in the institution of *lobola*, a process that is indeed currently underway.

One of the responses to this problematic situation is that a high discrepancy between rules and practices has developed in many areas. As with other social institutions that can seem rigid, there is a trend of “practices [...] changing without the rules changing”, leading to rules having “locally variable institutionalised patterns of deviation’ (Fay, 2003:11-12). While old rules about marriage and beliefs about unmarried women’s rights are quite restrictive, the new practices are thus now slowly forcing the rules to change. Bank (2003) describes two trends of circumventing the marriage rituals. The *ukuthwala* marriage meant that a couple eloped together, with the husband paying compensation to the wife’s family afterwards. The expectation in this case was that a full marriage with proper *lobola* payments and rituals would follow when the resources had been accumulated, though this did not always occur. *Ukutwala* marriages started to be a trend in the 1960s in the rural homelands, but Bank also points to a trend in the 1980’s in urban townships called *ukuhlalisana* (living together) relationships. This latter form of relationship did not acknowledge the rights of the families of the couple and was not necessarily followed by marriage. These relationships were associated with “rejection of older forms of family structure and obligation” (*ibid.*21). Though these type of relationships are still uncommon in the studied villages, many of the women who move away from their parents to build their own homesteads without being married in fact often do this so they can invite their boyfriends to more or less live in their homes without him having to pay *lobola* to her parents.

Marriage has thus tended to come later and later in life (if at all), which is reflected by the fact that only 23 % in Cutwini and 19% in Manteku of the persons between 20 and 29 years of age are married. The delayed or non-existent marriages cause much social suffering, since unmarried women do not have the same status in society. It also entails economic difficulties for unmarried women with children, since many unmarried men do not accept responsibility for their children. This is shown by the fact while 75% of unmarried women in the age group 20-40 years have given birth to children, only 24% of unmarried men in the same age group claim to have fathered children.

Many households in the villages are female headed, partly because women have decided to move away from their parents without being married, but also because of divorce or death of the husband. Female headed households are, however, more susceptible to poverty, as are women in general, shown by the recent estimation that 70% of the world’s poor are women (Bentley, 2004). Researchers also point out that poverty strikes women in a different, and harder, way than men, since they tend to have fewer job opportunities, less access to land, lower wages and so on (CPRC, 2004). Women are also (as shown above) much more likely than men to assume the responsibility for providing for their children.

## Village Institutions for Decision-Making

Decisions concerning the whole village are debated at open village meetings, and a Village Committee of about 10-15 persons is present in every village. Specific committees, e.g. for the school or a certain development project, may also be formed when needed. With respect to “traditional leaders”<sup>37</sup> there is a Headman in each village, and there may also be different sub-headmen, while the Chiefs rules over several villages. In a parallel system<sup>38</sup>, several villages make up a ward, and one counsellor is elected who represents the ward in the municipality. Two representatives from each Village Committee represent the village interest in the ward council.

Table 4. *Different aspects of village meetings in Cutwini and Manteku.*

<b>Village Meetings</b>	<b>Cutwini</b> % of total hh	<b>Manteku</b> % of total hh
<b>Does someone in this household attend village meetings?</b>		
Always	34 %	49 %
Often	26 %	21 %
Sometimes	33 %	19 %
Seldom	5 %	8 %
Never	2 %	3 %
<b>If yes, does that person speak at these meetings?</b>		
Yes, often	6 %	10 %
I speak when I have something important to say	75 %	73%
No, I never speak	19 %	17 %
<b>Are you well informed about what goes on in the village?</b>		
Yes, very well informed	60 %	56 %
Sometimes I am, sometimes not	37 %	41 %
No, not well	3 %	3 %

In Manteku, 23 persons and in Cutwini 27 persons were on different committees in 2002. Thus, in both villages, approximately 26% of the households were represented in a committee. People were also asked how often they attended the village meetings. Attendance showed to be high, and is

<sup>37</sup> This is the officially used term in South Africa. Ntsebeza (1999) point out that traditional leaders have been present since pre-colonial times in South Africa, though this institution has been significantly transformed over time in line with the various objectives of the ruling elite at different times. A problematic system with "tribal authorities" was for example created under apartheid, and McAllister (1992) has also written about the many problems this system caused.

<sup>38</sup> After the transition to democracy, a vague dual system that recognises traditional leaders alongside elected local government has been put in place. The constitution of South Africa does not clarify the role, function or powers of traditional leaders, according to Ntsebeza (2002), and the system has received severe criticism, e.g. by Bentley (2004).

presented in Table 4, which also shows how often people speak at meetings and how well informed about village business they consider themselves to be. The number of village meetings has increased lately, since villagers now have to discuss different development projects, like poverty relief programmes and tourism initiatives, as well as e.g. road improvements, school-house building or the community forestry (and meet with annoying researchers asking a lot of questions like myself). Thus, most people stated that they could impossibly attend all the village meetings. Still, a quite high number of persons claim that they always attend meetings, and many of these persons are also committee members. The majority of the people in both villages consider themselves to be well informed about what goes on in the village. An important note is that those who said they never attended village meetings are not the same persons who claim not to be well informed.

Though many people are attending village meetings, close to 1/5 of those attending are not really participating – they are just there to listen. Most of those who said that they attend meetings but do not speak at them are women. Thus, even if women are in majority in the villages (and in many essential aspects are running everyday life, heading households and bringing in incomes), village meetings remain to an extent a male domain, where women often sit and listen without speaking.

It is important to note that while people in Manteku go to meetings to a greater extent than people in Cutwini, they still feel less well informed about things that go on in their village. This also reflects the atmosphere of the villages – people in Cutwini sometimes stated that they do not feel the need to go to all the meetings because they trust their committee members and know that they will receive information about decisions taken at the meetings through relatives and friends. In Manteku, the somewhat suspicious atmosphere in the community forces people to attend meetings in order to guard their own interests, while people still tend to feel like decisions are being taken behind their backs.

## Ceremonies, Events and Daily Socialising

Social life in the villages includes, except for general visiting of friends and relatives, regular visits to church for some and to *sheebeens* (village pubs) for others. One village may have up to 10 different small churches – common ones are the Zion Christian Church, the Methodist Church, the Catholic Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Anglican Church and the Apostolic Faith Mission. While *sheebeens* and beer-drinking is an important part of social life, alcoholism is a big problem in the villages, with some people spending most of their money in the *sheebeens*. Domestic violence, which is aggravated by drinking, is also a common problem.

Daily village life is also interspersed with ceremonial occasions and parties. These are important occasions for socialising in the village, and as men-

tioned above, important sources of protein, as ceremonies usually require slaughtering of cows, sheep or goats. The slaughtering of such an animal produces significant amounts of meat, which due to lack of refrigeration possibilities usually need to be consumed quickly. Customs dictate that meat should be eaten directly and shared by everyone in the village. Thus, anyone in the village, indeed any passer-by, can and should join such a festivity and eat of the meat prepared. The meat of a cow can last for two days of feasting for the whole village. The system thus evens out meat intake over time and provides supply of meat even for very poor families.

The most important *rites de passage* in the villages are funerals. These are always important occasions, when big tents are hired and cows (and/or sheep and goats) are slaughtered. People often travel far to attend the funerals even of distant relatives, and an elderly person with many relatives might have to spend quite an impressive amount of time on just attending funerals. Another important festive occasion is when a widow takes off her mourning clothes, one year after her husband has died, and receives gifts and attention from relatives and friends. The increase in deaths due to HIV/AIDS has led to funerals and “release from mourning”-ceremonies taking place more often in the villages (observed also by Kepe, 2003a).

Weddings are a festive occasion mostly for the two concerned families, with the *lobola* ceremony (i.e. negotiations between the families of the future husband and wife and the handing over of the bridewealth) being the most important part of the wedding. Initiation ceremonies for boys are common among Xhosa-speakers, but have not been historically common in Pondo-land. However, these practices have quite recently become increasingly popular in the studied villages. During these ceremonies, boys camp in the forest where they are circumcised and taught about “manhood” by men from the village. When their wounds have healed, they ceremoniously re-enter the village and their homesteads, at which time a feast is held for them<sup>39</sup>.

In addition to the ceremonies above, Christmas and Easter are also celebrated in the villages, and Christmas festivities are often the cause for *umngalelo* saving associations<sup>40</sup> since they are supposed to be elaborate.

## Meeting Daily Basic Needs

Meeting the family’s basic needs is a central aspect of daily village life, and sometimes a challenging task since expenditure needs tend to be higher than incomes. In this section, I will focus on describing basic needs and their various contexts, beginning with needs that are the responsibility of each

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<sup>39</sup> See Bank (2003) and Fay (2003) for more about the practice of circumcision.

<sup>40</sup> Local saving associations, these will be further discussed later.

family to meet, such as food and energy, and go on to describe needs where the government is offering services, such as healthcare, education and transport. These needs and the livelihood activities used to meet them will in the following chapters be more thoroughly discussed from various perspectives.

#### **Box B. Family Income/Expenditure Example**

This family consists of 6 household members. Their livelihood consists of a pension, which in 2005 was 780 Rand per month, complemented with a some of natural resource use. This is their expenditure on food and daily use articles during one typical month.

<i>Foodstuffs</i>		<i>Other articles</i>	
Maize meal, 12.5 kg	24 Rand	Candles, 2 packets	12 Rand
Rice, 10 kg	30 Rand	Matches	5 Rand
Soup mix, 2 big pkts	10 Rand	Paraffin, 5 liters	20 Rand
Potatoes, 10 kg	20 Rand	Firewood <sup>2</sup>	(Free)
Cabbages, 1 big bag	25 Rand	Soap for washing, 4 bars <sup>3</sup>	16 Rand
Tuna, 4 tins	18 Rand	Steel wool for dishes	3 Rand
Beans, 3000 g	30 Rand	Transport to town <sup>4</sup>	30 Rand
<i>Samp</i> , 4 meals/month <sup>1</sup>	Own garden	Water	(Free)
Oil, 2 liters	13 Rand		
Onions, 1 bunch	5 Rand	<b>Total costs</b>	<b>475 R</b>
Salt	2 Rand		
Chicken, 2 whole	64 Rand	The remaining 305 Rand is spent on needs that arise, like healthcare, school fees, clothes, utensils, house improvements etc.	
Bread, 8 loaves	32 Rand		
Sugar, 12.5 kg	50 Rand		
Powdered milk	54 Rand		
Big packet tea	12 Rand		
Taro	Own garden		

<sup>1</sup> Maize from the garden is usually eaten in like *samp*, but only about 4 times per month.

<sup>2</sup> Firewood is collected as a complement to the paraffin stove.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Sunlight' type of soap is used for both personal hygiene as well as for washing dishes and clothes.

<sup>4</sup> This transport is necessary in order to buy the groceries at cheap bulk prices.

*Box B* illustrates the incomes and expenditures of a family of 6 persons living in Cutwini during one month. The family had an income of R780 per month in 2005, which is below average for the village<sup>41</sup>. As with most other families in the village, this family buys the majority of the food eaten on a day-to-day basis in the supermarkets in Lusikisiki or at the *spaza*-shops in the village. There are a few exceptions, however. *Samp*, (stamped or crushed maize), eaten perhaps 2-3 times per month, is often made with maize grown in the own garden, and during harvest times, it may be complemented with beans and pumpkins from the own garden as well. Taro, eaten occasionally, is also often from the own garden, while cabbage, spinach and chicken meat are bought more often than produced at home. Firewood is commonly col-

<sup>41</sup> Average income in Cutwini in 2002 was R820 per month, and by 2005 incomes had increased significantly. See also later data on jobs and incomes.

lected in the surrounding areas, even if it is often complemented with paraffin as an energy source, while water is fetched from springs (see pages 143-145 for more details on water and energy).

As the calculation in *Box B* illustrates, an average-sized family can survive on a pension-sized grant without starving (though the nutritional composition of their one-sided diet may be questionable). There are several important points related to this calculation. For one, it illustrates the relatively small needs that a family in these villages has. Secondly, it indicates the low prices of food, which are important contributory factors to why most families focus on jobs instead of various forms of natural resource use. Thirdly, the example underscores the poverty relief value of pensions, which often meet the most basic needs of entire families.

The groceries listed in *Box B* make up the daily meals of a whole family for one month. This is possible because people tend to eat only two meals per day, and use cheap groceries. Breakfast usually consists of maize porridge, while lunch is eaten only sometimes, perhaps if there are some visitors who are served tea (with milk if possible and lots of sugar) bread, fruits or biscuits. The evening meal may consist of maize in the form of *pap*, *samp* or *sgwamba*, beans, cabbage, pumpkins, tomatoes, spinach, rice, potatoes or taro, and usually some form of soup or relish. The amount and variation of these foodstuffs all depend on what the family can afford at the time – if money is scarce, more expensive items are left out.

Protein is obtained through eating beans, tinned fish (pilchards or tuna) and different soups or soy-mince products (which are very popular because they taste and look like meat and are cheap and simple to store and cook). Eggs, chicken, minced meat, fish or seafood is eaten more rarely, perhaps 2-4 times per month if the family is relatively poor. The meat (usually beef and mutton) eaten at celebrations, rituals and funerals is also an important contribution to this diet. These occasions may occur up to 2-3 times per month (especially with the recent death toll claimed by HIV/AIDS).

Beinart (1992) recites a study that found in 1931 that people in a rural Transkeian village were eating surprisingly little manufactured foods, except for tea, coffee and sugar. This situation has definitely undergone major transition. For example, cow-milk used to be an important staple according to McAllister (1992), while today most people frown at the thought of milking their cows and buy milk for tea at the store. Also, though some women still make their own home baked bread, it is much more common to buy sliced bread (and due to the high price of flour, it is cheaper to buy bread than to make your own).

Common articles sold at the local *spaza*-shop in Cutwini are listed in *Box C*, with amounts and prices recorded in April 2005 (note that the prices in *spaza*-shops are much higher than when buying bulk at the supermarkets, hence potential differences between prices listed in *Box B* and *Box C*). The most commonly bought processed additions to the three mentioned above

are cooking oil, “long-life” milk, bread, rice, soups, salt and tinned beans and fish. Popular treats include biscuits, sweets, chips, soft drinks and of course the bestseller – beers. *Spaza*-shops make handsome incomes just by selling these latter “luxury” foodstuffs in the villages.

**Box C. Common Articles Sold at the Spaza-Shop in Cutwini.**

(These articles can be viewed on a photo on the CD).

White bread flour (2.5 kg, R18.50)	White sugar (500 g, R4)
Long-life milk (500 ml, R4.50)	Maize meal (2.5 kg, R18.50)
Long grain rice (2 kg, R10.50)	Eggs (half dozen, R6)
Sugar beans (500 g, R5)	Baked beans (225 g, R4)
Salt (500 g, R1)	Aromat (75 g, R6)
Corned meat (190 g, R4)	Canned pilchards (215 g, R6)
Sweets (15 cent each)	Glen Tea (125 g, R4)
Beef soup (100g, R3.70)	Soy mince (200 g R4.50)
Hansa beer (750 ml, R8)	Castle beer (750 ml, R8.5)
Snuff leaf (last about 3 weeks, R3)	Tobacco (12.5 g, R3.50)
Glycerine (100 ml, R6.50)	Matches (1 box R6)
Morvite sorghum breakfast porridge (1 kg, R8)	Cooking oil, (750 ml, R8)
Mix for home-made sorghum beer (500 g, R4)	
Nestle lactogen child's milk for about 2-3 weeks (400 g, R35)	
Metylated spirit for cleaning paraffin stoves etc. (200 ml R7.50)	

There may be many reasons for this change towards buying processed foods, including the increased focus on wage-work that allows less time for producing these foods at home and a popular perception that it is more “high-status” to eat store-bought foods instead of home made food. Treating oneself or a visiting guest to store-bought soft drinks and snacks creates a feeling of luxury that is worth more than the nutritional value of the foodstuff. The relatively low prices of some of these foods no doubt contributes to this trend<sup>42</sup>.

## Healthcare and Diseases

Health is one of the most important basic need of all, however, poor families tend to have bad health situations that affects their opportunities to engage in livelihood activities and often leads to vicious circles of poverty. In order to obtain a rough appreciation of the healthcare needs of people in the villages, the families were asked how often someone in the household suffered from some common minor ailments, such as cough/flu/fever<sup>43</sup>, itching and diar-

<sup>42</sup> A problem resulting from the increased reliance on store-bought food is the large amount of household waste generated, especially non-organic waste. Since neither village has any waste management facilities, people either bury their waste in the garden or burn it, but cans, plastic bags and other packaging still litters the areas around villages.

<sup>43</sup> It was very difficult to try to separate these conditions from each other. Many people use the same word for all these conditions.

rhoea. Table 5 shows the percentage of households in the two villages where someone is suffering from these symptoms monthly or more often. While the prevalence of flu symptoms is high in both villages, itching and diarrhoea is much less common. Cutwini seems overall a healthier village than Manteku by these standards, and especially concerning symptoms of itching.

Table 5. *Ailments in Cutwini and Manteku. The percentage of households where someone suffers monthly or more often from cough/flu/fever, itching or diarrhoea is given. On the bottom row, the percentage of households with a TB-diagnosed person is given.*

<b>Suffer monthly or more often from:</b>	<b>Cutwini</b> % of total hh	<b>Manteku</b> % of total hh
Cough/flu/fever	61 %	74 %
Itching	12 %	28 %
Diarrhoea	3 %	6 %
Someone in hh has TB:	28 %	31 %

A much bigger problem is chronic illnesses, such as Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS. The TB epidemic has been growing in South Africa by about 20% each year (South African Yearbook, 2002/3), and its correlation to HIV infection can give an indication of the incidence of HIV/AIDS. As can be seen in Table 5, almost 1/3 of the households harbour a person who has been diagnosed with TB, and it is furthermore likely there are many undiagnosed TB carriers in the villages. HIV/AIDS prevalence is probably likely to be close to or slightly above the average for South Africa, which was an estimated 29.5% in 2004 (Department of Health, 2005).

Key informant discussions showed that disinformation is very common when it comes to HIV/AIDS. People tend to believe in *muti* that will protect them from the infection, or conversely, that avoiding sex is the only way to avoid the disease, and condom use is not very widespread. In contrast, the reasons behind diarrhoea and cholera were very well known. The success of the anti-cholera campaign suggests that it should be possible to spread information successfully on sexual and reproductive health issues as well, though of course these issues are surrounded by more taboos and are harder to talk about openly. People in general tend to find it difficult to talk even about minor ailments in private with a nurse at the clinic, and they do not trust in confidentiality. One woman said:

The nurses are rude and they think about themselves, just like schoolteachers [this refers to the earlier mentioned stratification of educated people in society]. They think they are high because they went to school so it's not easy to talk to them about something that is hurting you. [...] You can sit and wait outside the clinic for many hours and then sometimes they don't have medicines for weeks.

Low awareness of disease prevention is likely to be connected to the absence of clinics in the villages. Sick people or pregnant mothers have to pay for and endure the long and bumpy ride to Lusikisiki. Therefore it is not surprising that around 85% of the households in both villages said they would visit the clinic more often if it was closer to their home. An attempt to cater for the healthcare needs of rural villages has been the “mobile clinics” that are supposed to visit the villages between once/week to once/month. However, these clinics have been irregular visitors in both villages, especially when bad weather makes the roads difficult to navigate.

People also sometimes consult “traditional healers”<sup>44</sup>, i.e. *Amagqirha* and *amaxhwele*<sup>45</sup>. *Igqirha* has sometimes been translated as “witch doctor”, while *ixhwele* is usually translated as “herbalist”. The difference between the two is that *igqirha* has clairvoyant capabilities, can commune with ancestors and give out *muti*, or medicines that have magic properties, while *ixhwele* usually only provides different herbal remedies. While becoming *igqirha* is seen as a calling experienced by selected individuals, the *ixhwele* profession is free for anyone to learn. Traditional healers have organised themselves and their practice is regulated by the government.

While most people believe at least to some extent in witchcraft and *muti*, the rate of visitation to traditional healers is quite low. Only around 25-30% of the households in Cutwini and Manteku have stated that they visit traditional healers, and most of them do so rarely. Visitation also depends on if a certain type of healer is available in the vicinity, and if that particular healer has a good reputation. Contrary to popular beliefs, people do not move from relying on traditional healers to relying on clinics in a linear way. The data shows that it is the same persons who say that they never visit clinics, who also never visit traditional healers, while a majority of those who visit healers also visit clinics. People often state that they visit healers when they get certain (i.e. witchcraft-related) diseases or problems, while they visit clinics with “ordinary” ailments. In addition, if people have visited a clinic without being cured of their ailment, they might turn to traditional healers instead.

## Education

Though most people think that it is very important for their children to receive schooling, many obstacles cause most children not to complete the full 12 years of elementary school. In villages such as Ndengane, many children never even start in school because of the impossibly long distances (up to four hours per day) that would have to be walked. Apart from the long dis-

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<sup>44</sup> This is the officially used term in South Africa, though according to Geschiere (1997, 1998), issues of witchcraft and magic are highly modern parts of present-day African societies, and far from some sort of ‘traditional’ residues.

<sup>45</sup> *Amagqirha* and *amaxhwele* are the plural forms of *igqirha* and *ixhwele* respectively.

tances to schools, the schooling of children from grade 10 and upwards presents a major obstacle, since the children will have to move to another village, where a room and daily meals have to be secured for them. In Cutwini at the time of the survey, there were no children were attending grades 10-12, and in Manteku there were only eight children who did. This reflects the possibility of transport by bus from Manteku to the senior secondary school.

About 90% of the households claim that money for schooling of children schooling is a cause of constant worry for them, and many people still comment on the failure to keep promises about free schooling as one of the greatest disappointments they have had with the new government. However, the school fees are still relatively affordable compared to the costs of school uniforms. A uniform may in fact cost triple the sum of the school fee itself, and many parents without regular incomes cannot afford to let their children go to school because of the uniform requirement.

Most families have several children, and may be forced to choose one of them who will be sponsored to complete schooling. It does not seem like boys get precedence over girls in these cases, as is sometimes suggested. In both villages, the number of boys (of school-age) who are not schooling is almost double the number of girls. Children often drop out of school of their own free will. Boys often claim that they drop out of school because they want or have to try to earn money, while many girls drop out because of teenage pregnancies.

## Infrastructure and Transportation

Access to transportation is a very important issue in the villages, as people need to travel to the closest town (Lusikisiki) in order to take care of many different errands and businesses. Groceries are for example usually bought in bulk in Lusikisiki once or twice per month. This food is then supplemented with groceries bought at the *spaza*-shops in the villages (which have higher prices). Lusikisiki is also where one can apply for grants, buy clothes or furniture, draw money from the bank, charge a cell phone, hire a tent for a funeral and so on. In villages where the road is good enough to allow bus traffic, people have the chance to work in the areas close to town while still residing in the villages, which increases job opportunities. Thus, the item “improving the road” is first on both villages’ development ‘wish-lists’.

In Cutwini, the road is in very bad shape. There have been some road works on it recently, though these have not improved it sufficiently for a bus to be able to traffic to and from the village. The roads to the villages Manteku and Ndengane are both very long and in fairly bad shape, though a bus does traffic these roads occasionally. In each village however, some persons own “taxis” (minibuses or pick-ups) that are driven to Lusikisiki and back every day, carrying passengers from the villages. Taxis are nevertheless too expensive for some villagers, so the buses are important for transport.

## 6. Livelihood Activities in the Study Area

In this chapter, the various livelihood activities and opportunities that are available to people in the study area will be presented. Firstly, I will discuss a framework for analysing and livelihoods in the study area, and discuss how various basic needs can be met through different types of livelihood activities. After presenting livelihood activities in detail, I will calculate their relative values to local households. The insights from this chapter will be used and complemented in chapter 7, where I will go into the details of local strategies, how people choose between livelihood options, and what factors influence these choices.

### A Framework for Analysing Livelihoods

In a previous chapter, the sustainable livelihoods approach and SL framework (*Figure 1*) was introduced. Inspired by this framework, I have made my own model that I will use for structuring and analysing information on livelihoods in the study area. This model (*Figure 7*) was based on interviews with local people on how they perceive and relate to their livelihoods and the outside factors that influence these. The model departs from the household in the central ellipse, in which people draw on their assets and capabilities when making choices<sup>46</sup> about which available livelihood options to use. Available livelihood options present themselves to the families through the thick arrows from above and below. Meanwhile, various outside factors such as institutions, policies, shocks and trends affect both the available livelihood options as well as the family itself.

Local livelihoods are in the model divided into two distinct livelihood-generating categories, which in turn consist of several sub groups as illustrated in the figure. Livelihood activities that generate money directly include jobs (which have been further divided into different types of jobs) and governmental grants (which exist in various forms). The second type of livelihood-generating category is based on environmental resources, which directly generate different products that can be used for livelihood needs or sometimes also sold for money. These activities include e.g. agriculture, rearing of domestic animals and marine resource use.

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<sup>46</sup> This workings of this choice process is illustrated in *Figure 13*.

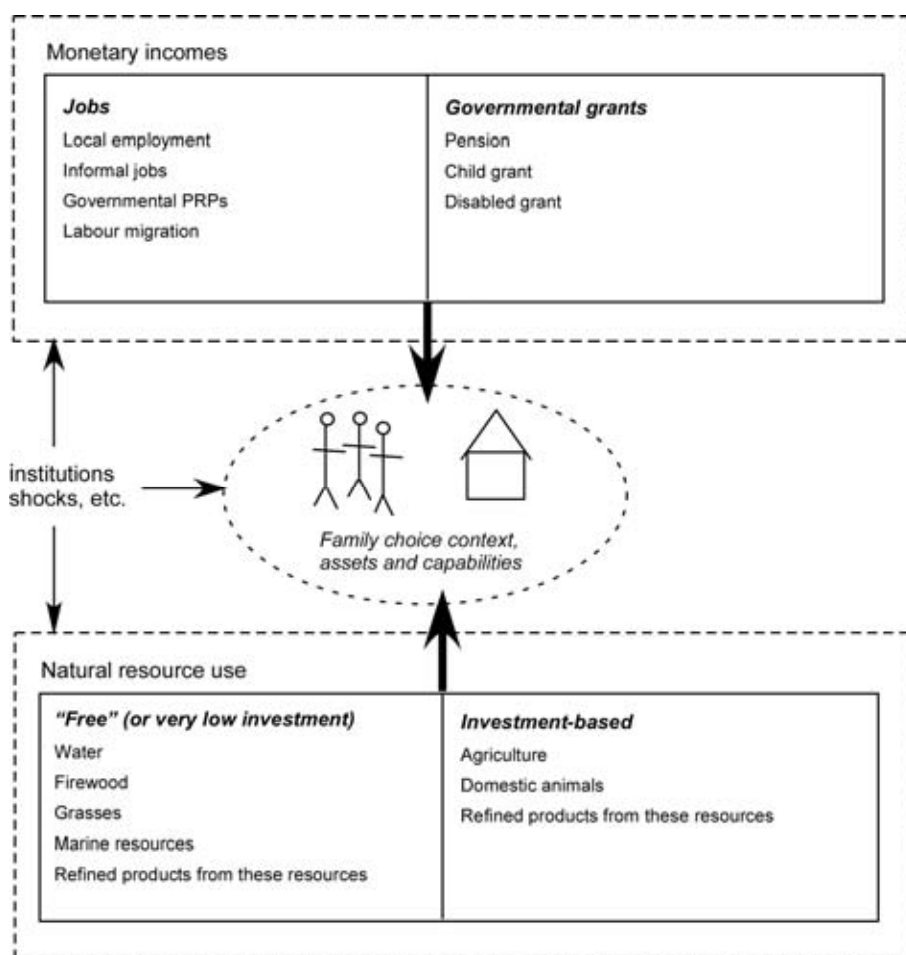


Figure 7. Model of the processes involved when local people choose between livelihood options in Cutwini and Manteku. The family in the middle chooses between the available livelihood activities, while various outside factors affect these options as well as the family. The livelihood activities have been divided into two categories and several sub-groups.

I have chosen to divide livelihood activities in this way for several reasons. Firstly, I found that local people themselves make a general distinction between livelihood activities that generate money and those that mainly generate various products directly<sup>47</sup>. The reason why they make such a distinction is connected to the various basic needs that people have and how these can be met through different types of livelihood activities, which is discussed below. I have furthermore chosen to divide these two general livelihood

<sup>47</sup> Note that people in this area do not usually sell much of the natural resources or agricultural products that they collect or produce. In other areas, where people do make money from natural resources, they are perhaps less likely to perceive such a clear distinction between monetary and environmental livelihood activities.

categories into subgroups in order to be able to get results that can contribute to an ongoing discussion about livelihoods in rural Eastern Cape. This discussion holds for example that grants are very important for livelihoods and that remittances from labour migrants are more important than local jobs, hence I focus on grants separately from jobs, and divide jobs into migrant labour and into different local jobs.

Keeping common divisions between various forms of natural resource use, such as agriculture, livestock keeping, marine resource use and firewood collection, also allows me to make comparison with other research. As I will show, people may use some of these resources but not the others. In some cases there are further subdivisions within each livelihood subgroup – for example one family that utilises marine resources may collect crayfish but not mussels, while another collects both. These various subdivisions are discussed in this chapter when I present the different livelihood activities in the villages, and I have taken subdivisions into account when making calculations and analyses of the data. They are, however, not included in the model for the sake of simplicity.

As mentioned, informants explained to me that they perceive a crucial difference between livelihood activities that generate money and those that generate various products such as food, firewood or building materials. One assistant explains the reason for this:

There is a difference between these things [i.e. the two livelihood activities], because we all need money for some things and there is nothing we can do about that. We need money for things like buying seeds, and going to town, and paying school fees. There are those few people [...] who just plant in the garden and they almost never go to the shop, but even them they have to buy salt ... tea ... candles. But most of us like to buy more things than that, so we need that money and that is why every family needs to have a job or a pension or something. [that gives money]

People thus find that they have to combine livelihood activities from both these two major categories in order to be able to fulfil their basic needs. I asked informants to list those needs that should be important to every family in the village (some of which were discussed in the previous chapter). Table 6 shows this list, which includes commonly identified basic needs such as food, water, energy, shelter, but also other things such as material for planting in the garden, healthcare, education and transport to town. Clothes, utensils, furniture and other necessary supplies were collected under one heading, while the informants stressed that there should also be a need called just “money”, since you sometimes need money for small things, like paying for a permit or making a phone call and because it is good to have a bit of money in the bank in case unexpected costs appear.

Table 6. *Basic needs in the villages and how they can be met through monetary means or by using environmental resources directly.*

Basic needs	Monetary means	Environmental resources
Water	A few people have water tanks	Fetch water from springs
Energy	Buying paraffin, gas, stoves, lamps, candles	Collecting firewood
Shelter	Buying bricks, poles, cement, tin roofs etc. at shop	Collecting wood, mud, dung and grass.
Food	Buying groceries	Growing maize and veg., keeping chicken and pigs, fishing, collecting marine resources
Material for planting	Buying hybrid seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, fences etc.	Using old seeds, cow manure, weeding by hand, collecting wood for fences
Healthcare	Paying for transport to clinics, for medicines or traditional healers	Collecting herbs (only done by herbalists)
Clothes, utensils, furniture	Buying from shops	A few utensils can be made, e.g. sitting mats and baskets.
Money	Money is acquired through work, grants or remittances.	Selling crops, animals, sea harvest, grasses and e.g. sitting mats.
Education	Paying school fees and uniforms, papers and pens etc.	----
Transportation (to town)	Paying for taxis or buying car	---

Most of the needs listed in Table 6 can be met both through monetary means and through utilizing environmental resources directly, as indicated in the table. However, people mostly tend to use monetary means for meeting several of these needs. The two first needs, water and energy, are usually met through direct environmental resources use, even if paraffin use and especially candles are becoming a more and more common means of meeting the energy need. Houses for shelter are often built both by using environmental resources and store-bought supplies, while the majority of the food eaten in both villages are bought in the shops for money. The majority of the households also buy seeds and fertilisers. The last five needs on the list are almost exclusively met through using monetary means, though a few ways exist for making money from natural resources.

It is also important to note that sometimes a monetary investment is needed before an environmental resource can be used. This can be investments in buying animals, fishing rods, or learning certain skills (like training for a herbalist). The livelihood activities that need particularly high investments – agriculture and livestock keeping, are marked as “investment-based” in *Figure 7*.

In the following two sections, the livelihood activities that take place in Cutwini and Manteku will be thoroughly presented. I begin with the livelihood activities that generate money – jobs and governmental grants, and continue with natural resource based activities. In a final section, I will calculate the relative importance of these livelihood activities to the households in the two villages.

## Monetary Livelihood Activities

The all-important monetary incomes are mainly generated through different forms of wage-work, both formal and informal, from various short-term “piece jobs” to regular full-time employment. Money is also obtained through governmental grants and may furthermore be generated from natural resources. These different ways of generating monetary incomes will be described in detail below, while analysis of their relative importance will follow in the next chapter.

### Jobs

In most households in both villages (67% in Cutwini and 59% in Manteku), there is at least one (and usually only one) person having a job. In the later analysis, it will be shown that jobs are in fact the most important livelihood activities in the villages, even if many of these jobs give low wages. Though unemployment is high – in Manteku for example, only 37% of those who want to work<sup>48</sup> have actually managed to secure a job – the incomes of those who do have jobs supply entire households with their most basic needs nevertheless. In *Box B* I gave an example of incomes and expenditures of a “normal” family with a low income, which shows that it is indeed possible to meet the most basic needs of a family through only one low-income job or pension.

For the sake of analysis, job opportunities have been divided into four different categories: locally created employment, local poverty relief programme employment, local informal jobs and labour migration. The different types of specific jobs that exist within each category are detailed in Table 7 for Cutwini and Table 8 for Manteku. The jobs will be discussed in more detail shortly. The table only deals with regular daily jobs – piece jobs are not counted here.

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<sup>48</sup> “Those who want to work” have been calculated like this: the village population between 20-60 years of age, who are not still schooling, not mentally disturbed or have not explicitly stated that they are not looking for work because they consider keeping the homestead and looking after children their daily job, have been assumed to want to work.

Table 7. *Types of jobs in Cutwini, the number of households involved in every job and a roughly approximated monthly income from each job.*

Job category	Daily jobs	No. of hh	Approximate income Rand/month (2002)
Local employment	Mazizi/Magwa Tea	48	500
	Ntsubane State Forest	5	2500
	Teacher	3	2500
	Forestry factory	1	2500
	Cattle dipping	1	1000
	Work in Lusikisiki	3	2500
	Local garage	1	1000
Local poverty relief programmes	Working for Water	10	600
	Coast Care	8	700
Local informal jobs	Spaza-shop	6	1000-2000
	Taxi owner + driver	3+2	4000 (800)
	Sewing	1	400
	Building houses	1	500
Labour migration	Durban/Johannesburg	18	1000-2500

If added up, job incomes in Cutwini bring approximately 120 000 R/month to the village, while the same sum is about 100 000 R/month in Manteku. Because of the fewer households in Manteku, however, the average amount of money per household in the village is higher. The reason for this is probably that Cutwini has a large share of people working with low-income jobs at Mazizi Tea Plantation and in poverty relief programmes. These contribute with less money to the village per person working.

In Cutwini, the money is more evenly distributed over the households, as only 5% of the households have more than one person with a job. In Manteku as much as 12% of the households have two or more people holding a job, which means that more households are without job incomes.

The pattern in Manteku shows something that was also noted in interviews; if one person in a family gets a job, the other people in that family are more likely to also get jobs because they now have access to resources needed to look for jobs (like money for taxi fares and phone calls) and also have contacts and may be recommended for a job by their family member. Children growing up in families with secure incomes are of course also more likely to have good schooling, which is essential in the search for jobs. Furthermore, as capital is accumulated in the family, a decision to start an informal enterprise, such as a *spaza*-shop or a taxi service may be taken, which will employ other family members. That this pattern is not evident in Cutwini is possibly due to that it is easier to get jobs here at the tea plantation, even without contacts and resources. In addition, the poverty relief pro-

grammes have explicit rules stating that they are only to employ persons who live in families where no one else has a job.

Table 8. *Types of jobs in Manteku, the number of households involved in every job and a roughly approximated monthly income from each job.*

Job category	Daily jobs	No. of hh	Approximate income Rand/month (2002)
Local employment	Ntsubane state forest	1	2500
	Holiday cottages	9	400
	Nature conservation	5	2500
	Public works	1	1000
	Ntafufu road building	3	1000
	Temp. local building projects	2	1000
	Teacher	1	2500
	Cattle dipping	1	1000
	Bus conductor	1	1500
	Work in Lusikisiki	3	2500
Local poverty relief programmes	Coast Care	11	700
Local informal jobs	Spaza-shop	3	1000-2500
	Taxi owner	4	4000
	Building houses, roofing painting	5	500-1500
	Iqirha (traditional healer)	1	1000
Labour migration	Durban, Johannesburg, Port St Johns, KwaZulu Natal etc.	14	1000-2500

The breakdown of available jobs in Cutwini and Manteku into the four job categories in Table 9 shows that local employment is the by far biggest category in both villages. The impact of the tea plantation in Cutwini can be seen through the fact that local employment is more common there than in Manteku. Poverty relief programmes create approximately the same share of the work opportunities in both villages, while the informal sector is much bigger in Manteku. This is partly due to the fact that a village supports a certain minimum amount of taxis and *spaza*-shops even if its small, but also perhaps to the fact that Manteku is less isolated and that e.g. taxis and house builders have a bigger market here than the village itself. Also, since Manteku was the second village to be interviewed, I was probably more observant to the issue of informal jobs, which I had discovered to be an important source of income in Cutwini. Finally, labour migration seems to be more common in Manteku, perhaps because the opportunities for local employment are less. Below, the four different types of employment will be shortly discussed

Table 9. *Comparison between Cutwini and Manteku: breakdown of the total amount of jobs available in each village into the four job categories.*

Job categories	Cutwini	Manteku
	% of total jobs	% of total jobs
<b>Local employment</b>	56%	42%
<b>Local poverty relief programmes</b>	17%	16%
<b>Local informal jobs</b>	10%	20%
<b>Labour migration</b>	17%	22%

## Local Employment

Contrary to firmly held beliefs about the almost total lack of local employment in rural Transkei, wage-work generated locally account for the largest part of work opportunities utilized by people in Cutwini and Manteku.

The largest employer in Cutwini, and a factor that probably sets this village apart from many other villages, is the Mazizi Tea Plantation<sup>49</sup>, located just a few kilometres from the village. It is mainly women who work at the plantation, and in 2002 it was a very low-income job, about R500 a month, which was less than what people were paid for poverty relief work or pensions. The tea corporation also had a very bad reputation for not paying workers on time, or not paying them at all, and in 2002 a number of people had quit their jobs there because they were not paid for several months. The head office of the Corporation was also burned down that year, most probably by angry workers.

Shortly afterwards, the tea corporation got a new management when a German company invested money and an Indian company contributed with expertise to revive the business. In 2005, the Corporation was running much more smoothly, and paying workers between R800 and 1000 per month. This led to much more people from the surrounding villages starting to work at the plantation, even if the working conditions are described as hard. Around 180 casual and 80 permanent workers are employed at the plantation, and an estimated 50-60% of them are from the surrounding local area. The Corporation now also plans to extend its community development programme, through which local families can be given a small (1 ha) tea field with a guarantee that the Corporation will buy the produce.

In Manteku, one of the most important work opportunities is at holiday cottages, which are present in the areas around the villages. People from towns like Durban or East London, who come here during school holidays for fishing and relaxation, have built these small cottages. When the cottage owners are in their cottages for holidays, they employ locals on a rotational

<sup>49</sup> Information obtained through interviews with workers at the Tea Plantation as well as with Mr Mafuza Pangwa, Estate Manager and Mr Tobias Mhlanga, Production Manager at Mazizi Tea Estate, 8/4 2005.

basis for cooking, cleaning and looking after children. They also sometimes buy food (e.g. fish or crayfish) from local fishermen. In 2005, these cottage owners employed 16 local persons on a day-to-day basis to look after the cottages when they were away, and paid about R400/month for this service.

The data from 2002 show that only 9 families claimed to be earning money from cottages. The reason for this may be a fear of admitting this income due to the fact that a conflict raging in Manteku since 2000, see *Box F*. Though the income of R400 per month is certainly low, many local families still manage to survive on it, and thus the cottages are considered a crucial source of income in Manteku. People can also find work at the local nature conservation offices in Manteku. Close to Cutwini, the Ntsubane state forest also employs rangers who patrol the forest, and there is furthermore a forestry factory located here (though most employees in these two establishments are from the village Mbotyi).

The government further creates work opportunities in the villages through employing one person in every village as a cattle-dipping supervisor<sup>50</sup>, and several persons as teachers in local schools. Teaching and nursing is usually the only jobs available close to the villages for people with college or university education. The teachers are therefore usually among the most well-respected and highly educated persons in the villages, and enjoy a special social status. If there are not enough people present in the village with a teacher's education (like the case is in Cutwini), teachers from outside might be employed. These teachers usually rent a house from a family in the village and live there during the weeks.

Jobs within the local municipal area, in Lusikisiki and Ntafufu for example, have also been counted as local jobs, instead of as labour migration. These jobs are close enough to allow the person working to be able to drive home every day, if they have a car, or rent a room/live with relatives close to the working place and visit their home villages on a weekly basis. They are thus able to be an active part in family and village life.

### **Poverty Relief Programmes**

During the last few years, poverty relief programmes (PRPs) have created a significant amount of job opportunities in these villages. In the study area, "Working for Water" (WFW) started in 2000/01 and is only employing people in Cutwini, while "Working for the Coast" (Coast Care) started shortly afterwards and is present in both villages. A short background to these programmes was given on page 71. By 2005, several other poverty relief projects had arrived in Manteku, e.g. a plant nursery project and another coastal cleaning project. The community tourism project, discussed on page 76, had not created employment that could be counted as a daily job in 2002.

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<sup>50</sup> There is a law that all cattle must be dipped in tick-poison every week, and a local man employed by the Department of Agriculture is usually in charge of arranging this.

PRPs are implemented through NGO's in the area – IDT (Independent Development Trust) is implementing WFW and PondoCROP is implementing Coast Care. The programmes both employ about 10 people in every village, and advancement opportunities to “supervisor” and “field manager” are possible within the Coast Care programme, while WFW works with contractors who are given responsibility for teams of ten workers and are empowered through business-training. Both programmes include extensive training and education components.

Coast Care pays their workers every fortnight, and in 2002, the salary was R700 a month, while WFW pay when the contracted area has been cleared (which usually works out to about R600 a month). The differences between the programmes and the effects they have on local livelihoods are discussed more on page 224.

### **Informal Jobs**

Informal jobs are created by small-scale private enterprising in the village, and arise from the needs of local people for transport, groceries and services. In South Africa an estimated 5.1% of the population runs informal (non-VAT-registered) businesses (Statistics South Africa, 2002b), and in Cutwini and Manteku, informal businesses account for about 10-20% of daily jobs.

The taxi business (previously discussed on page 130) generates significant amounts of money for several households in each village. In Cutwini, some taxi owners employ persons from other households for driving the taxi (where the owner gets much more money from the business than the driver), while in Manteku, owners tend to drive the taxi themselves, or employ a person from their own household. Another common small enterprise is the *spaza*-shop, which can be of different sizes, from small shops selling mostly beers (usually known as *shebeens*), to big and well-stocked stores that employ several persons. *Spaza*-shops are also common enterprises for women, as shops can be minded while doing other things around the home.

In every village, there are also usually at least 2-3 persons who work as bricklayers and/or roofers, who are contracted by other locals to build houses. People may also use their special skills as e.g. carpenters, mechanics or seamstresses to create employment for themselves. Traditional healers and herbalists, such as *igqirha* and *ixhwele* (discussed on page 129), have also been considered informal jobs, although there is only one household, in Manteku, that has claimed this as a livelihood activity.

### **Labour Migration**

Migrant labour, often conceptualised as the most important monetary incomes in rural households, are not among the most important forms of employment in the studied villages. In Cutwini, only 12% of the households, and in Manteku 16% have migrant workers contributing to the monthly in-

come. These persons usually work in KwaZulu Natal or in Johannesburg, and come home to the villages on a monthly or yearly basis.

The number of migrant workers is connected to the definitions adopted at the time of data collection, where persons who contribute very little to the livelihood of a family in the village are not counted as labour migrants (see page 99 a discussion on this). This definition tries to mirror the reality of a divide between those who have the intention of contributing to a rural family's livelihood, and those who are actually doing it. Those households that have a labour migrant successfully contributing to the family income are usually among the richer families in the villages, since the jobs secured in cities are often better paid than local jobs. However, labour migrants often also end up not contributing as much as was originally intended, or sometimes anything at all, and leaving their families to fend for themselves most of the year. A woman comments:

my husband works at a sugar cane plantation in KwaZulu Natal, but he only comes home once per year. Yes, he brings money at that time, but otherwise we have to harvest mussels and sell if we need money. And we have to do everything ourselves, ploughing and working the garden and repairing the house. It is not worth it having him gone all the time for that small amount of money that he brings.

Migrant workers are usually visualised as men, working in mines, at sugar-cane plantations or in factories. It should, however, not be forgotten that many women also work as labour migrants. About 20% of the labour migrants are women in Manteku, and they usually work as domestic workers ("maids"). Indeed, 'domestic worker' is the most common profession for African women in South Africa (Central Statistics, 1998).

### *Piece Jobs*

Small, occasional jobs that supplement other incomes, such as occasional employment in a nearby garages or a *spaza*-shop are not that common in these villages. Jobs that provide very little income or income on a highly irregular basis have not been reported in the tables above. These jobs will instead be discussed in chapter 8, as coping mechanisms in times of crisis.

## Governmental Grants

In both villages, the governmental grant system (explained in more detail before, p. 72) is very important for local livelihoods. In Table 10, the percentages of households in Cutwini and Manteku that receive different types of grants are presented. Note that one household may receive several pensions or several different types of grants at the same time. In both villages, approximately 30% of the households are receiving at least a grant of pen-

sion-size (R 600/month in 2002). A grant of that size is usually a big part of that household's livelihood, and is often the only major livelihood income. The pensions have made a big difference to reducing poverty, as stated by many informants. However, people do not yet feel secure about the pension money, since the application procedures have been complicated and lengthy. Most households stated that they were worried that the pension would be taken away from them or delayed in different ways. A young male informant said:

In my home we depend on my grandmother's grant [pension] so we are worried that if she doesn't get her money from the government every month we are going to face a problem. It's not easy not to worry about that, because we know if that happens the toddlers are going to cry because of hunger.

Though pension is the most important type of grant in the village, a small number of people also benefit from the disabled grant (referred to as sick pension by some). Furthermore, the process of applying for child grants had started in the villages at the time of data collection. At that time, only about 30% of the children eligible for child grant Manteku, (and even less in Cutwini since the data there was collected half a year earlier) were receiving the grant, but as this process was gaining momentum quickly, there are many more families benefiting from child grant today. Indeed, the fact that the data were collected 6 months earlier in Cutwini than in Manteku may have influenced the numbers. This money, though contributing with much less than the pension, is an important safety-net and supplement for poor families with many children. In Manteku, as many as 8 families were in 2002 having one or more child grants as their only income source.

Table 10. *Governmental grants in Cutwini and Manteku. Percentage of total households that are receiving each type of grants, and the total percentage of households that were receiving at least 600 R/month in 2002.*

<b>Governmental grants</b>	<b>Cutwini % of total hh</b>	<b>Manteku % of total hh</b>
Old-age pension (R600/month in 2002)	27%	23%
Disabled grant (R600/month in 2002)	3%	7%
Child grant (R120/month in 2002)	17%	27%
Percentage of households receiving at least R600/month in 2002.	30%	30%

No families in the villages were to my knowledge at this time receiving any Foster Care Grants, though many families are taking care of children whose

parents have died. Information meetings about the application procedures for this grant had begun when I visited the villages in 2005, but it seems to be a very lengthy process.

The grant incomes per month for the entire villages add up to approximately R30,000 for Cutwini and R23,000 for Manteku. Naturally, this monthly cash injection has many spin-off effects, especially as it helps to create informal jobs locally for people who supply different services in the villages. However, if compared with the aggregated monetary contribution of jobs (p. 136), then grants only supply about  $\frac{1}{4}$  as much money. On the other hand, grants fill a complementary function to job-based security, since they are mostly distributed precisely to the people who cannot work, i.e. the elderly, sick or disabled. Indeed, very few households (about 5-7%) depend on both jobs and grants simultaneously, which is to an extent is surprising since about 20-30% of the households contain people of both pension-age and working age. This is probably due to the fact that unmarried sons and daughters often move away from home and create new homesteads if they get a job, especially if their parents have a livelihood secured through pensions.

## Natural Resource-Based Livelihood Activities

The natural resources around the villages are used for livelihood purposes in many different ways. Though the later analysis will show that natural resource use is declining, and that it is already a much less important livelihood activity than jobs and pensions, the resource use represents a crucial factor of rural livelihoods for several reasons. For one, people rely very heavily on some of the resources, like water and firewood. Secondly, there are a few families in both villages that rely on natural resource use as their main livelihood activity. Thirdly, for many families natural resource use constitutes a complementary livelihood activity and an important coping mechanism in times of crisis. Below, the different types of resources and their use will be more closely investigated.

### Water

Water availability is one of the factors that is different between the two studied villages. In Cutwini, people collect water directly from springs, while in Manteku there are two water tanks available, as well as several springs. The springs or water tanks in both villages are relatively close to the households, but the springs in Cutwini are often in inaccessible places in steep valleys, which means that water collection is a very strenuous activity here. An estimate is that up to one hour per day is spent by the women of an average sized household on water collection. In Manteku, the water tanks (put in

place by the cottage owners discussed in *Box F*) naturally make this process shorter and smoother.

The quality of the water is good according to 40 % of the households in Cutwini and 74% in Manteku, reflecting the impact of the water tanks in Manteku. The major complaint about water, however, concerns its scarcity in winter times in both villages. Also, salt intrusion is a problem in some of the springs in Manteku. Awareness around water sanitation issues and practices for water collection seems quite widespread in the two villages, and thus diarrhoea or outbreaks of cholera is not a common problem here. It is, however, important to note that water quality has not been assessed in this study in any other way than through asking people what they think about it.

### **Firewood and Building Material**

Wood is the second most used natural resource in the villages, after water. Firewood is collected by almost every family, although the level of use varies considerably. Most households combine both wood and paraffin for cooking, depending on the type of thing that is cooked, though wood usually constitutes the major component of the household energy requirement. Some households use paraffin or gas for most of their cooking needs, while other households use only wood. This is, however, not a linear process where households go from using wood to paraffin to gas. Households often switch back and forward between various forms of energy, depending on what is available in terms of labour force and money at a specific time.

Table 11 accounts for frequency of firewood collection, and other opinions about the resource in Cutwini and Manteku. Firewood (i.e. dead wood collected in the forest) is usually gathered and carried home in big bundles by women. As can be seen in Table 11, people in Cutwini overall feel confident about the condition of firewood and has not noticed major changes in the resource availability. In Manteku, the forest is not as big as the one close to Cutwini, and people generally consider the condition of firewood to be worse here. People are also more worried about the resource, although they have mixed opinions about whether the resource has been improving or not recently. Local perceptions about restrictions in firewood collection are discussed on page 211.

Materials for house building include bricks, cement and zinc (all bought at local builder outlets) as well as wooden poles, thatching grass and mud (usually bought or collected from natural sites). Mud can be collected at certain places around the villages, and is usually mixed with grass and sometimes with dung and made into bricks. Some people in the villages occasionally make money from making and selling these mud bricks.

Thatching grass (*umqungu*) is usually collected by women in wintertime, if there is a need for it. Though Cutwini is famous for its vast grasslands, the specific type of grass used for thatching (*Cymbopogon validus*) is much more widely available in Manteku. In fact, 81% of the households consider

this resource to be in a bad or very bad condition in Cutwini and 77% of the households are worried about the future availability of the resource.

Table 11. *Different aspects of firewood use in Cutwini and Manteku. Firewood collection is given in percent of all households of each village at different frequencies. Opinions on changes in firewood availability, if one is worried about the resource and the current availability of the resource are given in percent of total users.*

<b>Firewood collection:</b>	<b>Very often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Total % users</b>
Cutwini	64 %	32 %	0 %	4 %	96 %
Manteku	66 %	26 %	2 %	6 %	94 %
<b>Availability of firewood:</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Very Bad</b>
Cutwini	24 %	47 %	16 %	12 %	0.7 %
Manteku	6 %	37 %	23 %	26 %	9 %
<b>Changes in the resource:</b>	<b>Change for better</b>	<b>Change for worse</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>Changes yes</b>	<b>I'm worried about it:</b>
Cutwini	-	-	42	58	35 %
Manteku	20 %	34 %	46	-	52 %

Poles for house building are sold by the State Forests, and cost about R250 (in 2002) for the amount of poles it takes to make a standard rondavel. Since Cutwini received a gum tree plantation as a community forest, poles from that forest have also been sold in the village and the revenue has been used for the schoolhouse, which was improved by the community in 2003. Illegal cutting of poles in the forest occurs sometimes.

## **Agriculture<sup>51</sup>**

An estimated 81% of the total land area of South Africa is farmed today (South Africa Yearbook 2002/03), and a significant part of this consists of small-scale subsistence farming of fields and gardens. In both Cutwini and Manteku, farming is an important part local livelihoods. Soil quality is also the environmental resource that people are most often worried about.

Fay (2003) describes the yearly cycle of agricultural activities in Xhora District, in the southern part of coastal Transkei, observations that are confirmed in the field study area as well. The farming season lasts from early spring ploughing and planting in September-October, through the summer chore of weeding to the autumn harvesting in April-May. During these months, cattle are herded to prevent them from disturbing the fields and gardens, while during the winter months they are allowed to graze the remains

<sup>51</sup> Note that I here discuss agriculture in terms of the cultivation of land, while in the next section I discuss domestic animal production. At a later point, I will discuss both of these activities in terms of "agricultural activities".

of the harvest. Grasses and poles for building are collected after the harvest, and winter is the time for building and improving houses.

In Cutwini, the shift of focus from gardens to fields as described by McAllister (1992) (discussed previously on page 78), is mirrored in that 95% of the households have gardens, while only 58% have fields<sup>52</sup>. Those homesteads in Cutwini that do not have gardens are usually either newly established or lacking in essential working-force and/or monetary input. In Manteku, the figures show a less clear tendency – only 71% have gardens and 68% have fields. Here, fields are still very fertile since they are cultivated on the floodplain of the Mzintlava River and several households claim that they are not making gardens since they get enough from the fields. People in Manteku tend to have more “garden-like” fields, as they often inter-crop maize with pumpkins, potatoes, beans and taro in their fields, while people in Cutwini grow these crops in their gardens. Spinach, cabbage and tomatoes are considered to be exclusively garden crops in both villages.

According to several authors (*c.f.* Beinart, 1992; McAllister, 2000; Shackleton *et al.*, 2000), it is difficult to estimate how productive local, small-scale agriculture is in these areas. McAllister (2000) describes many problems and complications when trying to calculate productivity through measuring e.g. tonnage in harvest or estimating field sizes. Previous agricultural surveys have tended to focus on easily quantifiable factors, leading to a neglect of factors such as green mealies eaten before harvest<sup>53</sup>, fruits, chicken and pigs, according to Beinart (1992). In this present survey, all crops and fruit trees grown as well as all types of domestic animals were included. An attempt to estimate agricultural production including ‘green mealies’ was made through the design of the question on yearly dietary percentage (see below). Hectares of cultivated lands, kilos of maize produced and exact numbers of animals were however not recorded, though in some cases key informants made estimates.

Commonly grown crops in Cutwini and Manteku are ranked in Table 12. Maize is grown by everyone who is cultivating a field or a garden in both villages. After this ubiquitous crop, beans are also commonly grown in both villages. The difference between the villages starts showing when it comes to other crops. While taro (*madumbe*) and sweet potatoes are favoured in Cutwini, people in Manteku prefer to grow pumpkins and tomatoes. The most striking difference between the two villages is in crop diversification – in Manteku, many more households are experimenting with various crops than in Cutwini. The differences are probably due to both better soil quality as well as the prospect of selling vegetables to the cottagers in Manteku.

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<sup>52</sup> The figure for fields includes a few homesteads that are currently borrowing fields which they do not own, but are cultivating.

<sup>53</sup> Note that the possibility to eat maize before it is ready for harvest is a very important aspect of the crop, see page 79).

Table 12. *Most commonly grown crops in fields and gardens, ranking for Cutwini and Manteku with percentages (of households growing crops at all) given.*

Cutwini Crop type	Percentage of total hh	Manteku Crop type	Percentage of total hh
Maize	100%	Maize	100 %
Beans	73%	Beans	88 %
Taro ( <i>madumbe</i> )	73%	Pumpkins	88 %
Sweet potatoes	66 %	Tomatoes	53 %
Pumpkins	61 %	Taro ( <i>madumbe</i> )	51 %
Potatoes	35 %	Sweet potatoes	49 %
Tomatoes	16 %	Spinach	48 %
Spinach	11 %	Potatoes	48 %
Cabbage	4 %	Cabbage	38 %

A few words also about cannabis growing, for which rural Transkei, and especially Pondoland, is well known. Investigating this particular (illegal) activity in detail would have required extra efforts and could not be simply included in the questionnaire. I still got an idea of how prevalent it was through informal discussions and observations. Kepe (2003b) investigated the issue in more detail in a village in rural Pondoland, and found that 13 persons in the village were involved in growing cannabis for trading purposes. According to my own observations, marijuana growing is a source of income for a few households in the village only, perhaps only one-third of Kepe's figure. It is unclear how big the village studied by Kepe is, but Cutwini is probably a smaller village, which could account for this discrepancy in results. However, I also want to point out that it is likely that there are big differences between villages when it comes to this activity, and that the position of dominant families in the villages when it comes to cannabis growing probably has significant effects on its prevalence. Interviews suggest that the fact that other people in the village grow cannabis and trade it successfully has a high significance for the decision for individuals to get involved in this activity.

The common popular view that rural people in Pondoland survive mostly off growing cannabis is in any case strongly exaggerated. For those few households that engage in this activity in the study area (perhaps 2-3%) it is an important form of livelihood, but other activities are vastly more important on a village-wide scale. Just as Kepe (2003b) points out, it is not primarily rich persons who grow and trade with cannabis, and ultimately, it is not the farmers who grow marijuana who makes a lot of money from it, but the middle-men and those who sell it in big towns.

Many gardens also contain fruit trees. In Cutwini 75% and in Manteku 57% of the homesteads have fruit trees. Those who have fruit trees tend to have several different varieties, including banana, guava, orange, mango,

paw-paw, peaches, nartjee, lemon, sweet lemon, chain guava and avocado. A small stand of sugarcane is furthermore kept by 15-20% of the households.

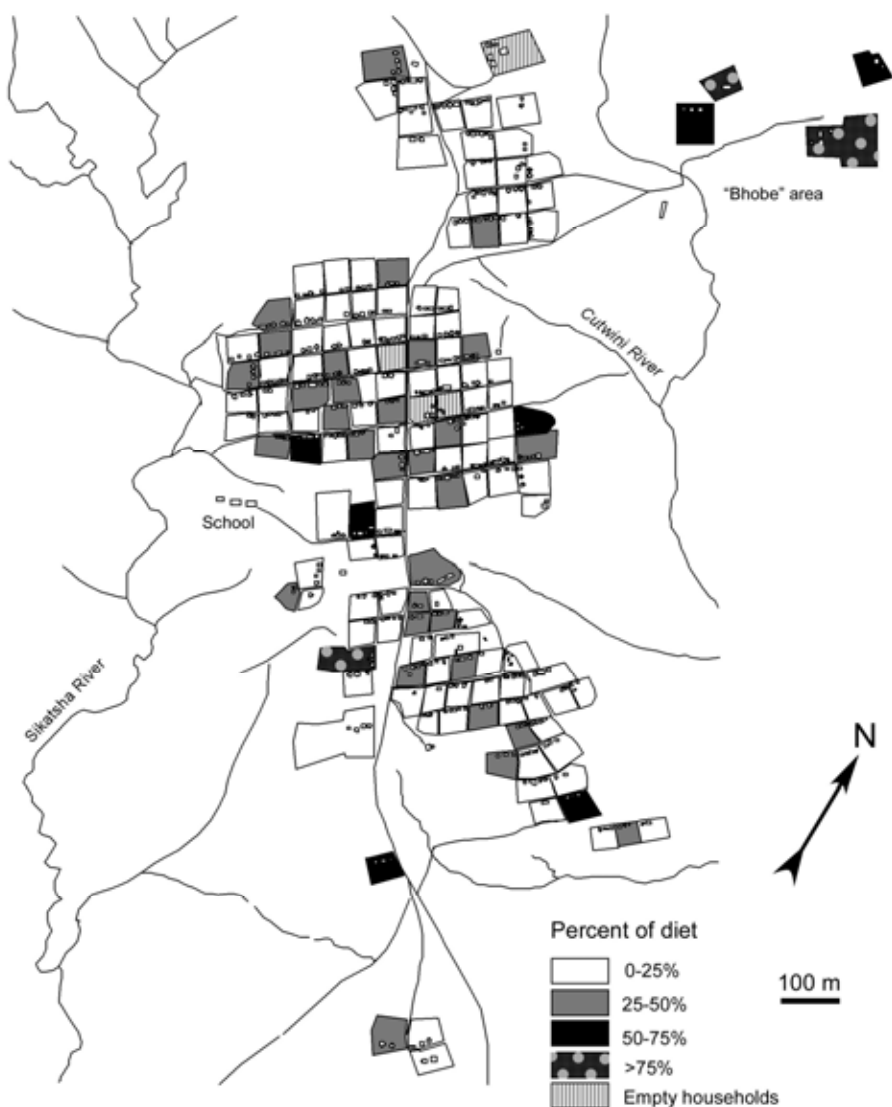
Beinart (1992) shows how the contribution of farming activities to family income has declined steadily in this century, as poverty has become more widespread. Indeed, in these villages, most families grow only a little bit of maize and sometimes a few other crops in their gardens. The vegetables and pulses are primarily used to supplement the diet around the time of harvesting (and in Manteku also for selling), while maize may be stored longer and eaten as *samp*. An average family eats *samp* from their own garden about 4-8 times per month, which means that most of the days they eat maize meal bought at the store (see the food expenditure example of a family in *Box B* for an illustration of the relative unimportance of maize grown in the garden in the average monthly diet).

Table 13. *Answers to the question: How big percent of your yearly maize and vegetable supply do you grow in your own field or garden?*

Percent of yearly diet	Cutwini (% of total hh)	Manteku (% of total hh)
None	9 %	10 %
Less than 25 %	62 %	44 %
25-50%	22 %	30 %
50-75%	5 %	11 %
More than 75%	2 %	5 %

Agricultural productivity in this survey was assessed through asking people to estimate how much of the maize and vegetables they eat during one year comes from their own gardens and fields. As Table 13 indicates, the majority of the households in both villages estimated that they grow less than 25% of the vegetable food that they eat, including maize. In both villages, about 10% of the households do not cultivate at all (or receive very bad crop yields). Only a few of the homesteads are nearly self-sufficient in food production. Consistent with earlier findings that the soil quality in Manteku is better and that people have the added incentive of being able to sell some crops, the food production in Manteku is somewhat higher than in Cutwini.

In the map in *Figure 8*, the results in Table 13 for Cutwini is illustrated spatially, showing that agricultural productivity has a connection with the potential that a household has for making a big garden. All the households that grow more than 50% of their yearly vegetable diets are located so that the household garden can be expanded to at least one side without intruding on the spaces of other families.



*Figure 8.* Map of Cutwini, with rivers, roads and homesteads marked. Homestead sites are marked as squares including the garden, with individual houses marked as small circles, squares or rectangles. The homesteads are coded to show the percentage of domestic agricultural production in the total household diet (see Table 13). This map is also available on the CD.

People were also asked if they experience any problems when farming. In both villages, baboons and monkeys were a problem, as were wild dogs, wild pigs, rats and different insects, like *isihlava* (stockborer) and other maize diseases. Cattle or goats grazing in the fields are also a reoccurring problem, and the cause of many conflicts in the village. Lack of draught

animals to plough the field is sometimes also a complaint. This relates to another common complaint, about 'new seeds' and expensive fertilisers, and is due to TRACOR interventions in the 1980's when people were encouraged to abandon ploughing by draught animals and were given hybrid seeds (see further discussion on page 206). Weather and soil conditions are also sometimes a complaint – there is too little or too much rain (usually too much, which makes the maize rot and the fields become waterlogged), bad soil (sandy or 'red') and occasionally too much wind, so that the maize breaks. The importance of monetary investments into the agricultural activities is shown here, since many of these problems are related to a lack of money.

### **Domestic Animals**

Domestic animals are kept by about 85% of the households in both villages, but there are big differences in what types of animals people keep, reflected in Table 14. Grazing stock (referred to here as livestock, following Ferguson's definition, 1990) i.e. cows, goats, sheep, horses and donkeys are much more common in Cutwini, with 55% of the households owning livestock, compared to 36% in Manteku. The much higher percentage of households keeping livestock in Cutwini as compared to Manteku probably has historical and geographical reasons. As discussed on page 85, Cutwini lies on the Lambasi plains, consisting of vast grasslands that were reserved as a winter grazing area until the late 1930's. The people who eventually settled here thus most likely did so because of the grazing opportunities. It is also not strange for villages lying close to each other to have big differences in cattle ownership depending on local availability of grazing lands, as discussed by Beinart (1992). The big difference in sheep ownership between the two villages probably relates to the superior grazing in Cutwini for sheep, while the grazing in Manteku is more appropriate for goats.

Beinart (1992) claims that the percentage of households owning cattle, the most important type of livestock in rural Transkei, has declined from about 70% in the 1950s to 50% in 1980s. In Cutwini and Manteku, the percentage of households owning cattle were 43% and 30% respectively in 2002, which seems to confirm a declining trend. The many newly built female-headed households surely play an important role in this trend, since women are unlikely to invest in cattle when they are heads of households. While livestock are 'men's animals' that are kept mainly for storing and multiplying wealth and for use at different ceremonies (this will be discussed shortly), pigs and fowl (chicken, ducks and geese) are kept primarily as a food resource and are sometimes conceptualised as 'women's animals' (Ferguson, 1990).

The assistants advised me against directly asking people how many animals they had, especially when it came to livestock. A question like that is

considered inappropriate, and people in the village would never ask this information of each other<sup>54</sup>.

Table 14. *Domestic animal ownership in Cutwini and Manteku, ranked after the percentage of households owning the animal type in question.*

<b>Cutwini</b> Animal type	<b>Percentage</b> of total hh	<b>Manteku</b> Animal type	<b>Percentage</b> of total hh
Chicken	64 %	Chicken	78 %
Pig	49 %	Pig	51 %
Cow	43 %	Cow	30 %
Sheep	35 %	Goat	17 %
Goat	32 %	Horse	6 %
Horse	12 %	Donkey	3 %
Duck	5 %	Geese	3 %

The role of livestock keeping in rural communities has been debated in the literature. Ferguson (1994) comments that livestock are not particularly important as a cash income, and neither are they important for every-day subsistence, since their chief function is to store wealth, not to produce it. However, Ferguson's study area was Lesotho, a country where the conditions for grazing are arguably bad, and quite different from the lush grasslands in Pondoland. The profit that lies in keeping a large herd of cattle in Pondoland can be surmised by what one middle-aged man said:

People are laughing at me and they say I'm stupid because I don't look for work, I just focus on looking after my cattle and other animals. Instead of sending my son to look after the cattle and looking for work for myself, I send him to school and look after the cattle myself. But I have worked when I was younger, in the mines in Johannesburg, and I never want to work again... I have always had an eye for cattle and I can see what they need. Look at my cattle, they are nice and fat ... every one is worth at least 2000 Rand, so I'm a very rich man as you can see. This money which is walking here in the field increases faster than it would at any bank. If I need something, money for school fees or anything else, I just sell a sheep or a goat. It is those people who are stupid, breaking their backs to find hard work and earn some small shillings instead of looking after their livestock.

Ainslie (2003) studying Peddie District in Ciskei, points out that cattle are not just economic investments, but that people usually have a very close relationship to their cattle, and that having "an eye for cattle" is a highly desirable quality in a person. It is considered a typical activity for elderly men to just sit and observe their herds of cattle for hours, counting them,

<sup>54</sup> That the issue is sensitive has also been suggested by authors like Beinart and Bundy (1987), who showed how people have historically resisted their cattle being counted, and by Redding (1996), who point out that the issue is connected to fears of witchcraft.

looking at and discussing at length the build and behaviour of the animals. The man quoted above has in fact an almost legendary reputation in the village of being good with cattle, and people gossip about him being able to “talk to the animals”.

Ferguson (1990) shows how investments in livestock by migrant labouring men in Lesotho were made for many complicated social reasons. He makes a strong case for livestock, and especially cattle, constituting a “special domain of property” (1990:138), which due to social and cultural rules cannot simply be sold for money or slaughtered and eaten at the owners will. Livestock is a type of property that men handle exclusively, and that should only be sold when a household is in absolute destitution or faced with an extreme emergency. This makes money invested in livestock safe from the claims of the migrant labourer’s wife and family, while money in the bank would never be safe from the endless needs that relatively poor families tend to have – the claims for medicines if someone is ill, for school fee payments, for a proper Christmas celebration, for repairing a leaking roof, and so on<sup>55</sup>.

Thus, cattle serves as a “retirement fund” for migrant labourers who know that they one day will be laid off and forced to return to the village to depend on their herds of livestock. Shackleton *et al.* (2000) state that livestock is very important also as a safety net for people in rural Southern Africa – for example if a breadwinner dies, his or her family could be able to meet their cash needs for several years if they had a herd of livestock to sell off.

Ferguson (1990) goes on to point out that bridewealth payments constitute an important type of cash transfer from the younger, working generation to the older, dependent generation. The role of cattle in society and the cultural norms and rules that surround cattle, are therefore part of a constant social battle, where women challenge norms in order to gain access to the money invested in cattle, while men defend the norms because it defends their right to keeping their “retirement funds”, and where younger men challenge the bridewealth system in order to keep the money they earn instead of having to pay it to their in-laws, while the older generation defends the system because it is their old-age insurance. Thus, these cultural practices are actively maintained and protected because they play an important function in society, and not because they are ‘traditional’ residues from ancient times.

In the Pondoland study area, the norms and rules about livestock in society seem to be quite similar to those observed by Ferguson in Lesotho. However, contrary to what was noted by Ferguson in Lesotho in 1990, there has in Pondoland in the recent years been a move away from cattle-keeping and high bridewealth payments, which was reflected in my survey and interviews. In the light of the above discussion, this change may be attributed perhaps more to the introduction of pension payments to elderly people in

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<sup>55</sup> See also the discussion on page 203.

South Africa, which make the culturally constructed cattle-based pension funds less important, than to general “modernisation” in the rural areas, which is an explanation perhaps more often invoked.

The livestock in rural villages thus has a high social value in many ways. Not only are they conceptually linked to “village life”, but they also fulfil important ceremonial and social purposes. For funerals for example, tradition requires livestock to be slaughtered as a ceremonial occasion. Another important social part of the livestock issue is the long-term lending and borrowing of livestock, which is a widespread phenomenon, noted by both Ferguson (1990) and Ainslie (2003). The lending of cattle creates a prestigious place in society for a man with a large herd who is able to help others. McAllister (1992) points out that livestock does not only benefit the owner, but that it is often lent for ploughing to relatives and neighbours, who may also be given manure (which is sometimes also sold). When a cow is slaughtered for a ceremony, everyone in the village benefits from the meat. Kepe (2002) also lists many important functions of cattle.

Many people in the study area agree that owning many cattle has one big disadvantage - it makes you very vulnerable to cattle diseases. As discussed on page 79., cattle diseases have historically had dramatic effects in the Transkei area and caused massive starvation and upheaval.

Since 1911, a law states that all cattle have to be dipped tick poison in a village dipping tank every week, and one person in every village is employed by the government to see that this task is fulfilled. Historically, farmers have resented this and other interventions such as culling and the introduction of ‘exotic’ cattle breeds (see Beinart and Bundy, 1987). People have been especially sensitive when it comes to their livestock, and Beinart (2002a) shows how a law about poisoning of locust populations were fiercely resisted in Pondoland because of the potential detrimental effects of the poison on livestock. The dipping may not be a current controversy in the villages today, but Kepe (2002) has demonstrated that many of these previous policies linger in the minds of people close to the study area, (and in the context of many other governmental interventions in rural lives and livelihoods, they have made people suspicious and sceptical against ‘development’ programmes and interventions.

### *Grazing Lands*

Connected to the issue of livestock keeping is the issue of grazing lands and their condition. As mentioned previously, a common view of Transkeian grazing lands is that they are overstocked and overgrazed in general. Grassland burning by local populations in the homelands has usually been regarded as ecologically detrimental by the state and by conservation activists, however, Kepe (2005b) has shown that burning of grasslands has many different ecological and social functions in Pondoland. This issue connects to the previous discussion about how biologists used to be convinced that most

of South African grasslands had been forests in the past, a conclusion that has lately been contradicted and the discussion on the influence of the degradation narrative on conservation ideologies and state policies.

Kepe and Scoones (1999), through carefully analysing grassland states and transitions in their study area (the Mkambati Nature Reserve and the village Ndengane), show how the grasslands in the last 60 years have transformed from containing mixed grasses, mainly *Themeda triandra*, that are good for grazing (local name *iqunde*) to being dominated by *Aristidia junciformis*, which is poor quality for grazing. *Aristidia* (local name *inkonkoni*) is only palatable to livestock when young, and therefore herders have to burn the grasslands regularly. Kepe and Scoones claim that though people are well aware that the only way to revert to a more palatable mixed grassland would be to allow only light grazing and seasonal burning, this is not feasible, due to both the high stocking rate in the grasslands as well as the breakdown of local social mechanisms that in the past controlled grazing and burning. Thus, regular burning to keep *Aristidia* swards short is the only available strategy to local herders.

Though their study area is very close to mine (see map in *Figure 4*), I got a different picture from the key informant interviews I conducted in my study area in 2005. In Manteku, one informant said:

No, we don't have a lot of inkonkoni here, only a little bit, there, over by the school. [...]

**Flora:** *What about iqunde?*

Oh, we have a lot of that. Over by the Dakana River and there close to the sea, all the way.

**Flora:** *Do you have any problems with this iqunde turning into inkonkoni?*

No, that can happen if they graze a lot and if people are burning all the time. We don't have that here, maybe you heard about that in Cutwini [the informant knows that I work in Cutwini as well]. We have a law here, we burn the grass on one side [in one area] and then we *wait* and graze on the other side. If you are burning grasses where you are not supposed to people can take you to the chief.

Kepe and Scoones (1999), in contrast to this man in Manteku, note that there are many inter-village conflicts over illegitimate burning of grasses. Their study area lies on the Lambasi Plains, as does Cutwini, where conflicts over grass burning occasionally happen (as indicated by the man in the quote above). In Cutwini, cattle owners acknowledged the problems described with *inkonkoni* grasslands, but claimed that there was also plenty of *iqunde* mixed grassland available. Though my interviews on this subject were probably

not as thorough as those of Kepe and Scoones, the results suggest that the negative changes in the grasslands should not be seen as a homogenous phenomenon, even in this relatively small area.

### **Gathering of Wild Resources and Hunting**

When discussing with the assistants and making pilot interviews, the issue of weather or not to include questions about hunting and gathering of wild resources was debated. The informants firmly stated that hunting was not going on in the village. One informant said:

No, nobody is hunting in this village. It is illegal and we are scared of the rangers. We don't even like to go into that big forest, it's a scary place. Maybe you can find some boys who throw rocks at birds or monkeys, that's all.

I had no reason to think that my assistants would deny the existence of hunting, even if it is illegal, since they openly admitted that people engaged in other illegal activities, like growing marijuana or collecting firewood illegally. Thus I did not ask about hunting in the survey.

On the issue of gathering of wild resources, people said they collected grasses for thatching (discussed before) and other grasses for making of baskets and sitting-mats. In the survey, every family was asked if they collected natural resources that they made products of for sale, and only a few people mentioned making baskets and mats for sale. I did not ask more about the collection of the type of grasses that are used for baskets and sitting mats (*Cyperus textilis*). Kepe (2003a), however, found mat and basket-making to be much more widespread in a contiguous study area, and he also points out that many of the mats and baskets are made for household use, or given as gifts at ceremonial occasions – so these would have "slipped through" my question since it focused on production for sale. Dahlberg (2005) also notes that crafts have increased in importance in her study area in KwaZulu Natal, though this is mainly due to the possibility of selling crafts to tourists, which does not exist in my area. These studies nevertheless suggest that I might have underestimated the importance of this resource in the study area.

The only people who gather various herbs in the wild in the study area are herbalists and *amagqirha*<sup>56</sup>, who sell them to people who come to see them about ailments. There is, however, only in one household in Manteku where two persons are practicing as *amagqirha*, and none in Cutwini (where the only village *igqirha* had to move to another village because people did not believe in her competence). Some informants claimed that herbalists from other areas sometimes visit the big forest close to Cutwini to collect herbs, though this activity could not be assessed in the survey.

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<sup>56</sup> *Igqirha* is often translated as "witch-doctor", *amagqirha* is the plural form. See discussion on page 129.

The only other wild plant that people gather for own consumption or use are various weeds from their garden that are mixed in the maize porridge to make the dish *sgwamba*.

## **Marine Resources**

As suggested by a shell midden (archaeological site) close to Cutwini, mussels have been a part of the diet for the populations in this area for a long time. Marine resources that are used by people today include various types of fish and shellfish. Seaweed has at times also been collected in Manteku and in the village Ndengane, a practice that started because a company (Taurus) came to the area and offered to pay money for bags of seaweed. During the time of this study, however, this practice had stopped. Mussels are usually collected by women once or twice per month at neap tide, while men fish with fishing rods in the sea or in the river estuaries. Crayfish is collected by hand by younger boys on the rocky shores.

Several studies of the marine intertidal resources and their local utilisation along the Transkei coast have come to the conclusion that the increase in human population growth since the 1960's have resulted in an overexploitation of mainly the shellfish (see Dye, 1992; Hockey and Siegfried, 1988; Hockey and Bosman, 1986; Lasiak and Field, 1995). Mussel collection has received attention from nature conservation authorities due to a collection method that involves an iron rod, which if practiced carelessly can destroy the musselbeds. Marine resource use is since the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998 (discussed on page 74) under various restrictions, including seasonal restrictions, and restrictions according to species, size, weight, amount and so on. These restrictions and their effect on people in the study area will be further discussed on page 211.

The above studies attest that the marine resources along most parts of the coast are an important part of the diet and a crucial supply of protein for the local people. In Pondoland, however, as discussed previously, studies have found that people do not use so much marine resources. Table 15 shows the frequency of utilization of different marine resources in Cutwini and Manteku. It is quite evident from the data that there is a much higher overall use of marine resources in Manteku, since both the total percentage of resource users as well as the use frequency is higher. One reason for this is that Cutwini, as a betterment village, lies about 2-3 km from the sea, which can only be reached with a fairly strenuous climb down the steep coast. Manteku lies very close to both the sea and a river estuary, making accessibility to fishing and resource collection much easier. Another reason is the historical context, where Cutwini, as mentioned earlier, lies on exceptional grazing lands and thus has attracted livestock herders rather than fishermen.

In Manteku, the cottage owners also constitute a market for selling marine resources on a small scale. Many fishermen in Manteku state that fishing is their emergency strategy – when in need of quick cash, they can fish for one

day and try to sell anything they catch (which will usually add up to a very modest sum, but it can be enough to get a taxi to town if there is an urgent business for example). People perhaps turn to fishing and marine resource collection in Manteku to a higher extent because full-time employment is more scarce here than in Cutwini

Table 15. *Marine resource use in Cutwini and Manteku. Frequency of resource use is indicated in four categories. Percentage of households in Cutwini and Manteku.*

Resource use		Very often	Often	Seldom	Never	Total % users
Fishing	Cutwini	2 %	18 %	3 %	77 %	23 %
	Manteku	12 %	37 %	3 %	48 %	52 %
Crayfish collection	Cutwini	5 %	20 %	0 %	75 %	25 %
	Manteku	3 %	36 %	14 %	47 %	53 %
Mussel collection	Cutwini	0 %	22 %	8 %	70 %	30 %
	Manteku	5 %	56 %	5 %	34 %	66 %

Marine resource use overall seems fairly limited in the study area, even if it is common in Manteku. If the data were to be averaged between the two villages, the conclusion would be that the majority of the households never use any sea resources at all. Very few people utilize marine resources once per week or more (which is considered “very often” in the table), and the total amount of resource users are somewhere around 40 persons in Cutwini and about 25 persons in Manteku. Many of these, especially in Cutwini, use the resources only once or twice per month.

### Generating Money from Natural Resources

Money can be generated from natural resources through selling collected or harvested resources directly, or through creating different refined products. This is to varying extent in both villages. Selling sea resources is an important livelihood activity in Manteku, where 15% of the households claim to sell fish, crayfish and mussels to the tourists in the cottages. In Cutwini, since there are no tourist cottages, this does not happen very often, only 1% of the households claim to sell crayfish (these are boys walking all the way to Lusikisiki or Mbotyi to sell their catch).

Selling garden products is done by a few percent of the households. These products are staples like maize and taro and fruits like bananas, oranges, guava and also sugarcane. Selling domestic animals (mainly chicken, pigs, sheep and goats) is done in an emergency, as earlier discussed, but a few households also have it as an occasional livelihood activity, especially in Cutwini.

The selling of wood and grasses is practiced only by one or two persons in each village. In fact, the market for wood and grasses is limited to those

people who are either physically handicapped or very old and do not have any close relatives looking after them, otherwise nobody seems to want to pay for something that they can collect for 'free'.

For refined products made from grasses, like baskets, mats or ornaments, there is also a very small market, since people can either make them themselves or prefer to buy cheap manufactured goods that are seen as better. One elderly woman's comment sums up the general mood well:

I used to make pots of clay and sell to people before I got my pension ... my children don't want to learn how to make them, they want modern jobs. And anyway, people don't need these pots, they have plastic ones.

It is important to note, that in some other villages, handicraft projects have effectively created jobs through providing access to a market for these products (e.g. Dahlberg, 2005). Herbal medicines are made from various ingredients, some of which are collected in the wild, though there is only one household in the study area where people claim to engage in this activity. Those few who do sell wood and grasses and refined products based on these resources do so when lacking other occupations, as a coping mechanism or an emergency strategy when they need some extra money.

## Calculating the Relative Value of Livelihoods

I have argued that broad and comparative livelihood studies in Transkei are important in order to put other, more probing livelihood studies into context. In this study, I have chosen to take a broad view on household livelihoods instead of focusing on one or a few aspects of local livelihoods because I want to make comparisons regarding the relative importance of the different activities, as well as identify the ways that people combine activities to make up their livelihoods.

Based on the model in *Figure 7*, I have calculated the relative importance of different local livelihood activities. The calculation (presented in Table 16) is based on survey data and informant discussions. In order to assess relative importance, I had to establish a common ground for analysis, in this case village averages of various livelihood's contributions to household income. I thus chose to convert environmental resource use into monetary incomes in order to be able to compare the different livelihood activities. This approach, however, neglects everything except monetary contributions of different livelihood activities. For example a garden can have other benefits than simply producing food – it can work as a safety-net and a back-up strategy and thus provide peace of mind to the people of the household. The exercise is nevertheless interesting for the purpose of comparing different livelihood activities in terms of their contributions to household livelihoods.

In the next chapter two chapters, I will instead focus more on strategic thinking around livelihoods and safety-net functions.

The survey data on jobs and grants presented previously in Table 7, Table 8 and Table 10 already provides estimations of household job and grant incomes, through which the village average for both Cutwini and Manteku could be calculated. The conversion of environmental resources into monetary incomes is more difficult. Shackleton *et al.* (2004) have done this for non-timber forest products (NTFPs) through estimating the use of every resource and substituting it with the monetary value of local sale prices. In my opinion however, this gives somewhat unrealistic estimates of the direct-use values of many resources. For example, Shackleton *et al. (ibid)* estimate firewood to have an annual gross direct-use value of over R3000 per household per year, based on the amount of firewood an average household collects and the cost of firewood locally. Local trade in firewood, however, occurs on a very limited scale, for example if someone in a household is ill and cannot collect firewood for a few days. Substituting firewood with paraffin or gas, which is what a family would do were they not able to collect firewood over a long period of time (according to informants) would cost approximately R500 per year, which is in my opinion a more realistic direct-use value of the firewood resource. Sheil and Wunder (2002) makes the same point when criticising various attempts at putting value on NTFPs (which have come to radically different results), stressing the importance of understanding local people's motives when they choose among livelihood options and their cost and benefit calculations.

I have thus based the calculations of the value of natural resources on the value of the items that local people themselves claim that they would (and often do) substitute these resources with. A fish caught in the sea can for example be sold directly for between R10-15 depending on size (representing a contribution of this amount to the household income), or alternatively, the fish can be consumed by the household members and replace the consumption of 2-3 cans of tuna, costing between R9-14 (thus representing a saving in household expenditure). I rely on the survey data for information on how often someone in each household goes fishing, while factors such as how often you actually catch a fish when fishing, how often the fish is either sold or eaten and how much money this brings in or saves were assessed through discussions with informants. Below, I will discuss the data that the calculations were based on for every type of environmental resource used in the calculation.

For agricultural activities, the data from Table 13 was used. These are the answers to a question from the survey, where households estimated the percent of their yearly maize and vegetable diet that they grew themselves in the garden or field. As illustrated in *Box B*, an average family would save a maximum of R150 per month if they would not need to buy maize or vegetables at the shop. Subtracting, as suggested by informants, R250 per year

for the costs of planting (seeds, fertiliser, fencing etc.) we arrived at a maximum monthly “saving” of R130 for a family growing nearly 100% of their maize and vegetable supply. Based on this approximation, monthly monetary contributions from agriculture were calculated to be R30 for households growing less than 25% of their yearly dietary requirements, R60 for households growing between 25-50%, R90 for households growing between 50-75% and R125 for households growing more than 75%. Note that this approximation does not allow for differences within these four categories, that is, a household that grows 26% and a household that grows 49% of their diet are both counted as saving R60 per month through their agricultural activity.

Information on the number of households that kept different types of domestic animals, related in Table 14, were used for calculating the monthly contribution this makes to the accumulated livelihoods in the villages. Families that keep chicken or ducks slaughter about one chicken per month, which contributes with a saving of approximately R30 in their monthly expenses. Pigs, sheep and goats are either slaughtered for certain festive occasions or ceremonies or sold when a bit of cash is needed. Informants approximated how often these occasions happen and how much money the animals can be sold for, and arrived at the conclusion that sheep or goats contribute with about R100 per month to a household, while pigs contribute about R30. These animals are not sold every month, though the income from them in this calculation is distributed evenly over the year (as is the harvest from the garden, which is eaten primarily in the months close to the harvest season). Another fault in this calculation is that it does not take into account if a family owns 5 or 50 goats, only that they own goats (since I never collected data on how many animals of different types each household has, see discussion on page 150). However, informants told me that the slaughtering of an animal depends more on other factors than on how many animals a household has:

Even if you have many chicken you're not going to slaughter them all the time. One or maybe two in a month is enough. And the goats or sheep are slaughtered for certain ceremonies, or you can sell one in January when you need money for school fees. You can't just go to the *kraal* and slaughter one when you're feeling hungry, ha ha ha.

Cattle are, as discussed previously on page 151, domestic animals that do not really contribute to the household's day-to-day livelihoods. Instead, they could be seen as savings in a bank (or perhaps rather, in risky but potentially high-return shares). Horses essentially fill the same function, and therefore these animals were not included in the calculations, just as people's potential bank savings were not included either.

The frequency of use of various marine resources in Cutwini and Manteku was presented in Table 15. Informants estimated average monthly

household income from using these resources for households on varying levels of use frequency. The conclusion was that fishing contributes with R75 per month if practiced “very often” and R50 and R30 if practiced “often” and “seldom” respectively. The same figures for crayfish were R100/75/30 and for mussels R50/30/10. In Manteku, people stated that they sometimes collect and sell seaweed. This is, however, only done when a certain company comes to the village and buys the seaweed, and since the survey in 2002, this has not happened. Thus, seaweed collection was excluded as a livelihood activity in this calculation.

Information from the survey on how often households use paraffin or gas instead of firewood was used to calculate the approximate contribution of firewood collection to livelihood resources. In Cutwini 42% and in Manteku 57% of the households stated that they used paraffin in combination with firewood for household energy needs, while 54% in Cutwini and 37% in Manteku rely on firewood collection alone. The remaining few percent in each village use only gas or paraffin and do not collect any firewood. Informants estimated that an average sized family using only paraffin or gas and no firewood spends approximately R40 per month on household energy expenses, while a family buying some paraffin but complementing it with firewood use (like the family in the example in *Box B*) spends R20 per month. Thus, the families that use only firewood were roughly estimated to gain R40 per month from using this resource while the families using both firewood and paraffin/gas were estimated to gain R20.

The calculations discussed above were all added together for each village and divided by the number of households. However, as will be shown later, households tend to focus on one or a few types of livelihood activities. This means that while Table 16 shows village averages, these should not be interpreted as typical for average village households – i.e. it is unlikely that there is a household in Cutwini that uses all the livelihood activities in the proportions listed.

There are also some additional factors that have not been included in the calculations, due to difficulty in quantifying their value. Already mentioned are cows and horses and the non-monetary values of certain resources. Water, a natural resource used by everyone in the villages, has also not been included. Sale of harvest (maize, taro, bananas) or grasses is practiced by a few households very infrequently, and was excluded from the calculation since it would contribute less than R1 per month to the village average. Mud, grasses, poles and other building materials were also excluded since they are used so seldom and since it is difficult to compare houses built with different natural resources and houses built with bought materials. Social networks and service exchange in the villages also have an impact on livelihoods, as discussed on page 114, but this was similarly not included in the calculations.

Table 16. *Relative importance of different livelihood activities in Cutwini and Manteku (village averages). Each livelihood activity contributes a certain amount of Rand/month to the total household income.*

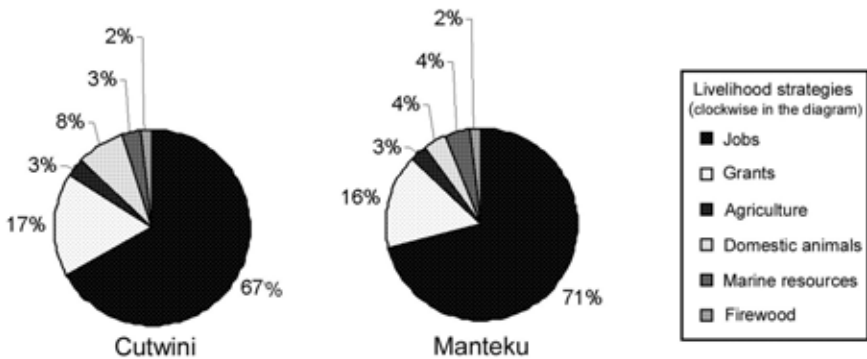
Type of livelihood activity	Cutwini R/month average	Manteku R/month average
Jobs	830	1150
Grants	210	265
Agriculture	39	47
Domestic animals	103	57
Marine resources	35	65
Firewood	30	26
Average household income	<b>1247</b>	<b>1610</b>
Income / household member	192	237
Income / hh member / day	6.4	7.9

## New Perspectives on Livelihoods in Pondoland

Table 16 shows that average household income in the two villages is approximately between R1200 and R1600 per month. Most of this income is in the form of money, while a smaller part of the income is in the form of resources such as vegetables, meat and firewood. Manteku has a higher average income than Cutwini, most of which is accounted for by the higher income from jobs that Manteku has (the reasons for this difference between the villages was discussed in the previous chapter). Income per household member was calculated through dividing the average household income with the average number of household members. Since Manteku has slightly more persons per household than Cutwini (6.8 and 6.5 respectively) the difference in income between the two villages, which was in Manteku's favour, became slightly decreased when it comes to income per household member. Previous data from the two villages have indicated that Cutwini has more houses, more furniture, more toilets and so on than Manteku, which might seem surprising in the context that Manteku has higher incomes. This can be attributed to the unequal distribution of incomes in Manteku, where fewer households have more money than in Cutwini, but the average amount of wealth indicators for the whole village becomes less.

If compared to the cost of living expenses, as exemplified in *Box B*, the average incomes of both villages seem sufficient to sustain an average family with the basic necessities of life. This, however, does not mean that people feel secure about their livelihoods, and there are also vulnerable families who do not have any incomes and who are invisible in this type of calculation based on averages. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Table 16 is illustrated with a diagram in *Figure 9*, which shows the relative importance of different livelihood activities in each village. The average livelihood composition for the two villages consists of 69% jobs, 16.5% grants, 3% agricultural activities, 6% livestock keeping, 3.5% marine resource use and 2% firewood collection. The only major difference between the two villages is that people in Cutwini focus more livestock keeping while people in Manteku focus more on marine resource use. This difference has a lot to do with differences in the natural surroundings of the villages.



*Figure 9.* Diagram over different livelihood activities’ relative importance in an average household for Cutwini and Manteku respectively, calculated as percent of the total livelihoods

The livelihood composition of these two villages is, in relation to existing views about livelihood composition in rural Transkei, unexpected. Livelihoods of rural people in Transkei are by researchers routinely described as “a mixture of arable and livestock farming, the collection of a range of natural resources, and off-farm sources, including remittances and pensions” (Kepe and Scoones, 1999:31, repeated in Kepe 2003a). These views are repeated in policy documents, such as The White Paper for Sustainable Coastal Development in South Africa: “the economy of the region [i.e. Wild Coast in the former Transkei] is based to a large extent on subsistence agriculture and on income from pensioners and migrant labourers working outside the region” (DEAT, 2000:section 4.4.3). I have, however, arrived to conclusions about the livelihood situation in the studied villages that differs from the above descriptions. An alternative description of the livelihood situation (based on the result from these villages) is formulated in *Box D*.

The description in *Box D* differs from other descriptions somewhat in the high emphasis it puts on jobs compared to agriculture and natural resource use, but especially in the emphasis put on local jobs as compared to migrant labour. A clear result from my studies is thus that jobs is the overall most

important livelihood activity in both villages, and that most of these jobs are local jobs. Labour migration accounts only for between 17-22% of the jobs incomes in Cutwini and Manteku. Pensions and other governmental grants are also only about one fourth as important as jobs. Thus, the collective contribution of labour migrant remittances and pensions are about 30% of local livelihoods, while local jobs add up to 55%. A description that focuses on remittances and pensions would therefore ignore the largest contribution to local livelihoods in this area. Since the results I have presented differ somewhat from other research, I have to discuss if there is a possibility that the two villages I have studied are rare exceptions in a region where livelihoods indeed consist mainly of subsistence agriculture and migrant labour remittances.

#### **Box D. Conclusion about Livelihoods in the Studied Villages**

Livelihoods in the studied villages are based to a large extent on various forms of local employment (though much more employment is needed, since the majority of the working-age population is still unemployed) and a diversity of locally created informal jobs. Governmental poverty relief programmes, pensions and other grants make up important parts of local livelihoods. Migrant laborers, working outside the region, also make valuable contributions to livelihoods, though this factor has been decreasing over the last decade. Finally, local livelihoods are also supplemented with subsistence agriculture and livestock keeping, as well as a range of natural resource use, such as fishing and collection of marine resources, collection of firewood, grasses and other wild resources. To most households in the studied villages, these environmentally based livelihoods represent a complementary, back-up strategy, though a few families manage to fulfill most of their livelihood needs through farming, livestock keeping and natural resource use.

Cutwini indeed stands out when compared to other research data (such as the survey data in Fay *et al.* (2002) as well as to Manteku, as a place that has unusually many opportunities for local employment. This can be attributed to the big impact of the Mazizi Tea Plantation, where as many as 33% of the households in Cutwini has someone employed. However, many other villages are close to other jobs. In various rural areas in Africa, studies have shown that there are many types of local job opportunities available; people are traders, painters, potters, blacksmiths, health workers, teachers, veterinarians, NGO workers, council and local government members, guards, carpenters, roof thatchers, equipment and car repairers, barbers, shoe shiners, butchers, preachers, money lenders, musicians, rain makers, waiters in bars and restaurants, hair dressers, electricians, tailors and so on (Carswell, 2002; Helgesson, 2006). Why would rural Transkei lack most of these types of local job opportunities? Though Manteku is not close to the Mazizi Tea Plantation, it is instead closer to holiday cottages and road construction projects, and the most important livelihood strategy here is still local jobs.

The fact that Pondoland as a whole has more opportunities for local employment than other coastal areas of Transkei is suggested by data compiled

by the Wild Coast SDI in 1997<sup>57</sup>, where the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector stands out as especially important in the area. Indeed, much of the local employment in the studied villages, such as the work at the tea plantation, in the state forest and in logging, is within this sector. A comparison with a survey from Xhora and Gatyana District (Fay *et al.*, 2002) suggests that there are less work opportunities locally in other areas of Transkei, or at least that local variation in employment opportunities is high across the region.

Pondoland is also well-known for its agricultural potential and grazing lands, and thus the results of the study on livelihoods might be expected to be biased towards a higher reliance on cultivation and livestock keeping than in the rest of Transkei. Yet, the results from this study highlight among other things the relative unimportance of agriculture in the livelihoods of the local people. Though the villages have an influx of population, and many families who move here state that they do so because the villages are good for grazing (Cutwini) and marine resource use (Manteku), the survey still shows that jobs are much more important to local livelihoods than natural resource use. The relatively isolated location of Cutwini and Manteku also means that people in villages that have access to better roads and communications can commute on a daily basis to small towns like Lusikisiki, where many different jobs are available.

Obviously, definitions adopted for data collection can have big influences on the results as well. When compared to the survey in Fay *et al.* (2002), I have in this survey chosen to use a more restrictive categorisation of labour migration (where labour migrants are not counted unless they actually deliver money to their rural households) but a less restrictive categorisation on what is counted as full-time employment. While I have counted all daily jobs, even those that are not permanent, as full-time employment, the other survey chooses not to count jobs in poverty relief programmes or informal jobs towards "full time employment". This is probably one reason for my results pointing to local jobs being more important than other surveys. People in the area, however, pointed out to me that poverty relief programmes and other temporary employment (e.g. in road constructions) usually are contracted for about two years, which is not particularly bad in the context of most jobs, including labour migration, tends to be under insecure conditions. In fact, the wages from poverty relief programmes were considered among the most reliable wages, compared to for example the erratic wage distribution from the tea plantation. As for informal jobs, I do not see why these should not be counted, since they are viewed as highly secure (as people usually own their own businesses or are employed by friends or relatives in

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<sup>57</sup> "Employment per sector per magisterial district", map compiled by the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative, 1997, based on Development Bank of South Africa Data from 1991.

informal businesses), and often contribute with more money than many other types of jobs.

Another important part of this discussion is the fact that I chose to calculate household rather than individual livelihoods and incomes. If viewing data on an individual basis, it is not as encouraging – as shown by the calculation on page 135 that only 37% of those who want to work in Manteku actually have jobs. The most common situation is in fact that only one person per household has a job. The income of that one person provides the entire household with most of their basic needs nevertheless. Thus, the unemployment rates are still very high, and many people with jobs struggle to support large families of dependants. The increasing amount of people of working age who are dying from AIDS is also contributing to making the situation more and more desperate in many households.

This high unemployment rate and the situation of vulnerable families might have perhaps contributed to the overly negative general view of the lack of jobs in Transkeian livelihoods. It sounds like an oxymoron that there can be high unemployment while the majority of the households still have jobs as their major livelihood activity. However, I argue that since income is generally distributed among household members to meet basic needs, this method nevertheless comes closer to the reality of rural livelihoods than when looking at individual incomes. The issue of “household unemployment”, i.e. the households that do not have any persons with jobs, should therefore be a more relevant factor than individual unemployment in identifying vulnerable families.

Indeed, Cutwini and Manteku may have an unusually high availability of local jobs and an unusually low reliance on natural resources when compared with other villages in Pondoland and Transkei. However, due to the unique properties of the study that I have made, with the specific definitions adopted, the focus on local perspectives, the complete survey of all households in both villages, it is not possible to be completely sure of that. At the very least, this study has shown that there might be significant local variations in livelihood activities, and that there is probably a scale from low to comparatively high availability of local jobs, instead of a homogenous situation where local jobs are almost entirely lacking. I will now go on to discuss various possible explanations to the fact that jobs, and especially local jobs, are so important, while natural resource use is relatively unimportant.

### **The Importance of (Local) Jobs**

This study has found that the majority of the households in the villages depend on jobs. Compared with other research on livelihoods in rural Transkei, it seems that the importance of jobs as livelihood activities, especially locally created jobs, might have been previously underestimated. The general view has tended to be that rural people’s major monetary incomes originate from remittances by labour migrants or governmental grants.

In the first phase of fieldwork, it also appeared to me as if there were no local jobs. For one, I had read and heard that this was the case even before I came to the study area, and secondly, local people complained constantly that there were not enough jobs. Those times that I asked people how they survived and they talked about someone in the household having a job, I assumed that these households were the rare exceptions, and that perhaps I, as an outsider, got to meet the most well-off people in the community first. However, the survey with all the households revealed that in fact, when all these exceptions were added together, they became the norm. There is a cumulative effect of adding together the people who are employed at forestry factories, small hotels, holiday cottages, clinics, schools, petrol stations, nature conservation offices, for cattle dipping and road constructions. Added to these are the locally created informal jobs, in the forms of taxi services, *spaza*-shops, *shebeens*, small garages, house building services and other businesses.

Why are people then focusing to such a high degree on jobs as a main livelihood activity? One reason is the need for money previously discussed concerning basic needs – money is needed for buying many things that nature cannot give, such as clothes, utensils, furniture, school uniforms and books. The dependence on money has been consciously encouraged by the government, ever since the area was annexed to the British colony. Bundy (1979) describes some of the forces at work, for example, the state insisted on people purchasing European clothing, especially school uniforms, and required children to go to school. Peasant crafts have also declined as a result of the increased competition from manufactured goods.

Today, global processes influence especially young people and changes consumption patterns in a way that can be recognized all over Africa, as showed by e.g. Helgesson (2006). People in South Africa have for a long time been subjected to the notion of the Western lifestyle as the ideal of everything civilized, good, developed and luxurious. This idealized lifestyle with huge houses, BMWs, turkey dinners and “weekend getaways” is aggressively marketed in TV-shows, magazines and adverts, often aimed at poor rural people. This vision of this ideal lifestyle is often mentioned in interviews as a reason for wanting to work and earn money:

No, no, farming and fishing and those things are not for me, you see. I don't want food for today or for tomorrow, I want all those things that you see that people have on TV. I want to build a big house here in the village, and have another house in Port St Johns where I can go on holiday. I want a small car that I can use for myself, and a big van ... I will hire someone to work for me driving it as a taxi. I have big plans you know. My kids will go to good schools, I will not send them to school here in this village.... This is why I will have to work hard the next few years to earn lots of money.... I have no time for ploughing the field.

27-year old single, unemployed man with a teacher's education

People today depend on working for others and using that money. Especially the young people need money for everything, many useless things. The times are changing. ... People today don't like to hoe in their own garden, but if someone employs them to hoe then they like to do it.

47-year old divorced man who relies mostly on  
agriculture and livestock keeping

Though the statement from the unemployed man might seem like it is over-optimistic, he had indeed three years later secured a job and bought a van, which was driven as a taxi. Many families in these rural areas (which are still without water and electricity) have in fact in the last few years been able to buy cars and cell phones, TV's and stereos and build impressive houses. Moreover, far from wanting to go "back" to agricultural activities, people in the villages are looking ahead and looking for jobs just like most other people, rural or urban, Western or African.

In the comparisons between my findings and other research on Transkeian livelihoods, it is important to note that the livelihood situations in Transkei have undergone significant changes in the last few years. Governmental grant reforms have gained momentum and improved their outreach and various poverty relief programmes have been initiated. This has contributed to more money circulating in the villages and has in turn fuelled an upsurge in informal job opportunities. The changes have been so rapid that they probably affect the data reported in Table 16. The fact that the data from Manteku was collected 6 months after the data in Cutwini has probably influenced the survey slightly to Manteku's advantage, especially when it comes to pensions and child grants (which at the time of data collection many households were in the process of applying for). These recent developments may well be important reasons for the differences between my findings and other research on Transkei. New studies based on recent fieldwork are needed to assess and keep up to date with the rapidly changing situation. In the next sections, various explanations to the results detailed above will be discussed.

### **Local Jobs versus Labour Migration**

As mentioned above, a very negative view about the availability of local jobs in rural South Africa has generally been predominant in the literature. Bryceson (2004:625) writes:

Transfer payments, be they remittances or pensions, have sustained the rural areas for many decades and there is no sign that this is likely to suddenly be replaced with a turn to commercial agriculture and non-agricultural enterprise [...] Rural-urban links in South Africa are comparatively well established and there is a well-entrenched notion that gainful employment is necessarily urban.

The situation reflected in the quote above might be changing currently, however. This may be due to the many retrenchments in the labour-intensive mining and plantation industries, but also to other factors. Labourers are no longer forbidden to live with their families closer to their working place, which reduces migratory labour. If labourers do decide to leave their families behind, they are no longer forced to return to their rural homes during vacations, which leads to families splitting up more often. It is very common that people who move to towns to work, with the intention of sending money back to family members in the villages, actually find themselves either struggling to make ends meet in the cities without being able to spare money for sending home, or else simply wanting to build a life for themselves and severing the close ties to their home village. Even persons who could be assumed to have very good incentives to try to send money home – e.g. husbands who try to support a family this way, or mothers who have left their children with the grandparents, are often blamed (by those at home) for failing to contribute much to the family's livelihood.

It might thus be the case that the decreasing importance of migrant labour after the abolition of apartheid and the retrenchments from the mining industry has led to a new spatial pattern developing in job availability, where former migrant labourers have to an increasing rate stayed at home and focused on diversifying their economic activities through opening small businesses and searching for local jobs. The jobs have thus moved closer to the villages over time, which has also been helped by increasing grant incomes and poverty relief programmes. These factors might thus in recent years have led to a shift in the demographic and social structures in rural villages, creating the situation that was noted in my survey; namely that there were only a fairly small amount of households that depended on migrant labourers, while local employment was the main economic activity in the village, and that the ratio between men and women was quite even.

There has also been a curious contradiction in the literature and the common views about the role of migrant labour in rural livelihoods. A typical approach to explaining livelihood related problems in rural Transkei has its roots in the opinion that the migrant labour system induced a shortage of men and thus a shortage of agricultural labour in the homelands, which led to agricultural underdevelopment (e.g. McAllister, 1992). While this may have been true historically, this explanatory approach is still used today when South African policy-makers attempt to conceptualise the problems of the rural homelands. For example, in the White Paper for Sustainable Coastal Development in South Africa (DEAT, 2000:section 4.4.3), it is stated that "Development is limited by high male absenteeism..." in the rural Transkei.

However, since agriculture has proven to be such a small part, while jobs are such an important part of rural livelihoods today, this line of reasoning can be debated. The men who are away working as migrant labourers are

part of the relatively few percent of the people in the village who actually have jobs and should hardly be seen as those who limit development. On the contrary, they bring much-needed cash into the village. The high rate of male absenteeism is furthermore disputed by my findings that 46 % of the adult village population who live there on a permanent basis are male (see page 109). What limits development, according to the view of the local people, is instead bad infrastructure, poor teaching standards at the schools and the general absence of job opportunities.

The data on the availability of local jobs presented above, should, however, not be interpreted as if the job situation for people in these villages is quite secure. The interview data show that people feel highly insecure about their jobs and are constantly worried about losing them. The high dependency on jobs for livelihoods should be interpreted as a signal of the importance of creating secure jobs for rural people, rather than a signal that no more jobs are needed.

### *The Role of Informal Employment*

Perhaps one of the reasons that local employment has not been found to be as important in other surveys can be due to the factor of informal employment. As mentioned, other surveys (e.g. Fay *et al.*, 2003) have not always counted informal jobs as full-time employment. However, data from the villages show that informal jobs are of high importance to people in the studied villages, and contribute in many instances with more, and more secure, incomes than many other types of jobs. In my survey, informal employment accounts for between 12-26% of local jobs.

Just like the man in the quote on page 167, many people include small businesses as parts of their plans for a working career, and as will be demonstrated later, spaza-shops and taxi businesses especially bring a feeling of livelihood security to their owners. Furthermore, spaza and taxi owners are considered as important persons in the villages, people you can ask for help in times of need, and people who are using their resources for the benefit of the whole community. Many informal businesses thus represent highly desirable, high status jobs.

Informal businesses such as taxis and spaza-shops have, however, experienced a recent boom, so dramatic that I could observe these businesses almost doubling during the five field study years. This is probably closely connected to the fact that pensions have increased during these years, both in amounts and in the number of recipients, while poverty relief programmes and other forms of local job creation also has contributed to the circulation of significant amounts of money in the villages. A survey conducted today would thus most likely recognise informal businesses to a higher extent than surveys conducted only a few years ago.

## **The Relative Unimportance of Environmental Resources**

Another important result from the study concerns natural resource use in local livelihood strategies. Though authors such as McAllister (2000:1) attest that “survey after survey in various parts of Transkei (and elsewhere in rural southern Africa) suggest that the role that agriculture plays in meeting local subsistence requirements is negligible”, a view of subsistence agriculture as an important part of local livelihood still lingers. This view is tangible in the quotes from both Kepe and Scoones (1999) and DEAT (2000) cited above (page 163), where subsistence agriculture is mentioned first when describing livelihood activities. According to this study, subsistence agriculture contributes a meagre 3% of local livelihoods, and does not merit such a heavy emphasis in descriptions of local livelihoods.

This study has shown that environmental resources in the studied villages are used to a relatively low degree. Is this a surprising result, considering previous research in Transkei? The literature on Transkeian livelihoods is somewhat ambivalent regarding this issue. Studies like Bundy (1979) and Beinart (1992) point to the low reliance on and productivity of agriculture in Transkei. At the same time, Beinart cites a study that in 1985 found agricultural production to be on average enough for staple requirements in the Amadiba coastal area in Pondoland, which lies just north of my study area. Still, Beinart (1992) chooses to use the term “smallholders” instead of farmers or peasants when referring to local people in Transkei in order to indicate their relatively low focus on agricultural activities. A high reliance on natural resource use in Transkei is, however, often implied in policy documents and is accentuated by the fact that most research on Transkeian livelihoods focuses on various forms of natural resource use and/or conflicts over natural resources between the state and local populations (*c.f.* Beinart, 2002b, Dye, 1992, McAllister, 1992, Lasiak and Field, 1995, Hockey and Siegfried, 1988, Fay *et al.*, 2002, Fay, 2003, Kepe, 1999 and 2003b, Kepe *et al.*, 2001a, Ainslie, 2005). In addition, natural resources in Transkei are usually described as severely degraded due to overuse, which implies a high local reliance on natural resources.

Local natural resource use in general seems sometimes to be over-emphasised in Transkei (e.g. in Shackleton *et al.* (2004) as I argued above). Most research and many policy interventions dealing with Transkeian livelihoods focus on natural resource use, though these activities account for only about 13-16% (Manteku/Cutwini) of local livelihoods in the study area. While it is important to research and discuss local natural resource use, it should be remembered that the discussion for some villages concerns only about 15% of local livelihoods and that the contribution of these activities are dwarfed by the amounts of money contributed on average by jobs and pensions.

Findings from the study also suggest that previous conceptualisations of natural resource use may have been skewed towards agriculture as the most important environmentally based part of local livelihoods in Transkei. This study shows that livestock rearing and marine resource use are both slightly more important to local livelihoods in these villages than agriculture. Furthermore, the results underscore that natural resource use varies a lot from location to location. There is a significant difference between the two villages, as domestic animals are much more important in Cutwini and marine resources more important in Manteku. This can be explained by the fact that Cutwini is located in an exceptionally good grazing area, while Manteku is very close to the sea. In inland villages, located in poor grazing areas, agriculture is probably more important. The differences between these two villages that lie relatively close to each other should alert us to the dangers of drawing generalised conclusions about rural livelihoods in Transkei. The natural environment varies a lot within the region and so does job opportunities, accessibility and other socio-economic factors. People adapt to these conditions and use the resources and the opportunities that are available.

As mentioned previously, there is a historical trend connected to the pattern of low agricultural production. Many persons explained how their grandfathers had always made big gardens and planted a lot, while their fathers had planted a bit less and they themselves planted only a small garden. Various state interventions, such as Betterment villagisation discussed before, had a discouraging effect on agricultural production. Today, the role of agriculture and to a certain extent of marine resource use for many families is mainly as a complementary livelihood strategy and a safety-net in case other strategies fail (e.g. in the case of retrenchment or death of a pensioner).

Fishing also gives unemployed men something to do and somewhere to belong, as one man stated:

When there is no work I just take my fishing rod and go to the sea. It's better than just sitting at home because it makes me feel like I'm at least trying to contribute with a little something [to the household], and it keeps me from wanting to drink beers all day long. It is also nice to talk to the other men who are also by the sea, because of lack of jobs... we can sit together and talk about our situation.

In this discussion about the relative unimportance of natural resource use, it is nevertheless important to note that there is an essential distinction between livelihood activities that are important for survival on the one hand, and the social and cultural importance of certain natural resources on the other. Thus, even though agriculture, livestock-keeping and marine resource use may not be crucial for livelihoods, they are integrated in everyday village life and are very important as parts of different social customs, e.g. cows are associated with the payment of *lobola* and should be slaughtered at funerals

and the *amalima* agricultural workgroups are important for village co-operation and social networking. Natural resource use is thus socio-culturally embedded in rural lifestyles, even if it is not an important factor when considering what it contributes to total household livelihoods.

Interviews reveal both that some people tend to like the lifestyle that comes with practicing agriculture, which also gives them a sense of security, as well as the fact that people are aware of the need for money and do not like the thought of relying too much on agriculture:

It's good that we are farming a lot, but there are some things you need money for, especially the school is very, very expensive if you have many children.

I want my husband to find a job, it's not as nice to live from working in the field. We need money for certain things.

If we need money, we can always sell millies.

We would still plant a lot even if we were working both of us. Only if you were really rich could you think of stopping.

At the same time, many other informants spoke primarily of the need for money and the lifestyle that goes with relying on jobs, as discussed in the previous chapter. One young male informant puts it like this:

We are planting the garden just to have a small something, just for the kids, but to rely on it? No. All of us we are first and foremost looking for work. I think for us young people we are going to stop making fields altogether and even stop making big gardens. It's the grandmothers who are thinking of planting in the gardens all the time. Maybe we will have a small garden, just for some vegetables, but not to plant maize. It is cheaper to buy maize now.

Agriculture on a large scale may in fact not be cost-effective for most households. Making a big maize field demands able-bodied family members with time to spare for the labour-intensive and strenuous work of fencing, ploughing, planting, weeding and harvesting. Additionally, money must be invested in fences, seeds and tools (and also, in the case of hybrid seeds, in fertilizers and pesticides) - and there will still be the dangers of droughts or heavy rains, pests, etc. This hard work should be compared to the cost of buying a bag of already grounded maize meal - R24 for 12.5 kg. This is the reason why many families choose to buy most of their maize, and have only a small garden "just in case", even if their only source of livelihood is a job that pays R500/month.

Through interviews in the villages, a complex picture of natural resource use and its importance in local livelihoods emerge. Fishing and sea resources are important as fallback strategies for many families in Manteku, while livestock keeping in Cutwini is important primarily for some relatively well-

off families. Agriculture and livestock keeping, though not usually practiced on a large scale, is an important source of safety for many families. Selling the harvest can bring in some money in emergencies, but this does not happen on a big scale, perhaps especially since these villages are too far from town to access the market for fruit and vegetables. The lifestyle associated with practicing agriculture is compelling to some families, while other families strive instead for a lifestyle where monetary incomes are in focus. Family history, traditions and personal preferences are very important when it comes to the choices families make regarding these issues.

## 7. The Dynamics of Livelihood Strategies

The previous chapter analysed various livelihood activities and their relative importance to local people's livelihoods in the studied villages. The focus was on an aggregated village level. In this chapter, I will instead turn the focus to livelihood strategies – i.e. how particular families combine different livelihood activities, how they perceive livelihood options, and what kind of choices and decisions are taken in the process of securing a daily livelihoods. How livelihood activities change over time, patterns in livelihood choices and degrees of livelihood diversification all play into this. The family types discussed in the beginning of chapter 5 will again here be useful in this analysis.

### Diversification of Livelihoods

As mentioned previously, I use the term 'diversification' to discuss how families combine different types of livelihood activities. Departing from the livelihood activities listed in *Figure 7*, it is possible to analyse i) to what extent families combine several livelihood activities within the same subgroup (i.e. having two jobs in one family), ii) to what extent families combine activities within each category, across subgroups, (i.e. combining pensions and jobs) and iii) to what extent families combine activities across the two major livelihood categories (i.e. monetary incomes and environmental resource use). Below, I will analyse these various types of diversification in the studied villages and discuss the factors that affect the patterns identified.

### Combining Similar Livelihood Activities

Having two similar livelihood activities that fall within the same subgroup of livelihoods (e.g. jobs) is not particularly common, as illustrated by Table 17 for jobs and pensions. Note that this table does not account for combinations with other livelihood activities (for example a household that has one job and one pension is registered twice in this table). The data show that most households tend to rely on only one job, alternatively on only one pension.

The most important explanation to households having only one job can probably be found in household life cycles and the family 'types' identified previously (p. 109). According to these life cycles, family units tend to move

from depending on jobs to depending on pensions and back to depending on jobs again as the generations shift. Securing a job is a key concern for the grown-up sons and daughters of a family, but they will also be tempted to build their own homesteads as soon as they have managed to get jobs, and especially so if their parents have secure incomes from jobs or pensions. The causality thus runs both ways – people get a job to support their household, but people also decide to create a separate household when they can support it. Unless both the husband and the wife in a family have managed to secure jobs, the households therefore tend to have only one job income.

Table 17. *The percentage of total households in each village that has one, two or three jobs, or one or two pensions respectively.*

Combinations within categories	Cutwini	Manteku
	(% of total hh)	(% of total hh)
One job	58%	38%
Two jobs	8%	22%
Three jobs	1%	3%
One pension	26%	25%
Two pensions	3%	5%

In the cases that households do have two or even three jobs, one of these jobs tend to belong to a grown-up son or daughter who has not yet build their own homestead. The exception is informal jobs, which are often combined with regular employment. The regular job in these cases provides the necessary investment to start up the informal business. Informal jobs are thus important in this context as well, as potential diversification opportunities.

A person who has a job can (and is expected to) help other members of his or her family with contacts and financial assistance when they search for jobs. Several informants from families that have more than one job mentioned how much easier it is to secure a job if you know someone who already has one. With respect to Manteku (where, as I have previously mentioned, some families are much better off than others) it is more common that family members help each other in this way compared to Cutwini. This is also reflected in Table 17, which shows that job aggregation in one household is much more common in Manteku, even though total jobs are fewer.

It might seem surprising that this tendency to have only one type of livelihood activity in each group is so strong also when it comes to pensions, since it seems reasonable to assume that households would fairly often have two pensioners – both a husband and a wife. However, the fact that the older generation of men currently of pension-age have tended to marry younger women, together with the shorter life expectancy of men in general, creates a situation where the wife is often not of pension age when her husband is, and

already widowed when she does reach pension age<sup>58</sup>. The result was probably also affected by the fact that the application and granting process of pensions was being reformed in 2002. Many pensioners had thus still not started receiving the grant that they were entitled to when the data were collected.

When it comes to natural resource use, it is common that households combine agriculture with livestock keeping, but much less common that they combine any of these two agricultural activities with marine resource use. This has probably a lot to do with the fact that people in Cutwini tend to focus on agricultural activities while people in Manteku focus more on marine resource use. These decisions are also influenced by identity and knowledge, since being a farmer or a fisherman are two quite separate things. Different types of marine resource use are often combined, however – for example fishing and crayfish collection. The labour division among different categories of family members can explain this fact – according to common practice it is the men who do the fishing, the younger boys who collect crayfish and the women as well as the younger girls who collect mussels. If a family has no young boys, then that family is therefore unlikely to rely on collection of crayfish as a livelihood activity.

## Diversifying Livelihoods across Categories

When it comes to cross-group and cross-category combinations of livelihood activities, I decided to investigate how households combine the four most important types of livelihood activities, i.e. jobs, pensions, agricultural activities (i.e. both agriculture and livestock keeping) and marine resource use. The data had to be simplified in several ways for it to be suitable for comparison and analysis.

I decided to focus major livelihood activities, which meant for example that small piece jobs were not counted. Also, only governmental grants of pension size<sup>59</sup> (i.e. of R600 per month in 2002) were counted, which excluded the smaller child grant of R120 per month. Agricultural activities were only counted if they contributed more than 50% of the yearly dietary requirement and only marine resource use that took place more than weekly were counted. Livestock, since it is commonly associated with agricultural activities (and because I have not collected information on numbers of livestock) has been assumed to be of importance to most of the households that focus heavily on agricultural activities. The activities that were deemed as minor and thus excluded from the present calculation should not be seen as

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<sup>58</sup> The reason for men marrying younger women can be found in the difficulty of raising *lobola* (bridewealth) discussed earlier, which leads to men marrying late in their lives and preferring to marry women who can still have many children (and who do not already have children of their own).

<sup>59</sup> Pension will in these calculations include the “disabled grant”. A few families in each village receive disabled grant, which is of the same amount as a pension.

unimportant activities. They are not counted in this particular calculation because the objective is to be able to see some general patterns.

These patterns correlate roughly with the family types identified previously (Table 2). The various ways of combining these four livelihood activities can be seen as constituting “livelihood packages”, some of which are much more common than others. Table 18 shows the results of this analysis in terms of the “livelihood packages”, where agricultural activities and marine resource use, due to the limited extent that these are used to, have been combined to represent environmental resource use (though there are figures indicating each type of resource use in the table). The level of diversification increases in Table 18 from households relying on only one type of activity (i.e. jobs, pensions *or* environmental resource use) to those utilizing various combinations of two or three activities.

This categorisation into livelihood packages and the discussion on family types is intended to indicate patterns and help to visualise local realities. It should not be seen as something absolute, and it is important to point out that families within each category can look very different and have widely varying reasons for belonging to a certain category.

Table 18. *Percentage of total households that have a particular type of “livelihood package” in Cutwini and Manteku. The family types A-H correspond to those in Table 2.*

Family Type	“Livelihood package”	Cutwini	Manteku
<b>A</b>	Job(s)	54 %	37 %
<b>B</b>	Pension(s)	21 %	17 %
<b>C</b>	Environment (agri + mar)	1 % (1 + 0 %)	7 % (1 + 6 %)
<b>D</b>	Job and environment (agri + mar)	7 % (3 + 4 %)	17 % (7 + 10 %)
<b>E</b>	Job and pension	6 %	5 %
<b>F</b>	Pension and environ. (agri + mar)	2 % (1+1 %)	5 % (3 + 2 %)
<b>G</b>	Job, pension and environ. (agr)	0 %	3 %
<b>H</b>	Nothing	8 %	9 %

Table 18 shows that certain livelihood combinations are more common than others. The two most common “packages” in both villages includes no diversification at all – the most common strategy is to rely on job(s) only, and the second most common is to rely on pension(s) only. As the discussion above has shown, most of these households furthermore depend on only one job or only one pension. Their livelihood situation could therefore be considered insecure, since the household is left without a major livelihood activ-

ity if that one job or one pension is lost. Furthermore, the majority of these jobs and the pensions contribute with low amounts of money, especially if a whole family has only this income to survive on. In 2002, the pensions and the wages from the tea plantation, holiday cottages and poverty relief programmes were all between R400-700 per month.

The low percentage of households relying on both jobs and pensions is a sign that grown-up children tend to move away from their elderly parents, as discussed in relation to family types previously. The households therefore transition from relying on a job to relying on a pension as the family member who works grows old. It is perhaps more surprising that households tend not to rely on pensions and natural resource use at the same time, since these two activities should be easy to combine. One reason may be that many pensioners state that they are suffering from illnesses or have started feeling too weak to engage in strenuous agricultural activities, and thus the granting of pension relieves them from relying on agriculture.

Household livelihood diversification is illustrated by the diagram in *Figure 10*, which in turn is based on Table 18. It is informative to compare this diagram with the diagram in *Figure 9*, which showed that Cutwini and Manteku were quite similar in terms of the average importance of different types of livelihood activities. While the percentage of families having jobs in Manteku is smaller than in Cutwini (63% and 67% respectively), Table 17 indicated that there are more families that have two or more jobs in Manteku. Thus, as discussed before, the jobs are more concentrated in fewer families in Manteku. The data in Table 18 and the diagram in *Figure 10* show furthermore that there are more households in Manteku that have a more diversified income base, as well as a few households that have achieved maximum diversification. At the same time, there are more households in Manteku that have no major livelihood activities at all – results that all underscore the previous observations that Manteku is a village with more economic inequality between households than Cutwini.

While the two villages thus in general rely on the same types of livelihood activities to approximately the same extent, there is a big difference in how diversified individual household's livelihood activities are. Some households in Manteku have been highly successful in securing their livelihoods, which creates a gap between these households and those with very insecure incomes. In Cutwini, average incomes are lower and less secure, but more equally distributed in the village. As discussed before, this situation is tangible in the different atmospheres in these two villages while Cutwini is in general a harmonious village where people tend to get along well, Manteku is often plagued by hostility and suspicion among the villagers, and problems with theft and accusations of witchcraft.

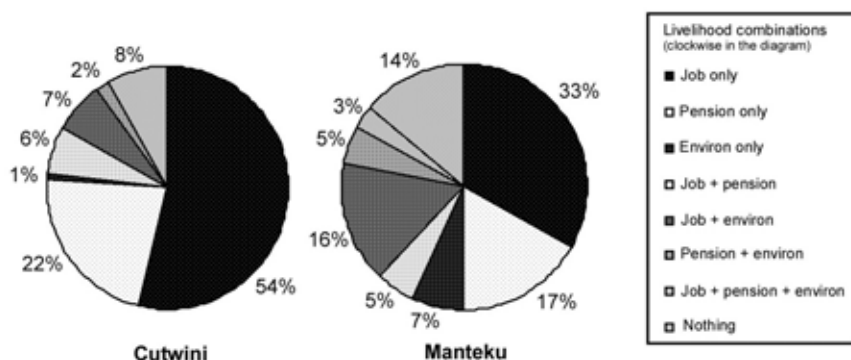


Figure 10. Household livelihood diversification in Cutwini and Manteku. The percentage of households in each village that rely on livelihood packages of varying degrees of diversification. Based on Table 18.

There is a clear difference between the villages in natural resource use, with more households having it as their only livelihood activity in Manteku. This should be seen in the light of Manteku having more households without jobs or pensions. These families use marine resource use as a way of securing food as well as small incomes, in lack of other possibilities. Relying solely on agriculture and livestock is similarly uncommon in both villages.

In Manteku, there is tendency to combine jobs and pensions with environmental use more often than in Cutwini. Most of the families categorised as ‘family type A’ in Cutwini do not use marine resources and grow less than 25% of their dietary requirement, while many families that fall in the same category in Manteku use more resources – some grow between 25-50% of their dietary requirement and use marine resources monthly or every fortnight. Similarly, families that have managed to secure monetary incomes from more than one source are more inclined to decrease their reliance on agriculture, and tend to stop completely with marine resource use in Cutwini, while in Manteku many of these families continue with both activities. Manteku’s proximity to the sea makes marine resource use a much less cumbersome activity than in Cutwini, which can explain why people continue to use marine resources here, even if they have secured other incomes. In the case of agricultural activities, the comparatively high soil productivity in Manteku might also encourage people to continue with the profitable gardening activity.

When analysing the natural resource use in the villages in closer detail, several interesting points emerge. For most families, natural resource use is only a minor livelihood activity and basic needs are to a large extent met through monetary means. Only one or two families (1%) in each village use agriculture and livestock keeping as their main source of livelihood. There

are, however, several households that focus a lot on agriculture and livestock keeping, though they do have a monetary income as well (not seldom a fairly high-paying job). This pattern has been observed by several authors who have pointed to the fact that that significant monetary investment is required in order to engage in agriculture and livestock keeping on a big scale. For example Beinart (1992) refers to studies that have found strong correlations between wage labour and agricultural output.

Many informants have similarly attested that if one has money to make investments in fertiliser, pesticides and fencing, then the output increases to the point that many regard it as almost useless to practice agriculture if one can not make these investments. Livestock keeping on a big scale is also closely related to wealth, as attested by many informants, but it is related to personal preferences as well, as many rich households choose not to invest in livestock. Another significant fact is that all the households earning above R2500 per month in Cutwini (10 households) have very low agricultural production. Thus, it seems that people who feel safe in their job incomes might tend to decrease their agricultural activities.

‘Type H’ in Table 2 and Table 18 constitutes a ‘transitional phase’ rather than a specific family type. This phase, in which a family has no major livelihood activity that they rely on, will be further analysed in the next section on transitions between livelihood states, and addressed in the next chapter on poverty and vulnerability.

The fact that livelihood diversification seems difficult for families and is relatively uncommon can thus probably be attributed to that there are not enough human resources in the smaller families of today to diversify livelihoods. Today’s more individualistic tendencies encourage adult sons and daughters to think about their own agendas – i.e. to find work as soon as possible. When they do find work they tend to move away from their parents in order to be independent, whether married or not. A common explanation that adult sons and daughters give to the fact that they want to move away from home is that they want to be able to make their own decisions and rule their own lives without parent intervention. In fact, autonomy is so important that people often are willing to accept considerable cut-downs in lifestyle and livelihood security in order to achieve it.

## A State and Transition Analysis of Livelihood Changes

To illustrate how households move between different livelihood activities and levels of diversification, I will use a ‘state and transition analysis’. This type of analysis has for example been used by Kepe and Scoones (1999) to analyse grassland states and transitions in a study area just north of Cutwini. The analysis is based on informant discussions centred on a matrix of liveli-

hood states (i.e. the ‘packages’ defined in Table 18) and common transitions between these states.

A key issue in this exercise is the issue of livelihood diversification, as discussed above. A basic assumption is that every household goes through a continuously changing process, where livelihood activities change and sometimes increase or decrease in diversity. For example, a Type B family (see Table 18 and Table 2) that depends only on a pension is increasing its livelihood diversity if one of the grandchildren in the household gets a job, while the grandmother keeps receiving her pension. The household then becomes a type E family, relying on two different types of livelihood activities instead of one. The same household decreases its livelihood diversity if the grandmother dies, because now the grandchild has to support the entire family through his or her job. The family has become a type A family.

Common livelihood states and transitions are illustrated with the matrix in *Figure 11*. The rows represent a specific livelihood activities (or combinations of livelihood activities) that a particular household engages in before a transition, while the columns represent the state the household is in after the transition. The code letters in the matrix cells thus represent the driving forces behind a transition from one stage to another. In the example family above, the causal factors behind the two livelihood transitions were ‘finding a job’ and ‘death of a family member’. Where no codes are present in the matrix, it means that the transition is not possible, or at least not plausible.

Note that the matrix deals only with one-step transitions. A transition from e.g. “pension” to “job” is thus not possible, since it would in reality require several steps of transition – first someone in the family needs to find a job, leading to the household transitioning into the “job and pension” sphere (however briefly) after which the pensioner has to die, leading to a second transition into the “job” sphere. Depending on the order that these things happen in, the same transition could of course be represented as going from “pension” to “nothing” to “job”.

The state ‘none’ stands for a family having no major livelihood activities (identified as a type H family before), but this should be seen as a transitional phase and not a specific family type. This phase tends to be fairly short-term and usually ends either in the family succeeding in making a positive transition towards acquiring some form of livelihood (through one of the driving forces marked in the top row of the matrix), or alternatively, the family is split up and/or incorporated into one or more other households where a livelihood base is secured. A prolonged lingering of a household in the transitional phase would probably be defined as chronic poverty, something which, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, is not very common in the study area at this point.

Figure 11. State and Transition matrix with local livelihood activities in different combinations. Factors that lead to transitions are marked with abbreviation.

To:\nFrom:	NONE	JOB	PENS	ENV	JOB &\nPENS	JOB &\nENV	ENV &\nPENS	ALL 3
NONE		FJ	GO	MAR or SN				
JOB (J)	R		GO		GO, 2	LF,MO 2		
PENSION (P)	D				FJ, 2		LF,MO 2	
ENVIRON (E)	CR	FJ	GO and TO			FJ, 2	GO, 2	
JOB &\nPENSION		D	R					LF,MO 2
JOB &\nENVIRON		CR		R	GO,TO		GO	GO, 2
PENS &\nENVIRON			TO or CR	D				FJ, 2
ALL 3					CR	D	R	

**Factors that influence the transitions (abbreviations):**

**2** = there are at least two different persons in the household involved in the transition

**CR** = crop failure or other problems with agriculture leads to low motivation and/or lack of resources to invest in agriculture, alternatively the family member who was engaged in the activity dies or moves away.

**D** = death of a family member (e.g. a pensioner)

**FJ** = someone in the family finds a job

**GO** = a family member grows old and starts receiving pension

**LF** = a previously unused labour force presents itself, e.g. someone who has lived in a town moves back home

**MO** = the family receives a monetary injection, which they can spend on e.g. investment in agriculture

**SN** = means that the family has probably been helped economically and otherwise by someone within their social network to start up agricultural activities

**MAR** = a family that has no or low incomes start using marine resources for survival

**R** = retrenchment (or death/moving away of the person who has a job)

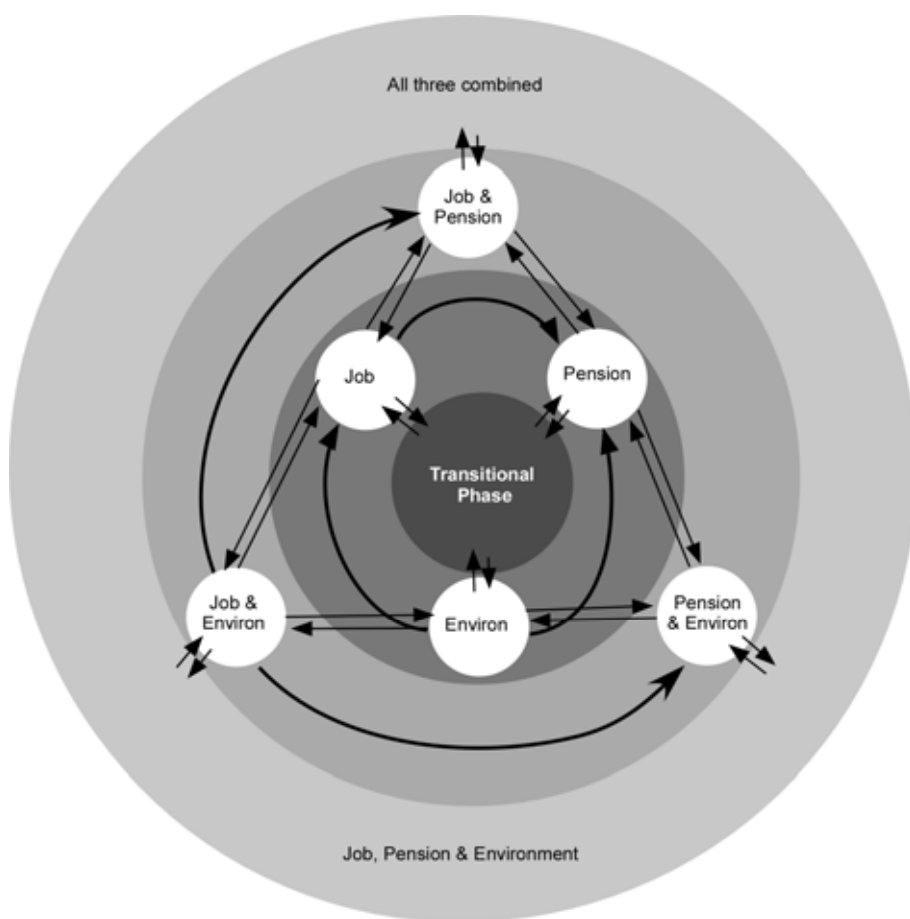
**TO** = the person who was in dealing with agriculture/natural resource use has become too old to practice this any more

As can be seen in the matrix, some transitions usually require a combination of two driving forces (this is indicated with a comma between the abbreviations). For example, for a household to suddenly take up large-scale agriculture (meaning making big gardens and fields instead of the smallish gardens that are more common) and thus enter into the environmental sphere of livelihood security, both a cash investment and a previously unused labour force is usually needed.

The most common transitions in the matrix are those that include finding or loosing a job or the granting or loosing of a pension. Two types of transitions tend to occur when a household starts to include environmental activities into their livelihood package. In the case of marine resources, it is not common that a family that already has a job or a pension would suddenly start using marine resources. It is more common that a family with no income sources at all starts relying on marine resource use, as a coping mechanism. With agricultural activities, it is the opposite situation – a family that has no incomes would need to be helped by someone from outside the family in order to start up agricultural activities, which is rare. It is common, however, that families that have jobs or pensions diversify their income sources through investments in agriculture and livestock keeping.

*Figure 12* is an illustration based on the state and transition analysis. It seeks to visualise how transitions between different common livelihood states occur. Note the grey concentric circles that indicate levels of livelihood diversification. The level of diversification increases as a household moves outwards from the inside through the circles, from the transitional phase in the middle, with no major livelihood, to the outermost level, where all three types of livelihood states are combined.

Arrows indicate possible transitions, while the reasons for the transition may be traced in the matrix in *Figure 11*. Transitions between diversification levels, marked with thicker arrows, thus seem to be more plausible than transitions within a certain diversification level. The reasons for this is probably that the latter transitions usually involve some form of shift in a specific person's livelihood activity (otherwise the transition would naturally go through a lower or higher level of diversification as described above). One exception to this is when a person grows old and naturally changes their livelihood activity, from working or using environmental resources to being a pensioner. Another exception is when a person engages in environmental resource use solely because they lack a job, and cease immediately with the resource use as soon as they get a job. This happens for example in the case of fishermen in Manteku, who claim to go to the sea to fish only when there is no other job available (see the discussion in the previous chapter).



*Figure 12.* Illustration of states and common transitions, based on *Figure 11*. Grey zones indicate levels of livelihood diversification, with increasing diversification from the innermost circle outwards

Movements towards the inside of the circle usually entail some form of negative development in the household – a pensioner has died, someone got retrenched from work, or crop failure combined with lack of money and labour force has led to the abandonment of agriculture<sup>60</sup>. Movement outwards in the circle, which represents livelihood diversification, is a form of transition that usually involves several family members (when more than one family member has to be involved in the transition, it has been marked with a “2” in the matrix above). For a household to move from relying on a job to relying on both a job and a pension, someone in the family has to start re-

<sup>60</sup> In the case of natural resource use though, it does not have to be a negative development. Abandoning agriculture can, as mentioned before, be an active choice that is not perceived as negative, and people do usually not see abandoning fishing because one has a job as a negative development either.

ceiving a pension at the same time as someone else keeps working. Also, when a family relies on both a job or a pension and on environmental resources, this usually involves several family members. Though a person working on a daily basis could make big fields in their free time, the more common situation is that someone who is unemployed in the family assumes more responsibility for the agricultural activity. If there is no one else in the family to help out, the agricultural activity might soon become smaller and eventually even die out.

This state and transition analysis shows how livelihood activities and increasing or decreasing livelihood diversification often are dependent on family structure and life cycle. However, the matrix might give a simplified picture and imply that livelihood activities are mainly determined by a set of factors outside the household's control. In the next section, I will instead discuss the context of individual choice and livelihood strategies.

## Strategies and Livelihoods

Households have various options that they draw on in order to build their livelihoods, as illustrated *Figure 7*. What cannot be illustrated in this picture is the fuzzy filter between the family and the livelihood options, in which family situations, personal preferences, thoughts and ideas, knowledge and skills, coincidences and other complex, small-scale social, psychological and cultural factors interact to form a complicated choice context that cannot be easily identified or predicted. Interviews reveal some of people's thoughts and strategies around livelihood choices. As discussed previously, much human behaviour is not pre-meditated and could thus not be called strategic in the typical sense of the word. People themselves also do not always feel that their choices are tactical or strategic. It is therefore important to include the non-strategic parts of the choice context in the analysis as well.

One factor that came through very strongly in interviews was how much the personal preferences of individuals affected choices and strategies. Opinions about livelihood options vary a lot between individuals and are probably one of the single most important factors in choosing what livelihoods to focus on. Jacobs (2003) also points to great individual differences between livelihood preferences in her study area:

Some people preferred the independence of farming, selling beer, or sewing, because miners were vulnerable to retrenchment. Others preferred the regular salary of a steady job. One woman preferred grape harvesting, simply because that was what she knew best. These different experiences, perceptions and priorities warn against over-generalisation in the evaluation of well-being (*ibid*:208).

Examples of individual differences in opinions about various livelihood activities abound in my study area as well. While some people detest the thought of working at the tea plantation and would never consider it, others do not find the work there particularly dreadful. When asked why or why not they had or had not applied for work at the tea plantation, people's answers were often not about monetary considerations, but personal preferences:

No, I don't want to work there, you have to be outside in the sun the whole day so your skin turns very dark and ugly. I'd rather work anywhere else.

26-year old unmarried woman

I stopped working there because even if it's cold or raining you have to get up early in the morning and walk all the way to that side [the plantation]. I got sick from walking in the cold.

48-year old woman with many children

No, I'm fine with working at the tea plantation, it's close to my home and you work early in the morning so you have time to do other things in the afternoon. I don't want to look for another job.

29-year old married woman.

That job [at the tea plantation] is not so bad at all. You just walk around in the tea and pick leaves and you can talk with your friends the whole time.

22-year old unmarried man

People are also very influenced by their family, friends, relatives and neighbours, which is illustrated in the case of choosing between using wood or paraffin for cooking in Cutwini. Since collecting wood is a strenuous activity, one could expect families that are well off to substitute wood for paraffin to a high extent. However, there are many comparatively rich households that do not use paraffin, and several low-income households that do. Most of the households that use a lot of paraffin are either neighbours or closely related, so it seems as if the influence of others is the biggest contributing factor in this case.

Of course it is not just individual preferences, but family traditions and collective identity that play a large role in determining livelihood choices. For example, many of the households that focus on large-scale agriculture and livestock keeping, especially in Cutwini, embrace a lifestyle that by informants is characterised as "the life of our grandfathers", which means a relatively low use of manufactured foods and a low focus on buying TVs, cell phones and other items so much desired by most other families. They also more often than other families live in big households with several generations present and sometimes the grandfather of the house has several wives, a practice that was common earlier but that today is very rare.

It thus seems as if a high reliance on environmental use and a low reliance on monetary resources is the result of an active lifestyle choice that is linked

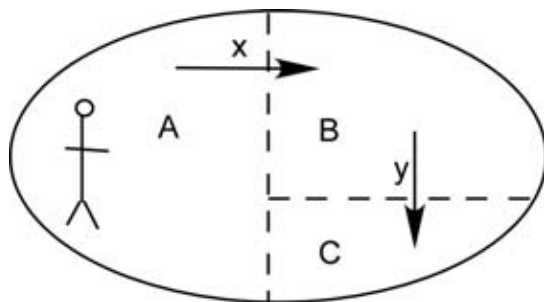
with family history and structure, knowledge and traditions. It is important to note that these families are not 'traditional' in the sense that their lifestyle has not changed over the years like other families' have. Many of the grandfathers in these families may in fact have lived in cities and worked in mines for much of their lives, only to choose to move to the countryside and lead a "retro" lifestyle as they grow old. The herd of livestock that they built up during their years of working now serves as a pension, funding their rural retirement (see also Ferguson, 1990).

Another important factor is the different knowledge and skills that are available in a household, which to an extent is dependent on the family life cycle, but also on people's personalities. This can probably explain the fact that frequent natural resource users in both villages tended to focus on one type of natural resource use. While some focus on collecting sea resources several times per week (especially in Manteku), others focus on gardening and growing vegetables, usually combined with keeping livestock, while yet (very few) others focus on selling refined products. When looking at who performs each type of livelihood activity, these patterns can be explained. Young boys, who tend to be encouraged to engage in crayfishing – and thus become good at it – usually are not skilled in weaving grass mats, which is done by women. Similarly, while the older generation has the necessary experience with agriculture and livestock rearing, a family where most of the available labour is young tends not to engage in these activities.

The families in these villages exist within a complex web of historical influences, traditions, values, family structures, life cycles and human resources. A spectra of choices that from a perspective stripped of local context would seem available to every family, becomes narrowed down by many factors, such as the gender and age structure in the family, the family's previous history of livelihood strategies or the educational level of persons in the family. For example, certain jobs are not options for those who do not feel confident in their English skills, and persons who are disliked in the community will not be recommended for jobs within poverty relief programmes. Only by understanding the options that local people actually feel are open to them can their choices be understood.

*Figure 13* illustrates the process of choosing between livelihood opportunities. All the opportunities available to people in the villages are in *Figure 13* represented by the rectangle ABC. For a young woman from Cutwini, 20 years old, these opportunities are reduced by many institutional factors outside of her control (the *process x*). Labour migration or opening a *spaza*-shop are disqualified options because she has no starting capital. Teaching is impossible because she has no education, driving a taxi is impossible because she has neither licence nor car. She does not qualify for any grants because she has no children and is too young for pension. She cannot start fishing because of her gender and because she lacks the necessary skills. Of the remaining resources, she chooses (the *process y*) not to take up agricul-

ture because she believes it will not earn her enough money to buy the things she needs, and she chooses not to apply for a job at the tea plantation because she has heard bad things about that job. She ends up choosing to apply for a job in a poverty relief programme, because some of her relatives already work there and she likes the idea of working together with them.



*Figure 13.* The choice process illustrated. The whole big ellipse (ABC) represents all opportunities available to the local people in a village: jobs, governmental grants, possibilities to use environmental resources such as fish and agricultural land, and so on. For each person, through the *process x*, these resources are limited because of factors outside the decision-making power of him or her. B and C represents together the remaining resources, which are in turn limited through the *process y*, involving decisions taken by the person him/herself. C represents the resources that are *de facto* used by the person.

The illustration in *Figure 13* should be seen as a complement to the model presented in *Figure 7*, where the ellipses in both figures overlap each other. The choice process connected to livelihood activities is influenced by a mixture of factors such as economic calculations, thoughts and ideas, rumours, personal traits, skills and connections and is therefore very difficult to predict and model beyond the general level illustrated here. It would be difficult to identify and measure all these factors, especially since people themselves do not analyse their choices in this way. Many of the factors in the domain of personal choice are on a sub-conscious level, where for example perceptions about what type of persons have certain jobs and what type of person you yourself are influence decisions.

It is therefore also difficult for decision-makers and people from outside to fully consider these processes while making policies that affect local livelihoods. The *process x*, i.e. the institutional limitations, can of course be influenced through outside interventions – for example a micro-financing programme could give our young woman the opportunity to open a *spaza*-shop through giving her a loan. These measures can, however, be disqualified through the *process y*, since perhaps the girl feels that she is not an outgoing type of person (something that is expected by a *spaza* owner) and thus does not feel confident to apply to the microfinance programme. The *process*

y is thus difficult to influence through outside interventions, at the same time as outside interventions tend to fail when they do not give ample room for such processes to unfold. One example of this that will be discussed in more detail later is the microfinance project in Manteku that attempted to steer certain people towards certain types of business activities, while ignoring the many already existing and successful businesses in the village.

## Feelings of Livelihood Security

Livelihood security has previously (page 59) been conceptualised as a *feeling* of security – i.e. the confidence that local people have in that they will be able to fulfil their basic needs in the future. This perspective that recognises people's feelings and thoughts about their livelihoods is intended complement the focus on more tangible factors in the previous livelihood analysis. After thus asking more straightforward questions about livelihoods, the feeling of security was assessed through questions about worrying.

It was then assumed that people who worry a lot over various parts of their livelihoods and needs are also feeling relatively insecure about them. This is an assumption that does not always hold true and is strongly affected by individual personalities. There are those who worry a lot even if they have a secure situation, and there are those who do not worry about tomorrow very much even if they have every reason to do so. However, allowing for these shortcomings, the question still provides interesting information on whether people in the villages in general feel that they worry a lot about their livelihoods or not, and also an opportunity to compare the villages and the different causes for worry with each other.

The questions put to people in the villages were about how often they worry about various livelihoods- and needs-related issues, more specifically:

- Jobs – worries about losing a job, not getting paid or not being able to find a job
- Grants – worries that one would not be granted pension or child grant, or about not receiving the payments.
- Environmental resources – worries that natural resources will become scarcer or more restricted.
- Social networks – worries that relatives or friends would not be able to help in times of need.
- Education of children – worries that there will not be money for school fees and uniforms.
- Healthcare – worries that someone in the family will become seriously ill and that there will not be the resources to help that person.
- Food – worries about securing enough food to eat.

Figure 14 illustrates how many percent of the families in each village worry very often about the issues mentioned above. Indeed, “very often” (*rhoqo*) was the overwhelmingly most common answer to all the questions about how often people worry about various issues. This indicates that people perceive their livelihood situations as highly insecure.

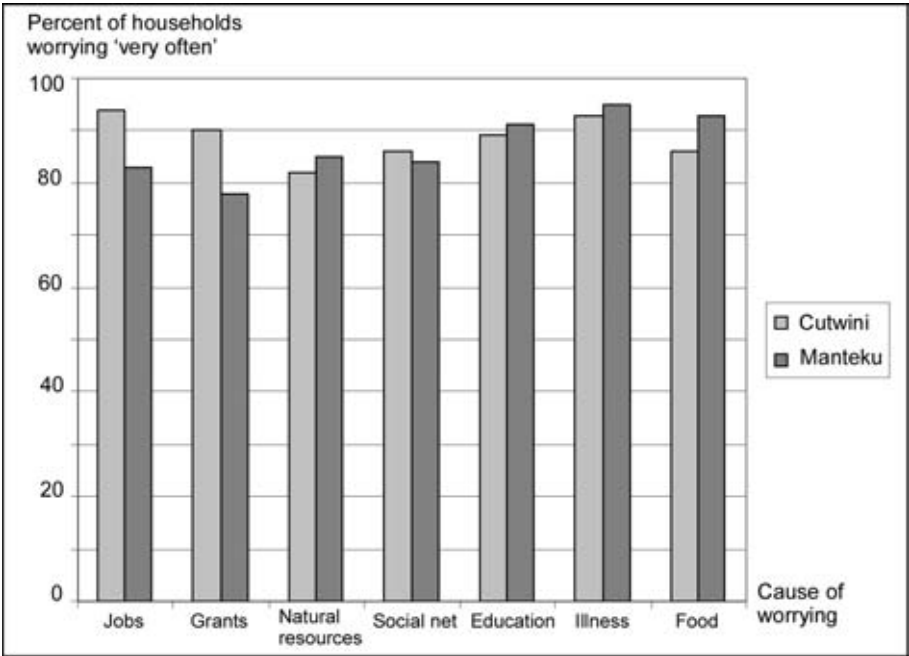


Figure 14. Percentage of households that stated that they worry ‘very often’ about different livelihood related issues in Cutwini and Manteku.

One result from this study is that though people do worry a lot about specific parts of their livelihoods, like their job or pension, they tend to worry in general even more about some of their needs, like food and schooling for children, or about crisis situations, such as illnesses in the family. Illness is perhaps the biggest cause of worry, and almost all families do worry that someone in the family will get sick and that they will not have the resources to help them. This is particularly true for families with children or elderly persons. Worrying about illness seems well-founded in the face of the difficulties and costs associated with getting to clinics and the high prevalence of serious diseases such as tuberculosis and AIDS.

Jobs and governmental grants, the two most important livelihood activities in the villages, are also naturally big causes for worrying. People with jobs worry that they will be retrenched or will not receive their wages, while people who do not have jobs worry about finding work. The high percentage of households worrying about grants might seem surprising since in theory

you are either eligible for a grant, and then you receive it, or you are not, and then you do not apply. In practice, however, people are very worried about the complicated application procedure, about not being granted pensions due to problems such as lack of identification documents, and about receiving the pension payments on time. The application, granting and payment procedures for pensions and child grants were in the process of being improved at the time of the survey, and have since then become much smoother. Thus, this worrying over grants is likely to have decreased significantly.

Natural resources and social networks are, compared with other issues, less cause for worrying to people in the villages, indicating both that these factors are not of high relevance to livelihoods, as well as the fact that people in general think (as suggested by other questions in the survey) that natural resources are in a good condition and that their social networks are fairly strong. There is a difference between Cutwini and Manteku here, where people in Manteku worry more about environmental resources and less about jobs and grants than in Cutwini. This can be partly explained by the fact that marine resources are more important in Manteku and that people worry about being caught when using these resources. The awareness of problems related to natural resources is also higher in Manteku, due to the presence of nature conservation offices and tourists. These questions are furthermore difficult to ask, and there might have been important differences in how the assistants put these questions in the two villages, which would in turn be reflected in the results.

During the in-depth interviews, people were asked about what would make them feel more secure in their livelihoods. It became clear that people who are self-employed feel more secure, since they cannot be retrenched. Especially people who have *spaza*-shops or taxis feel very secure, since they perceive that these businesses always go well. Having a *spaza* has the added advantage of always having food in the house, though it is of course always a responsibility to run your own business, as a young woman says:

It's nice to have a *spaza* – you can't starve if you have a *spaza* because there is always food. So I worry less since we got it, but now I have to think about getting supplies for the shop, and all those things related to the business.

Naturally, people also feel more secure if they have managed to save some money for a buffer in difficult times. Due to many problems with bank fees and various socio-cultural factors that will be discussed in the following chapter, most of these savings are not kept in the bank. Buying a car, which can be driven as a taxi, or starting up a *spaza* is seen as a way of saving in the form of an investment that repays itself through generating “interest” that the family can live off. Cattle are another form of saving, which also generates significant “interest” if well cared for. A middle-aged man says:

If you have some livestock you can start to relax because it's like insurance. If you have a problem or lose your job you can always sell a cow and try to use that money to find a new job or think of another plan.

These considerations around livelihood security show that it is probably easier to ensure that people's basic needs are met than to ensure that they have a feeling of security and do not worry too much about the future. As long as people run the risk of losing their jobs or not getting paid, and do not have either (personal or governmental) social security networks that they know they can rely on in difficult times, or alternatively savings to take them through the tough times, they will tend to worry about the future a lot. For example, temporary poverty relief programmes that employ poor people and pay a small sum of money for their labour, can ensure that these people's basic needs are met during that time, but they do not necessarily provide livelihood security, since they are temporary and since the payment tends to be too low for people to be able to save any money. Poverty relief programmes and other policies will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## Multiple Livelihood Strategies?

The data presented in this chapter can be used to make some interesting comparisons with the literature on livelihood diversification and 'multiple livelihood strategies'. Ellis claims that "most rural families have truly multiple income sources" (2000:5) and that an 'average' livelihood portfolio for a rural household in sub-Saharan Africa consists of a highly diversified income base, including agriculture, livestock, gathering, remittances, farm employment and other jobs at the same time. He illustrates this with a typified household that relies on seven different types of livelihoods, each of these constituting between 8 to 25 percent of the household's total livelihood. This type of family does not exist in the study area, where a majority of the families depend only on one low-income job and do not manage to have other major survival strategies beside this. There are also other implications of Ellis' findings that simply do not hold true for my study area. For example, no family in the villages that has managed to secure three different types of jobs would ever consider engaging in much gathering activities.

Ellis also implies (see the quote on page 60) that the reason why rural people diversify their livelihoods is that agriculture cannot provide enough means for survival. However, many persons explicitly stated in interviews that they did not *want* to engage in agricultural activities, that they did not *like* it, that they *preferred* to do other things. There are thus a lot of active choices and preferences involved.

Livelihoods literature has also tended to assume that access to many, small-scale livelihood opportunities is always highly desirable to people, and

that given opportunity, they would utilise as many and diverse opportunities as possible. Shackleton *et al.* state: "The ability to access various combinations of assets helps to determine how vulnerable or robust a livelihood may be" (2000:1). This statement suggests that diversification itself, and not the other potential qualities of livelihood activities, is the cause of robustness in livelihoods. However, my study suggests that many of the poorest families in the villages rely basically on one, single, all-important livelihood, usually a low-paid job or a pension, and do not choose, for many different reasons, to diversify their livelihoods to include agriculture, basket-weaving or fishing. Therefore, the qualities of this one livelihood source - its regularity, the amount of money it brings in, and to what extent one can depend on keeping that income, becomes the crucial issue.

People themselves do not necessarily regard diversification as the most desirable aspect of their livelihoods. A person who loses a job and is forced to rely on fishing, agriculture, loans from friends and minor grants has diversified his or her livelihood strategies, without this being in any way something positive for that person. Risk spreading is similarly not always considered crucially important. Having many different livelihood strategies take up time and effort and people may often prefer to focus on one activity – such as a job. Multiple livelihood strategies also require bigger households with an available labour force for the many different livelihood tasks, while the trend is going towards smaller and more nucleated households. Also, multiple livelihood strategies require investments, and are thus to an extent a luxury of the relatively non-poor, instead of the characteristic property of poor people's livelihoods that it is often assumed to be.

The results from this study shows that rural livelihoods in Transkei are complex, heterogeneous and do not easily fit into ready-made models and assumptions based on findings elsewhere. After analysing the relative importance of different livelihoods, the pathways to livelihood diversification and the strategies and choices of local people, I will in the next chapter widen the context of this livelihood study in two ways. Firstly, I will focus on vulnerable families, and on how poverty influences choices and strategies. Secondly, I will widen the perspective upwards, and look at how policies from outside are perceived by and affect people in the villages, and how decision-makers can attempt to understand local perspectives and incorporate them into their policies.

## 8. Poverty and Policy Contexts

The focus on understanding livelihood strategies in a holistic way and the empirical approach of interviewing all the households in two villages employed in this study, has so far provided information on the village-wide importance of various livelihood activities and shed light on some of the ways that local people think when they combine different livelihood activities. This village-wide approach could, however, have the effect that vulnerable families, especially if they are in a minority in the villages, become invisible in the data and are neglected in the analysis. Therefore, the analysis of livelihood activities has been complemented with a section (the first part of this chapter) where I focus specifically on the families that have no major livelihood activities and the problems and processes of poverty and vulnerability that they experience. Poverty and vulnerability as concepts were shortly discussed, together with some of the relevant research in this field, in a previous chapter (page 62).

The availability of livelihood options as well as the possibilities to choose between these are of course strongly affected by various policies and institutions, as pointed out in earlier discussions. These need also to be taken into consideration if village livelihoods are to be understood in a holistic way. With this in mind, both local people and local, municipal and regional officials have been interviewed about their perceptions regarding national policies and other interventions that affect the two case study villages directly. The findings of these studies will be discussed in the second section of this chapter. The two parts of this chapter thus serve to put the previous analysis of local livelihoods in various wider contexts.

### Patterns of Vulnerability and Implications of Poverty

This section on will focus on identifying vulnerable families in the two villages and on assessing their situations, discussing various coping mechanisms that people use in times of crisis, analysing how poverty itself can create a barrier to securing a livelihood as well as how local attitudes to money, saving and borrowing influence factors of poverty and welfare. These issues put together are meant to contextualise local livelihoods and give various perspectives on local processes of poverty and vulnerability.

## Vulnerable Families

In Cutwini, the household survey conducted in April 2002 showed that 8% of the families were without major livelihood activities ('type H' as defined in the previous chapter). In July 2003, i.e. 15 months later, in-depth interviews were made with these 12 households. I asked these families to describe the situation they had been in at the time of the 2002 survey and what had happened since. A few in-depth interviews were made in also Manteku, with a selection of families in different livelihood situations.

From these follow-up interviews, it became clear that most of the households that had been identified as having no major livelihood in 2002 had managed to get out of this situation by 2003. They had been in an "in-between" period at the time of the survey, as people in these households had either just been retrenched and were looking for new jobs or had applied for pensions and not received them yet. When these households were revisited, they had thus either started receiving pensions or found new jobs. There were a few deviations from this pattern, which consisted of households where a breadwinner had died. These families had dissolved the household and moved in with relatives instead, a type of reaction to a changed situation will be further discussed below in the section on 'coping mechanisms'.

Thus, most of the households with no major livelihood activity in 2002 had not been in a state of permanent poverty, but rather in a transitional, in-between period. This draws attention to the fact that these types of surveys portray a momentary picture, frozen in time, of a continuously changing situation. In such a picture, there will always be a few families that have just lost their jobs and not been able to find new ones, and therefore a crucial question in this context is how long households tend to linger in this situation. The phenomenon observed in Cutwini, with households moving in and out of difficult situations, is comparable to what has become known as transitory poverty i.e. situations of poverty that households periodically may enter but can also get out of (CPRC, 2004).

The state and transition analysis in the previous chapters identifies a transitional phase in which households have no major livelihood (see *Figure 12*). The process behind the existence of this transitional phase is connected to the fact that most households rely on one livelihood only. It thus becomes almost inevitable, when a household's livelihoods base changes, that it goes through a shorter or longer period of transition during which it has no major livelihood activity. A key issue then becomes how the households can cope with this transitional phase. It is clear that social networks of family and friends, which have been shown not to play very significant roles when it comes to daily livelihoods, do become much more important in difficult situations or crises. Having access to a loan from relatives or friends can mean that the family can get out of the transitional phase faster, since money

is needed e.g. in the process of searching for new jobs. Coping mechanisms will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Discussions with families and key informants helped to identify both the factors that lead to increased vulnerability as well as the categories of people who are in different ways particularly vulnerable. For example, young people who have finished schooling and are looking for their first jobs, due to lack of work experience, money and contacts, can have a very difficult time in the transition from studying to working. Many young persons say that they “sit at home and do nothing” for years before they finally manage to get jobs. Another vulnerable group is persons just below pension age – in case of retrenchment they face difficulties in getting back on the labour market, as shown by the comment of one elderly man:

I was retrenched and now I cant find a new job because people think I am too old. But I am still too young for pension. So I am stuck here in this situation and I worry a lot about the future.

Another important insight was that vulnerability can be needs-specific. For example, if a family has a job and is also growing vegetables, they can meet their food needs through both job incomes and agricultural activities, while they meet their needs for school fees through the jobs only. The schooling of the children would thus immediately suffer in case the job was lost, since there is no back-up strategy on meeting this particular need.

A general conclusion was also that the smaller the family, the more vulnerable it is. Almost all the households that informants point out as “struggling” were single, divorced or widowed men or women, or alternatively orphaned or abandoned children. Obviously, children who are orphaned or through other means more or less abandoned are highly vulnerable and risk not being able to complete their schooling or even suffering from malnutrition. Orphaned children tend to be taken in by relatives or friends of the family, but due to the high incidence of deaths due to AIDS, these networks are now becoming dilapidated.

There were one or two households in each village that consisted only of children and teenagers, but in all these cases their parents were alive but had moved to towns or other villages and left their children behind. These parents did send money regularly to their children, but on a day-to-day basis, the children had to fend for themselves and rely on the generosity of neighbours and relatives in difficult times. The reasons for leaving teenage children in the villages were that the parents had found jobs in towns and could not afford to bring their children with them, or had re-married and found it inappropriate to bring children to their new homesteads.

Divorced women are in the literature often lifted out as particularly vulnerable, which indeed they are in these villages as well. However, it is inter-

esting to note that also divorced men are not in an easy position in society. Consider the following statement by an informant:

That man lives alone, because his wife left him and moved back to her parents. So he has to do everything for himself, fetch water, collect wood, work in the garden, cook, clean, everything, and he is looking for work at the same time. His son is sometimes staying with him to help out, but he needs a wife so they can share that work. [...] He is struggling now because he paid many cows to get married and now he has to save new money [if he wants to marry again]. And nobody wants to marry him when everyone knows that his wife left him and now everyone is laughing at him when he is fetching water with a wheelbarrow<sup>61</sup>.

The quote above illustrates that it is very difficult to live alone in these villages, both economically and in terms of labour-load and social stigma. In big households, there is always someone who can help out with things like housework, gardening or looking after children if one family member has an opportunity to do wage-work or has to go to town for an errand. Being two persons instead of one in a household thus doubles the available work force and livelihood opportunities, but does not necessarily double the costs, since it is for example more economic to cook food for two.

There is often an assumption in popular discussions about poverty that families with many children are especially vulnerable and that people should want to have less children in order to have “less mouths to feed”. There are connotations of this type of thinking also in demographic development studies, where poverty is often blamed on population pressure. From local people’s perspectives, however, children are in general considered an asset. In addition, having children is more of a social and personal decision than an economic calculation., for example informants pointed out to me that men and women with many children are held in high regard in society. Even single women want to have many children in general and the interest in fertility treatments<sup>62</sup> is much higher than the interest in family planning.

Other categories commonly identified as vulnerable are elderly or disabled people, who in the South African case, however, are relatively well looked after through pensions and disabled grants. There is one category of people who are not cared for in the system, however, and these are those

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<sup>61</sup> Because women usually collect water, carrying it on their heads, men never learn how to carry water on their heads and have to use other means of carrying heavy buckets, like in this case a wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow thus becomes a symbol that this man is struggling with a task he should not have to perform, and the women see this as a punishment that he was (assumedly) mean to his wife.

<sup>62</sup> There is no fertility treatment available in the hospitals close to the villages, but women who cannot have children sometimes go to the doctor anyway, or to ‘traditional healers’. During my time in the villages, several women have, like the woman mentioned in the preface, approached me for advice on how to get pregnant. Nobody has been interested in how *not* to get pregnant.

with slight mental problems, alcoholics, social outcasts and people who for different reasons (e.g. violence or accusations of witchcraft) have bad reputations. As was earlier pointed out (Hossain, 2005; Hossain and Moore, 1999), these people are often conceptualised as “non-deserving poor” whom it is “permissible to neglect” (see page 64). Those who suffer from psychological problems, diseases, malnutrition, abuse, social stigma, debts and addictions – all problems that have strong connections to poverty – are likely to have difficulties even with getting jobs in poverty relief programmes.

When designing policies for the poor, it is thus important to remember that research on the poorest segments of societies has shown that “opportunity is not enough” (CPRC, 2004:54) for them. As Hulme and Shepherd (2003) argue, the chronically poor are, by definition, those who most lack the assets required to make their voices heard and communicate their needs. The poorest people are difficult to find, and even more difficult to consult, since they tend to be neglected and pushed out of their own communities.

## Local Coping Mechanisms in Times of Crises

Understanding the way that local coping mechanisms work for people in difficult situations is very important in order to create effective policies that target the challenges of poverty and vulnerability. In these instances, there are many cultural factors that affect choice and behaviour in stressful situations, which are not easily predicted by outsiders.

As discussed before, one common coping mechanism that has been identified elsewhere as well (*c.f.* Shipton, 1990) is that the family itself can be quite fluid and adaptable to different economic situations. It is common that family members move back and forward between homesteads and relatives, as responses to economic fluctuations, needs for work-force or opportunities for jobs or schooling. These movements are also sometimes dictated by social norms and standards. For example, if an old man dies and leaves his wife alone in the homestead, the socially accepted course of action is not that one of her children offers the widow to come and stay with them, but that one of the grandchildren (usually at least one girl) is designated to move in with the grandmother and help her with the household. Many children in fact, because of various reasons, end up being in part or fully raised by relatives other than their parents, in many cases by their grandparents.

Depending on the situation, there are different courses of actions for persons or families who find themselves in a livelihood crisis. If it seems that the crisis is long-term (e.g. if the breadwinner in the family has died), people can rearrange the family and become incorporated into other households. A widowed woman who realizes that she will not be able to support her children can for example decide to move back to her parent’s household, or alternatively she could move in with her sister/brother or in-laws. If it seems as if the crisis is temporary rather than permanent, however, people can util-

ise their social networks to get help with food or money during the problematic period until they have secured another livelihood (be it pension or job). In these cases, people do not have to move away from their homesteads.

These strategies are connected to the views about money that will be discussed in more detail shortly. Within the households, social networks are strong and the income that a family member earns is distributed so that everyone in the family benefits from it. Between households, however, money flows more rarely, which is true even between related families. Thus it is easier to invite a person to come and live in your family than to agree to give that person a certain sum of money every week. This is also due to the fact that a person living in a family can contribute to that family with their work and thus make up for the costs it entails to support him or her.

Since people have this tendency to re-organise the household in times of big crises, the only families that show up in the data as having no major livelihood activities are those who are in temporarily vulnerable situations, or as I have referred it to before – in a transitional phase. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that all the families from the survey had succeeded in securing a new livelihood when interviewed 15 months later.

Coping mechanisms in times of minor crises include various temporary piece jobs. If there is an economic difficulty in the family, relatives, neighbours or friends – even strangers – can often be persuaded to give a person some form of a temporary job, for example in a local garage or in a spaza shop. This type of activity is often also conceptualised as ‘help’ rather than a ‘job’.

There are also some environmentally based coping mechanisms, the most important of which is marine resource use. This is probably an important coping mechanism since it can be utilised immediately in a crisis. Agriculture, by contrast, represents a more long-term strategy that cannot be used for sudden shocks. Consider the following statement:

Well, if I would suddenly lose my job and needed to survive, I could go to relatives, and also try to go fishing and sell the fish.

**Flora:** *What about planting in the garden, could you think of doing that if you lost your job?*

No..... think about it – if you lose your job today and start planting instead, you will starve to death before it is time for harvest. Yes, you can think ahead and plant something before you lose your job, but what about if you lose that job when it is not a month for harvesting? .... No, if you lose your job then planting will be the last thing on your mind, cause you don't have the money for seeds and fertilisers.

However, as Crais (2003) and McCann (2005) discuss, maize does have the property that it is possible to eat green before it is ripe, and thus it represents

a 'food insurance' during a longer time of the year than other crops. Many people do state that they often eat green maize when food is not enough. Planting maize can thus be a strategy for preventing sudden crises.

Another temporary coping mechanism that people rely on if they have not got their salary or during days when money is finished in-between salaries, is to cut back radically on their needs. For example, people eat less in general, and especially less of expensive foodstuffs like bread, tea or meat in difficult times. Eating only maize in different forms for several days in a row is a reality for many families, and keeps costs very low, though nutritional needs are compromised. In these times, people consciously "conserve their energy" and try not to exhort themselves with any unnecessary physical activity. This conscious effort to conserve energy, can sometimes by outsiders be perceived as "laziness" or "passivity", a type of clash in perceptions evident in the following quote from a frustrated informant:

They [the representatives from an NGO] want to target the "poorest of the poor", but they expect us to come to meetings all the time. How are we supposed to have the time or energy to go to these meetings when we see that nothing is happening? Nothing has happened for years now, we are still just talking about the project! [...] They always sit there with their stomachs full after eating food in town, and you know what – sometimes they even have food in the car with them, but they don't offer us food for walking all the way there to participate in the meeting. And they always complain that they are trying to do something for us but that we don't want come to the meetings. If there would be food it is clear that people would come.

This quote illustrates how important it is from an NGO and policy perspective to understand and keep in touch with local people's realities. As will be illustrated in the policy chapter, people do not always express their feelings and opinions, but the fact that they do not come to meetings should be seen as a warning sign that something is wrong and that people do not feel proper ownership of the process. I will here continue to discuss local perspectives and realities and how these affect people's livelihood choices and the everyday processes they go through when struggling to fulfil their needs.

## Poverty as a Barrier to Securing a Livelihood

"If you have no seeds to put in the ground, you cannot plant in your garden", a woman said when asked why she did not consider making a garden since she had no other means of a livelihood. This statement summarizes an essential point about how poverty governs choices - poverty entails many limitations and barriers that are difficult to imagine if one has not experienced them. Obstacles that are very small become insurmountably big. A job opportunity that is just a phone call away might as well not exist at all if one simply does not have the money to make one. A possibility to apply for a

grant that requires going to town is not a possibility if one has no money for the journey. This point is illustrated by what another elderly woman told me about the application meetings for Foster Care Grants in 2005:

I lost my daughter last year and now her four children are depending on me only for all that they need. [...] I heard about an information meeting for a grant for people who are in my situation [the Foster Care Grant] and I went to town to go to the meeting. When I got there, I found out that the meeting had been postponed, it was a few days later. So I had paid 20 Rand to go to town for nothing. That other day I again got up early and went to town for the meeting. This time there were so many people there and very few clerks, so they could only see a small part of the people there. How many times do I have to go there to find out if it is even possible for me to apply for this grant? Even if I need that money very much, I can only afford to go to town twice per month.

This connects to Sen's (1993) discussion on capabilities as a measurement of poverty, where he points out that a person can be incapable of obtaining food because they lack money, or because of other factors, e.g. a lack of transport to the market. As pointed out previously, the poorest parts of the population are vulnerable in many ways; they may be sick, disabled, malnourished and suffering from alcoholism and are also often unassisted by relatives. These people may not be able to comprehend complicated application procedures for grants and poverty relief programmes and cannot summon enough resources and strength to attend several information meetings in faraway places. When application procedures and information about grants are very complicated, this will thus unfortunately result in that the most vulnerable parts of the population will not have the means and endurance to follow them through. These issues constitute barriers to poor people's ability to choose between different livelihood activities. Poverty-related considerations need therefore to be recognised as important factors that govern the livelihood choices of vulnerable individuals and families.

One aspect of poverty is, as mentioned, that people have no capital to invest in improving their livelihoods. Due to this barrier, people are sometimes forced to choose alternatives that are economically worse for them. For example, in the long run it is much cheaper to use gas for cooking than to use paraffin. However, gas requires the initial investments of a gas stove and a cylinder of gas, which would require several months of saving for a poor family. Though this investment would repay itself after about a year, it is nevertheless impossible to make for many families who live on a month-to-month basis. Even those few families who have invested in gas stoves and cylinders sometimes have problems since the cylinder is big and costs a lot to refill (though it lasts for several months).

This is also connected to the previous discussion on the need for investment in agricultural activities. In the study area I noted that many small

families that depend on low-income jobs or governmental grants do not use natural resources to a high extent, contrary to the theory that these resources become more important to poor families. In interviews, these families state that they have no time or capacity (because they are small) to fish or the resources to make big gardens or buy animals. In Cutwini, 79% of the families with an income below R700 per month have an agricultural production of below 25% of their dietary requirements, (in the village as a whole it is 72% of the families). Thus, while high natural resource use can be related to relative wealth, so low natural resource use can be a sign of relative poverty.

Investments needed in order to improve livelihoods thus have to be as small as possible and repay themselves quickly; otherwise people will not be able to afford them. This point will be illustrated in the next chapter through a poverty relief programme that requires people to make investments before they receive money. A key problem for people in the area is also that they, both due to low incomes as well as various other factors, have generally not been able save money and are thus very vulnerable to sudden shocks and changes in their livelihoods. Saving for a larger investment, or borrowing money to make one, is problematic for people in many ways, not the least because of many social factors. The reasons for the problems of saving and borrowing and local, socially embedded attitudes to money and monetary transactions will therefore now be probed.

## Attitudes to Money, Saving and Borrowing

Money is a precious resource to people in the studied villages, and as such it has a special place in society, surrounded by certain rules and norms. As has been mentioned, money is usually only shared with people of the same household. In fact, sometimes people try not to share their money even with their immediate families. While social norms dictate that you share other assets, especially visible assets such as food, money can be "kept in your pocket" and nobody knows how much you have, which sets it apart from other assets (observed also by Shipton, 1989). Precisely because it is so precariously easy to spend money without being reprimanded, money is considered a very volatile asset.

Conversely, one might argue, considering the extremely rigorous norms and rules surrounding cattle discussed before, that money invested in cattle is the opposite of money in the bank - it is the most stable asset you can have. Ainslie (2003) writes:

money in the bank, for those who have that luxury, is for buying things, but is whittled away quickly. Cattle, however [...] can only be sold when a homestead is in dire need, to put food on the table. It is unheard of, people told me emphatically, that cattle can be sold to buy a television or fridge (*ibid*:13).

Cattle thus constitute a particular form of money, 'earmarked' for emergencies only. This corresponds well with my own findings, illustrated here by one young male informant who says:

If I am serious about saving money, I will buy cattle with it. If I try to save it in the bank, there is always the risk that I will go there and draw it. Nobody can see me when I do that and nobody can blame me. If I have cattle in the field, then it's impossible to just take one and sell it, everyone will see this and ask me "why are you selling that cow?". Then I have to give a very good reason. And I have to go to my father and ask what he thinks about selling that cow.

*Flora: But I know your father lives in Ndindindi, which is not close to here, and you don't see him very often. Do you still have to ask his permission to sell a cow, even if you bought it with your own money?*

No I *have* to talk to him, and he will tell me not to sell it. We would also have to involve the ancestors, and wow, that is a *long* process...

People stressed over and over again in interviews that it is very difficult to save money in the bank, which is problematic since people usually need starting capital with which to initiate livelihood activities. Searching for jobs require money, starting up a business, however small, or planting a field requires an investment, and in some cases even natural resource use requires initial assets. One young married man explains why saving is difficult for poor families:

It is not easy to save money. You will always know that that money is there in the bank and can help you. There is always something that needs your money, for example your child may become sick and need some medicines. In a situation like that, how can you keep your money there in the bank and watch your child being sick and your wife crying? Maybe the wall of the house is starting to look like it is going to fall down so you start thinking it's better to take that money and fix it before it falls. If it's not one thing it's the other [...]. There always seems to be something. I think you can only save money if you are already rich.

While men are complaining that their wives thus prevent them from saving, women often stated that they found it easier to convince their men to buy furniture and other expensive things on credit and then repay the loan than to convince them to put money aside from their wages month after month.

Saving can also be difficult because of cultural norms. For example, it is expected that you spend all the money you can come over on a big funeral if a loved one has died, and if one of your relatives come to ask for money, you are supposed to help them if you can. Saving is in a way seen as a luxury that people who already have enough money can engage in. Thus, people often state that they find it much easier to buy things on credit, because you

can then hold up loan repayments as a legitimate argument against people having claims to your money. Telling someone who asks for money that you cannot help them because you are saving your money is simply rude, it equals telling the person that you could not care less about their problems. Repaying a loan, however, is different altogether. Consider this statement by an old pensioner:

If you want to buy something like furniture, it is better to take in on credit. Then you will be forced to pay that money every month to the furniture store. If you were trying to save that money every month, you would find that there is something else that needs your money every time. And if you get pension like me, people know that they can come to you and ask for money that day [when the pension is distributed]. You can tell them this money is for the furniture store, or they will come after me if I don't pay it. Then they [i.e. the persons asking for money] can understand.

When discussing this issue with a young male informant who was thinking about buying a bed on credit instead of saving money for five months and buying it later, the informant said:

I could wait for that bed for 5 months, but I am afraid that if I try to save that 200 [Rand] every month, something else will always come up, you know, someone can get sick or ask me for money. Like just last week, these cows that I'm looking after for my uncle got into the maize field of this other guy and started eating all the maize. It was a big problem and that guy was very angry. [...] So I had to take 100 Rand and give to him. Things like that happen all the time. [...] If I try to save instead [of buying the bed on credit] I'm afraid that I will never get that bed.

Buying something on credit is thus like 'earmarking' your money. The informant above, just like many people who buy things on credit all over the world, chooses an option that entails some economic loss in order to make sure that his money goes towards buying the bed – i.e. to protect his money, essentially from himself.

In this context, though it probably would be bizarre to an economist, people would perhaps prefer savings accounts that forced them to save every month and charged them high fines if they did not save. Local *umngalelo* saving associations, informal groupings of people who save money together, do exactly that. There are many forms of this institution, but one important aspect is usually that joining the association forces you to save. *Umngalelo* is a way of saving money for important investments through a rotating savings and credit institution, described for example in Mosley and Rock (2004). Burial associations fill the same purpose, but here people save in order to be able to afford unexpected funerals.

In contrast to these savings associations, local moneylenders charging extremely high interest rates have unfortunately become a problematic issue in

many areas. A perhaps less problematic institution is that of *ityala* (debt), where people can buy groceries at the local *spaza*-shops and pay later. This can still result in situations where many elderly persons continuously owe their whole pensions to the shopkeeper. Due to this situation, the status of shopkeepers is often very high in the villages, since people want to be on good terms with them. Shopkeepers are thus perhaps comparable to Ferguson's (1990) 'important men' with big herds of cattle in Lesotho villages, who according to him are eminent in their communities because they are in a position to help other people in emergencies through lending them cattle. The importance of informal loans, given by both relatives/friends and shopkeepers, is confirmed by studies like Mosley and Rock (2004).

The cultural embeddedness of money and institutions of saving and borrowing has been pointed out by several researchers (*c.f.* Gudeman, 1986, 2001; Shipton, 1989). Above, I have given some illustrative examples of such embeddedness, showing that local behaviour around these issues cannot always be easily predicted and planned for. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to target the poor and vulnerable through policies. It becomes the basis for the important argument that experiences, coping strategies and perspectives of the poor should be understood and included in policy-making. The next part of this chapter will go into more details about the relationship between policy-making and local livelihoods.

## Policies and Local Livelihoods

As discussed previously, there tends to be a discrepancy between local and national understandings of both the nature of various problems and the policies for targeting these. In the previous section, I focused on local realities of poverty and vulnerability, realities that are often difficult for national-level policy makers to grasp. While current policies affect local livelihoods in profound ways, the legacies of previous policies are also integral parts of today's livelihoods in the study area. In this section, I will first discuss past and then present policies and the effects these have in the study area.

### Impacts of Previous Policies on Local Livelihoods

As mentioned before, the South African government has since the colonial period attempted to govern rural life through various policies. These 'development' initiatives have included schemes of various kinds – from villagisation and agricultural improvement to cattle production and irrigation, as listed by de Wet (1990). As touched on before, compulsory cattle dipping was introduced already in 1911 and have been an intervention that was particularly fiercely resisted in many places through anti-dip movements, as Bundy (1987) points out. Two interventions that have had and still have very

direct impacts in the studied village Cutwini, the Betterment scheme and the interventions of TRACOR.

Betterment, a governmental villagisation policy, was one highly interventionist policy that affected the village Cutwini especially. The people who came to live in Cutwini were up until the beginning of the 1960's living in scattered settlements located a few kilometres northeast along the coast from where Cutwini is today (that village was referred to as Bhobe). They were during Betterment moved to the present location and assigned plots for building their homesteads and making their gardens and fields – plots that were smaller than those that they had before. People were also faced with the task of ploughing and fencing new gardens and fields, and possibly also coping with new soil types. The new fields were also much closer to a big forest reserve, which exacerbated problems of predation by baboons, monkeys and other animals on the crops. In a context where agricultural activities were already under pressure due to previous interventions in the homelands, and most of the yearly food supply had to be bought due to the small sizes of gardens and fields, Betterment led to many people abandoning large-scale<sup>63</sup> agriculture in Cutwini.

Today, a few families have moved back to the Bhobe area and re-assumed a scattered settlement pattern, a trend noted also by Fay (2003) in Southern Transkei. These families state that they find it easier to look after their cattle as it can graze close to the homestead, and they are also making much bigger (field-sized) gardens that give yields that last most of the year. The map in *Figure 8* shows that many households that are able to make bigger gardens, usually because the homestead is located on the outskirts of the village, are able to grow a higher percentage of their yearly diet than other households in Cutwini. Note also that all the families who are living in Bhobe are growing a high percentage of their vegetable foodstuffs<sup>64</sup>.

Some people in Cutwini still do not dare to move or to make bigger gardens, however. Consider this interview with a young woman:

*Flora: How much is your family ploughing [i.e. farming] now compared to before? I mean before like in your grandfathers time.*

Our grandfather used to farm a *lot* ... We used to rely on farming for most of our food. Now we are not growing as much because we had to move because of the government [in 1965]. We tried for many years to farm on this space but it was not enough. Then [in 1982] my father met a white fisherman by the sea and he helped him to find a job in Durban. But now he was retrenched in 2001.

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<sup>63</sup> By large-scale I here mean a scale that would sustain the whole family with maize and vegetables throughout most of the year, not 'large-scale' in a commercial sense.

<sup>64</sup> Fay (2003) however, did not find a clear correlation showing that the households that resumed a scattered settlement pattern were indeed able to grow more maize in his study area, though he found that these households had increased their crop diversity.

*Flora: So what is your father doing now?*

He bought a car there in Durban so when he came back he brought that car and now he is driving it as a taxi.

*Flora: What about your brother?*

He has been looking for work in Durban since several months now.

*Flora: Might your brother take up farming if he doesn't find a job?*

Yes, my brother can come home to help with planting, but it doesn't matter because we are scared to make a bigger field because it is illegal to take more space than what you were given back then [in 1965]. The government came and took people to jail if they did that. So we are very scared and afraid.

*Flora: But since then you have a new government?*

No, even this new government can take you to jail.

The quote above shows how government interventions over a long period of time has made local people suspicious of the government and afraid of its actions. These fears and suspicions are often extended to the new government as well, as will be discussed more in the following section.

The largest intervention into agricultural practices in Cutwini was when the parastatal Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR) came to the village during the late 1970's and 1980's. People in Cutwini describe how outsiders came there, bringing hybrid seeds, pesticides and fertilizers, and told them that they would help them with tractors and that they should abandon their old, locally bred seeds and use the products provided by TRACOR. TRACOR suddenly left, they said, but by then people did not have any old seeds left and most people today have to buy new hybrid seeds at local shops instead. The soil had furthermore become used to fertilizers, so people today therefore complain that they have to invest much more money than previously in order to plant in their gardens and fields.

Over the years while I have interviewed people about livelihoods and agriculture, the issue of these 'new seeds' and the problems associated with them has been brought up by informants countless times. Most families, especially those who plant only small gardens, are complaining about the new seeds, just like the old woman below. A few families do claim that they are using them successfully, and even fewer families have managed to keep some of their 'old Xhosa maize' and use these instead. Consider the following statements:

Its not easy to plant today, before you plant you need to examine the soil and know what to do. It's not the same thing as in my grandfather's time, there

are new seeds now and they need many things like fertilisers and if you don't do it properly you can have nothing.

Old widowed woman who is planting only a small garden

These new seeds are causing a problem. People are using those seeds mixed with chemicals and they need a lot of fertiliser. People think the new seeds are better because they are new, because they are from overseas. But with those seeds you can work the whole year and then get nothing in the end. It's better to use just your dry millies from last year and plant it and you don't need to buy fertiliser. [...] I kept some of my old Xhosa maize because I didn't trust those people from TRACOR.

Middle-aged divorced man who plants a lot of maize

We keep our seeds from last year so we are using the old Xhosa maize to plant, and with these seeds you can use *kraal* [cow] manure. We also use the new seeds, but then you can't plant without fertiliser. The new seeds are better cause if you use them right you can get a lot. it's not difficult to use the fertiliser, the new seeds have their own fertiliser and you have to know which one to use. [...] We tried the different fertilisers until we succeeded.

Middle-aged married woman who plants a big garden and field

The seeds sold in towns are different forms of hybrid maize, which are supposed to give much higher yields. This maize needs specific fertilizers and pesticides in order to give optimal yields. Agricultural innovations associated with these "green revolution"-type of hybrid seeds, and lately with genetically modified crops, are problematic for many reasons, including monocropping, increased pesticide use, increased reliance on outside products, loss of local knowledge and so on. Many of these problems are apparent in the study area, where local people complain that it is expensive to buy the new seeds and fertilizers, instead of keeping old seeds and using *kraal* manure, like they used to do with their 'old Xhosa maize'.

Table 19 represents the opinions of two older male informants interviewed (separately) in Cutwini in 2006, who were asked to compare the properties of their old Xhosa maize with the seeds brought by TRACOR and the new hybrid seeds they are currently buying and using. These informants, as well as other people interviewed in Cutwini and elsewhere seem to think in general that the old Xhosa maize was of high quality, produced a lot, tasted nice and was good for the soil. The only thing which is perhaps more positive about the new seeds is that they grow faster, though some informants were sceptic to this property and felt it was a bit unnatural. When people were asked if they in any way had felt that there were problems with their old Xhosa maize, at the time that TRACOR came with 'new maize', the practically unanimous answer was that people had been very happy with the old maize and had no particular problems with it at all.

Both villagisation policies as well as TRACOR's interventions were thus not based on felt needs locally, but rather on what outsiders thought would

be needed in rural Transkei, and both policies have resulted in detrimental effects on local agricultural activities. State action has indeed discouraged farming across Africa, as Iliffe (1995) points out, citing a study in West Africa in the 1960s that found that “agriculture generally prospered in inverse proportion to government interference” (*ibid*:266). This history has in the studied villages led to a widespread scepticism towards state policy today and to a general fear of outsiders, who are often assumed to come to the village with hidden motives. Such history should alert current policy-makers to design policies that are sensitive to local needs and build on local capacity, which indeed is a stated aim of policy-making in South Africa today. As I will show in the next section, however, many policies are today still not rooted in local needs and have a top-down implementation strategy, with severe shortcomings when it comes to feed-back mechanisms that could act as channels for local people to express their opinions and needs to the authorities.

Table 19. *The various properties of the different types of seeds grown over the years in Cutwini. Information from interviews with two male informants in Cutwini, 2006.*

Properties	Old Xhosa maize (Before 1979)	TRACOR seeds (1979-1988)	New hybrid seeds (After 1988)
Harvest amount in the same field	15 bags	10 bags	5 bags
Rate of growth	Grows slowly	Grows fast	Grows fast
Fertilizer use	Kraal manure	Tracor gave fertilisers	We have to buy fertiliser from shops, since the soil is used to fertiliser now
Pesticide use	We only bought some insecticide occasionally	Tracor provided pesticides	We have to buy pesticides
Taste of maize	Very tasteful	Bad taste	OK taste
Amount of planting	We used to plant big fields and gardens	Tracor was helping us to plant big fields	Now people plant less and less
Equipment for ploughing	We used cattle for ploughing	Tracor helped us with tractors	Some people rent tractors, some use cows, some stopped planting
Effect on soil quality	The seeds were good for the soil	The soil was good because of fertilisers	New seeds are bad for the soil

## Current Policies and Considerations for the Future

There are several current policies that affect the livelihoods of people in the study area today. In this section, I will discuss how some of these policies are perceived locally. Questions on policies were included in the household survey, and I also made many in-depth interviews with local people on these issues. Local and regional officials were also interviewed (for a list of interviewed persons, see page 256). I will first discuss some of these policies, such as restrictive policies concerning marine resource use and use of forest products, agricultural policies, and policies for job creation and poverty relief. After that, I will discuss crosscutting issues, such as local participation and empowerment in the context of these specific policies.

### **Restrictions in Use of Marine and Forest Resources**

As pointed out previously, South Africa has a long history of quite fierce ‘old school’ nature conservation efforts. Still today, conservationist ideas are often connected to paternalistic images of local people degrading their environments. Researchers, conservation organisations and policy makers tend to be highly concerned about local use of natural resources in the country (e.g. DEAT, 1997, 2000, 2003; Dye, 1992; Hoffman *et al.*, 1999; Lasiak, 1993) and the government is currently enforcing a number of restrictions on this use. In the villages in the study area, people are primarily affected by the restrictions in marine and forest resource use – these restrictions were introduced before (page 73). While some of the concerns may indeed be connected to serious problems of degradation, the tendency to homogenously view Transkeian environments as degraded and local people as significantly contributing to this degradation should caution us to question the empirical basis of these concerns, as has been previously discussed.

Continuous state interventions and regulations of local natural resource use have triggered many conflicts between the state and rural people, an area of tension that has been well researched by South African environmental historians according to Beinart (2002b). While I have focused primarily on livelihood strategies, and as natural resources have not been the most important livelihood factor in my study area, I have, however, only partly touched upon this much-researched topic. My results are based on interviews with local people, nature conservation rangers and officials on various levels.

As exemplified previously, the restrictions on marine resource use in South Africa are quite complicated, and apply to subsistence resource users as well as all recreational use. Every person who engages in fishing is required to apply for a permit (R35 per year at the Lusikisiki Post Office) and is furthermore supposed to adhere to a complex list of restrictions in how big certain fish species has to be in order to be allowable (between 2.5 cm and 70 cm depending on the species), maximum allowable weight for other fish species (between 3.2 to 25 kg depending on species), how many of each

species one may catch every day and so on. I have seen only one informative pamphlet about the restrictions, which was in English and had a quite complicated diagram illustrating what type of fish fall into what category and how many of them you are allowed to catch during which season.

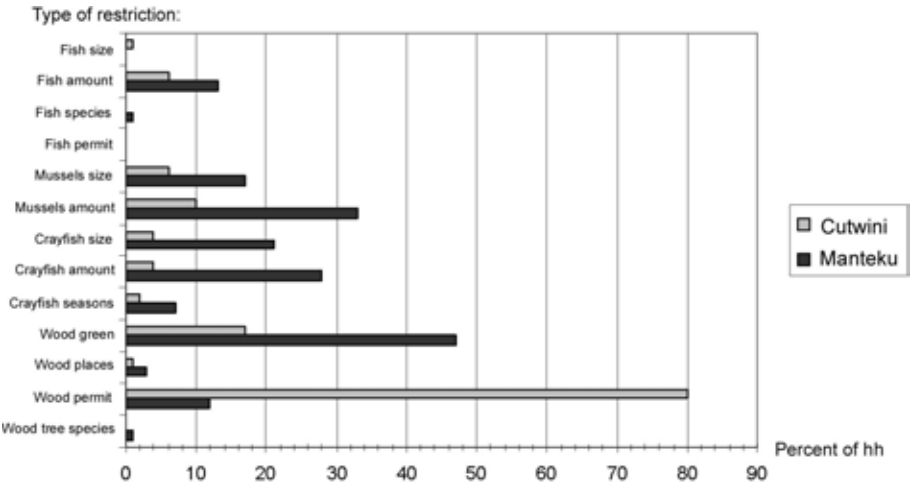
In theory, rangers for the nature conservation offices are supposed to hold information meetings with local people on the rules and regulations surrounding marine resource use. In reality, this very seldom happens, as both by local people and the rangers themselves confirmed. Rangers patrol the coast and focus instead on trying to catch local people in the act of fishing without a permit or exceeding certain quotas. Even though the rangers are in general patient when they meet local people and try to inform them about the restrictions instead of just fining them, people still have very vague ideas about why they are being “caught” and tend to try to run away when they see rangers or fish at times that they believe are safe (like at night).

In Table 20, categories of certain existing restrictions are presented, along with type examples of local conceptualisations of these restrictions. The diagram in *Figure 15* shows the percentage of the households in Cutwini and Manteku that knew about each type or restriction. The households were firstly asked if they knew of any restrictions on marine or forest resource use. If they said that they knew about restrictions, they were asked to specify and list all the restrictions they knew about. The quotes in Table 20 are from such attempts to specify restrictions.

Table 20. *Local conceptualisations of existing restrictions in marine and forest resource use.*

Type of restriction	Local conceptualisation of the restriction
Fish, size/weight	”You are supposed to throw back small fish that you catch”
Fish, amount	”You can not catch more than a certain number of fish every day”
Fish, species	”Certain types of fish you are not allowed to catch at all”
Fish, permit	”You have to have a permit to go fishing”
Mussels, size	”You are not allowed to collect small mussels”
Mussels, amount	”There is a limit to how many mussels you are supposed to collect every day”
Crayfish, size	”You are not supposed to take the small crayfish”
Crayfish, amount	”You are only allowed to take eight crayfish per day”
Crayfish, seasons	”Certain times of the year you are not supposed to go crayfishing”
Wood, dry/not green	”You should not cut down green wood/ bring a bush knife”
Wood, designated places	”you can collect wood in specific places and leave other places alone”
Wood, permit	”You have to have a permit to collect wood”
Wood, tree species	”There are certain types of trees you’re not supposed to take”

As can be seen *Figure 15* from most people in both villages did not know about restrictions in marine resource use. Especially striking is the complete lack of knowledge, in both villages, about the compulsory fishing permit. Rangers stated that the application procedure for permits at the Lusikisiki Post Office can be a bit complicated and is sometimes delayed, but they were of the opinion that about 10% of the people from the coastal communities did have fishing permits. This does not seem to be the case in the two studied villages.



*Figure 15.* Diagram over the percentage of households in each village that claimed that they knew about a certain type of resource use restriction. Types of restrictions are specified above in Table 20.

Knowledge about other restrictions concerning fishing was also very low – the only restriction that some people seemed to know about concerned the amount of fish you are allowed to catch per day. Restrictions in amount are, however, very different according to species, but only one household was aware of this. The low awareness of fishing restrictions is perhaps not surprising. Remembering that it is mainly the poorest parts of the population that use sea resources in the first place, it seems likely that these people might not be able to read English (or even *isiXhosa*) very well and are not well-educated enough to be able to comprehend the various complicated types of restrictions. Even if local people had been successfully informed about restrictions, it is unlikely that they would be able to acquire rulers and weights or scales that they can bring to the sea with them to be able to weigh and measure various types of fish species. People often fish while standing on the rocky shores, using poor fishing equipment, and sometimes they do not catch a single fish in a whole day. It is thus quite absurd to think that

they would consider throwing a fish back in the sea due to size or weight restrictions when they have finally caught one.

The reason why rangers have not focused on the complicated fishing restrictions is perhaps that people are not very likely to catch enough fish per person per day to be in danger of breaking the restrictions (which are usually between 5 and 10 fish per day). As can be seen in the diagram (*Figure 15*), people were indeed more well informed about restrictions in mussel and crayfish collection, where it is also practically much easier for people to take more of the resources than they are allowed to. Especially when it came to size- and amount-based restrictions in mussels and crayfish, people could often cite them to me: “eight crayfish and thirty mussels per person per day, and no small crayfish or mussels should be taken”. These restrictions are relatively simply formulated, easy to remember and easy to understand. People for example naturally tend to choose the bigger crayfish and mussels when collecting, so that the smaller ones “can still grow”. The “per day”-restrictions in mussels were considered stupid by many informants, since people usually collect mussels only twice per month, at neap tide, at which time they would prefer to collect a full bucket once they have made the trip to the sea. In Cutwini, where the coast is a fairly long walk and a steep climb from the village, people also complained that they would prefer to go there once per week and spend a few hours collecting crayfish instead of going there every day for only eight specimen.

When it comes to firewood and forest resource use, there are different rules in the different forested parts of the study area, depending on type of forest tenure. Local conceptualisations of firewood restrictions and the percentage of households that know about them are also shown in Table 20 and *Figure 15*. In Cutwini, most households think that they need a permit in order to collect firewood (i.e. dead wood) in the big and dense indigenous forest that is close to the village<sup>65</sup>. In fact, they are not allowed to collect wood here at all, since indigenous forests are very strictly protected by law. The confusion about the permit is due to the fact that people needed permits if they wanted to cut green trees in this forest earlier. Since then, however, regulations have become harder, at the same time as the nature conservation offices were moved further from the village. The people therefore do not experience that rangers are patrolling the forest any more, and thus they collect wood here quite freely, although they still remember the permit issue. Most people would thus be afraid if they suddenly saw rangers in the forest, which illustrates how restrictive laws often are very closely connected to their enforcement in the minds of local people. If there are no rangers to implement them, people tend to think that perhaps there are no restrictions any more.

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<sup>65</sup> This forest can be seen in the aerial photograph in *Figure 5*.

### **Box E. Local Perceptions of Restrictions in Natural Resource Use**

Selected quotes from local people in answer to the question: Why do you think there are restrictions in marine or forest resource use?\*

*Protection/conservation/because people damage the resources:*

- They have to protect the forest so it is not damaged by the people
- They want to protect nature
- It is good, because people cut green trees and that is not good
- Because the government wants animals to feel free
- We are allowed to collect dead wood because it's already dead. You cant touch the things that are alive
- Because the people damage nature
- Forest belongs to the government and they dont want it to be damaged
- Security doesnt want people to finish all the resources
- Because people use too much wood and make deforestation

*Sustainability/future generations:*

- The government are helping us to keep our resources forever
- We not allowed to catch undersize fish because they must still grow
- We need to leave some for future generations
- Nature tells us the restrictions so the people should leave these things to grow bigger
- Because the children in the future should also see all these things if we follow the restrictions

*Money/corruption/government thinks of its own interests:*

- The forest belongs to the government. They want money
- They want to protect the forest and also they want to have an income
- They own the forest so they don't want us to use it
- The security need money

*Confusion/disagreement/acceptance of authority:*

- Small fish must grow, but I dont know why big fish is limited. They are already big and will soon die anyway
- Its because of apartheid. But they are wrong becuase nature belongs only to God
- People from Nature told us, we don't know why
- We are not informed about the reasons for these restrictions so we are still wondering
- We did not know because we used to collect these things but now we are afraid of the government and of the security
- I don't ask why, it's the government and they can decide these things if they want
- Those people from Nature are rude so its not easy to ask them why

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\* Nature conservation rangers are often referred to as "Nature" or "Security".  
"They" refers to nature conservation officials or the government.

Cutwini has recently received a designated community forest (a gum tree plantation), where the local people are supposed to collect their firewood. A few kilometres of steep climbing has to be undertaken in order to reach this forest, which leads to people preferring to collect firewood (a daily activity for many women) in the closer-lying indigenous forest. This forest is so overwhelmingly large and dense that the rules against dry wood collection there make very little sense to the local population. Indeed, it is questionable how much damage the people of this small village could be able to do to this big forest through their firewood collection. Firstly, people never penetrate

more than a few hundred metres into the forest, due to its impassability, combined with local beliefs about it being “dangerous” in different ways, and due to the fact that people do not hunt or collect other things than wood from the forest. Secondly, aerial photo analysis of the forest has not revealed any significant change in forest extent or density over the last 70 years, out of which the village has been close to the forest for around 35 years (Haag and Hajdu, 2005).

In Manteku, people are allowed to collect one headload of dead wood per person every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the protected forest close to the village. Rangers are stationed here and the procedures are tightly controlled, for example, people are not allowed to bring bush knives with them when collecting firewood (in order not to be able to cut green wood). Therefore, people in Manteku are well aware about the rule against cutting green wood. Many of the villagers in Manteku, however, collect wood in other wood patches, where firewood collection is not regulated in any way. Hence they do not know about other restrictions.

#### *Local Conceptualisations of the Reasons for Restrictions*

Each household was also asked *why* they thought these restrictions had been put in place (in those cases that they knew about restrictions in the first place). In key informant interviews, some of the natural resource users were furthermore asked to expand on their thoughts about the resource use restrictions and how it affected their lives and livelihoods. The results of the household survey and the interviews were very varied. While many resource users have no idea, or very vague theories about the reasons for the restrictions that affect their lives, others say things that could as well be quotes from “Our Common Future” (WCED, 1984). Some selected quotes from the interviews, representative of different types of common opinions, are presented in *Box E*.

Local theories on the reasons behind natural resource restrictions often relate to ‘old-school’ conservationism, where people themselves say that they damage nature and that nature should be protected from them. Over the years, nature conservation officials have probably told people these reasons for restrictive laws. Some people talk instead about future generations and that they should save the natural resources for their children – sometimes even the word “sustainability” is mentioned – these are mostly people who have been involved in environmental education provided by poverty relief programmes like Coast Care and Working for Water, and in Manteku also by some nature conservation officials. Some of the answers, however, show how sceptic people are against government motives and interventions, and that they suspect that both the government and the rangers are corrupt. The fact that the State fells and processes trees in forest plantations is seen by many as proof that the government is just using the nature conservation argument is to restrict local people from using the trees because “they just

wants the trees for their own profit". Some informants expressed mostly confusion about the restrictions, and stated that they were afraid to ask the rangers about the reasons.

When answering these questions, people in general tended to avoid giving their own opinions on the matters. Overall, people do not seem to be particularly used to questioning government authority or expecting explanations to various policies. Local people were also usually afraid of the nature conservation rangers and some believed they could be locked up in jail just for being close to the sea or the forest. This is perhaps also not surprising considering the "crusading zeal" (Beinart, 2003:332) with which conservationist policies have been implemented in South Africa previously. It should also not be forgotten that people are used to a highly authoritative regime that never used to ask for their opinions.

Some current policies also send questionable signals to local people about the role of nature conservation rangers. For example, the rangers carry guns when patrolling the coast, and are deliberately changed around on their jobs so that they cannot build up any personal relationships to people in their area of jurisdiction. They get only one month of training, focusing mostly on physical education and learning about laws and restrictions, rather than on pedagogical or communication skills. Thus, it seems as if rangers are supposed to focus on intimidation and forceful implementation of policies rather than on communicating with and educating local communities.

Big individual differences in awareness of restrictions and knowledge about the reasons for them show that there are considerable intra-village differences in educational level, power and wealth. The 'elite', consisting of people who for example belong to important lineages, who are committee members, who are relatively well-educated (e.g. teachers) or relatively rich, tend to agree among themselves that governmental policies on natural resource restrictions are good. These persons are respected in their communities, and are the first ones to be selected when policy-makers need people from the villages for environmental education or for participation in policy-making or various projects, but they do not necessarily represent the point of view of the poorest people in their villages. It is difficult for people of the local elite to actually comprehend the situation of their poorer and less empowered neighbours, for example since they themselves often buy their food and use paraffin instead of wood. Thus, they can sometimes pronounce statements that are very elitist and paternalistic, much like Maddox' (2002:251) example of South African scholars saying that African farmers "don't really know how to farm".

Poor people are often treated with this paternalistic attitude, by both local elites as well as people further removed from the village level, as if they actually *wanted* to depend on fishing and firewood collection instead of having jobs and buying their food and fuel. Attitudes vary a lot between individuals, but in general I found that local NGO's and the rangers themselves

sometimes have more sympathy and understanding for the situation of the poor resource users than do local elites or people further up in the implementation chain in cities like Umtata or Bisho.

Interviews with the poorer segments of the communities, who often rely more on natural resources, show that people are frustrated about the restrictions, and especially the restrictions on marine resource use. A man in Manteku who often goes fishing when unemployed states:

The government is always trying to stop whatever we are doing to try to survive. If we are trying to work at the cottages, they stop us, if we are fishing, they stop us, if we want to move to town to work they tear down the houses we build there. ...<sup>66</sup>

People can thus feel that the government is working against them rather than for them. This quote also illustrates the big differences between the perspective and perceptions of local people who are directly affected by policies and the perspective of “the government” or policy makers who are trying to integrate global concerns of sustainability, national concerns such as the requirements of the forestry industry, and local needs.

It is also important to note that even if many people say that it is good that nature is protected and that restrictions are in place, it does still not necessarily mean that they are actually following the restrictions. Najib (1993, 1999) shows in a case study from Morocco that people who are well aware of environmental problems and have a positive attitude towards changing their lifestyle on a general level, still have a low willingness to really make sacrifices on a concrete level in order to conserve the environment. Awareness does thus not necessarily lead to actual action. Similarly, laws intended to protect nature are made at a state level by decision-makers who do not themselves need to make any specific sacrifices in order to follow these laws. People at the local level, who will have to change their lives, thus tend to resist these laws even if they on a general level want to protect the environment.

### **Agricultural Policies**

One question has often been raised when I have discussed my findings at conferences and seminars, and this concerns if and how the rural people in the study area could be encouraged to go “back” to focusing more on agriculture. It thus seems that there is a great interest among researchers, policy makers and people in general to persuade local people in rural areas of South Africa to focus more on agricultural activities. In my opinion it is questionable if this is a feasible and desirable thing to strive for to the extent that it is done today. As discussed previously, interventionist agricultural policies have tended to depart from the assumption that subsistence agriculture needs

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<sup>66</sup> The reference that this man makes to “work at the cottages” reflects a current controversy in Manteku, see *Box E*.

to be improved in order to resemble commercial agriculture, which is seen as more 'effective'. As for example Scoones and Woolmer (2003) point out, this belief goes back to developmental policies from the 1980's and 1990's, associated with the IMF and the World Bank, where it was believed that rural families would be able to support themselves largely from agriculture if only their farming techniques were improved.

These types of policies have failed in the study area, like in many other places, which is demonstrated e.g. by the introduction of hybrid seeds and the "help" provided by the TRACOR projects discussed above, that seems to have done more harm than good to local livelihoods and agricultural production. The World Food Summit came already in 1996 to the conclusion that unequal distribution rather than agricultural productivity is the main problem when it comes to food security (Thomson, 2001). Yet, policies are continuing to try to improve productivity rather than focusing on distribution and it seems that the 'Green Revolution'-type of ideas are still guiding people's concerns about reforming rural agriculture and convincing people to go 'back' to farming. Bank and Minkley (2005) show how current agricultural programmes in South Africa still reproduce the dichotomies between subsistence agriculture, associated with underdevelopment, unsustainable farming practices and wasted lands, and commercial agriculture, associated with development, productivity and enhancement of economic growth. In a newly launched agricultural development project<sup>67</sup> close to the studied villages, the government is again engaging in interventionist methods, this time promoting genetically modified seeds and commercialised production methods.

Interviews in the study area reveal that people who use local seeds do not in general feel that their yields are low or that they are in need of pest control or fertilisers. Thus, productivity does not seem to be the problem. Authors such as McAllister (2005) and Ainslie (2005) have also suggested that maize yields in household gardens cultivated without chemical fertilizers and commercial production techniques are sufficiently high, and cattle production on communal lands is sufficiently effective, for meeting local expectations and are in no particular need of interventionist reformation.

Even if people are in essence fairly satisfied with their own agricultural production, this does not by any means imply that agriculture is their main livelihood activity or that agricultural production suffices to meet all the basic needs of the village populations. An assumption is often made that it is rights to arable land that give people security, and land redistribution is often characterized as an important means of poverty alleviation for rural South Africa. However, as Zimmerman (2000) shows, the poorest parts of the population are likely to be rationed out of such a program, at the same time

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<sup>67</sup> This project is part of a governmental strategy to increase food production in South Africa. Klara Jacobson at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences has recently begun a research project that focuses on how this agricultural project works as a development initiative.

as access to jobs or pensions are much more important than access to agricultural land to most rural people in South Africa today, which is also observed by McAllister (1992). Neither agricultural productivity nor the lack of land thus seems to be the main problem behind poverty or low agricultural production in these villages, which is demonstrated by the fact that those who do not plant much in their gardens are those who lack the monetary resources to buy seeds and other necessities for planting. The lack of monetary incomes is thus the major problem, and the need for jobs is the major need.

It is furthermore important to note that whatever the reasons originally behind a move from agricultural activities to jobs, most people today *want* to depend on jobs rather than agriculture. Trying to force people to go against what they want has seldom proved effective previously, and is unlikely to prove so in this instance. It is furthermore important to remember that agricultural activities can only help to fulfil a part of people's basic needs – and people in general worry more about jobs, health and education than about food. The dangers of exaggerating the benefits that local people would reap from improving the agricultural productivity of their plots is thus that it draws the focus from the dire local need for jobs and the problems of the poorest segments of rural communities, and instead encourages projects focusing on large-scale, interventionist agricultural development. If it is truly recognised that people in the rural areas are highly dependent on jobs first and foremost, then it should follow that that job creation must be a first priority from a policy perspective.

### **Policies for Job Creation**

What types of policies for job creation have then been implemented in the study area? Well, there have been various governmental initiatives, such as poverty relief programmes, as well as one foreign aid-based initiative. All of these have been implemented through various NGO's, and some have been more successful than others. In this section, I will discuss some of these initiatives, as well as another policy that affects local job creation (though it does not have that as a main purpose).

Poverty relief programmes have been prominent in both villages, and they have affected local livelihoods in significant, and usually positive, ways. The two most important poverty relief programmes in the area, Working for Water and Coast Care have both been conducted with success in the area, and will be discussed in more detail shortly. Other poverty relief programmes have not been as successful. In Manteku for example, the Department of Land Affairs and Agriculture (DLAA) launched a microfinance programme in 2001 in which local people were invited to present their own ideas for

small-scale projects that would create jobs for them<sup>68</sup>. The policy required that people in the village should form a group that had meetings, agreed on a constitution for the project and made a financial plan. People were informed about this possibility and given examples of projects: a village bakery, a sewing group or a brick-making project. The group had furthermore to start up the project by themselves and then apply for funding. An inspection group would then visit the village to see if the project was feasible and then decide on its funding.

However, this programme ended up not financing any local projects. Due to the quite large amount of work that had to be done by the villagers themselves before funding was given, people had difficulties to raise the money to start the projects properly. Furthermore, if projects were successfully started, the funding application procedure was so long and complicated that projects sometimes failed before they had been given money. There was a sort of paradox involved in the programme set-up – the projects that were good enough to earn the right to funding were likely to be so good that they did not really need funding by the time they had qualified to receive it. Instead of helping people to create a viable business, the project focused on sorting out the persons with unviable business ideas, i.e. probably sorting out some of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals (and leaving them worse off than before the project had started).

Another paradoxical point about this microfinance programme was it encouraged local people to start up businesses such as a bakery, which proved very difficult to sustain in the village (as mentioned before, the high costs of flour make it cheaper to buy bread at the shops in Lusikisiki than to bake it yourself), while ignoring many flourishing and budding small-scale enterprises that already existed in the village (spaza-shops, taxis, roofing, brick-laying, and so on). Thus, instead of recognising that local people know best what is a viable business idea in their own village, the programme thus came to the villages with preconceived ideas of what would work – and approach that has continued to fail during decades of interventionist policies.

Another failed initiative in the study area has been the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative (SDI), discussed before, which has not managed to assist with much local job creation. An EU-sponsored ‘support’ project implemented by the NGO PondoCROP, focused instead on community tourism and worked well in the northernmost area of the Wild Coast, where the “Amadiba” coastal horse and hiking trail was implemented. There were therefore high expectations when the “Amampondo trails” were planned and launched in the study area. However, this project has so far been a disap-

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<sup>68</sup> The information on this particular poverty relief programme was collected only through interviews with local people. Since the project never succeeded in the villages, I did not make any interviews with the implementing agency (which is of course regrettable in retrospect). Thus, the perspective of the implementing agency and the policy makers is not represented in this particular example.

pointment. Since 2000, people feel that there have been endless meetings and very slow progress with the project, and local people who expected to be employed by the project have so far gotten a few days work per month at the most.

**Box F. The Case of Illegal Cottages in Manteku\***

In Manteku, one of few local job opportunities include work in the holiday cottages that some tourists have built along the coasts. These cottages are illegal since 1992, when the special coastline Decree No. 9 was enacted, establishing a coastal conservation area 1 km inland from the coast. Cottage owners have however got permission to build the cottages from the community through negotiating with the chief (though it is not in his jurisdiction to give these permissions). Some of the cottage owners have also raised funds to help with different things that are needed in Manteku, for example, they have installed two water tanks and built a school for children attending grade 1-2. In return, the villagers look after the cottages very carefully. In December 2000, when cottage owners were arriving for summer holidays, the police attempted to implement this law in Manteku. Soldiers were brought in to block off the roads, and local people were not allowed to go to work at the cottages. The villagers protested loudly, stating that the cottages had their full support and could not be uprooted without community consent. This led to the whole issue being taken to court in 2005.

\* This information was obtained through interviews with villagers, cottage owners and local NGO representatives in 2001, 2002 and 2004, as well as from the website *South African Government Information*, [www.info.gov.za](http://www.info.gov.za).

The case of the illegal cottages in Manteku<sup>69</sup> (see *Box F*), show that people do not perceive that the government has succeeded in creating local employment, and that they become very upset if livelihood opportunities are taken away without anything being offered in return. In the eyes of local people, who have been displaced by previous governments and are very suspicious to outside intervention in their lives, the new government is now again implementing laws that erode their daily livelihoods. The reactions should be seen in the light that several government policies that infringe on local livelihoods have been harshly implemented recently – like restrictions against wood collection and harvesting of marine resources. This illustrates that conservation measures must be linked to protection of livelihood security if they are to be accepted locally. Some people seemed in fact convinced that the government was implementing these laws, just to make their lives more difficult, “because they hate us”. One woman who works at a holiday cottage said:

Those people [i.e. the cottage owners] have done more for us than the government. They have built a school, they have built water tanks, and they are

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<sup>69</sup> The DEAT Subdirectorate: Coastal Zone Management is the lead agent for coastal management issues, including the actions against illegal cottages on in the study area

giving us jobs. When the government promises to make improvements in this village, and bring us new jobs, that's when they have a right to chase away those cottagers.

The government claimed in 2000 that the Wild Coast SDI and the EU-funded tourism project would compensate the people of Manteku for the lost job opportunities at the holiday cottages:

“projects are being implemented which will contribute to the sustainable economic development of the area and the creation of work opportunities for members of local communities. All these initiatives, which form part of the revitalised Wild Coast SDI, have the full support of Cabinet and the Executive Council of the Eastern Cape (quoted from the website *South African Government Information*, article “Government moves on illegal activity on the Wild Coast”, [www.info.gov.za/speeches/2000/001215945a1002.htm](http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2000/001215945a1002.htm))

As shown by the discussion on these projects above, local people were rightfully sceptical to these promises. By 2005, these two projects had led to very few job opportunities in Manteku. Instead, Manteku received R670 000 of EU money in 2005 for a project and were advised to make a plant- and flower nursery. About six persons were trained for the project and a big office building was built in the village, but when discussing the project with people, they had no clear idea about how it would work in the future and who would actually buy the things grown at the nursery. The villagers are supposed to take over the project after 3-4 years, but people themselves said that they did not believe that the project would be able to generate enough money to continue to employ them after this time.

If the R670 000 given to Manteku end up providing only 6 families out of 86 with an income for three years, it has in the end been a fairly wasteful way of using this money. Consider that every household in the village could instead have received R650 per month for a whole year out of this money. Could this have proven a more successful approach? Interested in what people would do if they were given some money, I asked this question during interviews in Cutwini in 2003 and 2005. Some typical answers indicate a willingness invest in future livelihood security, both through starting up businesses and investing in education:

I would improve this homestead and pay for the school fees of my sisters and brother

28-year old unmarried woman who is working at the tea plantation

We could plant more in the field and try to sell those things

54-year-old married man who is not working

I could try to buy some things in town and sell to the people [in this village], and after a while I could have my own spaza-shop.

35-year old unmarried woman who is not working

I would buy a car ... we could use that car as a taxi and earn money with it

45-year-old married woman working in a poverty relief programme

I would buy cattle and sheep and I could marry and build my own home-  
stead here [in the village]<sup>70</sup>

30-year old unmarried man who is working in Durban

I could go back to college [...] I could not afford to finish my nursing  
training before

26-year old unmarried woman working in a furniture shop

The failure of the job creation projects discussed above, together with the observation that many informal businesses in the villages, which have been started up without projects or microfinance loans, are flourishing, brings us back to the previous debate on aid projects that try to tell people what to do instead of supporting their own initiatives and the potentially controversial idea of simply giving people money transfers and allowing them to get out of poverty on their own accord (Hanlon, 2004). In the next chapter, this question will be debated, drawing on various results from my study.

### *Working for Water and Coast Care Programmes*

As mentioned above, two poverty relief programmes, designed by the South African governmental departments DEAT and DWAF and implemented by local NGOs have been important features of livelihoods in Cutwini and Manteku, and will here be investigated in more detail. It is important to note, however, that these programmes, though partly financed with poverty relief money, do not have poverty relief as a only goal.

The Working for Water project has employed people in Cutwini and the Coast Care project employed people in both villages. In general, local people are very happy with the projects, since they provide job opportunities, and they seem to have been fairly successful in reaching their goals in providing work for some of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the communities they have been active in.

Here, however, I will shortly analyse some aspects of these projects that go beyond the fact that they have provided job opportunities, and look at how poor people are targeted, what type of work and training is provided and how the programmes are designed. These conclusions are based on interviews with persons working in the projects, with local supervisors, contractors, area managers, implementing agencies and, in one case, with a na-

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<sup>70</sup> As suggested by this quote from a man working in Durban, labour migrants are often interested to move back to their rural villages on a permanent basis, contrary to popular beliefs about people's dislike for living in rural Transkei. Interviews furthermore reveal that people in the studied villages are in general very happy with village life and would like to continue living in the villages if they could only secure some monetary incomes.

tional policy maker. I have also observed the work, training and meetings of the two poverty relief programmes. However, since my fieldwork included many aspects of local livelihoods, the amount of time I devoted to poverty relief programmes alone was limited.

It has been discussed earlier that it is difficult to reach all the poor people through poverty relief measures. Remembering Hossain's (2005) discussion about poor people, it is evident that many poverty relief measures seem to be targeted at able-bodied, physically stable, efficient, diligent and responsible persons, who seemingly only need a work opportunity in order to get out of poverty. However, many poor people who do not fit into these categories still need help and be able to work in the programmes if they only had the self-esteem to apply for a position or got support to do so. The programmes discussed here have strict criteria for the selection of the workforce to ensure that it targets the 'poorest of the poor' – for example the people working for the programmes should come from households with no other incomes (not even pension) and the target is to recruit 60% women, 20% youth and 5% disabled persons to the workforce. Some of Hossain's categories are thus here included, as for example the disabled, though the work in both programmes is physically challenging to the point where persons with certain types of disabilities are excluded.

Elite capture is a reality also in the poverty relief programmes. The persons who get the best positions, such as contractors, supervisors or field managers where people are trained and empowered, usually belong to various local elites. In the case of Working for Water programme, the contractor furthermore gets to choose the people who will work for him or her fairly freely, which might also favour people who have strong connections with the elite. The ordinary "workforce" does usually consist of people who belong to the poorest categories, but these do not receive as much training and are usually rotated after one or two years. In addition, since the poverty relief programmes pay a very low wage, and since the persons working in the programmes are supposed to be the only ones supporting their households, it does not leave much room for saving up a starting capital for the future, after the project is finished.

The reason why jobs as supervisors and contractors are given to local elites, according to area/regional managers and NGO representatives, is that it is important that the people who will supervise workers should be reliable and have certain skills. For example, contractors at the Working for Water programme should be debt free, able to open a bank account, able to read and write and register for tax paying. The programme makes a contract with each contractor, who is him- or herself responsible for paying their workers. The idea is that even after the programme ends, these contractors will be empowered since they have contacts, certain equipment and knowledge about how to run a business. They should then be able to open their own businesses and become employers to other people in the area, is the reason-

ing. I have not conducted fieldwork in the area long enough to be able to follow up if this strategy has indeed worked, but I did observe that some of these supervisors and contractors were empowered in different ways, for example several of them opened businesses such as *spaza*-shops, though I did not observe that they would create employment for others.

The education and training component for the regular workforce seemed at times, though ambitious in its goals, questionable in results. I have witnessed several sessions of training of the Coast Care programme, for example a “business management training”, where the supervisor was trying to explain a booklet in English about complicated business management issues to his group of workers, many of whom were illiterate. The supervisor himself had great difficulties in grasping what the whole thing was about and could not understand most of the complicated English words in the booklet. He simply wrote down the booklet on a blackboard, word for word, and had the workers (or those of them who could write) copy it down in their books. This particular session of training seemed only to make people feel stupid and quite certain that they could never start up a business of their own.

Poverty relief programmes seem to have been very successful in spreading messages of environmental awareness and protection – much more effectively than the for example the efforts of the nature conservation officials. Because of Working for Water and Coast Care, many persons in the villages have become more aware of conservation issues and educated about how to protect the environment. The fact that people know about restrictions in forest and marine resource use at all (see above) can probably be attributed mainly to these programmes. Since the programmes communicate the message of environmental concern while giving the people work, they do not carry the stigma that nature conservation as an institution does. The programmes contribute to local people feeling that the government cares about them and is trying to help them, instead of just restricting them in different ways.

It is a bit ironic that the money that is today used for trying to enforce (without usually succeeding) various overcomplicated marine and forest resource restrictions, could probably instead be used to achieve the same result (i.e. local awareness of the need of nature protection) if it was spent on creating local jobs through poverty relief programmes, which would include education on nature protection. While the former type of policy is perceived as focusing on constraint and leads to people feeling things like “the government hates us”, the latter policy focuses on creating opportunities and leads to reactions like “finally the government tries to help us”.

As mentioned, Moffat (1998) has pointed out that policy-makers should never lose the focus on local people’s stomachs, which always come first from their perspectives. People in the study area also constantly mentioned things that alluded to this fact, for example, people often conclude by saying something like: ”You know, at the end of the day, you need to feed your

family". This was also mentioned when discussing the main benefits of the poverty relief programmes (which is that they provide money) and the fact they have different payment policies. One woman who was in the Working for Water programme said:

Yes, yes, *lima* [this work for 'work party' is also used to refer to the Working for Water programme} is a good project in many ways. But you know for us here [i.e. in the village] the most important thing is money... always money. And Coast Care pays their workers every two weeks. So we like that project more. We who work at *lima*, we don't get paid until we finish a certain area. Sometimes it takes 6 weeks, so then we have to go to the *spaza* for too much *ityala* [i.e. debt]. And how can we borrow money or pay bills if we are not sure that the money is coming every month? No, even if Coast Care paid less, I would still prefer that project.

Its clear from the statement above that Working for Water's policy to withhold money until the contract is finished is very difficult for poor people to handle, since they do not have any savings. Since these programmes target the "poorest of the poor", it is not surprising that these people do not have money in the bank to rely on while waiting for their wages, and the inevitable result is that they will simply have to go hungry or have to borrow money, sometimes with high interest.

Though the poverty relief programmes have been successful in providing environmental education and employment to the local people, I still feel compelled to question the aims of the projects, when departing from the particular locality of my study area. These programmes focus on invasive plants and other conservation efforts at the same time as poverty relief, a mix that is often said to go well together. However, if one departs from the consideration that there is apparently money to pay people for doing work close to their communities as a poverty relief measure, then are really the current tasks of cleaning the coast and removing alien plants the most urgent tasks at hand, especially in this particular area? These communities have not had the resources and labour force to build enough schoolhouses or clinics, and are in bad need of road repairs. Why do not poverty relief projects focus at all on these much-needed things, and why do they not teach people skills like house building, instead of teaching them skills of dubious future use, like how to kill trees with herbicides?

The Working for Water project started in areas of South Africa that were suffering from drought and where alien vegetation was invading endemic, highly vulnerable and valuable flora. In these areas, the clearing of alien vegetation fulfilled a dual purpose of protecting the indigenous flora and contributing to water conservation. Since the project was successful in these areas, the concept was extended to include other parts of South Africa, but it does not seem to have been adapted to the varying local situations in the country. In this study area, local flora is not as valuable and vulnerable as in

the Cape region, and the extent of alien infestation is such that removing the aliens seems like Sisyphus work. In addition, since the area is receiving about 1200 mm of rain every year, the water issue is hardly a big problem here. Thus, the work that the workers perform seems in many ways not of particularly high priority, at least not from the perspective of local people.

The Coast Care project is cleaning the coast from litter, alien vegetation (again!) and restoring walking paths along the coast. The rationale is that the country's coasts should be kept clean for tourists. This is also a bit strange in the study area as it is currently not many tourists who use the coastal areas and the beaches here. In addition, the Port St Johns municipality had money for a poverty relief project, which they modelled after the Coast Care project. This led to a situation in Manteku in 2005 where another 40 people were working with cleaning the coast through this initiative. Though it is good that all these people have jobs, however temporary, it is a bit absurd that about 50 persons are on a daily basis cleaning a 3-4 km long stretch of coast, which is used by about five tourists per week, most of who are responsible eco-tourism oriented persons who would never litter in the first place. Needless to say, the people working for these projects are not very busy in Manteku, which is a distressing waste of labour force when considering the things that could instead have been done in the community.

### **Policies for Sustainable Livelihoods**

So far, I have looked at various policies and how they affect local livelihoods. In this section, I will turn the focus to local livelihoods and the question how these, through various policies, could be made to be more sustainable. Remembering that the definition of sustainability when it comes to livelihoods includes that people's capacity to generate new activities should also be sustained (Scoones, 1998), we recognise that unsustainable livelihoods in the study area would be those that undermine their own existence, either environmentally, socially or economically. For example, unsustainable livelihoods could be conceptualised as jobs that are so hard and stressful that people who perform them become sick and unable to work, or pensions that make so large holes in the national budget that it is unlikely that future generations can be guaranteed their pensions.

There are a few potential problems in this area – the work at the tea plantation and in the mines and factories are potentially physically very challenging for example. Thus, from a policy perspective, systems of work security and compensation for work-related injuries might be looked over. Poverty relief programmes, though in general terms working well, are only temporary employments, and many of the informal businesses that generate livelihoods for local people are in fact illegal and unsupported by the state. These issues could all be of policy concern.

For livelihood strategies based on natural resource use, unsustainable livelihoods are those that deplete the resources and make the livelihoods

successively less productive. It is here important to note the difference between various changes in the natural resources, which do not necessarily have to be valued as negative, and changes that actually deplete resources.

The most concern so far, appears to have been devoted to the environmentally sustainable (in terms of resource protection) aspect of livelihoods. This concern has manifested itself in worries about local marine resource use, overgrazing, erosion and so on. The studies in this particular area have, however, shown that there might not be an acute cause for concern about these issues. The more important issues connected to livelihoods in this area are other ones – the question about easier access to livelihoods, mainly to jobs and grants, and about basic security when a livelihood fails, e.g. when retrenchments occur. Job creation, infrastructure development, better schooling and healthcare, and basic poverty relief and social security are major issues, dealing not only with making livelihoods sustainable, but with creating them in the first place and ensuring that they are sufficient to cover basic needs.

A focus on livelihoods also underscores that if an opportunity to natural resource based livelihoods is to be restricted or taken away, there needs to be alternative for the affected families, otherwise the sustainability of local livelihoods is threatened. Job creation can be such an alternative, but it is important to note that families who depend on natural resources are usually not the same type of families that are first in line for jobs, and can therefore be difficult to reach.

How can thus sustainability and security in livelihoods be safeguarded? Some negative livelihood changes, like those that occur when a pensioner dies or a person is retrenched, cannot be prevented. However, social security systems can help to carry affected families through the transitional phase until they manage to secure a new source of livelihood, and thus prevent them from falling into poverty traps.

Trying to prevent the splitting up of families into smaller units, or, as discussed above, trying to alter people's decisions to stop with agriculture are more tricky issues. It should be pointed out that these are informed decisions taken by local people and that these families perceive their choices as rational. Thus, they would probably resist policies that try to change their choices without changing the circumstances that lead them to take their particular choice. Some families may of course have decided to cut down on agricultural activities only because of a lack of money, and these might be helped by cash injections in different forms. However, the decision to resume agriculture should in these cases still come from the concerned families.

### **Policies, Local Knowledge and Participation**

McAllister (1992), when criticizing the national rural development and land reform strategy from 1991, in which there is a lot of rhetoric on local em-

powerment and communities making their own decisions, points out that these goals are necessarily contradictory the goals of the policy itself:

If [...] development is to be a matter of letting people decide for themselves what is best for them, and assisting with the achievement of these goals, then one cannot have a national rural development and land reform strategy. (*ibid*:214)

This summarizes the paradoxical situation of policy-making and local participation. My interviews show that local officials often understand the communities they are working in well, but do not have the authority to adapt implementation of laws and regulations to local situations. At the same time, research into local perspectives and consultation with local people is often very urban-based. Few researchers actually visit rural areas for longer periods, and consultation often takes place out of the local context. A nature conservation official gave a good example of this type of consultation:

You, know, some of these laws have been drafted without proper consultation. They interview the educated people in towns in preparation for the laws. [...] When they select someone from a local community to participate, that person doesn't really understand what is going on. This happened to me once when I was younger. [...] I was chosen by my community to participate in a meeting and they flew me to Johannesburg and I was just like '... wow, I'm flying on an airplane! ... wow, these buildings are big! ... wow, I'm here at a hotel now! ... wow, I'm eating meat... oh no how do I use this knife and fork?' and so on. I was not focusing on the things that were discussed and I did not understand them. And when they asked me I just said 'yes that is good' because I felt shy and otherwise I just kept quiet.

The example above illustrates that 'local participation' and 'consultation' can look very different and be more or less effective depending on the set-up. In most of the cases, however, the consultation and participation is on the decision-makers, planners or researchers terms. As discussed above, another problem is that those who are selected to participate in consultative processes often belong to some sort of local elite and thus are not representative of their communities (and especially not of the poorest parts of their communities). Furthermore, people may, as illustrated by the quote above, feel stupid because they are out of their contexts, and feel shy or intimidated to express their opinions at consultations.

Not only is consultation a problem when drafting laws and regulations, but mechanisms of feedback once a law is in place sometimes seem very weak. While the poverty relief programmes had fairly good feedback structures, the processes around natural resource use restrictions did not. A nature conservation official said:

Feedback from the people ... hmm... well, it would be a rare situation if the community would complain about something and we would take it further. The community would have structure themselves, and complain formally. I can't see that happening really. [...] You know we are not even supposed to ask them for their opinions and pass that information back, that is not our job. We are here to implement the laws, that's it.

This lack of a feedback mechanism again reinforces the paternalistic tendency of the natural resource use restrictions, where local people are not given an opportunity to give feedback on this law, since policy makers already know "what is best for them". The problem that outsiders tend to feel like they have much more knowledge about things than local people has been touched upon before. Similarly, policy-makers often assume that they understand local reactions and do not take the time to check that assumption.

Eriksson Baaz (2005) points out how development workers in Tanzania tended to interpret local resistance to their advice as passivity on behalf of local people, instead of as a delicate way of communicating their dislike of the advice. Assistants, however, repeatedly explained to me that it was not considered good form to object if an elderly person or someone else in an authoritative position gave you advice that you did not like. If that happened, the culturally acceptable form of reaction was to politely thank the person for their advice, and then proceed to ignore it. If the person in question did not 'get the message', and confronted you, asking why you had not followed their advice, it was still more polite to come up with some form of excuse rather than telling them straight that you did not agree with their advice.

In South Africa, resistance through passivity and 'slow-working' has a long history of being a means of protest against authorities, both politically and at the individual level. Thus, in South Africa, it could be seen as especially important to create an atmosphere of participation where local people feel at ease to express their opinions, and there lies a specific danger in interpreting passivity and lack of protest as consent in policy-making.

The rural areas in South Africa are still often neglected in policy, as shown by e.g. Lind (2003) who argues that post-apartheid housing development has been skewed towards the urban areas in the Eastern Cape, while rural regions, especially in the former Transkei, have been effectively excluded by official housing policies, even though the need for housing and other basic services is high in this region. An informant echoes this observation, and expresses his frustrated feeling that rural people can not have any influence on national policy-making in South Africa:

It's not easy to live in the rural area because we don't have democracy here. We can't just raise our voices and we are not there when they make the laws. The government used to tell us to be proud of our culture and go back to our roots [and live like we used to live, relying on agriculture and natural resources] but at the same time they are trying to stop us from doing that with

laws and rules. When it is time for elections, the government comes and promises water and electricity and toilets, but then nothing happens. The councillor said there would be 8 people trained to become police but nothing happened. The government are just helping those people in the towns just to show the people from overseas that SA [South Africa] is looking good, but in the villages nothing happens.

Another point, touched on before, that adds to this gap between local level realities and national level planning is that planners can lack crucial local insights because they are on their level dealing with abstractions and ‘concepts’ instead of things that affect their daily lives (Hjort af Ornäs and Lundquist, 1999). An example of this is given by Kepe (1999) and Cousins and Kepe (2004), who argue that the definition of ‘community’ can be an abstract concept in initial planning of a project, but when it comes to its implementation, and it affects local people’s livelihoods and survival, the definition can be of crucial importance and become highly contested. This difference between abstractions and realities can be traced in the examples given above.

The case of the cottages in Manteku illustrates how things that are intimately connected to each other at the local level can belong to different ‘categories’ of problems that are addressed by different departments, on a national level. While one part of the government decides to enforce the laws against illegal cottages, the other part, which is supposed to make sure that new job opportunities are created for people in Manteku, is lagging behind. On a national level, this time discrepancy may be of no great concern, but to the local people, for whom it is a matter of being able to put food on the table or send children to school, even a few months of discrepancy is of crucial concern. The gap between the local and national realities can in these instances have devastating consequences for families or individuals.

## 9. Discussion: Dynamics of Local Worlds

This study has investigated local livelihood strategies in a rural study area in Pondoland, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Livelihood activities have been recorded, their relative importance analysed, the strategic ways that people combine them and choose between them has been discussed, and the interactions between local processes and national-level decision-making have been examined.

As has been illustrated in this thesis, local worlds and the various contexts they are a part of are complex and dynamic. Yet, I have argued that national-level decision-makers have a responsibility to try to understand these local worlds as much as possible, since they are making policies that affect localities directly. In this chapter, I go through and discuss some of the most important conclusions of this study. I also point at links between different parts of this thesis, which constitute links between theories, methodologies and my own results and analysis.

### Changing Livelihoods in Rural Transkei

The fieldwork undertaken for this study has provided a somewhat different picture of situations in the former homelands of South Africa than many other previous studies have, which shows that rural livelihoods are dynamic and continuously changing, and very difficult to assess conclusively. This study has, however, in several ways been different from many other studies that have addressed rural livelihoods in Transkei. The livelihoods analysis has been firmly rooted in local people's realities, and thus data consist mainly of surveys and interviews with every household in two villages. This point of departure has had bearing on the way in which livelihood activities are defined and calculations made, since these are first and foremost intended to reflect local perceptions and realities. For example, I have only counted incomes from labour migrants if they actually reach the rural households, which often is not the case, as informants pointed out to me. Incomes from informal employment, often neglected in other surveys, have in this survey been given the same status as other forms of employment, also based on informant discussions. The way in which natural resources have been valued in the calculations, in contrast to some other studies, depart from in-

depth discussions with people regarding how they would themselves value these resources and replace them if they were not available.

I have also chosen to take a broad view on household livelihood activities in the villages, instead of focusing on one aspect of livelihoods (like e.g. natural resource use or remittances only). This is also intended to reflect local realities, where different livelihood activities are not viewed in isolation but constitute parts of complicated choice-processes with various available options. The strength of this approach is also that I can make comparisons between different livelihood activities and draw conclusions regarding their relative importance to the rural households.

Comparing my results with previous studies, I have noted that many descriptions of livelihoods in Transkei conceptualise these as based mainly on subsistence agriculture, livestock rearing and collection of natural resources, complemented with pensions and remittances from labour migrants. In the two studied villages, however, livelihoods are based mainly on local employment – something that is often portrayed in the literature as close to non-existent in rural Transkei. Indeed, labour migration, pensions, agriculture, livestock rearing and collection of various resources do constitute parts of local livelihoods in my study area as well (as described in *Box D*), but I would put less emphasis on these livelihood activities, compared with local employment, than previous studies have.

This difference in my results compared to previous surveys is probably to a certain extent due to the differences in method and way of data collection mentioned above. Some surveys (discussed on page 165) also suggest that Pondoland stands out compared with the rest of Transkei as a place where local employment is more readily available. The impact of the Mazizi Tea Plantation, which lies close to one of the villages, should also be acknowledged as a factor that contributes to local employment opportunities in this specific locality. Beinart (1992) also shows, through recounting the findings of different studies in Transkei, that there is considerable variation between different localities with regard to agricultural production, the importance of livestock and the dependence on wage-work. McAllister (2000) also points to complexity, heterogeneity and unreliability in the results of previous surveys on Transkeian livelihoods.

In my opinion, however, an important factor is also that there have been significant changes in rural livelihoods in recent years. Not only have poverty relief programmes and other forms of local employment been introduced, but the increased money-flow in the villages, due to these new job opportunities and the recently raised grant incomes, has led to the blossoming of various informal businesses. Thus, the majority of the families in the study area are no longer living off remittances from migrant labourers, instead, they have many different strategies for making money closer to their homes.

Jacobs (2003) asked a group of informants in the rural Northern Cape to make a matrix over change in time in “ways of working for a living, including food production” (*ibid*:208). Agriculture and livestock keeping declined in this matrix after the 1930s, and crop farming even declined to the point of becoming negligible. Working in mines and as domestic servants peaked around the 1960s and declined thereafter, to be replaced by various small-scale jobs in the 1980’s and 90’s - such as sewing, harvesting grapes on farms, selling beer, making bricks and small-scale trading. This matrix correlates very well with the results from my case study villages. Interviews with villagers, focusing on changes in subsistence strategies from the past to the present, suggest that there has first been a general shift from agriculture to wage labour, to be followed by a shift from large-scale migrant wage labour to a diversity of locally based small-scale employments.

It is thus of crucial importance that recent changes in livelihoods and local needs be correctly understood, not the least when targeting specific areas with policies for development. This study could be seen as an alert to the fact that current changes in rural livelihoods in this region need to be further studied and monitored.

## Local Worlds and National Policies

The tension between the local perspective and national-level planning of policies that affect local levels have been an important focal point in this study. I will here attempt to summarize some of the most important conclusions that have been reached throughout this thesis regarding that issue.

### The Problematics of Scale and Planning

The problem of planning policies on national levels, and thus having to integrate global influences, national concerns and local perspectives, has been repeatedly addressed in this study. It was noted that restrictions on natural resource use in South Africa seem more influenced by national conservationist concerns than an understanding of the local reasons behind and modes of resource use. Conversely, local people’s understandings of policies, such as those restricting marine resource use, tend to be patchy, inconclusive and even non-existent. Local people’s everyday interactions with implementing agents (e.g.. rangers or development project workers) are therefore from their perspectives very important. These representatives of the authorities come to personify the policies in the minds of the local people and can make or break the success of a policy locally. Nevertheless, researchers tend to prefer to look at national-level policy documents rather than the actions of

local administrators and how policy is actually implemented, according to Fay's (2003), which is problematic in this context.

The difficulties that national level policy-makers have in grasping local perspectives are probably to a certain extent due to weak consultation processes and feedback mechanisms, as exemplified in several instances in this study. Historically, local people in the South African former homelands have very seldom been consulted on, which means that it can not be assumed that they would suddenly and unproblematically be able to actively participate in policy-making.

These conclusions are supported also by Goldman *et al.* (2000), who write:

the way [the South African] government interacts with people both at political and technical levels had fostered high levels of dependency [...] there are no participatory planning systems which link people with local government and there is a significant democratic deficit [...] South Africa has enacted many 21<sup>st</sup> century policies drawing on examples from the rest of the world. However its ability to implement them has been very limited, partly since macro policies have not been sufficiently linked to micro level understanding (*ibid*:1-2).

The state, they argue, needs to redefine its role as a 'provider' and key agent for change, and learn to adopt a role as a facilitator, where local initiatives are given more space and freedom.

Another problem with national policy-making is the large regional and local differences that exist, especially in a huge country like South Africa. This was demonstrated in this study by the way that national poverty relief programmes were shown not to be particularly well adjusted to local needs and realities in the study area. Goldman *et al.* (*ibid*) stress that the district level should be well suited for managing the interaction between micro-level understandings and macro-level policies. In this study, the agents at municipal and district level often proved to have a good understanding of local situations, but little power to adjust policies to local contexts. Representatives of regional-level implementation bodies were often far removed from local realities and sometimes harboured stereotypic and paternalistic attitudes to local people and the problems they face in their daily lives. Often, local elites (defined in a broad sense) also exhibited similar attitudes towards the poor and less empowered members of their own communities, which is a problem since consultation, participation and development initiatives usually go through and involve mainly the local elites.

## Simple Solutions to Complex Problems?

In the theoretical part of this thesis, it was established that problems connected to environment, development, society and poverty in the world today are very complex and interconnected on various levels. It was shown that attempts at simple solutions to these problems have a tendency to fail. The case study from South Africa has provided some examples of the complexity of local perspectives, and the difficulties of targeting local people through development policies.

The focus on poverty and local attitudes to money provided some examples of how people make their livelihood choices in extremely multifaceted socio-cultural contexts. These examples show how difficult it is to address poverty through development aid projects, poverty relief programmes and even through very concise strategies such as microfinance projects. It was noted that many programmes aim to target the “poorest of the poor”, though projects are nevertheless often not designed to reach the type of poor people often conceptualised in society as being ‘permissible to neglect’ according to Hossain (2005:965), i.e. those who cannot make their own resolute efforts to get out of poverty, due to e.g. psychological problems, diseases, malnutrition, abuse, debts and addictions. Thus, programmes like these would need to be complemented with other actions, e.g. social security systems, basic grants or other policies that guarantee that everyone has some sort of final safety net in a desperate situation.

In addition, when designing policies and programmes targeted at poor people, the most crucial factor of poverty – i.e. the lack of money – is sometimes curiously neglected. In this study, I have given several examples of this, such as poverty relief programmes that require poor people to make significant investments before receiving any money, and the way that people are expected to be present and attentive at endless meetings with rumbling stomachs. As pointed out, it is difficult to comprehend the ramifications of being poor if one has not experienced the situation.

Several times throughout this paper, I have come back to the idea that local people could be given money directly, instead of the money being spent on pricey projects that may succeed or fail (see for example the example on page 223). The idea is to a certain extent a logical consequence of the whole empowerment discourse.

The “basic income grant” that is currently being discussed in South Africa (see Hanlon, 2004) would be a way of pursuing this course of action. According to this idea, the government would pay a small sum of around R100 per month to every South African, unconditionally. This money would be enough to keep people from extreme poverty and starvation. Naturally, such money would also have to be combined with investments in infrastructure, schooling and healthcare. Hanlon (2004) points out that two things are also needed in order for this type of action to work – “a proper identification sys-

tem and an adequate banking system” (*ibid*:379). In South Africa, these systems have already been put in place. Such a grant would therefore be possible to implement, and it would indeed be an interesting pilot project, which pioneers a completely new way of looking at poor people and how to help them out of poverty.

## Local Views of Problems and Policies

In the eyes of the local people, the problems they face in their everyday life are about their monetary incomes, such as jobs and grants, and about securing money for education, food and health emergencies. Job creation in various forms is thus, as mentioned before, very important for development in the villages. Currently, most of the available job options depend on government financing (i.e. nature conservation, teachers, cattle dipping, poverty relief programmes, etc.). The lack of private or corporate investments and small enterprises is thus a major problem in the area. Small-scale enterprises may be a good means of poverty relief, but the only such enterprises that exist in the villages today are informal ones such as shebeens or *spaza*-shops, the creation of which are currently not supported by the government. On a slightly bigger scale, this results in substantial migration to nodal points in the area, in Cutwini’s case to the small town of Lusikisiki, where a varied retail and informal sector economy is quickly growing.

Development ideas and initiatives in Transkei have however often focused on intervening in agricultural activities and local natural resource use. Many of these interventions are meant to bring ‘development’ to the rural areas. In the views of people I interviewed, however, the most important development needs in their communities are better roads (in order to get access to the labour market in nearby towns) and the creation of new jobs, while agricultural development is hardly ever mentioned. I thus argue that interventions in agricultural activities and natural resource use may be of limited use for local development, and may even have detrimental effects on local livelihoods.

An important point that has been made is that agriculture may actually not be particularly cost-effective for most households, for various reasons. Also important to note is that most people *want* to depend less on agriculture and natural resources. This felt need is the path that will be pursued by people, and therefore, programs that aim to help people to grow more food may be misguided.

The South African government seems furthermore to have great expectations on pro-poor tourism development as a way of job creation through various private investments in rural areas. However, this venture is faced with an intrinsic problem – on a small scale it does not provide sufficient amount of work to bring on any major change to an impoverished region

(which has been the case with the community based tourism project in the study area), while the benefits of larger scale tourism tends to leave the poor behind. It is therefore unlikely that tourism will be able to bring benefits to the poor on the scale hoped for in South Africa, though, if managed well, it may be a piece of the greater puzzle to achieve the goal of a diversified rural economy in poor regions. This conclusion is drawn by Kepe (2001c) as well: "while ecotourism can make a contribution to rural development, it should not be seen as a panacea for rural poverty" (*ibid*:158).

From a local perspective, governmental policies are confusing. Does the government want rural people to work for money or do they want them to rely on natural resources? Quite heavy restrictions in natural resource use make it seem like the government would prefer people to rely on jobs. Yet, programmes that aim to help people rely more on the environment, e.g. for food production, would contradict this. Perhaps the aim of the government is to make local people use certain natural resources – like marine resources and forest resources less, while agricultural and grazing lands should be used more? If this is the case, then job creation is probably the best way of achieving this result. As the results of this study has shown, people with jobs and secure incomes tend to use less natural resources, while the increased monetary income from a job often stimulates investment in agriculture and livestock.

## Critical Views of Transkeian Narratives

The findings of this study have challenged the conceptualisation of Transkei as a generally degraded region, discussed in the theoretical chapter, from several angles. As I have argued, people in the study area are not highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, since the vast majority of them rely mainly on different types of monetary incomes. Except for firewood use, they tend to make only small gardens, keep a few animals, and engage in occasional fishing and marine resource use. Thus, it seems unlikely that they would grossly overexploit the natural resources in their surroundings unless these resources are extremely fragile or under intense pressure from other factors.

A common perception is also that people in fact do not rely on agriculture and resource use precisely because of degradation and scarcity of resources. In the studied villages, however, people tend to think that the resources are in good condition and erosion, droughts and degradation is not an experienced problem. There thus seems to be no particular evidence to support the idea that the environment around the studied villages is severely deteriorated. When it comes to marine resources, where strong concerns about local people over-utilising these have been expressed, the results have shown that

majority of the households never use any sea resources at all, and very few people utilize marine resources once per week or more.

The low reliance on the environment seems to have much more complex causes than general degradation. One reason is that people have been discouraged by government interventions that made them feel insecure in tenure and restricted garden sizes, increased monetary dependence and decreased productivity of seeds and livestock. Another reason is that the situation with many new varieties of seeds that need expensive fertilisers and pesticides is confusing, and in addition, agriculture needs hard labour and significant investments. The need for money and the high status of jobs also contributes to this trend.

Dahlberg (1996) points out that caution should be exercised when valuing change, either negatively or positively, in terms of degradation or development. Furthermore, varying local conditions should not be confused with degradation. In Cutwini, there are exceptionally good grazing lands, while the soil is not so good for agriculture. In Manteku, the soil is more fertile, but the opportunities for grazing are not as good. Local people do not seem to make a big deal out of these differences – they adapt and use the resources that are available. Thus, as Fairhead and Leach (1996) point out, the interpretation of the landscape is sometimes dependent on if the person doing the interpretation chooses to have a “glass-half-empty” or a “glass-half-full”-perspective.

In discussing this issue, the political forces behind the vigour with which many of the degradation narratives across Africa are kept alive should not be neglected. The image of the degraded savannah in West Africa attracts major international funding for environmental rehabilitation (Fairhead and Leach, 1995, 1996), and in the case of South Africa, the conclusion that it was apartheid policies that had led to degradation was politically important (e.g. Carruthers (2002)). These examples naturally do not mean that all narratives of degradation in Africa have been wrong. Beinart (2003) argues that though the early conservationist discourse was “overgeneralised, uncertain in its explanations, alarmist and infused by racial ideas” (*ibid*:367), there was in fact areas in South Africa that already in the 1930’s experienced considerable agrarian problems, including problematic levels of soil erosion and vegetation loss. In some cases and localities, there has undoubtedly been overexploitation of resources and environmental degradation, while in other places, change has been undeservedly interpreted as negative. The interesting questions here concern how to distinguish between these two situations and how to analyse underlying political causes for degradation narratives.

While Transkei has unquestionably experienced environmental problems like the ones described in the literature, and while many of the problems were certainly caused and exacerbated by political actions, a new challenge is now to open up for a critical examination of these homogenous descriptions of the problems and their explanations. More diversity and detailed

empirical examinations are needed. While the links between apartheid, over-population and environmental degradation may be true for some areas, other localities may not show such clear and simple correlations.

## A General Conclusion not to Generalise?

In thus criticising generalisations about Transkei, I do recognise I can also not make generalisations, based on my limited studies, about the lack of natural resource use or the prescience of local jobs in Transkei. It is also not my intention to dispute that there are, in specific places and at specific times, environmental problems of varying degrees of severity in South Africa, or that there are places in Transkei where local jobs are extremely rare to find. In the light of this study, however, the conclusion can be drawn that caution with regard to generalisations in Transkei is warranted. There is a need to move away from simplistic explanations on all levels, and realise that different solutions are needed in different localities.

This study has shown that what might be a general truth about a region may be misleading in specific localities, a conclusion that has been reached in other studies as well (e.g. Dahlberg, 1996; Simonsson, 2004). Therefore, it is crucial that development planners, NGO's, researchers and other actors understand the social, cultural and environmental dynamics of the local worlds they are affecting. Preconceived ideas and general assumptions are unconstructive when it comes to detailed planning and implementation of plans that have significant effects on local scales.

There should also be no need for alarm if studies draw different conclusions about wage-work, natural resource use or the state of the environment in Transkei. Dahlberg (1996) point out that she found many different stories about the land and natural resources in her study area in Botswana, stories that could not be forced to become one, single narrative. Similarly, Moore and Vaughan (1994) partly deconstruct previous research in their study area in northern Zambia, but do not attempt to produce a single, smooth counter-narrative.

Indeed, Meppem and Bourke (1999) point out that it would be helpful if scientific disagreement was more often clearly acknowledged, since this helps us to remember that scientific truths are but narratives, constructed in various historical and social contexts. Achieving a homogenous picture of Transkei should thus not be seen as a goal for research, just as targeting the whole region through one remedy cannot be seen as a goal for policy. Instead, a diversified picture, highlighting the heterogeneities in the Transkeian landscapes, is needed and the importance of understanding complicated but localised situations before targeting them with policies must be stressed.

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Department of Water Affairs and Forestry: [www.dwaf.gov.za](http://www.dwaf.gov.za)

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: [www.deat.gov.za](http://www.deat.gov.za)

Working for Water Programme: <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/>

Working for the Coast Programme:

[http://www.environment.gov.za/ProjProg/CoastCare/working\\_for\\_the\\_coast](http://www.environment.gov.za/ProjProg/CoastCare/working_for_the_coast)

Marine resource restrictions:

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South African Government Information on illegal cottages on the Wild Coast:

<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2000/001215945a1002.htm> and

<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2003/03111909461004.htm>

Chief Directorate of Surveys and Mapping:

[http://land.pwv.gov.za/about/chief\\_dirctr/surveys\\_mapping.htm](http://land.pwv.gov.za/about/chief_dirctr/surveys_mapping.htm)

South African Demarcation Board:

<http://www.demarcation.org.za/>

Pondoland National Park and dune mining controversy:

[http://www.greenclippings.co.za/gc\\_main/article.php?story=20031002151253401](http://www.greenclippings.co.za/gc_main/article.php?story=20031002151253401)

Wild Coast SDI:

<http://sacoast.uwc.ac.za/education/resources/factsheets/WildCoastSDI.htm>

The Wild Coast Community Tourism Initiative (incl. Amadiba hiking trails):

<http://www.wildcoast.org.za/wc/>

On HIV/AIDS in South Africa:

[http://www.health-e.org.za/hiv\\_aids/index](http://www.health-e.org.za/hiv_aids/index)

# Aerial Photographs and Maps<sup>71</sup>

## Aerial Photographs

Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping, South Africa. 1995. Job no: 983.

Cutwini, 1995. 23:695 Scale: 1:10 000

Cutwini, 1995. 23:696 Scale: 1:5 000

Manteku, 1995. 23:698 Scale 1:10 000

Manteku, 1995. 23:698 Scale 1:5 000

Ndengane, 1995. 30:469 Scale: 1:10 000

Ndengane/Rhole, 1995. 30:468 Scale: 1:10 000

Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping, South Africa. 2002. Job no: 1068.

Cutwini, 2002. 13:1695 Scale: 1:16 666

Cutwini, 2002. 13:1695 Scale: 1:5 000

Manteku, 2002. 13:1690 Scale 1:16 666

Manteku, 2002. 14:1690 Scale 1:3 333

## Maps

Topographic series, Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping, South Africa.

3129 BD and 3130 AC Mkambati 1982, Scale: 1: 50 000

3129 BC Lusikisiki 1982, Scale: 1:50 000

3129 DA Port St. Johns 1982, Scale: 1:50 000

## Interviews

### Interviews with Officials, Researchers and NGO Representatives

Ted **Avis**, CES, Grahamstown, interview September 2000.

Dr S. **Boateng**, Department of Geography, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Arthur **Chapman**, Terrestrial Resources and Environmental Management, CSIR, Stellenbosh, interview September 2000.

Elize **Cloete**, Department of Botany, interview July 2001 and July 2003.

Funeka **Dlulane**, Programme Implementation Manager, IDT (implementation agency for the Working for Water Programme), Umtata, interview July 2003.

Jonathan **Duncan**, SRK Consulting, Cape Town, interview July 2001.

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<sup>71</sup> Mapping and Aerial photography supplied by Surveys and Mapping, Cape Town.

Prof. Theresa **Dye**, Department of Zoology, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Sizakene **Gabula**, Director of the Chief Directorate of Environmental Affairs for the Eastern Region of the Eastern Cape Province, interview July 2003.

Thembele **Kepe**, Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, interviews October 2000, June 2001, August 2003, March and May 2005.

Dr. **Lamla**, Department of Anthropology, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Dr. P. N. T. **Madizikela**, Department of Geography, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Tyras **Mbiko**, Assistant Area Manager, DWAF office, Umtata, interview July 2003.

Gladwell **Mphula**, Nature Conservation Offices, Umtata, interview July 2003.

Mr. **Mrara**, Department of Geography, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Thembeke **Nontso**, Department of Sociology, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Lungisile **Ntsebeza**, Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, interview October 2000.

Prof. Christian Y. **Oche**, Department of Geography, University of Transkei, interviews September 2000, July and August 2001, March and September 2002, June and August 2003.

Dr. O. **Oloyede**, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of the Western Cape, interview September 2000.

Dr. Robin **Palmer**, Department of Anthropology, Rhodes University, interview September 2000.

Guy **Preston**, National Programme Leader, Working for Water National Office, Cape Town. Interview February 2004.

Dirk **Prinsloo**, Deputy Director of Biodiversity and Coastal Management, Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism, Eastern Cape Provincial Government, Bisho. Interview August 2003.

Pax **Siongwana**, Department of Geography, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

Simon **Sperring**, PondoCROP, field facilitator for community tourism project, interviews July 2001, September 2002, July 2003.

Dave **Tate**, PondoCROP, Coordinator for the Wild Coast Area, Working for the Coast Programme, interview July 2003.

Dr. Vincent **Taylor**, Department of Earth Sciences, University of the Western Cape, interview September 2000.

Andre **Terreblance**, Village Planner, interviews September 2000 and August 2001.

Herman **Timmermans**, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, interview September 2000.

Dr. Rehema **White**, Department of Zoology, University of Transkei, interview September 2000.

## Interviews with Local Informants

Zamekile **Bhoposana**, Village Committee member, Ndengane, interview Aug. 2001.

Busisiwe Bhusumani, Igqirha ('traditional healer') in Cutwini, interview Sept. 2002

Nontobeko **Daliwe**, Working for Water Contractor in Cutwini and member of the Cutwini Village Committee and representative for Cutwini in the Ward Committee, interview September 2002.

Anton **Dindi**, Village Committee member, Ndengane, interview August 2001.

Mandla **Dingezweni**, Councillor for Cutwini, interview September 2002.

Kholisile **Holo**, leader of Coast Care project, Manteku, interview August 2001 and interviewed in July 2003 when working with a community nursery project.

Torch **Holo**, Headman in Manteku, interview August 2001.

Nomfundo **Kala**, Nurse at Lusikisiki Clinic, interview 16/9, 2002.

Lawrene **Ludude**, working at Nature Conservation Office, and member of Village Development Committee, Ndengane. Interviews April 2002, October, 2002 and July 2003.

Themba **Makhanya**, member of the Cutwini Village Committee and representative for Cutwini in the Ward Committee, and Coast Care supervisor in Cutwini. Interviews September 2002, July 2003 and April 2005.

Thandeka **Makhinase**, Village Committee member, Ndengane, interview Aug. 2001

Mr. **Maddlaka'theli**, Headman in Cutwini, interviews Aug. 2001 and Sept. 2002.

Vuyani **Mapia**, Reserve Manager, Mkambati Nature Reserve. Interview July 2003.

Nophumzile **Mavela**, Village Committee member, Manteku. Interview Aug. 2001.

Mr. **Mdoda**, Senior Manager of Lambasi Management Unit, Working for Water Programme, interview September 2002 together with one Project Controller, five contractors and one member of the Project Steering Committee of the Lambasi area, and follow-up interview in July 2003.

Nozamile **Mfukuli**, teacher in Cutwini, interview September 2002

Thandeka **Mhlaba**, Nature conservation ranger, Msikaba Camp Site of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. interview October 2002.

Joyce **Mhlengi**, teacher in Cutwini, interview September 2002.

Mrs. **Msomi**, teacher in Cutwini interview September 2002.

Mrs. **Msumza**, teacher in Cutwini, interview September 2002.

Nozuko **Ngcanga**, Agricultural Trainee at the TRACO Project, interview and tour of the project in September 2002.

Mrs. **Nozulela**, member of the Cutwini Village Committee, the PondoCROP Tourism Committee and Cutwini School Board, interviews Sept. 2002, July 2003.

Bonginkosi **Ntinini**, Admin. clerk, Ntsubane State Forest, interview October 2002.

Mfundiswa **Ntshangase**, Village Committee, Ndengane, interview August 2001

Mzwandile **Pandela**, Headman in Ndengane, interview August 2001.

Mafuza **Pangwa**, Estate Manager and Tobias **Mhlanga**, Production Manager at Mazizi Tea Estate, interview April 2005.

Phzamile **Qekele**, Nature conservation ranger, Msikaba Camp Site of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Interview October 2002.

Churchill **Quvana**, Project Manager for the Msikaba-Port St Johns area of the Coast Care project. Interview September 2002.

Sylvia **Sotshange**, Administrative clerk, Ntsubane State Forest, interview Oct. 2002.

Sylvia **Soyipa**, Administrative clerk, Ntsubane State Forest, interview October 2002.

Mrs. **Tshezi**, teacher in Cutwini, interview September 2002

Xolani **Zozwana**, member of the Cutwini Village Committee, interviews September 2002, July 2003 and April 2005.

## List of Local Interpreters and Assistants

Bongumusa **Hola**, assistant in Manteku, September-October 2002.

Nokuzola **Hola**, assistant in Manteku, September-October 2002.

Kuki **Holo**, assistant in Manteku, August 2001.

Kuzile **Juza**, interpreter and facilitator in Cutwini and Manteku, August 2001.

Nolwethu **Mavela**, assistant in Manteku, August 2001, September-October 2002.

Nombulelo **Mavela**, interpreter in Manteku, August 2001.

Zoleka **Mazinyo**, assistant in Cutwini, March-April 2002.

Advocate **Mdelwa**, assistant in Manteku, September-October 2002.

Zamile **Mdiya**, assistant in Cutwini, March-April 2002, September-October 2002.

Nkosinathi **Mfukuli**, interpreter and assistant in Cutwini, August 2001, March-April 2002, September-October 2002, June-July 2003 and April 2005. Facilitator in Manteku, September-October 2002. Interpreter in Ndengane and Rhole, September-October 2002 and July 2003.

Buyiswa Rittah **Mhloluvele**, interpreter in Ndengane, April 2002.

Bongani **Mlotywa**, interpreter in Cutwini June-July 2003 and April 2005. Interpreter in Manteku, April 2005.

Nkosiphendule **Mthengwa**, assistant in Manteku, August 2001.

Mdatyulwa Douglas **Siyem**, assistant in Manteku, August 2001.

Mzufukile **Siqikini** assistant in Manteku, August 2001.

Sinazo Faith **Zathela**, interpreter in Ndengane, August 2001, April, 2002.

Xolani **Zozwana**, interpreter and assistant in Cutwini, March-April 2002, September-October 2002. Interpreter in Ndengane and Rhole, August 2001.

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<i>Quest Manteku</i>	The household questionnaire for Manteku.	Word
<i>Page 2 Q Manteku</i>	Second page of the household questionnaire for Manteku.	Word
<i>Figure 5 Cutwini</i>	Aerial photo, Cutwini.	
<i>Figure 6 Manteku</i>	Aerial photo, Manteku.	Jpg
<i>Figure 8 diet Cutwini</i>	GIS map showing percent of diet grown by households in Cutwini.	Jpg
<i>Village map Cutwini</i>	GIS map over Cutwini.	Jpg
<i>Village map Manteku</i>	GIS map over Manteku.	Jpg
<i>Map movements Cutwini</i>	GIS map showing movements of households in Cutwini.	Jpg
<i>Additional data</i>	Tables with additional data from the household surveys.	Word
<i>Slideshow Pondoland</i>	Photographs from the study area with commentary.	Ppt