MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES IN A RURAL SETTLEMENT IN PEDDIE DISTRICT

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This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any other university.

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This thesis is an account of the challenges people in Tyefu Location, Peddie District, and specifically in Gwabeni village, face in their attempts to manage their common pool natural resources. Taking my analytical cue from the literature which deals with the institutional dimensions of resource management in common property systems, I look at the impact of both outside influences and local dynamics on resource managing institutions at village level.

I show how particular historical circumstances, including state interventions, led to the enclosure of Tyefu Location, and to the rapid increase in the population that had to be accommodated here. This placed enormous pressure on the natural resources of the area, and contributed to the emasculation of the local institutions responsible for overseeing resource management. The residents of the location adopted whatever strategies they could to ameliorate the depletion of natural resources in their villages. One ‘traditional’ strategy they have sought to emulate is to move their imizi (homesteads) away from areas where local resources has been exhausted. Given the finite area of land available to them, this strategy was only ever likely to be successful in the short-term.

I analyse social, economic and institutional factors at village level that appear to act as disincentives to collective resource management activities. These factors include the social structure of the imizi and the socio-economic heterogeneity that exists between imizi in Gwabeni village. The varying degrees of household economic marginality that follow from this, together with the differential ownership of livestock and other possessions that decrease people’s reliance on locally available natural resources, mean that the transaction costs that people would incur by contributing to collective resource management activities, differ widely.

A primary cause of people’s failure to engage in resource management at village level stems from the dispersion of the members of their imizi. This factor robs the village of decision-makers and undermines the capacity of those left behind to make and implement resource management decisions. It results in the various members of imizi in the village having different orientations that dissipate the energy needed for collective action. It also fuels existing struggles, and creates new ones, over the meanings and uses of the term ‘community’.

I conclude by arguing that, in Tyefu Location, the management of natural resources is extremely difficult to co-ordinate, because such management is highly contested, undermined by differentiation among resource users, and subject to the attentions of weak village institutions that do not share a clear set of resource management objectives.
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INTRODUCTION

Concern has been growing over the increasingly degraded\(^1\) state of natural resources in rural areas across the African continent (Anderson and Grove(eds)\(^2\)1987; Berry 1997; UNRISD\(^3\) 1994). In South Africa, much of the academic and popular attention in this regard has focussed on the resource degradation that is said to characterise many rural areas of the former bantustans (Cowling 1991; Ramphele (ed) 1991). It is particularly in these areas, where most of the land is subjected to various modified forms of communal tenure arrangements and related resource management systems\(^4\), that disproportionately high indices of resource degradation are said to exist (De Wet 1987b; Cooper 1991; Cross 1991; Peters 1994; also see Shackleton 1993).

Recently, both in anticipation of and, latterly, in response to the land reform initiatives of the African National Congress (ANC)-led government, some of the literature on the subject of resource ownership and management has grappled with the social and ecological implications for sustainable resource utilisation of the government’s plans to redistribute agriculturally productive land (MacKenzie 1994; Scholes 1994; Cousins 1995). One result of these endeavours has been to place the track record of resource management practices in former bantustan rural areas under the spotlight again, as planners and policy-makers attempt to deal with the social, political and ecological legacy of past policies towards land ownership and management.

A key area of the (ideologically loaded) debate in the ‘land reform’ literature has been the respective economic and ecological merits of different forms of land tenure (Cousins 1996; Williams 1996; also see De Wet and McAllister(eds) 1987; Cross and

\(^1\) Such degradation can be both ecologically and economically significant: in terms of ecological criteria, the argument has been made that some of these processes of degradation are ‘irreversible’ on any reasonable human time-scale (i.e. only very costly mechanical rehabilitation or thousands of years of natural rehabilitation could restore the resource base to an ‘optimum’ (not pristine) utilisation level); economically significant degradation could be said to have occurred when the state of the resource base declines below the subsistence requirements of the local population.

\(^2\) Anderson and Grove (1987:9) contend, however, that the depiction of an African ‘ecocatastrophe’ has been used by Western environmentalists and developers as a lever to justify further post-colonial interventions, both physical and socio-political, in rural Africa. Also see Leach and Mearns (eds) (1996) and Rocheleau et.al (1995) in this regard.

\(^3\) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

\(^4\) The concept of natural resource management as used here, is based on the interaction of three elements: the physical resource base (land, water, fauna, flora and climate), the production system (the uses to which these resources are put) and the social regulation (by way of rules, norms and conventions) of access to, use and distribution of these resources (Egger and Majeres 1992:305).
The social and ecological impacts of one particular instance of tenure reform, namely state intervention by way of Betterment Planning, and its implications for natural resource management, has been subjected to rigorous empirical analysis and consideration (Yawitch 1981; Hendricks 1989, 1990; De Wet 1988, 1989; 1995; Mager 1992). Other factors, *inter alia*, the historical and institutional factors which mediate the ways in which rural people use and manage their natural resources, are not always as well documented or understood: in fact, the field seems to have a relatively soft empirical underbelly, with commentators relying on a small number of case studies from which to make their generalisations (see Bernstein 1997:16; Cross 1991:92; Krüger in Ramphele (ed.) 1991).

Given this context, *i.e.*, firstly that of the debate around the present government’s land reform programme and the formulation of national land policies, and secondly, of the relative dearth of empirical data (see section below on post-modernism) on rural natural resource management systems, the need for detailed analyses of the social, economic and institutional dynamics across a broad range of these systems has been identified (Cousins 1995). Indeed, localised studies conducted more recently on a provincial and district basis have begun to address precisely this need (see for example, Kepe 1997; Ainslie et al. 1997; Huggins 1993 and LAPC 6 1995).

1. Explanations of Resource Degradation

Conventional explanations for the degradation of natural resources in bantustan rural areas have taken two different tacks: the first set of broadly neo-liberal explanations blames natural resource degradation on the ‘intrinsic weaknesses’ of the communal land tenure system at the micro-level. It is argued that the depletion of the resource base is most advanced in these bantustan rural areas subject to communal tenure (see for example, Transkei Agricultural Development Study 1991; Houghton 1962:11; Antrobus et al. 19947; and for a critique of this approach, Vivian 1992:59). In its more sophisticated rendition, this line of argument invokes, or at least draws inspiration from

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5 A central problem here is that many people who reside in rural areas cannot be called ‘rural’ in any meaningful sense: almost every rural-based person has multiple and complex social and economic ties with people and institutions in urban centres. It might in fact be that only the space in which they are presently situated is rural, but that their whole orientation is urban focussed.

6 A series of regional or ‘zonal’ studies commissioned by the Land and Agriculture Policy Centre and published as working papers.

7 Also see the series of letters, articles and editorials in the Daily Dispatch 27/9/1996 to 10/10/1996.
the assertion that 'common property is nobody's property.' Resource degradation is seen as the inevitable result of uncontrolled utilisation\(^8\) under such conditions, such that the communal tenure system and the rural people\(^9\) in it, who are apparently unable to collectively manage their resources, are seen to be at the centre of the problem (see Runge 1986:50; Lawry (1990:405) for a case-study from Botswana and Lane (1992:98) for an example from Tanzania; Louw 1988).

The second set of explanations for the degradation of bantustan natural resources relies mostly on macro-level analyses of the regional political economy. Such analyses stress the deleterious impacts of colonial expansion, of the appropriation of land and of labour migration by adult male villagers, who are often key decision-makers in village matters. They posit a picture of the subsequent crippling and impoverishment of the rural economy, rural overpopulation and the emasculation of rural local government first through incorporation into the colonial political economy and later through the interventions of the apartheid juggernaut (Ramphele (ed.) 1991; Huggins 1993; Letsoalo 1987:77).

This latter set of approaches has tended to cast rural people as the essentially innocent victims of an oppressive world system in its particular local manifestation, the apartheid state, which has imposed radically modified systems of communal tenure on rural people and in the process, upset an indigenous custodianship of land or 'land ethic'.\(^10\) These macro-level type explanations argue that the rigidity of these imposed systems, taken with the pressure of high concentrations of rural population, primarily the consequence of forced resettlements, has resulted in the inevitable over-exploitation and the subsequent degradation of the natural resources used by rural people. In this way, such explanations tend to portray rural people as 'reactive, buffeted by forces beyond their control, and helplessly watching as their own activities contribute to the

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\(^8\) This conventional view of the 'causes' of resource degradation subscribes to Hardin's (1968) 'Tragedy of the Commons' argument which has been challenged in recent times (see McKay and Acheson (eds) 1987). The solution commonly put forward is to institute private ownership of land, thereby increasing the incentive of individual owners to manage their natural resources more sustainably.

\(^9\) A consultant's report (Loxton, Venn and Associates 1991:67) on Tyefu Irrigation Scheme reads as follows: 'The basic causes of environmental degradation go back to the people on the land. Therefore the primary conservation effort should be to create awareness of the processes causing soil erosion and veld degradation and to foster an interest in conservation.' [my emphasis].

\(^10\) An exception here is Hendricks (1990) who, despite taking a political economy perspective on rural land management, gives a nuanced analysis of intra-community socio-economic differentiation, showing how this negatively affects co-operative activities.
destruction of their chances for a better life in the future' (Ghai and Vivian 1992:11).

By contrast, I make use of a common property theoretical framework (Cousins 1995; Peters 1994; Ostrom 1990; Oakerson 1986) in this thesis, to analyse the management of natural resources in one particular resource management system, namely Tyefu Location in the Peddie district of the Eastern Cape Province. I argue that taken separately, both sets of conventional explanations for resource degradation in the former 'bantustans' are inadequate, because they fail to situate the patterns of natural resource consumption adopted by rural people within the local domain of the choices and strategies available to these people. The focus in this study is thus on the actual resource users and managers in these resource management systems and on the sometimes ambiguous ways in which these people contest and mediate the effects of the wider political economy on the use and management of rural natural resources (see Palmer 1997:13; Berry 1997, 1993; Blaikie and Brookfield 1987).

By incorporating elements of both these sets of explanations, I argue for a more open-ended analysis of the complex social and social-ecological interactions that are taking place in rural areas of the former bantustans. Instead of seeking to present either a micro-level or a macro-level causal analysis for the many patent failures of resource management practices in bantustan rural areas, I want rather to problematise such an enquiry by investigating the ways in which factors which supposedly have their origins in one of these two domains (i.e. the micro-level actions of resource users and the macro-level political economy) reinforce or undermine each other. The prism through which this is viewed is the experience and actions of the people in these areas who are at the same time, both the agents and the recipients of resource management interventions.

In arguing for a more nuanced understanding of the social norms and interactions that attach to land and other natural resources at the micro-level, I also suggest that facets of the common property theoretical framework may be deficient in failing to take sufficient cognisance of the complex processes involved in the interplay between a variety of local and supralocal factors. The usefulness of the notion of 'social capital'

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11 Sara Berry, in the foreword to Peters (1994), makes this point eloquently: 'Once we confront the possibility that social agency involves ongoing struggles to cope not only with conflicting external pressures but also with ambiguous or contradictory interests in (and understandings of) their outcomes, it becomes difficult to sustain modes of analysis that attribute social outcomes to the hegemonic influence of particular agents, institutions or ideas.'
(Putnam 1993; Ostrom 1995), which sees the success of common property institutions as essentially a function of the degree of harmony or disruption in social dynamics in a corporate group, is one that I wish to challenge.

2. The Study Area: Gwabeni village in Tyefu Location, Peddie District

Tyefu Location, which provides the spatial parameters of this study, has an area of some 24 218 hectares (De Beer 1984:200) and is situated in the north-western section of Peddie district (see Map 1). The location falls within the former Ciskei bantustan and is bounded by the Fish River to the south and by the Peddie-Committee’s Drift road to the north, east and west.

Tyefu Location was never subjected to villagisation and tenure reform under Betterment Planning. Consequently, the ‘indigenous’ settlement pattern in the location is one of widely dispersed groups of dwellings, which are loosely arranged into eleven villages, of which Gwabeni is one. In 1985, the resident population of Tyefu Location was (probably over)estimated at around 13 563, with that of Gwabeni estimated to be approximately 600 (Setplan 1985, but see Chapter Five for an explanation of this figure).

Tyefu Location has been described as having very limited overall agricultural potential and as only moderately suited to extensive and semi-intensive livestock production rather than cultivation (Loxton et al. 1979). The low potential for dryland crop production stems from the semi-arid ecological conditions which prevail in the area. These include low and unpredictable rainfall, high rates of evapotranspiration, shallow soils and a complex topography.

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12 Tyefu Location should not be confused with the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme (see Holbrook 1992), which was established in a section of the Fish River Valley that falls within the boundaries of Tyefu Location.

13 The exact number of villages in Tyefu Location is a source of contention, because the people in some of the smaller settlement units have formed separate Residents’ Associations, which hold their own meetings and consequently consider themselves to constitute a separate village to their ‘parent village.’ This applies, for example, in the case of Mankone and Horton ‘villages.’ Throughout this thesis, I use the term ‘village’ to refer to the loosely arranged (i.e. non-Bettered) clusters of homesteads that make up the discrete settlements prevalent in Tyefu Location.

14 See Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion of these issues.
Given the low natural resource potential of the location, consistently high levels of natural resource use in the area, which include extensive grazing by domestic herbivores and the cultivation of steep slopes, have had an adverse effect on the limited resource base of the area. The most visible features of these patterns of land-use and resource [mis]management are accelerated soil erosion (with an associated net loss of carbon from the remaining soil) and the transformation of vegetative species, such as the spread of unpalatable grasses and karroid shrubs (Palmer and Avis 1994).
Gwabeni village consists of 68 (occupied) homesteads, with around 227 residents. Local employment opportunities are very limited and the local economy is buttressed by state transfers and migrant remittances. Gwabeni has a primary school, a Methodist church and a creche. The nearest clinic is at the Tribal Authority office in Horton (some six kilometres away). While a few tiny spaza shops are dotted around the village, local residents generally make use of the credit offered at the small general dealer attached to the Breakfastvlei Hotel (less than one kilometre from the village) for the purchasing of their homestead necessities, especially food, toiletries and paraffin. The bottle-store and bar that form part of the Hotel complex are frequented by the men of the village.

3. Fieldwork, Postmodernism and Writing Ethnography

As has been the case in a number of other disciplines, postmodernism\textsuperscript{15} has subjected the epistemological roots of anthropology, specifically its (often implicitly) positivist and modernist tradition, to an intense and critical scrutiny. In the process, the entire ethnographic project has been placed under a microscope - to use a somewhat positivist metaphor - and probing questions have been asked about the ways in which ethnographers 'construct understanding from the constructed native's constructed point of view' (Crpanzano 1986).

At the heart of the postmodern deconstruction of rational scientific method, with its aspirations to objectivity and realism, is the assertion that social phenomena are layered with multiple meanings and that any analysis of these phenomena can only be, at best, subjective and partial (Van Maanen 1995:16). As Clifford argues, 'cultures do not hold still for their portraits' and any attempts to make them do so always involve simplification and exclusion, selection of a temporal focus, the construction of a particular self-other relationship and the imposition or negotiation of a power relationship (Clifford 1986:10). While Hastrup (1992:125) has described ethnographic texts as 'contextualised truths which are under threat from the empirical', for postmodernists, it is both these texts and 'the empirical' (or factually knowable) world which are under siege from the multi-vocality and multiple perspectives of a post-modern condition.

\textsuperscript{15} The ability of native (or insider) anthropologists to critically challenge assumptions made and conclusions reached in the depiction of the 'other' in anthropological texts is another feature of this critique (see Mafeje 1997).
Postmodernist theorists have argued that fieldwork entails systematic 'violence' between ethnographer and informant, and that this 'violence' is expressed in the essentially asymmetrical relationship that exists during fieldwork between researcher and researched (Hastrup 1992:122). The asymmetry of this interaction is carried over into the contextualisation and reframing of the ethnographic material by the ethnographer-as-author.\textsuperscript{16} Such reframing has emerged, according to Clifford (1986:2), as central to what anthropologists do both 'in the field' and thereafter: the interpretive and manipulative exercises that go into the fashioning of ethnographic texts have been shown to comprise a myriad of literary devices that are employed to establish both the ethnographic authority and the narrative contract (including the establishment of an 'us' group as opposed to 'them', the observed and revealed) between ethnographer and reader.

The self-reflexive criticism generated by postmodernist authors has elicited the acknowledgment that all ethnographers are 'positioned subjects [who] grasp certain phenomena better than others' and that their position is defined by age, gender and outsider's status in the research setting (Rosaldo 1984:192). By challenging the long-held notions of ethnographies as detached, objective descriptions of cultures or as self-sufficient explanations of social reality (Van der Waal 1992:169), the postmodernist-inspired 'ethnography of ethnography' (Van Maanen 1995:17) has left us with the task of making explicit the ways in which our data are collected and how this process is contextualised by our subjective experience (Van der Waal 1992:170,171). Moreover, our task is to render the lives and events which we study as fully as possible, with all the 'contradictions, contestations and uncertainties' which exist in everyday life (Moore and Vaughan 1994:Introduction,xix). As Van Maanen (1995:23) argues,

'\textit{The work at the coal face of ethnography goes on......in much the same way as it did before textuality came into vogue. Evidence must be offered up to support arguments whose pedigree must be established in a way that will convince at least a few readers that the author has something credible to say. Changes in attitude are always possible, and what is persuasive to one generation may look ludicrous to another......In the case of ethnography, what we continue to look for}'

\textsuperscript{16}In an argument more subtle than it is rendered here, Hastrup (1992:118-121) suggests that the confrontation and dialogue between the two parties involves the joint creation of otherness and selfness, and that the responses of an informant are relational, circumstantial responses to the ethnographer's presence and questioning. According to Hastrup, the dialogical element of the encounter does not allay its inherent 'violence.'
is the close study of culture as lived by particular people, in particular places, doing particular things at particular times.'

Like all anthropological texts, this thesis should be judged on the merits of the particular ethnographic evidence, and specifically, on the way in which it is presented and analyzed in support of its key arguments. The merits of this evidence can, in turn, only be judged on the credibility of supporting claims to an 'I was there' ethnographic authority. What follows by way of a summary of my fieldwork experiences, are these supporting claims to authority.

4. Fieldwork

I conducted fieldwork for this study intermittently over a period of four years (i.e. 1994 to 1997). My association with the village of Gwabeni in Tyefu Location began in February 1994 when I was introduced (as part of a research team investigating the dynamics of gender, households and environmental change) to the people of Gwabeni by Dr. Cecil Manona of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University (see Palmer 1997). Dr. Manona is patrilineally related to a number of Gwabeni residents and we were able to use his kinship ties and good relations with villagers to gain their confidence and get the research project off to a good start in the somewhat politically volatile pre-election period. Since February 1994, whilst working on subsequent research projects at the ISER, I have been almost constantly involved in research in Gwabeni, the rest of Tyefu Location, and in Peddie district more generally. All of these projects have been concerned with natural resource management issues.

Throughout the research period, I have meticulously maintained my own research interests in Gwabeni and kept the fieldwork component that was at the centre of my thesis research, separate from larger research projects. Subsequent to the first project initiated in Gwabeni (referred to above), I was able to structure the various research projects so that I could personally conduct whatever fieldwork was required for various projects in Gwabeni.

In 1994, I spent two months living at the Breakfastvlei hotel adjacent to the village. A businessman who hails from Rura village in Tyefu Location (and who is also patrilineally related to a Gwabeni lineage) had recently purchased this practically derelict hotel and he was in the process of renovating it. On the same premises he now
runs a small but successful shop and a thriving bottle store that caters for the residents of Gwabeni and passers-by, his hotel being at the junction of the two gravel roads that are the main thoroughfares through the area. The verandah of the hotel proved to be a good place to meet the men of Gwabeni, many of whom congregate there and, by pooling their resources, are able to buy a few drinks that oil their exchanges about the news and events of interest in the village, the district and in other parts of the country.

In an attempt to immerse myself more fully into the lives of the people of Gwabeni, I later negotiated to move into a house in the village itself, which I rented for a small fee from the absentee owner. Throughout 1995, I used this house for a number of week-long periods of fieldwork. During 1996, my fieldwork visits all consisted of commuter trips, after which I returned to Grahamstown (some 53 kilometres away) on a daily basis. During 1997, periods of fieldwork were sporadic, except for a one week period in December when I revisited and lived in the village to tie up some loose ends in the writing up of my thesis. In total over the nearly four year period, I have spent approximately six months living in Gwabeni, conducting fieldwork towards this thesis.

During the course of my fieldwork, I attended various ritual events, graduation parties, church bazaars and community meetings, I went hunting with young men on adjacent (vacant) farms and, on a number of occasions, I assisted in the removal or repair of fencing on the commonage. I also participated in group discussions about historical claims to land, the chieftaincy and the management of natural resources, such as water and grazing resources. I was elected as ‘organiser’ on the Gwabeni Development Forum (GDF), but I declined the position. I did, however, assist by equipping the GDF with a typewriter, stationery and other administrative effects, and I attended several meetings of the GDF and general community meetings, at which I observed proceedings and only participated when my opinion was sought. These varied interactions with the villagers of Gwabeni I would incorporate under the rubric of ‘participant observation.’

Although I have studied isiXhosa, I am not yet fluent in the language, and I found it necessary to employ an interpreter-cum-research assistant, particularly for the more structured components of my fieldwork. Except for the first few weeks of my study, the same (male) person filled this role throughout my period of fieldwork. This had obvious advantages for the research endeavour, such as the fostering of a mutual familiarity and understanding between researcher and research assistant, but also had distinct
disadvantages, as such the selective filtering of data through one person's perception of what constitutes saliency. Fortunately, several men and women in the village, whether through periods of migrant labour or domestic service, are fully conversant in English and this allowed for some interviews to take place without the 'interpreter-as-filter.'

Another consideration was the fact that my research assistant is a prominent ANC organiser, and a member of one of the two dominant clans, in the village. On the one hand, this made it easier for me to conduct my research in that my association with this man served to sanction my interaction with the majority of the villagers. On the other hand, this situation also had the drawback of making it more difficult for me to interact with villagers who are peripheral (by choice or otherwise) to the locus of community organisation and I had to actively seek such people out in order to learn about their views and interests. My assistant was also able, particularly in the earlier stages of my research, to select and structure my interaction with informants and thereby 'package' particular information about the village in ways that were not always useful to me.

During the course of my fieldwork, I engaged in archival research to historically contextualise this study. I conducted a series of structured and unstructured interviews with a number of key informants. I also administered a questionnaire survey to all of the sixty-eight households in Gwabeni which were occupied at the time of the survey in 1995. The survey covered all aspects of household structure and composition, patterns of income and expenditure and levels of natural resource utilisation.

I also conducted participatory rural appraisal (PRA) workshops in Gwabeni on four occasions. The first workshop was held in 1994 to establish a nominal understanding of resource management issues in the village. The second workshop was held in 1995 and comprised of elderly men and women and addressed people's perceptions of the role of traditional authorities in general village administration. In May 1996, two colleagues and I conducted a third workshop in Gwabeni, where we informed members

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17 At the National Archives in Pretoria, in the Cory Library at Rhodes University, at the Port Elizabeth Intermediate State Archives Depot and in the records housed in the Peddie Magistrate's Court. After the offices of the Magistrate's Court in Peddie were damaged by fire in March 1997, the records were moved to the new provincial archives in King Williams Town, where I continued to conduct my archival research.

18 One of these questionnaires could not be used during the analysis of my data.
of the village that the funders of our research project would make funding available to them in order for them to initiate natural resource-related pilot development projects in their village, with our assistance and the help of local NGOs and officials from the Department of Agriculture in Peddie. The Gwabeni Project Implementation Committee (GPIC) was subsequently set up, as a sub-committee of the Residents' Association, to administer the project.

In August 1997, a colleague and I conducted a fourth PRA workshop with a view to discussing, with the GPIC, the form that proposals and business plans for projects that would be submitted to the GPIC by groups and individuals in Gwabeni, should take.

Although the villagers clearly hoped that my presence in the village would finally pay off and that I would 'bring them something,' I was very careful throughout the period over which I conducted my fieldwork, not to raise any expectations about my ability to do so. It was only at the third workshop that the availability of funding for specific natural resource-related projects in the village was broached. One of my colleagues has the formal responsibility of overseeing the rather slow process of implementing the pilot development project in Gwabeni (and a similar one in another village in Peddie District), which left me relatively free to pursue my research interests as before.

Despite my best intentions and my 'open agenda', I concede that it is possible, and even likely, that the people in the village chose to regard me as a well-resourced and potentially influential outsider who may be able to assist them in some as yet unspecified way. I was sensitive to this possibility throughout my fieldwork and, in analysing my data, I have tried to be particularly alert to instances where their perceptions may have coloured their interactions with me and given rise to patterned or predictable responses to my many questions (see Sharp (1985:69) for a subtle discussion of similar concerns).

5. The umzi (homestead) as unit of analysis

'The question of the "unit of study", far from being a methodological nicety, is a consequential theoretical matter. For fields of enquiry are never naturally given; they always reflect substantive assumptions about the constitution of the "real" world.' (Comaroff 1982:144).
In this study, I use the umzi (pl. imizi) as my primary unit of analysis. This approach to the important issue of conceptualising the most elementary unit of social organisation for rural areas (in this case in the Eastern Cape), takes cognisance of the many analytical problems that have been associated with the concept of household (see Spiegel 1990:254-262; Netting et al. 1984). Among these problems is that, in practice, it has been difficult to circumscribe in terms of structure and membership what constitutes a household: Spiegel (1986;1990) and others (Guyer and Peters 1987; Sharp 1994; Niehaus 1994) have pointed to the significant degree of fluidity which characterises rural and urban households in the South African context with regard to structure and composition, mobility, patterns of residence, of consumption and of the variable contribution made by members to the sustenance of the household. As Spiegel (1990:261) notes, it is precisely this wide-ranging variation in the form and content of the household as analytical unit that is itself of conceptual significance, and which undermines the analytical rigour of the concept.

In choosing to use the umzi as unit of analysis, I take as my starting point the observation that natural resources are generally collected and managed by the members (or contracted outsiders) of each umzi (or homestead) for use and consumption in that homestead. It appears to me that many village and location level resource management interventions, be they social, economic or ecological, are discussed, decided upon and implemented (or ignored) at the level of the umzi (see McAllister 1992:203-4). While not wishing to diminish the impact of individual agency on these many activities, I nevertheless argue that it is the umzi - with its particular configuration of social, economic and physical resources, at a specific point in the developmental cycle (Spiegel 1980; Manana 1988a), and which comprises a fluid set of co-operating individuals who share, to some extent, certain short and longer term goals with regard to social reproduction and material well-being - that is the 'common denominator' when trying to understand natural resource management strategies in Tyefu Location.

Most importantly, though, I found that the emic understanding of umzi in Tyefu Location has far-reaching implications for the management of natural resources. Membership of a specific umzi in Gwabeni, to which the members of a number of variously and fluidly constituted, rural and urban-based households, can make a locally recognised claim, meant that a person has rights, irrespective of where they reside at any one time,
to the full use of natural resources on the ‘commons’ in the village.\footnote{Such people include women who were born into Gwabeni lineages and homesteads, but who have since got married, moved away from the village and established their own households elsewhere. These women are still recognised as fully-fledged members of their homestead of origin and, should they be separated from their husbands or widowed, they would be able to return to the village and to enjoy unrestricted access to ‘commons’ resources. Access to resources and influence over resource management decision-making are, however, two different issues (see below).}

In Gwabeni, each \textit{umzi} consists of one or more buildings, which together with the fenced or unfenced residential site on which these buildings are situated, possibly one or more arable fields and some livestock,\footnote{The ownership of livestock, whether by the \textit{umzi}, or by specific members of the \textit{umzi}, varies from homestead to homestead. This is not, however, the case with arable land, which in Gwabeni is regarded as the ‘property’ of the \textit{umzi}.} constitute the ‘property’ of that \textit{umzi}. There is sometimes a fenced garden to be found adjacent to the buildings on the residential site, but such gardens have, in many cases, fallen into disuse.

\textit{Socially, the umzi} has traditionally comprised of extended families defined by patrilineal descent and virilocal residence. Typically, the male head of this extended family lived with his wife and his married sons with their wives and children (Manona 1988a:87). Socio-economic changes over the course of this century have transformed the structure of the \textit{umzi} so that in Gwabeni, \textit{imizi} are currently made up of a varying number of members, kin and non-kin who are related to each other in a number of ways (see James 1985:159-163). Increased population mobility has contributed to the notion of the \textit{umzi} taking on multi-layered meanings in respect of belongingness and identity, both for those members who are present in, and those who are absent from, the village.\footnote{I am grateful to Leslie Bank for this insight.}

A number of \textit{imizi} in Gwabeni are deserted as their members have all moved permanently away from the village, often but not always, to an urban centre. Other people have also effectively become urban-based, but retain their \textit{imizi} in the village and visit once a year or less frequently in order to conduct rituals there. While residence in the village undoubtedly constitutes a key element in conferring influence to people in respect of decision-making over resource management, the stake of those who are absent but who maintain varying degrees of contact with the village is consequently more complex and ambiguous. The resulting shifts in people’s claims to ‘belonging’ to the village, and thus of their roles in local alliances and authority are
played out in the contestation of access to and management of the natural resources of the village. These ideas are explored in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

6. Chapter outline

Chapter One introduces the study and situates it theoretically within the framework of common property systems and communal land tenure arrangements. Some elements of this broad framework are discussed and evaluated. The socio-economic heterogeneity prevalent in rural villages and the institutional challenges of managing natural resources held in common, in circumstances such as those which prevail in Tyefu Location, emerge from a review of the literature as central to understanding how these resource management systems change over time.

In Chapter Two, the agro-ecological conditions of Tyefu Location are described and discussed. The chapter looks at recent debates around the notion of resource degradation and considers whether it is possible to establish conclusively that the natural resource base in Tyefu Location has been subjected to significant and effectively irreversible levels of degradation.

Chapter Three analyses the historical processes that have exerted an influence over the way resources have been used and managed by the people of Tyefu Location and Gwabeni in particular. Reference is made to significant legislation which has influenced people's access to the land and its resources and continues to have an impact on natural resource management practices at village level. The role of the former Ciskei bantustan administration, particularly in politicising many aspects of the rural economy, is also evaluated.

Chapter Four examines the institutional arrangements that have shaped the management of natural resources at the level of the location and its constituent villages. I argue that the interplay between state intervention and local dynamics over a considerable period has changed the structure and powers of the local institutions that manage natural resources at this level. This has, in turn, undermined the efficacy and legitimacy of these institutions over time. The ways in which rural people attempt to circumvent or ameliorate unpopular measures imposed on them, are also considered.
Chapter Five unpacks the factors that currently impact on the use and management of natural resources in the village of Gwabeni. It analyses how the communal tenure system here is constrained by the natural environment, and has been modified by the 'enclosure' of the village, as well as how the resource management strategies adopted by residents are affected accordingly. I suggest that circumstances in the rural political economy limit the options open to people in this respect, but that different imizi and individuals have enjoyed and continue to have differential success in exploiting these options.

Chapter Six examines the extent of socio-economic heterogeneity in Gwabeni. Differences between imizi with respect to composition and structure, patterns of income and expenditure, relative wealth in terms of material possessions (including livestock holdings) and different levels of natural resource use, make it is possible to distinguish between different categories of resource users at the level of umzi. I show how these categories of resource users have differential incentives to contribute to the collective management of the natural resources available to them.

Chapter Seven analyses the changes in the rural agrarian economy and the impact that these changes, in conjunction with the dynamic rural-urban interdependence patterns prevalent in the villages of Tyefu Location, are having on natural resource management efforts at village level. It explores these issues within the context of one particular case-study, i.e. voluntary resettlement onto the Breakfastvlei Outspan.

In conclusion, Chapter Eight revisits the theoretical framework on common property and suggests how and why the observed property situation differs from the 'ideal' common property system. It draws together the main themes of the study and speculates on both the significance of these findings for the study of agrarian and post-agrarian systems in rural areas of the Eastern Cape and on the prospects for the successful implementation of sustainable natural resource management practices in these areas in the future.
CHAPTER ONE
The Management of Natural Resources in Common Property Systems

To analyse how rural people (in Tyefu Location) mediate the impact of the wider political economy on their use and management of the locally available natural resources, their individual and collective actions aimed at resource management must be situated within the interplay of social, economic and political conditions that prevail in this area. Given that the resources in question are held under a system of modified communal land tenure, it would be appropriate to ascertain whether a common property theoretical perspective can inform an analysis of this nature. To this end, we begin by analysing the notions of tenure and property systems.

1. Some General Principles of Land Tenure Systems

'Tenure' embraces the terms and conditions under which land and other natural resources are held and used (Bruce 1986: Introduction, xxvii). In rural areas throughout Africa, land tenure systems regulate access to productive resources, influence patterns of income and employment and impact on the local distribution of wealth, status and authority (Lane and Moorehead 1995:117). The legal basis of a tenure system provides one important framework for the expression and negotiation of kinship networks and ethnic identity and for the exercising of power within social groupings. Englund (1996:1) refers to land in rural Mozambique as the 'fabric of social relationships' and sees tenure, or the engagement of villagers around the land and its resources, as a key context in which the local sense of moral being is negotiated and refined.

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1 Modified in the sense that people in these tenure regimes are prevented (essentially by virtue of being fenced in) from expanding their settlements into 'new' areas, once the natural resources in their immediate locality are exhausted.

2 Bruce (1988:23) contends that a wide range of variables may affect the development of land tenure systems. These may include local climate and ecology, the quality of the land resource, population density, level of agricultural technology, crops, markets, kinship organisation, inheritance patterns, settlement patterns, political organisation, religious significance of land and patterns of ethnic conquest, dominance and rivalry.

3 This argument is most convincing in those cases where an agrarian rural lifestyle still predominates, and where relations around land and other productive natural resources are central to social reproduction. As will be argued later, in many rural areas of South Africa, the centrality of land in defining a 'local sense of moral being' has been eroded (but not displaced) by longstanding patterns of migrancy, urbanisation and overpopulation.
A central component of tenure is the notion of property: Bromley and Cernea (1989:2) argue that property is not an object such as land but a right or entitlement to a benefit stream that is only as secure as the social guarantees that protect such entitlement. The concept and practice of property is thus deeply rooted in social relationships (Lane and Moorehead 1995:117).

Analysts usually distinguish between four property regimes, namely state property, private property, common property and situations of 'open access' or non property (Bromley and Cernea 1989:11). Under state property regimes, rights of ownership and management of natural resources are vested in the state, but the state may transfer certain rights, for example usufruct, to individuals or groups. In private property regimes, the elementary rights to a stream of benefits accrue to the individual (or to a legally circumscribed group of people, such as a trust), but these rights are subject to certain legal conditions and social conventions. Under common property systems, ownership and management rights to a particular stream of benefits are vested in a corporate group of people. In situations of 'open access', no corporately recognised system of rights and obligations in respect of resource use exist.

In practice, different permutations of these four 'types' are found and it is relatively common for various elements of these types of property to co-exist in one property regime. This is, in fact, the case in Tyefu Location, which is one geographically and administratively discrete resource management area under a modified communal tenure regime. The implications of this are discussed below.

2. Common Property Systems

Common property has been defined as 'private property for the corporate group' (Bromley and Cernea 1989:14). Ostrom refers to 'self-organised and self-governed

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4 The corporate group of a common property system is defined by Bromley and Cernea (1989:15) as a social unit with definite membership and boundaries, with some shared cultural norms and an endogenous authority system. Each of the members who make up the corporate group has structured rights and duties in the regime (IFAD 1995:19).
common pool\textsuperscript{5} resource\textsuperscript{6} systems, by which she means a situation in which specific, interdependent groups of resource users collectively use and manage one or more common resources to obtain continuing joint benefits (1990:25,29).\textsuperscript{6}

According to Oakerson (1986:13), all common property regimes\textsuperscript{7} have one central problem, namely the co-ordination of rights and obligations in the management of resource use by individuals, especially since all users ostensibly face the temptation to free-ride. This co-ordination includes members agreeing on how to allocate and manage the common pool resources, and on the monitoring of compliance by resource users of the resource management rules. The management of common pool resources attempts to attain an optimal and equitable rate of consumption and productive use of resources by the whole group (Swallow 1996:1).

The problem of co-ordinating common pool resource use is addressed by:

(i) defining a corporate group of rights holders which is able to limit access to resources through the exclusion of 'outsiders' and,

(ii) by establishing and enforcing rights and obligations, or operational rules, with regard to resource use (Cousins 1995:2).

It is argued that common property regimes are compatible with individual usufruct of prescribed segments of the total resources held by the corporate group. Bromley (1989:870) argues that resources in many rural areas are characterised by complex

\textsuperscript{5} These refer to the resources held in common and available for use by all members of the corporate group.

\textsuperscript{6} Lawry (1990:406) argues a 'minimum definition' of common property pertains to situations where rules define who has access to the commons and, by extension, who is excluded from using these resources. Explicit regulation of the behaviour of those who qualify as commons users becomes necessary when local resource demand exceeds sustainable supply.

\textsuperscript{7} Li (1996:504) argues that much of the common property literature constitutes an ideological project to influence a diverse audience of scholars, policy-makers and others in national and international agencies, by challenging the currently dominant neo-liberal discourse that advocates a shift towards 'more efficient' private property management systems (also see Mosse 1997:468; Peters 1994:3). In pursuing this objective, simplified representations of what are essentially 'fragile' (see Ostrom 1990:178) common property systems and rural 'communities', when deployed in a macro policy context, can be more effective than emphasising the 'heterogeneous, factional and stratified nature' of these communities (Li 1996:504). I share Li's concerns and suggest that it is important to recognise and differentiate between the ideological, theoretical and practical ways in which common property systems are discussed and put forward as potentially suitable systems for specific instances of resource management.
institutional arrangements that vary across resources and during different seasons, giving the impression that property rights are, in fact, absent. For example, arable allotments which are generally held by individuals, are nevertheless often regarded as part of the common property system, with the proviso that the user cannot alienate or transfer the rights to, or the use of, that resource segment. In the event that the user fails to put the resource segment to productive use, it reverts (in theory at least)\(^8\) to the jurisdiction of the corporate group for re-allocation to another user (Bromley and Cernea 1989:16).

The discussion thus far has outlined several key characteristics and institutional aspects of 'ideal' common property systems. In rural areas of the former bantustans in the Eastern Cape, land that is state-owned is held under a modified communal land tenure system and exhibits some of the features of the common property model. Land shortages (mainly due to overcrowding in these areas) have, however, resulted in social pressure which blocks the reversion of arable land to the common pool and its subsequent re-allocation to another individual for arable purposes at a later stage. Nevertheless, the same arable lands are often used out of growing season as common pool (i.e. common access) grazing areas. Grazing lands proper are held in common and may be used by the livestock of all members of the local corporate group. In the case of Tyefu Location, this includes owners of livestock from the eleven constituent villages of the location, as the boundaries between the villages, although well-known to residents, are not demarcated by fences, and livestock are thus free to roam across the location.

Other common pool resources in these villages, namely water, fuelwood and timber products, mud for building, soil resources, thatching grass, manure and wilderness resources, such as wild game, wild vegetables and fruits and medicinal plants, are (nominally) subject to common property management regimes. These regimes tend to be localised to specific villages and their residents, who have unfettered access to these resources.

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\(^8\) Clearly, whether the under-utilised resource segment does, in fact, become available for re-allocation, has major implications for issues of productivity, equity and resource conservation in these regimes.
3. Institutions for resource management in common property systems

By definition, common property systems are made up of a specifically defined group of resource users who, because of their membership of this group, have rights of access and use to particular common pool resources. Further, there are rules in place which govern individual access and which ensure that the limited resources at the disposal of the group are allocated and used in ways that are broadly endorsed by the whole group (see Wynne and Lyne 1995:649). Clearly, both the composition of the group and the structured nature of their interaction are of key significance to the efficacy of the common property system. The interaction between the members of a common property system is structured by means of local and supra-local institutions.

Unpacking Institutions

Institutions are established social practices or relationships based on shared norms and behaviours that change over time, but which serve collectively valued purposes (Uphoff 1992:4). Because they are the expression of established sets of conventions, codes and rules, institutions are at the core of all social systems, mediating the ways in which people interact with one another (Bromley 1989:870). Institutions include things like legal codes, tenure systems, kinship and marital arrangements (Thomas-Slayter 1994:1480), as well as informal ‘constraints’ on behaviour such as sanctions, taboos, customs and traditions (North 1991:97). It is important to note, however, that these ‘codes of behaviour’ are themselves constantly being renegotiated, adapted or ignored to suit particular social situations and that while an institution might endure through time, its raison d’etre and its characteristic features may undergo a number of fundamental changes. Also, as Cousins and Robins (1993:3,21) point out, non-statutory and informal institutions which exist and are maintained outside the formal institutional framework can have enormous effects on the latter.

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8 Here, I use the term efficacy to mean a state in which the allocation and use of common property resources is ecologically sound and is socially and economically acceptable to its members, in the sense of meeting their material needs.

10 Communal tenure is one such institution (see Besteman 1994; Peters 1994).
In what is widely regarded as a seminal text on common property institutions, Ostrom (1990:88-102) analysed a number of ‘long-surviving, small-scale’\(^{11}\) common property systems and described what she termed the ‘design principles’ of the institutions that govern these resource management systems. The features of these systems are paraphrased below:

1. Clearly defined rights and boundaries in terms of membership and of the physical resource base,
2. Congruence between use and management rules on the one hand and local socio-economic and ecological conditions on the other,
3. Collective choice arrangements where most individuals affected by the operational rules can participate in the negotiation and modification of these rules, (or what Bromley (1989:871) has referred to as ‘rules for changing the rules of use’),
4. Resource monitoring, where monitors accountable to the group (and who are possibly also members of the group), actively audit resource conditions and the actions of resource users,
5. The application of graduated sanctions, by officials accountable to the corporate group, against resource users who violate operational rules, with the initial sanctions used often fairly minor,
6. Ease of access to low-cost local arenas where conflicts between users and between users and officials can be resolved,
7. The right of users to devise their own institutions that will not be undermined by external governmental authorities and,
8. The existence of institutional arrangements where the different levels of activities necessary to sustain the management of resources in common property systems are hierarchically structured into local levels of resource use and management and more generalised, regional or national levels, of these activities.

This influential framework has a number of weaknesses. Firstly, many of these ‘principles’ relate to group membership and collective activities more generally, and are not necessarily specific to common property systems per se. Secondly, the list begs the question as to whether a property system that does not exhibit all these ‘ideal’

\(^{11}\) Ostrom’s definition of ‘small-scale’ is where the common pool resource (CPR) is located within one country and the number of individuals affected varies from 50 to 15 000 who are heavily dependent on the CPR for economic returns.
institutional features can be called a common property system or not, and what the implications of this might be. Thirdly, the somewhat organic (i.e. internally interdependent) - and what Li (1996:504) refers to as an 'outdated functionalist' - framework does not appear to deal adequately with institutional change over time. As an 'ideal case', the framework seems to suggest that if one or more of the 'design principles' are neglected, the institutional basis of a common property system is weakened and may collapse (see Mosse 1997:469-70). Indeed, Ostrom (1990) refers at length to the inherent 'institutional fragility' of common pool resource systems.\(^{12}\)

**Institutional flexibility**

Recent work (see Swallow 1996; Ng'weno 1996) that deals with the contestation around management and use of land resources, offers a corrective to Ostrom's somewhat static orthodoxy\(^{13}\) by placing an emphasis on the value of fluidity and flexibility (essentially, openness to change) with respect to group and physical boundaries. This new emphasis offers a corrective to an idealisation of the way common property institutions should work as opposed to the 'messy' ways in which these systems have actually been found to work in practice.

Swallow (1996:11) asks '....if well-defined [membership and physical] boundaries are so important, why do some common property regimes have flexible or fuzzy\(^{14}\) boundaries?' He reasons that flexibility is an alternative way of maximising the access to common property resources which is useful specifically in situations when rights to 'resource bundles' can be exchanged easily between rights holders who have different

\(^{12}\) These systems are threatened by overcrowding and 'rent dissipation' (i.e. resource depletion) (Ostrom 1990:143); by heterogeneous users with conflicting interests, in situations where there are no over-arching institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution (ibid:146); by increased market opportunities and socio-economic differentiation (1990:156-7); by a lack of recognition of local resource regimes by national governments (ibid:205).

\(^{13}\) Ostrom (1990:191) herself argues that current theoretical studies of common pool resource systems do not deal properly with institutional change and the role of external political regimes, nor do they include information and transaction costs in common pool resource management.

\(^{14}\) A boundary is flexible if its spatial location is easily identifiable, though subject to change through negotiation and agreement. A boundary is fuzzy if it does not separate territories into discrete land units that are the property of mutually-exclusive groups (Swallow 1996:11).
needs. Ultimately, it seems that, in practice, Swallow's flexible common property arrangements still rely on local or macro-level (overarching) institutions (such as the administrative and judicial organs of the state) that are organisationally competent enough - and have sufficient political legitimacy - to administer and regulate these flexible systems. Without this regulation it may be debatable whether there is, in fact, a 'common property system' to speak of.

In a different vein, Ng'weno argues that, at any given time, different groups of resource users benefit from the fixity or dynamism of categories and possibilities ('codes') in respect of access to and use of natural resources (1996:22). She suggests that it is the existence of flexible membership boundaries, geographical borders, networks of kin and other relationships of belonging, that allow people with questionable claims to group membership to remain on the land, to utilise resources and to survive physically. Following Ng'weno's argument, however, it is not clear, to what extent the common property institutions that accommodate this degree of 'flexibility' are immune to pressures of overexploitation, conflict and disintegration. Indeed, it could be argued that the 'community ethic' values (see below) that underpin and accommodate this flexibility, may result in a major influx of people onto a fixed land area. A typical result of this scenario is an increase in social, demographic and ecological pressures that threaten to disrupt the common property system and could make it move towards an open access (i.e. unregulated) situation.

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15 This argument is most compelling in respect of trade-offs between pastoralists and agricultural resource users who have overlapping claims to different resources in the same landscape, such as those in the Sahel. It could, however, also be applied to resource users in the communal areas of Peddie District, who are characterised by heterogeneous interest groups and socio-economic differentiation at village and location level, and who thus have different needs and uses for local natural resources.

16 As Mosse (1997:500) argues, 'Collective action theory persistently constructs as spontaneous and self-supporting, institutional solutions which are in reality conceived, imposed, and in most cases sustained, by substantial external authority and resources.'
4. Collective action and 'social capital'\textsuperscript{17}

Thomas-Slayter (1994:1482) has argued that across Africa, it is often informal networks and formal associations based on patterns of co-operation, reciprocity and patron-client exchange, that underpin household survival and promote individual and collective welfare. These relationships and networks, which are based on shared identity, religion, kinship and local (neighbourhood) networks, play a key role in determining access to resources and to centres of power and decision-making.

Membership of these networks provides individuals with an insurance policy of sorts, a store of 'social capital', which ensures a measure of social and material support for them and their dependents, in the event of some unforeseen disaster or even in the daily business of resource (including prestige) scarcity. Sharp and Spiegel (1985:140) refer to the 'social resources' of kinship and neighbourhood that foster relationships of reciprocity and clientage and provide a hedge against impoverishment.\textsuperscript{18}

Notions of social capital are also a critical component, it is argued, of what makes common property systems work effectively. Ostrom (1990:184, 190) draws attention to the importance of shared norms and patterns of trust and reciprocity, and people's reputations for keeping promises, honest dealings and reliability, as valuable components of the social relationships that form the bedrock of collective social action. As Ostrom (1990:184) argues,

"When individuals have lived in [small-scale common pool resource systems] for a substantial time and have developed shared norms and patterns of reciprocity, they possess social capital with which they can build institutional arrangements for resolving common pool resource dilemmas." [my emphasis].

\textsuperscript{17} The term 'social capital' (Putnam, 1993:167) is used popularly (and often loosely) in the common property literature to refer to the features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate co-operation and coordination of group action for mutual benefits (see Mearns 1996 and ODA 1996).

\textsuperscript{18} Sharp and Spiegel (1985) go on to discuss the extent to which these ties were drastically undermined in the conditions of poverty and deprivation experienced by people in the former Qwa Qwa bantustan.
The existence of 'social capital' supposedly helps to explain why people choose to co-operate in the management of common pool resources, essentially because it makes a major contribution to reducing the 'transaction costs' of resource management in common property systems. Mosse (1997:468), however, sees the current academic and policy trend of advocating 'community management' models (in which ideas about 'social capital' play - explicitly or implicitly - a significant part) in preference to state control and privatisation options, primarily as a larger critique of the modernising development strategies of centralised states and the dominance of 'western' technical models over indigenous community perspectives.

This 'pro-community management' view tends to portray 'communities' as resource managers who are autonomous and independent of the organs of the state, and as synchronic, ahistorical and monolithic constructs (Mosse 1997:469; Berry 1997:1228). This approach tends to assume that 'local communities' possess the necessary capacity (i.e. 'social capital') to collectively manage their resources, because of (romanticised notions of) long established and stable norms of mutual trust and co-operation. The reality is, of course, that practically all 'local communities' have been, and continue to be, subjected to the vagaries of changes in climate, population, and economic and political integration. In other words, they are not homogenous groups of people, and, as such, do not continue to act and co-operate in accordance with age-old customs and practices.

How useful then, are ideas about 'social capital' in understanding the actual processes at work in situations that require collective decision-making and action to manage natural resources? Firstly, the notion of 'social capital' appears to assume a degree of social egalitarianism and co-operation among the collective in a common property system that is not always borne out in practice. In the Eastern Cape, the levels of socio-economic differentiation that exist in rural villages and the differential access enjoyed by various categories of rural people have to decision-making fora are two

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Agarwal (1994:1456) has argued, for example, that it is patently misleading to assume that the household is a unit of congruent interests and preferences, among whose members the benefits of available resources are shared equitably, irrespective of gender.
important elements that dispel any myths of egalitarianism and of the existence of homogenous 'communities' in rural areas.

Furthermore, at the inter-household level, Keohane and Ostrom (1995:33) remind us that many social groupings are characterised by heterogeneity and deep fissures and that they continue to experience rapid social change. On a similar note, Mearns (1996:2) dispels the myth of equality by contending that the shared expectations and commitments [of members in a common property system] do not necessarily imply equality among members of that particular system (see Thomas-Slayter (1994:1482) and Snidal (1995:58), for discussions of this asymmetry of expectations and access). Clearly, social relations and networks of reciprocity and trust, as well as shared incentives are critical elements of effective and robust common property systems. Despite the detailed attention to institutional arrangements, Ostrom (1990), and indeed much of the voluminous literature on common property systems, and land-resource issues more generally, does not systematically 'unpack' the processes by which 'social capital', as the 'glue' that binds people together in collective action systems, develops and is nurtured, or is destroyed.

This failure stems mostly from the fact that the elements included under the rubric of 'social capital' do not exist in the objective and readily identifiable form that the term 'capital' suggests. 'Social capital', used in this way, tends to act as a holdall for the myriad of social and moral elements of human action that cannot be accounted for by rational choice or similar (for example 'game') theories of human behaviour. This is because the 'moral economy' of trust and reciprocity, that is at the core of 'social capital', is embedded, in a way which is constantly being negotiated and contested, in the everyday social, economic and political circumstances of social groupings. For these reasons, I do not find the notion of 'social capital', as used in the common property literature, an analytically useful concept in the study of common property systems. As I show in Chapter Seven, notions about, and claims to membership and identity within particular kinds of 'community' and the 'social capital' such a grouping

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20 Cross (1988:367) in her discussion of informal freehold, refers to a 'community ethic' which has much in common with the notion of 'social capital' put forward here. More recent work by Mearns (1996) and White and Runge (1995) has paid closer attention to the aspects of social organisation in common property systems.
ostensibly shares, can actually undermine efforts aimed at collective resource management. 21

5. The advantages of common property systems

With reference to the potential benefits of common property systems, Runge (1986:33) argues that ‘village economy’ common property systems are easier to manage and generally have lower transaction and enforcement costs than other property systems. The latter systems of necessity make greater formal, social investments in mechanisms for the assignment, definition and adjudication of exclusive rights in property. They do this because of the absence of the ‘moral community’ which is apparently prevalent in the ‘village economy.’ In the ‘village economy’ system, a relatively small number of people have been tied together, possibly for generations, by kinship and other social networks, and there is likely to be a recognition of local leadership and institutions. Lawry also points out that the costs of delineating clear private property rights to many kinds of resources would be prohibitive to the people involved in common property management arrangements. In addition, the resource needs of poor people and small-scale users may be best met by common property systems. A good example of appropriate use of common property is in arid and semi-arid rangelands, where range productivity is essentially a function of rainfall, which varies both spatially and temporally. Communal use of these rangeland resources allows for livestock to move over large areas in search of available grazing (Lawry 1990:405-6).

What is not readily specified in these arguments is the point(s) at which a common property system that exhibits these features, loses its comparative advantage in terms of transaction costs over other property systems. Nor is it clear which factors undermine the existence of the ‘moral community’ at village level so that it is no longer able to

21 White (1996:2) argues that ‘common pool resource systems, and other forms of collective action, perform a valuable role in societies, not only by the particular issues they address, or economic gains they generate, but by their subtle and generalised contribution to the construction of other and future forms of social capital’ [my emphasis]. Ostrom’s definition of ‘social capital’ as ‘the arrangement of human resources to improve flows of future income....[social capital] is created by individuals spending time and energy working with other individuals to find better ways of making possible the achievement of certain ends that, in its absence, would not be possible’ (1990:125-6).
regulate the use and management of resources in common property systems.

Another ostensible advantage is that common property systems are able to manage and allocate resources more efficiently (i.e. with less long-term ecological impact) because they benefit from local indigenous knowledge. This knowledge allows for the development and adaptation of management mechanisms that are sensitive to, and which suit, local environmental conditions. These mechanisms may include the development of systems of communal rangeland management that are sensitive to the abovementioned high local temporal and spatial variation in rangeland (vegetative) production. Again, this argument assumes firstly, that a ready source of indigenous ecological knowledge exists which has been and continues to be generated, refined, adapted and transmitted over an extended period and secondly that, despite management intervention by outsiders, including the state, and rapid socio-economic and possibly ecological change in a locality, this indigenous knowledge remains relevant and useful. Suffice to say that this may in fact not be the case in specific rural areas.

A further advantage cited in the literature is that common use rights may contribute to social stability by guaranteeing common access to certain key resources, particularly in situations of poverty and where the availability of natural resources may be unpredictable. Common property systems can thus be appropriate institutional adaptations to resource management at the local level because they provide the individual, through membership of a group of resource users, with a hedge against poverty and distress (Runge 1986:49; Lane and Moorehead 1995:120-1). This is also referred to as the 'risk management' function of common property regimes which provides people in high risk, marginal environments with the necessary 'assurance' against impoverishment. In these situations, natural resources may become 'the employer of last resort' or 'safety net' which allow the poorest members of the community to intensify and even commercialise their use of natural resources (Swallow 1996:6-8; IFAD 1995:7-8).

Empirical research from the Indian sub-continent has shown that the rural poor do indeed derive far greater proportions of their fuel supplies, animal grazing, employment
and total income from resources under common property regimes than do the wealthier stratum of rural residents (Jodha 1991:6). This is also true for rural areas in South Africa (May et.al. 1995:66). Swallow (1996:8) argues that the relatively wealthy members of a common property system may also favour the maintenance of a 'safety net' comprised of resources held as common property because they too are subject to the vagaries of fortune and may at some future juncture need to rely on these resources. Another reason why they might support the notion of a 'safety net' is that the availability of 'commons' resources relieves them of the social and moral obligations of having to assist impoverished residents (ibid:8). Furthermore, this relief can be achieved at no real expense to themselves, as many of the resources that constitute the 'safety net' of the poor are not needed by the wealthier members of the corporate group and vice versa. The state can also be included among those who benefit from the maintenance of common property systems, because these systems relieve the state of the administrative and financial burden of taxation, and of having to make welfare disbursements to the poor.

6. Reasons for the 'breakdown' of common property systems

Common property systems, like all social institutions, are subject to the pressures of socio-economic, political and ecological change. Some of these systems are able to adapt to changes in the wider political and economic context in which they exist, but others are less successful. One reason why some of these systems fail is that the mechanisms for the regulation of resource use are not capable of adapting to changed social conditions and increased pressure on ecological resources. This could result, *inter alia*, from rapid population increase in areas with inflexible leadership structures. Both these factors would make it difficult for a large number of resource users to reach agreement on appropriate levels of resource utilisation or on other changes that should be effected to optimise resource management.

Lawry (1990:410) has identified the lack of incentives to invest in collective action as one reason for the collapse of common property systems. He argues that collective action is more likely to be successful where a commons resource is (a) critical to local livelihoods and (b) is scarce. In essence, this means that in those areas where the
needs and interests of the members of a common property system no longer correspond sufficiently to serve as incentives for collective resource management, the system is likely to fail.

In the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, marked socio-economic differentiation appears to be well-established. In this situation, the management of commons resources that make a critical contribution to the subsistence needs of poorer residents, such as firewood, wild vegetables and prickly pear fruit, is virtually ignored by the wealthier residents. The wealthier stratum of imizi are in a position to substitute the use of some natural resources with alternative options, for example, by using paraffin or gas as fuel instead of firewood. As a result, the ‘rural elite’ has considerably less incentive to contribute to the sustainable management of these resources because the opportunity costs of their labour in collecting, using and particularly, in managing the resources subject to common property management are often higher than the value of the resources to them (Jodha 1991:10).

Conversely, wealthier imizi may attempt to appropriate certain resources, such as grazing resources, for their private use, thereby ignoring the rights of other members and in the process undermine the common property system itself (Cousins 1995). These imizi are also more likely to try to disengage from stifling local social networks that hold few benefits for them, although there may be strong social pressure exerted on them, including the threat of witchcraft accusations, to prevent this. This disengagement by the local elites from village affairs means that decisions taken by the rest of the village residents are not necessarily endorsed by the wealthier (and often influential) individuals and imizi and may therefore lack authority. Again, the common property management system can suffer as a result.

Another factor that renders common property management vulnerable is increased demographic pressure (Ostrom 1990:220). Increased population densities tend to create competition and tensions that cannot easily be resolved with the institutional mechanisms in place. Another factor, namely the penetration of market linkages may result in the commercialisation of resources and pressures for privatisation, particularly where some resource use occurs outside indigenous controls (Little and Brokensha
1987:191). This may happen, for example, where firewood resources are utilised to fulfil subsistence needs but are easily harvested for sale outside of the corporate group or local area. Market linkages also result in increased population mobility, through practices such as labour migrancy, which remove people from rural areas, blur the membership boundaries of common property systems, and negatively affect efforts aimed at collective resource management. The spread of markets can also promote socio-economic differentiation: as people’s levels of engagement in the economy, their sources and levels of income diversify and their interest in collectively managed local resources diverge.

Another problem with regard to common property systems is that of mediating and maintaining the requisite recognition by outside political institutions of the legitimate role of local resource management institutions (Ostrom 1990:144-6). Thomas-Slayter has observed that in many African countries centralisation of power has been the fundamental objective of the state (1994:1484). This somewhat haphazard advance of the modern state system in Africa has witnessed the partial integration of common property systems into the legislative frameworks of present day nation-states. The unwillingness of many incumbent national governments, (with their pretensions to control over land-based natural resources) to recognise and uphold the often localised authority and decision-making systems of common property regimes, has seriously undermined the continued existence of these systems.22

The issue of institutional recognition and support by government is complicated by a lack of government administrative capacity and by the competing claims and interests of the various tiers and organs of government (Toulmin 1991:113,115; Lawry 1990:419). Where this recognition and support is withheld for whatever reason, and state-controlled organisations attempt to usurp the decision-making powers of local common property regimes, the ambiguities and uncertainties of what is often an incomplete transfer of these powers undermine the trust and confidence between resource users themselves and between them and their local institutions responsible

22 Indeed, Toulmin (1991:115) contends that governments use what they regard as ‘anarchy’ in land management to justify continued central control, on the grounds that local populations are patently incapable of managing their own resources. This is so even though most African governments have themselves not been up to the task.
for regulating resource use (see Tiffen 1991:99).

As a result of this lack of clear (i.e. unambiguous) external legitimation, common property systems suffer from a crisis of authority and are likely to decline and eventually lapse into non-management or 'open access' (Bromley and Cernea 1989:19). It cannot, however, be assumed that the dismantling of state control over decision-making processes with regard to rural resources will automatically lead to the resurgence of local management institutions: a more likely scenario is that of an institutional vacuum on the ground because the endogenous institutions have been changed and possibly eroded (IFAD 1995:90; Toulmin 1991:111).

7. Modified Communal land tenure in the Eastern Cape Province

Defining communal land tenure
Bruce (1986:3) suggests that the term 'communal tenure' has been used loosely in the literature to cover at least three quite different situations. Firstly, it may be used to describe common ownership, which implies collective use and management of resources, something which occurs only exceptionally in Africa. Secondly, the term may refer to 'the right of members of a group to each use independently the full resources of certain land (the commons) of the group,' but this right does not extend to arable land, which is held individually. Thirdly, the term 'communal tenure' has been used to refer to 'significant group control over land which is apportioned for the exclusive use of individuals or families of the group'. This group is usually defined by common descent, common residence or both and the group's interest may be represented as a property right or couched in political or administrative terms (ibid:4).

In the South African context and specifically in communal tenure areas of the former Ciskei, it is the nature and extent of the 'communality' of both resource use and management that has generated debate (see De Wet 1987b:459). Cross argues that 'communal' tenure has taken on different forms around the country depending on how

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23 Runge (1986) speaks of the problem of 'assurance' where users lack confidence in the capacity of institutions to regulate resource use.
it is administered (1991:72). Cross has also suggested that to describe indigenous tenure as 'communal' is to obscure the way it works in practice. This is partly the case because it is only the resources on the commons which are held communally in the sense that every member of the 'community' has rights of access and use to them. Cousins (1995:2) points out that while these resources can potentially be managed as common property, there is a tendency in South Africa and more generally to elide the concepts of common property and communal tenure in ways that obscure the significant differences between the two concepts. Although resources on the commons generally lend themselves to management by common property systems, they could also be (and in some cases are) held and managed under state, private or non-property regimes.

In contrast to the communal rights that people have to these natural resources, residential sites and arable allotments are held and controlled by individuals who have exclusive usufruct rights to these resources for as long as they reside in the village (Mills and Wilson 1952:8). Ownership of the land and its resources rests with the State, but it delegates (in theory, at least) the responsibility for the management of these resources to its statutory local representative(s), for example a magistrate, chief or headman.

In principle every (married male) person has the right to residential and arable land by virtue of his being a member of a village community. In practice however, De Wet (1987b:460) notes that the exercising of the right to arable land may be restricted by a local scarcity of such land. The rights to arable land may be (unofficially) inherited but not sold (Mills and Wilson 1952:8). Rights to grazing land for livestock (and rights to other commons resources) are generally secure, regardless of whether a person holds arable land or not and irrespective of the number of livestock a person owns (De Wet 1987b:461).

Cross (1988:17) points out that the term 'communal' also refers to the right of the members of the corporate group to approve the transfer of usufructary rights over

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24 As noted previously, these include a significant number and range of natural resources other than grazing resources.
residential land to an outsider. This means conferring user rights and obligations to this person and his dependents. This practice echoes Bruce's notion of 'communal' as 'significant group control over land' (Bruce 1986:4). By conferring membership on individuals through transfers of land, the corporate group has the capacity to organise itself and to enforce (to some extent) socially acceptable behaviour because the right to belong is conditional to the exercising of acceptable moral and social behaviour.\footnote{In practice, it is not very easy for the corporate group to withdraw membership rights once these rights have been conferred.}
The extent to which the corporate group actually participate en masse in the transferring of this right is probably highly variable, especially given the formal powers which were formerly enjoyed by the headmen and the 'tribal' authority structures.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Modified Communal tenure**

In a critical analysis of the apparent benefits of communal tenure in the Eastern Cape, De Wet (1987b:467-8) found that the communal tenure system does, in fact, provide people with access to commons resources. Another benefit of the system is that inheritance patterns and the inalienable nature of the land resources contribute to social and cultural continuity, because membership of these communities has in many cases been relatively stable over time (Ibid:467). The implication here is that it remains possible, in the face of state-endorsed and other (for example economic) resettlements, for the members of a village to control the influx of 'outsiders' into their area or to admit these people on their terms. Clearly, this has not always been the case for many rural areas in the Eastern Cape, and Tyefu Location is no exception.

De Wet (1987b) also suggests that many of the assumptions that exist concerning this tenure system do not necessarily apply in practice. Firstly, the shortage of arable land in practically all former 'bantustan' rural areas means that not every married man is guaranteed access to land, a fact which undermines the supposed egalitarianism which the communal tenure system promotes, and which increases the potential divergence of local interests. This may also result in a breakdown of the incentives for collective action that are necessary for the maintenance of the property regime and of the related management of natural resources.
Secondly, the tenure security offered by a land tenure system which confers land use rights based on membership of the social grouping, has been vulnerable to government intervention in the form of Betterment Planning or through the implementation of large-scale irrigation schemes that have re-engineered local tenure regimes. This argument relates back to the point about the uncertainty experienced locally as a result of the (possibly unwanted) transfer of authority from local institutions (for example, chiefs and lineage heads in villages) to those representing primarily the interests of the government administration.

Cross shows that 'traditional' tenure regimes in South Africa discriminate against women (1991:76). This issue is also emphasised in DLA (1997:32): 'There are parts of the country where the rules and practices of communal tenure discriminate against women, both in respect of access to land and in terms of their ability to participate effectively in decision-making structures.' Discrimination against women in this regard is certainly not restricted to areas subject to communal tenure, but clearly these issues have an important impact on the sustainable use of natural resources in rural areas where women predominate.26

**Institutional flexibility under systems of modified communal tenure**

Cross (1988:33) has characterised 'communal' tenure in the former Ciskei as a rigid, administrative codification of what colonial administrators thought indigenous tenure was, with legal codes that facilitated control by the State. The weight of these laws, Cross argues, 'has functioned to freeze spontaneous change and to promote the state-sponsored 'traditionalism' that informs and sustains the homelands system at the expense of adaptation at the local level (Cross, 1991:77). I suggest that the de facto modified communal tenure system in the former Ciskei is characterised more by the manipulation, circumvention or blatant disregard by the resource users and managers of laws and regulations in specific resource management systems, than by rigidity.

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26 An emphasis on gender differences should not, however, mask the significant intra-group heterogeneity of needs and (class) interests that exist between rural women as a group and between rural men as a group.
Indeed, Cross (ibid:64) herself refers to this tendency:

'[We must take note] of the administrative gap between what the state and its bureaucracies prescribe and what people on the ground are actually doing. Black South Africans have often successfully evaded planning efforts to force them to conform to state restrictions. As a result, some of the main tenures under which Africans live today do not officially exist. These land systems survive because of the administrative gap between the state's capacity to intervene and the daily activities of the people on the ground.' [my emphasis].

Cokwana (1988:305) has also argued that the communal tenure system in the former Ciskei of the mid-1980s did not provide for either community or individual control over the use or disposal of land. He contends that although the headman and village council were involved in processes of land allocation and management, authority over land [and related natural resources] rested with the agricultural officer, the magistrate and the relevant government minister (ibid:305). This perception of the rigidity of the land administration system in the former Ciskei is however, particularly tenuous when the past twenty years - the period of Ciskeian 'independence' and the few years immediately preceding it - are examined. Evidence suggests that the 'system' of land administration became increasingly fragmented, as forced removals increased and local people began taking the initiative and solving their problem of land shortages by invading vacant (often 'released') land for residential or livestock grazing purposes (see Bank 1993).

Two contentious issues require clarification here: firstly, the process by which local or supposedly 'customary' institutions for resource management were undermined and subsequently formally supplanted, only to be reconstituted through, inter alia, the implementation of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, was not a linear one. Instead it was convoluted, drawn out, uneven and contradictory (see Hendricks, 1990). In

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27 Kerr's argument (1990:95ff) that the 'Administration holds ultimate jurisdiction over the rights to residential and arable land [in communal areas], and therefore over the use of the land' is, of course, correct in the legal sense, but that is not what is at issue here. Rather it is the day-to-day practices of natural resource allocation and management that interest us and at this level, the only representatives of the administration involved were the headman and the (unpaid) sub-headman, both of whom did not exist outside the web of local socio-political and economic networks.
addition, in the rural location areas of former Ciskei, this process has played out over a period of some hundred and fifty years with marked local variations and sometimes considerable time lags between the passing of legislation and its implementation on the ground. This implementation was by no means uniform in all areas of the former Ciskei.

Secondly, the legislative articulation (i.e. the 'codification') of the lines of administrative authority aimed at the management of land and other natural resources in rural localities, did not necessarily match the observed patterns of day-to-day land and resource allocation and management on the ground. The pervasive existence and survival of 'informal' or 'unofficial' tenure and resource management arrangements, which circumvent the institutions of legislated authority, have been noted in the literature (Cross 1991; N'gweno 1996; Bruce 1986) and have also been recorded for rural areas in the Eastern Cape: De Wet (1992:23) notes that even for freehold land in Keiskammahoek,

'Administrative officials have in the past tried, with varying degrees of success, to bring the records [concerning landownership] up to date. Relationships around land thus take place in the context of community norms, with the legal context usually being invoked only when appeal to these community norms has failed......This de facto location of land matters in a social and moral, rather than in a formal legal context, also leads to considerable diversity on the ground......'

Actual examples from rural areas of the Eastern Cape of observed patterns of village level land management, clearly show how the authority and effectiveness of statutory institutions formally responsible for land management has often rested on informal village networks and alliances: De Wet (1987b:460) notes that with regard to applications for land in Keiskammahoek (prior to the 1980s), '......the magistrate rubber-stamps the application [for arable and/or residential land] of candidates presented to him by the headman, provided that the person has paid his taxes.' This observation suggests that headmen, and by extension the local village networks in which the headmen moved, continued to play a pivotal role in land allocation and thus

28 For instance, subheadman - headman - agricultural officer - magistrate - government department - government minister.
in respect of resource use, even though these tasks were the ultimate legal responsibility of the magistrate.

Lending weight to this argument is the contention by De Wet that ‘inasmuch as landlessness is increasing, the headman has discretionary power in relation to the allocation of vacant land and it is not unusual for a person applying for an allotment to present a gift of sorts to the headman’ (1987b: 460; also see Wilson et.al. 1952:37). Once a field had been granted, the headman was also ‘thanked’ (ukubulela) with a gift.29

A review of examples of correspondence between landless, urban-based men and the local Native Commissioner30 in Peddie dating from the 1950s, indicate the extent to which the latter was forced to rely on the local headmen for confirmation of each case, giving the headmen considerable influence over the success or failure of each application. As a result, even though greater ‘formal’ control over land resources had been transferred to the statutory structures (particularly to the Native Commissioner), some of the local people were still prepared to present the headman with gifts, indicating his continued importance with regard to access to material (and natural) resources at the level of village and village-section.31

But the headmen were not alone in having discretionary powers over local natural resources: Wilson et.al. (1952:29-30) noted that matters of administrative concern to specific village sections, were dealt with by the (unpaid) subheadman and the inkundla (moot or court) in his village section. These subheadmen were responsible for ensuring that the instructions given by the magistrate to the headman of the village or location concerning, for example, matters such as soil conservation or the eradication of noxious weeds, were carried out in his own area. He also conveyed to the headman

29 See Mills and Wilson (1952:11-12) for an account (from the late 1940s and early 1950s) of the increasingly prominent role played by the Native Commissioner in the allocation of arable land.

30 Documents from the Magistrate’s Court in Peddie stored (but as yet uncatalogued) at the recently-established Eastern Cape Provincial Archives in King Williams Town (File No.N2/8/3-B).

31 The point here is that there were a number of avenues a man could pursue in trying to secure arable land. I argue later that the existence of these various avenues contributed to increased ‘institutional dissonance’ which had a negative impact on resource management.
any requests from people in his section for residential sites and arable land and informed the headman when land became available for redistribution through the death or removal of any members of his section. In all areas of village administration, and particularly with regard to land and natural resource management, the subheadmen represented a tier of government, which was a level below that of the headman, with the concomitant ability to influence decisions over which imizi would enjoy access to particular local resource 'bundles.' As such, his office represented another forum where the complexities and ambiguities of overlapping and multiple claims to local resources could be negotiated and contested.

Why should rural people be keen to retain flexibility, even in modified communal tenure arrangements? With reference to arable land resources in the Transkei, McAllister (1992:215) has pointed out that the 'indigenous' tenure system provides rural people with the flexibility to exercise their individual rights to cultivate or not to cultivate their land, depending on their present social and economic circumstances. The system, he argues, makes allowance for the cyclical nature of umzi agricultural productivity. This means that 'farmers' who are currently inactive as a result of the social and financial constraints they are experiencing at that particular point in the developmental cycle, (or who are absent migrant workers) are not denied the opportunity to farm in future, once they are able to overcome their particular constraints to agricultural production. Cousins (1993:35-6) also shows how the communal tenure system in Zimbabwe makes for flexibility in respect of access to, and use of, natural resources.

These examples suggest that the communal tenure 'systems' in the former Ciskei, Transkei and elsewhere in southern Africa were not and are not as rigid as has been suggested by some commentators. As De Wet points out, local diversity rather than rigidity is a feature of this system. I would argue that this is essentially because of the social value of land: since social and moral values must constantly adapt to dynamic, local social circumstances (such as a large influx of people into the area), most rural people are likely to resist outside attempts to codify and standardize land tenure
matters. Instead, they strive to retain local autonomy and dynamism, in short flexibility, in matters relating to land and natural resources. As Cousins (1993:37) points out, however, 'the price of this flexibility is a legacy of deep-seated ambiguity' over who has rights of access to resources and who is responsible for managing these resources.

While some policy makers and commentators may continue to regard communal tenure areas as intractable and unproductive sponges for soaking up the 'discarded people' i.e. the aged, destitute and unemployable masses of people, it is clear that these rural areas hold out the promise of at least some livelihood options and 'fall-back' positions to those people who are able to make and sustain claims to village membership in these areas. This is borne out by the virtual absence of calls by rural people for state-driven tenure reform measures in the communal areas, as opposed to their strident calls for access to more land outside these areas. It is also borne out by the vast financial and explicitly social investments being made by urban-based people in rural housing and in rituals conducted in rural areas, and by calls made by the people in these areas for the state to provide infrastructure and services in their villages.

The social, political and economic costs of changing land management practices in communal tenure areas or more drastically, wholesale changes of the nominally common property system to a freehold system (i.e. privatisation and title registration of land and natural resources), could far outweigh the present utility - to both local people and to the state - of the communal type arrangements currently prevalent in these areas (McAllister 1992:217). For the Communal Lands in Zimbabwe, Cousins (1993:32) argues that 'changing this system...[would be like] playing with political dynamite.'

32 See, however, the differential response of different categories of rural (and urban-based) people to Betterment Planning (Mager 1992).

33 Desmond (n.d). Sharp and Spiegel (1985:133) grimly referred to the bantustans of 1985 as 'places to which the structurally unemployed are being permanently consigned.'

34 This does not mean that the flexibility of the system suits all categories of local and displaced (urban-based) rural residents: indeed, different groups have different needs, giving rise to contests over such matters as whether old age pensioners can reasonably be expected to make a major contribution to the costs of building creches in rural villages. In the villages of Tyefu Location, landless people have been agitating for a redistribution of arable land, but most of them want this to be done by local institutions, not through outside intervention.
8. Rural Change and Collective Action

A vast array of studies provide evidence that social and economic differentiation\(^{35}\) is firmly entrenched in rural areas across South Africa and that ‘rural communities are fundamentally heterogeneous in nature’ (May et al. 1995:124; De Wet and Leibbrandt 1991; Spiegel 1990; Williams et al. 1989). In respect of collective action (aimed, for our purposes, at the management of natural resources), it could be argued that social and economic differences or inequalities are empirical realities and that is the very fact that people have unequal social and other resources that fuels patron-client relationships, reciprocity and people’s participation in numerous social networks that could be potentially beneficial to them and to the corporate group of resource users of which they are members (Berry 1989; 1993).

However, as Lawry (1990:407) argues, the changing nature of social relations, brought about by what he styles the ‘modernisation process’, often reduces the incentives for individuals to participate in local collective activities, particularly by limiting the scope for local action in managing common property systems. This is not because of any homogenising effects of economic integration: on the contrary, with even partial integration of rural people into the national (and global) economy, broad-based reliance on communal resources tends to decline and to differentiate as people’s economic interests (in essence, their sources of livelihood) diverge, and the commitment to collective decision-making over the management of local resources is often undermined (Lawry 1990:413-15). Evidence suggests that where the relative importance of communal resources to local livelihoods varies markedly, collective action in managing the overall resource base effectively and sustainably is likely to be impeded.

In South Africa, few rural dwellers are forced to rely exclusively for their survival on the communal natural resources in their village: all areas of the country are, to a greater

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\(^{35}\) De Wet (1995:57) lists a number of factors that may contribute to this socio-economic differentiation: the local economic role of migrant remittances, pensions, access to arable land and livestock, the domestic cycle, the length of settlement in an area, access to political and bureaucratic power and patronage. The list of variables suggests that some opportunities do exist for enterprising people to be socially and economically mobile and that the reality of differentiation should not be interpreted as static or unchanging. As discussed later, not all rural imizi are in a position to grasp even these limited opportunities.
or lesser extent, integrated into the national economy, so that there is an in and outflow of economic resources (including employment opportunities and cash). By diversifying their income generating activities, rural people adopt multiple livelihood strategies in an attempt to buffer themselves against risk in uncertain agrarian, socio-economic and political environments (May 1996:4).

One long-standing livelihood strategy adopted by under-resourced rural dwellers is to stake claims to remittances from urban-based migrants. Besides that portion used in the purchase of domestic consumables and in payment for the education of children, such remittances are then diffused, to a lesser or greater extent, through the rural sector (see Spiegel 1980). They are used mostly as payments for minor services provided by individuals or teams of paid workers, such as additions and renovations to people’s residences, the herding of livestock, the digging of pit-latrines, the collection of firewood and the repair of livestock kraals (byres). This tends to result in the commercialisation of the use of natural resources, a process which blurs the distinction between private and collective ownership of local natural resources.\footnote{As will be argued later, this commercialisation also sets up a moral dilemma for local resource management institutions, because it is often the unemployed and destitute who are forced to take on these ‘piece jobs’ which may have an adverse effect on sustainable resource utilisation.}

Claims to remittances from urban-based kin have been less successful in the past two decades or more, mostly as a result of the gradual collapse of legislative and administrative restrictions on African urbanisation, which has allowed migrants greater freedom to invest their resources and energies in the urban sector. As a consequence, the amounts in cash and kind that are remitted to rural areas have, for the most part, dropped over this period (Sharp and Spiegel 1985; Gould 1988). Clearly, differential levels of remittances into rural imizi is one factor affecting decisions regarding other livelihood strategies adopted by these imizi: where remittances are low or non-existent, other strategies aimed at generating incomes are called for.

These strategies include optimising the possibilities of formal employment closer to ‘home’. As De Wet (1995:71) argues, this became a real option with the creation of the former Ciskei bantustan bureaucracy, and the industrial decentralisation policies of the
1970s and 1980s. Both of these developments brought more job opportunities and thus more money within reach of rural people, transforming those areas and imizi that were best able to avail themselves of these opportunities.

Social welfare transfers from the state, which have grown considerably in prominence (not least because of a substantial increase in real monetary terms) in recent years, represent another avenue for securing a livelihood. The most significant of these transfers are old age and disability pensions, although child maintenance benefits also make a significant contribution to umzi survival in some instances. May (1996) notes that pensions constitute a critical component of the livelihood strategies of many rural people, to the extent that pensioners become nodes of social agglomeration because of their secure incomes.

Other livelihood strategies may include 'petty' production and sale of foodstuffs or the assistance of kin and neighbourhood networks and may even involve 'outright charity' transfers (May et.al. 1995:62). They may include other forms of community reciprocity and collective action, such as work parties, mainly in respect of agriculturally productive activities. For the most part, however, organised work parties in the former Ciskei have tended to rely on resources from outside the particular area, such as the payments provided by state-sponsored resource management projects, rather than local voluntary action by members of the collective (see Chapter Four).

A key strategy for many people is to exploit their multiple kinship links and social networks, in both rural and urban areas, so as to minimise the risk of becoming destitute or exposing their children to impoverishment. Young children are often left in rural villages of origin in the care of a pensioned relative, often their grandmother, while the parents reside in the cities where they are employed or seek employment. Indeed, the demographic composition of rural villages in parts of the Eastern Cape, particularly those where rural-urban links and specifically the circular migration of people are a longstanding and entrenched pattern, represents a challenge to the effectiveness of local decision-making and therefore of resource management regimes in rural areas.

To summarise then, it is apparent that the complex heterogeneity of interests, both
social and economic, that characterise modified communal tenure areas of the Eastern Cape, are the result of ongoing social and economic change in these areas. Taken together, these factors present a considerable challenge to any attempts made by groups of people in these areas to collectively manage their common pool natural resources, as will be discussed in later chapters.

9. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the nature of the 'ideal' common property system and its local variant, the modified communal tenure regime. It has been pointed out that the literature surveyed places an emphasis on the importance of 'robust' institutions with particular qualities. Actual modified communal tenure situations were shown to differ from this model. I argue that while the situation in Tyefu Location exhibits some of the features of a common property system, the area cannot be viewed as an isolated 'village economy' system, such as that postulated by Runge (1986): Tyefu Location may be peripheral in a number of ways, but it is at least partially integrated both socially and economically as well as politically, into the larger regional and national political economies. This degree of integration serves to dispel notions of 'desert island' type co-operative behaviour based on trust and face-to-face interactions and introduces greater complexity into a study of the conditions under which rural people may cooperate to manage their natural resources.

While I postulate that incentives for collective resource management initiatives would be limited by the specific environmental conditions that exist in Tyefu Location and would be constrained by the marked social and economic differentiation that exists in its constituent villages, it is nevertheless the case that a measure of collective action is known to take place in these villages and there is strong evidence of a 'will to collective action' in local discourses. Moreover, local organisations are grappling with common property resource management issues in the face of demographic pressures.

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37 Whether this 'will to collective action' is premised on local circumstances or is externally induced is debatable: non-governmental organisations often require that 'communities' demonstrate 'consensus' and a unity of purpose in respect of a proposed development intervention; village leaders continuously exhort local residents to work together to achieve their ostensibly collective objectives; government projects require that village residents demonstrate the ability or will to act collectively before initiating projects in rural areas.
institutional weakness and economic exigencies. These issues are real and a common property theoretical emphasis, while not without its problems, does appear to offer some relevant insights into these complex issues. The chapters that follow will shed more light on the particular characteristics and failures of common property resource management practices in Tyefu Location and Gwabeni in particular.

Pencil, ink marks and highlighting ruin books for other readers.
Although the successful long-term management of natural resources has critical social and institutional dimensions, it is the specific ecological characteristics (such as availability and resilience) of localised natural resource systems that circumscribe, to a greater or lesser extent, the potential levels of resource utilisation within such systems. For this reason, the (changing) resource endowment of a particular area has a significant and dynamic influence on the types of resource management arrangements that are likely to be ecologically and socially sustainable in the medium to long term. Strategies for the management of natural resources in modified communal tenure areas are likely to be most effective when they match a sound understanding of the ecological processes of change at work in these systems, with the establishment and maintenance of flexible common property institutions, that are able to enforce conformity to resource use rules and norms.

1. Tyefu Location

According to a 1984/85 [former] Ciskei Department of Agriculture and Forestry annual report,

'The Tyefu Tribal Area is one of the most eroded and impoverished areas of the homeland. The area is densely populated and it is so drought prone that the people are unable to subsist from the land: a truly depressed area.'

Tyefu Location has an area of some 24 218 hectares, and is situated in the north-western section of Peddie district (De Beer 1984:200). The area is topographically complex, with much of the land consisting of steep slopes that separate low-lying land in the Great Fish River Valley from the more undulating lands on the interfluvial ridge between the Great Fish and Keiskamma Rivers. The settlement pattern in the location is one of dispersed groups of dwellings which are loosely arranged in eleven settlements. In 1985, the population of the area was estimated at around 13 563 (Setplan 1985), giving a population density of some 56 people/km².
2. The Agro-ecology of Tyefu Location

Climate

Tyefu Location falls within an area which is regarded as semi-arid, and which is prone to severe periodic droughts (De Lange et al. 1994). The area experiences a dominant summer rainfall regime, with the highest precipitation occurring during the months of November and March. A central feature of the rainfall pattern in Tyefu Location is that it is erratic in quantity and distribution, with a coefficient of variation in the mean annual rainfall of just under 32% (Computer Centre for Water Research). The typical effects of altitude and topography on rainfall apply in that the higher lying areas of the Location (around Gwabeni and Mankone) generally receive more rain (between 500 and 550mm), while the Fish River valley receives least rain (less than 400mm per annum) (De Lange et al. 1994:5).

There has been no significant long-term change in the amount of annual rainfall over a one hundred year period stretching from 1890 to 1990, for which records have been kept in the town of Peddie. Youthed suggests, however, that there may be a recurrent dry and wet rainfall cycle of approximately 23 years (Youthed 1994:2). In terms of rainfall for the area, the decade from 1983-1993 has been the driest on record this century. The overall water deficit in the area means that people are forced to make use of rainwater tanks or drums which capture a supply of rainwater conveniently near to where it is needed. During the drought of the 1980s and early 1990s, many imizi were forced to buy water or to share the meagre supplies of (what becomes polluted) surface water in local dams with their livestock.

Mean monthly (maximum) temperatures range from 21.8°C in June to 30.1°C in February, when extreme temperatures reach 40°C and more (De Lange et al. 1994:12-13). Again, these high temperatures are experienced particularly in the Fish River valley and are the cause of heat stress in crops. Winter temperatures are generally mild and temperatures rarely fall below 0°C. The area experiences between 15 and 30

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1 Personal communication from A.R. Palmer, based on Computer Centre for Water Research statistics of 111 years of rainfall data from Peddie town, some five kilometres from Tyefu Location and 20 years of rainfall data from Committees Drift (adjacent to Tyefu Location).
days of light ground frosts in winter, but the higher-lying ground is generally frost-free.

The Fish River valley area is subjected to large diurnal temperature fluctuations, but sudden fluctuations in temperature occur throughout the area as a result of two weather effects: (i) sudden cooling is caused by the on-shore flow of very cold maritime air of Antarctic origin, which is brought in by the passage of cold fronts and (ii) the rapid warming caused by the off-shore flow of Berg winds which are common to the Eastern Cape. These significant temperature variations which are often accompanied by winds of high velocity, cause further stress to crops and natural vegetation (De Lange 1994:13).

The average amount of evapotranspiration for a typical crop is greater than the average rainfall for every month of the year in parts of Tyefu Location (particularly in the Great Fish River valley), and crops can only be grown under irrigation (Loxton et al. 1979). These climate features give an indication of just how risky dryland cropping is in these areas, except in years of higher than average rainfall. As a result of this high margin of risk, agricultural production in the location, except on the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme in the Great Fish River valley, is centred around livestock production.

Geology and Topography
Tyefu Location has a geological substrate consisting of a variety of sedimentary rocks dating back to the Karoo sequence, which have very limited potential for dryland crop exploitation. In the area south of Gwabeni village, the oldest deposits belong to the Ecca Group and consist mainly of blue or black shales (De Lange et al. 1994:16). To the north of these Ecca deposits, rocks belonging to the Beaufort Group occur. These rocks consist of light coloured siltstones, mudstones and sandstones. In places, igneous rocks in the form of dolerite dykes and sheets occur (Ibid:16). Murray (1995:8) refers to one such dyke which runs through Tyefu Location in a WNW to ESE direction as the ‘Tyefu dyke’ and suggests that it has potential hydro-ecological significance (see below).

The landscape of Tyefu Location consists of inter-basin ridges, with steep river valleys. The inter-basin ridges are made up of more resistant sandstone of the Middleton
formation. In the river valleys, nutrient rich mudstones are exposed, but these are extremely susceptible to erosion (Palmer and Avis 1994:12).

The area has a complex topography, with elevation ranging from 170m above sea level (asl) in the Fish River valley to about 560m asl in the north west corner of Tyefu Location, which is situated on the dividing ridge between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers. Slopes in the latter area are predominantly between 15% and 30%, but steeper slopes are not uncommon (Ibid:13). Most of the villages in the Location are situated on this higher-lying plateau which runs down to the Fish River basin. Unlike the gently sloping plateau area, the landscape between the plateau and the Fish River basin has been deeply incised by the downcutting of rivers and streams (Palmer et al. 1996). Some of the villages (for instance, Gwabeni, Qamnyana and Rura) that overlook the Fish River valley are situated on the crests on several narrow ridges, another feature which inhibits extensive arable land-use.

Soils
Soils derived from the shales of the Ecca Group are highly erodible. In particularly the lower-lying parts of Tyefu Location, the soil cover has been removed, leaving a blue-black 'moonscape' devoid of any form of vegetation (De Lange et al. 1994:16). Most of the soils in the area are extremely deficient in phosphorus, which is a major factor limiting plant growth (Ibid:17).

The two major groups of soils in Tyefu Location are the shallow soils of the plateau and valley slopes and the moderately deep soils of the valley bottoms of the streams flowing into the Fish River. The shallow soils of the first group cover by far the largest part of the Location. They consist of shallow, grey and grey-brown lithic soils, with a depth of approximately 200mm and have a sandy loam texture. This surface layer of soil usually overlies a gravelly layer of rock fragments and some tongues of soil (De Lange et al. 1994:17). Because of their shallow rooting depth, the water holding capacity of these soils is limited to about 40mm in depth. The slopes of the valleys are usually very

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steep, hence the formation of soil here is minimal and the surfaces of these slopes are covered with stones.

The second group of soils are found in the valley bottoms where relatively deep layers of weathered material have been deposited. These soils are subjected to run-off and seepage and are often imperfectly drained, exhibiting a grey and mottled appearance as a result. The distribution of these soils, which have a higher agricultural potential, is limited to a few scattered areas which are small in extent (Ibid:18).

In summary, De Lange et.al. (1994:19) argue that the distribution of potentially arable soils in Tyefu Location is limited mainly to the Fish River valley itself. The largest part of the area is covered by a very shallow mantle of soil, which on steep slopes and in eroded areas, has by and large been reduced to a few remaining patches and clumps.

**Hydrology**

The groundwater potential of the Ecca and Beaufort Group sediments in Tyefu Location is relatively poor even though some local aquifers can supply sufficient quantities of water to meet domestic requirements (Murray 1995:8). The quality of groundwater in terms of (greater) salinity decreases towards the south away from the Beaufort Group sediments. In Rura village the electrical conductivity was measured at 430mS/m, which means that the underground water tastes extremely salty and even over the short-term, consumption of this water may lead to disturbance of the salt balance in the human body (Ibid:8). As a result, several boreholes have fallen into disrepair and local people have not been overly concerned to rectify this situation.

The only natural water bodies in Tyefu Location are the intermittently flowing streams that occur in the deep valleys. These streams, the Nqwele, Mankazana, Rura, Nqwwebenei and Sinqumeni streams, all have very localised catchments and drain into the Fish River (Loxton et.al.1987:70). The scarcity of perennial streams poses a problem for human and animal water consumption across the location, but particularly in the villages on the plateau.

The construction of dams in the valley bottoms has alleviated the overall water deficit.
by providing a reliable supply of water in the dry season, but the distance of these
dams from the imizi and the difficulty experienced in negotiating the steep terrain are
major obstacles to effective utilisation of these sources (Palmer 1997:23). Most of
these dams suffer from siltation which will reduce their holding capacity. Small ponds
or dams that form in the depressions on the plateau areas during the rainy season are
used for domestic purposes but are often unfenced and are thus shared with livestock.

Murray (1995:25) notes that all the villages of Tyefu Location have inadequate
domestic water supply systems. Under these circumstances, the rainwater tanks and
drums that store rainwater collected from the roofs of houses provide many imizi with
a much-needed supply of potable water which is conveniently close at hand.

Vegetation

Much of the vegetation in the study area consists of two main veld types: Acocks
(1988)\textsuperscript{3} classified one type as 'Valley Bushveld' of which there are two local variants
known as Fish River Scrub and Southern Variation. The second vegetation type is the
grassland known as 'False Thornveld of the Eastern Province' which occurs on the
plateau areas. Acocks maintained that in its natural state (i.e. in the period before it
was intensively use by domestic herbivores) Fish River Scrub would have consisted of
extremely dense, semi-succulent thorny scrub-forest of between 2 and 2.5 metres high
with very sparse grass cover. This vegetation type represented an adaptation of Valley
Bushveld vegetation to the low rainfall and high temperatures which occur in the Fish
river valley.\textsuperscript{4} It is interspersed with grassland on the high-lying areas and Acacia
thickets along the riverine fringes.

Acocks argued that the dense Fish River Scrub had been thinned out and opened up
through over-utilisation by domestic and wild ungulates, leading to encroachment by
jointed and spineless cactus (\textit{Opuntia sp.}) and \textit{Euphorbia bothae} and resulting in Karoo

\textsuperscript{3} As quoted in Palmer and Avis (1994).

\textsuperscript{4} Fish River Scrub occurs along the north-eastern bank of the Fish River from the coast to
Committee's Drift (Loxton et al. 1987:66).
vegetation of the lower Central type invading the landscape. Loxton et al. (1987:68) argue that the vegetation of the area has also been transformed by the demands made on the resource base for firewood which is a significant source of domestic fuel in the area, and by way of clearing for arable and settlement purposes.

Fabricius and Burger (1994:5) contend that a characteristic of the endemic vegetation is that it is highly sensitive to grazing pressure by livestock and that it is very slow to recover if a threshold amount of woody vegetation is removed through over-utilisation.

**Soil Erosion**

Loxton et al. (1979) found that 25 to 50 per cent of the topsoil in the area comprising Tyefu Location had been lost entirely. They also argued that erosion gullies were common and that urgent rehabilitation was needed. The area is considered to have a high natural susceptibility to erosion because of the steep topography and the shallow soils which form a thin layer over the highly erodible shales and sandstones. Given the nature of these soils, any reduction of plant cover, through intensive grazing pressure or through turning the soil for arable production, is likely to greatly increase the likelihood of soil erosion, because the lack of vegetation increases the run-off of rainwater, both in terms of the volume of water and of the velocity of flow.

This situation is exacerbated in those areas where, as a result of selective grazing, unpalatable karroid shrubs have replaced the endemic grasses and shrub species and have left the soil surface largely uncovered. The most conspicuous evidence of accelerated soil erosion in the area is the occurrence of erosion gullies (or 'dongas'), which are found particularly on the slopes of valleys where arable land-use has occurred in the past. Sheet erosion has also occurred widely throughout Tyefu Location and are responsible for a substantial loss of topsoil (Kakembo 1997).

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5 As quoted in Palmer and Avis (1994:14).
Debating notions of degradation and resilience

With specific reference to communal rangelands, the ‘new thinking’ in rangeland management, articulated by Scoones (1995), Cousins (1996) and Shackleton (1993), has challenged the conventional argument that the communal areas in southern Africa are unequivocally overgrazed and degraded. These writers argue that the categories of what constitutes ‘overgrazed’ and ‘degraded’ rangelands, are subjective and based on a particular normative set of views and evaluations (usually with the commercial production of that area in mind) of what rangeland condition should be. They argue that a wide range of site-specific rangeland management objectives (what Scoones (1995:2) terms ‘differentiated livelihood objectives’) exist which do not necessarily share the values or stress the same rangeland characteristics as the normative rangeland condition model. The condition of particular rangelands might not, in fact, be regarded as degraded, especially when the normative model is not a commercial one, but based on multi-purpose livestock production strategies (Scholes 1994:12).

These writers make a distinction between equilibrial and non-equilibrial rangeland systems. In equilibrial systems, there is a direct relation between animal numbers and vegetation states, successional processes (between vegetational states) can be identified and notions of carrying capacity are relevant (Behnke and Scoones 1993:12, quoted in Cousins 1996:173). Here, appropriate common property systems for managing livestock in communal tenure areas are those with clearly defined boundaries for user group membership and management rules that accommodate the internal heterogeneity of resources needed for herd mobility at the local level (Cousins 1996).

In non-equilibrial systems, an important element is the existence of heterogeneous patches of resources over greater spatial and temporal (for example, season and drought cycle) variations. Non-exclusive forms of common property resource management, that accommodate opportunism, and allow for maximum flexibility in use

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See the Introduction for the definition of the term ‘degradation’ used here.
patterns, thus making for wider access to co-ordinated access to these patches, would probably be the most suitable form of tenure in these situations. The argument is essentially that arid and semi-arid rangelands are inherently unstable systems, driven by episodic events, such as fires or drought, and that these non-equilibrial systems may actually be very resilient and often recover rapidly after drought or periods of rest (Behnke and Scoones 1993, quoted in Cousins 1996:172).

With respect to resource management it is argued that rainfall, rather than the effects of possible over-exploitation of the resource base, is the key factor influencing rangeland condition in non-equilibrial rangelands (Scoones 1995:1). Consequently, the stocking rates that are often regarded by agricultural authorities as excessive under common property systems, are subject to substantial cyclical fluctuations (animal numbers increase rapidly during and just after periods of high rainfall, but decline dramatically during droughts) and may in general approach optimal levels of utilisation (Shackleton 1993:74). An assessment of 'carrying capacity' in terms of the current appearance of resource depletion in the short to medium term may thus be unnecessarily bleak. They may also lead to inappropriate and unpopular resource management interventions (such as livestock reduction programmes) that could undermine the legitimacy of local resource management institutions (Shackleton 1993:67; Cousins 1996:172,173).

Another important consideration is time scale: it is argued that if disturbed systems revert back to their 'original' state after one generation (15-30 years), then they can be considered stable (Shackleton 1993:70). These temporal cycles are generally longer than the usual administrative planning horizons or research project time-frames, a fact that could lead to inaccurate assessments of the state of the resource base at any given time. One important caveat here is that the effect of continuous, heavy grazing which reduces vegetal cover may result in accelerated erosion, which would degrade the resource base and thus warrant management intervention.

This same argument could be extended to question whether significant and irreversible degradation has taken place in specific rural areas across the spectrum of natural resources utilised by rural people, given the fact that practically no empirical studies
(with long-term vegetation trial sites) of the ecological transformation of these areas have been done over a period sufficiently long to account for the possible episodic rejuvenation of the resource base (Shackleton 1993:74).\(^7\)

**Has degradation of the natural resource base occurred in Tyefu Location?**

A longitudinal study of resource degradation in Tyefu Location was conducted very recently with the use of air photographs dating as far back as 1938 (Kakembo 1997).\(^8\) Although not suitable for assessing the state of grazing resources, this study shows conclusively that indices of both sheet and gully erosion have increased over this period, with the decade 1965-1975 exhibiting the most 'drastic increase' in erosion. Kakembo argues that the cessation of cultivation, without the adoption of measures aimed at the rehabilitation of arable lands, was a major cause of gully erosion in the area (Kakembo ibid:105-107).

Using satellite image data and two different erosion status indices, Tanser (1994:22) also detected a large increase in erosion status between 1982 and 1992, with the percentage of severely eroded land increasing from 21 per cent in 1982 to 40 per cent in 1994.

There is also evidence which strongly suggests that widespread deforestation of indigenous tree species together with species replacement and bush (Acacia sp.) encroachment has occurred (Palmer and Avis 1994). In a comparative study of the change in vegetative cover and composition (effectively over a twelve year period) for an area which includes Tyefu Location, Palmer and Avis (1994:40) found that the cover of perennial shrubs and grass in the communal rangeland areas is low to very low, with extreme transformation in the species composition in favour of species that are unpalatable and more tolerant of arid conditions.\(^9\) Palmer et.al (1996) also argues that

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\(^7\) The comparative study by Palmer and Avis described below is a useful alternative to an longitudinal study.

\(^8\) The dates of aerial photographs used in Kakembo's sequential analysis were: 1938, 1954, 1965, 1975 and 1988.

\(^9\) The study compared rangeland condition across three different land management regimes: State-owned land under nature conservation management, freehold land that was previously commercially farmed but had been under-utilised for twelve years, and land that is subjected to
the former 'patchy' distribution of nutrients across the landscape has changed to one in which the nutrients are widely dispersed, primarily by erosion.

In the case of areas in Tyefu Location which have a combination of low elevation and low rainfall, the study of vegetation in the communal rangeland indicated a move towards an arid condition, where perennial grasses and herbaceous species have been replaced by karroid dwarf shrubs (*Jatropha capensis, Chrysocome ciliata*) and annual grasses. In areas with high elevation and high(er) rainfall, samples of vegetation were dominated by unpalatable woody shrubs (such as *pteronia* or *Coddia rudis*) and succulents, for example *Aloe* sp. Perennial grasses and shrubs, such as the highly palatable *Portulacaria afra* (commonly known as 'spekboom'), had been replaced by unpalatable shrubs and succulents (Palmer and Avis 1994:29).

On the plateau areas, it is the spread of unpalatable grass species, such as *Eragrostis plana*, which is one cause for concern in terms of vegetative transformation. Arable lands which were ploughed at one time in the past, but which have since been abandoned and thus reverted to rangeland, have been invaded by these undesirable grasses that grow very successfully after the soil has been disturbed. In the virtual absence of more desirable species of grasses which have been subjected to heavy, continuous grazing pressure, these unpalatable grasses are able to spread across significant portions of the rangeland.

Palmer and Avis (ibid:29) conclude that the communal rangeland areas of Tyefu Location exhibit an 'extreme transformation in species composition' and are generally in poor condition. They attribute the most significant causes of this state of affairs to the heavy stocking rates, the practice of continuous grazing, the high proportion of goats and sheep in livestock herds and the fact that there is too little land available for the number of land-users in the area (ibid:44). They estimate that in its 1994 condition, the communal rangeland of Tyefu Location had a carrying capacity of about 35ha per modified communal tenure land-use arrangements (i.e. Tyefu Location).

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10 Areas under 300m asl that experience less than 350mm rain per year.
11 Areas higher than 450m asl with more than 450mm of rain per year.
large animal unit (LAU). This low (estimated) carrying capacity is comparable to an area in the Karoo which receives half the annual rainfall of Tyefu Location.

On a similar note and in respect of species richness as an index of biodiversity, Fabricius and Burger (1994:7) argue that Tyefu Location contains less than half as many plant and arthropod (mainly insects and spiders) species as the nature conservation reserve areas adjacent to Tyefu Location. They also note that a large number of medicinal plants identified by traditional healers during the course of the study within the reserve area no longer occurred in Tyefu Location.

4. Conclusion

For the purposes of this study, it is accepted that sufficient empirical evidence does in fact exist (despite the call to take cognisance of disequilibrium systems) which demonstrates that the ecology of the resource base in Tyefu Location has been detrimentally and irreversibly transformed over an extended period (Palmer and Avis, 1994; Fabricius and Burger 1994; Kakembo 1997). Palmer et.al. refer to the 'altered vegetation state'\(^\text{12}\) of the Tyefu landscape, with the implication that the livestock production potential has been adversely affected. They suggest that an optimistic estimate for the 'restoration' of the rangeland vegetation would be fifty to one hundred years (1996:12). The result of this transformation has been to adversely affect the production potential of rangeland resources, as well as fuelwood, soil and other resources.

This transformation is deemed to be 'irreversible' for all practical purposes, because

\(^{12}\)Walker and Noy-Meir (1982:567) argue that there are 'bounds beyond which savanna ecosystems cannot recover', but also suggest that many of these systems have more than one stable point or 'state', one of which the system will tend towards, depending on the nature and duration of a disturbance or treatment. Despite the absence of long-term empirical data on rangeland condition for Tyefu Location, Palmer (personal communication), on the basis of 20 years of experience in the area, argues that continuous, heavy grazing by domestic herbivores, possibly starting from as long ago as one hundred years, pushed the rangeland in Tyefu Location into a specific and fairly resilient 'state.' It appears to have persisted in this state for several decades, maintaining a relatively constant number of livestock over this period. Data for the period 1946 to 1997 show that livestock numbers have generally remained constant overall, dipping slightly as a result of recurrent droughts through the 1980s and again in the early 1990s (data provided by Nick Fischer, State Veterinarian for Peddie, Alice and Seymour Districts).
firstly, it would require that all livestock be removed from the rangeland for several decades at least and that other resource use also be severely curtailed during this period (Palmer et al. 1996:12). Without the provision of additional land, this would in effect mean removing all the local inhabitants of the area so that the vegetation is given an opportunity to recover, since resting smaller sections of rangeland (by prohibiting all forms of resource use there) would simply increase the pressure on the natural resources in those areas which were still in use. Local institutions are not likely to be in a position to enforce such exclusions given the strongly held perceptions of an acute shortage of arable and grazing land in these areas.

Secondly, even long-term 'natural' (as opposed to mechanical) rehabilitation would entail considerable financial expenditure (labour costs in the eradication of alien vegetation, the reseeding of large areas of rangeland, and programmes to rehabilitate and prevent gully erosion) that would probably be unjustifiable in terms of the benefits that could be gained from what would remain ecologically marginal rangeland, and in a situation where rangeland and other natural resource production would still be reliant on variable amounts of rainfall (see Palmer et al. 1996).

Clearly, this particular set of agro-ecological constraints poses enormous challenges for the management of the local resource base in Tyefu Location. The semi-arid conditions are only really suitable for extensive livestock production, although some of the irrigable potential of the low-lying areas has been exploited. Even if the area had a population of less than 1000 people to support - which is roughly the comparative number of people on a similar area of commercial farms adjacent to Tyefu Location in the Great Fish River valley13 - socio-economic conditions for the majority of the inhabitants would not be rosy. Given, however that the population of the Location is closer to 14 000, resulting in a density of around 56 persons/km², the enormity of the resource management challenge is brought into sharper focus.

If, as I argued in Chapter One, Tyefu Location does exhibit some of the characteristics

13 These farms have comparable agro-ecological conditions but population densities in the region of 3-6 persons/km² (Ainslie et al. 1995)
of the 'ideal' common property model, then it appears to be an inefficient (even dysfunctional) common property system, in that the regulation of natural resource use has not ensured the maintenance of sustainable levels of consumption. Clearly, the high population densities (both human and livestock)\textsuperscript{14} are one significant contributing factor to this state of affairs, but it is a factor which begs the important question of what circumstances have allowed for such high and patently unsustainable concentrations of people and livestock on marginal land? Moreover, what other factors have contributed to the degraded state of this modified communal tenure area and how are we to understand the role of social institutions and of socio-economic incentives with respect to natural resource management in this context?

\textsuperscript{14} As Lacey argued in 1979: "Overstocking, overgrazing, or overpopulation and congestion - which was the greatest cause of deterioration in the reserves? The controversy is of prime concern to agricultural extension officers even today" (1979:88).
CHAPTER THREE
Setting the Scene: A History of Natural Resource Management in Tyefu Location, Peddie District

Introduction

Present-day patterns of natural resource management in Tyefu Location are rooted in the historical events that shaped access to land on the frontier of the Cape Colony from the early nineteenth century. A brief account of these historical struggles for control of land and natural resources in this area would thus be apposite.

The recorded history of the Eastern Cape prior to the twentieth century is dominated by the nine Frontier Wars that were waged between 1779 and 1878. These wars have been described as the brutal contestation of different ways of owning and managing the land and its resources (Crais 1992; Bundy 1988:31). Settler demand for the land (mostly for extensive livestock grazing purposes) claimed by Xhosa-speaking groups for the same purpose, and for control over indigenous labour characterised this struggle (see Lacey 1979; Webster 1991a). The effects of the settlement of Mfengu people in Peddie District from 1835 are of particular interest to us here.

1. ‘Frontier’ conflict over land and resources

In the mid-eighteenth century, Xhosa-speaking pastoralist groups were in permanent occupation of the grazing land between the Fish River and Algoa Bay (Peires 1981). The Gqunukhwebe in particular were to be found in the area extending from the Keiskamma River to beyond the Gamtoos River, west of Algoa Bay. Xhosa-speaking groups in these areas were involved in relationships of economic exchange and social (including intermarriage) and cultural (noticeable by the number of linguistic influences) interaction with Khoisan groups who also inhabited the area (Ibid:97).

From as early as the 1750s, these people were also in contact with white hunters and travellers and later with the Dutch farmers (‘trekboers’) who were expanding the frontier.
of the Colony eastwards. From 1703, these farmers could apply for grazing permits enabling them to rent 'loan farms' which were large tracts of grazing land (a minimum of six thousand acres) at a token price for their exclusive use. Thus was introduced a system of individualised (if not strictly private) property rights which was to bring these 'trekboers' into conflict with the shifting pastoralism of the Khoi Khoi groups and Xhosa-speakers in the area (see Peires 1981:122). By the late 1760s, the 'trekboers' had laid claim to all the Khoi Khoi grazing land between the Gamtoos and the Fish rivers and had come into contact with the Gqunukhwebe, Gwalli, Mbalu, Ntinde and Mdange Xhosa-speaking groups (Switzer 1993:46).

Although initially peaceful and characterised by barter in ivory, meat and hides, the relations between these Xhosa-speaking groups and the trekboers had degenerated into open conflict by the 1770s (Peires 1981:57). The first significant tract of land to become the focus of conflict between the two parties was the Zuurveld (see Map 2), a well-watered region of prime sourveld grazing land that was situated along the coast and into the interior, between the Sundays and the Fish rivers (ibid:54). Three 'Frontier Wars' were fought in, and over access to the resources of, this area in the period from 1779 to 1800.

By 1811, Britain had re-occupied the Cape and the British colonial officials had accepted the Fish River as the boundary between the Cape Colony and Xhosaland. They were, however, unable to restrict the re-entry of Xhosa-speaking groups, particularly the Ndlambe and the Gqunukwebe, into the Zuurveld. The war of 1811-12 resulted in about twenty thousand (mostly Ndlambe) Xhosa men, women and children being driven off the land, their cattle confiscated and their imizi destroyed so that the entire Zuurveld was opened up for 'white' settlement (Switzer 1993:51-2).

Such was the competition for natural resources (mostly livestock grazing and water resources) in the area, that thirty small forts were subsequently built along the Fish River and the boundary was patrolled by soldiers. The eastern bank of the Fish River

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1 The most important division of the Xhosa 'proper' was between the sons of Phalo, Gcaleka and Rharabe. The Gcaleka Xhosa are associated with the Transkei area, while the Rharabe Xhosa are mostly associated with the former Ciskei area (Peires 1981:47).
between Trompetters and Committees Drifts comprised a significant Xhosa-speaking settlement and cattle post during this time (Holbrook 1992:45). In spite of the intermittent wars, economic ties between the settlers and the Xhosa continued to grow and in 1817, bi-annual trade fairs were being held in Grahamstown and Xhosa-speakers were given permission to enter the colony to participate in these fairs (Bundy 1988:30).

During the War of 1818-19, the area between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers (currently Peddie District) was virtually cleared of Xhosa groups, including the Gqunukhwebe and the Ndlambe, their huts and food supplies were destroyed and their cattle seized (Webster 1991b:13). A neutral zone was established between the two rivers that extended to the Kat and Tyhume rivers below the Winterberg. This zone became known as the 'Ceded (or Neutral) Territory' and was intended to be an uninhabited buffer area between settlers and Xhosa-speakers (Peires 1981:79).

By the early 1820s, however, Dutch-speaking settlers began to cross the Fish River to farm in the disputed territory (Switzer Ibid:54). By 1824, the trade fairs² between colonists and Xhosa-speakers had been moved to Fort Willshire on the Keiskamma River³ and, although strictly regulated, were being held three times a week (Bundy 1988:30; Peires 1981:98-101). The arrival of British Settlers in 1820 and thereafter put more pressure on the available land resources: land was granted to them on a perpetual quitrent basis, which greatly increased the speculative potential of land (Peires Ibid:122).⁴

The drought of 1829 devastated both the Colony and Xhosaland up to the Kei, and only the area which constituted the Ceded Territory was spared (Peires Ibid:89). Consequently, both settlers and Xhosa-speakers drove their herds of cattle into it,

² Colonists traded mainly beads and to a lesser extent, blankets and utensils for the ivory, hides and other resources (such as aloes) that were provided for barter by Xhosa-speakers (see Lewis 1984a:64-5).

³ Fort Willshire is situated about seven kilometres north of Tyefu Location.

⁴ Peires (1981:122) notes that the 'possibility of reselling land obtained for next to nothing created an unquenchable thirst for new grants.'
making government attempts to keep the Ceded Territory uninhabited untenable. The colonial government abandoned the trade fairs in 1830, after an attempt to relocate the Fort Willshire fair to the Clusie (present-day Ngqushwa) River near Gqunukhwebe territory failed. Traders were subsequently allowed to penetrate the interior beyond the Keiskamma River as far as Mpondoland (Ibid:102).

Map 2: Contested Areas circa 1779-1835.
2. The Establishment of Mfengu Locations in Peddie

After the War of 1834-35, a large number\(^5\) of ‘refugee’ Mfengu people with approximately 22,000 head of cattle were brought out of Gcalekaland by the colonial forces.\(^6\) With the missionary John Ayliff, they crossed the Kei river and settled in Peddie, west of the Keiskamma river. Fort Peddie was constructed to protect the new arrivals (Bundy 1988:33). Mhlambiso, the ‘loyal’ chief of the amaHlubi group of Mfengu, was appointed overall chief of the original settlement at Peddie, on the orders of D’Urban, the Cape governor at the time, and on the recommendation of the government agent, J.M. Bowker (Ibid: 29).

D’Urban wanted all the land between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers, between Fort Willshire and Peddie, to be allocated to the Mfengu in fortified villages from where they would provide the colony with military support against the Xhosa (Crais 1992: 117). At the same time, they would form a strategic buffer between the ‘white’ settlers and the Xhosa ‘proper’. It was by means of this policy that Mfengu men were induced, through taxation\(^7\) and through exploiting the desire of these people for consumer goods, to enter service in the Colony (see Moyer 1976:349).

In any event, the nature of the settlement was somewhat different to D’Urban’s plan and

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\(^5\) The conventionally accepted figure is around 16,800, but Webster (1991b) regards this figure as excessive.

\(^6\) Recent work by Webster (1991a) has questioned whether the Mfengu (or ‘Fingo’) were in fact refugees from the upheavals in Natal that resulted from the military campaigns of Shaka in founding the Zulu kingdom between 1817 and 1829. Webster argues that most of the 1835 ‘Fingo’ who were settled in present-day Peddie were ‘captured Gcaleka (and Rharhabe) Xhosa women and children, military auxiliaries, refugees and mission collaborators’ (1991b:37). Webster (Ibid:34) also contends that the destruction of Xhosa livelihoods during the Frontier War of 1834-35, was one of the keys to the increase in the number of ‘Fingo’ at this time. Peires (1981:121) concurs with this, arguing that ‘Many Xhosa, impelled by the loss of their cattle during the war, passed themselves off as Mfengu and the joined the stream [into the colony].’

\(^7\) The Mfengu were the first Nguni people in the Cape to be subjected to taxation. A hut tax of ten shillings per hut/family was imposed in areas of African settlement from 1848 (Switzer 1993:93). Various other taxes, including wheel taxes for those who owned wagons and horse and dog taxes, all to be paid in pounds, were also imposed on the people in these settlements (see Lewis 1984a:241). Switzer (Ibid:93) argues that ‘the Mfengu……were not so much attracted as compelled to participate in the market economy to pay their taxes,’ and that successive Cape governments spent ‘virtually nothing’ on the locations during the colonial period because they had a reliable source of revenue received entirely from the African population (also see Lewis 1984a:670-74).
the original Peddie location was a small settlement on the Clusie River, consisting of some six hundred and ninety eight people clustered around the protection of the fort and the Boers stationed there (Webster 1991b:28). The Mfengu apparently refused to be settled in areas that had only recently been cultivated by vanquished Xhosa groups, considering this to be too much of a provocation to the dispossessed Ndlambe and Gqunukhwebe people (see Peires 1981:131).

A short time after their arrival, however, groups of Mfengu were settled in six locations and on two mission stations. The area comprising Tyefu Location was settled by the amaHlubi abaseKunene and was called Nzulu Location around this time. Although D'Urban had wanted 'all locations carefully delimited and the boundaries pointed out to the residents to prevent disputes between clans, boundary disputes began almost immediately and flared up regularly thereafter' (Moyer 1976:358). In the immediate vicinity of this settlement of Mfengu people in Peddie were placed settler farmers, and Bowker, who served as the Resident Agent (of the Mfengu) and Justice of the Peace at Peddie, had instructions to intersperse Mfengu land grants with these 'white' farms so that the Mfengu could be 'civilised' through contact with whites (Webster 1991b:32; Moyer ibid:358). The settlement of the colonial farmers in the area was delayed by the outbreak of war that followed the establishment of the Mfengu locations.

3. Conditions in the Peddie locations (1848-1858)

On 8 March 1848, Peddie, including the area comprising the Mfengu locations, was created a magisterial district by proclamation and was named the District of Fort Peddie, with Mr. W.M. Edye as the first Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate. By the 1840s, the population of the district had risen to over 10 000 and was

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9 The Mfengu at Fort Peddie were attacked by Siyolo's people in 1837. Mhlambiso was stabbed during the attack (Peires 1981:131).
considered to be overpopulated (Moyer 1976:363). There was much discontent among the Mfengu who had hoped to receive more land than they did in payment for their collaboration against the Xhosa. Their fortunes were to change though, and as a reward for their loyalty to the Colony in the Frontier War of 1848, the Mfengu were given land concessions in Fort Beaufort (around Healdtown) and Victoria East. At the end of the 1850-53 war, more concessions of previously Xhosa-held land were made to the Mfengu in the Crown Reserve, to the west of King Williams Town, at Keiskammahoek, and in the Queenstown district at Lesseyton, Kamastone and Oxkraal (Lewis 1984a:239,241).

In 1849, the first white settlers received title to farms in Peddie District and in 1853, after the Eighth Frontier War, settlers began arriving in the area in considerable numbers (Bullock 1960:28). Preference, in respect of title to farms, was given to the 1820 Settlers and their sons and to Dutch-speaking burghers who had taken part in the Frontier wars. The farms were granted on condition of personal occupation and under a quitrent system. The central portion of the lower Peddie District was granted to 1820 Settlers and the upper portions, along the Keiskamma River, to the burghers (Ibid:28). The settlers wasted no time in establishing lucrative sheep farms, specialising mostly in labour-intensive wool production. The presence of a considerable number of whites settled on farms in the district was resented by the Mfengu, who by 1854 numbered 8688 people in six locations and on two mission stations in Peddie District (Lewis 1984a:245).

A census of the Mfengu in Peddie was conducted in July 1854 by N.Edye, the Resident Magistrate in Peddie. It gives an idea of the conditions of the six Mfengu locations¹⁰ and the settlements at the two mission stations, D'Urban and Newtondale (Lewis 1984a:245). Of interest here, is the situation in Nzulu (Tyefu) Location at the time, as shown in Table 3.1. overleaf.

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¹⁰ These six were: Jokweni, Matomela, Nzulu (which would later be known as Tyefu), Kwankwezi, Kaulela, M'Thonhli and Ft. Peddie Location (Lewis 1984a:245).
Table 3.1. Census of Nzulu Location, July 1854

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Women</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male children over 16 years</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female children over 16 years</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male children under 16 years</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female children under 16 years</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total population</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,509</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huts</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Imizi</em></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>2,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagons</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploughs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guns</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Table 3.1 are indicative of the general conditions prevalent in Tyefu Location at that time. What is of interest here is the high proportion (49 per cent) of children below sixteen years of age. Lewis (Ibid:246) speculates that this figure indicates a population that was growing or at least had the potential to grow rapidly. The low numbers of (unmarried) females over sixteen years (62) compared to males in the same category (105), suggests that many of the girls were married soon after they turned sixteen and were placed in the 'married women' category during the census. The census indicates that there were no polygynous households in Tyefu at the time (Lewis 1984a:249).

11 Adapted from census taken by N.Edye quoted in Lewis (1984a:245-6).
The census also shows that the population lived in groups of households, with each such group constituting a homestead (umzi). Each of the 89 imizi would have consisted on average, of 17 people and would have been under the direction of a senior member of one of the constituent households (ibid:246).

Investment in cattle was fairly significant: each homestead possessed an average of nearly 34 cattle, which represents nearly 11 head of cattle and 2 goats per man. It is, however, unlikely that every man in the Location would have owned cattle, and a more probable scenario is that the ownership of cattle was concentrated in the hands of a number of the homestead heads (see Lewis 1984a:248). The overall relatively high ratio of cattle to men among the Peddie Mfengu is not surprising as they had been recipients of Xhosa cattle during the period 1848-53 (ibid:247).

The data show that investment in ploughs had hardly begun in the Location. The low numbers of ploughs suggest that field cultivation was still being done largely by means of hoes. The eight wagons in Tyefu imply that transport-riding as a source of income had taken root in the Location by this time. Lewis (1984a:250) suggests that investment in wagons was encouraged during the 1851-53 War in which the Mfengu were significant providers of transport to the British forces. Investment in guns by the people of Tyefu is also evident with an average of one gun to 1.6 men, or nearly 2 guns per homestead.

The census appears to support Lewis' (1984a:250) argument that prior to the cattle-killing of 1856-7, the Peddie Mfengu were not investing their resources in cultivation, but rather that earnings from employment on colonial farms, from the sale of grain and from other sources, were invested in wagons, guns and the purchase of cattle. Only on the mission stations, with encouragement from the missionaries, had arable production overtaken pastoralism in respect of economic activity.

4. Consequences of the economic and political integration of the locations

When Calderwood surveyed the Mfengu in three areas - Victoria East, Tyhumie and Fort Beaufort (i.e. not Peddie District) - in January 1855, he found that, despite the
migration of people to concession lands in other areas of British Kaffaria, many of the locations were overcrowded and 'too narrow to allow both grazing and agriculture' (Moyer 1976:396). He also noted that several white farms overlapped on to Mfengu locations and that problems had arisen as a result of the impounding of Mfengu-owned cattle by settler-farmers. These tensions between white and black neighbours also existed in Peddie district and were set to continue for over a hundred years.

For eighteen months from January 1855, lungsickness decimated the cattle herds of the Xhosa and Mfengu. The Mfengu, even though they did not participate in the Xhosa Cattle Killing of 1856-7,12 were to find themselves without cattle, and were confronted with thousands of starving refugees from the Cattle Killing who wanted to buy grain.

The widespread impoverishment in the wake of the Cattle Killing led to a major population displacement: thousands of Xhosa-speakers flooded into the Mfengu locations, where they 'became' Mfengu by changing their legal status (Stapleton 1996:240). As a result, the Mfengu population expanded dramatically.13 The settlements between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers were severely overcrowded through this influx of Xhosa refugees. In March 1865, the Mfengu population of Peddie District was 16,400 (Stapleton ibid:246), an increase of some 89 per cent in the 11 years since Edye's survey.

Large numbers of Xhosa-speakers also streamed across the Fish River and into the Colony in search of work, many of them settling on farms in the Albany and Bathurst districts where they worked as farm labourers. Decades later, they would move off these farms into the locations and villages of Peddie District.

The Gcaleka chief, Sarhili, had been driven beyond the Mbashe River by the Colonial forces, and in 1865, some 40,000 of the Mfengu living in settlements throughout British Kaffaria were persuaded to resettle in the central region of Sarhili's territory around

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12 The most thorough account of the Cattle-Killing saga is Peires (1989).

13 See Stapleton (1996:240-3) for a somewhat controversial account of how this 'conversion' was endorsed by the colonial authorities.
Butterworth, in an area which came to be known as Fingoland (Stapleton 1996). The population of Peddie decreased by 11.2 per cent as a result of this exodus (Lewis 1984b:21). The land of those who had left was taken over by younger *imizi* who were in need of arable land, and who were apparently motivated by the fear that the Colonial state would seize any underutilised land in the Locations. The result, Lewis (1984b:21) has argued, 'was a [sic] organised drive to acquire ploughs and expand production in order to retain effective occupation of vacated lands,' thereby denying the Colonial government any excuse to intervene and redistribute land to settler colonists.

Lewis has argued further that the increase in arable production at this time (1865 onwards) was not the result of the intensification of production, but rather of the expansion of agricultural activity over a greater area. This arable expansion was made possible by the exodus of people to Fingoland (1984b:22). In places like Tyefu Location, the expansion of arable production into agriculturally marginal areas would have contributed significantly to increased levels of soil erosion in later years.\(^{14}\) Lewis contends that the increases in production were shortlived and were actually reversed by drought and by the pressure of further population increases that followed the 1879 rebellion (1984b:22).

Lewis argues that economic stratification between *imizi* was intrinsic to the structure of the economy in the locations, as it had been to the pre-conquest Xhosa economy and social formation (1984b:4). This stratification became more apparent as the imizi themselves began to break up because of the differential engagement of their constituent *imizi* with the Colonial economy, leaving each *umzi* to fend for itself economically. In consequence, a situation of 'radically skewed' access to productive resources such as land, cattle and family labour was entrenched, underscoring the overall trend of increasing impoverishment for the majority of rural *imizi* in these areas (Ibid:24).

Commonplace symptoms of this impoverishment after 1870 were that of overcrowding,\(^{14}\) Cf. the observation by Kakembo (1997) that, since the late 1930s, a great deal of the erosion features in Tyefu villages are the result of abandoned arable lands that were not rehabilitated.
land disputes, a young landless group, indebtedness and a large wage-seeking group (Bundy 1973:29). Disputes over access to land grew more intense as landowners with livestock outside the locations clamoured for access to the grazing on communal grazing land in the locations\textsuperscript{15}, while poorer imizi without stock wanted to use grazing land for residential and gardening purposes (Switzer 1993:99).

Magistrates were allowed, in terms of Act 20 of 1878 and Act 37 of 1884, to confiscate stock and charge grazing fees where imizi failed to pay their hut taxes. By Proclamation 140 of 1885, tax collectors were empowered to seize land and other property and even to evict people from their homes for failure to pay taxes (Switzer 1993:100). Natural disasters, such as drought and livestock diseases contributed to the creation of an increasingly sub-subsistence rural economy, as did the attempts by the Colonial government to increase the flow of labour from these rural areas through administrative and legislative means (Bundy 1973:31).

With finite land resources, and with the mobility of the population regulated, overcrowding and landlessness became the norm in the locations. Soil erosion took hold as marginally productive land (including hillsides, ridges, dry and stony patches), was ploughed and reploughed (Bundy 1988:117). Grazing resources were diminished. Although great disparities in wealth were recorded (Bundy 1988:88), the majority of those Mfengu who were still 'on the land' by the end of the 19th century, had become heavily indebted, sub-subsistence farmers who had to leave the area periodically in search of employment (Moyer 1976:419). The scarcity and uneven distribution of land resources in the rural locations bred competition and conflict as the degree of economic stratification increased (Bundy 1988:129).

In 1890, it was estimated that of a total population of 18 500 people in Peddie district, 4000 men and women were absent 'at work on the gold-fields, railway works, reaping or in service' (Bundy 1988:118). By 1905, these reserves had become reservoirs of labour which slowed the development of an urban African proletariat and served to

\textsuperscript{15} This highlights the problem of defining and maintaining the membership boundaries of those with access rights to resources subject to a system of common property management.
underpin a system of migrant labour. The consistently high indices of adult male and female labour migration hamstrung rural agricultural production systems and, by causing membership of village communities to become increasingly dislocated and fragmented, undermined the authority of the institutions responsible for managing natural resources.

While government land policy in the reserves vacillated between the opposing white interests,\(^{16}\) conditions in many of the reserves were bleak. Moll's (1988:7-8) description of the conditions experienced by peasants in the Transkei in the 1900s, mirrors the processes that had been underway for some time in the Ciskei areas, including the locations in Peddie District,

'......Under conditions of limited land area (partly due to restriction of African land ownership to the reserves) and rising population, land pressure escalated. Confined to limited resources in Transkei and the imperatives of survival, African imizی were forced to over-exploit the land, which had the long-run effect of undermining the fertility of the soil and lowering cereal and pastoral output......One such survival response by rural producers was to cultivate marginal land on steep slopes, very near rivers, on stony patches and in other areas subject to erosion......A crisis was thus postponed for some years largely by increasing the absolute land-area under cultivation, and holding more stock.'

5. The State intervenes into land-management\(^{17}\)

The reserve system was legally reinforced in rural South Africa through the passing of the Natives' Land Act 27 of 1913. The terms of this Act set land aside for the exclusive occupation and ownership by Africans. The schedule to the Act was based on the existing rural reserves and locations which included Tyefu and the other Mfengu

\(^{16}\) The disparate needs and demands of mining capital and the emergent white farming sector are discussed in Lacey (1979); Haines and Cross (1988: 78) and Davenport (1987:393).

\(^{17}\) Hendricks (1989:306, 325) has observed that there is often a wide discrepancy between the stated objectives of government plans and their eventual implementation. Such observations serve as warnings against a view of the state as a monolithic institution that formulates and uniformly implements policy in ways that are free of contradiction.
locations in Peddie district. Additional land was set aside for African occupation (but not always handed over) in terms of the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 (Surplus Peoples Project, 1983:xii). The South African Native Trust would henceforth administer the scheduled areas set aside by the Land Act of 1913, as well as additional areas designated for African occupation by the 1936 Act itself (Switzer 1993:223). In practice, it was the headmen in the scheduled reserves (including the locations in Peddie) who continued to control access to land and other resources in the villages, and they remained answerable to the magistrate.

The Native Economic Commission of 1930-32 pulled no punches in describing the environmental crisis in African reserve areas as characterised by “denudation, donga-erosion, deleterious plant succession, destruction of woods, [which is] drying up of springs, [and] robbing the soil of its reproductive properties, in short the creation of desert conditions” (U.G.22/32).

The official view attributed rural resource depletion to indiscriminate overstocking and the irrationality of African agriculture (Bundy 1988:125). The official response in the late 1930s to the disintegration of the rural economy and the (perceived) almost total depletion of the natural resources of the reserve areas, was to implement rehabilitation schemes in rural location areas (Hendricks 1989:316). These schemes included the division of land for arable, grazing and residential purposes and the relocation of people and livestock (Bundy 1988:227). The programme embarked upon also included ‘limited agrarian reform’, such as the culling of stock, fencing, contour ploughing, and measures aimed at water conservation and the control of soil erosion (Ibid:227; Moll 1988:23).

Referring to conditions in the Transkei, Moll (1988:25-31) notes that the efforts to

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18 Peddie District was identified as Area 26, and an area of 63 725 morgen (54 612.3ha.), which included Tyefu Location, was scheduled (U.G. 19/1916).

19 The role of local institutions like the headmen in managing natural resources is examined in Chapter Four.

20 Beinart (1984) has made some interesting observations about the origins of what seemed to border on paranoia with respect to the perceived levels of soil erosion and desertification.
rehabilitate these areas did not address the root of the problem, namely that of too many people and too many animals on too little land (see Lacey 1979:88). This argument also featured in the rhetoric of rural people in the former Ciskei where the same problem of overcrowding had existed in rural locations such as those in Peddie District since the middle of the previous century (Switzer 1993:231).

By the mid 1940s, land-hunger was all-pervasive in the former Ciskei. The majority of the population were unable to subsist on the land and depended on urban wage remittances (Mager 1992:766). In 1945, more than half the cattle and sheep and a third of the goats in the former Ciskei died as a result of relentless drought. Agricultural productivity declined steadily while the incidence of soil erosion increased through desperate ploughing measures, designed to conserve drought-weakened draught animals.\footnote{To relieve the weakened oxen, downhill ploughing on steeper slopes was initiated, with women and children having to drag the plough back up the slope (Mager 1995b:200).}

Government drought relief took the form of the employment of destitute men and women in public works programmes, such as road-building, contour maintenance and dam construction. These measures could not reverse the declining fortunes of the poorest nor did they make a lasting impression in terms of arresting the ecological decline of the reserve areas (Mager Ibid:767). Indeed, one legacy of these cash transfers by the state to villagers for the completion of natural resource management related tasks, was that of undermining the endeavours of local institutions which of necessity, rely on the voluntary (i.e.\textit{unpaid}) participation by villagers for fulfilling such tasks (see Chapter Four).

In the post-war period, and especially after the National Party came to power, one aspect of government policy towards the reserve areas focussed on the need to maximise the numbers of people settled in the reserves. In order to address the problem of overcrowding, the Tomlinson Commission (1955) recommended that the reserve population be divided into farmers and rural-based wage-earners, with the latter, who were to have no rights to arable land or stock ownership, subsisting by
means of wages from the urban sector. Consideration of the ecological implications of such a policy took the form of Betterment Planning. While the discourse of these resource rehabilitation programmes was couched in purely technocratic and economic terms, it allowed for the state to exert control over the rural population through chiefs, headmen, dipping foremen and police. Ironically, as resistance to Betterment grew, the legitimacy of many of these functionaries was negatively affected. This was particularly the case for local headmen and chiefs who had agreed to the implementation of the schemes in their areas.

This intervention by the state into the management of natural resources included the imposition of fines for the breaking of contours, the impounding of stock found grazing in betterment areas and for failure to dip cattle or to keep pigs enclosed. At the same time, the state devolved responsibility for policing rehabilitation onto headmen in the locations, in anticipation of the implementation of Bantu Authorities (Mager 1992:771).

In many instances and in numerous ways, these measures were resisted and subverted by rural people (see Mager 1992), and particularly the contentious measures relating to imposition of restrictions on access to land and to the culling of livestock were the source of much resistance. Livestock that were to be culled by the authorities were often moved to kin or clansmen in neighbouring locations to escape this fate.

Because of administrative delays and local resistance, the implementation of Betterment Planning was accompanied and even preceded in some places, by the establishment of Bantu Authorities. One goal of the Bantu Authorities Act was to re-invent the 'traditional' African system through the establishment of tribal, regional and territorial authorities with limited powers. Both Betterment and Bantu Authorities tended to have the effect of strengthening the dominant conservative groupings in these locations, while simultaneously confining as many people as possible to the reserve areas and making them firmly dependent on the central government. In this way, the state hoped to divert emerging African nationalist forces (Moll 1988:38). These policies were to have the opposite effect in many areas (Mbeki 1964; Mager 1992, 1995b).

Moll notes that in general, the rural people in the former Ciskei locations demonstrated
much less resistance to these interventions than those in the Transkei. This he attributes to the greater differentiation at village level, a greater dependence on migrant remittances, higher education levels and more effective proletarianisation, which resulted in a limited and heterogeneous interest in issues of land and resource management (Moll 1988:42).22

In Peddie District, as in other parts of the former Ciskei, there was both silent acquiescence and vehement resistance to the implementation of Betterment Planning (see Mager 1992:763). In the Mazizini area in the southern coastal section of the District, two chiefs (Jama Njokweni and Jeremiah Msuthu23) who agreed to Betterment without the consent of their followers were murdered (Mzozoyana 1995a:3; De Beer 1984:145). In Tyefu Location, long-standing opposition to the Native Affairs Department (NAD) had centred around the person of Alfred Msuthu, the chief of the amaHlubi abaseKunene, who had been banned for leading the resistance of the men of Tyefu Location against the imposition of the Bunga system as far back as 1933. As a result of his 'obstructionist and recalcitrant attitude', Msuthu had been suspended from his position as headman of the location (see Mager 1995a:57). Although he was reinstated as headman in 1952, Msuthu still refused to defer to the authority of the NAD officials and he was dismissed and deported from the area, but only after he had been a fugitive from the authorities for three years.

Mager (1992:772-4) notes that in the early 1950s, the mobilisation of rural people, including large numbers of women, in Peddie District against Betterment came increasingly under the influence of the Port Elizabeth-based members of the ANC Youth League (see Hirson 1977:126). This shift corresponded to the collapse of the rural economy which saw imizi become totally dependent on the wages of younger, urban-based men. In Peddie, imizi who had lost 60 per cent of their livestock in the

---

22 While the early leaders of this opposition to Betterment and Tribal Authorities were the rural, patriarchal elite (the chiefs, headmen and wealthy livestock owners), who had the most to lose through the culling of stock, the fencing off of land and the changing of ploughing habits (Switzer 1993:304), the landless and unmarried women were often more ambivalent towards Betterment implementation, hoping that they would be the beneficiaries of arable land. Mager's (1992;1996) perceptive accounts of the resistance to state intervention show how different social and economic categories of rural people responded in different ways to this state intervention into access and control of rural natural resources.

23 No relation of the Msuthus in Tyefu Location.
drought lived half in the reserves and half in town in an attempt to make ends meet (Mager 1992:773).

The villages of Tyefu Location were finally surveyed or 'planned' in anticipation of Betterment in 1963. No Betterment schemes were, however, implemented in Tyefu Location, probably in part because the state machinery had lost its enthusiasm by then to go into an area with the reputation for resistance such as Tyefu Location. Permission to Occupy certificates that never were completed, or issued to landholders, are still held at the Magistrate's office in Peddie.

6. Population increase: a key consequence of the Ciskei experiment

Population increases and the pressures associated with it, were by no means solely a result of the creation of the Ciskeian bantustan: the 1946 census conducted in Tyefu Location makes interesting reading in this regard, particularly when compared to Edye's survey 92 years previously, as in Table 3.2. below.

Table 3.2. A Comparison of Tyefu Location Census data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>1854 SURVEY</th>
<th>1946 CENSUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>1 509</td>
<td>4 889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>2 989</td>
<td>2 938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5 388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>18 464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is immediately clear from Table 3.2 is that, while cattle numbers stayed remarkably constant, even declining slightly, the number of goats (nearly 36 times as

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24 Discussions around the implementation of the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme and the political costs of the possible failure of this scheme steered the authorities away from implementing betterment to the villages of Tyefu Location (see correspondence (from 1966) between the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, KWT and the Bantu Commissioner, Peddie, (File No. N2/8/3-B, Tyefu Location), Peddie Archival Records (PAR) King Williams Town).

25 As quoted in 'Eradication of Prickly Pear - Ciskeian Native Areas' (1947). PAR, King Williams Town (File No. N2/8/3-B, Tyefu Location).
many) and sheep (over 117 times as many) increased quite spectacularly over the 92 year period, albeit off a low base. Given the agro-ecology of Tyefu Location, it is understandable that particularly goats would be favoured over cattle and that they would be better able to withstand drought, but the figures above give more than a passing insight into the possible causes of the deterioration of grazing in the location. This begs the question of how a situation could have arisen in which the numbers of goats and sheep, both of which are capable of doing considerable damage to grazing resources, and thereby contributing to soil erosion, could increase to such an extent? At least part of the reason must lie with the fact that dryland arable production has always been a poor option for most areas of Tyefu Location, so that people were likely to invest in hardier species of livestock. The overall levels of investment in livestock (as depicted in Table 3.2) would help to explain the vehement resistance to attempts to cull livestock in the Location from the 1940s.

If we accept that the area of the Location remained unchanged, an increase of 224 per cent in the human population would have put local resources, especially water and arable land and thus living conditions for the resident population under considerable pressure. Clearly, by 1946 the situation in Tyefu Location in terms of the pressure on natural resources was already looking bleak.

In terms of the Ciskeian Proclamation 187 of 1972, the Ciskei was declared a self-governing state (Freeman 1981). In pursuance of its project of ethnically constituted 'states', the South African State proceeded to relocate large numbers of Africans into areas demarcated for the development of self-governing ethnic enclaves. At the same time, plans to 'consolidate' and rationalise the boundaries of these enclaves were formulated and carried out. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the implementation of these plans involved both the removal and resettlement of 'black spots' and the buying out of white-owned farms for inclusion into the reserves (Surplus Peoples Project 1983 Vol.2). This activity was to have far-reaching consequences, not least in contributing to the collapse of institutions responsible for natural resource management.

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26 The farms, Gnusha Poort (506 ha) Woodlands and Runletts (combined area 1767 ha), which were bought by the South African Development Trust in 1924, have remained discrete settlements outside of Tyefu Location (see Lacey 1979: Appendix B5).
and the to unsustainable utilisation of natural resources. The ‘consolidation’ of homeland boundaries resulted in a breakdown of the agricultural support systems and personnel, including agricultural extension staff, stock inspectors and grazing rangers, that had been key to the management of natural resources in both freehold and communal tenure areas until then (see Higginbottom et al 1995:53-54).

Population increase in the Peddie locations (see Table 3.3 below) has historically been augmented by the various measures introduced by the state to eliminate the phenomenon of ‘squatting’ on white-owned farms. More recently, there have been other major movements into Peddie District, this time by ex-farmworkers off white-owned farms in the surrounding districts. Manona (1988a:284-292) notes that there were successive waves in the 1960s and 1970s of ‘destitute’ farmworkers that were pushed off these farms in the wake of widespread farming mechanisation and the labour cuts that accompanied it (Manona Ibid:77-80). Predictably, many of these people attempted to settle in areas of relatively high agricultural potential and by 1984, villages like Mgababa in Peddie South had grown by several thousand people (Manona 1988a:286). Most of the influx of farm-people into Tyefu Location came from the farms to the north of the Location, those of Peddie North and Victoria East areas. The majority of these new arrivals were able to gain access to residential land and in some cases, such as in Tyefu Location, they were also granted grazing rights. For the most part, however, these newcomers were unable to secure access to arable land. Table 3.3 lists the official census figures for females and males in Peddie District over a fifty-five year period.

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27 Manona (1988a:66) notes that the Location Acts of 1892, 1899 and 1909 made it increasingly difficult for the African tenants on these farms to pay the increased rentals to stay on the farms. Records show that by 1931, implementation of the 1909 Act had reduced the ‘squatting’ population in the Eastern Cape from about 40 000 to 7 000 people (Manona 1988a:66). These people relocated to neighbouring areas demarcated for ‘Native’ residence, such as the locations of Peddie District.

28 Manona (1988a:288) argues that some farmworkers were attracted to villages in the former Ciskei because of the ‘cultural infrastructure’ including better schooling facilities, churches, access to kin and a sense of being among one’s own ‘community.’

Table 3.3. Rural (black) Population of Peddie District 1936-1991.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR OF CENSUS</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>23 522</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>23 415</td>
<td>- 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>23 340</td>
<td>- 0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>31 711</td>
<td>+ 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>41 985</td>
<td>+ 32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>62 707</td>
<td>+ 49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>65 057</td>
<td>+ 3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 3.3 indicates, the population of Peddie District began to increase rapidly from 1951, registering considerable increases from this time until 1985. Between 1970 and 1985, the population of the district increased from 41 985 to 62 707, which constituted an increase of over 49 per cent. This increase was largely attributable to the displacement of people from neighbouring farms, as well as forced resettlements in the already overcrowded locations (Charton 1980:174,229). Five major resettlement camps were established in Peddie District. These were Glenmore, where 4 500 people were settled on a farm bordering the villages of Tyefu Location, as well as Kammaskraal, Zweledinga, Bell and Bingqala (Surplus Peoples Project 1983). From 1985, the table shows that the population increase flattened off, indicating that the major resettlement projects had been completed.

Manona (1980) has shown how the relocation of whole communities into Peddie District onto land which established villagers regarded as their grazing land, has led to conflict over access to natural resources. In Tyefu Location, incidences of conflict between the residents of Glenmore and those of Ndwayana, particularly in respect of access to local grazing resources, have been recorded (De Lange et al. 1994).

30 Comparable statistics in DBSA (1985) indicate these totals as 30 311 (1970) and 55 136 (1985); with the increase over the fifteen year period of nearly 82 per cent. These figures are probably an exaggeration since the methods used during the collection of the DBSA data set were potentially inaccurate (see Chapter 5).
In 1981, the former Ciskei gained its 'independence' from South Africa. The commercial agricultural sector of this 'country' was deemed to be unviable, and the subsistence sector had all but collapsed. Rural employment was practically non-existent and migrant wage-labour offered the only viable strategy for household income generation. The rural areas were stagnating economically and politically (Charton 1980:228). Vast areas of the countryside were over-grazed and heavily eroded. Despite the industrial decentralisation policy adopted by the South African government in the 1960s, which consisted of encouraging the establishment of border industries that were supposed to alleviate rural poverty, little headway was made in relieving the overall impoverishment of many rural dwellers (Switzer 1993:328).

The politicisation of the countryside had a negative impact on local resource management practices, because practically all the government funding which was aimed at providing drought relief and the conservation of natural resources was channelled through the Tribal Authorities or the Department of Agriculture, and directed at members of the CNIP 31 (see Rogers 1980:77). As a result, those people who were opposed to the bantustan system (and thus not members of the CNIP) were marginalised from workteams that were paid to undertake these conservation projects.

After some nine years as 'President-for-life,' Sebe was ousted in a military coup in March 1990 and was replaced as 'head of state' by Brigadier Oupa Gqozo. Gqozo suspended the headmen (although he continued to recognise chiefs) who had become unpopular with rural people, but he did not transfer their powers to the ANC-aligned SANCO 32 Residents' Associations at village level (Manona 1995:2; Lewis 1992). With the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other liberation groups in February 1990, opposition from non-statutory groups like SANCO, towards the delayed re-integration of the bantustans into South Africa and the continued existence of the bantustan administration reached fever-pitch. This made for intense political activity at village level and resistance grew towards Gqozo and his newly-formed party, the African Democratic Movement (ADM). In the face of this opposition, and in an attempt

31 Sebe's Ciskei National Independence Party.
32 This is the acronym for the South African National Civic Organisation.
to re-establish statutory local government structures, Gqozo withdrew what amounted to tacit support for the Residents' Associations and re-introduced the headmen system, linking access to rural resources to membership of the ADM. This move was vigorously opposed at village level and met with a violent response in places (Manona 1995:26; Lewis 1992:18).

The upshot of the political upheavals in the period 1990 to 1994 was that many inhabitants of rural villages have been alienated more than ever from the loci of authority at all levels of the bantustan administration. This induced a great deal of uncertainty over issues relating to resource management in the countryside as the former Ciskei bureaucracy all but collapsed. *Laissez faire* resource management practices were adopted: land invasions, particularly by newcomers onto the commonage grazing land of established villages, was widespread as local systems of control fell away or were ignored. Existing regulations concerning resource use, such as the prohibition on the use of axes to collect firewood and the regulation that pigs must be kept enclosed, were identified with the oppression of the bantustan and its headmen system and were brushed aside.

In Peddie District, the now-dominant village Residents' Associations were non-statutory bodies and as such had no legal status. They also did not have any formal links to tiers of the bantustan government in respect of funding for community projects and drought relief initiatives. In an effort to break any vestiges of local power the oppositional headmen (and by extension, Gqozo's African Democratic Movement) might still enjoy, the Residents' Associations assumed responsibility for allocating (residential) land in rural villages, with varying degrees of success.

In 1994, the former Ciskei was re-integrated into South Africa, forming part of the new Eastern Cape Province, which included the Transkei and a section of the former Cape Province. The amalgamation of these three administrations has been fraught with difficulties and the new provincial government has been slow to address the broad range of issues relating to the management of natural resources, with a key constraint being that of the lack of capacity at the level of rural local government.
8. Conclusion

This chapter has documented the historical contestation over access to land and other natural resources in the area between the Fish and the Keiskamma Rivers and has reviewed several critical facets of this contestation. Firstly, there were successive waves of people coming into and settling on land in the rural locations of Peddie District, so that the land resources of these areas were put under considerable pressure. Despite outflows of people to other areas (notably to 'Fingoland' in 1865), rural locations like Tyefu Location were, by the late 1850s, already demarcated, permanently fixed in area and fenced in by the presence of white farmers bordering on these areas. This meant that an increasing population had to be accommodated on a finite area of land. The socio-cultural and economic significance of livestock did not diminish however, and even with finite grazing resources and ever-increasing numbers of people settling in the locations, the inhabitants fought to retain their stake in livestock ownership.

Secondly, given the relatively marginal arable potential of Tyefu Location, the economic viability of arable production was soon under threat. Every consecutive influx of people heightened the contestation over arable land and increasingly brought ecologically marginal land into production, increasing the probability of soil erosion. Eventually, all possible arable areas had been allocated and the subsequent landlessness of newcomers and younger people became one indicator of the widespread socio-economic stratification in the villages of Tyefu Location. Landed and landless villagers had and still have different levels of interest and stakes in the sustainable management of local natural resources.  

Thirdly, their permanent settlement by the colonial authorities in overcrowded villages required a transformation on the part of the inhabitants of Tyefu Location to an economy centred around migrant wage labour in towns and cities. Overall, colonial and local authorities had prioritised the economic development and exploitation of local resources, often at the expense of environmental sustainability and community well-being.

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33 Cross (1991:77-78) has argued that in 'trying to ensure access to land for all the families in the community, communal tenure has tolerated rapidly diminishing sizes of sites and fields and severe degradation of the environment...[In these systems], universal access to land is basic, and ecological considerations distinctly second' [my emphasis].
state interventions over the entire period of contact, conquest and integration, have played a significant role in mediating the relationship of rural people to the natural resources at their disposal. Intervention by the state has generally been disruptive of local patterns of resource use, undermining the legitimacy of local institutions and increasing the tenure insecurity of rural people to the detriment of sustainable use and management of their natural resources.

The long-standing and entirely pragmatic commercialising of activities aimed at resource conservation and rehabilitation (through the payment of labour), has resulted in people not being prepared to perform these activities on a voluntary basis.\(^{34}\) Voluntary collective action by local residents in this regard has been and remains highly unlikely, given the weak incentives in place. The politicisation of the countryside during the era of authoritarian bantustan politics has further eroded a sense of custodianship that rural people might have felt towards the resources that are, certainly in the case of the poorer imizi, still crucial to their subsistence.

The concentration of people in the locations of Peddie District documented in this chapter begs the question of why people continued to stream into these areas once they had become - and were known to be - overcrowded, so that the prospects of receiving an allocation of arable land were remote. In terms of the economics of arable production, it made very little sense for these people to resettle in the locations and one might have expected them to resist attempts to resettle them into these areas. It would appear, however, that they had little choice in the matter, given the terms of the coercive legislation in place and the fact that there were no viable alternatives where they could resettle.\(^{35}\) Moreover, as Nash and Charton (1980:70) noted, the remuneration of chiefs in the Ciskei was based on the number of people over whom they claimed jurisdiction. This meant that the chiefs had a private interest in allowing

\(^{34}\) The Annual Report of the Ciskei's Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 1983/84, makes the point that 'the donga and gully reclamation structures would be constructed on a \textit{labour intensive basis} thereby providing the much needed employment opportunities for each Tribal Authority' [my emphasis].

\(^{35}\) Around 1980, Lennox Sebe was quoted as saying that the Ciskei felt bound to take the responsibility for people displaced by the Republican [sic] government 'for humanitarian reasons' and that '[they] cannot drive Ciskeians away when they have nowhere to stay' (Nash and Charton 1980:69).
newcomers to settle in their areas. In Nash and Charton's prophetic words, 'that......short term interest......will in the long term further impoverish and destroy their territory, their people and themselves' (ibid:70).

In one sense, the overcrowded and depleted reserve areas like Tyefu Location were - by default - places of refuge, in which people felt relatively safe from the attentions of a government which did not appear to be overly concerned with the circumstances in the reserves. This allowed for greater flexibility in terms of group membership: it was especially the kinship idiom, where every local man had a 'birthright' to land in his natal village and where the identities of individuals and families were acknowledged and reinforced by social interaction, that afforded people a sense of security in the locations, overcrowded as they were. People were generally amenable to extending this sense of secure membership of their village community to newcomers as long as the latter showed that they were prepared to abide by local norms.
CHAPTER FOUR
Institutional Dissonance and Competition over Scarce Resources

Introduction

Institutional changes in both the formal and informal institutions that mediate the access to natural resources and oversee the management of these resources are of key analytical concern to this thesis. Local and supra-local institutions provide the context and the critical fora in which the users and managers of natural resources in Tyefu Location reshape and redefine rules and boundaries of resource use. In the process, the particular meanings and structures of local institutions are themselves continuously subjected to scrutiny, debate and contestation by local people (Berry 1997:1228; Cousins 1993).

Rather than viewing institutional change in African rural areas as the inevitable collapse of monolithic ‘traditional’ or indigenous institutions in the face of economic and political integration, Berry (1997:1229) advocates that a processual rather than a structural viewpoint be adopted. This entails recognising that institutional change consists of multiple processes of change negotiated by individuals and groups of people (not necessarily on equal terms) that may or may not be synchronised or mutually consistent. This contextual and processual perspective extends to an analysis of the actions of the state, illustrating how the state has itself struggled to definitively modify and transform ‘traditional’ forms of tenure and patterns of resource use.

Contemporary natural resource management practices in Tyefu Location represent a particular amalgam of ‘traditional’ and introduced forms of natural resource use which have adapted locally (and not always successfully) to changes in the state of the natural resource base. These practices are also responses to changes in the political and economic conditions in the rural-urban environment, as well as to the changing social dynamics at work in the location and beyond.
1. Pre-conquest patterns of natural resource management

Prior to contact with white settlers, the chief was the embodiment of Xhosa society: he had the tasks of controlling access to land, protecting his followers from their enemies and acting as the custodian of their environment. In doing so, he played a central role in the resolution of internal disputes over cultivation, grazing and hunting land (Sansom 1974:137). Chiefs sought to regulate access by their followers to the available resources, and to this end, they guaranteed individual and communal rights to the use of the land (Peires 1981:33-4). A chief and his deputies allocated land for pasture and for cultivation, they supervised hunting privileges and often ritually opened and closed the agricultural cycle. It has been argued that Cape Nguni chiefs held the land in trust¹ for their followers and that under this system of communal tenure, every married male had a right to the use of the land (Switzer ibid:36).

As long as these segmentary chieftaincies, with their subsistence economies based on livestock (particularly cattle) ownership, limited crop cultivation and hunting and gathering, remained relatively small and had sufficient land for expansion, they were unlikely to do much lasting damage to the natural resource base. One category of these ‘traditional’ practices in particular made ecological sense: that of transhumance between summer grazing areas on the plateaux and winter grazing in the river valleys (Peires 1981:9; Holbrook 1992:45). Cattle posts which were established at a distance from settlements for both security and ecological reasons, also served to limit the depletion of grazing resources.

The scattering of imizi in a decentralised manner also eased the pressure on local resources (Sansom 1974:139). In the event that the resources of one area were exhausted, the practice was to move to other (uncontested) areas, allowing the depleted resources of the first area to recover. Since the political system of the Xhosa was geared towards indefinite expansion (Peires 1981:53), it was inevitable that once

¹ Notions concerning chiefly ‘trusteeship’ over communal land and presumptions of an ‘egalitarian pre-colonial society grounded in relations of reciprocity’ are simplistic and generally inaccurate (Levin and Weiner 1996:104). With respect to the role of the chief, Letsoalo (1987:20-1) argues that, among the Bapedi at least, chiefly control over land only extended to its allocation: once allocated, the actual use of the land was no longer any concern of the chief (see Peires 1981:33).
no more land was available for westward expansion - as the colonial settler-farmers expanded into the hinterland in the opposite direction - pressure would be brought to bear on natural resources through the increased and concentrated population in the areas dominated by Xhosa-speaking groups.

2. Colonial intervention into local level institutions of resource management

After 1835, Governor D'Urban brought all Xhosa-speaking groups within the new colonial borders under the authority of the Colonial government (Crais 1992:118). A white magistrate was appointed over each acknowledged Xhosa chief, curtailing the chief's powers. From 1855, Governor Grey took the erosion of the powers of the chiefs a step further by announcing that chiefs and their councillors would receive monthly salaries as part of their roles as 'administrators of justice' (Crais Ibid:201).

Grey implemented policies which made headmen and subheadmen responsible for local administration in specific settlements and locations. They reported to a Resident Magistrate (Crais 1992:201). The headmen, many of whom had been the amaphakati (councillors) of a particular chief, were now paid directly by the government and were no longer reliant on the patronage of the chief. The policy of co-opting recognised leaders by appointing them as paid officials was also implemented among the Mfengu in Peddie District. In many cases, the Colonial officials appointed men of proven loyalty to them to the position of chief to preside over the Mfengu locations. Chiefs appointed in this way experienced difficulties in getting the people in the locations in Peddie District to accept their authority. In an attempt to bolster their authority, the Colonial officials gave these chiefs cattle, goats, grain, clothing, knives and most importantly, land which they could distribute to their followers (Lewis 1984b:34).

As long as the chiefs followed government directions, assisted in protecting the colony,

2 Lewis (1984a:243) suggests that the powerful headmen of the Mfengu clans functioned as de facto chiefs although, relative to the Xhosa, these Mfengu chiefs were weak.

3 See Moyer (1976, Chapter 3) for the most comprehensive text on the history of chieftaincy and governance among the Mfengu. Moyer (Ibid:172) notes that for the majority of the displaced Mfengu in Peddie District, their chiefs remained leaders in name only and that there was little to be gained by identifying with them.
In apprehending cattle thieves and pass-law violators and encouraged Mfengu enlistment in military levies, they retained their offices and were permitted some independent authority. If they tried to assert their independence too forcefully, they could be removed from office, although this was not always a viable option (Moyer 1976:176; and cf. how the widespread support for Chief Msuthu in Tyefu Location made it difficult for the authorities to remove him from office).

It was the headmen (who presided over sub-headmen in villages and the larger village sections) though, who were responsible for the day-to-day administration at village level (Moyer 1976:168). In fact, in Peddie District, it was precisely the more influential headmen who were later installed as chiefs. Switzer (1993:95) argues that after 1855 these headmen became the eyes and ears of the local magistrate: they helped to collect hut tax, to locate stolen cattle and to apprehend fugitives from the law. Headmen also became the key intermediaries between colonial officials, labour recruiters and rural people in the locations. In effect, they controlled access to wage-earning labour opportunities and to the labour pool itself. They also mediated the settlement of debts in the changing rural economy, where debt relations and payment for the rendering of various services that had previously been paid for in kind, were becoming increasingly monetarised. These services included the hiring out of cattle and ploughs, the selling of milk, fencing of gardens and cattle-kraals, the collection of wood and other building materials (Switzer ibid:95; Mills and Wilson 1952:11-15).

With the rise of the headman as an appointed government official, the pre-contact ideal of descent and consensus as mechanisms for determining political office was disturbed (Crais 1992:203; Lewis 1984a:638). Headmen, on occasion, received payments for land allotments and sometimes set up their own courts (Switzer 1993:95). In short, the rise in the fortunes of the headmen saw them build and maintain patronage networks that had a major influence on daily social practices in the locations. They were de jure answerable firstly to the administration and secondly to the residents of their villages, but in effect the demands from these two quarters were intertwined and had to be skillfully mediated by each headman (Lewis 1984a:641).

By the 1880s, headmen had consolidated their position to the extent that they were
able to confiscate, not uncontroversially, land from households who had not cultivated
garden plots, or who had not paid their taxes, or in cases where contract labour had
been absent from the location for more than six months (see cases cited in Chapter
Five). These practices were not condoned by the authorities who insisted that the
headmen had no legal status other than that conferred on them by government decree
and that they could only allocate land or to deprive individuals of land on the orders of
the resident magistrate.  

An example of the authority assumed and resistance offered by some headmen was the
reported opposition (in 1883) of 'Headman Tyefu' of Tyefu Location to the surveying of
land in Horton for the purposes of establishing a Wesleyan Methodist Mission station
there:

'......He (the Headman) objected to a site being surveyed for the purpose stated
above and he still objects and expresses himself surprised that the matter is
again brought forward......'  

The reply from the Civil Commissioner in Peddie, dated 2 August 1883, was
unequivocal:

'With reference to the Headman Tyefu's remark that he has always objected and
still objects to a site being surveyed I will thank you to inform him that the
Government has decided long since to make a grant of ten morgen and have it
surveyed for the Wesleyan Mission, and that he has nothing whatsoever to say
in the matter.'

While it appears that the land in question was surveyed and granted, the matter was

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4 Rogers (1933:107) has argued that under the 'general regulations framed at the time of
annexation the sole right of allotting land was vested in the Governor. Subsequent regulations have
placed this duty in the hands of the Magistrates. In practice, however, the headmen of the various
locations actually allotted lands in their respective areas subject to the confirmation of the Magistrate,
which is readily given except in disputed cases requiring investigation.' Wilson et al. (1952:27) have
suggested that control over land (given by the colonial state) gave early headmen in communal villages
some of the attributes of chiefs. Hence, they were spoken of as chiefs and even in the 1950s, 'there was
a strong tendency to regard the office as hereditary.'

5 As described in a letter dated 31 July 1883 from Inspector Hartley of 'A Location' (present-day Tyefu Location) to the Civil Commissioner in Peddie (Cory Library, Methodist Archives PR 3605/2).
not laid to rest quite so easily: some five years later, in a letter dated 4 January 1888 and written by E. Gedye, the Superintendent at the Methodist Mission at D'Urban in Peddie to the Peddie Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate, the subject of the Wesleyan Mission land at Horton was broached again:

'.......[I] refer to Head-man 'Tyefu', who has......deprived our Native Minister and two of our School Teachers of the 'Garden lands' which had been allotted to them for years past; and up to the present, though this action has been duly complained of, we have no redress, our Native Agents being this Season deprived of their lands.......Rura Location [sic] being said to be 'Treaty Territory', this head-man appears to have absolute authority over garden lands.......'  

Clearly, while the Civil Commissioner, who was stationed in Peddie town, could make the decision to grant land in the locations, he had to rely on the headmen to carry out such decisions in the locations and villages. In the case described above, the headman demonstrated his ability to circumvent and undermine this authority in matters pertaining to land when he felt that the decisions reached were not in his own best interests. Indeed, Switzer (ibid:96) argues that in general, the Colonial officials were 'simply not strong enough to impose their will on headmen inside the locations during this period' (see Lewis 1984a:681). Headmen were the organisers of public opinion and no laws could be implemented effectively in the locations without their support.

In 1890, the duties of the headmen included reporting on the movements of all people entering or leaving the location, providing crime reports and collecting evidence against suspected offenders, helping to collect taxes, enforcing forest regulations aimed at protecting trees and monitoring illicit beer-brewing.

De Wet argues that 'headmen tended to favour people from their own and neighbouring village-sections in the allocation of land.' This gives a hint of the patronage networks the headmen were involved in, not unlike that of the chief, to ensure the support of local

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6 Methodist Archives, PR 3605/5, Cory Library.
residents. As arable land became scarce, villagers found that their interests were best served by having the headman live in their locality and they tended to support a local candidate in contests for the headmanship (see De Wet 1987a:60).

In the village of Chatha in the Keiskammahoek District, village sections and other ‘factions’ were galvanised by the often ambiguous intervention of the authorities over a period of seventy years (1880-1950) into contests for the headmanship. While the colonial authorities were more interested in efficient administration and the maintenance of law and order than in adhering to local claims based on genealogical succession to the headmanship, they were happy to accede to such claims when a proposed hereditary candidate was likely to support their objectives. Negotiation, strategic trade-offs and local politicking were thus key ingredients involved in the selection and appointment of headmen, the latter activities made all the more contestable and ambiguous by the fact that they rested on fluid and subjective judgements concerning the respective merits and standing of candidates for the headmanship (cf. Berry 1997:1235).

3. Local ambiguity in the reform of ‘traditional’ tenure regimes

In the 1850s, colonial policy towards even the ‘loyal’ Mfengu shifted: Governor Grey wished to implement procedures aimed at controlling especially the mobility of the Mfengu, while simultaneously increasing their agricultural productivity. He also wanted to wean people away from their chiefs. It was decided to settle Mfengu people in compact villages and to begin issuing individual title deeds for land (Moyer 1976:396). The colonial government officials also felt that settling people in compact villages would provide for the best defences for these people against Xhosa attack.

The Mfengu, however, preferred to reside in scattered imizi in which each family had its privacy. They also preferred to live on hillsides, which enabled them to survey their

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7 De Wet (1987a:69) quotes the Assistant Magistrate of Keiskammahoek (in 1912) as follows, '...[the acting headman's] fearlessness in carrying out his duties has not been palatable to some of the residents and this fact, in my opinion, has been the reason for the opposition to his appointment.... I have no hesitation in recommending his permanent appointment as headman' [my emphasis].
garden lands, to watch over their livestock and to keep a look-out for an enemy approach. Hillsides also ensured good drainage for their kraals and grain storage pits (Moyer 1976:359-360).

Moyer (ibid) notes that '[in 1835]...the problem of organising Mfengu into compact villages was a source of controversy that would last for the next 30 years'. In fact, intervention by the government into the tenure and spatial arrangements of the Mfengu settlements was to continue for approximately 150 years thereafter (Crais 1992:200) and, with the adoption of a comprehensive land reform programme in 1995, it continues to impact on people at the present time.

The granting of individual (freehold) title to land in 'native areas' in Peddie District was initiated in 1858 when the Mission locations of D'Urban and Newtondale were surveyed (Union of South Africa, U.G.42/22:1). The headmen were not averse to title being granted for residential and arable land in their locations, but they wanted such title to land to be vested in them and not in their followers. Against the wishes of the government that employed them, some chiefs and headmen in Peddie District managed to convince their followers not to accept title to land and these locations remained effectively communal. The chiefs are said to have persuaded their followers that by accepting title to land in Peddie they would jeopardise their collective chances of being granted land across the Kei (in Gcalekaland) where they would be free of the colonial yoke (Moyer 1976:236).

Rural people in many modified communal tenure areas resisted the offer to take up freehold title to land. A number of reasons were cited for this: there was a preference for 'tribal' tenure, due in a great measure to the deep-seated aversion of the chiefs to individual tenure; rural people disliked being tied down to definite and permanent sites for dwelling and gardens; there was a reluctance to pay the costs of survey and title and; the unsuitability of allotment caused by surveyors not consulting the interests of the future occupants, so that these surveys were generally haphazard, with residential, grazing and garden areas laid out without due regard to the quality of the land or the wishes of the landowner (U.G. 42/22:1; Hendricks 1990:27).
An interesting development in the locations where individual title was taken up was the fact that no local attempts were made to prevent non-title holders from disregarding tenure arrangements and from residing on and cultivating the commonage (U.G. 42/22:4). The fact that people could still move into these areas indicates how rural people were able to undermine the state's attempts at privatisation and villagisation at this time. It also illustrates one of the central themes of this thesis: that the existence of flexible social arrangements (manifested in the often ambivalent approach adopted by local institutions responsible for resource allocation towards restricting access to these resources) had two crucial results: First, it allowed the locations to become severely overcrowded, putting unrealistic pressure on an often fragile and marginal resource base. Second, in the subsequent heightened contestation over scarce resources, this ambivalence led to uncertainty over who had rights to land and other resources and who was responsible for the management of these resources.

The latter point also highlights another issue that appears to have been a weakness in the villages of Peddie District in the period 1870-1900, and remains a problem with local institutions at present: the capacity or inclination of the headmen and chiefs to actively regulate all forms of natural resource use (beyond the allocation of land for residential and arable purposes) appears to have been tenuous at best. The reasons for this lie in the ambiguous and localised nature of the headmen's authority and the way this was exercised at village level. As the linchpin in the contested interactions over natural resources that existed between the colonial state and the people in the rural reserves, and owing his position to his maintaining good relations with both these parties (and their various interest groups), the headman needed to be skillful in mediating the various demands made of him (see Wilson et.al 1952:24). This mediation included not being overzealous in regulating the resource use of local people, even if such use was not sustainable in the long-term.

Another reason why headmen were not more involved in ongoing resource management across the spectrum of resources (although this probably varied from

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8 Hendricks (1990:27) argues that 'where title was granted, the situation was chaotic; surveyed boundaries were disregarded, land was sub-divided, transfer procedures were ignored......In short, these schemes......[were] rendered unfeasible by both Government policy (or lack thereof) and the resistance of the African people.'
place to place and from one headman to the next) was because the state, (see later in this chapter), took it upon itself to (intermittently) dictate the terms of such resource use (to the point of employing local people to rehabilitate degraded areas).

For locations like Tyefu, I argue that the apparently laissez faire approach to the steady influx of new arrivals into the location and the pressure this placed on over-stretched resources, had two quite different sources: in the first decades following the settlement of the location, newcomers would have been welcomed by the headman as new supporters who increased his following and thus his status (and later, contributed directly to an increase in his income from the state). By the early twentieth century, when the resource scarcity in the locations may have been causing the headmen to rethink their openness to newcomers, the balance of power at local level had tipped firmly in favour of the state, which was more interested in accommodating as many people as possible in the rural locations and aiming resource management interventions at attempts to ameliorate environmental degradation. The headmen do not appear to have been in a position to reject incoming people or to institute acceptable mechanisms for managing the natural resources under increasing pressure in their villages.

4. The politicisation of natural resource management institutions

As discussed above, the authority of the headmen in the locations, while no doubt variable, was somewhat tenuous and their de facto impact on resource management minimal. In the 1920s, legislation was introduced that would further complicate the management of natural resources in the rural locations, by introducing a further tier of government at 'local' level. The passing of the Native Affairs Act of 1920 provided for the establishment of local councils, composed of six members, although the law made provision for not more than nine members (Groenewald 1980:85). Section 6 of the Act empowered the local council to fulfil a number of natural resource management related

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9 Tandy (n.d. 2.71) observes that the Native Affairs Act of 1920 only applied to land scheduled under the 1913 Land Act. It thus applied to Tyefu Location.
functions in its area of jurisdiction. These functions included:

(1) the construction and maintenance of roads, dams and channels and the prevention of soil erosion,
(2) the provision of a suitable system of water supply,
(3) the combating of livestock diseases,
(4) the eradication of weeds,
(5) an efficient system of sanitation,
(6) the improvement of agricultural methods and,
(7) afforestation.

The Peddie council\textsuperscript{10} operated under the guidance of the Native Commissioner in Peddie, on whose request it could furnish advice on any matters affecting the general interests of the Africans it represented.\textsuperscript{11} Since the councils relied on local taxes and fees paid by the African people in their district or location for their revenue, their ability to fulfil their many and varied duties was hamstrung primarily by a lack of finances (Rogers 1933:68; Wilson et al. 1952:39-40).

At village and village-section levels, these councils had to rely on the headmen and subheadmen to encourage people to pay taxes, to oversee the management of natural resources and for the mobilisation of labour. The existence of the councils, while clearly an attempt to co-ordinate local government, appears to have (institutionally at least) relegated the village headmen to the position of tax-collectors and 'micro-administrators' in the service of the councils. The fact that, as Wilson et al. (Ibid:43-45) noted for Keiskammahoek in 1950, there was a general apathy among village residents in connection with the dealings of the Local Councils (meetings to nominate councillors were poorly attended, as were the ordinary meetings of the Council), that people complained that the Council had done nothing for them\textsuperscript{12} and that they claimed that the

\textsuperscript{10} Although problems were experienced in establishing local councils in some areas because 'the level of development' did not justify it, the Peddie Local Council, established by Proclamation No.127 of 1927, was one of nine councils established in the Ciskei reserves.

\textsuperscript{11} In those areas where the numbers of African people did not justify a full-time Native Commissioner employed by the Native Affairs Department, the resident magistrate served in this capacity (Rogers 1933:9).

\textsuperscript{12} Except for overseeing the dipping of stock.
Council was powerless as the 'Government laws were against it', did not alter the fact that there was now a new ‘official’ institutional tier of natural resource management in the rural areas. Crucial however, as Mager (1995a:50) has argued, was that, notwithstanding the existence of the local councils, the chain of command was still the location headman - Native Commissioner - Chief Native Commissioner - Minister (Secretary) of Native Affairs, indicating the ambiguity and dissonance that had crept into the management of these rural areas (see Wilson et.al 1952:22-23). No wonder, then that rural people were apathetic and sceptical about the role of the local councils.

The Native Affairs Act of 1920 also made provision for the establishment of General Councils, but it was to take another fourteen years before the Ciskeian General Council (the 'Bunga') was established in 1934. Mager (1995a:59) notes that the men of Tyefu Location refused to elect representatives to the Bunga, claiming that there was no such thing as the Bunga in Tyefu. Once established, the Ciskei General Council and its nine elected local councils were used by the Native Affairs Department (NAD) as the interface between white officialdom and the geographically scattered rural locations of the former Ciskei (Mager 1995a:50; 1992:764).

Relations between the NAD officials, the Bunga and the headmen became strained as frustration grew over the rapidly diminishing resources of land, cattle and labour (Mager 1995a:50). The position of the headmen as paid government officials was all the more problematic because their key responsibilities were to exercise control over access to land and to collect taxes, issues that were the source of most of the friction in the overcrowded, land-hungry and impoverished locations.

The Native Administration Act No.38 of 1927 provided for the appointment of six Chief Native Commissioners who were the regional representatives of the NAD. Responsible to the Minister of Native Affairs, one of these Chief Native Commissioners was based in King Williams Town, from where he exercised supervision over all the Native Commissioners, Agricultural and Engineering officials, Tribal chiefs, headmen, subheadmen and other officers of the department in the reserve areas (Rogers 1933:8).

The Native Administration Act further stipulated that appointed chiefs were, through
local headmen, to 'exercise control over the 'Natives' in their areas, to allot in a just manner land for arable and residential purposes and to act as 'upper guardian' of orphans and minors. For this, they were to be paid allowances as might be authorised by the Minister' (Rogers Ibid:12). If there had been any lingering doubt as to the extent of the de jure local authority of the appointed chiefs and headmen, the Act quashed this by stipulating that chiefs and headmen were authorised, inter alia, to:

(1) carry out lawful orders (given to them by the Native Commissioner);
(2) render assistance in tax collections, the prevention and eradication of animal diseases, the collection of statistics, the administration of land laws (including the settling of boundary disputes), the prevention and detection of crime, the supply of labour, public health and sanitary measures, eradication of noxious weeds, preservation of game, forests (which meant a limitation on the gathering of firewood) and public property and such other matters as the Native Commissioner might prescribe;
(3) report outbreaks of stock diseases, outbreaks of notifiable diseases among persons, death of persons through violence or other unnatural causes, crime, unlawful presence of strangers, unauthorised occupation of land, presence of fugitive offenders, illicit introduction of arms and ammunition and intoxicating liquor, unlawful meetings and the unauthorised presence of strange stock,
(4) prevent, as far as lawfully possible, veld burning, soil erosion, interference with bona fide travellers, sale of poisons and love philtres, and the practice of witchcraft and other 'Native' customs which were contrary to the laws and principles of decency and humanity;
(5) give assistance to Government officials employed in connection with 'Native' welfare, convene tribal meetings when so directed by the Native Commissioner and disperse riotous assemblies of 'Natives';
(6) have the powers of peace officers in regard to any 'Native' in their areas and may search without warrant any 'Native' or place occupied by a 'Native' for stolen stock or produce, intoxicating liquor or arms and ammunition wrongfully obtained and,
(7) to impound stray stock (Rogers 1933:13).

For conducting all these duties, the appointed chiefs and headmen received allowances from the Government and might be awarded pensions upon retirement after
long continuous service (Rogers Ibid:13). The role of the headmen was thus regarded by government as a pivotal one in the administration of land and natural resources in the rural locations, but as the duties listed above show, the headmen were expected to be the policemen of the government in the locations, in an atmosphere that was increasingly charged between the needs of rural people and the designs of the state. As with the local councils, headmen were not granted sufficient funds with which to conduct the administration of villages and locations effectively.

The Development Trust and Land Act No.18 of 1936 envisaged a far more active role for central government in respect of land conservation and resettlement inside the rural locations and to this end, Native Commissioners were key to attempts to rehabilitate the rural locations from 1939 (Switzer 1993:223). These attempts did not give rise to serious opposition in the locations until after the Second World War (Haines and Cross 1988:83). The rural locations of Peddie District, and specifically Tyefu Location also fell under the Trust in terms of this Act (Hirson 1977).

The influence of successive Native Commissioners at Peddie increased in all the rural locations with regard to natural resource management during the period 1927 to 1951. From the late 1940s in Tyefu Location and in the locations in Peddie South, they met with vehement opposition to the implementation of Betterment Planning. Leadership in the early resistance to Betterment rested on ‘traditional’ authority figures, namely the chiefs and prominent cattle owners (Mager 1992:769-771). Headmen as paid government officials were placed in an unenviable position as, on the one hand, they were required by the State to curb the local resistance, while, on the other hand, they needed the support of the residents in the locations in order to fulfil their duties effectively and to maintain their positions in local hierarchies.

It does not seem unreasonable to speculate that this form of State intervention has done great damage by alienating the local people from accepting the (at least potential) usefulness of measures aimed at the management of natural resources in the locations.

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13 See Wilson et.al. (1952:25-6) for a similar rendition of the duties and powers of village headmen legislated in Government Notice No.2252 of 1928 and as amended by Government Notice No.911 of 1947.
Certainly, resistance to any form of State intervention into the management of village natural resources has been noted (Loxton et al. 1987) and is still palpable in Tyefu Location: "Hayi, angahlaziwanga" ("No, it is not improved [fenced]"), followed by the assertion that "Our livestock have always been free to roam anywhere in this location", was a constant and forceful refrain made to me on a number of occasions in these villages with regard to grazing management.\(^\text{14}\)

The imposition of chiefs and headmen in the form of Bantu Authorities,\(^\text{15}\) in 'retribalised' positions of authority which exercised control over access to and the rearrangement of productive resources in the locations struck a nerve with the people of Tyefu Location. Resistance to the dipping and branding of cattle was particularly vigorous: the local people reasoned that the dipping of cattle allowed the authorities to count the numbers of cattle in the Location in preparation for their stock-culling programme.

The Bantu Authorities Act 68 of 1951 abolished local and district councils and delegated much of the local administrative authority to a system of direct rule through ethnic and reconstituted, pseudo-traditional chiefs and headmen (Bundy 1979:226). This was implemented in spite of the fact that, as the Chief Native Commissioner of the Ciskei claimed, 'the [traditional] power of the chiefs had gone and the people were leaderless' (Mager 1995a:66; Groenewald 1980:88). Tribal Authorities (TAs) consisted of a tribal chief and his councillors and dealt with local tribal matters by virtue of the chief's powers (Jackson 1975:3). The TAs answered to the district magistrates who in turn reported to the relevant department of the former Ciskei government.\(^\text{16}\) Up to the passing of the Self Government Act in 1971, district magistrates, more by default than by design, co-ordinated all service provision of the six line ministries of the Territorial Authority within their districts (Tandy n.d. 2.78).

\(^{14}\) It represents an expression of defiance that has not always been borne out in practice: in all the villages of Tyefu Location, people who can afford to do so, have fenced in their residential and (where they are still in use) their arable lands. Also, the periodic maintenance of a perimeter fence around the Location to keep livestock off the roads constitutes a valuable (if temporary) source of employment which the people of Tyefu Location continue to embrace.

\(^{15}\) The Bantu Authorities Act 68 of 1951 was only applied to the former Ciskei in 1956 (Branch 1994:17).

\(^{16}\) Since 1969, the finances of Tribal Authorities were handled by the Department of the Chief Minister and Finance in the former Ciskei.
Tribal Authority councillors were nominated by the TA itself (in essence, by the chief - see Holbrook 1992:206) and were thus not necessarily representative of any major constituency in the rural villages. Manona (1995:16) has suggested that the weakness of the TAs was their lack of contact with the village they served, and that this reflected the authoritarian and repressive nature of the Ciskei government as a whole.\(^\text{17}\)

Another weakness was that both Sebe's ruling Ciskei National Independence Party (CNIP) and before him, Mabandla's Ciskei National Party (CNP), sought to manipulate the tribal authority structure in the locations as a means of exercising control over the rural people. Sebe managed to establish himself and his CNIP as the dominant party in the former Ciskei, and appointments to the key role of (salaried) headman, crucial in the management of local political processes at village level, were linked increasingly to membership of the CNIP and commitment to its political agenda (Charton and kaTywakadi 1980:131). This gave rise to resistance and conflict from those quarters which were opposed to the whole existence of the Ciskei bantustan.

The councillors who served on the TAs were practically all old men, often without much schooling, with limited collective management abilities and as a result, limited executive capacity. They were nevertheless required to fulfil a wide range of local government functions. These included the organisation and promotion of agricultural activities, such as the control of grazing and arable land; the promotion of education including the granting of bursaries and loans to scholars; screening applications for old age pensions and other social benefits and for business premises and, the preservation of law and order (Tandy n.d.:44).

Groenewald (1980:89) argues that these Tribal Authority bodies were limited in terms of both personnel and finances and were too small to perform meaningful local government functions. This inevitably led to the centralisation of these functions, as

\(^{17}\text{As DBSA (1985:2) claimed, 'being in the best position to determine the subsistence needs of the rural people, the Tribal Authorities are used by the [Ciskei] Government as its "agents" in providing work opportunities in terms of the drought relief scheme.'\)
many of the chiefs themselves were also members of the Territorial Authority\textsuperscript{18} and later, of the Legislative Assembly and Cabinet of the Ciskei. Several chiefs thus became salaried Ciskeian government officials and gained political prominence, even though they risked losing legitimacy with sections of their rural constituencies.\textsuperscript{19} The tier above the TA was the Regional Authority\textsuperscript{20} and above this, the Territorial Authority of the Ciskei. In this situation, chiefs were both the policy-makers and the local administrators and thus accountable to no-one.\textsuperscript{21} The chiefs could only be dismissed by the central government (Switzer 1993:306). The extensive but vague powers and limited funding allocated to the TAs led to a situation where patronage and corruption could easily prosper (Anonymous 1992:5;Tandy n.d:1.5).

5. Institutional Dissonance: The Tribal Authority in Tyefu Location

The historical legacy of ongoing institutional change has imbued the contemporary resource management situation in Tyefu Location with certain characteristics. One of these is the ongoing contest for the right to control people’s access and use of resources at the village level. Documenting this process adequately requires the sourcing of rich archival material on local (i.e., villages in Tyefu Location) circumstances and their fluidity over a long period.\textsuperscript{22} Doing justice to this would require more archival work than I have been able to conduct during the course of this thesis, but the case-study that follows dates back some forty years and gives an indication of these ongoing

\textsuperscript{18} In Peddie, the Ngqushwa Regional Authority, which was made up of local chiefs and the district magistrate, had limited resources with which to fulfil its obligations.

\textsuperscript{19} This did not follow automatically, however, as it was possible for a chief to consolidate his support by intervening wherever possible to ensure a steady flow of resources to his rural 'constituency.'

\textsuperscript{20} I have deliberately refrained from discussing the Ngqushwa Regional Authority in any detail - even though I found extensive archival material on this structure - simply because it was nothing more than an advisory body, made up of local chiefs, that had limited resources and thus impact on local affairs, except as a further contributor to 'institutional dissonance' at the district level.

\textsuperscript{21} Tandy (n.d:1.5), writing of the late 1980s, argued that, 'Tribal Authorities have become little more than instruments of the central [bantustan] state, devoid of significant finances and power. Resources, often inappropriate and decided on without adequate consultation with the intended target population, now flow into communities via central [bantustan] government ministries rather than through legitimate [sic] local structures.'

\textsuperscript{22} The oral record is patchy, partly because people are reluctant to dredge up the recent, somewhat controversial past, and partly because many of the men who are prepared to discuss these issues, were migrants and were not necessarily always present on a full-time basis during the preceding decades. As a result their knowledge of the past is, at times, vague.
struggles and dynamism in rural institutions seeking to maintain a measure of local control of natural resources.

The Politics of Resistance

When Alfred Msuthu was removed as headman of Tyefu Location in 1954 because of his opposition to Betterment and his links to the ANC, Gladstone Mpahla (like the Msuthus, a member of the Radebe clan) from the village of Rura, was appointed to replace him. Mpahla and his supporters were soon lobbying the Chief Native Commissioner for the name of the Tribal Authority to be changed to the Mpahla Tribal Authority.

The latter was established in February 1959 by Government Notice No.285 (Loxton et.al. 1991:30). However, the unpopular appointment of Gladstone Mpahla neither quelled nor dissipated the resistance to government intervention in Tyefu Location during the period between 1954 and 1965 that had been initiated by Chief Alfred Msuthu. Records of the magistrate's monthly meetings with all the chiefs and headmen in Peddie District during this period, testify to the uneasy relations that existed in Tyefu between Mpahla and 'urban trouble-makers' who agitated against the implementation of Betterment in the Location.

When Mpahla died in 1965, Alfred Msuthu's son Douglas, was 'called' back from Port Elizabeth by the people of Tyefu Location to take over the chieftaincy in the Location (Mzozoyana 1995a:4). Douglas Msuthu had been a member of the ANC Youth League in the early 1950s and had assisted in mobilising the people of the Location against the implementation of Betterment Planning. Despite his inspirational role as an ANC Youth League activist in the area in the 1950s, Douglas' term as chief was not very successful.

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23 Mager (1995a:57-59) documents the role of one Alfred Giba who was controversially appointed as Acting Headman during the NAD's struggle against Msuthu.

24 De Beer (1984:198) argues that the appointment of Mpahla was not endorsed by the majority of people in Tyefu, because he was not of the same lineage as the Msuthus and because he supported plans for the implementation of Betterment in Tyefu Location.

25 Magistrate's records on Monthly meetings with chiefs and headmen, Provincial Archives, King Williams Town (File No. N2/8/3-B :Tyefu Location).
as he had allegedly taken to drinking heavily while in Port Elizabeth. In August 1968, at the request of the local people, the name of the Tribal Authority was changed to Tyefu Tribal Authority (TTA).

During its approximately thirty-one year (1959 to 1990) existence, with its office first in Rura (the home of Gladstone Mpahla) and then in Horton village, the TA in Tyefu Location was embroiled in the ethnic/party politics of the former Ciskei. The fortunes of Mfengu dominated areas in the Ciskei (such as Peddie District) tended to decline to some extent once Mabandla had been politically eclipsed by Sebe in the early 1970s. In Tyefu Location, the Mfengu-dominated villages on the plateau (and Ndwayana in the Fish River valley) were practically ignored during 'the time of Sebe' with regard to basic services, such as agricultural extension and animal husbandry (cf. Holbrook 1992:200). Economic conditions deteriorated with successive droughts and, by the mid-1970s, arable land use had been abandoned in many villages. Population increases, the result of forced removals and the influx of farmworkers from white-owned farms, had put pressure on natural resources and village level institutions, such as the headmanship and village moot (inkundla), were found wanting in mediating access to scarce resources.

The familiar hyperboles used in the reports of bantustan agricultural planners in the late 1970s probably had a disturbing element of truth in them with regard to the conditions in Tyefu Location:

'The land has been seriously abused and erosion and veld degradation have

26 Interview, Mr. M, Mankone village, 5/6/1995. This is in contrast to Mager (1995a:59) who writes that, 'leadership came easily to Douglas Msuthu who was quick to exploit his position in an older patriarchal ordering.' De Beer (1984:200) suggests that Msuthu and his headmen were weak leaders who 'could not motivate their followers.'


28 During 1994, the Tyefu Tribal Authority was still issuing orders to village headmen to attend meetings at the Komkhulu or Great Place.

29 The whole of Peddie District is said to have suffered this fate (Interview, Mr. M, Gwabeni, 25/2/1997; De Beer 1984:199), but it is possible that the 'antipathy of the villagers towards official services [sic].....precluded progress' (Loxton et al. 1977:4) by scaring the service providers away, and was one of the reasons for the lack of overall infrastructural development in the area.
assumed catastrophic proportions. Large volumes of staple food have to be brought into the area every year. The only potential for significant economic development lies in irrigated crop production' (Loxton et.al. 1977:1).

The Xhosa-dominated villages of Ndlambe and Pikoli along the Fish River, were suffering a similar fate but these areas were to be the main beneficiaries of the multi-million rand Tyefu Irrigation Scheme that was intended to create employment opportunities and boost the local economy.30

When Douglas Msuthu died in 1976, his younger brother Dolphin (aka Diba)31 took over as regent for Douglas' son (De Beer 1984:198). Two different issues soon arose that worked together to unseat Diba: Firstly, political divisions within the Location were reinforced by the presence of large numbers of (Ndlambe) Xhosa-speakers who lived in the villages32 along the banks of the Fish River, furthest away from the Tyefu Tribal Authority (TTA) office. Conflict arose in the predominantly Xhosa villages over local opposition to these villages falling under a Mfengu chief. Secondly, the 'ministers of Sebe' apparently wanted to exercise more control over the affairs of the Tribal Authority, particularly in view of the prominence that was afforded to the 'showcase' irrigation scheme. Once they had decided that having Douglas' wife as regent would better suit their objectives, they proceeded to exploit a schism that apparently existed among the Msuthu family over the 'true' paternity of Douglas' son, Sabelo.33 Under consistent pressure, Diba 'relinquished' the regency and was replaced in 1982 by the wife of Douglas, Nomalungelo Esther Msuthu, who is still the 'Acting Chieftainess' and regent for her son, Sabelo (De Beer 1984:41).

In the mid-1980s, this highly contested institutional environment was complicated even

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30 Holbrook (1992:59) indicates that the idea of an irrigation scheme at this point along the Fish River had already been mooted in the 1950s, long before the political struggle between Sebe and Mabandla.

31 Oral testimony has it that Douglas and Diba were half-brothers, since Diba was born out of wedlock to a woman in Ndlambe village.

32 De Beer (1984:199) notes that many of the inhabitants of Pikoli were of Gqunukwebe descent.

33 Interview, Mr.M, Gwabeni, 25/2/1997.
further when the Sebe government relocated the reconstituted amaMbalu people in two settlements, on a 'consolidated' farm adjacent to the Tyefu Location villages of Hlosini and Mqwashini.34 Once they were settled there, much to the displeasure of the local residents who had hoped to secure the farm as additional grazing and possibly arable land, the Ciskeian authorities proceeded to seek a chief for them. They identified one Swelindawo as a suitable chief for these people, although they were not specifically his subjects.35 The two settlements are only separated from the Tyefu villages by a road, and hostilities between the two groups simmered until the early 1990s, when the Tyefu Location residents were forced, mostly through the intervention of SANCO activists, to reconcile themselves to the fact that the amaMbalu people could not be intimidated into going away and would have to be tolerated in situ.36

The Economics of Acquiescence

As Holbrook (1992:62-4) points out, the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme (TIS)37 was heralded as an attempt by the former Ciskei state to create local employment (and generate income for the bantustan government through the export of vegetables) that would win over the people of Tyefu Location. The latter, it was argued (Loxton et al. 1977:1), had suffered because of a lack of state intervention in the area, which was itself a product of

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34 These settlements were called Bhongweni 'A' and Bhongweni 'B'.

35 Informants in Tyefu Location claimed that these people relocated from various areas of the Eastern Cape, including Albany District and Cradock. The chief, Swelindawo, apparently came from Kakamas.

36 An earlier event, important to an understanding of the management of natural resources in Tyefu Location, was to complicate the contestation between institutions tasked with local government in the area: In 1979-80, the South African government organised the removal of some 4 500 people from various 'blackspots' around the Eastern Cape, including Alexandria, Coega, Colchester and some from Grahamstown, to a site just across the Fish River. These people were settled on the previously white-owned farm, Commituys, which is strictly speaking outside the official boundaries of Tyefu Location. As the settlement of Glenmore does not owe allegiance to any Ciskiean chief, the community was (until 1994) controlled by a Community Authority and was administered by a Town Manager who was employed by the Ciskeian Department of Internal Affairs (Loxton et al 1991:31). In the post-1995 local government elections era, the Glenmore community reluctantly forms part of the Peddie Transitional Representative Council.

37 In the discussion that follows concerning the impact of the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme, I am not concerned with adjudging the 'success' or 'failure' of the Scheme. Rather, I want to examine the ways in which the local institutions in Tyefu Location reacted to this latest in a series of interventions by the State into the management of natural resources.
of their resistance to the state in the past.\textsuperscript{38}

The planners of the Scheme, while noting the need for sensitivity to the attitudes of the local people, decided that a prerequisite for the economic success of the irrigation project was an entirely revamped system of tenure (De Beer 1984:221; Holbrook 1992:65,67). The same land that had served as both economic and social resource in the villages, was to be placed under capital-intensive agricultural treatment with access decided upon by outside managers employing an alien performance-related measure. 'Tribal farms' that would occupy about half of the irrigated land were to be farmed commercially by the Scheme management, on behalf of the TTA.

These plans posed a serious challenge to the accepted social order in Tyefu villages, and opened up new avenues for contesting control over local natural resources. Established patterns of rights and access to arable land historically allocated by the local headmen, were already under threat because land scarcity (which resulted in residential sites spilling over on to commonage areas) was heightening discontent between various interest groups in the villages.

To effect this agrarian and social transformation, the Scheme planners enlisted the support of the previously 'unco-operative' Tyefu TA and the local headmen. Besides the promise of jobs in the area, the carrot held out to the TTA was that profits from the 'tribal farms' would go to the TTA for use in community development programmes (De Beer 1984:220). The TTA was consulted and was drawn into the decision-making processes regarding the nature of operational services and practices on the Scheme itself (Holbrook 1992:69).

Holbrook (Ibid:76) suggests that acceptance by local people of the Scheme was not so smooth: the initial overtures by the planners of the Scheme to the elders of the predominantly Mfengu Ndwayana village were rejected and the latter expressed

\textsuperscript{38} The planners of the Scheme also motivated for its implementation by referring its potential for reversing the serious environmental degradation and poverty that was in evidence in the area. Another motivation was strategic and related to improving the security situation of white farmers across the Fish River in relation to a hostile and impoverished African population by establishing a class of commercial African farmers in this sensitive 'frontier' zone (Holbrook 1992:61-2,64).
misgivings about the motives of the planners and the state interests they represented. In contrast, the response particularly from women, in the mainly Xhosa villages of Ndlambe and Pikoli was far more positive and the planners were given approval to implement the Scheme in these villages, although this acquiescence angered returning migrant men when they learnt that the scheme would allow access to natural resources to be governed by criteria that were set by outsiders. Planners' documents also indicated that 'there had been some evidence of attempts by people in Port Elizabeth to stir up opposition to the scheme (Holbrook 1992:185).

Widespread resistance to the scheme probably floundered for a number of reasons: the authority and the historically defiant stance of the TTA was weakened by the declining health of Douglas Msuthu and his subsequent death in 1976; the TTA was effectively co-opted into the management of the scheme, with promises of income from the scheme's 'tribal farms' and; given the economically depressed state of the Location, the prospect of jobs which the scheme held out to local people was too attractive to resist. This lack of organised resistance did not mean that the people in the affected villages simply accepted the management approach adopted on the scheme (see below).

**Institutional changes**

Holbrook (Ibid:185) suggests that in anticipation of the contest over the control of the Scheme's resources, political mobilisation and state manipulation had started in the Location by the early 1970s. In 1969, the Magistrate from Peddie is said to have visited the TTA office in Horton and proposed the excision of five villages (the Mfengu dominated Gwabeni, Qamnyana, Ndwayana, and the Xhosa dominated Ndlambe and Pikoli) from the TTA to form a separate tribal authority, the Lower Tyefu TA.\(^3\) The official ethnic label of the new tribal authority was particularly controversial because of the varying claims to ethnic identity (and the entitlements that accompanied these claims) made by the affected villagers. Furthermore, as Holbrook (Ibid:186) points out,

\(^3\) Although the matter requires more archival research, it is entirely possible that, in anticipation of the implementation of the Scheme, this move was designed to dissipate the authority and potentially negative influence of the TTA over the villages that would be affected by the Scheme. In the process, the issue of playing off Xhosa-Mfengu ethnicity, a central part of the 'official' discourse in the former Ciskei at that time, might also have been a conscious consideration. The pending removals to Glenmore might also have played a role in this regard (Holbrook 1992:225).
the villages of Ndlambe and Pikoli were accustomed to running their own affairs and their ties to the TTA in the past had been tenuous at best.

In 1970 Douglas Msuthu's brother, Diba, had taken up residence on the Mankazana River, between Ndlambe and Pikoli, as the chief of the Lower Tyefu TA. Although the new tribal authority was never promulgated, it became closely, if only relatively briefly, involved in the implementation of the Irrigation Scheme (Holbrook 1992: 191). This move was interpreted by the people in these villages as an unwelcome extension of the administrative reach of the Mfengu TTA into their area, and they opposed it. When senior (Port Elizabeth-based migrant) men from these villages approached Sebe's government and requested that they be placed under a Xhosa chief and tribal authority, they were told to identify a chief for this purpose.

After several years of searching for a suitable candidate, the group located a Chief Makinana in Centani, Transkei who agreed to release his second son, Hamilton Makinana, to take on the chieftaincy and leadership of the proposed Mhala TA (Ibid: 190-2). In the ensuing period, this Xhosa faction agitated against the role of the Mfengu-dominated Lower Tyefu TA in the implementation and management of the Scheme (Ibid: 191-2).

In 1982, in a Management Committee meeting on the Scheme, Diba Msuthu and his supporters called for the removal of 'Chief' Makinana from the area. The mood turned ugly and several members of the Xhosa faction were arrested. Diba and his supporters, however felt threatened enough (Makinana had become, Holbrook (1992: 192) notes, an important member of the former Ciskeian parliament by this time) to leave the area and return to Horton, apparently abandoning his claim to the leadership of the Lower Tyefu TA.

Another faction, which coalesced around the headman in Ndlambe, were opposed to both the Scheme management and the imposition of the new chief, Makinana, the latter
having implications for their continued control over access to key resources on the Scheme. The faction that had 'called' Makinana to the area in the first instance, meanwhile clamoured for him to play a bigger role in this respect.

The headman in Ndlambe retired due to ill health in 1982, and through the intervention of the former Ciskei government, a pro-Makinana man was appointed as headman for both Ndlambe and Pikoli. In terms of Ciskeian Government Notice No. 84 of 1983, the villages of Ndlambe and Pikoli were excised from the TTA, and with the two 'private locations' of Woodlands and Runletts, formed the Mhala TA of the Ndlambe 'tribe' with Makinana recognised as chief of the new Tribal Authority (Holbrook ibid: 198). The Mhala TA quickly asserted itself on the Scheme, aided by the recognition afforded to it by the Scheme management (Ibid: 200). This honeymoon period was shortlived however, and soon the members of the TA were engaged in a struggle with the Scheme managers for control of the Scheme.

The political situation throughout the former Ciskei deteriorated in the mid-to-late 1980s. The Mhala TA was to be the second casualty on the Scheme, as 'grassroots' political activism against the stifling traditionalism of the TA system swept through the former Ciskei, from the late 1980s. The growing perception regarding the inefficiency and corruption of the tribal authorities across the bantustan, also affected the Mhala TA.

The Gqozo era of the former Ciskei was accompanied by widespread violence and even deaths in the villages that formed part of the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme, as

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40 These resources included salaried and wage employment on the Scheme and access to irrigated land.

41 The portion excised from the area covered by the TTA, constituted the Mhala Tribal Authority, which comprises some 7370 ha (Loxton, Venn and Associates 1987, Vol. 5).

42 As yet uncatalogued archival records (Provincial Archives) show just how comprehensively Chief Makinana and his TA sought to stamp their authority on the local people: fines were levied for trespassing, for chopping 'wet' wood or collecting wood in the wrong areas; dog taxes were collected diligently and a number of cases with the charge of 'disrespecting the chief' were referred to the Peddie Magistrate.

43 Chief Makinana himself had become involved in 'national' political matters in the former Ciskeian capital of Bisho and had delegated responsibility to some of his supporters (Holbrook Ibid: 202, 205).
emerging Residents' Associations, aligned to SANCO, began to challenge the Mhala TA for control of the Scheme. The fluctuations in Gqozo's policy regarding the position of the TA's and the headmen, deepened the chasm between these local institutions and the mass of the rural villagers. The situation could not be resolved easily, as influence over the resources of the Scheme was a key political resource in the location that would not be relinquished lightly. Loxton et.al (1991:30) noted that an application was submitted to Gqozo's Council of State to have the area under the jurisdiction of the Mhala TA re-incorporated into the Tyefu Tribal Authority, but this was unsuccessful.

In early 1994 it was clear that although the dominant village representatives on the Lower Fish River Development Project Steering Committee (LFRDPSC) were by now the members of the SANCO-aligned Residents' Associations (RA) in these villages, the representatives of the Mhala TA were fighting a rearguard action on the Scheme itself. By this time, the RA representatives were obstructing Management meetings as long as the TA representatives were in attendance. The 'neutral' chairperson of the LFRDPSC felt obliged in terms of the existing Council of State proclamation to recognise the 'legitimate' presence of the TA representatives. The effect was that the Management meetings could not make any headway since every item raised for discussion elicited an angry response from the RA representatives that 'nothing could be discussed while these people [the TA representatives] are present.'

In summary, this review of institutional arrangements in Tyefu Location shows how contested, complex and sometimes intractable the conflicts around institutional arrangements have been. I argue that the continuous and often hard-fought struggles over a number of institutional issues have had a substantial negative impact on the management and control of natural resources over a period of several decades. These institutional issues, including contestation over identity (in this case, Xhosa-Mfengu) and claims to prior occupation of the area, intervention by parties outside of the location, struggles over issues of legitimate leadership and of control over access to resources, including natural resources and (on Tyefu Irrigation Scheme) sources of

44 The following account of the struggle for control of the Scheme is based on my fieldwork notes of meetings of the Lower Fish River Development Project Steering Committee (LFRDPSC), recorded during fieldwork conducted for the 'Mid-Fish River Zonal Study' project.
employment, have contributed to a situation of significant institutional dissonance in Tyefu Location.\textsuperscript{46}

I argue that this institutional dissonance has consistently distracted and seriously undermined the ability of local people and local institutions to make any visible impact on the sustainable management of the natural resources in their areas.\textsuperscript{46} Local people and local institutions at village and location level are embroiled in ongoing struggles over the right to administer and control the allocation of the various 'bundles' of rural resources, be these natural resources, employment opportunities or access to pensions. In the absence of one or more broadly acceptable (i.e legitimate and preferably statutory) institution for the management of natural resources, including the mediation and adjudication of disputes over resources, it is a case of the existing institutions, which generally lack both administrative capacity and authority, being constantly under siege and in conflict with each other, to the detriment of land and natural resource management. As I argue below, however, this institutional dissonance, which characterises the way institutions in Tyefu Location are constituted and operate, has not been the only cause of the lack of resource management regimes in the location.

7. Other institutional interventions by the state in Tyefu Location

\textit{The provision of state old age pensions}

Lawry (1990:410) argues that a prerequisite for collective action in resource management is that the resources in question must be critical to local incomes. In this context, the existence of external sources of income can undermine village level efforts to collectively manage natural resources (ibid:415). In Tyefu Location, it is particularly

\textsuperscript{45} Based on research conducted in 1975-76, Charton and kaTywakadi (1980:136) alluded to the same institutional dissonance when they argued that 'Communication between the village [of Gobozana, near King Williams Town] and the authorities did not seem to be at all good. Villagers misunderstood the reasons for official actions....... They maintained that [certain official actions] were clearly ethnic discrimination against a Fingo minority by a Xhosa government....... One may infer that the troubled relationship between village and Tribal Authority has reflected adversely on its ability to communicate felt needs up the traditional hierarchy, and the modern channels.'

\textsuperscript{46} See Manona (1980:113-118) for a detailed discussion of similar issues in the ongoing institutional conflict experienced in Nyaniso village, Peddie District, up to the late 1970s.
the payment of old age and disability pensions (albeit at sub-subsistence levels) that reinforces an essentially dependent, outward-focussed and reactive rural economy.\textsuperscript{47} The payment of pensions also impacts negatively on the management of natural resources, by reducing the overall dependence of recipients of pensions on these resources, and thus lowering the incentive for them to commit themselves to collective resource management activities.

Non-contributory old age pensions have been available to black South Africans, both urban and rural, with certain conditions, since 1944.\textsuperscript{48} Applicants had to be men over 65 or women over 60 years of age. The maximum amounts available to black South Africans in 1949 were £12, £9 and £6 per annum for pensioners living in cities, towns or rural areas respectively (Hellmann 1949:424). Wilson and Ramphele (1989:64) argue that the state did not provide pensions to rural black people until 1965 because to do so would 'conflict with or break down their tribal food-sharing habits.' Records show, however, that old age pensions of £6 were indeed paid to a small number of elderly people in Peddie District since the 1950s.\textsuperscript{49} By 1965, it was found that 70 per cent of black pensioners were in fact resident in rural areas and the state realised that the payment of old age pensions to people in rural areas might well serve as a deterrent to black urbanisation (Wilson and Ramphele ibid:64; Breslin et.al. 1997:25).

Average old-age pensions paid to black South Africans having been rising in real terms for the past twenty seven years: In 1970, a pension was worth around R67 per annum; in 1981, it was worth R162 per annum and in 1985, an old age pension was pegged at R948 per annum, at which level it was still below the poverty datum line and 'pitifully small' (Wilson and Ramphele ibid:64;343). In 1992, old age pensions paid to black South Africans achieved parity with those of white South Africans and the amount paid out as old age pensions has increased consistently: In 1994, elderly people in Peddie

\textsuperscript{47} These features are a legacy of migrant labour practices, amongst other things.

\textsuperscript{48} Before this time, the state had deemed that since black pensioners had access to their 'Native custom which makes provision for maintaining dependent persons' they did not require state pensions (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:64; Bhorat 1985:598).

\textsuperscript{49} Peddie Magistrate's records in the KWT Archives. An even smaller number of war veterans in Peddie were recorded as recipients of War Veterans' Pensions. In 1979, an estimated 28 000 elderly people in the Ciskei were receiving old age pensions (The Quail Report 1980:33).
District were receiving R390 per month, paid out bimonthly. This amount was subsequently increased to R430 and then to R470 in September 1997.50

While it is sometimes the case that pensions are the only difference between survival and starvation for vast numbers of rural (and urban) people, I argue that for rural areas like those in Peddie District, the net effect of increased pension disbursements has been to further economically marginalise these areas and the people resident in them, or as Beinart (1994:205) puts it, to 'systematically externalise poverty' from the urban core to these areas. This phenomenon is particularly apparent in the context of rising urban unemployment, where those people who have lost their jobs in cities and towns are able to return to the rural areas in the knowledge that they will be able to eke out an existence by making a claim to the pension of an elderly relative (see Callear 1993:4).

In the same way, Breslin et.al. (1997:26) found that 'pension......income is too small to be used for meaningful economic upliftment' and that this dependable income tends to contribute towards the emergence of 'granny households', in which large numbers of dependent people coalesce around one or more pensions. The payment of rural pensions has undoubtedly had the unintended effect of putting rural social networks under increased strain as greater demands are placed on what is often the only reliable source of income for imizi in the villages of Tyefu Location.51 It has also meant that some people (i.e. those assured on pensions payments) are not forced to address local resource degradation dilemmas as readily as would have been the case if their livelihoods depended on the sustainable management of their natural resources. This, in turn, undermines collective efforts to manage resources. These issues are taken up in the following chapter.

50 Daily Dispatch (9/10/1997) reports that black pensioners whose pensions were paid out to them in the former Transkei and Ciskei, only achieved parity with those getting pensions in the former Cape Province in September 1997, five years after overall parity was supposed to have been effected.

51 Of course, in the absence of pension payments, the conditions that rural people would have to contend with, would be far harsher and the strain on social networks even greater (see Sharp and Spiegel 1985).
Natural resource management projects

The state and its agencies have long recognised the degradation of natural resources in the reserve areas and the need for action to counteract this degradation. Indeed, it was the spectre of widespread environmental degradation that provided at least part of the impetus for Betterment Planning in these areas. In 1944, the government's 'post-war' scheme for the reclamation of the Native reserves was announced by the Minister of Native Affairs. It would cost millions of pounds, would take twelve years to complete and significantly, *it would employ large numbers of African returned soldiers on soil reclamation works and the building of dams and fences, thereby introducing a wage economy [directly] into the reserves* (Hellman 1949:188) [my emphasis].

A survey conducted in Tyefu Location in 1947 noted that the area was 'intensely infested with prickly pear and ... the hill-slopes suffered erosion to such a degree that the soil cover has been completely removed, leaving a gravel and shale surface scarred by incipient dongas.' The report recommended that it was imperative that 'immediate measures to re-vegetate and rehabilitate the whole area ... be undertaken simultaneously with the eradication of prickly pear.' 52

Such measures as were implemented in Tyefu Location did not to have an immediate effect, nor were they sufficiently wide-ranging in scope, and the state seemed to hold out in favour of (eventual) wholesale Betterment, rather than piecemeal interventions at village level. But as the implementation of Betterment in Tyefu Location was inexorably delayed, those responsible for efforts aimed at resource rehabilitation resorted to other, piecemeal approaches to resource conservation. These efforts, in retrospect practically futile given the enormity of the task, included the establishment (in 1953) of a few experimental sites in the Location where the reintroduction of palatable species was attempted. 53

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52 'Eradication of Prickly Pear - Ciskeian Native Areas' a 'Report by [a] Committee appointed by the Secretary for Native Affairs.' Peddie Archival Records (PAR), King Williams Town (File No. N2/8/3-B, Tyefu Location).

53 PAR, KWT (File no.N2/8/3-B) gives the impression that more work was done in respect of paperwork to set up, fund and report on the project, than on the demonstration plot itself: A reminder of the rather limited overall ability of the state to intervene and reverse the degradation of natural resources in areas like Tyefu Location.
What these rehabilitation efforts effected most comprehensively was to commercialise the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources in the eyes of the local people. By continuing a long-standing pattern of paying local people to perform certain categories of conservation-related tasks (such as fencing), these interventions undermined any voluntary efforts that might have arisen in these villages.\textsuperscript{54}

The authorities were aware of the predicament they were in with regard to payment for the completion of these projects, but by prescribing to local inhabitants what work was to be done and by providing them with cash incentives to do this work, they (i.e. the authorities) had come to be regarded by local people primarily as employer in this regard. It was a perception that would not be shaken very easily.\textsuperscript{55} As long as the state could be relied upon to come along at intervals and pay poor people to do this work, it was ludicrous for local people to undertake resource conservation projects voluntarily.\textsuperscript{56} Given this scenario, it is important to note that the state has never made adequate funding available to seriously address the degradation of resources in these areas (besides lacking the political will, it probably did not have sufficient funds, given the enormity of the task). The result has been a situation in which, firstly, local people have very little incentive to pro-actively and voluntarily manage their resources, because the state might intervene and provide some jobs to undertake at least part of this function, and secondly, where the state does not have sufficient resources to properly commercialise these activities so that they are performed adequately.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54} In 1952, for instance, a fencing project in Tyefu Location required the labour of 4 men for 30 days, while in 1953, the fencing of springs employed 3 labourers for 6 days, supervised by a ranger and agricultural foreman. In 1968, the labour intensive eradication of prickly pear was eventually undertaken, employing 46 'Bantu' who were supervised by two 'Bantu' foremen (PAR, King Williams Town, File No.N2/8/3-B).

\textsuperscript{55} See a letter from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Peddie to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, KWT dated 16/8/1966, stressing the need for voluntary labour by local people. (PAR, KWT).

\textsuperscript{56} 'Voluntary' in the sense used here does not mean that people should work on such projects free of charge, rather that village residents could choose to pool their resources and pay for resource conservation work to be done by local work teams. This would, of course, require strong institutions and a common interest in the management of local natural resources.

\textsuperscript{57} Hellman (1949:184) noted that, 'While a considerable amount of attention has been given by the Department of Native Affairs to the problem of improving agricultural practices in the reserves, the amount of money actually expended is only a small fraction of that devoted to helping European farmers. The efforts of the sub-department of Native agriculture have thus been hampered until recently by the lack of funds.'
De Beer noted that during 1984, 180 Tyefu residents were engaged by the Soil Conservation directorate of the Ciskei's Department of Agriculture to undertake the construction of stonepacks to prevent the spread of dongas. Such projects formed part of the Drought Relief programme. These people were employed on a piecework basis and were paid at a rate of R1,25 per meter of stonepack, the latter measuring 600mm high. Because the stones had to be brought to the work sites mechanically (by tractor), it was rare for a person to pack more that two meters a day. The authorities in charge readily admitted that this method of erosion control might in fact have caused more erosion than it prevented, since by removing stones and rocks from areas to be packed elsewhere, the original areas were left exposed to accelerated erosion. They were also aware that local people were not interested in the reclamation of dongas on abandoned arable land and they acknowledged that as soon as the payment of wages stopped, so would the construction and the maintenance of stonepacks (De Beer 1984:211-12). This analysis of the situation proved to be accurate and by 1994, not much evidence of the stonepacks remained, although they seemed to have been partially successful in slowing erosion in a very limited number of hillside areas in Tyefu Location.

Besides stonepacks, the authorities also sought to plant Agave americana ('garingboom') in an attempt to prevent soil erosion. Another project that was initiated involved efforts, again using the labour of local people, to eradicate the invasive Pteronia incana ('blue bush'). Little evidence of the effects of these projects is visible, except at a site at Qamnyana and one at Mankone and Rura respectively, where a small stand of agave took root. Concerning another recent project, an informant claimed that the

'katyi project (to eradicate noxious weeds) lasted two months and employed ten people for each month. People were interested because they were going to get paid. People are living in poverty, so they want money. The project happened all over Tyefu Location, but we were soon told that there was no money left to complete it.'

In 1994-1996, a number of fencing projects were undertaken in the villages of Tyefu Location, mostly keep livestock off the roads through the area. As before, these
projects provided much needed employment opportunities for local men and (some) women. In these most recent instances, the projects were subcontracted to private contractors with the proviso that they employ local labour and provide a training component for those employed on the projects. This new approach has succeeded in increasing the stakes with respect to who is selected (and how) to the project work teams: it has not addressed the fundamental problem of how villagers might overcome constraints to the emergence of local collective action aimed at sustainable resource management in their villages.

**Gendered Institutions**

The institutions tasked with natural resource management in Tyefu Location and general administration in the villages in question, have in the past practically all been the preserve of senior men. Writing about the Keiskammahoek area, Manona (1992:111) argues that in the ‘traditional’ inkundla (village moot), women as individuals were only present when they were involved in a particular case, and for the rest, they did not participate in the deliberations of these gatherings. Although women were involved in the protests and resistance of the 1940s and 1950s, the introduction of Bantu Authorities ensured that the elderly men would again assume at least nominal control over local institutions (see Mager 1992).

The irony of this male domination is that in the areas under discussion, not only have women outnumbered men (by an average of 8 per cent) in every census since 1936 and probably before this, but women in these villages are more intimately involved in the use of a broad range of natural resources, such as firewood, water and wild vegetables and fruit, and should thus have been in a position to make an informed contribution to the management and regulation of this use.

Women have, however, not only had to contend with their variable, but often structurally weak, position in the household and the village, but also with the fact that they themselves did not constitute a homogeneous group with identical interests and needs. Indeed, in the absence of an overarching institution for regulating resource use, and given the daily struggle to provide resources for consumption in their respective imizi, most women continue to be in competition with each other in respect of the use
of natural resources around the village. As a result, they are unlikely to co-operate across lines of class or kin and local networks to collectively co-ordinate and manage the natural resources of their villages.  

8. Conclusion

This chapter focussed on the legacy of institutional changes in the management of natural resources in Tyefu Location. I argued that 'institutional dissonance' (see Thomas-Slayter 1994:1481) has long been a key component of the (mis)management of natural resources in this area. I sought to demonstrate that, far from being the ideal-type 'robust' institutions expounded in the literature, that have local legitimacy and are able to adapt to change and thus to persist over time, local institutions in Tyefu Location have been engaged in continuous struggles over their very form, character and respective influence.

I showed that, at practically every level of the institutional hierarchy, overlapping responsibilities and differing agenda have, by keeping people focussed on contestations over structure and authority as opposed to substance and action, hamstrung the ability of local institutions to manage natural resources. The 'system' of land management in the area and its encompassing institutional framework, are characterised by dissonant and contested forms of local governance with all the contradictions and flexibility that 160 years of institutional layering has engendered. Just which institution (or combination of institutions) is responsible for different aspects of resource management, remains a mystery to the majority of the residents of Tyefu Location.

The institutional dissonance experienced in Tyefu Location is, in large measure, the result of the fluctuating and sometimes contradictory state policy towards rural institutions responsible for the management of rural resources.

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58 This competition for certain natural resources (for example, firewood) has possibly been reduced by the increasing contribution of pensions to the overall livelihoods of many rural imizi, but has been replaced by increased individualism (in the sense that women are only concerned about the economic security and consumptive needs of their respective imizi) and a reluctance to contribute to collective projects on the part of women.
Throughout these shifts in policy, state manipulation of the local institutions, particularly the headmanship, which should have been well placed to contribute to the management of village-level natural resources, has had an uneven effect on the performances of these institutions by sometimes bolstering and sometimes undermining their local legitimacy. Headmen have historically borne the brunt of mediating and implementing the changing state policies towards resource management at the crucial levels of village and location. On the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme, state intervention included the radical transformation of tenure arrangements and the recognition of a new chief and tribal authority in the area, the latter resulting in antagonism between two factions in the Location. By drawing people’s attention away from other facets of local administration, and by embroiling local institutions and leaders in political conflicts for the control of the Scheme’s resources, this intervention weakened the capacity and legitimacy of the Tyefu TA and the headmen linked to it.59

If the state was capable of manipulating local institutions it was also guilty of undermining existing institutions through neglect: as De Beer (1984:208) argued, between 1980 and 1984 (and possibly longer) Tyefu Location did not have the services of a single agricultural extension officer. People requiring advice with regard to agricultural production had to go to the offices of the Department of Agriculture in Peddie.60 A livestock inspector based in Horton village found that he was unable to perform his duties adequately because he had to rely on public transport to get to the

59 In Gwabeni, after the influential headman and mphakathi (counsellor) to Gladstone Mpahla, Dumo (Wellington) Manala passed away, the village lost its voice and influence at the Komkhulu (Great Place) and was later relegated to only having an unpaid subheadman under the authority of the neighbouring headman in Qarnyana. The subheadman in Gwabeni was still expected to attend weekly meetings at Horton and to administer the affairs of the village. This demotion in status resulted in apathy in the village, the position of subheadman changed hands several times, and, with the incumbents not always attending meetings, Gwabeni became politically marginalised. The authority of the TTA was seriously undermined in the eyes of residents of Gwabeni who began to ignore directives from Horton and agitate against the TTA. This agitation culminated in 1990 with the residents threatening to burn down the house of the then sub-headman - who had taken to attending meetings at the TTA offices at Horton against to the wishes of a majority of Gwabeni people - and to expel this man and his family from the village. This drastic step was not required, as the incumbent chose the prudent route and relinquished his responsibilities as sub-headman.

60 In 1988, Steyn argued that ‘from an extension point of view the situation in this region is most unsatisfactory ..,[with] only two extension officers at ward level serving the entire [Peddie District]’ (Steyn 1988:89). He goes on to argue that the Veterinary Division of Ciskei at the time was staffed by only one veterinarian who was having to run all seven clinics in the Ciskei. The low number of field veterinarians meant that little attention could be given to the animal health problems of individual livestock owners (Ibid :91).
other ten villages in the location. This man complained to De Beer (1984:210-11) that the animal health and herd management information workshops he conducted during stock inspections were not successful, because livestock were invariably driven to stock inspections by young boys who were not interested in the workshops (and who were not necessarily an appropriate target group).

Some state interventions have had more unintended consequences for natural resource management than could have been anticipated. The initiation of statesponsored resource rehabilitation projects and the payment of old age pensions have both had the effect of undermining the ability of local institutions to undertake local resource management initiatives. The local institutions that were impacted on by changes in policy, have sought to mediate the way in which these changes affected their control over local resources. Local people continue to find ways of resisting, ignoring, evading or changing the ways in which state-sponsored resource management programmes were carried out 'on the ground.'

During a period of rapid population increase in Tyefu Location, with the concomitant increased pressure on local resources, rapid social and economic change and heightened institutional vulnerability, unambiguous support on the part of the state for local institutions that are engaged in resource management - and that have legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of residents in the location - has been (and remains) a critical factor for effective resource management. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, state intervention has increased institutional ambiguities in the villages of Tyefu Location, and the cost of the resulting institutional dissonance has been the gradual collapse of local resource management institutions and the degradation of natural resources in the location.
CHAPTER FIVE
Resource management dynamics in Gwabeni village, Tyefu Location

Introduction

This chapter builds on some of the historical and institutional themes developed in the previous chapters and provides contemporary ethnographic data on natural resource management practices in Gwabeni village, Tyefu Location. It shows how, in reaching the limits to the expansion of arable land holdings in the village, and given the pressure of an increased population which was already having a negative effect on both the local resources and local institutions, people have been forced to adopt strategies in line with the changes in resource availability. The more individualist strategies they have adopted should be seen in the light of the overall changes in the village away from an agrarian economy, the institutional dissonance prevalent in the location, and the marked socio-economic stratification that has become a reality among the constituent imiziz in the village.

1. Access to natural resources

Gwabeni is one of eleven dispersed villages in Tyefu Location. Although there are no fences separating the eleven villages within Tyefu Location itself, the natural features of the area, such as the deeply incised valleys, restrict residential and arable expansion, and thus tend to separate one village from the next. For the past approximately 140 years, Tyefu Location has been bound on all sides by relatively impermeable boundaries, namely fences and rivers, which separate the location from neighbouring land held under freehold title. To the south and west of Tyefu Location lies the Fish River (beyond which are freehold farms in the Albany District) and in all other directions are to be found the fenced boundaries of freehold farms and, since

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1 Some of this freehold land is, in fact, owned by the state, since being expropriated from commercial farmers to consolidate the boundaries of the Ciskei bantustan in the late 1970s. Under State ownership, the boundaries tend to be more permeable than they were previously.
1990, that of the Double Drift Game Reserve. The sharply defined perimeters of the location are most accentuated in villages like Gwabeni, Qamnyana and Mankone, which lie on the fringes of the location, and are thus up against the fences of neighbouring state-owned land.

Map 3: The villages of Tyefu Location

Under a system of modified communal tenure, arable and residential holdings in each village are subject to individual or family usufruct, with every married man in a particular village in theory having the right to at least one field. In the absence of internal fencing within the location, except around some arable fields and residential sites, key

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This game reserve was originally called the L.L. Sebe Game Reserve. Its name was changed to the Double Drift Game Reserve in 1990 after the Ciskei coup. It now forms part of the Great Fish River Reserve Complex.
resources like grazing, water, firewood and wilderness resources are held and used in common by all the residents of Tyefu Location.

While there are natural boundaries and social norms which recognise, demarcate and restrict the access of neighbouring villagers to the 'commons' resources 'belonging' to any one village, these restrictions have proven to be difficult to monitor and enforce in practice, partly because the boundary demarcations are negotiable. In this way, key resources, such as water and firewood, are collected by the members of a specific village either within the boundaries of that village or on 'neutral' land (such as the expropriated farms adjacent to Tyefu Location).

Prior to the early 1990s, disputes between villages over the unsanctioned use of these resources by individuals were resolved by the headmen of the affected villages or were referred to the TTA, with fines levied in some cases, such as for 'trespassing' and for collecting wood in the commons area of another village. After this period, committee members of the Residents' Association or other senior men have been relied upon to apprehend those found gathering wood on Gwabeni land. This has happened very haphazardly and many people are afraid to challenge those found infringing on Gwabeni's resources, in case they are assaulted for being trouble-makers. One senior man, who travels by car along the road to Committees Drift regularly, is not afraid to chase women, children and even men, from the neighbouring village of Qamnyana away from the edge of the Breakfastvlei Outspan that is claimed as Gwabeni land.

Territorial restrictions on the rights of men to hunt are least clearly articulated, perhaps because much of the hunting in the past was illegal and therefore clandestine. Men in Gwabeni tend to hunt on the farms to the north of the village, where spill-over game from the reserve are quite plentiful. They also hunt in the valleys below the village, but informants claim that the game here has been depleted by hunting and has been scared off by the amount of other human activities in the area.

Unlike the norms regulating access to certain 'commons' resources referred to above, residents are quick to assert that grazing is the one resource that is explicitly available throughout the Location to all villagers who own livestock, including those people who
are not full-time residents of the area (but whose rights of membership to a homestead in Tyefu Location are recognised). The livestock of villagers in the Fish River valley are consequently allowed to wander, unattended, onto the plateau areas around Gwabeni and Mankone and, more recently, onto the vacated freehold land to the north and east of these villages. Although its origins are unclear, this 'open grazing' practice which exists in Tyefu Location appears to be a concession to the many villages, including Gwabeni, which have limited grazing - relative to the numbers of livestock held - available locally.

The village of Gwabeni is situated on the high-lying plateau section in the north-western corner of the Location. Gwabeni borders the Breakfastvlei Outspan (part of which falls inside the Double Drift Game Reserve), the Peddie-Committees Drift road and the fences of three freehold farms. To the west, lies the village of Qamnyana and to the east, that of Mankone. Gwabeni does not have access to piped water, water-borne sanitation or electricity. Seasonal streams with very local catchment areas run in each of the valleys separating the village sections, and all these streams have been dammed in the respective valleys below the village. People rely for their water requirements on their rainwater tanks or on water from the dams in the valleys below the village. Livestock make use of the latter sources and seasonal ponds on the plateau areas.

The 'enclosure' of Gwabeni village: a history

Before Ciskeian 'independence' in 1981, the area to the north of Gwabeni had been white-owned freehold land for some 120 years, and the people of Gwabeni had had very limited access to its natural resources. Individual village men had apparently 'always' engaged in (illegal) hunting activities on these farms. Gwabeni informants remember how some of the neighbouring farmers used to patrol their farms on horseback and how they would 'apprehend' any people found trespassing on their land.

In those days, the Breakfastvlei Pound was a focal point of friction and contestation between the villagers and the farmers. In an area which is prone to droughts, and

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3 Some of the material in this section also appears in Palmer (1997).
where grazing is a key economic resource, white farmers took the regulation of access to grazing seriously. Any livestock from Gwabeni that strayed onto the neighbouring farms or onto the Breakfastvlei Outspan would be impounded at the Breakfastvlei Pound and the owner(s) thereof duly fined.⁴

Informants in Gwabeni noted that their livestock numbers were far higher in the past (making herding more difficult, for one thing) and that the impounding of livestock by the neighbouring farmers was a constant source of irritation to livestock owners in the village. One informant related to me how, in an act of defiance in the early 1970s, two young men from the village had taken the cattle of the farmer adjacent to Gwabeni to the Pound after these cattle were found trespassing on Gwabeni land. The response of the farmer was to have the young men arrested, telling the police that they must have removed the cattle from his farm. The two youths received eight lashes each at the police station in Peddie for having impounded the farmer’s livestock.

But interaction between the white farmers and the residents of Tyefu villages was more complex than such anecdotes suggest. In previous years, the grandfather of one informant in Gwabeni, who had been adept at training ploughing oxen, was paid (in cattle) by the local white farmers to train their oxen for this purpose. Many of these neighbouring white farmers were beef farmers and were involved in relationships of exchange with livestock owners in Gwabeni on the following basis: since the farmers wanted mature cattle for slaughter, they would exchange two calves for one full-grown beast. In this way, livestock owners in Gwabeni were able to increase the size of their herds and the white farmers had access to cattle which could readily be converted into cash.

Men and youths from the village were called upon at times to chase kudu out of the dense bush when the farmers went hunting. Their payment in such cases was a portion of game from the hunt. Even though the Outspan had been rented out exclusively to white farmers in the vicinity of Breakfastvlei for the purpose of grazing their livestock

⁴ See the Provincial Gazette of 17 March 1961 for the adjusted rates of 'pound fees, trespass fees and sustenance fees' in respect of the Breakfastvlei Pound (Cory Library, PR 3929, Files of the Peddie Farmers and Fruit Growers Association).
there, livestock owners in Gwabeni were not entirely excluded: informants remembered one farmer, who had rented the Outspan over many years, allowing the ploughing oxen of Gwabeni residents to graze on the Outspan overnight on condition that they were removed early the following morning. Some farmers were also amenable to renting out grazing resources on their own farms on a controlled basis for use by Gwabeni livestock (and that of other Tyefu villages) during times of drought.

**Contests over natural resources on land adjacent to Gwabeni**

The shortage of land available to them has vexed the people of Gwabeni for at least three generations, and the need for more land for residential, grazing and arable purposes is still a constant refrain for many of the men and women in the village. Given the generally accepted historical account that the Mfengu inhabitants of Peddie District were recipients of confiscated lands or *umhlaba webhaso* (gift land) previously inhabited by Xhosa people, the (Mfengu) people of Gwabeni do not appear to have a historical claim to any of the adjacent land occupied by the white farmers. However, the fact that the village population has been augmented by ethnic Xhosa people over the past nearly one hundred years or more - many of them having moved off farms in the vicinity of Gwabeni - has allowed exactly this sentiment (i.e. the making of claims to adjacent farmland) to take root in the discourse over land and land dispossession in the village.

If land-hunger was a pervasive feature of villages like Gwabeni possibly even before the turn of the century, then the fear of land concessions being made to these villages seemed to be a very real threat to the white farmers adjacent to them. In 1957, the then Secretary of Native Affairs, Mr. L.B. Lang, proposed to alienate a portion of the Breakfastvlei Outspan in favour of the Department of Native Affairs. The response from the Divisional Council in Peddie, supported by the Peddie Farmers and Fruit Growers

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5 This is in spite of the fact that during my study, livestock numbers in the village seemed fairly low and field cultivation had been abandoned by almost every Gwabeni *umzi* for twenty years or more.

6 Ndlambe and Gqunukhwebe people.

7 In this way, both Mfengu and ethnic Xhosa people in Gwabeni made claim to all the land which made up the Double Drift Game Reserve as far as Ngqakayi, a stream which was situated close to Sheshegu and some fifteen kilometres from Alice.
Association (PFFGA), was that the Outspan was ‘essential for the use of the travelling public’, and that ‘the leasing of the Outspan was [done] in order to protect the grazing for that purpose from the encroachment and trespassing of Native owned stock.’

It is clear from the records of PFFGA correspondence from the late 1960s, that the white farmers whose farms bordered on this section of Tyefu Location regarded the Outspan (and the Peddie-Committees Drift road) as an important buffer between them and the people of the Location. The farmers were unsettled by talk of government plans to consolidate the boundaries of the Ciskei, which they believed would be started (in this area) through the proposed alienation of the Outspan, and possibly be followed by the expropriation of their farms. Their response was to ensure that the movements of Gwabeni cattle were strictly regulated and that any use of the Outspan grazing resources by the livestock of Gwabeni residents took place only under their close supervision.

Despite protests from the affected white farmers in Peddie District, the government plans to consolidate the boundaries of the Ciskei through the expropriation of white-owned farms went ahead and by 1982, the last white farmer had left the area adjacent to Tyefu Location. The L.L. Sebe Game Reserve, comprising some 21,000 hectares, was established on ten farms in the Peddie and Victoria East Districts.

In the euphoria that followed Ciskeian independence in 1981, the villagers that were neighbours to these consolidated farms, mistakenly believed that they would be given the use of this land. For a nine year period (between 1981 and 1990) - during much of which period the area was drought-stricken - people from neighbouring villages had unofficial access to the resources on both the Reserve and the adjacent commercial

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8 Cory Library, PR3929, Files of the PFFGA.

9 Contestation over access to the resources on that portion of the Outspan which is situated between the village and the Breakfastvlei Hotel are discussed in Chapter 7.

10 Other farms that were expropriated but not included into the Reserve, were intended for commercial use by ‘emerging’ Ciskeian farmers, rather than by the people already resident on such farms or by the neighbouring villagers. Several of these farms were leased or sold at very reasonable prices to Ciskei government bureaucrats who did not farm them commercially, but who ran their livestock herds there and attempted to evict many of the farmworkers and tenant families resident on these farms.
land. These resources included game, firewood, prickly pear and wild vegetables. As the drought of the early 1980s progressed, the common pool grazing resources in Tyefu Location came under considerable pressure and a few livestock owners began to make unofficial use of the additional grazing resources by allowing their livestock to 'wander' into the land which comprised the reserve. Even this action could not prevent the heavy, drought-induced stock losses that were incurred at this time. The access to these resources remained unofficial, because if caught by conservation authorities inside the reserve fences, people (and their livestock) from the neighbouring villages could be arrested, charged with trespassing and fined.

While the L.L. Sebe Game Reserve was officially proclaimed a reserve in terms of the Ciskei Nature Conservation Act 10 of 1987, it was only in 1990 that high game fences were erected around the reserve perimeter for the first time. These fences were impermeable to livestock and far less permeable (to hunters and hunted) so that successful hunts became less frequent. At the same time, the attitude of the conservation authorities hardened, increasing the stakes for the hunters from the village if they were caught hunting illegally inside the reserve area. People were forbidden to collect natural resources such as firewood or prickly pear from inside the reserve (although a permit system was later introduced to facilitate the controlled use of these resources) and the dogs of suspected poachers were shot by the conservation authorities, on occasion inside the villages that were adjacent to the reserve.

One of the farms adjacent to Gwabeni was not included in the Game Reserve and was used extensively for hunting purposes by the men of Gwabeni. During the period 1982-1988, Gwabeni residents grazed their livestock there, hunted game and collected firewood and prickly pears on this land, which offered welcome relief to the exhausted resources of the village. Since 1988, the (then new) owner of the Breakfastvlei Hotel, a businessman from Alice, had rented this farmland from the Department of Agriculture.

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11 There were in fact 90 households (with over 400 people in total) residing within the boundaries of the game reserve in this time. These people were the former employees and tenants of the 'white' farmers who had left the area.

12 Between 1982 and 1984, livestock numbers in Peddie District plummeted: the number of cattle fell from 20 219 to 13 572; sheep from 27 833 to 14 690; and goats from 40 688 to 30 214 (Ciskei Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Annual Report 1983/84).
for R3995 per annum in order to graze his cattle there. He owned 80 head of cattle, but was instructed by the officials of the Department of Agriculture in Peddie that the land could only support forty-five of these cattle and this was made a condition of his hiring the land.\(^\text{13}\)

As the fencing around the perimeter of this farm and along the road between the farm and Tyefu Location deteriorated, the cattle of Tyefu Location residents began to intrude on the area hired by the Hotel owner. Some residents also began to exploit the firewood resources of this and other farms quite openly, in defiance of the authorities and those who were hiring the farms. This practice became increasingly common for all the expropriated farms bordering onto Tyefu Location. There was also a rapid deterioration in the perimeter fencing of these farms, as people availed themselves of fencing material for use around their *imizigi*.

Anxious not to challenge local livestock owners over this incursion onto land he was renting, in case his hotel was burnt down, the hotel owner decided to stop paying for the hire of the land.\(^\text{14}\) In February 1993, he did not renew his grazing lease on the land, claiming that he would be subsidising the use of the grazing resources by the cattle of local residents if he continued to rent the land. He also resolved to move his cattle to his brother's two farms on the other side of Alice. In the build-up to the April 1994 general elections, the Department of Agriculture officials in Peddie were reluctant to intervene in the situation of free-for-all access to the grazing resources on the farm, as they did not wish to antagonise Tyefu villagers at this critical juncture in Ciskeian history. By the end of 1996, however, most of the hotel owner's cattle were still grazing around Gwabeni, and he was availing himself of the now free grazing for this purpose, as were the livestock owned by Gwabeni residents.

\(^{13}\) It is not clear whether he adhered to this condition or not.

\(^{14}\) As a local man, having grown up in Rura village, and as a cross-cousin to the current adult generation of a prominent Manala lineage (his mother having been a Manala), he also was involved in the web of local kinship relations and village politics. Moreover, as a businessman who did not want to offend his customers, he also had to tread sensitively around the issue of other livestock encroaching onto the rented area. It was easier for him to stop paying the rental on the land and to see what the Department of Agriculture would do about it.
The scenario described above suggests that while the boundaries of Tyefu Location and of Gwabeni in particular have been fixed for a considerable period, an increasing population confined to this finite space has meant that interest in and pressure on the resources of neighbouring lands has been consistently high. Access to particularly the grazing and wilderness resources of these areas has long been contested. At various times, the relations between the inhabitants of the Location and their neighbours have been relatively structured and certain (such as with the white farmers and game reserve management) or more fluid and uncertain (as with the hotel owner, or the state, as is presently the case). The present utilisation of natural resources on the farms adjacent to Gwabeni - the Breakfastlei Outspan excepted - appears to be entirely unregulated since the state institution responsible for this area, namely the Department of Agriculture, lacks the capacity - and possibly the will - to enforce some form of resource management regime in this area.

2. Managing arable land in Gwabeni

Historically, once land on the flatter, plateau area had been allocated, no expansion of grazing and arable landholdings in Gwabeni has been possible in any direction except southwards. Even in this direction, the steep narrow ridges, characteristic of Gwabeni, have hampered the expansion of arable landholdings. As a result, the availability of arable land of adequate size, soil depth and slope in the village has long been severely limited. In the past, many people were allocated arable land on steep, erosion-prone hillsides, where ploughing involved far more effort and effected a rapid loss of topsoil. Widespread and severe gully erosion features became commonplace around the village and, coupled with drought and declining production levels, field cultivation in Gwabeni declined and was finally abandoned altogether by the mid-1970s.

The majority of arable fields in Gwabeni are to be found on both the higher-lying, flatter

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15 Including livestock grazing, hunting, as well as the collection of firewood, prickly pear and other wilderness products.

16 In 1995, after an absence of any arable cultivation for nearly two decades in the village, and after two seasons of good rains, a solitary resident of Gwabeni cultivated his arable land. At the end of the season, he harvested 17 bags of peas and also a considerable amount of beans, melons and pumpkins.
ground to the north of the village, especially north of Bihbho section and around the perimeter of the Outspan. The fact that these fields are grouped together, meant that they could (in the past) be enclosed by a single perimeter fence, rather than having to be fenced individually, to ensure that the crops were not damaged or eaten by livestock. By the 1950s, this ‘fencing’ consisted of both wire fencing (along the Outspan perimeter), which was expensive, and *amahlaha* (branches) chopped from trees nearby and stacked up so as to be impenetrable to goats in particular. The maintenance of both types of fencing required a co-operative effort by the affected individuals if their crops were not to be damaged by livestock.

Other more isolated arable fields are situated on the few more gentle valley slopes and valley bottoms around the south-western section of the village. By the mid-1960s, many of the latter fields had been abandoned as they had become so eroded that they promised practically no returns if cultivated. Interspersed between these allocated fields and in other areas closer to the imizi, are smaller areas or ‘gardens’ that were not included in a particular individual’s arable allocation (of eight acres, see below), but which were previously ploughed or hoed and sown along with an individual’s other fields. Many of these smaller ‘gardens’ were primarily the responsibility of women.

Table 5.1. Access to Arable Land by *umzi* in Gwabeni (n=67)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMIZI</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Land</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Access to Land</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Table 5.1 shows that 69 per cent of the *imizi* in Gwabeni have ‘access’ to arable land, the nature of this access is often limited by the existence of multiple claimants to each inherited field. The shortage of arable land in Gwabeni is illustrated by the predicament of the oldest male resident in the village. K.S is an 84-year old member of the Khala clan who was born in Gwabeni. K.S. was allocated one arable field in his own right, but his three younger brothers did not receive fields of their own.
Instead, like all those who currently hold arable land in Gwabeni, K.S. and his brothers 'share' (but have not subdivided) the one field inherited from their father, J.S.\textsuperscript{17} Should K.S.'s sister who left the village upon getting married, decide to return to Gwabeni, she would also have a claim to the use of this field.

The shortage of arable land does not, however, mean that all men are restricted to having only one field. In fact, in the past, each married man in Gwabeni was entitled to eight acres of arable land, which did not have to be contiguous. For the male members of the longer-established families in the village, this meant that one man could have rights over three fields or more, as long as the total area of his fields was deemed to be no more than eight acres. Moreover, once a man had been allocated a field, it was very rare for the field to be confiscated by the headman and re-allocated, even though legal provision was made for such reallocation if the field had not been used for three consecutive years.

The oldest generation of a senior Manala lineage in the village consists of four brothers and a married sister. The sister and one of the brothers are permanently resident in Port Elizabeth. Their father, Esau M., who was born in 1899, had enjoyed access to two fields: one of his own and one inherited from his father. The fields were last ploughed in 1975-76 with a team of oxen, at which time Esau's widow had been in charge of the ploughing. When their mother passed away, the four brothers inherited these two fields, but the fields have never been cultivated again.

What inevitably happened with arable land in Gwabeni in the past was that a field was inherited by a man's son(s) via his widow. I recorded one case where the young widow (with 2 sons and 2 daughters), whose husband had died in 1942 without having been granted arable land, was allocated a field which she, with the assistance of her youngest son, ploughed until 1966. In this case, the younger son and his mother had ploughed the field for 24 years without any assistance from the older son. When the mother died in 1986, the field was nevertheless inherited - and has since been 'shared'\textsuperscript{17} K.S. told me that although he had a field of his own, he inherited (with his brothers) the field of his father, because he was the eldest son and because he owned sufficient ploughing oxen to plough both fields. He ploughed the fields and shared some of the harvest from the inherited field with his brothers.
- by the two brothers. By this time however, access to arable land was of academic interest to these men - at least in terms of arable production\(^{18}\) which had ceased entirely in Gwabeni - because neither brother had either the resources or the desire to cultivate the inherited land, which did not promise much in the way of arable yields.

Informants told me that there was a realisation that, given the finite number of arable fields available, it did not make sense to sub-divide a field into smaller and smaller units and parcel the sub-divisions out, to be ploughed by individual sons, because this would render these sub-divisions economically unviable. At the same time, multiple claims on these larger, single field allocations could become socially disruptive in the event of disputes over inheritance between the sons of a deceased man and over pressures for re-allocation of unutilised land between the landed and the landless men in the village.\(^{19}\) A deliberate effort was thus made, from before the 1950s, to prevent inherited fields in Gwabeni from being subdivided and to opt for such land to become the 'family field' which would be kept in perpetuity for the oldest generation of male members of that lineage. In effect, it appears that once all potentially arable land in the village had been allocated, the allocation and subdivision of land in Gwabeni was 'frozen' in favour of those men (and some widows) who had rights to arable land at the time. Given the decline in arable production soon after this time, it would be interesting to know what contribution this freezing of arable land rights made to hasten the complete abandonment of arable production in Gwabeni. The case study of Ndlovu (see below) gives some indication of the role land shortage, in combination with other factors, played in the decline of field cultivation in Gwabeni.

In the period before the mid-1970s, when arable land was regarded as 'lineage' land, some members of the umzi were not involved - perhaps chose not to involve themselves - in arable production. Use of arable land naturally had economic

\(^{18}\) Rights to arable land nevertheless conferred a certain status on men in the village, even if they had not ploughed the land for two decades or more.

\(^{19}\) One dispute over arable land exists between two half-brothers. W.M.'s mother had died giving birth to him and his father (T.M.) had subsequently remarried. When T.M. passed away, his elderly second wife moved into the household of her eldest son, S.M. In theory, both T.M.'s livestock and arable fields passed to his widow, but in practice, S.M. has taken over ownership of the livestock of his father and use of the arable land. When the elderly widow passes away, W.M. told me, the matter of who has control over these resources will have to be addressed.
consequences, in that those who cultivated a field bore the costs of inputs and also reaped the profits, if any, of doing so. As some informants pointed out, some people did not get involved in cultivating the ‘family field’ because they had noted the diminishing returns from arable production due to drought and increasing soil erosion, the shortage of oxen for ploughing and problems experienced with maintaining the fencing around arable fields. Some men who were migrants chose not to participate in cultivation when they had a brother who was resident in Gwabeni who wanted to cultivate the ‘family’ field. Some of the produce of this field would, however, be given to the imizi of migrant brothers of the cultivator.

In some cases, the time-consuming and potentially conflictual reality of ‘sharing’ a field with one’s brothers, which meant reaching agreement on who would plough it, what contributions each man would make to fencing, seed and the hiring of a team of oxen or tractor, and how the produce would be disposed of, was a factor which served to undermine arable production in Gwabeni. In the case of K.S. and his brothers, I was told that the “we the sons of J.S. have never ploughed [our one field] together.”

As long as field cultivation was still practiced in the village, social and economic distinctions were possible between those imizi that had access to land and who were making use of it and those imizi that were landless. Socially, arable cultivation reinforced the distinction that was drawn between the longer-established imizi with access to arable land and ‘newcomer’ imizi that were landless. Amongst the landed imizi, those still involved in cultivation would have been the imizi with the necessary economic and labour resources to cover the costs of arable production, so that relative wealth was another distinguishing factor that was brought to light by field cultivation.

In this situation where the amount of arable land available for allocation has long been severely limited, one might expect to find that contestation of claims to fields was fairly common, at least while the general level of interest in cultivating the land was high. On the contrary however, the system of inheritance seems to have been widely accepted, or at least, to have been enforced by the landed imizi who had kinship and neighbourhood ties to the successive headmen of Gwabeni. I have only recorded two cases where the ‘ownership’ of a field was contested and subsequently changed hands:
the first case, which occurred in 1956, concerned Nkwenkana K's field, which was 'taken' from him by a certain Bennett M. An informant related it as follows,

'Bennett M went to Nkwenkana and spoke about the tax problem, saying that he (Bennett) was far in arrears in his payment of tax. Nkwenkana admitted that he too was in arrears. Bennett went straight to the magistrate and told him that, 'I haven't got a field even though I pay tax. This man [Nkwenkana] does not pay tax.' The magistrate then ordered that Bennett be granted Nkwekana's field. Bennett was a big cheat, so much so that his son, Bornwell, said that he would never take the field. Bornwell left Gwabeni and moved to Wesley [in Peddie District], and has since died. His children moved out of Gwabeni and so no member of the M family has claimed the field. The land can automatically go back to the K family now.'

The second case also involved a field that was taken by one man going to the magistrate in Peddie and complaining about not having a field. This time it was Dimas M who secured the magistrate's authorisation for the headman in Gwabeni to re-allocate a field held by Mtutu to him, on the grounds that Mtutu, who was migrant on the mines in Kwazulu/Natal at the time, had not paid his tax and was not present to plough the land.

New settlers who came to Gwabeni from neighbouring farms were generally used to cultivating and owning some livestock on the farms from whence they came. Many, particularly those who had arrived in the village from the early 1960s, were to be disappointed when, upon settling in Gwabeni, they discovered that there were no arable fields that could be allocated to them. One case in particular, where a newly settled man, Ndlovu sought to borrow a field for cultivation, is a telling example of how the abandonment of arable production in the village was imposed on everyone, lest their agricultural successes reflect on those imizi that were either not willing or not able to plough their fields.
The case of Ndlovu: 20

Ndlovu is a seventy-seven year old man who settled in Gwabeni some 29 years ago.21 His parents had moved from a white-owned farm in the area, where they had been sharecroppers, to the Tyefu village of Ndwayana. They had moved to Ndwayana with their many goats and cattle. Later they moved to the farm, Inkerman, which was less than four kilometres from Gwabeni, where his father was employed to herd and dip the cattle. He was allowed to run his own livestock on the farm. At the time of his father's death in 1947, Ndlovu was a migrant labourer in Port Elizabeth. He had been remitting the largest proportion of his wage and was able to build up a large number of cattle and goats, so large in fact that he lent some of his many livestock out to relatives in neighbouring villages. He sent some to an agnatic relative in Ndlambe, while others were sent to his father's brother's son who had settled in Bhobho section of Gwabeni in 1952.

Ndlovu returned from Port Elizabeth to work on the farm to ensure that his dependents were not evicted from the farm. After working there for 11 years, Ndlovu was troubled by the shortage of money that prevented his children from attending school and he asked the farmer for permission to leave for Port Elizabeth to seek employment there. Since his wife was in domestic service in the farmer's home, his dependents were allowed to remain on the farm. The farm was sold in 1967 and the workers and their dependents were told to leave, as the new owner was bringing in his own work-force. Ndlovu moved his family to Bhobho section of Gwabeni in 1968. At that time, he had seven cattle and 30 goats and the area was in the grip of a prolonged drought that was to last three more years.

To secure permission to settle in Bhobho, Ndlovu had to consult the headman in Gwabeni at the time, a Mr. B. At a meeting in the village, the people of Gwabeni agreed to Ndlovu and his family settling in the village and the headman relayed this endorsement of Ndlovu's request for a residential site to the chief. Ndlovu said that he liked the village and was attracted by the good ploughing fields he saw close to Bhobho, some of which were still in use at this time. He soon found the people of Gwabeni to be 'funny' because they claimed to have insufficient

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20 This case-study is also discussed in Palmer (1997:172-174). My case-study of Ndlovu is based on interviews I conducted in Gwabeni.

21 That is, from 1968 to 1997.
arable land available for allocation to him and he was forced to borrow (ukuboleka) a field in order to plough. He was however, satisfied with the communal grazing that was available in the location for his livestock.

With his family relocated and settled in Bhobho section, he could continue to work as a migrant labourer in Port Elizabeth. This he did until 1974, when at the age of fifty-four, he had a dispute with his employer over wages and was discharged without a pension. He returned to Gwabeni and continued to cultivate the field for three more seasons until 1976. Ndlovu claims to have supported his family during this time through the sale of arable produce and the occasional sale of livestock. His eldest son, who was working in Port Elizabeth by then, also assisted by remitting cash to the umzi in Gwabeni. Subsequently, a dispute arose, as some of the men in the village, who had abandoned field cultivation by this time, appeared to resent the fact that Ndlovu had independently fenced the field he was using and continued to cultivate the land successfully, while the majority of established imizi in the village had abandoned their fields. They drove their cattle into this field of ripe maize to signal their displeasure and this hostile action convinced Ndlovu to abandon ploughing. After this disagreement, Ndlovu fenced in an area adjacent to his residential site and began to cultivate a vegetable garden. He has also established a number of fruit trees in this garden, something which is uncommon in this semi-arid area. After the 1994 general elections, discussions arose in the village concerning the redistribution of arable land in Tyefu Location. Not surprisingly, Ndlovu was an enthusiastic proponent of the idea that all imizi in Gwabeni should be given access to arable land. Landed imizi were not nearly as enthusiastic as people like Ndlovu about this idea.

What Ndlovu’s dogged attempts to continue cultivating in Gwabeni did was to challenge, more than anything else, the wholesale abandonment of the land and the move, certainly on the part of the wealthier, landed imizi, to an essentially post-agrarian

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22 This incident is widely cited in the village, although the details were (I think) kept deliberately sketchy. One informant put it thus, "You see, if one person is successful, the others become jealous. They were jealous of his big, ripe mealies." Another informant put it more obliquely: "People had a public [communal] fencing system first. Then some [people] started fencing their own fields as well, depleting the public fences in the process. Their own fences weren't good, and goats and sheep began to ruin their crops."
Whereas previously many of the men who were engaged in migrant labour attempted to retain a measure of economic independence through their stake in the rural production sector, particularly in livestock ownership and also through arable production, this had changed irrevocably by the mid-1960s. These *imizi* were no longer prepared to engage in the increasingly (economically) risky pursuit of arable production, but at the same time, they were not happy to see a newcomer to the village overcoming the adverse conditions that had led them to abandon arable production in the village.

3. Patterns of residential land-use

The 68 *imizi* in Gwabeni which have been permanently occupied by at least one member for the past four years, are divided into four village sections which are scattered across three ridges. Deeply-incised valleys form natural boundaries between the four village-sections of Nala, Bhobho, New Brighton and Nqwebeba sections (see Map 4, Chapter Seven). The most recently settled section of the village, which has only been inhabited since 1995, is the 'Sites' area, which is situated on a portion of the Breakfastvlei Outspan. Table 5.2. lists the village sections and their sizes. A concentration of *imizi* in Nala section is noticeable.

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23 The end of arable production in Gwabeni in the mid-1970s was not, however the end of all agriculture in the village: many *imizi* attempted to retain their investments in livestock, and sought to build up these holdings after periodic droughts. A few *imizi* tried to intensify garden cultivation, mostly for subsistence purposes.

24 In every section, there were *imizi* that were unoccupied for the greatest part of the year, the members only returning during holiday periods. Still other *imizi* were virtually derelict, but the members still returned sporadically to conduct rituals there. The *imizi* listed in the table are those at which at least one member was present for practically the entire research period. In the case of single person *umzi* in some of the *imizi* listed, the person may have gone to Port Elizabeth or Cape Town for a visit lasting up to a week, but the *umzi* is still considered to be 'permanently occupied.'

25 Many of the younger generation from established village *imizi*, especially from Nqwebeba section, are settling there. This resettlement is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.
Table 5.2. The village sections of Gwabeni and their sizes.\(^{26}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VILLAGE SECTION</th>
<th>NO. OF IMIZI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nala</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhobho</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brighton</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nqwebeba</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outspan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>68</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notwithstanding the limited area for settlement given the steep topography, there is much evidence of residential mobility by people within Gwabeni. For a number of reasons, people have moved, and continue to do so, from one residential site to another, and from one village-section to another.

Firstly, the movement by men who, during the course of the developmental cycle, get married and move out of the *imizi* of their fathers to establish their own *imizi*, is a well-known phenomenon. In the past, sons tended to establish their *imizi* in the same village-section, but at some distance from the *imizi* of their fathers. When Ncamazana wanted to establish his own *umzi*, he moved from his father’s (Mbhono) site in New Brighton section to the top of Nala section. When in turn his son, Aaron, wanted to establish his own *umzi*, he approached the headman for a site about halfway between that of his father and his grandfather’s residential site. This site is now the ‘family *umzi*’ looked after by one of Aaron’s four sons, although two other sons live on the site in separate buildings.

Secondly, *imizi* relocate when the natural resources in an area are exhausted. This deliberate strategy on the part of local people to deal with resource depletion is a legacy of past practices, when it was possible for smaller groups of people to leave an area in order for its natural resources to be given an opportunity to regenerate.

\(^{26}\) For the sake of clarity, the number of *imizi* on the Outspan refers to those which settled there in 1995. See Chapter Seven for more recent data on *imizi* settling on the Outspan sites.
Evidence of resource degradation in Tyefu Location suggests that this strategy, although still widely practised, has not been very effective since the time that villages have been confined by fixed boundaries, thus ruling out any possibility of expansion and resettlement onto 'new' land. The result has tended to be a steady, downward spiral in the condition of many of the available natural resources within these fixed boundaries. Despite this restriction, there is a pattern of umzi mobility in Gwabeni, visible in the way, for instance, in which seven residential sites and arable lands on Gunyeni ridge were abandoned over the years when the imizi from this degraded and denuded section relocated elsewhere.

Previously, the ploughing fields and gardens of the imizi on Gunyeni ridge were situated close by and were readily accessible. They were, however, situated on the steep slopes of the ridge and by the mid-1970s, serious gully erosion features were prevalent here (visible on air photographs). In fact, as early as 1954, evidence from air photographs shows the Gunyeni area to be denuded of vegetation, and especially of trees for firewood. Former residents of this village section claim that it became more onerous to gather firewood, while the collection of water from dams and springs down the steep slopes of the ridge, was a constant source of difficulty and irritation for women. The exhaustion of natural resources in the local area (especially around Nqwebeba section) is also a central component of the motivation of people currently resettling on the Outspan sites.

As one informant, Maxwell, explained:

'People used to migrate because of the pastures. If they think or they see things are better over there, then they go there. If people reap lots of mealies this side, then they [other people] think 'Oh, there's a big harvest there' and they move up here. They wouldn't need to have family there to be able to move, because it was just a question of the chief knowing where you are. If you want a new place, you go to the headman, and the headman will see to it that all the men agree to you settling in that place and then the chief will acknowledge that. That is all that happened. There was no written record, so it was a matter of knowing that this man stays here now.'
As an emphasis was increasingly placed on ease of access to and from one's homestead, it is clear why most of the intra-village umzi mobility over the past 50 years has been from the two most inaccessible sections, Gunyeni and Nqwebeba, to the more accessible village section of Nala. As noted above, seven imizi from Gunyeni relocated to Nala section, with the first of these moving in 1944 and the last one in 1990. A further five imizi have relocated from Nqwebeba section to Nala village section, four of them between 1977 and 1994. Informants from all of the imizi cite the denudation of the area, the distance from the store at Breakfastvlei and the steepness of the ridge that had to be climbed to reach Nala section and the facilities beyond it, as reasons for their move.

Four Mabhele imizi moved to up Nala section between 1977 and 1994. All of them cite the distance and inconvenience of living down the steep slope in Nqwebeba as the key reason for their move to Nala section. Three of these imizi are in the upper stratum of 'wealthy' imizi in the village and were thus able to cover the considerable costs of relocating from the more inaccessible Nqwebeba section. The fourth umzi consists of a single male pensioner who has taken over and refurbished an abandoned umzi in Nala section.

Ironically, the wealthier imizi, that relocated from Nqwebeba to Nala, have been left behind by the movement of Nqwebeba imizi, spearheaded by a group of Mabhele men in Port Elizabeth, onto a portion of the Breakfastvlei Outspan. This new settlement is adjacent to the road and very close to the Breakfastvlei Hotel and is thus the best situated site for a post-agrarian rural settlement. Having made considerable investments in their new imizi, in what they imagined would remain (at least in their lifetimes) the centre of the village (i.e. Nala section), the four Mabhele imizi that moved to Nala section are understandably reluctant to participate in the latest movement of people onto the Outspan sites.

Intra-village mobility has not been the only type of movement of people in Gwabeni.

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27 Two imizi relocated from Gunyeni to Nqwebeba in the mid-1970s. Both of these imizi were members of the Mabhele lineage, which is centred in Nqwebeba section.
Since the turn of the century, people have been moving into Gwabeni from neighbouring areas, particularly off the freehold (previously white-owned) farms in the vicinity of Tyefu Location. Although most of Tyefu Location - and indeed Peddie District - is regarded as being predominantly Mfengu in its ethnic composition, data collected in Gwabeni shows that the village has absorbed ‘newcomers’ of ethnic Xhosa origin, as well as Mfengu imizi from elsewhere, at various times over the past century. An examination of the clans represented in the village, reveals that 27 (or 40 per cent) of the contemporary imizi comprise ethnic Xhosa people, and that the balance is made up of people of Mfengu origin.\(^\text{28}\)

Informants claim that in most respects, the ethnic background of an umzi does not play any significant role in social relations in Gwabeni, but stressed that newcomers (known as amaranuga\(^\text{29}\) or imfiki) were settled “away from the established imizi.” Only in time, as more settlers arrived, did the earlier arrivals gravitate towards the hub of the village, or alternatively, the hub expanded to accommodate them. This can also be interpreted as symbolic of a gradual acceptance of their credentials as members of the village ‘community’ and their slow social integration into the decision-making structures and affairs of the village. Informants claim that no restrictions were placed on newcomers concerning the use of the communal rangelands of Tyefu Location to graze their livestock or on the use of the other natural resources on the commons.\(^\text{30}\)

In this way, new arrivals in Gwabeni were settled in New Brighton, the extension of Nala section. Eleven of the 27 Xhosa imizi currently in the village, the oldest of which have been in Gwabeni for over seventy years, are situated in New Brighton section. Other newcomers during this period were given sites in Bhobho section, to the south of the arable fields. One umzi that settled in Bhobho comprised the Jakuja family which

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\(^{28}\) Most of my informants seemed uneasy about me pursuing a line of enquiry concerning (Xhosa-Mfengu) ethnicity, suggesting a lingering sensitivity over these issues. I resorted to approaching the subject obliquely, such as identifying Xhosa and Mfengu clan names, asking whether informants’ families had ‘arrived’ in Peddie in 1835 or before this time, and so on, to see what role issues of ethnicity played in the management of natural resources in Tyefu Location.

\(^{29}\) Amaranuga refers specifically to ‘people from the farms’ (Manona 1980:115).

\(^{30}\) See Manona (1980:114) for an interesting discussion of these issues for Nyaniso village in Peddie District.
had occupied one of the farms adjacent to Gwabeni. When the oldest brother of the family neglected to pay rent on the land, the farm was sold and, in 1929, the family was obliged to move to Bhobho section in Gwabeni, a stone’s throw away from their former farm.

A total of 11 *imizi* of Xhosa origin are situated in Bhobho section, while Nqwebebe is home to three Xhosa *imizi* and Nala to two. Many of the *imizi* in Bhobho were established over a period of nearly 100 years by Xhosa people who left freehold farms in the neighbouring districts. The period 1966-1971, saw six families (separately) leaving commercial farms in the vicinity of Gwabeni, and securing permission to settle in the village. None of these people came from the same farm, but most had either kinship or clan links with Xhosa families already settled in Gwabeni.31

**Table 5.3. Differential Access to Arable Land by Mfengu and Xhosa *Imizi***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS TO LAND</th>
<th>MFENGU <em>IMIZI</em></th>
<th>XHOSAN <em>IMIZI</em></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to arable land</td>
<td>32 (48%)</td>
<td>14 (21%)</td>
<td>46 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Access to arable land</td>
<td>8 (12%)</td>
<td>13 (19%)</td>
<td>21 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40 (60%)</td>
<td>27 (40%)</td>
<td>67 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. indicates the differential access to arable land in Gwabeni. It suggests that *imizi* that have settled in the village more recently (these are mostly of Xhosa origin) have fared less well than the longer-established Mfengu *imizi* in terms of access to arable land. Eighty per cent of Mfengu *imizi* have access to arable land, while the equivalent figure for Xhosa *imizi* is 52 per cent.32 It should however be noted that a sizeable proportion of the Mfengu *imizi* share arable allocations with lineage members in other *imizi*, and that their ‘access’ in terms of being able to use the land productively is in fact quite tenuous. This also applies to the Xhosa *imizi* that have been settled in the village for the better part of this century.

31 It is not clear how many, if any, *imizi* coming off the farms were turned away from Gwabeni.

32 This is a function of the landless Xhosa *imizi* having arrived in the village after the last available arable land had been allocated and not because of any ethnic divisions in the village.
4. Social and agrarian change in Gwabeni

Not only have a number of imizi\(^{33}\) moved into Gwabeni over the past century, but a considerable number of Gwabeni people have moved out of the village to other parts of Peddie District and to various metropolitan centres.\(^{34}\) The Sishuta family left Gwabeni for Bira on the coast of Peddie District, only to return some years later. The Shuma family moved to Ndwayana village, while the Kondiles moved to Port Elizabeth. The Mpetsha and Mlungiso families also moved away. A few Manala men also left the village and set up themselves up in other villages: Oyama Manala left the village in 1930 and settled on D'Urban mission station in Peddie, while Mtheto Manala left Gwabeni and, in search of better opportunities to cultivate, he settled in Wesley village, near the Peddie coast. Phila Manala moved to Port Elizabeth permanently in the mid-1970s and only returns to Gwabeni very occasionally.

Migrant labour contracts and urbanisation are strategies that were widely adopted to escape the economic decline in Gwabeni from the early 1960s. In response to recurrent droughts, to the limited availability of arable land and to a marked decline in the quality of arable land in the village, a generation of migrant workers began to take a different view of the village and of their stake in it. This group consisted of both men and women and constituted the emerging, urban-focussed, more educated elite in the social milieu of the village. For them, the village became essentially a rural base, where they spent their holidays and periods of unemployment or a place to which they would retire, rather than a place in which they could generate reliable and sufficient incomes from agricultural production.

Since at least the early 1960s, the former role that the rural umzi economy in Gwabeni had played for this group as unit of economic production (or at least a significant component thereof) was in terminal decline and was steadily replaced by the notion of

\(^{33}\) Fifteen contemporary imizi represent the imizi that have moved into Gwabeni over the past 100 years.

\(^{34}\) I have a list of 27 imizi (comprising some 205 people) that are originally from Gwabeni but which are now permanently resident in a metropolitan centre, predominantly in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.
the rural umzi as a base for social reproduction. Henceforth, the rural umzi became a place where one's children could be left in the care of rural relatives - more recently, specifically that of their pensioned grandparents - where they would assist the latter with domestic chores and livestock herding responsibilities and attend the local primary school. It was also the place to which the umzi and lineage members who were away working as migrants 'in the city' and who were in most respects effectively urbanised, returned for holidays and ritual occasions.

If the rural umzi was becoming engaged primarily in social reproduction, then the emphases of space and place were very different to that required for agrarian economic production: for the latter, people needed space between imizi, for privacy and in order to reduce competition for key resources such as water and firewood. For the former, the emphasis fell on access and comfort: ease of access to the store at the Breakfastvlei Hotel for domestic consumer goods, and to the bus and taxi stop for transport needs; easy vehicular access to one's umzi (in case of emergency) and ready access for young children to attend the local creche and school (both in Nala section). Similarly, access by especially women to the church - also in Nala section - became a more important consideration in the (re)location of particularly female-headed imizi.

In an effort to make this essentially post-agrarian rural life more comfortable, those people who can afford to, have begun to invest some of their urban earnings in the infrastructure of the rural umzi itself: bigger and more expensive houses are being built, often with a face-brick exterior, and earnings are being employed in the procurement of rainwater tanks, comfortable furniture and domestic appliances. As field cultivation declined, the people who made attempts to cultivate domestic gardens found it necessary to invest in fencing to shield the produce of their gardens from the attention of unherded livestock that are free to roam around the village. Even garden production suffered, however, in the face of recurrent droughts and the changing lifestyle in Gwabeni, so that in 1995, I found that 58 per cent of the imizi in the village had abandoned garden cultivation entirely.
5. Conclusion

This chapter has described how the modified communal land tenure system prevalent in Gwabeni has been constrained by the natural environment (especially the steep topography of the area), and more specifically by the 'enclosure' of the village. Gwabeni is bounded by neighbouring freehold (and later state-owned) land in the only direction that arable and residential expansion may have been feasible, namely onto the flatter plateau area to the north of the village.

The 'enclosure' of the village and the subsequent overcrowding and landlessness experienced in Gwabeni has put the local resource base under considerable pressure. It has also led to far greater umzi mobility than might be expected, considering the material investment that an umzi has come to require: one strategy people have adopted has been for individuals and entire imizi to relocate out of specific local areas in which the natural resources have been exhausted. This relocation has occurred particularly at times when the sons of an umzi head take the opportunity to leave a more degraded village section and to set up their own imizi in better resourced areas, either in the village or further afield.

Another strategy adopted by a number of individuals and imizi has been to leave the village and rural area altogether and to settle in a metropolitan centre. The latter strategy has been an important factor in the increased socio-economic differentiation between imizi in the village and has complicated the management of local resources because of the communal system of membership conferred by birthright (or subsequently) allows such people to continue to have a stake in the affairs of these areas (and to graze their livestock on the communal rangeland) even when they are away for long periods, or even permanently.

The impact of limited arable land available to imizi in the village has been analysed. I argued that, in spite of the efforts of the village to prevent any subdivision of land holdings (by ensuring that each arable allocation was shared by the descendants of the man to whom the field was allocated), arable production went into a decline by the early 1960s. Declines in arable agriculture are also linked to the relatively frequent
occurrence of drought, increased soil erosion, institutional weakness\textsuperscript{35} and the inadequacy of state support for agricultural production in modified communal tenure areas.

The consequent re-orientation of rural livelihoods, which has been documented in other parts of Africa, can be described as a process of de-agrarianisation (Bryceson 1993). In Gwabeni, this process left residents with essentially three options: (a) migrate (i.e. ‘oscillate’) between town and village (b) move permanently to an urban centre or (c) adapt as best possible to a rurally-based (but not agriculture-centred) lifestyle. All these options, and various combinations of them, have been adopted by the different imizi in Gwabeni, with varying degrees of success. The net result has been a divergence of interests between imizi and individuals and an overall increase in social and economic heterogeneity in the village.

Overall, a number of fairly distinctive, but dynamic categories of imizi are discernible in Gwabeni. I argue that these imizi can be grouped in a way that generates insights into their respective capacities and interest with regard to making a contribution to the collective management of natural resources. The criteria for this grouping include the primary source(s) and reliability of umzi income and the overall employment and economic profile of the umzi. These criteria are informed by the stage of a particular umzi in the development cycle, and serve as a good indication of the orientation of the umzi and its members as either locally or outwardly oriented. Another important criterion, the social structure of the umzi is also linked to the development cycle. The social status or standing of an umzi and its members in the village, including the influence of the lineage to which an umzi and its members belong, are also important (if less easily quantifiable) aspects to be considered in developing an understanding of what contribution specific imizi are likely to make to collective resource management decisions.

In Chapter Four, I argued that contemporary institutions at village level lack sufficient

\textsuperscript{35} The integration of the agricultural activities of field cultivation and livestock grazing, requires effective institutions to regulate the behaviour of people and to mediate in disputes that may arise when, for example, livestock damage crops.
authority to sustain and implement local resource management decisions. This chapter has examined the measures that people in Gwabeni, in the absence of 'robust' local institutions, have adopted (individually and collectively) to deal with resource scarcity and degradation. I have also analysed how sustained pressure on local natural resources, and people's changing perceptions of arable production, has brought about a process of de-agrarianisation in Gwabeni, and alluded to the increasing social heterogeneity that has undermined efforts to manage natural resources on the commons. In the chapter that follows, emphasis is placed on describing the types of imizi in Gwabeni. I address the question why these imizi are collectively unwilling or unable to endorse and maintain 'robust' local institutions seeking to manage their common pool natural resources.
CHAPTER SIX
Social Heterogeneity and Collective Action in Resource Management

Introduction

The size and socio-economic characteristics of the resident population of Gwabeni (and those who return periodically to the village) are important variables in understanding local natural resource management practices in the village. Lawry (1990) argues that as rural areas and people are integrated into the wider, national and even global political economies, their degree of local social and economic differentiation increases. This differentiation poses particular challenges for the management of natural resources that are held in common at village level, because it results in people having widely divergent incentives for complying with these management systems.

For certain rural dwellers, their reliance on specific natural resources\(^1\) diminishes to the extent that the transaction costs of involving themselves in resource management systems becomes prohibitive and outweigh any benefits their participation in these systems might hold in store for them. Local institutions are not always in position to increase the overall incentive for a differentiated village and location population to engage in the management of shared resources.

In this chapter, I describe and analyse what I consider to be the significant categories of social difference and similarity at the level of umzi in Gwabeni, and provide reasons why these differences appear to undermine collective efforts aimed at managing common pool resources.

\(^1\) The perceived need to manage the use of natural resources in Gwabeni is graded by villagers according to a specific umzi's actual reliance on that resource, the perceived availability of a particular resource and according to which category of resident is primarily responsible for collecting and using this resource. Mud, which is a common resource used by women in especially the poorer imizi for the plastering of walls and floors, does not feature in any discussions concerning the management of natural resources in the village. On the contrary, strong opinions are voiced by both men and women about the state of water, grazing, firewood, and wilderness resources, specifically prickly pear and game. Other natural resources that people utilise are regarded as plentiful and thus as not in need of any management regime.
1. The demography of Gwabeni

Official population estimates for rural villages in the Eastern Cape are known to be inaccurate, partly because the methods used have been based on extrapolations of counts in a limited number of sample areas. One reason for the inaccuracy of these estimates is that counting an identifiable group of people who are 'normally resident' in the village, is made difficult by the high mobility of these people between rural and urban centres.

Official estimates of population are also inaccurate because of the suspicion and hostility shown by rural people towards census enumerators (DBSA 1985:2). This may result in enumerators being furnished with inaccurate data, since people are unsure how this information could be used by the government of the day. The manipulation of population data for political and economic ends is, of course, not unheard of: one obvious criterion for the allocation of the resources of the Ciskeian state to Tribal Authorities was the population estimates for each of these units. For this reason, it made sense for chiefs and headmen to inflate the numbers of people living under their jurisdiction, thereby misrepresenting the need for state resources in their areas.

Be that as it may, the estimated de facto population of Gwabeni village has been

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2 Possibly the least accurate part of one of these methods was the extensive use made of air photographs from which data is extracted concerning the number of dwellings or 'building structures' for all the rural villages in the Ciskei. Population figures were subsequently extrapolated from a 5 per cent sample of villages for the number of people per structure to establish a relationship between structures and population (DBSA 1985 Chapter 3).

3 Gwabeni is two hours by motor car from East London and about three hours from Port Elizabeth. Nevertheless, many urban-based people only return to the village at Christmas or Easter time or to attend ritual events and other ceremonies.

4 The phenomenon of inflating population statistics was observed during fieldwork in Gwabeni when the Amatola District Council sent a ‘development planning’ questionnaire to the village. The questionnaire, which made explicit reference to the long-awaited delivery of services, required the Residents’ Association committee in the village to provide details concerning the village population and the particular needs of the residents. Although it was clear that committee members did not know what the exact population of the village was, (they deferred to me to provide an estimate), they were not prepared to submit a figure of below 2 000 and a few members suggested giving the village population as 5 000, believing (probably correctly) that the higher the official number of residents that was on record, the more likely they were to get a response from the Council with regard to the meeting of their needs. After some discussion, the committee agreed to submit a figure of 2 000 as the permanent residents in the village, nearly ten times the actual resident population. Needless to say, this approach would not have promoted sound planning for, inter alia, the provision of infrastructure in the village.
pegged at 600 people (DBSA 1985) and 903 people (Setplan 1985). In contrast, I recorded a total of 227 people resident in the village at the time of my census of the sixty-seven occupied imizi in the village. This made for an mean of 3,4 people per umzi. While this figure suggests a radically smaller population than the official estimates, I recorded a further 451 people as the 'absent' (but bona fide) members of these imizi, which would constitute a total village population of some 678 people. It should be noted, however, that at no time are all of these people present in the village, nor are they ever likely to be, even over the festive season holiday. For one thing, the inconvenience caused by locally scarce natural resources (especially water and firewood) would probably keep many people away or restrict their visits to short periods.

Table 6.1. Gwabeni residents by age category (n=67)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE CATEGORY</th>
<th>NO. OF PEOPLE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than or equal to 6 years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 7 and 18 years</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 19 and 60 years</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 60 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two features of the resident population of Gwabeni, as presented in Table 6.1, are immediately apparent: Firstly, this population is dominated by the young and the aged. Fully 45 per cent of those in the village are eighteen years old or younger, with the mean age of the category 7-18 years, a youthful 10,8 years. The mean age for males in the category 7-18 years old is 11,7 years, while for females the mean age is 10,1 years. For both boys and girls in this category, there is only one person older than fifteen years and this person is a sixteen year old male. This underscores just how young this category (7-18 years) of the resident population of Gwabeni actually is. The youthfulness of this group is to be expected, since an important reason for the

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5 This census, which involved administering a detailed questionnaire schedule to every occupied umzi, took place over a three month period in 1995. This period did not include either the Easter or Christmas holidays. As mentioned above, one questionnaire could not be used.
The presence of this number of youths in the village is to take advantage of the primary schooling opportunities and the safe environment for children in Gwaben. The vast majority of these children are enrolled at Gwabeni Primary School. Once children have advanced past the primary school level, they often leave the village to attend a secondary school in an urban centre. The remaining few children attend Sotinini Secondary School in Horton village.

The aged, or those in the over 60 years old category, comprise a further 24 per cent of the local population. The aged category include some people who are considerably older than sixty and the mean age for this category is 67.7 years. The remaining 31 per cent of the population of Gwabeni is between the ages of nineteen and sixty, and can thus be considered potentially economically active.

A second feature of the Gwabeni population, as can be seen in Table 6.2. below, is that although males are outnumbered by females only marginally overall (at a ratio of 1:1.06), it is significant that in the 'mature' categories (19 years and over), the ratio of males to females is 53:72 (or nearly 1:1.4). There are thus noticeably more 'mature' women than men in the village.

Table 6.2. Gwabeni residents by age and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE CATEGORY</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than or equal to 6 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 7 and 18 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 19 and 60 years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 60 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are conspicuously more males in the second category (7 to 18 years) who are present in the village than females and this is possibly because young girls are more useful to their parents in the urban environment, where they help with domestic tasks. In Gwabeni, boys are expected to help with the herding of livestock and, depending on the structure and size of the umzi, with the collection of water and firewood as well.
Of the 70 people in the category nineteen to sixty years old, there are only 13 people under thirty years old. This group consists of 10 females and 3 males. The important role played by females in maintaining the rural umzi is highlighted here: these young women are expected to fulfil the range of domestic chores, such as collecting water and gathering firewood, cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and caring for younger children and older adults in the umzi. The data also reflect the tendency for 'mature' women to outnumber 'mature' men in the village. This is the result of the high number of these men being resident away from the village, often employed or seeking employment in urban centres. 

In total, there are 27 males between the ages of 30 and 60 years resident in Gwabeni at the time of the survey. In the absence of a headman in Gwabeni, some of these men, together with a small number of the men older than sixty years and, to a lesser extent, a few of the senior women, are responsible for managing the affairs of the village in general, including the management of natural resources.

As will be seen below, several of these men (aged between 30 and 60 years), themselves unemployed and not of pensionable age (65 years for men), are members of economically marginal imizi involved in ekeing out an existence. This fact tends to undermine their individual and collective status and thus influence in both the deliberations concerning administrative matters in the village and the implementation of decisions made during these deliberations.

2. Umzi size and structure

As discussed above, the fluctuating number of people resident in each umzi is an important variable impacting on the levels of natural resource utilisation. A second key variable which influences these patterns of natural resource consumption is the fluid household structure in the village. A number of factors are important here: whether

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6 There were a total of 152 men in the category 19 to 60 years old, who were regarded as members of village imizi but who were absent from the village at the time of the census. This means that only 20 per cent of the men in this category were resident in the village when the census was conducted (1995).
there is an able-bodied woman present in a particular umzi who can be burdened with the responsibility of collecting water and gathering firewood; whether there are young children who can assist in these tasks and who can (if they are young boys) play a key role in herding livestock. Where these categories of people are not present, such as in imizi comprising only men, especially older men, the labour needed for these tasks may be requested from a neighbouring umzi, another party may be paid to render this service (i.e. the service would be ‘outsourced’) or use of the resource may be substituted entirely, i.e. paraffin for firewood and a rainwater tank substituting for having to collect water from a distant dam or spring.

To elucidate these issues, a typology of imizi is constructed and discussed below. This typology is not set in stone: as was pointed in the Introductory chapter, if anything characterises rural imizi in most parts of southern Africa, it is their dynamism and fluidity in response to economic and social exigencies (see Spiegel 1990). The typology should rather be seen as an explanatory tool for identifying constraints to collective action at village level. This is because the various numerically significant ‘types’ of imizi, which differ, inter alia, in respect of their social structure and resource7 endowments, have different impacts on both the natural resource base and the resource management decision-making processes in the village.

Type A is the most common umzi structure in Gwabeni, with 27 imizi (or 40 per cent of those occupied) exhibiting this pattern. This type comprises a female headed household, often with the head being an elderly widow.8 The umzi is in receipt of one

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7 Here, I am referring to economic resources (including cash, access to pensions and livestock) and infrastructural assets, such as rainwater tanks and paraffin/gas stoves.

8 Niehaus makes the point that the ‘seniority of women in many households does not in itself indicate household headship or matrifocality...... [rather] to be defined as women-headed, a household must have a woman as the decision-maker, ‘who takes major or total responsibility for the care and well-being of the domestic unit’ [quoting Preston-Whyte (1988:59)]. Senior women such as pensioners and grandmothers may have little domestic authority and influence in decision-making’ (Niehaus 1994:118). The authority of senior (widowed) women in Gwabeni varied from umzi to umzi but appeared to be substantial in practically all of these ‘Type A’ imizi. Researching these issues of domestic authority and decision-making for every umzi in the village was beyond the scope of this thesis.
(or exceptionally two) pensions. The household may include some of the head's own offspring, but certainly includes one or more of her grandchildren.

MamTshawe's umzi:  

MamTshawe is a 65 year old pensioner and the head of an umzi in Bhabbo section of Gwabeni village. She lives with her two grandsons (the sons of two of her daughters), both of whom are aged 14 years and scholars at Gwabeni Primary School. MamTshawe has four daughters, all of whom reside elsewhere: two of them live and work in Port Elizabeth, one lives and works in East London and the fourth daughter is 'married' in Gobozana, near King Williams Town. Her first-born, a son, passed away in 1994.

As newcomers to the village in the 1940s, MamTshawe's parents were not granted arable land in Gwabeni. MamTshawe married a man from Ngcabasa, near Middledrift, and went to live there. When her husband absconded sometime later, she left her five children in the care of her affines and found domestic work

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9 Receipt of a pension usually meant that a woman was 60 years of age or over and a man was 65 or over, but those receiving disability pensions could, of course be younger than these ages. A total of six people (all women) were in receipt of disability pensions in the village during the survey. Their ages were 59, 59, 54, 52, 50 and 38 years respectively.

10 In all these diagrams, the encircling, dotted line denotes those present in the umzi during my 1995 census. A hatched circle or triangle indicates a pension recipient, while a black circle or triangle indicates that the person is in full-time employment.
in Peddie town. As they were also struggling to make ends meet, her parents-in-law decided to ‘bring’ the children to her and, with her own parents having passed away, she placed them in the care of her sister in Gwabeni. MamTshawe moved to East London with her employer and became a migrant worker, seeing her children for two weeks a year. She later retired to the village, and her brother, who lived in Alice, supported the umzi which she became head of in Gwabeni. MamTshawe managed, even after she became an old age pensioner, to secure ‘piece jobs’ on the various drought relief/rural development projects initiated and sponsored by the Department of Agriculture in the village.

Without an allocation of arable land, the umzi previously made do with cultivating a vegetable garden to supplement their diet. Although they later abandoned the garden because of the recurrent drought conditions in the village, MamTshawe took advantage of the rains in 1995 to cultivate vegetables in her garden again. At present, the only livestock owned by this umzi are a pig and three chickens. MamTshawe uses paraffin by preference but when her supply runs out, she makes use of firewood as fuel. She gathers firewood on and around the Breakfastvlei Outspan with other women from the village but claims that even in this more recently accessible area, supplies of firewood are diminishing. Her two grandsons help with domestic chores like washing dishes and fetching water, but MamTshawe does almost everything else around the home herself.

Although her daughters sometimes bring groceries with them when they visit the village, the umzi is heavily dependent on MamTshawe’s old age pension. She has to go to East London to receive her pension, which is costly in terms of transport and sometimes accommodation when there is a delay in the pay-out process. Even though her pension allows her to purchase most of the domestic necessities of her umzi, they still make regular use of the range of resources available on the commons, including water, firewood, imifino (wild vegetables), prickly pear and mud, the latter for the plastering of walls and (mixed with cattle dung) of floors.

MamTshawe is not aware of any regulations concerning the use of any of these natural resources. She says local people do not have much interest in resource management, except when the government pays them to work on conservation projects. Although she recognises their worth in terms of supplementing local incomes, MamTshawe is dismissive of the impact that these various conservation projects have in conserving or rehabilitating resources. Clearly an able and competent (elderly) woman, MamTshawe suggests that as a female headed umzi
(and being without sons), her *umzi* does not have any real influence on the way in which village institutions manage the allocation and use of resources in the village. About her conduct in meetings, she told me: “I only listen. I don’t stand up and answer or challenge anything.” (She might have added that the fact of her *umzi* being without arable land, a legacy of not being a member of one of the dominant ‘founding’ lineages in the village, also plays a role in this regard.)

MamThembu's *umzi*:

MamThembu is a 64 year old pensioner and widowed head of an *umzi* in Nqwebebana. She used to work as a domestic in Grahamstown and retired to Gwabeni in 1989. She now lives with two of her daughters-in-law and seven grandchildren between the ages of three and thirteen years. Four of the children are scholars in Gwabeni and another three attend the creche in the village.

These ten people are supported primarily by MamThembu’s old age pension provided by the state and by remittances from her two sons to their wives. Her oldest daughter, Nosisi, remits money to her occasionally. MamThembu sometimes sells pigs in the village to augment her pension, but only irregularly. This *umzi* spends the bulk of its income on domestic necessities, namely food, clothes and paraffin.

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11 In 1996, this *umzi* relocated to the Outspan sites.
MamThembu's deceased husband had had access to an arable field at Dreyini. MamThembu took over this field upon her husband's death in 1960. She last had it ploughed in 1976 and is adamant that she does not have to defer to her sons regarding the cultivation of this field. Nowadays, instead of field cultivation, she cultivates maize, pumpkins and melons in a garden adjacent to her home.

The *umzi* owns six cattle, five sheep (four of the sheep are owned by her third son, Lethu), one pig and ten chickens. Her three grandsons (aged 13, 11, 11 years respectively) are responsible for the cattle and sheep, supervised by MamThembu. She looks after the pigs and chickens.

The *umzi* also owns a rainwater tank which constitutes a significant investment in terms of domestic time-saving and health (except, of course, during droughts). It allows them to use rainwater, rather than pump or dam water for drinking, cooking and for the washing of white clothes. Mamthembu, her daughters-in-law and the boys still collect water on a daily basis for washing other clothes and for other domestic needs. Members of the *umzi* rely on firewood as their primary source of fuel for cooking purposes, but also use paraffin and gas stoves. They use paraffin for lighting their home. Twice a week, the three women and three boys take turns gathering firewood in the forest area around the village. MamThembu remembers that previously there was a rule that no axes should be used to gather firewood (i.e. only dry wood was to be gathered), but now there are no rules in respect of gathering firewood.

The *umzi* makes extensive use of a wide range of other natural resources on the village commons. These include saplings for building, mud, thatching grass, *imifino*, prickly pear and medicinal plants. The boys hunt casually and collect honey wherever they can.

Being married into one of a handful of predominant ('founding') lineages in the village, in this case a Mabhele lineage, means that MamThembu has a greater influence on the affairs of the village, relative to many other women in Gwabeni. Because of her long absence from the village, however, she is not among those who appear to be party to key decisions on matters of concern to the entire village. Rather, she has thrown her time and energy into the committee planning (and latterly, executing) the move of people to the Outspan sites area. She is, in fact, secretary of the Outspan sites committee (discussed in Chapter Seven) and
shows a keen grasp of affairs in the village in general and of the Outspan sites section in particular.

Type B consists of male-headed *imizi*, in receipt of one or two pensions. These *imizi* include the wife of the head, one or more of their offspring and some grandchildren. There were ten (15 per cent) *imizi* in Gwabeni which exhibit this domestic structure. Most of these *imizi* have very little impact on decision-making around natural resource management in Gwabeni, as the majority of them consist of people too frail to attend meetings in the village.

The umzi of K.S.: 

This umzi in Nala section consists of K.S., his wife, Nowethu, one of their sons (44) and four of their grandchildren (three girls and one boy between the ages of six and thirteen. K.S. (81) and Nowethu (72) are both pensioners. Their son is unemployed at present and does small ‘jobs’ around the village. All the grandchildren are scholars in Gwabeni. Three other sons reside in Port Elizabeth (two of them are employed and married, the third is still at school) while their daughter lives in Cape Town. K.S.’s umzi is the senior umzi of the S. lineages in the village. The S. lineages are members of the Khala clan and as such, they tend to associate and support the other Khala clan members in the village.
Previously, K.S. worked in Johannesburg, Cape Town and latterly in Port Elizabeth for an industrial company for 18 years. One of his sons now works for the same company. K.S. eventually retired to Gwabeni, where his wife had been residing with his parents.

The umzi shares access to the arable land of K.S.'s deceased father with K.S.'s two brothers who are resident in the village. The brothers have never ploughed together and the land was last ploughed in 1976. K.S.'s umzi does not cultivate a garden. They own four goats, five sheep, five pigs and three chickens. K.S.'s grandson, Ncedo, is responsible for looking after the goats and sheep, while his wife, Nowethu, looks after the pigs and chickens. The grandchildren collect water on a daily basis from the big dam in the valley below them, even though the umzi has a rainwater tank. The grand-daughters are responsible for gathering firewood and do most of the domestic work around the umzi.

Both K.S. and Nowethu are in increasingly poor health. K.S. travels to Port Elizabeth regularly to get medical attention. He complains that his (urban-based) children do not contribute financially to the education and care of their children resident at his umzi.

Because of his ill-health, K.S. is only able to attend community meetings infrequently. He is too old and too ill to be interested in the temporary employment opportunities offered by the various resource conservation projects. He regards the younger generation [of men] as 'inactive' and as people who must be induced by cash incentives to do the important tasks that need to be done collectively by the men in the village.

He is adamant that Tyefu Location is one piece of land which cannot be demarcated by villages and fenced separately. As a result, he is sceptical of proposed plans to fence the grazing land of Gwabeni so as to better manage the grazing resources.
Tamkulu (85) is an old age pensioner who lives in Bhobho section with his wife, Nofirst (69), who is also a pensioner, and their twin grandsons, aged three years. Tamkulu's daughter (the mother of the twins) works as a housekeeper in Mdantsane. The umzi is dependent on the two old age pensions it receives from the state.

Tamkulu's umzi does not have access to arable land, but he and Nofirst do have a garden in which they cultivate crops of maize and beans. Besides caring for their young grandchildren, Tamkulu and Nofirst are responsible for collecting water from the nearest dam as they do not have a rainwater tank. Nofirst gathers firewood, their primary source of fuel for cooking purposes, ehlatini (in the forest) around the village. Like most people in the village, they use paraffin for lighting purposes. Increasingly, they rely on ilima (workteams) of young girls (aged between eight and fourteen years) to collect firewood for them. These workteams are paid with tea and sandwiches. They prefer to ask young girls, because young men expect to be paid in cash to collect firewood for them.

The umzi owns three goats, one pig and five chickens and the labour involved in looking after these livestock is provided by Tamkulu and Nofirst. Neither of these two are able or have the inclination to attend village meetings, which are held in Nala section (about 50 minutes return walk from their home) on a regular basis.

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12 The arable field of Tamkulu was one of those mentioned earlier which changed hands during his absence from the village.
Type C consists of a male headed *umzi* in receipt of one pension (exceptionally two) in which the head lives alone, with one kinsperson or with a domestic helper. This category comprises eight *imizi* (12 per cent) and includes those *imizi* in which the heads were long-term migrant workers who spent the best part of two to three decades away from the village. In that time, they established urban homes and raised their children in places other than Gwabeni. Some of them returned to the village upon retirement, leaving their respective wives in urban centres, because the latter who saw no reason to leave the city to return to an under-resourced rural village. Their wives visit them for short periods in the village or see them when they go to town to collect their pensions or to get medical attention. Others chose to return to Gwabeni, because their wives had passed away and their offspring had all established their own urban-based homes. Two men in this group had never married and returned to the village upon retirement.

The case of Madoda's *umzi*:

Madoda is a 71 year old pensioner and head of an *umzi* in Nala section of Gwabeni. He lives with his youngest son, Sizwe (30) who is occasionally employed to do 'piece jobs' around the village. Madoda's wife and six of his eight offspring - they have four sons and four daughters - live in Port Elizabeth. The other two children live in Johannesburg.

Madoda was born and grew up in Gwabeni. His father was a relatively wealthy man and had sent Madoda, his first-born, to school in Healdtown and
Grahamstown, where Madoda completed his Junior Certificate. Madoda left Gwabeni in the late 1940s in order to work in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. He met his wife in Port Elizabeth and they were married in Cape Town in 1954. For the period that Madoda worked in Cape Town, his wife resided in Gwabeni. When he joined the South African Police in Port Elizabeth in 1955, she moved there to live with him. He was transferred to Paterson (in 1958) and then to Grahamstown (in 1960). His wife continued to reside in Port Elizabeth. He resigned in 1973 and took on a post as municipal constable in Grahamstown before being transferred back to Port Elizabeth to be with his family. When he retired in 1986 and came 'back home' to his umzi in Gwabeni, his wife and (by then, adult) children opted to stay in Port Elizabeth. His wife only makes brief visits to the village now.

Needless to say, circumstances in the village are very different now to those Madoda remembered from his youth: then, people had plenty of livestock and were able to plough their lands and harvest successfully. They lived happily and 'only needed to buy coffee, tea and sugar.' Upon returning to the village, Madoda found the fact that his father's livestock and arable land had been taken over by his father's oldest son by his second marriage (i.e. Madoda's step-brother) to be a constant source of irritation. He has to be content with cultivating a vegetable garden and realised that he would have to do a 'lot of shopping' as he couldn't rely solely on the produce from his garden.

He and his son rely on Madoda's old age pension for their everyday needs. Madoda does all the housework himself and complains that 'children of today do not help financially or around the house.' He says that 'Sizwe is absent most of the time and it is as if I am alone here. I have to cook and do everything for myself.' Instead of his children sending him money, they expect him to give them financial support. He currently has 13 goats and 25 chickens. He personally looks after these livestock.

Madoda's rainwater tank is worn out and he collects rainwater in plastic drums. He also has to collect water from a nearby dam himself. He does not need to

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13 Like the elderly members of many other imizi in Gwabeni, Madoda and his wife are separated in part because they receive their old age pensions in different centres, i.e. Gwabeni and Port Elizabeth respectively. Both of them have been warned that they could 'lose' their pensions if they were to relocate across the former Ciskei boundary, something they can ill afford. Another reason that Madoda's wife stays away from Gwabeni is that she belongs to a church which is apparently frowned upon by the majority of people in the village.
gather firewood as he only uses paraffin for his domestic fuel needs. He makes use of 'commons' natural resources, including mud for plastering, grass for thatched ceilings, *imifino* (wild vegetables), *itolofiya* (prickly pear) and honey. His son hunts in the vicinity of the village.

As a devout Christian, Madoda does not conduct 'traditional' rituals, nor does he eat the meat of livestock ritually slaughtered by other people in the village. He does not drink any alcohol either, and thus does not socialise with the many other Gwabeni men on the verandah of the Breakfastvlei Hotel. Perhaps partially as a result of his more than 35 year (virtual) absence from the village, Madoda appears to be fairly peripheral to the decision-making processes in the village. He is nevertheless eager to voice his opinions during 'community' meetings but these are not always well received, as he told me, "You saw that when I stand up in a meeting, everyone starts to mumble, mumble......they don't like me, because I am a straightforward man. Me and......, they don't like us. All they do is backbite people."

Thus far, the three 'types' described account for 45 (or 67 per cent) of the *imizi* in Gwabeni. As the case studies have argued, most of the heads of these *imizi* are fairly peripheral in respect of overall decision-making at village level, having only a minimal impact on deliberations in these fora. 14 Many of them are on the periphery of these fora by choice, in that their livelihoods are pension-based and thus secure, and because the village Residents' Association is not able to offer them anything substantial by way of improvement in their living conditions. 15 Indeed, efforts to raise funds for communal projects in the village (such as building a new creche) inevitably turn to the *imizi* in receipt of pensions for the majority of the required funds. This is not always well-received by the people in question, many of which are already under considerable financial strain because of the numbers of people they support.

14 Certain individuals within these *imizi* (i.e not the heads) are active in village level institutions.

15 People in Gwabeni complain that they are always last in line in respect of being granted funding for community projects by the non-statutory Peddie Development Forum and latterly, the Transitional Representative Council in Peddie. One cause of their inability to secure funds is their persistent absence from meetings of these fora, even when applications for projects are sought and funding allocated. A key reason for this absence is that the Residents' Association committee members in Gwabeni are unable to raise the R10-00 return taxi fare from the cash-strapped *imizi* in the village in order to attend these meetings in Peddie town more regularly and thereby stand a chance of securing funding for various development initiatives in the village.
The remaining 22 (33 per cent) imizi in the village mirror the three umzi types described above, with only one significant difference: that they do not have access to old age pensions (there is one exception - see below) and are consequently reliant on other sources of income. One interesting feature of these remaining imizi is that 13 (19.5 per cent) of them have resident male heads. Of these thirteen, only one umzi head has secure, permanent employment and can be described as financially well-off.

The other 12 umzi heads are all reliant for their livelihoods on combinations of local piece work (‘jobs’), building alterations and renovations, remittances from urban centres or livestock herding. Their lack of secure employment means that these men are not always present in the village, as they visit urban centres to hear of job opportunities, or find ‘jobs’ in other villages in Peddie District. When they are doing ‘jobs’ for other people around the village or location, they cannot be relied upon to attend general meetings in the village. As some of them serve on the Residents’ Association committee, their absence thwarts the attempts of other residents to debate issues (relating to resource management or other administrative affairs in the village) and to reach agreement about implementing any decisions that might be taken.¹⁶

Nevertheless, in the absence of any other body of senior men, it is this group of unemployed (or sporadically employed) men that are most influential when decisions relating to natural resource management in the village are made. Not that any decisive natural resource management-related initiatives have been started: the fact that these men are in dire need of money to support their families and themselves, means that they are unwilling to start any resource management projects that will involve men (including themselves) in the village providing their labour free of charge.¹⁷ In part, the long legacy of government funded projects has set a precedent that makes it illogical

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¹⁶ Two elderly men complained bitterly to me that the most pro-active young (35 year old) ‘community leader’ in Gwabeni, who had been unemployed for practically all of the past four years, had left the village to take up a job in King Williams Town. They felt that without his energy and leadership, “nothing will be done in the village.” The same young man told me that he was totally frustrated with the apathy of the people in Gwabeni who “wanted everything to be done for them.”

¹⁷ A ‘robust’ local institution might, in theory, be able to raise funds locally in order to pay people who provided their labour for natural resource management projects, so that they are not required to volunteer their labour free of charge. The Residents’ Association in Gwabeni has had no success in this regard, for the reasons described below.
for villagers to initiate projects themselves. In this way, an initiative aimed at retrieving
superfluous fencing poles along the Peddie - Committees Drift road (where the fence
and poles had been replaced) failed, partly because these men could not afford to
sacrifice their time doing unpaid work. In the same way, they are unable to persuade
other people (for example, younger men) to volunteer their services for locally-initiated
resource management projects, because they themselves are reluctant to work on
these projects. As a result, very few locally-initiated projects are started and, during my
fieldwork period (1994-1997), none can claim to have achieved the modest targets that
they set for themselves.

By contrast, work parties of young men are still relied upon to volunteer their services
to dig graves in preparation for funerals and to assist with the collection of firewood
before a ritual occasion. Most other tasks relating to the use, management or regulation
of natural resources are done by individuals themselves, or by men employed to do
them. These instances of the commercialisation and individualisation of everyday
natural resource-related tasks, subverts attempts by people and institutions, like the
Residents' Association in Gwabeni, to make a visible and proactive contribution to the
management of these resources.

I found that only two (3 per cent) imizi fit the more orthodox model of a migrant male
umzi head who is absent from the village, and whose wife and children remain behind

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18 One man, who is a bona fide member of the Gwabeni community, resides in Peddie town,
subsisting off his disability pension. He nevertheless spends most of his week days in the village,
tending to his vegetable garden. In 1995, he managed to persuade a few of the senior men to assist
him in retrieving the fencing poles in question for use in 'community projects.' The only way he could
get (about seven of) these men to assist him was by telling them that he would keep a record of the
hours worked by each man and they would be paid the next time a resource rehabilitation-type project
was 'brought to the village by the abalimi (agrucultural extension officers). Over a period of about three
days' work, they realised that he was not keeping a very close check on who was working and who was
not always present. They also realised that other people in the village might not agree to their being
paid with unrelated project money at some point in the future. The work party collapsed after about
forty poles had been retrieved.

19 One example of this is the young women who served as secretary of the Residents'
Association (i.e. someone who was regarded by Gwabeni residents as a 'community leader'), told me
that she would "never" join other people in starting a community poultry project, because she "wouldn't
like to work with a group of people in this village. They are just a lot of trouble." Another example is the
educated and wealthy man, from an influential lineage in the village, who makes no contribution to the
affairs of Gwabeni. When I asked him about this, he told me that "People here don't want to work
together as a community. They don't want people like me at their meetings, because when I advise
them, they say I want to be the boss of everything. Our people don't want to be helped......[only] when
money is made available, [do] people take notice. It is best just to keep quiet and let them get on with it."
in the village, supposedly dependent on remittances from the head. In both cases, however, the wives in question are reasonably financially independent: one receives a pension and the other runs a successful spaza shop in the village. The second woman is one of the few women who is confident enough to express an opinion during village meetings. She is influential in the activities of various women’s groups in the village and allows her ‘guest’ rondavel to be used for village meetings during bad weather. Her influence in the general administration of the village is constrained by the fact that she is married and not always willing to ‘speak for’ her husband at village meetings.

A further seven (10.5 per cent) imizi are nominally female headed, although four of these imizi are heavily dependent on remittances from urban-based male kin. Another umzi head (aged 53 years), who resides with her 40 year old brother and three grandchildren, is employed at the Day Care centre in Gwabeni. The last two imizi in this group consist of young women with one child each. Both of these women sell goods, such as clothes, fruit and vegetables. One of them runs a hair salon from her home. Both imizi are amongst the poorest in the village and rely on remittances from urban-based kin. Because of their impoverished state, both women are able to put forward a strong case for temporary employment on the intermittent resource management projects conducted in and around the village.

3. The socio-economic stratification of imizi in Gwabeni

**Formal employment opportunities**

Reasons for the high degree of socio-economic stratification in the villages of Tyefu Location include the very limited ‘formal sector’ job opportunities that exist in these villages and the varying degrees of success that people enjoy in generating other local livelihoods. Only 12 people resident in Gwabeni (or 17 per cent of the able-bodied) are formally employed. These 12 people generate a total monthly income of about R8 800,

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20 These include Manyano (Wesley Methodist Church) prayer groups, burial societies, imigalelo clubs (rotating credit associations), year-end grocery buying clubs, and groups of women who volunteer to help during preparations for funerals and other rituals.
with 68 per cent of this generated by the members of one umzi. These 12 people\(^{21}\) are:

- a husband (47 years) and wife (43) who are school teachers in the neighbouring villages of Ndwayana and Qamnyana respectively\(^*\);
- a man (31) employed as a labourer on the Double Drift game reserve\(^*\);
- a woman (31) who is employed at the Ripplemead orange factory near the village;
- a woman (53) employed at the creche in Gwabeni\(^*\);
- a woman (47) who works at the creche in Gwabeni;
- a woman (53) employed in the kitchen at the Breakfastvlei Hotel\(^*\);
- a woman (38) employed in domestic service in Gwabeni;
- a woman (48) in domestic service in Gwabeni\(^*\);
- a woman (32) in domestic service in Gwabeni;
- a woman (21) temporarily employed as an assistant supervisor on the state-sponsored fencing project in Debe Nek and\(^*\);
- a woman (24) temporarily employed in a similar capacity on the fencing project at Hlosini;

The data above show that only two men resident in the village are in permanent employment. The rest of the men in Gwabeni are dependent on their savings (sometimes in the form of livestock) accumulated through periods of migrant labour, piece work around the village (see below), the 'formal' employment (detailed above) of their wives or other kin attached to their imizi, or on state transfers (i.e. old age pensions and disability grants) to themselves or to those in their imizi. Cash remittances from urban-based umzi members in most cases are low and irregular, but remittances nevertheless play a vital role in the physical survival of the marginal\(^{23}\) imizi.

Despite the fact that 10 women are employed, i.e. five times as many as employed men, the women in the village are as affected by the chronic lack of employment opportunities in the area as the men. The consequences of such high levels of

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\(^{21}\) Soon after the census, three of these women lost their jobs: the woman employed at the hotel resigned, citing insufficient remuneration, while the fencing projects that employed the two young women ended, leaving them without work.

\(^{22}\) An \(^*\) indicates that the imizi in question have no other reliable source of income.

\(^{23}\) I use 'marginal' to refer to the socio-economic status of the imizi that do not have access to regular and reliable cash income from either a pension or from the income of a formally employed resident or absent member. Marginal imizi in Gwabeni often have to rely on the charity of other people for their daily subsistence needs.
unemployment include a village depleted of its young people who have left for the metropolitan areas in search of work, and a resident population that is overwhelmingly outward-focussed and dependent in respect of economic activities and umzi incomes on outside inputs. These two factors alone make collective action in the management of natural resources, which are not central to the livelihoods of all imizi, extremely difficult to achieve. Underpinning these factors is a village economy which exhibits a marked dependence on the state pensions of the elderly and disabled.

**Access to state transfers**

Access to 'formal sector' employment is one measure of stratification in the village, as evidenced by the fact that this category of work is limited to only 12 of the 70 people in the 'mature' age category (i.e. 19 to 60 years old). But this is not the only measure, nor even the most important one: a key index of socio-economic stratification in Gwabeni is whether an umzi has access to state pension disbursements, and how many dependents are supported by each pension. In 1997, these old age pensions are valued at R470-00 (per month) and are paid out every two months. Disability grants are of equivalent value and are also disbursed bimonthly. In many cases, as has been found for imizi in rural areas elsewhere in the country (see May 1995:23), these pensions and grants form the primary and most reliable form of umzi income and are a critical component of the multiple income bundles of the majority of the imizi in Gwabeni. Table 6.3. below lists the relative access that Gwabeni imizi enjoy to this source of income.

**Table 6.3. Imizi and pensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS TO PENSIONS</th>
<th>NO. OF IMIZI</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>MEAN IMIZI SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No pensions</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One pension</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two pensions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3. shows that 69 per cent of the imizi in the village are recipients of at least one
pension. A total of 58 pensions are paid out bimonthly to Gwabeni imizi. At 1997 pension values, this means that R27 260 per month is being disbursed to imizi in the village by way of state pensions, or more than three times the amount coming into the village through formal employment. Table 6.3 also shows that a positive correlation exists between the number of pensions per umzi and the number of people per umzi that are resident in the village. This is indicative of the key role that pensions have come to play in the economy and social structure of Gwabeni: the imizi with access to two pensions can be considered to be in a relatively secure financial position - certainly in relation to the imizi without access to pensions - and are able to provide reliable support to a greater number of dependents. Hence they tend to have more resident members than the other imizi.

Of the 21 imizi that do not receive pension payments, four imizi are not in the marginal category. These four include the husband and wife team of teachers and the umzi in which a woman is employed at the creche in Gwabeni (both referred to above). The third umzi has a considerable cash income remitted by the Port Elizabeth-based head of the umzi. A fourth umzi is headed by the woman employed at the Breakfastvlei Hotel. Although she left this job in 1995, she has been able to support her umzi through livestock sales and with the money remitted to her by her urban-based son. This leaves the resident members of 17 marginal imizi reliant on income from sources other than pensions.

**Economically marginal imizi**

The sources of income for these 17 marginal imizi does not vary greatly: Eight of them rely on piece ‘jobs’ for their incomes; five rely on remittances from urban kin and four imizi rely on a combination of ‘jobs’ and remittances. These remittances are not paid monthly, but rather ‘sometimes’, and vary between the sums of R50-00 and R200-00 at a time. Among these marginal imizi, three people (all women) own small spaza shops in the village. One man’s income derives from the sale of his own livestock when

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24 Since old age pensions and disability grants have the same value, the latter have been included under the general rubric of ‘pensions’. This does not include any pensions from the private sector which individuals in the village might receive at the time of their retirement. To my knowledge, no-one is currently receiving such a pension, even though some of the older men claim to have received a pension payout when they retired.
in need of cash and from his ‘job’, which consists of herding the cattle of other imizi; another man sells herbal medicines for livestock and does some manual labour, while the piece ‘jobs’ of another man consist of making and selling axe handles, repairing kraals and digging pit-latrines. Two men from different marginal imizi are builders who undertake building ‘jobs’ for people around the village and sometimes in neighbouring villages. Since mid-1996, fencing people’s new residential sites and garden plots on the Outspan has also provided ‘jobs’ for a number of individual men. What the examples mentioned above indicate is the extent to which these people rely on their right to exploit the common pool resources available around the village, in order to survive.

Given that these imizi have no reliable source of income, it is not surprising that the resident members of these imizi are few in number and that the mean number of umzi members for these 17 imizi is two. As Table 6.4. shows, five of these imizi consist of men living alone. Another two imizi consist of only two men (in one case, two brothers, in the other, a father and son) residing together. Six of the 17 (35 per cent) marginal imizi are female-headed.

Table 6.4. Resident members of marginal imizi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO. OF RESIDENTS</th>
<th>NO. OF IMIZI</th>
<th>NO. OF FEMALES</th>
<th>NO. OF MALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted above, three of the female-headed imizi rely on remittances from urban-based kin. In all three cases, these cash remittances come from the umzi head’s son, brother, and both son and brother, respectively, i.e., close kinsmen are investing in the rural sector and in an umzi in which they undoubtedly have longer term interests.
Livestock ownership as a measure of socio-economic stratification

Differential levels of investment in livestock have often been regarded as an indicator of the economic stratification which exists in the rural sector of the country (De Lange et al. 1994). Although informants claim that the numbers of livestock in Gwabeni has declined overall since the late 1970s, mainly as a result of the prolonged drought, the degree to which imizi are stratified according to livestock holdings, and the absolute numbers of livestock, has implications for the management of particularly grazing and water resources in the village. A closer scrutiny of the livestock holdings by umzi in the village, indicates that only eight imizi (12 per cent) own no livestock at all. Another eight imizi (12 per cent) have very modest livestock holdings, with a total of 3 goats (owned by 2 imizi), 11 pigs and 24 chickens between them. In total then, 21 per cent of the imizi, make no use of the grazing resources in the village and another 3 per cent (the 2 imizi with a sum of 3 goats) make very minimal use of these resources.

Table 6.5. Total livestock holdings in the village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIVESTOCK TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL IN GWABENI</th>
<th>NO. OF IMIZI WITH</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5. illustrates the uneven ownership of particularly cattle and sheep in Gwabeni.

25 Livestock also have an impact on soil management and arable land-use.

26 Livestock holdings are by no means as static as this section suggests: After three seasons of good rains, imizi in Gwabeni are in the process of rebuilding their livestock herds; people are not averse to slaughtering one or more of their sheep during the Festive season; the numbers of especially pigs and poultry fluctuated on a weekly basis; also, people are concerned about the number of cattle, goats and sheep that have been stolen by 'syndicates' from outside the District. Nevertheless, the patterns of ownership give some indication of socio-economic strata in the village over the long-term.

27 A total of 51 goats and 23 cattle owned by Gwabeni residents have been sent to farms in the vicinity of Alice and near Wesley in Peddie District, where there is more grazing and they can be looked after by kinsmen. Two cattle were sent to Ripplemead (on the Keiskamma River and about four kilometres from Gwabeni) because the owner, an elderly widow who lives alone, does not have anyone to look after them in Gwabeni.
with 70 per cent and 66 per cent of all imizi not owning these types of livestock respectively. Only six of the 20 imizi (or 9 per cent of all imizi) that own cattle have more than five of these livestock units. One umzi that owns 16 head of cattle has them taken care of on a farm in Alice District, while another umzi has chosen to loan its two cattle to someone in Ripplemead village close to Gwabeni. This means that there are a total of 70 cattle that are actually in the village. The mean cattle holdings (including the cattle not held in Gwabeni) for these 20 imizi is 4.4 units.

Although the vegetation around Gwabeni was previously deemed to be unsuitable for sheep, the ‘opening up’ (removal) of the dense shrubland, particularly on the high-lying ground, means that grazing for sheep has increased and that they can be farmed quite successfully. Sheep are ritually slaughtered during social occasions, such as weddings, graduation ceremonies and to provide meat over the festive holiday period. Even though sheep are shorn and an income can be derived from the sale of the wool, such sales have all but collapsed in the last few years. As sheep require closer herding than goats, particularly given the reportedly high incidence of jackal in the area, the imizi with a labour shortage are not inclined to own sheep. As a result, sheep are held by only 23 (34 per cent) of the imizi in the village, at a mean of 12.3 sheep per umzi.

Even more than in the case of cattle holdings, a few imizi own a disproportionately large number of sheep: five (22 per cent) imizi own 61 per cent of the sheep in the village, with two imizi having 56 and 52 sheep respectively. While both these imizi owned goats, neither of the two large sheep-owning imizi have goats in the village. Instead, their goats are placed with kinsmen on farms in the vicinity of Alice and the coastal strip of Peddie District.

In contrast to sheep, holdings of goats are more evenly spread across the imizi in Gwabeni, with 67 per cent of the imizi owning at least one goat. The mean for goat ownership (including the 51 goats not held in Gwabeni) is 7.6 goats per umzi, but again this is dominated by five (11 per cent) owners of goats, who owned 35 per cent of the

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28 Men complain that the high incidence of jackal around the village is the direct result of their dogs being shot by the conservation authorities, so that they are unable to deal with jackal taking their small stock.
Only two *imizi* own more than 20 goats, and these hold 46 (not held in Gwabeni) and 21 goats respectively.

Pig and poultry ownership is also spread fairly evenly across the village, with mainly the *imizi* consisting of elderly men or women, often living alone, who do not own pigs. Poultry ownership is almost exclusively associated with women, except for Madoda who owns 25 chickens, the highest number in the village. Popular with *imizi* of all socio-economic strata, pig and poultry keeping made economic sense for especially the marginal *imizi* in Gwabeni, since neither of these animal types require much cash to purchase, nor do they need close attention. Both are fast growers that reproduce abundantly and both can easily be sold for cash.

**Marginal *imizi* and livestock holdings**

In the section above, use was made of the source and reliability of an *umzi*’s cash income as a measure of socio-economic marginality, and 17 *imizi* (25 per cent of the total) were categorised as marginal. Significantly, of the 17 marginal *imizi*, only three (four per cent of the total *imizi* in the village) have no livestock whatsoever. A further seven (nearly 11 per cent of the total) have limited livestock holdings, such as only one or two goats, or one or two pigs and some chickens. In total, these seven *imizi* own three goats, six pigs and seven chickens, with a mean investment of R322 per *umzi*. One *umzi* that was categorised as marginal, however, owns 46 goats that are in the care of the *umzi* head’s kinsman on a farm. The same *umzi* owns 56 sheep, two head of cattle and a pig. Although the male *umzi* head has no other form of income and lived alone, his *umzi* clearly does not the same socio-economic constraints that other *imizi* in the marginal category have.

Livestock ownership is relatively unevenly spread across the *imizi* of the village, with a moderate concentration of sheep and cattle holdings in the village. Goat ownership is more evenly distributed across the village, as are pig and poultry ownership, but it is possible to identify a core of 10 (15 per cent) marginal *imizi* without access to state transfers nor regular remittances, that have no or only modest livestock holdings. One important factor identified in influencing the pattern of livestock ownership is the structure of the *umzi*, i.e. whether there is sufficient labour to tend to the livestock,
including dipping, herding and kraaling them.

A critical point to stress is the amount of variation between imizi in Gwabeni, with regard to livestock ownership and farming patterns. Some imizi are almost wholly reliant on periodically selling off some livestock to meet their basic subsistence needs. Other imizi maintain relatively large herds of goats and sheep for reasons other than purely economic ones, while (as we have seen above) there are imizi that do not own any livestock at all. There is thus considerable differentiation between imizi in respect of their economic means to invest in livestock, their motivation for keeping livestock, their levels of interest in the health and quality of their animals and their interest in the condition of the grazing resources. This degree of differentiation affects the very varied incentives the different imizi have for supporting a system of grazing management.

4. Common pool grazing management in Gwabeni

I would describe the 'system' for managing of local grazing resources around the village and indeed across the whole of Tyefu Location as minimalist, in that there are ostensibly no formal and very few informal strategies and regulations in place for the management of rangeland. If we assume that practically all of the inhabitants of Tyefu Location have a stake in the long-term management of grazing resources, it is remarkable that there is no well articulated and uniformly recognised grazing management system in the location.29 Upon closer investigation, the reasons for this are not hard to see. Firstly, there is a small group of imizi that owns a significant proportion of the livestock in the village.30 This group's high levels of investment in livestock might suggest that these people have sufficient incentive to internalise the

29 Before the late 1970s, when field cultivation was still practised in Gwabeni, the management of grazing and of livestock movements had, of necessity, been more carefully regulated. Owners incurred fairly high fines and social costs when livestock entered other people's fields and destroyed their crops. Cattle were only allowed to enter the fields after the crop had been harvested, to consume the crop residues. At present, people in Gwabeni know each other's livestock and are fairly familiar with the livestock of other Tyefu villagers. As a result, some local people (especially senior men) are quick to notice when livestock owned by non-Tyefu residents are using their grazing resources. I have not, however, come across any cases where such livestock has been evicted from the location. Mechanisms to enforce exclusion from local resources are thus not strong.

30 A group numbering 18 imizi (27 per cent of the village total), own 64 per cent of the goats, 73 per cent of the sheep and 49 per cent of the cattle in Gwabeni.
transaction costs involved in devising a grazing management strategy in some form, and to implement such a strategy. One reason they might have for doing this is to prevent their individual livestock numbers from 'crashing' during droughts, as they have done regularly in the past.\textsuperscript{31}

This scenario does not hold true for Gwabeni: only 27 per cent of the \textit{imizi} are in this category of significant livestock owners, while the remaining 73 per cent of the \textit{imizi} in the village have few or no livestock. The social transaction costs of implementing a grazing management strategy (for example, a system of camps and rotational grazing) in the village would require securing the ongoing support of these 73 per cent of the \textit{imizi}, since even those without livestock are hoping to build up a herd in future and would have to be convinced to abide by new grazing regulations.

This would involve not only high 'start-up' transaction costs (such as holding meetings, motivating the perceived merits of a new grazing management system, and providing explanations of the operational plans of the system), but also require close regulation (i.e. more transaction and possibly financial costs, such as paying for a ranger to monitor the use of grazing resources and to act against deviant behaviour) \textit{ad infinitum}. These requirements pose serious challenges to the larger livestock owners or any other people who may want to initiate a new grazing management system. Moreover, such a system could, if proposed and promoted by the larger livestock owners, draw unwanted attention to the differential impact their (more numerous) livestock are having on the grazing resources and could thus be interpreted by the other \textit{imizi} as unfair and inappropriate regulation inspired by self-interest on the part of the larger livestock owners.

Secondly, as long as the available grazing resources in the area (including the grazing on neighbouring farms) are sufficient to absorb the grazing demands of the livestock holdings of these 18 \textit{imizi}, together with the relatively meagre holdings of the other \textit{imizi}

\textsuperscript{31} This assumes, of course, that a critical mass of these people would be able to overcome their differences of interest, intra-group animosities and conflicts, and mobilise themselves as a group to achieve this end. Given the amount of individualism and lack of confidence in the weak local institutions that people in this category exhibit, this does not seem likely to happen in Gwabeni in the near future.
in the village, the former, in fact, see no need to formalise livestock grazing arrangements in the village. Indeed, any formalisation of mechanisms aimed at a supposedly more sustainable use of the grazing system (such as the introduction of rotational grazing, a camp system and the introduction of a ranger to monitor livestock movements and rangeland condition), would have the undesirable effect, several livestock owners informed me, of involving the input and participation of the Department of Agriculture officials in Peddie in facilitating the supply of fencing materials, in the supervision of the camps and in intermittent grazing assessments (i.e. estimates of carrying capacity).

Livestock owners in Gwabeni realise that any formalisation of a rangeland management system cannot be sustained by local institutions in Gwabeni in isolation, because these institutions lack the resources and the skills for accomplish this. Both livestock owners and Residents' Association committee members in Gwabeni also argue that the 'open grazing' arrangement in Tyefu Location means that Gwabeni is not at liberty to adopt a grazing management system on its own. A necessary condition for the success of such a system would be that it should encompass all the livestock and all the grazing resources in the location. This would probably require unwanted government intervention (by way of the institutional co-ordination across the location - and quite possibly financing - of a grazing system) in livestock ownership in the villages of Tyefu Location. In the minds of livestock owners in Gwabeni, it would be a short step from such intervention to the adoption of attempts to revive the unpopular livestock reduction programmes of the past in Tyefu Location.

The same sentiment is expressed by the Residents' Association committee when recalling particularly 'the days under Sebe' when, for them, less meant more: less direct government supervision of common pool resource management (although, as discussed in Chapter Four, quite considerable institutional intervention), meant more local flexibility and individual autonomy over the use of grazing resources. Consequently, as long as the organs of the state can be held at an arm's length from the village and its environs, livestock could safely make use of unfenced grazing resources throughout Tyefu Location. Livestock owned by residents of Tyefu Location are also able, in the absence of local institutions or government supervision that can
sanction and restrict such activity, to use the grazing resources on the underutilised (previously commercial) farmland adjacent to the village. These farms thus provide considerable relief to the grazing resources of the location.

Thirdly, and by the same token, Gwabeni imizi with more modest livestock holdings are also able to make use of the grazing resources on the adjacent farmland and whatever grazing is available around the village. For this group, the social transaction costs of subscribing to and sustaining a local grazing management system are unjustifiable, since, considering the small size of their livestock holdings, they are unlikely to make substantial gains in the short-term from a new management system. If these holdings were to increase substantially, their cash investment would also increase and the overall transaction costs would be reduced, as more people would have an increased incentive to comply with a new grazing management regime. In the fairly unlikely event (given recurrent droughts in the area) that all the livestock owners are able to drastically increase their livestock holdings, it is more probable that increased pressure would be put on the grazing resources of adjacent farmland *before* a rangeland strategy is formulated and adopted for the grazing resources of Gwabeni. As mentioned above, a key constraint would remain that grazing in Tyefu Location continues to be available to the livestock of all Tyefu villagers and the villages are not in a position to manage what might be 'their' geographic area of the common pool grazing resources as a separate grazing commons.

A rangeland management system would thus require co-operation and co-ordination between the *imizi* in Gwabeni and between the villages of Tyefu Location. At present, local institutions both at village level and at the level of the location, are unable to take on a process of this magnitude.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{32}\) One elderly male informant told me that “There are no leaders in Gwabeni to push people. The so-called leaders that we have here, need to be pushed [themselves] to get things going in this village.” Local attempts to implement local resource management regimes indicate the depth of the problems: I recorded a case where local 'leaders', including some Residents' Association committee members were discussing the implementation of a grazing management system. They thought that they would deal with non-compliance by individuals by introducing a ‘community register’ which every member of the village would have to sign, stating that they agreed to abide by the ‘community laws’, including resource management ‘laws.’ This meant that those who refused to sign the register would not be regarded as members of the community and could (in theory) be excluded from community affairs generally. Several people present at this discussion immediately saw problems with this plan, such as the fact that the people most likely to ignore resource management regulations were also those who made no positive contribution to the affairs of the village anyway. People realised that, in the
5. Water resource management in Gwabeni

In Gwabeni, the bulk provision of clean domestic water is of central concern to all *imizi*, but people know that a project of this nature would require considerable financial input and technical expertise. As a result, the residents of the village look to the government to deliver a domestic water supply project to them, rather than address the situation with whatever means they have at their disposal. Indeed, local attempts to address the current problems of poor quality surface water (which is shared with livestock) are undermined by the fact that influential (often wealthy) people and *imizi* in the village, who might be expected to initiate and to lend their support to collective attempts to, for instance, fence in dams and prevent livestock from polluting the water, do not, in fact do so. Why not? Firstly, they own rainwater tanks, and are thus not reliant on the polluted surface water for their domestic water needs. In times of drought, when the water supplies in their tanks are exhausted, they have the financial means to purchase water from local entrepreneurs who collect and sell water from the Keiskamma River to the villagers in Tyefu Location. Poorer *imizi* are forced to rely on the irregular (some informants suggested patronage driven) supply of water by government lorries. One informant put it as follows:

'These [wealthy] people think that they can exist on their own, especially once they’ve got their [pay] cheques. When we spoke about dams being expanded, reservoirs being built up, they said they’ve got their own tanks. These people are breaking the workforce.'

Secondly, fencing in dams would obviously reduce the number of dams to which livestock in the village have access. I would argue that since the influential *imizi* are also the owners of the majority of the livestock in the village, they would not support this initiative, not least because it would reduce the number of dams that are available for their livestock. In other words, wealthier, more influential *imizi* have practically no incentive to make a contribution to this project. Without their inputs, including their providing direction for the administration of the project and garnering the support of all

absence of other means of enforcing compliance, the signing of a ‘register’ was unlikely to be enough of a sanction to ensure co-operation from all in the village.
the villagers for the project, the dams remain unfenced.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed various aspects of social heterogeneity and showed how these impacted on collective action in respect of natural resource management in Gwabeni. I examined the demographic characteristics of Gwabeni which, despite a fairly high incidence of rural-urban mobility, showed the population of the village to be dominated by young people (below the age of 18 years) and by the elderly (those over 60 years). I argued that this fact made it more difficult for those present in the village, firstly to make decisions about how best to manage their common pool resources and secondly, to implement these decisions successfully.

I also pointed to a predominance of women in the village and indicated that there are only around 27 men between the ages of 30 and 60 years who can be called upon to supply their labour for tasks relating to the management of communal natural resources in the village. However, it is this very group of men and their respective imizi that feature most strongly among the economically marginal imizi in the village. As a result, local attempts to initiate resource management projects on the basis of a supply of labour free of charge from this group, are doomed to failure or, at best, to make only a modest impression in terms of managing resource utilisation.

Case-studies of the social structure of imizi in Gwabeni illustrated the constraints to resource management activities that these specific umzi configurations experience. In 67 per cent of the imizi in the village, it is elderly men and women, in combination with young children, who gather, collect, extract and manage the common pool natural resources used by each of their imizi and their livestock. I argued that practically none of these categories of people is well-placed to make a significant contribution to the regulation of resource use in the village to ensure the sustainable management of local resources.

A further constraint on collective resource management activities is the degree of economic differentiation in the village. Sixty nine per cent of the imizi in the village, for instance, have access to (and are dependent on) the disbursement of state old age pensions. Although no Gwabeni umzi in receipt of such pensions can be considered

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33 Of course, this number is variable, depending on the movements of these and urban-based men in this category between rural and urban areas.
well off, access to pensions allows people to purchase many of their domestic food and fuel requirements and makes what would have been, in the absence of pension disbursements, extremely vulnerable (elderly) *imizi* far less reliant on the natural resources on the village commons.

Consequently, many of those in receipt of pensions are not overly concerned about the declining state of the broad range of natural resources in and around the village. Clearly, the incentives for involving themselves in the management of the overall natural resource base have diminished.\(^{34}\) This does not mean, however, that they disengage entirely from all village level attempts at resource management (after all, some of these *imizi* have unemployed men and women who would benefit by being employed, even temporarily, on resource management projects), but that they are likely to be far more selective in the projects they support.

The variable engagement of *imizi* in Gwabeni with the wider national political economy, specifically (but not only) with the state-driven old age pensions economy, has had an unmistakable influence on the nature of social life in this rural settlement. This influence is particularly noticeable in respect of the economic differentiation which exists between *imizi* and in the patterns of social difference in terms of *umzi* social structure. I argued that both these features severely constrain attempts to collectively and actively manage the common pool natural resources in Gwabeni, because people’s incentives for engaging in such management differ widely.

The following chapter examines how the orientation of individual people and of *imizi* (i.e. whether they are predominantly urban or rural focussed) impacts on the interest, incentives and commitment of people to collective resource management. It also analyses the attempts that have been made to deal collectively with the issues of resource degradation and decline in Gwabeni.

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\(^{34}\) One elderly (female) pensioner, when asked whether fencing the arable and grazing lands would be a useful start in addressing problems of soil erosion, overgrazing and the lack of arable production in the village, replied ‘Is there any point to [us] fencing in all the dongas?’ By contrast to this, a number of younger respondents (both male and female), who are as well aware as the pensioner of the fact that the provision of fencing materials is fully subsidised by the Department of Agriculture and that, in line with the long-standing tradition of the area, *several local people could gain temporary employment* on a fencing project, are far more enthusiastic about ‘fencing in the dongas.’
CHAPTER SEVEN
Rural-urban Interdependence and Local Attempts at
Managing Natural Resources

Introduction

The previous chapter described the social and economic differentiation prevalent at umzi level in Gwabeni which, I argued, generally undermined collective resource management activities. This chapter examines another factor which, while more ambiguous in its effects, tends to have the same impact on these activities. This factor is the (medium to long-term) residential and economic orientation of individual people and of imizi in the village. People’s perceptions of their individual and collective futures, particularly whether they are likely to be ‘full-time’ residents of Gwabeni in the medium to long-term, affects the interest and commitment shown by individuals and imizi to the collective management of natural resources in the village. This chapter looks specifically at a recently-initiated attempt by a group of Gwabeni people resident in an urban centre, with the support of some people resident in Gwabeni, to adapt their settlement pattern to a more post-agrarian lifestyle, and to deal collectively with the issues of resource degradation and management in one section of the village.

1. Rural-urban interdependence

There is a tendency for many of the people who are resident in Gwabeni to be far more urban-focussed than rural-focussed in their orientation and interests. One reason for this is that their umzi incomes originate from sources almost exclusively outside the village: pensions, which play the central role in the local economy, ‘arrive’ in the village quite dramatically (with heavily armed guards) from Bisho on a bimonthly basis, giving rise to a flurry of commercial activity.¹ Remittances from urban-based kin, on which ‘marginal’ imizi are at times entirely dependent, keep people’s attention focussed squarely on the circumstances and events affecting their relatives in urban centres.

¹ Some people have their pension paid into their bank account in Peddie.
Indeed, over the past three decades or more, people from Gwabeni have made significant economic investments, especially in housing, and social investments, in networks of support and reciprocity (crucial for childcare, education and for securing increasingly scarce employment), in urban areas that have kept their attention firmly focussed there.\(^2\) Forty-five per cent of the *imizi* in the village own a house in a town or city elsewhere, with Port Elizabeth being the most popular urban centre.\(^3\)

Urban-based people have found, however, that an urban-centred lifestyle also means being exposed to increased economic risk: certain socio-economic categories of the urban-based Gwabeni people (especially those in unskilled jobs) are particularly vulnerable to the retrenchments, evictions and the hardships associated with apartheid policies and periodic downswings in the national and regional economy. To counteract these uncertainties, and to give themselves a cushion in the event of unforeseen economic setbacks, many urban-based people continue to retain some ties with their rural village of origin. By doing so, they are hedging their bets in a way that is accepted by those people resident in the village as a legitimate method of spreading the inherent risks of urban life. Bank (1995:19) refers to similar motives among hostel dwellers, who originate from the Transkei, living in Duncan Village, East London. The motivation of these people is not uniform and not purely economic: I would argue that the social significance of being able to claim membership of an *umzi* in the rural village is also an important consideration as a source of identity, status and social continuity for those in the socially and economically insecure and ephemeral environment of the city or town (see Bank 1995:17).\(^4\)

Some urban-based people retain this foothold in Gwabeni by maintaining the physical

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\(^2\) This tendency to invest more of their financial resources in urban areas, rather than in rural activities such as agriculture, partially accounts for the decline in arable agriculture in the village.

\(^3\) Twenty (30 per cent) *imizi* in Gwabeni owned a house in Port Elizabeth.

\(^4\) Although it was beyond the scope of this study to visit Gwabeni people in urban centres, my 'view from the village' data suggest that the mobilisation of kinship ties and social networks that have their basis in the social structure of the rural village, are often as important for co-operation aimed at economic advancement between urban-based people in the urban setting as they are for the fostering of the rural-urban ties that both underwrites the rural economy and render life in the city meaningful in the long-term for the migrant.
structure of their (sometimes) wholly uninhabited *imizi* of origin and through their very occasional visits to the village, often to conduct rituals. Even though it lacks infrastructural services, the social, economic and natural resources of Gwabeni to which the effectively urbanised can still claim rights of access, act as incentives for the maintenance of the ties with the village. To many urban-based people, especially men, the village represents a potential place of retirement, and maintaining one’s *umzi* in terms of the physical resources and meeting a minimum of kinship and ritual requirements expected of a member of the village,⁵ is a sensible way of investing in one’s retirement.

For men who have spent twenty or more years as migrants in an urban centre, the village represents a return to their rural roots and to their role as owners of livestock and as heads of rural *imizi* (see Bank 1995:19).¹³ Unlike conditions in the urban environment, village life still affords senior men a measure of respect from the youth and, despite their sometimes patchy understanding of local and more recent village affairs, these senior men are able to contribute to, if not to dominate, the discussion at village meetings. One elderly man, echoing the sentiments of many informants told me that, despite the hardships of village life, he enjoys life in Gwabeni because of the “absence of crime and because we do not bury young people here.”

The urban-based person who invests in livestock in his rural village of origin is exploiting an economic opportunity available to him by virtue of his kinship ties and thus his continued recognition as a member of the village, despite (in some cases) his prolonged absence from the village. It is important to note, however, that villagers have definite (if not uniform) notions of a social universe with regard to which category of

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⁵ There is no consensus among my various informants on what these ‘minimum requirements’ might be. Some people say they include at least one annual visit to the village (Christmas or Easter time), financial contributions to, and presence at, the rituals and other social events of patrilineal kin, at least occasional remittances in cash or kind and investment in livestock for the *umzi*. Assistance (in the form of accommodation and board) to Gwabeni-based kin who visit the urban centre in search of work or on other business is also mentioned. Other informants say that nothing is expected of a person, it is enough that they themselves still identify with the village.

¹³ When I asked one elderly man, who is in poor health, why he continues to reside in the village when all his family, who could take care of him, are in Port Elizabeth, his reply was, “Who will look after my house? My goats and chickens? I have spent a lot of money building up this house. The roof has blown off three times and I have had it repaired everytime. How can I leave now?”
individual may exploit local resources in this fashion. Securing access to common pool natural resources requires membership of an established agnatic cluster or lineage in the village, or recognised membership of the village 'community' as a more recently settled umzi.

In terms of the flow of resources between rural and urban areas, cash transfers in the form of remittances are clearly expected, if not always forthcoming, from urban-based workers who leave their school-going children in the care of the latters' grandparents or other kin in the village. The fact that one's parents are recipients of state old age pensions relieves one of some of the pressure of having to provide for the primary education of one's children in Gwabeni. Once these children reach secondary school level, kinship ties in other centres (Gwabeni having no secondary school) have to be mobilised to offset the financial burden this phase of education poses.

Of course, the maintenance of social ties of kinship and ritual between urban base and rural village is not only to the advantage of those in the urban centres: the people who are resident in Gwabeni also gain economically and in terms of status by maintaining strong ties with their urban kin, especially where these kin are economically successful. Even though many older people in Gwabeni complain that their (employed) children are not remitting as reliably as they themselves did in the same situation years before, it is clear that substantial transfers, often in kind, are taking place from urban to rural areas. These transfers include furniture, building materials, rainwater tanks as well as cash contributions for the purchase of livestock, food and liquor when rituals and other ceremonies (such as graduation parties) are conducted by a particular umzi or agnatic cluster.

More recently, the increase in the value of old age pensions and the promise of infrastructural improvements in rural areas more generally, has coincided with increased investments and support from younger, urban-based residents for the construction of rural housing in Gwabeni. Since 1994, this phenomenon has led to the

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7 What is glaringly absent are the institutional mechanisms to enforce the exclusion of the people (and their livestock) who are outside this social universe.
start of a new settlement on the Outspan sites and substantial improvements and additions to a large proportion of *imizi* in the other sections.\(^8\)

With regard to the management of natural resources, it is significant that all of the 451 people who are absent from the village are regarded as *bona fide* members\(^9\) of the village, with all the rights of access to available common pool resources that this entails. For the young, urban-based man, future identification with and residence in the village often rests on whether he stands to inherit the *umzi* and the arable land of his father, whether he is planning to build a house in Gwabeni or whether he would prefer to establish himself in an urban centre. I asked an unemployed man in his mid-forties, whose children and their mother are in Port Elizabeth, why he resides in the village. His reply was, "There is no work in Port Elizabeth, whereas here I can sometimes find some 'jobs'. I am the *omkhulu* (first-born son) here and my father is sick, so I should be here to help the people of this place."

These decisions about residential preference\(^10\) are influenced, *inter alia*, by a man's immediate and long-term career prospects in the urban area. However, in a situation where he does not stand to inherit his father's *umzi* and chooses not to establish his own *umzi* in the village, he is still entitled to return to the village and to take up residence at some future time. He is free, if he has the financial means, to purchase livestock and to make use of the communal grazing in the village. The other natural resources available on the commons are also at his disposal.

Since arable agriculture is deemed to be economically unviable in Gwabeni, the fact that there is no arable land available which can be allocated to him, should not

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\(^8\) I would argue that this particular move is symptomatic of a wider phenomenon of younger, urban-based people beginning to consider the merits of establishing a rural home of their own that will complement their urban lifestyle. For this reason, I disagree with Palmer's (1997:309) assertion that 'in the face of population aging and continuing urbanisation in communities like Gwabeni, the threat to the environment has to be a constantly diminishing one.' On the contrary, the 'threat' of degradation to most natural resources in these modified communal areas is likely to remain as real as ever.

\(^9\) In theory at least, although the return of some of those who have been away and who have not maintained contact with those in the village, might not be greeted with equal enthusiasm.

\(^10\) It is not only about residential preference, of course, but crucially about where a man will direct both his economic resources and his social resources, in terms of attending meetings and supporting the work of local institutions in making a contribution to the development of the village.
adversely affect his economic well-being. In Gwabeni, however, having access to an arable field, which may have been allocated to or 'be in the name' of one's father or one's father's father, is a powerful confirmation of one's claim to membership of the village.

The case of Mzukisi S.

Mzukisi is a forty-four year old unmarried man who grew up in Port Elizabeth. Mzukisi previously lived and worked in Port Elizabeth, where he was employed on the railways. His five children and their mother still live in Port Elizabeth, and he visits them when he can. In Port Elizabeth, he first stayed in the house owned by his father, before buying his own house, in which his family now live. When Mzukisi was retrenched from the railways, he returned to Gwabeni where he occupied a 'flat' attached to the umzi of his father.

The fact that both of his parents are recipients of state old age pensions means that, upon his return to the village, he was not in danger of being left destitute. While awaiting news of work opportunities in Port Elizabeth, he spends his time socialising at the Breakfastvlei Hotel, hunting and doing piecemeal 'jobs' for people around the village, such as digging pit-latrines, repairing cattle kraals, and doing some building alterations. He was employed for the two month duration of a recent government-sponsored fencing project, which involved teams of workers replacing the perimeter fence around the northern boundary of the village bordering the Peddie-Committees Drift road. Mzukisi does not own any livestock nor does he assist in looking after those of his elderly father. The livestock are tended instead by the nine year old son of Mzukisi's younger brother. The latter is based in Port Elizabeth and has taken over their father's house there.

Since the umzi is not involved in any cultivation, Mzukisi does not take any active part in such activities either and he seems set to join the ranks of able-bodied but chronically unemployed men in the village. These men are accused by the women in the village of being layabouts who spend their time 'drinking all the money' of their respective imizi.11

Ironically, Mzukisi's fairly gloomy economic prospects may have improved as a result of a cruel misfortune: during a drunken altercation with a fellow villager at the Hotel, the latter hit Mzukisi against the head with a chair, severely damaging his left eye, and resulting in it having to be removed surgically. Two weeks later, after his initial shock had subsided, but still in considerable physical
For an unmarried, separated or widowed woman who may return to the village, the same *modus operandi* for settling in the village applied. Either with or without her children, she could reside in the *umzi* of her father, or of her deceased husband, or she could request a residential site from the Residents' Association to establish her own *umzi* in the village.

The case of Nosimo M:

Nosimo (38), an unmarried mother, left both of her children with her elder sister Port Elizabeth in 1989, and went to work as a stylist in a hair salon in Carletonville for nearly four years. In 1993, she returned to Gwabeni and her ten year old daughter joined her here. Her 16 year old son continued to reside with Nosimo's sister in Port Elizabeth. Upon her arrival in the village, she took up residence in the unoccupied *umzi* of her deceased parents. Her daughter attends the primary school in the village. Nosimo is, in theory, permitted to make use of her deceased father's arable land, since she has no brothers who would have prior claim to the land. However, no cultivation of these fields in Bhobho section has taken place in the past two decades and even if Nosimo wanted to cultivate here, she does not have the resources to fence the land and pay for it to be ploughed and sown.

Nosimo supports herself and her daughter by styling people's hair in the village, through the occasional buying and selling of fruit and through sporadic employment on government-sponsored village work team projects. She also receives maintenance support for her children from their father, who lives in Port Elizabeth, and her elder sister in Port Elizabeth sometimes sends her money. Her relationship with one of the men in the village does not benefit her economically, as this man has no regular income and is not able to provide for her and her daughter. Nosimo, whose father had been a headman in Gwabeni

Mzukisi stoically assured me that not only would he be getting a replacement glass eye, but that his prospects of receiving a state disability grant as a result of this accident are fairly strong (I personally doubt this to be the case in the present administrative climate in the province). While procuring such a grant from the state would probably involve a great deal of bureaucratic red tape and would by no means make him a rich man, Mzukisi feels that his financial future is nevertheless practically secured, and unlike many other men of his age in the village, he will be assured of a regular, reliable and independent income.

12 She told me she left Port Elizabeth to get away from the father of her two children, who resided in the house next door to her sister.
in the past, serves as the (unpaid) secretary on the Residents’ Association committee in the village.

For both individual women and men, the attraction that the rural umzi and village might hold for them, differs according to their personal and economic circumstances and responsibilities and the circumstances that prevail in the rural umzi itself. In Mzukisi’s case, returning to the village was made easier by the established presence of his parents in the village and their regular income from state pensions. For Nosimo, trying to make ends meet in the village is still proving to be a daily struggle.

Table 7.1. Absentee members of Gwabeni imizi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO. OF IMIZI</th>
<th>NO. OF PEOPLE ABSENT PER UMZI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>less than 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1. gives an indication of the number of people absent from imizi in Gwabeni.\(^\text{13}\) I found that sixty-nine per cent of the imizi in the village have five or more members who are absent from the village. Given that the average umzi size in Gwabeni is 3.4 people, it is clear that 64 per cent of what is considered by residents to be the bona fide village

\(^{13}\) Palmer (1997:13) refers to this as the ‘extensive diaspora’ of Gwabeni people. De Wet and Holbrook (1997) speak of the ‘regionalisation of the umzi.’
population, is absent from the village.\footnote{14}

There is a heavy concentration of people with ties to Gwabeni in Port Elizabeth. Fifty-three per cent of the absent members of imizi in village are in the Port Elizabeth metropole.\footnote{15} In all, a total 56 (or 84 per cent) imizi in the village have at least one of its members resident in Port Elizabeth. This means that only 11 (16 per cent) imizi have no absentee members in the Port Elizabeth metropole. Of these, two have members who retired to Gwabeni after working in Port Elizabeth for long periods. The remaining nine imizi show a marked orientation towards the East London and King Williams Town metropoles and hinterland.\footnote{16}

It is interesting to note however, that in only 11 of the 56 imizi with absentee members in Port Elizabeth, are all of these absentee members resident in Port Elizabeth. The remaining 45 (67 per cent) imizi have members in between one and five cities, towns or villages other than Port Elizabeth, with a mean of three different locations. Imizi A and B are examples of this phenomenon. Table 7.2 overleaf shows that Umzi A has five members who are resident in Gwabeni and a further 13 members who are resident in six other places.

\footnote{14} The issue of 'absence' from the village is problematic, given the high degree of movement between rural and urban areas. My own definition of a person who can be considered to be absent from the village is one who spends less than 30 days per calendar year in the village. Although the circumstances that affect people's fortunes are constantly changing, thus giving rise to changes in residence, my sense is that the overall size of Gwabeni's population remained fairly constant over the research period, even though I don't have exact figures to prove this.

\footnote{15} Here the Port Elizabeth metropole includes Uitenhage and the 'townships' associated with these two urban centres.

\footnote{16} These nine imizi also have a high correlation between their orientation towards the East London metropole (which is taken to include Mdantsane) and their places of origin, i.e. from the farms north of Gwabeni.
Table 7.2. The dispersion of Umzi A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE OF RESIDENCE</th>
<th>NO. OF MEMBERS IN...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gwabeni</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria West</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliwal North</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mdantsane</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3. The dispersion of Umzi B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE OF RESIDENCE</th>
<th>NO. OF MEMBERS IN...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gwabeni</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grahamstown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimbaza</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peddie town</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3. shows that of the total of 17 members in Umzi B, only six are resident in Gwabeni. The phenomenon of having umzi members dispersed over a wide area is evidence of people’s attempts to achieve a measure of financial security wherever it is to be found. The dispersion of umzi members is thus essentially a risk-minimisation strategy on the part of these imizi, since it provides a cushioning effect in an economically insecure environment: should a member of the umzi lose their job in one locality, his or her offspring and any other dependants can be moved to another locality, where another member of the umzi has a more reliable income and could support, even temporarily, these dependent people, at least until the first ‘breadwinner’
has managed to secure a new source of income.

Many *imizi* in the village adopt this strategy, with the rural base in Gwabeni a popular site for the deposition of young children who can safely attend the local *creche* or primary school. This pattern is followed irrespective of the position of the Gwabeni-based members of *imizi* in the development cycle (i.e. they may be one's younger, unmarried sister or one's elderly parents), but is most common in those *imizi* with members who have reliable incomes, such as old age pensions or disability grants.  

The dilemma of where best to educate their children beyond primary school level rests, not surprisingly, on considerations of affordability and the perceived quality of education. Affordability is influenced by the presence of kinsmen and women resident in an educational centre, such as Alice or Port Elizabeth, in whose care children can be placed to offset the costs of accommodation and board.

What I would argue then, is that the rural village of Gwabeni offers urban-based people particular benefits (and, of course, drawbacks). These benefits include the presence of resident kin (often with access to pensions) who can be called upon to care for one's young children, a safe and relatively crime-free environment and guaranteed free access to the natural resources of the village commons. The drawback is that village does lack several critical things, specifically employment opportunities, a reliable domestic water supply system, a secondary school and adequate health care facilities.

What each *umzi*, with its particular circumstances and developmental needs at any one time, tries to achieve, is to optimally exploit all the economic, social and natural resources at its disposal.

How does the fact that Gwabeni offers a specific 'bundle' of resources - some of which may at times be socially and economically useful and profitable to exploit, but others of which, like those mentioned above, are either absent or unreliable - impact on the management of natural resources? I argue that, given the situation described above,

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17 Sharp (1994:76) working in Qwaqwa, identified a source of income that was **reliable over time** as being of critical importance in the reconstruction and maintenance of stability in domestic groups. In Gwabeni, pensions have taken on this role.
very few *imizi* are prepared to totally commit themselves, socially and economically, to a rural existence in Gwabeni. The ever-present need to retain social and economic flexibility, and the frequent mobility of individuals and *imizi* that are the expression of this flexibility, means that the people who are in Gwabeni at any one time, may well lack the commitment to contribute to the ongoing management of the local natural resources. As they are not wholly dependent on a livelihood in Gwabeni, their individual incentives to spend time and effort engaging in discussions and projects around managing the natural resources of Gwabeni, is generally low, hence the generally poor attendance at residents' association general meetings.\(^{18}\)

Of the absent *umzi* members, 28 per cent are scholars, most of whom are attending secondary schools. Nearly 8 per cent of the absentees consist of infants and students, while only 1.6 per cent are listed as old age pensioners. This means that just over 37 per cent of the absentees are in the category of 'not economically active.'

The data also indicate that some absent members of Gwabeni *imizi*, even though they have strong ties to the Port Elizabeth metropole, have managed to penetrate the Ciskei bantustan civil service and the increase in jobs that developed in this sector from the late 1970s. A total of 18 (four per cent) absent members are employed in the public service of the former Ciskei.\(^{19}\) By contrast, 40 (nine per cent) absentee members of Gwabeni *imizi* hold similar positions in the public service outside the former Ciskei, predominantly in Port Elizabeth, but also in Johannesburg, Cape Town and East London. This brings to sixty-two the number of absent members employed in the civil service and, taken with the pensioners, 69 people (or 15.3 per cent of those absent from the village) who are being supported by salaries and other transfers from the state.

Two other categories of absent members warrant attention, namely the 'married' (five per cent of the total absent members) and 'unemployed' (13.5 per cent) categories.

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\(^{18}\) Such low turn-outs are in contrast to the numbers of people at meetings when there is a hint of jobs being provided for local residents.

\(^{19}\) Four others are employed in the civil service of the Transkei bantustan.
The first refers to the people (invariably women) who have taken up virilocal residence outside the village after marriage. These women are still considered to be members of their *imizi* of origin in Gwabeni. This is because it is expected that, if their marriages should fail or their husbands pass away, these women would be free to return to their *imizi* in Gwabeni with their offspring, and to reside there permanently. Alternatively, a woman can re-attach herself to the rural *umzi*, by sending her children there, while she continues to reside and work in the urban centre. Some informants claimed that their daughters are more reliable remitters and more likely to stay in contact with their consanguines (although not necessarily remit money to them), even when they have their own offspring and conjugal responsibilities in another town or city. It is perhaps for this reason that the heads of nineteen *imizi* in Gwabeni recorded a daughter who is married and living elsewhere as an absent member of his or her *umzi*.

The high number of unemployed people who are absent from the village, suggests that these people prefer to remain in an urban area, again predominantly in Port Elizabeth, perhaps in the hope of securing employment there in due course. Of the 61 people absent and unemployed, 36 are females and 25 are males. Many of these people are young, in fact the mean age of this group is 32.3 years (the range is 16 years to 48 years old) and, judging from the comments made by younger urban-based people visiting Gwabeni, the lack of facilities and the slow pace of life in the village does not appeal to them.

One point of interest is that if all these unemployed people were to return to Gwabeni, the population of the village would increase by 27 per cent and the potential labour force in the village (i.e. the ‘economically active’ category of those present) would increase by 92 per cent. In theory, this would make more labour available for work teams to pursue natural resource management related activities, but in reality, the majority of these people would be highly unlikely to engage in such activities on a voluntary basis and their main impact on the available natural resources would be to increase the existing pressure on the finite natural resources of the village. In short, it makes ecological sense at least from the perspective of the village - and of course, economic sense to them - that they should continue to reside away from Gwabeni.
2. Voluntary resettlement on the Outspan sites

For Gwabeni residents, and particularly for those people who are linked to imizi in Nqwebeba section, the allocation of residential sites on a section of the Breakfastvlei Outspan since 1995, has shifted the focus away from the circumstances of the existing imizi and is likely to affect the social and economic strategies that have been described for urban-based imizi above. In terms of the arrangements of the Outspan Sites Committee (OSC) in the Outspan section of the village, anyone from Tyefu Location or beyond, whose character can be vouched for by a resident of Gwabeni, is permitted to pay R100-00 for a site, and to set up their umzi on the Outspan Sites. Situated close to the shop at the Breakfastvlei Hotel and to the road, this area promises to make residing in, or visiting, the village more accessible and a more attractive proposition. The planning and development of a new village section, which has been driven by young men based in Port Elizabeth, represents a marked reorientation of the umzi and village section social dynamics in Gwabeni. It also exhibits all the multi-layered facets of the institutional struggles that have long characterised access to, and the management of, natural resources in Gwabeni and Tyefu Location.

A short history of the Breakfastvlei Outspan

The high-lying and relatively flat area situated to the north of Gwabeni and comprising a total of about 300 hectares, is known as the Breakfastvlei Outspan (see Map 4). People in Gwabeni claim all this land for the village, citing the need for grazing and (irrigated) arable land for local people. This contest over land dates back to the nineteenth century, when oxwagon travellers from the Colony used to pass through this area en route to destinations in the interior such as Fort Willshire, the site of the first trade fairs (1824-1830) between settlers and Xhosa-speakers. An outspan was established on the interfluvial ridge between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers, to span out the oxen to graze overnight, before the wagons set off to the north and east.

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20 The earliest reference I could find to the Breakfastvlei Outspan was a hand-drawn map, dated 12 April 1880, which indicated that a (northern) section had been added to the Outspan in December 1862. At the same time, the southernmost section of the Outspan was excised and added to Zulu's Fingo Location (Tyefu Location). The same map indicates that Gwabeni imizi were resident on the section of the Outspan to the north of this excised part (Cory Library, Methodist Archives PR.3605/1).
Although they are vague about all the details of the case, informants in Gwabeni claim that their forefathers 'surrendered' their exclusive usufructary rights over this piece of land to the government when the latter requested it to formally establish an Outspan for use by the travelling public in this area. They also argue that an agreement was reached at the time that made provision for the continued access of Gwabeni livestock to the grazing resources of the area, and some people continued to live adjacent to, and even on, the Outspan itself.21

21 Informants can name several imizi that had resided on the Outspan itself.
An old male informant told me that, by the 1940s, the Outspan was 'enclosed by fences and out of bounds' to Gwabeni-owned livestock and the area was leased to a neighbouring white farmer on an annual basis. During the drought of the late 1940s, the farmer leasing the Outspan allowed the ploughing oxen of Gwabeni residents to 'sleep on the Outspan as long as they were fetched very early in the morning' (presumably so as not to use too much of the grazing resources for which he was paying and also not to jeopardise his lease of the land). In this way, the Outspan land and its resources which, according to my informants, the residents of Gwabeni continued to regard as their own, was effectively lost to them.

Gwabeni residents, anxious to have the problem of overcrowding in their village addressed, continued to make requests for additional land, specifically the Outspan land, to be given to them to meet the need for residential and grazing land. Instead, the government turned the area vacated by white farmers into a game reserve, proclaiming a large section of the area the L.L Sebe Game Reserve in 1983, and in 1990, the Ciskei conservation authorities proceeded to erect a 'game fence' around the perimeter of the game reserve. In the process, several areas which had come to be regarded by neighbouring villages as part of their communal land, including a large section of the Breakfastvlei Outspan, were incorporated into the game reserve.22

Hostile relations ensued between the game reserve authorities and the residents in neighbouring villages. Only two portions of the Outspan (the first situated between Gwabeni and the Peddie-Committees Drift road and the second, a camp behind the Breakfastvlei Hotel) remain outside the game reserve and, once the white farmer renting the Outspan and the ranger had left the area (in 1982), this portion became the focus of unsanctioned resource extraction (mostly by way of grazing by livestock, the gathering of firewood, prickly pear and imifino, and some hunting) by Gwabeni people.

Around 1988, the new owner of the Breakfastvlei Hotel began paying to rent the remaining Outspan camps and an adjacent farm for the purpose of grazing his livestock.

22 The villages that most affected in this way were Gwabeni, Qamnyana, Ndwayana and Glenmore.
there. As recounted in Chapter Five, he stopped paying rent for the land five years later, when it became clear that other livestock from the villages of Tyefu Location were also making use of the resources for which he alone was paying.

The seemingly endless struggle over access to, and control of, natural resources in Tyefu Location, a central theme of this thesis, is what is again at issue here. Resource scarcity, in villages like Gwabeni, heightens the pressures on both the actual resources available in neighbouring areas and on the local institutions that attempt to manage the natural resources at village and location levels. In the case-study below, I analyse how, despite long-standing calls from local residents for the restitution of the Outspan land to the people of Gwabeni, specifically for grazing and irrigated cultivation purposes, the changed socio-economic circumstances, and the weakness of local resource managing institutions, has given a small group of relatively well-resourced, urban-based young men the opportunity to step in - to virtually ignore the existing local institutions - and to claim a portion of the Outspan (an area of about 65 hectares) for residential settlement, all in the name of 'the community of Gwabeni.'

**Attempts to Reclaim the Outspan**

Gwabeni residents, specifically the Mabhele imizi (whose arable lands abut the Outspan to the south and west, and some of whose imizi had previously been in this area), had wanted to move back to the plateau area of the Outspan since before the 1960s. The idea to move to the Outspan area was given impetus by the degraded and eroded state of arable lands and gardens and the exhausted grazing and firewood resources at Nqwebeba, and the comparatively better state of the resources on the Outspan. Earlier attempts to orchestrate a move back to the Outspan, some of them directed at Chief Alfred Nkebeza Msuthu, came to naught, although in 1957 the then Department of Native Affairs did consider taking over the Outspan as 'Trust' land,

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23 Decades before this, some of their Nkwayi clan 'forefathers' had moved to the lower village section of Nqwebeba in search of grazing, water and new residential sites.

24 Informants blame residents from the neighbouring village of Qamnyana for using axes to chop down trees for firewood and, in the process, causing much of the deforestation that has occurred around Nqwebeba section, which is adjacent to Qamnyana (see Map 4).
presumably with a view to relieving the land shortage in Tyefu Location.25

In the interim period, between these early efforts to reclaim the Outspan and the renewed calls for this during the late 1980s, a number of imizi gave up on the idea of moving to the Outspan and opted instead to relocate in Nala section. Still others left Gwabeni altogether and moved to other villages or to an urban centre. A key complaint of those residing at or visiting Nqwebeba section of the village was the distance of this area from the Peddie-Committees Drift road, and the steep hill that had to be negotiated from Nqwebeba to reach both this road and other sections of the village.

The renewed attempt to reclaim the Outspan gained momentum in the late 1980s, under the leadership of a younger generation of men of the Mabhele and Mbhono lineages in the village. These men were all based in Port Elizabeth and wished to establish their rural imizi in a more accessible area of the village. Basing their campaign on the infrastructural upgrading and development of Gwabeni and, using the phrase ‘the Outspan is for our children and our children’s children’, they set about selling the idea of establishing new imizi on the Outspan sites to other working people based in Port Elizabeth. They emphasised the increased probability of services being provided by the government for imizi in a clustered settlement, rather than the scattered settlement pattern that characterises the villages of Tyefu Location. Adopting a discourse that stressed the virtues of arable production and which captured the desire of especially older people in the village, to return to the ‘good old days’ when people in Gwabeni enthusiastically ploughed, harvested and shared their plentiful crops, they also called for a locally managed process to re-apportion all the arable land in the village into equally sized portions, so that every umzi in Gwabeni could be given an allocation of arable land.26

The early opponents of their scheme were a few senior men with arable land and

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25 Referred to in Chapter Five (Cory Library, PR3929, Files of the PFFGA).

26 Without dispelling the notion that they might have regarded arable production as one possible livelihood strategy for some Gwabeni imizi in the future, their call for the redistribution of arable land probably had more to do with wanting to garner the support of the many younger, landless imizi in the village, who wanted to strengthen their claim to membership of the village community.
livestock in the village who, given their established *imizi* in the village, were unlikely to be interested in resettling on the Outspan. They regarded the group trying to reclaim the Outspan as young upstarts and disparaged their settlement plan as evidence of a 'township mentality.' They naturally saw the settlement plan as one which would impinge upon the already limited grazing resources available to Gwabeni livestock. In trying to oppose the development of the Outspan, some of these men adopted a 'community' discourse of their own. Their 'community' was that of the whole Tyefu Location, where grazing had 'always' been available to all livestock owners. Their claim that people in other Tyefu Location villages were complaining to them about the prospect of relatively high quality communal grazing on the Outspan, to which they too had rights of use, being lost for good, could not be easily substantiated or refuted. They felt that the negative effect of the Outspan settlement on "all the people of Tyefu" should be sufficient reason to abandon the plan to resettle on the area. Not surprisingly, they rejected with contempt the calls made for the redistribution of arable land to landless *imizi*.

Undeterred by this opposition, the young men started to lobby the Ciskei government in the late 1980s, with the request that the Outspan be transferred to the Gwabeni 'community' for the purposes of residential settlement. During 1990, institutional dissonance reached new lows in Tyefu Location: in Gwabeni, the residents, who were being mobilised by local SANCO activists, forced their African Democratic Movement-aligned sub-headman to stand down in favour of a non-statutory, SANCO-aligned Residents' Association committee. This meant that the village had forfeit its representation in the Tyefu Tribal Authority.

Shortly after the sub-headman had been pressured into standing down, a small group of Gwabeni residents from Nqwebeba section visited the headman from the neighbouring village of Qamnyana (under whose jurisdiction the village of Gwabeni still nominally fell) to enlist his support in reclaiming the Outspan. Opponents of the

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27 As one large livestock owner in Gwabeni told me, "we share all this grazing with the villages of Tyefu. Each village doesn't have enough grazing by itself. People from other villages are complaining about the settlement on the Outspan. In the long run, there'll be no grazing land left at all, because of such settlements. In five years' time, they will all be coming back [here] with all the resources up there [on the Outspan] exhausted."
resettlement plan would later submit that neither the enlisting of the headman’s help nor the subsequent trip to Bisho to press their claim to the Outspan land had been sanctioned by all the residents of the village.

The delegation from Gwabeni, which included two Port Elizabeth-based men from ‘old’ Gwabeni lineages (one of them was a Mabhele) as well as Ndlovu - the enthusiastic but landless farmer - went to Bisho in 1990 and spoke to Chief D.M. Jongilanga about their plan. They claimed that by the time they had finished arguing their case, Jongilanga “knew all about the Outspan but was not prepared to act in the matter at all.” Instead, the Gwabeni delegation was informed that the documents concerning claims and transactions in land for the area in question were in Cape Town and that nothing could be done to assist them at that time.

In 1992, however, word came via the headman in Qamnyana that the persistence of the ‘young men from Port Elizabeth’ had paid off: the Ciskei government was prepared to look into the claim, but only in respect of that section of the Outspan which fell outside the Double Drift Game Reserve.

Perhaps realising the potential difficulties of getting the support of all the *imizi* in Gwabeni, especially given that several influential *imizi* in Nala section had expressed their opposition to their project, the ‘young men’ from Port Elizabeth enlisted the support of the Breakfastvlei Hotel owner. The latter no doubt saw the obvious benefits in having a new and potentially upwardly mobile village section established directly adjacent to his shop.

A local chapter of the ‘Outspan Sites Committee’ (OSC) was duly established, consisting of 2 residents from Nqwebeba section and the owner of the Breakfastvlei Hotel. Both residents from Nqwebeba planned to move to the Outspan sites as soon as this became possible. The ‘main’ OSC comprised three men from Gwabeni lineages resident in Port Elizabeth. The local chapter of the committee later co-opted the elderly chairperson of SANCO-aligned Residents’ Association (RA) in Gwabeni onto their (local) committee, even though this man (who lives alone) had recently relocated to
Nala from Nqwebeba and is not planning to relocate to the Outspan. The reasons for this co-option are not hard to fathom: firstly, the OSC needed to win over the support of the (RA) committee to avoid being seen as circumventing the established institutions in the village by creating entirely new and parallel structures in the new section. Secondly, in the absence of a sub-headman in the village, Gwabeni people no longer felt the need to defer to the Tribal Authority Office in Horton when allocating residential sites, and the SANCO-aligned RA committee had taken over responsibility for doing this. Having the RA committee chairperson on the new committee would thus serve to legitimise the land allocations made by this committee.

In June 1993, the Ciskei Department of Agriculture brought in bulldozers to clear this portion of the Outspan of trees, shrubs and aloe plants. They also laid out roads and surveyed and marked off sites. Although the OSC wanted the sites to be 70m x 70m, the Department of Agriculture staff convinced them that the available space was limited and instead 177 sites of 40m x 50m were measured and demarcated. These sites, the OSC decided, would cost R100-00 each and, although people were allowed to choose and provisionally register a site in their name, no building on a site was to be permitted until the sum was paid to the OSC in full. Significantly, though not surprisingly, some of the most ardent supporters of the move to the sites were women who had languished in *imizi* in the furthest reaches of the village, i.e. those from Nqwebeba section.

**Contesting rights of resource ownership and allocation on the Outspan sites**

The lineages that enjoyed most local political control in the past in Gwabeni are predominantly those grouped under the Khala clan: Lineages of this group had regularly supplied the headmen for the village in the past and the *imizi* of its members still occupy the most centrally situated village-section, called *Nala*. The village primary school and the new creche are also situated in Nala section, and the village meetings are held in this section.

The dominant position of the Khala clan had been both numerically and politically (if

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28 His children are apparently interested in the Outspan sites development.
not spatially) counter-balanced in the past by members of other lineages, notably those who were members of the Nkwayi clan, a number of whose imizi occupied Nqwebeba village section, including several Mabhele families. As the wealthier Nqwebeba imizi moved away out this remote section from the late 1970s, networks of kinship and locality began to suffer: contact between those that had moved and those that remained in Nqwebeba became less frequent and the latter began to feel peripheral to the affairs of the village.

The attempt to reclaim the Outspan was thus in part a response to the despair and apathy that the imizi that were left behind in Nqwebeba had begun to feel. It was particularly their absent members, that felt that something had to be done to counteract what they perceived to be the increasingly peripheral role of Nqwebeba residents in the affairs of Gwabeni.29 It also represents a rejuvenation of imizi and a renewed commitment (not least financial) to a rural way of life and to a village that had witnessed a considerable haemorrhage of imizi and individuals out of the area in the past few decades.

By presenting what appeared to be a strong case for well-planned, ‘community-driven’ Betterment Planning,30 the OSC sent a clear signal to the authorities that they were awaiting the imminent supply of services like running water and electricity to the Outspan sites. Their claim was bolstered, they argued, by the existence of an electrical sub-station nearby which could supply the sites with power. Moreover, it was widely known that the official Ciskei National Water Plan (which has been adopted practically in toto by the Eastern Cape provincial government) shows that the government plans to build a water reservoir in the middle of the Outspan from where water will be supplied to several nearby villages. The OSC has also made known its plans to collect funds and to approach the government to assist them in the construction of a creche.
and a school on the Outspan.

The first note of dissension from the village institutions concerned the legitimacy of the party that went to Bisho to claim the Outspan area. The following are some reasons given by various informants among the disaffected in the village for rejecting what this party did:

(a) they had acted unilaterally in this matter, without a mandate from the majority of the people of the village, who were in fact, not even properly informed of the plan,
(b) they had acted in cahoots with a neighbouring, ADM-aligned headman who was unpopular in Gwabeni and whose authority over the affairs of Gwabeni had been challenged,
(c) by being satisfied with the grant of only a portion of the Outspan, i.e. that section which lay outside the game reserve, they had weakened the chance of claiming and securing the entire Outspan for the village,
(d) that to convert the specified section of the Outspan into an essentially residential area, would be to lose some of the best ploughing soil or, at very least, an area that was providing additional grazing and other resources to people in the village,
(e) that the 'Outspan Sites Committee' had no legitimacy and absolutely no right to allocate and offer sites for sale (especially not to people from outside the village), because this represented an attempt to alienate the resources on the commons in favour of private ownership,
(f) that plans to build a creche, school and clinic on the Outspan would only duplicate and detract from the status of these under-resourced facilities in Nala section. In particular the consequences of this for the construction of a new creche in Nala section, which had been the subject of ongoing fund-raising and sporadic building efforts, was of concern to Nala section residents and,
(g) that R100 for a residential site was ridiculously cheap, especially since this was "our grandfathers' prime ploughing land", which would now be sold to outsiders and thus be lost to "us, the true members of this community."

Other reasons for opposing the Outspan settlement scheme, which have not been voiced publicly, include resentment over the fact that the Port Elizabeth-based Mabhele men ignored the SANCO-aligned village structures and chose to negotiate only with the relevant officials in Bisho, and secondly, that the people settling on the Outspan are likely to be the first (and, more controversially, possibly the only) people in Gwabeni to benefit from provision of water and electricity, even though every umzi in the other (dispersed) sections of the village is in dire need of these services. Disgruntled
informants claim that people wanting to settle on the Outspan would remain largely urban-based, i.e. they are unlikely to live in the rural area on a permanent basis and, by implication, are undeserving of being prioritised in respect of the provision of services. The Residents' Association committee is adamant that should any infrastructural developments in fact take place in Gwabeni, these would have to be channelled through itself, since it is the legitimate and democratically elected structure for the whole village. The alleged response to this statement (which has since been denied vehemently by informants on the Outspan) is that the people on the Outspan sites no longer regard themselves as part of Gwabeni and have named the new settlement *Phakama* (Stand up!).

Because the key players who initiated the reclaiming of the Outspan are based in Port Elizabeth, the local OSC has to negotiate its way around these criticisms. This it does by deftly deflecting any difficult questions to the Port Elizabeth-based committee, where delays of time and distance rob them of their context, substance and urgency. Since the local OSC is not recognised by the Khala-dominated Residents' Association in the village, no real dialogue between the parties concerning the objections to the scheme is, in fact, possible.

However, when the Residents' Association committee sent a written request to the OSC - which it claims not to recognise - asking that the monies collected through the sale of Outspan sites be made available to ensure the completion of the new creche in Khala section, no formal response was forthcoming. Apparently, the OSC felt that it cannot make such a decision and would have to call a meeting of "Gwabeni people in Port Elizabeth" (to be organised by the emigrant section of the OSC) to discuss the request. After a long delay, the word came back that the OSC would not hand over any of the monies collected through the sale of sites, because this money is needed to develop facilities on the sites themselves, not in Nala section.

For nearly a year (from early 1994), tensions have simmered in the village over the proposed move to the Outspan. The 'roads' cleared and sites marked by the bulldozers have been in danger of being hidden by the regrowth of weeds and grasses in the area. Mr. G (whose one Port Elizabeth-based son was part of the delegation to Bisho) has
been a wholehearted supporter of the plan to move to the Outspan and he made the first move: to test the extent of local opposition to the scheme, he cleared the site he had purchased, erected a shack on it and instructed another one of his sons to live there. This young man spent about five anxiety-filled months living alone on the Outspan, before other people, realising that he was not going to be forcibly evicted from the this area by the opponents of the settlement scheme, worked up the courage to begin establishing their imizi there as well. The second umzi which established a presence on the Outspan is that of a Mr. Gd, who recently fell foul of the RA committee for irregularities that arose during a fencing project around the village and who consequently seemed keen to escape from his detractors in New Brighton section.³¹

By May 1995, there were three imizi established on the Outspan sites. Mr. G and his family moved in a 'corrugated' shack, while he paid to have a three-room house built nearby. He is still planning to extend the house to six rooms in time, each with its own entrance, so that each of his six unmarried sons can have one room. The three imizi have all fenced their sites and planted vegetable gardens. Mr. G has planted peas and tomatoes, both of which are doing well. He has constructed a kraal for his livestock and is building a chicken run for his wife. Water remains a problem and his wife has to collect water from the stagnant pond on the Outspan.

Slowly, the resistance from the main body of imizi in the remaining three village sections was being pared down to a few individuals. Although the sale of sites on the Outspan was initially boycotted by Nala section members and their allies, it has emerged that some of these people are, in fact, purchasing sites on the Outspan, but

³¹ Mr. Gd's daughter secured a job as an 'assistant' (some informants sarcastically claimed that 'the job came with strings attached') to the fencing contractor/supervisor during a recent fencing project which employed Gwabeni people. At the root of the subsequent controversy, was the fact that her job did not form part of the formal negotiations that had been entered into between the village and the contractor (nor any part of discussions among village residents) concerning which people qualified for, and which imizi were in line to benefit from, the jobs on offer. The project ended prematurely and, with the work incomplete, the Gwabeni workteam was paid off. Mr. Gd's daughter, however, continued to be employed on the project and to draw a wage. Then the contractor allowed Mr. Gd, an imfiki (relative newcomer to the village), to appropriate the redundant fencing that had been replaced along the road near Gwabeni. Local people expected him to hand it over to the RA committee in the village, but he refused to do so. Mr. Gd remained defiant until at a subsequent village meeting he received a comprehensive dressing down from several senior (Khala) men and was informed that unless he returned the fencing, he would be ostracised from the village (specifically, that people would no longer attend his rituals). At this, he relented and relinquished the fencing. Anger over the informal way in which his daughter had been employed, and the fencing material continued to smoulder in the village.
they claim to be doing so at the behest and in the name of their Port Elizabeth-based (adult) children. That they too are purchasing sites might be enough to thwart any concerted local opposition towards the scheme, but added to it is the fact that unemployed Khala (and other) men taking on ‘jobs’ clearing and fencing sites purchased by other imizi on the Outspan. Some of these men, who were previously voicing some of the most vehement opposition to the Outspan settlement, have been hired to build houses on the sites. The men from Nala section charge R300 to erect fencing around the two Outspan sites which several people have opted to purchase. Of course, it is impossible for them to both maintain their opposition to the Outspan settlement and to seek employment from those who are establishing their imizi there.

In late 1995, an attempt was made to quell any remaining dissent by encouraging local people to purchase the ‘remaining sites’, lest they be taken by outsiders. The OSC made it known that the residents of Gwabeni had now been given sufficient opportunity to acquire prime sites on the Outspan, and it was consequently throwing open the purchase of Outspan sites to people from other villages in Tyefu Location. A few outsiders have been attracted by the rumours of imminent infrastructural provision in the area and have apparently bought sites. This move has been met with indignation by some of the RA committee in the village, but seemed to have the desired effect: a number of those people who oppose the Outspan settlement scheme have relented and bought sites there. By December 1996, over thirty sites had been purchased and ten sites were already occupied, all of them by people from Gwabeni imizi.32 Several impressive houses had been constructed, indicative of the significant investments people are prepared to make in this new area. Meetings of the owners of Outspan sites, unlike the meetings held in Nala section, register maximum and enthusiastic attendance by the Outspan residents or site owners who are in the village or nearby.

32 In December 1997, this number stands at 82 sites paid for partially or in full, with only five sites purchased by people outside Gwabeni.
Instituting operational rules for resource management on the Outspan

Settlement of the Outspan is open to anyone in Peddie district. Some people from Ripplemead village on the Keiskamma River and others from Qamnyana are interested in purchasing sites. Meetings of Outspan residents take place at the Breakfastvlei Hotel. When someone applies to purchase a site, a meeting is called and the character of the applicant assessed by all the people already settled on the Outspan. Those who know the applicant personally may be asked to 'testify' in this regard.

The emigrant section of the OSC has decided that no-one may purchase more than two sites, because this would be "unfair and would quickly take up all the available space on the Outspan if one person was allowed to buy it all." It would also rob the younger people in the village of the opportunity to buy and develop their imizi on the Outspan sites in future. People who are keen to resume arable production are encouraged to buy two contiguous sites: one for their house and one for the purpose of ploughing. Those who are content to have a garden needed only one plot. Mrs. Mabhele, a local OSC member, admitted in an interview that people could easily purchase more than two sites, because they are allowed to buy additional sites "in the names of their children", but she hopes that the OSC would be able to control any excessive concentration of sites by individuals.

Another rule is that speculative buying of sites will not be tolerated. A site must be developed within three years of purchase. This is to prevent an "unfair" situation developing in which a person keen to retire to the sites cannot do so because some people are "sitting" on empty sites. The OSC would not confiscate such sites, but would communicate with the people involved to ascertain what problems they were experiencing that prevented them from building. If necessary, the OSC would pay their R100 back to them and put up the site up for resale.

Buyers of sites are issued with a receipt for the money which they have paid to the OSC, but no title deeds are available which can be issued to people purchasing sites. Recognition of their continued ownership of their site(s) rests on the authority of the non-statutory OSC and the endorsement of this authority by other Outspan settlers. Mr. G is emphatic about this:
“Our committee makes rules for the people on the sites - the government does not come into it. There is no higher level of authority concerning residential issues here. The [RA] committee in Gwabeni is not involved in our business here, even though we are still under them. When we have service-related problems, maybe with our roads or water supply, we send two people to Bisho to ask for help there. The government has asked for a map of the Outspan sites and has promised to help us.”

I interviewed some of the local OSC members to hear about their longer-term planning and what their approach to potential future problems on the Site entails, particularly in view of some of the resource management problems that are prevalent in Gwabeni itself. They seem vague on the details of several key issues, and there is a tendency either to defer to the Port Elizabeth section of the OSC for the making of regulations, or to say that “except for the selling of sites, we will do things [i.e. manage our resources] as they have always been done in Tyefu Location.” Some of the issues that are of concern are discussed below.

Although the ruling that no-one can commence building their new umzi until they have paid the R100 purchase price in full is clear, the exact rights that they are paying for are not spelt out. It is unclear, for example, whether any conditions of purchase exist which govern whether people are allowed to sell their sites, or subdivisions thereof in future - and whether they may only sell to buyers who have the approval of the OSC - or what rules of inheritance and of alienation would apply in the event of a site owner’s prolonged absence from the area, i.e. is the tenure system applicable to the sites essentially one of freehold or a more conditional form of tenure?

Another area of concern is that no restrictions are placed on the number of livestock that site owners may bring into the area. The reasoning is that people have the right to own as many livestock as they wish to, and that all livestock will be able to make use of all the grazing resources ordinarily available to Gwabeni (and by extension, Tyefu Location) residents. This arrangement is fine for existing Gwabeni imizi which are unlikely to see a marked increase in their livestock numbers when they move to the Outspan sites, but with the outsider imizi that may settle on the Outspan the situation is different: if any of these imizi are livestock owners (from outside Tyefu Location), they
will be increasing the pressure on the grazing resources around Gwabeni. Similarly, the increased number and concentration of people in the area, is likely to have an effect on the availability of other natural resources, such as firewood, water and wilderness resources, around the Outspan.

One of the first resource management issues that the Port Elizabeth-based OSC confronted, was the excessive cutting down of trees when people clear their sites. The OSC felt that at least some trees should be kept on the Outspan, and a meeting was called to address the problem. At this meeting, all the people present readily agreed to stop cutting down trees on the Outspan. No mention was made of penalties that would be instituted against those who may subsequently be found cutting down trees, possibly because this would appear to be too authoritarian, and in any case, no-one has been given the responsibility of keeping a check on the number of trees on the sites.

Another problem is that of people's livestock wandering onto the road nearby. The need for fencing this section of the sites has been broached, but the OSC does not yet have sufficient funds to erect fences, and this project will have to wait until more funds have been generated through the sale of sites.

3. Conclusion

This chapter documented the nature of rural-urban interdependence as it is experienced by Gwabeni residents. I argued that economic necessity has resulted in the fragmentation of *imizi* and the dispersal of dependents, in what has been described as the regionalisation of the household (De Wet and Holbrook 1997). With the investments in jobs, education and housing that Gwabeni people have made in a number of urban centres, notably Port Elizabeth, they have come to see their rural *imizi* in a different light: Gwabeni offers employed and urban-based people a particular 'bundle' of benefits (and drawbacks) that may be useful to them at different stages of the development cycle or may be rejected entirely in favour of an urban-centred existence. The dependence of most *imizi on both* the rural and the urban sectors, and the constant movement of people between these sectors, draws people's attention
away from the problems which may be considered exclusive to the rural village setting, such as the management of natural resources. Very few individuals and imizi can afford to be committed to an exclusively rural existence, and consequently the transaction costs involved in collectively managing the natural resources of the village are disproportionately high in relation to the expected returns.

The case study of the move to the Outspan sites is a vivid example of how, what is regarded, by many residents of Gwabeni and of Tyefu Location, as part of the commons, has been excised from the whole commons under circumstances which throw some of the more dysfunctional aspects of natural resource management under modified communal tenure into sharp relief. Some of these issues are revisited below.

The historical circumstances which led to the enclosure of Tyefu Location, and to a rapid increase in population, put enormous pressure on the natural resources of villages like Gwabeni. As a result, residents were forced to adopt whatever strategies they could to ameliorate the localised depletion of natural resources. One ‘traditional’ strategy they sought (and still seek) to emulate was to move their imizi away from areas in which the supply of resources had been (temporarily or permanently) exhausted. Given the finite area of land available to them, this strategy was really only likely to be successful in the short-term.

When all other suitable areas in the village had been colonised, a generation of young men, who were employed in Port Elizabeth, decided to lobby for the return of the Breakfastvlei Outspan to the village. That they should even contemplate doing this independently and from an urban base, is indicative of a dilemma which continues to undermine resource management in Gwabeni and throughout Tyefu Location. This dilemma is that a large number of absent people have rights of access to resources - by virtue of their claims to membership of Gwabeni imizi - and as joint ‘owners’ of the resources on the commons, have to be consulted (in theory, at least) before any decisions can be taken which could effect changes to the way these resources are allocated and managed.

Although, in practice, this consultation may not happen, the perceived need to consult
them before resource management issues are discussed, has the effect of hamstringing the simplest of management regimes, because the body of people resident in the village at any one time do not feel themselves sufficiently competent or authorised to take decisions which would affect those who are absent from the village. People in positions of leadership in Gwabeni give this as a cause of their inability to get several local initiatives going, as the following quote from one male informant shows,

"The [Gwabeni] people living in Port Elizabeth, who voted there [in the 1995 local government elections] and will be on the voter's roll there, should have no rights in Gwabeni or any rural area. They can't have rights and citizenship everywhere. It is these people with jobs and money, who are a problem, because they can engineer things in their rural villages to suit them, even if it hurts those left behind [in the village]."

This opinion is clearly not necessarily one that is shared by all the residents. Another man present at the time, who had spent many years working in Port Elizabeth, disagreed with my informant, saying that some people who live in Port Elizabeth only do so because they work there, and should be able to maintain all their rights in Gwabeni, including their right to be involved in community affairs. This is because "everything of theirs is still in Gwabeni" and it is only their jobs that keep them away from the village. Such people, he argued, cannot be expected to give up their citizenship in Gwabeni. The problem is, as I have argued, that urban-based people have varying levels of commitment and interest in the affairs of the village. To allow the possibility of dissent that may emanate from this group to undermine the making of important decisions in the village, because they are "part of this community", is to say that many of these decisions will probably never to be made at village level.

Even at those times, however, when a large number of absentee residents are present in the village (for example, over the Christmas season), village meetings to discuss specific resource management issues are practically unheard of. This is not only because "people are too busy to have meetings", as some informants claim, but rather
it is because there is resistance from resident elite\textsuperscript{33} \textit{imizi}, that appears to prevent the any discussion of serious 'community' matters at these times. These elite residents fear, perhaps, that the urban-based people will outwit them (as in the case of the Outspan sites), undermine their positions of power among the economically weaker, resident \textit{imizi}, or simply misunderstand the local issues and be meddlesome. When I asked the first chairperson of the newly established Gwabeni Development Forum how and when Gwabeni people in Port Elizabeth would be informed about the Forum, he replied,

"We still don't want them to know. Our reason is that they'll activate their own ideas there at Port Elizabeth. They don't qualify to be involved [yet], so when we are ready here, we'll delegate people to go to them. It's only then that we'll include them. If we let them confer there first before we get there, they'll...it will be a mess. Better we go to them [later]."

On the other hand, unless they are as confident of their support base in Gwabeni as the young men from Nqwebeba who make up the Port Elizabeth section of the OSC are, many urban-based people returning to the village during holiday seasons are reluctant to be seen to be meddling in local affairs, the exact dynamics of which they may little understanding, in ways that could jeopardise their social ties with other \textit{imizi} and people in the village.

The Outspan case indicates, however, that people connected to Gwabeni \textit{imizi}, both locally resident people and those based in an urban centre, are not all apathetic or inactive in the face of poverty and the social dislocation of life in the village (as some informants claim). On the contrary, people continue to actively strive to manipulate local conditions to their individual, and at times collective, advantage. In the case of the Outspan, even the local institutional dissonance has not derailed their project of relocation and development. The fact that women are permitted to purchase sites on the Outspan in their own right, is a welcome innovation to 'traditional' land rights in this area, in that it allows single women to acquire a bigger stake in land and resource

\textsuperscript{33} I use the term 'elite' here only to indicate the \textit{imizi} which, because of their economic resources, benefit most, in terms of both resource use and social status, from the \textit{status quo} resource management regime in the village and the location.
management issues, something that has been somewhat lacking in Gwabeni and in Tyefu Location.\textsuperscript{34}

The considerable pitfalls in the way of successful natural resource management under a modified communal tenure regime \textit{in a confined area} and in the absence of an effective resource management regime, await the Outspan settlers, however, when this new settlement almost inevitably reaches a stage when the overcrowding of people and livestock start to tell on the sites. As long as the institutions at the level of the village and the location remain weak, and the common pool resources around Gwabeni have to be shared with the residents of the ten other villages in Tyefu Location, the underlying causes of resource degradation are, unfortunately, most unlikely to be overcome by encroachments on neighbouring land like the move to the Outspan sites.

\textsuperscript{34} As Palmer (1997:97,126) argues, this is evidence of the manner in which traditional gender roles in Gwabeni have been modified by decades of migrant labour practices, the payment of pensions to women, which affords them an independent income, and, of course, the post-agrarian rural lifestyle in Gwabeni, all of which undermine the traditional authority of senior men.
CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has examined how resource users in Tyefu Location, and in Gwabeni village in particular, mediate the effects of the wider political economy in the ways that they utilise, and to some extent, participate in the management of, the natural resources which are held under a system of modified communal tenure.

A detailed examination of these issues is particularly pertinent at this time, because the most recent official government policy on the issue of (modified) communal tenure regimes, includes the explicit recognition and endorsement of the continued existence of these systems. In fact, these policies suggest that the interests of ‘disadvantaged and poor communities’ in rural areas may be best served by communal decision-making and resource-owning situations (Department of Land Affairs 1997:63-68).¹ The data presented and the points that have been argued in this thesis give a clearer idea of some of the long-term implications that modified communal tenure regimes, in their present form, are likely to have for the management of natural resources in these areas.

In examining the issues of resource management and mismanagement in Tyefu Location, I have tried to avoid both the sweeping and sometimes speculative generalisations of political economy-type explanations - prevalent in much of the literature in the area of debates around agrarian reform - and (what I consider to be) the reactionary dismissal of modified communal tenure arrangements and resource use practices as being hamstrung by particular, antiquated cultural practices, and as inherently destructive of the natural resource base.

I have not found either of these blanket explanations particularly helpful in advancing our understanding of the actual circumstances that prevail in Tyefu Location in respect of resource management. Specifically, blanket explanations of the workings of modified communal tenure regimes, in their present form, are likely to have for the management of natural resources in these areas.

¹ The Minister of Land Affairs, Mr. Derek Hanekom was, however, quoted in Business Day (10/12/1997) as saying that "some land reform projects were destined to fail and that government was trying to discourage the group purchase of land set aside for transfer." More controversially, the article went on to say that "individual ownership [of land] had proved to be the most efficient way of ensuring the sustainable transfer of land to black farmers."
communal tenure regimes *per se*, are of no help in explaining the *number and variety* of ways in which people in these areas negotiate and contest access to natural resources. Nor do political economy-type explanations critically unpack the reasons why only some of the natural resources, as opposed to others, in this area are degraded to the considerable extent that they are at present, except at the expense of painting a picture of rural people as passive, weak and unable to exercise any control over their lives.

I have thus made use of aspects of common property theory to analyse the nature of resource use and management patterns that are characteristic of the modified communal tenure system prevalent in Tyefu Location. In particular, I have found the emphasis on the nature and the role of local, resource-user institutions, and their relations with other institutions, notably the state, to be analytically useful. I have also found useful the theoretical interest in the causes and nature of institutional change over time, as well as the way in which the incentives of resource users and local institutions to engage in collective action aimed at resource management are constantly changing.

I have, however, been critical of the tendency of common property models to rarify the common property systems they analyse, i.e. to make use of 'ideal type' systems, that work best 'on paper'. As others (Swallow 1996, Ng'weno 1996) have found *in practice*, property regimes which most resemble 'ideal' common property systems, always function in ways that are 'messy' and more flexible than the 'ideal' theoretical construct of a common property system. Similarly, I found that features of the modified communal tenure system in Tyefu Location do not always match the characteristics of the 'ideal type' of common property system which is at the centre of this theoretical model.

Indeed, empirical studies of cases that resemble common property systems, suggest strongly that these systems are, in fact, highly susceptible to disruption from a number of quarters. These quarters include socio-economic, demographic, political, institutional and ecological change that undermine the individual incentives and abilities of people to contribute to collective resource management. In the *absence* of major institutional readjustments that can compensate adequately for these changes, such disruption
tends to move common pool resource use in the direction of 'open access.'

In applying some of these analytical tools and insights to the modified communal tenure system of Tyefu Location, I have argued, firstly, that the latter is at least partially integrated into the national political economy of South Africa. As such, it does not exist as an equilibrial, static system, in which socio-economic homogeneity among imizi and a shared value system (or commonly held 'incentives') are the long-term norms that underpin strong local institutions, which in turn, co-ordinate natural resource allocation and management. On the contrary, the ongoing socio-economic and political change experienced in the location, the result of its incorporation into the colonial (and later, national) economy over the past 160 years, has resulted in a considerable degree of social and economic heterogeneity and has led to a divergence of the interests of local residents.

Secondly, I demonstrate that the strong local institutions that are hypothesised as being a critical feature in the making, implementing and enforcing of resource management decisions in 'robust' common property systems, are practically absent in Tyefu Location. Even Lawry's (1990:406) minimum criterion for what constitutes a common property system - namely a situation where rules define (and are actively upheld in practice) who has access to resources on the commons, and by extension, who is excluded from using these resources (see Chapter One) - is not consistently met by the institutions that exist in the villages of Tyefu Location.

Some of the difficulties of common property management in these circumstances are demonstrated by the problems experienced in managing some natural resources around Gwabeni, particularly grazing land. The management of grazing resources around the village is complicated by the fact that this resource is open for use by all the residents of Tyefu Location, most of whom are not in regular contact with each other. To manage the commonly-held grazing resources sustainably, i.e. monitor and assess rangeland condition, co-ordinate the numbers and movement of livestock around the area when required, and ensure that the livestock of outsiders is excluded, would require that at least two conditions are met. Firstly, the local institutions in each village would need to undertake some of these management tasks and to have the capacity
to co-operate closely with similar institutions in other Tyefu villages to fulfil these responsibilities. Secondly, all the villagers would need to have recourse to some higher authority (at the level of the location) to adjudicate in local disputes over management and (at the level of district) to enforce the rules of exclusion of the livestock of outsiders from the area. Both these conditions are not met at present in the management of grazing resources in Tyefu Location and this does not seem likely to change in the near future.

So, does the current resource management regime in Tyefu Location constitute a common property system or not? I would argue that, if we accept that there is an 'ideal' common property prototype (in which resource allocation and management meet with Ostrom's design principles\(^2\)), with which the property regime in Tyefu Location can be compared, then the latter constitutes a weak common property system. This is, I argue, because there is a degree of exclusion of outsiders from the use of the natural resources, but the rules for the management of resources are practically non-existent.

Common property theorists would argue that resource degradation is most likely to occur when the mechanisms for managing resources in common property systems break down. Part of my enquiry has been to develop an critical understanding of the possible causes of resource degradation (specifically, the absence and/or ineffectiveness of resource management practices) in Tyefu Location. The first area of critical interest is the agro-ecological nature of the resource base in the location. To summarise, this area is known to have climatic conditions that are adverse to dryland arable production and to be highly sensitive to soil erosion. I cited evidence for the argument that, if placed under continuous, heavy grazing pressure, the communal grazing resources in Tyefu Location are susceptible to deleterious vegetative transformation in the long-term. I also provided empirical evidence which unequivocally demonstrates that irreversible and deleterious transformation of a range of natural resources in this area has, in fact, occurred in the location.

Clearly, the natural resources in Tyefu Location are susceptible to overuse (i.e.

\(^2\) See Chapter One.
depletion) and degradation, and all the more so, given the pressures that increased human population and livestock numbers have brought to bear on these resources. Given this scenario, a 'robust' and adaptable natural resource management regime would appear to be a minimum requirement in preventing resource depletion and degradation. The key analytical question then becomes why resource use and management regimes in the modified communal tenure villages of Tyefu Location are grossly inadequate or almost entirely absent. This is the question to which I provided some answers in the ethnographic chapters of the thesis.

Another area of critical relevance in this regard is the historical context of land settlement and management that continues not only to exert an impact on people’s access to land and natural resources, but also to affect their ability and inclination to participate in the management of these natural resources. I described how Mfengu people were resettled in Tyefu Location and then were progressively fenced in by the granting of white-owned farms. The resident population of Tyefu Location was augmented by natural increase and by people moving into the Location from neighbouring areas, with the result that overcrowding, of both people and livestock, and thus sustained pressure on natural resources, has been a feature of this area for over one hundred years.

The state responded to the subsequent signs of resource degradation that emerged in the villages of Tyefu Location by pushing for the implementation of Betterment Planning, despite the fact that settlement rearrangement without the provision of more land for an increased population was unlikely to solve the problems of resource degradation. Betterment was vigorously resisted by the people of Tyefu Location, and in the process, issues of resource management, specifically any restrictions on the number of livestock on the communal grazing lands of the Location, became fiercely contested - a fact which has acted as a deterrent to people attempting to implement a locally endorsed grazing management regime in parts of, or across the whole of Tyefu Location.

The long-standing practice of providing state remuneration for rural people to undertake local resource conservation and rehabilitation activities, has had the effect
of discouraging people from engaging in voluntary collective action in order to manage their resources. It also continues to suggest to the residents of Tyefu Location that the state is ultimately responsible for the management of natural resources in their villages, rather than they themselves, (and their local institutions) as resource users, accepting responsibility for the management of these resources.

This leads to the question as to why local institutions, primarily the magistrate, the chief, the Tribal Authority, the headmen (and sub-headmen) and, since the early 1990s, the Residents' Associations at village level, have been unable or unwilling to institute resource management practices that are adapted to the particular, changing socio-economic and political circumstances prevalent in Tyefu Location, and that might result in the more judicious use of the natural resources at the disposal of the residents of the Location. I showed how the nature of institutional authority in these villages, under a system in which the headman was paid by the state but was reliant on the support of both the magistrate and the villagers for the execution of his duties and his continued employment, was compromised. This gave rise to local interpretations of resource management regimes, the mediation of the official directives from the magistrate or Tribal Authority with the local, more acceptable and supposedly 'traditional' resource management practices. The result has been increased negotiation over, and thus flexibility of resource use, at location, village and village section levels.

I also showed how the nature of rural administration has resulted in the duplication and erosion of authority and how the resulting 'dissonance' allowed (and still allows) villagers to contest and negotiate, or simply ignore, directives concerning the use and control of natural resources in their locality. In a situation where considerable numbers of people from neighbouring farms (together with their livestock) were settling in Tyefu Location and the interests of established residents were becoming increasingly heterogeneous, the lack of institutional regulation over natural resources seemed to suit many of the residents. Isolated attempts by various authorities to introduce resource conservation measures (such as the prohibition on the use of axes while gathering wood, which came from the Tribal Authority), were not only physically difficult to 'police', but also unpopular and unlikely to be heeded, given the increasing scarcity of certain local resources (i.e. the closest 'dry' wood might be several kilometres away
from one's *umzi*). As a result, these measures were unevenly implemented and frequently ignored, suggesting a lack of local institutional capacity and commitment to resource management measures.

In addressing the issue of the apparent lack of local institutional capacity, I have been especially critical of the way in which state intervention into natural resource management has had the (mostly unintended) effect of undermining village and location level institutions concerned with these issues. In Chapter Four, I argued that outside intervention has had the effect of increasing the amount of 'institutional dissonance' in these villages, distracting the energies and attention of local institutions from the management of the resources upon which many village residents relied.

But even with this amount of 'dissonance' undermining local resource management efforts, the state cannot be accused of actually preventing the institutions and residents of Tyefu Location of mobilising around specific resource management problems. Clearly, a degree of incoherence in the collective ability or commitment of local people to address these problems, is part of the explanation for the inadequacy of resource management regimes in these villages. Stated differently, my argument is that the existence of 'institutional dissonance' does not exonerate village residents from the collective responsibility - in the face of the visible degradation of the resources which many of them use daily - to attempt to mobilise themselves and to initiate local resource management and conservation regimes. This is especially so since 1994, when village Residents' Associations have enjoyed an institutional legitimacy that has been rare in Tyefu Location since the time of Chief Msuthu in the 1940s and 1950s. If collective efforts to manage resources at village and Location levels had been latent but stymied by the 'institutional dissonance' of the period before 1994, then one might have expected a flurry of measures aimed at implementing resource management regimes during the past three years. This has, however, not been the case.

To account for why the present day circumstances in Tyefu Location do not lend themselves to collective attempts to manage natural resources, I analysed several factors which act as disincentives to collective action. These factors include the social structure of *imizi* in the villages of Tyefu Location (i.e. the predominance of elderly
people and children), that has a significant impact on the capacity of those resident in
the village to actually contribute to collective resource management activities and to
regulate resource extraction around the village. They also include the socio-economic
heterogeneity prevalent at the level of the umzi in the village, particularly in respect of
widely varying degrees of economic security or marginality. I found that access to
pensions tends to act as a disincentive to participation in collective resource
management endeavours. Moreover, differential ownership of livestock holdings, and
of other possessions that decrease reliance on locally available natural resources,
namely rainwater tanks, paraffin or gas stoves, makes for differentiated transaction
costs in the organising and maintaining of resource management regimes.

All these factors are significant, but possibly the primary cause of people's failure to
engage in the collective management their resource base stems from what must be
their most adaptive social and economic strategy in the face of the inherent risks in
both the rural and urban domains: the dispersion of the umzi. It is this factor which
robs the village of decision-makers and, more importantly, robs those who remain in the
village of the confidence and will to make and implement decisions. It results in the
various members of imizi in the village having different (most often, urban-focussed)
orientations and dissipates the human resources that might be used in managing
natural resources. The result is that people in Gwabeni do not all have the same
incentive to participate, as a group, in the collective management of their natural
resources.³

The widespread change away from an agrarian to a post-agrarian rural lifestyle that
people in these villages have adopted, was also found to have an effect on their
willingness to co-operate with each other around issues of natural resource
management.

³ Peters (1994:7), in her analysis of common property grazing systems in Botswana, puts it very
succinctly: “Studies show that the reasons for the demise of [a] commons..... lie...... in historically
specific conditions that include the effect of the state's claiming authority over locally managed
resources, the role of new technologies in changing patterns of use and assessments of value for
different categories of users, and the increased disparity in wealth and influence within a community of
users or between categories of users, which makes it more difficult to regulate use and to enforce
rules......Tragedy in a commons is produced not by the inevitable confrontation between a self-
interested, asocial individual and an impersonal group, but by the inability of members of social groups
to find (partial) solutions to competition and conflict.”
Despite these many weaknesses of the resource management system in Tyefu Location, I would argue that, to the extent that the natural resource base still makes a significant contribution to the subsistence needs of many rural imizi, and particularly to those of the poorest imizi, it does so precisely because of the flexibility of the system, itself made possible by the advanced degree of institutional collapse. This systemic flexibility allows individuals and groups of resource users the space to negotiate and manipulate the use and management of natural resources to their own best advantage -as in the case of the move to the Outspan sites - even in the resource-poor environments that have come to characterise the villages of Tyefu Location.

In the absence of an effective resource management regime and institutional framework - problems that are compounded by the modified communal tenure regime in the area, but not necessarily caused by it - the livelihoods of large numbers of people can be supplemented by essentially unregulated and indeed, predatory, resource extraction. This means that the natural resources that are available to people, by virtue of their membership of these villages, constitute an important social safety net to poorer people, but the price is, in Tyefu Location at least, resource degradation and potential conflict over resources.\(^4\)

Finally, I want to problematise the notion of communal tenure itself. I have argued in this thesis that the communal tenure system in Tyefu Location is 'modified' in the sense that a central feature of the 'traditional' tenure regimes, on which colonial models of communal tenure were apparently based, was the ability of rural people to expand into new areas when the resources in their immediate locality become exhausted. This ability to expand and resettle in well-resourced areas, while it does still occur (such as in the case of the Outspan sites), has been severely curtailed by the fact that the land is state-owned and that previously independent 'indigenous' institutions, such as the chieftaincy, have all but ceased to administer the affairs of people here, that the location is enclosed by fences and that large numbers of people have moved into the area, so that overcrowding has undermined many of the norms that are said to have

\(^4\) But it is certainly not alone in exhibiting these features - for striking similarities to the situation in Tyefu Location see studies conducted in oBivane, KwaZulu/Natal, (Huggins 1993), and in Mhezi Ward, in the Communal Lands of Zimbabwe, (Moyo 1995).
characterised pre-colonial communal tenure systems (see Peters 1994:9-10).

My first point in this regard is that it is important to stress that the 'communal tenure' system in Tyefu Location cannot be equated with 'traditional' tenure patterns in these areas, because the way in which people access and manage their resources has been transformed into something different. Just what this 'something different' actually entails, is the second point I want to address. The notion that within modified communal tenure areas like Tyefu Location, despite the overcrowding and degraded state of resources, there exist latent or actual 'systems' (including viable or potentially viable institutions) of natural resource management, which are premised on notions of collective decision-making and collective action (and which can 'empowered' to function democratically and equitably), is deeply problematic. If I have tried to demonstrate anything in this thesis, it is that, certainly in Tyefu Location, the management of natural resources is highly contested, individualised, subject to the attentions of weak rural institutions that do not share a clear set of resource management objectives, and thus extremely difficult to co-ordinate and to sustain.

As the Outspan case-study demonstrates, two areas in particular will remain highly contested. Firstly, individuals and groups of people linked to Gwabeni imizi, will continue to make attempts to excise parts of what many residents view as the common pool resources of the village and of Tyefu Location, for their own purposes. How successful these attempts will be over the long-term, and what mechanisms (if any) they will put in place to manage the natural resources they excise in this way, remains to be seen.

Secondly, the definition of the 'community' of people that have rights to use natural resources at village and location levels, will be a rich source of contestation. As long as the dispersion of the umzi does not undermine the rights of those umzi members who reside elsewhere from having a stake in the management of natural resources in the village, any definitions of a specific 'community' responsible for such management will be contentious. As Li (1996:509) argues, 'images of community are central to

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questions of resource access......not because of guaranteed rights provided by rules and traditions, nor because of any self-evident qualities of moral economy, but as culturally available points of leverage in ongoing processes of negotiation.”

Whether the causes that give rise to the resource management situation in Tyefu Location are widespread and prevalent in other areas that are subjected to modified communal tenure, is one area that would require empirical investigation. Another area of empirical interest is to understand more clearly the factors that underpin the ongoing social transformation of rural existence in places like Tyefu Location, from an agrarian lifestyle, to one in which (what appear to be) essentially post-agrarian concerns of accessibility and service provision are priorities for rural and urban-based people (Peters 1994:227). Conducting research into the feasibility of ‘building’ village level institutions that are able to take on the thorny task of moving natural resource management practices in areas like Tyefu Location, towards more sustainability, without undermining or threatening the flexibility that a foothold in these areas offers many people, would also be time well spent.


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