

# **Social Capital and Women's Participation in Three Land Reform Trusts: A Case of Mixed Blessings**

by

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# LOCATION OF THE CASE STUDIES



## DECLARATION

This dissertation represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any other form to any other university. Where use has been made of the work of others, it has been acknowledged and referenced.

The research for this dissertation was performed under the supervision of Julian May at the Centre for Social and Development Studies at the University of Natal Durban, during the period October 1998 to February 1999.

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## ABSTRACT

Gender equality and the participation of women is emphasised in the South African Land Reform Programme. At the same time, the programme is also premised on the group ownership and management of the land. As such, the land reform is often operationalised through community based legal entities, which usually take the form of Trusts and Communal Property Associations. The Department of Land Affairs encourages communities to elect women to these bodies, on the assumption that this involvement of women will translate into gender sensitive planning and management on the part of these entities.

Through the examination of three Land Trusts in KwaZulu Natal, this paper seeks to establish the validity of such an assumption in light of the patriarchy that often exists in rural areas. The focus of the paper is whether the dynamics inherent in these communities, and the entities they have formed, allow women to participate in decision making in a manner sufficient to achieve the ideals of equity inscribed in governmental policy. In addressing this question, the dissertation examines (i) how women are involved in the Trusts (ii) the implications of their involvement (iii) whether the increasingly popular concept of social capital provides a useful tool in understanding the issues that arise around the participation of women in the entities.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

In line with the South African Constitution, the platform established at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Agenda 21 and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the South African Land Policy emphasises gender equality. The Department of Land Affairs has committed itself “to taking legislative and administrative measures to give women and men equal rights to economic resources including access to ownership and control over land... credit facilities, natural resources and appropriate supporting technology” (Department of Land Affairs 1997:18).

This is to be achieved through “the removal of all legal restrictions on participation by women in land reform. This includes reform of marriage, inheritance and customary laws which favour men and contain obstacles to women receiving rights to land” (Department of Land Affairs 1997:50). Furthermore, decisions around land distribution and use must be taken democratically at a local level and “specific strategies... must be devised to ensure that women are able to participate fully in the planning and implementation of land reform projects” (Department of Land Affairs 1997:vii).

At the same time as gender equality and the participation of women is emphasised, the land reform programme is also premised on the idea of communal land ownership. All three components of the Land Reform Programme<sup>1</sup> are thus often operationalised by community base legal entities. These are essentially land holding and management bodies made up of members elected by the community, and most often take the form of elected Trusts or, under the Communal Property Associations Act of 1996, Communal Property Associations (CPAs). It is the Department of Land Affairs policy that women should be elected to these bodies (Department of Land Affairs, 1997).

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<sup>1</sup>The land redistribution, restitution and tenure reform strategies make up the three components of the Land Reform Programme.

The focus of this paper is on whether the dynamics of such group management and decision making allow the ideals of women's participation and gender equity to become reality. This question will be assessed in the context of land redistribution projects in KwaZulu Natal, which seeks to provide the disadvantaged and poor with access to land for residential and productive purposes (Department of Land Affairs 1997).

## THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

South African land reform is market based. Rather than seize and redistribute land, the Government of National Unity has chosen to base its land reform programme on a willing-buyer-willing-seller principle. Nevertheless the government has pledged to assist people to purchase land through the provision of grants. The principle grant for obtaining land is the Settlement/land Acquisition Grant, which provides beneficiary households that earn less than R1 500 a month with R16 000 to acquire land, enhance tenure rights and improve and develop the land. However, this grant seldom leaves individual households the means to purchase land at market prices. Thus beneficiary households must often group together and pool their grants to purchase land.

The South African Land Reform policy and the Communal Property Associations Act of 1996, allow for such group purchases (Department of Land Affairs 1997). These purchases require that legal entities be formed to purchase, hold, manage and develop the land. Such entities usually take the form of Trusts or CPAs. The objective of the Department of Land Affairs is that women are involved in these entities, although the legal force backing this objective varies according to the type of entity in question.

The Communal Property Associations Act requires that the internal rules and constitution of a CPA to ensure gender equality and democratic decision making (South African Government 1996a). Trusts are not so bound, and the process of drawing up the Trust deed may range from relatively despotic to highly participatory, depending on the community and the quality of facilitation. The documents may be little more than a registration of the body or for all intents and purposes a constitution. However, like CPAs, many Trusts do emphasise community and the involvement of all the land purchasers. Representatives

from the Department of Land Affairs and or consultants are usually brought in to facilitate workshops and community meetings at which the policies are formulated. Equal rights for women are often written into the deeds and women are encouraged by these facilitators to come to the workshops and meetings, and often sit on the governing bodies of these entities.

The reason for this emphasis is that men and women usually have particular, often divergent interests or prioritised concerns. That is not to say that all women have the same needs, or to imply in any way that women represent an homogenous group. Certainly, as noted by Molyneux, (1985, cited in Moser 1993) "women's interests" do exist, such as the relatively ubiquitous vulnerability of females to male perpetuated violence such as domestic violence or rape, yet differences in class, religion, age, stage in the life cycle and ethnicity may leave women with widely different perceived interests and status. Nevertheless, women in a particular "community" do tend to share certain "gender interests", by virtue of the roles they play in society relative to men. These interests may be strategic or practical in nature (Molyneux 1985, cited in Moser 1993).

"Strategic gender needs" are needs identified by women due to their subordinate position to men in their society, the fulfilment of which seeks to alter the status quo. Examples include the abolition of the sexual division of labour, a reduction in the burden of childcare and most important for my purposes, the removal of discriminatory practices that prevent women owning and benefiting from land (Molyneux 1985, cited in Moser 1993). On the other hand, "practical gender needs" are those identified due to women's role in society. They are a response to the immediate necessities of a given context and tend to focus on improvements in women's ability to fulfil domestic roles or ability to earn an income (Molyneux 1985, cited in Moser 1993). In South Africa such interests include rural women's need for convenient access to safe water, a land use that recognises resources such as firewood and thatch grass rather than placing an emphasis solely on grazing for cattle, and the importance of subsistence agriculture for family well being.

By putting women on these bodies, the assumption on the part of the White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997) would seem to be that this will result in the

representation and fulfilment of both women's practical and strategic interests. The aim of this paper is to explore the extent to which this assumption is accurate in the context of community based entities. The initiating hypothesis being that the dynamics inherent in these bodies do not allow women to be involved in a manner sufficient to significantly impact the lives of the women they are supposed to represent.

This hypothesis is based on the premise that for such an impact to occur, women need not only to be present on these bodies, they need to participate meaningfully in their decision-making processes. Women must not only contribute to the decisions made and the actions taken by these bodies, they must also have the power to shape them. Such involvement is inherently political, and requires that women act and are accorded a status, authority and credibility equal to men. However, given the powerful patriarchal norms that exist in South African society and in rural areas in particular, the ability of women to participate in this manner can not be assumed. For as noted by Goetz (1997), legal entities, as organisations tend to reproduce the cultural system in which they are rooted. In this instance a social system in which women are accorded less authority and status than men and are orientated towards a "private", domestic domain rather than a "public", decision making role in the community.

If this is the case, the institutions of the legal entity and those of the society by which they are influenced may actually serve to perpetuate male bias and power. The words inscribed in the entity documents and national policy may fail to be put into practice. Although technically involved in the redistribution process, women may be little more than figureheads and faces, excluded from the real decision making processes. If this is so, the management, development and distribution of land may continue to be a male dominated affair that leaves both women's practical and strategic interests unmet. The ramifications of this are that the principles of equity will be nullified, and the opportunity and time poverty that women face in their socially recognised roles may remain unaddressed.

## THE RESEARCH

This dissertation therefore aims to explore three issues. The first is whether women are participating meaningfully in entities such as Trusts and CPAs and the factors that may hinder or help this involvement. The second is what does such participation actually mean, and does it in fact translate into gender sensitive functioning and female empowerment. The third is whether, in the context of the group ownership of land, the increasingly popular concept of social capital provides a useful conceptual tool which can be used to better understand the issues around women's participation in these entities.

The concept of social capital, defined as "the information, trust and norms... inhering in social networks" (Woolcock 1998:153) is examined because it locates actors within the complex web of relationships and values that they share with other actors. The concept disaggregates social dynamics and draws attention to the impact that the accumulation of intangible factors such as norms, culture, reputation and networks has on economic, political and social outcomes for these actors. In this way it may provide a useful tool with which to better understand the functioning of groups, and in this case, the legal entities formed to manage land on behalf of a community of land purchasers. More specifically, in the context of the traditionally patriarchal rural society in which the entities are located, it is likely that social capital will be accumulated by and affect men and women differently. These differences may go some way in understanding the differing ability of men and women to participate in the land reform process and the entities that it has formed.

Central in understanding these gendered dynamics are therefore the following questions. What role do women frequently play in Trusts, and are they effectively involved in decision-making processes? What are the barriers to women's participation? How do men and women stand in relation to the social capital that exists in communities? Finally, how does this affect their participation? These questions will be addressed in the context of Community Land Trusts rather than CPAs.

There exist certain differences between these two types of entity. According to Cousins (1998), the entities can be distinguished in that while Community Property Associations



are comprised of the landowners themselves, under the administration of a governing body, Trusts hold land on behalf of their members. Furthermore while CPAs are monitored by the government, Trusts are far more independent. Thus, while the CPA provides for legal redress of member grievances, Trust constituents have no recourse to such legislation. Although it is to be noted that Trusts can be registered as CPAs, in which case they become subject to monitoring. Equally, both may have constitutions, although in the case of the CPA this is a legal requirement, and the entity is required to act in accordance with the rules and principles established by its members (Cousins 1998).

The study will focus on Trusts for the simple reason that they predominate in instances of land redistribution in KwaZulu Natal. I will however consider Trusts that have followed a participatory mode of functioning and I believe that the issues raised by this research could equally well apply to CPAs. Despite their differences, CPAs and Trusts are fundamentally similar in that they constitute the principle vehicles for collective decision making throughout the land reform programme. The focus of this study is to consider the dynamics inherent in such collective decision making that may prevent women optimally benefiting from Land Reform. The emphasis is thus on the relations between community members, men and women. Such relations exist regardless of the legal nature of the entity within which they are played out, and in any event often serve to make legal requirements largely irrelevant.

## THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It would seem that little research has been conducted around the question of women's involvement in land reform Trusts in South Africa, and for this reason a qualitative approach was preferred. Quantitative research requires the use of a fixed, predetermined set of questions to which a limited set of responses can be applied. The aim of this paper was to explore the situation that exists in a sample of Trusts and to begin to grasp the range of issues that emerge around them. It was felt that such a sensitive topic, with its range of relatively unexplored issues, would be restricted by the rigidity of such an analysis. A qualitative approach on the other hand suited such exploratory research as it allowed a far

more flexible line of questioning that enabled the subjects to largely determine the direction of the enquiry.

Three case study areas, one of a small, medium and large size were isolated. Two of the redistribution cases are to be found in the Estcourt-Weenen region, while the third is located near to Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal.

Baseline information on these communities was collected, as was information on the circumstances and processes of the Trusts' formation. This was done with the assistance of the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) and employees of the Department of Land Affairs who have been assisting these communities with their claim. The information was drawn predominantly from secondary sources, particularly the reports compiled for the communities' grant application, socio-economic surveys, agricultural reports and the grant applications themselves. In-depth interviews were also conducted with the people involved in assisting the communities to understand the processes and actors involved in drawing up the entities and their documents.

Further interviews were held with key informants who could shed light on the issues that have emerged around land reform and redistribution, legal entities, and the involvement of women in these entities. The interviews were conducted on a qualitative basis, with the structure informed by the expertise of the interviewee. The informants were drawn from the Department of Land Affairs, AFRA, and various consultancies. Additional primary research included the interrogation of the Trust Deeds and documents, national legislation and the consultation of various working papers.

Against this background three days were spent in the small Ntabeni community and four were spent in the medium and large Ekuthuleni and Thokozani communities. During this time key informant interviews were conducted with men and women sitting on the governing bodies of the Trusts concerned. In the Ntabeni community all eight Trustees, of whom four were women, were interviewed. Ten out of fifteen Trustees were interviewed in each of the other communities. All five of the Ekuthuleni community's female Trustees

were interviewed. Four women were interviewed in the Thokozani community. Each of these interviews was between one and two hours long.

Focus groups were also run to ascertain general attitudes in the communities, and the perception of the Trusts and women's involvement in them. In the small sized community two single and one mixed sex focus group were held. In the medium sized community two male and two female groups were held. These groups were divided between adults over the age of 25 and youths aged between 15 and 25. It was hoped that two mixed sex groups of older and younger people would also be held in an attempt to witness how men and women conduct themselves in each other's presence. The adult group was successfully conducted, however, I was, unable to run the youth group. The methodology followed in the large community mirrored this approach, except that all six focus groups were conducted.

In the Ntabeni community the single sex groups each contained seven people. The mixed group contained thirteen people and was divided fairly equally between the sexes. The single sex focus groups run in the Ekuthuleni community contained between six and ten people. Nineteen people attended the mixed adult focus group. Of these participants thirteen were women. In the Thokozani Community, the single sex groups each contained between six and eleven people. The mixed youth group contained six males and three females, while the adult group contained four men and eleven women. In total 66 women attended that various focus groups in the communities.

Focus groups consisting of female household heads were considered, although given both time constraints and the fact that there did not seem to exist any particular hostility to the idea of such heads getting land, this idea was dismissed. General discussion was the main tool employed in focus groups, although a limited number of PRA techniques were also used to elucidate certain issues. These included the construction of Venn Diagrams and a Gender Matrix. Trust meetings were also attended where this was possible.

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The research conducted in the small and large communities was relatively unproblematic. However, fieldwork in the medium sized community encountered some difficulties. It is briefly worth noting some of the problems encountered during the course of this fieldwork.

The first problem encountered was one of not being able to conduct the fieldwork over the predetermined days as the community was experiencing internal problems. The conflict revolved around people other than the registered beneficiaries settling on the land. Apparently, a group of such people had occupied a portion of the land against the community's will. The Trust wanted to address this issue before it was willing to allow us into the community.

A more serious problem, however, was one of a severe lack of communication between the Trust chairman, and the Trust in general, with the broader community. The end product of this was that the community was not notified of either our arrival or purpose, despite the additional time afforded the Trust by the above delay. We were thus received with some suspicion and guardedness. This occurred despite extensive phone calls (in Zulu) to the Chairman at his workplace and a prior meeting with available trustees. The issue, however, was not resolved for almost two days, both because the chairman was working and because there continued to be no communication between the chairman, trustees and community.

A more insidious difficulty was the general lack of interest with which we were greeted. Most community members did not want to participate in the research because they felt they would not receive any major benefit from it. People, however, did become more helpful when the chairman finally intervened to assist us. Women were particularly disinterested, even though we tried to inconvenience them as little as possible. Many of the men were also reluctant to speak to us, and one gets the impression that because the research was concerned with gender issues, it was not taken as seriously as it might have

been. Several of the men were also particularly guarded and triangulation of the answers given suggests that some were less than candid in their replies.

A difficulty encountered in the largest community was a fair amount of infighting and finger-pointing on the part of the three dominant committees in the community. In this context it seems that some of the answers given may reflect committee loyalties and political rhetoric.

A lack of women on the Trust and its constituent committee also hampered the effort to obtain women's points of view. To counter this problem, it was decided that women who had turned down Trust positions or who had dropped out of the committee would be interviewed. It was still, however, only possible to interview four women.

I believe that such problems should not have seriously affected the results obtained during the course of this research. In many ways the problems are instructive in themselves. They have thus been noted as both a cautionary measure and because of the insights that they offer into the topic at hand.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

In presenting the results of the research, this dissertation begins with a brief examination of the rationale that underlies the land reform programme. For it is felt that one must first understand the vision of the programme before one can begin to analyse any of its components. Chapter two thus aims to situate the study at hand within the broader strategy and objectives of the land reform programme.

Chapter Three then lays the conceptual groundwork from which the analysis of the later chapters can be drawn. By means of a literature review, this chapter seeks to understand what social capital brings to this analysis of women's participation and what is meant by the concept. Its theoretical origins and underpinnings are discussed, and the key definitions that have contributed to the concept are presented. The notion of the concept as capital is also discussed, the emphasis being on the alleged benefits and disadvantages of

the different forms of social capital. These, in turn, will be used as a basis for subsequent analysis.

In Chapter Four, the three case study communities are introduced. Baseline information is provided to illuminate the geographic, demographic and socio-economic contexts of the communities. The contexts in which the Trusts were formed, and the processes involved in their formation are also discussed. Other community structures are noted, and where appropriate, their relationship to the Trust is discussed. Associational bodies within the community are also recorded, and their membership described.

Chapter Five presents the case studies and discusses the findings of the research itself. The social dynamics within which the Trusts function and participation occurs are described. The workings and constitution of the Trusts are then documented before moving on to describe the issues that have arisen around the participation of women in the entities. As an indicator of women's impact on the decision making of the Trusts, the studies each conclude with a brief examination of whether involvement in the entities has, or would, in fact benefit either the Trustees themselves or the women they are supposed to represent.

In the penultimate chapter the findings are discussed in relation to the concepts of social capital described in the third chapter. The gendered accumulation and implications of social capital and its accumulation are described, and the contradictory influence that social capital has on women's participation is discussed. In the final chapter conclusions are drawn and possible policy recommendations are made.



## CHAPTER TWO: THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE LAND REFORM PROGRAMME

### INTRODUCTION: LAND DISTRIBUTION AND USE IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has for centuries been subject to a highly skewed distribution of land. There are several aspects to this inequity. The first is that of the racially discriminatory laws, which removed the vast majority of “non whites” from the land they occupied and prevented them from owning land. The much quoted legacy of legislation such as the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the Group Areas Act being that the white population, which made up approximately 15% of the population, came to own roughly 87% of the country’s land (Walker 1997). With this disenfranchisement, vast segments of the South African Population were also stripped of related physical and capital assets and the ability to acquire them through exchange, education, infrastructure and service investment and income generation (May, 1996).

The second aspect is one of male biased laws, which disempowered women and barred the majority from land ownership. As Marcus (1991) argues, in South Africa’s male dominated society, African women country wide have stood both “disadvantaged within their class and strata” (Marcus 1991:26). Not only have they suffered at the hands of racially discriminatory legislation, they have also been denied land rights under indigenous law. This disadvantage was enhanced by the Black Administration Act of 1927 and Proclamation R188 of 1967. The former gave legal force to customary practices that limited women’s access to land and subjected them to male marital authority (Mbatha 1996). The latter based the communal tenure of the “Homelands” on “traditional”, patriarchal African institutions as they were perceived by the Nationalist Government (Cross 1991).

Under indigenous law women, although the principle land users and agricultural producers, were barred from holding land in their own name, land was held and distributed by the *Amakhosi* (chiefs) and their officials (Cross 1991). Only men were able to obtain

and inherit land, as women were seen as legal minors and the dependants of men. Where women did obtain land they were usually widows, the assumption being that such ownership represents a transitional state in the transfer of land from a man to his son. A woman would either hold the land until a male heir came of age, or until she died, at which time it would pass on to such a male heir or other male kin. All the decisions regarding the use of such land were to be made in consultation with the heir in question or if he was too young, a male who could speak on his behalf (Marcus et al 1996).

Liberalised legislation in KwaZulu Natal allowed women to legally inherit land by the nineties (Cross 1991), although such inheritance has remained subject to patriarchal norms of male authority and a powerful desire to keep land within the family (Marcus et al 1996). For as Cross et al (in Marcus et al 1996:92) have noted "male children maintain the family name...female members of households are always bound to be married. Therefore, if they inherit property and thereafter get married, the property of the deceased is left in the hands of a stranger". As Marcus and her co-authors (1996) note, even women who themselves strongly assert their right to own land, have often been of the opinion that daughters should only inherit as a last resort when no male candidates are available.

A third aspect is the bias towards large scale, capital intensive agriculture which has been concentrated in White hands (Lipton and Lipton 1996). According to Lipton, this bias is the product of the privileged access to water, irrigation technology, rural infrastructure, credit, marketing facilities and subsidies afforded to White farmers under the Apartheid system. This bias being exacerbated from the 50's onwards by incentives designed specifically to induce farmers to replace their African labourers with machines (Lipton and Lipton 1996).

#### THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE LAND REFORM PROGRAMME

Against this background of patriarchy and discrimination, the reform programme's aims are four-fold. Firstly, by focusing on historically disadvantaged populations who have lacked land rights and access, the programme aims to "redress the injustices of apartheid" (Department of Land Affairs 1997:11). Secondly, it aims to contribute to national stability



and reconciliation. Thirdly, it is hoped that reform will improve household welfare and alleviate poverty. Finally, it is envisaged that land reform will underpin national, sustainable economic growth (Department of Land Affairs 1997).

The first of these aims is simply concerned with equity and rights. It represents a desire to rectify the skewed ownership pattern that has characterised South Africa, and to provide non-whites and women with access to the land they have previously been denied. The second aim is based on the desire to alleviate the resentment that exists over past land dispossession and the violence, dissatisfaction and illegal land occupation that is often its product. With poverty concentrated amongst these groups, and frequently enhanced by illegal squatting and violence, these goals feed into the contribution it is hoped that land reform will make to poverty and inequality reduction in the country. It is these latter points that would seem emphasised by the Department of Land Affairs (Madhanpall 1998, pers comm.), and it is to these that I now turn.

Despite its relative wealth in terms of Gross National Product, poverty and inequality are major features of the South African socio-economic landscape. For instance, Klasen (1997) argues that the majority of South Africans are poor, vulnerable to impoverishment or in the process of becoming poor. In fact, he estimates that approximately 50% of the population (19 million people) live in the poorest 40 % of households, while 27% of the population (roughly 10 million people) live in the poorest 20% of households. Moreover, South Africa bears the dubious honour of a Gini coefficient of 0.58, which indicates levels of income inequality second only to that of Brazil (World Development Report 1996).

Such poverty and inequality is problematic in itself. However, it also has wider ramifications in that not only does it lead to social and political instability, but international research has shown that it can retard the very economic growth that may help to improve the situation (Bruno et al 1996; Lipton 1997). A more equitable distribution of resources, and ensuring that people are able to make use of and benefit from such redistribution, is thus a central component of the policy adopted by the government. Land reform forms part of this redistributive thrust.

This is so because although the causes of poverty and inequality are diverse and complex, the lack of landed, physical and capital assets are important components. Land reform obviously has the potential to provide landed assets relatively rapidly, which can then for instance also be used as collateral to obtain credit. This can be used to “smooth consumption” (Lipton and Ravallion 1997) and to tide poor or vulnerable families over lean income periods. This may be crucial in preventing a loss or further depletion of the assets that a family does own. It can also be sold or leased as an immediate source of liquidity (Lipton and Ravallion 1997). This could obviously have an important impact on household income and welfare. An impact made all the more significant given that poverty tends to be concentrated in rural areas, where it has been estimated that approximately 70% of the country’s poor reside (May, 1996). Decreasing poverty also has national implications, as a wealthier general population would help to stimulate economic demand in South Africa (Padayachee and Zarenda 1996; Bruno et al 1996). Land is also an important source of natural resources such as thatch, wood and medicines that can be used for private family consumption or even sold.

In addition to protecting a family's asset base, land reform can serve to create livelihoods, employment and further assets in a way that benefits families and the economy as a whole. For instance, credit can also be put into income generating activities such as the establishment of small and medium sized businesses, so that land reform may help to support “business and entrepreneurial culture” (Department of Land Affairs 1997). This would not only serve to generate household income, but to provide additional job opportunities and stimulate the additional business ventures through knock on effects of supply and demand (Lipton and Lipton 1996).

Importantly, as envisaged by the Department of Land Affairs (Department of Land Affairs 1997), although demand for residential land is an important component of the current land demand, it should also form the basis of a growth of small and larger scale production. In this way land, through subsistence agriculture, will serve to put food on the table of poor families. The tendency for small-scale farmers to cultivate food rather than cash crops also has wider food sufficiency ramifications. Furthermore, production for the market on various scales cultivation should serve to increase family income, either as a sole income

source or as an additional money source in a range of livelihood options. Additional farmers should also serve to intensify production in areas of high agricultural production (Department of Land Affairs 1997).

It is envisaged that it will also serve to create further jobs, which is particularly important in light of the high rates of unemployment that exist in South Africa and the rural areas in particular. Lipton and Lipton (1996) argue the country's predominant employer, the urban formal sector is unlikely to absorb these workers or new entrants to the labour market. For example, the mining sector is the greatest employer of African migrant labour, yet it is presently suffering diminishing returns due to deepening mineral bodies and a decline in the price of gold. In addition to this, the high capital costs involved in creating mining jobs also serve to limit employment potential. The formal manufacturing sector is also a significant employer, yet here too the drive to become more competitive in the global market makes the prospect of large-scale job creation unlikely. In fact companies' efforts to cut costs and to become more competitive had, in 1997, resulted in over 40 000 job losses (Heinz 1997).

Most economies rely on the agricultural sector to "mop up" urban unemployment. This however, has not been the case in South Africa, where agriculture accounts for only about 5% of GDP and 14% of the labour force. A small amount considering that in countries of comparable size the agricultural sector typically generates between 15% of GDP and employs approximately 25% of the labour force (Lipton and Lipton 1996). According to Lipton and Lipton (1996) the relative unimportance of agriculture in the South African economy is unusual given that the country possesses features which should be expected to increase its role. Such features include the high unemployment rates mentioned, a high rural proportion of the population (39.5%), a relatively uneducated work force and significant inequality.

The government feels that an emphasis on the growth of small scale farming rather than the highly subsidised, capital intensive agriculture would thus bring South Africa in line with international trends (Lipton and Lipton 1996, Department of Land Affairs 1997). Such an argument is based on the premise that small-scale agriculture is more labour

intensive than large-scale agriculture. According to this argument both large and small-scale farmers seek to be privately efficient, but in different ways (Lipton and Lipton 1996, Sobhan 1993).

For big farmers it pays to operate in a capital rather than a labour intensive manner. This is because the transaction costs of supervising large amounts of labour over a large area of land are high compared to the costs of managing capital equipment and borrowing the money to purchase such machinery. Moreover, the costs involved in the latter decline as farm size increases. On the other hand, small-scale farmers often have difficulty in borrowing money and financing the purchase of machinery, which tends to be cost-ineffective considering the size of the farms. It is however relatively easy to supervise less, often family labour over a small area. People thus tend to take on the role of machinery and hence more labour is required. Small-scale farmers also tend to plant lower value but more labour intensive crops than larger scale farmers do (Lipton and Lipton 1996, Sobhan 1993).

Furthermore it has been argued, small farmers tend to farm more intensively to obtain the maximum benefit from their limited quantity of land. Multiple crops tend to be planted and they tend to use the entire agricultural year to support continuous, sequential crop rotations. Such practices are fuelled by the availability of labour and serve to generate a need for such labour. Thus it is argued that in addition to employing more people, small farms also generate a higher output overall productivity per hectare than larger farms of a similar quality (Lipton and Lipton 1996, Sobhan 1993).

Furthermore, Lipton and Lipton (1996) maintain that off farm economic activity will also be stimulated. They argue that South Africa has an historically neglected rural non-farm sector, as such manufacturers have had to compete with long urban production runs which have sold goods more competitively in rural areas. They thus believe that off farm activity will be concentrated on trade, transport and construction rather than manufacturing. Moreover, they assert that such ventures depend heavily on the growth of local demand, which as already noted could be stimulated by land reform and small-scale farming (Hazell and Ramasamy 1992, cited in Lipton and Lipton 1996).

Finally, the government envisages that Land Reform will contribute to both the family and national economy through its "important favourable environmental impacts in both urban and rural areas" (Department of Land Affairs 1997:13). It is claimed, tenure security is a necessary precondition if people are to desire to invest in and improve the land. Furthermore, the paper reiterates the common belief that ownership will encourage more environmentally sustainable use of the land (Meinzen-Dick et al 1997).

### CRITIQUES OF THE RATIONALE

These arguments underlying the government's rationale for the Land Reform Programme have, however, not gone uncriticised. It is not the aim of this discussion to explore in depth the validity of the government's vision, but rather to highlight the rationale against which the Land Reform Programme is played out. Nevertheless, it is necessary to balance the optimism of the government's policy with some of the cautionary arguments made in the literature. What follows is a brief, by no means exhaustive examination of some of the issues that have been raised.

Firstly, it has been noted by both Cross and Mngadi (1996) in a study of the KwaZulu Natal Pilot Programme, and Marcus et al (1996) in the context of a national survey, that any chance of small scale agriculture may be threatened by the large numbers of displaced people that are moving onto land. Moreover, as Cross and Mngadi argue (1996), although the land might be able to support a certain amount of agriculture at present, communities will expand as children mature and desire their own land, so that agriculture may face increasing pressure as time goes by.

More importantly, as Cross et al (1996) and Marcus et al (1996) argue, demand for land for what Marcus et al term "micro-production" (1996:53) or commercial agriculture purposes may be more limited than is hoped for in the White Paper. They argue that, although the desire for land for agricultural purposes does increase with the wealth of the household, the majority of poor people prioritise land for residential rather than agricultural purposes (Marcus et al 1996). A contributory factor is that after decades of



being dispossessed from the land and or urban exposure, many people simply no longer want land for agricultural purposes (Marcus et al 1996). There are also specific constraints that reduce the incentive for agriculture.

In relation to micro agriculture, they argue that a lack of capital, limited irrigation, and the likelihood of overcrowding and theft in the absence of institutions to deal with such problems, often make agriculture difficult (see also Cross and Mngadi 1996). Moreover, agriculture necessitates that people commit themselves to staying in one place, which may conflict with their need to be mobile and to pursue a range of livelihood options. They also assert that just as capital and land are scarce, labour is unevenly distributed amongst households. They argue that this labour constraint is aggravated by the severe infrastructural shortages that characterise rural and "black" areas after years of neglect, and that this effectively reduces the potential for farming. Finally, as Cross et al (1996) argue, the R16 000 grant is insufficient to cover the costs of obtaining such infrastructure, let alone the inputs necessary for production.

Where agricultural land is desired, it is usually for subsistence agriculture as part of a range of livelihood options (Marcus et al 1996). The *emphasis* is on smoothing consumption rather than the widespread commercial agriculture envisaged by the White Paper. Baber (1996), in a study of two villages in the Northern Province, confirms this point. He finds that livestock and crop production make only a minimal contribution to household incomes. More important are pensions, remittances and the urban economy. Similarly, in an examination of an NGO assisted cultivation project in the Western Cape, Cousins et al (1996) note that agricultural production is usually viewed as a part, rather than a full time affair.

The problems of a sedentary lifestyle, labour and infrastructural constraints are a factor in what is likely to be the limited potential for commercial agriculture. However, a number of other factors are particularly important. For instance, along with infrastructural underdevelopment there exists a lack of access to markets and credit facilities (Cross and Mngadi 1996). The quality of the land is also often poor, and as Marcus et al (1996) note, the size of the plots allocated is often too small for anything more than very small-scale

surplus production. Furthermore, the necessary skills are often lacking, for as Cross and Mngadi (1996) maintain, not only have the majority of these people lost their farming skills after generations away from the land, but government departments and the NGOs involved in Land Reform often lack sufficient staff and knowledge to teach these skills. Moreover, they tend anyway to focus on delivery and welfare rather than skills enhancement and commercial production. Likewise Cousins et al argue of the Western Cape that although agricultural skills are plentiful in the province, the management and accounting skills necessary for a commercial enterprise are often lacking. Finally, as De Klerk (1996) notes in his analysis of the viability of "emerging" fruit farming enterprises, the start up costs of such ventures are high and would require a sustained commitment from an under resourced government. Moreover, the rewards of such enterprises will not be immediate and it will take several years for them to break even. Such endeavours are thus too risky for many potential farmers to undertake.

The livelihood generating capacity of reformed land has also been questioned. Subsistence agriculture is likely to employ minimal, mostly unpaid family labour, while small scale surplus agriculture is unlikely to fare much better. More importantly, as De Klerk (1996) argues, it can not be assumed that such small-scale farmers are automatically more prone to "overstaffing". In fact, given time and productivity constraints, it may be in their best interests to hire equipment for certain activities rather than use additional paid or unpaid labour. Moreover, the costs of hiring labour may also be prohibitive in the face of basic technology requirements and the higher wages often paid by larger farmers (Marcus et al 1996). Thus Kirsten (1996), using models to explore the impact of changing farm sizes in the Northern Province, finds that in semi-arid areas a shift towards small scale farming may actually lead to livelihood losses, particularly where low and variable rainfall make irrigation necessary.

Moreover, because there would seem to be such a strong bias towards subsistence or very small scale production it would seem that the potential for significant off farm income generating opportunities is limited. Furthermore, as Kirsten (1996) points out, off farm activity is frequently of a survivalist nature. Such enterprises do not depend on land or capital, are often seasonal, and depend predominantly on unpaid family labour. A general

increase in people's access to land will thus generally have a minimal impact on such entrepreneurs and will leave their employment generating capacity unaffected.

Finally, it is apparent in the literature that regardless of their merit, the arguments highlighted are often waged in gender neutral terms. In reality however, land, land access, and the control of its resources have different meanings and outcomes for men and women. These outcomes may not favour household members and the sexes equally. Having established the arguments around the land reform programme it is to these issues that this dissertation will now turn its attention.



## CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### INTRODUCTION

The land reform programme in South Africa is, as has already been established, premised on the notion of community, communal decision making and management of land. Underlying this premise would seem to be the idea of co-operative, homogenous communities, which work together to achieve shared goals and ideals. A growing body of national and international literature, however, reveals that such communities seldom, if ever exist. Rather, as argued by Kepe (1997) and Leach et al (1997) for example, "communities" are usually heterogeneous, the site of conflict and conflicts of interest. People have divergent and not necessarily compatible interests that they pursue, often at the expense of others.

Thus Kepe (1997), in his study of the Mkambati reserve in the Eastern Cape, highlights the heterogeneity of vision in the communities that surround the reserve and the conflict of interests that are played out in the use of the reserve's resources. As he illustrates, while some members of the "community" desire to poach game from the reserve and to burn the grass so as to make this easier, other members who are dependant on this grass and other plant resources for their livelihood and survival seek to prevent them from doing so. At the same time hunters from outside the community seek to hunt game extensively in the reserve, and although the community members all feel strongly adverse to this idea, they have been unable to agree on a path of action, political fissures having appeared in the community.

Such intra-community dynamics have particular relevance for the study of gender, and women's participation in developmental initiatives for, as revealed by a vast literature, societies are also often characterised by what Elson (1991) has termed "male bias". Kabeer (1989), Elson (1991) and Moser (1993), for example, having noted that men are generally socially, politically and economically dominant in most societies. From "western" society based on notions of the male headed nuclear household to overtly patriarchal societies such as the Middle-East and Southern Asia, women have often been seen as the

function and how influence is exerted within them. Moreover, because the social capital debate presents such dynamics as a form of capital, which can be accumulated, created, destroyed and assessed, it may be possible to begin to examine from the gender perspective who possesses such capital and the implications of this possession, or lack thereof for women's ability to participate. Furthermore, if the such social dynamics are indeed capital, then the implication is that government can actively manipulate the "stock" of such capital in communities, a notion which lends itself to policy interventions of various forms.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the nature and properties of this concept of social capital. It asks what is meant by the term and whether it can indeed be considered a form of capital in the traditional sense. The chapter then considers whether social capital is necessarily a benevolent or wholly positive concept.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

### **The Conceptualisations of Social Capital**

With its roots in both economics and sociology, the origins of the term have been traced back to thinkers such as Smith, Marx, Weber and Durkheim, and in its present conceptualisation, to Jacobs (1961) and Loury (1977). Contemporary debate however revolves largely around the work of social scientists such as Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam and those who have followed or influenced their ideas (Wall et al 1998).

Social capital in Bourdieu's work is part of a larger theory that seeks to explain how distinctions are created and reproduced in, for example, the social, intellectual, economic, and political spheres ("fields") of life (Jenkins 1993). He sees these fields as structured social arenas in which individuals and institutions struggle to improve their situation. Where social capital becomes important, is that the fields are structured by power relations whereby actors positions stand in relation to one another by virtue of their access to different, though related, forms of capital. These include economic, cultural, symbolic and social capital, with social capital defined as social relations, "connections" (of which the

family and clubs are the main source) and obligations, which can be converted into economic capital such as assets which can be turned into money<sup>2</sup> (Jenkins 1993). Furthermore, Bourdieu uses the concept of *habitus*, or attitudes, outlooks and dispositions shared by people with similar class and gender positions. These commonalities activate social networks that may become institutionalised in the form of common names, citizenship and membership of an organisation. These networks and the perception that one is connected to others is also a source of social capital, as individuals can use these connections to obtain more capital in its various forms (Wall et al 1998).

Working almost a decade later Coleman, also transposes technical terms from economics to sociology, but unlike Bourdieu imports the "principle of rational action for use in the analysis of social systems proper" (Coleman 1990:302). Thus, in seeking to explain different levels of educational attainment amongst school children, Coleman argues that social capital exists in the relations between people and comes about through changes in these relations that facilitate action. Thus, he asserts that "social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Like physical and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities...unlike other forms of capital, social capital adheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons" (1988:S98; 1990:302). Corporate "actors" and firms are also included in this conceptualisation of social capital (1990).

Thus, in his 1988 paper Coleman examines obligations and expectations, information channels and social norms that accrue to groups or individuals in society as forms of social capital. He maintains that close social networks and organisational arrangements that allow for multi-layered relations between actors facilitate the formation of social capital, so that a close knit family and community, for example, can prove beneficial to its

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<sup>2</sup>Cultural capital is seen as legitimate knowledge of some kind, which can be converted into economic capital in a manner akin to human capital, while symbolic capital is envisaged as prestige and social honour (Jenkins 1993; Bourdieu in Wall et al 1998).

members. Moreover, he asserts that social capital is a public rather than a private good, so that people who invest in building social relations cannot capture the benefits only for themselves. As such it tends to be under invested, and is "created and destroyed as by-products of other activities" (Coleman 1988:S119).

According to Putnam (1995) however, "by analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital -tools and training that enhance individual productivity- "social capital" refers to features of social organisation such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit" (1995: 67). Like Coleman, he argues that social capital is productive and helps actors to achieve the ends that they desire. Furthermore, he asserts that, as with conventional capital, those who have social capital tend to accumulate more, so that "them as has, gets" (1993:169). Thus, for example, he argues that should people achieve success in starting small-scale institutions such as micro-lending groups, the social capital formed can be used to solve larger problems involving more complicated institutional arrangements. However, as with Hirschman's "moral resources", the supply of social capital increases rather than decreases with use and become depleted if it is not used. Thus he argues that the creation and destruction of social capital is characterised by "virtuous and vicious circles" (1993: 170) and that the accumulation of social capital is path dependent. Following Coleman, he also notes the "public good" nature of social capital.

However, in contrast to both Bourdieu and Coleman, Putnam (and later Fukuyama) sees social capital as accruing to whole political communities, as a property of society as a whole rather than individual actors (Putzel 1997). For although it is rooted in the associations between individuals and the norms that govern them, it becomes, through norms of reciprocity and civic engagement a resource "for the public good" (Putzel 1997:941). Thus in his famous work on Italy Putnam sought to show how the vibrancy of associational life and an informed public were instrumental in creating strong and responsive local government. So that Putnam asserts, "civics matters" (1993b:2).

Putnam would seem to have been influenced by other conceptualisations, such as Granovetter's (1985) notion of the "embeddedness" of economic relations. In contrast to

Narayan and Pritchett (1996, cited in Harriss and de Renzio 1997), studying trends of generalised trust among institutions and village members in Tanzania, follow such conceptualisations. In so doing they have defined social capital "in the overriding spirit of the World Bank" as "the density and nature of the network of contacts or connections amongst individuals in a given community" (1996, Harriss and de Renzio 1997:931). In other words, by omitting "trust", "norms" and cultural values in general, the definition corresponds roughly to Putnam's notion of "civil engagement", with social capital envisaged in terms of local institutions (Harriss and de Renzio 1997).

Brown and Ashman (1996) define social capital in an equally Putnamian manner. They see it as defined "in terms of relationships that are grounded in structures of voluntary association, norms of reciprocity and co-operation, and attitudes of social trust and respect" which is associated with co-operative social problem solving, good governance and economic development. The dimension they add to the concept is that of social capital, in the form of Grass Roots Organisation's (GROs), as a "bridge" between local populations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or governments. They see such organisations as both a signal of social capital and a component of it. Thus, they present evidence to the fact that participation by grassroots organisations in the various phases of project design and implementation have been the central to successful Asian and African development projects (1996:1467). This notion of intermediary institutions could apply equally well to the role NGOs often play in this country, as links between the government and community.

Finally, in some instances, social capital is equated with the entire institutional framework of society. Thus, North (1990) for example, although he does not use the term social capital, sees institutions or the "rules of the game" (1990:3) as mechanisms which reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life. These include any constraint human beings devise to shape human interaction and can include codified laws as well as informal regulators such as reputation, norms, accepted standards of conduct and conventions that emerge from repetitive interactions.



Thus, it can be seen that the concept of social capital is not an easy one to pin down. For as Fine (1988) notes, because social capital is seen as something over and above physical, financial and human capital it can in essence be anything ranging from public goods, to networks and culture. In fact, Narayan and Pritchett's assertion that it is "... many things to many people" (1996, cited in Harriss and de Renzio 1997:921) is perhaps an understatement. More accurate may be the statement by Putzel (1997), that "social capital has become the latest elixir within discussions about development, becoming "all things to all people" in a fashion not dissimilar to the fate of 'human development' and 'sustainable development' in recent years" (1997:940). So how can one understand this "chaotic concept" (Fine 1998: 4) ?

Harriss and de Renzio (1997) suggest that the concept can more easily be understood if it is seen in terms of six different forms of social capital. These include:

- **Family and kinship connections:** which relate to relationships within the household and clan, and "strong" ties of affinity.
- **Wider social networks and "associational life":** or groups and organisations that link individuals from different families or kin groups in the manner envisaged by the term "civic engagement". Examples include soccer clubs, credit associations and self help groups.
- **Cross-sectional linkages or linkages across different sectors and degrees of power:** which relate to the "networks of networks" that link together organisations belonging to different sectors of society such as the NGOs, GRO's, governmental, and commercial firms as well as co-operation between public and private actors. Such linkages may also be identified with the "bridging institutions" identified by Brown and Ashman, whereby some organisations act as intermediaries between others.
- **Political capital:** defined as the norms of trust or mistrust, and networks that shape the relations between civil society and the state.
- **Institutional and policy framework:** or the set of formal laws and norms that regulate public life and society<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Harriss and de Renzio this form of capital has a double nature as not only can it influence the formation of other forms of social capital, it also represents a resource that facilitates co-ordinated action by citizens.

- **Social norms and values:** defined as shared cultural beliefs and the effects these have on the functioning of society as a whole<sup>4</sup>.

It is as such a multidimensional concept that social capital is to be understood in this paper. Rather than trying to neatly package the concept, it will be seen to have various forms and properties. These may have different implications for different actors.

### Is It “Capital”?

If capital of whatever form is considered a stock of some kind of good which can be used by their possessors to generate more goods of some sort, then can social capital be considered “capital” in this way? According to the conceptualisations of social capital in the previous section, the norms, trust, obligations and expectations, information, perceptions of commonality and sources of “access” that make up social capital also make it productive and able to generate “more good things” for its possessor(s).

Many of the examples cited in support of this argument are convincing. For example the basis of Coleman’s 1988 paper was that social capital, in the form of a close, “nurturing” family and community, and the norms and relations underlying these, were important components in the development of human capital. Thus, he argues strong social relations between the child and parents may prove even more important in a child’s educational attainment than the family’s endowment of financial capital. This is because the parents are more likely to take an interest in the child’s education and the child is only able to access the adult’s human or other capital in these circumstances. He evidences this by showing how high school dropout rates are higher where these relations are lacking (large and single parent families are used as proxy indicators). Likewise he argues that the belief system that binds the Catholic community and its schools also results in a higher quality of education and lower dropout rates for its children. This is because the teachers tend to be more committed, and the close knit nature of the community (“closure”) ensures that any problems with the child’s education do not go unnoticed. Thus, the point is made that a

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<sup>4</sup>These bear on other forms of social capital and are themselves the most general form of social capital.

“stock” of social relations can be employed to produce more capital in the form of a sound education which they can use to pursue a career<sup>5</sup>.

Alternatively the example of the Chinese minorities in Asia and America is frequently cited in the literature (e.g. Granovetter 1992, Putzel 1997, Portes and Landolt 1996). The small size of such communities, kin ties and a common ethnic identity have helped to shield them from outside discrimination and to assist their members to start business enterprises (Portes and Landolt 1996). There are a number of reasons for this, not least of which is that kin (both real and fictitious) have been able to demand financial assistance from one another. Equally important however is that people have felt able to offer such assistance, secure in the knowledge that because the community is so small and interconnected the chance of non repayment has been minute. For in these circumstances malfeasance is not only difficult to conceal and execute, but is probably unlikely to be thought of (Granovetter 1992). In this way social ties act as a kind of “collateral” which can be put to productive use.

Equally, Granovetter (1985) asserts that the horizontal ties that bind actors in the business world also benefit them. Thus, he asserts that such actors tend to form sustained relationships with people that they know and trust, either through past interaction with them or via the assurances of those they already trust. In this way the sustained relationship between the contractor and subcontractor, the salesman and his purchasers, or even “networking” in the job market, serve to benefit the actors. For cheap, reliable information is obtained about one another, and the actors are encouraged to remain trustworthy. Furthermore, repeated interaction also means that the relationship becomes “overlaid with social content that carries strong expectations of trust and abstention from opportunism” (1985:249). Through lowering such transaction costs and generally providing the actors with a good reputation such relations help to accumulate financial capital in a very literal sense.

Relations are also seen by Putnam (1993) to facilitate action for “the public good”, and he notes that “working together is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of

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<sup>5</sup>This analysis however has not gone uncriticised (see Fine 1988).



social capital" (1993b:1). As noted, this is seen in the form of civic engagement, which he argues facilitates co-ordination and communication and increases information flows about trustworthiness amongst actors. Under such circumstances, people are more likely to engage in collective action. More importantly, the general environment of trust and co-operation, such as characterises the "civic" regions of Italy, are also important in a well functioning local government (1993a). For co-operation is necessary between legislature and executive, between political parties and between the government and the public. Good relations "lubricate" the government's ability to develop its constituency. Moreover a "virtuous circle" of trust develops over time as people become accustomed to trusting.

From the community level, Moser (1996) argues that the reciprocal relationships and social networks that originate in rural-urban kin links, past areas of residence and the kin and friendships within a given locality are important in facilitating collective action. For the short and long term reciprocal relations that are a product of these ties also form the basis for the formation of CBOs which work to bring services to these communities. Moreover, the more these CBOs have been involved in the fight for services, the more they have, and have become *able* to serve their constituencies.

In short, there would seem to be evidence in support of the notion of social "capital". Certain attributes of the concept however suggest that it has features apart from capital. For example, Moser (1996) notes how the family can provide an important safety net for its members, as poor households restructure to support vulnerable members such as single mother daughters or the unemployed (1996). Equally, as in the South African context rural-urban kin linkages often provide an important source of childcare for migrant and urban parents (Moser, no date). However, although such linkages may be beneficial to such actors, the properties and results of scenarios are not obviously of a "capital" nature.

Furthermore, although features of "social capital" such as reciprocity can help to generate capital, the notion that assistance has to be repaid in some way sets it apart from the usual definitions of capital (Portes and Landolt 1996). Equally, as Putnam (1993a) puts it, it is a moral resource which increases with use and decreases with disuse. This also differentiates

the concept from other definitions of capital. Most importantly, as will be explored in the next section, it also has an often ignored "downside" (Portes and Landolt 1996).

#### THE OTHER FACE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

A growing literature points to the fact that social capital can not uncritically be seen as the great hope of development. There are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, connections and networks may not be enough to significantly reduce poverty, so that as Portes and Landolt (1996) note, there is considerable social capital in the ghetto areas [of the USA], yet "the assets obtainable through it seldom allow participants to rise above their poverty" (1996:4). Similarly, a lack of social power may leave networks ineffective, as is revealed in Beall's (1997) examination of waste management in Asia. In Pakistan, for example, although people in a poor, medium and rich neighbourhood have organised to demand service provision from the government, only the representatives of the wealthy lobby group have the means and influence to invite the municipal representative to dinner. This face to face contact over a good meal virtually assures these neighbourhoods of waste disposal services. Lacking this status and wealth, the less fortunate communities are confined to lobbying for services through a large and corrupt official bureaucracy which is unlikely to deliver (1997). The "power variable" (Foley, in Harriss and de Renzio 1997:927) thus serves to reinforce the networks of the rich and to undermine those of the poor.

This brings us to the second, and most important point that has been noted but underplayed by both Putnam (1993) and Coleman (1988). This is that social capital also has a "dark side" (Olstrom, in Putzel 1997:944).

For example, Portes and Landolt (1996) note that "the same strong ties that help members of a group often enable it to exclude outsiders" (1996:3). For instance they note the tight control exerted by New York's white and immigrant populations over the construction industry. So strong are the ties in this industry that newcomers find themselves unable to compete with those who are already established. To this end they cite an African

American contractor being unable to access big contracts as he was “not in the social circles where those kinds of deals are made... I can’t play golf or go on boats with people” (1996:21). Equally, as noted by the World Bank (1998), close knit communities organised along ethnic, religious (political or racial?) lines can be harmful to each other and society (World Bank 1998). Examples that come to mind are terrorist groups, the Ku Klux Klan, People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (PAGAD) and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB).

Furthermore, Portes and Landolt argue that membership in a community also brings demands for conformity. Citing the “small town mentality” from which people so often flee, they assert that although in such a community people may know each other and one might be able to buy goods on credit at the local shops, these very benefits “may be asphyxiating to the individual spirit” (1996:3). More malevolently, a tight knit community with a powerful set of common norms may also stifle initiative and handicap its members' economic progress. Portes and Landolt (1996) thus reinforce the disadvantages of the close knit Chinese American Community noted earlier. They describe how families have been controlled by family clans and the Chinese Six Companies. These clans enforced conformity in the community by means of their iron fisted control over business opportunities and the alacrity with which they were prepared to ostracise nonconformists. Another classic example cited by both Granovetter (1985) and Portes and Landolt (1996) is that of Balinese businesses. Here bonds between family and friends allow them to demand and receive assistance from one another. Such demands for financial assistance also make businessmen unable to accumulate capital and turn them into “welfare hotels” (Portes and Landolt 1996:4). Similarly, in this country, although pensioners often play a significant role in supporting their families, this system is also subject to abuse. Thus as noted by Ardington and Lund (1996) pensions may be entirely expropriated by family members and the elderly may be subject to abuse if they attempt to prevent this.

Finally, Portes and Landolt (1996) note what they call the “downward levelling pressures” of social capital. In this regard they highlight the “wannabes” (1996:20) of the American inner cities. Here attempts to “lead the lifestyle of the majority in search of success” (1996:20) are derided and met with scorn by a community that sees this as a

threat to itself. Similarly, they note that although gangs and the Mafia may offer their members self-respect and wealth, ultimately the ties that bind will also prevent their members from leaving. As the authors put it, "these groups may hold them down rather than raise them up" (1996:4).

Thus perhaps one should be hesitant about too easily accepting the current nomenclature. In addition to certain beneficial properties that cannot strictly be construed as capital, social capital is also not the wholly positive concept that is implied by the term capital. However, while it may, as argued by Portes and Landolt (1996) be unwise to extend the economic analogy to far, the notion of a resource "stock" remains useful for this analysis. So too is the idea that social capital can be both beneficial and perverse. Envisaged in this way, one can begin to examine how certain actors hold social resources and others do not, how these "resources" can benefit some to the exclusion of others and finally, how the presence of such social capital may not be entirely beneficial, as people are differently placed in relation to this capital.

Having laid this conceptual groundwork, the following chapters present the case study material which these concepts can be used to help understand.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONTEXTUALISING THE CASE STUDIES

### INTRODUCTION

As has already been noted, three communities and the trusts that they have chosen to represent them were studied. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the study areas from which the data gathered will be analysed in the proceeding chapters. This will be achieved by briefly documenting the location as well as the geographic, demographic and socio-economic conditions that exist in the communities. The circumstances of the trust formation and the process involved in establishing the entities will also be examined.

### THE NTABENI COMMUNITY

The Ntabeni community resides on 155 hectares of a commercial farm by the name of Misgunst. The land formerly formed part of the farm owned by a Mr Buys and lies roughly seven kilometres south east of Estcourt in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands. Bordering this farm, the area lies between the R103 and the N3 highway, adjacent to the Estcourt Municipal dump and aerodrome. The community itself is small, and consists of only 68 people and eight male headed households clustered around a central, stoneland hill (Application for planning and settlement grant, 1996). All are interlinked through marriage and family (Hornby 1996).

The total population of the community is 68 people, of whom 39 (65%) are recorded as dependent children. There are two old age pensioners, and a person receiving a disability grant. According to the information collected for the grant application there are 54 stated dependants in the community with an average of 6.7 dependants per household, although as Hornby (1996) points out this figure may be dubious as the pensioners are included as dependants. The grant application lists three of the beneficiaries as employed, four as unemployed or casual labourers and one as self-employed. Community incomes are well below R1 500 per month, although even at this low level the data shows that household wealth varies. The wealthiest household has an employed head (and an income of R200 a

month plus transport), seven cattle, three ox-ploughing hoes, four cultivation hoes, a maize grinding machine, a rake, combi and bakkie, while the poorest household has an unemployed head and only three cattle and an ox-ploughing hoe. All households have cattle and arable fields of about 2ha each. It is worth noting, however, that wages and assets may have been understated in the official socio-economic information collected for the application (Hornby 1996). None of the community members have completed more than eight years of schooling, and all but two had not completed primary school.

According to the agricultural report the area receives approximately 750mm rain per annum, and is characterised by undulating, moist, tall grassveld with a carrying capacity of 34 Large Stock Units. It estimates that 22ha of the land is arable, although only 15ha have actually been ploughed. There is a permanent spring on the southern boundary and a second less reliable spring situated close to the homesteads on the arable land. The area is underdeveloped except for a Vodacom tower that earns the community R12 000 per annum in rentals (Twiddy, no date). More generally, there exists no reticulated water supply, electricity or telephones in the community and sewerage facilities are extremely basic. At the time of the research the digging of a borehole had been proposed. The aim was to place it more conveniently than the spring from which water is presently drawn.

The land was purchased under Act 126 of 1996, by the Ntabeni Community Trust with the assistance of the Association For Rural Advancement (AFRA) and the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) district office in Ladysmith. The Department of Land Affairs' national office approved the application for the Land Acquisition and Settlement Grant towards the middle of 1996. According to the AFRA field worker who assisted the community with its grant application, the notion of purchasing the land came about in early 1996 as a result of strikes held by farm workers in Estcourt's commercial farm district<sup>6</sup>.

These strikes were in response to wide scale evictions in the area and lasted over two months. They were eventually mediated and resolved with the assistance of AFRA and Independent Mediation Services for South Africa (IMSSA). However, soon after the



strikes were resolved the labour tenant families resident on Misgunst farm were served with eviction notices. Many of these tenants had been born on the farm, their association with the farm going back several generations, and although they believed that the immediate conflict could be resolved, the community desired a more permanent solution to the threat of eviction. AFRA was thus approached by the community to help them negotiate with Mr Buys about purchasing a portion of the farm and to assist them in making a grant application under the province's Pilot Programme (Mazibuko 1998, pers comm.).

Due to the insecurity of tenure faced by the Ntabeni community, the Trust and the Trust deed were constituted rapidly so that the community could purchase the land as speedily as possible. Despite this, preplanning workshops were held at which the community's existing and desired resources were mapped, and the need for and functioning of a legal entity was explained by AFRA field workers. Notions of democracy and the contents of the national constitution were workshopped with the community and it was explained that in line with DLA policy and the Constitution the entity had to espouse principles of gender equity (Mqadi 1998, pers comm.). The type of entity to be formed was discussed, and it was decided that a Trust would be constituted<sup>7</sup>. Due to the small size of the community it was decided that there would be no other committees apart from the Trust, although there exist associations such as a soccer club and a stokvel.

The size of the community also meant that all its adult members were involved in drafting the Trust Deed. Their recommendations and suggestions were formulated into a draft document that was presented to the community for review before it was sent to a lawyer to be finalised. The final document was again taken back to the community and its contents explained. At the final meeting the Trustees were elected by secret ballot to their positions and the deed was presented to the community to amend and adopt. AFRA field workers later returned to the community to explain to the trustees the responsibilities and duties of their offices.

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<sup>6</sup>See also the Application for Planning and Settlement Grant, submitted 22 March 1996.

<sup>7</sup>The Ntabeni application was one of the earliest in the KwaZulu Natal Pilot Project, at which time Communal Property Associations (CPAs) had not yet entered discussion as a forceful alternative to the Trust, so that in truth there was little option but to form such a Trust (Mazibuko 1998, pers comm.).



The whole process took roughly a month, with meetings held with the community each weekend. According to the AFRA field workers involved, the small size of the community meant that the entire adult population participated in the process. They furthermore assert that the imminent threat of eviction and gender sensitive facilitation ensured that the community's women were involved in the process (Mazibuko and Mqadi 1998, Pers comm.).

#### THE EKUTHULENI COMMUNITY

The Ekuthuleni community resides on Labuschagne's Kraal farm purchased from a Mrs Horner in 1997 by the Ekuthuleni Community Land Trust. The farm covers 927 hectares and is located roughly 7km east of Colenso in the Estcourt Magisterial District. The Colenso/Weneen road runs through the middle of the farm and the Tugela River forms the northern most boundary. The Thukela Biosphere borders the eastern boundary of the farm. Beneficiary plots are relatively large (about the size of a soccer field) and settlement tends to be concentrated towards the south of the farm. The community is medium sized, and the grant application report puts the number of beneficiary households at eighty-eight. Research in the community however revealed the number of households *actually* residing on the land at this time to be only 36, with many absentee beneficiaries and people who have not yet moved on to the land.

According to the grant application of the registered beneficiary households, sixty-three are headed by men (one is unmarried and fifteen are pensioners) and twenty-two are headed by women (four of whom are single, seven are widowed and seven are pensioners). According to a project report (1997) compiled for the Trust, the average household size is 7.2, while approximately 45% of the community members are below the age of 18.

The data further suggests that the average household income is R928 and that 89% of the community's breadwinners earn an income less than R1 500 per month. Approximately 15% of the household breadwinners are unemployed, while 22% of the beneficiaries are pensioners. The report further states each household owns an average of 6.1 and 7.8 cattle

and goats respectively. Again, however, there are significant wealth differentials in the community. For instance, at least five of the households earn no or minimal income and have no cattle or goats, while some wealthier households earn upwards of R2000 a month and own their estimated quota of animals. Several households earn over R2500 but have no livestock. My own research suggests education levels to be low, particularly amongst women who often have no schooling whatsoever. However this would seem to be changing in the younger generations, as most people under twenty-five have a matric education.

Turning to the area's geography, Twiddy (no date) asserts that the area receives an average annual rainfall of 720mm and is characterised by dry, tall grassland. Much of the area was previously ploughed but has returned to grassland. There exist roughly 30h of arable land that is irrigated from the Tugela river, while the veld can support 224 LSU's of cattle and 150 LSU's of goats. The farm is well watered as there exist three stock watering dams and all camps have municipal water supplied to drinking troughs. A windmill and reservoir supplement the water supply. My own research however highlights that while portable water was previously supplied by Nkanyezi TLC, the community deemed the rates too expensive and has now begun to collect water from a neighbouring farm. The farm has not been supplied with electricity or telephones and sewerage facilities are rudimentary, although such infrastructure has been prioritised by the community.

The farm was again purchased under Act 126, largely by labour tenant families residing on Chievely farm in the Estcourt district. Most of the families had been at some point evicted from farms in the district and as a result strongly desired their own piece of land that could offer them security of tenure. A twelve member committee elected by the residents of Chievely farm to drive this process was central in the purchasing of Labuschagne's Kraal, with the assistance of the district DLA office in Ladysmith. It is important to note, however, that the beneficiary "community" is far from homogenous, as essentially a disparate group of displaced people have been brought together solely for the purpose of obtaining land.

Again the Trust was constituted rapidly due to the urgency with which the community wanted to settle on the farm. In late 1996, six workshops were held over a period of three months and, as in the Ntabeni Community, the process was highly consultative. At the initial meetings the DLA representatives defined and discussed the need for an entity and the options available. Discussion later turned to the election of the trustees, their roles and duties and the powers with which they were to be vested. The issues to be incorporated in the deed were also work shopped. This took several meetings, after which the document was legally finalised. The final meeting saw the election of the trustees by means of secret ballot, with the trustees elected to the positions that the community wanted of them. The deed was also reviewed, amended and adopted.

The need for equity and the involvement of women was never isolated as a specific topic for discussion in the process. However, according to the consultant involved, an effort was made to highlight its importance throughout the process, and the issues were a continual sub theme in the meetings held. She further maintains that both men and women were generally receptive to these idea and that women participated fairly well in the process.

There are two other bodies in the community, namely a water and farming/ internal affairs committee. These committees are essentially satellites of the Trust and are made up of Trust members. As their names suggest, the former's activities revolve around the improvement of the community's water supply, while the latter is concerned with agricultural issues and the settling of community problems. The bodies operate quite autonomously in their respective portfolios although they report to and are co-ordinated by the Trust, which is responsible for the over arching-development of the land. It would seem, however, that the chairs of these committees, (both male) usually come to the trust for direction as they do not "know the channels" through which to get things done. The Trust is the only body able to effectively communicate with the authorities and other organisations.

A number of associational bodies exist in the community. These organisations include a soccer club and a gospel choir. Some of the community's women are members of a stokvel in a neighbouring community.

## THE THOKOZANI COMMUNITY

The community has occupied an area of just over 233ha of what has been referred to as Lot 67 Albert Falls Commonage. Located approximately 15 km north of Pietermaritzburg, the commonage lies between the village of Albert Falls and Cramond, to the east of the Albert Falls Dam. The title of the land lies as present with the Development and Services Board (DSB) who act as caretakers on the behalf of the landowners of Albert Falls Village. The people who now constitute the Thokozani community invaded the land in 1994, under the guidance of the then Concerned Cramond Community Committee. As yet, however, the community has not managed to purchase the land, although an application for a land acquisition and settlement grant has been lodged with the provincial DLA office in Pietermaritzburg. The community is large, and consists of 420 households scattered over the entire piece of land. The plots are at least 1000 square metres in extent.

According to the grant application (1996), 37% of the households are female headed. Sociological information collected by AFRA (1995) in support of the application further states that the average household contains 6.1 members, while 44% of the population can be considered pre or school going dependants. Approximately 4% of the community's residents are over the age of 60. Furthermore 26% of the population is unemployed, whilst 11% receive a pension although my own research however suggests that these figures may have increased over the last four years. The average household income stands at R983, and at least 62% of the community earn well below the minimum subsistence level of R1 500. Due to the small size of the land none of the families are allowed to keep either goats or cattle, although most keep poultry and or garden on their plots. Extrapolating from the demographic data collected from the interviews and focus groups conducted for this research, education levels seem low. Again this is particularly so for women and the older men, although regardless of their gender, most youth have or assert that they will obtain a matric.

According to an agricultural report, the area receives roughly 740-800 mm of rain per annum and the land consists of mostly of rolling hills and sieberiana veld with limited steep land. The commonage bears approximately 120ha of above average potential

In expectation of assistance from DLA, AFRA was in 1997 involved in the establishment of a Trust and a Management community, as well as the capacity building that this entailed. A preplanning session was held over a weekend, at which the community's resources and the resources desired for the future were mapped out and the concept of the trust explained and introduced. As the community already had a committee and constitution, discussion around the Trust's formulation revolved largely around answering the community's questions about the entity. The concept of and functioning of the Trust and Management Committee were explained. The responsibility of former was to obtain and distribute land while the latter was to be concerned with its development in terms of infrastructure and so fourth. The Trust was, however, supposed to co-ordinate the activities of the Management Committee, which was envisaged to be a substructure of the Trust.

A drafting committee was also established to assist the TDC in converting the Community's existing constitution into a Trust Document. The document produced was then work shopped with the community, taken to a lawyer to finalise and returned to the community to adopt and amend.

Over a second weekend, notions of democracy and the community's right to elect or not to elect the people they desired to represent them was discussed. The workshopping done at the establishment of the TDC regarding the need for a non-sexist committee was also reiterated. At this point the TDC was accused of being corrupt, and the community decided that a new TDC must be elected to form the legal entity. These Trustees were voted in by secret ballot, although no offices were given them<sup>8</sup> at this meeting. On the subsequent weekend an AFRA field worker worked with those elected to explain the duties of each office and to explain that the bodies had to be democratic and accountable to the community. Following this the people elected voted each other into the various positions.

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<sup>8</sup>Notably both men and women in the community elected men, until the field worker involved reminded them that women had also to be elected.

Before moving on to the next chapter, the other important committee in the community, the ANC Committee, should be noted. This would seem essentially a recruiting body for the ANC party. It has however, working hand in hand with the Management Committee, been instrumental in initiating crucial development in the community such as the hiring of a contractor to upgrade the settlement's roads. The committee has also been responsible for resolving conflict and disputes within the committee. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the ANC and Management committees are seen as the significant bodies in the community, with the Management Committee being the most important of the two.

As in the Ekuthuleni community there are a number of association type bodies in the community. These include two soccer clubs, a gospel choir, and a stokvel. An ANC women's group is in the process of being established.



## CHAPTER FIVE: THE CASE STUDIES

### THE NTABENI COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

#### **The Social Setting Within Which the Trust Functions**

As evidenced by gender matrices compiled by the community (diagram 1), there continues to be a deeply entrenched division of labour and responsibility according to “male” and “female” tasks. Women’s and girls’ responsibilities revolve around the home and family in the narrowest sense. Duties include fetching water and wood, cooking, cleaning, looking after children, the infirm and so fourth. Male roles on the other hand, are in a sense more distanced from “the hearth” and include employment on neighbouring farms and in town, herding and husbanding cattle. Both men and women are involved in activities such as agriculture and in the building of houses, although again the roles differ. Men for example plough the soil, dig the house foundations and do the thatching, as “it is unladylike for women to climb onto the roof”. Women plant, care for the crops, plaster and build the house.

None of the women in the community are involved in waged work, and although most men admit that an additional income would be useful given their economic circumstances, a number maintain that they do not particularly want their wives to work. Furthermore, the men felt that if a women should seek employment, she ought to still do her domestic chores. One or two men felt that if the women were absent for any reason, the men could do the cooking, although the idea of fetching water or looking after the children was greeted with disbelief. Importantly, the women felt this division of labour to be fair and proper.

The division extends to the realm of household decision making. Minor decisions are made separately. However, the interviews revealed that when it comes to major decisions, both partners discuss the issue at hand before the man takes the final decision. Of note in the matrices is that although the men in the male focus group believed household decisions to be made jointly by men and women, the women’s group unanimously agreed that



decisions are ultimately made by men and that in instances of disagreement the man's opinion would take precedence. Also highlighted by the research is the fact that men generally own resources such as agricultural equipment, vehicles, machinery of various kinds and livestock, although women often own poultry and so fourth. Interestingly, because it is an ex- labour tenant community the *Nkosi* has no influence over the decisions made by the Trust.

It is noteworthy that awareness of both general and women's rights, as stipulated in the national constitution, is minimal. Overwhelmingly rights tended to be conflated with the respective roles of men and women. For example it was noted that a women has the right to change the furniture and decorate the house as she pleases and the right to dress as she likes. She also has the right to have an equal say in decision making, to attend meetings and "do whatever she likes". Much the same can be said for the concept of general and women's empowerment. For the most part, empowerment in this community is envisaged as the ability to do things for ones self, and in the case of women, involvement in poultry, gardening and sewing projects.

Notably, a few of the men say that the idea of rights worries them because if a women is able to do as she pleases it could reduce the family morals and discipline. What is interesting is that both sexes had real difficulty addressing these issues. Significantly, three of the four women interviewed stated that they do not really see the point of women's rights and had not paid any attention to the issue when it had arisen in facilitated or community contexts.

Importantly, the spatial separation of men and women in meetings was also observed, in an observance the custom that a women should not for, instance, speak to her stepfather or see his face. The demographic data collected from the focus groups suggests that most marriages are under customary law. *Lobola* also remains a firmly rooted practice which, according to the men, earns them the respect of their in-laws and infers ownership of the women.

## The Workings and Constitution of the Trust

Eight people are on the Trust, and although it is not stipulated anywhere, four are men and four are women<sup>9</sup>. The division of portfolios amongst the Trustees is interesting. The Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Treasurer and Deputy Secretary are men, while the secretary and additional members are women. Notably, the secretary was originally voted on to the trust as the Deputy secretary. The gentleman elected as the secretary had a limited education and was unable to read and write the meeting minutes and, as Mrs C is well educated by community standards, she was asked by the man in question to swap portfolios.

The Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Secretary are the central figures in the Trust (see diagram 2), although it is the Chairman's responsibility to call trust and community meetings. The Chairman is also responsible for implementing the decisions made by the entity, and enlisting the services of governmental and private organisations. Should a visitor, such as a DLA or AFRA representative come to the community, they meet with the Chairman who will either have arranged a meeting or will call one to discuss whatever issues were raised. Likewise, if a male or female community member or trustee wants an issue addressed or a dispute settled, he or she will approach the chairman to have a meeting called. In practice however, these duties often fall to the deputy chairman who seems to be the forceful personality in this community.

The Trust document stipulates that a meeting should be held once a month, but according to the trustees community and Trust meetings are held as the need arises. Should the Chairman be unable to attend, the Deputy Chairman and Secretary (in that order) chair the meeting. The Secretary also has to take the minutes of the meeting. Meetings are usually called when "outsiders" such as DLA officials come to the community, to discuss land development and Vodacom issues and to resolve matters such as strayed or impounded cattle. "Family" matters such as inheritance or household disputes are not generally considered within the authority of the Trust to interfere. Unless it is specifically asked, the

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<sup>9</sup>It is only noted that "there shall at all times be eight trustees whose composition reflects the diversity of the Ntabeni community. Such trustees shall be men and women residents of Ntabeni..." (Clause 7, 1996).

Trust will only become involved in matters that affect more than one family. Men and women over the age of eighteen are allowed to vote on issues, although it would seem that anyone can attend meetings. When issues are decided in either Trust or community meetings, they are discussed and an attempt is made to reach consensus on the matter. Where this cannot be achieved the Chairman may have the deciding say, although the impression is that this is not a favoured option.

### **Issues Around Women's Involvement**

#### *The Election of Women*

On initial enquiry the majority of the men questioned stated that women were elected to the Trust because it was realised that their involvement would improve the quality of the entity's decision making. They argued that previously when decisions were made only by men, the men would return home to find their wives unhappy with the decisions made, and would influence their men folk into changing their stance. As a result many of the men would renege on the decision that was previously agreed upon. Thus it is asserted that the advantage of having women on the trust is the consistency that this brings to community decision making.

More of the women, as well as some of the men, also noted that women are important in bringing "women's issues" such as water, to the discussion, as men do not possess such knowledge. The involvement of both genders makes for more balanced and holistic decision making as they bring their relative experiences to the discussion. A minority of men believed that the election of women was important to establish the Trust as a "serious" committee, which is well balanced and founded and is seeking the interests of the entire community. One noted that women have a calming effect on the "heated debates of men", as men know they must behave in the presence of women. The value of having women on the Trust, they maintain, lies in their presence rather than what they have to say.

Further enquiry revealed that national legislation, prompting by AFRA, and the knowledge that their grant application could be held up or disadvantaged by the absence of women, was the key factor in their election. Apparently it had initially been decided by the men that decision-making would remain their preserve with women consulted when necessary, but that this stance was altered after the DLA and AFRA became involved in the process. Most of the men noted that they had felt somewhat harassed into including women on the entity, and that left to their own devices, they would have preferred a male only body. Nevertheless, many maintained that they now see the value of involving women. Two of the additional members, as well as the women in the focus group, felt that they had been elected to assist in the application and to satisfy its requirements, although they did not see this as problematic.

When asked how they would like their Trust to be constituted in the future, both men and women confirmed that they would like the entity to remain constituted by half men and half women. Most of the men could envisage a women being elected Chairman of the entity, although largely because DLA expected this sort of thing from them. Many, however, did not particularly like the idea, as "women cannot talk for men". It is clear that left to themselves it is unlikely to occur, a fact confirmed by the women, who with one exception deemed such an occurrence impossible as men valued their authority over women. A point that should be borne in mind in this context is that although those questioned agree that the role of men and women on the trust is essentially the same, it was pointed out that authority and influence was defined by portfolio. Another point of interest is that two of the additional members stated that they would not like to hold a higher portfolio as they did not want the responsibility and did not really understand what the job entailed.

### *Women's Participation*

Men noted that although they were initially unused to contributing to meetings and were shy to speak lest they say the wrong thing, they now feel confident to speak and that they are listened to. Similarly the women noted that to begin with it was difficult to talk in front of the men, and they preferred to speak to their husbands at home. However, although

some still feared saying the wrong thing, most were starting to feel confident to speak and disagree, and that they were listened to. Several however admitted that they would be happier to contribute if they were men, as "men are a lot more free". Moreover, they felt that their statements would be somewhat more credible if they could change their gender, and noted that the men have a tendency to tease them and to laugh at any mistakes they make. Noteworthy in this regard is a tendency for women to talk more amongst themselves than to the members of the meeting and to channel their contributions through the forceful personality of the secretary.

Importantly, although men and women agree that men encourage women to participate in Trust and community meetings<sup>10</sup>, it is asserted that women nevertheless tend to be quieter and contribute less to discussions and decision making. Furthermore, although the men generally feel that they have achieved something by being on the Trust, and feel fulfilled, all the female additional members believe that they were not doing anything constructive by being on the committee. Importantly, however, the secretary and many of the men also noted that women themselves actively draw back from decision making. They say that the men should make the decisions. A view that is substantiated by the experience of an AFRA field worker involved in formulating the entity (Mqadi 1998, pers comm.).

The reasons stated for this situation were numerous. Many of the men and women felt that women were intimidated in the presence of men and still did not feel it their place to make decisions. Several men put women's lack of assertiveness down to being shy. Furthermore, the men assert that women often "drag their feet" when it comes to making decisions so that they are overshadowed by the men. A few of the men also noted that women are less empowered than men and are less experienced in making decisions, so that it is more difficult for them to do so. Several men also felt that women often did not understand issues that do not immediately concern them. Women themselves noted that they often did not feel confident to talk about issues like fencing, cattle and so fourth.

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<sup>10</sup>This is done both at home and in meetings themselves, a statement which was confirmed in PRA exercises run in the community. Men do stop and explain things to the women if they do not understand and to ask them to speak their mind. Although the impression one gets is that a real any real challenge to accepted authority would probably be dismissed.

Finally, there are two couples on the Trust<sup>11</sup> and although one woman argued that this was a source of confidence as she was able to discuss and understand the issues with her husband prior to meetings, another said that having a partner on the trust reduces the desire to participate, as the women are afraid of contradicting or upsetting their partners.

Another aspect I feel to be important is what I cautiously call apathy on the part of some of the women. Women say that they feel free to contribute, however the impression conveyed is that they do not see the need to do so. Furthermore, with the exception of the secretary, none of the women see problems with the way things are currently operating. They are generally listened to and this is enough for them. Interestingly, time was not considered as a barrier to participation in meetings as they were announced in advance and held infrequently, time can be set aside for them. Nevertheless, some of the women seem to view the meetings as rather a nuisance, although they continue to attend them. Of note, however, is that one additional member said that she would not like another portfolio as it would make too many demands on her time.

Generally, however, both men and women feel that continued participation in meetings is helping to increase their confidence. In this regard participation in other organisations was also sighted as important. All the male trustees are members of the Ntabeni Soccer Club, and they argue that it adds to their confidence as the interaction serves to deepen their friendships with the other men and to give them a mutual insight into each other's thoughts. This helps make them comfortable about interacting with one another. Alternatively, the Deputy Chairman, having initiated the land claim after being inspired at an ANC rally, attributes his significant influence in the community to this role. Likewise, two of the younger women were part of a neighbouring community's stokvel and have found it helpful as they have become used to interacting with and speaking in front of other people. Interestingly, the women who were not in the stokvel reiterated this sentiment.

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<sup>11</sup>The chairman's wife is an additional member, as is the deputy secretary's wife.



*Have women benefited from their involvement?*

Involvement in the Trust would seem to have had little personal impact on women's lives. Four of the women (and many of the men) felt that they had only benefited in terms of having learned how to behave in trust meetings, such as the need to raise one's hand before speaking, and about the responsibilities of being a Trustee. The Secretary felt that she had benefited more constructively, and noted that she had learned about the land reform process, what goes into an application and how land is purchased. Her involvement and contact with extra-community organisations like AFRA and DLA have also given her an awareness of women's rights and concepts such as empowerment.

Although the trust is relatively new, analysis suggests that a broader impact is also questionable. As one additional member noted, having women on the Trust has not affected the decisions that have been made as men still essentially take these. Other men and women, however, felt that their involvement had led to improvements for women in the community. To illustrate their view they maintained that the inclusion of a borehole, poultry and sewing projects amongst the community's development goals<sup>12</sup> were a direct consequence of women's input. However, it would seem that these ideas were the suggestion of the DLA representative who helped the community establish its development priorities. As far as I can gather women have only been consulted as to where the borehole should be placed.

Furthermore, while the women say that such initiatives have "empowered" them, it is the men who are responsible for arranging the installation of the borehole and who are to build the poultry house. Equally while it is expected that AFRA will come in and "empower" women by teaching them to sew, the organisation has again been left up to men. Notable too, is that regardless of women's involvement in the entity, decisions regarding when, what and how much to plant, the sale of assets such as cattle and machinery, and the ownership of resources remain male dominated.

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<sup>12</sup>The broader goals included improvement of the farm's road to make access for a mobile clinic and the building of an irrigation dam and contour strips to improve agricultural yields and access to a mobile clinic.



Involvement has also not impacted on women's rights, or the right to land. All the registered beneficiaries are men, and it has been agreed that inheritance is to be left up to the men to decide, as it is not considered within the authority of the trust. Many of the men say that they will leave land to their wives, although it seems unlikely that the rights gained will be documented or legally binding. It is assumed that the women in turn will leave land to sons. As both men and women are of the opinion that unless there is no chance of a women getting married, daughters should not be entitled to land as they would marry it out of the family. Notably, the men were unanimous in arguing that a woman cannot obtain her own property as long as her partner is alive. Furthermore, should she seek her own resources against her husband's will, she would be forced out of the community.<sup>13</sup>

## THE EKUTHULENI COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

### **The Social Context in Which the Trust Functions**

Again, as shown in diagram 3, the division of labour is present and although less defined, it follows much the same pattern as in the Ntabeni community. The diagram shows that males do occasionally fetch wood and water, and thatch the house, while females help to look after the cattle and goats. Such a sharing of roles would often seem to be the product of circumstances such as those where the husband is unemployed and the wife is working. Observation, however, suggests that it is neither frequent nor entrenched, although a certain change in the attitudes of young men is evident. For although they refused to take on "mothering roles" they were relatively amenable to the idea of sharing other tasks, as long as the sharing was mutual and not just a case of men having to take on women's roles. Interestingly, the young women generally took no issue with the present state of affairs.

It is generally believed that all able-bodied people should work, although apparently a minority of the older men still insists that their wives should stay at home. Community

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<sup>13</sup>With regard to this point the small size of the community and its land should however be born in mind.

members all maintained that men's main responsibility is to "go to work and bring money home", although due to the economic needs of most households a number of women have also joined the waged work force. Of interest, is that this trend is concentrated amongst the younger women, with more of the older women "staying at home". This pattern is likely to become more pronounced, as the youth spoken to believe that woman should work in order to help provide economically for the family. In confirmation of this, all the school going women spoken to asserted that they want to earn for themselves and that they plan to seek work in the future.

Decision making within the household depends largely on the individuals involved, although in general the pattern resembles that of the Ntabeni community. Interestingly, men again stated that decisions are made jointly, "as the Trust says so" (see diagram 3)<sup>14</sup>, while women and the youth unanimously agree that the final decisions are taken by men. This disparity probably reflects the difference between ideals and practice. The trend may however shift in the future, for although the girls generally accepted the present process, the majority of young men felt that decisions should be made jointly.

As with the Ntabeni community, men own resources such as vehicles, machinery, agricultural equipment and most livestock, although women do own poultry and a small number of animals. Again as an ex labour tenant community the *Nkosi* holds no sway over the community.

Turning to people's knowledge of rights and empowerment some interesting differences emerge, although it is to be noted that people again had real problems with the questions and that the information is thin. According to the men, people have the right to own livestock and land, have markets, work and so fourth. Women have the right to speak out, to make decisions and to generally dress and do as they wish. Importantly, however, it was frequently stated that a women must also confer with her partner before she is allowed to exercise her rights. Thus, to paraphrase one gentleman, "nowadays women have the right to go anywhere, but men have the right to refuse them permission to go". Women in the

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<sup>14</sup>Women were present in the group, and actually outnumbered men. They were nevertheless extremely reticent and did not participate in the discussion, so that the matrix largely reveals the perceptions of the men.

community see general rights in terms of the right to have water, schools, toilets and money, as well as the opportunity to gain skills. They see women's rights in terms of their roles, so that women have the right to garden, sew, farm poultry and the like. The women on the Trust, however, noted that women have the right to speak, to share in decision making and to be treated "as human beings". The young men and women also agreed that women have the right to be listened to, and insisted that women must not be forced to cover their heads and should work so that they are not dependent on men. Several of the young men, although in agreement that women should have rights, felt that these rights have been over emphasised and that women should not be completely equal to men. Of interest in this regard is that most of the girls left when the topic turned to rights and views expressed reflect the ideas of the few that remained.

Empowerment is considered by men in terms of gaining access to skills, unions and more livestock, while women's empowerment is seen in terms of them becoming involved in sewing, gardening and poultry projects. Women also see empowerment in these terms, but emphasise that they should become more self-reliant and independent so that they do not have to be "fed by men". The young men also reiterated empowerment in terms of projects, but add that women must work, be educated, and obtain leadership roles. Notably the young women feel that women should speak out, think independently and not be intimidated by men.

As in the Ntabeni community the older women still wear a head cloth, which they assert is worn as a sign of respect for their husbands, although there is no rigorous separation of men and women in the seating arrangements. Of note is that the young women do not wear the head cloth and have moved away from wearing only the dresses and the "missionary garb" of their mothers. The demographic information collected from the interviews and focus groups suggests that most people are married under customary law, although again polygamy would not seem widespread. Lobola is still widely practised and men believe that through the custom they "buy the women to do chores". Notably the young men also believe in the practice and assert that it "makes the man superior to the women".

## **The Workings and Constitution of the Trust**

There are fifteen Trustees on the Trust, of whom the Trust deed states six should be male, four female and five youth in order that it "reflects the diversity of the Ekuthuleni Community" (Clause 7.7, 1997). In practice there are ten male trustees and five female Trustees. Of the fifteen only two men and women are youths under the age of 25. As with Ntabeni community the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Treasurer and Deputy Chairman are all male. The Secretary is a woman, as "men are not good at keeping notes". Of interest is that the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary are two of the youth members and are both twenty-one. Both have also passed matric and are the most educated people on the Trust.

The Chairman, Deputy Chair and the Secretary are again central figures on the body. Of note, however, is that due to her better education and the knowledge of the community's development issues, the youth see the Secretary as more influential in the Trust than the Deputy Chairman (see diagram 4). Other than this, the Trust functions in much the same way as the Ntabeni Trust. The Chairman is generally the contact person for outsiders and is responsible for arranging meetings. Community people however do not exclusively approach the Chairman if they want a community called, and often convey their desire through another of the Trustees. In the absence of the Chairperson meetings will be chaired either by the deputy chair or secretary (in that order).

Trust meetings are held on a weekly basis, while community meetings are only called when they are deemed necessary by the Trust. As already noted, however, the regularity of these meetings, the degree of communication within the entity, and between it and the community are questionable. Only people over the age of eighteen can vote and attend the meetings that are called. The emphasis is again on consensual decision making, although the chairman has the final say should this prove impossible. Meetings are usually concerned with the development of the land and when "outside people" come to the community. As with the Ntabeni community, the Trust and its bodies usually only involve themselves in matters which affect more than one family, although in contrast to the Ntabeni community the trust does become involved in inheritance should problems arise.

## Issues Around Women's Involvement

### *Election of Women:*

Many of the men and women in the community claim that women have been elected to the Trust because the community recognised that they had "strong words to say" and could make a valuable contribution to decision making. The Secretary said she was elected because she could do the job, although most of the female Trustees did not know why they had been elected. Two suggested that it was because they have a deep understanding of women's problems and that it was deemed necessary for them to present their ideas. This sentiment was reiterated by some of the men who noted that men lack knowledge about the domestic issues faced by women and that they need to be involved for the purpose of making "women's decisions" about water and electricity for example. A few of the men even went to so far as to say that women have been elected because "everything is equal now" and both genders must work together to develop the land. Two of the men however argued that it was necessary to have women on the Trust for the simple reason that "they like fighting" and if they are not involved in decisions making they will not co-operate with the decisions made.

As in the last community, however, efforts by the DLA seem to have played the crucial role in getting women involved in the Trust, for it is apparent that the committee initially elected by the community consisted solely of men. After DLA stressed that a non-sexist committee was necessary, the number of men was reduced and some women and youth were elected in their place. When asked about this several of the community and trust people did maintain that they "probably would have elected women anyway", as the idea of equality is "popular" at the moment. Nevertheless, a few men admitted that DLA's stance has been the deciding factor, with one elderly gentleman stating that "it is only the government that stresses women's involvement". Interestingly none of the women felt that they had been elected as a window dressing exercise.

Despite such comments, however, most of the people spoken to said that it was a good thing to have women on the trust and that they would vote women onto the committee in



the next election, as the genders must share their ideas. Several could even envisage the election of a female Chairman, although the older men were of the opinion that "it would be difficult to vote for a women" chairman. Interestingly, the girls in the youth focus group also asserted their desire to vote only for males in the future, for the reason that it is men who are talkative in meetings.

#### *Women's Participation:*

In general terms men proclaimed that their contributions were taken seriously and that they felt confident to participate in meetings. The majority were also of the opinion that men and women contribute equally in Trust and community meetings, and that if women have something to say they will not hesitate to say it. Similarly, three of the women Trustees stated that although it had initially been difficult to talk in front of men, it had become easier and they now felt confident to speak their minds in meetings. Like the men, most believe that they are listened to and that they are doing something constructive. Some of the men, and most of the women and youth, however, also agreed that the women tend to be quieter in both community and Trust meetings. As one man put it, "women don't talk, men have to ask them to talk". The behaviour evident in the focus groups seems to support this scenario, for although there are some vocal women, the majority are quieter than men and seem to be disinterested in the proceedings. Importantly, the men who confirm this statement do not see any problem with this and accept it as "the way things are".

As in the Ntabeni community the reasons given for this tendency are diverse. Most of the people spoken to assert that the men encourage women to speak up for themselves and that the women's opinions are often sought. Many simply put their quietness down to their inexperience on committees, as well as the fact that they are shy and bound by tradition. "Tradition" however would seem to have many facets. One man for instance argued that women are supposed to respect men and that to refrain from speaking was a way of doing this. According to the secretary, women in Trust meetings are relatively good at speaking up, but become reticent in community meetings as they have husbands in the community. They are afraid to participate lest their husbands accuse them of "talking to much". In

another instance the young male trustee noted that both the women of his age and those on the Trust are not outspoken, and tend only to speak amongst themselves rather than to the men. He believes that this is because women "still think of themselves as down trodden" and that a woman's place is in the background. Another man argued that women simply do not feel that it is their place to talk.

Other factors however are at play. For example, one of the female additional members noted that she did not want to be on the Trust, and that she had been forced into it as the DLA person said that once elected she could not refuse the position. She stated that she did not contribute much to meetings or go to workshops with the other Trustees as she felt handicapped by her illiteracy and lack of education. Others also highlighted the fact that the older women in the community and Trust often have little or no education and are afraid to talk lest they say the "wrong thing". In fact there was a general reluctance on the part of females to speak for fear that they would be asked questions that they could not answer. In contrast the Secretary said that as an educated women she felt able to "stand and talk among men". Another of the more vocal women Trustees, Mrs M, highlighted education in a different way. Last year she attended one of the gender workshops run by AFRA in Pietermaritzburg and on her return to the community called a meeting through the chairman to discuss with the community the issues that had been raised. The women, however, dismissed her words, as they viewed her as an ignorant woman like themselves who could not have anything important to say.

It is also evident that it is usually women who do not attend meetings, so that when they do attend they feel out of their depth and are reluctant to speak for fear of "making a mistake". Time constraints were a frequently cited reason for this non-attendance. The Secretary for example, noted that she is a single mother with small twins, and although she receives help from the deputy secretary she is often unable to attend meetings and to fulfil the responsibilities required of her. Other women noted that they could not attend meetings because not only did they work, they had to do chores. Interestingly two men felt that because meetings are usually held on weekends, women often do not take part because they "must attend to" their husbands who have returned from their work in the city. A lack of knowledge about the meetings could be another reason, for while I was in



the community a Trust meeting was held with a DLA representative<sup>15</sup>. No women were present and at least half of the Trustees had not been informed of the meeting.

That women lack power may also be a factor. Practically all the men consulted said that women were listened to "as long as they talk sense and are not rude to the men". However, the perception of sense was interesting. As one man explained, if a woman were to stand up and say to the committee, "look we paid money for the borehole but the taps have still not arrived, what kind of committee is this?" this would be considered rude. Should a woman attempt to "force men to do things" in this manner she would be told to sit down and be quiet. Similarly, should a woman wish to approach the authorities or to initiate a project herself she would be rebuked, for it would be seen as jumping rank and an act of disrespect to the chairman.

Before moving on to the next section, it is important to note the impact of association membership on both men and women's participation. As in the Ntabeni community several of the Trustees were members of the football club and some were particularly prominent members (the Chairman is the coach, the Treasurer manages the team and the Deputy Secretary is a talented player). All those involved in the club say that it helps build their confidence for much the same reason as given in the Ntabeni community. It builds their ability to make decisions, work in a team and organise others. The chairman, treasurer and several other trustees had also been involved in obtaining the land and felt this to have been instrumental in their election. Another Trustee felt that he had been elected on the strength of his being a Zionist Minister.

Similarly, the particularly vocal women all claim to have benefited from membership in associations. Thus according to the Secretary, her participation in the community's gospel choir has also helped her, as performing in front of an audience has made her extremely confident. It has also helped make her well known in the community. Similarly, Mrs M noted how she felt stronger for her involvement in a neighbouring community's stokvel as being able to buy food for herself made her "like a man herself". She also noted that her

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<sup>15</sup> The meeting concerned with the payment of equity contributions to the purchase price of the land.

role as the only women involved in obtaining the land had also given her confidence and a reputation.

### *Have Women Benefited From Their Involvement*

The personal benefit derived from their involvement varies between the women interviewed. One of the additional members said that she did not like the responsibility of being on the Trust and that although it is important for women to be on the body, she finds it a waste of time. Another made the important point that her involvement only added to her domestic "burdens",<sup>16</sup> while Mrs M. was disillusioned with being on the committee as she felt that she was not listened to by either the men or the women. The remainder of Trustees however felt that they had gained from their experience. The Secretary noted that her position keeps her abreast of what is going on in the community, so that she does not have to rely on information from others. Another additional member feels that she has gained confidence through her participation and has become more assertive and able to speak in front of people.

However, it is still questionable whether the involvement of women in the Trust and Community meetings has had significant impact on their lives. Women in the community feel it important for women to be involved in the Trust and often approach the female Trustees for advice on personal issues, and in one instance, about starting a poultry project. Nevertheless, most feel that to date their involvement has not improved their existence in any way. Moreover, according to the deputy secretary, the female Trustees and community members were "like ghosts" and did not participate enough to affect the decisions that were made.

It would seem that women (with some of the men) have been involved in approaching a neighbouring farmer regarding the collection of wood on his land. Moreover, of development priorities such as improving the community's water supply, toilets, roads and the installation of a public telephone, they are credited with asking the Chairman to have a borehole drilled. Their centrality in this endeavour is, however, open to question. Enquiry

suggests that this idea again originated with a DLA representative, although men and women in the community pursued it. Furthermore, although a women did accompany some men to Tugela Regional Council when the matter was being discussed, implementation of the decision has been left largely in the hands of the chairman, and as yet no action has been taken. People put this down to the chairman being a "slow person", although the community women believe that men generally just don't care about such things.

Whether women have played an instrumental role in these initiatives or not, conversations with the community and Trustees revealed a significant point. This is that the women on the Trust are not thought of as representative of women so much as of the community as a whole. Community women tend to approach the female Trustees, particularly the Secretary, after meetings to establish the decisions that were made and in this way the Trustees keep the women aware of the issues under discussion. They do not, however, necessarily seek "to do things for women", so that women as a category have not received particular representation beyond the fact the female trustees have shared some of their life experiences.

In terms of gaining rights and rights to land, women's involvement has had similarly little impact, so that as poignantly noted by Mrs M, "although we sit on the committee, the land still belongs to men". Again women cannot hold land in addition to her partner and inheritance issues have been left in the hands of the household heads, of whom the vast majority are male. Many of these men did assert that the land would be left to their wives in their wills, but the assumption remains that she would only be "keeping it" for a son (rather than a daughter)<sup>17</sup>. As such, most of the men and women noted that the women would not be able to autonomously make decisions about the land, and would have to involve the men. Furthermore, although the Trust has pledged to ensure a woman's right to land should male kin challenge it, many men still see the son's position as legitimate. The result of this is that several women questioned how committed such intervention would be and doubted that the female Trustees could make any impact in this regard. To

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<sup>16</sup>Notably, time was cited as a reason for not wanting a portfolio other than additional member

and doubted that the female Trustees could make any impact in this regard. To paraphrase one woman: "what happens, happens because the men support it, it can not necessarily be attributed to having women on the committee".

## THE THOKOZANI DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### **The Social Context in Which the Trust Operates**

Diagram 5 illustrates a division of labour reminiscent of the other communities, although *some* men in the community regularly engage in fetching water. What is interesting to note is division of tasks amongst the men. That males of all ages are more involved in "female tasks" is put down to high levels of unemployment in the community, which leaves men with time to spare and a "need to keep busy". Also worth noting, is the differing answers given by participants in the two groups in which the matrices were developed. In the mixed youth focus group, the young people involved felt that the majority of tasks, whether shared or not, were done by elderly men and women. This seems due to the fact that many of the younger men and women are employed or are seeking employment (see diagram 5). Equally interesting is that while culture was at the heart of the reasons given for the divisions, the adult group saw the division largely as the product of traditional law. Of note is that while the men viewed the divisions as acceptable, the women almost unanimously complained that the "men are useless" and that they don't like having to do all these chores when men just sit around and can't even get a job.

According to the Matrix, household decisions were shared, with some going so far as to assert that "a man cannot make decisions alone because he will destroy the household". However, although there are a few strong, vocal women in the community, enquiry suggests that the situation remains predominantly the same as in the other communities. A man will take the final decision, and in the case of disagreement between the partners, it is generally his stance that predominates. What is interesting, is that it seems to be the elders who make such household decisions.

As in the other communities, resources such as hoes, ploughs, tractors and vehicles are

As in the other communities, resources such as hoes, ploughs, tractors and vehicles are bought and owned by men, while women own at least some of the poultry. Likewise, the *Nkosi* is not a force in the community.

Turning to people's knowledge of both general and gendered rights and empowerment, respondents confused roles and rights less than in the other communities. Two youths did assert for, example, that women's rights include the right to raise children in the right way, to cook tasty food and to look after her husband, but for the most part answers erred towards a more "enlightened" understanding. Thus, men and women of all ages see rights in terms of the right to seek whatever employment they wish, to get land, to feel safe, to be respected and to marry whomever they wish. Women's rights are envisaged as the right to be listened to, to speak out, to help make decisions, to have assistance from their partners in doing chores, and to dress and have as many children as they wished. This suggests that the difference in perception of the generations may not be as noticeable as in the Ekuthuleni community. In fact, at least in theory, men have a greater grasp of rights in the "constitutional" sense, although here too this applies to some individuals more than to others.

With regard to empowerment, two women felt that empowerment involved fighting for ones rights and the means to become independent of men. A few of the boys and men similarly noted that women should work and build their own houses, so that they do not have to rely on men. Of note however, is that empowerment was again seen by both young and old as the initiation of projects and businesses. In this way women's empowerment was once more seen in terms of sewing, gardening and poultry projects which could furnish the table and provide an additional household income.

As in the other communities the older women wear the head cloth and dress in the "traditional" manner, while the younger women and girls do not. Seating arrangements bear no sign of a separation between the sexes. Judging however from the focus group demographics, most people remain married according to customary law, although polygamy does not seem to be widespread. People still advocate lobola, and men again say that through the exchange they came to "own the women, as she leaves her surname and



uses the man's". What is noteworthy is that fewer single people are engaging in the practice as they do not have the money to buy the necessary cattle. Most people do not like this development as it means that young people do not get married. There are a number of unmarried couples in the community, and a few single women<sup>18</sup>. This is, however, not the desired situation, particularly for women, as they feel it leaves them particularly vulnerable to dispossession should their partners "find somebody else".

### **The Constitution and Workings of the Trust and Management Committee**

Although this section concerns the functioning of the Trust, the significance of the Management Committee in the community makes it important that this substructure of the Trust is also examined. Thus, both entities will be considered throughout this section.

According to the constitution the Trust should have a maximum of fifteen and a minimum of twelve members, who "shall be male and female residents of Thokozani" (clause 4, 1995). In practice there are only eight people on the Trust itself and eight people in the Management committee. Notably, although a number of women were members of the old TDC, the existing Trust has no women members. The Management Committee has only one, who is an additional member. This aside, the Trust's official functioning remains much the same as in the other communities. Meetings are called by the Chairman, although as in the Ekuthuleni community people tend to approach any of the members. The Deputy Chair and Secretary can stand in for the Chair, and the Secretary or Deputy Secretary is expected to take minutes. Meetings are supposed to be held twice a month, and community meetings are held monthly or when needed, although in practice their regularity was questioned. Anybody may attend meetings and all adults over the age of eighteen may vote. Discussion generally revolves around development of the land, where the Committee reports back to the Trust on its activities. Decisions are again to be taken by consensus, with the chairman to have a casting vote if agreement can not be reached.

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<sup>18</sup>It would seem particularly difficult for single women to get a plot in the community as "they will just go through boyfriends" and create instability.



that they do not. In fact, as already alluded to, there seems to be a great deal of infighting and back stabbing between the bodies. Several of the Committee people accuse the Chairman of not running the Trust democratically and of taking decisions by himself. Several further accuse the Trust not only of incompetence<sup>19</sup>, but also of not wanting to work with the Management and ANC committee as they are perceived to be a threat. The Trustees on the other hand deny these claims and the chairman asserts that he is simply holding up the principles of the Trust deed and that people are blaming the messenger. In addition to being less than popular with the Management Committee, the Trust also stands accused of corruption by the community, which also accuses the chairman of being less than democratic.

Many of these problems are rooted in the workings of the "old" TDC which, dismissed on the grounds of corruption, seems to have tarred the reputation of the Trust. Moreover, when the "new" TDC was elected the "old" trustees were excluded. This created tension in the community and a divide between the old and new trustees and their supporters. Politics also seems to be a key factor in the strained relations. The ANC is held in high regard in the community and exerts a powerful influence thanks to the party's involvement in obtaining the land (see figure 6). There seems, however, to be a divide in the community. For while the Management Committee is made up almost exclusively of "politically active" ANC members, including the Secretary of the ANC Committee, the Trust would seem constituted by more "apolitical" people. In fact, in addition to regular attendance at community meetings and involvement in obtaining the land, strong political involvement seems to have been a key factor in the election of several of the Committee members. There may also be a generational divide, for the Trustees are mainly in their thirties and above while the Committee members are all in their twenties. One gets the impression that they view each other as old and slow, and young and impetuous respectively.

In this context, the management and ANC committee are reputed to "have joined forces", so that there exists a two against one divide amongst the committees. In addition to being

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<sup>19</sup> For example, it is alleged that the Trust has failed to properly note who has obtained plots, has moved away from the community, and who has gained through inheritance and so fourth, so that the community records are chaotic and incomplete.

In this context, the management and ANC committee are reputed to “have joined forces”, so that there exists a two against one divide amongst the committees. In addition to being a probable source of much conflict, this split also seems to have marginalised the Trust in the eyes of the community and committee.

## **Issues Around the Involvement of Women**

### *The Election of Women*

As already noted, there is only one women on all the community bodies combined (there are no women on the ANC Committee). However, this would not seem to have been due to a lack of awareness on the part of the community, as a significant emphasis was placed by AFRA on the importance of having women participating in the Committees. It is even alleged that the community received encouragement from the ANC to get women involved. The product of these initiatives is that at least in theory, all those spoken to feel that although decision making has often been male dominated in the past, “gone are the days when men can make decisions alone”. Furthermore, the majority of men and women agree that women have to be elected to committees as they are intimately involved with issues like wood and electricity (wood collection) and that “their time has come” to represent their interests.

Equally this state of affairs does not at first glance appear to be due to overt discrimination against women. All those spoken to agreed that five women were voted onto the respective bodies in 1997 and were persistently voted for in previous years. Moreover, the men say that they would continue to vote for women in the future<sup>20</sup>. Rather, the situation seemed to have come about because women have simply refused to sit on the bodies. Women have gradually over the past few years either declined to be nominated, to accept the positions or they have accepted but have stopped attending meetings.

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incomplete.

<sup>20</sup>Women are elected into the position of additional member and secretary “as they don’t drink and can write proper minutes”.

*Issues Around the Non Participation of Women*

The men and women spoken to agreed that women are allowed to present their views, but that they tend to be quiet in meetings. Moreover, they noted that the women who attend meetings are inclined to talk amongst themselves rather than to the other participants. Nevertheless the men argued that they are frequently encouraged to participate and are asked for their opinion. However, they maintain that even in these circumstances the women often said to them, "no, continue, we are listening". Many of them put women's non-participation down to the fact that women are shy, under confident and unused to speaking in meetings. As one man stated, "you can tell they are not used to talking... so that men often have to help them" to, for example, finish their sentences. Furthermore, although most stated that "those days are gone", a minority of the young men felt that women's non-participation was due to tradition and that quietness was a way of respecting the men. A number of men and boys also felt that women do not speak because they are uneducated and do not know about the issues that are discussed at meetings.

Many of the community women admit that "it is hard to talk in front of men" and many made similar statements to the men. Some, for example, still believe that it is not the place of women to "talk loudly" in meetings. Thus, the women on the Management committee feels that many of the women do not talk because they have been socialised into believing that they can not stand up for themselves, a view that is corroborated in a story told by another women. She noted that on one occasion, fieldworkers from AFRA came to the community and started talking about rights, saying that they wanted women to have their own title deeds. The women were shocked by the idea and kept asking "what would my husband say?". Moreover, some women noted that although they personally felt confident to speak up in meetings, some were afraid to raise an issue for fear that it "is something else that should be being discussed". At the same time other reasons were pointed out. For instance, some felt afraid to talk for fear of contradicting and angering the men. Others argued that although men allowed them to talk they felt afraid that they would still object to what they had to say.

These reasons are strikingly similar to those given in the other communities. However, while they were given as reasons why women were reluctant to talk, they do not seem to have been the deciding factor in making women refuse to sit on the Trust and Committee. For there are a number of strong, assertive women in the community who are vocal at community meetings. Nevertheless, although such women considered it important for women to be represented on the entities, they refused to sit on them. Alternatively, if they did sit on the bodies, it is claimed that they tended to become quiet.

### *Reasons for the Refusal of Women to Participate*

Many of the men spoken to stated that they did not know why women did not want to be involved in the entities as they had not asked them. Of those who gave reasons, several put it down to laziness and a lack of commitment on the part of their women folk. As one gentleman put it, "they know they should be on the committees, they are just lazy". Alternatively, the young men in particular felt that women were inclined to decline a position on the bodies because of the lack of other women on them. They "don't want to be alone with the men", both because they are shy and because their partners would not like it. A few felt that women were deterred by the conflict within the committees.

This point was confirmed by both women in the community and those who had refused positions. To paraphrase one woman's comments, "the men just fight, they can't work together, let alone with us". Yet while the women attribute part of the conflict to the in fighting and the alleged corruption of the Trust, they feel the most significant cause to be the tendency of some men to drink prior to meetings. They maintain that as a result of this the men become impatient and disagreeable with each other, so that they often heckle and shout each other down. Likewise, the women maintain, some of the men will shout at them if they speak, and tell them to be quiet. The women all feel that they simply do not want to be a part of this state of affairs.

Another deterrent cited by the women was that as Trustees and committee members, they would be expected to attend workshops. This is seen as hugely problematic for a number of reasons. For example, some of the women noted that they were not very educated and

were reluctant to go to workshops where they would be expected to speak out on issues and even talk in English. Many were afraid of being humiliated. Another popular reason was fear of their own inadequacy if they were expected to report back to the community about proceedings. Most also felt they would not have time to make such report backs. Another reason is that these workshops are often held out of the community, which requires that the women travel to them and sometimes spend the night away from home. This would make their attendance impossible, both because their partners would not allow this and because it would cause them to neglect their domestic duties. For in a context where women have their own chores to do and where husbands would object to being cared for by another women, the women complain that there is "no one else to help" them.

More generally, many of the women felt they would be unable to attend meetings every two weeks. The more vocal women in particular often seemed to be either *de facto* or *de jure* household heads, and they were firmly of the opinion that due to their domestic and earning responsibilities, they could not fulfil these duties (let alone go to workshops). Furthermore, it was noted that the meetings are usually held in the evening as the men are at work during the day. This was problematic. Firstly, because it coincided with the time when women were usually preparing the family meals and, most importantly, because it would seem that women were "traditionally not allowed out after dark". They feel that it would be far easier for them to go to the gatherings at around midday and point out that when meetings are held during the day on weekends they are better attended. However, they argue that this does not happen frequently as people also often work on weekends. Interestingly, the Chairman and several of the other men are aware of this constraint but do not seem prepared to act on it.

A minority of the women claim they do not want to be on the bodies for fear of upsetting their partners. They maintain that some of the men get jealous if the women are voted for, that they get angry and demand to know what is so special about their wife that she is being elected. One women also noted an incident that had occurred two years previously where a women was beaten up by her husband for attending a meeting a TDC meeting.



Less directly, women also mentioned the perception that they are unable to change things. Two examples were frequently cited in this regard: In the first instance a group of women, with the assistance of the female Committee member, went to the Chairman to complain about the present taxi stop. The existing one is very far from people's houses and the women wanted to either grade a shortcut to the stop or have a new one built. In this endeavour they had the support of the ANC committee which felt that the necessary money could be raised through community donations. According to the women, however, the Chairman became angry as the idea had not originated with him and the Trust and told them to go away. At the time of the research no improvements had yet been made.

In the second example, one of the women sitting on the Trust last year attended a workshop hosted by AFRA in Durban. At this workshop women's rights and empowerment were discussed and the women were encouraged to do things for themselves. Inspired, the women wanted to establish a women's organisation in the community and approached the Chairman about the matter. It would seem that the idea was not well received and the women in question were actually asked to leave the committee as a result.

According to the women such incidents leave them discouraged. They do not want to be part of the community decision-making structures as they do not feel that they are either gaining anything or are able to instigate change. Many feel that they are not seen as entirely credible, as "men take it that women are blank and know nothing as they stay at home. It is the men who do things, who go out and get experience...so the talk revolves around them and they delegate jobs amongst themselves". Importantly though, many of the women were also at pains to point out that not all the men were problematic and that many do encourage them to talk and are not averse to acting on their suggestions.

### *Ramifications*

Men and women in the community find it problematic that women are not involved in the community structures, and feel that they should be. The women in particular, note that "women need to be able to talk because it is the women who are suffering". Everybody



thus feels that the quality of the development decisions made by the committees has been reduced. Men try to compensate for the absence and quietness of women by making decisions they feel represent the women. Accordingly they pursue issues such as water and electricity because "it is well known that women need these things", but all assert that they feel as though they cannot speak for the women. In fact they note that the women often come to them and complain that they do not like the decisions that have been made.

It is widely felt by both men and women that the community's development is being hampered by the non-participation of the women. It was asserted that when a number of women were on the initial "old" TDC, some real improvements were made. For example negotiations with the area's Development Services Board (DSB) were held and a water reservoir built. This was to be connected with tanks in the community and was seen as the first stage in getting proper sanitation facilities. However, since women have dropped out, the body's progress has been slow as women are not there to chase the matter up. As one man put it, the "men do not care" and do not see any urgency to resolve the matter as it is not they who generally fetch the water everyday. Similarly, it is claimed for, example, that AFRA came to the community and discussed ideas such as the establishment of sewing projects and earning enterprises for the women. However, due to the absence of women in the community structures, these ideas were not followed up. Similarly, some of the men argued that farming plots have not been set aside, as men are generally less concerned with the issues than women.

Many of the women, and some of the young men feel that the situation has also left women's rights unaddressed, as having women on the bodies would help to make women's rights better understood. Moreover, they argued that because women are not on the entities decisions and messages left by people like AFRA, for example, are not translated to women at the grassroots. In this vein it was explained that invitations to women to attend meetings are not transmitted to them, while there are not women to send anyhow. Thus while the women elsewhere are becoming aware, these are being left behind.

Most women however argued, that even if women were in the bodies they would not stand to benefit unless the way the bodies operate was changed. They felt however that should they change, women's lives would be improved. The question is how likely is this to occur? Moreover in light of issues raised in the previous studies, unless women were given real power to implement decisions, their involvement might not make an enormous impact.

## CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

### INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of this dissertation four research questions were posed. These asked (i) how women are involved in the three Trusts (ii) What the barriers to their participation are (iii) how they stand in relation to the social capital in their communities, and (iii) the affect that this position has on their ability to participate.

What the case studies reveal is that although on occasion barred in some way from being involved, as a general rule women are technically "participating" in the Trusts, usually have at least the opportunity to be involved in them, and may be able to influence decisions indirectly by talking to their husbands at home. However, they would also seem to lack direct decision making power and influence, and that in some instances this has discouraged them to the extent that they no longer wish to even sit on the bodies. They also show that the social capital that exists in these communities is not gender neutral in its distribution or accumulation and that this pattern of distribution may lie at the root of the women's inability to participate in the manner envisaged by the Department of Land Affairs. The situation is, however, more complex than suggested by the questions that initiated this research.

To elaborate, the communities studied would all seem to be "blessed" with a fair stock of the six forms of social capital highlighted in chapter three (see diagram 7 for a rough summary) Family and affinity ties are reasonably strong and although households have often been displaced from previous communities, many house extended kin. The communities are all small enough to be relatively close knit in terms of people knowing and interacting regularly with one another, although this is particularly a feature of the small and medium sized communities. Horizontally organised associations are also present in each community in the form of soccer teams, choirs, common church attendance and so fourth. Each also has vertical, cross sectional linkages to the governmental authorities as well as, in the case of the Thokozani and Ntabeni communities, a political party. In the case of the Ntabeni and Thokozani communities, AFRA could also be construed to be a "bridging" institution, linking the communities with governmental authorities such as the

DLA and their respective local councils. All the communities also possess a powerful set of shared norms and are organised around strong notions of the family, "tradition", and the place of men and women.

When examined from a gender perspective however, this social capital has a strikingly contradictory influence on women's participation. In some ways, women's relative lack of social capital compared to men's hampers their ability to participate in the entities. At the same time, it could be said that they are prevented from participating fully in the bodies by the "wrong kind", or "perverse" social capital. As a result of this the implications of social capital for women are twofold, for not only does social capital stand to enhance women's ability to participate in these entities, it may also serve as a powerful barrier to their involvement.

## THE CONTRADICTIONS

### **"Too little" Social Capital**

Although there are obviously exceptions, women stand disadvantaged in their access to social capital in comparison to the majority of men in the communities. This occurs in numerous ways.

Firstly, statements made in the Thokozani community suggest that some of the important support networks noted by Moser (1996; no date) may be lacking amongst women. In particular, the reciprocal assistance in domestic chores that she notes in her 1996 paper seems to be absent. For as noted, a number of the women felt unable to participate in the entities and workshops for the reason that this would mean leaving their households and children unattended. They could not turn to other women, for not only do they themselves have families to care for and husbands to please, but also a husband's care can not be left up to another.

Secondly, women in the communities often seem less able to form the horizontal networks through their participation in the "associational life" noted by Putnam (1993) as an

important source of trust and reputation. Linkages which could, through their reputation generating powers, become "politically significant" for the individual.

To elaborate, all the communities had at least one soccer club, of which the majority of men and male trustees were members. Moreover, several of the men were also involved in political organisations of some kind, were prominent members of the churches attended by the majority of the community (four of the trustees interviewed were Zionist ministers), or have been involved in obtaining the land. The friendships, bonds and expertise formed by these associations were frequently cited as an important source of confidence, experience and management skills, which the men unanimously agreed helped them to participate in the entities that had been formed. Moreover, it would seem probable that these linkages, and the trust, credibility and reputations they have fostered have also played a role in people being elected to the Trusts.

Women on the other hand would seem to have had far less opportunity to build such networks. Certainly women have formed friendships and relationships with other men and women in their communities, but as a general rule they would seem to participate less, and less prominently in such community organisations. For example, although the Ekuthuleni community had a choir and an ANC women's group was being initiated in Thokozani, "women's associations" were generally lacking. Moreover, it would seem that few of the trustees participate in them. A handful of women in each community were members of stokvels, but all in neighbouring communities. Thus, although the women who were part of such organisations claimed that they taught them skills and built their confidence, such participation was *generally* limited so that there was less opportunity for women to gain experience, respect and reputation through such associations.

Thirdly, in a manner reminiscent of Beall's (1997) critique, power is concentrated amongst the already powerful. As discussed in chapter three, she noted that in the case of waste disposal for example, it is only the influential who are able to entertain the authorities and so gain the leverage to obtain disposal services in their neighbourhoods. Similarly, women frequently lack the authority and opportunity to form cross sectional links beyond the

community, so that such linkages and the opportunities they present are concentrated amongst the men.

As was noted, in all three communities the leadership roles have been taken by men, although the female secretaries may yield considerable influence, be extremely well informed, and liaise with extra-community sources by virtue of their duties. It is, however, generally the Chairman, or Deputy Chair who has most contact with "outsiders" of various forms. Moreover, implementation in all the communities is largely in the hands of men, and in the Ekuthuleni community, in the hands of the chairman in particular. Thus, it is men (although as illustrated by the Ekuthuleni community, not all men) who by necessity must make contact with the authorities and service providers. Furthermore, because they operate more frequently in the "public" sphere, and make these contacts it also means that they are better informed and are more likely to know or to learn about "the channels" through which to get things done.

Women on the other hand, tend to be more minimally involved in such processes, and with the exception of the two secretaries and two women in the Ekuthuleni and Thokozani communities, women did not know whom to approach about development issues. Some women have had the opportunity to attend workshops held by AFRA, but these would seem to revolve more around empowerment issues than the intricacies of how to make decisions reality. Notably however, even where women do possess this knowledge, they are often constrained by the power structures in the community and the taboo of "jumping rank". In this way women are held back by the virtuous and vicious cycles noted by Putnam (1993). "Them as has, gets", yet in the present situation women do not have as much as men and their ability accumulate social capital is uncertain.

### **"Too Much" Social Capital**

However, just as women are disadvantaged by a lack of networks and ties, they are also disadvantaged by much of the social capital that does exist in the community. In fact the case studies illustrate several of the points made by Portes and Landolt (1996).



For instance, they argue that by its very nature, the social capital that aids some serves to exclude and disadvantage others. A statement that is borne out by a subtle form of exclusion that seems to be at play in all the Trusts. As already noted, men in the communities would seem to be more deeply embedded in associational networks and to have greater linkages with actors outside of the community. That men have accumulated such social capital would seem to have led to the surreptitious formation of "boys clubs" in the communities. This is not to say that men are necessarily overtly chauvinist, but that rather because women are outside the networks, the "discussion revolves around the men" and tasks are delegated largely between them.

The situation that has developed in the Thokozani community also bears mention in this regard. Here it is apparent that the decision-making structures in the community have become organised around two rather opposing networks. The people inside these networks are to some degree protected by the shared thinking in them, and some may even have been elected because of their affiliations. The converse of this however is that the bickering between these cliques has, as illustrated, also had a detrimental impact on the participation of women in these structures. This conflict has served to exclude women in two ways. Firstly, women see the disharmony itself as a disincentive as they "do not like all the shouting" and don't wish to "fight all the time". Secondly, they would seem to have become discouraged by the fact that many of their contributions have essentially been lost in the finger pointing. For in the literal sense their voices have been drowned out as they "sit back and watch the men fight", while the suggestions that they have made have often fallen by the wayside as the two groups struggle to define their roles and relationship with one another.

More generally pervasive however, are powerful norms regarding the respective roles of men and women in these communities, although it is important to note that these are not cast in stone. Gender relations in the communities are under negotiation, although the size and heterogeneity of the communities would seem to affect the degree to which this is the case. Thus in the small and relatively homogenous Ntabeni community "traditional" norms of conduct and the perception of the division of labour remain fairly strong. In the larger and more heterogeneous Ekuthuleni and Thokozani communities it would seem that

a greater degree of negotiation is underway<sup>21</sup>. Indicative of this negotiation are, for example, the fair number of *de jure*, and due to the fact that many of the men work in urban areas away from the communities, *de facto* female headed households. Alternatively, that many of the women work in these communities, and in some instances are the breadwinners in their families suggests that women are no longer as confined to domestic roles as they have been. Moreover, the attitudes amongst the youth, particularly in the Ekuthuleni community, suggest that the younger generations may be edging towards an attitudinal shift.

Despite such negotiation, the fundamental components of the division of labour and authority remain entrenched. Certainly there exist strong, authoritative women, who demand to be recognised. Overwhelmingly however, the norms in these communities assert a particular status quo in which women have less authority and decision making power than men, and remain associated with the domestic rather than the public sphere. Thus while Putnam (1993a; 1993b; 1995) and Coleman (1985) in particular, argue for the usefulness and importance of shared norms for enabling people to achieve desirable outcomes, certain norms may be less benevolent when looked at from a gender perspective. The consequence of shared values in this instance being that men generally dictate the terms in which women participate.

Women may sit on the Trusts, but only to the extent that they do not anger their husbands or make them jealous by doing so. They may be elected, but to stereotypically feminine positions of secretary or additional member. Not to malign the potential importance and influence of the secretarial position, the positions with more "clout" generally go to men. Moreover, women's envisaged contribution to the functioning and decision making of the trusts is predominantly confined to their domestic roles. They can make suggestions about "women's issues", such as water and wood collection (come electricity), and can initiate "women's projects" concerned with gardening, poultry and so fourth. However contributions to issues outside these parameters would seem to remain limited.<sup>22</sup> In the face of potential abuse they can speak as long as they don't "speak too much", and their

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<sup>21</sup>Population numbers alone may in large part account for this difference.

suggestions do not severely challenge the authority structure or question the functioning of the trust. They can act as long as they do so within this structure. In short women participate, but firmly within the dictates of the existing status quo.

Furthermore, women are seen first and foremost as mothers, wives and daughters rather than decision-makers and community players. A woman's primary responsibility is to run the home and to see to the needs of her husband and children. Involvement in the Trusts would seem to be secondary, and any involvement has to occur over and above fulfilment of the duties required of these roles. Men also have duties to fulfil and work to do, but they are often perceived to have a more publicly orientated role to play. The dynamic of men and women's involvement in the trusts is thus different. While men participate largely to the extent their works allows, women participate to the extent that their domestic duties, work, and on occasion their husbands, allow. As noted, the resultant time poverty and the threat of a husband's wrath mean that such involvement is often limited, which in itself makes future participation more difficult. Thus although the family is often viewed as a fundamental source of social capital (see Putnam 1995), in this case women's perceived centrality in it is a significant barrier to this form of "civic engagement".

The perception of women's role in the communities serves to limit their participation in another way for, as shown by the demographic data collected during the course of this research, women in the older generations tend to be less educated than men. This can be directly attributable to the widespread belief noted by Sejane and Molose (1998) that male education is more worthwhile as they are the ones who are expected to go out and seek waged employment and so fourth. On the other hand it is expected that women will not only stay at home, but will get married into another family so that education is generally "wasted" on them. This trend is changing for the younger generations, however, for the majority of the women involved in the present committees this lack of education has certain ramifications. Educated women do achieve respect and can wield some authority. To illustrate this one only need look to the secretaries of the entities. Without fail these women are assertive, vocal, and above all, well educated by community standards. The

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<sup>22</sup>In this regard, Walker (1997) notes that it is generally such infrastructure that women want. My question is whether they feel, and are seen credible when they move beyond the scope of these issues.

less educated women however do not seem able to achieve the same kind of involvement. For not only does this serve to make many feel inadequate, but it also contributes to the general lack of resources that women have at their command. It is plausible that this lack of resources not only reduces their general authority, but as will be discussed shortly, their ability to risk "rocking the boat".

This brings us to perhaps the subtlest of ways in which the social capital in the communities serves to reduce women's meaningful participation in the Land Reform entities. In addition to the above difficulties the case studies also clearly suggest that some of the barriers to women's participation lie within the women themselves. The reason for this is, as Cousins (1998, pers comm.) argues, that both sexes have "bought into" the system. Thus for example, although many of the women in the Thokozani community complain about the chores they were expected to do, the majority of women in all three communities still accept the division of labour as it stands, although a number felt that decision making should be shared. Furthermore, although many of the women felt that "women should have a say in things", most also continue to support the mainstays of the patriarchal system, such as the belief that daughters should not inherit land. Moreover, although the vast majority of men argued that they did feel it important for women to contribute, and that they "make space" for them to participate, several of the women simply *felt* themselves unable to do so. They feel shy, that they are less than credible, that it is not their place to talk in meetings and to make decisions.

This is unsurprising, for as noted by authors such as Fierlbeck (1997) and Elson (1991) for example, women do not operate independently of their environments. Rather, like men, their identity derives at least in part from cultural templates that they have internalised. This is not to say that women are automatons, for as already noted these cultural templates are not unchanging and gender identities are not unnegotiated terrain. Rather, women like all individuals, are socialised into behaving largely as society expects of them, and into generally accepting the norms and values with which they are surrounded.

There is, however, also another dimension of this situation to consider, namely that it may not be in the best interests of women to challenge the system. As argued by Cousins

(1996) rural women operate within a field of risk, in which they have more to lose than to gain by overtly challenging existing social relations and structures. She argues that women generally have fewer resources, little authority and are expected to be attached to men in some way. With the "cards stacked against them" (1996:29) in this way, women will tend to continue to move within the system to protect what security they have. Any challenge to the system is likely to be covert.

In this way it is plausible that the norms and values surrounding women's position serve to reduce the quality of their participation as they seek not to challenge the status quo. Moreover, although the case studies suggest that such participation may allow women, in as much as the other constraints allow, to fulfil some of their practical gender needs, serious questions arise as to the extent to which women will be able to fulfil more strategic needs. Although, it is to be noted that strategic needs can not be fulfilled without some degree of political and ideological contestation, so that in light of the above this should perhaps even be seen as a goal.

Finally, it is worth noting that norms and values also dictate what is within the realm of the Trust to decide and interfere. For example, in the Ntabeni community, inheritance and the distribution of land within the family was considered the preserve of the household, particularly the male head. Unless specifically asked, the Trust will not interfere in the processes followed, so that regardless of their authority, such matters are beyond the scope of the female trustees to influence. This has important implications for the assumption made by DLA that women's involvement in land trusts will in some manner translate into more secure rights, and particularly land rights for women. For although some female household heads stand to benefit from the land redistribution programme, the majority of women's access to land remains mediated by men and tradition. These forces are unlikely to allow women rights to land that extend beyond one generation.

It also has significant implications for what, by encouraging the establishment of new institutions and communities with supposedly shared norms and goals, could be construed as the Department of Land Affairs's attempt to rebuild social capital. Land is as much a social resource as it is a physical one, and it is an important source of status and authority



(Cousins 1996). Thus, although legal entities are envisaged in the White Paper as a means to achieve gender equity, and the processes involved in their establishment have sought to promote these ideals, they do not readily intervene in matters concerned with land distribution within the family. This effectively eliminates an important source of equity. Such entities have been created, but their scope to impact on gender equity is limited by a particular set of norms that have simply been reproduced in them. If anything they have reinforced the inequity that exists.

In short, the implications of social capital for women's participation in the Trusts are far from simple. In fact, the different dimensions of the capital in all three of the communities interact in a complex and contradictory manner, the end product of which is that although men know that women must be on these bodies and generally do not object to putting them there, the decision making dynamic remains unchanged (Cousins 1998, pers comm.). Generally speaking, although there are outstanding individuals in these communities, women are involved, but not involved in a way that they can truly assert themselves or shape the decisions and outcomes of the decision-making processes of the entities.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSION

This paper set out to explore the degree to which women are involved in three Land Reform Trusts in KwaZulu Natal, the barriers to their participation and the meaning of their involvement. In concluding the discussion it can be asserted that despite the existence of strong women in the communities and a certain amount of negotiation around gender relations, women in the Trusts and their substructures generally lack overt decision making authority or the means to implement the decisions that are made. The result is that although according to the official doctrine, involvement in the Trusts offers women in the communities an opportunity to assert themselves, fight for economic autonomy and initiate improvements in their own lives and the lives of other women in the community, in practice these opportunities have been limited.

The concept of social capital has proved useful in disaggregating and understanding the dynamics that are at the root of this lack of participation. For, as the previous chapter showed, although women are present, or are provided with the opportunity to be involved in these Trusts, their participation is constrained both by their differential access to aspects of what has become known as social capital, and the gendered implications of the social capital which do exist.

Thus on the one hand the majority of women are excluded from the horizontal and cross-sectional networks which could provide them with the reputation, knowledge, credibility and confidence to participate fully in the processes of the Trusts. On the other hand they stand disadvantaged both by the gendered accumulation of the social capital that exists in these communities, and the properties of the norms and values that hold sway in them. In this way women are marginalised in decision making processes which are dominated by men in possession of authority, knowledge and contacts. They are also constrained by customary practices in which women are accorded less authority than men, and are confined primarily to a private rather than a public, decision-making role. Practices which not only hamper participation and justify women's non-participation, but which fuel, as

Walker (1997b:6) puts it, "their own ambivalences about assuming different roles" in the face their own acceptance of their place and the threat of abuse.

The existence of "too little" and "too much" social capital that is suggested by this study highlights what Hirschmann (1998) notes of civil society in the more conventional sense, namely that it is not an inherently beneficial or even benign phenomenon. Rather, "space to participate in civil society opens up opportunities for women's participation, but many of the same constraints, formal and informal, that limit women's empowerment in other political spheres are to be found in this one as well" (1998:235). Moreover, as he continues, "those with power will be in a position to manipulate opportunities for influence far more effectively than the powerless, most of whom are unlikely to have the information, or the capacity to participate" (1998:236). As this analysis has demonstrated, those with power and social capital are invariably male.

This highlights the fact that in contrast to the arguments made by many proponents of social capital, social capital does not benefit all and all the same. It is not an entirely positive concept with similar implications for all those that are lucky enough to possess it, but rather as argued by Portes and Landolt (1996), it may disadvantage some even as it benefits others. The impact of these dynamics on women's participation has important implications for the land redistribution programme and the reform strategy in general.

To elaborate, the White Paper (Department of Land Affairs, 1997:50) infers that gender equity can be achieved by:

- Removing the legal restrictions that prevent women from obtaining land.
- By selecting projects in which women stand to benefit from the reform.
- By using participatory methodologies in project appraisal and planning.
- Giving women access to credit facilities.
- Registering the reformed assets in the name of women.
- Encouraging women's groups in the communities and the awareness of women's rights.

- By providing gender training for the those officials and organisations in contact with communities and generally getting women involved in all aspects of the programme

What this paper highlights is that these outcomes can not be assumed, and that as things presently stand many of these points are simply optimistic policy recommendations.

In order for these to become reality, or to translate into real change, women have to be involved meaningfully in the processes of the land reform programme and the land holding entities which frequently manage the details of this reform. As noted at the beginning of this paper, they have to have the credibility and authority to shape the decisions and functioning of the entities, and they need to have the confidence, desire and ability to do so. Although women may be present or technically afforded the opportunity to participate, their present involvement in these entities would seem to be relatively insipid. The consequence of this is that women's ability to benefit from land reform, even in the terms of the fulfilment of their practical needs is not assured. The likelihood of the fulfilment of more strategic interests and the gender equity envisaged by the White Paper even more unlikely.

The moral of this story is that, as Hirschmann (1998:236) notes, there is a need to assess the "quality" and not only the "quantity" of involvement. Certainly quantitative targets are important, and can at least begin to offer women an opportunity to voice their concerns, however the depth of this involvement must also be assessed and improved. The question is, how can this be done?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals of the Land Reform Programme are hugely ambitious, and are unlikely to be achieved in the near future. The goals of gender equity are particularly unlikely given the patriarchal attitudes still upheld to lesser or greater extents by men and women in these communities. Certainly, efforts can be made to chip away at the edges of these attitudes, and maximise the room for manoeuvre that does exist, but large scale social engineering is both unrealistic and in all likelihood undesirable given that we do not have alternatives

with which to fill the vacuum that would be left. Moreover, such engineering is definitely beyond the scope and capacity of the land reform programme and the DLA to achieve. However, certain recommendations can be made in the attempt to build and counteract some of the social capital in these communities:

- The first of these is that we should not demand of the Land reform programme and the DLA alone solutions to a vast social process. A multi-sectoral approach is necessary, so that other sectors of government must become involved in the effort. Thus for example, not only notions of equity but also practical skills can be taught in schools, and the various institutions with which communities come in contact, be they Governmental departments, Local Councils or private organisations, should more consciously try to involve women in their initiatives. Most importantly, concrete skills and knowledge need to be transmitted so that women are able to credibly contribute all aspects of the developmental process.
- Efforts should be made to transmit information to the women beyond the reach of these organisations. My research suggests that that radio is a particularly useful medium for transmitting such information, as radios are owned by most people and would already seem to be an important source of information. Incorporating an awareness of women's work and leisure patterns into programming schedules could prove helpful in ensuring maximum impact.
- Importantly women, and men, need to be made aware of the rights and powers that they have been given by the national legislation. This knowledge, and access to the recourses to enforce these rights, needs to be transmitted at the local level. Paralegals, such as those being pioneered in the Muden area could be useful in this regard, as could strategies such as those adopted by the Legal Resources Foundation in Zimbabwe. These strategies include extension initiatives whereby women in rural communities have been shown how to protect themselves from violence and domestic abuse through the use of role-play and other participatory techniques. The strategy has also included the training of nurses, social workers, agricultural extension workers and so fourth to give legal advice should people desire it.

- It is also important, as noted by Cousins (1996), that strategies to support and minimise the risk faced by women be put in place beyond the specific focus of the land reform programme itself. Thus, as she argues, it would be advisable for the DLA to seriously approach the idea of co-ordinating research, monitoring, strategy development and implementation with other sectors. Emphasis should be placed on providing women with the resources and capital necessary to enhance their fall back position.
- On the part of DLA alone, the training of field workers to be gender sensitive that is already underway should be continued, but this must be more than an add on module to the training given. Moreover, the focus should change. It is not enough to merely get women on these bodies, it is necessary to enable them to participate in a fruitful manner. Rather than just ensuring that women speak up in the groups facilitated by the department, efforts must be made to ensure that women learn the skills and knowledge necessary for them to participate meaningfully and that they are involved in the implementation and not only the development of ideas.

The case studies suggest that for the most part women are aware of the need to participate in these bodies but they lack confidence and skills necessary to do so. In this regard the women in all three communities felt that workshops with DLA or NGO fieldworkers would be helpful. Many also suggested the idea of meeting with women, particularly assertive women from other communities as both an opportunity to discuss ideas and shared constraints as well as a source of inspiration. That women may however, not wish to travel long distances and spend nights away from their communities because of domestic responsibilities should be borne in mind when considering such work shops and meetings.

- Women's organisations and associations should be strengthened and encouraged from the earliest stages of the reform processes. This could be aided through skills training, workshops and other tools to increase discussion around gender equality, and the social and economic problems faced by women in the communities. Most importantly

the practical application of gender equality needs to be discussed, people need to be made aware of the realities and helped to understand what it means for them. It is essential that men be involved in such initiatives and that gender issues are not merely envisaged as women's issues.

- Careful monitoring is necessary, not only to ensure that women are involved in land reform processes in a meaningful manner over the long term, but that information is in fact reaching the majority of men and women. It would be important to also ascertain that this information is relevant, comprehensible, and most importantly, that women are able to use it.
- Further research into the position of women in rural communities, the resources available to them and room for manoeuvre that exists within the overriding cultural system is also important if we are to better understand the factors at play in the lives of many rural women.



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## APPENDIX A

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### Questions: Trust Members

- What is your role on the Trust?
- What duties does this position require you to perform?
- Why do you think you were elected to this position?
- Why did you accept this position?
- Would you accept it again if you could do it all again?
- What is the perception of the trust and other bodies regarding their ability to do things?
- Membership in other groups and effect on participation?
  
- How often do you attend trust/community meetings?
- When an outsider/important person comes to the community, who meets them?
- In such a situation what duties do they perform?
- When an important decision needs to be made by the trust, what procedure is followed (who is involved, who makes the final decision)? Who do community members go to? Who can call meetings?
- Can and do women call meetings? How do women get issues addressed?
  
- Why has this trust elected female members?
- Does having women on the Trust affect the way it works, or the decisions made?
- Has having women on the trust and participating in meetings helped women to benefit from the land?
- What do you think women's role on the trust is? Is it different from men?
- Does having women on the trust create any problems? [*For women: how do men feel about them being on the trust/ have they had problems with the other women on it?*]
  
- How do you feel about being on the trust. Do you feel your position is of importance, that their activities are making a difference? Has it benefitted you?
- Do you feel confident speaking at trust/community meetings? [*For women members add: do you feel confident speaking in front of men? Reasons for this?*]
- If you don't like a decision will you speak up? Reasons for this?
- *For women: If you could change their gender do you think you would speak more? The reasons for this?*
- *For the women: if you could change your gender do they think you would be listened to more? The reasons for this?*
- *For women: do you feel you represent the other women in the community in any way?*
- What are the barriers to female participation?
  
- How can women's ability to contribute/ be heard be improved?
- Is the trust deed ever brought out and referred to?

- What do you understand by women's empowerment? What are women's rights? What do you know about the rights enshrined in the constitution?
- Does being on the trust contribute to these things? Reasons for this?
- Who are the registered beneficiaries and who gets land if something happens to them?
- Do women want land and should daughters get land. Why?
- How secure is women's tenure when they do have land?
- Should young single women get land?

Demographics:

- Age?
- Gender?
- Marital status?
- Level of education?
- Urban exposure?

## Questions for the Community

- What are men and women's roles in the community?
- Is time poverty a problem?
- Do you think the Trust is doing a good job?
- What about other community bodies and their ability to do things?
- Why did you elect women to the Trust?
- Is it a good thing to have women on the Trust? Reasons for this?
- Have there been any problems around having women on the Trust?
- Should women's role on the Trust be any different to that of men?
- Has having women on the trust helped women to benefit more from the land? Reasons for this?
- *For women: do you think having women on the trust gives you any more say/ influence in the decisions made around how and who uses the land?*
- Next time, if you have a choice of voting mainly for male or female members, who would you vote for? Reasons?
- Would you ever vote a women into the position of Trust Chairman?
- How influential is the Trust in determining the day to day activities and practices?
- Do you feel confident contributing in community meetings? [*For women, do you feel confident speaking in front men? Do you feel confident to shape decision making?*]
- If you don't like a decision will you speak up? Do you feel able to voice your opinions? Reasons?
- Do you feel as though you are listened to?
- *For women: if you could change your gender do you feel you would participate and be listened to more?*
- What are the barriers to women's participation?
- How do you think women's ability to contribute and feel heard could be improved?
- Would you take up a position in the trust if voted for? Reasons?
- *For women: how often do you attend community meetings? Are there any barriers to your attendance?*
- Do men support your involvement in meetings?
- If an important decision is to be made or a dispute settled, who on the Trust do you go to?
- How can, and do, women call meetings?
- With whom do final decisions lie in community and Trust decision making?
- Who makes landuse decisions eg. cattle numbers? What decisions do men make, what do women make? Who is responsible for what activities?
- Who makes household decisions?
- In what type of issues will the trust intervene? Is land rights one of them?
- What are the communities priority development projects? Who decided these priorities and who is going to do what?

- Who makes land use decisions eg. cattle vs. arable land? Who is going to be responsible for cattle (and goats) vs. agriculture and poultry? Who made this decision?
- What do you understand by empowerment and women's rights? Has having women on the trust and your participation in meetings contributed to these things?
- Knowledge of land reform and how did you obtain that knowledge?

Demographics:

- Age?
- Gender?
- Marital status?
- Level of education?
- Urban exposure?

DIAGRAM 1

### ROLES IN THE NTABENI COMMUNITY

	INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY						INFLUENCING FACTORS								
	Young Female	Young Male	Adult Female	Adult Male	Female Elder	Male Elder	Politics	Religion	Culture	Economy	Legal	Education	Urban Exposure	Other Reasons	Desperation
Fetching Water	Female		Female						Female						
Cutting Wood	Female		Female						Female						
Herding Cattle		Male		Male					Female						
Housekeeping Child Care			Female						Female						
Thatching House				Male					Female					Other Reasons	
Cutting Grass	Female		Female						Female						
Digging Foundations & House Building			Female	Male					Female						
Employment				Male										MEN DO NOT WANT WOMEN TO WORK	
Ploughs Soil			ASSISTS	RESPON					Female						
Sows Seeds	Female	Female	Female	Male					Female						Desperation
Weeds / Tends Crop	Female		Female	Male					Female						
Harvests Crop	Female	Female	ASSISTS	RESPON					Female						
Prepares Grain			Female	Male										Other Reasons	
Farms Poultry			Female	Male											
Infrastructure Development			Female	Male											
Manages Infrastructure			Female	Male											
Decides on land utilisation/development			Female	Male	Female Elder	Male Elder				Legal					
Household Decision Making			Female	Male					Female					ENSURE FAMILY PEACE & HARMONY	
Trust Decision Making			Female	Male						Legal				MOST WOMEN ARE SHY	
Attend Meetings			Female	Male						Legal				EVERYONE EXPECTED TO ATTEND	
Vote for Committee	ABOVE 18	ABOVE 18	Female	Male	Female Elder	Male Elder				Legal					

Female Opinion
  Male Opinion
  Male/Female Opinion

The Gender Matrix represents an amalgamation of the two matrices constructed by the men and women who participated in the two single sex focus groups run in the community.

DIAGRAM 2

## INFLUENCE IN COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING



The above Venn Diagram was constructed by the participants of the adult, mixed sex focus groups run in the Ntabeni community. The participants were first asked to cut out pieces of paper of various sizes. The main actors involved in Trust decision making were then identified and the participants were asked to allocate the pieces of paper to the actors on the basis of their perceived authority, and to place them around a central point according to their perceived centrality in decision making. The larger the size of the circle and the closer to the centre of the paper, the greater the authority and perceived centrality of the actor to the entity's decision making processes.

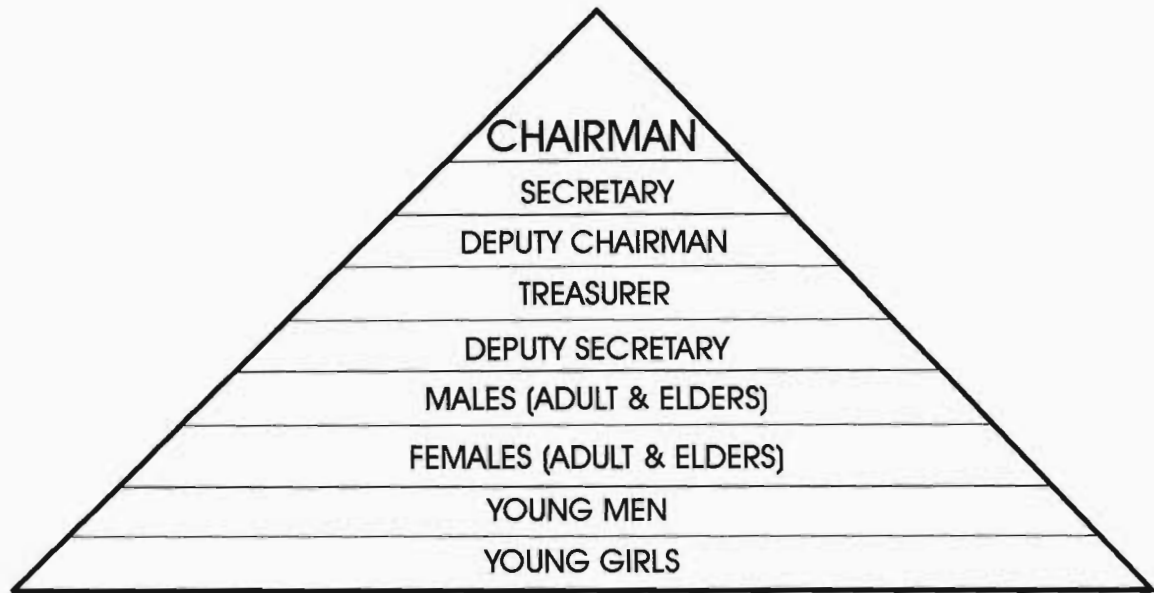


### ROLES IN THE EKUTHULENI COMMUNITY

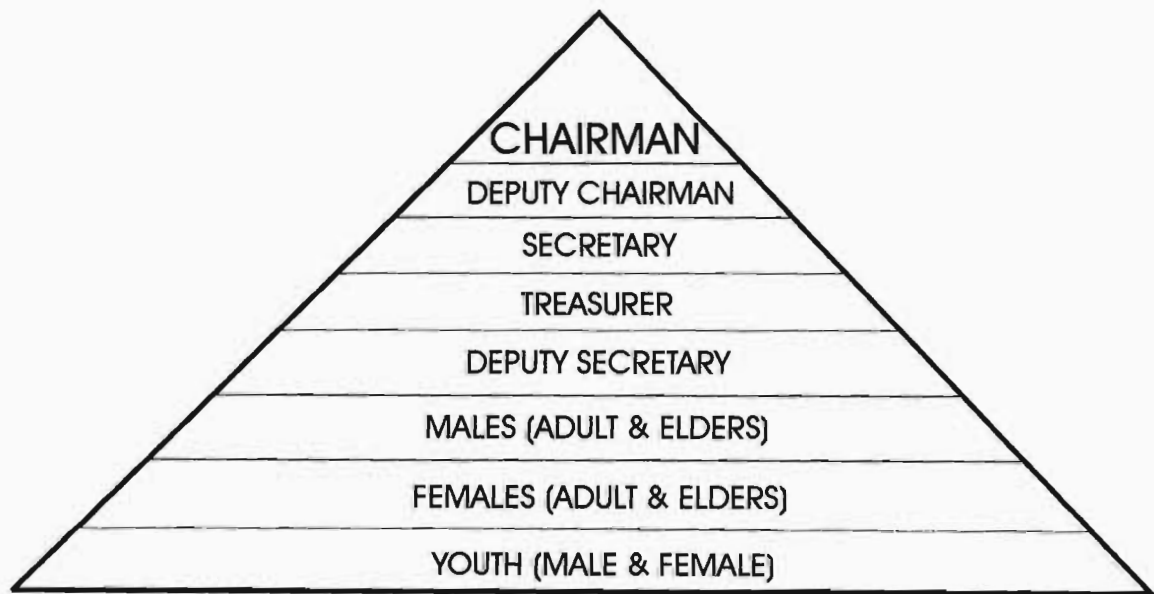
	INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY						INFLUENCING FACTORS								
	Young Male	Young Female	Adult Male	Adult Female	Male Elder	Female Elder	Trust decided	Culture	Religious	Economy	Legal	Other REASONS	Urban Exposure	Desperation	Education
Fetching Wood			OCCASIONALLY												
Fetching Water															
Cooking															
Household Child care															
Tends Cattle															
Tends Goats															
Prepares Fields															
Sows Seeds															
Weeds / Tends Crop															
Harvests & Processes Crop															
Builds House															
Thatches House															
Employment															
Land utilisation Decision Makers															
Community Decision Makers															
Household Decision Makers															
Decision Makers - Development priorities															
Responsible for Infrastructure															
Manages Infrastructure															
Attend Meetings															
Vote for Trustees															
Predominant Speakers															
Convoke Meetings															

This Gender Matrix was constructed by the mixed adult focus group run in the community. It was hoped that a similar matrix would be constructed by a mixed youth group, however, as noted in the methodology it was not possible to run his focus group.

PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHORITY IN THE EKUTHULENI COMMUNITY



OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY YOUNG MEN & WOMEN



OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY ADULT MEN & WOMEN

Four diagrams were constructed by the participants in the four single sex focus groups run in the community. As in the Ntabeni Community, the central actors in the Trust's decision making processes were first identified. The participants were then asked to rank these actors according to their perceived authority and centrality in the entity's decision making processes. The actor at the apex of the pyramid, was felt to hold the most authority, while those at the bottom were perceived to exert the least influence over the decisions that were made. Interestingly, only generational differences emerged in the rankings given, so that the four diagrams have been combined into the two illustrated above.

DIAGRAM 5

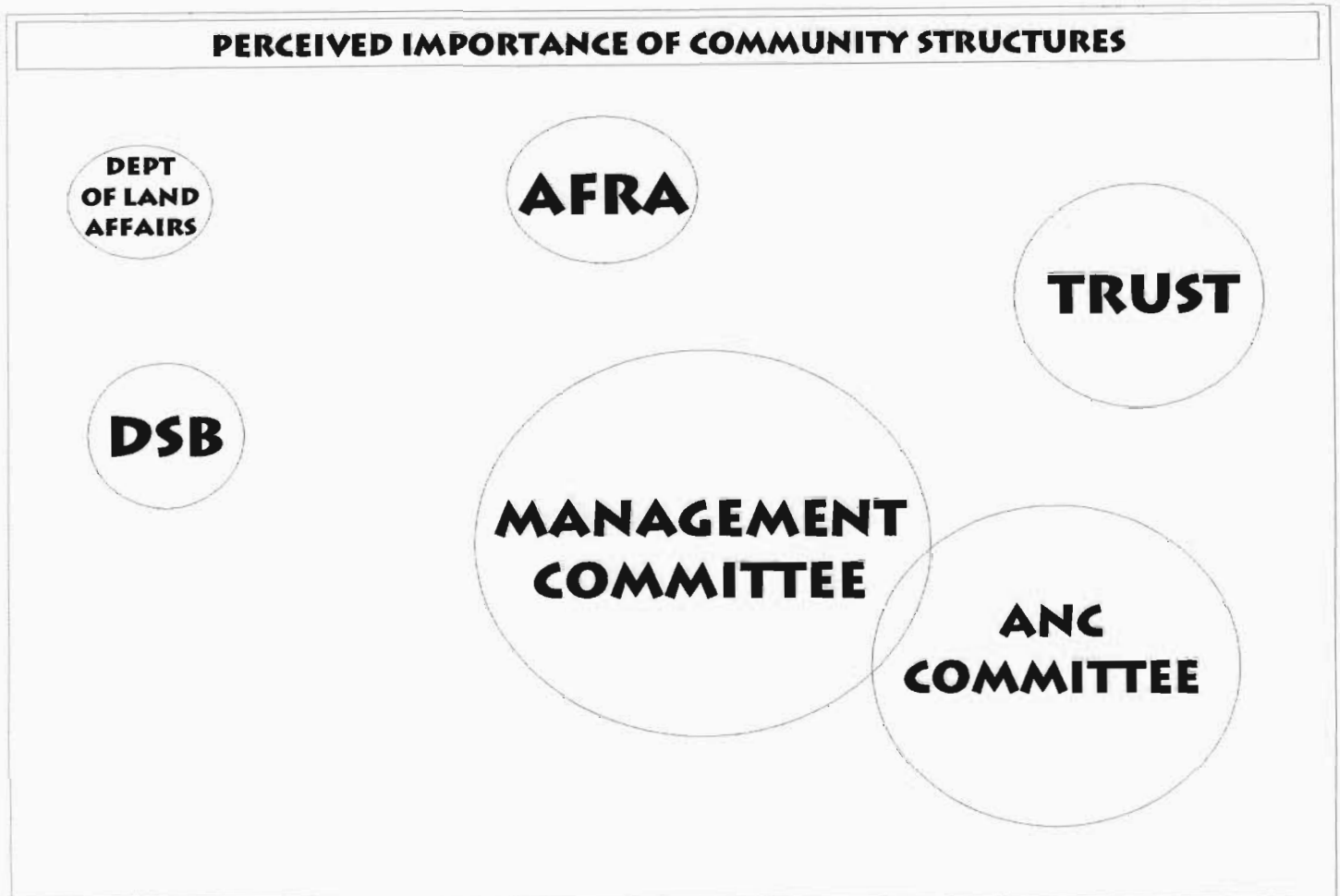
ROLES IN THE THOKOZANI COMMUNITY

	INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY						INFLUENCING FACTORS							
	Young Male	Young Female	Adult Male	Adult Female	Female Elder	Male Elder	Household Politics	Legal	Culture	Economy	Desperation	Other Reasons	Education	Urban Exposure
Fetching Wood														
Fetching Water														
House Cleaning														
Child Care														
Builds House														
Plasters House														
Prepares Soil														
Sows Seeds														
Weeds / Tends Crop														
Farms Poultry														
Erects Fences														
Employment														
Attend Meetings														
Predominant Speakers														
Vote for Committee														
Household Decision Makers														
Community Decision Makers														
Responsible for Infrastructure														
Manages Infrastructure														
Benefits from Infrastructure														

MIXED ADULTS      MIXED YOUTH      BOTH GROUPS

The Gender Matrix represents an amalgamation of the two matrices constructed by the mixed adult and youth focus groups run in the community.

DIAGRAM 6



The Venn Diagram, drawn using the same methodology as that employed in the Ntabeni Community, was constructed by the participants of the mixed adult focus group run in the community. The participants in the other focus groups were also asked to draw such diagrams, and although they often omitted actors such as the Department of Land Affairs and the DSB, the remaining actors were placed similarly in all of the diagrams.

## DIAGRAM 7

One possible summary of the social capital present in the three communities studied.

Social Capital	Ntabeni Community	Ekuthuleni Community	Thokozani Community
<b>FAMILY AND CLOSE TIES OF AFFINITY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kin networks.</li> <li>• regular interaction with majority of other community members.</li> <li>• absence of conflict in the community.</li> </ul>	H	MH	ML
<b>ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occurrence of associations e.g.. stokvels, choirs and soccer clubs.</li> </ul>	M	MH	MH
<b>CROSS-SECTIONAL LINKAGES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to local authorities.</li> <li>• links to NGOs</li> <li>• links to political parties.</li> </ul>	MH	M	H
<b>POLITICAL CAPITAL:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relationship between Trust and the state.</li> </ul>	H	H	ML
<b>INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overriding policy framework of DLA and the government.</li> </ul>	H	H	H
<b>SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shared cultural beliefs</li> </ul>	H	MH	MH

M = medium ML = Medium Low MH = medium high H = High

The diagram suggests that they exist relatively high levels of social capital in the three communities studied.