

**Trust-based Relationships between Parks and Communities: A Case
Study of the Obonjaneni Community and the Royal Natal Park in the
Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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PREFACE

The work presented in this dissertation is the original work of the author. It has not been presented or submitted anywhere else for any other degree to any other institution. Where use has been made of the work of other authors, such work has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in the Amazizi Traditional Administrative Council Area, in the Obonjaneni community, which is the closest community to the Royal Natal Park, KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the research was to evaluate how trust-based relationships can affect the ability of protected area managers to meet the objective of biodiversity conservation. The objectives of the study involved determining the nature and basis of the current relationship between communities and park authorities in the Royal Natal Park; determining the resilience of their relationship and commenting on how these relationships might be better developed.

Data collection was undertaken using focus groups from the community; key informant interviews with Park authorities (represented by the Officer in Charge), the Community Conservation Officer, and the Tribal Authority (represented by the *inkosi*). Three dimensions of trust, adapted from Grunig and Hon (1999), were used as a conceptual framework in investigating the extent to which trust can be assessed in the case study. The dimensions of trust are: integrity, competence, and dependability.

The researcher found that there is no forum for the exchange of ideas where the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) authority can act to address community concerns and facilitate the formulation of greater levels of trust. Several issues came up during data collection which showed that all the three dimensions of trust were under serious threat. There was inadequate communication amongst all the parties involved. Misunderstanding and the lack of adequate communication are key threats to trust between these parties. Findings draw attention to deficiencies in the competence and dependability of all parties and in the ability to develop and maintain trust-based relationships.

In order to develop a better relationship between the community of Obonjaneni and the Royal Natal Park authorities, it is recommended that the Park involves the community members of Obonjaneni, who are the interested

and affected party, in decision-making processes that directly affect them. This entails the formation of a forum for the exchange of ideas and one where the EKZNW authority can act to address community concerns – and where the community can voice its concerns. Furthermore, success in meeting the main objective of the park, that of biodiversity conservation; requires recognition among all stakeholders that the Park alone cannot solve poverty and underdevelopment in the surrounding areas. Other Government Departments also need to be involved in poverty reduction. The Park also needs to continue to play its role of providing resources and improving the communication with surrounding communities: these are critical areas of competency of the park authorities. Communities, because they have different levels of understanding and capacity, need to be helped to understand issues of conservation. Sharing the same set of values, which in this case is biodiversity conservation, may be successful if people, despite issues of poverty, are made to understand the critical importance of such a conservation ethic.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my family who have been inspiring and encouraging me to stay focused and to work hard.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.0. Background

The existence of protected areas will invariably result in friction and challenges with adjacent communities. These challenges are inherent in the restrictions that are placed on access to park resources. The involvement of local communities in conservation, by accessing resources, has become a major feature of conservation policy worldwide. The obligation is on Governments to show that communities are better off with, rather than without protected areas (McNeely, 1993). The initiative of involving communities in conservation issues is still in its infancy in South Africa (Hauck, 2002), and only a few conservation organizations have genuinely attempted to make such involvement possible (Hulme and Murphree, 2001).

The involvement of local communities in the conservation of protected areas assists in motivating local communities to understand the need for the sustainable use of natural resources. This involvement in resource management and use is viewed as the best option for effective and efficient management of the resources (Paliso, 2002). It can facilitate the participation of communities in conservation issues and provides them with opportunities to introduce enterprise-based partnerships with the private sector in such areas as craftwork (Hara, 1999).

However, these goals are easier to realize in a community where a trustful relationship has been established (Dees, 2004). Showing trust reveals confidence in the other person. Little research has been done to explain how trust operates to affect relationships in protected areas. In the limited literature dealing with the issue, trust has been thought to reduce opportunistic behaviour and to improve management of organizations (Dees, 2004). Against this backdrop the aim of this dissertation is to discuss how trust-based

relationships can affect the ability of the Royal Natal Park authorities, who manage a key conservation area in the Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal, to achieve their conservation mandate. The concept of trust will be discussed further in Chapter Two. The concept, the research question, and the objectives of the study are introduced in Chapter One. An overview is given of the history of protected areas in general and on contemporary South African protected areas in particular.

1.1. Research question

How can trust-based relationships between communities and park authorities ensure that accessing resources by communities does not compromise the primary mandate of parks to ensure biodiversity conservation?

1.2. Objectives

- To determine the nature and basis of the current relationship between communities and park authorities in the Royal Natal Park, KwaZulu-Natal, with specific reference to the Obonjaneni community,
- To determine the resilience of the relationship between communities and park authorities in Royal Natal Park, and
- To consider how the relationship between communities and park authorities of the Royal Natal Park might be better developed, if necessary.

1.3. Aspects of the history of protected areas

Protected areas are 'areas of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means' (IUCN, 1994: 1). In the past, the policies of protected areas were unsympathetic to the needs of local people (Makombe, 1993). Local access to

wildlife and to traditional subsistence resources was made impossible without breaking the law (Hulme and Murphree, 2001). People were excluded from areas they had previously inhabited, and fences were sometimes erected. For example, African people were initially evicted from the Pongola Game Reserve in the 19th century, and its successor the Sabi Game Reserve in 1903. Their presence was only tolerated from 1905 as it was considered that they could be a useful source of cheap labour. In another case, 1 500 of the Makuleke people were forcibly removed from the Kruger National Park in 1969 under the apartheid regime. They, however managed to win their land claim and the right to their land was recognized (Adams, 2004).

Since the 1970s there has been a growing belief in the importance of understanding the needs and perspectives of local people. Top-down approaches to conservation were viewed as having failed to deliver economic growth and social and conservation benefits (McNeely, 1993). In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, for example, black residents failed to perceive an association between conservation, tourism and improved economic welfare, but regarded protected areas as worthless (Infield, 1988: 23). From the 1990s, conservation objectives encouraged sustainable management and use of natural resources, and this initiative is characterized by local participation through joint management structures such as co-management (Dzingirai and Breen, 2005; Magome and Murombedzi, 2003).

1.4. Contemporary South African protected areas

In South Africa, 45 years of apartheid and 300 years of colonial rule have left a legacy of inequality in resource management: protected areas were established at the cost of the indigenous people surrounding these areas (IUCN, 1998). However, the transition to a participatory democracy in 1994 has resulted in the beginning of a process of transformation of government institutions as well as in major legislative reform. In the management of conservation areas, new policies and legislation have been introduced and alternative approaches to governance are being sought (Hulme and

Murphree, 2001). Some of these policies include the Biodiversity Act of 2004 - which aims to promote and conserve South Africa's biological diversity and manage conservation to sustainably utilise South Africa's natural resources; - the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998; the Protected Areas Act of 2003; the National Environmental Act of 1989; and the World Heritage Convention Act of 1999 (DEAT, 2005).

At a policy level, new approaches that move away from a 'command-and-control' style of management to those which promote participation, co-operation, and joint responsibility for resource management are being advocated. The South African National Parks (SANP) and other key conservation authorities such as Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) have also been under pressure to engage with the adjacent communities as it was seen that these communities are the silent majority who determine whether much of the country's natural resources will continue to exist (Picard, 2003; Makombe, 1993). With the assumption that communities are a homogenous group of people with the same resources, risks, and needs, the EKZNW were the pioneers in coming up with a range of neighbourhood policies that are meant to improve relations with neighbouring communities. The strategies of improving relations, as illustrated from their policy documentation are as follows:

'1. Creating trust through:

(a) improving communications;

(b) negotiating solutions to common problems; and

(c) encouraging participation in conservation activities;

2. Developing environmental awareness through education and interpretation programmes;

3. Facilitating access to the material and spiritual benefits of protected areas through understanding the neighbours' needs and encouraging access;

4. Fostering the economic and social development of neighbouring communities, this will contribute to an improved quality of life, or the continued existence of an acceptable and/or desired way of life;
5. Training staff in order that they may participate effectively in neighbour-related activities' (Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, 1999: vi).

The SANP also revised their mission with a view 'to transfer the power and control of natural resources from the minority that had been appointed and privileged by an undemocratic system, to the majority that participates in the new democratic process' (Picard, 2003:183). About 422 protected areas under their jurisdiction are now expected to serve a number of social, economic, and scientific purposes in South Africa.

If conservation is to become sustainable, the interests of neighbouring communities and conservationists must converge. Studies conducted indicated that communities or individuals that are impoverished do not have the leeway to support the practice of conservation, even if they support the concept (Infield, 1988). Protected areas may not continue to exist long wherever people remain impoverished and are denied access to needed resources inside protected areas. Similarly, local people will sink further into poverty unless they manage wisely and conserve their natural resources (Colchester, 2004). Hence, as the demands for poverty alleviation and job creation have profound implications for conservation and management of protected areas (Picard, 2003), neighbouring communities should therefore be allowed to have access to resources on a sustained-yield basis, whenever possible (Western and Pearl, 1989).

It is important to point out that poverty is a wider problem that societies need to address by wider government commitment to its eradication and possibly by structural changes to the model of development in the country concerned; protected areas do play a role as they provide some relief by providing access to natural resources. Issues such as the extent to which the local communities should be allowed to access resources from the parks and whether they can

be trusted to stick to the agreed quota are issues for debate. In addition, an assessment of whether park authorities can be trusted to meaningfully engage local communities in the management of the parks will be an issue of great interest in the future.

1.5. Structure of dissertation

This dissertation is set out in five chapters. Subsequent to the introduction, a literature review is presented. It examines studies which have discussed relationships between communities and protected areas and how communities which access resources from parks can be managed. In the chapter issues of trust as a concept and its implications will be focused on and a conceptual framework will be presented on how trust can be measured and assessed. In Chapter Three the area of study and the methodology used to assess the nature of the relationship between the communities and the park will be discussed. In Chapter Four the findings of the research are provided; also presented are a discussion of the results and the extent to which the aims and objectives of the study have been met. In Chapter Five an overall conclusion to the findings of the study is provided.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter the assumption is made that a lack of trust affects relationships, which will in turn affect biodiversity conservation in parks. The chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the social and biodiversity concerns of people living adjacent to parks. Subsequently, the general relationships between parks and the people who access park resources will be explained. The main focus of this chapter though, is that of relationship theory, of which trust is a critical component. The concept of trust, its scope, limitations, and its antithesis, mistrust, will be discussed. Lastly, a conceptual framework on how trust can be assessed will be provided.

2.1. Social and biodiversity concerns of people living adjacent to parks

Biodiversity conservation involves the conservation of natural resources for future generations (IUCN, 1994). Noss (2004: 1) defined biological diversity as 'the variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which they occur'. The social and biodiversity concerns of people living adjacent to parks are a critical issue in most developing countries. In these countries, what communities can or cannot do with biodiversity resources is largely driven by available choices and opportunities (Magome and Murombedzi, 2003). In some cases, they are helpless participants in biodiversity conservation processes over which they have very little influence. In other cases, biodiversity conservation assumes top priority and socio-economic considerations receive a lower priority (Magome, 2000).

As a concept, 'biodiversity conservation' means different things to different people and this alone creates challenges. The challenges arise from different cultural backgrounds with different expectations of what the outcome should look like. Hardin (1977) indicated that the basis of biodiversity conservation is

humanity but this does not fit with reality. Biodiversity conservation has an appeal, in terms of humanity, that individuals must constrain their own actions, to their own immediate disadvantage, for later benefit, or for the benefit of individuals of present and future generations. Many contemporary values, institutions, and attitudes are against humanity (Caldwell, 1990). The reality is that biodiversity conservation is a long term strategy that is in conflict with short-term individual interests, and this may lead to confrontation.

In addition, some of the attempts to link biodiversity conservation to the socio-economic status of local people can be said to be flawed as the error is in the belief by most policy-makers (Ezemvelo KwaZuluNatal Wildlife, 1999), that the community exists and that it can participate in the implementation of biodiversity conservation programmes. The concept that a community is a group of homogenous people, all with common interests and purpose, is not always correct because some communities may be heterogeneous in terms of age, social and economic status (Magome and Murombedzi, 2003). Hence, linking biodiversity conservation with the socio-economic status of communities who live adjacent to parks becomes almost impossible because of the ever competing and conflicting interests amongst these people (Magome, 2000). For this reason and others mentioned below, managing people who access resources from parks has proved to be a difficult challenge.

2.2. Managing communities which access resources from parks

The ability of an organization and the individuals within an organization to interact with various constituencies, to learn from them, and act upon their needs is vital. This interaction between organizations and their constituencies is determined by the system of governance and their culture (Raj, 2004). This is dependent on how those with power administer the powerless and how the two parties relate to each other.

As parks are mandated to conserve natural resources, accomplishing this requires partnerships between parks and adjacent communities. These partnerships motivate people in managing natural resources because they see the need to sustainably access resources from the parks. The management of natural resources improves the conditions of people's livelihoods and reduces incidences of environmental degradation, which threaten life-sustaining processes and people's aesthetic values (Murphree, 1993). People are in some cases issued permits for, and quotas on, needed resources such as grass and firewood, as well as leases, concessions, certificates, and identity cards necessary for entering particular areas. Their activities and accessing of resources are expected to comply with management goals (Raj, 2004). Sometimes conflicts originate from this control and such conflicts are located in people's perception of their rights and control over resources. It cannot, however, be denied that if people are allowed unrestricted access to park resources they may threaten the biodiversity in these parks through harvesting timber and non-timber forest produce, hunting, uncontrolled fires, high human population density and growth, high incidence of poverty, and large numbers of livestock (Robertson and Lawes, 2005; Shackleton *et al*, 2000).

2.3. People-park relationships

Different communities have varying relationships with parks and, even within communities, relationships and attitudes vary between individuals. (Hulme and Murphree, 2001). If conservation is to become sustainable, the interests of local people and conservationists must converge. Parks will not be able to survive wherever people remain impoverished and are denied access to needed resources inside protected areas or where governments or societies cannot provide alternative sources of livelihoods. Likewise, as mentioned in the first chapter, local people will sink further into poverty unless they manage wisely and conserve their natural resources (Colchester, 2004). Therefore, in order for local communities to support protected areas, there is a need to develop partnerships in which both parties benefit.

However, in some cases, such partnerships do not work. Studies conducted by Davion (1995) in Giant's Castle and Kosi Bay in KwaZulu-Natal revealed strained relationships between residents and the reserves as there were negative interactions between the two parties. Residents of Kosi Bay did not regard the assistance provided by the reserve as important, but seemed to have more needs than the reserve could handle. The residents also did not acknowledge the threats posed by human activity to the reserve but instead pointed fingers at the reserve management's inability to monitor the reserve. However, as Child (2004) pointed out, management systems need to respond well to changing circumstances and to the pressures protected areas are under, that is, the local interest group might have needs that are not dealt with in legislation. There is a need for a balance: although parks do provide value to society by providing jobs and economic growth, poverty is an issue of broader rural development.

Many authors have focused attention, where people and parks are concerned, on guidelines for collaborations such as those found within the framework of Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) or co-management (Magome and Murombedzi, 2003; Hulme and Murphree, 2001; Child, 2004; Dzingirai and Breen, 2005). In this dissertation, however, a different approach will be the focus, namely that of relationship theory, of which trust will be its central theme. The concept of a relationship and its scope will be discussed in the next subsection.

2.4. What is a relationship?

Holmlund (1997) defines a relationship as an interdependent process of continuous interaction and exchange between at least two actors. It is a state involving mutual dealings between people or parties. The process of developing and maintaining relationships is a crucial component of the management of protected areas (Grunig and Hon, 1999). This is because most relationships form because one party impacts on another (Grunig and

Hon, 1999) and this is a common set-up with protected areas. In the South African context the park has an impact on adjacent communities and the reverse is true (Colchester, 2004).

Relationships can be measured by focusing on the following six elements or components:

- Trust - one party's level of confidence in the other party.
- Control mutuality - the degree to which parties agree.
- Satisfaction - the extent to which each party feels favourably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced. A satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs.
- Commitment - the extent to which each party makes efforts to maintain and promote the relationship.
- Exchange relationship - in an exchange relationship, one party gives benefits to the other because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future.
- Communal relationship - both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other (Grunig and Hon, 1999).

These six components of a relationship are interrelated and are intertwined with trust. This is so because without confidence in the other party, which is the case with trust, parties will not be able to agree with each other. Also, without trust, relationships will not be satisfying as parties will not be positive about the relationship. In addition, without trust, parties will not commit to each other or provide benefits to the other. Trust is therefore the most important element in a relationship as the other five components are dependent and rest on it.

The presence of trust is central to successful relationships. Trust is the key because it encourages partners to work at safeguarding the relationship and to resist attractive short-term alternatives in favour of the expected long-term

benefits of staying with existing partners (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It is a necessary condition for people to talk to each other, advance ideas, provide evidence, and weigh and consider without resorting to physical or verbal violence (Silver, 2003). Sherman (1992:78) stated that: 'the biggest stumbling block to the success of alliances is the lack of trust' and Spekman (1988:79) hypothesizes it to be 'the cornerstone of strategic partnerships' This is because relationships characterized by trust are so highly valued that parties will desire to commit themselves to such relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

In short, trust leads directly to cooperative behaviours that are beneficial to relationship success. This is so because with trust, communities will resist short-term benefits of poaching resources from parks and prefer to cooperate with park authorities by sticking to agreed quotas and thus safeguarding the biodiversity of the parks. Park authorities will also prefer to cooperate with neighbouring communities since disregarding communities would mean that the existence of parks will not continue for long. For these reasons, the researcher decided to focus on trust as the main component in relationships between parks and people.

2.5. The concept of trust

Trust is based on the beliefs of how an alliance partner will behave in the relationship. It can be seen as an economically as well as socially rooted phenomenon, shaped by environmental, organizational and individual events (Cullen *et al*, 2000). Luo (2001) defines trust as a psychological state encompassing the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations or confidence in the intentions or behaviour of another. Reliance and risk always accompany trust. Reliance is the action by one party that allows that party's fate or success to be determined by the other party. In people-park relationships, if there is trust, there is reliance on the other party: parks will rely on communities to access resources sustainably and communities will rely on parks for employment and natural resources. Risk

means that a party would experience potentially negative outcomes from the untrustworthiness of the other party. Mistrust manifested by park authorities may lead to communities poaching and stealing from the parks, and mistrust manifested by communities may lead to park authorities forbidding any access to park resources in order to safeguard their primary objective of biodiversity conservation.

Luo (2001) also mentions that trust contains both calculative and relational components. Calculative trust is based on common sense, that is, the belief that the other party will perform an action that is beneficial. Relational trust on the other hand, arises from repeated interactions over time between two parties. Emotion enters this relationship because recurrent, long-term interactions lead to the development of attachments based on care and concern. Both calculative and relational components of trust are important in relationships between communities and parks as they are based on the belief and through long-term interactions that each party will perform actions that are of mutual benefit. Uncertainty about partners' actions and decisions is therefore reduced.

Mistrust is evidenced in relationships where there is opportunistic behaviour, inability to deliver, inability to communicate, and the lack of dependability on the other party. Whenever these actions are observable in relationships between communities and parks, it is the biodiversity of the park which is at stake.

2.6. Outcomes of trust

There are three main outcomes of trust which promote relationship success and overall performance (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). These are (1) acquiescence and reduced propensity to leave, (2) less functional conflict and reduced uncertainty, and (3) cooperation.

Acquiescence and reduced propensity to leave. Acquiescence is the degree to which a partner agrees to or adheres to another's specific requests or policies; trust influences it through relationship commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Reduced propensity to leave is the possibility that a partner will not terminate the relationship. With trust, stability is achievable as people require things from each other. For example, communities require resources from parks, and park authorities require the support of communities to fulfil their conservation mandates. Mutual interdependence leads to shared control and management. Where dependence is a one-way interaction, there arise positions of vulnerability and power, where the powerful can take advantage of the vulnerable (Syque, 2006). Therefore, both people and parks will value their relationship, knowing well that terminating it will lead to loss of biodiversity.

Less functional conflict and reduced uncertainty. This occurs when disputes are resolved amicably and provide a medium through which problems can be aired and solutions arrived at (Deutsch, 1969). Trust increases a partner's decision-making confidence because the trusting partner has confidence that the trustworthy party can be relied on.

Uncertainty may be reduced by communication which can be defined 'as the formal as well as informal sharing of meaningful and timely information between partners' (Anderson and Narus, 1990:44). Strong information sharing can indicate trust and trustworthiness in relationships (Cullen *et al.* 2000). Communication, especially timely communication, promotes trust by assisting in resolving disputes and aligning perceptions and expectations (Etgar, 1979).

A great deal of trust comes through communication and participation, for example, regular updates of progress. Where the actions and results of people's decisions and behaviours are hidden, and where there are other structural factors that encourage untrustworthy behaviour, then the temptation to manipulate others is higher. When, however, the actions and their consequences are noticeable to those who can act to punish transgressors, then untrustworthy behaviour is significantly discouraged (Syque, 2006).

Cooperation. This refers to the situation in which parties work together to achieve mutual goals (Anderson and Narus, 1990). A partner committed to the relationship will cooperate with another member because of a desire to make the relationship work (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Cooperation reduces self interested or opportunistic behaviour, hence the development of shared values, which in the case of the study is biodiversity conservation.

Values that support trust, are those which encourage interdependent working and support of others just because it is the right thing to do. Values that act to reduce trust, are often those which emphasize individual merits and financial goals (as in the case of poaching of resources from parks by communities). Where people are rewarded more for the achievement of individual rather than group goals, this is likely to lead to non-collaborative and untrustworthy behaviour (Syque, 2006).

2.7. Trust building

Partnerships and collaborations do not just happen but are built; thus, genuine participation promotes respect and respect promotes trust, hence, trust is earned by actions. To build trust, there is a need to know what actions generate or build it.

Trust can develop when organizations attend to relationships by:

- (1) Providing resources, opportunities, and benefits to partners who require them;
- (2) Maintaining high standards of shared values;
- (3) Communicating valuable information, including expectations and evaluations of partner's performance; and
- (4) Avoiding taking advantage of other partners (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

However, the development of trust is not a simple and linear process. As discussed earlier, trust involves beliefs and long-term interactions between parties (Luo, 2001). Trust is achievable after long term interactions between

parties; because people think differently, conflicts may arise which may take long to resolve or may never be resolved. Communities and park authorities may have shared values regarding biodiversity, but because of issues of poverty, communities might fail to cooperate with parks about accessing resources. These factors, amongst others can make it difficult for high levels of trust to be achievable.

2.8. Performance of parks with trust- based relationships

From their studies, Cullen and co-workers (2000) found that a higher level of mutual trust leads to better performing alliances in both financial and non-financial aspects. On the other hand, higher levels of performance result in trust. A feedback loop exists as strong performance influences and reinforces the trust cycle. In protected areas, the trust cycle also exists as higher levels of trust and commitment to conservation by both park authorities and communities leads to better biodiversity conservation of the area. Also, higher performance, in biodiversity conservation, leads to more commitment and trust.

The explanation of why trust and commitment affect the performance of parks focuses on efficiency and long-term benefits. When mutual trust and commitment are high, there are reduced costs of monitoring communities and parks and in the long run, anticipated conflicts and inequalities are reduced as a result of the strong social foundation. A more highly positive cost/benefit analysis will result for the partners as they see that there are more benefits and greater rewards by being trustworthy than being untrustworthy. This can be observed after weighing the costs of being untrustworthy against the benefits of being trustworthy. The costs of untrustworthiness include conflicts, lack of cooperation, uncertainty about actions and decisions and general instability. Yet the benefits of being trustworthy include the ability to deliver on promises, the ability to communicate adequately, the ability to care about the relationship, adherence to policies and requests, reduced uncertainty about partners' actions and decisions, cooperation, and general stability.

Luo (2001) states, however, that the trust-performance link is not a stagnant relationship, nor does it end when trust is established but it has a feedback mechanism. To him, this link is an ongoing process that proceeds under the continuous influence of other features such as risk sharing, resource sharing, and mutual commitment.

2.9. Conceptual framework

The dimensions of trust adapted from Grunig and Hon (1999) will be used as a conceptual framework in investigating the extent to which trust can be assessed in the case study. These dimensions are the backbones of my study as they are meant to help in assessing the levels of trust. The experiences in the case study will be analysed with the assistance of this framework.

Dimensions of trust

The three dimensions of trust are:

- (1) integrity,
- (2) competence, and
- (3) dependability.

These three dimensions of trust emerged from the fact that these are also the actions that generate or build trust. Their presence or absence enables conclusions to be drawn about trust in relationships. They are discussed as follows:

Integrity is the belief that parties are fair and just and are concerned about each other. Behaviours indicative of integrity have to do with the ability to openly communicate with others (Gebler, 2005) and the defiance of opportunistic behaviours aimed at short-term benefits by taking advantage of others. Integrity is important in trusting relationships as it can reduce uncertainty about the partners' actions and behaviour.

Competence is the belief that parties have the ability to do as they say. Cullen *et al*, (2000) described this component of trust as the confidence that the partner has the ability to meet obligations to the alliance. Also, it is the practical side of trust and it concerns beliefs about whether or not a partner can really deliver what was promised (Grunig and Hon, 1999). The ability to deliver is manifested in the adherence to policies by providing resources, benefits and opportunities and these are indications that the parties can be trusted.

Dependability is the belief that parties will do what they say they will do (Grunig and Hon, 1999). Cullen *et al* (2000) also refer to this as the belief that an alliance partner will behave with goodwill toward the alliance and the partner. They describe dependability as the subjective or emotional side of trust: it has more to do with one's beliefs regarding a partner's caring about the relationship.

The ability to care about the other party ensures cooperation in which all parties will work together for the mutual goal of biodiversity conservation. Parks depend or rely on communities to sustainably access resources, and communities depend on parks for employment opportunities and natural resources for their sustenance. Trust therefore develops when both parties do what is agreed upon or expected of them. Failure to do this will put the biodiversity of parks at risk.

The levels of these aforementioned dimensions of trust are assessed in the case study and this helped the researcher to draw conclusions on whether the relationship that exists between the community of Obonjaneni and the Royal Natal Park is trust-based or not.

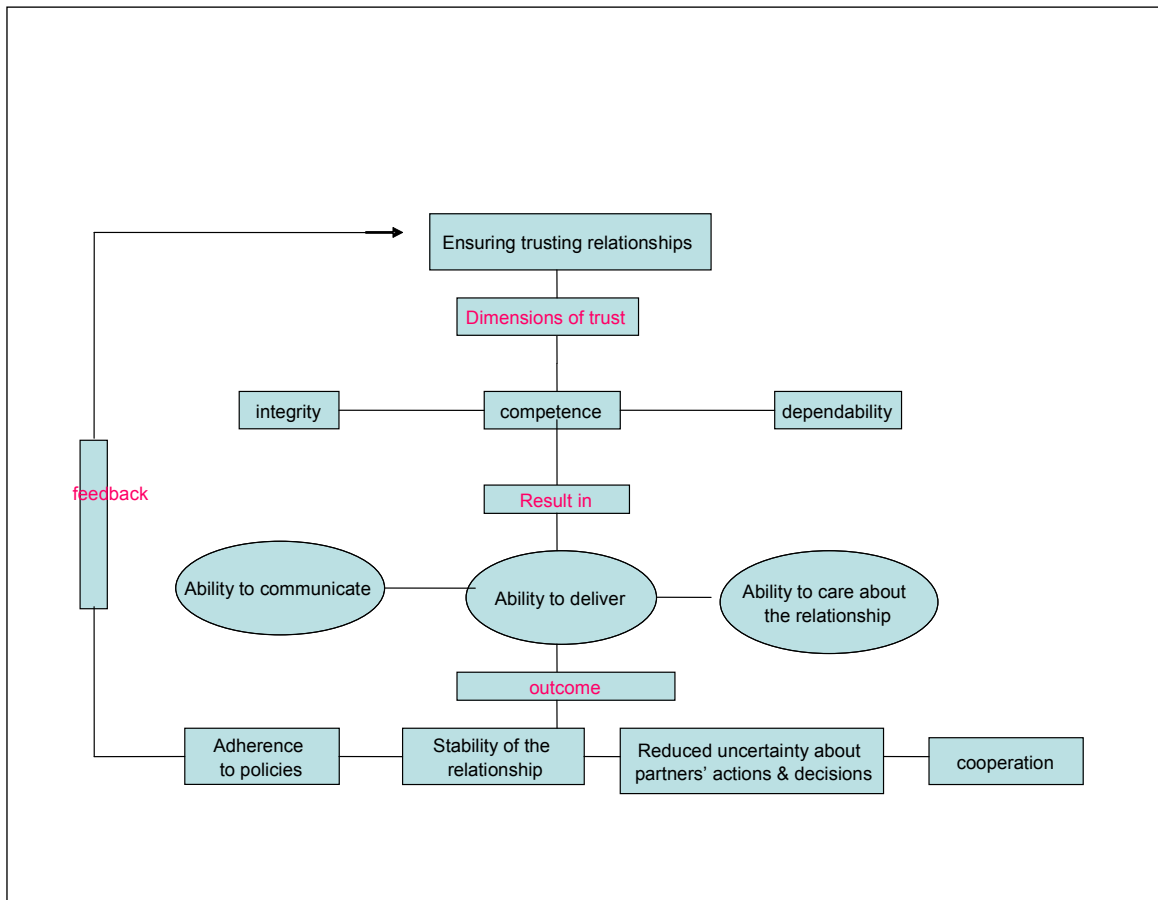


Figure 1: Summary of a conceptual framework indicating results and outcomes of trusting relationships.

In order to ensure trusting relationships, integrity, competence, and dependability are required as they result in the ability to communicate, deliver, and care about the relationship. The outcome of all this is adherence to policies, stability of the relationship, reduced uncertainty about partners' actions and decisions, and cooperation (see Figure 1).

2.10. Summary

This chapter has given an account of relationships in general and explained the concept of trust (its scope, limitations and its opposite, mistrust). Lastly, a conceptual framework on how trust can be assessed was provided. The

following chapter will give the context of the study area and reveal how data were collected.

CHAPTER 3

Context and Methodology

3.0. Introduction

The chapter, by way of establishing a context for the research, contains an introduction to the study area and the stakeholders involved. The other dimension is the study methodology where consideration is given to the methods used and how data were collected and reported on.

3.1. Study area

The study was carried out in the Amazizi Traditional Administrative Council Area. The Amazizi area is located within the Okhahlamba Local Municipality. The municipal area is located in the Drakensberg mountain region of KwaZulu-Natal Province and is one of the five local municipalities in the uThukela District Municipality. Okhahlamba is made up of privately owned commercial farmland, smallholder settlements, the urban areas of Bergville, Winterton, Cathkin Park, Geluksberg, and the two tribal administrative council areas of Amangwane and Amazizi (Okhahlamba Municipality, 2006; Okhahlamba IDP, 2007).

According to the 1996 census data, the Okhahlamba Local Municipality has a population of approximately 120 000 people, most of whom are resident in the rural tribal areas (Okhahlamba IDP, 2007). The Okhahlamba Municipality is characterized by an uneven distribution of infrastructure with the tribal areas, comprising the greatest population densities, having the poorest services. Infrastructure for the tribal areas includes water pumps which are utilised by several households in a particular area, transportation, electricity, communication which is limited and supporting facilities of social services such as those which provide grants (Okhahlamba IDP, 2007).

The primary constraints for the development of infrastructure are shortage of capital, lack of capacity for administration, construction, operation and maintenance (Okhahlamba IDP, 2007). However, authors of the Okhahlamba Integrated Development Plan (IDP) have made plans which will cover the following issues in the area: HIV/AIDS, poverty reduction and social issues, infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, economy, environment, and land reform. The Amazizi Traditional Administrative Council Area consists of four communities namely those of Obonjaneni, Busingata, Okhombe, and Enkosini. The Obonjaneni community is closest to the Royal Natal Park and for this reason the research was conducted in the area as it would affect or be affected by the Park (Figure 2).

The justification of why the study area was selected is that the area has a history of working with the Centre for Environment and Development (CEAD) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the Maluti- Drakensberg Transfrontier Project on the South African and Lesotho border. CEAD had concerns about the communities' relationship with the Royal Natal Park which was worsened by the issue of baboons which strayed into communal gardens to eat vegetables. Most importantly, it was easier for the researcher to work in an area which had established relationships with University as already there was a measure of cooperation in place. This research would only help to further understand and hopefully strengthen the relationship already in place. It was also easy for the researcher to work in this area as she used the same facilitator who was working with the Transfrontier Project as she was known to the communities.

3.1.1. Stakeholder profiles

3.1.1.1. The Obonjaneni community

Generally, the people of Obonjaneni are unemployed and depend on Government grants. A few are self-employed, sell crafts, or work as guides inside the Park while others work on the surrounding resorts. The large proportion of the population in the area is the youth with women and orphans

being the most vulnerable groups in the society as they are poorly educated. The majority of those working are earning incomes of about R 800 per month which is below the minimum living level of R1 600 per month. This suggests that there is severe economic hardship among families. In addition, the poverty in the area has contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the area (Okhahlamba IDP, 2007).

The Farmer Support Group (FSG) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal helps the community to develop community gardens. The gardens produce vegetables that supply the Obonjaneni and Busingatha communities. The FSG also offers training in organic farming which is meant to improve their farming skills and practices (FSG, 2007). Help from the FSG has done little to improve the communities' socioeconomic situation as baboons from the nearby Royal Natal Park destroy their gardens (see Chapter 4).

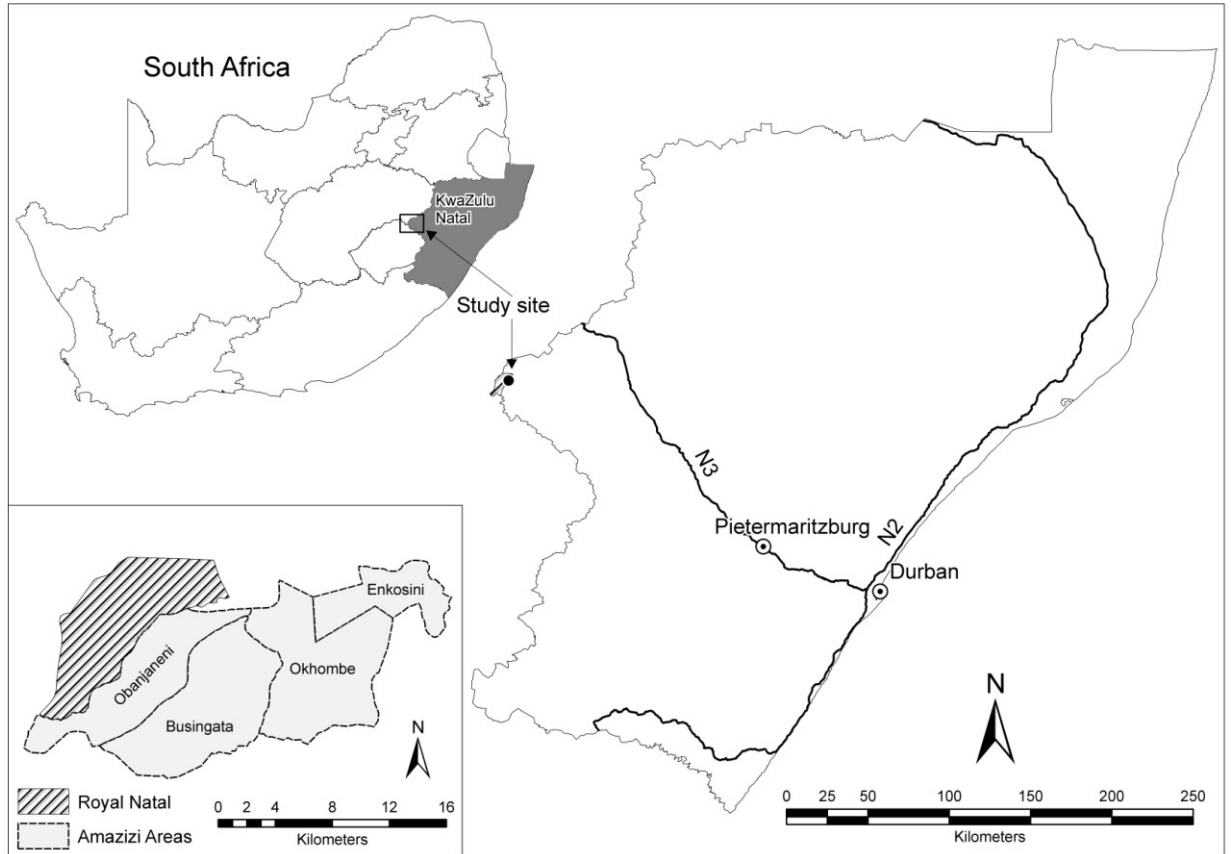


Figure 2: Location of the Royal Natal Park and the neighbouring Amazizi communities of Obonjaneni, Busingata, Okhombe, and Enkosini in western KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa.

3.1.1.2. The Royal Natal Park

The Royal Natal Park lies between 28°31' to 28°46'S and 28°52' to 29°00E. The Park is situated in some of the most important high water catchments of the Drakensberg mountain system and also forms an integral component of the Maluti-Drakensberg Transfrontier area (UNEP, 2003). It was established in 1916 and has a total area of about 8,094ha. The Park is State owned but is administered by the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife Authority (EKZN Wildlife). The EKZNW is a semi- autonomous and non-profit making organization. Sixty per cent of its total funding comes from the KwaZulu-Natal provincial legislature (UNEP, 2003). No private persons occupy the Park except the staff employed by the KZNWildlife Authority. One of the major rivers in the province, the Tugela, originates in the Park and the Tugela Falls is the world's second highest waterfall, with a height of 947m.

The area falls within an altitude range of 900 m to 1 800 m. The physical biodiversity of these areas is marked by a range of fauna, flora, abundant water, wetlands, and spectacular wilderness scenery (FSG, 2007). It is these features that have drawn tourists from all over the world. The inflow of tourists to the area benefits the adjacent communities as employment opportunities are created. *Ohashu*, which is abundant in the Park, is one of the plant species used by adjacent communities for craft making. In the Par, cultural diversity is evident in over 100 rock painting sites of the *Abathwa* or San which are present in the Park. These rock paintings also result in employment to the community members who work as guides since access to these rock paintings by tourists is only permitted in the company of guides. The Park was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2000 (UNEP, 2003).

Currently, the ecological integrity of the Park is being threatened with the spread of two alien wattle species, namely the black wattle, *Acacia mearnsii* and the silver wattle, *Acacia dealbata* (De Neergaard, *et al*, 2005). The concern is that the wattle species tend to consume a lot of water and provide cover to thieves and poachers. These alien plants are constantly being

cleared and the neighbouring communities are allowed to have them for household use (Park Chief Officer, personal communication, 2007).

3.2. Methodology

Two methods of data collection were used in the study. These were the focus group discussions and the key informant interviews. Focus group discussions with communities are important in bringing out issues of trust which involves emotions, contradictions, and tensions as will be shown in Chapter Four. Achieving this will not be possible with the use of key informant interviews or formal surveys using questionnaires. Focus group discussions were also important in achieving the objectives of the study as they managed to expose consensus of participants' experiences and assumptions.

Key informant interviews which are aimed at getting in-depth information were used with the leaders as these tend to be more knowledgeable about issues pertaining to the constituencies. Key informant interviews were useful in achieving the objectives of the research as they gave descriptive information on issues of decision-making and helped the researcher to understand the behaviour and perspectives of the community of Obonjaneni. In the study, the key informants were identified as the traditional authority, represented by the *inkosi* (headman), the Community Conservation Officer and the Park authority, represented by the Officer in Charge.

3.2.1. Focus group discussions

A focus group discussion, as the name suggests, is where a group of respondents gather with the researcher. The group normally consists of pre-screened people who are relevant to the set of issues being researched (Bouma, 1997). The use of a focus group discussion is a qualitative method. It aims to be more than a question-answer interaction. Its purpose is to obtain in-depth information on concepts, perceptions, and ideas of a group (Morgan, 1988). Focus groups are used for disclosing, describing, and understanding

life experiences shared by some relevant population (Fern, 2001). The researcher listens not only for the content of focus group discussions but also for emotions, ironies, contradictions and tensions (Grudens-Schuck, *et al*, 2004). The idea is that group members discuss the topic among themselves, with guidance from the facilitator (Morgan, 1988).

Although focus group discussions have been criticised, the methodology has more strengths than weaknesses. Some of the criticisms are: that the methodology does not provide valid information about individuals, that more outspoken individuals can dominate the discussions, and that the information collected may be more likely biased by subjective interpretation than is the case with quantitative methods (Morgan, 1997).

The strengths of focus group discussions (Morgan, 1997) are: that they give insights into not just what participants think, but also why they think it, and that they can expose consensus and diversity of participants' needs, experiences, preferences, and assumptions. They also allow group interactions such that participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view which is not possible from individual questioning. In addition, results are obtainable relatively quickly and they can increase the sample size of a report by enabling the researcher to talk with several people at once.

3.2.1.1. Selecting participants

In determining participants for focus group discussions, segmentation is often done. It refers to the decision to control the group composition to match carefully chosen categories of participants. Segmented samples are closely tied to the emphasis on homogeneity in the composition of a focus group. It is this homogeneity that not only allows for more free-flowing conversations among participants within groups but also facilitates analysis of data (Morgan, 1997). Thus, purposive or theoretical sampling was used by the researcher with the help of the facilitator, to achieve the objectives of the research.

From the community members, the researcher chose to work with three groups: one group which accesses *ohashu* from the Park, and two groups

which represented the rest of the community members. It was necessary to have the latter as two groups as this enabled a wide range of community views to be provided. Sections of the community which obtain *ohashu* from the Park were grouped separately from those who do not in order to avoid conflicting views (Bloor *et al*, 2001).

Fern (2001) stated that if the research purpose is to uncover theoretical notions about how a population of individuals generally thinks, feels and behaves toward some object, issue, or person (as this is the case in this study), compatibility of the group is more desirable as it ensures that all group members share similar backgrounds and life experiences (Krueger and King, 1998). Steps were taken by the researcher to ensure that the groups were fairly homogenous in terms of age, and social and/ or economic status. Older and younger participants may have difficulty communicating with each other because they have different experiences (Fern, 2001); older people were targeted, since they had been in the area for a long time; the assumption was that they would be more knowledgeable about issues relevant to them. Selection was conducted with the help of the facilitator who had been working as such in the area on the Drakensberg-Maluti Transfrontier Project and the Centre for Environment and Development of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and so was in a good position to know which people to target.

Members of the tribal authority, since it possesses authority over the community members, were interviewed alone since they could have been uncomfortable about discussing some issues. Since the information required was not highly personal, gender was not used as a control variable.

3.2.1.2. Size of groups

Smaller group sizes were chosen as this allows sufficient time for considerable input from each group member. This ensured that problems of individuals getting frustrated for not having sufficient time to express their views on the subject and problems of subsequent analysis were avoided (Bloor *et al*, 2001). In focus group discussions, a minimum of 10 to 12

participants should be chosen (Krueger and Casey, 2000). In the case study, an average of 12 people was in each of the three focus group sessions.

3.2.1.3. Recruitment of participants

The recruiting goal was homogeneity of individuals from the communities. This was done with the help of a facilitator who had worked as a facilitator in the same area in the Drakensberg-Maluti Transfrontier Project and the Centre for Environment and Development of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and so would be more knowledgeable about which people to target.

3.2.2. Key informant interviews

Unlike focus group discussions, key informant interviews provide closer communication between the interviewer and informant and ensure that the researcher gains an in-depth understanding of a person's opinions and experiences (Bouma, 1996). Burgees (1982) stated that key informants should have knowledge about specialized interests and concerns in a social setting. In the study, the key informants were therefore identified as the traditional authority, represented by the *inkosi*, the Community Conservation Officer and the Park authority, represented by the Officer in Charge.

The strengths of key informant interviews as stated by Kumar (1986) are that the informants generally have in-depth knowledge and experience within the community in many different aspects. Key informant interviews provide information directly from knowledgeable people and a relatively small number of interviews can yield in-depth information revealing much about community influence and problems.

Despite these strengths, key informant interviews have been criticised for the reasons that it may be difficult to prove validity of findings and that key informant perspectives are limited to those of leaders and may not be very representative of the public's views (Kumar, 1986).

3.3. Data compilation

It is important to mention that although the researcher has only some elementary knowledge of the community's language, she was able to follow what was being said. The role of the facilitator in the focus group sessions was then to help in translating the questions asked of the community by the researcher. Both the facilitator and the researcher performed the duties of a moderator in the focus group sessions. Interview questions (see the Appendix) were listed based on the researcher's own understanding on the theoretical idea of trust. Questions were not used for mere question-answer sessions but as possible questions which were used as a guide to conversations held with the stakeholders requiring in-depth knowledge of ideas and perceptions.

The interview questions were not piloted or tested before the actual research was carried out because, as mentioned earlier, the questions were used only to guide the researcher during discussions. In addition, the researcher knew that it was going to be uncomplicated to engage with the stakeholders as the facilitator was well known to them and also because as mentioned earlier, general problems facing the area were known to the researcher beforehand (such as the baboon issue- from already established relationships between the University and the community). All meetings were recorded using a tape recorder and the researcher extracted important and relevant points for data presentations as is required for qualitative data (CPRC, 2007).

The researcher met initially with the tribal authority and the Park authority and later with the community of Obonjaneni. Based on the interactions she had with the later, the researcher decided to go back to the Park authority and the Community Conservation Officer for clarification as she felt that the community had been misrepresenting certain issues and that justice had not been served as all that the community said was how badly the Park had been treating them.

3.3.1. Forms of data collected

Conversations, including tones of voices and silences on issues were taken note of in focus group sessions. In key informant interviews, in-depth information about issues was obtained.

3.3.2. Reporting of data

In the analysis stage, words spoken by participants were used to analyse the results. In reporting the findings, patterns formed by words, called themes or perspectives (Creswell, 1998) were used. This enabled the researcher to determine the community's logic in addition to their judgements (Grudens-Schuck, *et al*, 2004) concerning issues at hand. Some quotations were selected and used in reporting the data.

3.4. Summary

The context in which the study took place helps the reader to understand the findings obtained from the people with whom the researcher worked. The methods used in data collection were ideal to the situation at hand. The focus group discussions enabled the researcher to understand what the community thinks and why it thinks the way it does. The key informant interviews provide the researcher with in-depth knowledge of the situation, the outcomes of which form the material of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Research Findings and Discussions

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings from the data collection work in the Royal Natal Park and the Obonjaneni Community. The interviews were with the Officer in Charge, representing the Royal Natal Park authorities, the *inkosi*, representing the tribal authority, and the Community Conservation Officer, representing the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife authority. Focus group discussions were held with the members of the Obonjaneni community and the traders of crafts to tourists.

Data collected were designed to satisfy the three objectives of the study namely:

- (1) To determine the basis of the current relationship between the Obonjaneni community and the Royal Natal Park authorities in Drakensberg,
- (2) To determine the resilience of the relationship between the Obonjaneni community and the Royal Natal Park authorities in Drakensberg, and
- (3) To consider how the relationship between communities and the park authorities of the Royal Natal Park might be better developed.

4.1. Objective 1

This objective was achieved by considering the interactions between the Park with surrounding communities, the responsibilities that each party has in relation to biodiversity conservation in the Park and the how resources inside the Park are being utilised by the community.

4.1.1. Relationship between the Park and the Obonjaneni Community

Currently, there is no forum for the exchange of ideas and where the EKZNW authority can act to address community concerns, and where the community can voice its concerns. It is thus, solely, the role of the Park authorities to

make all decisions pertaining to the day-to-day running of the Park. According to the Park authorities negotiations for a forum which will involve the Park authorities and the traditional authorities are still in their infancy. During the discussions held with the community, they mentioned that they have not been informed about this management board but are only aware that the *inkosi* in some cases meets with the Park authorities when there are issues to be discussed, such as the stealing of resources from the Park. If, however, such a forum was to be formed, they mentioned that they would want issues such as job opportunities inside the Park, the issue of the community levy, and the building of another traditional centre to be discussed.

4.1.1.1. Responsibilities

The Park has three objectives which are biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, and water catchment management, of which biodiversity conservation is the most important (Park Chief Officer, 2007). Noss (2004) defined biodiversity conservation as the protection of the variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which they occur. Ecotourism ventures as defined by Zeppel (2006) involve tourism to natural destinations, building cultural and environmental awareness, and providing financial benefits and empowerment for local people. The Park is also involved in water catchment conservation of the Tugela River by supplying water to the neighbouring communities. As far as biodiversity conservation is concerned, the Park can be said to be fulfilling its responsibilities as it is amongst the world's best in terms of biodiversity conservation. The community members are not aware of their responsibilities in relation to biodiversity conservation in the Park; they feel that these have not been communicated to them by the Park authorities.

The fact that the community members did not know what their responsibilities are in terms of biodiversity conservation can greatly affect the future of the Park as the community might fail to realize the importance of the Park and will only regard Park authorities as an obstruction to accessing resources from, what they termed 'the land of our forefathers'. The need for dialogue between nature conservationists and indigenous people cannot be overemphasized

(Adams and Mulligan, 2003). Without consultation, the issue of responsibilities might fail to be resolved even in the near future because it might still be difficult to produce a constitution which spells out the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. Both the Park management and the community agreed that a communication forum would make it possible for the rules and codes of conduct to be spelt out clearly because without consultations, people cannot be expected to follow the rules that they were not involved in making.

The *inkosi* who leads the communities has to be responsible for consulting with the Park authorities and giving feedback to the communities which he represents (DEAT, 2003). Failing to do so, as was indicated from the discussions held with the community, will result in Park authorities and the community misinterpreting the actions of one another. The *inkosi*, who in certain instances meets with the Park authorities to discuss problems associated with the Park, such as poaching, needs to consult with the community before having these meetings and give feedback to the community. This lack of feed-back to the community was evidenced in that the community did not know about certain changes that were taking place around them as will be discussed in the next subsections.

4.1.1.2. Resource use

According to the Park authority, anyone who is within a 50km radius of the Park can use the resources inside the Park. *Ohashu* (raw material for making baskets, mats, etc) and firewood but not medicinal plants are available to all. Communities are allowed to harvest in autumn when the *ohashu* is mature enough. They are not charged for this but are given entry card/tickets when they go in. Firewood is generally sold to the local community but dead wattle, which is an alien plant, can be obtained free of charge. The *ohashu* is harvested without any limits as the Park is trying to support the local community. People who want thatch grass have to work for it, for example, by slashing grass along roadsides. After work, supervision of the collection of thatch grass is done to ensure that the workers stick to the agreed quota. According to the Park authorities, this harvesting of Park resources is not

discriminatory because both the workers and the communities are given equal opportunities to acquire the resources.

The concern of the Park authority is that at times the community enters the Park and steals indigenous trees for domestic use and fences for their gardens and fowl runs or to poach some of the wild animals present in the Park. The Park authority has to call the police and members of the community are in some cases made to pay fines or end up in jail.

However, during the focus group discussions with the community, all groups mentioned that firewood is only sold to 'special' people, that is, those who work in the Park and those community members who have 'connections' inside the Park. In some instances, the workers are given tickets to harvest firewood for free but they end up selling it to communities for R50-R100 per load. With the exception of the previous year, people had to work inside the Park to get *ohashu* in order to make crafts. There was no explanation as to why in the previous year they did not have to work for *ohashu* but they suspected that it might have had something to do with the changes which took place in the management structure of the Park. Discussions later held with the Park authorities made it clear that a policy change had resulted in their not requiring people to work for the *ohashu* because they realized that it can easily regenerate. In addition, the process of making people work for resources was too cumbersome because it involved a lot of paperwork such as drawing up contracts.

The community also mentioned that they have to work in order to get firewood and they feel that they are being abused as they are made to do tough jobs such as slashing grass for 10 to 14 days and being rewarded with 4-5 bunches of firewood, which they think is very little. The community feels that they should not work for anything at all but should be allowed to go inside the Park on certain days to harvest the resources they want. Security should only be there to make sure that that they do not over-harvest. The members of the community also feel that the Park authorities do not care about them as they are sent to jail, even for stealing dead wood. Upon being questioned about

this later, the Park authorities refuted these claims and mentioned that they have since stopped making people work in order to get resources in the Park.

Interviews with the tribal authority indicated that they are treated differently from the Obonjaneni community. They are allowed to enter the Park and obtain resources whenever they want. They are often invited to important celebrations such as the World Environmental Day and for parties. Once a year, they are allowed to enter the Park for traditional hunting (*isincina*). However, they think that the constant changing of Park managers has led to continuous changes in the rules inside the Park. They gave an example that in the preceding years, the Park authorities would bring offenders to the *inkosi* for trial but recently Park authorities report offenders to the police even for what they termed 'trivial cases'. Upon enquiring about this, the Park authorities mentioned that they stopped taking culprits to the tribal authority for trials because they felt that the justice system of the tribal authority was no longer effective as it could no longer discipline people. They attributed this to changing times that has led people to recognize traditional powers less fully than was previously the case.

The main findings of objective 1 were that the Obonjaneni community has no say in decision-making concerning the day-to-day running of the Park. This on its own creates problems as the community is not willing to let the Park authorities do all the decision-making, especially on issues such as resource use. The fact that there are no clear responsibilities of the community as far as biodiversity conservation is concerned means that the community is concerned about how they can utilise more resources and never about how they can help in the upkeep of the Park. The Park authority is doing its best in providing resources to the community but it seems that the community needs more than what is being provided; as a result, the community resorts to poaching and stealing of trees and fences. Since the parties do not share the same values, it may be a challenge for them to contribute to the development of trust.

4.2. Objective 2

The resilience of the relationship was determined after looking at the dimensions of trust, which are: integrity, competence, and dependability.

4.2.1. Dimensions of trust

4.2.1.1. Integrity

The Park authorities, represented by the Officer in Charge, admitted that it might be possible for some of their actions to be misinterpreted by communities but they try to overcome this by informing the tribal authority which then disseminates information to the communities. The authority also informs people when making decisions; the Officer in Charge mentioned as an example that they informed the communities before deciding that they were going to close the path gate which allowed unrestricted entry into the Park so that people must use the formal check point. The authorities also invite the tribal authority when there are issues to discuss such as theft and the issue of baboons which escape from the Park. The baboons often escape from the Park and eat vegetables from nearby gardens but the owners are not compensated. The communities occasionally without permission allow their livestock to enter the Park to forage. The livestock are confiscated and the owners have to pay for their release.

The Park authorities believe that people have an obligation to look after their own 'things'. Since it is some of the community members who cut boundary fences to let their cattle in to graze, they should then not expect to be compensated by the Park when baboons enter their gardens to eat vegetables. They need to take precautions such as erecting fences to ensure that their vegetables will not be destroyed by the baboons. The Park authorities also mentioned that they sometimes offer fencing to the community for such use.

However, the views of the Park authorities did not tally with those of the community. Members of the community indicated that they do not cut the

boundary fences but that their livestock stray into the Park to forage and when that happens, they are confiscated and the owner is made to pay R100 per beast or R40 per goat and so they do their best to prevent livestock from entering the Park. The Park authority should also play its part by preventing baboons from escaping the Park. They see this as a burning issue which needs to be resolved. They mentioned that they once suggested that the Park erect an electric fence but they believe that the Park authorities are not willing to do this as nothing has been done about it. Upon being questioned about this, the Park authorities mentioned that they are in a process of working on the issue.

Another issue of concern between the community of Obonjaneni and the Park authorities is that of the community levy. The community levy is a proportion of the money from gate takings and accommodation in the Park which is to be given to communities for development purposes. The community believes that this money is being squandered by the Park authorities as they have not seen its benefits. They expect that money to tar their roads, build play centres, a filling station, and a traditional centre, and to buy computers for the Community Centre for skills development of the locals. From the interviews with the *inkosi*, the Community Conservation Officer, and Park authorities they mentioned that yearly, plans are made on how the money can be utilised. The *inkosi* mentioned that in the previous year, the Enkosini and Okhombe communities (which are a considerable distance from the Park) benefited as fences for grazing were built using the money.

In contrast with what the community of Obonjaneni believes, discussions with the Community Conservation Officer revealed that the community levy fund is not kept by the Royal Natal Park or any other park in the Province but is sent to the Regional Offices. At the latter, it is kept so that if in the Province any community that is adjacent to a park decides on a project, it can apply for that money. Applications for projects which are related to conservation are given preference. The Officer mentioned that the community of Obonjaneni has never benefited from that money because, despite having been notified several times to submit applications which are linked to conservation, they

have never done so. Instead, they have been focused on submitting applications which involved building school classrooms, tarring roads, and building taxi ranks. These applications are not given preferential treatment because the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife which oversees the running of Parks in the Province considers this as crossing the line and performing duties of other Government Departments. In addition, any involvement in these duties not only would require the EKZNW to obtain special permission from such government departments; but also would involve paying the salaries of the teachers who would be teaching in the extra classrooms built and maintaining the tarred roads built by EKZNW.

The members of the community also mentioned that they feel sidelined as sometimes they see school children from distant places touring the Park, yet school children from their community have never done so. They feel that the Educational Centre for school children, which is located inside the Park, benefits only what they termed 'foreign' school children yet local children have never heard of it. The Community Conservation Officer, however mentioned that the community of Obonjaneni has benefited tremendously: EKZNW conducts workshops for teachers on conservation, the planting of trees on Arbour Day is performed yearly, and exciting competitions for school children are also conducted some of which involve school children running up the mountains in the Park in order to win bicycles. The EKZNW has also teamed up with a private company to provide meals for the local school children but feels that in spite all this, the community of Obonjaneni is not appreciative.

From the findings, the integrity of both the community of Obonjaneni and the Park is questionable. There are shortcomings with the way the Park is interacting with the community in terms of its mandate and these loopholes stem from the fact that there is no communication forum in which issues of concern can be clarified. Each party does not feel that the other is concerned about it as each misinterprets the actions of the other. The Park authorities, however, make an effort by fencing the Park in order to keep the baboons inside, yet the community perceives the fence in a different way as they cut and steal it in order to let their cattle in to graze and also for personal uses.

4.2.1.2. Competence

The Park authority mentioned that it is doing its best to carry out its responsibilities and it is amongst the world's best in terms of biodiversity conservation. The staff members are also well equipped for the day-to-day running of the Park. The Park also conducts in-service training for its permanent workers.

The Community Conservation Officer also mentioned that she feels she is doing her best as far as environmental education is concerned by conducting workshops for traditional healers, *amakosi* and teachers on conservation issues and endeavours to interpret the policies of the EKZNW to them. Despite her busy schedule and having to travel a long distance, she insisted that she liaises with communities in her area and attends meetings with tribal authorities.

From the researcher's point of view, the effectiveness of the Community Conservation Officer is debatable. She mentioned that for both the Northern and Middle Berg for which she is responsible, she is only allowed to travel 1 500km a month. It is then questioned if she is able to have heart-to-heart conversations the few times that she manages to meet the communities since the area for which she is responsible is enormous. The effectiveness of the tribal authority is also questioned as it is not very accountable to the community of Obonjaneni that it represents by sharing information and helping its subject to understand policies and general issues of conservation. The effectiveness of the members of the community of Obonjaneni can also be said to be doubtful as they have failed to come up with projects linked to conservation which would ensure that they obtain the community levy funds.

4.2.1.3. Dependability

The Park authority mentioned that the Park employs temporarily 100 people yearly and employs permanently about 80 people. The Park also support the local people by providing unrestricted access to *ohashu*, and providing clean water and the community guiding project where they train community guides

who can work in the Park and obtain income from tourists. A craft centre named Thandanani Craft Centre was built along the roadside which leads to the Park in order for the communities to sell their crafts to tourists. The Park authority mentioned that the Park is doing all it can to help and to work together with the community but feels that the community is not appreciative as it is bent on poaching, and stealing wood and fences from the Park, thus making it difficult for the Park to operate.

Discussions held with the people (who are mostly women) who sell their crafts at the Craft Centre revealed that they can make between R600-R1 000 per month which, according to them, is enough to support their families and so they feel that they can depend on the Park for their survival.

However, from the discussions with the two groups which do not access *ohashu* from the Park, the perceptions were that the Park cannot be depended upon as it employs people from distant areas, for example, Okhombe and Enkosini. The two groups say they are the ones who are closer to the Park and are affected by the negative occurrences in the Park such as the baboon issue. They said that, if at all, the Park authority employs people from Obonjaneni, it employs those who are younger than 25 years; these are people without family responsibilities and so the rest are finding it difficult to survive without employment. They said that they are then forced to poach or steal resources from the Park because they have no other means of survival.

The community members also mentioned that they not only want jobs inside the Park, but also they want to occupy the managerial posts. They feel that giving top jobs to what they termed 'outsiders' is unfair to them as these 'outsiders' will not take the concerns of the people seriously and will not feel their 'pain'. They want the Park to build the capacity of the locals so that they can have the required skills in order to tackle the huge responsibilities that come with the top jobs. They indicated that they cannot start their own projects since they believe that the Park is their neighbour which has the ability to provide employment and also because they cannot start projects without the initial capital required. In addition to this, they said that the Park

being the land of their forefathers, they should be allowed to make a living from it.

Upon being informed about the community's accusations, the Park authorities mentioned that when allocating temporary posts, they do not keep track or records of the areas where the employees come from but believes that all the communities are getting a fair chance. It does not employ directly the permanent employees because vacant posts are advertised by the Regional Office and it is thus the duty of the Human Resources Officer to interview suitable and qualified candidates and make appointments. Thus the Park will not be able to give them the 'managerial posts' they want. The Park authorities also mentioned that the Park's ability to employ a lot of people is limited because it only has the capacity to employ fewer people than the community of Obonjaneni would have wanted.

The Park can be said to be dependable to some extent as it seeks to provide employment and resources to neighbouring communities. The difficulty is that its ability to do so is minimal and it cannot satisfy all the community's needs. The dependability of the community of Obonjaneni is in doubt because it cannot be relied upon to stick to the agreed quota when accessing resources but it resorts to poaching, stealing, and leaving livestock to stray into the Park and destroy important species. The tribal authority's dependability can not be said to be very good because it fails to maintain a relationship with the community of Obonjaneni in a way that shows consideration.

4.2.2. Integration of the three dimensions of trust

The EKZNW endeavours to adhere to a range of neighbourhood policies that are meant to improve relations with neighbouring communities (Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, 1999: vi). They promote participation in conservation activities by encouraging communities to propose projects that are linked to conservation in order to obtain the community levy funds. they encourage teachers and school children to participate in tree planting activities. The EKZNW is also trying to develop environmental awareness through education and interpretation programmes by holding workshops for teachers, traditional

healers, and tribal authorities and explaining the EKZNW policies. In addition, the EKZNW has also been involved in facilitating access by the communities to material benefits from the Park; the fostering of economic development of neighbouring communities is being done by providing employment to communities and providing in-service training.

However, it cannot be concluded after considering all this that the Park is doing all it can to stand by its policies when it comes to neighbourhood relations. This is so because only a few community members are employed by the Park and this, on its own, will not stop the rest of the community members from stealing from the Park as they need to survive. Having a Community Conservation Officer, who, as it seems, is known by only a few community members is not enough to enable one to conclude that there is adequate communication or environmental awareness.

As was discussed in Chapter Two, lack of communication and understanding which are some of the pillars of trust, leads to the absence of trust (Anderson and Narus, 1990). The community members expressed concern about the lack of information regarding the community levy. Regular meetings between the Community Conservation Officer and the community of Obonjaneni not only will help to inform the community that the money is not being squandered by the Park; but also will enable the community to better understand the kind of projects which they need to plan in order to obtain that money in future.

The tribal authority, which often attends workshops with the Community Conservation Officer, also, may need to convey the information which it obtains from these workshops to the masses which it represents. DEAT (2003) stated that informing people what is happening and listening to their views and opinions will ensure that problems are dealt with before they grow into conflicts. This lack of understanding on issues such as the community levy and the obtainment of permanent employment in the Park, made community members to be very bitter towards the Park authorities. Inadequate communication has also made community members unaware of many issues pertaining to changes which take place around them, such as

the fact that changes in policy meant that they do not have to work inside the Park in order to obtain *ohashu* and firewood.

The findings showed that the community of Obonjaneni feels nothing but resentment towards the Park and the Community Conservation Officer: they mentioned only the negative issues and left out the positive things about the Park. From the discussions held with them, they never mentioned that the Tandanani Craft Centre (see Figure 3), where several communities, including them, sell crafts, was built using the community levy fund; and they also never mentioned the real reason why they have not benefited from the fund. In addition, they never mentioned about the competitions organized by the Park from which school children benefit, or the meals being given to their school children with help from the EKZWN. It seemed the interactions with the community were in part opportunistic, as they used their interaction with the researcher to lever support for them at the expense of developing their relationship with EKZWN. It seemed the community were aware that they were misrepresenting issues as they, at some point during the discussions, asked the researcher if she was not going to 'sell them out to the Park' based on the accusations they made about the Park. Had the researcher not gone back to the Park authority to verify the facts, she would have been left with the impression that the blame for the poor relations lies solely with the Park.

Self-interested or opportunistic behaviour such as poaching and stealing of fences and indigenous trees leads to reduced trust of the community by the Park authorities. Luo (2001) mentioned that issues of trust involve emotions. Emotions were high in all the meetings which were attended by the researcher. Both the Park authorities and the Community Conservation Officer became emotional during their respective interviews as they lamented how the community of Obonjaneni did not appreciate all they had done for them. Likewise, the community of Obonjaneni was emotional during the discussions held as members explained how they felt ill-treated by the Park authorities especially in issues regarding the baboon problem.

The community of Obonjaneni seemed to be acting in a deceitful way as it tried to make the researcher view the Park authorities as not acting according to their mandate. It is instead the community, itself, which needs to reflect on the way in which it interacts with the Park. It needs to bring to end activities such as poaching, cutting fences in order to let their livestock into the Park to graze, and stealing indigenous trees.



Figure 3: The Tandanani Craft Centre where a variety of community beadwork, woodwork, and baskets are sold.

The issues of shortcomings in the integrity, competence, and dependability indicate that the relationship between the two communities of Obonjaneni and the Park is weak and this breakdown in relations is about trust as these issues

are components of trust. From the conceptual framework, it can be said that trust manifests itself with the results such as adequate communication, the ability to deliver, (competence) and the ability to care about the relationship. The absence of these from the findings of the research shows then that trust is under severe threat. What implications could this have then? How then can the three dimensions of trust affect the management of the Royal Natal Park? From their studies, Cullen and co-workers (2000) illustrated that higher levels of mutual trust and commitment lead to better performing alliances in terms of both financial and non-financial aspects. Can it be said that because trust is under threat then there is poor performance by the Royal Natal Park in biodiversity conservation? The answer is that it cannot be categorically said. It, however, can be said that in future, if no efforts are made to build trust, conservation in the area might be at risk. The community of Obonjaneni does not seem to value its relationship with the Park. This lack of mutual dependence may lead to loss of biodiversity in future. From the interviews and discussions held, it was found that people were willing to cut fences to bring cattle into areas in the Park: this was not agreed to in discussions between the parties. This does not suggest that the community of Obonjaneni does not value biodiversity and because the parties involved do not share the same values, the development of trust has been damaged (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

4.3. Objective 3

The objective was met by making recommendations based on the research findings on how the relationship between the Obonjaneni community and the Royal Natal Park authorities might be better developed to foster trust.

There is a need for deep awareness of the kinds of impact the actions of both parties involved can have. Although there is need to understand the way in which ecological systems work, attempts at ethical purity that are based upon rigid patterns of thought should be abandoned (Adams and Mulligan, 2003). A willingness to act on the basis of ethical compromise can help the Park authorities in dealing with the community of Obonjaneni. As Figgis (2003)

pointed out, conservationist should be prepared even to 'sup with the devil' if they are to achieve better negotiated outcomes but which do not undermine conservation goals. The researcher recommends flexible modes of thinking which may improve the relations between the Park authorities and the community of Obonjaneni.

4.3.1. Need to involve more stakeholders

From the findings presented in this chapter, it can be suggested that there is a need to find ways of involving a much broader range of people in conservation of the Park (Adams and Mulligan, 2003; Dzingirai and Breen, 2005) such as the adjacent communities, non-governmental organizations, and other Government departments. The Park needs to involve the community members of Obonjaneni who are the nearby interested and affected party. This is suggested because the stealing of resources will continue for as long as structures that involve communities in the running of the Park are not set up. This entails the formation of a forum for the exchange of ideas and one where the EKZNW authority can act to address community concerns – and where the community can voice its concerns. This will help in improving not only communication, but also the level of understanding of issues. For this forum to succeed, strengthening the capacity of community representatives to engage in conservation planning is required (Robertson and Lawes, 2005; Picard, 2003).

Success in meeting the main objective of the Park, that of biodiversity conservation, requires recognition among all stakeholders that the Park alone cannot solve poverty and underdevelopment in the surrounding areas. Total blame cannot be put on the community of Obonjaneni for failing to realize the importance of biodiversity conservation, because as pointed in Chapter Two, if the issue of poverty is not tackled, parks will not continue to survive (Colchester, 2004). If other stakeholders such as Government departments and non-governmental organizations are involved, poverty in the country might be reduced.

4.3.2. Re-evaluate the strategy of employing temporary staff

Since there are many interested and conflict groups in conservation, attempts should be made to ensure that outsider interests are not privileged (Dzingirai and Breen, 2005) at the expense of the local community. The community of Obonjaneni which is closer to the Park deserves more privileges than peripheral communities such as Enkosini, Busingata and Okhombe. The reason is that the people of Obonjaneni are affected the most by the negative effects of the Park such as baboons which escape the Park and feed in their gardens. The Park authorities need to keep track of where the people they are employing originate. There might, or might not, be any merit in the accusation made by the community of Obonjaneni that the Park employs people who live far from the Park. The Park authorities then need to investigate and if they find that it is true that their employees are indeed from areas beyond Obonjaneni, then they need to change this so that it does not become the source of conflict between them and the community of Obonjaneni.

4.3.3. A more assertive role for the tribal authority

As Dzingirai and Breen (2005) pointed out, institutional legitimacy is always a function of accountability. Within the confines of their autonomy, local - level institutions must be responsible to those giving rise to them, that is, the ordinary people. This means that the tribal authorities should identify with the people they represent. They need to be accountable to the people of Obonjaneni and help them to understand issues of conservation and the EKZNW policies. Zeka (2005) emphasized the importance of cohesion in conservation areas. In this case, collective action by the tribal authority and the community of Obonjaneni will enable them to meet Park authorities and discuss how they can minimize the tension that exists between the two parties.

4.3.4. Need for an insurance scheme

It is advisable for the Park to set up a scheme which will help in compensating the community when wildlife ventures into vegetable gardens. This is being done in some areas in North – East Namibia in order to reduce human - wildlife conflicts (Kasaona, 2007). This idea, however, would need to be taken

to the board of EKZNW for consideration since it would mean a policy change throughout the province. This will reduce poverty in the community as the damage caused by baboons is worsening their economic situation.

4.3.5. Need to improve communication, maintain shared values, and avoid taking advantage of other partners

Silver (2003) mentioned that partnerships and collaborations do not just happen but they are built, and the same applies to trust. As suggested by Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust can develop when organizations attend to relationships by providing resources and benefits to partners who require them; by maintaining high standards of shared values; by communicating valuable information; and by avoiding taking advantage of other partners as is being done by the community of Obonjaneni by stealing resources from the Park. The Park authority needs to continue to play its role of providing resources. Communication needs to be adequate because communities have different levels of understanding issues; they need to be helped to understand issues of conservation. Sharing the same set of values, which in this case is biodiversity conservation, may be encouraged if people, despite issues of poverty, are helped to understand the importance of biodiversity conservation.

4.4. Summary

Issues that came up during data collection showed that all three dimensions of trust were under serious threat. Misunderstanding between the Royal Natal Park authorities and the Obonjaneni community and lack of adequate communication are key threats to trust between them. Findings also drew attention to deficiencies in the competence and dependability of all parties and in the ability to develop and maintain trust-based relationships. In order to develop better relationship between the community of Obonjaneni and the Royal Natal Park authorities, recommendations have been made.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.0. Introduction

In this chapter an analysis is made of the extent to which the objectives of the study were met. In so doing, it links back to the framework and its efficacy in facilitating the outcomes of this work.

5.1. Reflection on addressing the objectives of the study

All three objectives of the study were met. The current relationship between the Obonjaneni community and the Royal Natal Park was shown in three aspects which are: the management structure of the park, issues of responsibilities, and resource use. Information obtained was that there is no forum for discussing issues pertaining to the Park as it is solely the responsibility of the Park to oversee its day-to-day running. Issues brought up concerning responsibilities showed that the Park is doing it best in terms of meeting its objectives but because there was no forum for communicating with the community, the community did not know its responsibilities in terms of conserving the Park. Lastly, findings on issues of resource use by the community showed that the community expects more from the Park than the Park can provide and so members of the community have been resorting to poaching.

The second objective was to determine the resilience of the relationship between the community and the Park. This was done using a conceptual framework which made use of dimensions of trust which are integrity, competence, and the dependability of all parties involved. The conceptual framework was explained in Chapter Two. Findings showed that there were shortcomings within these three components. Trust was then concluded to be under severe threat.

The third objective was met by considering how the relationship between the community and the Park could be further and positively developed. This is crucial since trust is important if the main objective of the Park, that of biodiversity conservation, is to be met.

5.2. Conclusion

This dissertation is but one contribution to the ongoing debate on the park-people relationship. The framework has allowed the researcher to reflect on some of the insights emanating from the way park authorities and people relate and how relationships with trust can help in meeting the goals of conservation. The researcher reached the conclusion that in future, if no stronger efforts are made to build trust between the community of Obonjaneni and the Royal Natal Park, conservation in the area will be under threat. It is the lack of mutual dependence and the resultant illegal plundering of park resources by communities - in spite of the legislated entity that Royal Natal has as a formally constituted provincial park - that may lead to loss of biodiversity in future.

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Information on data collected is available on audio tapes.

APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

My name is Susan Maira-Tsvuura and am a masters student in Environmental Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg. I am currently working on a research project for the masters degree. My research involves investigating the interaction between communities which live close to or around parks and the park authorities. The aim of my research is to evaluate how trust based relationships between communities who access park resources and the park management can affect the ability of parks to meet their objectives. The research has two main objectives which will be met by this interview schedule.

Objective 1

To determine the basis of the current relationship between communities and Park authorities in the Drakensburg Park.

The following set of questions will help to meet this objective:

The Management Structure of the Park

1. Is the joint management board that exists in the Park legitimated by the government in terms of legislation and devolution of power (is the joint management board powerful)?
2. Is the joint management board legitimate in the eyes of the conservation authority?
3. Is the joint management board legitimate in the eyes of the communities, for example, how often are elections held and how effective is feedback to the community at large?
4. Do community representatives on the joint management board truly represent the needs of the communities?
5. Are there good conflict resolution mechanisms within the terms of the contract or the joint management plan?

Responsibilities

1. What are the responsibilities of the conservation authority in the Park?

2. What are the responsibilities of the communities in the Park?
3. Are these responsibilities clear?
4. Does each party rely on the other to undertake its responsibilities?
5. Do communities have the capacity to carry out their responsibilities in the Park?
6. On a scale of 1-5 do you think that negotiations between the Park authority and the communities are easy?

Resource use

1. Who can use the natural resources in the Park?
2. On a scale of 1-5 do you think that user rights are clear?
3. Who receives the most benefits from having a Park on the land?
4. In what form are the benefits for the conservation authority?
5. In what form are the benefits for the communities?
6. Are the benefits distributed equitably amongst the communities?
7. Do the benefits outweigh the costs of the Park for the conservation authority?
8. Do the benefits outweigh the costs (including the opportunity costs) of the Park for the communities?
9. How often are the communities allowed to access natural resources from the Park?
10. Was the agreement for the quota system of harvesting natural resources in the Park unanimous?
11. Do the communities stick to the quota agreed for harvesting of natural resources?
12. If not, how are offenders handled?
13. Is there an enabling macro-economic framework in which the Park can become profitable?

Objective 2

To determine the resilience of the relationship between communities and Park authorities in the Drakensburg Park.

The following set of questions will help to meet this objective:

Dimensions of trust

Integrity

1. Does the Park management treat all people fairly and justly?
2. Does the Park management show compassion for all stakeholders when it makes decisions?
3. Can the actions of the Park authorities be misinterpreted?
4. Can the actions of the communities be misinterpreted?
5. Do you feel that the Park is guided by sound principles?

Competence

1. Do you feel that the organization is doing its best to meet its conservation objectives?
2. Do you feel confident about the skills of those who are involved in the day to day running of the Park?

Dependability

1. Does the organization involve communities in making decision?
2. Are the communities willing to let Park authorities make decisions for them?
3. Are the Park authorities willing to let communities make decisions for them?
4. Can the Park authorities be relied upon to keep promises?
5. Can the communities be relied upon to keep promises?