

Engaging Top-Down Development in the Eastern Cape: A Case Study of the Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project

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Abstract

A longstanding trend in development studies literature has emerged that emphasizes the importance of addressing issues of power in all facets of development, including in the planning and design of development interventions. While top-down planning reinforces the view of the poor as impotent, powerless actors whose well-being is dependent upon the actions of others through concentration of decision-making power in the hands of those who take on the role of trustees, popular participation in planning empowers the poor by viewing the poor as competent, rational actors who are better suited to improve their own lives than any external expert.

This research report analyzes the power dynamics involved in an attempt by an Australian mining company (Mineral Commodities Ltd) and the South African government to implement a mining project in the Xolobeni area of the Wild Coast of South Africa. The issue of popular participation has always been a large part of the debate of whether to approve the mining license. Opponents of the project claim that the process discouraged and even prevented local participation, while supporters claim variously that either sufficient local participation did take place or that local participation was unimportant because the project would improve the lives of local residents regardless of how much participation took place. This report aims to analyze the power dynamics that came into play throughout the long fight over the proposed mine and draw out whatever lessons can be learned regarding South Africa's development process.

Preface

I hereby declare that this entire thesis is my own work, unless otherwise specified in the text, and has not been submitted, in part or in whole, to any other tertiary institution. The research for this thesis was conducted in coastal AmaDiba, or Xolobeni, between the Mzamba River in the north and the Mtentu River in the South along the coast between February and June, 2011. The research was supervised by Professors Richard Ballard and Bill Freund.

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Chapter One: Introduction, Research Questions and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

The story of international development, like other processes that involve a combination of economic, social, and physical elements, is a story of power. Throughout history, differences in wealth both between people and between nations, whether it is measured via food, land, assets, or money, have always been affected and largely determined by power-relations. Power and wealth go hand in hand, as those able to gain control over resources exert power over others seeking their share for survival or material gain. Any standard of wealth is truly just a measure of the resources one has under his/her control. Therefore, those with the power to take control over the world's resources are able to amass wealth, and gain more power by controlling and limiting other people's access to resources.

Cooperative development, or the idea that the development and economic progression of one nation is beneficial to all nations (provided that they are not enemies), is a concept that was popularized after World War II via the Marshall Plan and the creation of the numerous international financial institutions charged with assisting worldwide economic development. The idea that worldwide prosperity is both good and possible received further credence upon the fall of the Soviet Union and most other communist systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Francis Fukuyama argued in his famous article "The End of History?", that "the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution" had been reached, and that now with all that silly ideology out of the way, we could all get down to the business of applying our tried and true system of liberal democracy throughout the world, a modernizing process that would surely end in wealth and prosperity for all (1989).

Unfortunately, despite general acceptance of the capitalist economic system, enormous levels of poverty persist throughout much of the world. The concept of cooperative development, combined with the system of world capitalism, has generated many colossal contradictions. Wealth inequality has deepened, both within and between nations, due to the workings of a capitalist system that benefits the rich and powerful, allowing them to continually increase their wealth, often at the expense of the poor.

One reason for the persistence of poverty and inequality in today's world is the lack of development interventions that directly address the issue of power, especially in terms of the way the interventions themselves are designed and implemented. In most cases, development projects are planned and designed by technocrats and experts such as government bureaucrats, private companies seeking to maximize profit, development professionals, and bank officials. Involvement of the intended beneficiaries, the very people that a given development intervention aims to affect in ways that can be fundamentally life-altering, is often only done once a plan has already been formulated. Such top-down planning reinforces the powerlessness of the poor¹, and instead attempts to help them through paternalistic guiding action.

A longstanding trend in development studies literature has emerged that emphasizes the importance of addressing issues of power in all facets of development, including in the planning and design of development interventions. The idea that poor people can be empowered through the process of planning and otherwise participating in development interventions is a concept that has gained significant traction in development circles. While top-down planning reinforces the view of the poor as impotent, powerless actors whose well-being is dependent upon the actions of others by concentrating decision-making power in the hands of those who take on the role of trustees, popular participation in planning empowers the poor by viewing the poor as competent, rational actors who are better suited to improve their own lives than any external expert. Popular participation in development planning has thus been advocated as a way of combating normalized power-relations.

The locus of power and influence was a fundamental issue in the case study which forms the basis of this dissertation. The Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project is located on a 22 KM stretch of coastline in the Xolobeni area of the Wild Coast of South Africa, about 30 KM south of Port Edward between the Mzamba River in the north and the Mtentu River in the south. The area is located in the former Transkei homeland, now part of the larger Eastern Cape Province. The Xolobeni area is more commonly called coastal

¹ The term 'poor' is used here, as well as numerous times later in this thesis, to mean specifically a lack of monetary resources and other capital assets that can be easily converted into capital. Many local people from the Xolobeni area have asserted, both publicly and through my own personal research and interviews, that they are not 'poor' as they have enough to eat and are able to sustain themselves through farming.

AmaDiba, but has been referred to as Xolobeni in most news stories and other documentation regarding the mining project. An Australian mining company, Mineral Commodities Ltd (MRC), obtained the prospecting rights to the area in 1998. In 2002, the company claimed to have discovered 9 million tonnes of ilmenite, a mineral used in titanium production, making it the tenth largest mineral sands resource in the world.² The company spoke of plans to build a smelter nearby to process the minerals in the city of East London, but details never materialized.

In March 2007, Transworld Energy and Minerals Resources (TEM), MRC's 75 percent owned South African subsidiary, submitted a mining right application for the Xolobeni project. In the license application, MRC/TEM has claimed that the mine will create at least 557 permanent jobs (permanent meaning for the duration of the mine, which is predicted to be 22 years) and several other opportunities for temporary employment. In July 2008, the Department of Minerals and Energy issued the company a license to begin mining in 30 percent of the project area, while the remaining 70 percent remains open for prospecting and possible mining in the future.

The mining right was suspended due an appeal lodged in 2008 by the Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC) which was formed by community activists to oppose the mining project. The main argument of the appeal is that the community was not properly consulted in the licensing process, and has not consented to the mining of their land. The most striking piece of evidence in the appeal is the existence of numerous forged consent documents supposedly collected by the mining company in support of the mining development, many of which are signed by community members who have long since deceased.³ In June 2011, the Department of Mineral Affairs revoked the mining license based on the ACC's appeal, but left open the possibility of re-issuing the license in asking the mining company to provide further information within three months.⁴

The issue of popular participation has always been a large part of the debate of whether to approve the mining license. Opponents of the project claim that the process

² Mineral Commodities Limited Annual Report, December 2007

³ Amadiba Crisis Committee's Internal Appeal to the Minister of Minerals and Energy Against the Award of a Mining Right to Transworld Energy and Mineral Resources (SA) (PTY) LTD, September 2008

⁴ The decision to revoke the license was made after my fieldwork (done February-April 2011) was completed, meaning that my interviews and other research was conducted when the appeal was still pending, the license suspended but not revoked.

discouraged and even prevented local participation, while supporters claim variously that either sufficient local participation did take place, or that local participation was unimportant because the project would improve the lives of local residents regardless. This report aims to analyze the power dynamics that came into play throughout the long fight over the proposed mine, and draw out whatever lessons can be learned regarding South Africa's development process.

1.2 Research Questions

This research report analyzes the power dynamics involved in an attempt by an Australian mining company (Mineral Commodities Ltd) and the South African government to implement a mining project in the Xolobeni area of the Wild Coast of South Africa. The main research question that is posed is:

-What are the power dynamics involved in the proposed mining project in Xolobeni?

The subsidiary research questions are as follows:

-How have the mining company and the government attempted to implement the mining project? How can we interpret the balance struck between minimal and substantive involvement of those who would be most directly affected?

- In what ways have factions of those living on and near the site of the proposed mine developed their own mechanisms for influencing the process? What strategies have the Xolobeni people used to employ their collective agency in their opposition to the mine?

The research questions take as a given that there was a real attempt by the South African government, the Australian mining company, and certain local elites to implement the mining project, and that the project was resisted by the vast majority of the local residents. I will provide evidence for these assumptions in the introduction of this chapter (Chapter 1), as well as in Chapters 3 and 4.

In order to answer the research questions listed above, it is useful to briefly examine the major developmental interventions imposed on Xolobeni in the past. During my field research, a recurring theme in the community interviews was a link in the respondents' minds between the attempted implementation of the mining project and the attempted implementation of past development plans. In order to gain a better understanding of the community's strategies of resistance to the mining project that is the

main focus of this study, it is useful to conduct a brief review of these historical development interventions.

Three historical development interventions were mentioned repeatedly: the Betterment Scheme during apartheid culminating in the Mpondo revolt in 1960, a plan to grow gum trees for Sappi which ended in the “Gum Tree Rebellion” in 1999, and a community-based eco-tourism project initiated by the EU Development Programme in the 1999 that resulted in the company AmaDiba Adventures. An examination of these past development interventions will provide us with a perspective of how the South African government’s strategy of development implementation has changed over time, as well as how the Xolobeni people’s strategies of resistance have changed and evolved.

One final subsidiary research question must therefore be added:

-How do the historical development interventions implemented in the area affect and inform both the attempt by the mining company and the government to implement the current mining project, as well as the community’s strategies of resistance?

1.3 Structure of Dissertation

The structure of this study will be as follows:

Chapter One begins with an introduction of the main ideas that will be explored in the thesis (see above). The main argument that I will be using in the thesis reflects a trend in development studies that emphasizes the necessity of popular participation in development interventions; participation which enables influence and power amongst those affected by development projects minimizes the possibility that they will be marginalized, and maximizes the possibility that they will be empowered. Following this introduction, the main and subsidiary research questions are clearly stated and discussed. Subsequently, I will provide a brief outline of the structure of the thesis. Finally, the research methodology used in this dissertation will be discussed and justified.

Chapter Two focuses on the idea of participation in development interventions.

Technocrats, politicians, investors and other initiators of development processes have to address a basic tension in the way they involve those who will be affected by the project. On one hand they may pursue a route of minimal participation where those affected are consulted but not necessarily given any influence over key decisions, for example

whether a project goes ahead. A minimalist approach to participation is attractive to those who wish to retain primary influence in a situation either for their own self interest or because they believe that the greater good might trump the specific interests of those who stand to be affected. On the other hand, authorities may choose a format of substantial involvement where those who will be directly affected have considerable or absolute influence over key decisions taken. This would reduce the possibility of marginal groups being strong-armed by powerful interests. The balance between minimal and substantial power is shaped both by the power of different interest groups and by the principles, frameworks and objectives of the authorities. Yet the kind of influence exerted by those affected by a development process is not necessarily limited to the official, 'invited' forums of participation established by authorities. Grassroots activists may choose to create their own, 'invented' spaces of participation, for example through protest, through which they attempt to influence the outcome.

Chapter Three begins with a brief description of the major historical development interventions in the affected area. First, the apartheid government's Betterment Scheme is discussed as well as the ensuing 1960 Mpondo revolt. Subsequently, the gum tree development, culminating in the 1999 "Gum Tree Rebellion" is summarized, followed by the tourism development initiated in 1999 by the EU Development Programme. The way in which the South African government has attempted to implement the mining project is then discussed, and a conclusion is drawn from the sequence that the South African government continues to employ a top-down development strategy that facilitates a situation in which significant participation in development is highly unlikely. In addition, the responses of the local population to each top-down development intervention reveals that the people of Xolobeni have continually fought for the ability to meaningfully participate in its own development. Finally, evidence from numerous scholars studying the actions of the post-apartheid South African government and the structure of the economy is cited in support of the argument that the development strategy of the South African government is inherently neo-liberal and influenced by a particularly strong mining sector. The chapter concludes by arguing that the current political economy in the South African development field creates a situation in which high levels of participation are often discouraged in deference to more powerful interests (those with

capital). However, subjects of development may often use their collective agency and the wide array of rights granted to them by the new Constitutions to force popular participation in decision-making and implementation.

Chapter Four centers on the different strategies used by the people of Xolobeni to resist the mining project by employing their collective agency. The strategies outlined in the chapter include; various forms of popular protest both violent and non-violent, appeals to the traditional tribal authority to stop the mine on the community's⁵ behalf, the formation of the AmaDiba Crisis Committee (ACC) as a semi-permanent body of community activists to combat the mining project, the use of the Legal Resource Center (LRC) to lodge legal appeals, the creation of a community-based development project (Simbhademe) as a job-creating alternative to the mining development, and active participation in the selection of local ward councilors in the May 2011 elections to ensure that all representatives are anti-mining in an effort to change the behaviour of the local municipal government. The chapter concludes by arguing that the people of Xolobeni, in their post-apartheid context, have discovered numerous strategies to resist top-down development interventions and fight for real participation beyond the simple non-compliance and violent protest of the past. The wide array of effective strategies at their disposal has seemed to empower the community, and fostered its self-mobilization.

Chapter Five provides a conclusion based on all the issues covered; the positives and negatives of varying levels of popular participation in development projects, the repeated top-down development interventions in the Xolobeni area, the South African government's neo-liberal development orientation, and the Xolobeni people's innovative strategies to oppose the mine. The chapter argues that employing a high level of participation in development projects can help avoid the harmful effects often associated with big, top-down development interventions, even in the field of mining where the idea of participation seems impractical.

⁵ The term community is used here, as well as numerous times later in this thesis, with the understanding that the use of the term community **does not** imply a homogeneous group of people sharing a common identity, common desires, or common goals: "representations of 'community' interests all too easily muffle dissent and inequalities *within* communities" (Cornwall 2002: 53). Therefore, the term community is used here to simply mean people who reside in a given area, in this case the coastal region between the Mzamba and Mtentu Rivers, referred to in this report as 'Xolobeni'.

1.4 Methodology

The research strategy I have selected for this thesis is that of a case study, defined here as a detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena (Abercrombie et al 1984: 34). The use of case studies has attracted a large amount of criticism over the years, as detractors of the technique have claimed that case studies cannot be generalized as it is impossible to generalize from one single case. The supposed lack of ability to generalize from a case study is viewed as particularly negative due to the tendency to value general, theoretical, context-independent knowledge over concrete, practical, context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2006: 221).

Flyvbjerg (2006) has produced a convincing rebuttal of this prevalent anti-case study argument which I will briefly review in order to defend the worthiness of my own case study:

First, the case study produces the type of context-dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts. (Flyvbjerg 2006: 221)

Here, Flyvbjerg is essentially defending the importance of practical, context-dependent knowledge. Learning general theory is an important part of the learning process, but it usually comes at the beginning. As a learner seeks to become an expert on an issue, s/he closely examines numerous specific, concrete cases in order to observe how general theories work in practice. Only after one has an “intimate knowledge of several thousand concrete cases in their area” are they considered to be an expert (Flyvbjerg 2006: 222). Thus, case studies are extremely useful in becoming an expert in a particular discipline.

More generally, quantitative research and case study research are not in competition with each other in an either/or, right/wrong battle. Both methods have value and both have limits, while doing entirely different jobs. A major advantage of case study research is that it lends itself to an open ended investigative style where the researcher can flexibly follow up on new information obtained throughout the research process. It cannot really speak to the extent to which a phenomena or position exists, but it can fully examine a particular phenomenon or position on its own terms.

A second main defence of case studies once again addresses the criticism that they are not useful in producing generalized theory. The fact is that social science does not produce truly predictive theory (Flyvbjerg 2006: 223). Instead, all knowledge produced in the social sciences is by its very nature context-dependent. This reality is reflected by the repeated criticism of large development organizations such as the World Bank and United States Agency for International Development by development experts for their continuous search for one size fits all solutions to development problems. The recent trend emphasizing local knowledge and the importance of the participation of local populations in development projects indicates that focusing on general, context-independent theory is failing to produce improvements on the ground. Flyvbjerg goes on to argue that it is in fact possible to generalise based on a single case if that case is well selected:

One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated. (Italics in original) (Flyvbjerg 2006: 228)

By probing the case of the Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project, I am hopeful that I have provided both myself and the reader with a concrete, practical, and context-dependent example of the political economy of development in post-apartheid South Africa. Rather than testing a general hypothesis, my analysis is specific to only the Xolobeni case. However, through my examination, valuable lessons can be learned about the nature of development on a broad scale; the value of properly understanding one case is that it can be compared with other properly understood cases and thus contribute to collective understanding.

The main evidence I will be using in this thesis is qualitative in nature. I have conducted interviews with 32 stakeholders, usually individually but sometimes in small groups of 2 or 3, all of which were qualitative interviews. Qualitative data has been criticized by some academics as ‘soft’ data vulnerable to differing interpretations and particularly susceptible to researcher bias. However, the idea of a completely unbiased

and neutral researcher has long since been discredited. Instead, the idea of researcher reflexivity is used as a way to account for bias:

...in qualitative (and maybe also in quantitative) inquiry, the question is neither whether the researcher affects the process nor whether such an effect can be prevented. This methodological point has been turned into a commitment of reflexivity. The illusion of denying the human touch is countered by establishing an agenda for assessment on subjectivity...during all steps of the research process, the effect of the researcher should be assessed, and, later on, shared...Bias, in the sense of undesirable or hidden skewness, is thus accounted for, though not eliminated. (Malterud 2001: 484)

In the interest of researcher reflexivity, I would like to divulge that I am sympathetic to a radical, somewhat neo-marxist approach to development. I generally believe that power should be shifted downward to those who are currently disempowered, and that the state is the best agent to facilitate this power-shift, because left unchecked capitalism naturally shifts power upward into fewer and fewer hands as wealth is consolidated and inequality deepens. Furthermore, I believe that the world capitalist system inherently favours large corporations where wealth is concentrated (such as mining companies). Undoubtedly, my personal orientation is related to the analysis I ended up making because it influenced the kind of reading I did, the kinds of questions I asked and the type of structural issues to which I am sensitive. In acknowledging this my aim is, nevertheless, to substantiate as fully as possible the claims I am making.

In terms of the research process used, I have used an approach of inductive reasoning whereby I have examined the data with as clear of a theoretical slate as possible and attempted to derive theory from the evidence.⁶ Before doing field research and personal interviews, I believed that the most striking narrative would be that of a community attempting to defend their traditional livelihood systems, livelihood systems that would be threatened and possibly destroyed by the mining project. While this is still a major part of the story, I believe the most dominant narrative is that of a community repeatedly fighting for control over their own development, perhaps partially as a way of protecting their livelihood systems. This led me to a review of the literature on participation in development (see Chapter 2), and to my concluding theory that the

⁶ A completely clear theoretical slate is obviously impossible, thus I have included my worldview in the interest of researcher reflexivity.

current political economy in post-apartheid South Africa does not facilitate or encourage participation but rather severely limits it.

The strategy for data collection must also be discussed specifically. In order to answer my main research question (what are the power dynamics involved in the proposed mining project in Xolobeni?), it was necessary to interview key stakeholders. The main stakeholders identified were the Xolobeni community, the AmaDiba Crisis Committee (ACC), Xolco, the traditional tribal authority presiding over Xolobeni, the mining company MRC/TEM, the local Mbizana municipal government, and the national government as represented by the Department of Mineral Affairs and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. As research progressed, it became evident that the Accoda Trust, a community organization meant to attract and manage tourism development, was also a key stakeholder as most of the community viewed Xolco as a forced replacement of the Accoda Trust.

In terms of the broad Xolobeni community, the goal of data collection was to attempt to verify the numerous newspaper articles and previous reports that indicate that the local people were against the mining project, while at the same time attempting to gain a deeper understanding of why people are against the mine. Random houses along the coast were thus approached, in the company of a community guide and translator, and in depth interviews were conducted amongst the willing. The number of interviews necessary was determined using Kvale's law of diminishing returns; "new interviews are conducted to a point where further interviews yield little new knowledge" (Kvale 1994: 165). Community members actively involved in either the ACC or Xolco were then sought specifically after interviews with each organization's public relations chair, who provided names and contact information. The community guide helped seek out former Accoda Trust members, local representatives (headmen) of the tribal authority, and locals who are known to support the mine. Thus, random sampling was never conducted in any stage, but rather purposive sampling aimed at locating those with the most knowledge of and involvement with the mining project and its opposition or support in the community. No attempt was made to quantify responses or categories of responses, as the sample was non-representative and questions were not asked in a standardized way to all participants (Malterud 2001: 487). Interviews were normally conducted individually in order to

eliminate the effects of group-think, but on a few occasions interviews were conducted in small groups of never more than three at the request of the interviewees due to their personal time constraints.

The result is 26 community respondents, two of whom are on the board of the ACC, two of whom are on the board of Xolco and one who was formerly on the board, three headmen from the tribal authority, and four of whom were involved with Accoda Trust. All attempts to contact anyone from MRC/TEM went unanswered, and interviews with the DMA and DEAT could not be obtained. Numerous interviews with officials at the Mbizana municipality were conducted. A decision was made, once the community interviews were completed and the narrative of participation had been revealed, to specifically seek interviews with the three Ward Councillors currently representing the Xolobeni community (before the May election), as well as their three likely replacements, as Ward Councillors are meant to facilitate and encourage people's participation in government (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Two of the three before-election Councillors were interviewed, as well as all three likely replacements (all three of whom are now Ward Councillors). Mbizana's Local Economic Development officer for Xolobeni was also interviewed, along with a fieldworker for the Xolobeni area. Finally, interviews were conducted with Colin Bell, the former CEO of Wilderness Safaris, an eco-tourism company that was on the verge of a deal with Accoda Trust, as well as John Clarke, a social worker with clients in the community and a board member of the SWC.

Chapter 2: Participation and Empowerment in Development Interventions

2.1 Introduction

The contemporary concept of development has existed for over 65 years, since the creation of the Bretton-Woods institutions following the end of World War II. While some development goals have been met, it is not controversial to state that development has largely failed to successfully assist the underdeveloped world in its bid to ‘catch-up’ with the wealthy industrialized nations. Poverty remains unacceptably high, as an astonishing 40 percent of the developing world’s population still lives in absolute poverty, while inequality, both between and within nations, has actually grown (Bourguignon and Morrison 2002).

Amidst the frustratingly slow pace of change, the only reasonable thing to do is to re-examine the very way that development interventions are designed, structured, implemented, and monitored. One of the positions that have emerged from the critique of development interventions is that the top-down nature of development interventions intensify the causes of poverty and underdevelopment, reinforcing the very power relations that they should be attempting to reverse. Thus, development planning often “perpetuates elitist, centralizing, and change resistant tendencies” (Grabow and Heskin 1973: 106). Time and time again, development practitioners who design and implement development interventions have a distorted view of local realities, leading to projects that do not address the real problem. In response to the deficiencies of top-down development, a huge movement has arisen in development thinking and practice towards bottom-up development strategies and methods that attempt to confront and resolve the problems and contradictions that tend to arise from a top-down style.

The most obvious starting point in confronting top-down development is to envision a bottom-up form of development and examine its benefits and limitations. Participation in development therefore becomes eminent, not only in the implementation of development projects but also in the design, planning, and monitoring stages. The concept of popular participation recognizes people’s right to control their own

development, empowers them to change their lives proactively, and leads to more successful development outcomes.

This chapter discusses the reasons that top-down style development has repeatedly failed to reach its goals; a distorted view of local realities, bias against local knowledge, and lack of ownership from the intended beneficiaries. The idea of participation is then discussed in detail: how and in what way people can participate in development projects, and what level of popular participation should be strived for by development institutions and governments. Evidence that participation leads to better development outcomes is then provided, along with an explanation as to why this is the case. The argument that participation is an end in itself in the interest of empowerment is presented. Next, it is argued that participation is an idea that is widely embraced in theory, but often resisted in practice. The reasons for this phenomenon are addressed, as well as possible strategies to encourage increased participation in reality rather than just on paper. The chapter concludes by contrasting ‘invited’ and ‘invented’ spaces of popular participation in development.

2.2 Biases Inherent in Top-Down Development

Numerous physical, mental, and societal factors can distort development practitioners’ view of the problems facing the poor, especially in rural areas. In *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (1983), Robert Chambers labels the development professionals in charge of researching, designing, implementing and monitoring rural development projects “rural development tourists” as they normally live in urban areas, if they reside in the country at all. Even if said professionals happened to grow up in a rural area, they have doubtlessly since moved to the city. The very same process of the core extracting surplus from the periphery that makes so many rural areas isolated and underdeveloped in the first place is what caused them to do so:

Rural parents educate their children hoping they will gain urban employment; officials in districts seek postings to regional headquarters, those in regional headquarters try to get to capital cities, and those in capital cities try to join the brain drain to richer countries.
(Chambers 1983: 169)

With almost all development professionals living outside rural areas, a quick picture of the rural situation needs to be made in order to develop a suitable development plan. Unfortunately, the amount of time needed to get an accurate picture of the rural reality is rarely taken. Instead, “rural development tourism” is conducted, and with it comes numerous biases that affect what is seen, who is met, and what is discussed, distorting the outsiders’ view of the situation.

Spatial biases occur due to simple geographic realities. Rural areas closer to regional headquarters are visited more often than those more isolated (Chambers 1983: 13). Perhaps more importantly, people, places, and things closer to a decent road are given priority over those that are far from serviceable infrastructure (Ibid). Rather than having random and unpredictable effects on who and what is seen, this spatial bias explicitly favours the rich over the poor, as the poorest people in rural settings are often the most isolated and the furthest from infrastructure (Ibid). Thus, spatial biases exacerbate the most important and fluid form of bias, person biases.

Person biases refer to the type of people that are encountered on a typical short-term visit to a rural area. Elite bias leads the researcher to wealthier and more influential members of a community; headmen, religious leaders, teachers, and paraprofessionals (Chambers 1983: 18). Gender bias causes male input to be much higher than female, as females are often culturally pressured to be deferential and timid, especially when faced with male visitors (Ibid: 19). Community members who have adopted new services, tools, or practices are given more attention than those who have not due to a user/adopter bias (Ibid). Those who are “active, present, and living” are also given a greater degree of attention due to ease of access and visibility (Ibid). Thus, person biases lead the outsider, researcher, or development professional to those who are relatively wealthy, have high-status, are male, and are active and participating; in essence, to those who are relatively empowered in their setting. Those who are disempowered; the poor, the isolated, outcasts, women, and those less active and slower to adopt new services, programmes, or technologies, are given less attention due to these natural occurring person biases.

The biggest and most important bias affecting top-down development procedures is the bias against local knowledge:

From rich-country professionals and urban-based professionals in third world countries right down to the lowliest extension workers it is a common assumption that the modern scientific knowledge of the centre is sophisticated, advanced and valid and, conversely, that whatever rural people may know will be unsystematic, imprecise, superficial and often plain wrong. (Chambers 1983: 76)

However, local knowledge that is worthy and valuable does exist in large quantities, even in places where the vast majority of the population is uneducated and illiterate.

Knowledge of the structure of the community, the geography of the land, the nature of the local climate, the power relations in the community, viable livelihood systems in the local context, and what problems stand in the way of the community's development are all areas of knowledge that someone who has lived in the community for all or most of their lives is in a much better position to possess. In terms of farming, which areas of land are most fertile and what crops work best where is something that a local farmer may be more qualified to answer in his or her own local setting than a scientist studying agriculture in a lab. In terms of improving farming output, the local farmers' knowledge must be accounted for, as only the farmer can know whether newly designed tools and techniques are realistic and suitable for their own circumstances. This does not mean that local people always know best, or that poor people do not mix well with modernity and should therefore cling to their traditional livelihood systems. Enormous material advances have come from experts, advances that can be transferred from the laboratory to the field. Advocates of participatory development argue that local knowledge and priorities must work alongside and in tandem with modern, scientific knowledge in order to transfer the highest possible benefit to developing countries.

The often cited case of animal-drawn wheeled tool-carriers is a perfect example of how a top-down development intervention that ignores local knowledge and local realities can fail to reach its goals. The idea of development professionals was to create a multipurpose, mobile tool-carrier that can be used for ploughing, seeding, weeding, and transport (Starkey 1988). Farmers roundly rejected this technology on a consistent basis; it was costly, too heavy, hard to manoeuvre, inconvenient, complicated, and more risky than having a selection of different single-purpose tools (Chambers 1997: 21).

Approximately 10,000 of the tool-carriers were made at a cost of over \$40 million before it was finally realized that farmers would not use them, something that could have been

gleaned much earlier by allowing the intended beneficiaries to participate in the development process (Ibid).

A top-down development strategy can also lead to poorly targeted research due to the outsiders' distorted view of what kinds of improvements are needed. For example, development research has repeatedly concentrated on what is marketable and exportable rather than what is consumed locally. In terms of farming, this means that very little research goes into improving subsistence farming techniques as compared to the research dedicated to improving the cultivation of cash crops for export, valuing crops such as tea, cotton, coffee and cocoa over the staples of the rural poor such as millet, sorghum, cassava and yams. In Zambia, despite the fact that cassava is the basic staple for the rural poor, it does not appear on agricultural production surveys, and has "only one solitary research agronomist working on cassava" (Chambers 1983: 77). In terms of the raising and use of livestock, this has meant an enormous neglect of research regarding donkeys and goats despite their widespread use among the poor in the developing world.

Farming research offers a good example of the way in which lack of participation can stifle development. In *Challenging the Professions* (1993), Chambers describes the way in which development professionals view of the problem of the refusal of farmers in the developing world to adopt new technologies has evolved. In the 1950s and 1960s, the first decades of contemporary development, development experts blamed the farmers' non-adoption on ignorance, and the solution was therefore education (Chambers 1993: 67). In the 1970s and 1980s, the problem was seen as farm-level constraints, such as scale and cost of inputs; the solution was to remove these constraints by supplying the inputs (Ibid). When that strategy failed, development experts finally realized in the 1990s that the technology does not fit, and began to go about designing technology that farmers actually wanted through a participatory process (Chambers 1993: 67). While it is clear that these shifts have been oversimplified, the evolution of development experts' attitude toward the poor rate of technology transfer for third world farmers is a revealing microcosm of development practice as a whole. In many cases, it is not the ignorance of the intended beneficiary that is the problem, but the arrogance of the development expert.

The top-down development strategy falls in line with a modernist view of development. The underdeveloped global South is seen as poor because it is not as far

along on a natural and linear development process that all countries experience. The solution is to help these underdeveloped countries ‘catch-up’ through transfers of knowledge and technology from the modernized developed global North.

In theory, this modernist view has few supporters, as most academics have recognized that it would be impossible for a state to develop in the same fashion as the global North developed due to a completely different global economic context. However, in practice modernization still seems to be the dominant theory, as practitioners continually attempt to impart their modern ways of doing things on the “backward” South. Romantic notions of the preeminence of traditional ways of life and local knowledge is not being argued here, but rather a “best of both” situation in which empirical and general knowledge of the modern is combined with local context specific knowledge:

The question now is to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of outsiders’ and rural people’s knowledge, and to see how the strengths may be combined and the weaknesses neutralized. (Chambers 1983: 93)

The state of underdevelopment that characterizes much of the world and the poverty and inequality associated with it is not due merely to a lack of proper development interventions. There are structural causes as well, as the global economic system works to create winners (mainly in the global North) and losers (mainly in the global South). Therefore, development experts must take into account systems of oppression and exploitation if they aim to reverse these processes. Development strategies based on modernism rarely address these systemic issues.

Participation addresses the systemic oppression and exploitation of the global South in at least one way; through empowerment. By empowering the poor and marginalized, participation at the very least confronts the issue of powerlessness. When poor and marginalized people are empowered, they are able to engage development processes themselves, and the structure of the system must change in order to allow for their newfound empowerment, or otherwise crush it.

2.3 Participation

In order to avoid the downfalls of top-down development, many have argued that a new strategy of development should be envisioned that encourages a much higher degree of participation. Development experts must not start with their own priorities, but instead determine the priorities of the poor and start from there. Using this strategy, development professionals can work with poor people to design development interventions that assist the poor and create new opportunities for improvement without destroying or disrupting already existing livelihood strategies.

Chambers explains the “new development paradigm” that is needed as having four interacting conceptual levels: normative, empirical, conceptual and practical (Chambers 1993: 10). At the normative level, development should be people-centered, putting people and their priorities ahead of things, such as the construction of new buildings, and putting the poorest people before the less poor (Ibid). Empirically, there are four elements, two of which are particularly relevant here; poor rural people are knowledgeable, and rural people are capable of self-reliant organization (Ibid).

Conceptually, it is important to remember that development is not a linear process as it is viewed under modernization theory, but rather a complex process of adaptation to a changing global and local economic environment (Ibid). In addition, an important conceptual underpinning that justifies the new emphasis on participation is empowerment, both mentally and physically. Giving control over development projects to the intended beneficiaries will give local people a sense of ownership over the process and the outcomes. In the past, local people have often been involved with development projects only as recipients and therefore do not feel as responsible for their success. Without being involved in the design and planning phases and excluded from the monitoring process, local people have justifiably failed to take ownership of development outcomes. How can those targeted for development be expected to take ownership of a result, whether negative or positive, when they were not even allowed to determine on what criteria to base the success of the project? Thus, by allowing the local people to control all phases of the project, including design, planning, implementation, and monitoring, development professionals will give people a much more important role both literally and mentally.

Not only will using a participatory approach give the intended beneficiaries a greater sense of ownership over the project, but it will also give local people greater confidence regarding their personal abilities. Poor, uneducated and illiterate people tend to also have low self-confidence, reinforcing their relative lack of skills. However, participatory development projects can demonstrate to people of what they are capable:

And we thought we were so foolish because we could not write. Yet look, we had all this information inside us. –quote from a Zimbabwean woman after modeling and diagramming a part of a rural development project (Chambers 1997: 130).

Thus, the very process of participating in a development project can mentally empower poor people to be more confident in themselves and their abilities, in some cases making them aware of capabilities they did not know they had.

On a practical level, the “new development paradigm” means emphasizing decentralization and empowerment, allowing poor people to control their own lives and their own development (Ibid: 12). In terms of poverty research, poor people should be able to create their own criteria of economic well-being beyond simple per capita incomes. Poverty research using this participatory technique has revealed what can be termed “sustainable livelihood security” that includes many factors that determine a household’s economic well-being (Ibid: 92). The factors that poor people include vary by person, location, and time, underscoring the importance of creating context-specific solutions in the interest of poverty alleviation.

More specifically, a participatory development project uses a range of approaches and methods meant to give the intended beneficiaries control over their own development. The most important strategy is to have local people doing the actual activities involved. The power and control over the project must be handed over to the people with whom the project is concerned (Chambers 1997: 117). In terms of methods, this means that local people interview, map, model, rank, score, analyse, diagram, present, plan, observe, list, compare, count, estimate, act, monitor, and evaluate:

In consequence, they [local people] are more in command of the process, they own and retain more of the information, and they are better placed to identify their priorities for action, and to determine and control that action. (Chambers 1997: 132)

In terms of behavior and attitude of the development professional, this means trusting that local people can complete these tasks, and that it is necessary to listen, learn, relax, embrace error, and respect the community (Ibid: 117). The main aim is to have local people do all the activities involved with the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of a development project. The job of the development professional is then to facilitate and support rather than control and direct.

2.3.1 Levels of Participation

As the discussion so far has shown, advocates of participation believe it transcends the problems created by top down approaches by empowering the beneficiaries of projects to contribute their knowledge and help shape better project outcomes. Yet as the following shows, participation can take on different forms. The assertion that more participation is needed in development projects begs the question, how much participation is enough? And how does one determine the level of participation in a given development project?

To answer these questions, it is useful to review Jules Pretty's (1995) 'typology of participation' in "Participatory Learning for Sustainable Agriculture". Pretty's typology builds upon Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation", and is more suited for development projects (where Arnstein's was designed for planning theory). Despite its necessary simplicity, Pretty's typology can provide a frame of reference in order to classify the level of participation in a development project. Table 2.1 lists and describes Pretty's seven levels of participation in development projects.

Table 2.1: Typology of Participation (Pretty 1995)

Participation Type	Characteristics
1. Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply a pretence; beneficiary group representatives on official boards or committees are appointed and not elected and have no real power.
2. Passive Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Unilateral announcements are made by administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information being shared belonging only to external professionals.

3.Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and thus control analysis. The process does not concede any share in decision-making and professionals are under no obligation to implement people's views.
4.Participation for Material Incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. They are involved in neither the experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very often common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5.Functional Participation	Participation is seen by the external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, such as reduced costs or increased efficiency. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already being made by external agents. At worst, local people may be co-opted to serve external goals.
6. Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just as a means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures and practices.
7. Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resource and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Using Pretty's typology, it is evident that the level of participation for any development project that wishes to give the intended beneficiaries equal power to outside experts should be either 6, interactive participation, or 7, self-mobilization. At these levels of participation, development is people-centered, local people are empowered, local knowledge respected and utilized, and the intended beneficiaries necessarily have a vested interest in the project.

2.4 Participation Leading to More Successful Development Outcomes

A greater degree of participation in development projects has been shown to lead to better outcomes. Most studies that attempt to demonstrate this causality focus on a small number of specific case studies due to the large amount of detailed information required to make a determination on the level of participation involved. A discussion of the merits and limitations of case study research is included in the methodology section in Chapter 1.

One early example of case study research that reveals the virtues of participatory development strategies is David Korten's study of five successful rural Asian development projects. The author attempts to demonstrate the positive affects of a participatory process by examining in detail the methods and strategies used in the five projects (Korten 1980). The author notes that each of the projects shares three characteristics:

...each involves a rural development effort which seeks to engage rural people in their own advancement; each is generally recognized as more successful than the average; and each is dependent on effective program action more than on a uniquely favorable setting. (Korten 1980: 485)

The study finds that the success of the five projects was due to their use of a three stage participatory learning process; learning to be effective, learning to be efficient, and learning to expand (Korten 1980: 502). In support of Chambers' contention that a participatory process must embrace error, the study advocates an experimental learning by doing method (Ibid). Not only is the success of participatory development processes lauded, but the reader is also cautioned that such projects should start small and learn to be effective and efficient before expanding.

Not all research on the success of participatory development projects focuses on a small number of case studies. An important 1995 World Bank study set out to prove causality through a review of 121 diverse rural water projects (Isham et al). The study had several significant findings. First, it demonstrated a strong association between project performance and beneficiary participation (Ibid: 196). Next, it addressed the often repeated criticism that the association does not indicate causality, and the possibility that projects that perform well illicit higher levels of participation due to their success. The authors exposed that levels of participation for most of the successful

projects was high from the very beginning (in the planning and design phases), well before anyone could determine the success of the project as a factor in deciding whether or not to participate (Ibid: 194). The authors also measured success and participation at each individual stage of the project, and found that participation in early stages was similarly associated with success in the early stages just as it was overall (Ibid).

2.5 Participation as a Means or an End

While the success that a participatory process engenders in development outcomes is important, equally important is the empowering effect of the process itself, regardless of the outcome. Participation should thus be viewed as both a means (for better development outcomes and efficiency) and an end in itself (in the interest of the empowerment of the poor). Seen in the light of empowerment, participation changes from a depoliticized, technical intervention to a highly political, emancipating and radical idea:

Whereas participation as a means is politically neutral insofar as it does not address power differentials, participation as an end has an emancipatory, politically radical component in that it seeks to redress unequal power relations. (Parfitt 2004: 539)

In order to achieve its empowering and emancipating goals, participatory development must account for differences within communities. If power differentials are ignored, any benefits from a development project will likely be captured by the more powerful members of the community (local elite), as has often been the case with rural development projects in the past (Parfitt 2004: 539). Differences in gender, age, wealth, and ethnicity need to be accounted for to avoid the continued isolation and exploitation of oppressed segments of society.

Numerous methods can be employed to account for such differences, such as having local people rank different community members' economic and social well-being, and having separate meetings with women and men, young and old, or subsistence farmers and wage-earners. Once differences are made clear, it is easier to see who in the community needs empowerment. At some point, the different groups should be brought together in order to form a consensus on necessary action, with the poorest and most disempowered people in the community being given the highest priority.

...PRA [participation] holds great potential for helping people address and resolve conflict, because of its emphasis on communication skills. It is necessary for development workers to recognize that conflict as a political process is present in any community, and to become skilled in the facilitation and arbitration of conflicts as they arise through the PRA [participation] process. (Holland and Blackburn 1998: 193)⁷

In addition to empowering the poorest and most disadvantaged within the community in contrast to local elites, empowerment must also be seen on a larger scale. The global economic and political system also has the effect of disempowering certain groups on a much larger scale, and these macro-issues should be considered and actively confronted:

...we cannot expect participation to deliver meaningful political transformation if it is not coupled with a thorough analysis of how development as a process—capitalist, modernist, and so forth—rather than development as ‘willed policy and action’, produces the conditions under which social exclusion proliferates. (Ervin 2010: 775)

The capitalist and modernist obsession with efficiency is one area that participatory development attempts to challenge. Participation cannot be sold solely as a means to greater efficiency:

This resort to a discourse of participation as means effectively re-inscribes the primacy of a top-down logic of the need to achieve measurable objectives efficiently. Thus, power re-enters the equation incognito under the guise of the demands of efficiency. (Parfitt 2004: 544)

Although participatory development has two key interacting goals, empowerment of the excluded and better development outcomes, the goal of empowerment must reign supreme. According to advocates of popular participation, if empowerment is sacrificed for efficiency, parts of society will continue to be neglected and excluded from development.

2.6 Participation Embraced in Theory, Resisted in Practice

Theoretically, participatory development is an ethos which has received strong support and endorsement. From far-left academics to the IMF and World Bank, a wide

⁷ PRA refers to “Participatory Rural Appraisal”, one of several approaches in participation.

array of development actors have declared that encouraging participation in development projects is important and worthwhile.

However, while participation has been hailed publicly and theoretically, in practice many of its most important tenets have been ignored or resisted. In part, the reason behind this resistance is undoubtedly the natural tendency of institutions to resist change. Many development institutions may find it difficult to encourage participation in practice due to several logistical factors: donors and upper-management prefer fixed schedules and budgets to flexibility, set time-frames rather than the patience required for participation, and avoiding, ignoring, or hiding error rather than embracing them as part of an experimental process. Multilateral bank personnel are professionally rewarded for big projects and dispersing funds and punished for delays that are often necessary to ensure a sufficient level of participation:

....multilateral bank staff members have tended to be evaluated and rewarded for the size of the loans and grants they negotiate, and then the speed with which these are disbursed. Delays have been seen not as savings, as necessary for participation, as economies or opportunities to learn, or as needed for local differentiation and fit, but as 'slippage'. (Chambers 1997: 66)

Institutions can be further reluctant to hand over control to local people through interactive participation because it lowers the institution's ability to directly affect the project outcome. Additionally, the World Bank staff has traditionally been dominated by economists who greatly outnumber, outrank, and exert greater influence than the small number of sociologists and social anthropologists with whom they work (Ibid: 49).

Yet there are other explanations for the tendency to embrace participation on paper and resist it in practice that assert the trend is purposeful and not merely the result of institutional structures. Many critics of the new focus on participation assert that participation is being used as a neo-liberal strategy of dominance through inclusion, as certain voices and interests are invited to participate in pre-defined spaces, while undesirable radical forces that aim to truly alter normalized power relations are pushed aside and delegitimized. Miraftab (2006) describes the way the neo-liberal paradigm has created 'invited' spaces of participation that seek to allow only for action that does not disrupt normalized power relations:

‘Invited’ spaces are defined as occupied by those grassroots actions and their allied NGOs that are legitimized by donors and government intervention. ‘Invented’ spaces are defined as occupied by those collective actions by the poor that directly confront the authorities and challenge the status quo...in one space, strategies cope within the existing structure; in the other, resistance is mounted to change it. Grassroots activities move back and forth between those spaces. Institutions of power, such as the mainstream media, the state and international donor organizations, however, configure these spaces in a binary relation, and tend to criminalize the latter by designating only the former as the ‘proper’ space for civil participation. (Miraftab 2006: 195)

In this way, elites are able to allow only for participation that does not challenge existing power structures by delegitimizing ‘invented’ spaces as destructive and even criminal.

The degree of support shown by institutions of power when confronted with different developmental approaches often hinges on whether or not their power will be challenged or limited by the approach. In *Rural Development* (1983), Chambers constructs a scale of the “acceptability of rural development approaches to local and other elites” (164). The most acceptable approaches address physical weakness; feeding programmes, family planning, and curative health programs for example (Ibid). Such programs do not address empowerment and do not challenge normalized power relations. Slightly less acceptable approaches address the issue of isolation, and include the construction of roads, and the improvement and extension of education and other public services (Ibid). Approaches that address vulnerability, such as seasonal public works, seasonal credit, crop insurance, and preventative health are often only moderately acceptable as they decrease people’s dependence on the state and other elites for assistance during crises, increasing their power and freedom and thus decreasing the power of elites. Even less acceptable are approaches that directly address poverty, such as distribution of new assets and redistribution of old assets as this is a direct challenge to a key foundation behind the power of elites; their relative wealth (Ibid). On the bottom of the scale are strategies that directly address issues of powerlessness: legal aid, enforcement of liberal laws, trade unions, and political mobilization (Ibid).

Participatory development at the interactive or self-mobilization level directly addresses the issue of the powerlessness of the poor. Participation transfers the power and control over poor people’s development strategy from the elites who are normally in

control of the resources necessary to conduct development activity to the poor people themselves. In the following section, I will argue that high levels of participation do necessarily address the imperative of empowering poor people, and briefly discuss strategies to ensure that participation is not used as a neo-liberal strategy of dominance through inclusion.

2.7 Achieving High Levels of Participation Through Institutional Change

It should...be recognized that participatory development has no predetermined outcomes, and the space for unintended consequences—both positive and negative—is always present within it. (Williams 2004: 565)

The criticism that participatory development can be used as a neo-liberal strategy of dominance through inclusion is valid. Opinions and persons viewed as radical or undesirable by elites can be purposefully excluded while some of the community is included, and the process will still likely be labeled ‘participatory’ by the implementing institution. However, just because there are negative and manipulating forms of participation does not make positive participation that gives real power to people at the bottom any less empowering and emancipating. Many countries claim to be democracies while restricting who can run for election, intimidating voters and rigging elections, but this does not make genuine democracy any less desirable. The task, therefore, is to develop strategies and policies that ensure participation is used in a genuine, all-inclusive fashion.

Whether PRA [participation] is equitable and good depends on whom it involves. The natural tendency is for this to be men rather than women, the better-off rather than the worse-off, and those of higher status groups rather than those of lower status. The challenge is...that the weaker are identified and empowered and equity is served. (Chambers 1997: 217)

An examination of the idea of radical or insurgent planning offers useful insight as to the goals that a participatory development framework should seek to achieve. In “Foundations for Radical Planning” (1973), Grabow and Heskin describe the top-down, centrist, and modernist form most planning takes as elitist and exclusionary, and call for a participatory planning process:

What one social scientist or one planner thinks-whatever his status within his discipline or the community-is at best of marginal interest. The question which must be asked is, under what conditions will it be possible for the membership of a community to articulate its true needs and freely form a collective idea of its preferences...both the transformation of the present society, whose structure hinders progress toward a truly responsive society, and the substance of a responsive society must draw on ever greater participation of ever more members of society in ever broader and deeper management of their collective affairs. (Grabow and Heskin 1973: 107)

Radical planning uses an epistemology that accepts subjective, indigenous, and experimental knowledge rather than only accepting technical, scientific knowledge as is the case in normal planning (Friedmann 1987: 389). Grabow and Heskin thus call for “participatory evolutionary experimentation” in planning to offset the centralizing, exclusionary, undemocratic tendency of modernist planning (1973: 111).

Similar to radical planning, participation must deliberately seek to “destabilize the normalized order of things” (Miraftab 2009: 33). Institutional change must therefore take place in regards to both national governments and multilateral development agencies. The role of the state in the “new development paradigm” is, most importantly, to protect people’s rights.

The poorer people are, the more they need secure rights. To enjoy their rights, they need to know what they are and how to claim them. They also often need organization and solidarity to overcome vested interests. (Chambers 1993: 119)

By giving their citizens well-defined and well-publicized rights, the state can protect people from harmful forms of top-down development that can displace people from their land and disrupt already existing livelihood strategies. Chapter 4 contains a larger discussion on rights, with specific reference to South Africa and Xolobeni.

The state can also attempt to create legislation that requires popular participation in government and developmental activities. In Bolivia, the government enacted the Law of Popular Participation in 1994 which decentralizes authority and revenue to municipalities and local institutions such as vigilance committees, enabling them to “carry out a range of planning, management and auditing activities” (Blackburn and de Toma 1998: 30). Decentralization is a key strategy in encouraging participation, and can help to stymie the core’s tendency to suck away the surplus, skills, and labour of the periphery (see section 2.2) by transferring resources away from central, core locations to the periphery. Not only should more revenue and authority be given to local government structures, but those structures must also be required to use participatory methods to encourage direct public participation in planning and implementation in order to avoid a situation in which local elites simply intercept the benefits.

Institutionalizing participatory strategies into hierarchically structured organizations is a difficult process that requires “a major reorientation of planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation systems” (Blackburn and Holland 1998: 56). Higher-level staff must commit to the approach, while fieldworkers and extension staff require “new skills and competences if they are to switch from a teaching to a facilitating role” (Ibid). Flexibility in budgets and timelines is important in order to allow the ideas and priorities of local people take precedence over blueprints created by development experts. Similar to the participatory process itself, institutions must take an experimental, learning-by-doing approach that invokes patience and an understanding that institutionalizing participation should be a medium rather than short-term goal.

Those who would dismiss participatory development as simply a change in method are missing the point. Participatory development is more than a change in method; it is a change in power structure. It addresses the issue of whether well-meaning outside experts or political forces have the right to intervene in poor people’s lives, and concludes that it is only just to do so in a collaborative manner that puts the priorities of the beneficiaries first. Going beyond just a change in method, participatory development seeks to alter the fundamental power relations (and powerlessness of the poor) that underlies their poverty in the first place.

Critics of participatory development may also argue that institutions and development professionals simply cannot change in a way that empowers poor people because this would reduce their own power and therefore be against their self-interest. Conversely, advocates of participation assert that most development professionals desire to change the world in a way that uplifts everyone, and do not see the poverty and powerlessness of others as a gain for themselves. By being aware of and confronting the way power relations and hierarchies affect the development process, development professionals can begin to address them and even consciously reverse them.

2.8 Forcing the Issue: Invited and Invented Spaces of Participation

Spaces for participation that are created from above are known as ‘invited’ spaces of participation (Cornwall 2002). Invited spaces do not always have predetermined outcomes, and are usually subject to contestation:

Spaces for participation are ambiguous and unpredictable. Particular spaces may be *produced* by the powerful, but filled with those with alternative visions whose involvement transforms their possibilities, pushing its boundaries, changing the discourse and taking control. They may be created with one purpose in mind, and used by those who engage in it for something quite different. The temporary spaces opened up by the use of participatory methodologies, for example, may serve to produce new forms of surveillance and control or lend moral authenticity to the prescriptions of the powerful, as well as to create spaces for unheard voices or spark collective action to claim entitlements. (Cornwall 2002: 51)

Thus, the concept of invited spaces of participation is neither inherently negative nor positive. The danger of invited spaces is that they “may work to render other arenas for voice illegitimate” (Ibid: 52). By creating invited spaces of participation for citizens, governments may actually be, purposefully or otherwise, including only desired voices while excluding and even criminalizing others.

When popular participation in development is denied to people by the authorities, strategies can form from below to participate in ways unsanctioned by the state or implementing institution. Spaces of participation created by poor citizens themselves

have been labeled ‘invented’ spaces (Miraftab 2006). The main difference between the two spaces is that invited spaces are set up and defined by the state, while invented spaces are created by citizens themselves and lie outside what the state considers acceptable citizen participation (Ibid: 195). Invented spaces of participation therefore have the advantage of not having to play by a state-mandated set of rules. Thus, invented spaces can confront systemic problems and the state more directly, while invited spaces of participation more often seek to cope with existing systems of hardship (Ibid).

However, it is important to realize that the two spaces are not exclusive, but are instead:

...in a mutually constituted, interacting relationship, not a binary one...grassroots activities move back and forth between those spaces. Institutions of power, such as the mainstream media, the state and international donor organizations, however, configure these spaces in a binary relation, and tend to criminalize the latter by designating only the former as the ‘proper’ space for civil participation. (Miraftab 2006: 195)

In terms of participatory development, despite methodological strategies to mitigate exclusion, in all likelihood invited forms of participation will never be all-inclusive. Some voices will always be excluded, whether due to their lack of access and visibility due to spatial and societal factors, or due to political beliefs and priorities that conflict with state interests. In addition, even those who are included can find invited spaces to be restrictive, manipulative, or dogmatic. Invented spaces of participation will always have a place in the political economy of development, and as such efforts to portray actions in invented spaces as criminal should be viewed with a very critical eye. In Chapter 4, I will examine the way in which Xolobeni residents used a variety of invited and invented spaces of participation to oppose the mining project.

Chapter Three: Historical Top-Down Development in Xolobeni

3.1 Introduction

Participatory development, as discussed in the previous chapter, is widely embraced in theory. In post-apartheid South Africa, the government has consistently recognized the importance of people's participation in the development process, and even created a position in local government for Ward Councilors, whose chief responsibility is to encourage participation in government. In practice, participatory development has been resisted in South Africa as sharply as it has elsewhere in the world. The apartheid government used participation simply as part of a strategy to legitimize their rule in claiming that numerous black homelands were independent states despite their oppression and manipulation. Labeling the homelands independent, the apartheid government attempted to shift the responsibility for the poverty in the area to the poor residents themselves. In reality, people were only allowed to participate in the implementation of the apartheid government's pre-designed development plans. The fact that many of the development plans involved relocations with insufficient if any compensation, cattle-culling, and limits on living space meant that those who did participate were often labeled collaborators or traitors, pitting residents against one another.

In post-apartheid South Africa, participation is still a contested ground. The Constitution and other legislation that is in place do a good job of protecting people's rights, including their right to control and meaningfully participate in their own

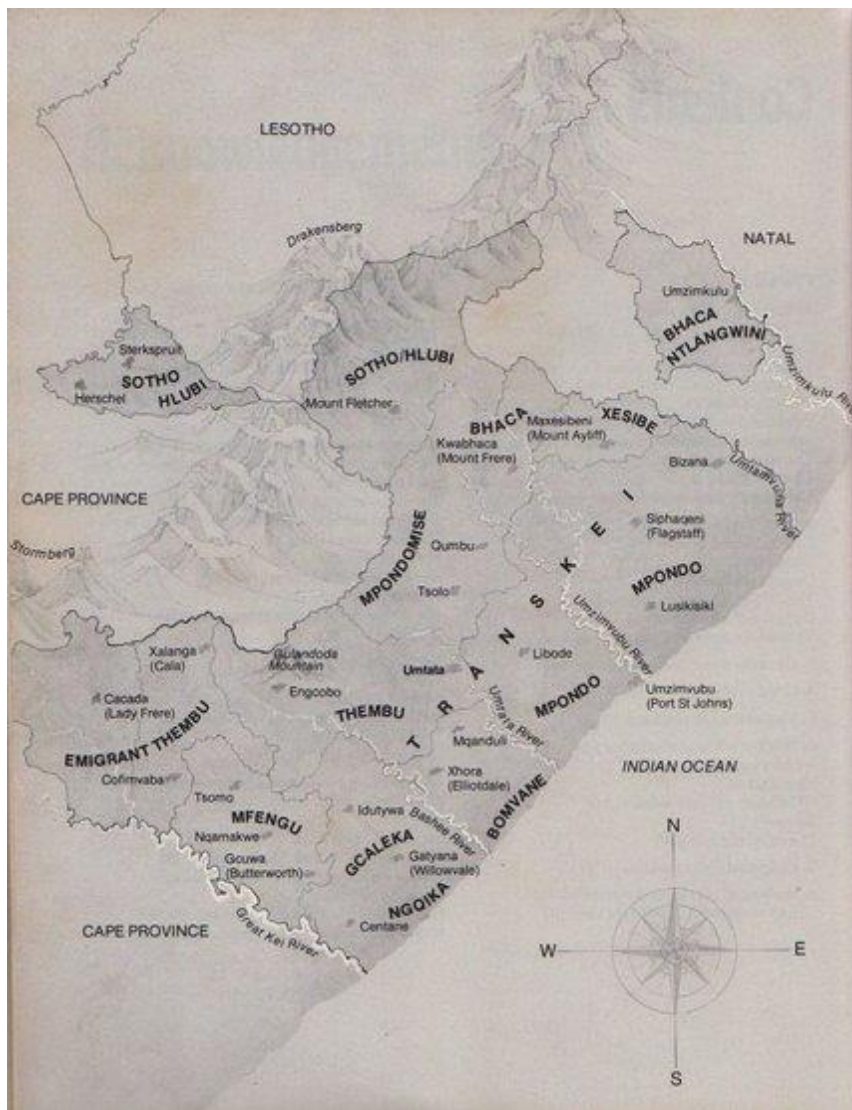
development. In terms of social policy, South Africa has a moderate system of transfers to help the poor in the form of social grants and subsidized housing, electricity, and water. However, the development strategy of the South African state has been characterized by a neo-liberal, private sector led approach. If a more participatory approach is to be followed, South Africa needs to confront the way in which the current development orientation tends to constrain and limit popular participation in development projects.

This chapter discusses the four major developmental interventions that have been directed to the Xolobeni area. First, the apartheid government's Betterment Scheme is discussed, as well as the ensuing Mpondo revolt. Next, the gum tree development is summarized, along with the resulting "Gum Tree Rebellion". Subsequently, the tourism development initiated by the EU Development Programme is examined. The way in which the South African government has attempted to implement the mining project is then discussed, and a conclusion is drawn from the historical sequence that the South African government has repeatedly employed a top-down development strategy in projects targeting Xolobeni. The argument is backed by a brief analysis of South Africa's macro-economic development policies, which numerous scholars have concluded are private sector driven, and neo-liberal in character.

3.2 The Betterment Scheme and Mpondo Revolt

In order to discuss the Betterment Scheme and the ensuing 1960 Mpondo Revolt, it is first necessary to understand the historical context of the Transkei at the time. The Transkei was considered a semi-autonomous "homeland" for the Xhosa people by the apartheid government, and later went on to gain official independence in 1976. Part of apartheid South Africa's policy of "separate development", the Transkei was thus officially in charge of running its own affairs and designing its own development policy, with assistance from the apartheid state.

Figure 3.1: Map of Former Transkei



3.1- Map depicting the boundaries of the former Transkei. Eastern Mpondoland refers to the area North and East of the Umzimvubu River. The Xolobeni Mining Project site is located at the Northeast tip of the former Transkei along the coast. (www.africafederation.net)

In practice, the Transkei was still under the authority of the apartheid state, and its Chief Minister Kaiser Matanzima and his government were widely regarded as puppets of the apartheid government. In terms of focusing specifically on Xolobeni, Paramount Chief Botha Sicgau officially ruled Xolobeni and all of Eastern Mpondoland until 1961. Chief Sicgau's rule was contingent on his favor with the apartheid government, and he thus became perhaps the most infamous 'traitor' or 'collaborator' in Eastern Mpondoland. The power of chiefs was reconstituted under white authority in 1956, and an important change occurred; headmen, who were previously formally independent of chiefly control, were now subordinated to the chiefs:

The new source of chiefly authority lay in a new, four-tiered administrative structure which, by emphasizing the legitimacy of tradition, sought expressly to limit popular participation in decision-making and to place local government in the hands of a conservative elite. (Southall 1982: 104)

The apartheid government was therefore limiting citizen participation in government in practice, while at the same time claiming to hand over power to the local people by further empowering those traditional leaders that were willing to collaborate.

The Betterment Scheme was designed by the apartheid government in response to reports of rapid soil erosion and desertification in the black homelands, and had the additional goal of increasing agricultural output and efficiency (Hendricks 1989: 316). Apartheid authorities determined that the main cause for soil erosion, and a contributing factor to poor rates of agricultural production, was overstocking of cattle by African farmers:

Africans, so the argument went, had an irrational desire to accumulate large numbers of livestock indiscriminately. Their religious outlook towards stock-holding contradicted 'scientific' farming methods and was the root of the evil of overstocking. (Hendricks 1989: 316)

In typical top-down fashion, the apartheid government had decided that overstocking cattle was a feature of ‘backward’ African agriculture and thus, if Africans hoped to become modernized, it had to be curtailed. This determination is a clear example of what Chambers and other proponents of participation view as a paramount deficiency of top-down development. Stocking cattle was more important to an African farmer than on a typical white farm at the time for several reasons. Most obvious to an outsider is the non-economic functions cattle served; use in cultural ceremonies such as funerals, weddings, and festivals, payment of bridewealth or lobola, and a way of displaying wealth and status. Yet overstocking cattle also played an important economic role for African farmers:

....although many commentators conclude that overstocking is almost wholly a result of the important non-economic functions which stock fulfill in African society, they fail to realize that stock also represents one of the few practicable means of capital accumulation for reserve inhabitants and that in impoverished societies where only a minority can afford to hire tractors, oxen are still extensively used for ploughing. (Southall 1982: 223)

Furthermore, in many parts of the Transkei as many as 35-40 percent of people did not have access to arable land, and thus depended on their livestock for survival (Redding 1996: 563).

The government’s solution was the 1939 *Control and Improvement of Livestock in Native Areas Proclamation*, commonly called the Betterment Scheme. Betterment had three main tenets; stock limitation and cattle culling, the use of fencing to limit grazing and separate farming land, and relocations into more densely populated areas. For reasons already discussed, stock limitation and cattle culling was fiercely resisted as it disrupted rural Africans both economically and culturally.

Fencing was introduced in an attempt to further limit overgrazing, ignoring the traditional grazing techniques of the Mpondo that involve strict rotation in order to avoid exhausting any particular area. Fencing was a source of grievance as it restricted the age-old practice of free-range grazing, while “limiting the total available grazing land, thus directly constraining the number of livestock that could survive and the number of people who could survive as livestock-owners” (Redding 1996: 563). Additionally, the funds

required for fencing were often raised by increasing stock levies, dealing yet another blow to stock-owners (Ibid: 564).

Relocations of homesteads were introduced by the government as a strategy to ‘rationalise’ the supposedly random and unplanned settlement patterns of the local people. Rural locations were to be separated into residential, cultivation and grazing units, with homesteads arranged together in village-like settlements (J Pieterse 2007: 67). Local residents were thus made to abandon their huts, entailing “the abandonment of prior capital investment”, and were usually either grossly undercompensated or not compensated at all (Southall 1982: 107; Hendricks 1989: 321).

Along with the loss of capital investment, residents also disliked several elements of the new, more densely populated village-like settlements. First, residents disliked living in close proximity of relative strangers, complaining of loss of privacy, theft, and intrusions, indicating that the relocations disrupted social cohesion (McAllister 1989: 359). Secondly, the new homestead sites were limited in size, thus limiting both the number of structures one can build and the size of one’s vegetable garden. Vegetable gardens were an extremely important source of production for those living in the area, and were often even more important than the use of fields (McAllister 1989). While fields were usually situated some distance away from the homestead, gardens were located immediately next to the homestead, were far more fertile, and were used to produce a variety of different consumable staples (Ibid). Gardens sometimes grew to as much as 6 to 7 acres in size, a situation that became impossible under the new site restrictions of about 0.25 hectares per site (less than one acre) (McAllister 1989: 352, 362).

The resistance of the Mpondo people to the Betterment Scheme was fierce and organized, especially in Eastern Mpondoland. In Mbizana specifically⁸, local residents were sharply opposing Betterment as early as 1957, as evidenced by a public meeting meant to explain the program in which Chief Sicgau was eventually jeered and not allowed to speak (J Pieterse 2007: 69). As the authorities attempted to implement Betterment, resistance tactics moved to the burning of huts, beatings, and sometimes

⁸ The Mbizana municipality includes Xolobeni.

murder of collaborators, forcing collaborating headmen and chiefs to either flee the area or face the people's wrath (Southall 1982: 110; J Pieterse 2007: 88-91).

Originating from the Makhuluspani movement, a set of vigilante groups that formed in the 1950s to combat cattle theft, the organization evolved by 1960 to become 'Ikongo' (Congress) with a leadership known as 'Intaba' (the hill) (Southall 1982: 109; Redding 1996: 572). Ikongo used the aforementioned intimidation and violence against headmen and other Bantu Administration figures so well that by October 1960, the four biggest centers of Eastern Mpondoland were no longer in control of the government (J Pieterse 2007: 96). The group was well organized enough to create judicial settlement structures to replace those of the absent government, and also obtained a defense fund for arrested rebels by collecting levies from homesteads and traders (Southall 1982: 110-11).

The reasons for the outbreak of such a fierce and well-organized resistance were due to both the features of Betterment that amounted to attack on the Mpondo's livelihood systems, as well as widespread rejection of the undemocratic and distorted character of chiefly authority under white rule. The people felt that their chiefs and headmen were collaborators who did not represent their interest, and this grievance was aggravated by an attempt to implement a disruptive top-down development intervention that was designed without any local participation. The ensuing revolt was impressive in its organization, but its success was limited to a short time-frame.

Faced with a violent popular revolt in a rural homeland, the apartheid government reacted with a predictable amount of draconian repression, and the revolt was crushed by force. After the declaration of a state of emergency throughout the entire Transkei in November of 1960, security forces were allowed to detain suspects without trial, leading to the arrest of 5,000 people between 1960 and 1963, 2,000 of whom were eventually tried (Redding 1996: 576; Southall 1982: 113). Hundreds of Mpondo were killed in the crackdown, and by 1963 the area was once again firmly in government control (Ibid).

For the apartheid state, whose goal it was to control and exploit the Transkei through a system of indirect rule, the lesson taken from the revolt was that "there could be no genuine relaxation of political control" (Southall 1982: 114). The Betterment Scheme was constructed by outside experts who aimed to curtail soil erosion and desertification while increasing agricultural output and efficiency, a technocratic

approach to development. The people of Eastern Mpondoland fought the intervention with a grassroots, organized, and violent resistance. As a result, Betterment was never fully implemented in the area, but many Mpondos died or were imprisoned as a price for their resistance efforts.

Officials in the apartheid government aimed to encourage participation in the implementation of Betterment, stating as early as 1956 that “Africans were to get involved and participate actively in their own ‘development’” (Hendricks 1989: 317). If the Betterment Scheme is applied to Pretty’s (1995) typology of participation, the Betterment Scheme used a combination of manipulative and functional participation. All real decision-making power came from the apartheid government, and local people were excluded from the design and planning stages. Local government structures, which were not representative of the people anyway, had no real power and were simply charged with implementing the plan in order to reduce costs. Thus, the local people who did participate were simply co-opted to serve external goals. In Chapter 4, I will provide evidence that the experience of Betterment makes up an important part of the mPondo people’s identity, and continues to inform people’s struggle against the mining project.

3.3 The Gum Tree Rebellion

The case of a planned gum tree development in 1999 is indicative of how a seemingly straightforward development intervention can be extremely harmful if local participation is stifled. Sappi Limited, a multinational pulp and paper company based in South Africa, came to the Xolobeni community with a plan to grow and harvest gum trees. Community members would be paid by Sappi to plant gum trees on their land in a rental system in which Sappi pays for the use of the land the gum trees occupy. When the gum trees reached maturity, Sappi would pay community members to cut them down and then take the wood to their factory. Sappi has and continues to employ this relationship with poor rural people in different parts of the global south, including in KwaZulu-Natal.

The plan ran into community opposition for two main reasons; concerns regarding whether or not it would be a proper use of land, and a feeling that the community was not

properly consulted. In terms of land use, many local residents felt that planting gum trees was not the most beneficial use of the land for the community as a whole.

Gum trees are well known for the amount of water they steal from their surroundings. Many people were opposed to planting these trees that would take water and land away from farming and grazing and put it into a program that would only benefit a small section of the community.⁹

Thus, residents were concerned that the gum trees would disrupt their livelihood systems, of which farming and grazing are paramount, and that the benefits of the scheme would be unfairly distributed.

In addition, many residents disliked the way the plan was presented to the community, claiming that one relatively wealthy family attempted to intimidate and mislead other residents into accepting the plan. Residents were also concerned that only certain people knew all the information while key details were kept from the majority of local people, contributing to their fear that the benefits would not be fairly and evenly distributed.¹⁰

The division created in the community over the gum tree development came to a climax during a two week period in 1999 in which 14 homesteads that had been ploughed to plant gum trees were burnt to the ground (Noseweek 2008). Similar to the Mpondo Revolt, the “Gum Tree Rebellion” was thus caused by a top-down development plan that did not allow for local people’s participation and that had the potential to disrupt people’s already existing livelihood systems.

In contrast to the Betterment Scheme, the gum tree development plan was not designed and implemented by the government, but instead by a private for-profit company. Yet the conflict, violence, and harm caused by the development intervention can still be largely attributed by a lack of participation in the process. Had the community’s concerns been dealt with in a transparent and straightforward manner, it is likely that the situation would have been resolved without violence and destruction. The conflict resolution capabilities of participatory techniques are thus highlighted by their absence in the gum tree case.

⁹ Interview with Mzamo Dlamini, 28/03/11.

¹⁰ Ibid

In terms of Pretty's (1995) typology, the Gum Tree Development entailed participation for material incentives. People were encouraged by Sappi to participate by contributing resources, including their land and labour, in exchange for money. Most of the local people rejected this plan to the extent that they even attacked the property of those who cooperated with Sappi.

3.4 Eco-tourism and AmaDiba Adventures

The European Union funded 'Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative Pilot Programme' (EU Programme) was initiated in 1999 aimed to achieve economic and social development of previously disadvantaged communities through nature-based tourism, as well as building local capabilities regarding tourism operations and management (Background Document 2001). The programme was meant to cover the entire Wild Coast. In Xolobeni specifically, a hiking and horse-riding trail and two rest camps were constructed along the coast.

Initially, the programme was seen as a success. Numerous community members were trained in eco-tourism activities, including trained guides, trail and camp maintenance, as well as management and marketing of tourism operations (Midterm Review 2003). Local residents were employed for almost all parts of the operation, including the construction and maintenance of the trails and camps, tending and supply of horses, caterers for the two camps, and community guides (Ibid). Tourists began to trickle in, and a fly-fishing company was formed that shared profits with the community (Ibid).

Unfortunately, the programme was not able to sustain its success after the EU initiators withdrew, leaving the management of AmaDiba Adventures to local residents and a local NGO, PondoCROP. It is likely that PondoCROP lacked the capacity to effectively assist in management, while local residents turned out to be insufficiently trained during the earlier stages (Wright 2005). Currently, the fly-fishing business is non-existent, only one of the two rest camps is operating while both are in need of renovation, and the number of tourists is extremely limited.¹¹

¹¹ Interview with Nonhle Mbuthuma, 19/02/11; Interview with Mzamo Dlamini, 19/02/11; Interview with Zeka Mnyamana, 19/02/11 (All worked with AmaDiba Adventures).

There are several reasons for the eventual failure of AmaDiba Adventures. One major issue was the theft of over 400 000 rand of AmaDiba funds by a PondoCROP employee charged with overseeing finances (AmaDiba Adventures Forensic Investigation). In addition, Zamile Qunya, MRC/TEM's community liaison, is alleged to have sabotaged the tourism operation in order to make way for the mining. In order to disperse profits to the community and help manage AmaDiba Adventures, a community trust was created entitled Accoda Trust. The board of Accoda was elected by the community, and the board could be replaced if the community felt it necessary. The former director of Accoda Trust, Philip Ndlovela, along with several AmaDiba Adventures employees, alleges that Zamile Qunya, another Accoda board member, also stole funds from Accoda.¹² Qunya is also accused of failing to pass on important information, accepting tourist reservations without appointing a guide or telling the caterers to prepare food. Furthermore, Colin Bell, former CEO of Wilderness Safaris, alleges that Qunya sabotaged an agreement between his company and AmaDiba Adventures in which Wilderness Safaris would have expanded the operation, accepting 75 percent of the financial risk while giving the community 85 percent of the profits.¹³

In addition to the obstacles posed by Qunya and PondoCROP, the eventual failure of AmaDiba Adventures appears to be due to a lack of ownership by the community due to a lack of participation:

Community respondent 2, with support from community respondent 1 and community respondent 3, argues that the programme had "...no proper involvement, local government was not approached and consultation with community was passive, with people being told what they were to do". Community respondent 2 notes that this approach resulted in a lack of ownership and commitment, "... people have just sat, watched, listened and showed no 'passion' for the programme ... there are people involved with this ecotourism who are just interested in the money because they don't have passion as the ideas they had were not used, they are just doing what was said ... they feel that they are not involved ... It's like spoon-feeding people, they cannot do it themselves...we don't feel like it is for the community". (Wright 2005: 70)

¹² Interview with Philip Ndlovela, 22/02/11; Interview with Nonhle Mbuthuma, 19/02/11; Interview with Mzamo Dlamini, 19/02/11.

¹³ Interview with Colin Bell, 22/03/11.

The claims of the community respondents were backed up by both the Midterm Review (2003) and the programme training manager, who claimed:

programme management did not understand the beneficiary community, “The programme was dominated by white people, for the development of black people ... they did not know how to go about this development ... the black voices in the programme were not heard, not listened to ... they [the black people] had a better understanding of their communities”. (Wright 2005: 80)

Not only were local residents merely passive recipients of the tourism development, but local government were also largely excluded from the process. The Midterm Review (2003) asserts that insufficient steps were taken to ensure local government institutions would take ownership of the project. Local residents involved in the project complained that the exclusion of local government made government officials feel “alienated”, hindering cooperation with residents involved in tourism (Wright 2005: 77). The local government’s hostility towards the tourism development likely contributed to their steadfast support of the mining project, as discussed in section 3.6, as they had no reason to protect the tourism industry.

Much like Betterment and the gum tree development, the EU Programme suffered from a lack of popular participation. Involving local residents in the planning and design of the project would have likely increased people’s stake in the project, giving them a sense of ownership and empowerment as opposed to their sense of being “spoon-fed”. Unlike Betterment and the gum tree development, however, the programme did not infringe on any pre-existing livelihood strategies. As a result, instead of being fiercely resisted by the community, the programme merely floundered once the substantial financial, managerial, and technical support of the EU Development Programme made its scheduled departure.

In terms of Pretty’s (1995) typology, the EU Programme constituted functional participation. Groups such as Accoda Trust were formed to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Most major decisions were made without the input of local people by the EU project management. However, while AmaDiba Adventures is barely running currently, the programme may have opened the way for self-mobilization (Pretty’s highest level of participation) by the Xolobeni community to develop their own

tourism industry in the future. Many community members, in their evaluations of the project, “argue that the community needs to change their current practice of waiting for the funders to come to them; ‘...listening to the funders and being driven by the funders and not by us driving the funding’” (Wright 2005: 74). Perhaps local people will initiate their own tourism development in the future due to their experience with AmaDiba Adventures.

3.5 The Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project

As noted in the introduction, the Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project is a proposed mining project along coastal AmaDiba. MRC/TEM has claimed universal community support for its proposed mine in its annual reports, press releases, and applications submitted to the Department of Mineral Affairs (labeled the Department of Minerals and Energy until 2009). However, it is clear that there is significant opposition to the mining project from the local community. Numerous demonstrations have been organized by the community to oppose the mining project, most notably at the announcement of the approval of the mining right in 2008 which forced the then Minister of the Department of Minerals and Energy Buyelwa Sonjica to leave the combined announcement and celebration early. According to community respondent and ACC board member Nonhle Mbuthuma, the Minister’s speech was disrupted by a mass of local community members singing and “toy-toying”.¹⁴

The field research conducted for this dissertation indicates that an overwhelming majority of community members interviewed oppose the mining project. Of the 26 community respondents, only 4 professed support for the mining project. The other 22 respondents not only stated that they strongly oppose the mining, but went on to assert that those who did support the mining were in an extreme minority. The level of opposition was so strong that the majority of respondents indicated that they would be willing to both kill and die to stop the mine from coming to their land. The conclusion that the Xolobeni people have roundly rejected the mine is also supported by Andrew Bennie’s 2010 unpublished master’s thesis, which consisted of 21 small-scale surveys, 15

¹⁴ Interview with Nonhle Mbuthuma, 19/02/11.

interviews and numerous informal conversations with community members (Bennie 2010: 9).

At least a partial factor contributing to the local people's opposition to the mining project is the way the mining company conducted the consultation process. Nearly all community respondents claimed that during the consultations, rather than asking for permission to mine the land, MRC/TEM informed the community there would be mining, listed the supposed benefits, and asked if there were any questions:

The consultation was not serious, it was just them saying we are going to mine and take your land, they didn't listen at all. One counselor for the chief at the meeting asked, 'why don't you go from house to house and ask people to sign their permission,' they answered, 'people would say no so we must just tell them.'¹⁵

The fact that MRC/TEM ended up submitting a document of forged community signatures to the Department of Minerals and Energy supports the respondent's claims.¹⁶

Many community respondents expressed disappointment in the government for not playing a proper role as mediator in the consultation process. They seemed to feel that the government was meant to present both the positive and negative effects of a potential mine in a fair and balanced manner, and then ask the community if they agreed to host the mine. Instead, the government attempted to push the mining project on the residents. Recently elected Ward Councilor Dimane had the following to say about the government's role:

The national government was on the side of pushing the mining through. They told me you shouldn't talk to these local people much because we are going to force the mine through. Some of them [the locals] will surely benefit.¹⁷

The local municipal government was also widely accused of attempting to force the mining project on the community. Many respondents claimed that the municipality would even use jobs and municipal services as a bargaining chip:

The people came [to the consultations] and everything had been decided, they did not come to ask if they can mine... the people who support the mine were paid and promised

¹⁵ Small group interview with S. Dlamini, Mfekethwa, and Mdumiseni, 20/02/11. S. Dlamini quoted.

¹⁶ Amadiba Crisis Committee's Internal Appeal to the Minister of Minerals and Energy Against the Award of a Mining Right to Transworld Energy and Mineral Resources (SA) (PTY) LTD, September 2008

¹⁷ Interview with Ward Counselor Dimane, 22/02/11.

jobs. The municipality even said that if people do not want the mine they will not get anything from the municipality; no water or roads.¹⁸

Even those interviewed who supported the mine did not defend the consultation process, instead arguing that the government should not have to ask the people permission because the people elected them.¹⁹

A major claim by MRC/TEM and the South African government is that the existence of the Xolobeni Empowerment Company (Xolco), a community-based BEE company with a 26 percent stake in TEM charged with distributing its profits to the community, proves that the community is both supportive and participating in the mining project, and that the community will receive significant material and financial benefit from the project. However, all of the community respondents not directly involved with Xolco claim that they have no idea how Xolco was formed, and do not feel that it represents the community in any way. The following sentiments expressed in a small group interview represent a typical response to the question, how was Xolco formed:

Community Respondent Mfekethwa: Xolco was formed in the forest, the dark bush, to steal our land. No one knows how it was really formed. Xolco is like a wild animal, it was born and grew up in the forest.

Community Respondent Mdumiseni: Nothing actually went well in the formation. According to traditional law, if you want to form anything that involves the land, you have to talk to the community and tribal authority at komkulu²⁰ first, then get the people's approval. Xolco just came out of nowhere with nice big cars and smart ties.²¹

It appears that Xolco was at first formed by community member Zamide Qunya, employed by the MRC as the community liaison to communicate between the MRC and the community, and Maxwell Boqwana, a lawyer from East London. After repeated complaints that Qunya had a conflict of interest, acting as both head of Xolco charged with pursuing mining as well as the head of Accoda Trust, a community trust charged with pursuing tourism, Qunya resigned and appointed a new board to head Xolco.²²

¹⁸ Small group interview with Nolulamo and Ward Counselor Mteki, 24/03/11. Mteki quoted.

¹⁹ Small group interview with Joli, Ndovela, and Hlongwe, 24/02/11.

²⁰ Komkulu, or 'great place', refers to the traditional authority meeting place for all of Xolobeni.

²¹ Small group interview with S. Dlamini, Mfekethwa, and Mdumiseni, 20/02/11.

²² Information gathered from interviews with social worker John Clarke, former Xolco board member Pitso Msebane, and Nonhle Mbuthuma who was present at the meeting where Qunya resigned.

However, former Xolco board member Pitso Msebane claims that Xolco was still under Qunya's control even after he resigned, as all communication between Xolco and MRC/TEM went through Qunya.²³ Msebane went on to state that several of the worried board members brought in an independent lawyer to analyze the agreement Xolco had with MRC/TEM. The lawyer told the 3 board members (2 of whom have since resigned and denounced Xolco) that:

- 1) Xolco actually was forced to take out a large loan to pay for its 26 percent stake in TEM and that the amount paid was actually 80 percent of the value of TEM at the time,
- 2) MRC/TEM had no obligation to stay with Xolco as its BEE partner and could potentially switch to another BEE once the mining right had been granted,
- 3) MRC/TEM would have the ability to sell the mining right to an entirely different company if the mining right were approved, a company which would have no obligation to partner with Xolco,
- 4) The smelter would be built in East London and not provide jobs to the Xolobeni community, and
- 5) There was no legal framework in place determining how the Xolco funds would be used, leaving the potential for massive corruption by the board.²⁴

In order to mount a more organized fight against the mine, the community decided to form the AmaDiba Crisis Committee (ACC), a semi-permanent group of community activists charged with managing the community's anti-mining efforts. In a stark contrast to Xolco, nearly all community respondents identified that the ACC was formed in the proper manner at a meeting at the tribal authority komkulu in 2004, where the community elected the board members. Since its formation, the ACC has been in charge of updating the community on all developments regarding the mining project (usually at the weekly community meetings at komkulu), organizing protests such as the demonstration at the announcement of the approval of the mining right, and working with the Legal Resource Center (LRC) to lodge a formal appeal of the mining right.

The ACC has aligned itself with the Saving the Wild Coast organization (SWC) and the LRC for logistical support, legal support, and public relations support. The SWC

²³ Interview with Pitso Msebane, 30/03/11.

²⁴ Ibid

runs a website opposing the mining project, works with many journalists who report on the controversy, and helps pay some of the community's legal costs.²⁵ The LRC does most of the legal work involved in opposing the mine free of charge, and lodged the official appeal against the mining right on the community's behalf. The strategies of the ACC, as well as the role played by its allies outside the community (SWC and LRC), will be examined in detail in Chapter 4.

The role of the traditional tribal authority in the mining controversy had varied greatly, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. During the early stages of the process, several headmen and sub-headmen gave their approval for the mining of the land, in many instances where they did not have the authority to do so. However, King Sigcau, ruler of the Mpondo area that includes Xolobeni, has consistently opposed the mining project since becoming aware of the issue at an imbizo²⁶ in 2004, as has Chief Lunga Baleni who rules over the entire AmaDiba area. Perhaps non-coincidentally, both King Sigcau and Chief Baleni are facing court challenges over the legitimacy of their rule.

In summary, the major actors involved are as follows:

- Opposing the mining project

- The Xolobeni Community

- The AmaDiba Crisis Committee

- The Legal Resource Center (LRC)

- Saving the Wild Coast (SWC)

- Supporting the mining project

- The Xolobeni Empowerment Company

- MRC/TEM

- The South African Government

- The local Mbizana municipality

- The national government, represented by the Department of Mineral Affairs and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

²⁵ Interview with SWC director John Clarke, 14/03/11.

²⁶ Imbizo refers to a public meeting in which the King or Paramount Chief listens to the people's grievances directly. All community members are allowed to direct their questions and comments to the King at an imbizo.

To comment on the participatory character of a mining project seems unnatural. Mining, by its very nature, appears to be a top-down, technocratic process with little room for popular participation outside the mine-workers themselves. Such a viewpoint, however, assumes that everyone has the right to mine resources, assuming they find the minerals and have the capability to extract them, ignoring the fact that there are usually people living on the land that is to be mined.

In the case of Xolobeni, the Mpondo people have been living in the area for hundreds of years. Use of the land for farming and grazing is a critical part of the Mpondo's livelihood system. If a mining company wishes to come mine the land, the proper way to do so that is fair to the Mpondo people is to work with them to construct a mining strategy that brings the community the most benefits possible while disturbing their already existing livelihood systems in the smallest way possible. The greater the influence those who stand to be displaced or otherwise directly affected have over the final decision, the more likely it will be that the development plan properly accommodates their needs.

Instead, MRC/TEM came to the community with false information, tricks, and bribery in attempt to gain their acceptance. Nearly all community respondents indicated that no real participation took place in the planning stages. MRC/TEM contracted a consulting firm, Mazizi Msuthu Association, to explain to the community what mining would do to their community and to ensure that the local people consented to the mine's initiation. Numerous community respondents claimed that all the consultation workshops that Mazizi put on were held far inland, outside of the areas that would be directly affected by the mine. During the consultations, community members were told that a decision had already been made to go ahead with the mining, and that the consultations were held to explain to the people what will happen. Yet even at this level the mining company was dishonest, telling the community that there would be no relocations as a result of the mining while at the same time admitting to local government officials that relocations would take place.²⁷

²⁷ Information obtained by comparing interviews with community members to interviews with Ward Councilors. The Ward Councilors all responded that there would be relocations. Community members suspected there would be relocations but claimed they had been told no relocations would take place.

Several community respondents had either been targets of bribery themselves or provided anecdotal evidence of the bribery of others. One community respondent obtained a job with Mazizi Consulting with the responsibility of informing local residents about the time and location of the consultation workshops. Afterward, the community liaison for the mining company told him that he should be paid double what they originally promised in exchange for his loyalty.²⁸

In a separate incident, the community liaison took two minibus taxis full of local residents to Richards Bay in order to demonstrate the benefits the mine would supposedly bring. According to residents who had been on the trip, participants were bribed with expensive accommodation, alcohol, food and clothing, and some were even given cash to pressure them into supporting the mine.²⁹ At the scheduled report-back to the community, participants were told to remain silent and let the community liaison explain to the community what they saw. One participant, Scorpion Dimane, stood up and publicly returned the clothing and money he was given on the trip, saying that he would not sell his land for these small gifts. Scorpion Dimane died a few months later due to suspected poisoning.³⁰

Throughout the process, MRC/TEM has enjoyed strong support from the local Mbizana Municipality. Officials from the Municipality have even attempted to use service delivery as a bargaining chip, claiming that no roads, water, or electricity will be delivered to Xolobeni if they refuse to accept the mining project (see Chapter 1 Background). All three Ward Councilors representing the community supported the mining throughout the consultation process despite the fact that the government created the position of Ward Councilor in order to elicit a greater degree of public participation in government.

The enormous degree of support from the local government can be attributed to a number of factors: a desire to have a large, highly publicized development project in their municipality, anticipation of increased funding in order to build roads and other infrastructure to service the mine, anticipation of increased revenue due to taxes

²⁸ Interview with Mzamo Dlamini, 19/02/11.

²⁹ Small Group Interview with Community Respondents D, E, and F, 20/02/11.

³⁰ Information obtained from numerous community interviews. All community respondents who spoke of Scorpion Dimane believed he was poisoned, but no forensic evidence has been obtained.

generated from the mine, and the creation of a significant number of jobs (even if they are not likely to employ local people). As with development professionals, government officials do not gain notoriety and advancement by turning down big projects, even if those projects are likely to worsen the situation of the poor and are strongly opposed by local people. In reality, careers advance through the creation of big projects, often regardless of their success (Ferguson 1990).

Applying the mining project to Pretty's (1995) typology, the level of participation is clearly at the lowest level, manipulative participation. Xolco, not truly representative of the community in the first place, has no power to influence decisions. Participation was merely used by MRC/TEM as pretence to help convince the government to grant the mining license. Their motivation likely lies in control and certainty; if an honest participatory approach were taken, the outcome would not be in the hands of the mining company but in the hands of local residents instead. So in order to maintain control of the outcome, MRC/TEM attempted to coerce the community into acceptance through bribery, intimidation, manipulation, and misinformation.

3.6 The Nature of South Africa's Development Strategy

If one were to base an analysis of South Africa's development strategy on the aforementioned development interventions in Xolobeni, the evident conclusion is that South Africa has changed from a top-down, *state*-led development strategy that existed under apartheid to a top-down, *private sector*-led development strategy with the state actually promoting initiatives and often empowering private sector actors.³¹ The role of the South African state, based on this analysis, has shifted from creating and implementing development interventions to the role of attracting and supporting neo-liberal, private sector development interventions. The development interventions still have involved a top-down method that fails to challenge normal power relations or empower poor people, but now private capital leads the way with strong backing from the state.

³¹ This is not to say that one should base an analysis of South Africa's development strategy simply on the development interventions in Xolobeni. What I go on to say, however, is that the government's development strategy toward Xolobeni seems to be a microcosm of its development strategy as a whole (based on the macro-level evidence).

Scholars who have examined post-apartheid South Africa have found a similar trajectory in the state's development strategy toward the entire country (Adelzadeh 1996; Bond 2001; Gelb 2004; Peet 2002). In the post-World War II period under apartheid, the South African state employed an interventionist economic policy. The country's most strategically important corporations, aside from several mining companies, were owned by the state. Examples of state corporations include Alexkor (diamond mining), Sasol (energy), Iscor (steel), SAH&R (Harbours and railways), and Eskom (electricity). The state used these corporations to heavily support the mining industry with direct and indirect subsidies, such as heavily subsidized electricity. What emerged was a Minerals-Energy Complex (MEC) that dominated the economy and crowded out manufacturing (Fine and Rustonjee 1996). Development was thus led by an alliance of an Afrikaner state and English (mostly mining) capital (Ibid: 148). The state aimed to provide full employment for the white minority through a combination of government jobs, including at state-owned corporations, and mining and manufacturing. The non-white population was meant to both provide cheap labour for the mining industry and be self-sufficient through small-scale agriculture (Wolpe 1972). The state attempted to assist in the development of black agriculture through the Betterment Scheme (see section 3.2) and similar state-led interventionist programmes.

After apartheid ended, many analysts expected the new democratic government to employ a socialist-style development strategy, as outlined in the Freedom Charter, which continued to utilize interventionist policies aimed at providing full employment and well-being for the whole country rather than only the white population. Nelson Mandela had stated as late as 1990 that the ANC would nationalize "the mines, banks, and monopolies" (Peet 2002: 76). The first indication of the post-apartheid state's development strategy came in the form of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994. The RDP document indicated that the new government would use an "industrial strategy [that] involved increasing national investment, especially in manufacturing, job creating, and the meeting of basic needs" (Ibid: 75). While the RDP did not provide for nationalization, it did state that the government planned to achieve growth through redistribution (Ibid: 59).

After only two years, the South African government's development strategy (and economic policy as a whole) took a major shift to the right, as indicated by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan (1996). As opposed to the RDP, GEAR advocated redistribution through growth rather than growth through redistribution (Ibid). Not only was nationalization no longer on the table, GEAR called for the privatization of certain state corporations. GEAR further planned for deregulation, trade liberalization, cutting state expenditure, and creating a more flexible labour market "widely interpreted as a euphemism for the suppression of unions" (Peet 2002: 80). Thus, while the flexible labour market approach was never actually employed (as unions continue to wield large amounts of power), the development strategy outlined in GEAR was essentially in line with the neo-liberal policy prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

The main goal of any neo-liberal development strategy, GEAR included, is to create a stable economic situation that avoids inflation and generates sustained private sector-led economic growth through trade and international investment. The South African government declined to employ an interventionist industrial policy in deference to natural market forces. Thus, the South African state's development strategy post-apartheid has been private sector-led backed by state support via deregulation and trade liberalization. It is in this context that the South African government supported Sappi's Gum Tree Development (section 3.3), the EU Programme's tourism development (section 3.4), and MRC/TEM's mining project (section 3.5 and Chapter 1 Background).

The MEC that was created under apartheid is still present, albeit moderately smaller and with slightly less influence over the economy (Fine 2010: 28). Yet a large amount of influence endures. As recently as 1990, the MEC accounted for 25 percent of South Africa's GDP (Fine and Rustonjee 1996: 81). The continued influence of the MEC is evidenced by the fact that mining companies continue to enjoy heavily subsidized electricity. Therefore, it is certainly possible that the large amount of power and influence wielded by the MEC puts pressure on the Department of Mineral Affairs and other government structures to support and approve almost all mining projects, as evidenced by the Department's failure to deny licenses in all but the most high profile cases (St. Lucia, Xolobeni). In the case of Xolobeni, the government initially approved

MRC/TEM's mining right application despite allegations of human rights violations, enormous bad publicity, intense and overt opposition by many Xolobeni residents, evidence of manipulation by MRC/TEM, and the unrepresentative nature and high potential for corruption in Xolco. While the government eventually revoked the license in June 2011 (before any operations had begun), they have not ruled out re-approving the license in the future.

In the context of South Africa's neo-liberal development strategy, what level of participatory development is really possible, or most likely to occur? Development interventions led by the private sector have very little reason to encourage participation as anything other than a means for greater efficiency, or in a strategy of dominance through inclusion. The overriding priority of any private sector development is to make profit, not to eradicate poverty or empower the poor. Sappi and MRC/TEM are not charities charged with developing Xolobeni; they are private companies attempting to exploit the resources of the area in order to make a profit. Private companies will only employ interactive participation if they are forced to do so. However, the creation of additional regulation that requires interactive participation in private sector operations that involve direct contact with South Africans is unlikely given the neo-liberal orientation of the current development strategy.

Chapter 4: Xolobeni's Strategies of Resistance

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 begins with an examination of the main reasons for the strong resistance of many Xolobeni residents to the mining project. The sources of opposition include a desire to protect the land and water resources that are an essential part of most local residents' livelihood systems, anger over the way in which the consultation process was conducted, objections to the character of Xolco and the way in which it was formed, and previous negative experiences with top-down style development projects (discussed in Chapter 3).

Next, the chapter examines and analyzes the wide array of resistance strategies local residents have used to oppose the mining project. The strategies outlined include: various forms of popular protest both violent and non-violent, appeals to the traditional tribal authority to stop the mine on the community's behalf, the formation of the AmaDiba Crisis Committee (ACC) as a semi-permanent body of community activists to combat the mining project, the use of the Legal Resource Center (LRC) to lodge legal appeals, the creation of a community-based development project (Simbhademe) as a job-creating alternative to the mining development, and active participation in the selection of local Ward Councilors in the May 2011 elections to ensure that all representatives are

anti-mining in an effort to change the behaviour of the local municipal government. The success of the different resistance strategies and what they mean in terms of the political economy of development in South Africa is then analyzed, using the concept of invented and invited spaces of citizenship as an analytical framework.

4.2 Reasons for Opposition

The people of Xolobeni have many reasons to oppose the MRC/TEM mining project. The reason most often cited in the community interviews conducted for this report was protection of the land due to its integral part in people's livelihood systems. Very few people in AmaDiba have a job that earns a wage or salary; only about half of the population fits in the economically active category (ages 15-65), and among them the unemployment rate is an astonishing 71.5 percent (SARPN 2008). Nearly all AmaDiba households also receive a government grant in the form of an old age pension, child support grant or disability grant (Ibid). The cash generated is used mainly to pay school fees, purchase clothing, buy alcohol or other luxuries, and to purchase essentials that are not locally grown, such as cooking oil and salt (Bennie 2010: 56).

Alongside the modest cash income most families receive in the form of grants and in some cases wage labour, nearly all households in AmaDiba provide for their remaining needs by making use of the land. Local residents estimated that at least 60 percent of their food intake comes from subsistence agriculture, an assertion supported by Andrew Bennie's research into local people's livelihood systems (2010: 54-66). Thus, while the use of subsistence agriculture has steadily declined in most parts of rural South Africa in the past century, it has declined to a much lesser extent in AmaDiba.

In addition to subsistence agriculture, local people use the land to provide for their own needs in several ways. Coastal residents have the benefit of fishing and collecting shellfish from the ocean and beach. Almost all homesteads in AmaDiba are traditional rondavels, built using mud-bricks for the walls, dung for the floor, and wood and straw for the roof, materials all gathered locally at no cost. In lieu of any piped water service, residents gather all their drinking, cooking, and washing water from local streams and rivers, also at no cost (other than the hours of labour time spent fetching water each day).

Thus, when asked why they oppose the mining project, nearly all those interviewed offered responses indicating that they are afraid the project will hinder their ability to make a living off the land. The following statements are typical of local residents' view of the situation:

Mfekethwa: It [mining] would mean hunger, because we grow our food on this land, and our livestock as well. As we said we have no formal jobs so taking away our ability to produce food from the land will mean we will die very soon.

S Dlamini: You should think about even the water that we use for drinking and fishing comes from the land and the mine would spoil it as it has in other areas. No food and no water...they talk about how beautiful this area is and they want to take that away from us so we can't show the tourists.³²

Media portrayals of mining has undoubtedly played a part in shaping people's perceptions; numerous respondents mentioned seeing television shows and news articles about the way mining activity has polluted the land and water elsewhere. The extent to which the mining project would disrupt farming, cattle-stocking, and the use of clean local water is a contentious issue; those in support of the mine claim the project would make only a slight disruption, while those in opposition claim it will make the land and water unusable, and both sides have used 'scientific' studies to support their claims. What is clear is that some disruption of local people's use of the community's natural resources would occur, and that the local people see this as a major threat to their livelihood systems.

Additionally, few respondents held out much hope for gaining employment from the mine, recognizing that people would migrate to Xolobeni from all around South Africa, many with better qualifications than local residents. This view is supported by fact, as most mining companies now require a grade 12 education, which less than 1 percent of Mbizana has achieved (Bennie 2010: 54). Furthermore, if a smelter was built it would be constructed in East London, outside of the Xolobeni area (MRC Annual Report 2009).

In addition to their objections over how the mining will affect the land, local people also trace their opposition to objections over the way in which the project was

³² Small group interview with S Dlamini, Mfekethwa, and Mdumiseni, 20/02/11.

brought to the community. Most respondents seemed to have an ingrained sense that the land and resources of Xolobeni belonged collectively to the local people, and that the proper approach for an outsider wishing to make use of the resources is to ask permission at a pre-existing community structure, such as the weekly tribal authority meetings at komkulu. For example, when asked what the best development strategy for Xolobeni would be, one respondent advocated anything that would bring formal employment, but only if it was brought the right way:

The best development strategy would be to bring anything that would employ people, such as a factory. But the owner must come to the community first and ask permission and make an agreement. They must not just build.³³

Rather than coming to the community to ask permission, MRC/TEM tried to force local people's acceptance of the mining project through bribery, manipulation, misinformation and trickery, often telling people that the decision to mine had already been made.

An additional cause of the community's opposition to the mining project lies in the character of Xolco. As previously discussed, most local people are offended by the claim that Xolco represents the community. No community members knew how Xolco was formed, and assumed that any profit Xolco made would not be reinvested into the community but rather that the leadership of Xolco would pocket the money. In summary, the underpinnings of the massive community opposition to the mining project are a fear of the pollution of the land and the destruction of their livelihood system, skepticism that the mine will employ local people, aversion to the way the project has been forced upon them, and widespread disbelief that Xolco's profits will be used to benefit the community.

Finally, the community's negative experiences with past top-down development projects likely played a role in the people's rejection of the mining project. All the major development interventions previously brought to the community ended in conflict and destruction, with the tourism development as a partial exception (see Chapter 3). That these historical interventions still affect people's view of development projects today is evidenced by the fact that numerous community respondents brought up the Mpondo

³³ Small group interview with Matom and Masoya Dlamini, 20/02/11. Matom quoted.

Revolt as a comparative example to the mining project, claiming that both involved an attempt to steal their land, without any prompting from the interviewer.

4.3 Strategies of Resistance

Throughout the consultation process and beyond, people from the Xolobeni area used a variety of techniques to resist the mining project. An examination of their techniques is presented here in an effort to better understand the different power-relations that came into play that led to the initial granting of the mining license, followed by its suspension and eventual revocation upon appeal.

The first strategy used by the community was an attempt to disrupt the consultations with tough questions that would reveal the ugly side of mining. As discussed earlier, the consultation meetings were seen by the residents not as an open process where concerns were addressed and permission was requested, but instead as workshops in which people were told about all the benefits mining would bring them. Afraid that these consultations would lead people to support the mine in anticipation of such benefits, several community activists began in 2006 to meet with community members before the consultations, advising them to ask targeted questions. The questions mainly centered on potential relocations of homes and graves, pollution of the land and water, uncertainty about Xolco and how it was formed, and doubt as to whether community members would really receive jobs. As a result of the questioning, further uncertainty, doubt, and opposition were imbedded in those who attended the consultations. Several community respondents complained that those running the consultations would delay responding to such questions, promising to return with answers on a future date that never came:

They did not do the consultations well, they would go away with our questions and return with nothing.³⁴

Such unanswered questions undoubtedly undermined the credibility of the Mazizi Consulting Firm that ran the consultations.

³⁴ Small Group Interview with Mike Joli and Jelselma Joli, 29/03/11. Mike Joli quoted.

A second resistance strategy used by local people was various forms of public protest, both violent and non-violent. In terms of non-violent protest, an anti-mining march was organized in July 2008 by community activists and Saving the Wild Coast (SWC) in which local residents and others opposed to the mining such as environmentalists walked the entire length of the proposed mining site while brandishing signs and yelling anti-mining chants. The popular television program *Carte Blanche* was invited to the area and aired two separate episodes that voiced the community's opposition to the project (Carte Blanche 2008). Numerous newspapers and news magazines, including *The Mercury*, *Noseweek*, and *The Sunday Tribune*, published stories about the local opposition. Finally, a large demonstration was made at the announcement of the approval of the mining right in 2008, leading to the disruption of the event (see Chapter 1 Background). All of these demonstrations served to put public pressure on the government to deny the mining right due to the bad publicity generated, while at the same time alerting potential allies of the fight.

In terms of violent protest, there are three separate incidents of note. The first was the vandalism of MRC/TEM monitoring devices set up in and around the mining site to measure dust. Several young people in the community were arrested for destroying the devices in 2002 in their attempt to derail the mining company's efforts.³⁵ The second incident took place immediately after the announcement that the government would grant the mining right in 2008. The main headman for all of AmaDiba, who had been against the mining in the past but switched to supporting the mine in 2008, was beaten nearly to death by a group of community members on his way home from the event.³⁶ The headman and his family then moved away, and the headman died from an unrelated illness soon after, leaving no acting headman for Amadiba. The third form of violent protest employed by local people comes not in the form of action but in repeated verbal threats of violence, often with references to the Mpondo Revolt. A typical example follows from Community Respondent C:

To oppose Betterment, we had to fight, sleeping the forest, it can happen again if it needs to. This is going to take us back to that time, a bad situation where we had to kill the

³⁵ Interview with Nonhle Mbuthuma, 19/02/11.

³⁶ Numerous community members recounted this event in interviews.

people who were in favour of it. If the mining comes, all the people in support will be on one side and they will be killed.³⁷

Threats of violence were not limited to private interviews, but were proclaimed publicly on the television *Carte Blanche* and in interviews with reporters. The threats and acts of violence served to put further pressure on the government to reject the mining application in fear of the further conflict and violence it would cause.

A third strategy of resistance employed by the community was to organize their resistance through the formation of the AmaDiba Crisis Committee (ACC) in 2002. The ACC leadership was elected at one of the weekly community gatherings under the tribal authority at komkulu, which is physically located in the Kwanyana block where the mining right was granted in 2008. The task of the ACC was to organize and manage the community's resistance. The head of the organization is Bazooka Radebe, a local taxi owner and former member of Xolco who left once he became aware of the organization's corrupt and undemocratic nature.³⁸ Since its formation in 2002, the board of the ACC has continually informed the community of the state of the mining project both through personal conversations and at the weekly meetings at komkulu. The ACC organized the protest at the announcement that the mining right had been granted, alerting the local people who were unaware that such an announcement was to be made.³⁹ Furthermore, all of the strategies and actions listed below were either planned, implemented, or assisted by the ACC, making it an extremely important actor in the mining saga.

One strategy used by the community and the ACC was to appeal to the traditional authority structures representing the area. The highest level of traditional authority presiding over Xolobeni is King Sicgau, paramount chief of all of Mpondoland. After hearing from the ACC, King Sicgau called for an imbizo⁴⁰ in order to hear directly from the community what the issue was. After the imbizo, King Sicgau made strong public denouncements of the mining project, claiming it did not have his support or the support of his people. King Sicgau's right to the throne is now being challenged by the

³⁷ Interview with Community Respondent C, 21/02/11.

³⁸ Interviews with Community Respondents A and B, 19/02/11.

³⁹ Interview with Nonhle Mbuthuma, 19/02/11.

⁴⁰ An imbizo is a large public gathering, under the traditional authority, in which the King or Chief hears comments and complaints directly from citizens. All community members are allowed to attend and speak.

government.⁴¹ Chief Lunga Baleni is the second highest traditional authority figure presiding over Xolobeni, claiming authority over all of AmaDiba. Chief Baleni has consistently opposed the mining project, and since meeting with the ACC, Chief Baleni has publicly claimed that the mine does not have the support of him or his people. Under Chief Baleni is headman Ndabazakhe Baleni, claiming authority over only coastal AmaDiba, who at first opposed the mine at the ACC's urging, then switched to supporting the mine just before the mining right was granted in 2008. Headman Ndabazakhe was the victim of the community's violent attack after the mining right event, and no new headman has been named since. Thus, the ACC managed to convince all the most powerful and public members of the traditional authority to publicly oppose the mine, striking a serious blow to MRC/TEM's and the municipal government's claim of widespread community support.

In addition to their appeals to the traditional authority, the ACC also made a formal complaint to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), with the help of activist social worker John Clarke. Clarke submitted the complaint on the behalf of the ACC in 2007, which claimed that the underhanded nature of the consultation process violated the local people's human rights. In the complaint, Clarke and the ACC identified seven human rights that had been violated: the right to human dignity, the right of freedom of expression, the right of assembly, freedom of trade, occupation and profession, the right to an environment that is not harmful to people's health, the right to property, and the right of access to information. The SAHRC held a highly publicized hearing in 2008, and their findings mainly confirmed the alleged human rights abuses, and stressed that there had been insufficient consultation with the community (Bennie 2010: 145).

For legal assistance, the ACC enlisted the supported of the East London based Legal Resource Center (LRC). The LRC began to work with the ACC in 2008 after the decision to grant the mining license was announced. The LRC then submitted a formal

⁴¹ King Sicgau is the descendant of Paramount Chief Botha Sicgau, a major collaborator with the apartheid government and the Betterment Scheme. During the mPondo Revolt, many mPondo's claimed his brother had the true right to the throne. In an ironic twist, the current King Sicgau, grandson of Botha Sicgau, is now opposing the government's plans. Perhaps non-coincidentally, the government is now claiming that Botha Sicgau's brother was the true heir to the throne over 70 years ago, and is in the process of challenging the current King's legitimacy to rule in court.

appeal of the decision to the then Department of Minerals and Energy in 2008, detailing the insufficient and fraudulent consultation process and requesting that the license be revoked.⁴² The LRC also began to prepare documents and evidence for court challenges of the mining right in the case that the Minister did not revoke the license upon appeal. Furthermore, the LRC repeatedly pressured the now Department of Mineral Affairs to make a decision on the appeal after several deadlines had passed, with the decision to revoke the license finally coming in June of 2011. The assistance of the LRC was thus vital to the community's resistance to the mine, most notably due to the success of the appeal which the LRC authored and submitted at no cost to the community.

Another tactic used by the ACC to oppose the mining project was the creation of their own job-creating development project labeled Simbhademe⁴³. The purpose of Simbhademe was to demonstrate to the community that there were other ways to create jobs other than the mining project, which had employed numerous community members in roles such as dust collection, installations, sample collectors, community liaisons, and promoters for the consultations.⁴⁴ The project was initiated, planned, designed, and implemented by the ACC and other community members, and thus it can be said to have the highest level of participation, self-mobilization (see section 2.3.2). The funding for the project came from several different sources: the Community Organization Resource Center (CORC), PondoCROP, the South African Faith Communities Environmental Initiative (SAFCEI), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), with CORC and PondoCROP also contributing logistical and managerial support. The project involved all five coastal AmaDiba villages as well as one inland village along the Mtentu River.

The project was broken into three phases, each lasting approximately six months. The first phase involved separate workshops in each of the six villages to determine what kind of small-scale development projects people wanted, with specialists on hand to answer technical questions. The second phase involved a smaller group from each of the

⁴² Amadiba Crisis Committee's Internal Appeal to the Minister of Minerals and Energy Against the Award of a Mining Right to Transworld Energy and Mineral Resources (SA) (PTY) LTD, September 2008

⁴³ English translation: We have discovered.

⁴⁴ All information about Simbhademe gathered through the following: Interview with Mzamo Dlamini, 19/02/11. Interview with Nonhle Mbuthuma, 19/02/11. Email correspondence with John Clarke, Mzamo Dlamini, and Nonhle Mbuthuma 01/05/11-30/06/11.

six villages who were selected to visit other areas to observe other development projects, as well as training specific to whatever project the village had decided upon. The final phase involved the actual execution of the projects. The planning for the project began in 2007, and all phases had been completed by 2009.

The projects differed for each of the six villages, and involved approximately five people from each village in the implementation. Some villages simply wanted to register development committees for their locale in order to put the legal framework in place and attract investment for future projects. Examples of some of the other small-scale projects include the attainment of a local grinding mill which is used to grind dry maize for making mealie meal, pap and porridge (which villagers would normally have to travel a long distance to use), and a project in which large chickens bred for meat were bought in bulk at a large farm and then sold to community members with the profit being used to improve the school building.

The projects, while small-scale and short-term, were well-suited to improve people's lives without disturbing their livelihood systems. Simbhademe was an important tactic in the opposition to the mine as it demonstrated that alternative development and alternatives to the mining project were still possible. In addition, the programme offers exciting possibilities for future development projects in the area as it has shown a clear determination and capability for self-mobilization style development.

The final strategy employed by the ACC to oppose the mining project was a concentrated effort to change the behavior of the Mbizana Municipality through the May 2011 elections. Working with the ANC, most notably local ANC branch chairperson Pitso Msebane, the ACC ensured that all three ANC candidates for Ward Councilor representing coastal Amadiba were anti-mining. Via the May 2011 elections, the ACC was thus able to replace the three Ward Councilors representing the area that had pushed hard for mining with Councilors who have promised to listen to the people and oppose the mining project. Numerous ACC members and other community respondents interviewed indicated a strong hope that this would lead to an increase in the attention and responsiveness by the Municipality to the people's opinions.

4.4 Analysis of Opposition

One useful way to examine the different resistance strategies used by the Xolobeni people is through Miraftab's (2006) concepts of invited and invented spaces of citizenship. In Miraftab's construct, invited spaces are grassroots actions that legitimized by donors and government interventions (i.e. legitimized from the top down), while invented spaces are "collective actions by the poor that directly confront the authorities and challenge the status quo" (2006: 195). The main difference between the two spaces is that invited spaces are set up and defined by the state, while invented spaces are created by citizens themselves and lie outside what the state considers acceptable citizen participation (Ibid). Furthermore, invited spaces attempt to cope with existing systems of hardship, while invented spaces attempt to change them (Ibid). The author goes on to highlight that the two spaces are "in a mutually constituted, interacting relationship, not a binary one" (Ibid).

Looking at the actions of the people of Xolobeni through Miraftab's framework, it becomes evident that most of the actions came through invited spaces of citizenship. Arriving at the consultations with tough questions and organizing a peaceful protest march along the coast were both actions made acceptable from the top, mostly via the South African Constitution. Appealing to independent newspapers and television shows, filing a complaint with the SAHRC, approaching the traditional authority for assistance, securing legal assistance from the LRC, and campaigning to affect the May 2011 local election are all actions that are clearly and firmly within invited spaces of citizenship. Taken together, this wide array of invited action indicates that the South African government has enormously widened the invited space for citizen participation since apartheid to a level not seen in most other nations still considered to be 'developing'.

The formation of the ACC and the creation of Simbhademe can both be said to be partially situated in invited spaces of citizenship, but are partly invented spaces as well. Both are not outlawed or illegal, yet both work outside the normalized system of power-relations. The ACC can be described as an community organization, constituted entirely outside of state control, that acts to protect the community's interest above all else, including when in conflict with the interest of the state. The ACC can be contrasted with the Mbizana Municipality which is meant to act on behalf of the local community's interest, yet is at the same time accountable to the central state as it is in fact an arm of

the state. While they are both meant to represent the community, the ACC was created from the bottom, while the Municipality was created from the top.

The Simbhademe programme also serves to challenge the normalized system of power-relations. While the state does allow these types of autonomous development programmes, it is in the state's interest to maintain control over such projects through the involvement of government institutions and structures. Simbhademe only interacted with the state insofar as it did not conflict with any laws or regulations. The ACC and Simbhademe thus confront normalized power-relations by going outside systemic interactions and creating a new space in which to evoke citizen-power. Neither are purely autonomous from existing structures; the ACC was elected within the traditional authority structures which sit adjacent to the state, and have relied on help from a state social worker (John Clarke) and an existing NGO (the LRC), while Simbhademe also developed within traditional authority structures and relied on aid from NGOs (CORC, PondoCROP, SAFCEI) and an international development organization (UNDP). Yet both the ACC and Simbhademe worked with non-state (NGOs) or extra-state (the traditional authority) structures to oppose what the state and a capital-heavy corporation were pushing for.

One resistance strategy has yet to be dealt with: the use of violent protest to oppose the mining project, both in terms of actions and threats. Violent protest action is certainly not an invited space of action, and is universally denigrated by the state as criminal. I have included in this category the protest that disrupted the celebration the government had set up to announce the approval of the mining right. The protest was not sanctioned by the government, and according to several community respondents who were present, would have been violently broken up by police had the police not refused to do so.⁴⁵

While not central to the community's resistance, violent protest and threats of further violence did play a role. The protest at the approval announcement was, according to former Minister Sonjica, the immediate cause for the Department of

⁴⁵ Three separate community respondents claimed, the first without prompting and the two others after questioning, that the police (who by all accounts numbered in the hundreds) were ordered to break up the protest, but refused when the chief on-hand was explained the situation by protesting residents. Regardless of the accuracy of this story, the protest was unsanctioned, ended in the violent beating of a headman, and disrupted a state event.

Minerals and Energy's suspension of the mining right. In addition, threats of apartheid-era revolt from residents in newspaper articles and television shows may have caused government officials to fear what violence may indeed occur if the mining project was initiated.

From the community's perspective, violence seemed to be the tactic of last resort if all other tactics failed. Looking at their strategy as a whole, the community began to oppose the mine by actively participating in the consultation process, an invited space of participation. When the consultants ignored their concerns, the ACC was formed in order to stage a more organized, sustained and tactical resistance, an action that walked the line between invited and invented participation. The ACC then approached the traditional authority for help, filed a complaint to the SAHRC via John Clarke, worked with the LRC to formally appeal the decision, and worked with the ANC and campaigned to ensure all those directly representing them opposed the mine, all actions that fall within invited spaces of participation. At the same time, the community initiated Simbhademe and engaged in limited violent protest, actions that edge further toward invented spaces of participation. According to community respondents and ACC leadership, had the appeal not led to the revocation of the mining license, the next step would have been to challenge the mining right in court, another purely invited space of citizen participation. However, community respondents claimed again and again that the final resistance tactic would have been larger-scale violence and even all-out revolt.

The fact that there were so many resistance tactics available to the community in invited or semi-invited spaces of citizen participation is indicative of how far South Africa has come since the Betterment Scheme and Mpondo Revolt in 1960. That South Africa's political economy allows for a group of villages as capital-poor as coastal AmaDiba fight off a development intervention initiated by a capital-rich multinational company and supported by the state is extraordinary.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project and the fight over whether to grant Australia's MRC mining company license to mine the sand along Eastern Pondoland brought up numerous important and controversial issues central to development in South Africa. This paper has focused on the issue of participation in development, summarizing and critiquing debates over the role of popular participation in development projects. The dissertation also scrutinizes what level of participation is possible in South Africa's post-apartheid political and economic context, as well as how much participation is sought by the state through an examination of the state's actions in the Xolobeni case, as well as the resistance strategies of the Xolobeni residents.

It is difficult to draw specific conclusions as to the exact goals of the South African state (regarding participation in development or any other issue), because as is common with all governments, the South African state is not a homogenous, unified entity but rather a constantly changing collection of distinct, diverse, competing individuals and interests. One conclusion that can be drawn, however, is that the South African state allows a relatively large amount of space for popular participation in development projects. The actions and resistance strategies of the Xolobeni residents opposing the mining project were not met with overt forms of state repression, violent or

otherwise. Instead, the Xolobeni residents were allowed to voice their concerns through a variety of formats, albeit many of them had to be creatively invented by the people. The strategies used (public protest, appeals to sympathetic mass media, legal challenges) were not necessarily endorsed and certainly not encouraged by the state, but at the same time they were not very actively opposed, and certainly not violently repressed either. The fact that in the end the state listened to the local resistance and first suspended and then revoked the mining license voluntarily (without a court order forcing them to do so) is perhaps most revealing of the amount of local popular participation the state allowed, though not necessarily encouraged.

In terms of the Xolobeni residents themselves, their actions in opposing the mining project and even actively attempting to create their own development alternatives (as discussed in Chapter 4) indicates that the residents are currently attempting to initiate development at the highest level of Pretty's typology of participation, self-mobilization. Ideally, all communities would be self-mobilizing, attempting to create their own development initiatives and attracting outside investment and support. However, few poor communities in the developing world can be characterized in such a way due to a variety of factors including lack of education, resources, free time, networks and links to the relevant external agents, and even lack of hope and ambition due to the disheartening and seemingly inescapable cycle of poverty. Given its uniqueness, how can the self-mobilization of Xolobeni be explained?

Several factors likely came into play, all of which have been discussed either directly or indirectly in this paper. One possible explanation is that the mobilization of Xolobeni arose out of its opposition to the mining project directly, and the unity and collective action that successfully opposing the project demanded. The rationalization is based on Hajer's (2003) argument that, in the context of a network society, "it is likely that it is the confrontation with a particular policy programme that first provides the shared basis for discussion, that first brings together the range of individuals in a particular region" (Hajer 2003: 95). Faced with what they perceived to be a major threat to their livelihood strategies, the Xolobeni residents came together to oppose the mining project, and in the process discussed what they liked about their current situation, what they did not like, and how things could be improved. The result was not only the creation

of the ACC and other action to oppose the mine, but also the creation of Simbhademe and a general consensus that tourism development should be actively attracted to the area.

A complimentary explanation is that the interference from outside activists seeking to protect the scenic beauty of the Wild Coast was a driving force behind the areas mobilization. In fact, one could further claim that the presence of numerous print and television journalists and even researchers such as myself contributed to the mobilization of Xolobeni. The questioning of residents by researchers and journalists doubtlessly caused people to think about development issues more actively and more often than under normal circumstances, and the contention by the media and environmental activists that the Wild Coast is a beautiful natural oasis likely affected local perceptions of their home environment, as well as what the best development strategy would be.

Another explanation is that the Xolobeni residents continue to be informed by their historical tradition of resistance, outlined in Chapter 3. Not only was Eastern Pondoland the epicenter for resistance to the Betterment Scheme and the location of the Gum Tree Rebellion, the larger Eastern Cape Province also produced more than its fair share of anti-apartheid leaders, most notably Nelson Mandela. Evidence that this history still affects the consciousness of the Xolobeni people was presented and examined in Chapter 3. The area's history of resistance seems to have contributed to the acquisition of a cavalier attitude that is embraced by the local people, and this attitude likely contributes to the people's desire for self-determination in terms of local development.

Finally, the significant expansion of individual and indigenous rights since the end of apartheid doubtlessly played an important role. In many other developing countries, the objections and resistance of the local (and directly affected) population likely would have been ignored or actively crushed by a central government aiming to generate revenue and increase exports. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Xolobeni residents had numerous avenues open to them in their resistance to the mining project, and in the end, the government gave in to their demands.

In today's global political and economic environment, an ever-consolidating and dwindling number of powerful supranational financial organizations and foreign government wield more and more economic and political power. At the same time, these

organizations have become increasingly uniform in their policy prescriptions regarding development despite deepening inequality and stagnating poverty levels. In this contemporary political and economic environment, concerns about who participates in development and how their opinions and desires are mediated and represented become increasingly important. If the goal is to challenge the broad, hegemonic, and basically uniform policy prescriptions of the global elite with diverse, context-specific, creative and unique ideas grown from the bottom-up, it is necessary to pay close attention to what is actually occurring in spaces of participation, whether invited or invented, as well as what outcomes they produce. In Xolobeni, the massive amount of both invited and invented forms participation by local people led to the defeat of the mining project. The mine's defeat was a victory for Xolobeni residents; whether it was a victory for the whole country is debatable, and is certainly an area that requires further research.

Development in which experts arrive at a location to tell the people, "I know why you are poor, listen and do what I say and you will become wealthy like me," is coming to an end. Through participatory approaches, the situation is changing to one in which development professionals, still with a theoretical background, arrive at a location to ask the people questions such as why are you struggling, what are your limitations, capabilities, and opportunities, and how can your livelihood systems be improved? Development strategies can then be built together that confront both context-specific and macro-structural factors that cause powerlessness, poverty, isolation, exclusion, and underdevelopment.

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List of Key Informants

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