

# **Land Restitution and Conservation: Social capital in the Mkambati Community**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Sandile Zeka, declare that this dissertation is my original work and it has not been submitted in part or entirely for the award of a degree in this or any other university.

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## **DEDICATIONS**

I dedicate this study to my late parents and my late aunt who, during my early childhood, realized the potential in me, and always inspired my conceptualization of the world. My worldview would not be what it is today had they not meaningfully guided my intellectual prowess.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study highlights the role social capital plays in promoting relationships within and between organizations so that they are able to act with common cause. For years relationships between parks and local communities have hinged upon access to, and use of natural resources that are more abundant within parks. Contestation over these resources has overtime led to covert, and in most cases open conflict between these two stakeholders in conservation. Intrinsic in relationship building is social capital. Using the case of the community of Mkambati this study presents both historical and, as developed in recent organizational studies, mental models as critical variables through which social capital evolves and sustains itself within organizations. The argument advanced in this study is that social capital plays an important factor in helping previously displaced communities to regain their land. Relationships play a pivotal role in bonding people, communities, and organizations. Secondly, this study provides a historical perspective of the role played by the community of Mkambati in challenging dispossession of their land. Since the expropriation of their land, the community of Mkambati has relied on bonding social capital in their resolve to regain this land. As this study demonstrates, trust, reciprocity, solidarity and empowerment are some of the properties of social capital that have bonded the community of Mkambati in the struggle for the restitution of their land.

The success of the community of Mkambati in regaining their land is also attributed to this community's resilience to withstand challenges it faced through its protracted battle to have its land back. This resilience, as this study demonstrates emanates from this community's reliance on social capital. Also, and equally important, the robustness of the community of Mkambati to resist change is founded on relational capital drawn from the shared mental model of injustice – the wish to have their land back. This relational capital was continuously reinforced by the actions this community resorted to to achieve this goal.

Land restitution and the emergence of a democratic government made redundant the strongly shared mental model that bound people together for many years. With the return of the land to the people of Mkambati, many new opportunities arose around access to, and use of resources. These opportunities are framed as mental models so that whereas in the past the people held a shared mental model, now they differ among themselves according to their preference for access to, and use of resources. It is suggested that, if not managed, opportunistic behaviour could lead to the privatization of resources and an erosion of the present common property regime and a weakening of a community social capital. On this understanding it is prudent for the community of Mkambati to instil a new shared mental model that will enable this community to use relational connectedness and relational capital to enhance collaborative behaviour necessary for the community's realization of opportunities associated with the return of common property through land restitution.

This study highlights the importance of understanding the role of mental models in sustaining social capital and directing collective action. This study suggests that particularly in the context of common property, explicit attention should be given to understanding the diversity of mental models held by stakeholders, and to a process that constructs and sustains a strategic shared mental model. This is because mental models are perceived to provide a foundation for social learning which is necessary to sustain social capital that promotes collective action within the community.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>AISA</b>       | Africa Institute of South Africa                  |
| <b>ANC</b>        | African National Congress                         |
| <b>CBNRM</b>      | Community Based Resource Management               |
| <b>CLC</b>        | Community Land Conference                         |
| <b>CMC</b>        | Co-management committee                           |
| <b>COSATU</b>     | Congress of South African Trade Unions            |
| <b>CONTRALESA</b> | Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa   |
| <b>CRLR</b>       | Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights      |
| <b>CPA</b>        | Community property association                    |
| <b>CWM</b>        | Community Wildlife Management                     |
| <b>DTI</b>        | Department of Trade and Industry                  |
| <b>DWAF</b>       | Department of Water Affairs and Forestry          |
| <b>ECPB</b>       | Eastern Cape Parks Board                          |
| <b>IFRI</b>       | International Forestry Resources and Institutions |
| <b>JMC</b>        | Joint management committee                        |
| <b>LMS</b>        | London Missionary Society                         |
| <b>O.R.</b>       | Oliver Reginald                                   |
| <b>SACP</b>       | South African Communist Party                     |
| <b>SADET</b>      | South African Democracy Education Trust           |
| <b>SANParks</b>   | South African National Parks                      |
| <b>SDI</b>        | Spatial Development Initiative                    |
| <b>TRACOR</b>     | Transkei Agricultural Corporation                 |
| <b>UDM</b>        | United Democratic Movement                        |

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Preamble**

Land dispossession has been a global phenomenon that has left millions of people deprived of their property and resources. Whether in the Latin Americas, Asia, and Africa, the land issue remains an intractable problem that continues to pose a threat to people's livelihoods, peace and security. There are a number of indications, in the African continent, that point to the fact that conflicts constitute a profound linkage between land, and political violence. In 2002 Cote d'Ivoire, for example, was caught in a civil war, integral to which were dynamics between land and identity (Chauveau and Colin, 2005). This quagmire around land is mostly prevalent in rural areas where about 40 per cent of land is owned mostly by the Burkinabe (people from Burkina Faso); Malian (people from Mali); and Guinean (people from Guinea) (Chauveau and Colin, 2005). A similar outcry about land dispossession is also experienced in Nigeria. Renowned for its oil reserves, Nigeria is also at the epicentre of a number of conflicts around land which is amass with oil reserves (Adebajo, 2008). Central to this land conflict are the Niger Delta and Niger River states where violence rose to its peak in 1999 (Akpan, 2005).

This conflict around land resources, as Mustapha (2008) points out, has not only been a threat to Nigeria's domestic relations, but has gone to the extent of destabilizing Nigeria's foreign policy and its hegemonic status in West Africa. Indeed, as research indicates, Nigeria's attempts to lead peace initiatives in West Africa have been compromised by internal instability due to clashes over land and oil resources (Mustapha, 2008). In East Africa, Kenya has also been embroiled in conflicts over land. For instance, extreme inequality and landlessness has in recent years led to Kenyans threatening land invasions (Yamano and Deininger, 2005). In Southern Africa, as a response to skewed land possession, Zimbabwe has experienced massive land

invasions which have impacted negatively on the country's economic power (Chitiyo, 2003).

When South Africa attained democracy in 1994, this country was hailed as a miracle. Indeed peaceful negotiations that followed decades of tense relations between the South African government on the one hand, and underground struggle spearheaded both internally and out of the country, armed struggle led by liberation movements, mass struggle propagated inside the country, and international anti-apartheid solidarity, finally led to the drafting of a democratic constitution. This was in turn hailed as one of the most democratic constitutions in the world. Indeed, this constitution prides itself of advocating for a Bill of Rights which was seen as a mechanism to foster peace, security and freedom for all citizens of South Africa. Under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, the first democratic president of South Africa, the country started playing a role as a mediator in a number of peace initiatives in the African continent. Subsequent presidents – Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma have continued to uphold South Africa's political footprint in the continent through facilitating peace and security in various strife-torn countries. While these peaceful continental initiatives by South Africa are applauded, it is regrettable that South Africa, as this study indicates, has so far fallen short of addressing the critical land possession challenges facing millions of its citizens.

A number of scholars globally have, for some time now, devoted their intellectual attention to land dispossession (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007). Indeed, it is imperative that dynamics surrounding land dispossession, and subsequent land reform are closely scrutinized so as to continuously build a sustainable scholarship on the land question. Despite these frantic attempts by myriad scholars to ensure that intricacies of land dispossession and land reform are placed in the public domain, there remain a number of gaps or weaknesses which afford an opportunity for new and innovative ideas that would further elucidate nascent, and sometimes, elusive dichotomies in both land dispossession and land reform issues. Firstly, it is this perceived 'gap' in the scholarship on land issues that requires more research to be conducted on the evolution of social dynamics within dispossessed communities. In particular, research should focus on

communities during the time they are deprived of their land, and after it has been given back to them. Secondly, this study offers a unique contribution to scholarship in that it simultaneously engages political theory such as critical theory, double-hermeneutics theory, which emphasises the use of language and interpretation of text, and mental model theory, which provides a psychological explanation and understanding of the thinking of both individuals and groups on the use of land. The focus on social capital and land restitution in Mkambati in this study is an attempt to contribute to a body of knowledge on land dispossession. Most studies on land dispossession focus on political dynamics in which government on one side, and communities on the other are involved. In this study I use the notion of social capital in combination with mental model theory to demonstrate that intra and inter-community relations can be used in conjunction with individual and group thinking to strengthen the community's resolve to fight for their land rights. It is in this unique perspective that this study contributes to the body of knowledge on land dispossession.

South Africa is still experiencing relentless calls by myriad communities that land that was dispossessed from them, through the notorious Native Land Act of 1913, should be ceded back to them (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007; Hendricks *et al.* 2013). The colonization of Africa has been characterised by expropriation of land, commonly without compensation, and the marginalization of indigenous people. Understanding the sensitivity of the land question, the democratic government in South Africa moved swiftly in putting in place legislative mechanisms that would help in addressing the land injustices of the past. It is within this vein that the land reform programme became one of the primary political interventions with which the 'newly-found' South African state had to contend. As evidence advanced in this study suggests, despite this swift move by the newly-elected government, the land reform programme in South Africa remains a contested phenomenon that, if not speedily addressed, is likely to threaten the democratic gains since 1994.

Two implications of this are that land and empowerment have been at the heart of the struggle for democracy, a struggle that has drawn people together with a sense of

common purpose and commitment to collective action (Benson, 1985; Hendricks *et al.* 2013). What is it that binds people together in a protracted struggle for land restitution, a struggle that had to be engaged over many generations? And, what happens to these people once their goal of land restitution has been achieved? These are the key questions of this study. Also, this study provides a critical analysis of the challenges and impediments that are faced by the community of Mkambati despite having got back their land. These challenges, as the study illustrates, point to the institutional deficiencies posed by the land restitution programme.

Although this study focuses on the community of Mkambati, an isolated people living on the eastern seaboard of South Africa, whose struggle for land restitution was sustained for more than eighty years, the findings have much broader relevance. First, while the land reform programme is aimed at ceding land back to the original owners, it also puts in place regulatory principles on how that land has to be utilized. In the case of the community of Mkambati, and indeed other communities countrywide, the South African government has stipulated that conservation should be at the epicentre of the land restitution programme (Walker, 2008). This condition, as this study will demonstrate, is not being appreciated by the community of Mkambati, as they would have liked to use the land in a way that promotes a number of developmental imperatives that would help in accelerating employment in their area. It is this latter approach that the community of Mkambati feels would be more beneficial to them.

The Mkambati Nature Reserve has been established on land originally expropriated for the establishment of a leper colony in 1913. The affected people, who refer to themselves as “*Thina bahlali baseMkambati*” or “We, the community of Mkambati”, never accepted the injustice associated with the expropriation of their land and so engaged in a protracted struggle for restitution. In this thesis I will argue that to sustain such a struggle requires that people feel empowered to act collectively and this must persist across generations; people must be bonded together by trust and reciprocity, and by social capital. The relationships between people and how they collaborate for common cause is central to their success. My argument is based on the understanding

that social capital plays an important role in promoting relationships within and between organizations, either enabling or disabling them from acting with common cause (Isham *et al.*, 2002).

Shared interpretation of how to deal with land restitution programme can be interpreted as a shared or team mental model (Giampietro, 2004). Thus, the relationships expressed through collaborative behaviours in support of the common cause are defined by a mental model that depicts how people's belief system is framed. These collaborative behaviours, founded on trust and reciprocity, enable the community to cope with change and retain identity (Herrerros, 2004). Identity conferred by a shared mental model is thus central for collective action. Importantly, the argument presented in this study considers both historical and, as developed in recent organizational studies, mental models as critical variables through which social capital evolves and sustains itself within organizations. Furthermore, I will argue that shared models confer resilience on communities so that they can retain identity over a range of dynamic states (Giampietro, 2004), and that where such models do not exist, communities lose identity and are less able to engage in collective action.

This study provides an historical perspective of the role played by the community of Mkambati in challenging the dispossession of its land. I will show that the community was defined by social capital, a resource that was to be central to the struggle for land restitution. The study indicates that the shared mental model of justice achieved through return of their land fostered trust, reciprocity, solidarity, and empowerment, properties of social capital that bonded the community of Mkambati during the struggle. However, with return of the land, the once shared mental model loses relevance. Under these conditions one can postulate that individual mental models could find expression in opportunistic behaviour around access to, and use of, the land and associated resources. A consequence would be weakening of social capital and loss of identity. On this understanding I argue for the importance of shared mental models in constructing and sustaining the collective identity; and further because social capital is context



specific and because mental models are tangible expressions of context, they provide the foundation for social capital and collective action.

I also demonstrate that the land restitution programme has failed the community of Mkambati. While it is indeed true that both social capital and shared mental models have been instrumental in promoting cohesion within the community of Mkambati, it should be equally admitted that the failure of the land restitution programme and the government's imposed community based natural resource management (CBNRM) have also compromised this community. This resulted, as discussed in this study, in a decline in trust and relationships within the community; and also a deterioration of relationships between the community of Mkambati and the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB), and other government departments and agencies. This decline in relationships has delayed the community of Mkambati from benefiting from their returned land. Secondly, this deterioration of relationships has delayed the implementation of development programmes in this area. This study probes whether the land restitution programme in its present format in South Africa does benefit the community of Mkambati, or whether it fosters divisions that stand to prolong the economic and social hardships that this community is encountering.

## **1.2 Purpose**

In our everyday lives we increasingly affect and are affected by the demands and actions of other people and that compels us respond to an urgent challenge to jointly face these demands. How can one foster and sustain collective action, particularly in contested and changing contexts? In this study I seek an understanding of the role of social capital and of its durability once the goal of collective action has been attained and new goals emerge. I also seek to understand whether the land restitution process in Mkambati has yielded the benefits that this community expected. My intention is to advance our theoretical understanding of social capital through the study of the land restitution process in which the community of Mkambati is involved. This intention will be accomplished through a consideration of theoretical constructs that have not

previously been aligned with understanding the role of social capital in community action.

The objectives of this study are to contribute to:

- Determine the role of social capital in promoting collective action in the community of Mkambati;
  - Evaluate the role of land and associated resources in influencing social capital in Mkambati;
  - Evaluate the impact of the land restitution programme on the livelihoods of the community of Mkambati in their resolve to access and use the resources in their returned land;
  - The influences of context on social capital and collective action.
- 
- How theories that have not previously been aligned with social capital might enhance understanding of this resource.
  - The relationship between social capital and mental models in the community of Mkambati as it is faced with new and changing contexts.

## **1.3 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

### **1.3.1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter defines the scope of this study and the objectives which the researcher seeks to attain in undertaking this study.

### **1.3.2 CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Theoretical and conceptual framework remains the hallmark of a scholarly writing (Raporport, 1985). This chapter provides an analysis of both theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this study. First, this chapter uses both critical theory and power theory as theories to ground this study. Second, this chapter provides an analysis of double-

hermeneutics as a supporting theoretical paradigm upon which this study is grounded. Last, this chapter provides an analysis of both mental models and resilience theories, and how these theories can contribute to an understanding of relationships between actors in the area being studied. Communities, the world over, have displayed relationships that have always promoted cohesion (Bourdieu, 1992). This chapter aims at addressing a number of issues. First it introduces the concept of social capital as a resource upon which communities worldwide rely to promote cohesion. Second, this chapter provides a synopsis of the concept of Ubuntu, and how African communities have relied on Ubuntu to further their interests and livelihoods. Third, this chapter provides an analysis of how communities use social capital to promote relationships among themselves. Lastly, this chapter defines and discusses mental models and their role in facilitating social cohesion

### **1.3.3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY**

The main theme of this chapter is the research area and how the research was conducted. The aims of this chapter are to (i) provide an in-depth understanding of the research setting in which the study was conducted; (ii) provide a historical background of the community of Mkambati; (iii) provide a synopsis of the land restitution programme in South Africa, with a particular focus on the community of Mkambati; (iv) explain research methods used during data collection and data processing; (v) operationalizing the methodological framework and analyzing relations among data, theory, and interpretations. Lastly, this chapter explains the ethical processes that inform this study.

### **1.3.4 CHAPTER FOUR: THE FIGHT FOR SOCIETAL VALUES AND LAND RIGHTS IN MKAMBATI**

This chapter provides an incisive analysis of a protracted struggle by the community of Mkambati to regain their land. First, the Ngquza massacre in 1960 heralded a turning point by the community of Mkambati in their resolve to regain their land. While the Ngquza massacre led to the death of scores of people and the injury and arrest of hundreds of people, this episode inevitably rekindled the intensification of the struggle for land by the community of Mkambati. Second, the apartheid regime, through among

others, collaborating with some of the *Amakhosi* held firm in subjugating the community of Mkambati under its unjust policies. Third, the attainment of the so-called independence by Transkei brought about further harassment to the community of Mkambati. Fourth, the advent of democracy in 1994 brought about some glimpse of hope to the community of Mkambati. While it is during this era that the Mkambati land was finally ceded to the community, it is worth stating that the community of Mkambati is still facing the socio-economic hardships that have always existed during the past eras, namely, lack of access to land and associated benefits that persist to impose poverty and misery to this community.

### **1.3.5 CHAPTER FIVE: CRISIS, CHANGE, AND CONTINUITY: LAND DYNAMICS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The implementation of the land restitution programme in Mkambati brought about hope and expectation to the community of Mkambati. Indeed, it was the belief of the community of Mkambati that finally getting back their land would enable them to benefit from the associated resources. Like myriad communities in other parts of South Africa, the land restitution programme brought about unfulfilled promises and frustrations for the community of Mkambati. This chapter explores some of these dynamics. First, it elucidates the challenges that the land reform programme is faced with in South Africa. Second, it provides the underlying reasons why the land restitution programme remains a contentious issue that betrays hopes and aspirations of the community of Mkambati.

### **1.3.6 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

This chapter overview has provided a synopsis of each chapter that this study entails. This study is premised on a conceptual framework that acts as a guide for the accomplishment of this project. The aim of this chapter is to provide an evaluation and a comprehensive analysis of this study. This chapter includes the following:

- a synopsis of the role played by history in shaping the context within which the community of Mkambati exists;

- an analysis of the role of social capital in collective action;
- an assessment of how the context has shaped the identity of the community of Mkambati; and
- The role played by theories that have not been previously aligned with social capital.

In particular, this chapter overview acts as a signpost of how the researcher has approached this study. The sequence that is provided in this study provides a guide on how the sequence of chapters unfolds throughout the study.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning this study and is divided into two broad sections. The first section introduces the following:

- Critical theory as a theoretical paradigm guiding this study;
- Double hermeneutics as a process entailing translation and interpretation in seeking to understand contextualities of actors' interactions;
- Power theory which I use in conjunction with critical theory to provide an analysis of actors being studied at Mkambati; and lastly
- Both mental models and resilience theory help to understand relationships existing within the area being studied.

In the second section, I examine the concept of social capital and consider how various scholars approach and define this concept. Understanding the role social capital play in community cohesion and behavior is central to this study. In particular, this section will:

- Introduce social capital as a concept;
- Analyze how Ubuntu promotes cohesion within people;
- Analyze the role of social capital in promoting intra-community relationships;
- Assess how social capital can be used to promote cohesion between communities and government; and
- Discuss how mental models play a role in facilitating social cohesion within communities.

The use of more than one theoretical approach is necessitated, particularly in this study, by the complex practices that exist in relationships. Commenting on the complex nature of social settings, Cicourel (1964) indicates that the nature of collective life is marked by a mix of social institutions, decision-making processes, general norms and values that

are explicit, behavioural patterns, and power relations, among others. In addition to matching critical and power theories, further compelling reasons will be provided on how these two theories relate to each other.

### **2.1.1 Critical theory**

The pivot of this study is the significance of relationships among or between actors<sup>1</sup>. Critical in constructing and sustaining relationships are patterns of interaction between individuals, communities, or organizations. To provide clarity on relationship building this study will use among others, critical theory. The choice of critical theory, in conjunction with power theory is also premised on the assumption that these theories are not in contestation with one another, rather they complement each other. Critical theory as a social scientific theory has been defined in varied but complementary ways. Critical theory is 'critical' in that it defines theories as analyses of social situations and provides an analysis of those features which can be altered in order to eliminate certain frustrations which are experienced by actors in relationships (Habermas, 1971; Fay, 1974). Similarly, critical theory plays a pivotal role in acting as a guide for human action (Seale *et al.*, 2004). This theory is aimed, among other things, at promoting enlightenment and emancipation (Seale *et al.*, 2004). According to Seale *et al.* (2004), critical theory relies on an interdisciplinary approach, that is, it takes into account that relationships in our societies are too complex to be studied from a single perspective.

Fay (1974) used critical theory to demonstrate how and in what context relationships occur among actors. Critical theory recognizes that many of the actions people perform are caused by social conditions over which they have no control. Critical theory seeks to uncover those systems of social relationships which determine the actions of individuals, and the unanticipated, though not accidental, consequences of these actions (Fay, 1974). Therefore, critical theory is framed on the explicit understanding that social theory is interconnected with social practice: that is, what is to count as truth is partially determined by the specific ways in which scientific theory is supposed to relate to practical action (Fay, 1974). Therefore, one can argue that research or

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<sup>1</sup> 'Actors' in this case refers to individuals, a community, or organizations.

research findings should be viewed from a particular theoretical background against which the researcher operates. These findings cannot be regarded as the complete truth. Rather their truthfulness is premised on the subjective epistemology to which the researcher is affiliated.

Critical theory is not moralistic or utopian, in other words, it does not attempt to get people to adopt a set of new ideas that are foreign and threatening to them (Bourdieu, 1986). Rather, it seeks to articulate the felt needs of a specific group of actors, and to provide a vocabulary by virtue of which they and their context can be conceptualized (Fay, 1974). In order to accomplish this objective, critical theory seeks to explain why the conditions in which actors find themselves are frustrating, and offers a programme of action which is intended to end with the satisfaction of these desires (Fay, 1974). In his theory on power relations and social fields, Bourdieu (1993: 72) posits that the use of symbols and signs to differentiate each actor from the other, and how through language, clothing, cultural tastes and habits “we send a message to the world as to who we want to be and with whom we want to associate” which are critical in explaining relationships. Economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital all contribute to determining where one stands on the social ladder. Drawing from Bourdieu’s analysis it becomes evident that critical theory alone is not sufficient in explaining or interpreting interactions among actors. This view is based on the fact that human interactions are premised on language. Secondly, and as mentioned earlier, critical theory operates in an interdisciplinary approach, that is, it takes into account that social interactions are complex. Lastly, the articulation of grievances of actors and the use of vocabulary to conceptualize the issues and their context requires the use of a philosophical approach consistent with language interpretation. Some of these challenges to critical theory can be addressed through the use of the philosophy of double hermeneutics.

### **2.1.2 Social science as a double hermeneutics**

While critical theory is concerned, among other issues, with historical context as an integral part of discourse interpretation, the hermeneutics approach can be defined as an attempt to recreate or translate the meaning of historical events from the available



textual data (Harvey *et al.*, 2000). A central feature of hermeneutics is the notion of knowledge-constitutive interests (Habermas, 1987). Put differently, knowledge is not self-evident but constituted according to prevailing interests. Building on hermeneutics, double hermeneutics refers to a two-fold process entailing translation and interpretation in seeking to understand contextualities of actors' interaction (Giddens, 1984). Put differently, Giddens (1984) comments that everyday life contains knowledge by which one understands forms of social interpretation. In addition to mediating the frames of meaning within which actors orient their conduct, double hermeneutics also seeks to translate in and out of the frames of meaning involved in sociological theories (Giddens, 1984). Relating the philosophy of double hermeneutics to actor relationship which is the focus of the present study, Giddens (1984) contends that all human beings are knowledgeable agents. This means that all social actors are aware of at least some of the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives.

In agreement with Giddens' assertion, Habermas (1987) comments that in developing the concept of 'knowledge-constitutive interests' (knowledge is not self-evident but constituted according to prevailing interests), practical knowledge-constitutive interests are concerned with the hermeneutic task of extending understanding in intersubjective relations, the aim being to achieve consensus, community, and mutual understanding (Habermas, 1987).

Through the use of hermeneutics, Habermas (1987) interprets critical theory as the basis for rational change via the self-awareness of people. This self-awareness is drawn not only from developing knowledge but also through analyzing the constitutive interests that impinge on the construction of knowledge. Critical in the application of hermeneutics is the use of the evolving understanding of history to develop a holistic understanding of the wider context (Habermas, 1987). It places the specific events (or parts) in the context of the whole. In addition, social action is facilitated by the use of language in specific contexts and constructs (Habermas, 1987). He argues that actors use certain strategies and resources in engaging in mutually intelligible social interactions. Using Habermas' analysis, the present study will take into account the

significance of the context in shaping the response of the community over time, and within which actors respond to interview questions or hold their meetings, and how they create a new context thereof.

### **2.1.3 Power theory**

One of the important factors in understanding the rules and constitutive meanings of actors is the social order within which actors participate and make decisions (Fay, 1974). This social order is founded on, and often operates around, power relations. Theories of power are often divided into two types: those that originate from the political science school of thought and those that emanate from sociology (Barry, 1981). Consistent with the articulation of the felt needs of a specific group of actors as indicated earlier in critical theory, and understanding contextualities of actors' interaction as postulated by Giddens' double hermeneutics theory, sociological theories of power will be used as a guide in this study. The sociological approach argues that in every society there will be a small group that can dictate all major decisions (Barry, 1981). Mills (1959), a proponent of power theory, postulates that participation and decision-making processes are determined by a centralized unified class of power elite. In agreement, Bourdieu (1991, 1993) comments that studying actors in a social field should centre around power, that is a study should search for the rules guiding decision-making processes and the power dimensions that exist in the field. He further argues that identical family relationships, class backgrounds, and education are key sociological factors that underlie group cohesiveness; it is through these relationships that power is exercised.

Arendt (1958) argues that there are power differentials between groups. Often these groups have unequal access to the material and symbolic resources most likely to assist them in collectively working for conditions that best enable them to pursue their needs and interests. Participation in conditions where material and symbolic obstacles prevent the possibility of real social change can be a hollow exercise (Jovchelovitch, 1996). Therefore, participation under these conditions simply legitimizes the status quo rather than providing an opportunity for marginalized people to pursue their needs and

interests (Jovchelovitch, 1996). Does power impinge on actors' rights to equal participation? Not according to a 'double-edged' conceptualization of power, as espoused by Arendt (1958). He strongly argues that this conceptualization of power also allows for the possibility of empowerment. Jovchelovitch (1996: 55) argues that:

Power is not a phenomenon to be explained only through an intrinsic negativity, but as a space of possible action, where social subjects strive to exert their effects.

Power, argues Jovchelovitch (1996), is inextricably linked to that realm where people collectively participate in the everyday negotiations, bringing different social groups and identities into dialogue about the possibility of social change. Jovchelovitch (1996: 55) adds that:

Power, in this sense, is deeply intertwined with participation. It refers to being capable of: to be able to produce an effect, to construct a reality, to institute a meaning.

Therefore, whenever a community participates in activities and initiatives to enhance its interests, it actualizes the power it holds to participate in the shaping of its way of life (Campbell, 2003).

In addition, the present study investigates, among other issues, how actors use social capital to strengthen their relationships. Marsden *et al.* (1993) argue that actor relationships are critical in creating and sustaining group cohesion. They contend that actors or group networks are bound through nodes that control them.

The historical context is an integral part of discourse interpretation. Taking into account this context during data collection and analysis enables one to highlight the historical dimension which I consider crucial in the present study. Therefore, one could argue that social research should be informed by a multi-disciplinary approach. This argument stems partly from the view that the historical context is a strong determinant of power relationships and cohesion, both within groups of actors and between groups of actors.

Power may be defined as a certain kind of relationship which involves the capacity of an individual, or group of individuals, to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in a way that the individual or group desires (Tawney, 1931; French and Bell, 1999). Perhaps the use of the power theory in this study could be better understood through Lasswell's (1951: 75) argument that:

The making of decisions is an interpersonal process: the policies which other persons are to pursue are what is decided upon. Power as participation in the making of decisions is an interpersonal relation.

One of the important factors in understanding the rules and constitutive meanings of actors is the social order within which actors participate and make decisions (Fay, 1974). This social order is founded on, and often operates around, power relations. The variance in theories of power continues to be a matter of continuous discussion in social science. Power should also be understood from the fact that decision making first takes place in people's minds (Fay, 1974).

#### **2.1.4 Mental models**

Social capital is both a facilitator and an outcome of dialogue. In situations where people trust each other, information and understanding is exchanged freely, leading to a shared understanding of how the world works. This is not to suggest that all understandings match perfectly. Personal Construct Theory suggests that we each have unique ways of thinking, even when we may share parts (Kelly, 1955; Abel *et al.*, 1998). If this was not to be so, intellectual progress would likely be impossible. The dynamic context in which we live provides a continual stream of information that as individuals we process at different rates into new understanding. If we belong to social learning systems we are enabled to transfer and reshape our understanding (Kim, 2004; Wenger, 2004).

Senge (1990) considers mental models to be deeply held internal images of how the world works, which have a powerful influence on what we do because they also affect

what we see. He suggests that mental models are one of the five learning disciplines, as we reflect upon, continually clarify, and improve our internal pictures of the world, and see how they shape our actions and decisions (Senge *et al.*, 1994). However, he also notes that learning may be hindered when new insights conflict with established mental models (Senge, 2004). Wenger (2004:242) observes:

People must know each other well enough to know how to interact productively and who to call for help or advice.

In this study the argument presented is that communities with high social capital provide social learning institutions that help members progress to, and sustain, a shared understanding of how their world works. This would be particularly so where communities are small and isolated.

One of the geneses of socially shared cognition is individual belief structures which mean that in order to understand the notion of team mental models we first have to understand individual cognitive processes (Damon, 1991; Resnick, 1991; Miles and Kivlighan, 2008). A range of cognitive terminology has been used to explain the process by which individuals make sense of their surroundings. For instance, researchers in fields such as business policy and strategy have employed 'group mind' like constructs (Klimoski and Mohammed 1994). Various terms, argue Klimoski and Mohammed (1994), such as shared mental models, common cause maps, shared frames, team work schemas and others have been used to define the process by which individuals make sense of their surroundings. Because the term 'mental models' has different meanings for different researchers, in this study I use the term to illustrate how the community of Mkambati interacts to define a shared cognition of their environment. Holyoak (1984: 193) defines a mental model as a "psychological representation of the environment and its expected behaviour." Similarly, Rouse and Morris (1986) indicate that the role of mental models is to provide a conceptual framework for describing, explaining, and predicting future system states. Therefore, mental models allow individuals to understand phenomena, make inferences, and experience events by proxy (Johnson-Laird, 1983; Mohammed and Dumville, 2001).

Using the term 'shared mental models' this study seeks to demonstrate that groups of people can retain information through sharing in a way that transcends the cognitive facilities of individuals (Mohammed *et al.*, 2009). Shared mental models promote cohesion within a group and enhance the group's understanding of their environment. By understanding the environment the group strengthens its social capital around common objectives. The existence of social capital within a group is informed and reinforced, among others, by continued information sharing. Groups with shared mental models, and their reliance on social capital, are likely to be resilient against what they perceive as a threat to their existence (Klimoski and Mohammed 1994).

### **2.1.5 Resilience**

Resilience theory provides a way of thinking about, developing, and sustaining understanding of the dynamics of social-ecological systems so that we are better able to direct and manage our actions (Folke *et al.*, 2002; Holling, 1973). I have argued that social capital is an important determinant of how communities are enabled to learn and act together with common cause as they strive to cope with the stresses of a changing world. Bonding and bridging social capital can help communities deal with external actors in whom they may have little trust (Sekar, 2007), and resilient social-ecological systems (SES) "may make use of a crisis as an opportunity to transform into a more desired state" (Folke *et al.*, 2005:441). It follows that social capital is central to community resilience because it helps members of the community to cope with disturbances. A disturbance is anything that causes disruption to the system. In a social-ecological system, such disturbances can have their origins in the ecological, economic or social parts of the system (Berkes and Folke, 2000; Anderies *et al.*, 2004; Ostrom 2007).

It is intuitively compelling to assume that resilience is beneficial for a social-ecological system. This assumes, however, that the system operates in a benign environment, but where resilience entrenches an oppressive regime for example, it is not beneficial (Berkes and Folke, 2000). An SES that resists change limits learning and so in the

longer term it decreases resilience. Unsurprisingly, Walker *et al.* (2002) have argued that building and sustaining a resilient system requires that actors address structures and processes that undermine resilience, and learning is surely paramount among these. This understanding encourages that we draw a distinction between resilience and robustness. Resilience has been defined in a number of ways (Neubert and Caswell, 1997) and a distinction has been drawn between system robustness and resilience (Giampietro, 2004; Anderies *et al.*, 2004). Essentially, a robust system is one that is able to resist change whilst a resilient system is one that is able to adapt to change by reorganizing whilst still retaining its stable state(s). Cilliers (2006) has argued that changing too frequently causes instability that can confound governance, and he suggests the need for a 'certain slowness' which would be achieved by a balance between resisting and adapting to change. Social capital can enable a community to act together to resist or to adapt in the face of change. However, whilst resistance is tactical, adaptation is strategic and requires co-learning that leads to sufficient overlap in mental models of the future to secure support and commitment to action Cilliers (2006).

Scale is an important dimension of resilience in SESs (Dietz *et al.*, 2003; Anderies *et al.*, 2004). Small scale social-ecological systems that function in relatively isolated situations have limited memory of disturbances on which to construct strategic responses. Anderies *et al.* (2004) drawing on the work of Ostrom (1998) indicate that the resource users and public infrastructure providers are the same individuals who observe on a daily basis each other's behaviour and they solve their internal problems through reciprocity and trust, based on reputation and interactions over an indefinite time horizon. Thus, whilst memory in the context of social capital can be positive because it enables the community to retain beliefs, values, and norms, in so doing it may constrain innovation in the face of change and predispose the SES to rapid collapse. Where institutions are persistent there is potential for robustness to reduce ability to respond strategically to disturbances (Berkes and Folke, 2000). Given the complex and dynamic nature of SESs, adaptation is by its very nature experimentation and the outcomes are uncertain. This uncertainty, particularly where it affects beliefs,

values and norms, tests relationships among actors and so relationships must be resilient to avoid collapse and a change of state. Nkhata (2007) has argued that this is a function of two variables: relational capital and relational connectedness.

## **2.2 Conceptual framework**

Conceptual frameworks are neither models nor theories (Rapoport, 1985). Rapoport (1985) further indicates that models describe how things work, and theories explain phenomena. On the other hand, conceptual frameworks play a role in helping to think about and define phenomena, and to order material. Conceptual frameworks are critical in helping the author to keep focus on phenomena, provide direction, and assist in the synthesis (Berkes and Folke, 2000). In this study I have sought to demonstrate that applying critical theory in conjunction with hermeneutics and power theory can be used to analyze and understand actors' relationships within their contextual setting. By adopting these perspectives and discourses, social capital could be better understood as a resource that reflects the state of relationships among actors. Because social capital is dynamic, maintaining preparedness for collective action requires that it is resilient in the face of changing context. This has led me to argue that resilience theory should assume importance in seeking understanding of the dynamics of social capital and the implications for society.

As individuals perceive their emerging context differently, they hold different mental models and whilst they do so, prospects for collective action are diminished. This suggests that mental models can become powerful determinants of relationships among actors and, hence, of resilience in social capital. This led me to conclude that relationships are a strong determinant of the identity and social capital of a group or community, and that this in turn enables groups to make, support, and act on collective decisions. These actions in turn develop collective power and influence. In effect, it is the complex interplay between individual and group behaviour that ultimately determines how social capital is created and used to sustain group cohesion.



Mental models are constructed on past experiences and perceptions of the present and future. Lukacs (1920) defines history as the destiny of people. This simply means that history is created by the processes in which people are involved. Importantly, however, this understanding of history suggests a role in determining the future. If it is accepted that social and cultural phenomena are determined by history (Macey, 2000), then it is difficult to contest the conclusion that history is a strong determinant of how individuals view their world and how they behave in relation to it, or in other words of their mental models. This suggests further that the interactions between history and contemporary context shape personal perceptions and behaviours. These directly affect the relationships an individual has with others and indirectly affect relationships among others acting in a group.

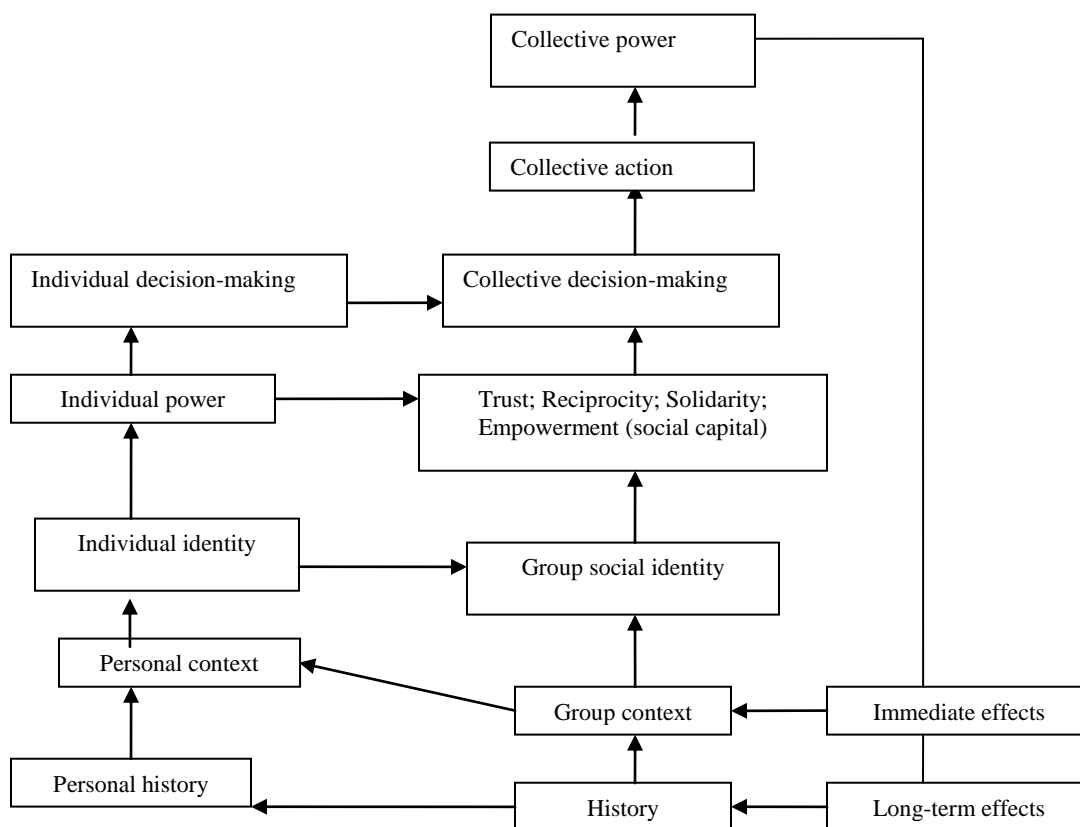
Commenting on historicism, Macey (2000:184) argues that:

Historicism is the belief or conviction that historical phenomena are situated and defined by their specific context and is therefore to be explained in terms of the contingent factors that gave rise to them.

Macey's (2000) definition lends significance to the intertwined and reciprocal relationships between history and contemporary context. While history creates the context within which processes and activities unfold, it is also re-created by the evolving context within which processes take place. Thus it is the complex reciprocal interactions between individual history and context with group history and context that determine and sustain social capital.

The conceptual framework that guided this study is depicted in Figure 3.1. It posits that history shapes the context in which individuals and groups establish their identities and that how this is expressed determines whether relationships exhibit trust, reciprocity, solidarity, and empowerment (social capital). However, such social capital is also always vulnerable to abuse of individual power. Where a group has developed social capital, collective decisions and actions lead collective power to influence the destiny of the group, and thereby to reshape history. Thus, a historical analysis helps one

understand contemporary behaviour. The conceptual model is generic. In this study it is used to structure analysis with a view to understand the role of social capital in collective action that embodied the struggle for restitution of land. Social capital (Narayan, 2000) inheres in the structure of relationships. To contribute to social capital a person or organization must be related to others. To analyze the role that social capital has played over time it is necessary to conduct a longitudinal study, which in the context of this research, would cover a period from before expropriation of land to the present.



**Figure 2.1** A conceptual framework of the interplay between individuals and groups in determining social capital and how, through collective actions and power, the interplay feeds back to influence context and history (**Source: Developed by Author**).

### **2.2.1 Origins of Social Capital**

The concept of social capital dates back to the Middle Ages in Europe. In his article *“Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-industrial Europe”*, Brenner (1976) states that social capital, among other historical achievements, contributed to the abolishment of serfdom in Western Europe. This, he argues, was not the case in Eastern Europe, where the absence of communally managed resources deprived those communities of strong social capital. If communities in Eastern Europe had had a strong social capital, they could have used it in the creation of political capital that would, as was the case with their counterparts in Western Europe, have helped them in abolishing serfdom (Brenner, 1976). Of particular relevance to the present study is the role of land and associated resources in forming and sustaining social capital. Defining social capital, Bourdieu (1992) indicates that social capital entails a totality of actual and potential resources which are commonly associated with the possession of lasting networks. Intrinsic in these networks, argues Bourdieu (1992), are institutionalized relations where actors know and respect each other. Herreros (2004) argues that social capital refers to resources – such as trust, information, ideas, and support – that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with other people. These resources are ‘social’ in that they are only accessible in, and through these, relationships. Social capital is the totality of all actual and potential resources associated with the possession of a lasting network of institutionalized relations of knowing and respecting each other (Bourdieu, 1991). In his definition, Bourdieu (1991) emphasizes the role played by different forms of capital in the production of unequal power relations. According to Bourdieu (1991), unequal social relations are maintained through a range of social, political, economic and cultural processes that sustain inequalities (Campbell, 2003).

The concept of social capital has been debated quite extensively by myriad of scholars. This ongoing debate has, in many instances, led to lack of consensus on what social capital is. Despite this debate, there is an overwhelming consensus that social capital remains a critical analytical tool in social science discourse. A number of assertions, and indeed conclusions in certain instances, have been advanced about social capital

by authors who are considered experts in the social sciences. For instance, in his seminal work, Fine (2001) succinctly argues that capital should be primarily taken to be social in a historical sense. This argument is based on the assumption that capital is confined to a particular period of history. It is therefore imperative that the understanding of capital should be confined to those historically delimited social circumstances that provide its conditions (Fine 2001). The failure to take cognizance of the historical perspective leads to a situation where capital is understood ahistorically and in a wide-ranging situation that contributes to the distorted understanding of social capital (Fine, 2001). It is perhaps this concern that has led Fine (2001) to draw from various proponents, to provide an extensive analysis of social capital. It is not surprising that Fine (2001) draws insights from Bourdieu (1986a), particularly his seminal work on the book entitled “*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment Taste*”; and Coleman (1990a) – with his major contribution to social exchange theory, which, in many academic circles, is regarded as a discourse about how and why social capital emanates.

Fine (2001), drawing from a myriad scholars provides an extensive critique of Putnam’s role in advancing social capital as a discourse that, more than others, advances the role of social networks in relationship building and social cohesion. The association of Putnam with social capital can be traced back to two publications, namely, “*Making Democracies Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*” (1993a); and “*Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital*” (1995). These two scholars have, over the years, been associated with the promotion of the notion of social capital, albeit in various, and in some cases different perspectives.

It is, therefore, appropriate that our understanding and analysis of social capital should be premised on the scholarship and indeed discourses advanced by these scholars. Fine (2001) summates Bourdieu’s use of the term capital thus: economic, symbolic and cultural. Amongst these capitals, cultural capital emerges as one that encapsulates social capital, with the latter, according to Bourdieu, focusing on the extent of social connections and networks (Bourdieu, 1996a). Two distinct features of social capital, as

advanced by Bourdieu are highlighted by Fine (2001). Firstly, social capital consists of resources based on connections and group membership. Secondly, social capital is informed by a broader analytical content that excludes economic attributes. This category is specifically attached to the notion of power (Fine 2001).

While agreeing with Fine (2001), Postone (1993) goes further in observing that Bourdieu's notion of capital entails the capacity to exercise control over one's own future and that of others. Indeed, Bourdieu postulates that the amount of social capital an actor possesses depends on "the size of network connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital... possesses in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected" (Bourdieu, 1986b: 249), with "position in the field of power (defined by the structure of a person's capital)" (Bourdieu, 1996b:162). Bourdieu, as reflected by Fine (2001), argues that the individualistic basis of the notion of social capital emerges in making comparison between those with different portfolios of endowments. This point is succinctly advanced by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:99) when they argue that:

Two individuals endowed with an equivalent overall capital can differ ... in that one holds a lot of economic capital and little cultural capital while the other has little economic and large cultural assets.

While Bourdieu's contribution to social capital is acknowledged in academic circles, there are concerns about some of his analogies. For instance, Bourdieu is criticized for offering a generalized notion of social capital and disaggregates it into specific types (Fine, 2001). It is therefore not surprising that Castle (1998) refers to rural capital as a form of social capital in the countryside. It is also concerning to many scholars including Fine (2001) that the use of social capital by Bourdieu cuts across all social sciences; whereas Bourdieu's other capitals have become much less wide-ranging in interdisciplinary scope.

As indicated earlier, as one of the proponents of social capital, Coleman (1990a) continues to be the pivot around which the theory of social capital has to be located.

More than Bourdieu, Coleman's contribution in social capital continues to be acknowledged and commended as the literature on social capital continues to evolve and expand (Fine, 2001). The genesis of the use of the theory of social capital by Coleman is often traced back to his wish to explain differential school performances on the basis of differences in familial and environmental circumstances (Fine 2001). Coleman went on to argue that those from "better" [Catholic] families or neighbourhoods do better at school. According to Coleman, social capital is a source of human capital over and above the resources invested in the latter capital by the individual, the employer, or the state (Fine, 2001). Perhaps of particular significance, and indeed, what set Coleman apart from other proponents of social capital is his link of social capital to social exchange theory, and that he regards his work on social capital as representing continuity with his earlier work on social exchange theory (Fine, 2001). For instance, in his analysis of social capital, Coleman anchors his argument within social exchange theory: How to derive the social from the individual? Coleman's response to this question is that all social science, other than psychology, can be reduced to rational choice because of their dependency on a social system (Coleman, 1990b). Emphasizing the role of social capital on social systems, Coleman sums it thus:

Whether social capital will come to be as useful a quantitative concept in social science as are the concepts of financial capital, physical capital, and human capital remains to be seen; its current value lies primarily in its usefulness for qualitative analyses of social systems and for those quantitative analyses that employ qualitative indicators (Coleman, 1990b: 305-306).

Coleman's analysis of social capital has been an immense contribution to social sciences. One of the social scientists who are commonly associated with social capital is Robert Putnam. In his seminal work on social capital, Putnam explicitly indicates that he draws his interest on social capital from Coleman's analysis of the contribution of social capital to educational attainment (Fine, 2001).

Putnam (1993a) defines social capital as being properties of social organization, such as information exchange, trust, norms, and networks. Table 2.1 illustrates properties of social capital that can be used as indicators of relationships between a community and

others. Putnam (1993a) argues that, defined in this way, social capital can make a contribution in the improvement of society's capacity to overcome social dilemmas that have for decades been described in the literature as problems of collective action (Olson, 1965). Putnam (1993a) also stresses that social capital is ordinarily a public good, unlike conventional<sup>2</sup> capital, which is ordinarily a private good. This sentiment is echoed by sociologists such as Lin (2001) and Portes (1998) who argue that social capital refers to resources, such as information, ideas and support that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with other people. These resources, argue Lin (2001) and Portes (1998), are 'social' in that they are only accessible in, and through, relationships, and they are unlike physical resources: tools, technology or human capital, which are essentially the property of individuals.

**Table 2.1** Properties of social capital and their roles

| <b>Properties of Social Capital and Roles in constructing and sustaining social capital</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Social bonds (Bonding social capital)</i>  | <i>Roles</i>  |
| <i>Trust</i>  | <i>Promotes cooperation</i>   |
| <i>Dialogue</i>   | <i>Promotes resilience and empowers participants</i>                          |
| <i>Reciprocity</i>  | <i>Strengthens behavioural rules</i>  |
| <i>Social networks (enshrining norms and values that promote social cohesion)</i>           | <i>Promote identity and a sense of belonging</i>                              |
| <i>Information exchange</i>   | <i>Extends knowledge base and creates avenues to deal with new challenges</i> |

**Source: Adapted from Dekker and Uslaner (2001)**

Similarly, Dekker and Uslaner (2001) regard social capital as an intangible resource. They postulate that social capital is a non-material, inter-individual resource that

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<sup>2</sup> Conventional capital includes commonly used forms of capital such as economic, physical, and human capital.

enhances the possibilities of cooperation and coordination that a group can utilize, for example, to harvest a crop, to organize an association, or to enforce norms (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001).

Expanding on the intangible nature of social capital one could argue that social networks, bonding (connecting nuclear and extended families, and neighbours) with similar people, and bridging (connecting diverse groups) between people, with norms of reciprocity are, by definition, abstract formations (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001). For instance, while human capital shares its intangibility with human nature, this is more pronounced in social capital. It is this intangibility that makes it particularly difficult to identify social capital as a resource (Herreros, 2004). Concurring with Putnam (1993a), Herreros (2004) argues that social capital emanates from exchanges that take place through participating in social networks. Streeten (1995) also comments that social capital comprises behavioural norms which are regulatory principles underlying, and are strengthened by trust.

While the definitions highlight the intangible nature of this capital, it is also important to note that intrinsic in social capital is the notion of participation. This process entails information sharing, trust, and obligations of reciprocity within networks, at horizontal and vertical levels, and both at micro and macro scales (Putnam, 1993a).

Two approaches are significant in understanding social capital. Firstly, Portes (1998) refers to social capital as resources such as information, ideas, and support that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with other people. Portes (1998) refers to these resources as 'capital' which are 'social' in that they are only accessible in, and through, these relationships. Intrinsic in accessing these resources is who interacts with whom, how frequently, and on what terms (Grootaert *et al.*, 2002). Secondly, Putnam (1993) interprets social capital as a concept that could include activities such as engaging in recreational activities, chatting with neighbours, joining environmental organizations and political parties. In essence, Putnam (1993) uses the



term 'social capital' to characterize varied ways in which community members interact (Grootaert *et al.*, 2002). Woolcock (2002: 20) goes further to suggest that:

Intuitively, the basic idea of 'social capital' is that one's family, friends and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake or leveraged for material gain.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that those communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations have demonstrated strength in confronting challenges such as poverty, vulnerability, and accessing resources (Moser, 1996; Narayan, 1997), resolution of disputes (Schafft and Brown, 2000), and sharing of beneficial information (Isham, 2002). If such definitions and interpretations of social capital are correct, then social capital is produced by day-to-day interactions between individuals. These interactions are reflective of relationships between individuals, and help in lowering the transactional costs that individuals would bear if they had to confront challenges without the solidarity from their partners. One could therefore argue that social capital plays an important role in forging relationships among community members. A relationship is a resource that can facilitate access to other resources (Bourdieu, 1992). Relationships associated with social capital, espoused by individuals within communities, act as catalysts in the creation and sustenance of social trust and solidarity, norms of reciprocity, and other elements of social capital that are important in bonding communities together (Putnam, 1993b).

Influenced by the end of the cold war and other related factors, the 1990s brought about a change in relationships between, among others, communities, governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and international donor agencies (Uphoff, 1993). Mutual interdependence based on trust and negotiated joint actions have replaced top-down direction and supervision: these changes are promoting a reframed relationship between these actors (Uphoff, 1993; Sachikonye, 1995). While intra-community and inter-community relationships date to centuries back, the advent of political and economic liberalization in the 1990s has established new interaction

patterns. These patterns rely on social capital to promote institutional pluralism (Uphoff, 1993).

While a multitude of factors could be regarded as being instrumental in creating and sustaining relationships, the fundamental impact of trust in relationships cannot be underestimated. Societies that rely on trust can lower the transactional costs of creating and sustaining relationships (Isham *et al.*, 2002). Lowering the transactional costs could benefit societies through promoting cooperation and reciprocity which are vital elements for societies' sustenance. Social capital theorists consider bridging ties as relationships that are crucial to increasing one's access to other forms of capital (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Trust is based on the regulative principles such as behavioural norms, which in turn are strengthened by trust (Isham *et al.*, 2002). Perhaps, one needs – before deliberating on what trust can or cannot do – to define trust: simply put, trust is a firm belief in someone (Isham *et al.*, 2002).

Deliberating on the term trust, Herreros (2004) contends that trust can constitute social capital if the assumption is that the trustee may be a creditor of a future obligation to the person giving the trust. He postulates that trust can play an intermediary role between membership of social networks and the generation of social capital. Therefore, trust, argues Herreros (2004), could be defined as a well-grounded expectation about what people expect of one another. In alluding to the relation of trust to social capital, Herreros (2004) states that trust placed in a co-member generates an obligation to be trustworthy, that is, to reciprocate the cooperative overture. Therefore, trust can be claimed as a crucial element between the membership of a social network and the generation of social capital.

Indeed, a focus on trust is important in the attempt to understand social capital. Trust can also be used as an indicator of social capital (Herreros, 2004). He further comments that many of the positive externalities associated with social capital are linked to the presence of social trust. Commenting on trust, Hooghe and Stolle (2003) argue that

societies with higher levels of trust lead to better institutions. Also, they content that trust is essentially cultural.

Relationships among individuals, communities, and organizations are pertinent in advancing social capital. Some of these relationships are founded on either power or gender differentials, and these relationships tend to convey a skewed picture of social networks (Putnam, 1993a; Herreros, 2004). Despite these concerns, there is a general agreement that elements of social capital such as trust and reciprocity are pivotal in forging relationships. It is through social networks, learning, and norms of reciprocity that members of society become empowered.

Relationships among organizations are important because they build trust (French and Bell, 1999). Empowerment is an important element in addressing power differentials among individuals, communities, organizations and government. Empowerment is the enabling of stakeholders to achieve their own objectives, through providing opportunities for independent initiatives and pursuit of actions, increasing capacity, and delegating decision-making. Elements of social capital such as shared decision-making, reciprocity and solidarity are critical in empowering individuals, communities, and participants in inter-organizational relationships (Bourdieu, 1991; Putnam, 1993b).

Research on group dynamics began in the 1940s, and grew in the 1950s and 1960s (French and Bell, 1999). Drawing from traditional communities, research on group dynamics established that most people desire increased involvement and participation which yield greater performance, produce better solutions to problems, enhance acceptance of change, and increase commitment to the organization (French and Bell, 1999). In the conservation arena there is growing appreciation of the role that local communities play in natural resource management (Cousins and Claassens, 2003; Ntsebeza, 2007; Kepe, 2010). Contrary to this appreciation, particularly in southern Africa, central governments and conservation agencies have traditionally allocated few rights to local people for a role in the management of the use of natural resources. This exclusion from management and flow of benefits does not motivate local communities to

protect and sustainably use these resources, and this encourages them to 'poach' (Gibson and Marks, 1995).

In his analysis of organizational development, Nadler (1998) indicates that it is important to understand organizational dynamics and change. French and Bell (1999) argue that central to understanding organizational dynamics and change is participation, which is an effective form of empowerment. They define the term 'empowerment' as giving individuals authority to make decisions, to contribute their ideas, to exert influence, and to be responsible.

One could argue that the use of social capital through contributing ideas and also being responsible for sustaining livelihoods is an important catalyst for empowerment. In addition to their empowering role, group dynamics increases involvement and participation by various actors (French and Bell, 1999). Commenting on the conservation sector, Wily (2003) indicates that participation of constituencies, particularly local communities, enhances learning and strengthens the capacity of all involved. Therefore, this dynamic organization treats those closest to the problem as relevant experts, and gives more collective power to the people (French and Bell, 1999).

Engagement between individuals, groups, and organizations is created and sustained through social capital. Social capital is responsible for forging intra- and inter-group relationships. Joint participation by constituencies, which is a form of empowerment, helps them in attaining their goals. Intrinsic to this process is the empowerment of participants. Transparency and capacity strengthening benefit participants through bridging power differentials and lowering transactional costs. Also integral to this participatory process is the empowerment of those involved, particularly those participants with fewer resources. One could then argue that the empowerment of stakeholders is an important element of effective and cohesive governance.

The institutions of democracy have an important role to play in promoting relationships among constituencies. Particularly in Africa, policies governing the use of goods and

services in conservation areas have relegated local communities to being peripheral participants in the governance of these resources (Adams and Hulme, 2001; Buscher and Dietz, 2005). These policies have deprived local communities from using social capital to govern the access and use of natural resources (Buscher and Dietz, 2005).

Contrary to general assertions that democracy is central in promoting trust and that governments can produce trust, Uslaner (2002) contends that it does not automatically lead to trust. He argues that state structures cannot produce trust, but that state policies can. According to Putnam (1993b) honesty in government may promote generalized and interpersonal trust. Levi (1998) similarly states that democratic regimes may be prerequisites for generalized trust. Perhaps a more succinct claim citing democratic governments' ability to promote trust is drawn from Brehm and Rahn (1997) who argue that a strong government performance makes people feel better about it. They further argue that when people trust their government, they are more likely to believe that they can influence it.

In contrast to the widely held view that democracy promotes trust, Uslaner (2002) argues that societies do not exhibit more trust because they are more democratic; they become trusting because they distribute their resources more equitably. This is evident in countries where people have a higher level of trust. It is on this ground that Uslaner (2002) probes whether governance<sup>3</sup> is responsible for the promotion of trust. The roots of trust are not institutional: they lie in the deeper values societies hold; and informed by the distribution of resources (Uslaner, 2000). Societies with more trust also have better performing governments – with less red tape and a more responsive judiciary (Uslaner, 2000). According to Rothstein (2000) democratic states are better at producing generalized trust than non-democratic institutions. This is because democratic states are better at restricting the use of coercion to tasks that enhance rather than undermine trust.

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<sup>3</sup> Governance is defined as compliance (or non-compliance) of social actors to the rule of law; and the level of legitimacy of governing institutions.

It has become a global trend that governments stipulate that people or organizations with high earnings should pay revenue tax (Scholz and Pinney, 1995). Those that fail to do so are prosecuted. This coercion is aimed at enhancing trust and (through the use of that revenue to build public institutions such as schools and hospitals) equitably distributing resources among the civil society. Empirical evidence shows that people are more likely to obey laws and pay taxes if they believe that laws are enforced fairly and if people trust government (Scholz and Pinney, 1995). Earlier in this chapter it was indicated that trust as an element of social capital has been a long-held principle and has been valued by people for a long time, and is largely based upon our experiences (Uslaner, 2002). In order for relationships among people, groups, and organizations to effectively regulate societal behaviour, relationships have to be properly managed. Social capital, through trust, information sharing, and solidarity, plays an important role in strengthening the management of relationships.

For example, Ghate (2004) highlights the evolution of a culture of relationships between forest managers and communities. Central in the evolution of this culture are a number of factors such as mutual relationships between forest managers and local people, activities in the forests that are modified by incentives structured by market forces, government forest policies, and values and norms of local people (Becker and Leon, 2000). Consistent with the theory developed in the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI), these researchers define 'forest institutions' as rules or social norms applied to the use of forest goods and services: a rule is a social regularity with an implication of 'must' or 'must not' that is observable, interpretable, or explainable by a local person (Becker and Leon, 2000:167). Three levels of social organization are crucial to the implementation and understanding of resource management: (i) the operational level – refers to actions of individuals that affect the state of the resource (activities such as harvesting and culling); (ii) collective choice – actions of individuals that affect the operational level (prescribing, invoking, monitoring, enforcing, and so on); and (iii), actions at constitutional level affect collective choice by determining who prescribes, invokes, monitors, or enforces rules (Becker and Leon, 2000).

Intrinsic in the notion of social capital are norms, values, and relationships. These variables are espoused by communities, and are also prevalent within other organizational structures. Perhaps another challenge is how to establish a social structure that would act as an interface between local communities and government. Citing inter-organizational coordination as significant elements of joint management, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) observe that the lack of task consensus is one of the potential obstacles in coordination. They argue that failure to agree on what has to be done, does, in most cases, contribute to the reluctance by actors to share information. In the analysis of the concept of social capital, various commentators consider information sharing and reciprocity to be central elements in bonding actors. However, reluctance to share information could, among other issues, be traced to a lack of trust.

The complex and ever changing nature of the world continually presents communities with new challenges. The issue then is: whether social capital provides resilience by which communities are better able to cope with change? To help understand the role that social capital plays in promoting resilience within societies, Woolcock (1998) comments that there are four dimensions to social capital: strong ties between family members and neighbours; weak ties with the outside community and between communities; formal institutions such as laws and norms; and state-community interactions. Community relations, constituting nuclear and extended families and neighbours are the primary variables integrating a society (Colletta and Cullen, 2002).

These strong ties constitute intra-societal relations and are in most cases founded on kinship, ethnicity, and religion; they are largely protectionist, defensive mechanisms that form a safety net for basic survival (Colletta and Cullen, 2002). The resilience of societies is, however, based on other societal ties – weak ties are also important in strengthening societies' resilience: these linkages are associational and connect diverse groups outside societal bonds (kinship, ethnicity, and religion). These links exist within civic associations and networks. These inter-societal links are critical in promoting cross-cutting relations that bridge differences in kinship, ethnicity and religion (Woolcock, 1998). The third dimension in Woolcock's model is the use of social capital

through vertical and formal institutions at the macro level such as democratic and authoritarian regimes (Woolcock, 1998).

In providing an analysis of social capital across various levels, Woolcock (1998) presents a model comprising four pillars of social capital:

- i) strong ties (integration) form the primary building blocks of society. These ties unite nuclear and extended families and neighbours, and are relations based on kinship, ethnicity, and religion;
- ii) weak ties (linkages): these ties are associational and connect diverse groups outside the smaller bonding communities. These ties exist within civic associations and networks. They also bridge differences in kinship, ethnicity, and religion;
- iii) macro level with vertical links: organizational integrity encompasses state institutions and their effectiveness and their ability to function. This pillar includes legal environment and social norms (Woolcock, 1998);
- iv) state-community relationships – synergy: these relations reflect how leaders and government institutions are engaged in, and interact with, the community.

These four pillars of Woolcock's model (integration, linkage, integrity, and synergy) are pivotal elements of social capital which promote and sustain community resilience. Citing the Guatemalan civil war, Colletta and Cullen (2002) comment that synergy played an important role in bonding communities during this war: these communities relied on cultural institutions and spirituality to collectively withstand the violence (Colletta and Cullen, 2002). In a study "*Social capital, education and credit markets, in Burkina Faso*", Grootaert *et al.* (2002) established that, particularly in rural areas, legal institutions for enforcing financial contracts are in the process of being developed. Third-party enforcement, such as a bank, is often not available. In order to ensure that mutual benefit prevails in these financial agreements, community members rely on altruism, long-term self-interest, or social norms that favour cooperation and integrity. The maintenance and honouring of agreements in such contexts depends on social capital (Grootaert *et al.*, 2002). While this may have been so in the past, the breakdown of



social capital in some communities has revealed that self-interest is a formative agent for individualistic behaviour (Nkhata *et al.*, 2009).

As reservoirs of social capital, traditional communities in developing countries are good for democracy (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001). In the developing world, particularly Africa, family and communal ties provide the basis of organized activity to sustain livelihoods and promote wellbeing. Various criteria, including ethnic affinity, play an important role in promoting the redistribution and sharing of opportunities, costs, and benefits (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001). Indeed, communities in Africa have, for centuries, relied on communal ties to sustain their livelihoods.

### **2.2.2 *Ubuntu* as the hallmark of societal value system**

The notion of *Ubuntu*<sup>4</sup> has been used by communities to build and sustain trust on which their communal networks are based (Broodryk, 2006). Societal values remain the hallmark of African communities' in their fight against what they perceive as an injustice to their livelihoods and other significant attributes such as land (Jacobs, 2006). The community of Mkambati is a typical example of a community that portrays uncompromising societal values in its quest to ensure that its rights are honoured. In their fight for the defence of their land community of Mkambati has for years drawn its strength on *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is a philosophy that has shaped relationships and behaviour in African society for centuries. Translated as humanness, personhood and morality, *ubuntu* comprises of key values of group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity (Broodryk, 2006).

Although mentioned only in the post-amble in the Constitution of the democratic South Africa – *ubuntu* is perceived as a philosophy that embraces respect and value for life and gives meaning and texture to the principles of a society based on freedom and equality (Jacobs, 2009). Also, Mahomed (2009: 72) extrapolates that:

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<sup>4</sup> *Ubuntu* is an African philosophy that is centred on norms and values that seek to promote intra-relationships that are founded on trust, reciprocity, and empathy between people and within communities.

The need for *ubuntu* expressed the ethos of an instinctive capacity for an enjoyment of love towards one's fellow men and women; the joy and fulfillment involved in recognizing their innate humanity; the reciprocity which this generated in interaction within the collective community; the richness of the creative emotions which it engendered and the moral energies which it released.

Indeed, the significance of *Ubuntu* in an African societal perspective is highlighted by a number of scholars, who have written extensively on this phenomenon.

For instance, in his seminal work on *Ubuntu*, Broodryk (2006) argues that *ubuntu* is an ancient African world view and philosophy of humanness. Some writers, including Koka (1996:3) draw the meaning of *ubuntu* from an age-old saying that "*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*", meaning "I am a person through other persons". As indicated earlier the philosophy of *ubuntu* includes the entire African community. For instance, in Kiswahili, a language that is spoken throughout the coast of East Africa the word "*utu*" is used in reference to deeds or acts that are done for the benefit of the whole community (Koka, 1996:3). In Zimbabwe the philosophy of *ubuntu* has the same recognition as in other parts of the African continent. For instance, the Shona often use the saying "*munhu munhu nekuda kwevanhu*", meaning, to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others in order to establish respectful human relations with them' (Samkange, 1980). It can be argued that *ubuntu* is an indigenous term for social capital. Hence, in order to understand the role of social capital in collective action and land restitution requires that one appreciates historical and indigenous perspectives.

Putnam (2000) argues that membership in community organizations is critical in the sustenance of social capital. Applying this perspective to developing countries, Isham (2002) indicates that membership in associations can affect socio-economic outcomes. Societies, particularly in developing countries form associations, such as credit cooperatives to further specific economic objectives. Citing the Mossi nation, Fiske (1991) comments that cooperation among rural people in developing countries is not driven by self-interest, but is an intrinsic value practised even when it is not individually

beneficial. In South Africa, *stokvels*<sup>5</sup> are well known for promoting cooperation and trust which result in the benefit for all members. Membership in these associations also yields indirect benefits such as the development of mutual trust that enables members to share valuable information or credit (Isham *et al.*, 2002).

As Isham *et al.* (2002) indicate, credit cooperatives play a pivotal role in sustaining both livelihoods and lifestyles of these societies. Also of particular significance is the use of trust by these societies to prolong these relationships. It is obvious that the reliance of these societies on trust helps in binding relationships for the sustenance of their livelihoods.

Reliance on trust and solidarity enables communities to find different ways to adapt to adverse conditions facing them. Social capital enables communities to be resilient to challenges they face. Mutual trust and social norms based on reciprocity are some of the elements of social capital that help communities deal with the challenges they continuously encounter. It is through relying on these relationships that communities are resilient to, among other challenges, economic hardships that threaten their livelihoods. Relationships are the results of community interactions through using social capital.

### **2.2.3 Social capital and communities**

If social capital is defined in terms of relationships and norms of reciprocity, then it would be difficult to imagine the existence of a community or some other form of association without social capital. Putnam (1993a) dates the emergence of the concept of social capital in academic circles to 1916, from the American reformist, L. J. Hanifan. While – since then – there has been less use of this concept. The 1980s experienced an increase in the use of the concept of social capital in the academic field by economists, sociologists, and political scientists (Herreros, 2004). While some scientists, including Putnam, provide an independent definition of social capital, other

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<sup>5</sup> Stokvels are group saving schemes providing mutual and well-being of members' social and entertainment needs.

scholars, such as Solow (2000), argue that social networks are built for various reasons, and the definition of social capital should always depend on other forms of capital: economic, political, and cultural.

Information exchange and trust are critical factors that constitute social capital (Putnam, 1993a). Citing the Catholic Church as an example, Clemens (1999) and Putnam (1995) contend that hierarchical associations do not create mutuality and equality of participation. They attribute this lack of mutuality and trust to the asymmetric nature of vertical networks which, unlike horizontal networks, are unable to promote reciprocity. However, this assertion is strongly disputed by Tarrow (1996) who contends that the state has a fundamental role in shaping civic capacity. Therefore, societal factors cannot be exclusively regarded as explanatory variables for institutional performance (Tarrow, 1996). Policy performance spearheaded by government can either create or destroy social capital (Levi, 1996).

As indicated earlier, historical epochs with systems such as serfdom have promoted and facilitated the development of social capital in Europe. The capacity of a society to ensure cooperation among its citizens is determined by its historical experiences (Banfield, 1958; Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993a). Citing medieval Italy as a hub of social capital, Putnam (1993a) indicates that in the south, Norman mercenaries ruled through a powerful feudal monarchy with hierarchical structures. On the other hand, the north was under the rule of communal republics based on horizontal relationships. These latter relationships promoted mutual assistance and economic cooperation, that is, they developed and sustained social capital. While some researchers' analysis of the development of social capital in Europe is consistent with the theory put forward by Putnam, others, however, argue that the hierarchical nature of governments can also play an important role in enhancing social capital. Worldwide, government structures – whether benign or repressive – do create and, through their policies, sustain social capital (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001).

Social capital and its effects needs to be analysed from a variety of perspectives in order to be understood (Daniere *et al.*, 2002). In their study on the use of social capital in environmental management in Bangkok, Daniere *et al.*, (2002) postulate that some forms of social capital are available to residents in all communities. Some of these forms like trust and cooperation can effectively leverage and mobilize environmental improvements. Daniere *et al.*, (2002) concluded that communities with a history of designing and maintaining other collective goods, such as a local health clinic, are more likely to be successful in managing community-based waste collection. The study by Daniere *et al.* (2002) raises two important issues for understanding social capital. Firstly, social capital is an important resource for communities, and it occurs at a horizontal level, that is, amongst community members. In fact, communities emerge and develop because of their social capital. The level of their social capital defines the extent to which they conform to the concept of 'community'. Communities have leaders who guide them in decision-making; therefore, social capital also manifests itself vertically between community members. Secondly, and depending on the nature of the task to be executed, communities draw their strength from specific and relevant components of social capital to accomplish their goals.

Communities are bound together by social capital. The use of social capital by communities enables them to achieve beneficial societal goals. Perhaps the question is whether government, like communities, should rely on social capital to attain its objectives.

#### **2.2.4 Social capital and government**

Communities are aggregated into hierarchies of authority and are thus subject to government at a range of levels. Overbearing responsibility over policy and legislation, government has an influence on the social capital and its expression in society. This influence reflects the cohesion, norms, and behaviour of government that are its own social capital, and reflects how this relates to society (Booth and Bayer, 1998).

Governments use social capital to promote their interests, which in some instances – in the case of authoritarian regimes – might not necessarily be compatible with the social capital espoused by the civil society. In their analysis of selected Central American countries, Booth and Bayer (1998) argue that, generally, authoritarian states have been found to have a strong negative influence on social capital. Repressive governments frustrate civic development by discouraging spontaneous group activity, and by promoting citizens' trust in government structures while discouraging intra-citizen trust. They argue that generally, authoritarian and totalitarian governments mobilize civil society through party and other governmental organizations. This kind of association is always state controlled and often not voluntary (Hooghe and Stolle, 2003). Almond and Verba (1963) and Inglehart (1997) cite democracy as a state-related variable that promotes social capital. They argue that civil liberties and political rights are central variables which promote generalized trust, which is an intrinsic component of social capital.

One would then argue that whether repressive or benign, governments – through institutional and policy structures – create and sustain social capital. So, in addition to the horizontal nature of social capital, as espoused by societies, hierarchical government practices are also embedded in social capital.

While there are some who may doubt the role of states in the creation and maintenance of social capital, Scandinavian welfare states exhibit high levels of social capital in Europe. They pride themselves on high levels of resources such as generalized trust, compared with the United States – where there has been a decline in levels of generalized trust (Putnam, 2000). The existence of these resources – income equality, gender equality, and guarantee of relatively high material and personal security – at an individual level is positively related to social capital, particularly participation and trust (Verba *et al.*, 1978). There is also evidence that, unlike democratic governments, authoritarian governments inhibit the promotion of 'societal-generated' social capital. In fact, as Sztompka (1995) indicates, authoritarian governments on the contrary promote a "culture of mistrust" and, indeed engage in deliberate attempts to disrupt social

networks and reduce social capital in society so that it is not able to attain the levels of trust, co-ordination and integrity that are necessary to provide cohesive resistance. However, it is pivotal, as Levi (1998) argues, to note that governments' ability to realize their capacity to generate trust depends on whether citizens consider the state to be trustworthy. States also enforce rules that punish lawbreakers, protect minorities, and actively support the integration and participation of citizens (Levi, 1998). These rules, particularly those that punish law-breaking, help in engendering trust within government institutions and among citizens.

From perspectives provided by social capital theorists and researchers, it is evident that while society plays a critical role in the establishment of social capital, governments, particularly welfare states, make a contribution to the facilitation of social capital. This is evident through the use of state resources to create and maintain a participatory and integrative process. Governments, whether democratic or authoritarian, create and sustain social capital. Using social capital, governments are able to promote their policies, and also use it to establish relationships with citizens. Of significance with regard to democratic governments' social capital, is that it is in most cases compatible with citizens' social capital.

I have introduced social capital as a resource that is contextually constructed. Since context changes continuously, albeit very slowly at times and sometimes abruptly, social capital is never stable. It is the resource communities draw upon when the need for collective action arises. Implicit in this understanding is the view that for a community to be continually positioned to take collective action, social capital should be resilient under the influences of changing context. This encourages a view that if social capital is not resilient then communities find it difficult to engage in action.

Similar to new approaches to discourse analysis, as discussed above, the concept of social capital has gained prominence in literature in recent years. Kreuter (1997: 56) understands social capital as:

those specific processes among people and organizations, working collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust, that lead to the accomplishment of goals of mutual social benefit.

Implicit in this understanding is that power differentials do not necessarily undermine trust. Social capital consists of features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks (Putnam, 1993). Putnam (1993) argues that, defined in this way, social capital can contribute to the improvement of society's capacity to overcome social dilemmas that have for decades been described in the literature as problems of collective action.

Leaning towards Bourdieu's (1991) definition, in the present study social capital will be conceptualized in terms of people's participation in mutually beneficial networks that underpin collective action on decision-making aimed at promoting constructive relationships. Whilst I have demonstrated earlier that many authors have different definitions of social capital, it is also necessary to illustrate both positive and negative aspects of social capital. These illustrations are critical firstly, in that they provide an in-depth understanding of this concept, and secondly, are indicative of how this concept will be applied and analyzed throughout this study.

According to the social capital approach, people are in a better position to establish relationships if they live in communities that offer high levels of participation in local networks and organizations that are associated with increased levels of trust, reciprocity, and collective decision-making (Campbell, 2003). According to Campbell (2003), a central feature of social capital is 'perceived citizen power'. This is a characteristic of communities where people feel that their needs and views are respected and valued, and where they have channels to participate in decision-making processes in their families, schools, and neighbourhoods (Campbell, 2003). Success in communities' participation in decision-making, argues Campbell, rests on the extent to which they mobilize or create social capital. Therefore, communities that are rich in social capital are those that provide a supportive context within which people can



collectively renegotiate social identities in ways that promote an increased likelihood of building relationships (Campbell, 2003).

Despite the portrayal of social capital as an overwhelmingly positive social resource and one that is freely available to local communities irrespective of the extent of their social disadvantage, Labonte (1999) argues that not all forms of local participation have equally positive benefits for participants. There is much evidence that points to the fact that social capital is sometimes unequally distributed in particular contexts (Labonte, 1999). In their study on the epidemiology of participation focusing on a community in Australia, Baum *et al.* (2000) point out that effective participation in local networks is most likely to take place among the wealthiest and the most educated members of the community. Therefore, this partial participation may, in most cases, serve as a source of social exclusion and disadvantage (Baum *et al.* (2000)). This view is in line with critical theory which points out that human action or inaction is a critical element in determining participation and decision-making. Also, power theory postulates that participation and decision-making are centralized around a unified elite class. Both of these theories constitute the theoretical framework of this study, and their analysis and significance are discussed in chapter three.

In addition to mixed and contradictory arguments about the ability of social capital to promote relationships through inclusive participation and collective decision-making, the concept of social capital is criticized for its failure to take into account that various forms of social exclusion undermine the possibility of creating, sustaining, or benefiting from social capital in marginalized communities (Bourdieu, 1992; Campbell, 2003). Again, concepts such as social capital, argue critical social scientists, are being used by neo-liberal and market theorists to further their arguments that grassroots organizations and networks have the power to take over functions such as welfare, previously assigned to governments and international development agencies (Fine, 2001). These arguments can serve as justifications for cuts in welfare spending in the affluent countries of the North<sup>6</sup>, and reduced development aid in the South<sup>7</sup> (Fine, 2001).

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<sup>6</sup> North is the term used in reference to advanced industrial countries.

Chambers (2005:198) cautions against the use of concepts like social capital to further the interests of powerful organizations and the North:

Since 1997 the polarization of power and wealth in the world has become even more extreme... Words and concepts used in development have remained potent. Social capital and sustainable livelihoods have met needs in powerful organizations and have been widely adopted and influential.

Despite these concerns, the present study seeks to highlight the role of social capital in building and strengthening relationships between actors. The use of the concept of social capital in this study will be confined specifically to the elements of participation and decision-making as critical elements that build and sustain relationships within communities. In order to conceptualize the nature of community relationships, this study seeks to contextualize social capital into three forms. In his critique of relationships within the American community, Putnam (2000) defines bonding social capital as exclusive, inward-looking social capital located within homogenous groups. This 'within-group' social capital bonds people in relationships (Campbell, 2003). Some of the critical elements of this form of social capital are trust, reciprocity, solidarity, and a positive common identity. Bridging social capital refers to links that occur between social groups. This 'between-groups' social capital links diverse groups with varying levels of access to material and symbolic power (Szreter, 2002). The third form of social capital is linking. This form of social capital combines the network view of social capital, as demonstrated through synergies between diverse groups, and the institutional view, that is the need between government institutions and communities to collaborate (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).

## **2.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a context within which different theories can be used together to advance a particular objective. More specifically, this chapter has provided an

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<sup>7</sup> South is a collective noun used in the context of international political economy to identify a group of state actors or countries which are either developing or still lacking in basic social, political, and economic resources (Fine, 2001).

analysis of the critical theory, power theory, and double hermeneutics. I have demonstrated how I intend to use these theories in conjunction with social capital in order to demonstrate social relations within the communities. Also addressed in this chapter is an extensive analysis of the notion of social capital as a resource on which actors rely to advance their needs. Social capital can be used to promote joint participation and empowerment. As pointed out, social capital can be used in a variety of ways that could not only promote joint empowerment. Some sectors can use social capital to promote their interests while disadvantaging other parties. It is therefore important, as discussed in this chapter, that social capital be looked at as not only a resource that bonds relationships, but also as a resource that could be used to exclude unwanted actors in a particular setting. Also of significance in this chapter is that I have provided a conceptual model that I intend to use as a guide that will enable me to understand social dynamics within the community of Mkambati.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Research setting and methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research methodology used during this study. The following will be addressed:

- The research setting in which this study was conducted;
- The historical background on the community of Mkambati;
- The South African Land Restitution Programme and its Ramifications;
- A description of the research site;
- Research methods that were employed during the data collection process; and how data was processed;
- Operationalizing the methodological framework;
- Analyzing relations among data, theory, and interpretations; and lastly
- Ethical considerations that were taken into account.

Earlier I indicated that the pivot of this study is the significance of relationships among and between actors. When focusing on relationships among and between actors it is important to nuance so as to better understand interactions between these actors. However, one has to be circumspect when doing that so as to avoid being subjective. The focus of this chapter will be centred on the Mkambati community as the actors that will be studied. However, 'community' is an imprecise word that is defined and used in varied ways by researchers. The aim of this section is to define 'community' in line with theoretical perspectives that already have been provided in the preceding chapter.

'Community' is usually defined in terms of geographic locality, of shared interests and needs, or in terms of deprivation and disadvantage (Midgley, 1986). This concept, argues Midgley (1986), is defined implicitly in reference to a traditional African village or a squatter settlement. I will provide a few definitions of the concept of community in trying to illustrate both differences and commonalities of various definitions, specifically with an attempt to highlight the context within which the concept is used in this study.

Edward and Jones (1976) define a community as a grouping of people who reside in a specific locality and who exercise some degree of local autonomy in organizing their social life in such a way that they can, from that locality base, satisfy the full range of their daily needs. Coming out of this definition is the geographic importance attached to and exercises of power implicit in 'local autonomy'. A community is:

... a group structure ... integrated around goals associated with the problems arising out of the collective occupation and utilization of habitational space ... The community has certain measures of local autonomy ... and a degree of local responsibility (Zentner, 1964: 420-423).

Strongly evident in this definition is that a community is integrated around goals, and in agreement with the earlier definition, the notion of geographic space is also highlighted. Lastly, and consistent with the context within which 'community' is used in this study, Roberts (1979) argues that the community exists when a group of people perceive common needs and problems, acquire a sense of identity, and have a common set of objectives. Common between this definition and preceding definitions is the implicit notion of participation and collective decision-making. The use of the idea of 'community' in this study draws from Roberts' argument which emphasizes common needs and problems, and the acquisition of a sense of identity that is intended to promote or advocate a set of common objectives. This study will show, through providing a critical historical perspective, how the community of Mkambati has used social capital to facilitate land restitution. Secondly, this study shows how, over many years, the Mkambati community engaged in participation and collective decision-making in order to actualize its set objectives.

### **3.2 Historical background**

Historically, Mkambati has been an autonomous settlement founded and governed through participation in networks of reciprocity and collective decision-making (Saunders and Derricourt, 1974). Governance in this area was framed around structures based on local autonomy. This is evidenced by the appointment of Chief Mtono in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, by King Marelane of amaMpondo, to be the leader of

Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). This community held the land under a traditional management system. The land was used for residential, grazing, and other agricultural purposes such as planting. Unfortunately the outbreak of leprosy in the Eastern Pondoland region in 1899, and subsequent political events threatened peace and livelihoods that once prevailed in Mkambati. In 1913 the government of the Union of South Africa, through its notorious Native Land Act of 1913 forcibly removed people living in Mkambati further inland (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). The late 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were marked by forced removals of many African people from their land. Forced removals in South Africa have been a common practice. The Mfengu community was also forcibly removed and relocated to the so-called native reserve (Lowenberg and Kaempfer, 2001). The displacement of communities was synonymous not only with South Africa. For instance, in his book *"A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope for Africa"* French (2005) explicitly narrates the capture of Asante's capital city, Kumase, by the British in 1874. This capture deprived the people of Asante of collections of ivory, gold, sculpture, and royal furniture. Similarly, forced removals by the Union of South Africa government deprived the community of Mkambati of their land and natural resources.

Continued erosion of the autonomy of the community of Mkambati is demonstrated by the discussions held between Paramount Chief Sigcawu and the Assistant Chief Magistrate of Lusikisiki on the location of leprosy victims at Mkambati in 1920 (Lamla, 2006). Despite an outcry from the community, these discussions culminated in a unilateral setting aside of the present Mkambati Nature Reserve as a leper institution (Lamla, 2006). This action by the government of the Union of South Africa not only displaced the community of Mkambati but also deprived them of participating in a decision-making process which affected their well-being (Kepe *et al.* 2001). This institution was later reserved for 'European' leper patients. This decision was not accepted by the community of Mkambati who, in vain, contested it. Their contestation was premised on the fact that they used this land for collecting firewood, harvesting medicinal plants, ritual and ceremonial activities, and burying their dead (Kepe *et al.* 2001). Indeed contestations against forced removals were occurring in the whole

country. Nonetheless, this study is not about these contestations. It is sufficient to mention that, despite complaints by the community of Mkambati, the then Minister of Native Affairs, in terms of the provisions of Section 5 of Proclamation No. 143 of 1919, formally declared Mkambati as a leper settlement. This landmark proclamation promoted hostility between government and the community of Mkambati (Lamla, 2006).

### **3.3 The South African Land Restitution Programme and its Ramifications**

There is a consensus among many scholars that land dispossession is widely perceived as one of the cornerstones of colonialism which resulted in skewed patterns of land ownership (Fay and James, 2010; Hall, 2010). One of the commitments of the democratic government in South Africa was to redress the land imbalances that were caused and facilitated by the apartheid regime. While the land reform programme has been hailed as a bold step by the new democratic government in South Africa seeking to address the socio-economic imbalances of the past, this land programme has been deemed a failure by myriad participants, the supposedly beneficiaries, and scores of researchers and political commentators (Walker, 2010). A number of researchers including Walker (2008) in her extensive seminal work of land restitution in South Africa, particularly KwaZulu-Natal, have raised a number of concerns regarding the land restitution programme in South Africa.

It comes as no surprise that Walker (2008) succinctly points out that although forced removals in South Africa have impacted negatively on the people who were robbed of their land, the impact of the land restitution programme on that legacy is less clear. Walker's (2008:12) main argument is anchored on what she terms the "... apparent intractability of the many issues facing the programme and the lack of consensus on their resolution". In her book, Walker further cites the gaps that exist within the expectations and outcomes of the land restitution programme, and the significance of this disjuncture that is experienced not only on land restitution but also for the broader national project for redress. To substantiate these arguments it is befitting that this study

probes further the analogy provided by Walker and other contributors on the literature around land restitution in South Africa.

During the launch of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) in February 1995, Minister Thoko Didiza declared that the restitution of land rights will set South Africa on 'the real road to reconciliation and reconstruction' (Walker, 2008:17). This Commission was founded based on the "Sections 121-123 of the Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993), which entitled the victims of racially discriminated land policies in the twentieth century (after 1913) to claim restitution from the state" (Walker, 2008:17). Seemingly, failing to attain the set goals the Minister appointed a Ministerial Review Team tasked with identifying areas that need critical intervention (Walker, 2008). As per the mandate, the Ministerial Review Team cited five key dimensions of crisis in the restitution process. They were slowness of delivery; a crisis of poor planning; opposition between restitution and development; low levels of trust between implementers; and high levels of frustration (Walker, 2008).

It would seem that the much-vaunted land restitution programme in South Africa remains one of the most contentious processes that aim to redress the socio-economic imbalances that were inflicted by the apartheid regime on the majority of South African citizens. For instance, land restitution programme in South Africa is perceived as a political attempt by government to demonstrate its political will to address rural transformation through land reform (Hall, 2003). According to Hall (2003: 34) "restitution is an important political symbol, but lacks real political power". It is therefore not surprising that being one of the communities whose land was returned to them, the community of Mkambati, despite the return of their land, still struggles to benefit from the land restitution programme.

At the epicenter of the land that has been restituted to Mkambati is the use of community based natural resources management (CBNRM) or community wildlife management (CWM), as these two terms are interchangeably used in this study. In their extensive work Kepe *et al.* (2001) cite the failure of community wildlife management



(CWM) in Mkambati as a classic example of the crisis in the land restitution programme. Upon the return of land to the community of Mkambati, CWM was cited as the anchor around which livelihoods and development will revolve to ensure that the community of Mkambati benefits from their returned land (Kepe *et al.*, 2001). So far CWM has failed to yield the expected benefits that the community of Mkambati expected from the land restitution programme. Indeed CBNRM, as evidence elsewhere in southern Africa indicates, is both fluid and often a figmentation of the imagination of project managers and donors seeking quick fixes (Fabricius *et al.*, 2004). Fabricius *et al.*, (2004) further indicate that failure to acknowledge and understand that there are differences between groups lead to conflicts that are difficult to solve.

As illustrated in their study in Mkambati, Kepe *et al.* (2001), the introduction of the Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) immediately after the Mkambati land was restituted to the community of Mkambati led to the use of “Mkambati community” as an abstract term that was adequate for planning purposes. In its introduction of the SDI the government failed to take into cognizance diverse and sometimes contradictory interests that prevail within a number of stakeholders within the Mkambati area. Unfortunately, lack of acknowledgement of diverse needs and interests towards the use of the restituted land has led to what the community of Mkambati regard as the failure of the land restitution programme to benefit them. As it will be indicated in chapter five, while the community of Mkambati has been given back their land, this community remains entangled in a number of challenges that have so far stalled or delayed their expected benefit from their land.

#### **3.4.4.1 Research site description**

The Mkambati community is situated in Flagstaff in the Eastern Pondoland region. This area fell under to the former Transkei government. Presently, the Mkambati community falls under the Qawukeni District Municipality which is one of the district municipalities under the Eastern Cape Provincial government. Two rivers act as boundaries of this community. On the south it is the Msikaba River, and on the north is the Mtentu River. Part of the community of Mkambati is the Mkambati Nature Reserve. This nature

reserve lies on the eastern side of the community of Mkambati, and it is bordered by the Indian Ocean. The community of Mkambati is formed by seven villages adjoining the reserve. These villages are Khanyayo, Mtshayelo, Rhamza, Kwa Cele, Thahle, Ngquza, and Vlei (Figure 4.1). Situated along the Wild Coast, Mkambati Nature Reserve is one of the scenic tourism areas in South Africa. One other potential tourism advantage is that this nature reserve falls within an area identified for environmental and tourism development. This conservation area is about 20 000 acres. There are differing explanations regarding the origin of the name of this nature reserve. One explanation is that the name 'Mkambati' originates from the name of a coconut palm found in this area. However, a different explanation is that Mkambati Nature Reserve is named after a small river that flows through the area. The land on which Mkambati Nature Reserve is located is formally known as Lupondo Forest No. 3, and was later known as Leper Location No. 3 (Deed of Trust, Mkambati Land Trust (Department of Land Affairs, 27 August, 2002)



**Figure 3.1 Map of Mkambati (Source: AISA Cartography, 2013)**

### **3.4.2 Description and profile of the claimed land**

This was a community claim lodged by the Mkambati Community duly represented by Bhoyi Ntozimnandi Sikhonza (ID No. 570623 5796 080) in his capacity as the chairperson of Mkambati Community.<sup>8</sup> This claimant community comprises of 5 960 households of which 326 households are the direct descendants of the community who were dispossessed of their rights to Mkambati. The rest, (5 634) lost grazing rights as a result of the dispossession. The verification of the claimant households and beneficiaries was conducted with the assistance of the Eastern Cape Communications in the presence of the officials from the Regional Land Claims Commission, Eastern Cape. In terms of the Trust Property Control Act No. 57 of 1998, the Minister approved the formation and registration of the Mkambati Land Trust as a “Founder”.<sup>9</sup> The Mkambati Land Trust was then registered with the High Court of Umtata in 2002 Vide Trust No. 26/9/5-42/2002, through the assistance of Chris Bodlani Attorneys.<sup>10</sup> The claimants describe the features of the claimed land through Mtentu River and Msikaba River. The total size of the claimed land is 17 400 hectares.

### **3.4.3 Nature and extent of land rights lost**

As the claimants, the community of Mkambati occupied the land under an implied traditional system. This community therefore had beneficial occupation rights by virtue of being members of the Mkambati traditional community.<sup>11</sup> The claimant community used the land for various reasons. These included the following:<sup>12</sup>

- Residential;
- Ploughing and grazing;
- Various farming and other agricultural purposes;
- Collecting firewood and harvesting medicinal plants;
- Performing ritual and ceremonial activities; and lastly
- Burying the dead.

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<sup>8</sup> Mkambati Settlement Agreement: Land Claims Commission, 17 October 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Mkambati Settlement Agreement: Land Claims Commission, 17 October 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

The dispossession of this land deprived the community of Mkambati of a plethora of important natural resources such as (i) the sea and its marine resources. (ii) Natural herbs. (iii) Medicinal plants which the community used for its health requirements.<sup>13</sup>

This land is currently used as illustrated in table 4.1.

**Table 3.1** Division of the land claimed by the community of Mkambati

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Land in the Mkambati Nature Reserve (all grazing)       | 5 773 hectares         |
| Land in the Mkambati Nature Reserve (under plantation)  | 227 hectares           |
| Grazing land outside the reserve                        | 6 400 hectares         |
| Arable land currently unused for beneficial agriculture | 4 497 hectares         |
| Land under forest plantation                            | 503 hectares           |
| <b>Total land under claim</b>                           | <b>17 400 hectares</b> |

**Source:** Deed of Trust, Mkambati Land Trust (Department of Land Affairs, 27 August, 2002)

## 3.5 Methodology

### 3.5.1 Case study research

Miller and Salkind (2002) define a case study as a bounded system, bounded by time and place, and the case may be a programme, an event, an activity, or individuals. Commenting on the description and analysis of the case, Merriam (1998) postulates that the research should be situated within its context so that the case description and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

themes are related to the specific activities and situation involved in the case. Critical in the case study approach is its focus on an in-depth description of a process, a programme, an event, or activity (Stake, 1995). A case study approach aims at providing an insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. A case study is a unit of human activity embedded in a real world and can only be studied and used in a context which exists at a particular moment (Gillham, 2000). Also significant in a case study, argues Gillham (2000), is that human activity merges with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw.

While many writers define a case study in different and sometimes contradictory ways, Gillham's (2000) definition captures a number of types of case studies ranging from political, psychological, social work, and other fields that use case study approaches as methodological domains within which they conduct research. For instance, in her study on the failure of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in South Africa, Campbell (2003) indicates that in a small community of Summertown<sup>14</sup> which was used as a case study, the interaction of prostitutes with men in a nearby mining company led her and a team of researchers to also include men from the mining company in their sample. Similar to Gillham (2000), her study was done in a social context involving the primary subjects (prostitutes) and men from the nearby mine. This action blurred the boundaries of her initial conception for the case study. For purposes of the present study the significant process is the re-inforcing of social capital to achieve land restitution. Therefore, this study is orientated around the process that enshrines social capital as a resource which the community of Mkambati used to regain access to and use of the Mkambati Nature Reserve.

Definitions provided indicate that a case study is process oriented. Some researchers also agree that a case study is situated within a context. A context is defined as the circumstances that form the setting for an event (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000). In line with the said definitions, this study will explore the significance of social capital in building relationships within the Mkambati community, that is, 'human activity

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<sup>14</sup> Summertown is a pseudonym for the study area. The name of the community is disguised in order to protect the anonymity of research informants.

embedded in the real world'. While the focus is on the Mkambati community, this community will be studied within the context of its relationship with changing actors over time. More specifically, this context will focus on autonomy of the community of Mkambati, and on its power to influence decision-making on access to, and use of, resources at the Mkambati Nature Reserve.

The boundaries of this study, as indicated in Gillham's (2000) analysis, will be difficult to draw. Following Stake (1995), I will use an instrumental case to understand a particular issue or process – social capital – within the Mkambati community. Stake (1995) postulates that an instrumental case study Lastly, I will locate this case study within a historical, political, and geographical context. Social processes are located or exist within particular contexts which play a major role in helping a researcher in understanding complexities in study areas (Giddens, 1984). Commenting on the instrumental case study approach, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that focusing on issues and processes shifts the emphasis of the case. The case becomes a secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates one's understanding of something else (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Nonetheless, the case is looked at in depth, its context scrutinized, its activities detailed, all because this helps the researcher to pursue his interest (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Drawing an in-depth understanding of the Mkambati community provides me with an opportunity to gather multiple forms of data. Yin (1989) recommends six types of data gathering. These are documentation, literature review, archival records, observations, interviews, and storytelling all of which find application in this study.

### **3.5.2 Sampling**

There is a continuing debate among scholars on the significance of formalized sampling in qualitative research. Two schools of thought posit different and conflicting assertions on the significance of sampling. Most theoretically significant studies on field research were based on opportunistic samples (Seale *et al.*, 2004). This, argue Seale *et al.* (2004), is likely to lead to a conclusion that interacting issues of sampling,

representativity, and generalizability are both unnecessary and time wasting. Another school of thought, in support of the significance of sampling, argues that sampling is essential in order to avoid messy and empirically shallow research. This view argues that sampling helps in addressing the problem of representativeness that is often prevalent in contemporary organizational research (Seale *et al.*, 2004). In line with the latter view, and also drawing from Neuman (2000: 196) who contends that sampling both “illuminates social life” and helps in collecting specific events or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding, I drew my data from purposive and snowball sampling.

#### *3.5.2.1 Purposive sampling*

The choice of purposive sampling in this study is premised on the understanding that this sampling technique enables the researcher to document diverse variation and to identify important patterns (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For instance, the seven villages that constitute Mkambati are sparsely located. To gather information from interviewees from these villages was not an easy task. As the researcher, I had to use my discretion in identifying interviewees who would add value to this study. Identifying patterns enables one to draw logical generalizations that will help in applying findings in other areas. This sampling approach helps in selecting unique cases that are especially informative (Neuman, 2000). The selection of the Mkambati community enabled me to explore community patterns that illustrate the dynamics of this community’s social capital.

Commenting on purposive sampling, Creswell, (2009) indicates that this sampling technique reduces the cost (monetary and time) of preparing samples and fieldwork. I travelled to all seven villages identifying potential informants. Although this exercise was tedious, as I would drive in dirt and sometimes muddy roads when it was raining, the representation of each village in the Mkambati Land Trust meant that in some cases I had to use the member of the Mkambati Land Trust based in that particular village to help me in identifying potential respondents. In some cases the respondents would make themselves available for the interview as soon as I got to their household. In that

case my data gathering programme became easy. However, some potential respondents would cite commitments such as having to go to Flagstaff to buy some family necessities, and would therefore ask me to return either in the afternoon of the following day. While these postponements delayed my data collection process, they in some cases, enabled me to pay more attention to the data that I was transcribing. Also, the postponements helped me to psychologically prepare myself for the interview, as I would have already seen and known the person I would be interviewing the following day.

However, Creswell (2009) points out that this type of sampling is unable to control variability and bias of estimates. Also, purposive sampling has limitations such as omitting potential informants that could make significant contributions to the study. To minimize this limitation I also used snowball sampling (Neuman, 2000). This sampling method enabled me to obtain more information from informants who were not in the initial sample, but whose knowledge about processes leading to the consolidation of social capital within the community of Mkambati was central to developing the understanding desired in this study.

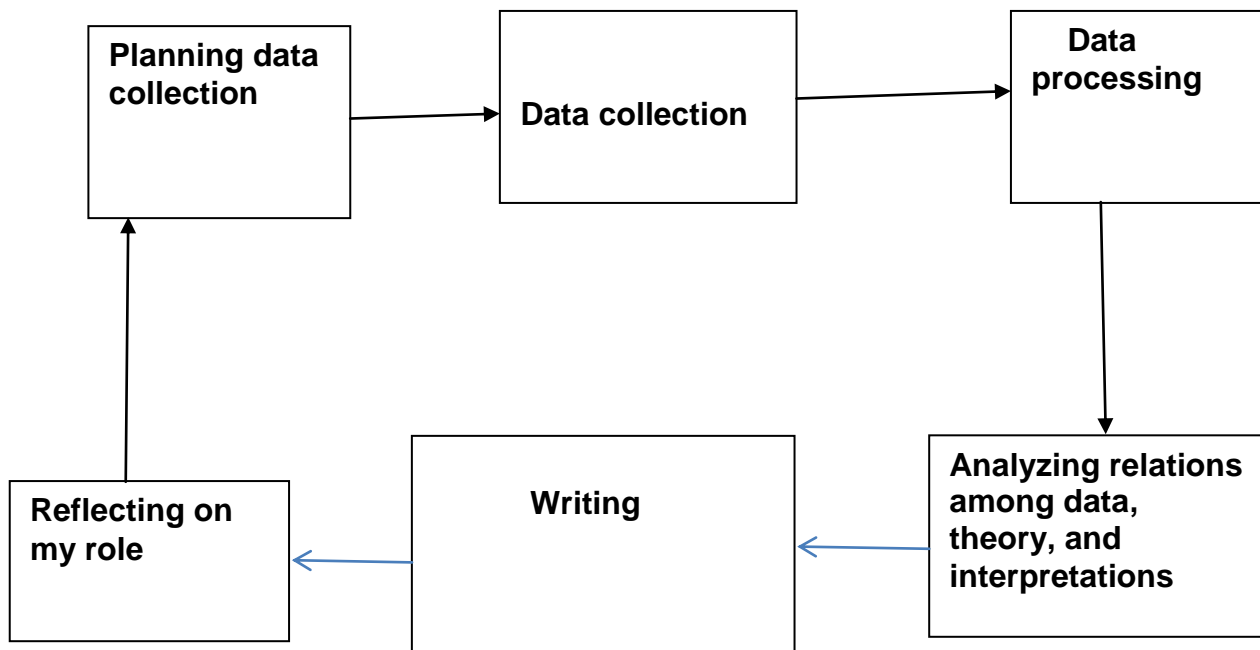
#### *3.5.2.2 Snowball sampling*

Central in the application of snowball sampling is the notion that researchers are interested in an inter-connected network of people or organizations (Neuman, 2000). Taking into account that each individual or organization is inter-connected to the other, particularly in inter-organizational relationships, I was conscious that my initial sample would grow in an attempt to establish linkages with other members or organizations as they relate to decision-making processes. Therefore, in addition to purposive sampling I also used snowball sampling as circumstances required. For instance, during the process of interviewing, a particular respondent would indicate that, “*Ukho ubawo onolwazi oluphangaleleyo ngalemeko*”, meaning; there is someone who has a broader insight on the subject we are discussing. Then I would get the details of the person being referred to, locate where the person resides; and arrange an interview with him.



### 3.6 Operationalizing the methodological framework

I operationalized the methodological framework through an iterative research process that is illustrated in Figure 4.1.



#### 3.6.1 Planning data collection

##### 3.6.1.1 Preparation for data collection

During the tenure of this study I was a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. Upon making a decision on undertaking this study at Mkambati on 26 August 2005 I wrote a letter to Ms Maswana. Ms Maswana was then the Chief Executive Officer of the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB). This is a government agency that is tasked with overseeing the functioning of nature reserves in the Eastern Cape. The objective of this letter (Appendix 1) was to acquire permission to also include Mkambati Nature Reserve in this study. In order to conduct this study I had to book accommodation in Kokstad which is about 250 kilometres away from the Mkambati Nature Reserve. This is the arrangement by the Eastern ECPB, which is managing the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Firstly, I had to make a call to the ECPB

Office in Kokstad. Then this Office would call the Office at the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Mkambati Nature Reserve occupies the eastern border of the Mkambati area.

I also travelled to Mkambati to seek permission to conduct this study from the local *Amakhosi* and the Mkambati Land Trust. Upon explaining the purpose of this study to these two groups that lead the community of Mkambati they suggested that I come in two weeks so that I could present my request to the entire Mkambati Land Trust and *Amakhosi*. This meeting was held at Mkambati Nature Reserve in October 2004. In this meeting I had to declare to community leaders that there are no monetary benefits for the community from this study. I indicated to the community leaders that the study is another attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge. During this meeting these leaders welcomed the fact that I am conducting a study in their area because “*Inhlupheko yethu yakuthi yaziwe lilizwe lonke*”, meaning, our plight would be known worldwide.

Upon driving to Mkambati Nature Reserve I had to drive through the seven villages that constitute the community of Mkambati. Driving through these villages would afford me the opportunity to familiarise myself with the Mkambati area. Moreover, and as this area is gravel road, I had to drive at low speed. This afforded me the opportunity to have regular stops where I would chat with some members of the local community. These informal observations and interactions provided me with the opportunity to have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the livelihoods and challenges facing the community of Mkambati. Staying in the chalets at the Reserve afforded me the opportunity to interact with park staff, all of whom are Mkambati community members. A Reserve staff member, who is the manager of the Mkambati Nature Reserve, became one of my key informants. Initially, I had a thought of staying in one of the villages; this idea was discouraged by members of the Mkambati Land Trust who felt that staying in the Nature Reserve would help in generating revenue, as I was paying around R180 per night in a self-catering chalet. Moreover, staying at the Mkambati Nature Reserve afforded me the opportunity to do the write-ups for on the data that I would have

collected during the day. The Mkambati Nature Reserve had electricity while all villages that constitute the community of Mkambati had no electricity.

#### *3.6.1.2 Geographical and institutional challenges experienced*

I recall one day driving around Kwa Cele whilst it was raining. I must have underestimated the amount of rain that had fallen overnight. I drove through a downward slope. After having completed an interview with one of the members of the community I drove back to the main road that links Mkambati Nature Reserve and the small town of Flagstaff. The road had become more slippery as rain continued pattering down. It is at that moment that I got stuck in the mud. I had to call for help from the community. Typical of rural communities, the people within this village came in numbers to help push the car so that I could get out of the mud. During the pushing and shoving these people, in a clear attempt to send a message to me about their predicament, started uttering statements such as “ *ezi ndlela koko zaba nje, yaye alikho ithemba lokuba zokuze zilunge*” This meant that “these roads have always been in this bad condition, and we have lost hope that they will ever be fixed”. Eventually, with their force, the car was successfully pushed out of the mud. As I thanked them for their effort they indicated that, as one of the people who are close to the decision-makers I should relate their predicament on bad roads and that there is no electricity in their areas. While being stuck in the mud frustrated me as I could not make it for the next appointment with another member of the community, this unfortunate incident provided me with the opportunity to establish relations with key informants. These unplanned interactions also helped me to further understand relationships and livelihoods of the community of Mkambati.

While conducting this study I had to encounter some of the challenges. Being a rural area, Mkambati lacks some of the basic services. For instance, after being provided with three books entailing minutes of meetings the Mkambati Land Trust had held concerning the land restitution process in their area, I had to look for a place where I could make copies. Community members informed me that the only area that does make photocopies is a local school. This school was situated about 10 kilometres from

the Secretary of the Mkambati Land Trust homestead – where I had just got the books containing minutes of meetings. Upon arrival at the school the school principal told me that they are willing to make photocopies for me. However, he indicated that the number of the photocopies I wanted is way beyond what they are capable of. He asked the school secretary to make a few copies for me; and suggested that for the number of copies that I need I have to go to Flagstaff, which is about 30 kilometres away from the school. It is during times like these that I would take the opportunity to informally engage with these community members. These engagements helped me in understanding the living conditions and social dynamics within which the community of Mkambati lives.

Challenges were not only confined to one-on-one data collection process. For instance, it took me more than six months to access the ‘Land Settlement Agreement Document’ between the Department of Land Affairs and the Community of Mkambati. In my earlier interaction with the community of Mkambati I asked to have access and peruse the Settlement Agreement Document that led to the restitution of the Mkambati land to the community of Mkambati. Although members of the Mkambati Land Trust were already familiar with me, and in particular with the study I was doing in their area, they were reluctant to let me access the Settlement Agreement Document. After they had promised me that I would have access to the document, during my later visit to Mkambati, the Mkambati Land Trust suddenly told me that the document is being kept by the Land Claims Commission in East London. I believed them, and instantly contacted the Land Claims Commission in the East London. After repeated attempts to get hold of the head of the Land Claims Commission I still could not access him. For instance, his secretary would tell me that her ‘boss’ is in a meeting and will attend to my request after the meeting. I remember one day the secretary told me to write a letter to the head of the Land Claims Commission. Unfortunately, there was no response despite a clear indication that this information pertaining to land restitution in Mkambati is wanted for academic purposes. My persistent plea with the Mkambati Land Trust was finally heard, as they gave me a copy of the Settlement Agreement document.

### *3.5.1.3 Guided walks, drives, and resource use demonstrations*

After completing interviews with members of the Mkambati Land Trust and members of individual household, I would often walk with them around the village in which interviews were held. This practice often helped me in familiarizing myself with areas such as their grazing land, places where they collect firewood, and the general relationships amongst themselves as the community of Mkambati. I would always enjoy these walks as I speak the local language, so they felt comfortable in engaging in conversation with me. If some areas where we were going to were a bit far I would drive with some members of the community. These drives, including the one from Mthontsasa – a central area where most of the Mkambati Land Trust meetings were held – would include giving lifts to members of the community. These joint drives offered me with an opportunity to interact with community members. Moreover, these joint rides played a big role in helping me to understand social networks amongst the community members. It is also during these joint rides that some of the potential interviewees would be recommended by community members whom I had given lifts. I also used these guided walks and drives as an opportunity to ask questions and seek explanations on grazing land; resource harvesting; and other questions pertaining to my research.

Also, I emphasized that the land restitution programme is one of the critical issues that are being dealt with by the South African government, and it is therefore prudent that more research is conducted in this area so that various dynamics pertaining to the land question could be better understood by the research community and other involved stakeholders such as local communities. Upon this explanation, attendees were happy that a study of this nature will be conducted in their area, and the challenges they are faced with would be known countrywide and beyond. Also, during meetings with members of the Mkambati Land Trust, these members indicated to me that among the researchers who have conducted studies in Mkambati are James Feely and Thembele Kepe. Div de Villiers – a researcher who spent some time in Mkambati studying tourism in the Wild Coast area – gave me James Feely's address and telephone number. I found that James Feely lives in Ugie, a town on the south-west of the Eastern Cape. As my study in Mkambati unfolded, and after some telephonic exchanges with James

Feely, I drove for about six hours from Pietermaritzburg to Ugie. I arrived at Feely's farm and had discussions with him on his perception and understanding of the community of Mkambati. As will be indicated in the next chapter, Feely provided some invaluable information and knowledge about the community of Mkambati and amaMpondo in general. Similarly, Thembela Kepe has spent many years undertaking land related studies in the Pondoland region. In particular, Kepe has made much scholarly input on land restitution and livelihoods studies in the Mkambati area. It is on this basis that I have also engaged and consulted a number of land restitution and land tenure studies that have been conducted by Thembela Kepe in the Mkambati area.

### **3.6.2 Data collection**

This section is divided into three parts. The first part draws from various types of triangulation, and explains why triangulation is important in qualitative research. The second part, as postulated by various research methodologists and research analysts, draws from research techniques and how these techniques contribute to the attainment of research objectives. The third part demonstrates how I have operationalized these research techniques in collecting data within the community of Mkambati.

The paradigms of qualitative and quantitative research assumptions play a major role in the researcher's choice of methods of data collection (Firestone, 1987; Guba and Lincoln, 1988; McCracken, 1988). My choice of data collection methods is framed and guided by qualitative research assumptions, and intrinsic in these assumptions is an inductive process (Creswell, 1994). Informing the choice of qualitative methods is that they enable me to infer understanding of the situation.

Commenting on qualitative methods, Gillham (2000) contends that qualitative methods are essentially descriptive and inferential in character. These methods, he continues, draw their strength from their ability to illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations. Using qualitative methods would help me to 'get under the skin' of the relationship between the Mkambati Land Trust and government institutions aligned to the land restitution programme in the Eastern Cape. In accomplishing this objective, I

used various data collection tools under the rubric of qualitative research to understand how organizations have related over time. Commenting on qualitative research and assumptions, Firestone (1987), Guba and Lincoln (1988), and McCracken (1988) argue that this method postulates that:

- Reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in a study;
- Researchers interact with that being researched;
- Researchers are value-laden and biased; and
- Reality is context bound.

Commenting on the data collection process Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest four critical parameters. These are the setting (where the research will take place); actors (who will be observed or interviewed); events (what the actors will be observed doing or interviewed about); and the process (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting). These parameters are highlighted in the interview schedule (Appendix 2). These paradigm assumptions guided me during the data collection process and enabled me to take cognizance of them. The following data collection instruments were employed: observations, semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis, and audio-visual information and storytelling.

### *3.6.2.1 Triangulation*

Triangulation is used in qualitative studies to check and establish validity of the study or area that is being researched (Stake, 2010). To provide clarity on the type of triangulation that is employed in this study it is important that the types of triangulation that are used in qualitative studies are mentioned. Several authors including Olsen (2004); Merriam (2009); and Stake (2010) cite five types of triangulation as critical in qualitative research. These are:

- (i) Data triangulation. This type of triangulation refers to the use of different sources of information in order to increase the validity of the study in question. These sources could be participants in research, community members, and other researchers.

- (ii) Investigator triangulation. This type of triangulation involves using different investigators during the analysis process.
- (iii) Environmental triangulation. This type of triangulation focusses on the use of different locations, research settings and other factors related to the environment that is under study.
- (iv) Theory triangulation. This triangulation refers to the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data. In most cases this type of triangulation involves people from different disciplines to interpret data.
- (v) Methodological triangulation. This is the type of triangulation that is used in this study. Multiple qualitative and sometimes including quantitative methods are used as indicated earlier, in this study the researcher has used semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, storytelling, and document analysis as research techniques that have been used to validate data being collected.

Commenting on triangulation, Neuman (2000) argues that it is better to look at something from several angles than to look at it in only one way. Although triangulation is applied in this study it is not used regularly as relatively more data has been gathered through interviews. The use of various methods of data collection enables one to attend to the limitations experienced by each technique. As indicated earlier, various theoretical dispositions are used to provide a better understanding of social capital as a critical factor in building and sustaining constructive relationships in the Mkambati community. Therefore, this study used eclectic data collection techniques in order to provide validity (acceptable processes and outcomes of data collection) and reliability (whether information has been gathered through academically accepted norms) of data gathered. Validity and reliability of data are essential both in answering questions that have been earlier asked and also in satisfying the objectives of this study (Neuman, 2000).



### *3.6.2.2 Non-participant observation*

Non-participant or complete observer role is useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for informants to discuss (Creswell, 1994). Also commenting on observation, Neuman (2000) notes that a great deal of what researchers do in the field is to pay attention, watch, and listen carefully. During observation of meetings and other activities in the Mkambati community I noted observations in a systematic way that could be easily understood later. Critical in writing observations, is that notes taken should convey sensation and images needed. Relationships are normally expressed through feelings. Observing meetings or cultural activities provided me with the opportunity to record feelings expressed by participants. Particular attention was paid to language used in expressing either acknowledgement or condemnation of practices or behaviours that are considered influential in either the promotion or the subjugation of the Mkambati community's social capital. Nonetheless, using observation as a tool in data collection has some shortcomings. One of these is that the observation technique does not provide insights into what the person observed might be thinking or what might motivate a given behaviour or comment (Nueman, 2000). This deficiency was compensated for when semi-structured interviews were conducted.

### *3.6.2.3 Semi-structured interviews*

Unlike non-participant observation, interviews are specialized kinds of conversations with a specific aim and role differentiation. Commenting on interviews, Neuman (2000) indicates that using interviews in research helps respondents in expressing themselves in the forms in which they normally speak, think, and organize reality. Indeed, the overwhelming strength of face-to-face interviews is the richness of communication that is available (Gillham, 2000). Interviews are speech events, that is, they are closer to a friendly conversation than the stimulus response model found in a survey research (Neuman, 2000). Asking questions relating to relationships is the motivation for choosing semi-structured interviews as the main source of data collection in this study. Interviews differ from a friendly conversation in that they have an explicit purpose: to learn about the process, informants, and context (Neuman, 2000). These questions are arranged in themes in an interview schedule (Appendix 2) that guided me during

interviews. While interviews were arranged in themes, citation of respondents varied depending on the type of questions asked. For instance, some questions required responses of historical facts. In instances where respondents provided historical facts their identity was not revealed, rather code names were assigned to respondents. On the other hand in instances where respondents provided factual responses that clarify the organization's protocol or constitution, their actual names were being mentioned. Questions asked sought to explore various elements of social capital that are crucial in constructing and sustaining relationships within the Mkambati community.

Like non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews have limitations. Among the limitations is that, argues Creswell (1994), they provide indirect information filtered through the views of the respondent. Being "speech events" as indicated by Neuman (2000), time cost plays an important role, that is, interviews on any scale are very time-consuming (Gillham, 2000).

#### *3.6.2.4 Document analysis*

Documents relating historical and contemporary activities at Mkambati were sourced and analysed with the specific aim of understanding how, over time, relationships among stakeholders have shaped decision-making and resolution of conflict. This data collection technique focused on, among other sources, the land settlement agreement between the Department of Land Affairs and the Mkambati Land Trust, minutes of meetings by the Mkambati Land Trust, and joint meetings held by both the Mkambati Land Trust and the Eastern Cape Parks Board; and on archival material that reflects how relationships have evolved in the study area.

The use of document analysis helped me to understand the 'external perspective' of the community of Mkambati. Also, document analysis helped me to verify interviews and observations thus helping in triangulation. Particularly, the land settlement agreement document helped me to understand the nature of the agreement the community of Mkambati were involved in with the Department of Land Affairs. Then I was able to verify whether this agreement was honoured or not. This document further helped me in

understanding more issues about the land restitution, and plan for further questions and clarification when meeting members of the Mkambati Land Trust on one hand; and management of the Eastern Cape Parks Board on the other.

#### *3.6.2.5 Analyzing minutes of Mkambati Land Trust meetings*

In order to further understand dynamics that prevailed amongst the community of Mkambati in regard to their land this study also perused minutes of meetings that were held by the Mkambati Land Trust. During the process of interrogating minutes it became evident that even though the community of Mkambati was given back their land they still encountered a number of problems in either accessing this land or using it to their benefit. Before getting back their land, and after the attainment of their land the community of Mkambati, through the Mkambati Land Trust has been holding a series of meetings with the aim of dealing with the challenges that they face, regarding their newly-attained land. Also, these meetings were held so that they could provide guidance on how this area could be further developed and to create employment opportunities.

In consultation with written minutes of meetings held by the Mkambati Land Trust it became evident that, as indicated in a number of interviews and non-participant observations held during the course of this study, there is still myriad issues of contention that the community of Mkambati has to deal with in order for them to benefit from their land. Minutes referred to in this study were recorded between 2005 and 2007. An attempt to access minutes that were recorded before the Mkambati land was restituted failed because the Mkambati Land Trust indicated that most of these minutes have already been destroyed, also, some meetings were not recorded as it was their strategy not to record their meetings because they feared that information regarding discussions on their demands for the restitution of their land might be leaked to government, and as a result jeopardize their cause.

#### 3.6.2.6 Storytelling

Storytelling as a method of data collection occurs in varied forms. Storytelling occurs in a verbal format, in drawing to portray the story, and in photographs, mapping, dances, musical forms, and rituals (Reason, 1993). Cultural and physical artefacts such as rituals, architecture, and other constructed artefacts depicting social capital within the defined research site are used as part of storytelling. Commenting on physical artefacts, French and Bell (1999) indicate that prevailing artefacts together with values, norms, assumptions, and interactions are central in an organization. Led and confined by ethical dimensions, the present study used the verbal format – through the use of semi-structured interviews that allow interviewees to digress to issues they consider pertinent to their social capital.

Some of these artefacts relate to intra- and inter-stakeholder relationships, and as such they contribute or impact on the operation of social capital. During this study I would seek extra time with members of the Mkambati Land Trust after I had observed the proceedings of their meetings. During this extra meeting I would pose a question or raise an issue related to how they cope when dealing with issues related to their land. It is during these meetings that these members would be involved in discussions amongst themselves.

In some cases these discussions would be vigorous, with each member trying to demonstrate how he or she understands their history and land question. I would intervene here and there in seeking clarification, but at the same time allocating these members to deliberate on issues without being confined to a particular questioning or interviewing mode. I would always jot down notes so as to better understand the phenomena. In some cases I would attend their ritual ceremonies such as *Umgidi* [A ceremony where a cow is slaughtered so as to appease the ancestors]. AmaMpondo are a friendly ethnic group. They would offer me meat, and I would join them in their *isithebe* [a large wooden plate on which meat is served] and eat together with them. Upon realising that I am freely joining them in their meals they would be more open in their discussions. Also, it is during ceremonies like these where I would listen to the

traditional music they sing and observe the traditional dances. For instance, their music would relate to their land, *Amakhosi*, their livestock, and general social issues or challenges they are faced with. I would continue taking notes of these performances and try and link them to my study.

#### *3.6.2.7 Taking notes and recording*

During the entire tenure of this study I always carried a pen and a small (A6) note book to make jotted notes. I also used both jotted notes and a recording device during certain interviews. Recording interviews during observation of meetings helped me to capture direct quotations and to paraphrase when necessary. During my interaction with members of the Mkambati Land Trust and other community members I would use both indirect observation notes and a recording device. When interviewing these respondents the use of a recording device was not a problem as the respondents did not feel threatened by being recorded.

However, during my interview sessions with the staff of the Mkambati Nature Reserve, and the management of the Eastern Cape Parks Board I only used jotted notes as these respondents did not want me to record them as they felt that the recordings might be used against them by their respective managers or political leaders in government. However, during the Mkambati Land Trust meetings I was allowed to use a recorder, and would replay the recorded information, and compare the recordings with what I have written as notes during those meetings. This study mostly relied on interviews as the primary source of data collection. These interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using themes to organize and interpret data.

### **3.7 Data processing**

The data gathered was primarily in the form of extensive field notes. I wrote field notes before, during, and after engaging in the research methods I used during this study. Most of the time during this study was spent composing notes. In the main my field notes contained text, maps, and tape recordings. I varied my field notes so as to accommodate each data collection technique I used at a specific time. For instance, I

used jotted notes when I engaged in a one-on-one interview with interviews. Sometimes I used inference and analytic notes when observing proceedings of the Mkambati Land Trust and community meetings.

I also used personal notes to help me to capture some of the details that might help me to further understand the phenomena, and make follow ups in cases where there were issues that need clarification. My jotted notes in the form of words, phrases, or diagrams helped me on the recollection of detail when writing longer and more detailed observation notes. The significance of jotted notes was two-fold. Firstly, jotted notes helped me to focus on the phenomenon I was observing rather than concentrating on writing notes, which might have led me to miss some of the points drawn from either the interview or during observation. For instance, in some meetings, and due to a plethora of responses, interventions, and contributions from members of the Mkambati Land Trust I could not be in a position to take longer and detailed notes. In those cases I would rely on both jotted notes and a tape recorder. Critical in the processing of data was the use of themes to illustrate common as well as different views and opinions of respondents. In some cases respondents' names were coded so as to guarantee confidentiality.

Sometimes I would write personal notes. I used these types of notes as a personal diary. Personalised notes helped me in contextualizing other types of notes. Also, my continual communication with my supervisors, fellow researchers and staff at the Centre for Environment and Development in Pietermaritzburg did not only alleviate the fieldwork stress, but to a greater extent inspired me in my analysis of the phenomena. The Mkambati Nature Reserve has no television sets and is a quiet and isolated place. Hence, I could pay more attention on how I typed my hand-written notes. Every evening after either interviewing or observing in meetings I would type my hand written notes on my laptop. It is during this time that I would elaborate on my hand-written notes and observations.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

As McBurney (2001) states, failure by researchers to consider ethical issues carefully amounts to negligence towards society; on the other hand continues McBurney (2001), researchers who refrain from doing an important study because of excessive concern about participants are also liable for failing to keep commitment to the same society that hopes for a better future. The process of data gathering should take into account cultural and indeed other practices prevalent within the area or community that is studied (Babbie and Mouton, (2002). The value and quality of the research must not outweigh any potential discomfort, inconvenience, or risk experienced by participants and other people from whom data are collected (Rubin and Babbie, 1997). In line with this principle I followed the following ethical principles in my study.

It is incumbent upon researchers to anticipate ethical issues that may arise during their studies (Hesse-Bieber and Leavey, 2006). Also conducting research entails protecting the researcher's participants; develop trust with them and promote the integrity of research (Isreal and Hay, 2006). Having cognizance of these ethical issues led me to introduce the study to the local *Inkosi* – Zwelibungile; the Mkambati Land Trust; and community elders and sought their permission to proceed and established their willingness to participate. In the meantime a letter (Appendix1) seeking permission to conduct this study was sent to the Mkambati community and the Eastern Cape Parks Board. The main primary focus area in this study was the community of Mkambati, particularly the Mkambati Land Trust – a body tasked with dealing with land and developmental issues in Mkambati. Also, as an integral part of Mkambati, the Mkambati Nature Reserve is also included in this study. Being under the management of the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB) meant that I had to get permission from the Eastern Cape Parks Board management and explain why I am undertaking the study at Mkambati. Approval by the Eastern Cape Parks Board provided me with the opportunity to interact with the staff of the Mkambati Nature Reserve, freely. Also, this permission enabled me to hold a meeting with the Mkambati Land Trust in the premises of Mkambati Nature Reserve.

I guaranteed confidentiality where this may have been required by interviewees. Each time I had to have an interview or engage in a non-participant observation I would ask for informed consent to participate. In all the Mkambati Land Trust meetings I attended as a non-participant observer I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the research. In cases where I conducted interviews I also explained to respondents that if they so wish their identity would remain confidential and anonymous. Respect of confidentiality and anonymity of respondents can be maintained through the use of codes (Creswell, 2009). As will be indicated in later chapters, in some cases I have used codes to protect the confidentiality of some respondents. Due to my knowledge of the language and cultural dynamics of the amaMpondo ethnic group it became relatively easy for me to visit various homesteads and request to meet with the potential respondent.

For instance, I would initially find out what clan name a particular respondent uses, and then I would salute *Ukukhahlela* in that clan name and take off the hat in case I had put one due to the heat. This gesture would 'soften' the respondent and I would be warmly welcomed. While the ECPB, the Mkambati Land Trust, and *Amakhosi* expressed their acceptance of the study being conducted in their area, I also emphasised that participation in the research was voluntary at the individual level. Apart from constant interaction with my supervisors, I also had regular conversations with other fellow researchers who were doing research in other areas. These conversations and consultations with fellow researchers helped me in consistently positioning myself correctly in directing and executing this study.

The land restitution programme in South Africa is still unfolding. A number of communities are still to get back dispossessed land. Those that have already got back their land are yet to benefit from this process. This is the process that is marked with hope, expectation, and assurances that their land will be ceded back to them. During the data collection process I would sometimes be asked whether government would speed development in Mkambati now that the community had got back their land. I had to reflect carefully on such questions prior and during the data collection process. The



community of Mkambati had the experience of being under three governments systems, that is, the apartheid government, the Transkei government, and the present democratic government of South Africa. It is the feeling of the community of Mkambati that these three governments have so far failed to provide this community with the developmental needs they deserve. Moreover, the community of Mkambati felt that they are yet to benefit from their land. It is on such contentious issues that I had to take a stand and unequivocally distance myself from issues that are not in line with my methodological framework. I felt that if I entertained these issues my research would be compromised. At the same time, I understood that my relationship with research participants was part of the phenomenon that I was investigating. I was cautious in divulging some of the information. For instance, some of research respondents would ask me whether there are any research respondents that I have already met before conducting interviews with them. While I would not deny meeting other research participants I was strategic in responding to such questions.

### **3.9 Limitations**

This study had some limitations. For instance, the study site was remote. The seven villages that constitute the community of Mkambati are staggered and, because of the condition of roads, which are gravel, it sometimes became difficult to access some of the respondents. This challenge led, in some case, to postponement of planned interviews thus impacting on the timeframe I had initially allocated to the data collection process. I also experienced problems in accessing higher level officials of the Eastern Cape Parks Board. At some point I had to fly from Durban to East London to interview a senior executive of the Eastern Cape Parks Board. Even then, I had to wait much longer before I could interview him as he was involved in other meetings on the day.

### **3.10 Limitations of the case study**

In this study I have employed a research methodology that enabled me to undertake an in-depth investigation of the case. I have used a number of research techniques that have helped me in triangulating data. The use of various research techniques has enabled me to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena I am studying.

However, the instrumental case study approach that I have used limits me in the type of generalizations I make. If I had the ability to generalize to other similar cases this research would be more practical and be applied to other similar cases. Also, the instrumental case study has enabled me to study issues and processes pertaining to social capital and its relation to land restitution in the community of Mkambati. While this approach has helped me in understanding the role of social capital in enhancing the land restitution process in the community of Mkambati it has nonetheless deprived me of having an overall in-depth understanding of the community of Mkambati as a case study. However, I am in a position to make a meaningful contribution on the role of social capital in promoting relationships within communities. I am also in a position to contribute in debates about land restitution programme.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

One of the major characteristics of qualitative research during the data collection process is talking directly to people, seeing them behave and act in their context (Creswell, 2009). It is in line with this major characteristic of qualitative research data collecting that this chapter has identified and analyzed how the data collection process was undertaken during this study. For instance, both the research setting and the historical background were discussed at length in this period. Also included in this chapter is how the land restitution programme has impacted on the South African communities. Lastly, this chapter has provided an extensive discussion of the methodology that is used in this study. This methodology also includes ethical issues that have been significant whilst data was being collected.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The fight for societal values and land rights in Mkambati**

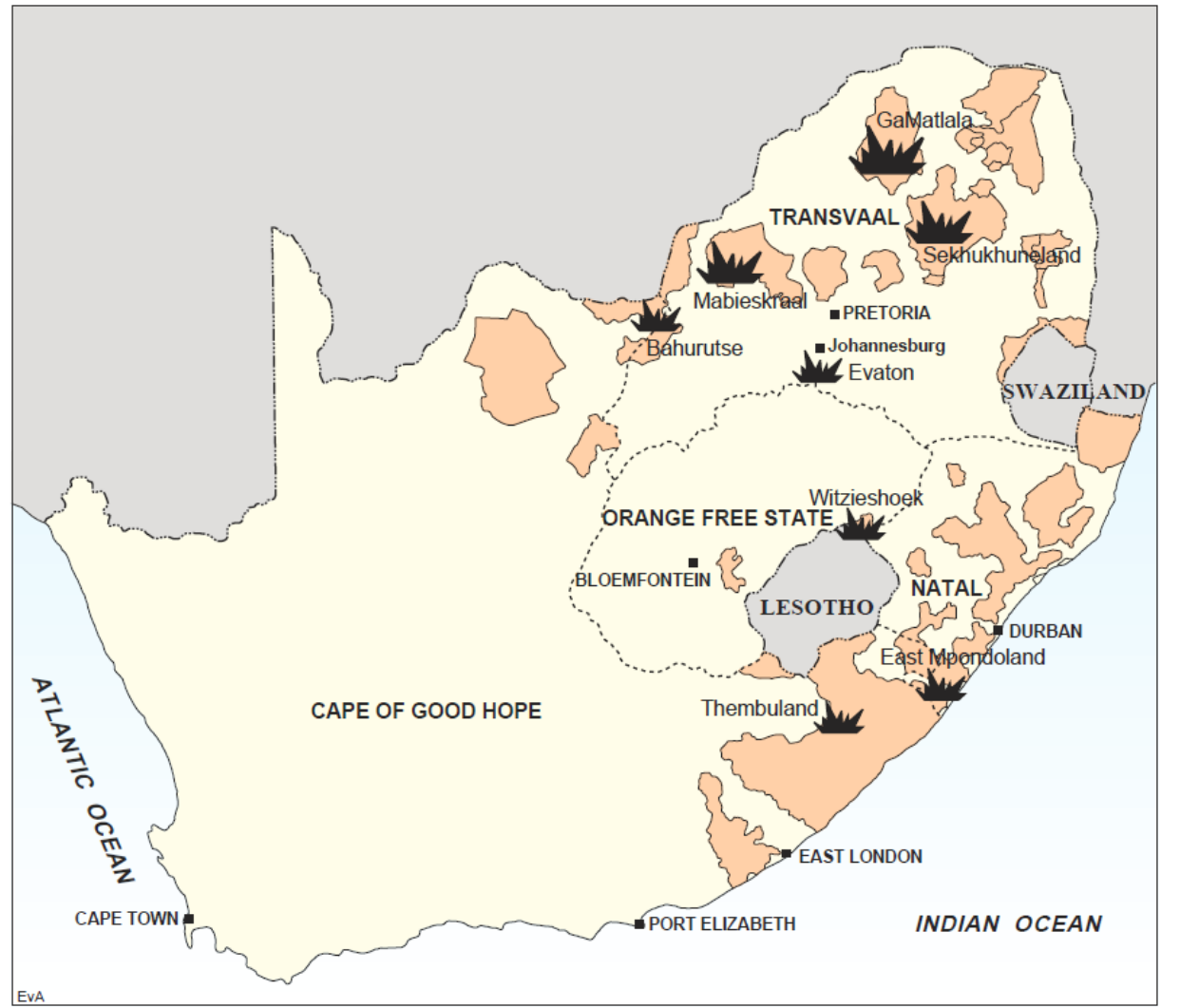
#### **4.1 Introduction**

While there could be other approaches to historical events that have had an impact on the community of Mkambati, the Ngquza massacre or, as it is commonly known the Pondoland revolt, remains one of the watershed moments that has shaped, and indeed influenced the destiny of the community of Mkambati, particularly on the land issue (Matoti and Ntsebeza, 2004). The imposition of the Bantu Authorities Act in 1951 in rural areas prompted a spate of revolts in rural areas. The Ngquza massacre remains one of the events that continue to rein in the minds and hearts of the community of Mkambati. In addition to the Ngquza massacre, the community of Mkambati has been subjected to governments which, according to many scholars cited in this work, ill-treated the community of Mkambati. This negative behaviour by these governments is also confirmed by people interviewed in this study. Apart from the Ngquza massacre, which is focal area of the next section, there are three political eras that informed the history of the community of Mkambati. This chapter provides an analysis of these eras so as to demonstrate their impact on the community of Mkambati.

#### **4.2 The 1960 Ngquza massacre: in defence of land and cattle**

Most revolts against the apartheid system that existed in South Africa for decades took place in urban areas, particularly in the Townships. In 1960 both the Sharpeville and the Langa revolts were heralded as a watershed moment for the history of black people in South Africa. While these revolts and indeed subsequent massacres remain one of the epic moments in South African struggle, people in rural areas also revolted against the apartheid policy (Badat, 2012). These revolts in rural areas were by no means of lesser impact than those that occurred in urban areas. The Pondoland revolt should be viewed in a broader rural revolt context. During the 1960s a number of revolts took place in rural areas in South Africa. A common element in these eight revolts that took place

across South Africa is that people in these areas were contesting the imposition of the Bantu Authorities Act which provided indirect rule led by tribal, regional, and territorial authorities that were led by chiefs and headmen that were favoured by the Apartheid government. One of the unfortunate effects of the Bantu Authorities Act was, as Matoti and Ntsebeza, 2004:179) put it, is that it 'forced chiefs to choose between serving their communities and becoming salaried officials and collaborators of the apartheid state'. The imposition of the Bantu Authorities Act led to a number of revolts in many rural areas. For instance, similar revolts against Bantu Authorities also took place in places such as Bahurutse, Mabieskraal, GaMatlala, Sekhukhuneland, Witzieshoek, Evaton, and Xhalanga in Thembuland (Map 5.1) (Kepe and Ntsebeza, 2012; Badat, 2012). However, the Mpondo revolt – referred to in this study as the Ngquza massacre – is the strongest statement by rural people against social, economic, and political forces that denied the Mpondo people of their right to democracy and equality (Kepe and Ntsebeza, 2012). The 6 June 1960 Ngquza revolt (Figure 5.1) – where a total of eleven people were killed by the apartheid forces – remains one of the pinnacles of the struggles that were launched by the rural people against the apartheid government. In fact, of all the rural rebellions that took place in South Africa in the middle of the twentieth century, the 1960 Pondoland revolt was the largest and the most celebrated (Gibbs, 2010).



**Figure 4.1** Map of key areas of rural rebellion, 1949-1961 (adapted from Badat 2012)

Similar to the Sekhukhuneland rebellion, this rebellion was a form of popular resistance by rural peasants against the state intervention into their land and livelihoods (Gibbs, 2010). In addition to attempts to encroach on peasants' land, the apartheid government was attempting to reshape and control chieftaincy in the Bantu authorities system so as to appoint and support *Amakhosi* that would help facilitate and sustain the apartheid system (Gibbs, 2010). These claims are corroborated by Ntsebeza (2005) who argues that the introduction of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, which established Tribal Authorities, contributed to resistance against the District Council in Xhalanga. Both in

the Pondoland and Xhalanga – former Transkei; and indeed in other parts of the country, this newly-enacted Act provided chiefs and headmen uncontested powers at the local Tribal Authorities areas for the execution of government policies, including the controversial power to make recommendations to the magistrate in the allocation of land processes (Ntsebeza, 2005).



**Figure 4.2** Tombstone of Heroes who died in the Ngquza Massacre (**Source: Freedom Park Archives**)

There were two destabilizing activities by the apartheid government and their collaborating partners in homelands. Firstly, the resettlement of rural communities in order to accommodate the new village planning measures that were imposed by authorities. Secondly, and of significance to rural livelihoods, was the imposed culling of cattle (Matoti and Ntsebeza, 2004). Tasked with the implementation of these government programmes were *Amakhosi* and Headmen, who because of their loyalty to

the apartheid regime, used their power to contain and discipline the reserve army of African labour (Evans, 1997). Matoti and Ntsebeza (2004) indicate that the role played by *Amakhosi* in enhancing the policies of the apartheid regime discredited even those *Amakhosi* who might have enjoyed some degree of legitimacy by virtue of their marginalization. The Pondoland rebellion is generally viewed as a response to the imposition of apartheid policies on rural land in the Pondoland area. The *Intaba* (The Hill), as the revolt in Pondoland became to be known, remains the epitome of the people of Pondoland in their struggle against the unjust apartheid policies imposed on them (Matoti and Ntsebeza, 2004). The 1960 revolt in Pondoland is regarded by many historians as the culmination of the 'selling out' of the Mpondo people by their traditional rulers. To corroborate this claim, Chief Botha Sigcawu, one of the renowned Mpondo chiefs, until his decision to support the apartheid regime, made a speech on 7 October 1954 at a function to welcome chief magistrate TWH Ramsay, in eQaukeni. In his speech Chief Botha Sigcawu proudly declared that:

We, Pondos, claim Dr Verwoerd and Dr Eiselen as our fathers and we hope you as our guardian will transmit this message to them and also make every possible arrangement to introduce them to us at Qaukeni so that through you, we can be honoured with our fathers' visits... I further desire to state that it is the wish of my people and myself to continue to be loyal to and to cooperate with the government in whatever schemes designed for the welfare of the Bantu (Umtata Archives, File 3/9/2/1).

This declaration by Chief Botha Sigcawu left an indelible mark on the struggle of the Mpondo people. It is not surprising that during the gathering at Ngquza Hill in 1960 the revolt was led by people such as Clement Gxabhu; Simon Silangwe; Mkhupheni Mhlanga who despite being ordinary members of the community, were tasked with the responsibility of leading the offensive against the apartheid army (Ngquza Hill Massacre, Freedom Park archives, 29 October, 2004). Leadership by these three men was a clear indication that the *Amakhosi's* role as the custodian of their people's rights had been highly compromised by the infiltration from the apartheid government. It comes as no surprise that the Bantu Authorities Act is summarized thus;

Though the whip has remained in the hand of the White government, it has been the Chiefs, the new jockeys riding the reserve horse, who have applied the spurs. The Chiefs are now well in the saddle (Mbeki, 1964:109).

Indeed, *Amakhosi* had their accomplices in their support of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. Recollecting the events leading to the Ngquza massacre, Gxabu; Slangwe; and Mhlanga<sup>15</sup> point out that while gathering at *eKhongweni*<sup>16</sup>, Ngquza Hill they knew that there were '*iimpimpi*' [sell-outs] amongst them, nonetheless they were not concerned by the presence of these 'sell-outs' as they were prepared to die for their land. Traditionally, kings and chiefs in African customary and traditional practices would always consult with their people in every decision that is deemed to be taken collectively. Breaking from this traditional norm, Chief Botha Sigcawu collaborated with the apartheid regime without consulting his subjects (Lamla, 2004). Moreover, as Lamla (2004) indicates, Chief Botha Sigcawu did not tolerate any dissenting voice. His unpopularity stemmed from his acceptance of the Bantu Authorities Act, and the attainment of paramount chief status.

The ramifications of the Ngquza massacre are still being felt by the amaMpondo. This event has intractable links with both land and cattle which even in the present day continues to be highly acclaimed resources on which the community of Mkambati, and indeed the entire Pondoland region feels strongly about. The continued dissatisfaction by the community of Mkambati about lack of benefits that should accompany the restitution of their land is often directly linked, and indeed reminds this community of the Ngquza massacre. In a commemoration of the Ngquza massacre on 6 June 2007 a number of amaMpondo speakers rekindled events leading to the Ngquza massacre. Integral in their recollection of this tragic event is what they perceive as the democratic South Africa's inability in addressing issues around land and development challenges that the community of Mkambati is still faced with. In a veiled attack on what the

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<sup>15</sup> These are three Mpondo community members who, together with other Mpondo men, gathered at Ngquza Hill in 1960 in a resistance move against the apartheid forces. They were interviewed on 1 January 2003 by the members of the SADET Oral History Project (Lamla, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> *Ikhongo* is interpreted differently by various people. For instance, Gxabhu; Slangwe; and Mhlanga agree with Govan Mbeki that this name is derived from "Congress" in the ANC's name. On the other hand another interpretation is that the term comes from the Belgian Congo, scene of major post-independence strife in 1960, during the time of Patrice Lumumba (Kepe and Ntsebeza, 2012).



community of Mkambati perceives as lack of commitment from the present democratic government in speedily addressing land, resource, and developmental challenges facing the community of Mkambati, a young Mpondo bard (Lamla, 2006) recites a poem with the intention of motivating the community of Mkambati to affirm their stance on what they expect to benefit from their restituted land. The poem reads:

*Khumbulani, ndithi khumbulani,  
Nijonge phambili.  
Ningakumbuli nijike niphind' umva.  
Phambili! Ndithi phambili!  
Niwadunga-dung'amadlagusha  
Phambili ngomzabalazo wabantu, phambili!  
Dalibunga kamb'ungu-Joshua.  
Tambo wen'ubungu Moses.  
Zizi wen'ungubani?*

Remember, I say remember.  
Face the front.  
Do not remember and turn to look back.  
Forward! I say forward.  
Sages of our fatherland you worked  
You caused the sheep snatchers to spread  
Helter – skelter.  
Forward with the people's struggle, forward!  
Dalibunga [Mandela] by the way you are Joshua  
Tambo (O.R.) you were Moses  
Zizi [Mbeki] who are you? (Lamla, 2006:106)

The message from this poem is that the community of Mkambati should remember the past. There is a need to continue with the struggle for their land. It is also important to note that the community of Mkambati is frustrated with lack of progress by the ANC government under President Thabo Mbeki in delivering on the promises such as benefits that the government had purported will accompany the land restitution process. The land question in Mkambati has, for years, been a priority issue that the community felt it has to be addressed. It is therefore not strange that the community of Mkambati have effervescently engaged every government that reigned over them on the land issue.

**Table 4.1** A time line showing important events relating a protracted struggle for land by the community of Mkambati

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Century. | Chief Mtono appointed by King Marelane of AmaPondo  |
| 1894                      | Annexation of Pondoland from Chief Sigcau   |
| 1899                      | Outbreak of leprosy in Pondoland  |
| 1919                      | Proclamation No 143 of the State annexes the Mkambati area  |
| 1920                      | People removed from Mkambati area, Anglican Church given control and a leper colony is established  |
| 1963                      | Transkei granted self-governance  |
| 1976                      | Transkei granted independence   |
| 1979                      | Transkei government grants rights of use of the land to Mkambati Game Reserve Pty. Ltd.   |
| 1983                      | Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR) granted rights to use 11000 ha of land claimed by the Mkambati community                                 |
| 1984                      | Transkei government takes control of the game reserve   |
| 1986                      | TRACOR extends Eucalyptus plantations by 400ha  |
| 1990                      | Tensions between TRACOR and the Mkambati community force TRACOR to permit livestock grazing on 3500 hectares  |
| 1990                      | Transkei government and community of Mkambati formed a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)   |
| 1992                      | Mkambati Community Joint Monitoring Committee stages 'sit in' at reserve administration offices. Transkei government pledges to address restitution |
| 1992                      | Land Rights Committee constituted by Mkambati community   |
| 1993                      | Joint Monitoring Committee disbanded  |
| 1992-1994                 | African National Congress drive for democratic government sidelines the land issue  |
| 1994                      | Democratic government elected and Restitution of Land Rights Act promulgated  |
| 1994                      | Land Rights Committee and ANC press for land restitution and return of Mkambati Nature Reserve  |
| 1998                      | Sugar cane farming abandoned by TRACOR  |
| 2000                      | TRACOR land ceded back to the Mkambati community  |
| 2002                      | Mkambati Land Trust constituted and Mkambati Nature Reserve transferred to the Trust  |
| 2004, 17 October          | the Co-management Committee constituted. On this day both Mkambati land and TRACOR land returned to the community of Mkambati                       |

**Source: Developed by Author**

## 4.3 Land dispossession: Historic perspectives

### 4.3.1 Mkambati in the era before constitution of the Transkei

The area in which this study is conducted is referred to as 'Mkambati' and the community of this area often refers to itself as "uMkambati; *abahlali base Mkambati* or *uluntu lwase Mkambati*". This is translated as "We are the community of Mkambati". This suggests an association and cohesion between the people of the seven villages in the area.

The appointment of Chief Mtono in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by King Marelane of the amaMpondo to be the leader of Mkambati suggests recognition of sufficient homogeneity and cohesion among the community of Mkambati to warrant recognition as a community (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). This community, argue de Villiers and

Costello (2006), held the land under a traditional management system. The land was used for residential, grazing, and other agricultural purposes such as planting crops. Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) succinctly provides an analysis of land use trends in Mkambati, and indeed in other rural areas in both former the Transkei and KwaZulu. He notes that the community of Mkambati resides on land that is fertile and suitable for crops such as maize and sorghum; land that is not suitable for planting purposes is used for grazing. He, therefore, argues that land on the eastern side of Mkambati, along the sea, was used by the community of Mkambati for grazing purposes. The community of Mkambati, he argues, would burn this land once or even twice a year so that their cattle could be able to graze when grass was still short and sweet. Every morning cattle would be taken to graze on the best pasture in which owners had land rights (Hunter, 1961). The reason for this practice is that once grass becomes tall it also becomes sour, and cattle find it unpalatable to graze (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*). Feely also emphasizes the significance of traditional leadership among the amaMpondo; anything that involves land, argues Feely, is done with the consent of *Inkosi* (chief). Indeed the role of *Amakhosi* in Mkambati is recognized by the Management Planning Framework for the Mkambati Reserve (2004) which prioritizes the continued practice of local customs, traditions in the conservation and management of biodiversity in Mkambati.

In essence, argues Feely, the notion that there was underutilized land in the Eastern Pondoland region is unfounded. The Eastern Pondoland region has always been inhabited. This is evidenced by the removal of people in 1913 by the Union of South Africa government. Through its notorious Native Land Act, this government removed people without their consent. People were removed from Mkambati to locations further inland. But it was only in 1920, following discussions between Paramount Chief Sigcawu and the Assistant Chief Magistrate of Lusikisiki concerning the location of people infected with leprosy, that land from which people had been removed was set aside for a leper colony by the Minister of Native Affairs, in terms of the provisions of Section 5 of Proclamation No. 143 of 1919. Despite complaints from the community (de Villiers and Costello, 2006), the agreement between the Chief and the Magistrate resulted in the ceding of 17 140 hectares of land held as a common property of the

community. Paramount Chief Sigcawu together with his subjects was unwilling to cede land to be used as a leper colony. However, he was forced to succumb to pressure from the Cape government which had used the Annexation Act to occupy Pondoland in March 1894 (Saunders and Derricourt, 1974).

The decision by the Cape Government to use part of the present Mkambati Nature Reserve as a leper colony caused animosity between the community of Mkambati and the Cape Government (Hunter, 1961). This animosity was built and strengthened because of trust existing between Paramount Chief Sigcawu and his subjects. According to Feely (27 May 2007, pers. comm) it is a customary practice by the amaMpondo kings and chiefs to constantly consult with their people on issues affecting them, thus consolidating trust in one another in dealing with challenges facing them (Kepe, 1997). Kepe attributes the ceding of Mkambati land by Paramount Chief Sigcawu to be the result of hegemonic pressure from the Cape Government. This act strengthened the already existing mistrust between the community of Mkambati and the then government. Indeed, as Hunter (1961) and Saunders and Derricourt (1974) note, the amaMpondo people have always distrusted governments. Distrust of governments, notes Hunter (1961), would always be discussed in an *Inkosi's* kraal, and it is this continued dialogue that strengthens the amaMpondo people's solidarity against what they regard as outsiders, including government (Feely, 27 May 2007, pers. comm.). While conducting this study I realized that the meetings of the Mkambati Land Trust are not held in the *Inkosi's* kraal. However, *Amakhosi* are always invited to these meetings<sup>17</sup>. To ensure that *Amakhosi* are able to attend these meetings each *Inkosi* is given *amanqina*.<sup>18</sup>

The Anglican Church was appointed by the government to administer the Mkambati leper colony established on the excised land (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). To enhance self-reliance a small agricultural enterprise and cattle ranch was established

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<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust meeting held on 13 November 2004.

<sup>18</sup> *Amanqina* is a term used by the community of Mkambati to refer to money that is provided to a person for transport costs.

and staff accommodation, a church, school, and a hospital was built (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). 'Giving' land to the Anglican Church forged collaboration between the Union of South Africa Government and the Anglican Church which strengthened relationships between these two organizations (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). By contrast, the community was marginalized and strained relations prevailed between the community, and the government and the administration of the leper colony.

Whereas the appointment of Chief Mtono suggests recognition of the community of Mkambati as a community rich in social capital, bound together by norms and values reflected in traditional authority, the colonial government undermined this authority. This is evidenced through excising Mkambati land without the consent of the community of Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). Land ownership and matters around its allocation and dispensing is regarded by the African people and the amaMpondo in particular as the domain of *Inkosi* (Hunter, 1961). The significance of land to the community of Mkambati is emphasized by Feely, who sums it up thus:

The Pondos are conservative people (believe in old ways of doing things). Most important to them is land; and anything that concerns land is done with the consent of the king (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*).

Cohesion between an *Inkosi* and his subjects has always been a fundamental element that bonded relationships among the amaMpondo (Hunter, 1961; Feely, 1987). For instance, in a meeting attended by the Mkambati Land Trust and government officials on the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve, one of the Trustees indicated that they had brought with them *Amakhosi* (chiefs) because the Mkambati Land Trust believed that the presence of *Amakhosi* – with whom they constantly consult on critical issues – would be a clear indication to government officials that the community of Mkambati was concerned about the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Indeed, the prevalence of trust within the community of Mkambati has always been demonstrated – particularly in meetings held by the Mkambati Land Trust which I attended – by representation of an *Inkosi* by an *Induna* (headman).

The injustice of forced removal and alienation of people from their land united people in a common cause, thereby strengthening cohesion and dialogue in their contestation of the legitimacy of the Mkambati Nature Reserve (de Villiers and Costello, 2006; Davenport, 1989). Similar practices of alienating people from their land have been experienced in other parts of the world. For instance, Ferrari (2003) points out that failure by the management of protected areas in Mt Kitanglad (Philippines) to recognize the land rights of the Talaandig, Bukidnon, and Higaonon communities and to interface protected area management with ancestral domain management strengthened social networks that promoted trust and dialogue within these communities. This strong social capital consolidated their resistance to what they perceived as unjust treatment (Ferrari, 2003). Excluding local people from decision-making processes about their land is also a common practice in Africa (Adediji, 1999).

For example, by failing to include local people in management, the CAMPFIRE project in Zimbabwe faced resistance from local communities who showed their dissatisfaction through relying on their long-held social networks such as information sharing and solidarity that sustained long-held identity and a sense of belonging (Murombedzi, 2001). Relying on these networks helped these communities to consolidate trust and continue dialogue which both strengthened and sustained their social capital. As will be shown later, the resilience of the bonding social capital (Isham *et al.*, 2002) strengthened the resolve of the community of Mkambati to continuously challenge the misappropriation of their land; and this in time culminated in the constitution of the Mkambati Land Trust.

Historical evidence reveals that the people of Khanyayo, which is the closest village to the Mkambati Nature Reserve, engaged in a prolonged struggle for the return of their land. During this process the people of Khanyayo accused Chief Mtono and his son, Chief Twetwela of selling the grazing land to whites (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). Thahle village, and later the rest of the villages joined the Khanyayo village in protesting at being alienated from their land (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). It is this shared cause between these villages, as will be shown later, which strengthened networks based on

trust and reciprocity among the community of Mkambati, thus strengthening their social capital. Whilst exclusionary networks can build social capital within these networks they also serve to strengthen social capital among those who are excluded.

In this way, by putting social capital to negative use through exclusionary networks (Streeten, 2002), the government of the Union of South Africa not only failed to assert its hegemony on the community of Mkambati but also intensified the already fragile relationship it had with the community of Mkambati (Feely, 27 May 2007, pers.comm.). By excluding the community of Mkambati from decision-making the Union of South Africa government unwittingly strengthened social cohesion among this community resulting in this community consolidating reciprocal networks amongst villages that strengthened their cause for claiming the return of their land. Indeed, in response to their exclusion, the community of Mkambati, as will be discussed later, established the Mkambati Land Trust, an organization that consolidated their efforts against what they considered as the illegitimate occupation of their land.

It was common in South Africa, as Saunders (1992) reports, that governments led by whites established decision-making networks that excluded blacks from political decisions that had an impact on their lives; this exclusion sparked discontent that was passed from one generation to another. Indeed, strong bonding social capital among Africans is drawn from inter-generational norms and networks that promote social cohesion (Streeten, 2002). For instance, in Mkambati the government of the Union of South Africa alienated the community of Mkambati from bridging social capital developed through reciprocal networks and associations, particularly between itself (government) and the Church.

Similarly, in Botswana the London Missionary Society (LMS) involved itself in the politics of that country through supporting Khosi Khama III, a Christian, in his dispute with his father, Sekhoma I, a non-Christian (Tlou and Campbell, 1984). This interference by the LMS about the politics of Botswana, argue Tlou and Campbell (1984), was perceived by the people of Botswana as an attempt to alienate them from political

decision-making processes in their country. This perception strengthened the social capital of the Batswana people, and they shunned Christianity in favour of practices enshrined in their indigenous norms and values (Tlou and Campbell, 1984). Similarly, it was a common practice in South Africa for the exclusionary political ideology of the government of the Union of South Africa to influence the churches' behaviour through involving churches in networks that sidelined local people in decision-making processes that affected the latter (Elphick, 1997).

Exchanges between Paramount Chief Sigcawu and the Assistant Magistrate also had implications for social capital within the community of Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). Individuals can use their social positions to attain political control aimed at guiding and influencing policy formation (Birner and Wittmer, 2000). Similar cases in other developing countries bear testimony to this: patron-client networks are regular practices, where individuals in decision-making positions generate opportunities for earning rent through engaging in activities that do not only strengthen their political status, but also influence the direction of policy (Lowi, 1979; Grindle, 1999; Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002). For instance, in Mexico during the revolution from 1910 to 1920 (Nuijten, 2003) the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, tasked with overseeing land policy, embarked on establishing extensive patron-client networks which deprived most communities in Mexico of land ownership. Similarly, whilst the agreement on converting Mkambati to a leper colony benefited Paramount Chief Sigcawu, crucial decisions such as giving permission for the use of Mkambati as a leper colony strengthened his relationship with the South African Government. Nonetheless, this agreement compromised the right of the community of Mkambati to make decisions on issues pertaining to their welfare (de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

Prior to 1990 it was common practice for governments of South Africa to pledge support, through monetary and other patron-client related types of gifts, to chiefs deemed supportive of these governments' exclusionary policies, and at the same time to persecute those chiefs that were aligned with local people in resisting their exclusion from decision-making processes (Gilliom and Schlemmer, 1989; Ntsebeza, 1999).



This practice also applied to the community of Mkambati who did not participate in critical decision-making processes in regard to using and accessing their land on which their livelihoods depended (Tyani, 4 April 2006). However, rather than weakening their resolve, the decision to exclude Mkambati strengthened community networks framed around trust and solidarity which in latter years, as evidenced in this study, resulted in the return of the Mkambati land to the community of Mkambati.

### **4.3.2 The Transkei era**

#### *4.3.2.1 Redefinition of Mkambati*

As the South African government aggressively pursued its apartheid policies, Mkambati remained somewhat isolated by virtue of its designation as a leper colony. But, as the incidence of leprosy declined, that justification for land use was no longer defensible because those still suffering from leprosy were moved to other locations and the hospital and support systems were closed down (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). This change, argues Ntsebeza (1999), was congruent with the emerging drive by the South African Government to establish 'Homelands'.<sup>19</sup>

Although granted self-governing status in 1963 and independence in 1976, the Transkei, nonetheless, remained largely under the control of the South African government (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989). Being part of the Transkei territory, Mkambati then fell directly under the authority of the Transkei government but, perhaps because of South African government control, as was the case in other 'Homelands', restitution of land rights for the community of Mkambati did not arise, despite the continuing contestation of the expropriation of their land (Benson, 1985; Lodge, 2002; de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

Progressing further with their homelands policy, in 1976 the South African Government granted Transkei "independence" (Davenport, 1989). It is normally the case in Africa (Adedeji, 1999), that independence does not herald a change in government's attitude

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<sup>19</sup> A system where Africans were afforded the opportunity to rule themselves in their own areas within the South African territory.

to the land owned by local people. Continued government disregard of the rights of the community of Mkambati to their land was demonstrated in 1979 when the Transkei Government allocated such rights to private entrepreneurs who had established a company, Mkambati Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd. with the intention of establishing a hunting ranch for entertaining investors with interests in the Transkei. This reallocation of land rights did not have the support of the community of Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). In return, argues Feely (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*), the Transkei government was allocated 51% shares in the Mkambati Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd. which was a further illustration of a reciprocal business relationship between the government and the private sector (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*). This partnership between the government and the private sector was not only perceived with skepticism by the community of Mkambati, but also angered this community whose land and its resources were being used by outsiders (Kepe *et al.*, 2001).

In yet another continued disregard of the rights of the community of Mkambati to their land, in 1983 the Transkei government allocated 11 000 hectares of land on the north-west border of Mkambati Nature Reserve to the Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR), a parastatal organization tasked with developing agriculture at Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006; Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*). TRACOR, which later proved a failure, initiated a number of projects such as sugarcane plantation (discontinued in 1998), breeding of Nguni cattle, and *Eucalyptus* plantations (expanded to 400 hectares in 1986). Allocation of land to TRACOR alienated this government agency from the community who continued to 'illegally' graze livestock on the land (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*).

Relations between TRACOR and neighbouring villages such as Khanyayo and Thahle were immediately strained due to the impoundment of cattle from these two villages by TRACOR for 'unlawfully' grazing on TRACOR land. These tensions led in 1990 to an agreement whereby 3 500 hectares of land were allocated for grazing to the villages of Khanyayo and Thahle. Failure by TRACOR projects to yield the intended positive spin-offs led to the disbandment of this project in 2004, and eventually the land was ceded

back to the community of Mkambati on 17 October 2004, although it is still leased to a business entity for maintenance of the plantation (Tyani, 4 April 2006, interview). While the disbandment of this organization was heralded as a victory by the community of Mkambati the status quo remained with the Transkeian government not returning the Mkambati Nature Reserve land to the community of Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

Towards the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa, both in urban and rural areas, was mired in protests and violence (Hart, 2002). The community of Mkambati was during this time engaged in regular meetings on broad-based issues ranging from the return of the Mkambati Nature Reserve, and general political independence, as was the case in the rest of the country. Political organization of the community of Mkambati was orchestrated under the guidance of the African National Congress (ANC). Although the community of Mkambati engaged – like communities in many other parts of the country – in political protests aimed at realizing the democratic aspirations of the people of South Africa, it nonetheless prioritized the restoration of the Mkambati Nature Reserve to the legitimate owners: the community of Mkambati. To this end they established a Land Rights Committee (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*).

In 1992 the community of Mkambati petitioned the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve<sup>20</sup>. The main demand in the petition, argues Qalaba (20 June 2007, interview), was a meeting between the community of Mkambati and the senior management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. The reluctance by the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve to accede to this demand resulted in a nine-day occupation of the Mkambati Nature Reserve offices and the hostage taking of officials (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, interview). It is during this occupation that the community consolidated their strategies to further confront government regarding their dispossessed land. As Qalaba vividly recounts, the community of Mkambati rendered support to the members of the community staging a sit-in in the Mkambati Nature Reserve – through taking turns in

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<sup>20</sup> This petition culminated in a sit-in in Mkambati Nature Reserve. Mr Qalaba was one of the community members who led this campaign. He was subsequently elected to the Joint Management Committee consisting of members from the community of Mkambati and the former Transkei government.

supplying food and clothes. It was during this occupation that some members of the community were sent to Durban to contact the *Natal Mercury* – a regional newspaper – so that this occupation could be known countrywide; the then Radio Transkei, which was owned by the Transkei government, deliberately did not broadcast events in Mkambati (Sikhonza, 21 June 2007, interview).

While the occupation of Mkambati Nature Reserve was carried out through peaceful means it, however, strengthened intra-community relationships. Vimba (20 June 2007, interview) adds that despite being part of initial meetings culminating in the occupation of Mkambati Nature Reserve, *Amakhosi* nonetheless continued with their Tribal Court meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays because of fear of reprisals from the Transkei government which paid their salaries. During this period some members of the community of Mkambati were excluded from these meetings, and this resulted in further deteriorating of relations between *Amakhosi* and community members. For instance, in an interview with Maragana (4 April 2006, interview), she recalls that continued meetings that took place were among certain groups in the community, and most people, particularly in her village – Ngquza – were not part of these meetings as *Amakhosi* in their area did not inform them.

As indicated earlier, it is common practice for governments to use patronage networks to maintain hegemony over their subjects. In retaining their long-held relationship with *Amakhosi*, the community of Mkambati demanded that *Amakhosi* join them in the sit-in campaign. *Amakhosi* acceded to this demand and joined members of the community in the Mkambati Nature Reserve (Hanxa, 20 June 2007, interview). Demonstrating the cohesive relationships prevalent within the community of Mkambati, other critical institutions participated in this sit-in campaign. Qalaba recalls that Reverend Faku, a church leader from the Methodist Church, was one of the members of the community who spent nine days in the Mkambati Nature Reserve. One of the leaders of this occupation was Zoleka Langa – a nurse from the Holy Cross Hospital; she, as Qalaba relates, was very vocal during this sit-in campaign resulting in her being elected the spokesperson for the community of Mkambati.

An agreement between the community of Mkambati and the Transkei government, where the latter pledged to work closely with the former to ensure that Mkambati be returned to its rightful owners, ended the stalemate and the sit-in was called off (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, interview). Again, cohesion was demonstrated by the community of Mkambati through their relentless efforts: holding meetings and liaising with other communities countrywide, to regain their land (de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

Whilst primary groups and networks provide opportunities to those who belong to the same group, they may also re-inforce social stratification, prevent mobility of excluded groups, and promote corruption and co-option of power by the dominant group (Narayan, 2002). Commenting on social capital, Streeten (2002) notes that patronage networks can be used particularly by government to strengthen the social class of people or organizations that are favoured by government. These networks, add Isham *et al.*, (2002), tend to exclude other actors who, according to patrons, are not intended to benefit from shared resources. Despite the empowerment bestowed on the Mkambati Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd by the Transkei government, the enterprise failed (Kwekwana, 4 April 2006, interview). Financial mismanagement, and lack of support from the community of Mkambati, argues Feely, are some of the reasons for the failure of Mkambati Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd (Feely, 27 May 2007 *pers. comm.*; de Villiers and Costello, 2006). In agreement with Feely, Madotyeni (4 April 2006, interview) notes with dismay the lack of financial benefit by the local community from tourism at Mkambati Nature Reserve. She goes further stating that “*Siluluntu lwase Mkambati sasifuna umhlaba wethu, yaye sasingaxhamli kwimali eyayingena eMkambati*”, [the community of Mkambati was desperate for the return of their land, and they were mostly concerned by benefiting from tourism proceeds from Mkambati Nature Reserve]. Secondly, the community of Mkambati consistently opposed their exclusion from decision-making processes guiding access to and use of Mkambati Nature Reserve. They demonstrated their anger through ongoing harvesting of natural resources and grazing their cattle in areas designated as the nature reserve (de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

Elsewhere in Africa the demise of similar projects is also attributed to the exclusion of local communities from resources to which they claim rights. For example, in the province of Nampula, Mozambique, the exclusion of local communities from agriculture projects was met with resistance from local communities resulting in the complete failure of these projects (Bowen, 1994). Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) points out that the community of Mkambati are closer to traditional livelihoods patterns than most communities in the Eastern Cape, and these patterns are founded on and revolve around land ownership. It is therefore not surprising that both government and the private sector did not command respect from the community of Mkambati. This point is emphasized by Madotyeni (4 April 2006, interview), who explicitly points out that, although the community of Mkambati was not against the practice of tourism at Mkambati. She indicates that “*Oyena ndoqo kukuba sasifuna umhlaba wethu*” [our primary concern was the return of our land] (Madotyeni, 4 April 2006, interview).

The demand for the return of the Mkambati land, as Mazandile points out, seems to be equally shared by all respondents in this study. The community of Mkambati had never forgotten the history around the occupation of their land; as a result they did not trust the Transkei government because it was a puppet of the apartheid rulers. As demonstrated by de Villiers and Costello (2006), illegal activities such as poaching markedly increased transaction costs and continued to threaten the viability of the Mkambati Nature Reserve and the Mkambati Nature Reserve enterprise. The failure by Mkambati Nature Reserve (Pty) Ltd to successfully manage the Mkambati Nature Reserve led to the Transkei Department of Finance taking full control of the company and the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Again, information on the management of Mkambati land was exchanged between government and the private sector without the involvement of the community of Mkambati. This practice further eroded trust between the community of Mkambati and the government (de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

The Transkei government envisaged that the commercial enterprise would bring three primary benefits: effective management, conservation of the resources, and benefits for

local people (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). However, Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) argues that the take-over of the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve by the Department of Finance in 1984 was a puzzling move because this department had no expertise in managing biodiversity. In reference to the Magwa Tea Venture, also in the Pondoland area, Kepe (2005) is adamant that take-over by government was a political move aimed at strengthening government's control of this venture even though it had no expertise to manage it. This emphasis of the political domination by government tends to undermine the economic success that seeks to benefit local communities.

In his observation of the relationship between the Transkei government and the community of Mkambati, Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) postulates that the community was not consulted on changes pertaining to the management of their land. Failure by the government to share information – on pertinent issues involving the Mkambati land – did not contribute to relationship building between the local community and the Transkei government. The forced removal of the community by the Cape Colony government, coupled with the lack of recognition by the Transkei government of the community of Mkambati on their role pertaining to critical issues affecting their land increased tension between the community of Mkambati and government structures (Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*). Commenting on the relationship between the Transkei government and the community of Mkambati, Khala, (4 April 2006, interview) a resident in Holy Cross, sums it thus:

*Hayi kaloku ngexesha loo Matanzima zazibotshwa noma zingafuni. Sasinyanzelwa ukuba sivume nangona sasingafuni.*

During Matanzima's rule we were forced to agree on issues that we were not happy with.

Khala demonstrates his anger and resentment towards the former Transkei government under Kaizer Matanzima. He indicates that the community of Mkambati, and indeed many other communities in the then Transkei were coerced into supporting policies that were inimical to their wishes. This tension, as I will indicate later, still persists in the area.

Collaboration between the Transkei government and the private sector was founded on political and economic aspirations. Rural development, argues Bourdieu (1991), takes place in a social field where other forms of capital (social and cultural) have to be taken into account when institutions attempt to consolidate their economic interests. Bourdieu's assertion has been demonstrated in other instances globally. For example, in Indonesia attempts by the government under President Suharto to exclude local people from economic and political decision-making processes led to the depreciation of the currency and the fall of the economy due to lack of support from the excluded civil society, forcing the government to include the previously excluded social groups (Sanit, 1998; Lindayati, 2002). Similarly, excluding the community of Mkambati from decision-making processes pertaining to their land inadvertently empowered this community to be steadfast in challenging any initiatives which they perceived as attempts to further alienate them from their land. Corroborating that there is a risk to excluding local communities from decision-making processes on their land Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) explicitly states that:

People in Mkambati are closer to traditional way of life than other people in Transkei: As far as anything is to do with land they are as conservative as ever.

Excluding the community of Mkambati from decision-making processes regarding their land had unforeseen consequences. This exclusion inadvertently weakened the anticipated cohesion between the Transkei Government and Mkambati Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd, as they both failed to manage the confrontational relationship they had created by excluding the community of Mkambati from playing a role in the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve.

Whilst the Transkei government played a positive role in imparting business skills: such as owning and managing shops, however, it failed to win the support of the community of Mkambati on the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve. Qalaba (20 June 2007, interview) sums up the exclusion of the community of Mkambati from the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve thus:

*Urhulumente akazange athethe nathi, yaye sasingenawumphikisa kuba wayekuvalela ukuba uthethe into agayithandi.*



It was difficult to oppose the Transkei government as any attempt to do so was met with arrest and persecution.

Despite being dissatisfied with their exclusion from the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve by the Transkei government, the community of Mkambati could not openly oppose this decision because the Transkei government was renowned for repression and arresting all those who opposed its actions (Qalaba (20 June 2007, interview). Together with the late *Inkosi* Sgwebo, argues Silangwe (20 June 2007, interview), the community of Mkambati continued to hold *izimbizo* (community meetings) to discuss various issues confronting them as the community. This is confirmed by Hunter (1961) who indicates that the amaMpondo tribe believes in sharing information with their *Amakhosi* on various issues taking place around them.

Information sharing and trust were critical in empowering the community of Mkambati in decision-making processes which strengthened their social capital. Ultimately, the exclusionary approach adopted by government and the Mkambati Nature Reserve neither built social capital between the Transkei government and the Mkambati Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd., nor did it build social capital between the Transkei government and the community of Mkambati. A major consequence of this was the strengthening of dialogue and cohesion in the community of Mkambati as a mechanism to bond intra-community relationships with the sole purpose of destabilizing efforts aimed at managing Mkambati Nature Reserve without their consent.

As history reveals, destabilizing the management of the use and access to resources is not an isolated incident confined only to Mkambati. Similar incidences have been cited globally: for instance, a unilateral decision to lease land by the wife of the Thailand Member of Parliament from the Royal Forestry Department in 1980 led to prolonged protests and destabilizations by local communities. These protests informed by information exchange and reciprocity strengthened the communities' social capital; it was not a surprise that the lease contract was withdrawn nine years later (Brenner *et al.*, 1998; Sukin, 1997). History indicates that collective action founded on social capital is a critical element that bonds various ethnic groups in Burkina Faso (Fiske, 1991).

Narayan (2002: 59) contends that central features of social capital are relationships promoting:

the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of society that enable people to coordinate action and to achieve desired goals.

The exclusion of the community of Mkambati in decision-making processes on the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve promoted conflict rather than cohesion between the Transkei government and the community of Mkambati (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). As stated earlier, the community of Mkambati continued protesting against the occupation of their land. Embarking on a sit-in was indicative of the extent to which this community was prepared to sacrifice for the return of their land. For instance, in an interview with Spelman (20 July 2007, interview), an eighty year old community member, he indicates that protesting the denial by the Transkei government to use their land culminated in the sit-in at the Mkambati Nature reserve:

*Nangona lwalukho uloyiko kuba abanye bethu babeyiqabuka le nto yoqhanqalazo thina maMpondo siyayimela inyaniso. Kungoko salisabela ikhwelo.*

Although we were scared that the Transkei government would retaliate against us we stood by our decision to embark on a sit-in action precisely because we were fighting for the restoration of justice.

Commenting on this sit-in action, (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, interview) indicates that democratic changes were taking place all over South Africa, and the Transkei government failed to stop the community of Mkambati from occupying Mkambati Nature Reserve. Hence, the Transkei government could not respond with violence to the sit-in. This action by the community of Mkambati was based on long-held norms and values based on trust, information exchange, and cohesion which strengthened their bonding social capital. These properties of social capital were continuously demonstrated during *izimbizo*, and were pertinent in strengthening their cooperation against actions perceived to be alienating the community from their land.

Normatively, the community of Mkambati modelled their destiny through norms and values founded on information exchange networks. The community of Mkambati, together with *Amakhosi*, relies on *izimbizo* when discussing issues pertaining to

decision-making processes (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, interview). Qalaba notes that the community of Mkambati is against “*ukugqityelwa*”, [being compelled to abide by decisions reached by government on their behalf without them participating in the process]. This is corroborated by Stapleton (2001) who confirms that decision-making within the amaMpondo tribe is a process involving community members and *Amakhosi*. The reliance of the community of Mkambati on norms based on information exchange and solidarity proves critical in creating and enhancing bonding social capital which has guided them in their resolve to reclaim and gain access to Mkambati Nature Reserve.

What has been observed at Mkambati has also occurred elsewhere. In the former Ciskei, state Whisson and Manona (1980), communities in villages such as Gobošana and Nyaniso were excluded from making a contribution to decisions regarding the use of their land. This exclusion served only to consolidate norms and values that strengthened their united stance against what they perceived as external domination. Elsewhere in Africa, Uganda provides compelling evidence of the adverse consequences of disregarding the strength of social capital possessed by local communities. Commenting on these consequences, Gibson *et al.* (2000) contended that depriving local communities of their tenurial rights offers little incentive for these communities to constrain their consumption of forest resources. On the contrary, if anything, excluding local communities provides them with the opportunity to intensify their resistance through using long-held norms and practices founded on upholding land ownership (Gibson *et al.*, 2000; de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

#### **4.3.3 The democratic dispensation**

The advent of democracy in South Africa was hailed as a victory not only for this country but for the entire continent (Beinart, 2001). In 1994 South Africa was the last country to be freed from colonialism and apartheid; it is not surprising that the attainment of democracy was applauded throughout the continent (Beinart, 2001). This milestone was perceived by those who were dispossessed, including rural communities, as an opportunity to regain their land (Ntsebeza, 1999). Since 1994 there has been a dramatic change in political power in South Africa which included, among other developments, the formation of a new, and largely African political class (Beinart, 2001).

This change has resulted in communities and other social and political organizations identifying themselves with a successful political struggle, rectification of past injustices such as exclusionary practices, and indeed an opportunity to consolidate a shared purpose on power-sharing (Beinart, 2001; Calland, 2006). The first years of democracy in South Africa displayed a political culture of meetings and discussions and of consulting stakeholders (Beinart, 2001). These discussions, as Calland (2006) points out, were, to a greater extent, influenced by the ANC's ingrained tradition of debate.

Taking the opportunity of free debate, community organizations engaged government institutions on issues that they perceived needed urgent attention (Beinart, 2001). However, being involved in free debate had its problems, because communities found it difficult to negotiate in representative democracy partly because they were accustomed to a mass mobilization approach which was a predominant method during the struggle against apartheid (Beinart, 2001; Calland, 2006). Nonetheless, as Beinart (2001) illustrates, some communities were able to focus on their long-held projects, and acted as pressure groups to attain their goals such as land restitution and access to economic benefits.

One of the immediate objectives of the ANC government was to realize its policy of land redistribution – informed by pressure from communities and other stakeholders – to reverse one of the central features of apartheid: skewed land ownership (Beinart, 2001; Ballard *et al.*, 2006). In addressing this urgent issue through Parliament, the Land Affairs Minister, Derek Hanekom, with the support of non- governmental organizations (NGOs) such as National Land Committee and Legal Resource Centre, promulgated a Restitution of Land Rights Act in 1994 (Beinart, 2001). Contrary to communities' expectations, argues Beinart (2001), about the democratic government, restoration of their land proved to be both a prolonged and tedious process. As both Beinart (2001) and Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) point out, a plethora of issues, such as the establishment of community trusts to manage land; prolonged negotiations with communities; planning of new settlements; and unwillingness by white farmers and

other land holding organizations to part with land, frustrated government's efforts to speed the land restitution process.

Even those communities who were the first to be given back their land found themselves faced with a number of challenges. These intractable challenges centre on how the land should be used, and who has to determine how resources are accessed and used (Walker, 2008). Also, as Walker (2008) expands on her discontentment on the manner in which the land restitution process has been handled by government, there are overlapping and competing rights and claims such as those of tenants and landowners. The community of Mkambati was not immune from this confusion around the land restitution process. This confusion is clearly pointed out by Kepe *et al.* (2001). According to Kepe *et al.* (2001) emerging power relations involving *Amakhosi*, local Councilors, and civic organizations at local level impact negatively on the access and use of resources by the community of Mkambati. Secondly, despite the finalization of the land restitution in Mkambati, this land is still nominally owned by the state, with the Minister of Land Affairs holding it on behalf of the community of Mkambati (Kepe *et al.*, 2001).

It is not surprising that the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB) through one of their managers pledged cooperation between the community of Mkambati and the ECPB. This willingness to work closely with the community of Mkambati is confirmed in the minutes of Mkambati Land Trust where Mzazi<sup>21</sup> indicates that:

*Siza ngo Clause 6 we Settlement Agreement ethi kuzaku fomisha I Co-management Committee edibanisa amalungu e Trust namalungu e Parks Board*<sup>22</sup>.

We will be guided by Clause 6 of the Settlement Agreement which stipulates that a Co-management Committee entailing members of the Mkambati Land Trust and members of the Eastern Cape Parks Board should be established.

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<sup>21</sup> Mzazi is the Manager of the Eastern Cape Parks Board tasked with co-ordinating with communities alongside Nature Reserves in the Eastern Cape.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust held on 18 January 2005.

In an interview with Mzazi on 20 May 2008, he emphasized that as the management of the Eastern Cape Parks Board, they are always willing to work closely with the community of Mkambati, through the CMC, so as to facilitate development. He also acknowledged that the community of Mkambati is yet to benefit from Mkambati Nature Reserve. He, however, confirmed that lack of trust between various government institutions and the community of Mkambati remains a challenge that is yet to be resolved. This lack of trust is caused by a number of factors. One of these factors is that expected benefits out of land restitution in Mkambati, and indeed many other areas in South Africa is at a low pace. This concern is also acknowledged by the ANC partners in the tripartite alliance.<sup>23</sup>

In a joint statement made during the Land Tribunal proceedings in December 2003 the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC); the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) registered their collective concern about the slow pace of land reform in South Africa (Ntsebeza, 2007). This slow progress on land reform has resulted in a diminished trust between the community of Mkambati and various government departments. It is common practice, according to Feely (27 May 2007, *pers. comm.*) – based on previous confrontational encounters between government and the amaMpondo – for the amaMpondo not to trust government. This confrontation, as Villiers and Costello (2006) indicate, emanates from the fact that conservationists have historically regarded the Pondoland people as having environmentally destructive livelihoods.

#### **4.3.4 Conclusion**

The land issue at Mkambati is marred by decades of protracted struggle where the community of Mkambati has consistently advanced its desire that their land be returned to them. Indeed, events such as the Ngquza massacre threatened to ruin the resolve of the community of Mkambati in their quest to make their own decision on how to administer their land. However, the community of Mkambati demonstrated resilience in

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<sup>23</sup> Tripartite alliance is an alliance between the ANC – which is the ruling party in South Africa, COSATU, and the SACP.

ensuring that their struggle for their land remains unabated. As this chapter demonstrates, a number of eras, ranging from the apartheid government, the Transkei government, and the current democratic government have prevailed over the community of Mkambati. As interviews in this study confirm, despite the return of their land, the community of Mkambati is still facing a mammoth challenge of ensuring that it benefits from their land resources.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Crisis, Change, and continuity: Land dynamics in South Africa**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

It has been 19 years since a democratic government was installed in South Africa. Like many new democracies in the world the democratic state in South Africa raised hopes to its myriad citizens that, at last, inequality and segregation would come to an end. It is indeed correct to claim that, until this far many political and social changes have taken place in South Africa to the benefit of the previously disadvantaged communities. However, the same cannot be claimed when it comes to the land question. This chapter sets the scene on the land-related challenges that are yet to be accomplished in South Africa. For instance, the return of land to the community of Mkambati was hailed by this community together with government as one of the landmark historic events in the Pondoland region. However, as evidence in this study indicates, the community of Mkambati is yet to benefit from this land reform programme. Therefore, this chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the legal terms set by government on how this returned land should be utilized by the community of Mkambati. This chapter also demonstrates that despite the return of this land to the community of Mkambati the expected benefits are yet to accrue. Indeed, as researchers on land restitution programme indicate, co-management of land between government and local communities has deprived these communities from taking full control and responsibility on how they have to positively use their returned land.

#### **5.2 Intricacies of the land question in South Africa**

The year 2013 marks the centenary of the notorious Land Act of 1913. It is on this day in 19 June 1913 that indigenous communities in South Africa were denied the right to own land. The enactment of the Land Act resulted initially in 7% of land being left for the black people. While the amendment of this Act in 1933 increased the land allocated to black people to 13%, this move was still not welcomed by the black population of South Africa (Mbeki, 1964). Dispossessed of their land, and deprived of their valued resources



such as livestock, black people were forced to seek jobs in mines and domestic work so as to sustain their livelihoods (Mbeki, 1964). This unfortunate scenario presented mine recruiters with an opportunity to strengthen their recruitment campaign for cheap labour in mines. Indeed, this massive recruitment campaign paid dividends as black people were left with no option but to migrate to the cities where they were compelled to engage in cheap labour (Mafeje 1988).

Denying blacks land rights could be interpreted as one of the cornerstone of the struggle for the liberation of South Africa which followed in subsequent years. It is therefore not surprising that after the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 the land issue became one of the issues that the African National Congress-led government had to deal swiftly. Unfortunately, concerted efforts by government to redress the past land dispossession are proving insufficient to meet the needs of the communities that lost their land. This is despite government's belief that it has put in place the correct legal and institutional principles to deal with the land question.

The enactment of the Land Reform Act, Act 3 of 1996 was hailed as one of landmark decisions to have been taken by the democratic government. With its three pillars – the land redistribution; land tenure; and land restitution, land reform programme brought hope to myriad South Africans that eventually their land will be restored to them. Some of the critical elements that impacted on the land question in South Africa will be reviewed in this section. Overwhelming interest on the land question in southern Africa, and indeed globally is being reflected in a number of studies that have been conducted on this subject. Contrary to the view that the land question is an agrarian issue, Moyo (2007) argues that the land is the basic resource of livelihoods in agriculture, tourism, mining and industry. It is in this sense that the land question remains a social question around which people's livelihoods revolve (Moyo, 2007). For instance, countries like South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique have undergone large-scale land dispossession which has posed complexities when this land had to be ceded back to the rightful owners (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007). These complexities, argue Ntsebeza and Hall (2007) have led to the involvement of these countries in negotiated political

solutions that has not only stalled the land reform programme but has, to a greater extent, failed to deal with racially unequal control of land.

Indeed in South Africa constitutional guarantees on the protection of existing property rights rendered the land reform programme ineffective. This has resulted in a wide-ranging disagreement between those in possession of land and those that are in need of land (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007). This disagreement emanates from the fact that the enactment of the 1913 Land Act and subsequent state-sponsored state removals did not only deprive the majority of South African citizens of their precious resource, it also incapacitated these citizens from accumulation wealth through raising their livestock (Mafeje, 1988). Several studies conducted on land dispossession in South Africa agree that both in urban and rural areas, land dispossession remains one of the political tools that were used by the apartheid government to disempower indigenous communities in South Africa (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007; Walker, *et al.*, 2010). Land dispossession confined indigenous people of South Africa to reserves where they were subjected to conditions that were unfavourable to live under and unsuitable for agriculture. Faced with this conundrum, indigenous communities had no alternative but to migrate to cities in search for job opportunities, and also moved to White-owned farms to offer themselves as cheap labourers (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007). Several studies suggest that before the implementation of the notorious Land Act of 1913, Africans were engaged in productive farming activities which rendered them dynamic agricultural producers (Bundy, 1988). However, these activities were immediately curtailed when the process of land dispossession got underway.

### **5.3 The conundrum of the land reform programme in South Africa**

While the attainment of democracy in South Africa in 1994 is globally hailed as a watershed moment in the socio-political dynamics in this country, the failure of the ANC-led government to emphatically address the land question threatens to undermine this political milestone. Under the ANC-led Government of National Unity, land reform became one of the issues that was critical to the general political reform programme in South Africa. It is during this period that the expectations of communities that were

previously deprived of their land were raised. Indeed, these communities felt that the ANC government would ultimately restore their dignity through ceding back their land (CLC, 1994). However, as myriad studies demonstrate, the land question in South Africa remains an intractable problem that poses a threat to this new democracy. For instance, while claims by those communities dispossessed of their land rely on their traditional customs and tradition that were previously practised, government dictates that communities should undertake modern activities on their newly acquired land (van Fay and James, 2010). It has become common that, as Conway and Xipu (2010) indicate, during the post transfer period of land restitution, communities have had to deal with the unenviable task of challenging the state's intervention and imposition of land use programmes that communities have not been part of their conceptualization.

While the South African government has embarked on a large-scale land reform programme, the damage that was inflicted by land dispossession on the social fabric in South Africa is not easy to redress. It is also commendable that the ANC-led government in South Africa has put in place constitutional principles that have enabled the implementation of various programmes such as the land reform programme. However, failure to satisfy people who were deprived of their land has posed a threat to this much-vaunted democracy. Even in cases, such as Mkambati, where land has been given back to the rightful owners, people still feel that they have not been granted wholesome land use rights. As this study will indicate, government is still dictating on how the returned land should be utilized. These interventions by government are perceived as further constraints to communities' right to take overall control of their land. As will demonstrated in this study, this scenario is unfolding at Mkambati where despite the return of their land, the community of Mkambati is yet to experience the gains from the land restitution programme.

## **5.4 Dynamics and Dichotomies of Land Restitution in Mkambati**

As the supreme law of the land, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides the framework for addressing the disparities of the past. The Constitution therefore provides the framework through which land disparities of the past

are addressed. In this case the Restitution of Land Rights Act No 22 of 1994 provides a framework and foundation on which land restitution rights of communities are addressed. The Mkambati land was returned to the community of Mkambati in terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act No 22 of 1994. This Act was promulgated to provide for restitution of land rights to persons or communities dispossessed of rights in land, after 19 June 1913, as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices. The Mkambati Land Trust had lodged the claim in 2002 (Registration Number 26/9/5-42/2002). The Mkambati Settlement Agreement, as facilitated by the Land Claims Commission, was reached on 17 October 2004. This agreement was entered into by the following parties:

- Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs;
- Member of the Executive Council for Economic Affairs. Environment and Tourism, Eastern Cape;
- Member of the Executive Council for the Agriculture and Land Affairs, Eastern Cape;
- Executive Mayor for the O.R. Tambo District Municipality; and
- The Mkambati Land Trust (Land Claims Commission, 17 October 2004)

The signing of this agreement was the result of a land restitution claim that was lodged by the Mkambati community in accordance with the Restitution of Land Rights Act, Act No 22 of 1994. In terms of the agreement the Minister was satisfied that the community of Mkambati, represented by the Mkambati Land Trust, was entitled to restitution of land rights, and the claim had been properly lodged before the December 1998 cut-off date, in accordance with the Restitution of Land Rights Act. The Mkambati Settlement Agreement entailed a number of conditions by which the community of Mkambati should abide when using the restituted land. These conditions entailed the following:

- That the Reserve shall be utilized solely as a Provincial Protected Area and the other land shall be used for agriculture, eco-tourism, or for any other developmental purpose which shall seek to enhance the value of the land;
- That no part of land including the reserve may be used for residential purposes as indicated by an environmental impact assessment, and as approved by a

competent authority. The Reserve area shall be proclaimed in perpetuity as a Provincial Protected Area in accordance with the existing provincial legislations; and

- The Trust may not alienate any portion of the land including the Reserve, other than to the State or to a competent authority that is authorized by the State (Mkambati Settlement Agreement: Land Claims Commission, 17 October 2004).

These conditions were deemed to be protecting the community of Mkambati from any external interest or interference that might deprive this community of the potential benefits accompanying the restituted land. However these conditions, as will become evident in this study, have deprived the community of Mkambati from making decisions about their returned land. Also, these government-set conditions have contributed to acrimonious relationships stemming from lack of benefits from the restituted land.

The return of land to the community of Mkambati was met with joy and hope that finally poverty and deprivation that has reigned in that part of Pondoland would come to an end. Indeed, it is true that one of the cornerstones of the apartheid regime in terms of consolidating its hegemony over the majority of South African citizens was depriving people of the most precious resource – land. For instance, a number of studies on land reform in South Africa point to the fact that depriving people of their land rights; and the subsequent slow pace; a gradualist approach; and a lack of wide range agrarian land reform in South Africa have had a phenomenal and compromising impact on the livelihoods and land resource benefits of the majority of South Africans (Cousins, 2007; Moyo, 2007; and Ntsebeza, 2007). Unbeknown to the community of Mkambati, concerted efforts by various actors and interest groups has resulted in competing and sometimes acrimonious relationships that have destabilized this community (Kepe *et al.*, 2001).

Contest over who has authority over access to and use of land resources between *Amakhosi* and local government Councillors has brought about confusion and frustration on the community of Mkambati. For instance, among the seven villages (see

figure 4.1) that constitute the community of Mkambati, the people of Khanyayo have been bent on ensuring that natural resources that exist in Mkambati, particularly in the Mkambati Nature Reserve are primarily used to sustain their livelihoods (Kepe *et al.*, 2001). This view is shared by Khuzwayo (20 May 2007, interview), a member of the Mkambati Land Trust.

In one of the Mkambati Land Trust meetings, Khuzwayo (20 May 2007, interview) indicated that the people of Khanyayo have nothing else to rely on to sustain their livelihoods except accessing resources that exist at Mkambati Nature Reserve – which is their land. In his seminal work, Berkes (1997) highlights the importance of trust as one of the cornerstones of a successful co-management arrangement between local communities and nature reserves. It is also important to note that in an interview with Khuzwayo (20 May 2007, interview), he exclusively spoke on behalf of the people of Khanyayo instead of including the plight of other villages that, together with Khanyayo, constitute the Mkambati Land Trust. This is a testimony to the argument that the people of Khanyayo village are suspicious of the motives of other villages in the Mkambati Land Trust (Kepe, 2010).

Both government and the community of Mkambati do not seem to have a solution to the challenges they are facing with regard to how to make use of abundant resources in Mkambati. This is despite the fact that Mkambati is located in the Wild Coast<sup>24</sup>. The Wild Coast is one of the potential tourist and development areas in South Africa. With its attractive scenery, nature reserve, and favourable climatic conditions, the Wild Coast of which Mkambati is a significant part, stands to be one of the economic hubs in South Africa. Taking advantage of the potential the Wild Coast had, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) facilitated the implementation of Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) in this area. The main objective of the DTI was to facilitate investment in this area as the area has a potential for economic development (Kepe *et al.*, 2001). Together with the Department Of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), SDI seeks to attract investment

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<sup>24</sup> Wild Coast is a collective name given to the coastal area that borders the eastern part of the Eastern Cape

opportunities, create employment, and generate wealth for the people of this area (Kepe *et al.*, 2001). In addition to generating wealth for the people of Wild Coast, the South African National Parks (SANParks), through its national Social Ecology Unit, has established projects that aim at conserving and sustaining the natural resource base of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. However, this project and its financial spinoffs are deemed insufficient by the community of Mkambati, as it falls short of addressing poverty and underdevelopment being faced by them.

Similarly, the community of Mkambati, like many other rural communities in the country, expected a speedy return of their land and access to and use of resources (Qalaba, 20 July 2007, interview; Feely, 27 May 2007, *pers.comm.*). In a meeting between the Mkambati Land Trust and Mr Gilson – the Director of a company called Triponza<sup>25</sup> - members of the Mkambati Land Trust protested that Mr Gilson has reneged on the agreement with the Mkambati Land Trust. To demonstrate their frustration the members of the Mkambati Land Trust posed the following questions to Mr Gilson; and Mr Gilson failed to provide answers to these questions:

- i) *Xa sikufuna asikufuman?*<sup>26</sup>  
Whenever we need you we struggle to get hold of you.
- ii) *Ziphi iincwadi owathenga ngazo amahlathi?*  
Where are documents confirming that you leased the forest?
- iii) *Usazimisele ukusebenzisana ne Trust?*  
Are you still prepared to continue business with the Mkambati Land Trust?
- iv) *Iphi imali yerenti?*  
Where is the money for the rent?

These anger-loaded questions are an indication that contrary to the expectations the residents of Mkambati had when their land was returned to them, lack of benefits from this land had become a concern for this community. In an expression of the frustration

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<sup>25</sup> When TRACOR was liquidated Gilson as part of Triponza secured rights to harvest the forest with an agreement to pay R1 250.00 a month for a minimum of 8 years. When the Mkambati land was restituted back to the community of Mkambati in 2002, the Mkambati Land Trust – representing the

<sup>26</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust, 10 February 2005.

within the community of Mkambati regarding access and use of resources in Mkambati, Madotyeni (4 April 2006, interview) sums up her frustration thus:

*Inoba sasingadalelwanga ukuba sixhamle thina siluluntu lwalapha. Xa kunje nezizukulwana zethu ziyakuhlupheka njengathi.*

It seems that we were not meant to benefit. If the conditions prevail like this it means that even our grandchildren will also suffer.

The frustration expressed by Madotyeni is an indication of how the community of Mkambati feels about not benefiting from their land. Most respondents in this study seem to be in agreement with the argument espoused by Madotyeni that not even the future generation of Mkambati will benefit from resources in their land. For instance, in a meeting held by the Mkambati Land Trust, members clearly demonstrated their anger towards the Land Commission and the Eastern Cape Parks Board. The main concern in this meeting is that since the Mkambati land was ceded to the community of Mkambati there are no benefits that have accrued to this community. Instead, poverty levels are escalating:

*Le Komishoni yomhlaba ilunceda ngantoni uluntu lwase mkambati?<sup>27</sup>  
Sifuna i renti yase Mkambati ukusukela ngo 17 November 2004 – 2006.  
Umhlaba ngokabani?  
Singamthemba njani u Parks Board?*

How does the Land Commission help the community of Mkambati?

We demand the rent for the use of Mkambati land from 17 November 2004 – 2006.

Who owns the land?

Parks Board should pay the money and interest it owes the Mkambati Land Trust from 2004 – 2006.

How do you expect us to trust the Parks Board?

Intra-community relationships have been central in fostering collaboration within the community of Mkambati. These relationships are evidenced through the election of two members from each village to constitute the Mkambati Land Trust (Table 6.1).The

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<sup>27</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust meeting, 9 March 2006.



incumbent Trustees were elected as the leaders of the Mkambati Land Trust in 2002, replacing the Land Rights Committee. Also, the Mkambati Land Trust includes two members who are original claimants of the Mkambati land. These members are part of the Khanyayo village which is the closest village to the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Because of their close proximity to the Mkambati Nature Reserve, people from Khanyayo village were forced to leave their land to create enough space for the establishment of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. As land owners, *Amakhosi* are represented in the Mkambati Land Trust as ex-officio members. The Mkambati Land Trust was formed to manage Mkambati land:

The formation of Mkambati Land Trust was influenced by the fact that the original claimants, because of their small number, could not manage Mkambati land alone (Tyani, 4 April 2006, interview).

A significant element in interactions within the Mkambati Land Trust is the exchange of information for the benefit of all members through their respective leaders. A critical objective of the Mkambati Land Trust is to initiate development activity in Mkambati.

**Table 5.1** Trustees of the Mkambati Land Trust

| <b>Trustees</b>      | <b>Portfolio</b>          | <b>Village</b>     |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Mr Vimba</i>      | <i>Chairperson</i>        | Ngquza village     |
| <i>Mr Qalaba</i>     | <i>Deputy Chairperson</i> | kwaCele village    |
| <i>Mr Mbane</i>      | <i>Secretary</i>          | Mtshayelo village  |
| <i>Mrs Ngcobo</i>    | <i>Deputy Secretary</i>   | kwaCele village    |
| <i>Miss Ngcayiya</i> | <i>Trustee</i>            | Marhamzeni village |
| <i>Mr Khuzwayo</i>   | <i>Trustee</i>            | Khanyayo Village   |
| <i>Mr Sikhonza</i>   | <i>Trustee</i>            | Khanyayo Village   |
| <i>Mr Tyani</i>      | <i>Trustee</i>            | Khanyayo Village   |
| <i>Mr Goduka</i>     | <i>Trustee</i>            | Mtshayelo village  |
| <i>Mr Nokwente</i>   | <i>Trustee</i>            | Marhamzeni village |
| <i>Mr Mkhovana</i>   | <i>Trustee</i>            | Ngquza village     |
| <i>Mr September</i>  | <i>Trustee</i>            | Vlei village       |
| <i>Mthikithiki</i>   | <i>Trustee</i>            | kwaThahle village  |
| <i>Mr Cephu</i>      | <i>Trustee</i>            | Vlei village       |

**Source: Mkambati Land Trust (17 March, 2006)**

The formation of Mkambati Land Trust on 16 May 2002 was heralded as a milestone for the community of Mkambati – as this institution made a concerted effort to engage various institutions including government on the return of Mkambati land (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). It is through the role of the Mkambati Land Trust that the community of Mkambati finally regained their land eight years into the democratic dispensation when the Minister of Land Affairs, Thoko Didiza, transferred Mkambati Nature Reserve to the Mkambati Land Trust (de Villiers and Costello, 2006). Regaining their land has posed a challenge to the community of Mkambati and this community is determined to ensure that the use of this land benefits the present and also the future generation. Qalaba (17 March 2006, interview) indicates that the cooperation of various villages of Mkambati to establish the Mkambati Land Trust promotes a strong network that continues to build and re-inforce solidarity and dialogue among the community of Mkambati; re-inforcing solidarity and dialogue is a worthwhile process which continuously strengthens bonding social capital within the community of Mkambati.

One of the problems in land restitution programmes is that the state is predominant in institutionally diverse and sometimes contradictory roles as adjudicator, advocate, and opponent (Verdery, 2003; Walker, 2010). This diverse and multiple role of the state, as this study will demonstrate, continues to frustrate the community of Mkambati in its desperation to benefit from their regained land. In a meeting involving Mkambati Land Trust and various government departments, one of the Trustees of the Mkambati Land Trust commented that:

The land is back to us; we expect to benefit from tourism practised at Mkambati<sup>28</sup>  
Trustee A (4 April 2006, interview)

This comment by the Trustee indicates firstly, collective responsibility of the community of Mkambati that is founded on intra-community relationships. Secondly, the strength of relationships within the community of Mkambati is also shown through its willingness to collectively share from potential tourism spin-offs. Past exclusion and deprivation of the community of Mkambati of their land plays a central role in influencing decision-making about Mkambati land. Also, continued tenure insecurity countrywide has exposed the limits of political democratization. Discontent on the slow process of land redistribution has resulted in the formation of the Landless People's Movement which has constructed an identity around landlessness (Greenberg, 2006). Using intra-community networks based on information sharing and solidarity, the community of Mkambati remains resolute in their efforts to ensure that they benefit from the Mkambati Nature Reserve. These intra-community networks are demonstrated within the community of Mkambati through various meetings they hold. Commenting on these networks and how they strengthen solidarity, Trustee B (17 March 2006, interview) postulates that:

*I Trust idibanisa zosixhenxe iilali. Into eyenza ukuba ezilali zibumbane kukuba zonke zingaphantsi kwa Nkosi Zwelibongile Mhlanga. Ke zonke iinkosi zinegalelo kwi Trust kuba ziqulunqwe kwiindawo zamakhosi, yaye I Trust isoloko inika ingxelo ezimbizweni.*

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<sup>28</sup> While this Trustee is also part of Mkambati Land Trust which is responsible for decision-making in Mkambati he seems to be not happy with the progress made by the Mkambati Land Trust. His views are similar to those of members of the community who are not part of the Mkambati Land Trust.

The Trust constitutes all seven villages. The reason these villages are united is that they are under the leadership of *Inkosi* Zwelibongile Mhlanga. Therefore all the chiefs contribute to the operation of the Trust because the Trust was founded under the guidance of the chiefs. Also, the Trust regularly reports in meetings presided over by the chiefs.

This Trustee highlights the importance of the role played by *Amakhosi*, and in particular *Inkosi* Zwelibongile Mhlanga in unifying the community of Mkambati to support the Mkambati Land Trust.

Significant in upholding these intra-community networks is information exchange and trust amongst community members which promotes bonding social capital within the community of Mkambati. Elsewhere in the country similar intra-community networks based on trust and solidarity have emerged amongst farm tenants who perceive government as failing to address poverty and inequality caused by land rights that favour white people (Hart, 2002; Ndovela, 2003). Intra-community networks have also been influential in Zimbabwe; for instance, land invaders state that more than two decades have passed since independence and Zimbabwean people are still deprived of land rights (Buckle, 2001).

Allegiance to their *Inkosi* and continued exercise of intra-community networks such as information sharing and dialogue has promoted solidarity among the community of Mkambati thus strengthening their bonding social capital. It is this solidarity framed on bonding social capital that has prolonged this community's resilience in their fight for the restoration of their land. *Amakhosi* are a significant factor in Mkambati:

*Amakhosi* are always represented in meetings about the future of Mkambati, as they always provide guidance to us as their subjects (Madotyeni, 4 April 2006, interview).

Citing the significance of land and role of *Amakhosi*, Adedeji (1999) argues that despite adopting pro-western democratic processes, communities in Africa still rely on *Amakhosi* when dealing with land issues. The community of Mkambati as well, appreciates the role of *Amakhosi* in land issues. Trust and respectability commanded by

*Amakhosi* by the Mkambati Land Trust was evident in a meeting held between this institution and government officials at the Silaka Game Reserve in Port St Johns. While every delegate was asked to stand when being introduced by the chairman of the meeting, the deputy chairman of the Mkambati Land Trust conceded that:

*linkosi zona azinawuma ngoba zinkulu kunathi. Zisiphethe noba silapha*<sup>29</sup> (Qalaba, 17 March 2006, interview).

*linkosi* are not supposed to stand because they are of higher status and remain our leaders wherever we are.

Trust in and respect for *Amakhosi* seems to play a central role in strengthening bonding social capital in this community. Also, this statement by Qalaba demonstrates that the community of Mkambati, due to the treatment meted to them by various governments in the past and by the present government, has become disillusioned and lost respect for government officials. For the community of Mkambati, showing respect for *Amakhosi* in the presence of government officials signals tensions that are growing between this community and government officials. While it seems that the Mkambati Land Trust has a good relationship with *Amakhosi*, the Mkambati minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust meeting that was held at Mthontsasa seem to contradict this assertion. According to the minutes, the Mkambati Land Trust is concerned with the behaviour of *Amakhosi*. Vimba, the Chairperson of the Mkambati Land Trust complains that: Mhla sasisentlanganisweni e Mfundisweni *iinkosi* zaya etywaleni zabuya zinxilile<sup>30</sup> [During the past meeting at Mfundisweni *Amakhosi* went to drink alcohol and came back drunk]. In addition, Caphu commented that: ezi *nkosi* mazibizwe kunjalonje zixelelwe ukuba ziza ku repotwa apho ziphethwe khona yi contralesa<sup>31</sup>. [*Amakhosi* have to be summoned to a meeting so that they could be rebuked for their unbecoming behaviour. Also, they have to be told that this behaviour will be reported to CONTRALESA<sup>32</sup>].

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<sup>29</sup> While it is normal in African tradition for commoners to respect *linkosi*; here Qalaba is also attempting to win the support of *Amakhosi* in this crucial meeting as their endorsement of proposals made by the Trustees will garner support from people attending the meeting.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust meeting held at Mthontsasa on 14 December 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> CONTRALESA: Congress of National Traditional Leaders of South Africa, an institution of traditional leaders in South Africa.

While in meetings where government officials are present, members of the Mkambati Land Trust argue that the relationship of the community of Mkambati with *Amakhosi* is a positive one, it seems that there are underlining tensions between the community of Mkambati and *Amakhosi* in that area. Tension relating to the role played by *Amakhosi* on land issues is not only experienced in Mkambati. Similar findings in other parts of the country are indicative of the role of *Amakhosi* on land issues. For instance, in a study I conducted in Salem, KwaZulu-Natal, on the role of Tribal Authorities in the management of river resources, the findings indicated that there are prevalent tensions between *Amakhosi* and members of the community on how land resources should be utilized (Zeka, 2004). Qalaba (20 June 2007, interview) points out that although the Transkei government was ruthless in dealing with the community of Mkambati in their attempt to reclaim the Mkambati Nature Reserve, in 1992, this community forcibly entered the Mkambati Nature Reserve despite tight security by government officials. He further indicates that although the community of Mkambati was barred from having access to and using resources in the Mkambati Nature Reserve including access to the sea, this community nonetheless remained resolute, engaging in dialogue during *izimbizo* with the sole intention to instill social cohesion regarding the reclamation of the Mkambati Nature Reserve, in their efforts to see this land restituted to them. It is these activities based on norms and values espousing cohesion that the community of Mkambati strengthened their bonding social capital. It is through trust – drawn from dialogue and social cohesion – that the community of Mkambati has succeeded over the years, up to the present, in consolidating their bonding social capital.

## **5.5 History and contemporary behaviour**

In the context of this study – as indicated in earlier chapters – group history and contemporary behaviour are influenced by both personal history and individual identity. For instance, this study argues that actor relationships are important in promoting cohesion within a group. However, actor relationships are built and sustained through information exchange, trust, and decision-making within a particular context. Group

context, as is demonstrated in the community of Mkambati, helps in promoting relationships which influence group history and contemporary behaviour. Group history and contemporary behaviour are a reflection of bonding relationships between individuals and within groups.

Commenting on individual and group social capital, Colletta and Cullen (2002) postulate that support is a key element that individuals rely on in strengthening their relationship with other individuals. Various examples (Putnam, 1993b; Herreros, 2004) point out that individuals' participation in social networks play an important role in building and empowering group social capital. Individuals espouse relationships that exist within a group, and use these relationships to promote trust, reciprocity, and solidarity. Interpreted as a collective interaction between individuals, social capital is critical in lowering the transactional costs that someone would incur had he or she acted individually. For instance, one of the observations in the present study is that trust, information exchange, and solidarity prevalent between individual members of the Mkambati Land Trust has bonded members of this organization. It is this bonding social capital that has – for many years – sustained the resilience and cohesion within the community of Mkambati. Individual power is also pivotal in influencing group social capital. Individuals can use either intangible resources such as knowledge or cultural affiliation, or tangible resources such as money or the use of force to influence collective decision-making. Collective decision-making based on trust and solidarity is used by individuals to influence group social capital to promote collective action (Herreros, 2004).

The significance of history in determining the context within which actors interact with each other is evident in the community of Mkambati. The Trustees of the Mkambati Land Trust have continuously made reference to events in history as significant factors in determining their fate in the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve. The main issue that they raise is the dispossession from them of the land comprising Mkambati Nature Reserve. For instance, a Trustee (Trustee C, 17 March 2006, interview) makes clear that their present relationship with the Eastern Cape Parks Board has been

influenced by the handing over of the Mkambati Nature Reserve back to the community of Mkambati. While the previous apartheid government and the former Transkei government spearheaded the forced removal of the community of Mkambati from the land, some of which now constitutes the Mkambati Nature Reserve, the democratic government under the African National Congress<sup>33</sup> has sought to redress these historical injustices.

The transfer of the Mkambati Nature Reserve back to the community of Mkambati is one of the initiatives by the present government to redress the historical imbalances of the past. The transfer of this land has created a new context whereby the community of Mkambati – as the owners of the land – is beginning to play a meaningful role in the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Positive anticipation of the role of the community of Mkambati is reflected by one of the Trustees: “The land is now ours; we expect to benefit from tourism practised at Mkambati” (Trustee C, 17 March 2006, interview). This statement by a Trustee is indicative of the fact that although the Mkambati land has been regained there are doubts even within some Trustees that as the leaders of the community of Mkambati they (Trustees) have sufficient power to make decisions regarding the use of this land.

While revenue has been generated from tourism practised in the Mkambati Nature Reserve, the community of Mkambati was not benefiting. Now that this land has been restituted to the community of Mkambati, expectations are that benefits will start accruing to the community. In a meeting held by the Mkambati Land Trust one member expressed the community’s frustration on disagreement on who and how money allocated by the Department of Land Affairs to the community of Mkambati should be kept and used. A clear contestation between various government agencies about how both money and other resources that the community of Mkambati is supposed to benefit

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<sup>33</sup> Commonly called the ANC, the African National Congress is the current ruling party in South Africa. It is the leadership of this ANC-led government that has been instrumental in redistributing land to the previous rightful owners in South Africa. The community of Mkambati is one of the beneficiaries of this resettlement programme.



from is demonstrated by the Ntinga Development Agency<sup>34</sup>. This is an Agency that is tasked with promoting development in Mkambati. In clear expression of his frustration this member of the Mkambati Land Trust said:

*U Nkanise watsho ukuba imali ayiyanga kuye sobe aphinde adibane nento yase Mkambati*<sup>35</sup>.

Mr Kanise once indicated that if money that had been allocated by the Department of Land Affairs to the community of Mkambati is not kept in the custody of Ntinga Development Agency, then this Agency will never deal with the community of Mkambati.

The Mkambati Land Trust is the institution tasked with ensuring that the community of Mkambati benefits from economic spin-offs brought about by the restoration of their resource rich land. Nonetheless, the Trustees are aware that, like in many other rural areas in South Africa, the land in Mkambati is under the custodianship of the traditional authority. Allegiance to the traditional authority became evident in an interview with one of the Trustees:

All the seven villages that constitute the Mkambati Land Trust have a reason to be united because they are all under the leadership of *Inkosi* (Tyani, 4 April 2006, interview).

During observations, I realized that *Amakhosi* do attend some of the meetings of the Mkambati Land Trust. As an honour, *Amakhosi* are awarded special permission to address the meeting at any time they wish to make contributions.

Groups are a conglomerate of individuals. Therefore group history is influenced, among others, by individual history. This is evident in this study where individual history espoused by some of the Trustees is demonstrated within the Mkambati Land Trust. Time and again individual history is being cited as one of the elements in collective decision-making. Whether in authoritarian regimes or democratic governments,

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<sup>34</sup> Ntinga Development Agency is a parastatal tasked by the O.R. Tambo District Council to promote development within the precinct of the O.R. Tambo District Council, of which Mkambati fall under.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust held on 3 April 2006.

individual history manifests itself as a factor. For instance, dictatorial, corrupt behaviour, and high expenditure by the former leader of the then Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, is regarded as being a factor that still influences the political and economic state of affairs in the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo (French, 2005). Closer to home, South Africa is still relying much on the individual history of the former president, Nelson Mandela, ten years after the end of his presidency (Gumede, 2005). Similarly, and based on observations, individual history is manifesting itself in interactions and deliberations within the Mkambati Land Trust:

*Ndibuhlungu kakhulu, kubuhlungu ukusebenza nabantu abaqeshiweyo ube wena ungaqeshwanga. Ndicela ukunixeleva, abantu zinkosi zam, badiniwe. Niyasilibazisa...* (Trustee A, 17 March 2006, interview).

I am disappointed. It is painful to engage with employed people when one is not employed. I would like to tell you that the community is angry. You are wasting our time...

Contrary to other Trustees who argue that the community of Mkambati is still hopeful that it will eventually benefit from the restituted land, this Trustee argues that the community of Mkambati has lost patience with the slow process of development and benefit from the restituted land. The Trustee expresses his anger over the delay by the government to transfer money to the Mkambati Land Trust bank account. He attributes this laxity of government to the fact that government officials are employed and earn salaries as a result are not concerned about the plight of the unemployed community members. This dissatisfaction is corroborated by minutes of one of the meetings of the Mkambati Land Trust. One of the resolutions in this meeting is that:

*U Mr Colin Bell uchaza ubutyebi bendawo yase Mkambati. Uthi kwindawo encinane kanje ubona iintlobo-ntlobo zezityalo ezingekhoyo kumhlaba wonke. Uthi ukuba angenza iilodges kulendawo abantu balapha bangaxhamla kakhulu. Ikhona incwadi ebhalwe ngu Duncan Hay ezakukhutshwa kungekudala. Urhulumente wase Eastern Cape Udlala ngani. Anifumani nto kwaphela ngenxa yalo rhulumente wase Eastern Cape. Ndizawunincedisa nanini na xa nifuna uncedo<sup>36</sup>.*

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<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust held on 18 May 2006.

Mr Colin Bell indicates that this area (Mkambati) is very rich in natural resources. He says although this area is small there are many kinds of plants which cannot be found the world over. He says that the local community stands to benefit phenomenally if there can be lodges in the area. He also indicates that there is a book, on Mkambati that is written by Duncan Hay that will be published soon. The Eastern Cape government is failing on the promises it has made. The reason that you are experiencing this lack of development and employment opportunities is that the Eastern Cape government is inept when it comes to dealing with the community of Mkambati. Anytime you need help I will be of assistance.

In these discussions in a meeting it becomes clear that, in dealing with their desperate situation, the Mkambati Land Trust opens itself up for lobbying by various potential investors. While they show their interest in investing in Mkambati these investors are using weak relations between the community of Mkambati and the Eastern Cape government to advance their personal needs. This is one of the dangers facing the community of Mkambati. The trustees of the Mkambati Land Trust freely deliberate on issues pertaining to the role of the Mkambati Land Trust. It is in these deliberations that individual history of some members is presented. For instance, one of the Trustees, who is also an original claimant, indicates that the issue of the Mkambati Nature Reserve also rouses memories of dispossession and forced removal of their ancestors from their land. It is this sense of deprivation that still contributes to the present poverty and disillusionment amongst the community of Mkambati. Since the community of Mkambati regained its land several meetings between the Mkambati Land Trust and potential investors have taken place. The community of Mkambati is desperate to benefit from the resources in their land; however, this community feels that government is stalling this process. For instance, in a meeting held by the Mkambati Land Trust a number of proposals were tabled by the Mkambati Land Trust one of the proposals reads as follows:

*Sicele I DEAT ukuba isakhele I Lodge ne Horse Trail ngaphandle kwe Nature Reserve (former TRACOR Land). I Trust ifuna ukuba senze indibaniselwano*

*(partnership) no Mrs Sarah apho sizokwahlulelana ngo 50%/50% kwi gross profit. Yonke le nto iyakubhunca kuba kaloku urhulumente akakhathali<sup>37</sup>.*

We have asked the Department of Environment and Tourism (DEAT) to build for us a lodge and a horse trail just outside the Mkambati Nature Reserve. We are also contemplating establishing 50%/50% gross profit partnership with Mrs Sarah. All these attempts will fail because the government does no care for us.

Individual history is also reflected through the competence demonstrated by some Trustees. One Trustee, a former teacher, has, during the meetings I attended, chaired the Mkambati Land Trust meetings. Perhaps it is because of his ability to successfully control the proceedings of the meeting that he was always tasked with this responsibility. For instance, he would not hesitate to call to order a Trustee who seemed to deviate from a matter that was being debated. As a former teacher he was perhaps used to chairing meetings where diverse ideas are deliberated upon. His historical background, judging by his contribution in meetings, plays a role in promoting consensus within the Mkambati Land Trust.

A significant factor in the formation of group social identities is the social context. The significance of context in the existence of group social identities is demonstrated by Eldredge (1993) in his analysis of the rise of the baSotho Kingdom under King Moshoeshoe. He points out that those environmental factors such as land with enough resources such as water led to the increase in numbers of people under King Moshoeshoe, thus strengthening his military prowess. Of note in group social identity is that rather than being static, permanent, or given, group social identity is being constantly constructed and reconstructed by context from one moment to the next (Campbell, 2003).

The physical artifacts are some of the prominent features of the context within which social capital is used by the Mkambati community to construct relationships. Through the use of storytelling technique, that is observing physical structures and deducing a meaning from that observation, I was able to get an in-depth understanding of how the

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<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust held on 28 March 2006.

community of Mkambati uses physical artifacts to strengthen their social capital. For instance, the old rondavel<sup>38</sup> in which members of the Mkambati Land Trust regularly meet to discuss issues relating to the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve is symbolic of the history of this community. Inside this old rondavel are a table and benches. There are also a few pillows. These pillows, according to one member of the Mkambati Land Trust, are used during church services that are conducted every Sunday in this rondavel (Qalaba, 4 April 2006, interview). It transpired that this rondavel is used jointly by a local congregation and by the Mkambati Land Trust. This common use of this rondavel by both the church and the Mkambati Land Trust is reflective of horizontal relationships within the community of Mkambati. During my first observation of the proceedings of the meeting by the Mkambati Land Trust one of the Trustees indicated that:

We meet at this place because it is easier for all the members to access because it is at the centre. However, we would like to have an office from which we could operate. Possibly, that office could be situated nearer the nature reserve (Trustee A, 20 May 2006, interview).

The interviews were conducted in the context of confidence and excitement. One of the reasons was that the leadership of the Mkambati Land Trust has a five-year tenure to carry out its duties. Therefore, for these Trustees it was thought that interacting with 'outsiders' such as researchers will help to facilitate their management skills and empower them on how to deal with critical issues facing the community of Mkambati. For instance, in welcoming me to one of their meetings, and acknowledging my presence and potential contribution to the meeting one member commented:

We welcome your presence, and you are welcome to advise us on procedures of running this meeting, please feel free to advise us on any issue.

Apart from group context there are individual contexts that are present within the Trustees. For instance, Tyani (4 April 2006, interview) a Trustee from Khanyayo village, pointed out that the plantation close to their household belongs to a white person who is

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<sup>38</sup> A traditional circular African dwelling with a conical thatched roof.

not from Mkambati. According to this owner this forest was leased to him by the former Transkei government, and he will only vacate when the lease agreement ends. As a result, people at Khanyayo village cannot harvest wood from this plantation despite its close proximity to them. He also indicated that their cattle graze in an open field next to the Mkambati Nature Reserve. It was evident from the interview that he was passionate about the use of resources in the Mkambati Nature Reserve to the benefit of the community of Mkambati. Through his deliberations during meetings, such as ensuring that every issue is thoroughly discussed to the satisfaction of all members, Tyani played a major role in establishing a context within which decisions are reached by the Mkambati Land Trust.

In most meetings I have attended that are hosted by the Trustees, these Trustees regularly recollected their dissatisfaction about the conditions under which they execute their duties as the leaders of the Mkambati Land Trust. One of the concerns of the Mkambati Land Trust is lack of infrastructure such as computers, a telephone, and an office from which they can execute their duties. This discontentment is also shared by Marangana (4 April 2006, interview) who complains about the slow progress in infrastructural development. For instance, she complains that there is no water and electricity in her village yet the Mkambati Nature Reserve generates capital which should be used for the development of villages in Mkambati.

Situated at a central position, and enabling members from each village to be close to the meeting place, this rondavel is also a symbol of contestation. Lack of prompt transfer of compensation from the Land Affairs Department delays the establishment of infrastructure such as an office and other facilities that would help the Mkambati Land Trust in executing its duties. Context could take varied forms and processes. Among processes which have an influence on social capital there could be historical, social, political, economic, and cultural factors, and indeed other forms and influences. Taking these processes into cognizance, social capital is influenced by, among others, the fact that the interaction between these processes is continuous (Ponton and Gill, 1982).

The individual, like an actor on stage, attempts to maintain consistent performance to those who have significant influence on the role the individual plays (Goffman, 1959). According to Goffman (1959) identity is both malleable and instrumentally defined. Drawing from Goffman's analysis of individual identity it becomes clear that the existence or action of an individual takes cognizance of the 'significant others'. In one of the Mkambati Land Trust's meetings, one Trustee, demonstrated how united the members of the Mkambati Land Trust was, indicated that despite having different political allegiances the Trustees remain steadfast in promoting the objectives of the Mkambati Land Trust:

For instance I am a member of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) but in the Trust we all work together as a group (Trustee B, 20 May 2006, interview).

Despite being a member of the United Democratic Movement<sup>39</sup> (UDM) this Trustee is committed to promoting a common vision together with his predominantly ANC affiliated counterparts.

Group social identity is also demonstrated during meetings held by the Trustees. For instance, observing proceedings of the Mkambati Land Trust meetings or joint meetings with other stakeholders such as the Eastern Cape Parks Board, it became evident to me that it is not the Mkambati Land Trust chairperson's sole responsibility to call the members to order. For example, there was an instance where one member made a remark that seemed to draw attention to or glorify himself. Instead of sharply rebuking the concerned member, to the detriment of the group unity, fellow members tactfully influenced that member not to make such utterances. Commenting on the management of individual identity, Goffman (1959) argues that 'tact' and 'pep talk' are critical properties that, despite the existence of individual identity within groups, consolidate group identity.

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<sup>39</sup> The United Democratic Movement is a political party led by General Bantu Holomisa, a former military leader, in the now defunct government of the former Transkei homeland. This party commands the second biggest support, following the ANC, in the Transkei region of the Eastern Cape.

Group social identity could be defined as those aspects of one's self-definition that arise from membership of a particular social group, or from one's position within networks of power relationships, shaped by socio-economic and other related factors (UN AIDS, 2002). An important factor is that group social identity is constructed around a coherent set of values, common instrumental strategy for maximizing extrinsic rewards, or the needs and desires of members for interaction (Thompson and McHugh, 1995). One of the Trustees (Qalaba, 17 March 2006, interview) indicated that the unity that prevails within the Mkambati Land Trust emanates from the fact that the community of Mkambati has common needs. One of these needs is to manage the Mkambati Nature Reserve so that benefits accrue to the community. They also have a set of values founded on the premise that the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve will yield benefits that will promote community development.

Qalaba (17 March 2006, interview) indicated that, as elected members of the Mkambati Land Trust, they are faced with the challenge of addressing the problem of lack of development in Mkambati. He cited the partnership between the Mkambati Land Trust and the Eastern Cape Parks Board as still failing to meet the objectives of the community of Mkambati. During this interview the Trustee (Qalaba, 17 March 2006, interview) emphasized that the community of Mkambati is collectively convinced the use of the resources in the Mkambati land will help facilitate development in Mkambati. Two years earlier, in a meeting of the Mkambati Land Trust members contend that<sup>40</sup>:

*Kudala sifuna uphuhliso eMkambati. Phantse ngoku ngunyaka wesine kodwa akukho nto iqhubekayo. Masifonele iSecretary ka Premier engu Guy Rich.*

For about four years now we have been calling for development in Mkambati but there is no progress. Let us telephonically speak to the Guy Rich, the Secretary to the Premier.

It is evident from these minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust that they are frustrated with lack of development in their area. The unity that is displayed by this community shows

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<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust held on 17 December 2004.



that even though they are facing hardships they still demonstrate shared values which are the hallmark of their group social identity.

The promotion of strong bonding social capital within a group of marginalized people is most likely to provide a starting point for the renegotiation of identities, as well as the processes of empowerment and critical consciousness, which are the essential first step for successful participation (Campbell, 2003). Similarly, Putnam (2000) defines bonding social capital as exclusive, inward-looking social capital located within a group. This 'within-group' social capital bonds people in relationships (Campbell, 2003). The Trustees of the Mkambati Land Trust portray certain similarities that are critical in promoting a sense of group social identity. During my observations, properties of group social identity were evident in the Trustees' regular reference to their spouses if they were tasked to perform duties in addition to their meetings. It was not uncommon for members to refer to their spouses whenever there were some duties they had to undertake outside the Mkambati area. In one of their weekly meetings, one Trustee indicated that his wife was not well, and he would like to be compensated for a meeting he had attended a while ago. His request was met with sympathy by other members, and attempts were quickly made to ensure that he was urgently given the money that was due to him.

Another property which I found significant in strengthening group social identity among the Trustees is that no member had tenured employment in any sector. For the Trustees, being unemployed provides them with an opportunity to devote their energy to strengthening the Mkambati Land Trust. For instance, in a meeting attended by the Mkambati Land Trust, the Eastern Cape Parks Board, the O.R. Tambo District Municipality, and government departments, one Trustee had this to say:

It is painful to us as the unemployed Trustees to be dealing with employed government officials because the latter wittingly delay development, while on the other hand we, as Trustees, are faced with a barrage of complaints, on the slow progress on development, from the community we are serving (Trustee F, 17 March 2006, interview).

## 5.6 Decision-making processes

Decision-making must truly be returned to the people, who have both the capacity and the right to inject into the process the richness – including the subjectivity – of their values and needs (Korten, 1984: 301).

Decision-making on issues pertaining to the Mkambati Nature Reserve rests with the community of Mkambati. Qalaba (20 June 2007, interview) pointed out that as a Trustee from Kwa Cele village he is representing the village and is responsible for reporting the activities of the Mkambati Land Trust to the Community Property Association<sup>41</sup> (CPA), and thereafter to the chief. A similar procedure is followed by other Trustees in their respective villages. Qalaba emphasized the importance of collective decision-making among the Trustees thus:

When an issue is raised by one of us we all discuss that issue. Based on those discussions we make a decision. Since we were elected as Trustees there has never been any walkout as a result of lack of common understanding amongst us. We discuss issues until we reach a solution (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, interview).

While it is true that the Trustees discuss issues until a solution is reached, during meetings and during individual interviews with Trustees one gets a sense that some Trustees are not happy with the slow progress regarding the development of Mkambati. Yes, they do consent with decisions of the Mkambati Land Trust, but they only do that to avoid conflict.

During meetings of the Mkambati Land Trust it is common for individual Trustees to voice their opinions, and suggest that a decision should be taken based on their viewpoints. However, other Trustees would probe the individual's viewpoint, and if they felt that it did not serve the interests of the Mkambati Land Trust, it was not uncommon to hear fellow Trustees say "*Tyhini uyasikhwenkwa ngoku, asinawuva ngawe apha*" [You are now treating us like boys, and we won't accept what you are saying]. Such

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<sup>41</sup> Each village has a sub-committee (Community Property Association) whose mandate is, among others, to monitor the activities of the Mkambati Land Trust.

statements are made if fellow Trustees feel that their colleague is trying to drive his point home even though that it is rejected by the house. Then members would burst into laughter, and the Trustee's viewpoint would not be considered. Looking at the Trustee whose viewpoint had been rejected one would find him happy as well, and joining his colleagues in laughter. Indeed, during Trustees' meetings there were moments where they could not agree with one another. However, that disagreement would be perceived as another way of strengthening their discussion so as to build a strong front against government and its agencies. As reflected in the minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust meeting, the Chairperson registered his concerns about the behaviour of some members of the Mkambati Land Trust. In these minutes it is indicated that:

*Usihlalo ukhalazela amalungu ase Mtshayelo ngokuthi xa kuqhutywa intlanganiso aphume engacelanga, ngokunjalo namhla kwakuyiwe e Mpumalanga lamalungu aziphatha kakubi<sup>42</sup>.*

The Chairperson is complaining about the behaviour of Trustees from Mtshayelo. These Trustees have left the meeting without notifying the Chairperson. Their behaviour was also unbecoming during a trip to Mpumalanga.

The trustees apologized to other Trustees in the meeting. These disagreements and condemnations, and eventually reconciliation in meetings signaled the Trustee's commitment to collective action:

Collective action is when a group of people collectively engage in an activity, sharing a mutual interest, sentiment or concern; act together, and in concert (Swanepoel, 1997: 13).

A turning point in the struggle for the restoration of the Mkambati Nature Reserve to the community of Mkambati was marked by a collective protest action that was taken by the community of Mkambati in the early nineties (Flatela, 20 June 2007, interview). Finally, argues Flatela, their collective action was a success, as their land was restored to them.

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<sup>42</sup> Minutes of the Mkambati Land Trust held on 2 October 2008.

Political scientists, government leaders, and organizational development practitioners cite three approaches as important for understanding power. I will focus on the One-Dimensional Approach. Commenting on this approach Dahl (1969: 80) stated that: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do”. This notion was earlier raised by Polsby (1963: 55) who, on community politics, added that power may be studied by examining “who participates, who gains and losses, and who prevails in decision-making”.

Collective power, in this sense, is deeply intertwined with participation. It refers to being capable of, to be able to produce an effect, to construct a reality, to institute a meaning (Jovchelovitch, 1996: 19).

Collective power has been demonstrated time and again in South Africa. For instance, community-based groups such as Zenzele groups (A group of women with a specific objective to develop themselves) have over the years, particularly in rural South Africa, exercised collective power through engaging in projects that sustain their livelihoods (Kotze *et al.*, 1985). Also, the community of Mkambati exercises collective power through ensuring that every village is represented in the Mkambati Land Trust whose role is to ensure that, through the use of Mkambati land, the livelihoods of the community of Mkambati are sustained. For instance, all the seven villages that constitute the community of Mkambati are represented by two members. During extended observations of the activities of the Mkambati Land Trust, I noticed that in every meeting that the Mkambati Land Trust holds each village is represented.

Qalaba (20 June 2007, interview) indicated to me that members discuss issues until they reach consensus on decisions. Ultimately, one Trustee would make a suggestion and that would convince fellow Trustees, despite their different viewpoints on the issue, that it was the best way to deal with the issues at hand. The exercise of individual power within the Mkambati Land Trust rests on participation and consensus rather than winners and losers. In individual interviews with Trustees, each leader would attribute successes achieved (for instance, their engagement in a joint committee with the Eastern Cape Parks Board) to their ability as the Trustees to constructively engage

other stakeholders and interested parties. While individual power is demonstrated by some Trustees in meetings, this power is translated into a collective strength that benefits the entire organization.

## **5.7 Contemporary life: A destabilizing factor of self-identity**

The attainment of independence and indeed the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 were hailed as milestones in this country (Beinart, 2001). Perhaps more attention was given to South Africa because of being the last country in southern Africa to be freed from minority domination. This 'new' country brought to an end polarity that existed during the reign of the previous government. For instance, the democratic dispensation in South Africa brought to an end the 'black-owned' regions of South Africa or the Bantustans as they were termed (Beinart, 2001) and exposed land reform as a major challenge that faced the new democratic government. After being dispossessed of their land through the 1913 Land Act many communities had the opportunity to be relocated and in, some cases, to have their land restituted to them (Cousins and Claassens, 2003). The land reform process is perceived as a landmark move which will restore the status and pride of the native community. While this process has yielded benefits such as enabling re-location of communities to their former land, and expanding land rights to those sections of the society who had been previously deprived of their land rights, this has been accompanied by the emerging challenge of determining how the newly acquired land can be utilized equitably and productively (Cousins and Claassens, 2003).

The land reform programme in southern Africa has resulted in the definition of heterogeneous user groups, and this heterogeneity in land use has resulted in personal and group differences on how to use the land (Cousins and Claassens, 2003). The land reform process has also had to deal with myriad opportunities such as business ventures, infrastructural development, and re-integration into wider social and economic scales of operation. Many local communities after generations of marginalization have had to prematurely deal with these challenges. In most cases the preponderance of opportunities has resulted in competing visions on how newly-acquired land and

associated resources and opportunities can be utilized; and in some cases these communities have been torn apart by opportunistic incentives offered by global markets (Claassens, 1995). When common property rules break down and fail to evolve to accord with changing conditions, outcomes such as the pursuance of individual or private accumulation of wealth in the name of community development are experienced (Cousins, 1992; 1995; Lawry, 1990). This evidence from various land restitution illustrates starkly that beneficiaries such as the community of Mkambati, can face tenacious challenges for which they are poorly prepared, once land has been restituted to them.

The integration of local economies and social fabric into larger systems and the consequent decline of the importance of local political and social institutions tend to undermine the ability of local communities to defend themselves from the encroachment of outsiders (Cousins, 1995). The return of Mkambati land to the community of Mkambati has been heralded as an historic moment for this community. It has also led to the anticipation of benefits that are to accrue to this community. This integration of the community of Mkambati in the broader South African society has, however, proved to be a source of frustration for the community. While the struggle for the return of the Mkambati land rested on the willingness of the Mkambati community to use the land for conservation of wild animals, the context in which they find themselves is one in which they perceive myriad opportunities and challenges. Resource use along the Wild Coast – of which Mkambati is part – has long been defined by the strong interconnectedness between communities and *Amakhosi* (Kepe, 1997), and is increasingly defined by external interests. This contestation on resource use is further highlighted by an interview with Kangazana (31 October 2008, interview). In this interview Kangazana is accusing the Pondoland Development Agency for attempting to run projects in Mkambati without the involvement of the community of Mkambati. Expressing her frustration she says:

*Makujongwe ukuba abantu aba phantsi phaya bafuna ntoni. Makuyiwe ebantwini.*

Let us consider what people at ground level want. Development initiatives should be initiated with the people.

Whilst the involvement of external stakeholders in the development of Mkambati will benefit this community, this is also likely to threaten the community's long-held social identity.

Emerging developmental opportunities associated with mining, road construction, and other infrastructural development initiatives now drive change in the local context and this is re-inforced by learning associated with the free movement of people since the advent of democracy. Contemporary life among the community of Mkambati – which is more global and market-oriented – challenges the norms and values that once influenced the social capital that bonded the community of Mkambati. In an interview Clarke (24 July 2008, interview), indicated that there are sections of the community in the Wild Coast area who are interested in the mining of sand dunes. He, however, argues that there is less support for mining in the area, though this initiative poses a threat to the social cohesion in the area. Negotiations for the return of land to the Mkambati community were premised on the understanding that conservation would lead to diverse benefits from tourism (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, pers. comm.). However, responding to national trends, the expectations people have of service delivery and development have widened beyond those that might reasonably be expected to derive from conservation. Not surprisingly perhaps, the return of the Mkambati land to the community of Mkambati is yet to match growing expectations and this is aggravated by perceptions that the Mkambati Nature Reserve has yet to yield expected benefits – at least to the bigger section of this community. In support of rising expectations about lack of benefits from the restituted land Mhlabeni (20 June 2007, interview) indicates that:

*Amathuba omsebenzi mancane. Kusafana kodwa asikeva nto. Njengoba ubona into ekhoyo yiproject yeetoileti kuphela.*

There are no job opportunities. Nothing positive has come up. As you can see we only have a toilet project.

One of the challenges facing land restitution during the earlier stages of land reform as Cousins (1995) suggests, is that initial inequalities in resource endowments tend to have socially destabilizing effects leading to breakdowns in efficient resource use. This has become increasingly evident in the Mkambati area as prospects from conservation (part of the coast); mining (coastal area), road construction (a new inland highway) and service delivery (around already established urban centres) create 'endowments' that differentiate groups within the larger Mkambati society. Land allocation and management in rural areas has always been the prerogative of *Amakhosi*; and the land restitution process has inadvertently led to tensions between local government institutions and traditional authorities (Cousins and Claassens, 2003). Now external forces such as markets, infrastructural development, and competition for new skills and job opportunities have re-shaped the social identity of the community of Mkambati.

To deal with the challenges posed by external forces, Swift (1993) suggests that institutions have to be flexible to track the dynamic changes in their environment. One can envisage that this flexibility calls for, among other things, the creation of a new social identity that might be at the expense of the long-held norms and values that have guided the community of Mkambati in the past. This is a challenge facing the Mkambati Land Trust as the institution that is tasked with the management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. Qalaba (the Deputy Chairperson of the Mkambati Land Trust) acknowledges that the delay in meeting expectations of development anticipated from the return of the Mkambati land is beginning to frustrate the community of Mkambati. Through their heightened awareness of what is happening elsewhere, the community of Mkambati has developed high expectations of infrastructural development. Commenting on land restitution process in southern Africa, Cousins and Claassens (2003) posit that lack of clarity on whether and how infrastructural projects such as housing development, water supply and irrigation schemes, business centres, and tourist infrastructure should be expedited for the benefit of people is a common problem affecting the use of the restituted lands. It is thus reasonable to argue that in Mkambati such expectations generate demands that continue to shape a new and different social milieu that influences the livelihoods of this community.



Prospects for development such as mining, tourist ventures, roads, and service delivery continue to shape and re-inforce new mental models within the community of Mkambati. It is common in South Africa that the beneficiaries of land restitution are faced with poverty which leads them to stridently demand the facilitation of service and infrastructural development so as to promote their livelihoods (Cousins and Claassens, 2003). Hargreaves and Evelenth (2003) conclude that the land restitution process in South Africa has not been an instant solution because the intended beneficiaries lack infrastructural development so as to positively utilize the land. With service delivery high on the agenda and unrealized expectations associated with opportunities such as tourism, mining, and road development, the social capital that has, until the present, been heralded as a resource that was instrumental in helping the community of Mkambati to reclaim their land is at risk of being fractured. New, multiple forces are shaping mental models around service delivery, infrastructural development, and job opportunities. Informed by the contemporary life it might be expected that these new mental models are not only replacing old mental models built around land restitution and conservation, but are to a greater extent eroding existing social capital in Mkambati, and indeed the identity of this community.

It is in light of these tensions that respondents' perceptions portray a shift from using the Mkambati land for conservation and grazing to use it for modern service and infrastructural benefits and beneficiation. In an interview with Qalaba it seems this community, and in particular the Mkambati Land Trust is showing signs of frustration. He maintains that the Mkambati Land Trust still regards conservation as the main pattern of resource use in the area. However, there are community members that prefer other developmental services to conservation:

*Siyi Trust siyazama ukucacisela abantu ukuba ulondolozo lwezilwanyane lubalulekile eMkambati kuba ludala amathuba omsebenzi. Khona uphuhliso luyacotha yaye uluntu luxhalabile. Siyi Trust siyazama ukucacisela uluntu (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, pers. comm.).*

As the Mkambati Land Trust we do try to explain to the people that conservation of wildlife is important because it creates jobs. Yes, development in this area is slow; and people are frustrated. As the Trust we try to allay their fears.

Some of the interviews conducted suggest signs that frustrations are accumulating within the community of Mkambati. For instance, Qalaba argues that although it has been a long time since the Mkambati land has been restituted to the community of Mkambati the much anticipated development still has to come. He comments further that concerns resulting from lack of development in Mkambati are consistently raised by members of the community of Mkambati during *izimbizo* and he argues that the slow pace of development threatens unity that once prevailed within the community of Mkambati:

*Abantu bakhe baxhalaba kakhulu kuba bengaboni nto ephathekayo kuphuhliso. Kodwa siyi Trust siyabacacisela ukuba uphuhliso luyeza (Qalaba, 20 June 2007, pers. comm.).*

People are concerned because of lack of development in their area. As the Trust we continue explaining to them that there will be development in Mkambati.

Also highlighting problems around the management of Mkambati Nature Reserve is a prominent member of the Eastern Cape Parks Board. He indicates that there is a good working relationship between the Mkambati Land Trust and the local management at the reserve. The problem, he argues, is with the head office of the Eastern Cape Parks Board which is delaying the disbursement of benefits to the community of Mkambati (Interview with Y, 20 May 2006, interview). Drawing from these comments one could argue that the community of Mkambati, whilst united in their struggle for the return of their land, did develop a shared thinking on how, once restituted, the Mkambati land should be utilized. It seems that the expectations people had of land under conservation have not been met. Perhaps conservation was an inadequate 'plausible future' when measured against emerging expectations and immediate basic needs. The importance of a process that examines 'plausible futures' has been emphasized by Senge *et al.* (1994: 238-239):

By describing plausible futures, they developed a better understanding of each other's tacit beliefs. The scenario, when used this way, becomes a shared: memory of the future: as people rehearse their views of what will happen, they reveal the differences and similarities in their current views of the world.

In interviews with community members in Mkambati it became quite clear that the restituted Mkambati land has not, as expected by this community, yielded any benefits. All respondents registered their disillusionment about the lack of development and service delivery in the Mkambati area. The overall argument registered by these interviewees is that they do not believe that the use of the Mkambati land for conservation will lead to the betterment of their livelihoods. They argued that conservation, for which the returned Mkambati land is used, has not benefitted them. For instance, Mhlabeni, a community member from kwaCele village, registered his ill-feelings about the use of the returned Mkambati land for conservation purposes. Commenting on the present use of Mkambati land as a nature reserve Mhlabeni observed:

*Asisazifuni izilwanyane, mabahambe nazo. Umhlaba ngowethu kodwa usalwelwa lo mhlaba* (Mhlabeni, 20 June 2007, interview).

We no longer need wild animals, they should take them away. This is our land and we are still fighting for this land.

Mhlabeni argues that despite the successful land restitution process there is no change in the livelihoods of the community of Mkambati, and so he feels that those responsible for bringing animals for conservation should take them away. Referring to the development around the Mkambati land Mhlabeni observed:

*Asikafumani nto sisamile; usalwelwa lo mhlaba* (Mhlabeni, 20 June 2007, interview).

We have not yet benefited from this land. The fight for the land continues.

Mhlabeni indicates that since the return of Mkambati land the community of Mkambati is still awaiting the benefits they were promised; and the struggle for land is still

continuing. He also indicates that they attend meetings but these have not brought about change in the community's relation to the Mkambati land. He complains that it seems the Mkambati land is still under the influence of the whites – as it is white tourists who frequently travel to Mkambati Nature Reserve. Registering his frustration over the slow progress on the transfer of proceeds from the Mkambati Nature Reserve to the community of Mkambati he observed:

In discussion, Mhlabeni argues that the community of Mkambati is no longer interested in the wildlife that exists at Mkambati Nature Reserve and indicates that those – referring to Mkambati Land Trust – that brought these wild animals should take them away. Use of the expression 'no longer' implies that a once held shared mental model for the use of Mkambati Nature Reserve has been undermined as expectations (implicit models evolving among individuals) have not been met.

Also, Xaba indicates that her expectations of benefits accruing from the returned Mkambati land include better roads so that they could access their destinations with ease and the supply of potable water which they still do not have as a community of Mkambati.

*Sizolinda side sibhubhe kunje. Ibuhlungu impilo esiyiphilayo. Asisenalo ithemba kwiTrust. Nasezimbizweni kuyaxatyanwa (Xaba, 20 June 2008, pers. comm.).*

We will wait until we die. We are living a painful life. We no longer have hope in the Trust. Even in meetings there are quarrels.

She is concerned by the lack of progress on the disbursements of benefits from Mkambati Nature Reserve to the community of Mkambati and indicates that, unlike before; conflict is now reigning in community meetings. She observes that the community has lost hope in the Trustees because promises made around the Mkambati land by the Trustees have not come into fruition. She concludes that the community of Mkambati is no longer interested in the use of Mkambati land for conservation.

*Nangona sisenayo imihlangano, kodwa kuyaphikiswana ezimbizweni. Sisahlupheka; akukho migwaqi, namanzi sisawasokola. Uluntu lufuna uphuhliso. Ulondolozo ndalo alusenzeli nto* (Xaba, 20 June 2008, pers. comm.).

Although we still attend meetings, in these meetings there are endless debates. We are still struggling. There are no roads and potable water. The community wants development. We do not benefit from conservation.

Manzimande (20 June 2008, interview), a community member in Mkambati, indicates that since the return of the Mkambati land, different, and often contrasting views as to the use of Mkambati Nature Reserve have emerged. She observes that divergent views are continuously expressed in meetings resulting in disagreements over the use of the Mkambati land. According to Manzimande, road construction, water supply, and electricity should be urgently addressed as these services will provide development; rather than conservation which does not benefit the community. She goes on to argue that conservation which is one of the designated purposes for the Mkambati land is no longer regarded as a primary land use.

Under the influence of the Mkambati Land Trust and its negotiations with government and the conservation agencies, the community of Mkambati perceived conservation as a primary activity for the land after restitution. However, conservation was a means to an end rather than an end in and of itself. Arguably, community members held a shared perception that 'their land' under conservation would bring developmental benefits. As community members become more aware of how others are benefitting from national programmes of service delivery, the extent to which conservation is failing to meet development expectations grows. In an interview with Qeda (20 June 2008, interview), the differences between villages was emphasized.

*Abantu abahlelelekileyo sithi apha kwaCele, eThahle, nakuKhanyayo. Umgwaqo uphelela eMthontsasa yaye namanzi asinawo. Inkqubela ikho kwezinye iindawo.*

As the people of kwaCele, eThahle, and Khanyayo we are still deprived. The road ends at Mthontsasa; and we do not have potable water. There is development in other places.

While evidence shows that these social services have existed for many years in other villages and the people may have resigned themselves to their situation, now that this land has been returned with promises of development there are new expectations. With these comes growing awareness of inequity in service delivery within these seven villages and hence there are perceptions that conservation is failing to meet expectations. Thus, whilst the community of Mkambati may have held a shared view that conservation was an appropriate land use after restitution, it seems that the mental model was framed by development needs rather than by conservation as an objective.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Land restitution has been hailed as a positive step by government in its attempt to address the imbalances of the past. Land dispossession left an indelible mark in the deprivation of land of many communities in South Africa. However, as many scholars on land reform issues indicate, land restitution in South Africa remains a contentious issue that continues to impact on the livelihoods of many communities. This impact remains negative because these communities are yet to benefit from the resources provided by the restituted land (Ntsebeza, 2007; Walker, 2010; Cousins, 2007; Kepe, 1997). For the community of Mkambati, the return of their land is yet to yield the expected benefits. As I illustrated in this chapter, the community of Mkambati feels constrained by the terms imposed by government on how the returned land has been used. Also, a number of stakeholders and interest groups are eager to benefit from this land. These contestations over who has to have a contract with the community of Mkambati on extracting resources in the Mkambati land continuously frustrate this community. Their land might have been returned to them, but as they indicate during interviews conducted in this study, they are yet to benefit let alone have complete authority on how they have to use their land.

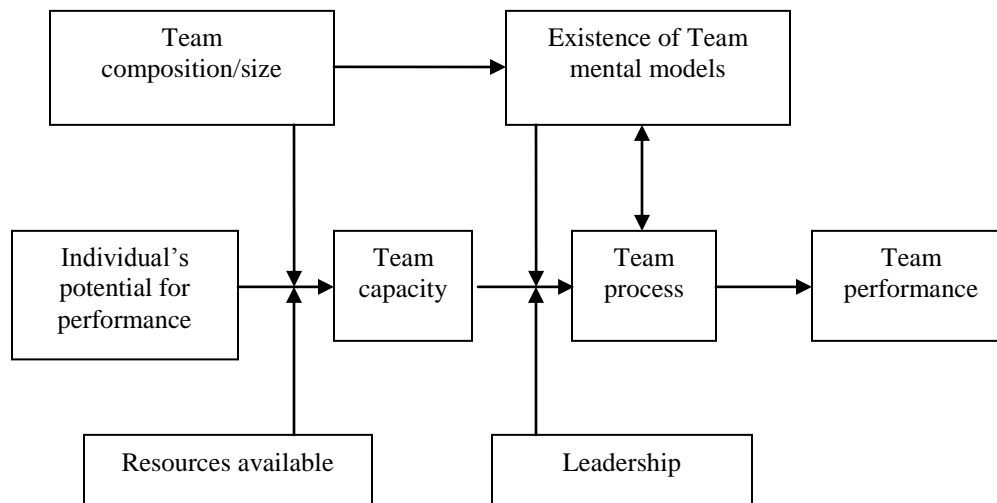
## CHAPTER SIX

### Evaluation and Conclusion

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an evaluation of the research framework and the research objectives that have guided this study. This chapter will extrapolate how different variables constituting the conceptual framework of this study relate to each other. In particular, this chapter deliberates on the notion of social capital and its relation to collective action with specific reference to land claims and restitution in Mkambati.

Figure 7.1 is a cognitive map or mental model (Carley, 1997) and thus is a symbolic representation (Johnson-Laird, 1983) of how I have interpreted the dynamics of community response to changing context, and how it has in turn affected them. It is my “representation of the environment and its expected behavior” (Holyoak, 1984:193) and as such, I may have inadvertently ignored discrepant information (Klimoski and Mohammed (1994). What has been important for me is that the framework provided a structured way of gathering, organizing, processing, and evaluating information (Hayes and Allinson, 1998).



**Figure 6.1.** Framework for explaining the role of team mental models in team performance (Adapted from Klimoski and Mohammed, 1994)

In the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) I illustrate that history shapes the context in which individuals and groups establish their identities and that how this finds expression in determining whether relationships exhibit trust, reciprocity, solidarity, and empowerment (social capital). However, such social capital is also always vulnerable to abuse of individual power. Where a group has developed social capital, joint decisions and actions lead collective power to influence the destiny of the group and thereby to reshape history. In this section I evaluate the usefulness of the mental model in developing responses to the research questions.

## **6.2 Role of history in shaping the context**

I have argued that history helps to fix meaning and thus provides a context in which to analyze contemporary behaviour. In this way history is perceived as playing an important role in guiding the destiny of a group or communities. Through influencing communities such as the community of Mkambati, history has shaped the context within which the communities executed their activities. Lukacs (1920) defined history as the destiny of people. In providing a systematic account of the progress of the community of Mkambati, I have illustrated how an event, namely, expropriation of their land, strongly defined the context that ensured an abiding influence across generations. I have also shown that the community of Mkambati, by achieving restitution of their land, has used history to determine present actions.

There has long been an interest in groups as social entities that hold a 'group mind' or 'shared mental model' (e.g. Klimoski and Mohammed, 1994; Carley, 1997; Hayes and Allinson, 1998). Of interest in the present research is that land expropriation from a community (a large 'team') that already exhibited cohesion catalyzed a 'group mind' or a 'team mental model' (Figure 7.1). Despite whatever different personal mental models each may have held, they shared something that was sufficiently important to cause them to act as a team. However, ranged against the state and its allies, the capacity and resources of this team (Figure 7.1) were limited and success would be determined by a slow, accumulating process of resistance and advocacy. This is shown to have



particular importance when the chief aligned himself with the state and the leadership was perceived to have failed the community

This illustrates how history shapes the context in which social capital evolves. The intra-community relationships among the community of Mkambati that have existed for centuries were critical in bonding that they used in consolidating their resolve (team capacity and shared mental model) to re-gain their land.

### **6.3 Role of context in shaping identities**

Because our world changes continuously it is reasonable to question whether group identity can be enduring (Albert and Whetten, 1985). It seems probable that without a coherent and enduring identity, the community of Mkambati would have not been able to sustain sufficient size and capacity (Figure 7.1) to counter the sense of helplessness (Brown and Starkey, 2004) that would have attended their failed expectations along the way. I have shown that achieving land restitution was a protracted process stretching over many years. Thus, success required that the 'team' or group identity had to be sustained for continuity from one generation to the next. Wenger (2004:251) has argued that:

Identity is crucial to social learning systems for three reasons. First, our identities combine competence and experience into a way of knowing. They are the key to deciding what matters and what does not, with whom we identify and whom we trust, and with whom we must share what we understand.

The present research shows that the act of dispossession and continued deprivation of land use by various governments from the community of Mkambati consolidated this community's identity in its fight against what it perceived as an unjust practice. It is interesting to speculate whether events that offered promise for restitution but failed, including the closure of the leper colony and the phases of governance in Transkei, acted to re-inforce identity in later generations or not. Importantly, this re-inforcement of identity helped the community of Mkambati to combine their competences and enabled a continuous social learning process that focused on what mattered to them as a group.

This collective identity is still demonstrated by the members of the Mkambati Land Trust every time they have a meeting when they refer to themselves as “*Thina bahlali baseMkambati*”; which means, “As the community of Mkambati”. It is through describing themselves as the community of Mkambati that this community uses the land ownership context (both dispossession and restitution) to continuously affirm and shape their identity. However, as I shall illustrate later, their sense of identity is currently under threat.

#### **6.4 Role of identity in influencing social capital**

Alvesson (2004:397) has observed that “Contemporary social life in many ways destabilizes a coherent sense of self identity”. Perhaps rural communities that are geographically isolated, such as the Mkambati were, are less exposed to the destabilizing forces of change and so more easily retain their sense of self identity. However, as land is central to the sense of community among the indigenous people of Africa (Adedeji, 1999), the expropriation of land was potentially a powerful destabilizing force, one that was re-inforced by other associated external influences including the leprosy colony, the church that operated in the colony, and TRACOR that introduced new forms of agriculture. The strength of social capital determines how a community maintains a coherent sense of self identity under destabilizing conditions.

Dispossession of their land heralded an era of deep-seated distrust by the community of the government and its allies that ultimately evinced hostile behaviours. It is tempting to speculate that shared distrust of the government served to re-inforce social capital among the community and that these incidences of hostile behaviour were expressions of this connection. However, there is need for caution because as Granovetter (1985) has observed, trust can create opportunities that make betrayal more profitable.

Critical in social capital are processes that involve trust, reciprocity, solidarity, and empowerment. These are constructed through social networks and serve to bond groups or communities together promoting a collective identity (Ghate, 2004). In Mkambati, these processes exist within an institutional tribal setting where those

involved are bound by a common identity and sense of belonging established over many generations. Yet, this was not sufficient to prevent individuals, for example, Chief Mtono, from abusing the trust and solidarity of the community. Through selling the community of Mkambati's land to Whites, Chief Mtono used personal empowerment to the disadvantage of the community restitution process. Perhaps as there is no evidence that this weakened community resolve to achieve land restitution, one can conclude that this abuse of social capital may have served only to strengthen the cohesion and identity of those who continued to challenge their dispossession.

Despite the changes, including the advent of democracy in South Africa that has weakened traditional authority, the community of Mkambati is still held together through a common identity. The Mkambati Land Trust members, who are drawn from all the village communities, indicate that they are an inclusive community under the leadership of a single *inkosi* – *Inkosi* Zwelibongile Mhlanga. It was through the use of their collective identity that the community of Mkambati gained sufficient capacity (Figure 7.1) to successfully contest dispossession and reclaim their land from the government. This enduring identity evidently continues to sustain social capital, at least to some degree. I have argued that this identity endures partly because it was strongly re-inforced by a shared mental model of injustice associated with dispossession.

Clearly, with restitution that supporting force has waned and a new mental model has to emerge if cohesion, identity, and social capital are to be sustained. Whilst the sense of injustice was sufficient to develop a shared mental model, individuals may at the same time hold mental models that while different, may still be aligned with the shared model (Kim, 2004; Carley, 1997). Surely there would have been differences in the expectations individuals had of land restitution as these are shaped by their own mental models. The challenge for the Mkambati Land Trust is to manage these expectations by building a new shared mental model with a focus on equitable distribution of costs and benefits from the land, a model that can sustain social capital that comes under pressure from unfulfilled individual expectations and competition for opportunities.

## **6.5 Social capital, collective power, and the reshaping of history**

From the time of land dispossession there was an alignment between individual wants and group interests that created the relationships of mutual dependency inferred by Giddens (1979) and Coopey (2004). Regarding the context of exercising power, Clegg (in Coopey 2004:533) refers to this as “circuits of dispositional power” because interests are furthered on the basis of shared meaning. As such, it reflects the social capital built up within the community. Over many years collective power was used to further the shared interest in land restitution, and perhaps particularly so when parties considered to be allies in the cause such as Chief Mtono and the Transkei government, acted in ways that were contrary to the shared interest. Collective power was also expressed through events such as the community sit-in at the Mkambati Nature Reserve that compelled the former Transkei government to accede to their demand for land restitution in which process the Mkambati Nature Reserve was returned to the community of Mkambati.

Indeed, as indicated by Yates (1991), the advent of democracy in Africa has fallen short of addressing some expectations of communities; and in his analysis of post-independent Zimbabwe he points out that ten years after Zimbabwe gained its independence the socio-economic system was still privately owned, with about 90 percent of production, agriculture, and trade still under the control of foreign individuals or multinational companies. Twenty years into its independence, Zimbabwe is still faced with the dilemma of a land reform programme that has not adequately addressed land ownership by local communities (Buckle, 2001). Similarly, argue de Villiers and Costello (2006), since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the community of Mkambati has had to engage in lengthy negotiations with the government over the return of their land. In their attempt to regain their land, the community of Mkambati lodged a land claim to the government in terms of the land restitution process (de Villiers and Costello, 2006).

As evidence in this study shows, land restitution has brought with it a dramatic change in context. Whereas collective power was mobilized around a shared interest, now it is

increasingly a reflection of competencies to realize the value of the assets. It will be the “transformative capacity” (Coopey, 2004: 540) that will determine success of collective action. The Mkambati Land Trust is the agency that acts for the community and is thus the locus of power that is responsible for organizational learning, developing transformative capacity, and promoting innovation. This comes at some risk because, as Coopey (2004:540) has observed, in this type of situation, appointed managers especially at the apex of their organization respond differently:

In making use of their enhanced discursive penetration at the nodal points where internal and external circuits of power intersect they are likely to build up and safeguard their power. Others who feel their power is threatened will probably behave defensively, placing restrictions on the possibilities for collectively productive learning.

The community of Mkambati have regained their land, and this has been accompanied by a sudden and dramatic change in context, one for which they have been ill prepared for because of their long history of marginalization. Increasingly, they are under the influence of external circuits of power [external power dynamics of which the community of Mkambati have no control] that will generate uncertainty and be a cause for social disagreement. These are conditions that can lead to chaotic behaviour (Kinnaman and Bleich, 2004). A compelling cause is for those in positions of influence to foster collaboration and cooperative behaviours, and alignment of individual wants with group interests (Kinnaman and Bleich, 2004). Under conditions of such widespread marginalization this suggests a need for combining the use of shared mental models with organizational learning. Clearly, individuals with this history have much to learn, but from whom do they learn? Connecting to external social learning networks will provide opportunity for increasing the pace and relevance of learning, and shared knowledge, will provide greater prospect for behaviours that are collaborative and cooperative. But, these bring with them new opportunities for skewing knowledge distribution and entrenching power among certain individuals to the disadvantage of the group (Kinnaman and Bleich, 2004).

It seems reasonable to argue that knowledge lies at the heart of a group's ability to balance individual and group interests through co-operative and collaborative behaviours. In the absence of a commitment to social and individual learning, regaining access to their land may herald the start of a new era of disenfranchisement as control is increasingly exerted by those who can access knowledge and who may seek to use it for personal gain. This suggests that social capital is as important for the community of Mkambati now, as it was a hundred years ago.

#### *6.5.1 The role of social capital in collective action*

In this study two forms of social capital are identified. Firstly, bonding social capital was used by the community of Mkambati for nearly a hundred years to mobilize collective action, particularly in land restitution. Engaging in collective action in their attempts to regain their land helped re-inforce social capital within this community. Secondly, this study demonstrates that bridging social capital, and more particularly the inability to establish it with other actors, played an important role in retarding progress of the community towards land restitution. The community of Mkambati was geographically isolated which, together with the attitudes of other actors, the Church, the South African Government, and the Transkei Government, prevented development of bridging relationships that might have facilitated the restitution of the Mkambati land. Although the community of Mkambati had initially thought that the Transkei government would facilitate the restitution of the land, this was never to be. It was not until the process leading to the advent of democracy that the community of Mkambati established bridging relationships with the African National Congress. This led to their inclusion in a social capital system at a national scale that was constructed, at least in part, by the shared goal of land restitution. It is through this bridging social capital that the community of Mkambati finally regained their land.

This study illustrates the benefit of distinguishing between bonding and bridging social capital. It also shows that collective action re-inforces bonding social capital but that attaining large scale goals commonly requires both bonding and bridging social capital.

### *6.5.2 The influence of context on social capital and collective action*

By taking a long-term perspective of social capital the study encompasses three epochs (the colonial, Transkei, and Post-Transkei) each establishing a different context. The central question was how resilient was social capital under these changing contexts. The study suggests, for instance, that the installation of Chief Mtono strengthened bonding social capital by re-inforcing norms and values. By contrast, the allocation of Mkambati land as a leper colony strengthened this community's bonding social capital because of the sense of injustice, whilst at the same time hindering construction of bridging social capital with the Church under whose auspices the colony was operated. The granting of 'independence' to the Transkei during the apartheid era created a context in which the community might have been enabled to establish bridging social capital with government. However, the government's decision to use Mkambati land for conservation purposes created a context within which this could not happen, and the community of Mkambati strengthened their social capital through resistance and embarking on collective action to regain their land. When attempts to regain their land failed their resolve intensified and in this way the context supported strengthening social capital which was re-inforced as collective action progressed.

The democratization process initiated in 1990 changed the context, even for isolated and marginalized communities in South Africa. Alignment of the community of Mkambati to the ANC created a context within which bridging social capital became possible between these two institutions. The struggle for democracy was bridging communities across the country and was strengthening collective action at a scale far bigger than the localized attempt for land restitution. Land restitution was a feature of collective action at the national scale and this eventually saw the community of Mkambati regaining their land. The struggle for democracy embraced much more than land restitution, and raised expectations of access to work and welfare and the general improvement in the quality of life of people who had been marginalized for so long. Restitution of the Mkambati land coincided with the change in context, one characterized by many expectations of which land was one. Since this new context led to personal expectations and weakening of the overlap between mental models, it weakened the social capital within the

community and the divisions that ensued reduced the capability of the community for collective action.

#### *6.5.3 How social capital may be made more resilient*

The term 'social capital' conveys that it is an asset held by a group of people. I have argued that this can be described by two variables: relational connectivity and relational capital. For capital to be social, people must be connected among themselves (bonding capital) and at times with other groups (bridging capital). But this is not enough, they must also be held together by the quality of their relationships with others, by their relational capital. It is a community's ability to manage relational connectedness and relational capital under changing contexts that confers resilience. But, for people to be connected they need a shared mental model of how the world works, as the community did before colonization, or as they did when contesting the injustice of alienation from their land. The attainment of land restitution and the opening up of their world has created space for multiple interpretations of how the world should work for the community. This challenges relational connectedness and relational capital with potentially serious consequences for resilience of community social capital.

#### *6.5.4 How theories that have not previously been aligned with social capital might enhance understanding*

The study indicates that social capital is context specific because the reasons people have to become, and stay, connected are shaped by how they perceive their world. Context also determines how strongly they feel about an issue and whether they are willing to trust others in their actions to address issues of concern. The social system in which social capital grows and declines is complex and dynamic to the extent that no single theoretical construct is adequate to explain how one should manage resilience. Mental models helps one understand the importance of context, while resilience theory encourages one to take a dynamic view of social capital. To accomplish this understanding, one is required to identify the key variables that define the state of social capital which directs attention to behavioural theory, and more especially, relational connectedness and relational capital. But because self-interest is such a strong



motivational force, power theory holds particular relevance for collective action and in the processes of constructing and sustaining relational connectedness and relational capital.

The use of these theoretical constructs in association with social capital enables this study to provide a better understanding of the role social capital has played both within and beyond the community of Mkambati in their struggle to regain their land. It has also enabled understanding of how one might understand resilience in social capital.

#### *6.5.5 To understand the relationship between social capital and mental models in a community faced with new and changing context*

People use mental models to explore and communicate how they understand context. In this sense there are personal interpretations of the past, the present, and the future. Where people hold shared or at least substantially overlapping mental models they are positioned to connect. But whether or not they do depends on how they explore and develop a shared interpretation and as they do this they construct relational connectedness and relational capital.

Before colonization the community of Mkambati held a shared understanding of their rather small and isolated world. Individual mental models were similar and overlapped. There was potential for change with colonization which created opportunities for the emergence of multiple new mental models. But, isolation and strong traditional institutions supported a dominant mental model that was re-inforced by the injustice of alienation from their land. The strongly shared mental model created conditions favourable for people to connect with each other which, together with the prevailing norms and values, strengthened social capital. On this interpretation I suggest that it is difficult to manage resilience of social capital without an understanding of how individual mental models are constructed and shared as this provides the platform for relational connectedness and relational capital

Even though the community of Mkambati failed to regain their land during various epochs, these contexts strengthened this community's social capital until their land was restituted. During these challenges this community relied on their shared mental models to strengthen their social capital so as to regain their land. The observation in this study is that the community of Mkambati relied on shared mental models which strengthened their social capital even though this community continued to fail to regain their land. Once their land was regained, their mental models dissipated resulting in the disintegration of the social capital that had bonded this community for a long time. A new context informed by democratization and globalization influenced the emergence of new mental models that weakened the community's social capital. Although the Mkambati land had been restituted, new mental models, informed by service delivery, job and business opportunities, divided the community of Mkambati on collective action and fragmented their social capital. Whilst the restitution of the Mkambati land was a victory for the community of Mkambati, the emergence of new mental models had a negative impact on this community's social capital.

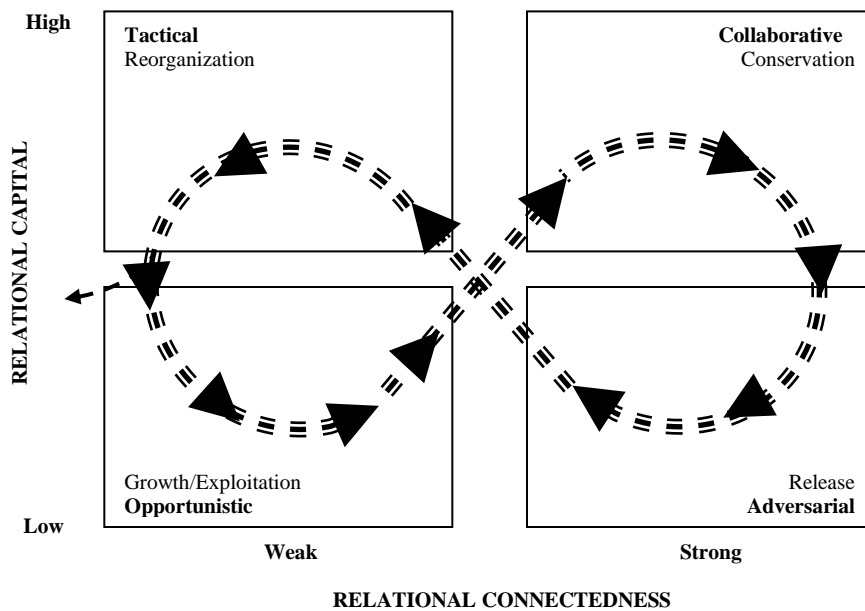
## **6.6 Resilience**

The restitution process culminated in the return of the Mkambati land to the community of Mkambati under a common property regime. I have argued that to be able to overcome the effects of generations of marginalization and to jointly realize the potential benefits of land restitution, the community of Mkambati will require learning and reconstruction of group mental models so as to sustain social cohesion. Much of this learning must be drawn from sources external to the community and so relationships both within and beyond the community will strongly determine both the pace and the relevance of learning. I have also argued that the community faces a new era in which the challenges are not ones which they have previously experienced and so social learning will determine the resilience of the community in the face of change from external forces.

It is instructive to interpret the changes that have occurred in the context of resilience as espoused by Holling (1995), and more recently by Giampietro (2004) and Nkhata *et al.*

(2008). I have presented evidence that the community of Mkambati was unified under Chief Mtono during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and that it remained so largely because of its location that isolated it from the forces of change elsewhere in southern Africa. This isolation prompted the selection of part of the Mkambati land for the leper colony, because leprosy at that time was controlled by isolating affected people.

This understanding conveys an impression of a community that had become specialized over many generations and had achieved a state of maturity in a slowly changing world (Figure 7.1). Giampietro (2004) might argue that such a community, bound together by strong social capital, would be robust and thus able to resist change. It was a community in which social capital (trust and reciprocity) was reflected in collaborative behaviours, strong internal relational connectedness (the degree to which they are connected) between members of the community, and a high level of relational capital (the store of trust and commitment) (Nkhata *et al.*, 2008, Figure 7.2). However, increasing connectedness with the outside world led in time to the appropriation of land by an external government. I have argued that there was little, if any, bridging social capital between the community and those parties associated with expropriation of land, and I have shown that even within the community tensions arose around decisions made by Chief Mtono. Thus it can be understood that relational capital as defined by Nkhata *et al.* (2008), declined (Figure 7.2), and this release was associated with adversarial behaviour and a decline in relational connectedness (Figure 7.2). It provided the stimulus for the community to reorganize around the issues of land restitution and loss of access to resources (Figure 7.2). During this phase of reorganization they exhibited tactical behaviour designed to continuously pressure authorities for return of their land (Figure 7.2).



**Figure 6.2:** A framework based on relational capital and relational connectedness for analyzing change in long-term social relationships (Nkhata *et al.*, 2009).

I have shown that after the restitution of their land the community of Mkambati, although drawn into a much wider world, one in which there were many new potential relationships, were largely excluded, and so relational connectedness was weak, confined in the main to internal connections. But, although relational connectedness decreased, relational capital among the community was kept high by the shared mental model of injustice, the wish to have their land returned, and the actions they took to achieve this goal (Figure 6.2). I have argued that since the land was returned new opportunities for collaboration have arisen. The community, through promoting relational connectedness with other stakeholders, is poised for exploitation of these opportunities (Figure 6.2). However, I have cautioned that opportunistic behaviour emerges under such conditions (Figure 6.2) and that if not managed it can result in a complete change of state. A likely scenario would be progressive privatization of resources and an erosion of the present common property regime. I have argued that a new shared mental model that provides a foundation for expanding relational connectedness and relational capital is necessary to evince the collaborative behaviours necessary for the community to realize the opportunities associated with land restitution. These

behaviours will prove central if social learning is to proceed at a pace that is fast enough to avoid the consequences of opportunistic behaviour.

Giampietro (2004) draws a distinction between robustness, the ability to resist change, and resilience in which there can be multiple states but in which identity is retained. Perhaps centuries ago isolation and slow pace of change contributed to a mature community that was capable of maintaining its identity by resisting change. As the context changed, the community has come under forces of change of which it has little experience, and over which it has little direct control. I suggest that if community members are to maintain identity they will have to exhibit resilience. It seems that they are striving to achieve this through maintaining the common property regime. Whether they can remain a large enough team and control enough power (Giampietro, 2004) to combat perturbations has yet to be seen. The strength of their social (relational) capital and relational connectedness will be central to the outcome.

## **6.7 Shared Mental Model and Collective Action**

Drawing from myriad views from interviewed community members on how and for which purposes the restituted Mkambati land should be used, one can argue that this divergence and contrast in ideas point to a lack of better understanding of tacit beliefs existing within the community of Mkambati. One of the ways of understanding tacit beliefs is through learning. Commenting on organizational learning Argyris and Schon (2004: 35) argue that:

Most organizations have shared assumption that protect the status quo, preclude people from challenging others' troublesome or difficult qualities and characteristics, and provide silent assent to those attributions; hence, very little learning is possible.

While the community of Mkambati has, over the years, been vehemently opposed to the expropriation of their land, it seems that this community was only concerned with the status quo (reclaiming their land for conservation purposes); and failed to develop an understanding of its members' tacit beliefs. In failing to do so the community

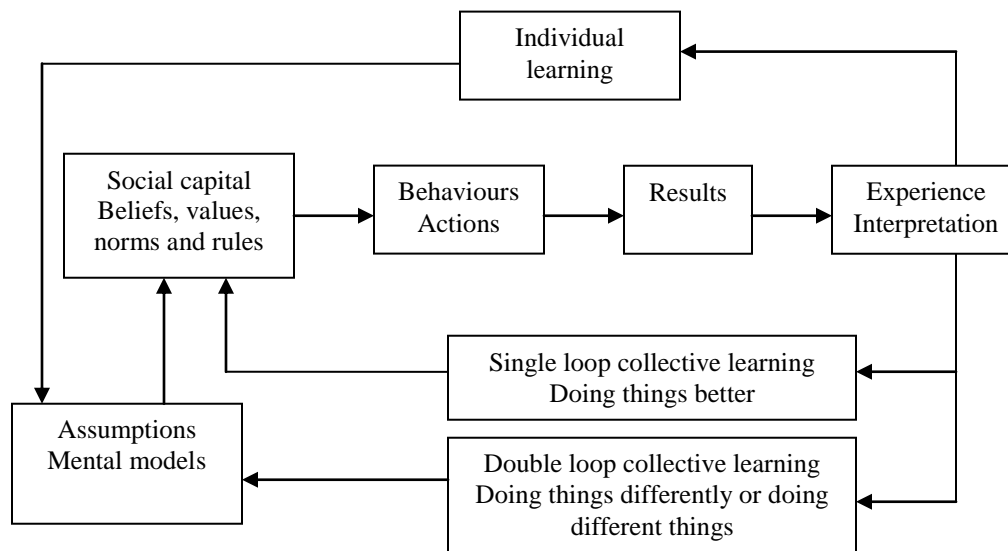
squandered the opportunity to learn from its individual members. Again, and drawing on interviews held with the community of Mkambati, lack of dialogue on the members' assumptions on how their land, once returned, has to be utilized, and how to jointly confront future challenges seems to be a contributing factor to the present disagreement on the use of the restituted Mkambati land for conservation purposes.

This opportunistic behaviour has promoted individual mental models that are influenced by behaviour that is 'external' to the joint community's mental models. Lack of shared mental models does not help to solve the present problems confronting the community of Mkambati. The strategic, and indeed the successful use of the restituted land rely on the community of Mkambati's shared mental models. It is therefore imperative that the community of Mkambati finds a common metaphor that addresses new context and opportunities. Different and divergent ideas on how the Mkambati land should be used are an indication of the instability prevalent within this community. Perhaps one can, at least for now, adopt Alvesson's (2004:397) view that: "Contemporary social life in many ways destabilizes a coherent sense of self identity".

In this study I have attached considerable significance to mental models because as Kim (2004:41) observes, "the mental models in individuals' heads are where the vast majority of an organization's knowledge (both know how and know why) lies." I have suggested that the expropriation of land from the community of Mkambati created in their minds a shared mental model of injustice and need for restitution. They used their social capital built up over generations to direct behaviours toward the desired result of restitution (Figure 7.3). I have also argued that shared mental models are important, particularly where success depends on collective or team action.

I have argued further that, while the shared mental model was explicit and openly stated, individuals would still have held different assumptions about the use of the land and its associated resources once regained. In other words, they held mental models that were not necessarily openly discussed among the community of Mkambati. Some of these models might conceivably have challenged existing norms, values, and rules

and in that way weakened social capital. This informs one of the importance of encouraging the emergence of these models into community discourse. However, 'Capturing individual mental models alone is not sufficient to achieve organizational learning. There needs to be a way to get beyond the fragmented learning of individuals and spread the learning throughout the organization" (Kim, 2004: 47).



**Figure 6.3.** The Learning Organization (**adapted from Hayes and Allinson, 1998**).

I have postulated that the context that has emerged since restitution of land is complex and brings many new opportunities for which the community of Mkambati is not likely to be well prepared. They do not have the experience and opportunity for interpretation that is a foundation for both individual and collective learning (Figure 7.3). More especially, they do not have the experience that equips them to challenge their own and shared mental models. So, it becomes difficult to influence beliefs and behaviours. It seems that interest groups need to draw on external circuits of experience from other groups to enable them to share their mental models and make them explicit. This is particularly important if the community of Mkambati is to learn at the pace that will be required to recover from their marginalization. Because of the diversity of opportunities, groups will have to focus their individual and group learning so as to align their mental models, facilitate cooperative behaviours, and implement coordinated actions.

The understanding gained through this historical analysis affirms the importance of social capital in collective action. More importantly perhaps, it places this in a dynamic context and illustrates how mental modeling can be an aid to learning and to fostering resilience in social capital. While much has been written about organizational learning (e.g. Starkey et al., 2004) in the corporate context, much less is known of such learning in a community organizational context, and, more especially, where people have a history of marginalization. This should prove to be a fertile field for research.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

The regaining of land by the community of Mkambati has not come easy. Contrary to positive expectations, this historic achievement was attained at a considerable cost. Many lives were lost during the 1960 Ngquza rebellion. There was strong opposition by the community of Mkambati to the Natives Land Act of 1960 and the betterment scheme, both of which were regarded by the amaMpondo community as a government-driven initiative aimed at depriving them of their precious resources such as land, livestock, and other valuable resources on which the community of Mkambati relied to sustain their livelihoods. While the land restitution programme has raised expectations of the community of Mkambati that their regained land will enable them to use and access its resources so as to better their livelihoods, this government-driven programme seems to frustrate the community of Mkambati. The co-management arrangement between the community of Mkambati and the Eastern Cape Parks Board has so far failed to yield the expected benefits for this community. This failure to deliver on expectations contributes to a lack of trust between the community of Mkambati and government departments, including the Eastern Cape Parks Board. As indicated by the interviews, trust within the community members is beginning to wane. This decline of trust amongst the community members threatens to erode social capital that has bonded this community for decades. As evidence shows, through regaining their land, the community of Mkambati had hoped that their livelihoods would be better compared to the period before the land settlement agreement.



Unbeknown to the community of Mkambati, regaining their land meant that this community had to be confronted with a new struggle. Instead of freely utilizing their regained land resources in the manner in which they deemed fit, the community of Mkambati had, through government-initiated institutional procedures and regulations, to use this land on the basis of what they perceived as 'foreign guidelines'. For instance, Clause 6 of the Settlement Agreement prescribed that both the community of Mkambati, through the Mkambati Land Trust, and the Eastern Cape Parks Board should be jointly involved in the co-management of the Mkambati Nature Reserve. It seems that this co-management arrangement continues to frustrate the community of Mkambati. This frustration emanates from lack of benefits from this co-management venture. The problems of the community of Mkambati are further compounded by promises and incitements from potential private investors who blame government for lack of development in Mkambati. Desperation within the community is further demonstrated by a member of the Mkambati Land Trust who indicated that the Mkambati Land Trust did try to mitigate against these problems through assuring the community that eventually the community would benefit from their land. However, the Mkambati Land Trust has, for the past decade, been making these promises with no avail.

The world of the community of Mkambati has become increasingly complex. Prior to the arrival of settlers, their world was small and bounded; now boundaries that exist are porous, with people and knowledge moving in and out freely. Initially, the social context was relatively stable, shaped by the strong norms and values that characterize *ubuntu*. People felt a sense of belonging, they were connected and trusted each other; there was little social differentiation, and knowledge was shared. This suggests that social capital is context specific. The particular conditions that pertained and the slow pace of change meant that the community shaped and stabilized its own context and that social capital was constructed and maintained within this context.

If social capital is shaped by communities within particular contexts, then one might argue that it would be eroded if the context became unstable, particularly if it changed faster than a community was able to adjust to it. What is it about a changing context that

erodes social capital? Uncertainty is disruptive because it requires innovation to reduce it, commonly at a time when knowledge and expertise are discontinuously distributed across the community. Instead of the community having a shared mental model, or at least sufficient overlap in their mental models to support collective action, different mental models emerge, each offering a solution. Uncertainty is enhanced and social capital is weakened as people form alliances around particular solutions, causing them to lose overall connectedness.

The community of Mkambati has been exposed to a number of externally driven contextual changes: the expropriation of their land; the imposition of a centralized government; the imposition of the Transkei government; and recently the centralized democratic government. Why was it that the earlier contextual changes strengthened social capital, yet it seems the recent change brought about by the emergence of democracy has had the opposite effect?

I have argued that the community of Mkambati was geographically isolated from mainstream contextual change in South Africa. This isolation brought with it marginalization from opportunity to learn and keep pace with changing socio-political and economic conditions. Because of this, loss of some of their land did not fundamentally change their context. They remained a community with norms and standards that were not challenged; they retained their sense of belonging, their sense of being connected and of mutual respect and trust, their relational capital. Loss of some of their land was an injustice, and not a driver for uncertainty. The sense of injustice, felt by all because of their relational connectedness and relational capital, strengthened their shared resolve to regain their land. In this sense it reduced uncertainty. Their context appears to have been defined by their origins, their isolation, their sense of injustice and their common cause.

The arrival of democracy reduced the isolation experienced by the community of Mkambati. They were free to move about the country and they increasingly connected with the national context. Whereas in the past a shared sense of place accorded people

a common foundation for knowledge, this was no longer the case. Knowledge and expertise became discontinuous and the norms that might once have encouraged co-evolution of knowledge waned and for some perhaps they were perceived as impediments to personal or community progress; access to and ownership of knowledge became more personal and social differentiation increased. One might argue that their origins were becoming less important than their futures for individuals, and the sense of injustice that gave them common cause was lost. The context was changing faster than the community could co-evolve in response. World views changed and mental models of how to cope diversified.

The advent of democracy raised expectations, informed to a considerable degree by knowledge imported from further afield. People expected improvement in the quality of their lives. Many of these expectations had little to do with land and so land lost its central position in the struggle for progress into the wider social economy. Without this dominant shared cause, individual welfare became prominent. Expectations were diverse and the role of land in community welfare became uncertain. Coping with such social uncertainty requires innovation but as knowledge and expertise were discontinuously distributed, uncertainty became disruptive of relational connectedness and relational capital, and hence also of social capital. The conditions necessary for collective action began to weaken and perhaps this explains why the Trust experiences the difficulties it does with constructing a shared mental model that is required for legitimacy and collective action. Something special has to happen to mitigate or remedy this potential for disruption.

The struggle for restitution was sustained by the sense of injustice and consequently, a vision that no matter how long it took the struggle would go on until ownership of the land had been regained. This contrasts with present expectations that government funded welfare will improve in the short term and for some at least, that the benefit stream from the land will be immediate and tangible. Short-term expectations can worsen uncertainty, particularly when they are not met. Until longer-term perspectives gain hold in thinking, particularly around access to and use of the land, prospects for a

shared vision and sense of purpose are poor. Uncertainty may even increase and lead to conflict among the Mkambati Land Trust, the community it represents, and the Eastern Cape government. Whereas the Mkambati Land Trust could in the past draw on the social capital of the community, this has weakened at the time it has to facilitate relational connectedness and relational capital (bridging capital) with government. These parties have to create a new context, a shared context, in which stakeholders hold a shared longer-term vision the legitimacy of which is underpinned by trust.

The community of Mkambati achieved their objective of land restitution, which was as much a moral and political victory, as it was one of regaining access to resources. This released them from a shared cause and they were unprepared for the multiple expectations that emerged. Success came with liabilities. Because of centuries of relative stability they had created a social context characterized by shared understanding and a sense of belonging. It seems they did not anticipate the complex and dynamic nature of the context that would emerge. Their perceptions were narrowed by the dominance of the land issue during the apartheid era in which many other options were dreams at best. Managing the unexpected requires that one senses and seeks to understand the emerging complexity and one prepares for it. The rapid transition to democracy encouraged the emergence of multiple expectations for improved welfare. Whilst many may have sensed, and hoped for a future in which welfare improved, it seems that as a community they were unprepared. The anticipated gains that accompany the land restitution process were not achieved. Community governance weakened in the face of expectations that central government was responsible for and would deliver social benefits far beyond what community leaders were capable of delivering. This contributed to erosion of social capital.

Operating in such dynamic, complex systems typically requires multiple task teams, something that the community may not have had either experience of or the competencies needed with which to engage the diverse and unfamiliar issues that emerged. The Land Trust appears to have retained its focus on what land use would be appropriate, what the benefit stream would be, and how this might be apportioned. It

seems that for many this may have been less pressing than welfare. The relevancy of the Land Trust came under scrutiny, weakening another force that sustained social capital. Social capital is not abstract and it should not be taken for granted; it provides the foundation for coping with uncertainty because being connected with people one's trust allows for experimentation and learning while doing. This is because "credibility and trust are perishable ...every day is a new day in interrelationships and in holding on to trust" (Weick and Sutcliffe 2001:61 and 66). Social capital is dynamic and importantly, it can erode quite suddenly as seems to be happening in the community of Mkambati. Building resilience into social capital requires sensing of trends and timely corrective action, competencies that seem rare in many marginalized communities that are rapidly entering contemporary contexts. How one can create and sustain resilience in social capital provides a challenge for researchers. Reducing uncertainty is clearly important, and this can be achieved when co-learning proceeds at a pace that keeps up with contextual change.

It is indeed accepted that times have evolved since the community of Mkambati had been dispossessed of their land. The return of their land coincided with global demands that are driven by developmental challenges. It is in this perspective that community members often cited infrastructural needs such as roads, health facilities, job opportunities, and other poverty-alleviating aspects as critical attributes that should 'seal' the return of their land. It would be probably appropriate that future research should involve further interrogations on how both government and local communities, who have been previously deprived of their land, should jointly engage in intensive discussions that would set clear cut conditions that should accompany the ceding back of their land. Unfortunately, these wishes and expectations have not materialized for the community of Mkambati. Now, with the land restitution programme yet to positively yield these expected benefits, the community of Mkambati finds itself embroiled in a new struggle – desperately trying to sustain trust and cohesion amongst themselves. Further investigation is also needed to understand social dynamics of communities prior to ceding back their land. For the community of Mkambati the ANC-led government, which they voted into power, is yet to deliver on the promised benefits accompanying the

return of their land. For the community of Mkambati, the return of their land is yet to fulfill their long-awaited dream of sustainable livelihoods.

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**Note.**

The following letter was written during the initial stages of the research project. The letter reflects the initial title of the study. However, as the research project progressed, and interactions made with various actors including the management of the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB) the title of the study was changed. The letter below is the original letter that was written to the management of the Eastern Cape Parks Board.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Request for permission to conduct a study**

26 August 2005

Ms Nokulunga Maswana  
Chief Executive Officer  
Eastern Cape Parks Board  
P O Box 11235  
East London  
5200

Dear Ms Maswana

#### **AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MKAMBATI NATURE RESERVE**

I am Sandile Zeka, a PhD student registered at the Centre for Environment, Agriculture and Development of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (CEAD). Professor Robert Fincham is the Director of the Centre and Professor Charles Breen is my research supervisor. My research is conducted within the People and Conservation Programme.

My research, entitled "*Social capital as a factor in building and sustaining constructive relationships*", focuses on rural communities and their relationships with conservation agencies. More particularly I am seeking to understand the properties of these relationships and how constructive relationships can be fostered. I postulate that social capital provides the foundation for robust relationships that are resilient and enable the

parties to manage the tensions that arise between communities and conservation agencies. My research will elucidate the role of social capital and suggest ways in which it may be strengthened in support of relationships between affected parties. I have completed an extensive review of the literature and am now identifying suitable sites for study.

Mkambati Nature Reserve presents an ideal case-study through which to pursue my research, particularly with the recent establishment of a co-management committee tasked to direct the management of the Reserve. For some years through the Eastern Cape Estuaries Management Programme, CEAD has been working with the Amadiba Community and ACCODA at Mtentu and with Mr Mapiya as the officer in charge of Mkambati. We have also discussed the idea of using Mkambati as a case study with Mr Div de Villiers who has encouraged us to pursue this option.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal requires all staff and research students to commit to a code of conduct that ensures responsible and ethical behaviour. I am personally committed to this code of conduct and assure that I will act responsibly and ethically at all times. We are required to report regularly and fully to stakeholders in the research and so we will be happy to meet your reporting requirements.

I am seeking your in principle agreement to using Mkambati Nature Reserve as a case study and if you are able to offer this support, please advise me on the procedure for registering my research project with the Board.

I thank you for this consideration and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Sandile Zeka (Student)

Rob Fincham (Director)

## Appendix 2



### **ANNEXURE 1: CONSENT DOCUMENT INTERVIEWEES**

FOR A PHD RESEARCH PROJECT TITLED: LAND RESTITUTION AND CONSERVATION: SOCIAL  
CAPITAL IN THE MKAMBATI COMMUNITY

I hereby seek your voluntary participation in a four-year research project in Mkambati as part of my Doctorate in Philosophy of Science (PhD) titled "Land Restitution and Conservation: Social capital in the Mkambati community". This is a longitudinal study that seeks to understand the evolution of social capital in the Mkambati community in their resolve to regain their land. This study investigates how social capital has over the years enabled the community of Mkambati to remain united in their campaign to regain their dispossessed land.

This is a case study that will rely on semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and storytelling as the methods of data collection.

As a member of the community of Mkambati your knowledge of the area and relationships among the community members on how they have, over the years continuously challenged various government with the aim of regaining the Mkambati land that was taken from them will have an immense contribution to this study.

I hereby request you to participate in interviews and give me access to any information that will be relevant to this study. Your participation is on condition that you will be not compensated in either monetary or any other way. Secondly, your participation is voluntary.

I look forward to your positive consideration.

Mr. Sandile Zeka

My contact details:

Sandile Zeka, PhD

1 Embassy House Cnr Bailey Lane and Edmond Street

Arcadia Tshwane 0001

Tel 012 304 9766

Cell 072 727 0585

E-mail [szeka@ai.org.za](mailto:szeka@ai.org.za)

To verify this information please contact my supervisor:

Prof. Charles Breen

Centre for Environment, Agriculture and Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Tel 082 454 1386

E-mail [breen@mweb.co.za](mailto:breen@mweb.co.za)

## DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

## **Appendix 3**

### **Interview schedule**

#### **1. Introductions**

#### **2. Explanation of study purpose**

##### **Theme1. Representativity**

Is the Mkambati Land Trust representative of the community of Mkambati?

How were you elected to the Mkambati Land Trust?

Do you think the community of Mkambati feel represented in the Mkambati Land Trust

How does the Mkambati Land trust ensure that there is continuous social cohesion within the community of Mkambati? How does the community of Mkambati deal with challenges they happen to face?

##### **Theme 2. History**

Do you think the Mkambati Land Trust is representative of the needs of the Mkambati community?

It must be a challenge to run an institution like the community trust. Could you explain to me some of the challenges, and how do you ensure that you overcome them?

*Amakhosi* play a leadership role in many rural areas in South Africa. Tell me, do you have any relationship with them as the Mkambati Land Trust?

As the Community Trust how do you ensure that you work in harmony with both *Amakhosi* and local government Councillors

How would you describe this relationship in relation with your role as the Mkambati Land Trust?

##### **Theme 3. Profile**

Can you tell me why the Mkambati Land Trust was formed?

Tell me, how has your organization performed since its formation?

Do you think you are realizing your goals as the organization?

Is the Mkambati Land Trust regarded as a legitimate partner by the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB)?

### **Theme 3. Topical issues**

The land restitution programme on the Mkambati land has been finalized. Are you now in a position to access land resources at Mkambati Nature Reserve?

As nature conservation agency the ECPB, one would assume, is tasked with the protection of biodiversity: how does your organization ensure that there is local communities' support in this regard?

It has been established, particularly in southern Africa that relationships between protected areas and local communities have, for years been marred by tension: particularly but not exclusively in Mkambati, how does your organization address that perception?

Is it your view that the Mkambati Land Trust is committed to upholding the objectives of the CMC?

How would you describe the nature of discussions within the CMC?

Are there particular instances where the ECPB feels that the commitment of the Mkambati Land Trust in addressing critical issues within the CMC is not what the ECPB expects from this relationship?

How has the relationship been since your involvement with the Mkambati Land Trust in the CMC?

Being two different organizations with varied mandates, one would assume that at times there are tensions between ECPB and the Mkambati Land Trust: how do you deal with those tensions?

How is the ECPB responding to opportunities and challenges within the CMC?

What is the ECPB's perception of the relationship with Mkambati Land Trust for the next ten years?

### **Theme 5. Decision-making and implementation**

Being tasked by your organization to represent it in the CMC, how do you ensure that your community is aware of the process in the CMC?

How would you describe the nature of your participation in the CMC?

It is common for two organizations to have different opinions on how to address issues. In your case how do you deal with such situations?

As the CMC how do you ensure that agreements reached at your meetings are carried forward?

### **Theme 6. Empowerment**

Do you feel empowered to make decisions now that the Mkambati land has been transferred back to the community of Mkambati as legitimate land owners?

Is your participation regarded as legitimate in the CMC?

Do you think your contribution is influential in decisions that are taken?

Has there been an issue you raised in the CMC and was accepted as part of the decision making process?

Would you say that since your participation in the CMC you have learnt things you did not know before?

### **Theme 7. Trust**

How are the relations between the community of Mkabati and various government departments who are involved in the management and decision making processes on access to and use of land resources in Mkambati?

How are the relations between the community of Mkambati and other stakeholders such as the private sector or potential investors in the Mkambati area.

?

As a member of the CMC are you always aware of activities taking place within the CMC?

Are you confident that the ECPB/Community Trust is committed to promoting the objectives of the CMC?

Do you believe that ECPB/Mkambati Land Trust is open enough in the running of the CMC?

How would you describe the nature of your relationship with the ECPB/Mkambati Land Trust in the CMC?

Have you at times thought that things would be better dealt without the CMC?



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