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The Role of Traditional Leaders in Environmental Governance in the Context of Decentralization: A Case Study of Grass Utilization in QwaQwa, Eastern Free State

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A research report submitted to
the Faculty of Science, University of the Witwatersrand,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science in Environmental Sciences

October, 2008

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work except where acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Science in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Herbert Mwalukomo

October, 2008

ABSTRACT

This research investigated the role played by traditional leaders in environmental governance in the context of decentralization, based on a case study of grass utilization in QwaQwa. Specifically, the research focussed on weaving practices under traditional systems and in the current context. While environmental governance debates recognize the importance of the local scale through concepts such as Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) and Local Action 21, environmental roles of traditional leaders in relation to democratic institutions of local governance have not been adequately researched. Using institutional frameworks, effectiveness of traditional institutions of grass utilization in QwaQwa is analysed.

Findings from the research show that the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization is shaped by historical, environmental and political factors that are specific to QwaQwa. In the past, grass was managed through various traditional practices with traditional leaders regulating access and enforcing traditional rules of utilization. In behavioural terms, traditional practices that governed grass utilization especially weaving were effective. Although traditional leaders continue to influence local affairs in QwaQwa, traditional practices in general and the regulatory role of traditional leaders in grass utilization have been eroded. Erosion of traditional practices resulted from the influence of colonial and apartheid policies, misunderstandings of democracy, current local government institutional reform and modernization, all of which undermined traditional mechanisms of environmental governance, including grass utilization.

Overall, this research has demonstrated the fact that institutional mechanisms that impact upon grass utilization are locally defined and influenced by the historical context. Based on these findings, this research calls for broader understanding of traditional leadership in the context of decentralization beyond cultural conceptions.

To my wife Thandie Sharon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible through the support, encouragement and participation of various individuals and organizations. Various mentors, scholars and colleagues at the University of Witwatersrand contributed to the research process by inspiring me intellectually through formal and informal interactions. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Zarina Patel and Dr Emma Archer for building my capacity to undertake advanced academic research through their dedicated supervision of this work.

Many people played key roles in the fieldwork component of this study than I can mention. I would like to thank Kevin Moore, Sandra Taljaard and Alexis Symonds for their guidance in the identification of the study area and participation in the study as respondents. Thanks are also due to Jabulani Qolwane for helping with language translation during data collection. I am grateful to Sheila Vrahimis for her role in identifying a research assistant (translator). I also thank Ntsane Thabana for spending countless hours in taking me to various grass utilization spots in the study area. Heartfelt thanks are due to all community members of QwaQwa and government officials who participated in this research.

This study would not have been possible without the financial support from the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the University of the Witwatersrand. I am thankful for their timely support. I also thank all those who wrote reference letters in support of my applications for research funds. In addition, thanks are due to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) for funding my participation to a conference on Environmental Governance and Democracy held at Yale University, New Haven in May 2008, where part of the research findings were presented.

The moral support and encouragement from my family and friends are appreciated. Special thanks are due to my mum Tusekile, dad Wilford, brothers and sisters for enduring my absence as I carried out this research away from them. I remain indebted to my wife Thandie Sharon for her support in ways too numerous to mention.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCV	Basotho Cultural Village
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CODESRIA	Council for the Development Social Science Research in Africa
CPA	Communal Property Association
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTEEA	Department of Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
FPA	Fire Protection Association
FSDP	Free State Development Programme
GGHNP	Golden Gate Highlands National Park
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
IHDP	International Human Dimensions Programme
KNP	Kruger National Park
LA 21	Local Action 21
MAP	Maluti-a-Phofung
MDTCDP	Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme

MMC	Member of the Municipal Council
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
QNP	QwaQwa National Park
SADT	South African Development Trust
SANParks	South African National Parks
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
TPC	Threshold of Potential Concern
UFS	University of the Free State
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

In South Africa, as in other African countries, traditional leaders[1] play various roles, some of which have environmental significance. Such roles include controlling access to land and natural resources (Shackleton *et al,* 2002; Beinart, 2003; Lutz and Linder, 2004). Environmental roles of traditional leaders have been eroded by political, cultural and religious changes over time (Lawes, *et al*, 2004; Martitz and Shackelton, 2004). The involvement of traditional leaders in colonial governments as agents of indirect rule tainted their image (Mamdani, 1996; Beall, 2006). Despite this negative history, traditional leaders have remained influential especially among rural populations (Ribot, 1999). Recognition of this influence has been the basis of proposals to define the role of traditional leaders in South Africa in relation to democratic institutions (Venson, 1997; Keulder, 1998; Pieres, 2000; Pycroft, 2002) amidst contestations surrounding the legitimacy of traditional leadership in democratic contexts (Mamdani, 1996; Ntsebeza, 2005; Beall, 2006).

While traditional leadership is often understood from a cultural perspective (Garrigue, 2004; Lutz and Linder, 2004), defining the role of traditional leaders in the current context requires understanding traditional leadership beyond cultural and traditional practices. This research examines the role of traditional leaders in the current context without undermining the cultural context that shapes the nature of traditional leadership in QwaQwa in the Eastern Free State. In

[1] The term 'traditional leader' is generally used when referring to chiefs of various ranks (Ntsebeza, 2005). In this thesis, the term 'traditional leader' is used interchangeably with 'chief.'

particular, this research focuses on understanding the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance based on the case of grass utilization.

Due to the proximity of QwaQwa to the protected areas of Golden Gate Highlands National Park and QwaQwa National Park, the study explores the implications for the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization, amalgamation of the two parks and other institutional processes affecting them in both the protected areas and communal land. The establishment of Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme which affects the two protected areas and part of QwaQwa also forms part of the institutional context within which this study is situated.

Various interpretations of decentralization as discussed in Chapter Two have implications for the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in QwaQwa. For example, aligning decentralization with the role of municipalities (Larson, 2002) helps to understand the role of traditional leaders in relation to elected leaders in the current context. On the other hand, the focus on community based conceptions of decentralization (Ribot, 1999) is useful in the analysis of the implications of institutional developments in protected areas for the future role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in protected areas and communal land.

Central to this research is the conceptual understanding of environmental governance. Unlike decentralization which focuses on local aspects, environmental governance recognizes multiple actors at various scales (Paterson, 1999; Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003). A dominant theme of the local scale of environmental governance is Local Agenda 21 (which was later renamed 'Local Action' 21) (www.iclei.org), a planning tool for integrating environmental issues with development (Hardoy *et al,* 2006). Even though the implementation of LA 21 is voluntary, the statutory requirement by the integrated development planning (IDP) process in South Africa (Todes, 2004) indirectly necessitates

implementation of LA 21 by all municipalities. For this reason, this study explores the extent to which LA 21 is implemented in a rural context of QwaQwa.

Based on the understanding of institutions as rules and norms that guide interactions (Ostrom, 2005; IHDP, 2006), it follows that institutions provide mechanisms for environmental governance (Dietz *et al,* 2003). It is for this reason that institutional frameworks are used to understand traditional institutions of environmental governance in this study. Specifically, this study utilizes frameworks of institutional design and institutional effectiveness.

The role of traditional leaders in environmental governance is interrogated based on the case of grass utilization. Within this scope, the focus is on weaving practices. Increasing commercialization of weaving has been witnessed in recent years in South Africa (Shackleton, 2005; Makhado and Kepe, 2006) as well as other Southern African countries (Cunningham and Terry, 2006). Increasing commercialization has important livelihood benefits (Kepe, 2002, Shackleton, 2005). More research is required, however, to understand the institutional context governing grass utilization in the context of commercialization. It is this growing body of knowledge that this research seeks to contribute to by focussing on the role played by traditional leaders in grass utilization.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is premised on an understanding that traditional structures may, in part, define the way in which communities interact with the biophysical environment. Since traditional leaders are known to be custodians of tradition (Olowu and Wusnch, 2004; Oomen, 2005), an understanding of traditional belief systems and practices provides a framework for understanding the role played by traditional leaders in environmental governance. The research process was guided by the following three questions:

- What belief systems and practices govern grass utilization in QwaQwa?

- What roles do traditional leaders play in grass utilization based on traditional belief systems and practices in QwaQwa?
- What are the implications of traditional beliefs and practices for effectiveness of traditional governance arrangements for grass utilization in QwaQwa?

Given the change in the context of local governance in South Africa and other African countries, analysis of traditional practices is undertaken in relation to the current institutional framework of environmental governance at the local level. Situating the study in this context is meant to provide insight into how traditional institutions of governance fit within the scope of the current institutional framework of environmental governance in general and grass utilization in particular.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Chapter One provides an overview of the theoretical influences and outlines research questions being addressed by the study. **Chapter Two** develops a conceptual framework for the study through a detailed review of literature on traditional leadership, decentralization and environmental governance. The review draws on theory and empirical studies on governance of natural resources to identify gaps that help to define the relevance and scope of this study. **Chapter Three** outlines the methodology that was employed to generate relevant data for the research. In addition, Chapter Three outlines the sampling criteria and the data analysis approach. **Chapter 4** sets the scene of the study by describing the environmental setting and socio-economic conditions of the study area. In addition, Chapter 4 outlines the historical context of traditional leadership in QwaQwa.

Chapters Five and Six and Seven present findings of the study and discuss their implications for the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance.

Specifically, **Chapter Five** presents and discusses traditional practices and the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in the historical context. **Chapter Six** presents the current framework that governs grass utilization in QwaQwa in terms of policy and practice. **Chapter Seven** outlines institutional developments that are currently underway in Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP), QwaQwa National Park (QNP) and Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP). These institutional developments are described with respect to their implications for the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in QwaQwa. Based on discussions of findings in chapters Five, Six and Seven, key issues are summarized by way of conclusion in **Chapter Eight**.

1.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has mapped out the theoretical underpinnings to be further developed through literature review in Chapter 2. The chapter has also outlined questions that guided the research process. Traditional leaders are known for playing environmental roles such as allocation of land. Despite the introduction of electoral leadership at local level, traditional leaders in many African countries continue to influence local affairs especially in rural areas. Consequently, defining a possible role of traditional leaders in democratic governance seems inevitable. Defining a possible role of traditional leaders in local governance requires understanding their traditional functions in relation to the context. It is against this background that this research seeks to understand the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance in QwaQwa, based on the case of grass utilization.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a review of literature on human/environment interactions in traditional African societies in order to determine how they fit in the broader context of environmental governance debates. The review starts with a discussion of traditional leadership and its environmental roles. This is followed by a review of debates surrounding traditional leadership in modern democratic governance and the context of decentralization in which the study is situated. The review ends with a rationale for focusing on weaving as the basis of analysing traditional environmental governance in QwaQwa.

The first section of the chapter discusses the relationship between traditional leadership and the environment by outlining environmental roles of traditional leaders and citing specific examples to this effect. Section two provides an overview of the evolution of environmental roles of traditional leaders. Section three is a theoretical debate on tradition and modernity as it applies to local and environmental governance. The fourth section discuses various interpretations of decentralization and the implications for the role of traditional leadership in environmental governance. This is followed by a discussion of environmental governance in Section five. Institutional frameworks for understanding traditional governance of grass utilization are presented and discussed in section six. Section seven provides the context of the case study by looking at broader debates and trends surrounding natural resource utilization in general and grass utilization in particular.

2.1 TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE ENVIRONMENT[2]: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The functions of chieftaincy in South Africa have always included some regulation of natural resources (Beinart, 2003). One of the functions of chiefs is to allocate land (Lutz and Linder, 2004; Beal, 2006). This role is central to the chief's political authority in that access to land is dependent on acceptance of the political authority of the traditional leader (Oomen, 2005). Since many natural resources such as trees, grass, soil and watercourses are found on land, it follows that considerations made or ignored by chiefs in allocating land have environmental implications.

Environmental roles of chiefs are also reflected in the spiritual beliefs found in many African cultures. In Chimanimani area of Manica Province in Mozambique, for example, sanctions for transgressions of rules relating to land, resources and the environment are believed to be meted out through spirits as the owners of resources (Anstey and Sousa, 1999). In certain rural areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), water spirits are believed to inhabit natural water sources that hold communal importance (Peterson, 2006). Farming in forest areas that surround such water sources is prohibited, thereby ensuring sustainable use of water and biodiversity conservation (Peterson, 2006). Since chiefs are known to be custodians of tradition (Olowu and Wusnch, 2004; Oomen, 2005), it is their role to ensure that such values are adhered to and passed on to future generations, more so because they (chiefs) are regarded as intermediaries between the ancestors and the living (Assimeng, 1996).

South African examples of traditional control of resource use based on spiritual beliefs include the traditional value attached to Thanthe forest in the Soutpansberg Mountains in Limpopo Province. This forest is regarded by the

[2] The term 'environment' can be used to mean different things in different contexts and disciplines (Barry, 1999). The meaning adopted in this research is that of natural resources.

Tshidzivhe people as a royal dwelling place of their headmen, six of whom are known to have been buried there. As a result of this belief, any form of natural resource utilization within the forest is prohibited (Eeley *et al,* 2004). In KwaZulu-Natal, the Gwaliweni (Hlatlikulu) forest in the Lebombo mountains north of the Pongola River has traditionally been protected by the Zulu people as a royal forest because it is where the Zulu king Dingaan was buried (Moll, 1977). Spiritual beliefs also exist in the Umnga municipal area in the Eastern Cape where communities, in 2004, resisted the establishment of a hydro power plant at a waterfall that has great spiritual significance for diviners in the region (Bernard and Kumalo, 2004). These spiritual beliefs and actions have had environmental implications even if management of the environment was not the primary motivator.

2.2 EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ROLES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

Traditional conservation practices have been eroded by political, cultural and religious changes over time (Lawes, *et al*, 2004; Martitz and Shackleton, 2004). By implication, functions of traditional leaders of controlling access to natural resources have also been eroded. Since they were the focal point of resistance to the British rule, chiefs in South Africa were supplanted by government and appointed as headmen, administrators, legislators and magistrates of their respective areas (Tapscott, 1996). The authority of chiefs in natural resources management was weakened by transferring their functions to magistrates or Forestry and Agricultural officials (Martitz and Shackleton, 2004).

Under apartheid, traditional leaders were assigned a tribal homeland as a way of reinforcing racial and ethnic segregation. Traditional leaders then exercised political control over homeland inhabitants. Apart from tribal affairs, they also performed functions on behalf of central government (Pycroft, 2002). During this period, little attention was paid by the state to supporting the management of natural resources on communal land. Instead, the focus was on protected areas

(Martitz and Shackleton, 2004). Post-apartheid policy reforms have further undermined the role of traditional authorities in communal resource management (Martitz and Shackelton, 2004). In particular, traditional authorities continue to be weakened by lack of clarity regarding their role and responsibility relative to local government and other new structures of governance (Rihoy, *et al* 1999).

Environmental functions of traditional leaders have also evolved in other African countries as a result of colonial interference and subsequent political changes. Prior to colonial occupation, traditional leaders, in Botswana, controlled land allocation and management systems on tribal land (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). During the protectorate period, the state took over land tenure and use systems which led to many natural resources such as wildlife being declared as belonging to the state (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). The post-independence government retained these rights and switched chiefs' former powers over land to Land Boards in which chiefs are merely ex-officio members (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). As a result of these changes, indigenous conservation methods were abandoned, leading to more indiscriminate methods of natural resource harvesting in some places (Rihoy *et al*, 1999).

The Botswana model of Land Boards was replicated in Namibia where chiefs also used to control allocation of land and use of natural resources prior to colonial governance (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). Due to their previous role in land allocation, chiefs in Namibia played a central role in the development of community based wildlife conservation (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). They had overall authority in game guard projects (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). Later, conservancy committees were established in which chiefs became mere patrons (Rihoy, *et al,* 1999). Consequently, chiefs became less involved in decision making on wildlife issues (Rihoy *et al*, 1999).

2.3 TRADITION IN MODERNITY: A CONTRADICTION TO PROGRESS?

Prior to colonial occupation, most African communities were governed by chiefs (Keulder, 1998). Despite recognising that chiefs acted on behalf of colonial powers as agents of indirect rule (Mamdani, 1996), most African states have, in practice, chosen to co-exist with traditional leaders after attaining independence (Beall, 2006). Many analysts, however, consider formal recognition of traditional leaders by independent African states to be retrogressive and contradictory to democratic ideals (Mamdani, 1996; Ribot, 1999; Ntsebeza, 2005; Beall, 2006). From this perspective, African governments cannot claim to be democratic while accommodating traditional leadership.

The disconnection between recognition of traditional leadership and democratic governance is based on what are known to be non-democratic tendencies inherent in the institution of traditional leadership. Unlike democratic governance where legitimacy of leadership is based on electoral representation, succession to traditional leadership is hereditary (Beall, 2006). On the basis of this argument, traditional leadership is discredited for lacking the means of holding leaders accountable to the electorate (Beall *et al*, 2005). Implied in this discourse is the direct association of elections with effective representation.

A contrary discourse suggests that democratic elections do not assure accountable representation because elections can be manipulated (Ribot, 1999). It is further argued that elections in themselves do not guarantee representatives who will deliver on expected outcomes (Anderson, 2006). This phenomenon is sometimes reflected in environmental projects where instead of representing local populations, elected bodies may represent their own interests or that of particular leaders (Ribot, 1999). For example, members of a committee that was set up to facilitate management of Moribane Forest Reserve in the Mpunga area of Manica Province in Mozambique were perceived by locals as project workers rather than representatives of local interests. This distrust stemmed from flaws in the electoral process of the committee and the fact that the committee was

serving the interests of an illegitimate chief who put them into power. As a result of these factors, people's participation in the project was constrained (Serra, 2001).

Another ground on which traditional leadership falls short of democratic expectations is the general exclusion of women from office (Walker, 1994; Beal, 2006). Likewise, this criticism is valid if viewed within a democratic paradigm. Alternative views suggest that non-participation of women in traditional societies is based on a value system which assigns distinct roles to genders without necessarily undermining the skills and capabilities of women (Garrigue, 2004). From this perspective, performance of traditional leadership is understood based on other factors such as: assurance of security against potential aggressions by neighbouring communities, respect for cosmic order, administration of justice in accordance with traditional rules, improvement of living conditions, respect for social values and ensuring that ownership and benefits of natural resources remain inside the community (Garrigue, 2004).

It follows then that regardless of its merits or demerits, traditional leadership is fundamentally different from democratic governance. It would be expected, therefore, that by adopting democratic governance, post-independent African states have chosen to do away with traditional leadership. On the contrary, a series of legislation has been passed in South Africa since 1994 which provides constitutional protection to traditional authorities (Beall, 2006). In independent states of former French colonies such as Senegal and Burkina Faso, chiefs were incorporated in administrative structures as civil servants (Pacere, 1997; Ribot, 1999). Attempts to explain this irony point to the recognition by African states of the influence of traditional leaders on their subjects (Ribot, 1999). Beall (2006:459) describes the political implications of the influence of traditional leaders in many African countries by stating that 'the power and influence of traditional leaders is such that politicians seeking elected office compete with them at their peril.'

The continued influence of traditional leaders in South Africa despite the introduction of democratic institutions at local level has led some analysts to conclude that traditional leadership is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future (Keulder, 1998; Rihoy *et al,* 1999; Pycroft, 2002). This conclusion is influenced by perceptions of many local communities who want both chieftaincy and democratic institutions to work together in fostering development (Oomen, 2000; Goodenough 2002; Williams, 2004). According to Williams (2004), some communities even encourage their traditional leaders to take part in electoral processes thus indicating that communities will not simply choose between traditional and elected leadership.

It seems then that democratic structures of governance may not avoid working with traditional leaders one way or the other. For this reason, there is a growing academic literature on the need to define the role of traditional leaders in relation to democratic institutions in general (Venson, 1997; Keulder, 1998; Pieres, 2000; Goodenough 2002; Pycroft, 2002) and environmental management in particular (Rihoy *et al,* 1999). Policy attempts to define a new role for traditional leadership have taken into account the cultural functions of traditional leadership. This has led to criticisms by traditional leaders of confining their role to mere custodians of culture (Williams, 2004). Emphasis on the cultural functions of traditional leaders in policy discourses appears to be shaped by lack of adequate information on other roles played by traditional leaders in the context of political pluralism and modernity.

It is against this background that this research seeks to complement existing knowledge on traditional leadership by examining both cultural and current functions of traditional leaders in QwaQwa. Cultural functions are included in this study because they provide the historical context and basis for current functions. In particular, this research is concerned with the role of traditional leaders in natural resource governance based on the case of grass utilization. The

existence of traditional leaders alongside elected leaders is believed to have created an open access situation on communal land resulting in environmental damage (Ntsebeza, 2002). By examining cultural and current functions of traditional leaders in grass utilization, the environmental implications of the existence of traditional leaders in the context of democratic local government in QwaQwa are examined.

2.4 THE DECENTRALIZATION CONTEXT

The shift towards democratic governance in African countries places traditional leadership in a context of decentralization. Decentralization refers to the transfer of power, resources, and administrative capacities of central government to those who are mostly affected by the exercise of power (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001). The rationale for decentralization is the need for people to have a say in their own affairs, thereby promoting political justice (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001) and efficient service delivery (Larson, 2002).

The specific meaning of decentralization depends on what type of authority is being transferred and to whom. When the central state redistributes authority to its own representatives within defined geographic units, the process is called ‘deconcentration’ or ‘administrative decentralization’ (Oyono, 2004). Accountability in deconcentration is upward to the central state (Ribot, 2002). ‘Devolution’, also known as ‘democratic decentralization’ is said to have occurred when power has been transferred to local governments and to authorities representative of and accountable to local populations (Ribot, 2002).

Despite the various meanings associated with the term, decentralization literature is primarily concerned with transfer of management responsibility to elected municipal governments (Larson, 2002). From this perspective, decentralization in South Africa is one of the means of addressing past imbalances created by policies of separate development. Prior to the introduction of majority rule in 1994, land administration and other functions of rural governance on communal

land were administered by tribal authorities who were an extended arm of central government. The post-1994 South African government attempts to decentralize local governance by transferring administrative functions and powers to municipalities which are governed by elected leaders (councillors) (Ntsebeza, 2002). The establishment of local municipalities is an effort to bring service delivery and governance closer to people. In this regard, the existence and functions of local municipalities is what is referred to as the 'decentralization context' in this research. Based on this understanding of decentralization, the effect of post-apartheid local government reform on traditional rules governing utilization of grass in QwaQwa is explored.

While decentralization literature tends to focus on local governments, natural resource management (NRM) literature emphasizes community based conceptions of decentralization of the management of natural resources (Ribot, 1999). The latter has been the basis for the wide body of literature on Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM). NRM literature focuses on decentralization of NRM responsibilities to affected populations beyond the local government bureaucracy. Despite this emphasis, examples exist of countries in which NRM responsibilities are decentralized to local governments such as Bolivia (Kaimowitz, 1998) Nicaragua (Larson, 2002), Cameroon (Oyono, 2004) and Zimbabwe (Hulme and Murphree, 1999). The community focus of NRM decentralization is important to the scope of this study. From the NRM perspective, the 'decentralization context' in this research includes other institutional processes that have (or are likely to have) an effect on grass utilization in QwaQwa. These include: SANParks' development of a resource use policy; amalgamation of QwaQwa and Golden Gate Highlands National Parks; and the establishment of Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme.

The existence of traditional authorities is both an opportunity and a possible source of conflict in CBNRM initiatives. Due to their influence, traditional leaders

can either encourage or frustrate CBNRM efforts (Rihoy *et al*, 1999; Serra, 2001; Hara, 2004, Child, 2004). Empirical evidence shows that exclusion of traditional leaders undermines prospects for effective outcomes from CBNRM initiatives (Shackleton *et al,* 2002; Hinz, 2003; Hara, 2004, Mauambeta *et al*, 2007). This realization appears to be at the centre of CBNRM programmes in which chiefs are included in governance structures. For example, chiefs in Botswana are involved in CBNRM by presiding over meetings and becoming members of community trusts that are formed to manage resources (Rihoy *et al*, 1999). In South Africa, the case of the Makuleke in the northern part of Kruger National Park (KNP) in which the chief is an ex-oficio chair of the executive committee of the communal property association (CPA) is an example of traditional leaders being involved in CBNRM (Koch, 2004).

The possibility for involvement of traditional leaders in CBNRM does not undermine the fundamental differences between formal CBNRM programmes and indigenous systems of resource management. While resource use is regulated by existing traditional authorities in indigenous systems, formal CBNRM programmes involve the creation of new governance structures (Turner, 2004). In general, CBNRM programmes are shaped by forces that operate from outside the context in which CBNRM occurs (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001; Koch, 2004). External forces may include donors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001). Furthermore, CBNRM programmes are associated with the application of commodity values to natural resources which may conflict with the spiritual ecological principles in indigenous regimes (Bernard and Kumalo, 2004). This research investigates indigenous systems of resource management in QwaQwa. However, situating the study in the context of decentralization enables an understanding of the implications of indigenous systems of resource management for CBNRM.

2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: A GLOBAL TREND WITH LOCAL IMPLICATIONS

Unlike CBNRM and other forms of NRM decentralization, 'environmental governance' recognizes the role of multiple actors at various scales in the management of environmental resources. Described as the 'means of governing', governance focuses on the means for allocating resources and exercising control and coordination (Rhodes, 1996 in Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003). Unlike the term 'government' which refers to the authoritative exercise of power by the state (Vogler and Jordan, 2003), governance encompasses and often transcends the state to include non-state actors including the private sector and civil society (Allah-Mensah, 2003).

Environmental governance is rooted in the notion that the state is simultaneously too big and too small to adequately deal with environmental problems which occur at international, transnational, national and local scales (Hempel, 1996; Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003). Consequently, it is argued that governance practices must shift upwards to international/transnational institutions and downwards to local organizations in order to deal effectively with environmental problems (Hempel, 1996). Besides the spatial considerations, environmental governance also opens up space for participation in environmental decision making of broader institutional structures generally termed as 'civil society' (Peters, 2002).

The local dimension of environmental governance is often understood to have found its expression in the framework of Local Agenda (LA) 21. LA 21 is a component of Agenda 21, one of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit of 1992. LA 21 focuses on the role of local authorities in the implementation of sustainable development. The recognition and participation of local authorities is deemed necessary due to the realization that the problems being addressed by Agenda 21 originate from local activities and that local authorities play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public (Lafferty and Eckerberg,

1998 in Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003). As a way of demonstrating commitment to the implementation of sustainable development, the word 'Agenda' was replaced with 'Action' at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 (www.iclei.org). Implementation of LA 21 is guided by principles of planning for sustainable development namely, community based issue analysis; action planning; implementation and monitoring; and evaluation and feedback (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, 1996)

In the South African context, LA 21 is compared to the Integrated Development Planning (IDPs) process (Coetzee, 2002). The IDP is a planning tool for municipalities to achieve their development mandate (Sowman, 2002). Unlike LA 21 which is voluntary, the IDP is a statutory requirement (Todes, 2004). However, by providing for the integration of environmental issues into IDPs, all local authorities are theoretically supposed to be involved in LA 21 implementation. In practice, few local authorities have incorporated environmental sustainability in their planning (Todes, 2004). Many local authorities have not been able to incorporate environmental sustainability in their planning due to lack of guidance on how to integrate environmental issues in the planning process (Stevens, 1999 in Sowman, 2002). Capacity constraints in municipalities also affect their ability to effectively incorporate environmental issues in planning processes (Foundation for Contemporary Research, 1998 in Sowman, 2002).

In South Africa, LA 21 has formally been implemented by major metropolitan cities of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg (www.iclei.org). According to Gordon and Richardson (2000 in Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003), LA 21 has in effect simply given impetus to existing environmental initiatives by local authorities. In other words, it is possible for local authorities to be involved in environmental initiatives in line with the principles of sustainable development planning without being described as implementing LA 21. Based on this argument, could it be that

some rural communities in South Africa have also been involved in the implementation of LA 21 without being formally noticed as such?

According to Turner (2002), since indigenous care for nature was replaced by colonial and modern practice, nature conservation in South Africa has been largely restricted to protected areas in whose management rural communities have little to no role. The implicit assumption of this observation is that there is hardly any conservation taking place outside state controlled protected areas. By examining traditional practices of grass utilization in QwaQwa, this research explores existence or non-existence of conservation practices, thereby determining the extent to which LA 21 is being implemented or neglected in the area.

2.6 INSTITUTIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The role of institutions in environmental governance has been widely debated. According to Ostrom (2005:1) institutions are 'prescriptions that humans use to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions'. It follows from this and related definitions (IHDP, 2006) that institutions provide the mechanisms for environmental governance (Dietz et al, 2003). By implication, institutions can either cause or solve environmental problems depending on their design. Lack of effective governance institutions at the appropriate scale can lead to numerous environmental problems (Dietz *et al*, 2003). At the same time, faulty institutional arrangements may cause large scale environmental problems (Young, 2007). This significance of institutions has generated interest in the scholarship of institutional characteristics that facilitate or undermine environmental sustainability. In this study, traditional arrangements that govern grass utilization are analysed with respect to frameworks of institutional design and institutional effectiveness.

Institutional design defines the nature of institutions in terms of their basis for existence, the actors involved and the processes followed in decision making. Studies of common property regimes have led to the identification of design principles that characterize robust institutions (Ostrom, 1990). According to Ostrom (1990), institutions are likely to remain relevant and operational for long periods if they meet the following seven design principles:

- ***Clearly defined boundaries***
    - Defining boundaries of common property resources helps in understanding what is being managed and for whom. Defining boundaries also helps to guard against exploitation of resources by 'outsiders' who do not invest any effort in managing the resources.

- ***Congruence between appropriation and provision rules for resource exploitation***
    - This principle is based on the need to balance appropriation such as rules restricting time, place technology, and/or quantity of resource units with local conditions and provision rules requiring labour, materials, and/or money. The principle serves to ensure equitable deployment of skills and resources in situations which require participation of all affected members to meet a collective goal.

- ***Collective choice arrangements***
    - Most people affected by the rules must be able to participate in changing them.

- ***Effective monitoring procedures***
    - Effective monitoring procedures must be in place and monitors of rules must be resource users or accountable to them.

- ***Graduated sanctions:***
    - Resource users who violate rules will be liable to sanctions graduated in terms of degree of the violation.

- ***Conflict resolution mechanisms:***
    - Rapid access to low cost arenas to resolve conflicts.

- ***Recognition of the right of resource users to devise their own institutions by external (government) authorities:***
    - This principle is based on the premise that effectiveness of rules for managing local resources can not be guaranteed if government officers see themselves as the only ones with authority to set rules. It would be very difficult under such circumstances to enforce or even to set the rules at any other level since such rules would be open to challenge (Ostrom, 1990).

Although Ostrom's design principles provide a major framework for understanding the nature of traditional institutions in this study, they are not applied uncritically. The analytical framework is enriched by critiques of underlying theories on which Ostrom's principles are based. Firstly, the idea of exclusivity of use that necessitates defining the 'outsider' in communally owned resources (or common property) as suggested by the principle of boundary definition is questioned based on empirical examples suggesting flexible exploitation of resources by some communities without regard for any boundaries (Peters, 2000; Dore, 2001).

Another critique relates to the 'collective action problem,' a dominant theme in public choice literature[3]. According to the collective action problem, individuals have no incentive to participate in collective action because the benefits of participation are collective rather than individual in nature (Olson, 1965). This

[3] Public choice literature discusses prospects and constraints to participation by individuals in activities that are of public interest (Olson, 1965; Rydin and Pennington, 2000).

argument is countered by the design principle of 'collective choice' which argues for the existence and, therefore, necessitates participation of many affected members for an institution to be robust. Critiques of the collective choice principle align themselves with the collective action theory by contending that individual choices continue to drive people's involvement in collective action (Peters, 2002).

A broader critique suggests that we cannot have general institutional recipes without due regard to the context (Young, 2007). According to this argument, design principles are necessary but not sufficient to address global environmental problems, as articulated in the following statement. For example, although monitoring procedures are necessary, they are not sufficient because individual members of a group can cheat even with monitoring mechanisms in place (Young, 2007). Similarly, all the other design principles are, according to this argument, necessary but not sufficient to deter undesired resource exploitation. Based on this critique of design principles, it is suggested that flexibility should be exercised to allow for development of governance systems well suited to specific situations instead of prescribing a set of externally determined conditions (Young, 2007). Implied in this discourse is the notion that suitability of institutions is context specific and cannot be measured, therefore, using a single set of criteria (such as Ostrom's principles).

In other words, having well designed institutions in conceptual terms does not guarantee smooth delivery of intended outcomes in the real world. The effect of institutional design on the environment is determined by the effectiveness of the institutional arrangement. For this reason and taking note of the other critiques discussed above, an additional framework of institutional effectiveness is used to understand traditional arrangements in QwaQwa, thereby complementing the institutional design framework. Institutional effectiveness can be understood as the role of institutions in shaping or moulding behaviour (Young, 1992). While institutional design defines the *nature* of an institution, institutional effectiveness measures its *impact*.

In environmental governance, an institution that promotes positive environmental behaviour is said to be effective. Although environmental quality is the ultimate indicator of effectiveness, behavioural practices are good indicators in themselves because it is unlikely that environmental improvement will result in the absence of positive environmental behaviour. As Mitchell (2007:5) notes: "evidence that an institution did not change human behaviour undermines any claim of that institution's influence on environmental quality, even in the face of dramatic improvements in environmental quality." Effectiveness of traditional institutions in QwaQwa is seen in behavioural terms through traditional practices of grass utilization that can be associated with good environmental quality.

2.7 UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES BASED ON GRASS WEAVING

Natural resources such as non-timber plant products are important sources of livelihoods to rural communities (Kepe, 2003; Makhado and Kepe, 2006; Pereira *et al*, 2006). Efforts to quantify the livelihood contribution of natural resources in South Africa have shown that natural resources can help to alleviate poverty through household consumption and trade (Kepe, 2002; Ntshona, 2002; Shackleton, 2005; Shackleton *et al*, 2008). In QwaQwa, grass is known to have important livelihood functions as it is used for grazing (Schoemann, 2002), weaving (Slater, 2002a) and thatching (Schoemann, 2002). It is in recognition of this value of grass that interrogation of the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance is based on practices of grass utilization in QwaQwa. Specifically, the study examines traditional institutions of environmental governance by focusing on weaving practices.

Although traditional environmental governance systems can be understood from all uses of grass, weaving provides a good basis for analysing the role of traditional leaders in the context of decentralization because it is becoming increasingly important in the modern context. Grass weaving has always been

done traditionally to make household items such as mats, brooms and ropes in QwaQwa (Slater, 2002a; Moffett, 1997) and other parts of South Africa such as the Eastern Cape (Kepe, 2002) and Limpopo (Rogerson and Sithole, 2001). Recent trends have shown increasing commercialization of weaving as a result of the income benefits realized from trade in grass and other natural resource based products (Shackleton, 2005; Cunningham, 2006; Makhado and Kepe, 2006). The same trend has been observed in other Southern African countries such as Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Cunningham and Terry, 2006).

The development of a market for grass products presents an opportunity for people to start or increase weaving to broaden their income base. This trend has important governance implications affecting traditional leadership. More grass would have to be harvested for weaving at a commercial scale than would be required for producing items meant for household use. According to Cunningham and Terry (2006), increasing commercialization of weaving necessitates having mechanisms for ensuring sustainable supply of raw materials. In other words, it would be unrealistic to expect that traditional rules governing access to grass for domestic weaving would remain effective in a commercial environment. Various examples discussed in Section 2.2 above have shown the shifting role of traditional leaders in response to changing political systems of governance. Focussing on weaving practices helps to understand how traditional leaders have responded to changes in the use pattern of grass. At the same time, focussing on weaving practices helps to understand the implications of the current institutional context on grass management in the context of commercial utilization.

2.8 SUMMARY

Traditional leaders fulfil various functions of environmental significance. While their role in democratic governance is contested, their resilience is not. With democratization of most African countries, many traditional leaders are operating in a context of decentralization. Various interpretations of decentralization are

useful to understand the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance. For example the local government perspective which focuses on the transfer of power to municipalities is necessary to understand the role played by traditional leaders in relation to democratic institutions. The NRM community conception of decentralization is also useful in understanding the extent to which traditional leaders are involved in environmental governance without being part of formal local government structures. The extent to which LA 21 is implemented in QwaQwa is examined.

Institutional frameworks of analysis are used in this study to understand effectiveness of traditional institutions in environmental governance using grass weaving as the focus of enquiry. These frameworks are institutional design and institutional effectiveness. With regard to institutional design, analysis of traditional institutions is based on Ostrom's design principles of defined boundaries; appropriate rules for resource exploitation; collective choice, effective monitoring procedures; graduated sanctions for violation of rules; conflict resolution mechanisms; and recognition by government authorities of the right of resource users to devise their own institutions. Effectiveness of traditional institutions is analysed by examining traditional practices of the study area that can be associated with good environmental quality.

CHAPTER THREE

SETTING THE SCENE: DESCRIPTION OF QWAQWA

3.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In order to define the context in which this research was undertaken, this chapter describes the historical, administrative, socio-economic and environmental setting of QwaQwa. Aspects that are considered include the location, population, climate, vegetation and livelihoods. Since the study explores the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance, the history of chieftaincy since the mid 19th century is also described.

The chapter is organized into ten sections, the first one being a general background of the area. The location and demographic profile of QwaQwa are presented in Sections two and three respectively. Section four presents the climate of the study area. This is followed by a description of the vegetation of the area. The income and livelihoods strategies in QwaQwa are discussed in section six. Section seven recognizes existence of neighbouring protected areas as part of the institutional context within which the study is situated. Section eight provides a brief overview of how chieftaincy in QwaQwa has evolved since the Mid-19th Century. Section seven discusses the resettlement programme and its effects on the livelihoods of the communities in QwaQwa. The chapter is then summarized in section ten.

3.1 BACKGROUND

QwaQwa was originally inhabited by the San people[4]. The San are believed to have lived in the area for as many as 8000 years (Irwin *et al* 1980). The Bantu speaking people, pastoralists and cattle owners are thought to have arrived in

[4] The San were nomadic hunter-gatherers who lived in caves and temporary grass shelters (Irwin *et al* 1980).

QwaQwa and the rest of the Drakensberg in the latter part of the 17th century (Irwin *et al*, 1980). QwaQwa was established as a homeland in 1974 for people of the southern Sotho tribe as part of the homeland policy of the South African apartheid government (Slater, 2002a). The area was incorporated into the Free State Provincial Government after democratization in 1994 (www.thedplg.gov.za/).

3.2 LOCATION

QwaQwa is situated at the junction of the KwaZulu Natal, Lesotho and the Free State borders (Figure 1).

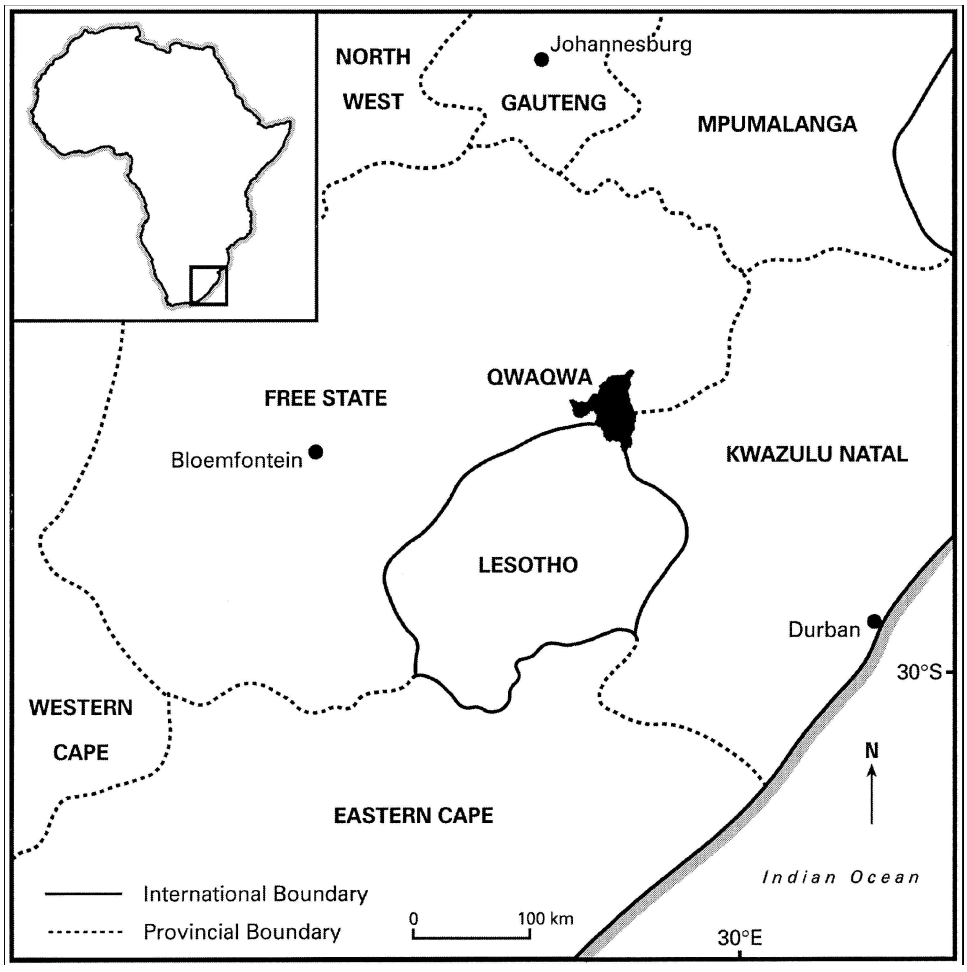


Figure 1: Location of QwaQwa in South Africa
Source: Slater, 2002a

Administratively, QwaQwa is situated in Maluti-a-Phofung (MAP) local municipality which forms part of the Eastern Free State and falls within the jurisdiction of Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality (FSDP, 2001). The entire Maluti-a-Phofung (MAP) Municipality has three service centres, namely, Harrismith, Kestell and QwaQwa (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/). Phuthaditjhaba is the urban core of QwaQwa where the headquarters of the local and district municipalities are located (FSDP, 2001). Harrismith is approximately 60 kilometres north-east of Phuthaditjhaba (FSDP, 2001). Kestell is about 44 kilometres west of Harrismith and 30 kilometres north of Phuthaditjhaba (FSDP, 2001) (Figure 2). Tshiame, a former new town located 12 kilometres west of Harrismith is also part of MAP (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/).



Figure 2: Maluti-a-Phofung
Source: http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/

3.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Despite covering the smallest surface area in Thabo Mofutsanyana District (16%), MAP has the greatest population density of 87.97 people per square kilometre while the average for the district is 25.76 people per square kilometre (FSDP, 2001). The bulk of the population of MAP is concentrated in QwaQwa (84%) (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/). The rest are in Harrismith (15%) and Kestell (1%) (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/). QwaQwa became densely populated in the mid-70s when it was established as a homeland for South Sothos who were forcibly removed from white towns and farms where they had previously worked (Slater, 2002). In 2002, 79% of the population of QwaQwa was rural. It can be assumed that this percentage of the rural population has largely remained the same as seen from the projection for 2012, which shows that the rural population will remain at 79% based on a growth rate of 0.9% (Table 1).

Table1: Population of Maluti-a-Phofung

Year	QwaQwa		Harrismith & Tshiame		Kestell		Total
	Urban	***Rural***	***Urban***	***Rural***	***Urban***	***Rural***	
1996	64 850	238 930	33 728	22 176	4 362	971	**365 017**
2002	68 431	252 126	35 591	23 401	4 603	1 025	**385 177**
2012	74 846	275 759	38 927	25 594	5 034	1 121	**421 281**

Based on an average growth rate of 0.9% per annum.
Source: http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/ (12th July 2008)

3.4 CLIMATE

QwaQwa lies within the summer rainfall region of South Africa with more than 85% of the annual precipitation normally occurring in September to March (South Africa, 2006). In the lower lying areas, the mean annual precipitation ranges from 601mm to 800mm increasing to over 1000mm towards high areas in the

southerly direction (www.agis.agric.za). In winter the average minimum temperature is 4°C and the maximum is 20°C. In summer, the average minimum is 14°C while the maximum is 32°C (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/). The area is also characterised by frost conditions which help to maintain the dominance of grass by preventing establishment of trees (Low and Rebelo, 1996).

3.5 VEGETATION

QwaQwa falls within the grassland biome of the Eastern Free State characterised by five vegetation types namely, the moist cool highveld grassland (in the central-eastern part of the highveld), the moist cold highveld grassland (west of the high escarpment), the wet cold highveld grassland (in rocky slopes and ravines of the lower slopes of the Drakensberg), the afro mountain grassland (on the moist, cool, steep Drakensberg plateau) and the alti mountain grassland (on the steep, treeless, alpine upper mountain) (Low and Rebelo, 1996; Moffet, 1997). The grassland is generally devoid of trees except in sheltered ravines and gorges where moisture is maintained (South Africa, 2006).

3.6 INCOME AND LIVELIHOODS

In Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality, 82.4% of the people live below the subsistence level of R19,200.00 per annum. This income level is below the national average of 65.3% by 17.1% (www.statssa.gov.za). Out of the 82.4% who live below the subsistence level, 66.8% earn less than R9,600.00 per annum (www.statssa.gov.za) . The low income level is a result of limited economic opportunities in the area. Only, 22.6% of the people are employed while the other 30.6% are unemployed and 46.8% are economically inactive (www.statssa.gov.za).

Incorporation of QwaQwa into the Free State Provincial government minimized sources of people's income. Before this development, several industries which were established in QwaQwa upon creation of the homeland received

government subsidies (Slater, 2002b). Subsidies were meant to create more jobs as a way of preventing homeland citizens from moving away from the homeland. These industries provided many jobs to both men and women (Slater, 2001). When QwaQwa was incorporated into the Free State Provincial Government, subsidies were withdrawn (Slater, 2002b). This withdrawal led to some industries relocating to other areas while others were simply abandoned (Slater, 2002b). Consequently, many people were left unemployed (Slater, 2002b).

Due to poverty, pension funds have become the most reliable source of household income in QwaQwa among kins and family members (Slater, 2002b; Taljaard, 2006). Stock grazing has become more important to those who have cattle (Slater, 2002b). Others are coping with decreasing incomes by diversifying their livelihoods into a broad range of activities such as establishing tuckshops and general trading in the informal sector (Slater, 2002b). Studies have shown that in the absence of wage income, natural resources play a vital role in sustaining people's livelihoods (Kepe, 2002; Lawes *et al*, 2004; Shackleton *et al,* 2008). This research explores the livelihood benefits derived from grass in QwaQwa in order to understand the governance implications of grass utilization.

3.7 NEIGHBOURING PROTECTED AREAS

Adjacent to QwaQwa on the north and north western side is farmland that was purchased in 1984 by the South African Development Trust (SADT) to extend the homeland (Schoemann, 2002). This land was taken over by QwaQwa Agricultural Development Corporation and later distributed to black farmers under the South African Government's Land Reform Programme (Slater, 2002a). The remaining SADT land was proclaimed as QwaQwa National Park (QNP) in 1992 (Slater, 2002a). QNP is managed by the provincial Department of Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs (DTEEA). A process of amalgamation between QNP and its immediate neighbour, Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) has been underway since the proclamation of QNP (Taaljard, 2006) (Figure 4).

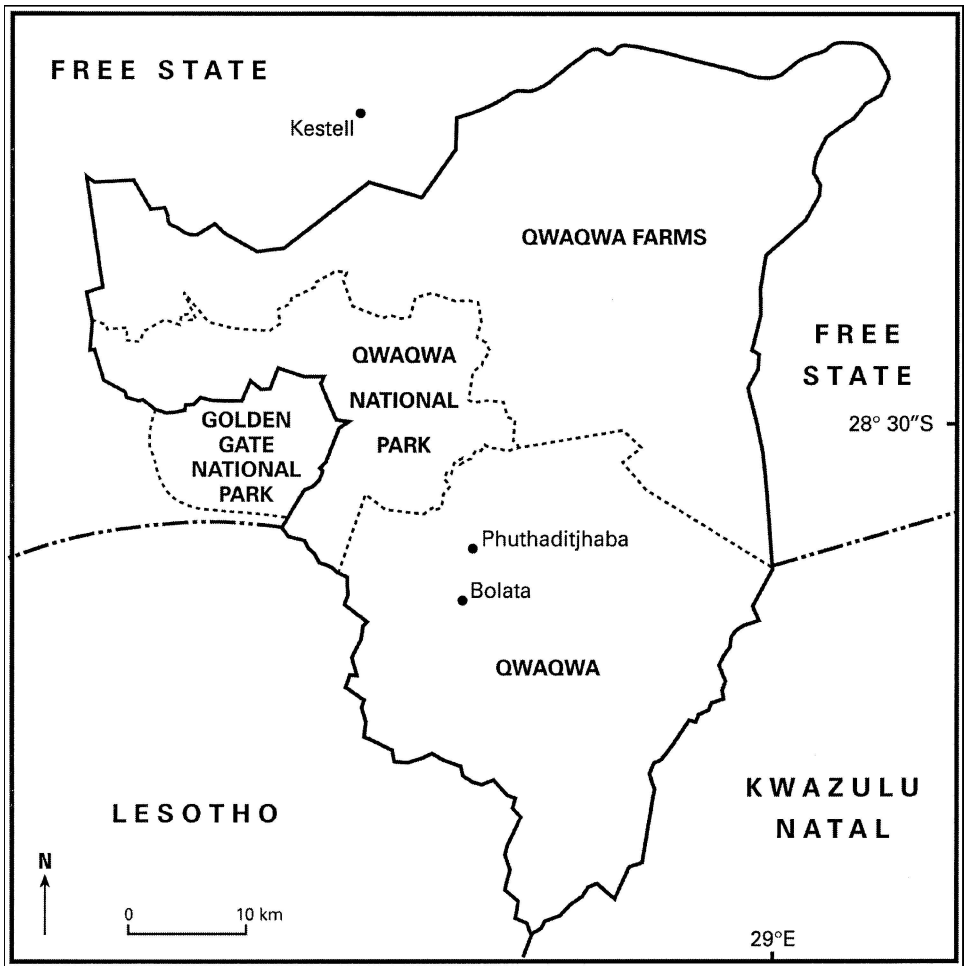


Figure 3: QwaQwa
Source: Slater, 2002a

3.8 EVOLUTION OF CHIEFTAINCY SINCE THE MID-19TH CENTURY

The Sotho wars of 1867 turned QwaQwa (formerly known as Witsieshoek) into a battleground of ethnic tensions among various Sotho chiefs. Prior to the 1867 wars, Witsieshoek had been inhabited by Wetsie, a minor chief of the Kholokwe clan, hence the name 'Witsieshoek' which means 'Wetsi's corner' (Bank, 1995). The Orange Free State government (as it used to be known then) gave Witsieshoek to a group of refugees who had supported white settlers in the Sotho wars. These refugees were led by Mopeli Mokhachane (Quinlan, 1986). The treaty signed between Mopeli Mokhachane and the Orange Free State

government identified Mopeli Mokhachane as a chief of the Koena 'tribe' thereby transforming Witsieshoek into a Koena chiefdom (Bank, 1995). This colonial construction marked the birth of the Bakoena[5] tribe.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two groups of people - one under a Kholokwe chief and the other under a Tlokwa chief (Koos Mota) - were permitted by the Orange Free State government to enter Witsieshoek based on their claims of previous occupation (Bank, 1995). Mopeli Mokhachane remained a senior African authority in Witsieshoek despite the coming of the two new groups (Quinlan, 1986). Koos Mota convinced the state in 1925 that he headed an autonomous Batlokwa tribe and succeeded in having a separate territory within Witsieshoek officially demarcated for the Tlokwas (Bank, 1995).

There were other Tlokwa and Kholokwe groups outside Witsieshoek claiming entitlement to land in the Harrismith district (Keegan, 1986). These groups were not, however, successful as the Land Act of 1913 recognized Witsieshoek as the only area of legitimate black settlement in the north eastern Orange Free State (Bank, 1995). Based on the recognition of the Batlokwa tribe in 1925, the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 created two tribal authorities in Witsieshoek namely, the Batlokwa and the Bakoena (Quinlan, 1986).

When seven white farms were incorporated into Witsieshoek in the mid-60s, the Bakoena and the Batlokwa decided to work together for the first time[6] to prevent outsiders from coming into Witsieshoek (Bank, 1995). This corporation

[5] Originally, 'Bakoena' was simply a clan name which was shared by Mopeli Mokhachane and other Sothos within and beyond the Basotho polity (Quinlan, 1986).

[6] Prior to this, there was widespread resistance against the Bakoena chiefs who were perceived as collaborators of colonial powers. The Bakoena chiefs were looked down upon for supporting betterment policies of the 1940s that required culling of livestock. Influenced by his mother who was also his predecessor, the Batlokwa chief of the time (Wessels Mota) rejected betterment policies, arguing that culling was done through indigenous means as cattle were killed during circumcision ceremonies which were held annually (Bank, 1995).

culminated in Witsieshoek becoming a Territorial Authority in 1969 and later into a self governing homeland in 1974 (Quinlan, 1986).

The Bakoenas managed to secure the largest area of land in the homeland by successfully appealing for inclusion of new land into the Bakoena tribal area whenever new land was allocated to the reserve/homeland (Quinlan, 1986). Success in such appeals was influenced by the political status that Mopeli Mokhachane had attained before colonial authorities as being the first to settle in the area (Quinlan, 1986). Accumulation of land attracted immigrants to the Bakoena tribal area thereby making the Bakoena 'tribe' numerically larger than the Batlokwa tribe. Consequently, some chiefs were appointed even without being part of the Bakoena clan (Quinlan, 1986).

Currently, there are three tribes in QwaQwa, namely the Bakoenas, Batlokoas and the Bakholokoes. Each tribe is headed by a paramount chief. In terms of hierarchy, senior traditional leaders (also known as district chiefs) report to paramount chiefs; sub chiefs report to senior traditional leaders; and village heads report to sub chiefs (Figure 4).

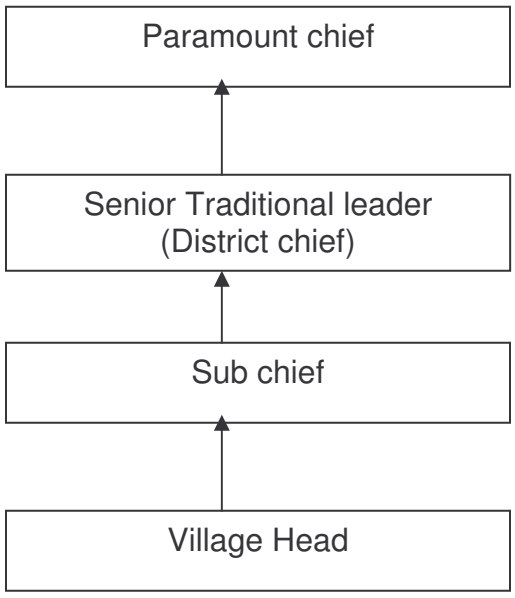


Figure 4: Hierachy of traditional leadership in QwaQwa

There are eight senior traditional leaders belonging to the Bakoena tribe and three senior traditional leaders belonging to the Batlokoa tribe in QwaQwa. Only one village (headed by a village headwoman) belonging to the Bakholokoe tribe is in QwaQwa. Other Bakholokoe villages are located in Harrismith i.e. outside QwaQwa.

3.9 THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

Realizing that QwaQwa was too small for agricultural development, the apartheid development strategy for the homeland was to have a vibrant urban economy in order to attract South Sotho people who were living in urban areas (Bank, 1995). The seven white farms which were incorporated into QwaQwa in the mid 1960s were intended for the construction of a capital Phuthaditjhaba and associated industrial parks (Bank, 1995). Despite the efforts made to entice urban South Sothos to move to QwaQwa, they refused to relocate and had to be forced out of white owned towns and farms in the Orange Free State (Bank, 1995). Those who moved voluntarily were the general African population who felt they had everything to gain by relocating to QwaQwa after their land had been dispossessed in white-owned farms (Bank, 1995).

Resettlement had significant implications for the population dynamics of QwaQwa. In 1974, there were 23,860 people in QwaQwa (Krause, 1982 in Quinlan, 1986). As a result of the forced resettlements the population quadrupled to 100,000 by the end of 1975 (Sharp, 1982). By 1977, there were 200,000 people (Krause, 1982 in Quinlan, 1986). The population later rose to 300,000 in 1980 and to 500,000 in 1984 (Krause, 1982 in Quinlan, 1986). The current population is about 338, 261[7]. QwaQwa is known to have had acute shortage of arable land from as early as 1911, when there were only 4,700 people settled in the area (Pickles and Woods, 1992). The influx of newcomers, therefore,

[7] Based on 0.9% growth rate from a population of 320,557 in 2002 (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/).

worsened the situation as farmland belonging to existing inhabitants was turned into closer settlement villages.

3.10 SUMMARY

This section has outlined contextual issues surrounding QwaQwa from an environmental, economic and social perspective. From the description of the environmental setting, grass appears to be an important resource ecologically and economically. The historical context of traditional leadership provides a good foundation for understanding the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance. It would appear that all traditional leaders had interests in claiming territorial authority for part of QwaQwa irrespective of their origins. It is clear from this chapter that QwaQwa residents are faced with the challenge of surviving in an environment of minimum economic opportunities. Based on this context of the study area, the next chapter outlines the methodology that was followed in conducting the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the methodological approach, the theoretical basis of various methods and the relevance of the methods to the context. The chapter also provides a detailed account of the criteria followed and considerations made in determining the actual respondents that participated in the study through various data collection methods. The basis for selecting respondents was critical to the research design, as it enabled identification of the relevant sources of data. The challenges that were met in executing some of the planned methods are highlighted. Mention is also made of some of the unplanned undertakings which became necessary during the course of data collection. Field data was collected between March and August 2007.

The first section of the chapter describes the design of the research by focusing on site identification and the theoretical approach which formed the basis for the data collection tools. The second section outlines sources of data while the third section describes the data processing technique that was employed to analyse data.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1.1 Site identification

Recognizing that every research process requires a unique approach dictated by the specific context in which it is conducted (Patel, 2001), it was imperative to understand aspects of the study area that were relevant to the research as part of the research design. South African National Parks (SANParks) played a key

role in this aspect. When I first shared my research concept with SANParks personnel at the headquarters in Pretoria, I did not have a preference for a specific area. Information about my intended research was disseminated to all regional coordinators in field offices of SANParks. The Regional Coordinator of SANParks' Northern Cluster was enthusiastic about my idea and suggested that I should conduct the proposed research in QwaQwa, which is near Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP).

The Northern Cluster Regional Coordinator introduced me to two community leaders who provided me with preliminary information about QwaQwa and traditional systems of the area. I made two visits to the study area to appreciate the geographical location of QwaQwa in relation to other physical and economic features. This appreciation was important in determining how far I could go and how much time I needed for data collection. The two visits enabled me to understand the major state and non-state actors in QwaQwa which was useful in defining sources of data.

Most of the community respondents spoke in the local language (Sotho). As a Malawian who had been in South Africa for only six months based in Johannesburg, chances of losing important information through the communication process were inevitable. This effect was minimized as much as possible by engaging a local assistant who has University training in archaeology.

4.1.2 A qualitative approach

A wide range of qualitative methods were employed to achieve the objectives of this study. Qualitative methods are useful in that they help to discover how the respondent views the world. Qualitative methods enable respondents to express themselves in a nondirective manner (McCracken 1988, in Hoggart, Lees and Davies, 2002). The choice of a qualitative approach was considered necessary

because understanding traditional belief systems and practices call for going beyond 'observable' facts. Interaction with respondents played an important role in generating information which could otherwise not have been easily solicited using closed structured techniques.

Due to the quest for understanding rather than mere explanation of facts and behaviour, the methodology employed can be said to be based on a phenomenological approach (Kitchin and Tate, 2002). By seeking to see the world through the eyes of the respondents (Kitchin and Tate, 2002), deep-rooted useful information was generated. This approach also draws on principles of realism as it seeks to understand the links between investigated behaviour and broader social structures by going beyond surface impressions. The influence of the realist approach to this study was pronounced in the search for underlying causes of investigated behaviour (Hoggart, Lees and Davis, 2002). Determining empirical regularity which is also part of the realist approach (Kitchin and Tate 2002) was not adopted.

4.2 SOURCES OF DATA

Evidence for addressing the research questions came from interviews, focus group discussions, institutional mapping, observations and policy documents[8].

4.2.1 Interviews

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of traditional systems governing grass utilization from a historical perspective and in the changing context, interviews were held with traditional leaders, councilors, selected members of the community[9] and government officials at district level. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes.

[8] Refer to Table 2 for a summary of the data collection methods.
[9] Refer to Appendix 1 for the schedule of questions.

4.2.1.1 Traditional Leaders

In-depth interviews with traditional leaders were held to elicit information from them regarding beliefs and practices of the community that govern or have a bearing on grass utilization from a historical perspective. Further, traditional leaders were asked for their impression about the current context and the effect of change on the role of traditional leaders, particularly with regard to grass management and utilization. This information provided me with an entry point for interrogating the role played by traditional leaders in grass utilization both in the historical and in the current context. The basis for determining the sample of traditional leaders was geographical coverage and the number of traditional leaders in each ethnic group.

A total of 17 traditional leaders were interviewed (15 men and 2 women). Out of these, 12 were Bakoenas[10] (1 Senior Traditional Leader, 1 Sub-chief, 9 Village Heads and 1 Secretary to their council); 3 were Batlokoas (one paramount chief, one senior traditional leader and one sub chief); and 2 were Bakholokwes (the only village headwoman and a senior traditional leader). Out of the 17 traditional leaders, two were women and 15 were men.[11]

4.2.1.2 Councillors

In-depth interviews with councilors followed a similar pattern to those of traditional leaders. In the case of councillors, perceptions of change were solicited in terms of how they viewed the roles of traditional leadership in the current context. Councilors were also asked about their perceptions of the role played by traditional leaders in grass utilization and management. Interviews with councilors were also designed to generate information about the role of local authorities (decentralization structures) in grass utilization. Although the focus of the research was not on assessing the effectiveness of local government

[10] Of the 12 Bakoena chiefs, only one was a woman, the rest were men.
[11] Refer to Table 2 below for more details on number and gender of the sampled traditional leaders.

systems and structures, the role played by traditional leaders in the current context could only be understood in the context of other institutions of governance.

There are 34 wards in the entire municipality. Each ward is represented by a councillor. Out of these, four councillors from QwaQwa participated in the study (2 women and 2 men). One of the councillors out of the four was a Member of Municipal Council (MMC) for Local Economic Development and Tourism which is also responsible for Agriculture. Apparently, the MMC for Local Economic Development and Tourism was the only person that I could talk to when I asked for an audience with government officials at the municipality. For other government officials, the municipality referred me to the district office of the Department of Agriculture, which is responsible for five municipalities in the Eastern Free State.[12]

4.2.1.3 Community members

In-depth interviews were also held with selected community members to gain an understanding of their perception of regulatory mechanisms for grass utilization and the role played by various authorities in the same. These interviews were aimed at understanding the significance of grass to the community, their involvement in grass management, roles played by elected and traditional leaders, and their general perceptions of elected and traditional leadership. The interviews with communities were designed to also generate information about traditional beliefs and practices; and the effect of decentralization on such beliefs and practices.

Interviewing community members was seen to be particularly relevant to the question of effectiveness of traditional governance arrangements in QwaQwa. The perception of communities of the different institutional structures

[12] See Table 2 below for details of number and gender of councillors that were interviewed

demonstrated the legitimacy of the institutions (acceptability) and their effectiveness in grass management and utilization.

The main criterion for selecting individuals in the community was involvement in some form of grass utilization. 23 members participated out of whom 16 were women and 7 were men. The average age of respondents in this category was 54.

4.2.1.4 Government Officials

In-depth interviews were held with two government officials from the Department of Agriculture at district level. These interviews were done to understand the various institutional arrangements affecting grass utilization; roles played by various institutions; as well as factors enhancing and impeding environmental governance. The purpose for targeting government officials was to triangulate information obtained from other categories of respondents (community members, traditional leaders, and councillors) regarding the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization. While councilors interact with communities as political leaders, government officials interact with communities through provision of extension and other public services. As such, government officials were also considered as key informants of traditional practices and institutions of grass utilization. The choice of the two officials was dictated by the fact that there was no other government department at district level that was closely involved in issues of grass utilization and management apart from the Department of Agriculture.

Based on the information that was obtained from commercial users of grass in the community regarding support that they had received from government, it became necessary for me to talk to the district office of the Department of Social Welfare. However, officers in the department were of the view that the Department of Social Welfare had nothing to do with grass. Due to these circumstances, it was not possible to talk to them.

As seen from Figure 2 in Chapter One, the former homeland of QwaQwa shares a direct boundary with QwaQwa National Park (QNP). This park is a provincial nature reserve. Rules of access to natural resources including grass are different from those that apply on communal land. Due to the proximity between the park and the communal land, however, it was assumed that the interaction between QNP and the community of QwaQwa could provide useful information about the nature and functionality of traditional systems of grass utilization outside the park. In particular, illegal harvesting of grass in the park by communities could reflect two things. On one hand, illegal harvesting of grass could mean that traditional systems of law enforcement were effective to the point that law breakers found it easier to harvest resources in QNP. On the other hand, it could also mean that there were no resources in the communal area due to lack of regulatory mechanisms, forcing people to harvest resources in QNP.

In addition, the ongoing amalgamation between Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) and QwaQwa National Park (QNP) implied that once the two parks become one, GGHNP will share a direct boundary with QwaQwa. In that case, access and management principles in QNP will change. For this reason, the understanding of existing interaction between communities on communal land and QNP on one hand and SANParks' resource use policy on the other would help to determine the likely impact of amalgamation on the community. This would consequently provide insight into the future role of traditional leaders in regulating grass utilization on communal land in relation to the neighbouring amalgamated protected area. An interview was, therefore, held with one of the officers responsible for the management of QNP. One of the most senior members of the management team at QNP was targeted in order to solicit accurate information relevant to the study.

Although QwaQwa does not share a direct boundary with GGHNP (Figure 2, page 6), the two areas are within a reasonable distance to each other so much that QwaQwa is regarded as a neighbouring community to GGHNP (Taljaard,

2006). The proximity rationale that necessitated interviewing a QNP official, therefore, was also applicable to GGHNP. At the same time, this research was done at a time when SANParks had just developed a policy based on which neighbouring communities would be allowed to access resources in a national park under regulated conditions. The new policy provided yet another institutional context within which traditional systems of resource utilization on communal land would have to operate. It was, therefore, necessary to understand the contents of the new policy.

In view of the above, sampling for SANParks officials was purposive. In purposive sampling, units are selected subjectively by the researcher based on prior experience (Rice, 2003). Accordingly, one interview was undertaken with one official at Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) in order to appreciate the opportunities and challenges of traditional systems of grass utilization to the park, given the proximity of the study area to GGHNP. During this interview, insight was also gained into the implications of the ongoing amalgamation between GGHNP and QNP on traditional systems of grass utilization outside the two protected areas. Information about the establishment of Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme was also solicited from the GGHNP official. The person who participated in the research from Golden Gate Highlands National Park was considered to be suitable because she had been directly involved with supporting community initiatives of grass utilization on behalf of SANParks in the past.

Another interview was undertaken with one official of SANParks at the Headquarters in Pretoria. The goal of this interview was to understand SANParks' new resource use policy and the implication of the policy for the interaction between GGHNP and residents of QwaQwa. The interviewee was a senior person in the Community Based Conservation Department. The Community Based Conservation Department is responsible for all matters of

park/community relations, hence the suitability of the respondent from this department in the study.

4.2.1.5 Thaba Blinds Factory Official

Another interview was held with a member of the management team of Thaba Blinds Factory. This interview was done as part of understanding traditional practices of grass utilization. I had learnt from SANParks prior to the commencement of the study about the role played by Thaba Blinds Factory in helping to promote and preserve the Sotho culture through weaving. Based on this knowledge, the discussion centred on the history of the factory; mechanisms of grass supply; and the role of different institutional structures in commercial utilization of grass.

4.2.2 Focus group discussions

Information obtained from individual interviews was triangulated through focus group discussions. Initially it was designed that one of the focus group discussions would be held with factory workers of Thaba Blinds Grass Factory. At that stage I was not familiar with the institutional structure of the factory. It was not necessary to conduct the planned focus group discussion with factory workers because the desired information was obtained from management personnel of the factory. Instead, two focus group discussions were conducted: one was held with traditional leaders and another with a ward committee.

The need to conduct a focus group discussion with traditional leaders arose upon realization that traditional leaders held regular meetings at the traditional council office. It was therefore considered worthwhile to ask for an audience with a larger group of traditional leaders in one of their meetings in order to obtain information from as many traditional leaders as possible at the same time. The focus group discussion with a ward committee came about while I was conducting an interview with one of the councilors. During the interview, the councillor preferred

to invite ward committee members for them to participate in the interview, thereby turning it into a focus group discussion.

The focus group discussion with traditional leaders centred on the same issues that were discussed during personal interviews with individual traditional leaders of other areas i.e. belief systems and practices of grass utilization, the role of traditional leaders, historical perspectives and their perception of the changing context. Likewise, issues of discussion during a focus group discussion with a ward committee were similar to those that were discussed with individual councilors. These were: institutional mechanisms for grass utilization; the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in the historic and changing context; and the role of the municipality in grass utilization.

4.2.3 Institutional mapping

Another method employed to triangulate information obtained about the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in the context of decentralization from the perspective of communities was institutional mapping. Institutional mapping uses a combination of participatory tools and processes in group discussions to obtain local in-depth data on the operation of formal and informal institutions (Alsop *et al*, 2006). In this study, institutional mapping was similar in nature to focus group discussions but was different in two aspects. Firstly, the discussion was relatively more structured than focus group discussions. Secondly, the type of questions asked had more to do with institutional arrangements rather than traditional belief systems and practices.

Participants were asked to state the various institutional structures with which they interact; the strength of their interaction (expressed through frequency of interaction and dependence in times of need); and the role played by the institutional structures. A lot of information was generated from this exercise alone which either did not come out or was unclear from other methods of data collection. Such information included functionality, legitimacy and relative

importance to the community of the various institutional structures and the implications.

Sampling of participants for the institutional mapping exercise was hapharzard, implying that no specific criterion was employed in selecting participants. This is unlike other community members who were targeted based on their involvement in grass utilization. Haphazard sampling was employed deliberately in order to understand functionality and significance of institutions from communities with diverse backgrounds and interests. Out of five participants who participated in the exercise, one owned cattle; another was involved in weaving; and the other 3 were members of a vegetable growing project. The choice for such a diversity of participants was based on the need to capture as much information as possible about different institutional structures that operate or exist in QwaQwa.

4.2.4 Observations

Since grass utilization and the role of traditional leaders in regulating access occurs within a broad scope of cultural traditions, a general understanding of cultural practices in QwaQwa was important in the study. The other rationale for employing observations in generating data was the realization that the changing context of the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance, which includes grass utilization, is dictated by broader processes of change in cultural practices. It was therefore necessary to appreciate changing socio-cultural values and practices from a broader perspective. Ideally this would require living in the community for a significant amount of time; attending some of the traditional and modern ceremonies; and participating in some of the traditional and modern practices. Such an undertaking was not possible given the scope of the project and the time and resources that were at my disposal. This notwithstanding, the four site visits that I made to the study area made it possible for me to observe important aspects of traditional life in the changing context, since I met most of the respondents in their own localities. Observations were made about how people live in their day to day lives. Key issues that were of

importance in such observations were belief systems, cultural traditions, and relationships among people across social strata as they relate to environmental governance in broad terms.

Since the study was based on grass utilization, data collection also included physical observation of the grassland. This observation helped me to understand some of the current forms of grass utilization and to appreciate the state of the grassland in general.

4.2.5 Policy documents

In addition to the sources of data discussed thus far, policy documents were studied in order to understand the current policy framework that governs grass utilization.

Table 2: Summary of Methods Used in Collecting Data

	Method	**Required Data**	**Planned number of respondents**	**Actual number of respondents**	**Reason for deviation**
1	**Interviews**				
	Traditional Leaders	Traditional beliefs and practices of grass utilization; role of traditional leaders, perceptions of the changing context.	11	17 (15 male and 2 female)	I realized during data collection that there were more ethnic groups and that the structure of chiefs was more complex than my initial understanding.
	Councillors	Role of traditional leaders and councillors in grass utilization; perceptions of change.	4	4 (2 male and 2 female)	
	Community	Traditional beliefs and	20	23 (7 male	It was possible to interview

	members	practices of grass utilization; role of traditional and elected leaders, perception of change.		and 16 female)	more people in between appointments with traditional leaders, councillors and government officials.
	Local municipality government official	Traditional beliefs and practices of grass utilization; role of traditional and elected leaders in grass utilization, perception of change, and reports on state of the environment.	1	None	I was referred to the district Agriculture office. Besides the MMC for Local Economic Development and Tourism (who happens to be one of the councillors I interviewed), there was no government official responsible for grass issues in the municipality.
	District government official	Traditional beliefs and practices of grass utilization; role of traditional and elected leaders in grass utilization, perception of change and reports on the state of the environment.	1	2	I first interviewed a senior person in the extension department at the district office. It was still necessary, however, to interview another officer who had conducted a survey in 2003 on grazing in QwaQwa. I learnt about this survey from SANParks but the first interviewee was not aware of it.
	Provincial official	Written reports about state of the grassland in QwaQwa.	1	None	I got the necessary information from the two district officials including a report of a survey done in QwaQwa about overgrazing.
	Golden Gate	Grass utilization	1	1	

	Highlands National Park	practices in Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP), effect of community proximity on grass utilization in the park and implications of amalgamation of GGHNP with QwaQwa National Park on traditional systems of grass use on communal land.			
	SANParks Headquarters	SANParks new resource use policy; and implications of SANParks' new resource use policy for GGHNP and QwaQwa residents.	1	1	
	QwaQwa National Park	Grass access rules in QNP and existing relationship between the park and the neighbouring community (study area).	1	1	
	Thaba Blinds Factory official		None	1	It became more convenient to obtain information about the factory from a management official instead of the originally planned factory workers.

2	**Focus group discussions**				
	Thaba Blinds Factory workers	History of the factory and role of various institutional structures in commercial utilization of grass.	1	None	I got the necessary information from an interview with one of the members of the management team of the factory.
	Traditional leaders		None	1	It was convenient to interview 12 chiefs of one of the ethnic groups at the same time (during one of their regular meetings). Meeting them individually was going to require a lot more time that I could manage.
	Ward Committee		None	1	One councillor invited members of her ward committee to the interview meeting.
3	**Institutional Mapping**				
	Community members		1	1 (1 male and 4 females)	
4	**Policy documents**				
	Government laws and policies.	Current institutional framework governing grass utilization in communal land.			

4.3 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of the data was based on Dey's approach (cited in Kitchin and Tate 2000) which involves description, classification and determining interconnectedness of concepts. The first step involved transcription of data which was collected using voice recorders and observations. Care was taken to

transcribe tape-recorded data verbatim so as to maintain its originality. Where non-verbal expressions helped to add meaning to the context in which the data was collected, necessary indicators that linked the expressions to the associated information were also transcribed to aid analysis.

The second step involved defining themes and classifying data according to the defined themes. Various methods of coding information were used to organize and classify data. The last step in the analysis involved identifying links and connections between various themes in the classified data. Causal relationships, interactions and links between various pieces of information were identified, recorded and compiled to facilitate interpretation of results in relation to the research questions.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach and the data collection methods that were employed in this research. Various qualitative approaches were used including in-depth interviews with key informants, focus group discussions with community leaders and institutional mapping with members of the community. In addition relevant policy documents were studied to understand the current policy framework governing grass utilization. All the methods were designed to answer one or more research questions. The chapter has also highlighted the selection criteria that were employed to come up with respondents and the data processing and analysis techniques. The data that was generated through these methods is presented in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

GRASS UTILIZATION IN THE TRADITIONAL CONTEXT

5.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter and the subsequent two chapters present and discuss findings as generated from various methods of data collection. A major finding of the study was that questions relating to traditional systems of governance were answered based on past experience. This was so because most of the traditional and cultural practices of regulating access and managing grass that used to happen in QwaQwa are no longer in place. This notwithstanding, traditional practices were investigated and are the focus of this chapter.

The chapter begins by discussing weaving aspects that are common to both the past and the present contexts. In the second section, the chapter outlines conservation practices and access rules that governed grass utilization in the traditional context including the role played by traditional leaders in regulating access to grass resources. Section three explores the extent to which traditional governance arrangements of grass utilization can be said to have been effective.

5.1 WEAVING IN QWAQWA: THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

Visits to households and entities involved in weaving showed that grass in QwaQwa is used for making various household items such as baskets, mats, hats, ropes and brooms (Plate 1). These crafts depict the cultural practices of the Sotho people. Grass weaving is, therefore, one way of preserving the Sotho culture. The deliberate targeting of individuals involved in weaving for interviews showed that most people who are involved in weaving come from villages that are situated at the foothills of the Drakensberg. Considering the remoteness of

such areas from urban centres, the prevalence of weaving expertise in mountainous areas is not a coincidence. Those who live close to urban centres can diversify their income base by engaging in other activities such as retailing or employment. Residence in remote mountainous areas requires innovation to meet household and income needs. Developing skills in grass weaving is part of that innovation.



Plate 1: Various products made from grass in QwaQwa
Photo: H. Mwalukomo

As seen in Table 3, specific species of grass occur in specific sites within the biome. This has important implications for governance. Members of a weaving enterprise that obtains its raw materials exclusively from the top of the Drakensberg indicated that access to resources has always been free. This is not surprising considering the difficulty of enforcing rules of access in highlands that are difficult to reach. On the other hand, weavers who live away from the mountainous region indicated that permission was sought from chiefs to harvest grass for any purpose including weaving in the past. By implication it would be more difficult to regulate access to species like *Merxmuellera drakensbegensis*

than those which occur in low lying areas such as *Eragrostis plana* and *Hyparrhenia hirta.*

Table 3: Examples of common grasses found in QwaQwa and their uses[13]

Scientific name	Local name	Local Distribution	Products
Merxmuellera drakensbergensis	Mosea	On top of the berg escarpment.	Hats, ropes, brooms and baskets.
Hyparrhenia hirta	Mohlomo	West and north facing slopes in the lower lying areas and along roadsides.	Grain and fruit baskets.
Eragrostis plana	Modula	Favours compacted soil such as overgrazed veld in the lower lying areas.	Traditional hats.
Aristida diffusa	Monya	Shallow soils often overlying sandstone and sometimes in rocky areas.	Soft brooms.

Visits to weaving individuals and enterprises showed that weaving is largely undertaken by women (Plate 2). Of the 24 individual users of grass that were interviewed, 17 (70.8%) were women and 7 (29.2%) were men. Membership in three different commercial weaving enterprises that were visited was also found

[13] This data is based on Moffet, 1997. Local names, distribution and products were confirmed through interviews with weavers and physical observations.

to be dominated by women. These enterprises include: Thaba Blinds Factory, Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project and Lejoaneng Grass Project. At the time of this study, Thaba Blinds Factory had 11 women and 2 men; Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project had 19 women and 4 men; and Lejoaneng Grass Project had 16 women and 2 men. These figures represent 85% women's and 15% men's involvement in the sampled commercial enterprises. The dominance of women in weaving has also been reported in other parts of South Africa such as in Mpondo in the Eastern Cape (Kepe, 2003) and the Bushbuckridge in Limpopo (Shackleton, 2005). All weavers who participated in the study indicated that they had acquired weaving skills from their mothers or grandmothers.



Plate 2: Women at work inside Thaba Blinds Factory
Photo: J. Qolwane

Men's involvement, however, is a recent trend. In QwaQwa, involvement of men results from commercialization of grass weaving. Interviews with members of Thaba Blinds Factory, Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project and Lejoaneng Grass Project showed that even in the commercialized enterprises, women do all the weaving. Men's roles are largely administrative. The only weaving products made by men in such entities are ropes and bottle wrappers (Thaba Blinds Factory, 10th July

2007; Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project, 8th July, 2007; Lejoaneng Grass Project, 8th July, 2007).

5.2 TRADITIONAL PRACTICES GOVERNING GRASS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION

Respondents of all categories described practices that governed grass utilization when traditional leaders were in full control of local affairs. Due to the effect of colonial, apartheid and democratic processes on the structure and functions of traditional leaders, these practices have not been maintained over time. The description of traditional practices in this chapter, therefore, is based largely on what used to happen prior to colonial interference, except where specific mention is made of other periods.

5.2.1 Conservation practices

According to community respondents, weaving grass was conserved through various practices. Most of these practices were associated with considerations that were made in allocating farmland and building sites. In terms of farmland allocation, areas which had useful grass in them were not allocated for farming. With regard to selection of residential sites, areas with an abundance of valuable grass species were avoided by the community. For this reason, most houses were built on barren higher ground with little or no grass on it.

In addition, community respondents mentioned various rules and traditions of hunting, brick moulding, stone sculpting and time identification that had a bearing on the growth and sustainability of valuable species of grass. Hunting was done during specific times of the year in areas specifically designated for hunting. Collection of grass in hunting areas was not allowed. Sites for brick moulding were carefully selected so as not to disturb grass used for weaving purposes. Stones for sculpting were collected with utmost care in order to prevent disturbance of growing grass.

It was indicated by community respondents that different periods of the year were traditionally identified and named based on principles of natural resource conservation. For example, October was known as *mphala*. *'Mphala'* was a name of a zebra-like wild animal which started breeding in October, hence the association between the name of the month and the animal. The message behind the name was that *mphala* should not be hunted in October because it is a breeding season.

5.2.2 Access rules

Rules existed that regulated access to grass. Grass weavers, traditional leaders and councillors indicated that everyone had to obtain permission from the village head before collecting grass for weaving. This rule applied to residents of the village in which the desired grass occurred as well as members from other villages. Within a particular village, the chief granted permission to harvest grass for any purpose based on a number of considerations. Some of the considerations were:

- *Medicinal value* - harvesting of grass with high medicinal value was highly restricted;
- *Soil and water conservation* - harvesting of grass in areas that would threaten soil and water conservation such as river banks was not allowed.

In some cases, traditional leaders consulted traditional healers on medicinal importance of grass and other plants in order to make decisions that promote sustained utilization of grass. In addition, traditional leaders consulted village elders in some decisions of granting access to grass.

5.2.3 Other roles of traditional leaders

In addition to granting permission for grass collection as discussed above, traditional leaders were also involved in awareness creation and law enforcement.

5.2.3.1 Awareness creation

Traditional leaders and community respondents reported that chiefs used to call for village meetings during which people were sensitized about the need to conserve grass and the dangers of uncontrolled burning of grasslands. Conservation of grass was not the only agenda during village meetings of this nature. However, the meetings served as forums for creating awareness pertaining to sustainable grass utilization in addition to other issues of custom and people's welfare.

5.2.3.2 Law enforcement

According to respondents of all categories, traditional leaders played a critical role in ensuring adherence to traditional norms governing grass utilization. A critical element in traditional law enforcement mechanisms was the existence of village based appointed individuals who monitored adherence to traditional rules of access to grass. During the QwaQwa homeland government system, monitoring was done by tribal police who were paid by the government. Tribal levies[14] were used to pay tribal police.

Monitors also existed prior to the homeland system of governance. Information to this effect was obtained from a Kholokwe chief outside QwaQwa whose tribe was excluded from the homeland government (See Chapter Three Section 3.8). According to him, chiefs used to pay the monitors in kind (usually in form of cattle). Some people simply volunteered themselves to carry out patrols as tribal

[14] These were fees that were paid to the office of the traditional leader by villagers of the respective villages during the QwaQwa homeland government. The levies were used by traditional leaders for various purposes of community interest.

policemen. To such people, it was an honour to serve a chief even without remuneration. Although this information came from outside QwaQwa, it is useful in the sense that it came from a descendant of Wetsie, the occupant of QwaQwa (Wetsieshoek) before the land was given to Mopeli Mokhachane.

Traditional leaders also determined punishment for breach of rules as part of law enforcement. Punishment usually took the form of fines or whipping depending on the seriousness of the offence.

5.2.4 United by a common history

The current heterogeneity of QwaQwa in terms of tribal identities raises questions about the outlined practices being indigenous to the area. The influx of new comers, some of whom had no affiliation to any Sotho clan or tribe, only happened in the mid-1970s. Before that time, all residents of QwaQwa were South Sothos. Despite the different tribal identities of the South Sothos who lived in QwaQwa prior to the mid-1970s, their traditional practices of natural resource utilization are likely to have been united by the Sotho ethnicity. In other words, respondents' ability to describe traditional practices and the similarity of responses were not based on having origins in QwaQwa. Rather, these traditional practices are Sotho practices and are therefore, not limited to a particular clan or tribe.

5.2.5 Erosion of traditional practices

An official from the Department of Agriculture, all respondent community members and traditional leaders indicated that traditional practices had disappeared. However, respondents differed on the specific time and reasons at which traditional practices came to an end. Although most respondents associated the demise of traditional practices with the 1994 democratic elections, others pointed to the creation of the homeland government in 1975. Others

indicated that infighting amongst traditional leaders[15] distracted them from enforcing traditional rules of grass utilization.

Analysis of the historical context shows that traditional practices disappeared gradually over time, influenced by various factors including political changes. It was apparent from the clarity of explanations of elderly community members and one councillor that they had first hand experience with traditional practices. By implication, the practices could not have been abandoned at the onset of colonial rule. At the same time, the possibility of colonial rule contributing to the disappearance of traditional practices cannot be ruled out. For example, the two largest tribes of the Bakoena and the Batlokwa were both granted permission to enter QwaQwa by the colonial Orange Free State Government. In other words their legitimacy of occupation was based on their acceptance of the political authority of the colonial government. As a result of this history, tribal leaders were obliged to comply with colonial policies some of which contradicted cultural and traditional practices. For example, the betterment policies of livestock culling in the 1940s were contrary to the traditional methods of animal population control (See Chapter Three, Section 3.8).

The same explanation applies to the apartheid era. According to Goodenough (2002), it was even more difficult for traditional leaders to resist government policies during the apartheid era because they were paid by government. Under such circumstances, it would be difficult to strictly adhere to traditional practices of grass utilization.

In addition, the resettlement programme of 1975 saw thousands of people relocating to QwaQwa. Since some of the new comers were non-Sotho (See Chapter Three Section 3.9), it must have been very difficult to maintain traditional

[15] As alluded to in the summary to Chapter Three, in fighting resulted from pursuits of tribal recognition as a basis for gaining access and control over land in QwaQwa. During the study, I interacted with two traditional leaders who are still claiming entitlement to land which is currently out their control.

practices while living alongside new people who have their own way of life. The effect of new comers on traditional practices was reflected in the following statement from a Councillor, among others:

> The newcomers came with their own lifestyles which diluted existing cultural values and practices (Phomolong Village, July, 2007).

As a result of these influences, it is not possible to point to a specific time at which traditional practices of grass utilization came to an end. As we shall see in the next chapter, democratization and broader influences of modernization also contributed to the erosion of traditional practices.

5.3 WERE TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE ARRAGEMENTS OF GRASS UTILIZATION EFFECTIVE?

In accordance with the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2, effectiveness of traditional practices of grass utilization in QwaQwa is analysed with respect to theoretical frameworks of institutional design and institutional effectiveness.

5.3.1 Institutional design

As mentioned in Chapter Two (Section 2.6), robust common property institutions are characterised by boundary definition, congruence between appropriation and provision rules, effective monitoring, graduated sanctions, conflict resolution mechanisms, recognition by government authorities. The following analysis discusses the application or implication of these principles for traditional mechanisms that governed grass utilization in QwaQwa.

5.3.1.1 Boundary definition

According to the findings of this study, boundaries were observed in QwaQwa when grass utilization was regulated by traditional leaders. The fact that chiefs

granted permission to collect grass in their villages is an indication that chiefs were responsible for specific areas under their jurisdiction whose boundaries were clearly defined. However, absence of a clear distinction of access rules for outsiders and insiders raises questions about the extent to which village boundaries helped to exclude outsiders which is the underlying theme behind the principle of defining boundaries (Ostrom, 1990). Since much of the weaving was being done for household items, 'outsiders' are likely to have been grass users from neighbouring villages.

Going to a neighbouring village in search of weaving grass can be explained by the site specificity of different species as discussed in Section 5.1 above. Under such conditions, denying access to a member of a different village who is in need of grass that does not grow in her/his locality on the basis that s/he is an 'outsider' would amount to individualization of resource use. Since there are only three tribal identities in QwaQwa, neighbouring villages are likely to have belonged to the same tribe. Even if the desired grass were to occur in a village that is outside ones own tribal area, traditional practices, are likely to have united the Sothos as alluded to in Section 5.2.4 above, hence the application of common rules to all. In addition, the fact that grass was used largely for making household items meant that small quantities were harvested. Consequently, outsiders may have been allowed to harvest on the same terms as village residents because the quantities harvested did not warrant stricter controls against outsiders. However, this analysis does not suggest that QwaQwa was an open access regime under traditional leaders, as suggested by critics of the 'boundary' design principle (Dore, 2001). The seeking of permission helped to ensure controlled use.

5.3.1.2 Congruence between appropriation and provision rules

As stated in Section 2.6, the principle of congruence between appropriation and provision rule serves to ensure equitable deployment of skills and resources in situations which require participation of all affected members to meet a collective

goal (Ostrom, 1990). With regard to traditional practices of weaving, a situation could hardly have occurred that could have required the application of this principle because weaving was done at household level for individual benefit.

5.3.1.3 Collective choice

According to the principle of collective choice, most people affected by operational rules should be able to participate in modifying the rules (Ostrom, 1990). The account of the role of traditional leaders reflects minimum participation by affected people in decision making. It would appear that people simply followed instructions (such as choice of sites for farming and house building) and obeyed orders from chiefs. Some community respondents, however, perceived consultation of village elders and traditional healers as a form of democracy, as depicted in the following statement:

> By consulting elders of their villages, chiefs practiced democracy (Community respondent, Phuthaditjhaba, April, 2007).

The selective participation of village elders and traditional healers in QwaQwa does not comply with the collective choice principle which requires participation of most affected people. However, unlike situations which give rise to the collective action problem (where people shun away from desired participation for not perceiving individual benefits), it appeared that there was no demand for wide participation in decision making under the traditional system due to the community's respect and trust for traditional leadership (see elaboration in Section 5.3.3.1 below).

5.3.1.4 Effective monitoring procedures

As described in 5.2.3.2, tribal police monitored adherence to rules of grass utilization. Since the patrolmen came from the same villages in which they executed their roles, it is likely that they were also grass users themselves since

some of them owned cattle (See Section 5.2.3.2). The payment of tribal police during the homeland government must have encouraged monitoring activities. Since the highlands were largely out of reach for most people (See Section 5.1), monitoring adherence to traditional rules of grass utilization must have been done in the foothills and other low-lying areas.

5.3.1.5 Graduated sanctions for violation of rules

Sanctions for violation of grass utilization rules in QwaQwa were meted out through the law enforcement responsibilities of chiefs. As mentioned in 5.2.3.2, law breakers were either made to pay or they were whipped. The form of punishment (whipping or payment of a fine) and the exact amount to pay (in the case of a fine) depended on the severity of the offence. This is an indication that sanctions for non-adherence to grass utilization rules in QwaQwa were graduated.

5.3.1.6 Access to low cost conflict resolution mechanisms

Conflict resolution under traditional governance arrangements in QwaQwa was facilitated by traditional leaders. Conflict resolution mechanisms were accessible because chiefs lived with people in their villages. As a result, people could easily go to the chief whenever conflicts that required external intervention arose. Traditional conflict resolution was also affordable because it did not require any form of payment. Although these were general practices of conflict resolution, it is obvious that they also applied to conflicts in grass utilization.

5.3.1.7 Government recognition of the right of resource users to devise their own institutions

The principle of recognition by government does not apply to the pre-colonial context because traditional leadership was the only governance institution in most African communities during that period (Keulder, 1998). This means that understanding traditional governance requires a framework that caters for that

period. During colonial and apartheid eras, traditional leaders largely advanced government ideas in their areas of jurisdictions, implying minimum compliance with the principle of recognition by government to set local rules. Enforcement of government agendas rather than traditional practices is exemplified in the enactment of betterment policies affecting livestock (See Section 3.8 of Chapter Three). It can be argued that by involving traditional leaders in local governance, colonial and apartheid governments had confidence in the ability of traditional leaders to manage local affairs including grass utilization. The upward accountability of traditional leaders to central government structures undermines compliance of traditional arrangements with the principle of recognition by government during colonial and apartheid eras.

5.3.2 Institutional effectiveness

As stated in Chapter 2, having a well designed institutional structure does not in itself guarantee effective delivery of environmental outcomes. An assessment of actual practices is more useful than mere compliance with design criteria. Analysis of institutional effectiveness focuses on adherence to traditional practices that can be associated with good environmental quality (Mitchell, 2007).

The traditional practices of permission to harvest weaving grass, careful site selection for building and farmland allocation and conservation consciousness in naming months can all be associated with positive environmental outcomes. However, these beliefs and practices in themselves do not tell much about environmental behaviour. Positive environmental behaviour can only be determined based on adherence to those traditional practices. According to all categories of respondents, traditional practices were largely adhered to as illustrated in the following statement from a traditional healer:

> *Mphala* is not a fast runner. However, people never used to hunt *mphala* in *Mphalane* (October) because of their adherence to tradition. The name of the

> month spoke by itself. People knew what they were doing (Community member; Phuthaditjhaba; July, 2007).

This statement suggests that traditional rules that prohibited hunting of specific animals during specific times of the year were adhered to. The fact that names of some months carried messages that prohibited hunting of specific animals implied that grass that provided a habitat to those animals would indirectly be preserved in those months. Such grass included species of weaving significance. Other statements depicting adherence to traditional norms were made by different categories of respondents in comparison with the current institutional framework within which grass utilization is occurring. Examples of such statements are cited in the context of the current institutional framework which is discussed in the next chapter.

5.3.3 Basis for adherence to traditional rules

5.3.3.1 Respect for traditional leaders: a cultural value

Results showed that traditional leadership was an important symbol of the culture which defined people's identity as depicted in the following statement from the Secretary of the Batlokwa Traditional Council:

> We are known as Africans because of our culture. Chiefs are the custodians of culture (April, 2007, Phuthaditjhaba).

The perception of traditional leaders as custodians of culture which defined their identity made people have respect for the institution of traditional leadership. As a result of this respect, people adhered to traditional practices of grass conservation and utilization as captured in the following statement from the same respondent:

> Successful management of natural resources depends on reciprocal respect between authorities and the subordinates (March, 2007)

The implication is that adherence to traditional practices was not based on fear of punishment even though traditional law enforcement mechanisms existed. The motivation to adhere to traditional rules was respect for traditional leaders. Implied in this statement is a comparison with the current institutional framework as it sounds more like a principle rather than mere explanation of a phenomenon.

5.3.3.2 Trust for traditional leaders

Another basis for adherence to traditional rules of grass utilization was trust for traditional leaders. This is drawn from comparative responses of traditional and elected leaders. For this reason, this element is also discussed in detail in the next chapter after the description of the current institutional framework which includes the role of elected leaders.

5.4 SUMMARY

Weaving was regarded as one way of preserving the Sotho culture. Weaving is still prevalent and highly important to the community to this day. A variety of management practices existed in the past. Such practices included careful site selection for building. Traditional leaders played key roles in regulating access to grass by creating awareness; granting permission to collect grass; and determining penalties for illegal harvesting. Even though traditional practices of grass utilization did not comply with all of Ostrom's principles of robust institutions, grass users adhered to traditional rules governing access and management. Adherence to traditional practices of grass utilization was influenced by respect and trust for traditional leaders. The next chapter explores the institutional context and weaving practices in the current context.

CHAPTER SIX

GRASS UTILIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZATION

6.0 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter presents a further set of findings regarding grass utilization and the role of traditional leaders. Unlike Chapter Four which looked at historic management practices of grass, this chapter focuses on the current framework that governs grass utilization in QwaQwa. Understanding relevant aspects of what decentralization means in QwaQwa is useful to determine how decentralization processes affect the functions of traditional leaders in grass utilization. The implications of the new institutional framework for grass utilization are examined.

In the first section of the chapter, the current institutional framework for grass utilization is examined. This is followed by an institutional map of the study area which highlights functional institutional structures and the interrelationship among the institutions, based on research data. The third section presents perceptions of the current institutional framework for grass utilization by traditional leaders, councillors community members and government officials. Section four examines the application of the current institutional framework termed as policy in practice. In line with the conceptual framework of the study, the fifth section explores the implication of traditional institutions of resource governance on Local Action 21. The sixth section presents and provides an analysis of weaving practices in the current context. The role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in the current context is examined in section seven.

6.1 CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR GRASS UTILIZATION

6.1.1 Developmental local government

The current institutional framework for grass utilization is partly defined by the legal framework of local governance and environmental management. Section 40(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (referred to hereafter as the Constitution) recognizes three spheres of government namely, national government, provincial government and local government which are distinctive, interlinked and interrelated. The local sphere of government consists of municipalities. According to Section 151(3) of the Constitution, a municipality 'has the right to govern, on its own initiative, the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislation, as provided for in the Constitution.' The central responsibility of municipalities is 'to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives' (South Africa, 1998). Due to this developmental role of municipalities, they are described as 'developmental' local government. Developmental outcomes of municipalities are:

- Provision of household infrastructure and services such as water, sanitation, local roads, stormwater drainage, refuse collection and electricity;
- Local economic development - to promote job creation and boosting the local economy; and
- Creation of liveable, integrated cities, towns and rural areas (South Africa, 1998).

As part of creating liveable integrated areas, municipalities are expected to enhance environmental sustainability by including environmental issues in their planning processes (South Africa, 1998). Planning for environmental sustainability is an integral part the integrated development plans (IDP) process,

a planning tool for municipalities to achieve their development mandate. Integration of environmental sustainability is based on the understanding that social and economic services depend on the health of ecological and community systems (South Africa, 1998). It follows from this understanding of the role of municipalities that grass utilization and management falls within the governance mandate of municipalities.

6.1.2 Traditional leaders

Given the historical role of traditional leaders in grass management on communal land, MAP Municipality has the opportunity to tap from the knowledge and experience of traditional leaders in developing plans that promote grassland management. According to the White Paper on Local Government (1998), municipalities are required to inform and consult traditional leaders regarding municipal projects or programmes within the traditional leaders' area. This provision, however, does not confer any decision making authority on traditional leaders.

The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Amendment Act No. 41 of 2003 also provides a framework within which the current institutional framework of grass utilization can be understood. The Act provides for the recognition of traditional communities and traditional leaders. The Act also provides for the establishment of houses (councils) of traditional leaders[16] at national, provincial, district and local levels. These councils are made up of representative traditional leaders at the different levels of governance (South Africa, 2003).

At a local level, functions of traditional councils include:

[16] At national, provincial and district levels, the assembly of representative traditional leaders is known as a 'house' of traditional leaders. The same structure is known as a 'council' of traditional leaders at a local level.

1) supporting municipalities in facilitating community involvement in development planning processes;
2) communicating community needs to municipalities and other spheres of government;
3) recommending appropriate interventions to government to bring about development and service delivery;
4) promoting indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable development;
5) participating in the development programmes of municipalities and other spheres of government; and
6) Participating in the development of policy and legislation at local level (South Africa, 2003).

According to Section 20(1) of the Traditional Leaders Governance Framework Act No. 41 of 2003, national government or a provincial government may provide a role for traditional councils or traditional leaders in respect of arts and culture; land administration; agriculture; health; welfare; the administration of justice; safety and security; the registration of births, deaths and customary marriages; economic development; environment; tourism; disaster management; the management of natural resources; and the dissemination of information relating to government policies (South Africa, 2003). Despite recognizing traditional leaders, the role of traditional leadership in environmental management (which includes grass utilization) is not specified in the Traditional Leaders Governance Framework Act No. 41 of 2003. It is apparent from the outline of functions of traditional councils that roles of traditional leaders are limited to support, participation and making of recommendations to municipalities (and other spheres of government), as opposed to decision making and leadership. The provision for national government or provincial government to provide a role for traditional councils or traditional leaders (South Africa, 2003) does not specify the conditions under which such provisions may be made. The role of traditional leaders in grass utilization and management is, therefore, unclear in the current institutional framework.

6.2 INSTITUTIONAL MAP OF QWAQWA[17]

This section focuses on some of the institutional structures that exist or operate in QwaQwa, based on an institutional mapping exercise with five community members, except where mention is made of other data sources. Such an inventory of institutional structures is helpful to understand the broader institutional framework that affects grass utilization in QwaQwa, in the current context.

In Figure 5, various institutional structures are shown to be interlinked in different ways. As seen from the map, communities interact with councillors more frequently than the rest of the other institutions. According to participants of the institutional mapping exercise, this interaction is not desired by the community but is unavoidable, as reflected in the following statement:

> Frequent interaction with councillors is not my choice. I have to go to the councillor because s/he is the only one who signs my papers of eligibility for a government grant. Given a choice, I would rather interact more with the chief (Community member, Lejoaneng Village, July, 2007)

The preference for traditional leaders over councillors despite the institutional change in local governance reflects trust for traditional leaders and lack of confidence in elected representatives. Trust in an institution is built when people perceive that the institution is working for the public good rather than individual interest (Macnaghten *et al*, 1997).

The reverse link (shown by an arrow pointing in the direction of the community from the municipality) is the service delivery function of the municipality. Although the relative strength of this link was not explored in depth, the fact that

[17] Although institutional mapping was not limited to institutional structures whose functions are linked to grass utilization, the outcome is by no means exhaustive.

communities identified councillors as agents of infrastructural service delivery (Section 6.3.4) means that this link exists.

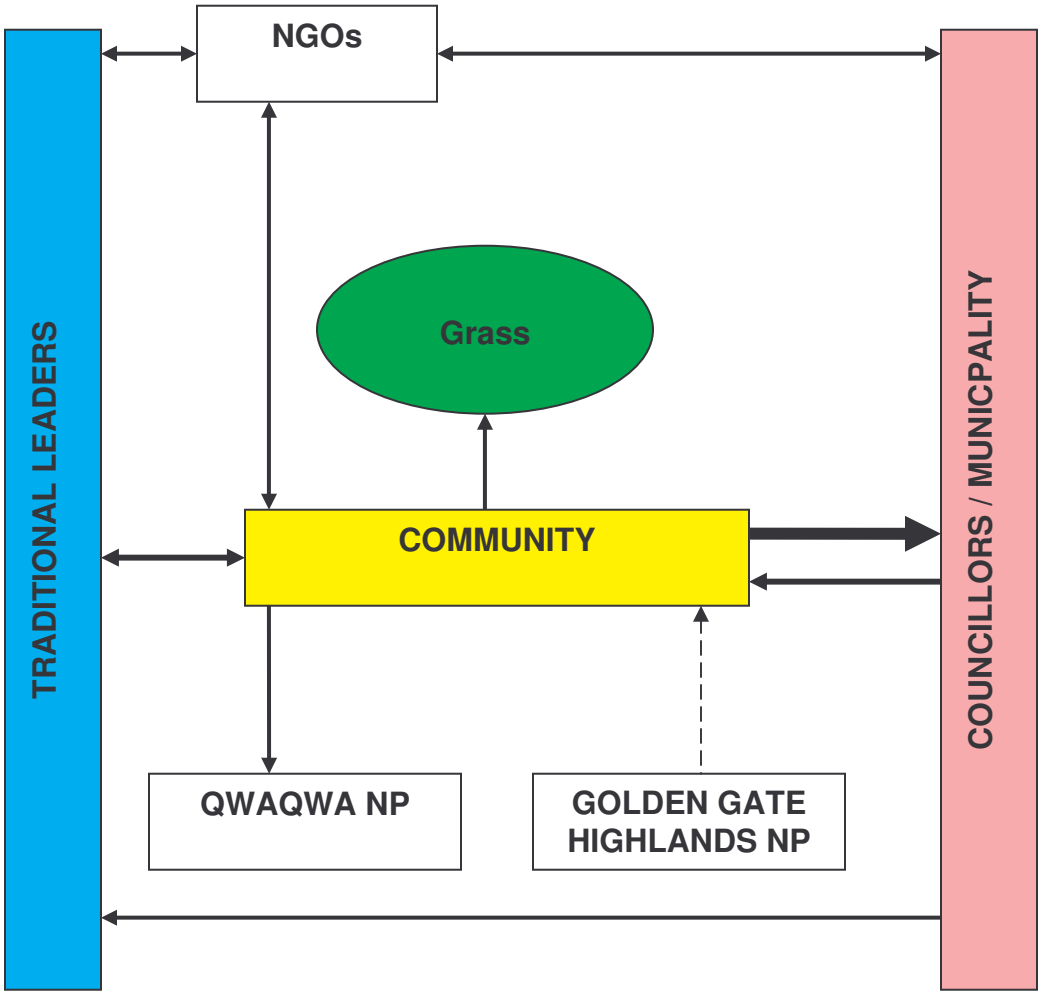


Figure 5: Institutional map of QwaQwa[18]

Although community members hold traditional leaders in high esteem, the link between the community and traditional leaders is not as strong as it was in the past. This is because traditional leaders are no longer performing most of the functions which made communities rely on them as the first point of call in times

[18]The thickness of an arrow represents strength of the link/interaction between the institutional structures connected by the arrow. A thick arrow implies a strong interaction while a thin arrow implies a weak link between the institutional structures. Arrows point in the direction in which services are sought or rendered. A two-directional arrow implies mutual dependence of the institutional structures in question on each other.

of need. For example, in terms of dispute resolution, people have other options such as national police and the courts of law in the current framework.

The link between councillors and traditional leaders (shown by an arrow pointing in the direction of traditional leaders) reflects the practice by councillors of going through chiefs whenever they want to address communities. This was reported during the institutional mapping exercise and by all the four councillors who participated in the study.

Individuals and business entities who are involved in weaving obtain part of their grass (raw material) from QwaQwa National Park (QNP), hence the link between the community and QNP[19]. Despite appearing as insignificant, the link between the community and GGHNP is positive. The link stands for the support that was given by GGHNP to some communities involved in weaving. The link looks insignificant because, unlike other links, this support was not (and it was not intended to be) continuous. It is, however, necessary to have the link reflected in the institutional map because it shows the potential for continued positive interaction between GGHNP and the community.

Participants to the institutional mapping exercise also mentioned that some NGOs support QwaQwa communities by helping them to start livelihood projects. During project inception, such NGOs facilitate acquisition of land from traditional leaders. At the same time, NGOs link communities with local institutional structures such as the municipality as an exit strategy. It is due to this multifaceted nature of the role of NGOs that they appear to be connected to many institutional structures. Despite the relative importance of NGOs to the community, there was no indication of their involvement in grass management and utilization.

[19] Sources of grass for weaving are discussed in detail in Section 6.6.2.

The utilization of grass by communities (through activities such as weaving and grazing) is the reason for the one-directional link between the community and grass. It is noteworthy that apart from this consumptive use of grass by communities, grass appears to be isolated from all other institutional structures in the map.

6.3 PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

In order to gain insight into respondents' perceptions of the current institutional context, questions were asked relating to their understanding of the current institutional framework governing grass utilization. Responses to this inquiry were varied. In some cases, the policy and practice regarding grass utilization was understood differently by different categories of respondents. In order to maintain the diversity of opinions, responses from various categories of respondents are presented separately. These perceptions complement findings of the institutional mapping exercise.

6.3.1 Traditional leaders

Sentiments of traditional leaders reflected intense frustration. In their view, all the work of the chief has been transferred to the municipality in the new political dispensation[20]. Traditional leaders indicated that there is no reason for people to go to them given that local disputes, which were originally settled by traditional leaders, are now the duty of national police and the courts of law. The municipality is given a budget for development projects. As a result, according to traditional leaders, people look to the municipality for their needs. Traditional leaders stated that the municipality falls short, however, of meeting people's expectations. According to them, when chiefs submit development proposals based on people's demands to the municipality, such budgets are rarely

[20] This is based on a focus group discussion with 12 Bakoena chiefs. The same sentiments were expressed by a Senior Traditional leader of Kholokoe Village.

approved. In the end, people perceive the chiefs as not being helpful to them. One traditional leader mentioned road construction as an example of projects which traditional leaders submit to the municipality for consideration.

Chiefs in QwaQwa realize that institutional change is nationwide. Their concern, however, is with the working relationship that exists between them and their municipality (Maluti-a-Phofung). Chiefs envied other provinces where, according to them, chiefs enjoy a good working relationship with councillors despite the changed institutional context. They expressed hope in the national process of legal reform which, according to them, seeks to restore powers to the chiefs (Senior Traditional Leader, Kholokoe Village, Interview, 10th July 2007).

Another concern expressed by traditional leaders, which is directly related to grass utilization, had to do with people's loss of respect for the institution of traditional leadership. According to the Village Headman of Thibela Village and a community respondent in Phuthaditjhaba, since the 1994 elections, people no longer obey their chiefs because of their perceived democratic rights. If a traditional leader attempts to challenge someone's negative behaviour (such as careless burning of grass), they get a response like: *'I have my rights.'* As result of this state of affairs, chiefs reported, people no longer adhere to cultural practices of grass utilization.

Given the general negative perception of traditional leaders towards elected councillors, it was convenient for them to associate irresponsible freedom of some community members with the 1994 democratic elections. It is, however, unlikely that such behaviour could be attributed solely to the political changes introduced in 1994 (See Section 5.2.5 for other factors).

Two community respondents indicated that councillors have nothing to do with grass utilization and management because their focus is on provision of infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity. There were indications

throughout all discussions with traditional leaders that despite the erosion of their powers, they are not ready to relinquish leadership. This perception is summarized in the following statement made by a Senior Traditional Leader in Kholokoe Village:

> We were not elected but we were born to lead (July 2007).

The same traditional leader elaborated on this point by stating that:

> Councillors' leadership is tied to their five year tenure of office. This is why their (councillors') personal interests tend to override people's needs (July, 2007).

This perception suggests that traditional leaders cannot use their position to advance personal interests because their leadership is not time bound. On the contrary, other studies have shown that traditional leaders too are not immune from using their position of office to serve their own interests (Ribot, 1999; Serra, 2001) especially when their legitimacy is questionable. This is exemplified in people's distrust of a committee that was put in place by an illegitimate traditional leader for the management of Moribane Forest Reserve in Mpunga area of Manica Province in Mozambique (Serra, 2001).

6.3.2 Councillors

Councillors who participated in this study had different opinions regarding the role of traditional leaders in grass management in the current context. Some councillors indicated that since most of the functions of traditional leaders including environmental governance have shifted to the municipality, traditional leaders are not involved and can no longer be involved in grass management in the current context. Other councillors expressed that even though environmental protection, including grass management is a mandate of municipalities, councillors focus on service delivery and development which includes provision

of electricity, water and sanitation services, infrastructure development e.g. access roads; and administering pensions. One councillor put it this way:

> We know that by law, councillors are responsible for grass management. But we follow our tradition. Traditional leaders are the ones who are responsible for grass. The focus of councillors is on service delivery (Councillor, Phomolong Village, July, 2007).

This perception was found to be more representative of actual practice based on triangulation with responses from community members (see below). Despite their differences in perceptions of the current role of traditional leaders in grass management, all councillors acknowledged that traditional leaders have always been involved in grass management.

Councillors stated that careless burning of grass is a recent trend. In their view, such malpractice is a result of misunderstanding among the youth about the meaning of democracy. The misunderstanding comes from a perception of democracy as a tool for expressing one's freedom which is a not a problem in itself. The problem lies in the exercise of freedom at the expense of the environment and other people's welfare. Councillors felt that constant awareness creation about rights and responsibilities would help to deal with such antisocial and environmentally damaging behaviour.

6.3.3 District government officials

Government officials from the district office of the Department of Agriculture reported that traditional practices helped in regulating access to grass and controlling illegal practices. The following statement depicts a comparative perception by a district government official between traditional institutions and the current institutional framework of local government:

> "In the past, chiefs would set aside land for winter grazing. Now we have moved away from the chief to the municipality, but the municipality is not doing much to assist in the management of the grassland (Department of Agriculture Official, Thabo Mofutsanyana District, July, 2007)

Despite making reference to grazing as opposed to weaving, this statement is a perception of effectiveness of traditional rules of regulating grass utilization. By describing traditional controls in relation to the municipality, it shows that although erosion of traditional practices started long ago, local government reform contributed to further breakdown of traditional controls of grass utilization.

Like councillors, government officials felt that misunderstanding of democratic rights has led to activities that are detrimental to the grassland such as harmful bushfires. Fire in itself is good for the maintenance of the grassland as it prevents establishment of trees (Low and Rebola, 1996). Traditional leaders and community respondents mentioned that grass was being burnt at specific intervals to allow for fresh growth when traditional leaders were in control. The problem with current burning is that it is not controlled. Even the Department of Agriculture recognized the threat of unregulated fires to the sustainability of grass supply in the area[21].

6.3.4 Community members

According to community members, elected and traditional leaders have different roles. Roles of traditional leaders include allocating land or providing access to it,

[21] In a bid to fight harmful bushfires, the Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) encouraged farmers to form Fire Protection Associations (FPAs) which were supposed to register with the Department of Agriculture. This initiative was aimed at helping livestock farmers to reduce their over reliance on government for fodder. Very few associations were registered. Even the few associations that were registered never functioned. Despite the poor response to the fire protection initiative, farmers expect government to give them fodder. According to an Agriculture Officer, the failure of this initiative was due to a dependence syndrome by farmers.

being a witness to a councillor, and authorizing funeral rituals. Councillors, on the other hand, are responsible for service delivery such as provision of housing, electricity and roads. In terms of grass utilization, community members attributed careless burning of grass to the reduction of the power of traditional leaders.

Trust for traditional leaders

It was evident throughout the study that community members respect and trust the leadership role of traditional leaders more than any other institutional structure as reflected in the institutional mapping exercise (Section 6.2). Trust in traditional leaders over councillors was further expressed by a community respondent who echoed sentiments of traditional leaders about councillors being interested more in their personal interests because their leadership has a life span of five years after which they may not be re-elected. As argued in Section 6.3.1 above, trusting traditional leaders because of their leadership is not time-bound depends on the context. Furthermore, the suggestions that traditional leaders are trustworthy simply because their positions are not subjected to elections cannot explain the wishes of some in other contexts communities to have traditional leaders included in electoral processes (Williams, 2004).

The perception of traditional leaders as custodians of culture, as discussed in Chapter Five (Section 5.3.3.2), offers a better explanation for people's trust in the institution of traditional leadership. As pointed out by Garrigue (2004) (Chapter Two, Section 2.3), the value system on which performance of traditional leaders can be assessed has nothing to do with democratic processes such as elections. In QwaQwa, it would appear that people's value for cultural identity which was the basis for respecting traditional leaders is also the basis for trusting traditional leaders.

6.4 POLICY IN PRACTICE

Acknowledgement of the role of the local municipality as infrastructural service delivery by the community speaks well of the municipality's ability to meet community expectations. In itself, provision of basic social amenities is beneficial to modern society including QwaQwa residents. For example, as a grass weaving society, good roads are needed in QwaQwa to facilitate transportation of grass products to market places such as Phuthaditjhaba (Plate 3).



Plate 3: Rural based individual selling brooms in Phuthaditjhaba
Photo: J. Qolwane

Pre-occupation of the municipality with infrastructural service delivery to the exclusion of rural environmental issues such as grass utilization, however, is not entirely in line with the goals of developmental local government which ascribes environmental responsibility to the municipality.

The need to integrate environmental sustainability in local government planning as required by the IDP framework is an indication of the recognition that sustainability of all forms of service provision requires protection of the natural and built environment. The councillors' shifting of responsibility to traditional

leaders while acknowledging that grassland management is part of mandate of the municipality shows lack of grassland management capacity in the municipality. This outcome confirms observations of lack of capacity as one of the setbacks for integrating environmental issues in IDP processes countrywide (Stevens, 1999 in Sowman, 2002).

6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL ACTION (LA) 21

By examining traditional systems of environmental governance in the current context, this research explored the extent to which the rural community of QwaQwa is participating in the implementation of LA 21. Given the erosion of traditional practices in QwaQwa, communities and traditional leaders cannot be considered to be involved in the implementation of LA 21 in the rural area which is under tribal authorities. Traditional leaders feel powerless to effectively enforce traditional rules of grass utilization because their powers have been eroded.

Given that Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality largely focuses on the built environment to the exclusion of grassland management as shown in this study, it follows that LA 21 is not being implemented in the rural area of QwaQwa even from the perspective of the local municipality. This is, however, contrary to the policy expectation that municipalities should take a leading role in planning for environmental sustainability through the IDP process (South Africa, 1998). Even though the focus here is on the rural, it is equally unlikely that urban environmental issues are integrated in development planning given the functional integration[22] of rural and the urban areas in Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality.

[22] The terms 'rural' and 'urban' in relation to municipalities are fluid. On one hand, municipalities encompass areas including those that are classified as tribal areas i.e. areas under the jurisdiction of chiefs. On the other hand, some tribal areas have establishments and institutions that are characteristic of urban infrastructure (See www.stasa.gov.za for various interpretations of urban and rural as used in the population census of 1996 and 2001). According to the White Paper on Local Government, in some cases the separation of rural areas from cities and towns has imposed artificial political and administrative boundaries between areas that are otherwise functionally integrated (South Africa, 1998). While the major service centres of Phuthaditjhaba, Harrismith and Kestell (Figure 2) are rightly referred to as urban areas (http://malutiaphofung.fs.gov.za/), actual demarcation of the urban area according to current

6.6 WEAVING IN THE CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Drawing on the understanding that institutions provide mechanisms for environmental governance (Dietz, *et al.* 2003), current practices of grass utilization reflect the effectiveness (or lack of it) of the new institutional framework. Despite the change in the institutional framework, weaving is still important to the communities of QwaQwa.

6.6.1 Commercialization of weaving

It was found that weaving is no longer just a traditional practice. Evidence from physical visits to weaving enterprises and individuals showed that weaving has become a commercial activity. Individuals make various household crafts for household use and for sale. Besides weaving activities that are done by individuals at household level, commercial enterprises have been established.[23] As noted in Chapter Five (Section 5.1), enterprises that were visited during this study were Thaba Blinds Factory, Lejoaneng Grass Project and Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project. By broadening the consumer base, commercialization of weaving is contributing to the income needs of the otherwise impoverished communities (as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.6). Weaving enterprises are also making a contribution to rural livelihoods through employment creation.

6.6.2 Access mechanisms

Grass for weaving is obtained through various mechanisms depending on the scale of production and location of the business. According to members of the management team of Thaba Blinds Factory, the factory obtains its grass by

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demarcations by the Municipal Demarcations Board extends deep into the tribal area (www.stasa.gov.za). Beall (2006) discusses similar ambiguities of the interface between urban and rural in a metropolitan context of EThekwini Municipality in KwaZulu Natal.

[23] See Appendix 2 for summarized profiles of major weaving business entities in QwaQwa.

buying from regular suppliers in QwaQwa and other places in the Free State. During harvesting time, the factory collects grass from suppliers' homesteads.

Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project, according to two members of the project, obtains grass from mountains, private farms and QwaQwa National Park. The two members of the project who were interviewed also indicated that while the project obtains grass from mountains freely, it pays to collect the same grass from private farms and QwaQwa National Park. Collecting grass from farms (most of which are far away) and QwaQwa National Park means additional costs of transportation to the project. Due to the perception of increasing scarcity of grass in the nearby mountains, as reported by members of the project, they had to extend the supply base of grass.

Grass used in Lejoaneng Grass Project is obtained only from the mountains due to the closeness of the mountains in relation to the location of the project. Within the mountains, members of Lejoaneng Grass Project travel long distances when collecting grass because the desired grass of different species is found in different sites that are distant from each other (Lejoaneng Grass Project, Interview, 8th July, 2007).

Individual weavers who were interviewed indicated that they buy grass from private farms. Others obtain grass from private farms for free. Free collection from private farms is granted to those who retired after working in the private farms and are now settled in QwaQwa. Individuals also buy grass from QwaQwa National Park at a cost of R6.00 per person per day. Those who live close to the mountain collect grass freely from the mountains.

6.6.3 Grass availability

All grass users (individuals and members of enterprises) indicated that grass has become scarcer than ever. Grass weavers reported that they used to collect grass from the surroundings of their homesteads in the past and that they now

have to travel long distances to find desirable species. Some grass users mentioned that they obtain their grass from the Durban side of the Drakensberg. Others indicated that they go as far as Sasolburg to obtain grass for their weaving needs.

All grass users attributed scarcity of grass to unregulated bushfires which in turn were reported to have been caused by a breakdown of traditional controls of grass harvesting. In order to cope with this tendency, members of Lejoaneng Grass Project harvest grass around March and dry it in their homesteads. They avoid waiting for the grass to dry by itself because it becomes prone to fires.

Since land resources on communal land are not governed by any property rights, it is difficult to control harmful bushfires. Unlike in the Wild Coast where it is possible to 'own' and manage *Cyperus textilis* by planting the grass (Kepe, 2002); it is not possible for any individual to claim ownership and, therefore, manage grass in QwaQwa as it is simply collected from the wild.

6.6.4 Sustaining the supply base

The need to ensure resource sustainability in weaving commercialization has been acknowledged in other studies (Cunningham and Terry, 2006; Makhado *et al*, 2006). Likewise, increased commercialization of grass weaving in QwaQwa necessitates having a management mechanism to ensure sustained availability of valuable grass. It is clear from the results of this study that grass dependent enterprises and individuals did everything they could to obtain grass from the nearest possible source. None of the enterprises are involved in grass management and protection. As far as business owners are concerned, they are victims of grass depletion as much as any one else.

Thaba Blinds Factory and Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project received support from government departments to enhance their operations. It was apparent from the interviews with members of both projects that this support was limited to aspects

of production and marketing of grass products. Little attention was paid to the protection and maintenance of the raw material supply base. The focus seems to have been economic empowerment and poverty alleviation of the target beneficiaries. The willingness of institutions to support grass based enterprises without giving attention to management of the supply base resonates with Turner's (2002) observation that conservation in South Africa has been largely restricted to protected areas. Probably, supporting institutions do not see the need for conserving grass in the communal area of QwaQwa because those areas are not 'protected'.

6.7 THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT

The fact that harmful bushfires were attributed to reduction of powers of traditional leaders as reported by government officials, traditional leaders and community members, shows that traditional leaders are no longer involved in regulating access to grass in the current context. A member of Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project had this to say about availability of grass in relation to the role of traditional leaders:

> If chiefs have failed to control harmful bushfires, what can we do? (Thibela Village, July, 2007).

While this question may seem to reflect a care-free attitude, it is a predicament in which grass weavers find themselves. It may probably be too much to expect any corrective measures from grass weavers when traditional authorities cannot contain the pressure of uncontrolled bushfires.

Although weaving related functions of traditional leaders have generally been eroded, isolated examples show involvement of traditional leaders in weaving commercialization. For example, it was learnt from a village headman of Thibela Village that during inception of Thaba Blinds Factory, he mobilized skilful women

from the foothills of the Drakensberg to train others in weaving. The village headman was also instrumental in leading early members of the factory into specific areas in communal land which are endowed with grass species that have weaving significance. Although it can be argued that the village headman was helping the enterprise in an individual capacity, he certainly used his position as a traditional leader to grant access to grass for the enterprise. Elderly members of Thaba Blinds Factory confirmed this history.

The foregoing example shows efforts by a single traditional leader to position his influence within the current context of grass utilization. With increased commercialization, however, the role of traditional leaders became even less significant as grass weavers started buying raw materials from villagers. Commercialization meant increased demand for grass, leading weavers to broaden their supply base by obtaining grass from other places besides QwaQwa communal land. As alluded to in the access mechanisms of grass described in 6.6.2 above, traditional leaders are generally no longer involved in the supply chain of grass.

The acknowledgement by councillors that traditional leaders have always been involved in grass management (See section 6.3.2) is a good basis for incorporating traditional leaders in municipal structures or programmes of environmental governance. By involving traditional leaders only when they want to hold meetings with the community (Section 6.2), councillors are not utilizing the knowledge and experience of traditional leaders in grass management at policy and planning level. This ‘omission’ can be attributed to a perception of grass management being separate from the business of the municipality, as reflected in the focus of the municipality on infrastructural service delivery. Ultimately, this state of affairs reflects the implications of the broader policy framework which lacks clarity regarding the exact roles of traditional leaders in the context of democratic governance (See Section 6.1 above).

Since councillors go through traditional leaders when they want to hold meetings with the community, it can be argued that traditional leaders are playing important roles which may include environmental governance depending on the objective of a particular meeting. At the same time, the need to go through traditional leaders each time a councillor wants to hold a meeting with the community raises concerns: Why should councillors not go to the community directly? Is there any problem with people attending a meeting organized by a councillor in the absence of a traditional leader? Could it be that traditional leaders are acting as 'gate keepers' of the community? As long as councillors cannot hold a meeting without going through traditional leaders, the essence of decentralization which aims at allowing affected local communities to have a say in their own affairs (Agrawal and Ostrom, 2001), is compromised.

Submission of development proposals for consideration by the local municipality as reported in 6.3.1 is a departure from the role of mere custodians of custom to that of development and service delivery. Submission of such development proposals raises questions regarding municipal planning which is beyond the scope of this study: Why should traditional leaders come up with parallel development proposals instead of simply participating in the integrated development planning process of the municipality? For purposes of this study, it suffices to say at present that traditional leaders are trying to define their role in relation to democratic institutions in the context of decentralization.

6.8 SUMMARY

Grass utilization on communal land is currently governed by the local government framework of environmental management. Despite the existence of various institutional structures in QwaQwa, there is hardly any institutional structure that is currently involved in grassland management. Weaving is increasingly becoming commercialized. Commercialization of weaving is faced with the challenge of ensuring sustainable supply of grass which is threatened by frequent incidences of unregulated fires. Although the role of traditional leaders in

grass management has been significantly reduced, they continue to influence local communities in QwaQwa.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PROTECTED AREAS OF THE EASTERN FREE STATE

7.0 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter builds on the current institutional framework governing grass utilization presented in Chapter Six. This chapter, however, differs from Chapter Six in that it focuses on protected areas, rather than the communal land of QwaQwa. In particular, attention is given to institutional developments that are currently underway in Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) and QwaQwa National Park (QNP). The implication of the establishment of the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP), which covers part of the communal land of QwaQwa, is also discussed.

Due to the focus on traditional leaders, belief systems and practices, this study concentrated on understanding environmental governance on communal land where traditional leaders have jurisdiction. For this reason, historical aspects and theoretical debates regarding the mentioned protected areas were not considered and are, therefore, not included in this discussion. Developments in protected areas are discussed only as part of the context within which traditional systems are operating. The proximity between QwaQwa and the two protected areas of GGHNP and QNP necessitates understanding aspects of their management that have a bearing on the role of traditional leaders. Likewise, developments in MDTCDP have direct implications for QwaQwa due to the programme's coverage of part of the study area.

Section one discusses developments in Golden Gate Highlands National park (GGHNP) that are relevant to the scope of this study namely, development of a resource use policy and a framework for stakeholder participation. The second section focuses on access rules and compliance to the rules in QwaQwa National Park (QNP). Implications of amalgamation of the two parks (GGHNP and QNP) are discussed in section three. Section four discusses implications for grass weaving communities in QwaQwa of the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP). Section five compares environmental governance institutions in QwaQwa which have an existing or potential impact on grass weaving communities of QwaQwa with respect to management authority, geographical coverage, community participation and grass use.

7.1 GOLDEN GATE HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK

7.1.1 Interaction with the community

As stated in the methodology (Chapter Four), the interaction between Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) and QwaQwa residents is considered to be useful in understanding the nature and functionality of traditional systems of grass utilization. It was felt at design stage that effectiveness or ineffectiveness of traditional systems would partly be reflected in the level of illegal harvesting of grass by communities in GGHNP.

According to a GGHNP official, rare occurrences have been observed of people grazing or harvesting grass in GGHNP. The low level of illegal activities is attributed to two factors. Firstly, since the communal area does not share a direct boundary with GGHNP (Figure 3), the long distance that separates the two areas prohibits people from grazing their cattle or harvesting grass in the park. The second and most important reason is the mountainous terrain of the area which inhibits access to communities of QwaQwa.

The interaction between GGHNP and QwaQwa residents is largely positive. As part of its local economic development programme, GGHNP has, on a number of occasions, supported local enterprises. In particular, GGHNP supported Thaba Blinds Factory; a community owned and managed enterprise involved in grass weaving. The park supported the enterprise by creating exhibition opportunities and linking the factory with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in order to develop their business management practice (SANParks Regional Coordinator-Northern Cluster, Interview, 24th July, 2007).

Apparently, no conclusions concerning effectiveness of traditional systems can be drawn from the insignificant record of illegal harvesting of grass by communities in GGHNP. Knowing existence of illegal activities as a means of assessing effectiveness of traditional systems of governance was based on the assumption that traditional systems of governance are currently operational. As evidenced from the erosion of the powers of traditional leaders, records of illegal grass utilization in GGHNP do not necessarily reflect on traditional systems of grass utilization. This is because traditional leaders are no longer formally responsible for regulating grass utilization in communal land. Results were, however, useful in understanding the future role of traditional leaders in grass utilization based on the institutional developments that are currently underway in the GGHNP. These are discussed below and include:

- development of a new resource use policy for SANParks;
- formation of stakeholder forums in all national parks;
- amalgamation of GGHNP and QwaQwa National Park (QNP); and
- establishment of Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP).

7.1.2 SANParks resource use policy

Since the creation of national parks, no form of resource utilization in national parks was allowed. As a result, communities have never been allowed to

collect/use grass from all national parks, GGHNP inclusive. Contrary to this policy, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 amended Act 31 of 2004 provides for communities to access resources from protected areas. This legal provision calls for a revision of SANParks policy on resource use, hence the development of a new policy.

SANParks' new resource use policy stipulates 13 feasibility and implementation principles which are supposed to form the basis for standard operating procedures for resource use in all South African national parks. Feasibility principles include impact assessment, precautionary approach, maintenance of system integrity, cost benefit analysis, cost recovery and adequate capacity. Implementation principles include adaptive management
incentives, ethics, redress, respect for rights, co-management and enforcement (South Africa, 2007). These principles are simply there to guide. The actual procedures will be specific to the respective national parks and would be developed in consultation with park forums (South Africa, 2007).

According to a SANParks official, SANParks recognizes that despite prohibition of resource use according to the old policy, communities were accessing resources in national parks. It is, therefore, expected that in developing park specific resource use protocols, resources that are already in use or those which communities have an interest to access would be targeted. In this regard, SANParks developed a database of existing resource use by communities. At the time of this study, 3 pilot projects were planned for implementation in 3 national parks to determine Thresholds of Potential Concern (TPCs)[24] as a starting point for implementation of the resource use policy.[25]

Establishment of park specific TPCs is critical to ensure that any form of resource utilization does not lead to loss of biodiversity. Regardless of the likely challenges

[24] TPCs are a set of operational goals that define the upper and the lower levels of accepted variation in ecosystems (Gillson and Duffin, 2007).
[25] Interview with a SANParks official in Pretoria, August, 2007.

of balancing resource use and biodiversity conservation, enthusiasm in getting the process underway was evident, during data collection, as reflected in the following statement:

> We have a problem in that our mandate as SANParks is to make absolutely sure that the whole state of biodiversity is not impacted negatively by any form of resource utilization. This means that a lot of research is required to determine who needs resources, what resources are needed, how much is needed, and how much can be safely accessed. But we have to get started because communities are not going to wait for us for another 10 years (SANParks Official, Pretoria, August, 2007).

Based on the demonstrated importance of grass in QwaQwa, it is likely that for GGHNP, grass would be targeted for the implementation of the resource use policy in the park. An example was given by a SANParks official of the Kgalagadi National park, where communities own part of the national park. In the Kgalagadi case, communities have traditional and cultural rights to the rest of the entire park which implies that they can hunt anywhere in the park. According to the SANParks official, given the cultural importance of grass in QwaQwa, the principle applied in Kgalagadi could also be applicable in GGHNP. At the same time, GGHNP is a grassland biome, in which case preservation of grass is a priority. Nevertheless, cultural heritage is equally important.

7.1.3 SANParks framework for stakeholder participation

NEMA (2003) also provides for stakeholder participation in the management of national parks. In view of this provision, park forums were established to allow for stakeholder participation. Stakeholders include:

> "individuals, neighbours, visitors to parks, private companies or individuals whose business relates to or could be impacted on by protected areas, community/ies, groups with specific interests and concerns, park forums, national and international groups with an interest in conservation or the

management of protected areas, NGOs, community based organizations, SANParks, vulnerable and disadvantaged persons" (South Africa, 2005:1).

According to a GGHNP official, who is also the Regional Coordinator for the Northern Region Cluster of SANParks, based on the national policy for stakeholder participation, GGHNP established a park forum consisting of various stakeholders with a provision for ongoing updating of the list of stakeholders. The stakeholders are categorised into five working groups namely, tourism; natural resources use; research and monitoring; cultural heritage; and biodiversity (SANParks Regional Coordinator-Northern Cluster, Interview, 24th July, 2007). Stakeholders meet twice or three times in a year (SANParks Regional Coordinator-Northern Cluster, Interview, 24th July, 2007).

Like all other stakeholders, it is hoped that the voice of traditional leaders will be heard in park forums (SANParks Regional Coordinator-Northern Cluster, Interview, 24th July, 2007). The same will apply to municipalities (SANParks Regional Coordinator-Northern Cluster, Interview 24th July, 2007). Although both traditional leaders and councillors were not among the represented stakeholders in the park forum of GGHNP at the time of this study, SANParks officials (both at the headquarters in Pretoria and at the field office of GGHNP) were optimistic that park forums could provide an opportunity for mediating between councillors and traditional leaders on issues of common interest.

Since the existing practice does not provide for any form of resource use, a resource use policy for neighbouring communities represents a major shift in the science and practice of protected area management. This shift is consistent with the broader trend of moving away from being state-centric to become more society based (Hulme and Murphree, 1999). In particular, the resource use policy and the formation of stakeholder forums are in line with goals of community based natural resource management (CBNRM) which allow lower level actors to

participate in deciding the management and use of locally situated resources (Agrawal & Ostrom, 2001).

The new resource use policy is particularly compatible with the CBNRM principle of introducing new resource governance structures (Turner, 2002) in the sense that park-specific resource use protocols would be developed by stakeholder forums of the respective national parks. According to the findings of this study, the role of traditional leaders in the implementation of the new resource use policy in GGHNP and elsewhere would be based on their participation in park forums.

The possibility of involving QwaQwa traditional leaders in the implementation of the resource use policy through their representation in the GGHNP stakeholder forum may be worthwhile, considering their experience and knowledge in the management of grass on communal land. Such an initiative, however, flies in the face of traditional leaders' understanding of their leadership role as inherited authority as reflected in the statement: *"we are not elected but we are born to lead."* A major paradigm shift would have to occur for traditional leaders who believe that they were born to lead to effectively participate in a forum of wider representation.

As discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.4), traditional leaders have the capacity to promote or jeopardize CBNRM efforts (Rihoy *et al*, 1999; Serra, 2001; Hara, 2004, Child, 2004). To avoid the negative, it will be necessary to clarify expectations from the outset in any initiative where traditional leaders are likely to participate in the CBNRM processes because of their influence on their subjects. The fact that some traditional leaders can be illegitimate (Serra, 2001; Shackleton *et al*, 2002) needs to be taken into consideration instead of accommodating any traditional leader for the sake of representation. Every case will need to be treated in its own merit. What matters is to make the most out of

the positive elements in the historical role of traditional leadership in order to enhance conservation and community benefits.

Implementation of the resource use policy in GGHNP has implications for the potential role of traditional leaders in grass utilization on communal land. Obviously, governance arrangements of grass utilization in adjacent communal areas are of interest to national parks. This is because an effective grass utilization system on communal land will result in less pressure being exerted on park resources. This is particularly important to GGHNP because grass is highly important to both goals of resource use and biodiversity conservation. The hope is that participation of traditional leaders in park forums will have knock-on benefits for communal land.

Given the nature of traditional leadership and the decentralization context outlined in this study, I argue that the impact of participation of traditional leaders in the GGHNP stakeholder forum and the associated impact on communal land will require some trade-offs for three reasons. Firstly, the municipality would have to recognize and support the role of traditional leadership in grass utilization, regardless of the lack of clarity on the role of traditional leaders in the current institutional framework of grass utilization on communal land. Secondly, traditional leaders would have to adopt a leadership style that accommodates views from a wider spectrum. Thirdly, the GGHNP forum would have to stimulate interest in traditional leaders of conserving grass in their areas for the benefit of both the communal area and GGHNP.

The SANParks' resource use policy attaches much importance is attached to traditional knowledge systems. As a result, the traditional belief systems and practices of grass utilization in QwaQwa, as described in this study, provide a useful baseline for the development of a resource use protocol specific to GGHNP. Examples of considerations that may have to be made by GGHNP in

developing a resource use protocol, if grass becomes one of the target resources include:

- lack of grass management practices on communal land;
- inequalities that exists among grass weavers; and
- the high level of dependence of QwaQwa residents on grass for a variety of uses.

7.2 QWAQWA NATIONAL PARK

As indicated in Chapter One (Section 1.2), QwaQwa National Park (QNP) shares borders with QwaQwa communal land on the southern side and with GGHNP on the western side (Figure 3). The park is managed by a team of 70 staff members, all of whom operate from the park offices which are located inside the park.

7.2.1 Grass access rules

According to the Park Manager of QNP, those who wish to harvest grass from the park in bulk apply for a permit. The park officials based in the park send such applications to provincial authorities in Bloemfontein for approval. The price of grass, in this case, is determined by park authorities based on the quantity harvested. Those who want to harvest in small amounts pay R6.00 per person to harvest for one day. Park residents[26] pay only when they are harvesting grass to sell. Otherwise, they have free access to grass. These rules have no bearing on the past and present role of traditional leaders in grass utilization on communal land.

[26] These are families or descendants of families that had been employed for many generations as farm labourers on white owned farms before the farms were turned into a provincial nature reserve (QNP) (Schoemann, 2002).

7.2.2 Illegal activities

The Park Manager reported that incidences of illegal grass harvesting by neighbouring communities from QwaQwa are frequent. According to the manager, frequent patrols by QNP staff helps to curb these practices.

7.2.3 Governance implications

Considering the ongoing amalgamation between QNP and GGHNP, however, resource use in QNP has a bearing on the future role of traditional leaders in grass utilization on communal land. Given that the communal area of QwaQwa shares a direct boundary with QNP, the interaction between communities of QwaQwa and QNP in terms of resource use is higher than the interaction that exists with GGHNP. This is evidenced from the fact that QNP is one of the sources of grass used for weaving by commercial entities and individuals. The higher levels of illegal grass harvesting in QNP by QwaQwa residents compared to GGHNP (QNP Park Manager, pers. communication) is further evidence of stronger interaction between QNP and QwaQwa residents.

The argument made for not making any deductions from records of illegal harvesting of grass from GGHNP in Section 7.1.1 above also holds for QNP, despite the relatively higher record of illegal activities in QNP. Illegal activities in QNP do not reflect ineffectiveness of traditional systems of grass management because they are no longer operational. By implication, illegal activities in QNP reflect ineffectiveness of the current institutional framework which can be explained in two ways. On one hand, since QNP is managed by provincial authorities, illegal activities could mean lack of adequate capacity to guard against illegal harvesting of grass in the park. On the other hand, illegal activities imply that ineffective governance of grass on communal land is forcing people to resort to QNP as a source of their raw material. This raises the question of the possibility for traditional leaders to play any role in addressing the governance gap that is leading to illegal harvesting of grass in QNP. This possibility will be

determined by the management plan of the park after amalgamation with GGHNP.

7.3 AMALGAMATION OF GGHNP AND QNP

Given the dependence of weaving communities on grass from QNP, the effect of amalgamation to grass users will depend on the nature of the resource use policy. Conversely, this means that current use of grass from QNP will have to be taken into consideration in the development of a resource use protocol for the amalgamated park. Since amalgamation of QNP and GGHNP will bring the two parks under the jurisdiction of SANParks, the implication of amalgamation for the role of traditional leaders will be the same as the effect of implementing SANParks resource use policy in GGHNP (as described above). Given that illegal harvesting of grass is relatively higher in QNP, SANParks will have to position itself appropriately to deal with the current pressure for resource use, once amalgamation is finalized.

7.4 MALOTI DRAKENSBERG TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Maloti Drakensberg lies along the southern, eastern and northern borders of Lesotho and South Africa. The Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP) is a conservation programme that seeks to conserve the mountain (Drakensberg) area and ensure that development needs of the local populations around the mountain are met (Derwent *et al*, 2001). The programme recognizes existence of local populations on both sides of the mountain who depend on the mountain for all or part of their livelihood. In South Africa, this programme encompasses:

- 3 South African provinces namely, Free State, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape,
- Golden Gate Highlands National Park,
- Sterkfontein Nature Reserve, and

- QwaQwa National Park.

It is believed that the incorporation of these areas in MDTCDP creates an opportunity to formally link separate protected areas across communal lands and jurisdictional boundaries (Derwent *et al*, 2001).

The establishment of Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP) has direct potential implications for residents of QwaQwa because the mountainous area covered by MDTCDP on the South African side includes an area in QwaQwa where communities are currently harvesting grass for free. These are mostly villagers who live along the foothills of the mountain. Whether these communities will be affected negatively or positively by MDTCDP will depend on the grass utilization/management regime that will be put in place by the programme.

Since GGHNP is also part of the MDTCDP, policy harmonisation will be required in defining the role of players (including traditional leaders) in the management of MDTCDP in the context of all institutional developments that are underway in GGHNP, QNP and MDTCDP.

7.5 A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS IN QWAQWA, QNP AND GGHNP

This section compares environmental governance arrangements affecting grass utilization in QwaQwa and the nearby protected areas of QwaQwa National Park (QNP) and Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP). Similarities and differences are drawn from the description of the governance institutions in Chapter Five (for traditional systems); Chapter Six (for the current institutional framework) and Chapter Seven (for QNP and GGHNP). Comparison is made with respect to geographical coverage; community participation in decision making; and resource utilization (see Table 4).

Table 4:

Environmental governance systems affecting grass utilization in some areas of the Eastern Free State

		Communal Land		Protected areas	
		Traditional system	**Current institutional framework**	**QwaQwa National Park**	**Golden Gate Highlands National Park**
1	**Management authority**	Traditional leaders.	Municipality.	Provincial government.	SANParks.
2	**Geographical coverage**	Entire area (communal land).	Entire municipal area.	Specific area set aside as nature reserve.	Specific area.
3	**Community participation in decision making**	Traditional leaders make decisions in consultation with elders and traditional healers of the village.	Participatory in principle, through the IDP process. But there are no indications that grass management is considered in planning processes in QwaQwa.	None.	Originally no community participation. This has changed with the introduction of stakeholder forums.
4	**Use of grass**	Regulated use.	Unregulated access to grass on communal land.	Regulated use.	Originally no use at all. This is changing with the introduction of the new resource use policy.

In Table 4, traditional systems are shown to have considered all areas as conservation and resource utilization areas[27], unlike QNP and GGHNP. According to community respondents, it is more ecologically and socially sustainable to conserve (and regulate resource utilization) in all places than to restrict management rules to a specific area of land. This argument contradicts the traditional practice of setting aside areas as sacred forests found in other parts of South Africa such as Thanthe forest in the Soutpansberg mountains in Limpopo Province (Eeley *et al,* 2004) and Gwaliweni (Hlatlikulu) forest in the Lebombo mountains in KwaZulu-Natal (Moll, 1977). Since QwaQwa is predominantly a grassland area with very few patches of forested land, the idea of a sacred forest is likely to be foreign to residents of QwaQwa. It is also unlikely for QwaQwa to have a spiritual connection with their land given that the land is mostly made up of people who migrated from other places. Spiritual significance of land and natural resource relies on long standing historical relationship to the land.

From a biome perspective, however, conserving a large area of land is advantageous. Increased human population and the associated increase in demand for natural resources implies that biomes can hardly be conserved without integration of livelihoods in conservation. This is one reason why MDTCDP seeks to integrate conservation of the vast mountain area (Maloti) with development and livelihood needs of affected communities. Achieving conservation objectives without undermining people's livelihoods depends, in part, on the effectiveness of the governance system. Given the high population density of QwaQwa in the current context, whether sustainability of grass supply can be attained by traditional approaches of conservation is a subject for further research.

It is also evident in Table 3 that community participation in governance is largely insignificant in all systems of governance, except in GGHNP where resource use

[27] Interview with a traditional healer and a community member, July, 2007.

is partly governed by a stakeholder forum (described in Section 7.1.3 above). The extent of community participation in GGHNP, however, depends on the nature and number of interest groups represented in the stakeholder forum. Unlike in the current institutional framework for grass management on communal land, grass utilization is shown in Table 5 to have been regulated under traditional systems. While utilization has not been allowed in GGHNP, it has been regulated in QNP. Grass utilization in GGHNP will be regulated through a resource use protocol to be developed based on the new resource use policy.

7.6 SUMMARY

Institutional developments in Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP), QwaQwa National Park (QNP) and Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme (MDTCDP) have potential implications for existing grass utilization practices and the role of traditional leaders in grass utilization in QwaQwa. As a result, successful outcomes from these institutional developments cannot be guaranteed without due recognition of existing institutions and practices of grass utilization in QwaQwa.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

> 'Beware the reduction of multifarious relationships and conditions to a series of capital letters[28]!' (Peters, 2000:7)

This chapter provides a synthesis of key issues emerging from the study by reflecting on the discussions of grass utilization in the traditional and decentralization contexts. Conclusions are drawn in relation to the following three questions that have been posed in Chapter One:

- What belief systems and practices govern grass utilization in QwaQwa?
- What roles do traditional leaders play in grass utilization based on the indigenous value system in QwaQwa?
- What are the implications of indigenous ideologies and practices for effectiveness of traditional governance arrangements for grass utilization in QwaQwa?

8.1 BELIEF SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES OF GRASS UTILIZATION

Grass weaving has always been done in QwaQwa as part of preserving the Sotho culture. Various traditional practices governed access and management of the grassland when traditional leaders were the only governance structures at local level. Grass management practices included avoidance of allocating farmland and building sites in areas that have valuable weaving species of grass. Grass was preserved indirectly through prohibition of grass collection in hunting areas and during specific periods of the year. Access to weaving grass was regulated by chiefs who granted permission to harvest based on considerations of medicinal value and soil and water conservation.

[28] By a 'series of capital letters,' Peters (2000) is referring to the proliferation of acronyms in the field of natural resource management including NRM and CBNRM.

Contrary to the emphasis on spiritual beliefs as a basis for traditional environmental practices (Anstey and Sousa, 1999; Bernard and Kumalo, 2004, Peterson, 2006), conservation practices of grass in QwaQwa were not associated with a spiritual value of natural resources. For example the treatment of all areas as conservation and livelihood areas does not match the belief of other areas that some places are sacred because they are dwelling places of spirits and ancestors (Bernard and Kumalo, 2004; Eeley *et al,* 2004). Given that most of the places that are considered sacred are forest areas (Moll, 1977; Eeley *et al,* 2004), it is not surprising that spiritual beliefs of this nature are not prevalent in QwaQwa which is dominated by grassland vegetation. In addition, belief in spirits and ancestors is associated with a long historical connection to land. As shown in Chapter Three (Section 3.8), the current dominant tribe of the Bakoena have been in QwaQwa only since the mid 19th century as a result of colonial conquests of original occupants. This analysis does not suggest that spiritual beliefs do not exist among the Sotho. Rather, the emphasis on spiritual beliefs as a basis for conservation does not apply to QwaQwa as much as it does to other areas where inhabitants have long ancestry histories.

8.2 THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN GRASS UTILIZATION

Traditional leaders performed various roles in regulating access to grass. These roles included granting permission to harvest, sensitizing people on the need to conserve, and determining penalties for illegal harvesting of grass. Although traditional leaders continue to influence local communities in QwaQwa, traditional practices in general and the regulatory role of traditional leaders in grass utilization have declined gradually over time for historical and other reasons.

8.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE OF GRASS UTILIZATION

Despite the failure to comply with some of the design principles (Ostrom, 1990), traditional arrangements promoted positive environmental behaviour in terms of

managing and regulating access to weaving grass. The disconnection between compliance with Ostrom's design principles and effectiveness of traditional governance institutions confirms the need for context specific criteria in understanding governance effectiveness (Young, 2007). In QwaQwa, factors that enhanced adherence to traditional rules governing utilization of grass included respect for traditional leaders which resulted from valuing culture and trust for traditional leaders. These factors were identified by understanding traditional practices from the perspective of the respondents.

8.4 EROSION OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND LEADERSHIP

As a result of the current institutional framework, traditional leaders are not exercising authority as much as they used to in the past in terms of regulating access to grass for weaving. The institutional shift to local government as a major responsible authority for grass management and utilization has contributed to the erosion of powers of traditional leaders. However, this is not the only cause for erosion of traditional practices. Cultural practices on which the role of traditional leaders is based have been declining gradually since the colonial administration. For example, new comers who were relocated to QwaQwa during the creation of the homeland had an influence on cultural practices as they came with a different lifestyle.

Furthermore, democratization has affected traditional practices in general. This is particularly so due to misunderstanding of the concept of democracy. For example, due to misunderstandings of democracy some people start harmful bushfires as an expression of democratic rights.

The general shift towards modernity also contributed to the breakdown of traditional controls of grass utilization. A typical example of the effect of modernization of cultural practices is the commercialization of weaving. While weaving was previously done for household items, it is now being done for sale to local and external markets. Commercialization of weaving has increased

demand for grass some of which is being obtained from outside QwaQwa. This being the trend, it is unlikely that traditional leaders can perform the same functions of regulating access to grass as before and expect to get the same results in terms of grassland management.

8.5 TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN THE CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Traditional leaders are involved in community mobilization by acting as an 'entry point' whenever councillors want to hold meetings with communities. Although this role is not specific to grass management traditional leaders are using their influence to facilitate people's involvement in policy processes of the local municipality. At the same time, this role of traditional leaders in the current context is problematic from a democratic perspective as it undermines people's direct participation in municipal proceedings. In order to participate more effectively in local environmental governance, traditional leaders ought to appreciate the importance of broad based public participation in the context of democratic decentralization.

Based on this study, it can be said that some traditional leaders in QwaQwa have realized the need to adjust in relation to the changing context. According to the findings of this study, which resonates with the broader South African context (Williams, 2004), traditional leaders do not want to be confined to cultural practices. The quest by traditional leaders for a much broader role is exemplified in their submission of developments projects to the local municipality. The motivation for developing proposals parallel to the formal municipal process of development planning is not clear but it reflects an effort by traditional leaders to define their role in relation to democratic governance. The ability of traditional leaders to adjust in relation to changing systems of governance can have negative and positive implications. Being used as agents of indirect rule during the colonial era (Ribot, 1999) is a negative example. As discussed for CBNRM situations in Chapter Two positive examples also exist of the positive effects of

including traditional leaders in formal governance systems. The exact path to be taken by traditional leaders in QwaQwa remains to be seen.

8.6 CO-EXISTENCE OF TRADITIONAL AND ELECTED LEADERS

According to Ntsebeza (2002), the power struggle between traditional and elected leaders in South Africa has resulted in reduction of common resources such as grass to open access. This argument is applicable to QwaQwa in two ways. Firstly, the perceptions of traditional leaders and councillors about each other show a deep seated conflict between traditional leaders and councillors regarding their roles. Secondly, the weak institutional framework affecting grass utilization on communal land in practice as shown in the institutional map leaves grass in a state of open access. This conclusion is based on the institutional vacuum that is created as a result of the demise of traditional mechanisms of grass management and the focus of local government on developing urban infrastructure.

However, since erosion of traditional controls cannot be attributed to the introduction of local government alone, it cannot be said that the open access situation is a result of the power struggle between traditional and elected leaders. Instead, it is more appropriate in the case of QwaQwa to say that local government decentralization has contributed to further deterioration of traditional practices of grass management.

8.7 LOCAL ACTION 21: BROADENING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

By examining possible implementation of LA 21 in a rural context, this research opens up new sets of conceptual and theoretical questions for local dimensions of environmental governance. Considering the holistic nature of principles of sustainable development which guide implementation of LA 21, this research argues for interrogating the extent to which LA 21 is implemented in all spheres of governance regardless of existence of formal LA 21 programmes.

8.8 SUMMARY

The quotation at the beginning of this chapter is a warning by Peters (2000) about the danger of reducing complex and situationally specific interactions among people and their environments to oversimplified models or rules of behaviour. Based on the findings of this research and in agreement with Peters (2000), I conclude that understanding and defining the role of traditional in leaders in environmental governance in QwaQwa cannot be straightforward. This is because the role of traditional leaders in QwaQwa is shaped by historical, environmental and political factors that are specific to the area. Consequently, defining the role of traditional leaders in environmental governance cannot be based on a 'one size fits all' approach. Rather, a more progressive analytical framework that recognizes context specific realities is required to understand the past and present role of traditional leaders in environmental governance in addition to cultural perspectives.

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Interviews

Date	Interviewee
Interviews	
March, 2007	Individual (Secretary, Batlokoa Traditional Council)
May, 2007	Village Headman
7th July, 2007	Individual weaver
	Individual weaver
	Individual weaver
	Individual weaver
	Paramount chief
8th July, 2007	Individual weaver
	2 project members of Lejoaneng Itshepeng Project
	2 project members of Lejoaneng Grass Project
	Individual weaver
	Individual weaver
	Village Headwoman
9th July 2007	Individual weaver
	Cattle farmer
	Individual weaver
10th July 2007	Traditional healer
	Member of Municipal Council
	Individual weaver
	Senior Traditional Leader
	Councillor
	Thaba Blinds Factory Official
11th July 2007	District chief
	2 Agriculture officials
	Councillor
	Individual weaver
13th July 2007	Individual weaver
	Councillor

24th July 2007	SANParks Regional Coordinator, Northern Region Cluster
	Park Manager, QwaQwa National Park
1st August 2007	SANParks official, Community Based Conservation Department, Pretoria
Focus group discussions	
9th July 2007	Focus group discussion with a ward committee
10th July 2007	Focus group discussion with 12 Village Heads
Institutional mapping	
12th July, 2007	Institutional mapping (with 5 participants)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Introduction

- Identity of researcher
- Introduction of research (scope and purpose)
- Criteria for choice of respondent
- Ethical considerations

Grass significance, belief systems and practices

- How important is grass a) in your area and b) to you?
- What ideologies, belief systems inform and shape grass utilization from an indigenous perspective?
- Are there any rules of access to and use of grass? If yes, what are they?
- How do the beliefs and practices affect long-term availability of grass in QwaQwa?
- How does this compare with what is actually happening now? If it is different, what are the reasons?

Role of traditional leaders and community

- What are the roles of traditional leaders that impact on or have relevance to environmental governance in general:
    - historical perspectives; and
    - Current trends?
- What role do you play in grass management, if any?

External Pressure(s)

- Are there any external threats to grass harvesting in QwaQwa? If yes which are they and why do they exist?
- If they exist, what remedial actions (if any) have been taken to deal with external pressure so far?

Effect of decentralization

- Are traditional leaders performing their functions the same way as they used to before? If not, what has led to the change?
- How has the changing institutional and governance system affected grass utilization (if there has been any effect)?

Other Institutional structures

- What other institutional structures (formal or informal) exist in your area?
- What role do the other institutional structures play in grass utilization in QwaQwa?
- What role does each institutional structure play?
- What is the level of influence of the different institutional structures on grass utilization?
- How do people respond to the various institutional arrangements?
- What relationship exists between you and the various institutional structures?

APPENDIX 2:

Major Weaving Business Entities in QwaQwa

Business Entity	**Location**	**Source of grass**	**Number of people involved (and their duties)**		**Products and technology**
			Male	Female	
Thaba Blinds Factory	Factory in Phuthaditj-haba (Urban area)	All around Free State. Buys grass from regular suppliers.	≥ 2 (Part of the Manage-ment Team).	11 producers; ≥ 2 (Part of manageme nt team).	African dishes, ceilings, wall mats, table mats, bags, trays, bottles, baskets, Floor mats and saucers. Weaving is done using machinery.
Lojoaneng Itshepeng Project	Thibela Village (rural area)	Buying from farms, Basotho Cultural Village (in QwaQwa National Park) and mountains (where grass is becoming increasingly scarce).	4 Involved in shoe making, gardening, making small bags, and providing security services for the production premises.	19 The rest of weaving and pottery activities are done by women.	Grass based: Baskets, mats, ropes. Others: pottery, leather products (e.g. shoes). Weaving is done using simple machinery.
Lejoaneng	Lejoaneng	All grass is	2	16	Mats, hats, beer

Grass Project	Village (rural area in the periphery of Maloti Mountain).	collected for free from the mountains. Grass is harvested before harvest time and it dries in homesteads.	Involved in weaving ropes and bottles.	They do the rest of weaving.	strainers, ropes, bottles, grinding mats. All weaving is done manually.
Individuals	Villages	Around the villages; buying from private owners of land; buying from Basotho Cultural Village (in groups); mountains; Sasolburg; and the Durban side of Maloti Drakensberg		Weaving mostly done by women. Older women transfer weaving skills to younger girls.	Hand woven products: beer strainers; mats; brooms; bags