

**LOCAL MEANINGS OF DEVELOPMENT:
THE GOVERNMENT, THE CHIEF AND THE
COMMUNITY IN RURAL TZANEEN.**



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Declaration

I hereby declare this research report the result of my own unaided work.

Joseph Klaas Nkuna

Signature:  Date: 14/06/2022

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Chapter One

Rural Tzaneen: Research Site Background, Theory and Current Policy Framework.

“On the other hand, “development” is used to refer to a process of transition and transformation toward a modern, capitalist, industrial economy. The second meaning ... defines itself in terms of “quality of life” and “standard of living” and refers to the reduction or amelioration of poverty and material want”. Ferguson (1994).

“Nhluvuko [development] is a path that individuals take in their lives, a path which in turn affect and determines the fate of the community. Nhluvuko is what we [the community] make it to be. It is not supposed to be imposed by the municipality”. Ndhuna J. Mavunge (the former headman of Dan village).

1.1 Introduction

Development programmes and projects that are conceived mainly in economic and technological terms, which neglect the importance of historical, social and cultural factors of the target community have dire consequences. If municipalities continue to ignore the cultural and social uniqueness of rural communities under their jurisdiction, then the South African dream of prosperity for all its citizens will not come to pass. In many rural communities in South Africa, municipalisation is perceived as a threat to local ways of life, reviving disputes between traditional leaders and government, increasing poverty and dependency in the rural communities. This research report argues that there are differences in the definition and interpretation of development between the government and the rural communities (including their traditional leaders). For the three Tzaneen hamlets in

this study, these notions of development had been influenced to a greater extent, by the history of the Gazankulu homeland and the South African apartheid government.

In retrospect, the former Gazankulu homeland¹ and its government, in particular played a very important role in influencing local cultural constructions of the meaning of social development and living space, among its people in the present day Northern Province² (now Limpopo) of South Africa. The former homeland government, in defense of underdeveloped rural communities and the existence of the homeland, invoked cultural conventions that were meant to glorify the rural areas as the 'ideal' living space where one could live without the 'bad influence' of the cities. For many people in the rural communities, local government's approach to development in the rural areas is seen as a tool that is aimed to urbanise their living space and thus strip it of its 'originality'. Hence most people, like *tatana*³ Ngoveni argue that "*mfumo lowu wu lava ku hi endla valungu*" [this government want to turn us to white people].

In apartheid South Africa, ten homelands were created and four of these were granted 'independence', but they were not recognised by any other country in the world⁴. These homelands, which are sometimes referred to as Bantustans, were reincorporated into South Africa in 1994. The Gazankulu homeland was thus also a product of the policies of segregation, which beleaguered South Africa until 1994. The homeland regime enforced apartheid laws of segregation such as the Group Areas Act by putting people in categories and separated living environs.

¹ Homelands, sometimes referred to as "bantustans" or "reserves", were areas set aside by the former apartheid government for occupation by black people.

² The Northern Province had been renamed Limpopo Province as from mid February 2002, however for the sake of consistency the name Northern Province will continue to be used in this report.

³ The title "*tatana*" can shallowly be considered as an equivalent for the title "mister". It is used in this context to denote a sense of respect to the respondent. According to Tsonga culture one is not allowed to call an elderly person by his/her first name.

⁴ These homelands were Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC).

Under the former Gazankulu government, as it was in the whole country, black people had two choices when it came to choosing an area of residence: a village (*tiko-xikaya*) or a (black) township (*lokhixi*).

In the rural areas, the homeland government left the responsibilities of the day-to-day administration of villages to local chiefs while, on the other hand, townships were left to the care of local municipalities. Traditional leaders⁵ played a fundamental role in rural areas as apartheid laws, amongst others the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951⁶, reinforced and legalised their powers in the rural areas (Lane 1981, Smith 1990 and Price 1991). Although they did not have much to say in the overall administration of the state in the rural areas where they lived, they were left with far-reaching administrative and judicial powers.

Amongst other duties, chiefs were charged with the allocation of land, the preservation of law and order through tribal courts, social welfare administration, promotion of education (including the construction and maintenance of schools) and also direct involvement in the implementation of local development plans. In the former Gazankulu government, chiefs were directly involved in policy planning and decision-making, and in the planning stages of all development projects. Most chiefs, including Chief Samuel M. Muhlava, the presiding chief of the villages in this study, formed part of the central government. At present, most of these chiefs no longer take part in local policy decision-making as their role is unspecified in the current representative government legislation. These chiefs, however, continue to perform their administrative role to the present day. Hence, their significance in local development planning and implementation cannot be ignored.

⁵ For the sake of clarity, the terms 'traditional leaders' and 'traditional authorities' are used in this report as an all-inclusive term to refer to headmen and chiefs and their structures.

⁶ The Bantu Authorities Act, 1951 helped in the legalisation of Tribal Authorities as institutions. These institutions comprised of the presiding chief, headmen, appointed councilors and a Tribal Authority secretary.

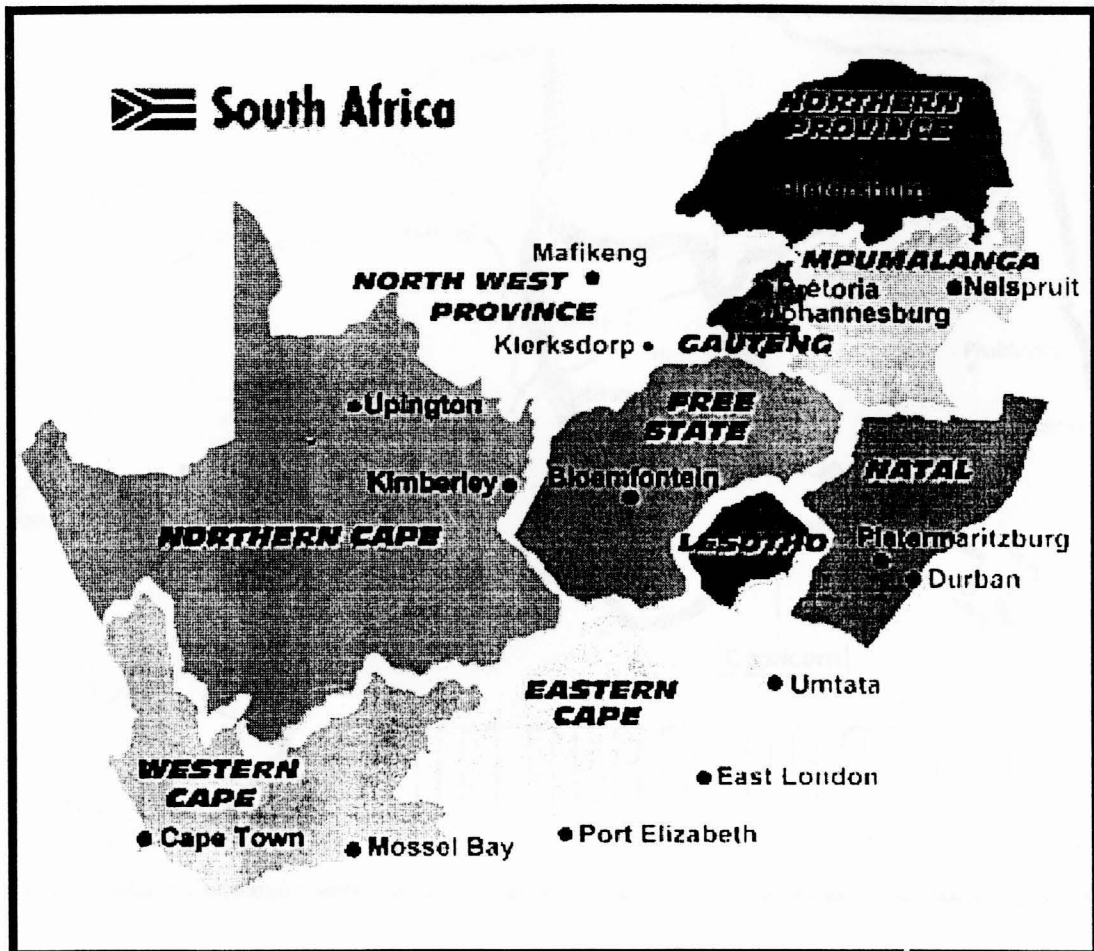


Figure 1.1: A map of South Africa's nine Provinces.

⁶ The Bantu Authorities Act, 1951 helped in the legalisation of Tribal Authorities as institutions. These institutions comprised of the presiding chief, headmen, appointed councilors and a Tribal Authority secretary.

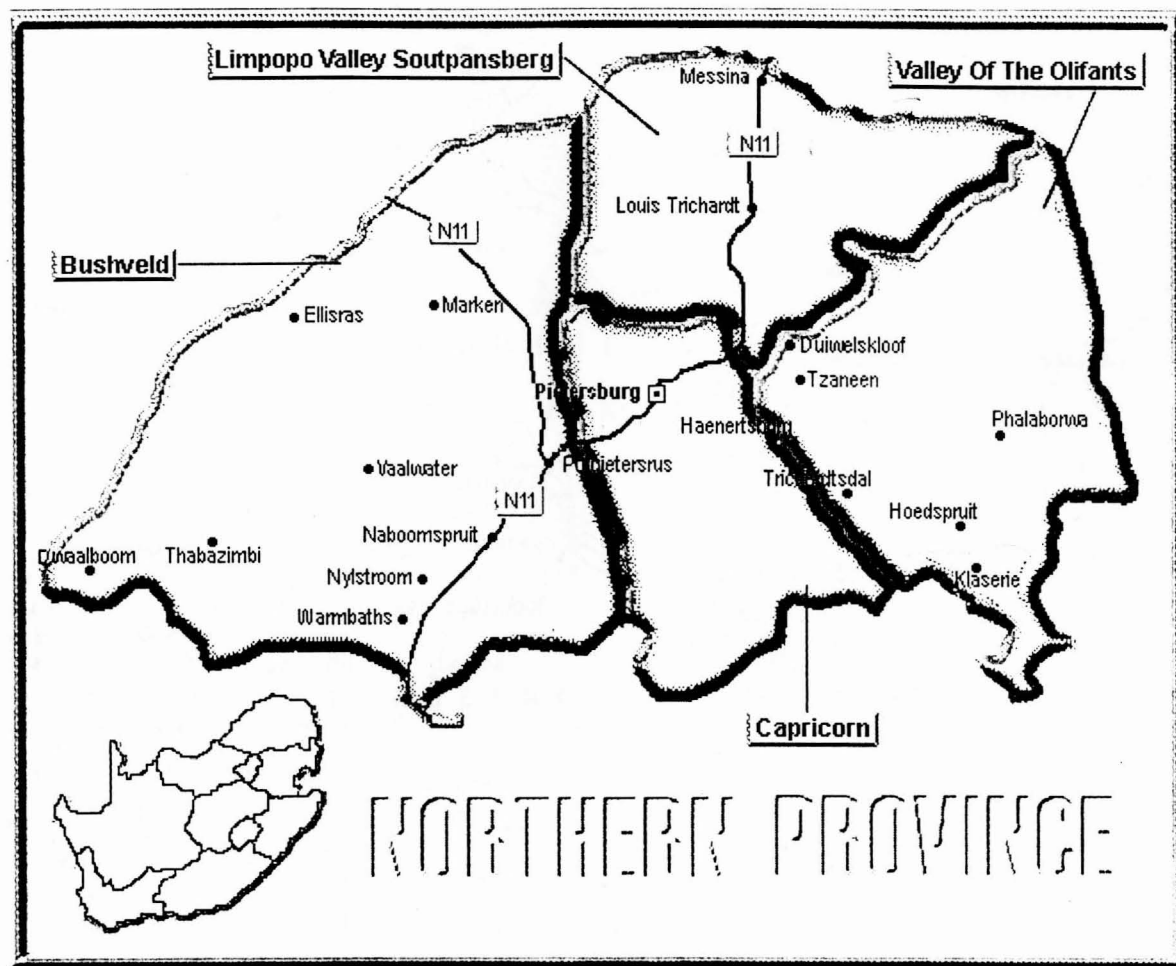


Figure 1.2: A simplified map of the Northern Province, with Tzaneen on the mid-eastern part of the map.

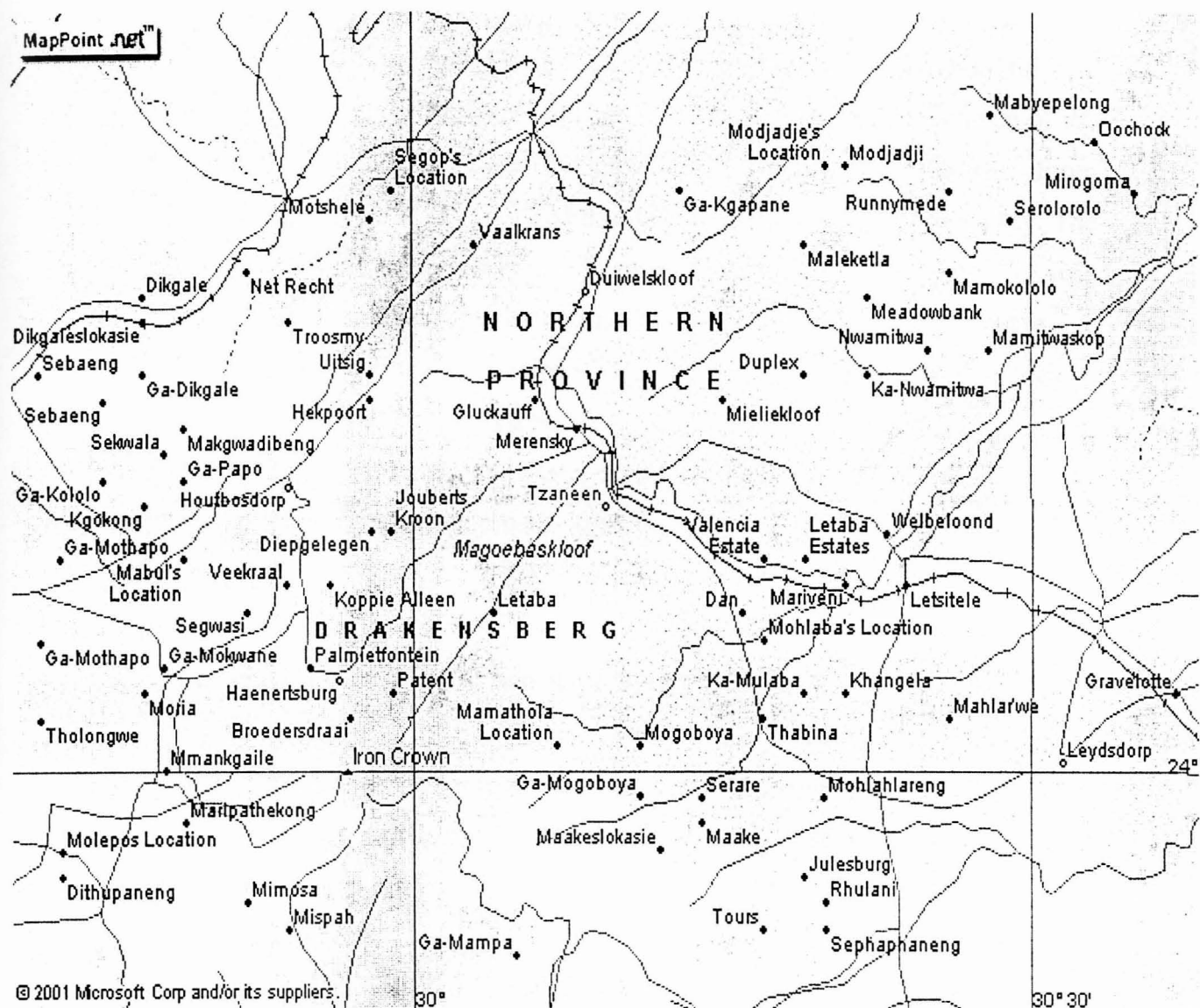


Figure 1.3: The map of Tzaneen rural areas and its surroundings.

This research seeks to investigate, at a community level, local meanings of development as affected by the on-going socio-political evolution, particularly the incorporation of three rural communities into municipalities. The report focused on Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana villages that were under the governance of the former Gazankulu homeland, and fall under the Nkuna Tribal Authority. From 1997, these villages were incorporated into the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The analysis will also highlight the Greater Tzaneen Municipality's challenges in trying to establish itself in the rural communities. By integrating government white papers⁷ on development and municipality management, this report seeks to make a meaningful contribution towards a better understanding of the challenges faced by the government, local institutions and target communities in the planning and implementation of rural development projects.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The aim of this research is to investigate local meanings of development in Tzaneen from the perspectives of rural communities, the chief, and the local government or municipality. The fall of the apartheid regime brought with it considerable cultural, social, and governmental changes in the South African society. Hence, I seek to highlight some of the complexities around the interpretations, apprehensions and implementation of development and social change in the rural areas.

Since the abolition of homelands in 1994, there had been a bitter struggle in rural areas between the new local governments (Municipalities) and traditional leaders over land distribution and control, service provision and, more importantly, the municipalisation and re-demarcation of the rural areas. In light of this we ask: **how**

⁷ Policy document containing official government policy.

do people on the ground interpret this change? What is the meaning of this change with regard to development? How do people see the relationship between themselves, traditional leaders and local government?

1.3 The Research Site

The Greater Tzaneen Municipality is situated in the eastern quadrant of the Northern Province within the Mopani District Municipality Area of jurisdiction, together with Greater Giyani, Ba-Phalaborwa and Greater Letaba Municipalities. The Greater Tzaneen Municipality is bordered by the Polokwane Municipality to the west, Greater Letaba to the north, Ba-Phalaborwa and Maruleng to the East and lastly Lepelle-Nkupe to the South. The Greater Tzaneen Municipality comprises of land area of approximately 3 240 square kilometers (GTM IDP 2001).

There are 125 rural villages within the Greater Tzaneen municipal area, and most of these villages are found in the southeastern and northwestern parts of the area (Figure 1.3). According to the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, there are approximately 480 000 people residing within the municipal area (Greater Tzaneen IDP Report 2001). Municipality records also show that 80% of the above-mentioned population is found in the rural areas under six tribal authorities. According to the municipality, almost 60% of the people in the rural areas live in poverty. In terms of population, Dan village is the biggest community in Tzaneen, with an estimated population of over 18 000 people. According to the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), Khujwana village is estimated to have a population of more than 8478 people and Petanenge approximately 5 331 people (DWA Free Water 2001).

Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana are adjacent Tsonga speaking villages (approximately 3 Kilometers apart from each other), found in the southeastern part of Tzaneen, approximately 16 kilometers from town (Tzaneen). The findings indicated that the combined population of these three villages is estimated at 30 733 people. The 2001 census helped in the verification of this estimate (DWAF 2001). These three villages are very unevenly balanced in terms of age and gender. It can be said that almost 50% of this population are under the age of 20, and more than 60% are women (GTM IDP 2001). As indicated in the introductory chapter of this report, Dan village is the biggest Village in Tzaneen, probably in the whole of Mopani District⁸.

These three villages form part of approximately 70 villages found in this quadrant of Tzaneen. The villages in the environs of my study fall under the authorities of two chiefs, namely Chief Maake of the Pedi people and Chief Muhlava of Nkuna Clan (Tsonga). Chief Muhlava and Chief Maake and their people (Tsonga and Pedi respectively) had lived together in peace for the last 12 decades, and the high level of cultural and linguistic influence they have on each other demonstrates this. Both Tsonga and Pedi villages are in close proximity of each other sometimes separated only by a street. Even so, throughout the years these villages have remained, mostly, either Tsonga or Pedi, as former apartheid laws and other socio-cultural barriers discouraged their integration.

Chief Muhlava played a very active role in the Gazankulu while presiding as a chief. Under the Gazankulu government, most chiefs were cabinet ministers or government officials. Thus, traditional leaders like Chief Muhlava played a very important role in the planning and implementation local development projects in the villages.

⁸ It could be rivaled by Sekgopo village, under the Greater Letaba Municipality.

Although Dan village could be considered the most developed of the three, these villages are relatively well developed in terms of general infrastructure and accessibility compared to other villages under the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The development of these villages had been fueled and supported by the existence and development of two industrial areas within their vicinity. Industrial Area A and B⁹ came into existence and flourished during the Gazankulu government, and most of people in the villages were employed by factories the area. According local authorities (including the Northern Province Development Corporation [NPDC]), since 1994, almost half of the factories in these two areas are no longer operational; others have relocated and some simply shut down. Many people lost their jobs and this number is constantly increasing as more factories retrench employees or shut down (Chapter 2).

As for the people of these three villages, water distribution and other services are expressed as becoming worse now, after the villages had been incorporated into the greater Tzaneen Municipality. Petanenge is the village that suffers most from lack of in terms of water and electricity. It had been more than seven years since the electrification of Dan, Khujwana and the surrounding villages, and yet Petanenge does not have electricity. Furthermore more, Petanenge is also suffering in terms of infrastructure particularly with regard to accessibility, as some streets were eroded by rainwater as it flowed down the mountain. The only recreational facilities in these villages are gravel soccer fields, which are in a bad state, as the government has ceased maintaining them and clubs do not have funds to do so. Thus, for youth in these villages, there are no usable recreational facilities.

⁹ The industrial areas comprise of not less than 100 factories. Big factories in this area, still operating, include Robertsons Foods (Carmel) which have approximately 700 employees and Letaba Citrus Processors (LCP) the company producing the Minute Maid brand of juice, employing not less than 500 people. Big companies that have relocated to urban areas or shutdown include BUSAF, a company that manufactured buses, employing approximately 700 people and Gazankulu Achar which employed approximately 400 people.

Each village has at least one lower primary School and a high school, with pre-schools mostly located in the neighbouring township (Nkowankowa). The Tivumbeni College of Education, now closed, lies in between Industrial A, Nkowankowa Township and Dan village. Although the college is well quipped with in terms of resources and infrastructure compared to other nearby still operating colleges of education, Tivumbeni was mysteriously closed without any reason being given to the local communities. As Tivumbeni was closed during massive centralisation of resources to Tzaneen, this event had a negative effect on the academic morale of the communities in its vicinity.

1.4 The South African Rural Development Policy Environment: A Research Rationale

The divide between rich and poor, despite the ANC government's best intentions, is growing alarmingly wider. In South Africa, more than forty-five percent of the population lives in rural areas, seventy-four percent of which are classified as poor. According to the 1995 World Bank Report, fifty-three percent of these are living below the poverty line (Zigeyee and Kriger 2000). In addition to land redistribution, the government is faced with a daunting task of providing services, the costs of which are higher than in the urban areas due to factors such as the sparsely distributed population, lack of infrastructure and greater distances in the rural areas.

Since the 1994 democratic elections the South African rural communities have been in a state of political and social transition. In most rural areas, the process involved a complete overhaul of local administrative structures and, in many ways, had been a frustrating series of trials and errors. According to Cameron

(1995), both present and the past policies had neglected the needs of poor people in the rural areas, resulting in confusing and unclear development strategies.

The infamous Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Rural Development Strategy (RDS) were the first development strategies instituted by the democratic government from 1994 onwards. The RDS and the RDP outlined the commitment of the government to the development of the rural areas. They dealt in more detail with the implementation of Local Economic Development (LED) in the rural areas. Apart from tabulating the government's commitment and plan for the rural communities, the document also tried to set out mechanisms by which rural communities could take charge of the development process in the area (Van Zyl 1995 and RDP 1998). For the government, the way to achieve this was through building rural local government, improving local service distribution, promoting local economic development, building infrastructure, education, developing local capacity, and promoting coherent planning based on accurate information about the target rural communities.

However, the Municipality Act of 2000 made it compulsory for all municipalities to formulate Integrated Development Plans (IDP). The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 gives effect to the country's vision of "developmental local government" as envisaged in the White Paper on Local Government (1998). Building on the Constitution's provisions for basic development rights, the governance and developmental objectives of local government, and the principles of a people-oriented public administration, amongst others, the Act, through the IDP, seeks to elaborate the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of communities, and ensure universal access to quality services that are affordable to all (The Municipality Act of 2000). The Act extends the definition of municipality to include residents and communities within the municipal area,

working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures.

With the help of *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ), a German developmental organisation, the government was able to draft an IDP Guide Pack that is aimed at providing a methodological blue-print to the IDP process. In general, all rural development projects in South Africa are expected to operate within a new planning framework for municipalities. The Act requires local authorities to formulate their own integrated development plans. According to the government policy framework, community participation is essential and compulsory for all development planning processes. In the past, community projects like water supply or agricultural extension services were implemented by the government without the participation of local communities.

However, in all the white papers and government development strategies, the role and functions of traditional leaders in local development and local governance remains unclear. The only reference to the role that traditional leaders can play in development and local government is found in the form of a vague sweeping statement in the White Paper on Local Government (1998)¹⁰. The White Paper indicates: "there is no doubt that the important role of that traditional leaders boldly have played in the development of their communities should be continued" (1998:197). However, apart from this, the role of traditional leaders in development still remains unresolved.

¹⁰ In South Africa, the Term "White Paper" refers to any document containing any official government paper.

1.5 Social Anthropology and Development: A theoretical Framework

There is a widespread consensus about the sort of contribution that an anthropologist might make to a field such as development by bringing to bear a certain frame of mind or manner of thinking which illuminates the social and cultural dimensions of a problem. In recent years, the development field, the case for the social and cultural dimension had been argued in opposition to the views of economists and other technical experts (Colson 1971, Grillo 1985 and Epstein 1976). Disillusionment with programmes and projects conceived mainly in economic and technological terms has led to a greater acceptance of the anthropologist's view of the importance of social and cultural factors, and the dire consequences that follow their neglect (Foster 1969, Cochrane 1980 and Barnes 1983).

As Barnes (1983) and Grillo (1985) noted, there are anthropologists in development may be roughly categorised into three groups. First there are *rejectionists*. Rejectionists argue that the anthropologist has no special right to intervene in social affairs, and that to do so entail form of elitism and paternalism. This group argues that anthropologists must resist incorporation within the development system (i.e. government and development organisations). (Belshaw 1976 and Partridge and Eddy 1978).

The second group is that of *monitorists*. For monitorists, the anthropologist must monitor what happens, understand what occurs and bring that understanding to the public's attention. This notion was established by anthropologists such as Firth (1938), Mair (1936) Richards (1932), Schapera (1947) and later by Colson (1971). This type of anthropological thought gave birth to what is today called "anthropology of development" by anthropologists like Charlsley (1980). The aim of 'anthropology of development' is to investigate specific development plans,

policies or projects and their implementation. Anthropology of development, as the third group, is precisely a separation of study and application. The anthropologist of development is usually at some distance from the action, since he/she does not directly intervene in the development project.

In contrasting the first and second or third categories, one comes to the heart of the ethical and political issues that are inherent in anthropological study of development. Anthropologists who refuse the role of spokesperson justify their refusal by saying that they do not want to be seen as reformists. However Grillo (1985:30) argues that "no amelioration, however small, is justifiable if it perpetuates a system which is wrong" and encourages poverty and underdevelopment. The activists on the other hand must justify their position through some version of reformism, rather than 'only doing a job'. However one might agree with Belshaw (1976:257) that the application of anthropological knowledge will moderate the bad and enhance the good in development programmes and projects.

The mainstream contributions of anthropology to the study of development from both rural and urban perspectives are relatively well established (Redclif 1985). They take the form of advocacy or empirical research aimed at various types of initiatives and implications. Advocacy seeks to identify the issues and the needs of local groups and amplify these concerns in the national or international arena. Anthropologists working as empirical researchers function in a more extractive manner. The operative paradigm here holds that in any setting, local understandings of development are intertwined with broader social, cultural, economic and political contexts. Rather than taking sides between commercial and political activism, this report seeks to bring local people's indigenous knowledge and point of views about development to a wider audience, thus providing a

research component in practical interventions that is painfully needed. (Robertson 1984, Sahlins 1976, Preston 1982, Palmer *et al* 1977, Jones 1982).

Furthermore, the discourse and ideas of anthropologists such as Escobar, Rahnema and Cochran had affected much of the arguments on this report. (Escobar 1995, Ferguson 1990, Rafi 1994, Cochran 1971, Shiva 1996, etc.). For Cochran rural development could be thought of as self-help. He argues that this type of development is self-sustaining and relatively autonomous. Escobar argues that underdevelopment is perpetuated by what he calls 'the problematisation of poverty' by development planners and governments. He argues that poor people are perceived as a social problem that must be transformed by and through materials means. However, as this research report argues, this approach to development force people into being dependent beggars and seldom bears good fruits.

1.6 Conducting Fieldwork in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Village: Research Methods and Sources.

Because anthropologists are people studying other people, the fieldwork experience is complex. Anthropologists are guided by the American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics, which specifies that researchers must do everything in their power to avoid harm to the safety, dignity, and privacy of the people with whom they work.

Because anthropology has traditionally centered on the study of the other, we have often overlooked the others in our midst, including members of ethnic groups and women. These omissions have led to gaps in anthropological theory overall (Wax 1979, Mauch 1989 and Fine 1993). However, conducting fieldwork at home, among people with whom one is familiar, also presents considerable challenges.

Among other issues, conducting fieldwork at home raises a variety of issues relating to the anthropologist's ability to gain access and with respect to differing power relationships between anthropologists and the people they study. Anthropologists have traditionally “studied down,” which means they are in a superior power relationship to the people they study (Eipper 1996 and Fine 1993).

However, this fieldwork could also be considered as an example where anthropologist “studied up,” where informants have greater power to control access to data, for example informants like government officials and the Chief. In some circumstances, it is possible to conduct research in settings where the informants and I had a balance of power with respect to each other. Hence, I was aware of the fact that differences in access and the power relationship between the informants and I shape the kinds of data available and given.

As a resident and someone who was born and continues to live in Dan Village, in the last decade I observed a constant, dramatic transformation in the lives of the people in the village, almost for the worse. Apart from the fact that the three villages offered me an opportunity to work in familiar surroundings with people that I know to a greater or lesser extent, I was also concerned about the escalating level of underdevelopment taking place. My concerns in the community included the closure of local factories and the subsequent retrenchment of employees, lack of cohesiveness and direction in community governance brought about by the municipalisation process and growing levels of landlessness and poverty.

Traveling daily from home to the place of my research was also cost effective. Conducting this ethnography as a resident of Dan village, presented me not only with ‘hands-on’ experience, but also various challenges. The most difficult challenge was that I had to distance myself emotionally and ideologically from the social context I was working in and familiar with, and control, check and balance

my prejudices about local politics and conceptions. Through this research project, I acquired and gained new ways of looking at the challenges faced by the government, traditional leaders and the communities in trying to develop rural areas in Tzaneen and the whole country in general.

This research report is the result of a 2-year observation (2000 and 2001). However most of the data was collected between April 2001 and January 2002, during winter and summer school holidays. Several methods of collecting data were used and include the following:

- Structured and unstructured interviews¹¹.
- Household survey¹².
- Participant observation.
- Informal conversations.
- Meetings.
 - General community meetings.
 - Youth meetings.
 - Tribal meetings.
- Documentary material
 - Community reports.
 - Minutes of past community meetings
 - Local (Tzaneen) government records.

The community survey comprised of 345 questionnaires, which were divided at the ratio of 115 per village. The questionnaires were administered between the 10th

¹¹ **Qualitative Research:** Participant observation, structured and semi-structured interviews, general conversations and public meetings were used to collect qualitative data.

¹² **Quantitative Research:** Barbara Oomen developed the questionnaire used in this research for her study on chiefship and local government in Sekhukhuneland. She is based at that Van Vollenhofen Institute for Non-western Law, Rijnkuniversiteit van Leiden, Netherlands. The Questionnaire instrument is used with her permission. However the questionnaire was modified with accordance to cultural differences and relevance.

and 15th of September 2001, with the help of 5 field assistants. The questionnaire used in these three villages was translated into xi-Tsonga language from the English version of the questionnaire. However, the sample was haphazardly selected around the villages. Thus the choice of household was based on willingness and availability of respondents to be interviewed. As for quantitative data, I gathered information about size of the household, age, and number of siblings, income status, and educational matters. The three research sites are in a different development scale or stage, and thus offer a diversified opinion and interpretations.

Tape recorders and photographic equipment were used occasionally in interviews and conversations with permission from my respondents. I used my notebook to write down important points mentioned during the interviews and public meetings. Precautions have been taken in writing this thesis. To safeguard confidentiality and privacy, I made it clear to my informants that I would not reveal their identities unless permitted to do so. For example most government officials living in these rural areas requested not to be mentioned by name because of fear of losing their jobs, "in case they said something wrong against the municipality". They had no choice but to conceal their identities. According to Murray (1992:8) anonymity "cuts off people from their family histories", and reduces the researcher's accountability. Nevertheless, the sensitivity of my research made such latitude impossible. Unless otherwise stated, where names are used in the text these have been changed and substituted with fictitious Tsonga surnames. My identity as a researcher was also made transparent in all interactions.

Conducting research in these villages presented me with a set of unanticipated challenges, especially with regard to administering the questionnaires. The first challenge was that sometimes my research assistants and I were associated or mistaken for government employees doing research on behalf of the government

even before we introduced ourselves. Hence in Dan village, 51 people *refused* to be interviewed while in Khujwana Village only 25 people did not want to be interviewed, despite the research project being sanctioned by local authorities. This number excludes those who *declined* to be interviewed because of non-political reasons, for example an indication of tiredness or hurriedness. More than 70% of these people were either illiterate or semi-illiterate as they indicated that they could not read our questionnaire. The reason for their refusal to answer questionnaires was that the Greater Tzaneen Municipality previously conducted surveys which according to them, led to demand of payment of services by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. This demonstrated some of the challenges that the municipality might have in trying to conduct research in these villages, especially in Dan village, as most people have negative feelings against the municipality. As demonstrated by the number of missing data in the answered questionnaires, it is without doubt that these issues influenced responses.

1.7 Plan of the Argument

Chapter one creates a theoretical and historical background of the research project and its site. The chapter highlighted the influence which the Gazankulu homeland and the apartheid government policy of segregation had on the way people in these three hamlets come to understand development and the municipalisation process. The Gazankulu government glorified rural areas (*matiko-xikaya*) as ideal places for living freely. This glorification had a very important impact on the way people understand their dwelling space. The chapter mainly acts as a frame of reference for the presentation and interpretation of data collected in the field and summarizes the relations between the theoretical framework and arguments developed later in the report.

Poverty is often mentioned as an excuse for development. Apart from discussing the social, economic and physical characteristics of these villages, Chapter Two acts as a foundation of the argument. The chapter argues that the *problematisation* of poverty by the municipality reduces the people in these hamlets into objects rather than human beings with history, traditions and priorities. For the municipality, poverty is, among others, a lack of proper roads and sanitation. This top-down approach to development only deals with the symptoms of poverty rather than the cause. Thus, it is argued in this chapter apart from the fact that the people in the hamlets are poor, amidst their poverty, they are still people.

After living in their betterment villages for several decades, communities in the hamlets found a way to understand and also to deal with their social conditions. As an example of this, Chapter Three highlights the way people attached value and meaning to their living space and the manner in which they defend and justify living in such 'poor' areas. The ways people in the hamlets understand and also categorise their living has very important impact on the success and failure of development projects in their area. However, the Greater Tzaneen Municipality is not concerned about the way people see themselves and understand development. This was demonstrated in the way the municipality tried to establish itself in the rural areas.

Since the municipalisation of the three hamlets in 1997, the Greater Tzaneen Municipality never attempted to work with 'people', but 'the poor of the poorest': in this case objects. Hence, Chapter Four deals directly with the municipalisation of Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Village. It investigates some of the approaches adopted by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in dealing with these communities. Before and after the municipalisation process there was little interaction and exchange of information between the rural communities and the municipality. The municipality lacked adequate information about the new incorporated rural

communities, and thus failed to implement a cohesive rural development plan, which was in harmony with these communities. Hence the top-down development strategies and projects undertaken by the municipality by then undermined the very people they were aimed to develop. Thus, development projects that are imposed on the community frequently lack their participation, as people often resist them, as it was the case in the three hamlets.

The fundamental argument of chapter 5 is that community participation in the rural areas of Tzaneen seldom takes place because the municipality imposes development projects on the communities. The chapter highlights some of the problems and hindrances towards community participation in development issues in the rural communities. Although all recent government White Papers on development, like the IDP (Integrated Development Planning) process advocate for community participation, development projects in Tzaneen still lack participation by the target community as they continue to be imposed on them by the municipality. For an example the IDP process in Tzaneen does not clearly indicate the role of community-based stakeholders, nor go further as to identify them. This causes pandemonium in the communities as major stakeholders like the chief and his tribal office, local churches and organizations (burial societies, stokvels, clubs, etc.) and individuals either do not know about development plans and projects or are not sure of their roles.

As a conclusion, Chapter Six methodises the differences in the way the municipality and people in the three hamlets understand development. It also suggests ways in which the two entities can reconcile their differences and work towards the better good of the society. And finally, the chapter gives a summery of the major points of the argument.

Chapter Two

Identifying the Poor? Prevailing Economic and Socio-cultural Conditions in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Villages and their Impact on Development.

"I don't care about the masipala [municipality], in my heart there is no room politics and politicians. What good is to have a house, and yet sleep hungry? I rather sleep in a mukhukhu [shack], in peace, assured that my children are fed and attending school. I don't want a free house; all I want is to earn a living so that I can be self-reliant. If it was not for my brother, we would have died a long time ago". Manana Sambo (A retrenched female head of household in Khujwana Village).

"We vote, so that they [politicians] win more tenders. We vote, so that they have the opportunity to stay in Tzaneen and drive expensive cars. We vote, so that we become more illiterate and hungry. Yes, it is so pathetic that we continue to vote [sentence] ourselves to absolute corruption and poverty. It makes me feel confused and angry at the same time". Elvis (An 18 year old from Dan Village, explaining why he is not voting in the local government elections of the year 2000)

2.1 Introduction

Instead of encouraging development, the municipalisation of the three hamlets broke down community ties and deprived people of access to land and other resources. The municipality perceives the poor rural hamlets as a problem that must be contained or transformed at all costs. Without attempting to conduct an archeology of poverty in these three villages, the first aim of this chapter is to present the social and economic conditions prevailing in these villages, and also to highlight their impact in the way people understand development in their

communities. Secondly, an opening argument of the chapter seeks to bring into light how the problematisation of poverty, by the municipality, objectifies people and strip of them of their humanity. The greater Tzaneen Municipality has embarked on a 'development' plan to alleviate poverty in the rural areas. While, on the other hand, the real development plan, which involves amongst others, the creation of jobs and access to education and land, is ignored by the municipality. As this chapter demonstrates, the municipalisation process and subsequent development plans did nothing other than perpetuating poverty.

2.2 Employment and Income Profile

For several decades, the former South African apartheid government evolved ideas and practices that attempted to encourage industry to locate next to, and later within, the homelands and rural areas¹. The 'industrial decentralisation' programme involved provision for large incentives to those developing industrial activity in selected locations, and conversely attempts to restrict industrial expansion in the established industrial centers (Bell 1973, Dewar 1984 and Glaser 1988). Regions were thus created in which a degree of subsidised industrial development took place at new nodes located at some distance from the settlements. In some cases these new industrial nodes were associated with established towns which happened to be situated close to reserve or homeland boundaries. Situated in the vicinity of the surrounding rural communities, the Letaba Industrial Area, in the eastern part Tzaneen, is one of the many examples (see Figure 2.1).

¹ Key examples may be observed in Durban and the multiple subsidised industrial complexes in KwaZulu-Natal (at Isithebe, Pietermaritzburg, Escourt, Ladysmith, New-castle); between East London and Butterworth, King Williamstown, and the complexes at Pietersburg and Nelspruit



FIGURE 2.1 One of the many, once vibrant, but now inactive factories in Letaba Industrial Area.

The establishment of the Letaba Industrial Area had both positive and negative effects upon the local adjacent rural communities. For example, the industrial area also had a tremendous impact on the economic empowerment and development of women in the surrounding villages, in the form of employment². On the negative side, employment in the industrial discouraged subsistence farming in the villages, as people had little time to cultivate their farms³. Thus, the consequence was the creation of dependent peripheral settlements whose survival largely depended on continuation and expansion of the industrial area. Hence, the recent decrease in employment as a result of retrenchments and de-industrialisation had serious negative impact on the villages adjacent to the industrial area.

As for findings of this research, the most alarming finding in the survey is that unemployment in these three villages is escalating at a very alarming rate. The survey suggests that 67% percent of the population is unemployed, while 10.2 % is self-employed. As figure 2.2 below indicates, at 79%, unemployment is more severe between people of the ages of 30 and 40 years. Youth between the age 20 and 30 years are also hard hit by employment, as the data suggest it to be at 76%. The growing level of unemployment, especially those between ages of 30 to 40 could be attributed to massive retrenchments in the local industrial areas. Also the growing number of unemployment in the 20/30-year age group might be affected the general lack of jobs in the environs of the villages, and also by the fact that most are unskilled.

² According to municipal records more than 50% of the people employed in the in the industrial area are women.

³ Only 15% of the respondents in the survey claimed to be engaged in either commercial farming or subsistence farming



Figure 2.2: Employment levels according to age.

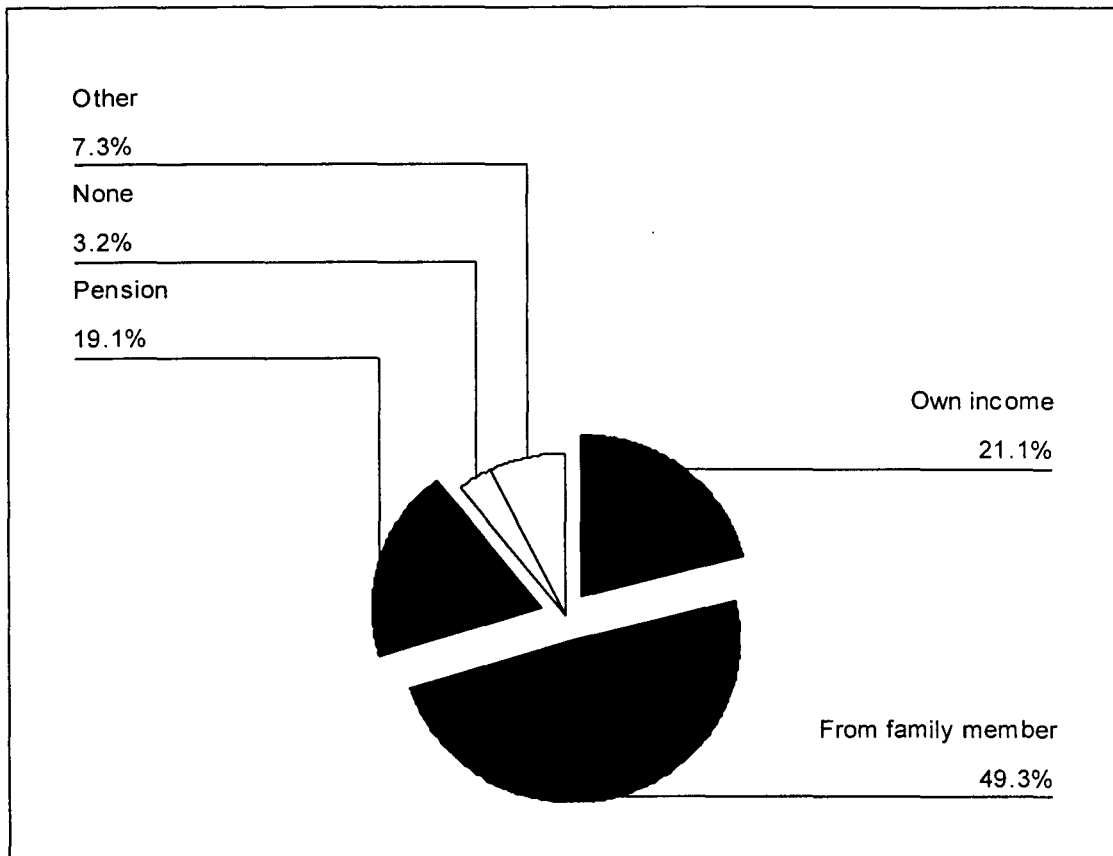


Figure 2.3: Sources of household income in the three villages.

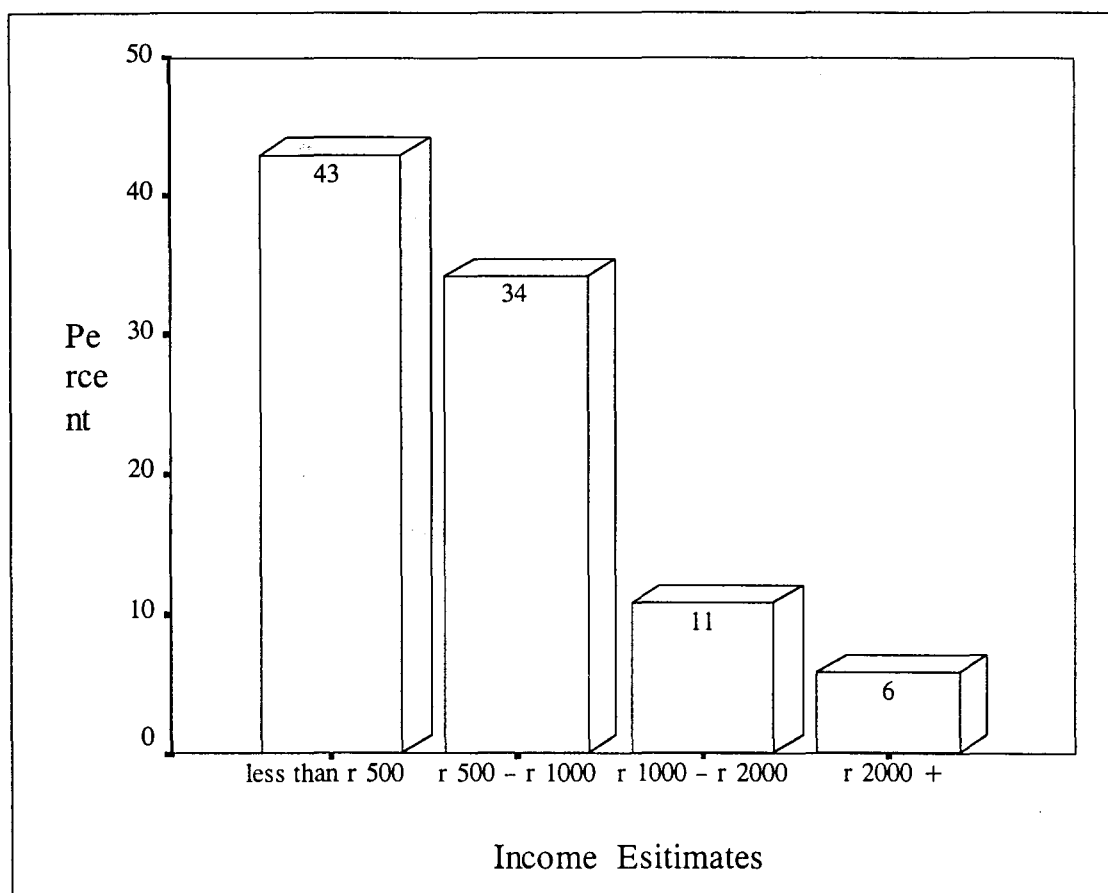


Figure 2.4: A representation of household Income estimates per month.

However one is aware of the fact that many people in these three villages and the surrounding hamlets are engaged in informal ways of earning income. These ways include amongst others, stokvels (*Xiseveseve* or *Ku-horisana*), spazza-shops⁴, beer brewing, dressmaking⁵, bricklaying, etc. Otherwise the average number of years of those who are actively looking for work (among the unemployed) is estimated between 3-6 years. This data does not only cast a light to the employment crisis in these villages, but also present political and economic challenges to the municipality, the chief and the communities as far as development is concerned.

As unemployment had reached severe proportions in these three villages, household incomes are also in very low. Household income of a larger proportion of the three villages is dangerously low. As figure 2.3 indicates, a large number of people live on pensions; in most case that of grandparents or other relatives who are employed. Most families rely on their relatives for support, as they are unable to support themselves financially (figure 2.3). This brings into play the importance of kinship in the rural areas, and suggests that kinship still play an important role in poverty alleviation.

In these three villages, 43% of households earn below R500, and 34% earn between R500 and R1000 per month. Only 6% of the people earn above R2000 per month (figure 2.4). These income estimates are affected by, amongst other factors, the migration of young successful people from the villages to the township. Most respondents indicated that educated young men and women, especially after marriage, usually leave the villages for Nkowankowa and Lenyenye townships or suburbs in Tzaneen. They leave their parents and siblings behind in the villages.

⁴ A small trading outlet in the yard.

⁵ Tailoring and dressmaking has gained popularity among women in these villages. There are three different dressmaking and sewing projects in Dan village alone. However most of these projects do not survive because of lack of business management skills and sufficient capital.

However it is not only youth that sometimes leave the villages. Older people who happen to have a financial breakthrough often leave the villages too. But while many people leave the villages, some also leave the townships or suburbs for the villages. This often happens in cases of divorce, job loss and loss of property. However the number moving from township to village is relatively insignificant. Although unverified, it would appear that the stress relating from poverty, low incomes and unemployment also contributes to a growing level of crime⁶, violence and other activities in the area.

2.3 Level of Education

The three villages demonstrate a significant development and improvement in to local education, compared to other hamlets in the area. Evidence show that approximately 40% of the people has an average education of between standard 6 and 10 (Grade 8 and 12). Furthermore, 10% have below standard 6 (Grade 8) education, 21% have matric certificates, while only 8% acquired university or technikon education. Only nineteen percent were completely illiterate, and most of these were over the age of 35. As for those who had post-matric qualifications, the most common forms of employment fall under these categories: teaching, nursing, police, army and technical (e.g. bricklaying, carpentry, motor mechanic, etc).

Figure 2.4 demonstrates a positive significant development in the education of women in these villages. Although illiteracy is still prevalent among women in these rural areas, in the last decade there had been a considerable shift in terms of education per sex in the villages. According to local adult education coordinators,

⁶ Crime, more especial armed robbery, is certainly a growing concern in these villages, with Dan village in the forefront.

women are more likely to join afternoon adult education classes than men are. However among young women, unwanted teenage pregnancy has become a serious threat to their education.

	SEX			
	Male		Female	
	Highest Level of Education		Highest Level of Education	
	Count	%	Count	%
No education	22	13.9%	44	23.9%
Until standard 6	14	8.9%	21	11.4%
Standard 6-10	71	44.9%	70	38.0%
Matric	36	22.8%	37	20.1%
College/Technikon	14	8.9%	10	5.4%
University	1	.6%	2	1.1%

Figure 2.5: The highest level of education attained by gender.

Apart from the good side, evidence also show that those who matriculate seldom proceed towards attaining post-matric education. According to a local High School principal, approximately 15 matriculates in 80 have the chance of acquiring post-matric education. As one of the prominent mathematics teacher in a local high school disclosed:

"I have been teacher for the last 15 years, surely I can tell you that things are bad for today's matriculants. In the past, education institutions were few and well controlled but today everyone's opening up a college. They [the government and owners] do not care about what these children get out of these institutions. Their eyes are on the profits. The parents of these children do not have money to push them forward. On the other hand students are losing hope because they can see their friends who managed to get education being jobless.

I am very concerned about the way the government is systematically shutting down local higher education institutions. The closure of Tivumbeni College of Education surely had a negative impact on our pupils, because it means that for them to acquire education they had to go to far places and it is very expensive. These children are passing. How do we [teachers/community] help them fulfill their dreams"?

Whatever the reason is, the closure of Tivumbeni College of Education surely continues to have an impact in the community in general (Figure 2.6). It also contributes to the fact that parents have to spend more on the living expense related to the education of their children, as they are forced to go to far places. It also had a bad effect on the morale of the community in general.

There are only three clinics, one per village, in the three villages under discussion. However, evidence show that these clinics are not effective, as they do not have sufficient resources. Respondents revealed that apart from lack of resources and medicines, some of these clinics do not have proper opening and closing times, as the staff leaves whenever they want to. In most cases people have to resort to a 13km hike to Banana Hospital to receive health care.

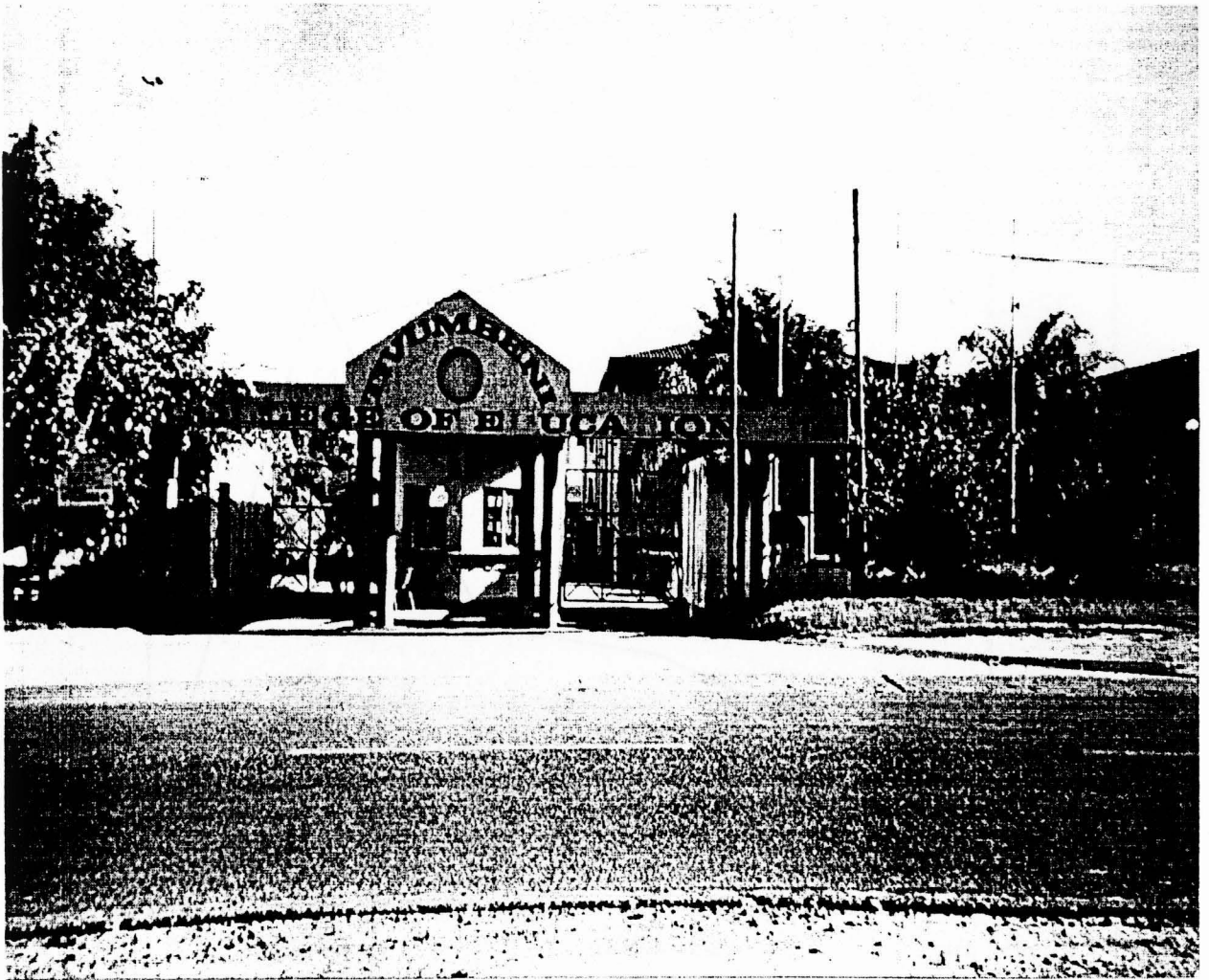


Figure 2.6: The main entrance of the now closed Tivumbeni College of Education

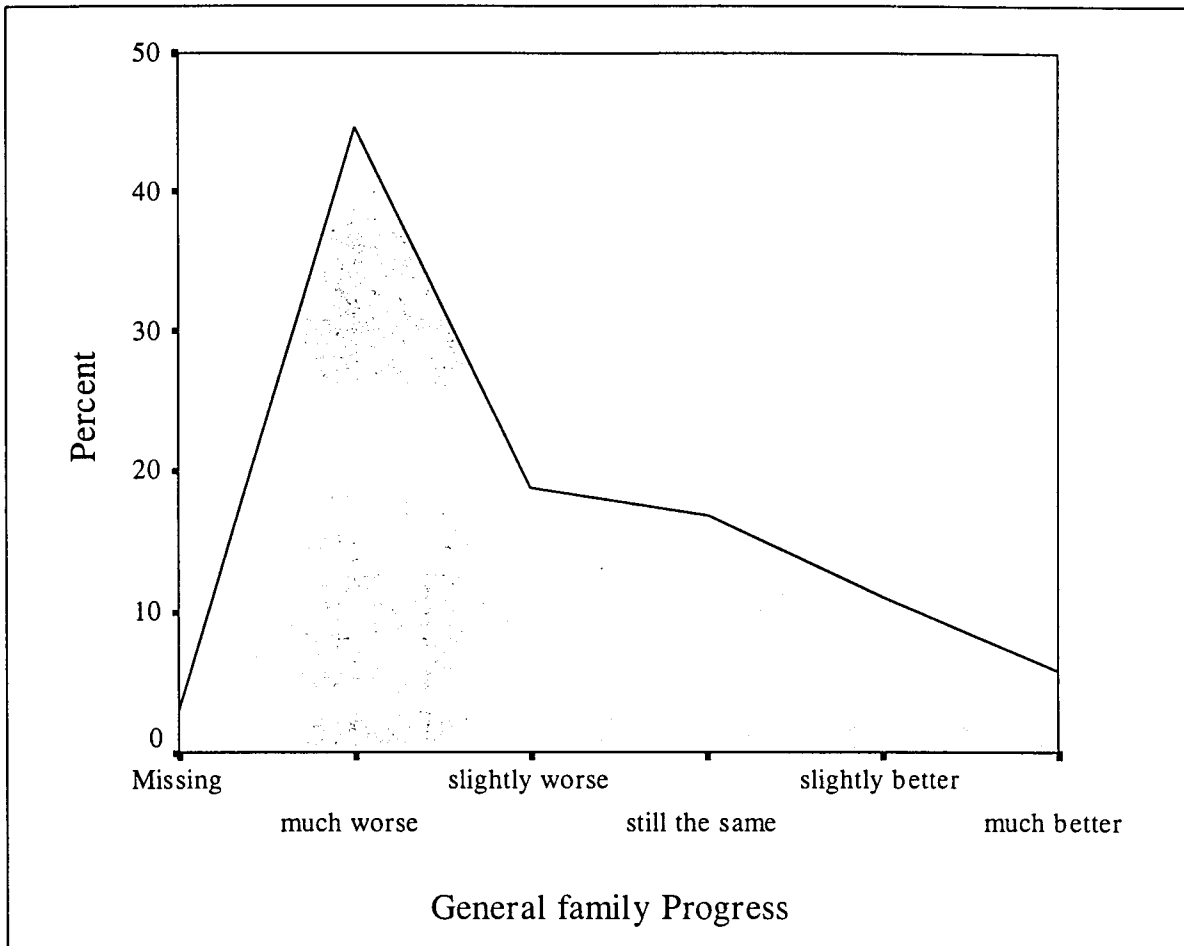


Figure 2.7: Family perception of progress since 1994.

2.4 Health and General Household Progress

As figure 2.7 indicates, most respondents argue that the standards of living of their families have declined since the 1994 elections. Unemployment, teenage pregnancy, illness and low household income have negatively affected the general progress of most households in these communities. In response, these families had to modify their living and spending habits, as *tatana* Rikhotso indicates:

"Ten years ago, we managed to buy rice, tomato sauce, peanut butter and eggs, today these things are luxury. The family had grown since then, but our income continues to shrink. Last year my wife was retrenched, thus cutting all the economic support I had. My salary [of R1 800] alone cannot support this family. For these reasons, we had to cut down on all luxuries".

In some cases, the 'cutting down of all luxuries' often includes medical expenses in a way that people use clinics for consultation (as they are free), or do not consult at all until their illness have reached alarming proportions. The rate of TB and other diseases is constantly rising in these villages.

2.5 The role of the Chief in Social and Cultural life of the Three Hamlets

Muhlava Cross is a village in the southeastern side of Tzaneen. As the name indicates, it is where the chief's kraal and tribal offices are located. *Hosi* Samuel Muhlava II's kraal continues to play a very significant role in the day-to-day administration of the three villages in this study. The incorporation of the 36

villages under his authority had little impact on his role and duties in the villages. The chief still continue to perform the following duties:

- Allocate land for (subsistence) farming, residence and business.
- Register Births and deaths.
- Help in the applications for identity documents.
- Help with pension applications.
- Presides over the traditional court.

The chief's relationship with his constituency is clearly demonstrated by the number of people that consult with him personally every Tuesday from 10 am. On this day people are allowed, with or without prior appointments, to privately speak with the chief regarding whatever issue they might have. On the 8 occasions that I visited the kraal, I counted an average of 40 individuals waiting to have an audience with the chief. Their age ranged between 25 and 60 years. Furthermore the chief's relevance in the community is also demonstrated by the number of court cases he attends to every Wednesday (and sometimes Thursdays) from morning until late afternoon. Evidence shows that the chief's traditional court deals with approximately 10 to 20 cases per week.

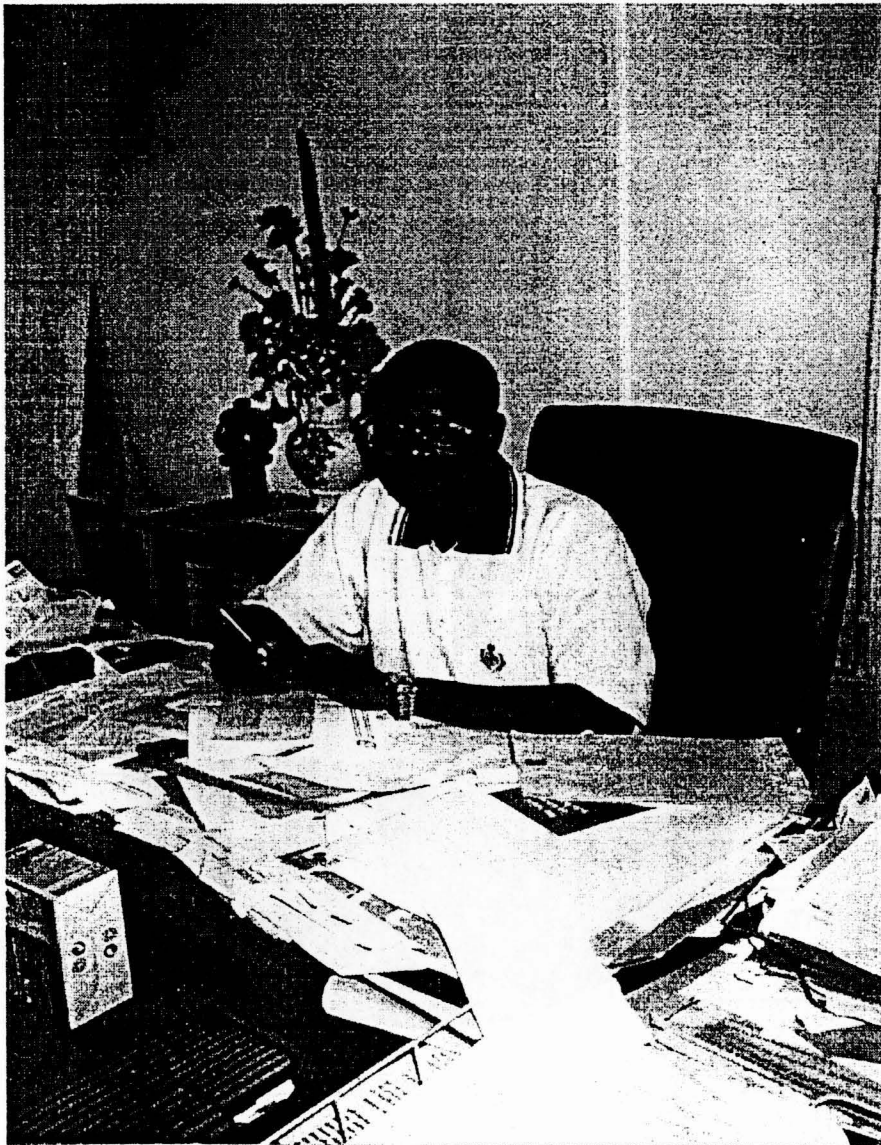


Figure 2.8: *Hosi Samuel Muhlava*, in his office.

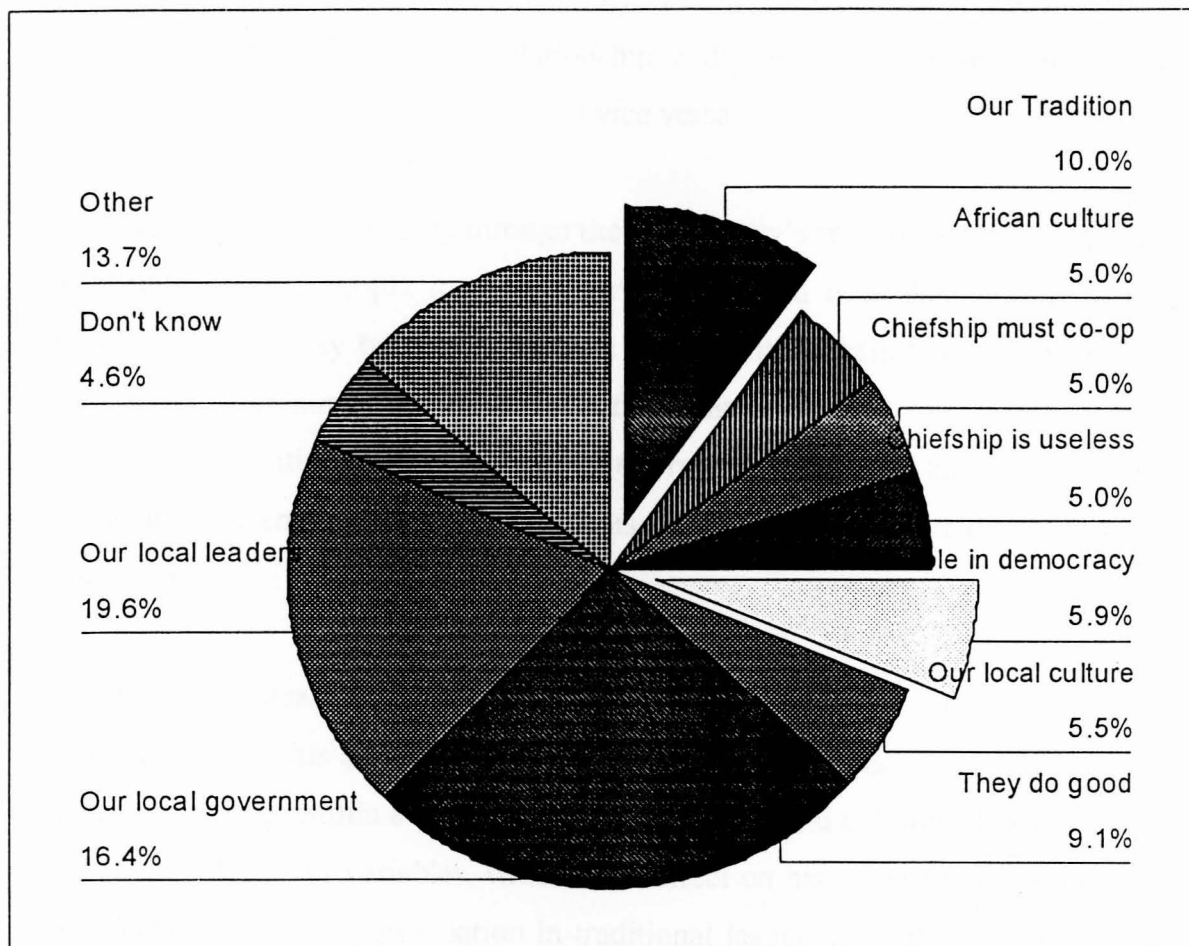


Figure 2.8: Opinion on the meaning and relevance of chiefship in the democratic South Africa.

It must be noted that most cases are those which had passed through the *tindhuna* in the villages, where either the complainant or the accused was appealing against the ruling of the *ndhuna* and his councilors in the village. The chief also indicated that he enjoyed a very healthy relationship with the local magistrate offices as cases are sometimes referred to him and vice versa.

The chief derives his authority through the community's recognition of his right to rule. Thus, for the people in these three villages and other hamlets under his control, the chief may be obeyed because of the cultural belief or because he does well in the community, and also the fact that he is the foundation of the community's identity. In their defense of the relevance of chiefship in the present democratic dispensation, most respondents in the survey echoed this sentiment (*figure 2.8*).

It is difficult to measure precisely the influence and authority that the chief has on the villages under his administration, although some generalisations can be made. The chief operates within a web of political, economic and cultural values and this in turn provides other variables, which have effect on his authority. Others might consider the degree of participation in traditional leadership matters by members of the communities as one of the determinants of the chief's influence and authority. However, the influence and authority that the chief has upon the people is dependent upon numerous variables, and is unstable. For example, approximately between 1989 and 1996, the chief enjoyed less support from the people in the hamlets, including Dan village, which is at the moment the dominant supporter for the chief. This was demonstrated by several incidences of illegal land grabbing acts, which were carried out without the concern of the chief, of which he was unable to prevent (Nkuna 2001).

2.6 Missing Data Analysis

Most respondents refrained from answering particular questions in the questionnaire. In most cases these questions had something to do with either the local municipality or the chief. This eventuality was predominant in all three villages, where many people either refrained from answering particular questions or simply chose to be neutral. However, according to research findings, people refrained from answering questions for different reasons.

Surprisingly, in Petanenge village, which is, with regard to services and infrastructure, the most under-serviced and underdeveloped of the three villages, most respondents were careful not to paint 'a bad picture of themselves' by speaking either against the municipality or the chief. As one of the respondents disclosed:

"We don't know who is punishing us between the government and *Hosi* Muhlava. However one thing is certain; one of the two is against our development. As you can see for yourself, we have no electricity and water. The clinic that we have is just for window-dressing; there is no medicine there. Maybe the ANC think that we did not suffer enough during apartheid or the chief is the one punishing us, I don't know".

As Petanenge is the most disadvantaged village, one would expect residents to be much more vocal and critical about the performance of both the municipality and the chief. However, to the contrary most people take a more compliant approach in trying to address their problems. Thus, the above respondent clearly demonstrates the way in which people struggle to be in a neutral position when it comes to the municipality or the chief. They hope that by staying neutral, they might attain

better services and development from either the chief or the municipality. Although many respondents refrained from answering some of the questions, of the three villages, people in Petanenge warmly welcomed my research team in their homes.

Most respondents in Dan and Khujwana villages refrained from answering particular questions, sometimes claiming that they lacked information about the subject in question. Most of these questions were about the municipality and its activities in their areas. Although most respondents spoke freely about the chief and his weakness, evidence suggests that these respondents did not want to 'speak bad' against the municipality, as they 'feared losing their homes and property'. As Tinyinko Mongwe, a 26-year-old from Dan village argues:

"People in this *mughanga* (village) are confused and scared about what is happening around this place. We as young people cannot individually criticise the *masipala* as we will be sabotaging our job prospects in the village and town, as brothers who are in power will not lift us up. For that matter you will not be considered for any jobs [police force, prison warder, government clerk or officer, nursing, etc.] or be involved in any local development project. With all this government corruption going on within the village, no one wants to be left out of the equation, by insulting the big dogs.

You see, some elderly people are afraid to openly criticise the *masipala* as individuals because they fear to be targeted by local politicians and [ANC] party die-hards. They fear that they will not get RDP houses and that the *masipala* will make them pay for everything, including going to toilet. Some fear, as most local party [ANC] politicians had scared pensioners, that their will no longer

receive pensions and those who apply, their applications will be not processed. Everyone in this village can only criticise and oppose the *masipala* only in front of Jacques (*ndhuna* Mavunge) as the community, not as individuals".

However people were more open when interviewed without using a recorder or questionnaire, allowing only the jotting down of notes. Thus missing data in this research does not constitute apathy, but is considered as significant and valuable data as it sheds some light to the way people interpret and understand their socio-political problems and challenges in the community.

2.7 Discussion and Conclusion

With high levels of unemployment, waning accessibility to health services and sinking standards of living, the three hamlets could be considered as surviving in the verge of poverty. The most important factor is how the municipality and the communities choose to treat it. In this case, the municipality has chosen to transform these communities by turning the poor into objects of knowledge and management. For the municipality and [the South African government at large], not only poverty, but health, education, employment and the poor quality of life in the hamlets are constructed as asocial problem requiring appropriate modes of social planning. (Escobar 1994, Levin 1997 and Van Niekerk 2000).

In simple terms, the poor, as perceived by the municipality, could be defined as lacking what the rich have in terms of material possessions. This economic conception of poverty has a detrimental effect on how the municipality approaches development in the rural areas. In this light, poor people in the hamlets are perceived as desiring to be, in all respect, like those in staying towns. Hence, for

government and the Greater Tzaneen Municipality rural development is narrowly defined as service and infrastructure provision with capacity building.

As argued in this chapter, and in this report as a whole, the Greater Tzaneen Municipality's top down approach to rural development is central to escalation of mass poverty in the villages. For the people living in these hamlets, political freedom has changed their dire living circumstances for the worse. For some, living in the Bantustan was sometimes better than the current system.

This chapter has argued that the top-down, overly technicist conceptions of development in the rural areas of Tzaneen turn people into objects, without values and cultural norms. Hence the municipality's conception of development is in the form of a linear progression, without regard of the target community. Development cannot be reduced to a simple economic equation. It must be integrated: in other words it must promote the whole man. (Latouche 1994). Thus for development to be sustainable in the hamlets of Tzaneen, it must take be planned, facilitated and implemented taking into consideration the nature and uniqueness of the target communities.

Then who are these poor people? Although people in the three hamlets might be simply categorised as being poor by development planners, as the next chapter will demonstrate, their lives have meaning and value. The most important example of this could be seen in the way people in the three hamlets understand and value their living space. For many people staying in the villages, although lacking when it comes to infrastructure, these hamlets have acquired meaning and makes life much easier to those who are poor, than life in urban areas [like Tzaneen]. Hence the following chapter discusses the categorisation of living space in rural Tzaneen, and its impact on planned development.

Chapter Three

Matiko-Xikaya, Malokhixi and Madoropa: The Local Categorisation of Living Space and its Impact on Development.

Are there perhaps obstacles to development... which are beyond the tools of analysis of economists and political scientists, which baffle the understanding of social activists and NGOs? The origin of this kind of resistance may well lie in the cultural uniqueness of the populations in question. Verhelst (1990)

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter argued that instead of development being reduced to a simplified linear economic and statistical equation, it must integrate and accommodate the uniqueness of the target community. Something which is not taken into consideration by present government and its municipalities. The way in which people in the three villages understand and reconstruct their living space has considerable impact on development as implemented by the Greater Tzaneen municipality. Thus, the aim of this chapter is not only to discuss the categorisation of living space from the perspectives of poor people, but to also highlight the significance of local culture and knowledge in development.

3.2 The Importance of Space in Development Studies

In the discipline of geography, location is the most basic of geographical themes. Furthermore, the people's ability to locate oneself in a geographical space satisfies a deep human need. Thus for geographers, location derives from three characteristics: direction or orientation, distance, and connection or relative position. However for Foucault (1986:252) "space is fundamental in any form of communal life, space is fundamental in any exercise of power". In Foucault's terms, any development project or activity that takes place within any community (or space) is not only considered as a simple action, but a "a plunge in into a field of social relations in which it brings about some specific effects" (*ibid*: 253). It is in this context that I wish to situate this chapter, and go argue that development is not a simple cut-and-paste linear progression, but a complex activity that 'plunges' into a fluid ever-changing cultural world of local relations and meaning. I shall investigate the meaning of living space in the three villages and how this meaning affect their interpretation of development projects as instituted by the municipality.

However, I am aware of the debate by some social commentators that insistence on the cultural uniqueness of different peoples and communities is beset by dangers. In South Africa, cultural differences and ethnicity were treacherously used by the apartheid regime to justify its racial segregation ideology, misleadingly presented as 'separate development' (Verhelst 1990, De Wet 1996, and Zigey and Kriger 2000). For this reason there has been great caution from development anthropologists in post-apartheid South Africa when it comes to writing about culture and development today.

As this chapter deals with culture and development, as a starting point there is a need for consensus in the definition of 'culture'. Here, the term 'culture' refers to

every aspect of life: know-how, technical knowledge, religion, mentality, values, language, symbols, socio-political and economic behavior, indigenous methods of taking decisions and exercising power or authority, methods of production and economic relations, and so on. (Verhelst 1990)

Thus, this chapter investigates the importance of local culture and its impact on development policies in the post-apartheid rural South Africa. The interpretation and categorisation of living space is used as an example of how local cultural knowledge impacts on development. The local categorisation of communities also sheds some light on the way these communities understand development and the provisioning of services as provided by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The chapter's prime argument is that the goals of a decisive rural development strategy in rural communities should not be subject to precise definitions or anticipation of outcomes but rather should be guided by an integrated comprehension of what development means to those communities. Many rural development strategies and projects failed or did not meet expected projections because of the mere fact that they ignored local perspectives and interpretations of living space and its impact on local development. Hence I argue that a rural development plan is not supposed to be based only on economical and demographic statistics done, but must plan ahead by taking into cognizance all cultural aspects of each community.

The community's interpretation and comprehension of local development could only be understood through local usage of the concept "*matiko-xikaya*"¹. For the community, the society exists in three spatial dimensions: *Matiko-Xikaya*, *malokhixi*² and *madoropa*³. The term *matiko-Xikaya* is used to refer to rural communities, *Malokhixi* refers to proclaimed locations or towns, and *Madoropa*

¹ Singular: *Tiko-Xikaya*. The phrase was derived from term "homeland".

² Singular: *Lokhixi*. The term was derived from the word "location".

³ Singular: *Doropa*. The term was derived from the Afrikaans word 'Dorp', for town.

refers to town suburbs. Furthermore, the term *tiko-xikaya* means 'homeland', thus, deriving from apartheid policy of 'homelands' for black people. On the other hand, the term seems to refer to 'tribal land', in this case the Nkuna tribe. So from the community's point of view, what qualifies *matiko-xikaya* to be referred to as rural areas? What does it mean to stay in a rural area?

3.3. *Matiko-Xikaya*: A Place for the Poor, A place for those who are free

The conception and meaning of *matiko-xikaya* can only be understood in the context of the history of *Bantustans*, land dispossession, territorial segregation and political exclusion and state control of the movement of people in the former South African government⁴. The creation of the *Bantustans* as pure ethnic entities could never have been achieved without the massive forced removals that became the symbol of apartheid. The 'ethnic cleansing' entailed the establishment of ten *bantustans* into which Africans were forcibly removed under different categories such as the removal of black spots, the consolidation of homelands, the abolition of labor tenancy, and influx control measures.

Before black communities in the Tzaneen areas were dispossessed of their land, all living space was a communal property for all that lived in the village. People lived in small communities, which were spread out, each village with its own authority structures like headmen and counselors to co-ordinate with the tribal chief. The chief was the custodian of the cultural and social systems, ensuring communal values and norms were respected and adhered to (Khumbane 1996). These living spaces were simply referred to as *makaya* [Homes] by migrant workers. However

⁴ However, land dispossession took place long before the declared policy of apartheid of 1948. The 1913 Natives Land Act No. 27 and the 1936 Bantu Trust and Land Act No. 18 both sealed the unequal distribution of land between the races. In terms of the former, only 7.3 percent of the land was reserved for Africans. The latter was meant to release a further 5.7 percent

with the institution of Betterment Scheme, was part of the separate development strategy of the former apartheid government, people were moved from their scattered living space to semi-planned villages.

In the Tzaneen area, the small scattered villages were clustered in small ethnic homestead plots of approximately 30m x 20m, regardless of whether one owned cattle or not. In Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana village people who owned cattle suffered more from this type of settlement, as they did not have enough land for their cattle. More than 70% of the land was allocated to white farmers. However, the former Gazankulu homeland government explained and marketed these villages as a process which would ensure that people got infrastructure services such as water, schools, roads, telephones, etc. The consequence of betterment was the disorganisation of local social systems and means of survival. Constrained by lack of access to land, subsistence agriculture was the first to suffer. Most households in the new villages survived only through the incomes of migrant members employed in the mines or in manufacturing industry or through the meager pensions paid to elderly people.

However, for the people in the rural communities of Tzaneen, there are still strong similarities between the villages before betterment and the villages after betterment (meaning villages as they are today). One of the most important characteristics between the two is that *people are left alone*; they enjoy greater freedoms compared to those living in urban areas. Among these freedoms is the fact that people are allowed to keep their livestock in their homesteads. *Tatana*⁵ Rikhotso helps in disclosing the distinction:

⁵ The title “*tatana*” can shallowly be considered as an equivalent of the title “mister”. In this context it is used to denote a sense of respect to the respondent. As indicated earlier in the paper, the literal meaning of “*tatana*” is “father”. In general, according to Tsonga culture one is not allowed to call an elder by his/her first name.

"We might be starving, yet we are free. We are free to stay with our cattle, goats and pigs. You cannot stay with cattle and pigs in your homestead in Nkowankowa or Tzaneen without being arrested. We do not want the Tzaneen *masipala* to come here and tell us to pay for services we don't enjoy. The *masipala* is coming up with another kind of slavery and subjugation, the problem is that this time our children are the perpetrators of this oppression".

For *tatana* Rikhotso, people who stay in *matiko-xikaya* are poor and unable to afford life in the towns. Hence these people cannot afford to pay for some of the services offered in towns. The benefit of staying in a rural community is that one enjoys a significant level of flexibility and tolerance within the community when it comes to owning and raising livestock. He used the example of having a pigsty in the homestead to amplify his idea of community tolerance. He argues that people in the rural communities tolerate the smell of pigs in the pigsty because there is a general consensus when regarding keeping livestock in the homestead.

The second peculiarity of *matiko-xikaya* is the absence of any building regulations. It is argued that unlike in *malokhixini* and *madoropeni*, where there are regulations on erecting structures on one's homestead, in *matiko-xikaya* people are not restricted when it comes to buildings and structures. According to *tanana* Mnisi, who is a builder by profession:

"Here in *matiko-xikaya*, I have complete control of my homestead, I build what I want as long as it does not give my neighbours serious problems. I can build a *zozo* [shack] or a massive beautiful house, without fear of punishment from the chief because he understands that it is what I can afford. But in Tzaneen [suburbs] people do not have freedom to build whatever structure in their homesteads. If you happen to build a *zozo*,

before the *masipala* comes to demolish and fine you, your neighbors will be first to complain that your *zozo* is devaluing their property. You are also not allowed to build a second house in your yard without permission from the *masipala*. But here [in *matiko-xikaya*] you build as much houses as your yard can take without fear of either your neighbor or the chief. It [matiko-xikaya] is a free community".

As the above interviewee indicated, in *matiko-xikaya* people are free to build, in their yards, whatever house(s) they can afford, compared to those who are staying in *malokhixini* and *madoropeni*. It had been argued that lack of building regulations in these rural areas helps in creating a level of flexibility and eases the burden of having to spend on building material.

For the people in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana the chief plays a very fundamental role on the life of *matiko-xikaya*. Apart from performing the role of the community administrator, the chief is considered by the residents as the head of an extended family. It is in this light that the community differentiates between the responsibility, role, and jurisdiction of the municipality and the chief. According to most of respondents the municipality only attend to issues in *malokhixini* and *madoropeni* and the chief attends to issues in *matiko-xikaya*. Thus the chief is considered as an important part of the political, social and cultural landscape of *matiko-xikaya*.

There are particular benefits for staying in rural communities. These benefits include not paying for water, sanitation (pit-toilets are used), cemetery levies and other rates and services. Most members of the community had argued that the absence and non-payment of these services contributes in making life affordable in the rural areas. As indicated earlier, one of the most important characteristics of *matiko-xikaya* is the affordability of land and living on the land.

As revealed by Oomen (2000) in her study of traditional authorities and local government in Sekhukhune area, land has become a central topic in the debate on the relationship between traditional leaders and their municipalities. She asserted that in the areas falling under traditional or tribal authorities in the former homelands, land has the title of communal property. In the village considered here, most interviewees had put an argument forward that the chief was the sole guardian and custodian of the land in *matiko-xikaya*. The argument put forward is that people in the rural areas owe their duty and obligation to the chief as the custodian of the land. As *tatana* Ngoveni from Petanenge argues:

"*Hosi* [Chief] Samuel Muhlava is the only leader we know and respect. He understands our poverty and suffering, hence his taxes are reasonable. We are able to send our children to school because of his kindness. Who built the schools? Our *hosi* [Chief]. Those who think the chief is useless have the right to leave for Nkowankowa [township]; the municipality will test the depth of their pockets".

This above interview highlights a particular type of relations between the chief and the rural community in Tzaneen by pointing to the idea mutual inter-dependence and understanding, which forms the basic cultural and political establishment in these communities. Research evidence show that Chief Muhlava has a general support of 89% in the three villages (*Figure 3.1*) . However support of the chief is relatively distributed across all age ranges and sexes. In a normal situation one would assume that most of the chief's support would come from older people rather than the younger generation and that women are likely to be negative towards the chief and the traditional authority in general.

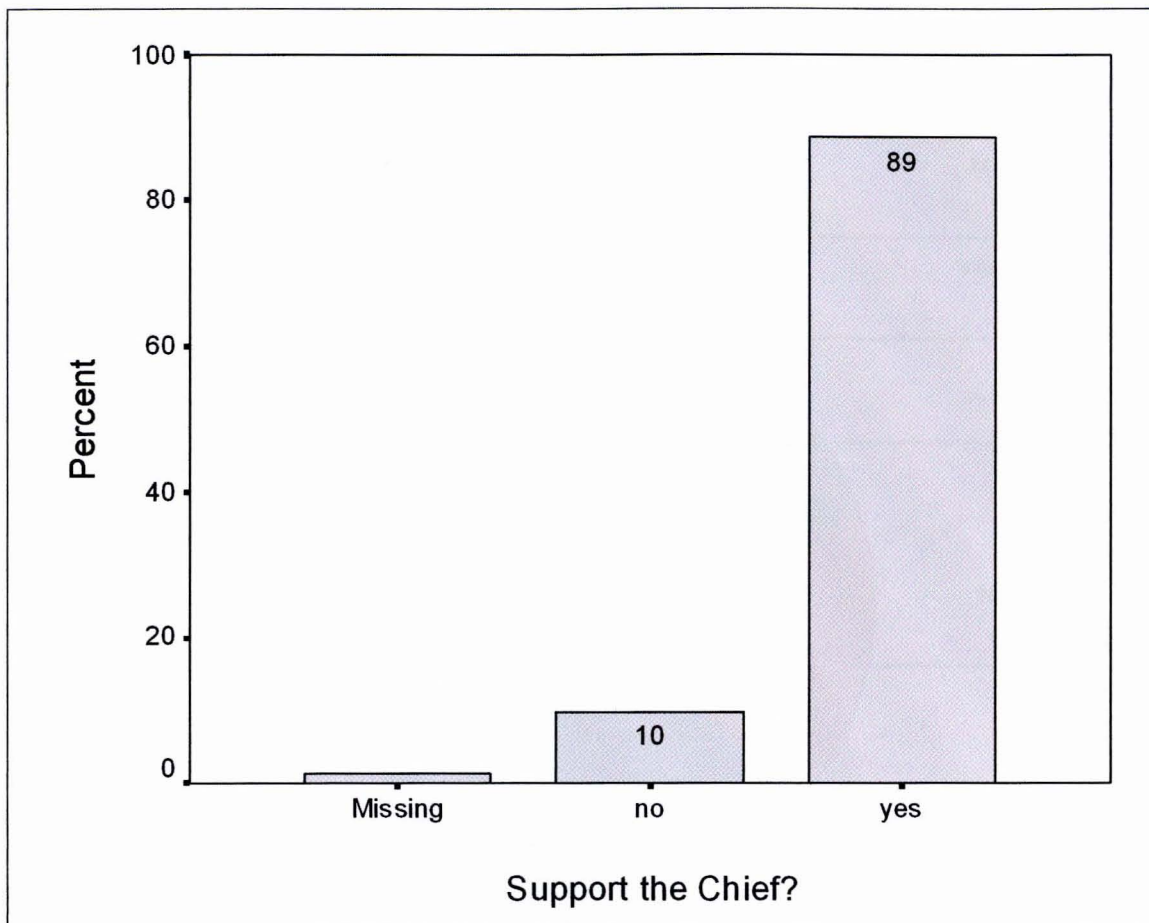


Figure 3.1: Support for the chief.

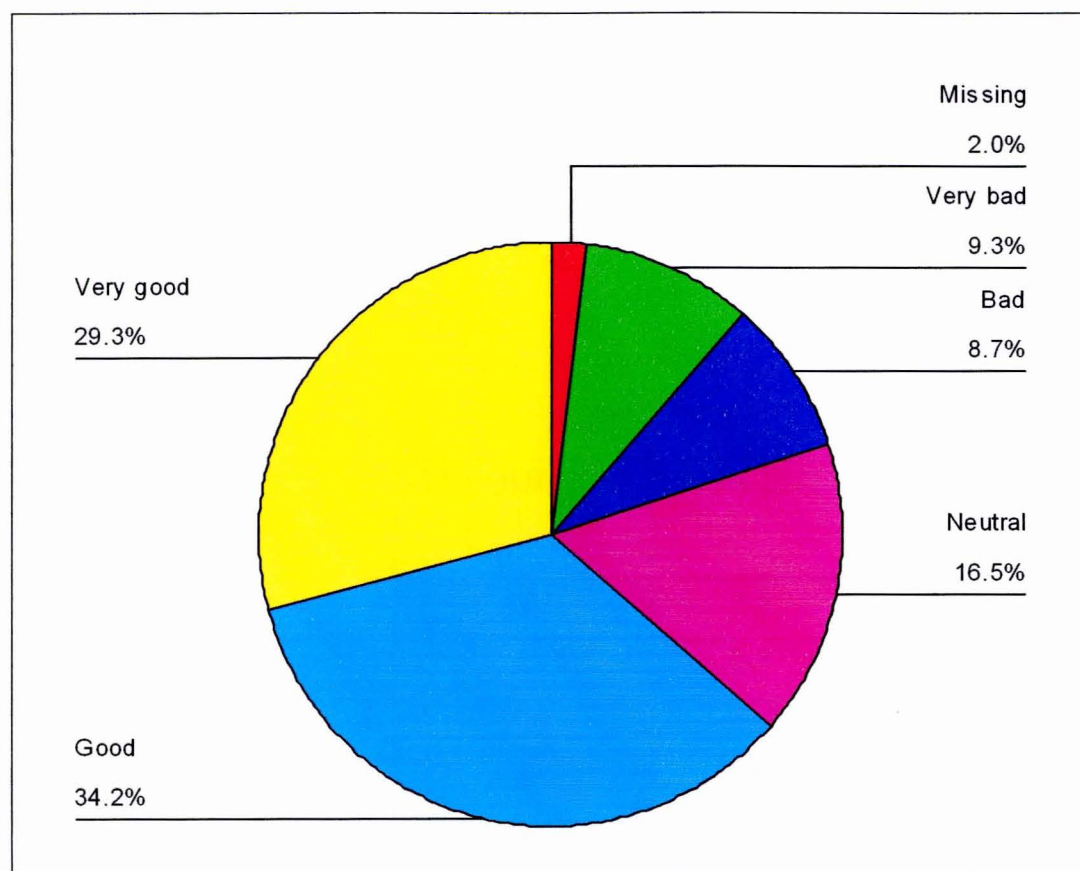


Figure 3.2 Local ratings of the chief

The results of the research survey indicates a considerable support for the chief, more especially with issues pertaining to the allocation of land in the rural areas, as many of my respondents indicated that they were allocated land by the Chief. Out of the 345 survey questionnaires administered in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana 88.4% (305) of the respondents indicated that the chief allocated them land, which they are occupying at present (refer to figure 3.3 below). Only 5.2% (18) claimed to have bought their stands and 2.6% (9) indicated that they occupied the land without permission from the chief.

		FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
VALID	Bought it	18	5.3	5.3
	Rents it	1	0.3	5.6
	Allocated by Hosi	304	89.7	95.3
	Occupied it	9	2.6	97.9
	Inherited it	2	0.2	98.5
	Other	5	1.5	100.00
	Total	340	100.00	
Missing System		5	1.4	
Total		345	100.0	

Figure 1.3: Methods of acquisition of land.

Opinion on Land Allocation

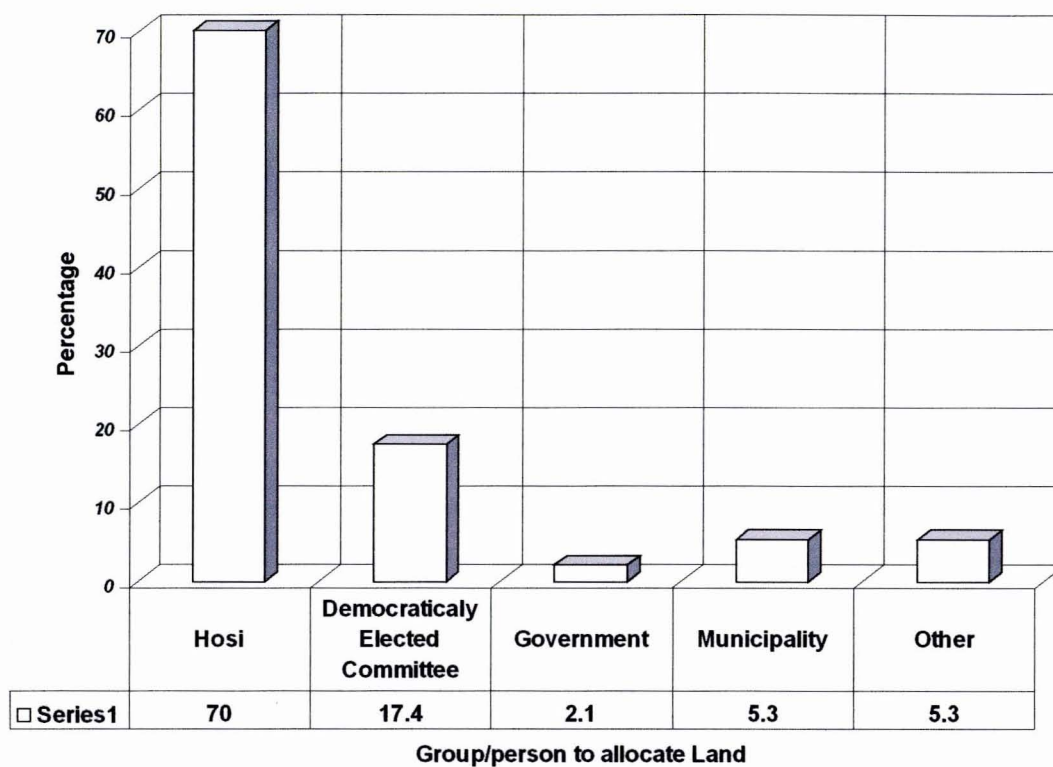


Figure 2.4: Opinion on land allocation

According to the research findings, the majority of people in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana argue that acquiring land in the rural area is cheaper than buying it at *malokhixini* (Nkowankowa) and *madoropeni* (Tzaneen). Thus when it comes to allocating land in the rural communities, the chief is favoured compared to land allocated by the municipality. For example when people were asked who is supposed to allocate land in the rural areas, 70% of the respondents chose the chief (Figure 3.4). As for the *government/municipality* only 7.4% and for *other* (which included variables like local pastors and sangomas) only 5.3%. Most of the people who claimed not to support the chief chose democratically elected committees and thus form much of the 17.4%.

The respondents' opinions on land allocation cement the idea that the municipality should have a limited role in *matiko-xikaya*. As for the chief and the rural communities the municipality is perceived as a threat to social order, because as it be discussed later, people support the municipality on other issues. The chief's support on land allocation signifies different aspects and realities of rural life.

Furthermore, the chief's support signifies that a large majority people in the community consider the chief a fundamental role player in their communities. Secondly, that the municipality should not distribute land as the land is in *matiko-xikaya* (tribal land). On the other hand the overwhelming support for the chief might mean, as indicated by some interviewees, that people fear that land will no longer be accessible to poor community members if the municipality takes charge of allocation. Thus land, a never failing source of political power and control over people and resources, inevitably become the primary concern of the chief and the rural communities in their new relations with the Greater Tzaneen municipality.

		Frequ ency	Perc ent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	22	6.4	7.3	7.3
	Paid Timangeni/Muhlava-Day/Xibala	279	80.9	92.7	100.0
	Total	301	87.2	100.0	
Missing	dk/na	29	8.4		
	System	15	4.3		
	Total	44	12.8		
Total		345	100.0		

Figure 3.5: payment of traditional levy.

As an obligation and token of support to the chief and traditional leadership, most respondents claimed to pay the annual traditional levy, which is locally called *timangeni*. This levy, which is approximately R5, is paid per household to the local *tindhuna*, who every year walk around the households collecting the money and issuing receipts to those who pay. Of the 345 respondents in the survey, 80% of the respondents claimed to have paid the levy in the last 12 months. (Figure 3.5). Apart from this levy, people are not obliged to pay any taxes or rates.

With the presence of the chief in the rural areas comes one of the distinguishing features of *matiko-xikaya*: traditional courts. As it had been highlighted in South African Law Commission Discussion Paper (no. 82 Project 90 1999), apart from being a source of power to chiefs in rural areas, they perform very important services. According to my respondents community members in the rural areas have a choice when it comes to attaining justice: either they go to the magistrate's office in the township [Nkowankowa] or local traditional court, depending on the crime to be reported.

To support this argument my report findings suggests that 12.2% of the respondents reported their case (in the last 12 months) to a traditional court and 36.2% observed proceedings in a traditional court. Compared to 16.2% of respondents who had taken their cases to the magistrate and 44.9% who had observed proceedings in a magistrate court, one can still argue that in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana village traditional courts still play a very vital role.

3.4. *Malokhixi and Madoropa: A Place for the Educated and Rich*

For the people in the communities, the township (in this case, Nkowankowa) is for civil servants that earn a moderate salary, as they are able to afford the services provided by the municipality. These services include sanitation and sewage removals, water, tarred roads, streetlights, living next to commercial outlets, etc. Some of these services are not paid for in the rural areas, as the municipality does not provide most of them. For *manana*⁶ Baloyi, who stays in matiko-xikaya:

"Teachers, clerks and policemen stay in Nkowankowa [township] because they can afford it. We remain behind because this is the only place that we can afford".

Apart from higher costs for staying in *malokhixini*, one important peculiarity is that the municipality is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the community. Although *malokhixi* are predominantly populated by black people, the chief does not have administrative powers or the right to represent the people there.

Most interviewees indicated that there are a considerable number of families and individuals who progress from the villages to the township, and those who leave the township to come and stay in the villages because of inability to pay for services and bonds. For the people in the rural areas, there is a great flexibility in terms of choice of where one wishes to stay. The basic idea is that those who become successful in life (becoming teachers, nurses, law officials, etc.) usually leave the village for the townships (Nkowankowa and Lenyenye).

⁶ The title "*manana*" can shallowly be considered as an equivalent of the title "madam". It is used in the same context with the title "tatana".

Staying in Tzaneen (*doropa*) is perceived by many rural people, as a privilege, and a demonstration of one's economic success. Tzaneen is understood to be very expensive, in terms of by the land and paying for services and rates. *Tatana Ngoveni* expresses these sentiments:

"Who is staying in Tzaneen? High-ranking government officials and rich business people. They have the money [to stay there], we poor people can only stay in Petanenge village, hoping that one day we might join them".

For the people in rural areas, the benefits of staying at Tzaneen include, amongst others, high accessibility to shops and banking services, staying in a racial integrated community, clean environment, adequate recreational facilities (i.e. cinema, recreational parks, Museum, etc.). It is for this reason that people who stay in town pay more to live there.

3.5 The Categorisation of Living Space and its Cultural Dimension

Since 1994, local development plans and strategies in rural Tzaneen have suffered from excessive fragmentation. Most of government instituted development projects have looked only at the material, quantifiable aspects while on the other hand putting particular emphasis on the political and social nature of nature of development. As demonstrated in this chapter, the cultural dimension gives coherence and finality to development strategies.

The cultural approach tackles social reality in a way that it is dynamic and holistic, in that culture encompasses all aspects of life whether they are material or spiritual, symbolic or technical, economic or social (Verhelst 1990). One might argue that the cultural development approach is synonymous with what Fair

(1998) and the World Bank call Community Driven Development (CDD). Thus they stress the importance of local culture and interpretations of development means placing rural community members right at the center of all analysis and initiatives. Respect for local culture and development interpretation implies respect for men and women who are both its trustees and its creators.

One classic example, but in a different context, was an attempt to introduce birth control to the Indian village of Manupur, by the Indian government. (Shiva 1996). The government failed to acknowledge adequately the importance of local knowledge and culture and their impact on development. Due to the cultural and economic value of having as many children as possible, it is argued that population control programmes were unlikely to be successful in the rural villages. However programme planners in the Khanna study assumed that the rejection of contraception was due to 'ignorance', thus completely ignoring local culture and way of thinking. In this respect the plea of taking local interpretations, categorizations and perceptions into account echoes Dudley (1993) and other development scholars, who had been arguing that human beings ought to be the goal of rural development.

3.6. Discussion and Conclusion

The Group Areas Act, Land Acts, and the Population Registration Act which were the pillars of apartheid might have been abolished in paper and practice in South Africa, but their impact on local ways of thinking will still continue. It is without doubt that the categorisation of living space in rural Tzaneen had been greatly affected by policies of the apartheid government and its homeland system. However one must acknowledge the fact that these categorisations had been fused with local cultural perceptions and thus affect rural development strategies. This

chapter investigated local traditional values and attitudes towards rural development by exploring local meanings of living space.

Various research projects conducted in the Northern Province and other areas have argued that most development projects in these areas are unsuccessful because of lack of research on the ground (Hlabane 1999, Ntsubane 1997 and Tainton 1997). In his research project on rural development in Lesotho, Ferguson (1997) also emphasised the importance of local knowledge and culture in development planning. He argued that because of the mere fact that development planning is done without the concern of the target community, developers are likely to overlook and ignore local knowledge and culture in the planning and implementation stages. This argument is illustrated in his discussion on power, property, and livestock in rural Lesotho, where he argues that for the people in Lesotho own cattle and that this has both cultural and socio-economic meaning in Lesotho, which was not taken into consideration by developers.

As the next chapter will demonstrate, the impact that the categorisation of living space has on development plans in rural Tzaneen is very significant. Although the municipality might have good intentions and ideas on how to develop the hamlets, the target community might reject those ideas or projects. For example at Sinthumule/Kutama area, of the former Venda homeland in the Northern Province, the municipality installed new water pipes in each household (in the year 1997/98). (Litholi 1999). Although this could be considered as a good developmental gesture from the municipality, the water pipes were vandalised and meters were removed from them.

This action by the community was a result of the fact that people rejected this kind of water distribution, as it was expensive and styled according to urban settings. Unfortunately, the municipality did not discuss other alternatives with the

community before the project was implemented. Hence, any development that is taking place in the rural hamlets of Tzaneen should incorporate or give attention to local culture. Local ways of thinking have a great impact in the way people will react to suggested development initiatives and implemented projects.

What happens when development planners ignore these fundamental issues? How does the community react? In taking this discussion further, the next chapter will investigate the municipalisation of Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Village, the approaches taken by the Greater Tzaneen municipality, and the complexities resulting from the municipalisation process.

Chapter Four

Socio-political Change and the Municipalisation of Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Hamlets in Tzaneen

"No meaningful development can take place if the development process depends on outside factors either of capital or expertise. It must be propagated and invigorated by spontaneous catalytic action with energy which is essentially indigenous".

Onyemelukwe (1974)

4.1. Introduction

Chapter three investigated the local categorisation of living space and its impact on local development initiatives. This chapter highlights some of the changes brought forward by the Transitional Local Government (TLC) and municipalisation process of 1997. It demonstrates how the incorporation of rural communities into the Greater Tzaneen Municipality is perceived by the community to be threatening local culture, tradition and the traditional community leadership. The basic argument in this chapter is that the rural community, including its traditional authority was not consulted and educated about the aims, obligations and duties of the new Greater-Tzaneen Municipality, while on the other hand the municipality did not have knowledge of these communities beyond simple statistics. As a result, the municipality became to be seen as an outside force aimed at not developing the community but plundering it.

4. 2. The Greater Tzaneen Municipal's in the Villages

The municipalisation of Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana came in 1997. During this period 122 villages, including the above mentioned, were also incorporated into the Greater Tzaneen municipality. According to the local *tindhuna* and members of these communities, the municipalisation process occurred without consultation, meaning that the Greater Tzaneen municipality did not engage the local people on these issues.

The municipalisation process was immediately followed by a series of changes both in the management and day-to-day administration of these incorporated rural villages. The first noticeable change was when the municipality started demanding payments for services and resources like water (*Figure 4.1*). These water bills ranged between R60 and as much as R450. As *tatana* Mhangwana indicates:

" The demand for water payments came as a shock. At first I thought that it was just a case of mistaken identity, but the appearance of my name and stand number on the document proved otherwise. I do not even have a water tap in my yard, so how can I pay for something I don't have? As you can see in that statement, it is alleged that I owe the *masipala* an unbelievable R310.00 in unpaid water bills. How did they come with this figure, as I don't even have meter? Maybe my name is already listed on with the credit bureau, I don't know".

The demand for water payments by the municipality had a tremendous impact on the relationship between the two. At first, most members of the community were confused. They did not know how to react to the demands for payments.



PLAASLIKE OORGANGSRAAD / TRANSITIONAL LOCAL COUNCIL

T (015) 307-1411 FAX: (015) 307-1507 24, 0850 TZANEEN

BETAALADVIES / REMITTANCE ADVICE

SKEUR HIERDIE STROKIE AF EN
STUUR ASB.
SAAM MET U BETALING AAN:

TEAR OFF AND SEND THIS SLIP
TOGETHER WITH YOUR
PAYMENT TO:

REK Nr. A/c. No.	00285892	FINALE DATUM DATE	23/01/1998	NAAM NAME	MRS XK NTIMBANE	R	192.61
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SKEUR HIER AF TEAR OFF AT PERFORATION

MRS XK NTIMBANE
P O BOX 1492
0970 LETABA



PLAASLIKE OORGANGSRAAD / TRANSITIONAL LOCAL COUNCIL

LW: LEES VOORWAARDES AGTEROP • NB: READ CONDITIONS OVERLEAF

1242/0, DAN
DAN STREET

BOOSKAP THIS IS THE DEC/97 ACCOUNT. MESSAGE

BELASTINGFAKTUUR / TAX INVOICE

BTW / VAT REG. NO. 9220101481

00285892

REKENING Nr. / ACCOUNT No.

R/KLIEN
R/CIENT

EXTRAS
EKTRAS

AANSL. NR.
CON NR.

31/12/1997
FAKT. DATUM /
INVOICE DATE

AVAILDEM

KVA

METER

MF-U

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MF-D

OPPERVLAKTE
AREA M²

WAARDASIE
VALUATION
GROND / LAND

WAARDASIE
VALUATION
VERBRETER / IMPROVE

GAARANTIE
BANKWAARBORG
DEPOSITO / DEPOSIT

2000

BESKRYWING / DESCRIPTION	HEFFING SONDER BTW LEVY VAT EXCLUDED	BTW / VAT	BEDRAG / AMOUNT
BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD			160.51
ASSESSMENT RATES:			
AA ASSESSMENT RATES	21.43	0.00	21.43
AC ASSESSMENT RATES	6.43-	0.00	6.43-
WATER - AVAILABILITY:			
AA WATER AVAILABILITY	15.00	2.10	17.10

LAASTE BETAALDATUM
FINAL DATE OF PAYMENT 23/01/1998

TOTALE
TOTALS

R

30.00

R

2.10

R

192.61

Figure 4.1: One of the Water and assessment rates bills that were sent per house in the villages.

In the midst of the confusions the chief was accused of selling the community's land to the municipality without proper consultation with the communities. After several meetings between local councilors and *tindhuna*, it was finally agreed to invite the chief to come and account for the allegations. On a Sunday, in December 1999 Chief Samuel Muhlava attended a meeting in Dan village, which was organised by community members including his *tindhuna*. The chief was not the only one who was invited. The mayor of Greater Tzaneen and other government officials were also invited in time to attend the meeting. Although all invited government officials confirmed that they were coming to the meeting, none turned up.

On the meeting the chief was asked about whether he had sold the land to the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, an allegation that he vehemently denied. The chief told the community that he did not know anything about water installments or the newly constructed pay-points (where payments were to be made) around his villages (figure 4.2). He revealed to the gathering that the Tzaneen municipality did not consult with him or any of his traditional officials. In his speech he urged the community to resist and fight against imposed development initiatives and promised the gathering that no household will pay for water.

What angered the people more was the fact that it was not clear as to how the municipality came up with such figures because of the mere fact that all households in the rural villages did not have water meters and some did not even have taps in their yards. Demands for water payments were followed by several other demands. These demands included among others payment for the cemetery, which was pitched between R20 and R50 per household per month¹. In other villages it is alleged that demands were also made for the development and

¹ People in different villages mentioned different amounts, but ranging between the one mentioned.



Figure 4.2: One of the several service pay-points that were constructed in the villages, where people were supposed to pay for their services.

maintenance of infrastructure like roads, an amount which was supposed to be between R50 and R80 per month.

In a quest to deliver accessible water services, in the last 16 months the Greater Tzaneen Municipality instituted the construction of new water pipes in the rural areas (especially Dan and Khujwana villages). Apart from supplying these communities with access to water, the municipality wanted to have a way of controlling the distribution of and consumption of water in these communities. For this reason between the year 2000 and 2001, water taps equipped with meters were introduced in each household to replace what the municipality call 'illegal taps' and taps which were placed on the streets (figure 4.3).

According to the findings of this research project, the Greater Tzaneen municipality experienced several problems in its quest to distribute and control water in the communities in question. The first problem was that the majority of people resisted or denied construction workers access to their yards (this was very common in Dan village). This occurred indirectly or directly. Indirectly, in some cases gates were locked whenever the construction workers approach. Directly, the construction workers were verbally denied access to the yard. Where meters were already connected, like in Lusaka and Rhulani (sections of Dan village), most were allegedly stolen and thus replaced by normal taps. In some instances, research findings show that some of the water meters were removed by members of the household and replaced by taps without meters.



Figure 4.3: An unused, closed street water tap.

After failing to convince people to pay for water service, the municipality distributed contracts in the rural communities that people were supposed to sign (figure 4.4). The aim of the contracts was to legally bind members of the community in agreeing to pay for services. This move also ended up in disaster, as people did not sign the contracts. People argued that the contracts were not 'legal', as they did not have the concern and signature of the chief. This meant that the chief either did not know anything about the contracts or did not support it.

To make matters more complicated in the year 2001, the Greater Tzaneen municipality proclaimed an area opposite Matsila-pata village as an extension of Dan Village (Figure 4.5). As figure 3.5 clearly shows the cheapest stand (approximately 25x25 meters) cost no less than R26 500.00. This move by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality was considered by most members of the community as an insult to the chief and the Tribal Authority in general. The municipality erected the sign (in figure 3.4) few weeks after local *tindhuna* and their constituencies held meetings on the allocation of the land in question².

² For example in Dan village the meeting was held on Sunday the 19th of August 2001 at *ndhuna* Mavunge's kraal.

CONTRACT SUPPLY OF WATER

I agree to the conditions for the supply of water laid down in the by-laws governing the supply of water.

0.7317065

- ☐ BY SIGNING THIS FORM, THE SIGNATORY DULY AGREES TO ABIDE BY ALL RULES GOVERNING THE LEGAL AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER OF CONNECTING AND USING WATER METERS INSTALLED BY THE TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY AT DAN VILLAGE.
- ☐ THE SIGNATORY IS BOUND TO REPORT TO THE TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY OR RELEVANT AUTHORITIES OF ANY ILLEGAL CONNECTION (S) ON THE METERS INSTALLED IN THEIR STAND OR BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY COSTS INCURRED SHOULD THE METERS SIGNED FOR BE ILLEGALLY CONNECTED TO OR TAMPERED WITH.

SIGNATURE: [Signature]

73



FIGURE 4.5: A board erected by the municipality, advertising the sale of new stands at the price of not less than R26500, in Dan.

4.3. The Community's Response

Demand for payment of services by the Greater Tzaneen municipality was met with great resistance from the communities. However the municipality responded by terminating services from selected communities, especially the distribution and provisioning of water in Dan Village and Khujwana. In responding to the to the municipality, the Dan Concern Group Committee was formed in December 1997. The structure consisted of the local *ndhuna*, his village councilors, some local traditional healers and members of the community.

At first, the strategy of the Concern Group Committee was to try to negotiate with the local ward councilors. When their strategy did not bear fruits they resorted to lobbying the community to fight against the municipalisation process. The support of the local traditional leadership (*ndhunas*) was clear, and their attitude towards the municipality known by everyone. As the late *ndhuna* Mavunge³ expressed himself:

"It is pathetic. This *masipala* claims to serve the poor of this community while on the other hand they create and perpetuate more poverty. It takes a sufferer to understand suffering. They [government officials in Tzaneen] only read about poverty on magazines, they just watch it on television, they don't have the experience. I sleep with poverty, I walk with poverty, I eat poverty, and poverty is I. When I wake up in the morning, what do I see? What do I do I smell? Poverty. Then a government official, in a fancy car, comes to me from town and tells me I don't know my people, that I don't know myself. I feel insulted.

Let me tell you about this *masipala*. It serious believes that we have hidden cash reservoirs in our backyards. It vehemently believes that our suffering is not genuine. Let it [municipality] come and see what we eat

and where we sleep. What can I buy with the R500 (pension) that it gives me? I cannot afford education for my children. But it still continues threatening and prompting me to pay for services, which are not a priority.

That is why I refuse to sell my community to this *masipala*. That is why I resist and refuse to engage my community in things I am not clear of. That is why I refuse".

Many community members across the villages expressed the *ndhuna* Mavunge's sentiments. Apart from highlight the attitude of the community towards the municipality, the above interview also brings into light the center of the problem and misunderstanding in the community. A problem highlighted in my interview with the chief. In my interview with Chief Samuel Muhlava in his office, he expressed these sentiments:

"I do not worry about the way the *masipala* and the mayor undermines me. I am more worried about my people. The problem is that the municipality does not consult with anyone; no one knows what is going on. In my land, I never had hobos or people who were labeled as squatters, but in the next few years the Tzaneen *masipala* will be successful in manufacturing them. I feel sorry for my villages, for most of them will be landless and poorer than they are now, thanks to the Tzaneen *masipala*".

As the chief indicated, one of the biggest problems with the Tzaneen municipality was lack of consultation by the municipality. He argued that people were not resisting development or trying to undermine the government, but resisting to imposed changes from the municipality.

³ The interview took place at *ndhuna* Mavunge's homestead on the 20th of September 2001.

It is worthy to note that in my investigations, of the 4 councilors I approached only one was able to agree on an interview. He agreed to the fact that the communities are not well informed about general developments in their villages. In responding to this problem he pleaded:

"What can I do? Please understand my position before you judge me. The municipality is my employer; it puts bread on my table. The African National Congress⁴ nominated me into job. The community voted for me and ensured my employment. Of the three opposing and antagonistic kings whom do I serve? Like Jesus said "you cannot serve two kings, you will love the other one and hate the other". Unfortunately for me it is three [kings]. I have three irreconcilable obligations: I am indebted to the community I claim to serve, I am obligated to my political party for the opportunity, and as part of the municipality I have duties to perform.

I am not superman, I cannot perform miracles. Unfortunately when things go wrong I am the one to blame by the community, by the municipality and the African National Congress. But I would say that these communities are not ready to be bombarded by installments for payment of services and advertisements of R30 000 per stands. They want development first, they want jobs and social security before anything else". I understand their cries because I stay here [in this community] with them; they are my neighbours. But what can I do".⁵

Speaking as a councilor and a member of the community, the above interviewee expressed and highlighted his dilemma and a problem faced by the whole community in general.

⁴ The exposure of his/her political affiliation does not expose the identity of my respondent, as almost all ward councilors in the Tzaneen municipality are ANC members.

⁵ The interview took place on a Sunday in December 2001.

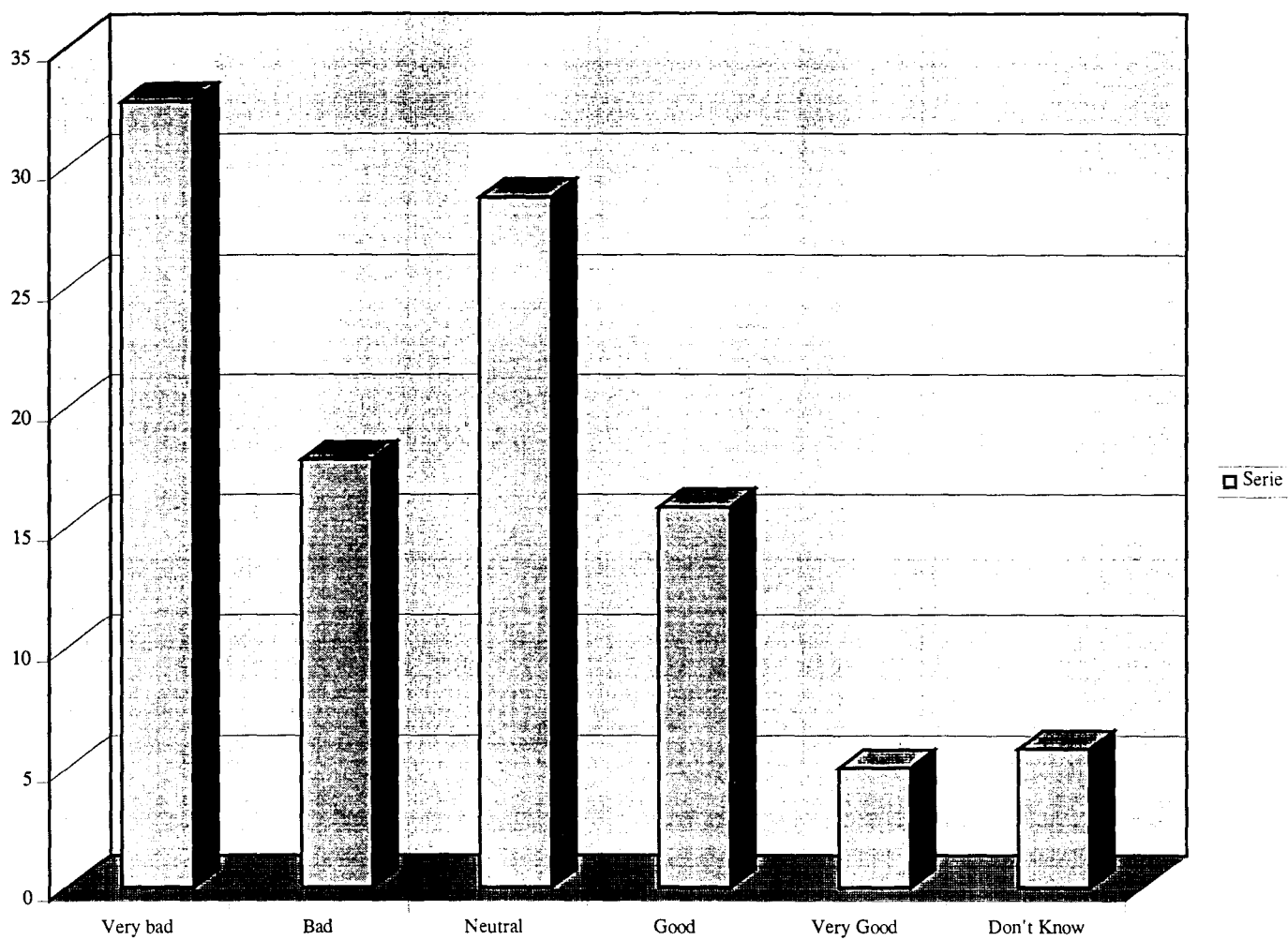


Figure 4.6: A chart representation of local ratings of municipality's performance since 1997.

With this kind of attitude towards the municipality, it is not surprising that most of the respondents argued that since 1997, the municipality performed badly in their villages. Out of the 365 interviewees 136 (39.4%) indicated that they knew little about the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, and only 201 (58.8%) claimed to know something. As the chart below indicates, an overall of 50.5% of the respondents indicated that the municipality performed badly, while only 20.8% indicated a good performance. Twenty-nine percent were neutral. Most of the respondents argued that the municipality does not engage in making itself known in the communities. As one responded indicated "the councilor and town council bakkies (pick-up trucks) have become the face of the municipality" in the rural communities, resulting in resentment.

4.4 Resistance and Fear: A Rural Development Dilemma?

It had been argued by other ward councilors and municipality officials that people in these rural areas are resistant to change and development. People in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana villages, however, are receptive to change and the problem of fear in the communities was manifested in their fear to register for free government houses. In 1998/99 people in the communities in question were requested to apply for free flood relief houses. According to the local house committees, very few people applied for the houses. According to the research findings, the majority of the people indicated that they did not apply because of fear of losing their land, as the houses were supposed to be built in their yards. The fear to apply for the houses was fueled by the fact that unlike in normal RDP (Reconstruction and Development Project) houses, relief houses were built inside the applicant's yard. Thus many people feared that the municipality plan was a scam to take over their land and belongings. These allegations were passed

through in local community meetings and also in the form of rumors (that most people believed). As one of the recipient of the house indicate:

"It was not easy for me to apply for this house, with all the bad rumors. Many people told me that the *masipala* was going rent the house to me, and that I was going to pay per month. But I told myself that I have nothing to lose except this land. I took a big risk, I just pray that the *masipala* does not change its mind and make me pay".

Thus, while the community's response could be understood in terms of their understanding and interpretation of what the term "rural" means, it could also analysed in terms of their fear of the unknown. Lack of communication between the municipality, local traditional leaders and community created a situation of fear and mistrust against the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

The people in the rural communities also find themselves in a socio-political situation that they do not understand, similar to the one that ward councilors find themselves in. As Oomen (2000) indicated, 'two bulls in a kraal' is often how her respondents have often described the situation. My research findings suggests that local people do not understand the relationship between the new municipality and the chief, especially when it comes to issues like the duties and obligations of the two stakeholders towards the community. The first source of confusion is the fact that for a number of positive reasons, the chief continues to play a role in local government, operating under pre-1994 laws. Among these laws is the 1927 Black Administration Act, which allocates to the chief such duties as public health, land allocation and registration of births and deaths. On the other hand the new municipality is trying to assume these duties.

This problem was also noted by Litholi (1999) in his study of community empowerment in Sinthumule/Kutama area in the Northern Province. He observed a power struggle between traditional leaders and the municipality, especially with regard to the control of projects. He also indicated that people were reluctant to participate in development projects which did not involve local traditional leaders, and that as a form of resistance people vandalised the project whenever the opportunity arose.

4.5 Conclusion

A number of changes have taken place in the villages around Tzaneen since their incorporation into the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in 1997, and these changes have had an impact on the day-to-day lives of the people in the villages. The way the Greater Tzaneen approached rural communities had a terrible effect on the way people interpreted the goals and consequences of the municipalisation process. The municipality did not make effort to educate and inform the people in the rural areas about the new dispensation that they were part of. People in the rural areas were not told of the changes that were taking place around them. They did not understand even the general meaning of belonging to a municipality. In general, few people knew about the municipality then as much as they know about it now. As a result, community members came to label the municipality as "a debt collector" and a "money spinning cartel".

This is a clear example of a top-down approach to rural development by a municipality that is not in tune with people's everyday struggles. The municipality ignored the importance of research, when it comes to development and service provisioning. It is clear that the Greater Tzaneen Municipality did not conduct effective research on their incorporated, nor coherently analyse the cultural and

social contexts of these areas. I have demonstrated and emphasised how the importance of understanding local cultural dynamics before engaging in massive development plans.

What are the consequences of imposed development? As it is argued in chapter five, the top-down approach to development denied rural communities the opportunity and freedom to be involved in development plans and projects aimed at developing their area. By using the one of the now to be implemented top-down development plan, the Greater Tzaneen Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, the chapter also brings to light the continuing ignorance of local perspectives and consultation.

Chapter 5

Development Falls Apart: Community Participation and Development Implementation in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Village

"Community development has a tendency to become largely cosmetic unless it involves the active participation of the community in the planning stages of the project". Dudley (1996).

"I will tell you why, after only two elections, people stay away from voting in local government elections. People are tired of being used as prostitutes by local politicians, because after the elections the term 'community consultation' is erased from all government books in Tzaneen, and replaced by the phrase 'the community must'. The circle of threats [i.e. demands for payment] begins once again". Kokwana Xikhivana. Dan Village (2001).

5.1 Introduction

The Greater-Tzaneen municipal's approach to development and service delivery is fixed and does not allow room for adaptation and flexibility. For any development strategy to succeed in rural Tzaneen, community consultation and participation must be enhanced. This chapter argues that a top down development approach denies and discourages the target community from participating in development projects. As this chapter demonstrates, community participation in the Hamlets of Tzaneen is not possible in the current prevailing circumstances.

However before one delves much into the debate, there is a need for a brief discussion of the significance of community participation and its aims. The problems of community participation in development planning in rural Tzaneen also manifests in the recent top-down development planning process (IDP). As a case study, the IDP (Integrated Development Planning) process will be used to highlight some of these complexities around community participation in the rural areas. As stipulated in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the Greater-Tzaneen municipality has completed the preparation for the compilation of an Integrated Development Plan. According to the White Paper, the IDP process is aimed at improving the quality of life of the rural communities under its jurisdiction through service delivery and socio-economic development. But as this chapter will demonstrate, by looking at the way the IDP final report came into being, one is bound to indicate that the path and approach taken by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality did not change from that of the past years. Hence the IDP process, as a top-down strategy, risks becoming a white elephant in the rural areas.

5.2 The Importance of Community Involvement in Development

Community participation plays a very fundamental role in the success of every rural development project; its presence is obligatory in all policy documents and project proposals (Wignaraja and Hussain 1991, Singh and Titi 1995, Municipal Systems Act of 2000, etc). However in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana village community participation may have won the war of words, but beyond the rhetoric its success is less evident. Despite its commitment to the idea of community participation, as is mentioned in the Greater Tzaneen IDP process's final report, the municipality does not have a plan on how it can support and implement it on a sufficient scale.

The municipality's revived commitment to community participation in the rural areas often conceals doubt as to its implementation and application. The IDP Final Report failed to come up with a clear definition of what community participation is, how it comes about, and what is actual for. Without this clarification, how will the municipality encourage community participation in the rural areas? There are different interpretations to community participation, its aims and consequences.

Community participation in development is two-dimensional: as a means to an end and as an end in itself. According to Dudley (1993) the split is between those who see participation as a means to an end and those who advocate it as an end in itself. Hence, Turner and Fischer (1972) argue that in rural development, community participation must be considered as a goal in itself. And for Turner and Fischer community participation is necessary when it comes to stimulating social independence and interdependence.

Community participation could be considered as a tool for carrying out tasks, whether political or physical. The most obvious use as a political tool is to bring people together to lobby the municipality to provide services. On the other hand, since it is not easy to challenge the inherent goodness of community participation, municipalities and development planners sometimes use it to evade their own responsibilities (Philander 1998 and Nemavhandu 1998). The municipal may transfer responsibility to the community or the NGO sector (Non-Governmental Organisations).

However, the Greater Tzaneen municipality should consider community participation as a method to accomplish the success of development projects more cost effectively and with a greater likelihood of sustainability. The Greater Tzaneen municipality needs to realise that the scale of poverty and

underdevelopment in the rural community is so great to be handled by conventional means, and that participation has become an economic necessity. Judged by its previous performance and approach to community participation, the municipality must first deal with some of the problems hindering the participation of its rural citizens.

5.3 Problems that Hinder Community Participation in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana Villages

5.3.1 Lack of Information and Consultation

Clearly, lack of information on local government and general policy changes have had negative impact on the rural communities. Unlike in urban areas, where the majorities of people are educated and understand the general policy situations in the country, most of the people in the rural areas are unable to effectively take part in local policy debates. Firstly, people in rural Tzaneen do not have a platform where debate can take place as they are not in contact with either their leaders or the institutions governing them. Secondly, they do not have sufficient information about local government, its aims and objectives. As Dr. Shingange, one the local medical doctors, now staying in Tzaneen indicated:

"People in *malayinini* (villages) are political dwarfs because of lack of information. But it is not their fault; the government is doing nothing to market itself in the rural areas. One of the first changes I noticed here in the suburbs [Tzaneen] since I left the rural side is the amount of information that is dished out by the municipality in this area, and the public debates that follows. This information ranges from annual budget

proposals, end of the year expenditures to proposed development projects. The municipality goes even to the extent of mailing to the people this information; here everything is made public. Hence, it makes you feel like part of government. But in Petanenge and other villages people there are still in great darkness about what is going on around them. Yes, I don't think it is fair, they are also taxpayers like us."

The only link between villages and the Greater Tzaneen Municipality are ward councillors. When it comes to marketing the municipality in the rural areas, these ward councilors are disadvantaged and lack capacity or resources to perform their duties effectively. These resources include lack of offices in the village, public relations skills and sometimes negotiations and communications skills. This problem has a tremendous impact on the community.

Availability of information is one of the main factors separating the Greater Tzaneen Municipality and local traditional leadership in the communities. Unlike the new local government structures, traditional leaders have succeeded throughout the years in establishing solid and effective information pathways in the villages (House of Traditional Leaders 2000, Oomen 2000, and Southall and De Sas Kropiwnicki 2001). In Dan villages and the surrounding hamlets, people know who to contact when they are looking for anything in the offices of the Tribal Authority.

The bureaucratic nature of local government structures also plays a very important role in discouraging people from seeking information from the municipality. Evidence show that people are often discouraged to go the municipality to seek information because of the mere fact that they do not know who is in charge of the information they seek. Even if they happen to visit the municipality in town as one of the respondents puts it "you will be referred from one office to another". If you

lucky to find the person supposed to help you, the chances are you will not be attended to, because you did not make an appointment". But in the case of local traditional leadership, one does not necessarily needs appointment to see the chief because there are no fixed dates for consultation and his *tindhuna*.

Tindhuna plays a very important part in the distribution of information in the villages. A village *ndhuna* is very is always available as he/she¹ resides within the village, and people are free to consult any day. In areas like Petanenge, where there are no active *tindhuna* people suffer more because there is no coordination in terms of information distribution. However information on traditional leadership is generally easy to access than the one on the municipality and local government.

Evidence show that very few people have information about the new dispensation. As already discussed in chapter 4, out of the almost 40% of the respondents indicated that they knew little or nothing at all about the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, even the majority of those who claimed to know something, it was not much. The problem of lack of information in the rural areas is not limited to these villages only, according other research reports, most rural communities in the Northern Province also suffer from this problem (Litholi 1999, Nemavhangu 1998 and Tainton 1997). Without enough information it is almost impossible for rural communities to partake in local development initiatives as initiated by development planners. As Reverend Hlungwani elaborated:

"We just see things happen, this village is no longer ours. Ten years ago, we used to chant 'power to the people' today it is 'power to the politicians'. The municipality owns the land; they [politicians] say the chief is outdated and irrelevant. They say we need toilets and waste management facilities. They claim to know us [the community], but they do not know or

understand our needs. Yes I will pay for medicine, I will pay for clean water, I pay for school fees and good sanitation, but we must be consulted. The municipality simply does not consult with us. This is their development, not ours".

In support of the reverend's comment, this research shows that very few people know about the functions of the municipalities, apart from receiving threatening letters about the payment of services, while others are simply misinformed about the role and function of the municipality in the rural areas. An interview with *kokwana* Mojela (64 years old) highlights this point:

"I have heard that a certain individual had declared himself a chief in Tzaneen, after the death of Ntsanwisi. I only know and follow two chiefs, [Nelson] Mandela and Samuel Muhlava. Apart from these two all are phonies".

Although 58% of the people in the survey claim to know something about the municipality, their knowledge is hardly substantial. Their knowledge of the municipality hardly goes beyond the fact that their village is under the administration and authority of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. People, especially the elderly, are not fully informed about the changes that are taking place around their villages. Thus they cannot effectively participate in development projects as they lack information about their purpose and objectives.

5.3.2. Ineffective Ward Committees

As it is required in the Municipality Systems Act 2000, the Greater Tzaneen Municipality established ward committees in its area of jurisdiction. The main

¹ Almost all *tindhuna* are male in these areas, there are few active female *tindhuna*, for example at

reason behind the establishment of these ward committees is to encourage community participation in the villages. However, from the community's point of view, it is not clear what the duties of these ward committees are. In these three villages these ward committees replaced local civic committees. However, unlike civic committees, which are popular in these communities, ward committees are not known by many. There are several reasons for this invisibility.

The first and most important reason is that unlike in civic committees where members of the community took part in the voting of committee members, ward committee members are selected or handpicked by the ward councilor. Hence this creates a problem when it comes to the legitimacy of the ward committee as handpicked by the councilor. Most people who claimed to know the committee members complained that the committees dominated by, in the words of *tatana* Rikhotso: "ANC diehards and young people who do not have any sense of responsibility in the community".

Research evidence also shows that since the formation of these ward committees in March 2001, apart from not being formally introduced to the community in a mass meeting, they have never met to discuss anything. According to *manana* Shikwambana, a member of a ward committee, argues:

"Since the committee came into being in March 2001, we have never met to discuss any issues. The only time I see the councilor is when he is driving past my house on the street in his new flashy car. When I asked him when we are supposed to meet, he tells me that there is nothing to discuss yet, as everything is still under control".

According to *manana* shikwambana, what is preventing these committees from functioning is lack of resources and incentives. She argues that "ward councilors

Mokgoloboto village (also locally known as Matsila-Pata).

are undermined because of the fact that they are not based in the community". According to her, for ward councilors to be effective they must operate within the communities they represent, meaning that their offices must also be in the villages rather than 25 kilometers away in Tzaneen.

Thus ward committees and councilors as the chairpersons of these committees must be housed in the community they serve in order to be successful. One of the local traditional healers, *tatana* Mativa-Ndlela, passionately indicated that "the chief is successful in his leadership duties because he continues to operate and stay in these villages". For him it does not mean that the chief might not have a desire to stay at the suburbs in Tzaneen, but he is remaining in the village because he understands his duty and obligations to the community he serves. Taking into consideration these arguments one can understand the animosity that most of the people have about being government from Tzaneen. This animosity affects the councillor and ward committees.

5.3.3. The Way The Wards Had Been Divided

The problems of ineffective ward committees in the rural areas are directly linked to the problem around the organisation and division of wards in Tzaneen (Figure 5.1). The way which wards had been partitioned in these areas is confusing to the people and creates a lot of problems. At the present moment, wards had been demarcated in such a way that they cut across or incorporate parts of different villages and townships. As a result ward committees consists of people from different communities and people who have different needs, challenges, priorities and problems. For example if one looks at the demarcation of ward 18 (figure 5.1), one will see that it comprises of part of Dan village and Nkowankowa township, while the remaining parts of these communities fall under different wards.

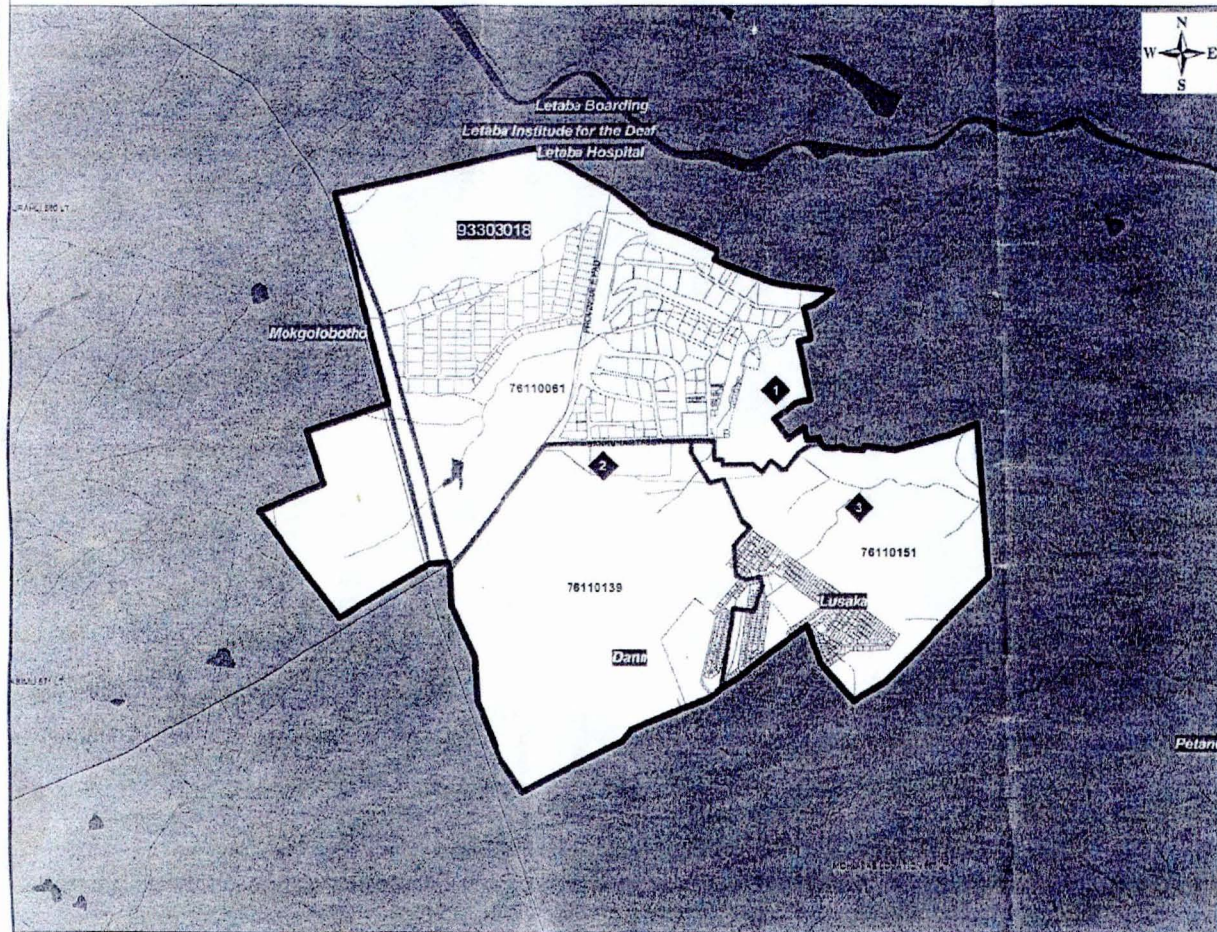
This arrangement has very vile disadvantages when it comes to community and individual participation in development and local political processes. Firstly, from the community's point of view, the current division of wards is de-communalising, meaning that it is aimed at destroying all elements of community and social integration. Hence, other interviewees labeled and likened the current division of wards to the apartheid policy of 'divide and rule'. A post-graduate university student, Eric Makhuvele further illustrates this point:

"One can judge from the way the wards had been divided that this present government does not see us as a community but as individuals. Development can only succeed if the community is counted as one rather than divided. 'United we stand, divided we fall' that is what the ANC used to preach not so long ago, but they do not practice what they preached. Dan village is a community made up of individuals, different attitudes and different families and yet a community of individuals and families living in complete *agreement* with each other. These divisions kill this cultural and moral consensus".

For Eric, the current division of wards is a step backwards as it compartmentalises people in smaller packages rather than a complete whole. The difficult point is that family and individuals see themselves as part of a community rather than a ward. Thus the current division of wards is seen by many in the rural communities as anti-communal and pro-individual.



WARD MAP FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2000 - 93303018



Municipal Boundary
 Ward Boundary
 Voting District Boundary

BEREA Suburb / Locality Name
JM123 Ward Number
32850312 Voting District Number

River / Dam
 Voting Station Locations

0 0.5 1
 kilometres
 This map has been produced and certified by the Independent Electoral

WARD INFORMATION

Geographic Area of Ward 11.0 km²
 No. of Wards in the Municipality 33

KEY **VD No.** **VOTING STATION NAME**
 1 76110061 NKOWANKOWA PRIMARY SCHOOL
 2 76110139 TIVUMBENI COLLEGE
 3 76110151 BANANA PRIMARY SCHOOL

1996 CENSUS STATISTICS

Total Population 12075
 Males 45.6%
 Females 54.4%

Most Predominant First Languages
 Xitsonga 80.0%
 Sepedi 14.9%
 Sesotho 3.4%
 Tshivenda 0.7%
 Other 1.0%

Labour Force
 Employed 54.2%
 Unemployed (Looking for Work) 11.8%
 Not Working 34.0%

Household Monthly Family Income
 Less than R2,500 71.8%
 R2,501 to R10,000 23.9%
 More than R10,000 4.3%

31 MARCH 2000 REGISTRATION STATISTICS

No. of Voters 4925
 Males 39.7%
 Females 60.3%

Age Groups
 18-29 years 30.7%
 30-49 years 45.1%
 50-69 years 17.4%
 Other 6.8%

% Registration 65.0%

Voter Turnout 85.4%
 (Elections 99)

RESULTS OF THE 1999 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

ANC	91.29%	DP	0.92%	AE3	0.19%
UDM	2.67%	XP	0.90%	VFFF	0.09%
NNP	1.63%	PAC	0.47%	DPF	0.07%
ACDP	1.49%	IFP	0.21%	OTHERS	0.07%

**Northern Province
 Municipality NP333**

(Tzaneen)

WARD No. 93303018

Figure 5.1: Ward 18

Secondly, the present division of wards creates untold miseries in local government initiated community meetings. Very few people know which ward they belong to and the boundaries of these wards. This has resulted in turnout apathy in ward meetings, where people simply stay away from such meetings². In contrast, meetings called upon by traditional leaders are very successful in terms of attendance. While a distinction exists between traditional leaders and the government, people prefer to be addressed as a community.

5.4 Community Participation and Development Planning: A Brief Investigation of the Greater Tzaneen IDP Process

The Greater Tzaneen municipality plays a fundamental role in the process of achieving economic and social development of its rural areas. As stated in the White Paper on Municipalities (2000), the municipal is responsible for formulating development goals and implementation strategies. Apart from coming up with strategies, the municipality also has the power to control and co-ordinate administrative functions and to mobilise various resources. The white paper (Municipal Systems Act, 2000. No. 32) introduced a wide range of ideas such as values in administration, community participation, social equity, administrative innovation, interpersonal relations, and client focus. The effect of the white paper is already evident in the growth of health and public educational programs as well as in the growth of research and consulting activities in the areas of public policy formulation, implementation and evaluation in the country in general. However the element of community participation in areas pertaining to development is still lacking, especially in rural areas.

² In a meeting of Ward 14 on the 15th of December 2001, there were only 41 people who attended out of approximately 15000 ward members.

The Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, as it is laid down in methodology guideline (IDP Guide III: Methodology 2001), is a five year plan developmental programme which must be drafted and carried out with consultation with the target community. According to the White Paper an integrated development plan, once adopted by the municipality council, is the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development, together with all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the municipality. Thus, the IDP document is a very fundamental document, which binds both the municipality and the communities with regard to the planning and execution of development projects.

According to the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, "consultations with community-based stakeholders have been held from August 2001, where issues and problems affecting communities were identified and the needs prioritised". These issues ranged from lack of basic necessities like water, roads, proper housing, escalating crime and unemployment. In a pamphlet distributed on the 14th of December in Dan Village (figure 5.3), it was confirmed that the IDP Representative Forum confirmed the key development priorities affecting the communities.

Phases of the IDP Process

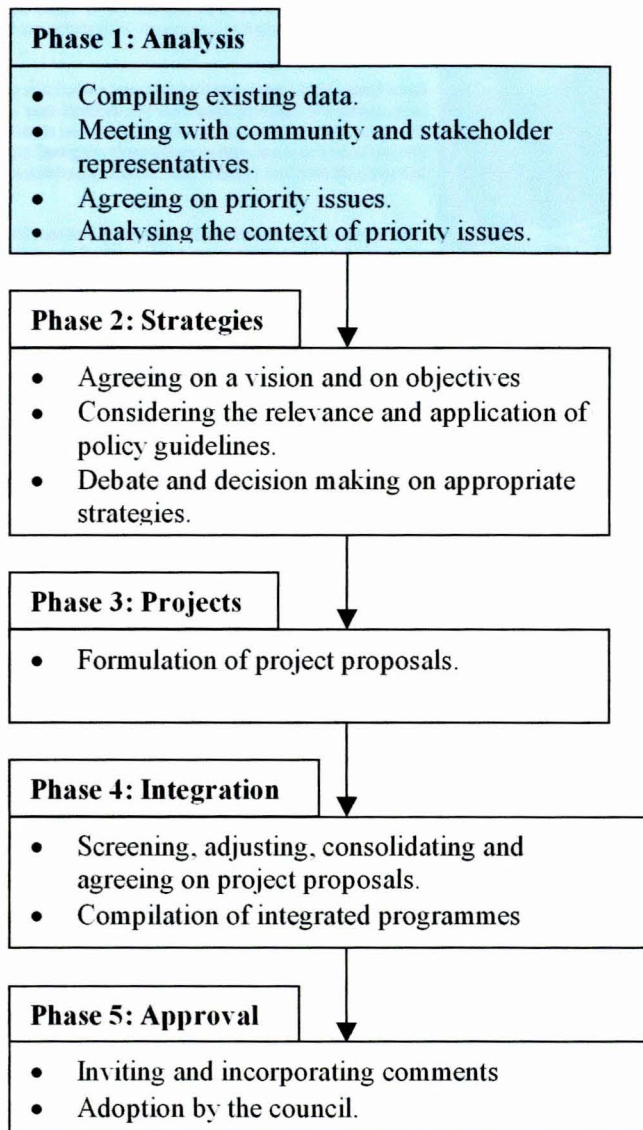


Figure 5.2: A simplified schematic representation of the five sequenced phases of the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process.

UPDATE ON THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY'S IDP PROCESS

The Greater Tzaneen Municipality has started with the Integrated Development Planning process for its area of jurisdiction. This process will enable all the role players in the municipality - municipal governing bodies as well as residents and stakeholders - to prepare a strategic development plan for a five-year period.

Consultations with community-based stakeholders have been held from August 2001, where issues and problems affecting communities were identified and their needs prioritized. The issues raised range from lack of basic services (water in particular) to roads, housing, crime and unemployment. The analysis phase has been completed. During this phase it became important to understand not only the symptoms, but also the causes of problems in order to make informed decisions on appropriate solutions.

The IDP Representative Forum has confirmed the key development priorities affecting the people of the Greater Tzaneen area and the causes thereof. The Forum has been established as a platform for the participation of various stakeholders and interest groups in the IDP process. The selection of members of this forum was based on criteria that ensure geographical and sectoral representation.

A need-analysis report has been compiled and this will serve as a basis for discussion during the strategies phase of the IDP process which will be starting soon. Strategies constitute the map to assist the municipality to progress from where it is to where it wants to be. During the strategies phase, there will be a broad inter-sectoral debate on the most appropriate ways and means of tackling priority issues.

Due to the fact that the municipality does not have sufficient resources to address all the issues identified by different sectors of the community at once, it is important to determine the key development priorities. Prioritisation will assist the municipality to allocate scarce resources to those issues highlighted as more important and / or urgent. At the end of the strategies phase, the municipality must adopt a vision for the Greater Tzaneen area, set out objectives for each priority issue, develop strategic choices for each issue, identify projects that will solve the problems identified and develop a tentative financial framework for projects.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED VISION FOR THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

The Greater Tzaneen Council invites all residents and stakeholders to comment on the proposed Vision for the municipality as adopted by the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Representative Forum during its meeting on 25 October 2001 at Tlumbeni College of Education.

The draft Vision reads as follows:

*To be a Municipality that is economically prosperous, which ensures quality of life and harmony for all its current and future residents**

This Vision reflects the desired future state of the municipality. It states the municipality's dream - what the municipality area seeks to achieve in the medium to long term. The final Vision will provide direction for the municipality's objectives, strategies and implementation of the IDP.

For more information and submission of comments, contact the Community Relations Facilitator, Mr N.S. Mashamba at:

Greater Tzaneen Municipal Building
1st Floor Office no. 251 Agatha Street
P.O. Box 24
TZANEEN 0850

Tel: (015) 307-8019
Cel : 082-780-5994
Fax : (015) 307-8049

Due date for submission of comments is 22 November 2001



GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

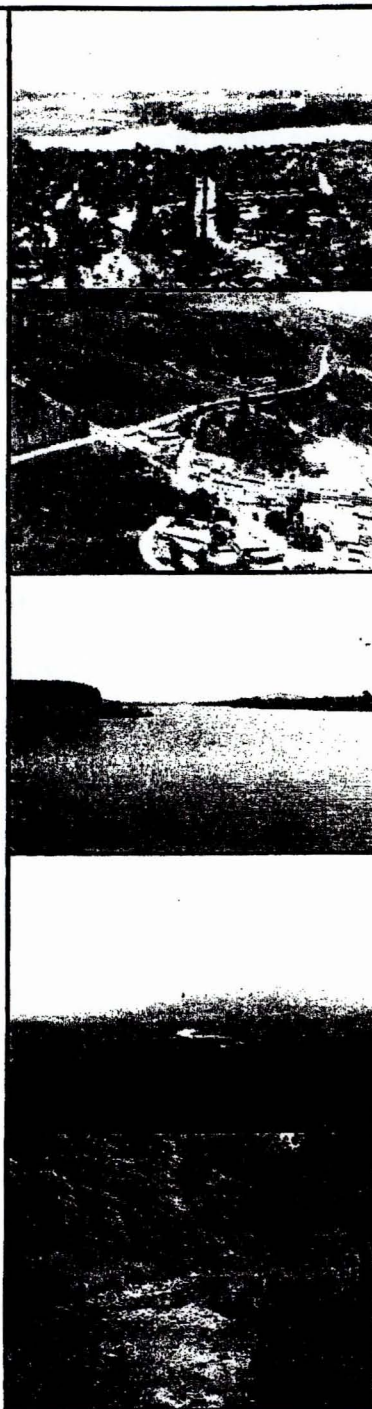


Figure 5.3. One of the circulated pamphlets

However, this research indicates that community consultation did not take place prior and during the planning stages of the Greater Tzaneen IDP process. Phase 1 of IDP process was completed only with consultation with local ward councilors and 'community stakeholders', which were nominated and handpicked by the councilors. Furthermore, throughout the five months of 'consultation', ward councilors failed to inform their constituencies about the IDP process. Hence, most community members knew little about the IDP.

This lack of information in the community was demonstrated in the way people reacted towards the circulated pamphlet (figure 5.2). It was observed that most people reacted towards the pamphlet with fear and disappointment to what was written on the pamphlet. For example after going through the pamphlet, one of the local youth exclaimed: "Oh shit! The *masipala* is about to come up with some moneymaking development hoax (*nhluvuko wa vukungundzwana*)". Hence, in many cases people refused to accept the pamphlet, fearing that it might be another contract from the municipality. Those who could not read were the ones likely to refuse accepting the pamphlet.

Most people also picked up on the fact that the pamphlet was long overdue by several months, as the closing date of suggestions from community members was the 28th of November 2001, sixteen days before. Thus it was interpreted by many that the municipality deliberately circulated those pamphlets after the due dates for comments in order to prevent them from participating in the planning process of the IDP process. As people were given these pamphlets in the streets and at their homes they could not ask anything about what was written in the pamphlet. The people circulating the pamphlets were volunteers who knew nothing about what they were circulating, apart from that the pamphlets were from the municipality given to them by the councilors. As one of the volunteers circulating the pamphlets indicated:

"I don't know exactly what these papers are about. I know that they come from the municipality. I was not there when those things were discussed. If you have any queries about what is written on the pamphlet contact the councilor or the municipality in Tzaneen".

This further demonstrates that people in the rural communities of Tzaneen know little about the municipality, let alone the IDP process. As evidence suggests, there had been little consultation and exchange of information between the hamlets and the municipality.

The problems of ward councilors in communicating with their communities were brought to light after I attended several meetings in Dan, Petanenge and Khujwana in the year 2001. In these three villages there is high level of apathy when it comes to attending meetings convened by local ward councilors. This case study illustrates my point:

On Saturday the 17th of August 2001, I attended a funeral service at *Malakiya* cemetery, just outside Dan village. As it always the tradition, the ward councilor was given a platform to say vote of thanks. At the conclusion of his address, the councilor announced that there was to be a community meeting at Mavumba Combined Primary school, the following day (18/08/2001). As for the agenda and the purpose of the gathering, the councilor told the crowd attending the funeral that the meeting was about "discussing community issues". There were approximately 120 people attending the funeral.

On Sunday (the 18th), the following day, I attended the meeting. The meeting was supposed to have started at 9h00 in the morning, but only commenced at 10H21, because few people were present. When we finally

commenced, there were 37 people (29 men and 8 women), present in the meeting excluding the councilor and 3 members of his ward committee. The councilor explained to the gathering that he was sent by the Greater Tzaneen Municipal "to ask the community what their problems were and solutions to these problems". Rather than discussing the issue at hand, time was spent on debating whether the meetings was supposed to go on or be postponed, because people generally did not know anything about the meeting, as they were not notified appropriately and in time. The debate was cut short by the councilor refusal to postpone the meeting, arguing that "many people attended the funeral and that a small meeting make the job easy as we avoid useless debates". Although the meeting was about development in the community, the IDP process was not mentioned by the councilor".

The failure of ward councilors to mobilise and inform their community has a detrimental impact on how these rural will receive the IDP process and its consequences. As indicated in the introductory chapter of this research report, with an estimated population of more than 17 000 people, Dan village is the biggest village, in terms of population, of all the villages under the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The 37 people who attended the meeting constitute a diminutive 0.1% of the approximated population; hence it is not wise to consider their opinion as representing that of the whole community.

The apathy in meeting attendance by members of community is a problem, which is shared by all three villages in this research project. It is a problem, which not only affects the communities in question, but also development projects and strategies which the municipality seeks to implement in the rural communities. Since people do not attend government meetings, they loose out on valuable information, and hence the community is not informed. As the case study demonstrated, the absence of people in government meetings is also affected by

the way information is circulated in the community. The biggest problem in these villages is that there exist no clear channels for relaying information. The municipality does not have fixed ways in which it circulates information in the community, ways that the community is aware of.

It is not enough for the IDP report to acknowledge the problem of communication in the rural areas. The municipality must come up with ways of circulating information in the rural areas, rather than relying on word-of-mouth from ward councilors. As for the IDP process to succeed, it depends entirely upon free flow of information between the target communities and the municipality, and more on the participation of these communities. Thus, the mere fact that most members of the rural communities were not adequately notified and consulted, IDP plans and projects will continue to be considered as alien, made by distant government officials who have little idea of what the conditions, capabilities or needs are in the rural area. Imposing such plans on the communities, rather than allowing them to participate in the decision making process, the IDP process will be a failure. Development in the rural areas can only be sustainable if there is a communicative, consultative and healthy relationship between the 'grassroots' and the 'top' (Chambers 1993).

The IDP report and the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in general fail to understand the real cause of poverty in the rural communities. By presenting all communities as being on the same linear path, as indicated earlier in this report, the municipality neglects historical and political factors which had made the playing field very far from level. Regardless of the repetitive use of the buzzwords like "community-based stakeholders" and "community consultation", the IDP final report already appears like a top-down approach to development approach. The report does not take into consideration that development does not progress in a linear fashion, "but people negotiate these changes and indeed initiate their own"

changes (Gardner and Lewis 1996, Escobar 199). Thus the planning IDP process in Tzaneen not only highlights some of the complexities regarding community participation, but also the failure of the municipality to come up with methods that will insure that people are informed and able to participate effectively.

5.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Local government is central to the ANC's vision of participative democracy in South Africa. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000, for instance, defined community participation in local governance and service delivery as central to every development process. The Act requires municipalities to involve communities, for instance via ward committees, in determining their own needs, participating in planning and monitoring performance (Development-SA 2002). However, as demonstrated in this chapter, considerable difficulties must still be overcome. Community participation as a product is affected by many factors; in this case the attitude and information people have about the municipality and the desire to protect what they have.

South Africa is not the only country trying to enhance participatory governance. In a number of countries, notably the Philippines, India and Bolivia, new legislation offers possibilities for new processes of participatory planning to influence the priorities of local governments. Perhaps the most extensive model for this is found in the Peoples Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala, which has mobilised thousands of people. The project is using participatory planning in a large number of municipalities across the country. In many instances, participatory planning methodologies are being used and local governments are requesting input by NGO's and others who have such skills (IDS 2002).

However in the case of South Africa, as argued by Van Niekerk (2000), local government operates in closed and undemocratic decision-making systems. There are few, if any, forums for consultation with poor communities. When they existed, systems for consultation favoured ratepayer associations and other groups that represented the rich, in the case of Tzaneen, those in suburbs in town. The system identified in the Municipal Systems Bill for public participation does not seem, on the face of it, adequate for developing democracy in the rural areas. Although provision is made for ward committees, the council makes the rules about how members of the ward committees will be appointed, how frequently the ward committees will meet and so on. The communities have no say in the selection of committee members. Furthermore, just like traditional leaders, the ward committees are simply seen as advisory bodies, which can make recommendations, but with no decision-making powers or veto powers.

As indicated in the last chapters, the municipality was in the past unable to entice the community to participate in development projects. One of the main reasons for this failure was lack of consultation with both the chief and the community. By looking at the Greater Tzaneen IDP Final Report, one realises the role of traditional leaders continue to neither be specified nor be identified as stakeholders in the development plan. In a way this also impact on the will of community members to participate on development projects. While on the other hand IDP report does not indicate which community stakeholders were consulted about the process, as ward councilors were given the responsibility to choose these "community-based stakeholders", and in most cases the councilors chose people who the community know little about or disprove. The report was supposed to have indicated the names of the stakeholders consulted.

This chapter also demonstrated that while prevailing local social conditions, local cultures and local community participation are essential to the success and

sustainability of development initiatives, the way people perceive the municipality to represent have tremendous bearings on their successes. Hence, this chapter emphasised that the biggest challenge on the implementation of development projects in Tzaneen and South Africa in general is the inclusion and analyses of social factors and variables that cannot be quantified in economic or commercial terms, but which become the essential condition for its success.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

"Rural development is about the transformation of the poor of the poorest". **Mr. Mokgoloboto**
(A government official in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality).

"Factories are disappearing and my people are jobless. This ANC government and its [Greater Letaba] Municipality are depriving and denying my people true development, which is, the right to work, be and do what they want. We are now all beggars!" **Ndhuna Jacques Mavunge**
(September 2002).

In the apartheid era, rural development always took place within a historical context characterised by socio/economic and political inequalities based on racial segregation. The apartheid policy on which the socio/economic system was based advocated separate territorial and economic development of the black and white people. This process saw the systematic dispossession of Black people and restricted them to the less fertile patches of land consolidated into homelands. The passing of the 1913 Native Land Act and the 1936 Native Trust Act concentrated vast amounts of land in the hands of minority white landowners and created a mass of pauperised landless black people. Following these Acts massive resettlement of black people was carried out through forced removals where 71% of the population, consisting of black people, was given less land while a larger percentage of fertile land remained with the minority white people. In short, for

the apartheid government rural development meant a strict containment and control of every aspect life of the rural black people.

For the government of today, what is rural *development*? For the municipality, development is a straightjacket, a rigid and inflexible process. It is a process solely about the elimination of poverty. Thus, for the present government and its municipalities rural development is about pauperism and beggary. It is about helpless people who are in need. Hence the aim of the greater Tzaneen Municipality is to satisfy these needs. Development as understood by the municipality is entirely based on the idea that needs must be satisfied at all costs. From the municipality stand point, the more developed ones are those who have satisfied their needs, mostly through consumption. Development is about building roads, installing proper sanitation, construction of recreation and educational facilities, etc. Thus for the municipality development is about the provisioning of the material needs of the communities.

The problem is development planning as understood and carried out by the municipality, is founded upon a tendency by its development planners to analyse the rural population from the standpoint of their own descriptive categories. This creates an illusion among municipality planners that they could see the reality of the rural people, in all its objectivity. As argued by Ndione (1996), planners claim to base their positions on the so-called 'logic of things', where as it was only their vision, given their culture and constraints. Furthermore these constraints are dished out as they are to the rural communities, without or with very little consultation. The municipality's approach to rural development will only make people in the hamlets poorer.

From the community's point, what is meant by rural development? For most of the people in the three hamlets, development means the transformation of a person

through self-education. Development is helping people to define their wants and letting them evolve the means of their satisfaction. Thus rural development is about not about fighting poverty, but fighting against deprivation and insufficiency. For example, while the government might consider free RDP houses as development, people consider building their own houses from their own earnings as a more developmental gesture.

For the people in the hamlets, rural development strategies must be adapted to the initial conditions in each community. A fundamental requirement for effective participation in rural development projects is adequate, training, and technical assistance. Community members must be given an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills, and also to manage their own affairs and take part in decision making. Hence, for many, development means earning a living, being able to build your own house, being able to acquire education, above all development is about being dependent.

Municipalities must realise that there is a great need for a home perspective in development planning, rather than always being handed from above. Surprisingly, the present government had been preaching what it calls 'people-driven or *Batho Pele*'¹ development approach for several years now. According to Ritchken (1995) people-driven development has its origin in the concern that the people who are the beneficiaries of development projects must be consulted and be allowed access to decision making structures regarding the project. People-driven development thus aims to build capacity in the process of implementing development rather than just delivering a product. Both the municipality and the communities determine what project to implement that is congruent with their capacity. As in most cases, the poor people in the villages lack the capacity to drive or control the

¹ "People first". The term 'batho' (plural), is a Sotho word for people.

delivery of a development resource; this approach helps them in developing their capacity (September 1994).

This idea of people-driven development is parallel to what Fair (1998) and the World Bank call Community Driven Development (CDD). The aim of both people-driven and community driven development approaches is to give target communities authority and control over decisions and resources. Specifically, this includes direct responsibility to manage internal resources and external matching grants, and responsibility for resource allocation decisions. According to the Nutall (1997), they define a process by which community groups organize and take action to achieve their common goals, in the context of an enabling policy environment and with support from responsive institutions (i.e. private suppliers, local government, and national agencies). A lead indicator of the CDD and people-driven approach is the extent to which communities manage internal and external funds themselves (Khan 1998).

The basic idea is that people-driven development needs to be based on priorities defined by the people themselves and expressed through community contributions. Community groups and actions need to be based on internal resource mobilization and self-help. In support of a demand-based approach, external agencies need to 1) develop clear rules of engagement (including procedures for inclusive decision-making and community contributions) with the communities they are assisting, and 2) help community groups to make informed choices among options, comparing costs and benefits, supporting local priorities and initiative and local capacity building (Oakley 1991). As mentioned earlier, the organizational capacity of local community groups is critical for successful people-driven development. Local organizational capacity is the ability to organize, network with others inside and outside the community to mobilize and leverage resources to achieve shared goals, and to resolve conflicts.

If people in these three villages are to partake in development planning and implementation, the chief, as part of the fabric of the society, cannot be ignored. The biggest problem is that the government's definition of '*batho*' refers only to the physical appearance human beings. This interpretation excludes, in its definition, the real nature of '*batho*', who they really are. It excludes their identity, beliefs, culture, history, etc. The incorporation of '*batho*', as a whole, in development planning and implementation is very important not regarding development projects, but also in enhancing governance and communication between the municipality and the rural community (and its traditional leaders).

Executive Conclusion

In the first chapter, I provided a historical, theoretical and methodological background to this research report. The chapter highlighted the influence which the Gazankulu homeland and the apartheid government policy of segregation had on the way people in these three hamlets come to understand development and the municipalisation process. The Gazankulu government glorified rural areas (*matiko-xikaya*) as ideal places for living freely. I argued that the glorification of the rural areas had a very important impact on the way people understand their dwelling space.

The second chapter presented the social, economic and physical characteristics of these villages. I argued that the *problemitisation* of poverty by the municipality reduces the people in these hamlets into objects rather than human beings with history, traditions and priorities. Further more, I revealed that development the municipality defines poverty in terms of, among others, a lack of proper roads and sanitation. This top-down approach to development only deals with the symptoms

of poverty rather than the cause. In the third chapter, I argued that poor people attach value and meaning to their living space. I also demonstrated how they defend and justify living in such poor areas. I also highlighted how the way people in the hamlets understand and also categorise their living have very important impact on the success and failure of development projects in their area.

The fourth chapter presented and discussed the municipalisation of the three hamlets and the Greater Tzaneen Municipality introduced itself to these communities. I revealed that prior and after the municipalisation process there was little interaction and exchange of information between the rural communities and the municipality. Hence, I argued that the municipality lacked adequate information about the new incorporated rural communities, and thus failed to implement a cohesive rural development plan, which was in harmony with these communities. I also demonstrated how the top-down development strategies and projects undertaken by the municipality undermines the very people they were aimed to develop.

In the fifth chapter I argued that development projects that are imposed on the community frequently lack their participation, as people often resist them, as it was the case in the three hamlets. The fundamental argument was that community participation in the rural areas of Tzaneen seldom takes place because the municipality imposes development projects on the communities. I also highlighted some of the problems and hindrances of local community participation in development issues in the rural communities.

The conclusion, chapter six, contrasted the way the municipality and people in the three hamlets understand development. It also suggested ways in which the two entities can reconcile their differences and work together towards the better good

of the society. And finally, the chapter gave a summery of the major points of the argument.

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