

**URBAN LIVELIHOODS AND INTRA-HOUSEHOLD
DYNAMICS: THE CASE OF MPUMALANGA AND
ENHLALAKAHLE TOWNSHIPS, KWAZULU-NATAL,
SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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Abstract

The focus of the research is on the responses of urban individuals in households and communities to socio-economic crisis in post-apartheid South Africa. In both Enhlalakahle and Mpumalanga Townships, there is a process of diversification of social, political and economic livelihood activities by women and men, young and old. The livelihoods literature together with literature on work and inter-household relations are merged to achieve a holistic understanding of urban livelihoods in South Africa. The study adopts a relational approach to capture the unequal power dynamics shaped by both gender and age, in the process of acquiring and securing livelihoods. The central argument of the study is that women and men, depending on their age, tend to adopt different livelihood activities in responding to their socio-economic crisis in post-apartheid South Africa. Specifically, the study shows that for individuals, households become central sites of production and survival, but only if supported by the state through social grants. At a community level, there are embryonic forms of “counter-movement”, led by an alliance of popular movements in civil society such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), Concerned Citizens Groups and anti-privatisation groups. The thesis explores diverse micro-level livelihood responses of urban households and communities shaped by a specific structural and historical macro-level context.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____ day of _____, 2005.

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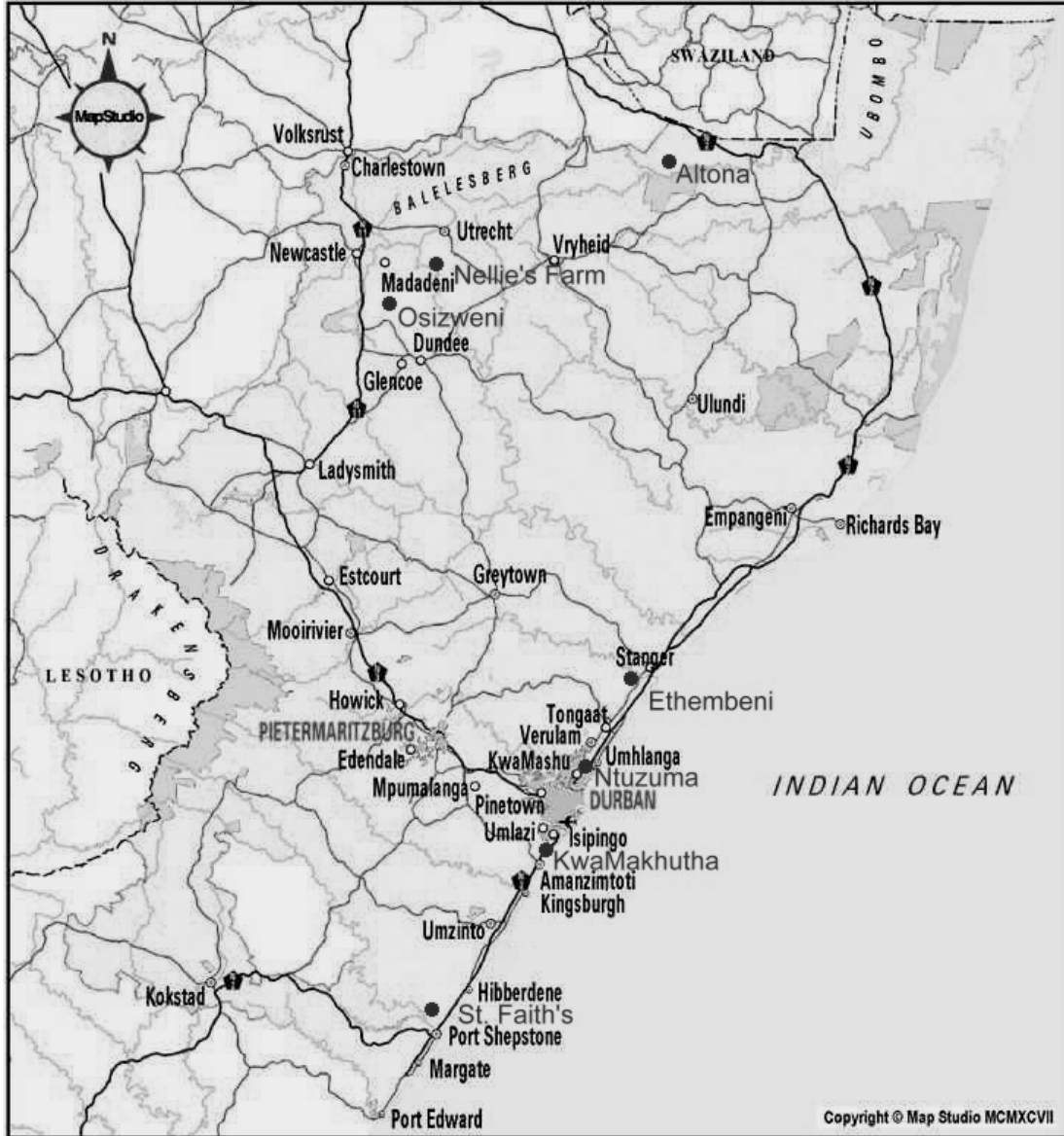
List of Abbreviations

ABE	Affirmative business Enterprise
AID	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
APF	Anti-Privatisation Forum
ASSA	Actuarial Society of South Africa
BBC	Black Business Council
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
BIG	Basic Income Grants
BSA	Business South Africa
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCG	Concerned Citizens Group
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
COFESA	Confederation of Employers of Southern Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DfID	Department for International Development [UK]
DSF	Durban Social Forum
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FEDUSA	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution [strategy]
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HAYCO	Hammarsdale Youth Congress
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LPM	Landless People's Movement,
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MCCG	Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-profit Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OHS	October Household Survey.
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
PGIEP	Policy Guidelines for Integrating Environmental Planning into Land Reform
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTWU	Southern African Clothing and Textiles Workers Union
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SANGOCO	South African Non-governmental Organisation Coalition
SAP	South African Police
SECC	Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SNA	System of National Accounts
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TB	Tuberculosis
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

VAT Value Added Tax
WTO World Trade Organisation

MAP of KwaZulu-Natal showing Greytown and Mpumalanga Township (2004)



Preface

In the course of my fieldwork for my masters research report, I identified the growing informalisation of footwear production in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, formerly the centre of South Africa's footwear industry. I had begun my research examining the response of the industry to global competition, but soon realised that the really interesting sociological question was how the growing number of retrenched women workers, households and communities were surviving without regular formal employment.

I undertook interviews with the women working in the footwear sector in Pietermaritzburg and visited them in their homes in Enhlalakahle Township in Greytown. In subsequent research, a similar pattern of retrenchment among women textile workers in Mpumalanga Township in Hammarsdale is identified. Both communities were struggling with the crisis of unemployment and poverty. They were also responding to the crisis through various intra- and inter-household and community livelihood activities. The central aim of this research became, therefore, to examine these changing livelihood activities of individuals, households and communities in Mpumalanga Township in Hammarsdale, eThekweni municipality, and Enhlalakahle Township in Greytown, Umvoti municipality, both in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The study explores the impact of macro-economic changes and micro-level responses of households, different household members, and the two communities in KwaZulu-Natal. This follows from Colin Murray's (1999:3) argument that "multiple livelihoods cannot be comprehended at the macro-level and must be investigated empirically at the micro-level." The study examines the social resources on which people rely and whether these are confined to urban areas or extend to rural areas, whether they are confined to the family or extend to wider social networks, and whether they are confined to areas of current livelihood

activities and neighbourhoods.

While many studies of household and community livelihoods exist, these have primarily focused on rural areas, and those with an urban focus often missed or ignored the urban-rural linkages. This is central given the history of long-term migration and strong links between town and country in KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of this research was to overcome this gap and conduct empirical research on the urban poor by looking at urban households, without losing sight of rural-urban linkages.

The study considers gender and age as two key variables as both point to differences among household members in relation to life-cycle stages and inter-generational relationships. The two translate into differences in the ability to cope with economic difficulties within and outside of households (Pearson, 1997). Gender and age are most importantly shaped and influenced by social relations within and between households. They determine how urban household livelihood activities are examined and understood. Hence, the research offers a gendered and intergenerational analysis of urban household livelihood activities and intra-household dynamics. It assumes that women and men, depending on their age, tend to adopt different livelihood activities that bring with them specific rewards.

Therefore, the question that this research explores is not just how resources are allocated, shared and exchanged among household members, but how gendered rights and obligations are constructed, maintained and made to appear “natural”. What are the conditions and modalities through which particular groups of women interrogate and overtly challenge prevailing gender ideologies and arrangements (Hart, 1997:19)? Furthermore, does women’s access to income-earning opportunities have any implications for gender relations within the household? Is economic dependency a major factor in structuring bargaining inequalities between women and men (Kabeer, 1997)? The thesis explores the ways in which lack of income by men and income access by women leads to serious tensions in households, not only between men and women but also between young women

and elders.

The thesis explores the following assumptions. First, it is assumed that the household will become central and the first means of survival for many poor and unemployed people. Does this result in, as Burawoy, Krotov & Lytkina, (2000) argue of Russia, more reliance on women given their traditional role as caregivers and therefore an elevation of their status in the household and community? Also, because of the changing nature of the labour market (with a shift towards the informal economy), there will be more benefits for women than men. Will the elevation of women challenge gender roles and masculine identities? What becomes the status of men, given their challenged roles as “breadwinners” and therefore heads of households since they are now unemployed? Does this mean a role reversal in the household and an “end of patriarchy” as Castells (1997) suggests?

Second, there is likely to be a range of similar livelihood activities pursued in both communities. These include an increased reliance on community organisations (formal and informal) such as faith-based organisations, burial and saving societies, as well as non-party-political groups such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and anti-privatisation groups. Could these organisations provide the basis for a backlash against liberalisation, as Karl Polanyi (2001) argues in his notion of a “counter movement” led by an alliance of popular movements in civil society?

Thirdly, my impression is that there is less dependence on political parties, since they are often blamed for some of the problems experienced by the community and given the bitter history of political violence in the province. The reconfiguration of the relationship between political organisations and individuals and communities signals a new trajectory in the two communities. Trade unions are also likely to be less significant because of their traditional role of only organising in the formal economy. This representational gap will largely be filled by the emerging community organisations.

Fourth, given the increase in unpaid work, wage employment continues to be the most important but unstable source of income for the majority of the households. However, there will be growing expectation that the state provides for the poor. Lastly, the contradictory role of the state as both an agent of redistribution and cost recovery has altered state-citizen relations in both communities. At most, it is characterised by conflict and mistrust. State social welfare and labour policies have been limited in cushioning the impact of liberalisation and consequent unemployment and poverty.

Thus, this study is about how individuals, households and communities in post-apartheid South Africa are responding to the crisis of unemployment and poverty. It has two parts, each focusing on different aspects of urban livelihoods in the two research sites of Mpumalanga and Enhlalakahle Townships. Part One introduces the research project and its context. Chapter 1 examines the various literatures on household, work and livelihood frameworks. The chapter engages with the livelihoods approach and identifies various shortcomings in its understanding of how poor people survive. In Chapter 2, South Africa's social security framework is explored, covering social, labour and economic policies. State and civil society relations within South Africa are also discussed. Chapter 3 analyses the various methodological issues, research design and techniques employed in investigating urban household livelihood activities pursued at the two research sites.

Part Two presents the empirical data, starting with the background of the two research sites in Chapter 4. The chapter concludes that the macro, historical and current context shapes the outcomes of livelihoods pursued in the two communities. The historical analysis of the country, province and communities seeks to demonstrate that government policies have varied over time and have influenced the creation and sustainability of livelihoods of the poor at the two research sites.

Chapter 5, 6, and 7 present an analysis of a series of interviews conducted in 2002, 2003, and 2004. They explore intra- and inter-household and community

livelihood activities. Chapter 5 provides descriptive and statistical information of the 29 identified households, including the economic and material conditions and livelihoods of the households. Chapter 6 is a critical discussion of the households, identifying unequal power relations and resource allocation based on gender and age. The chapter concludes that household livelihood activities are linked to community livelihood activities. Chapter 7 discusses community-level livelihood activities through an examination of various formal and informal community organisations. In Chapter 8, the dissertation concludes with a summary of the key findings of the study, its theoretical and practical implications, strengths and weaknesses of the study and suggestions for future research.