

Chapter 1

Introduction:

Exploring development in Maputaland

"I don't know when we will be rich... but it seems like these elephants are going to eat all our money"

- Kehla Mboza on the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative's (LSDI) relocation of three elephants from the Tembe Elephant Park to the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park. Two of these elephants later broke out and walked back to Tembe.

"My mother has been angry since my father returned two years ago. They fight every day. Sometimes I feel sorry for him but he doesn't want to work..."

- Dudu Zikhali in 2001 on the situation at home

This dissertation provides an anthropological study of the impact that the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI) had on people, social processes and power relationships in Maputaland. The aim of this dissertation is not to ask whether the government's R630 million investment in the LSDI was put to good or bad use, or to speculate about the ability of the LSDI's plan to "develop" Maputaland. Neither will I investigate the dependency relationships created by a project of this size. These questions are best left to students of policy and business administration.

Based on fifteen months of ethnographic research in the LSDI's target area, I argue that in the LSDI's marketing of Maputaland, they constructed an essentialist ethnic identity for its inhabitants. The ethnic branding of the area as Zulu was most visible in the craft industry. As such, the LSDI built a multitude of craft markets next to the newly constructed transport routes and 'developed' craft producers to make 'better' crafts. In the process, the LSDI gained greater control over the crafters and their means of self-representation. The development initiative also forced the craft industry to become

increasingly rationalised to cater to the supposed expectations of tourists. At the same time, the LSDI's insistence on recognisably 'ethnic' crafts extended production times and kept prices for such items to a minimum.

In Maputaland, Tribal Authorities¹ and other ambitious men used ethnicity as a resource to gain access to the various committees that consulted with developers. By laying claim to being the “true” representatives of the 'tribal' groups that the developers wanted to target, these men ensured their exclusive access to consultation jobs. Numerous men however were jobless and were likely to remain unemployed as emphasis was now placed on the service-orientated eco-tourism industry.

While powerful men served as ethnic representatives and helped plan development in the region, most projects were targeted at women. These development projects were largely informed by a stereotype of dependant white, middle-class housewives. However, black women in the region had, through the long absence of men, developed an informal gift economy that accorded them with considerable independence from men. As this dissertation will show, this economy was premised on female networks of patronage and reciprocity that allowed women to diversify and spread the risks of their economic activities. The subsistence-orientated and transient nature of most of these activities however did not allow wealthier women to maintain their positions of patronage for long. At the Ubumbano² craft market for instance, the acceptance of patronage roles ultimately impeded wealthier women's ability to expand their businesses further afield or to maintain success. On the other hand, poorer traders benefited from these female

¹ Although this term has fallen out of political fashion with the ruling ANC-government (they prefer the term Traditional Authority), people in my research area still used the terms Tribal Authority, Tribal Council and Tribal Courts. I will use the term “Tribal” instead of “Traditional” throughout the dissertation.

networks as they played an important role in securing access to labour and capital. While the craft industry provided large numbers of women with an economic safety net, it trapped women in a low-income activity.

The establishment and extension of nature conservation areas during the late nineteenth hundreds constituted an integral part of the colonial conquest of the Maputaland region. These game and hunting sanctuaries made the colonialists' presence in the area felt and forced local people onto ever-smaller pieces of land. Removals onto land with very marginal agricultural potential propelled men to become indentured labourers in the colony of Natal. When the apartheid government came to power in 1948, it continued to extend nature conservation areas. As part of its economic development plans for the KwaZulu homeland, the South African government also introduced extensive forestry projects in the region. With each nature conservation area established and with each forestry project begun, people staying on the land were forcibly relocated into overcrowded villages, with few social services and hardly any employment opportunities. The poor soil and shrinking size of agricultural plots allotted to each family was not conducive to subsistence agriculture. Consequently, Maputaland supplied the mines of the Witwatersrand with a steady influx of migrant labourers.

After South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the land restitution process allowed the inhabitants of Maputaland to reclaim the land that they had lost due to forced relocations since 1913³. Local land claim committees, often headed by neo-

² My research on craft markets focussed on this market inside the Sodwana Bay National Park. Roughly translated, *Ubumbano* means to speak together or do things together in Zulu.

³ The South African land restitution legislation determines that people can only lay claim to land that they had lost due to discriminatory laws, starting with the Land Act of 1913.

development of different 'cultures'⁶, a position that later formed the backbone of the government's apartheid policies (R.D. Coertze 1999). Applied research within this paradigm were often aimed at persuading "target groups" to co-operate with government policies. This ideological orientation placed *volkekundiges* at odds with social anthropologists (primarily based at English language universities in South Africa) who were generally critical of apartheid. Though politically marginalised (Niehaus 2001: 6-7), the detailed research by social anthropologists on black urbanisation called into question the apartheid vision of circumscribed and isolated cultural groups (*emosse*) (See Mayer & Mayer 1961; Reader 1961; Pauw 1963; Wilson & Mafeje 1963).

Internationally, the 1970s and 1980s saw the large-scale return of development anthropologists to the field. This return was precipitated by a new focus in development projects. Due to the miserable failure of, and environmental damage caused by many earlier infrastructure development projects, world-wide legislation forced development agencies to do social soundness analysis on all projects. Development agencies also began to emphasise the basic needs of targeted populations. This movement stressed the importance of combating poverty rather than promoting industrialisation and modernisation. This shift was accompanied by a growing focus in anthropology and the other social sciences on the structural issues of class and gender. In this context, development agencies, such as the United Nations and the World Bank employed large numbers of anthropologists to discover the needs of marginalised people and to help plan interventions that might change their plight (Hoben 1982: 363, 356-362; Ferguson 1990: 11).

⁶ P.J. Coertze (1960) defined a culture or *emos* as an endogamous, self-conscious ethnic unit with a unique way of life and unique language.

During this time, a large body of literature on anthropological “praxis” in development saw the light (vide Cochrane 1979; Brokensha, Warren and Werner 1980; Barnard 1989; and Carr 1989). Anthropologists in academia often questioned the involvement and co-option of their colleagues in development, and charged those in the service of this industry with “selling out”. Evans-Pritchard’s (1952: 78-79) argument that unlike the missionary and colonialist, the anthropologist is not there to change people’s way of life, but to humbly learn from it, still rang true. Mair (1984) called the applied scholars half-baked academics and second-rate anthropologists. Others drew upon neo-Marxism, dependency theory and upon Foucault to develop a radical critique of the very notion of development. For example, Evans (1979) and Calvocoressi (1985) argued that as a concept development is morally, politically and philosophically corrupt, and suggested that the practice of development creates dependency relations. Their radical approach found some resonance in South Africa, where social anthropologists exposed the contradictory political myths of apartheid, and showed how concepts such as “development” were misused in political rhetoric (Boonzaaier and Sharp 1988; Fischer 1988).

By the 1990s, many development anthropologists outside South Africa worked as consultants for non-governmental organisations (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 107-110). This change to the private sector was in large part due to a shift in development funding from the large-scale state-sponsored projects to local initiatives. Local knowledge, community participation, sustainable development and empowerment became integral components of development anthropology discourse (See Gardner and Lewis 1996: 111-120). In post-apartheid South Africa development studies has gained in importance at

nearly all universities. Increasingly, previously critical social anthropologists act as consultants to the government, development organisations and multi-national corporations. "Academic" anthropologists however continued their criticism of the practice and discourses of development. This critique stemmed from the discipline's increased introspection and focus on the construction and power of discourse (See Escobar 1991, 1995).

Given the contentious anthropological engagement with development practice, recent literature is divided along sharp ideological lines, between those for and those against development. In this debate ethnography is used to prove either that development can or cannot work. This preoccupation with the legitimacy of development practice prohibits thick descriptions of it as a historical process. More recently, anthropologists have treated the institutions, political processes and ideologies of development practice as sites of ethnographic enquiry. These studies tend to fall into three camps:

1) *Pro-development*. In the first camp insiders or sympathetic outsiders see development planning and development agencies as part of a global effort to raise standards of living, fight poverty, and promote different versions of progress in the third world. Harrison (1987) is an enthusiastic exponent of this camp, listing successful projects that might serve as blueprints of future development in Africa. These writers understand development as a tool at the disposal of the planner. Their analyses of development projects serve as pragmatic assessments that enable future projects to perform better, to maximise success and to avoid failure. Ferguson (1990: 10) writes of this approach, "Even the broader and more speculative discussions in this vein remain a

brand of policy science, locating problems and arriving at recommendations addressed to planners within 'development' institutions".

Development anthropologists have identified four main factors that inhibit projects from being successful or that lead to their failure. The first is that development planners do not engage sufficiently with the local target population, and are insensitive to local cultural realities and historical particularities (Cochrane 1971; Akong'a 1988; Bunker 1988; Connely 1988; Hogg 1988; Nindi 1988; Coetzee, Graaff, Hendricks and Wood 2001). According to this view, development planning is simply a matter of "fitting" interventions to supposed local cultural expectations.

Critiques are of the managerial process of development practice rather than of development *per se*. For example, Barnett (1977) warns about the dangers of top-down planning. Chambers (1983) suggests that this problem might be overcome by planning around the priorities and conditions of rural people instead of development agencies. This approach suggested that development 'targets' know what is wrong in their societies but simply do not have the means or know-how to correct it. As such, anthropologists emerged as interpreters, acting as brokers between local people and the various agencies and institutions that affect their lives. Taylor and Mackenzie (1992) even suggested that third world people could initiate development within their own societies. This acknowledgement did not, however, diminish the potential role of development planners in Africa.

Influenced by feminist anthropology, Ester Boserup (1970) points out that most development projects are premised on Western gender stereotypes. She shows that women in the third world often played a central role in agricultural production but were

bypassed by projects that target men as agriculturists. Rogers (1980) shows that the discrimination against women was not only rife in development projects but also within development agencies. This work was the catalyst for an enormous literature on the effect of development on gender relations, “the household”, “the domestic mode of production”, and “the division of labour” (Chaiken 1988; Fleuret 1988; Spring 1988; Cassam 1991; Peters 1995 and Chen 1996). As a consequence of such critique, various development projects were designed around the perceived needs of women.

Lastly, the pro-development faction identified the structural composition and interaction of development agencies with the wider policy environment as possible hindrances to 'development'. Chambers' (1980) focus on 'experts' in rural Africa and Hoben's (1980) analysis of the functioning of the USAID bureaucracy had a large impact on this critique of development agencies. However, despite their anthropological approach, these works remained technical and managerial in focus. Robertson (1984) analyses planned development as a political encounter between people and the state. He argues that development agencies are premised on the need to turn an unreliable citizenry into a structured public and that development interventions are thus the site of contest between people and bureaucracy. Robertson's work is more sensitive to the politically loaded contexts in which development planning may be embedded. However, it too ends up seeing the “development” apparatus as a practical tool for the solution of universal problems. In the end, these writers' only concern seems to be with the directing of or reforming of an institution whose fundamental beneficence they take as a given.

2) *Anti-development*. Anthropologists influenced by dependency theory and Neo-Marxism criticise the pro-development view for its political naivety. They argue that

development was meant to promote imperial capitalism by incorporating new territories into the capitalist market, by mystifying social inequality (between core and periphery, the state and civil society, and between men and women), or by working against radical social change (See Galli 1981 and Williams 1981).

These scholars argue that the concept of development is embedded in neo-colonial constructions of the world, and is a key ideological tool for perpetuating unequal global power relationships. Sachs (1992: 5) even writes of the “ethnocentric” and “violent” nature of development. By all measures, these writers assert that development projects could never be an instrument for “real development”⁷. Escobar (1991) attacks anthropologists working in development for their complicity to the continuation of development practice:

“[D]evelopment anthropology, for all its claim to relevance to local problems, to cultural sensitivity, and to access to interpretative holistic methods, has done no more than recycle, and dress in more localized fabrics, the discourses of modernization and development” (p. 677).

Dependency and Neo-Marxist theorists argue that development projects are not humanitarian attempts to overcome poverty but are important instruments of imperial and class-based control. They do not, however, show how this control is effected.

More recent work in this tradition deconstructs and problematises the very notion of development by analysing it as a form of discourse which constructs its subjects. Escobar (1995: 7-11, 14) proclaims that the construction of development discourses has led to new power relationships in which “clients” can only manoeuvre within the limits set by the discourse. According to Hobart (1993) this power relationship starts with the attribution of ignorance to the targets of development. This state of “ignorance” is not

simply the absence of knowledge but a state of being which those with power ascribe to those without. Hobart (1993) writes about the ways in which Western “world-ordering knowledge” conceptualises development problems. In his edited volume, several authors note that the scientific and “rational” knowledge favoured by development incorrectly constructs foreign “experts” as agents and local people as passive objects (Richards 1993). In this movement, Foucault’s work has been instrumental in unveiling the implied power in discourses of social reality. The study of development as discourse also borrowed insights from Said’s (1978) analysis of the discourses of Orientalism.

Feminist researchers such as Mueller (1991) and Mohanty (1991) also analyse development as a regime of representation. Mohanty (1991) claims that women in the third world are represented in most feminist literature on development as having “needs” and “problems” but little choice and freedom of action. She maintains that as a result of such constructions, Western women assume a paternalistic attitude toward their third world counterparts. In essence, the “discursive hegemony” translates into unequal power relationships between first and third world women. Through an analysis of discourse and text, writers such as Mohanty and Escobar managed to unveil the mechanisms through which development practice establishes and maintains power relationships. However, their analyses lack ethnographic foundations.

3) *Ethnographies of development.* The schools for and against development basically use anthropological insights to prove either that development is a benevolent force to be reformed or an exploitative manoeuvre to be denounced. There is however a third way to analyse development. Authors such as Beckman (1977), Bernstein (1979),

⁷ Although these Anti-developers are highly critical of current development practice, they often suggest alternative development aims such as political awareness.

Heyer, Roberts and Williams (1981), and Williams (1986), transcend the focus on evaluating the development industry as good or evil. They attempt to see 'rural development' interventions as real historical events, susceptible to the same sort of political and economical explanations as any others.

Despite the considerable contributions that these writers make to development studies, most of them are too quick to impute an economic function to development projects, and to accept the premise that development projects are primarily devices to bring about economic change. Beckman (1977: 3) for instance claims that development projects serve to force peasants to produce for an external market under bullying conditions of exchange. Bernstein (1977: 65) declares that development projects operate to further incorporate the peasantry into commodity relations. According to them, a development project is fully explained when all the different economic interests behind it are laid bare. Anthropological theory however, shows that one cannot assume that a structure simply and rationally 'represents' a set of objective interests. As Ferguson (1990: 17) suggests, structures are multi-layered, polyvalent and often contradictory.

In 1990, Ferguson's *The Anti-Politics Machine* offered a detailed ethnography of what actually happens when the apparatus of development is brought to bear in a specific social setting. His analysis of the Thaba-Tseka project in Lesotho shows how the deployment of development in Lesotho unintentionally served to further entrench the state and to depoliticise problems. In this regard, Ferguson plots the process through which intentional plans interacted with unacknowledged structures and chance events to produce unintended outcomes. He calls the unauthored resultant constellation of control "the anti-politics machine" (p. 20-21). Ferguson's (1990) study highlights how planned

social interventions can result in unintended but powerful constellations of control that are all the more effective for being “subjectless”.

Although these ethnographies unveil the mechanisms through which development projects 'work', they assume that these structures yield hegemonic control. Furthermore, they tended to naturalise existing power relationships at the expense of looking at what lies beneath the surface. In this regard, it is important to consider the reasons why dominated peoples acquiesce to the demands and power of those that dominate them. Here Scott's (1985) suggestion that power is not absolute and that people find ways to “talk back” to the structure and “resist” its demands is useful. The collective impact of their “everyday forms of resistance” often make utter shambles of the policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors. As such, these techniques are well suited to the characteristics of people often subjected to development projects; a diverse class often lacking the discipline and leadership that would encourage opposition of a more organised sort.

In my own study I will analyse the intentional and unintentional social, economic and political consequences of the LSDI's deployment in the Maputaland region. Following Scott, I will also investigate the ways in which the relatively powerless people in the region talked back and resisted the changes brought to bear on their lives. I will pay particular attention to the different ways in which men and women reacted to and accommodated development projects in the area.

My fieldwork in Maputaland

I conducted fieldwork in the Maputaland region (See Map 1) over a period of fifteen months, starting in May 2000. During this time, I left the field intermittently when I had exhausted my money or food supplies, or when the research routine became just too overwhelming.

I gained entrance to the field through Herman Els, an anthropologist at the University of Pretoria who had launched a multi-disciplinary research project in Maputaland. Herman graciously invited me to work in the Sodwana Bay area. Initially, my research interests were vague and it was suggested that I conduct an anthropological study of the social-dynamics and resource utilisation of the informal traders who sold their crafts inside the Sodwana Bay National Park at the Ubumbano craft market.

For the first two months of my research, I was in and out of the field very often, setting up interviews with various officials. The first people I had to talk to were the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (KZN Wildlife) officials who had to approve my residence and work in Sodwana Bay Park. They seemed enthusiastic about the research and offered me cheap lodgings in their research facilities at Sodwana Bay. These facilities were within walking distance of my planned research site, the Ubumbano craft market. Next, I felt it prudent to appoint a local research assistant. With the help of two reception clerks at Sodwana Bay, I set up interviews with ten local young women. I decided on Dudu Ngobese, a young mother of two and occasional vendor at the market. This proved to be a very fortunate choice as Dudu had a large personal and family network at the market and was popular with both young and old. Dudu introduced me to

the Ubumbano craft committee and to the women selling at the market. On my meeting with the Ubumbano committee, they insisted that I introduce myself to the Mbila (Zikhali) Tribal Authority in Mbaswana. Dudu, the chairman and secretary of Ubumbano and I subsequently went to Mbaswana three times before we were given an audience with Chief Sonto Zikhali and his councillors. Dudu introduced us and we were given official permission to do research in the area.

It was only in the third month that I could actually start doing research at the market full-time. For about a month and a half, I worked at the Ubumbano craft market from 7 am to 5 pm each day. In the evenings I conducted interviews and attended several gatherings with tourists and recreational divers⁸ until well after midnight. It was an extremely strenuous schedule and started to wear me out. My fatigue contributed greatly to a personal experience that fundamentally changed my research methodology:

I had to leave the field when I started washing my hands compulsively. In the beginning, my symptoms seemed mild and I studiously ignored them since I obtained very interesting information. However, I realised that my little quirk became a problem when I had to break off an interview to wash my hands. The market's tap had run dry and to the amazement of Dudu and the interviewee I cycled four kilometres to the nearest tap. At the time, I realised that my compulsive behaviour was completely irrational, packed my bags and returned home to Pretoria. The symptoms disappeared almost as soon as I left Maputaland. I returned to Sodwana Bay ten days later.

After this episode, I started to take days off from going to the market, drove around the area, and spoke to people not working there. This strategy helped me to contextualise my research and to gain greater depth into the experiences of my

informants at the market and forced me to re-evaluate the focus of my study. It was obvious that the women I studied were experiencing enormous social, political and economical upheavals at home and that my rather narrow focus on what they sold and how much they earned did not really speak to these changes. For instance, a year before I started my research ten thousand male migrant workers from Maputaland lost their jobs on the Witwatersrand due to the downsizing in the mining industry. These men returned home to an area with few employment opportunities and families that scarcely knew them.

In the same year, large portions of the land that local people were claiming in the land restitution process were declared part of the Greater St Lucia World Heritage Site. This meant that even if their claims were successful, the land could not be restored to the claimants. In this context, I realised that my questions on harvesting patterns within nature conservation areas did not take into consideration that these women (and their families) were locked into a battle with conservation agencies over land and natural resources. It is only when I stopped asking naïve questions about harvesting times, locales and volumes that the women started to trust me. They allowed me to go on harvesting trips with them. It was on these trips that I realised that the harvesting of natural resources from nature conservation areas was a site where people could resist an organisation, which seemed unassailable. In various other contexts I also started to see a contradiction in people's outward appearances of compliance to the development projects that were springing up all around them and their actual behaviour towards it.

After about seven months in the Sodwana Bay region, I ran out of money and returned to Pretoria to do various kinds of odd jobs. However, by March 2001, I was back

⁸Sodwana Bay is well known among divers as an ideal place to have one's first open sea dive.

in the Maputaland region, this time to work on a project with a group of indigenous healers, again under the auspices of Herman Els's Centre of Indigenous Knowledge. This time, I stayed in the Centre's custom-built research facilities within Tembe Elephant Park, about eighty kilometres from Sodwana Bay (which I continued to visit whenever I had a chance). From March to June that year, I only went to the field for very short stints as the facilities were still in the process of being built. Thereafter, I was based in Tembe until I left the field in September. During this period, I worked almost exclusively with a group of male indigenous healers who seemed to be continuously in meetings with development agencies. At first, I thought that my research on healers and men's experiences with development was a totally new project, because it differed so radically from those of the women. The crafters at Sodwana Bay's only contact with the LSDI or other development planners were during the implementation phases of such projects. I had to re-evaluate this impression when I met the chairman of the Ubumbano craft market and men from Sodwana Bay more frequently at my meetings with developers. I realised that men and women in the region had very different types of contact with the same development projects and that very specific gender roles and stereotypes informed these experiences. I was studying the same process but from different sides of the gender divide. In this regard, my apparently unrelated research "projects" turned out to give me a unique insight into the process through which the LSDI deployed their development projects in the region.

I sought to supplement my fieldwork observations and to reconstruct events that had occurred prior to my fieldwork by relying on archival records, earlier ethnographic and historical studies, life histories and the memories of my informants. I also made extensive

use of newspaper articles and travel magazines to gain an insight into the popular conceptions of the Maputaland region as a tourist destination. By means of trial and error I learnt to settle upon the following research techniques:

1) *Social surveying*. After about a month in the field, I started on a questionnaire survey of 131 of the approximately 297 individuals involved in the Ubumbano craft market (either as owners of stalls or sellers of wares). The survey was designed to give me demographic information about age, household compositions, places of residence, household sources of income, schooling and subsistence agriculture. It also contained questions about the harvesting and buying of raw materials, the purchasing of ready-made crafts and the use of dyes (See Appendix 1). This survey indicated that most craft producers bought their raw materials and finished crafts from Mbaswana. I wanted to know where the traders in Mbaswana harvested and where the finished crafts came from. To this end, I conducted a second survey of 135 traders (twenty men and 115 women) at the Mbaswana craft market (See Appendix 2). This second survey led me on harvesting expeditions to Lake Sibayi and various other (sometimes illegal) harvesting spots. It also took me to informal craft markets all over the area (Tshongwe, Ndongeni, Mkuze, Hluhluwe).

2) *Participant observation*. I collected much information by merely being present at craft markets, tourist haunts and at meetings with developers. Through spending many hours with women at the Ubumbano craft market and tourists at pubs, I learnt about the contradictions between what people said and what they did. Much of my later research was informed by the impressions I gained from my observations at the Ubumbano craft market. Here, older women told me wonderful stories about the origins of craft markets

in the region and about how they endured forced relocations during apartheid. They wove fascinating tales of the trade links between different craft markets and the workings of the craft committee. With women of my own age, I formed friendships that allowed talk about the violence they experienced at home, local gossip and tales about illegal activities. Through these friendships, I gained a deeper understanding of the crafters' lives at home. This understanding constituted the background to my interviews with nature conservation officials, developers and men serving on various local committees involved with development planning.

3) *Interviews.* My formal interviews about development projects, craft markets and nature conservation were mainly conducted with individuals that worked for development agencies, the Land Claims Commission or KZN Wildlife. For the most part, the local people I worked with introduced me to these informants. During the interviews, I relied on note taking. I guaranteed all informants anonymity and promised that I would use pseudonyms in the text. In highly publicised cases however I did not invent names for public officials.

4) *Documentation.* Soon after I started my research, I realised that the majority of traders at Ubumbano craft market did not come to the market each day. Since there were only thirty-three stalls, there was a definite upper limit to the number of women who could sell at the market. The only way for me to get an estimate of the size of the population involved at the market was to keep an attendance register. I could not take a daily register, as this would raise suspicions that I was employed by the Ubumbano committee, whose job it was to collect membership fees. (Many women sold crafts at the market without paying these fees). I thus chose four random weeks during which I noted

who attended the market. Through this, I could determine that approximately 297 individuals were involved at Ubumbano as either owners or sellers. This number corresponded closely to the questionnaire survey I had conducted earlier.

At the Ubumbano craft market I also took inventories of ninety-two stalls. These helped me to estimate the upper limits of women's earnings at the market and indicated the degree of economic stratification within the market. The inventories also enabled me to determine the exact worth of each stall and to compare these to the statements of traders about how much money they made on a daily and weekly basis.

Although the daily incomes and stall inventories gave me an idea of the amount of money that traders made by selling crafts, it was not a reliable measure of a family's total income or economic circumstances. It also did not answer my question about the economic importance of the income from the sale of crafts for the survival of households. To answer these questions, I asked fifteen traders living in male-headed households and thirteen traders living in woman-headed households for their monthly household budgets. All the women selling at Ubumbano craft market were women. Since women in the area were usually entrusted with paying household expenses from a pooled fund, they were in an ideal position to give me information on household budgets.

5) *Daily schedules.* To gain insight into the ordinary and everyday activities of my informants, I recorded what twenty-six women of different ages did on the previous day. These daily schedules helped me to determine the range of economic activities that women typically engaged in and their workload in terms of the household chores. In this regard, there was enormous uniformity in the daily schedules that the twenty-six women recalled.

6) *Observation schedule of tourists.* To corroborate the daily incomes of traders and to see what tourists bought, I drew up an observation schedule for tourists that visited the Ubumbano craft market (See Appendix 3). In these schedules, I noted what tourists bought, how much money they spent at the market and how many of them just browsed. This information formed the background to my interviews and talks with tourists about the reasons why they purchased specific crafts.

These methods enabled me to gain a layered understanding of the crafts trade in the Sodwana Bay/ Mbaswana area. It also helped me to understand the different ways in which men and women in the region become involved in the development projects around them. As such, these methods led me to an awareness of how the gendered power structure in this society was constructed and is constantly being undermined by those who spoke back and resisted the demands of more powerful social actors. My methodology thus allowed an analysis of both structure and fluidity.

Organisation of the Study

Chapter two outlines the historical context of my study and seeks to account for the social and economic marginalisation of people in the Maputaland region with reference to colonial and apartheid government policies. In this chapter, I will pay particular attention to the post-apartheid conditions that tied people to the emerging eco-tourism industry, which the government's LSDI established within the region.

In Chapter three I investigate how the LSDI established an eco-tourism industry in Maputaland. I will pay particular attention to LSDI involvement in the development of

the crafts industry and craft markets as well as the role that they played in the ethnic “branding” of the region. Following in the footsteps of Hoben (1980) and Robertson (1984), I show how rationalisation and control characterised such involvement. With development, the crafts industry became bureaucratised and functioned to deliver predictability, calculability, efficiency and control for the developers and tourists. However, the craft producers were impoverished by the process and lost control over their means of self-representation. My impression that people in the crafts industry would soon be caught in the “iron cage” of rationality was dashed when I noted the unanticipated consequences of development.

Influenced by dependency theorists and neo-Marxist theorists, I sought to explain the crafters' acquiescence to the bureaucratisation process by looking at the complicity of local politicians to development plans. In Chapter four, I will show how the land claims process and the LSDI's ethnic branding of the Maputaland region for the purpose of eco-tourism has fed into local men's political agendas. While I will pay particular attention to the agendas of “Tribal Authorities” and chiefs, I will also look at men who remained at the margins of the development industry. Large portions of the male population in Maputaland were jobless and were likely to remain that way in the light of the emphasis on a service-orientated eco-tourism industry in the region.

Chapter five focuses on development projects that were specially designed to target women. These projects aimed to address the feminisation of poverty in the region and to improve the “status” of women in society. However, most projects were premised on a Western construction of women as being economically and socially dependent on men. Yet, women in the region had developed a gift economy that made them dependant

on other women rather than on men for economic survival. I will also show that the craft industry did not allow women an escape from the subsistence economy.

As I show in Chapter six, people in Maputaland found various ways to resist the intrusions that nature conservation, Tribal Authorities and “development” projects made on their autonomy. In general, politically powerful men turned to open forms of resistance while women and men on the margins of the politics game used what Scott (1990) called the “weapons of the weak”. I explain this difference in resistance strategies in terms of the relative political capital that parties in an arrangement had or hoped to get.

In the conclusion I contemplate how my research findings can inform recent debates on development and control in ways that do not simply condemn or approve of development practice. I will show how an anthropological analysis of development as historical event speaks to debates on dependency, acquiescence, power and resistance.

Chapter 2

Landscape, history and the underdevelopment of Maputaland

“Everyone has the right –... (b) to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that – (i) prevent pollution and ecological destruction; (ii) promote conservation; and (iii) secure the ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development”

- The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996:11).

“Some people tell us that there is a black Government, we do not see it, we do not feel its presence, all we feel is the same old threat of forced removals... But all those who claim to love the environment but exclude black people, they must know that we will never leave this forest. They might as well kill us, keep us in their deep-freezers and feed us to their beloved crocodiles”

- Baba Msele, Maputaland (Munnik and Mhlope 2000: 31).

My two research sites were situated in the Umhlabuyalingana magisterial district in the former KwaZulu “homeland” (See Map 1). Since 1854, the Ubombo and Ingwavuma districts, now part of the Umhlabuyalingana magisterial district, have comprised an area known as Maputaland. Despite its incorporation into the former homeland of KwaZulu and later the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Maputaland retained its colonial name in both popular use and in literature on the area. The Zulu word for Maputaland (*Mhlab'uyalingana*) means “flat earth” and describes this flat piece of coastal plain where the average altitude seldom reaches more than one hundred metres above sea level (Mountain 1990:1-2; Hamilton 1999:60).

This region is widely celebrated for its virgin beaches, its protected marshes, coral reefs and indigenous forests. The area is also home to rare and endangered species. In 1999 a complex of protected areas in the region covering 239,566 ha was declared a World Heritage Site (<http://www.rhino.org.za> 2002). Parallel to the international

recognition of Maputaland's unspoilt natural environment, runs references in popular literature to the region as a natural "paradise" (Mountain 1990; Larsen 1999b: 23; Moore 2001: 9)

Literature on people living in Maputaland illustrates clearly that they do not live the utopian lifestyle evoked by images of this natural paradise. The poor nutrient retention of soils in the area, the unpredictable rainfall, and diseases and pests (foot-and-mouth disease, desert locusts, and tsetse flies) impede intensive agriculture in Maputaland. There are also no big industries in the region that could provide significant employment opportunities. Due to the marginal agricultural potential of the area and the shortage of jobs, most households suffer some form of food shortage, which is most acute during mid-winter (Taylor 1988:456). Diseases like cholera, malaria and dysentery have ravaged the human population while a recent government report estimates that the HIV infection rate of rural KwaZulu-Natal is close to 40% (Department of Health 2002: 6). Furthermore, few households in this region have had access to clean water, electricity, primary health care and education. The new South African government described Maputaland as one of South Africa's poorest and most underdeveloped regions.

There seems to be two very different descriptions of the same area in the literature, one that stresses natural beauty, abundance and wealth and another in which the poverty, suffering and neglect of local people features more prominently. The former images are associated with "pristine" nature conservation areas, the latter with the surrounding overcrowded human settlements. There is no single description of Maputaland aimed at integrating these two patterns of narration, or contemplating the connection between these scenes. There appears to be a selective amnesia about the

historical process through which people were disenfranchised and relocated from the nature conservation areas of today.

In this chapter I will focus on the history of the Maputaland landscape. I will pay particular attention to the extension of nature conservation and forestry areas and the people who occupied the landscape at different points in time. In tracing the history of the Maputaland region, I will attempt to determine the origins of its people's current economic marginalisation. I also aim to provide a historical background to the eco-tourism industry that the LSDI was developing in the region when I did my research; to the struggles for political legitimacy by Tribal Authorities; and to the women trade networks that operated in the area. I start off with a theoretical discussion of the causes of 'underdevelopment'. I then plot a history of the Maputaland region over the last four hundred years, a history marked by pre-colonial trade, colonial conquest and also the experience of discriminatory land laws, nature conservation and unfulfilled promises.

Theories of “underdevelopment”

In South Africa different theories have been put forward to explain the poverty and dependency of people in the former homelands. Until the early 1970s economic dualism was the analytical model most prominent in explaining African rural poverty. Crudely put, according to this model the traditional habits, customs, religions or social structure of black people somehow impeded the achievement of high levels of economic growth in a way that those of white South Africans did not. This theoretical model posits that South Africa has a dual economy characterised by two discrete sectors: a “static traditional

sector” in the rural areas and former “homelands”; and a “progressive industrial sector” characteristic of white urban, industrial and farming areas. The two economic sectors are inhabited by two distinct societies, each with specific norms, values and cognitive orientations.

The dichotomy between traditionality and modernity has been criticised in much anthropological literature. Bundy (1972) and Murray (1980, 1981) argue that the economic dualist model is ahistorical and fails to take into account the influence of colonial and apartheid state policies on the economies of the homelands. As an alternative conceptual framework for understanding rural impoverishment, they introduced a core-periphery model. In terms of this model, the South African situation can best be understood with reference to a single regional economic system. According to theorists of this school, the southern African economy comprised an economic core consisting of urban, industrial, mining and manufacturing centres such as the Witwatersrand and a periphery encompassing rural areas such as the African homelands. The relationship between core and peripheral areas was one of fundamental imbalance. In this regard, the periphery supplied cheap labour to facilitate economic growth in the core. Furthermore, peripheral areas were impoverished in terms of human resources, as the economically active section of the population left to work in the core. From the perspective of the core-periphery model, contemporary rural poverty is seen as a direct result of capitalist exposure, not a lack thereof.

The latter theoretical approach is increasingly utilised to explain contemporary poverty in Maputaland. Authors such as Makanjee (1989), McIntosh (1991a) and Møller (1996) claim that the “homeland” policies caused unsustainable population pressures on

areas already marginal in terms of agricultural potential. Nature conservation and commercial forestry made further inroads on the land available for agriculture. These processes, and also the apartheid government's labour laws, enforced a system of labour migration, in which the "homelands" were mere labour reservoirs for South Africa's industrial and mining centres. In the homelands, chiefs were responsible for the administration of the migrant labour system, and for ensuring a steady flow of workers

The core-periphery model has proved to be a valuable tool in the analysis of economic "underdevelopment". It emphasised historical processes and power relationships as causal agents for poverty rather than some innate quality of the impoverished. However, with the massive downsizing of mining in the fast de-industrialising South Africa of the 1990s, Maputaland seems to be functioning less as a labour supplying area, than as a location for South Africa's industrial reserve army.

Following the core-periphery theorists, I will trace the roots of Maputaland's economic marginalisation to historical processes and discriminatory government policies. I will however try to steer clear from their mechanical explanations of structural dependency.

Maputaland before 1843

During the sixteenth century, Delagoa Bay was an important trading post between Portuguese traders and indigenous people living in the hinterland. These people supplied the Portuguese traders with animal hides, ivory, meat, fresh fruit, vegetables, and fresh water. In return, they were given trade beads and iron nails (Smith 1969). However, the

Portuguese knew very little about their trade partners and assumed an empty hinterland sparsely populated by bands of people. Survivors from the shipwrecked Portuguese trading ship, the São Thomé which ran aground in 1589, provided the earliest ethnological descriptions of the Mabila¹ people of the Sodwana Bay area (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 437; Mthethwa 2002: 46). The Portuguese were surprised to learn that their primary trade partners had a higher level of state formation than appeared to be the case with Nguni groupings to the South (Hedges 1978:100-108).

For the next two centuries, descriptions of indigenous people tended to concentrate on those areas that the Portuguese were interested in trading with to the north and south of the Sodwana Bay region. They mention the lively trade between the Tembe-Thonga, the Nyaka and the Nguni groupings to the south (Van de Capelle 1730, in Hedges 1978: 100-154). Other descriptions of local people were by European hunter-adventurers who traversed Maputaland in search of big game during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Baldwin 1863, in Bruton 1980: 507). These writers' only concern with the "native" peoples was in their curiosity value and possible threat to the hunting trade. Due to the growing demand for animal hides and ivory from the European markets, the early settlers in Natal found hunting and trading more lucrative than farming. In 1840, the first elephant hunting business was established in Maputaland. Hunters who could penetrate the region's natural defence systems of malaria and sleeping sickness made a fortune from the sale of ivory (Mountain 1990).

Apart from the above-mentioned sources, narratives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries paint a picture of a landscape filled with wild animals and diseases

¹ Skalník (1988:74-75) disputes the view that distinct linguistic or culturally homogenous groups of people existed in South Africa's pre-colonial past and points to the flexible nature of cultural and political

(cholera, malaria) but devoid of human settlement. Maputaland became a wild thoroughfare for “native” peoples and a temporary resting-place for traders on their way to Delagoa Bay (Mountain 1990:8-9). As an empty space and dangerous thoroughfare, the area “belonged” to no one. The hunters and indigenous traders who went to the Sodwana Bay area invested stock in narratives of an empty landscape, since this made the resources contained in it free.

Subsequently recorded oral histories², which refers to extensive trade networks and bloody battles between indigenous chiefdoms of the Sodwana Bay hinterlands, contradict these narratives of emptiness (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 435). Cunningham (1987:265) describes how women from Maputaland traded beer baskets, sleeping mats and other woven articles with the Zulu kingdom from the early 1800’s. In 1820, the Zikhali chiefdom³ arrived in Sodwana Bay from Swaziland to disrupt the Mbila’s peaceful and ordered life. In Swaziland, their leader became involved with a succession dispute and was accused of witchcraft. Hereafter, he commandeered a large group of his supporters and fled south-eastwards over the Makathini Plains. When the Zikhali reached the coastal strip between Mabibi (now called Hulley Point) and Sodwana Bay, they encountered the Mbila, which they defeated in a bloody battle and incorporated in their group⁴. In 1850, the Tembe-Thonga (the Zikhali’s neighbours to the north) drove

boundaries between groups of people.

² Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (CINDEK) Archive, Ledger 2, Archival note no 31; CINDEK Archive, Ledger 1, State ethnologist 1971:1; CINDEK Archive, Ledger 1, State ethnologist note 13-856).

³ According to the state ethnologist, the Zikhali originated in Mozambique and moved to Swaziland in the late eighteenth century.

⁴ Although the people living in the Sodwana Bay area are still referred to as the Mbila, and their land as the Mbila Tribal area, this is not what the people call themselves. According to a letter which the state ethnologist wrote to the Head of Bantu Administration in Pietermaritzburg on December 14, 1971, the Mbila’s chief and his council objected to being called Mbila, referring to their historical subjugation of that tribe. The state ethnologist subsequently asked the head of Bantu Administration to rectify this mistake by changing the name of the tribe and its Tribal Authority (CINDEK Archive, Ledger 3). In this dissertation I will refer to the people of the Mbila Tribal Authority area as Zikhali.

the Mdletshe group southwards. In their flight, some of the Mdletshe committed suicide by jumping from the cliffs at Lala Neck. The remainder sought shelter with the Zikhali

With the Difaqane of the early nineteenth century⁵, the Zulu extended tributary control as far north as Delagoa Bay. However, due to the high incidence of malaria, cholera and other pests and diseases, the Zulu never invaded Maputaland (AFRA 1990: 48; Mountain 1990:8-9). In the literature, it remained an “empty space”, an area outside of the Zulu Kingdom. On the margins of civilisation, Maputaland became a dangerous haven. It was the impenetrable ‘bush’ that hid thieves and refugees from Shaka’s wrath. Those that fled before Shaka knew that he would not venture into this fever-ridden area but delivered themselves to its dangers. The original inhabitants of the area remained invisible as if the bush engulfed them.

The early colonial era: Reconfiguring Maputaland as empty space, 1843-1878

In 1843, the British established a colony just south of Maputaland. For the first twenty years of colonial rule in Natal, Maputaland continued to be treated as an empty space on the margins of the British colony. It was unaffected by Shepstone’s system of indirect rule⁶ or his black location policies⁷ since British influence barely extended to the colony’s borders (Marais 1962: 344). In the 1850s, the British could not persuade the

⁵ The Difaqane refers to the war and turmoil in the South African interior that followed Shaka’s aggressive territorial expansion in the early nineteenth century.

⁶ T. Shepstone was the chief administrator of Natives in Natal from 1845 to 1875 and introduced the Natal location policy. He tried to re-establish and foster the tribal system by instituting old chiefs and ruling through them (Bundy 1972:375; Marais 1962: 344).

⁷ After the Stanger (1846) and the Boys commission (1849), the British colonial government finally accepted the MacFarlane commission’s recommendation that between 24 000 and 26 000 acres should be put aside for occupation by black people. In 1864 the Natal’s Native Trust was created to administer the land allocations in the black areas (Els 1993: 60).

Africans in Maputaland or in Zululand to work in the colony. This frustrated the white settlers' commercial agricultural ambitions and allowed African peasants in the colony to rent land and become "rich and independent" (Bundy 1972:375-376; Guy 1994: 42-43). Such was the independence of these Africans and the need for labour among the whites that the Natal government was forced to import indentured Indian workers (Freund 1994). The rather paltry colonial performance of the British during the 1840s and 1850s did not impede their colonial ambitions. In lieu of their physical conquest of Africa, they started to lay claim to spaces by naming, documenting and describing them (Sumner Curry 2001: 25, 82).

In 1854, Captain Owen of the British Navy named the area stretching from Lourenço Marques in the north to Lake St Lucia in the South, and from the Pongola River to the Indian Ocean, Maputaland⁸. This name derives from the Mabudhu chiefdom that Owen thought encompassed the vast area (Kloppers 2002: 3). The English word for landscape signifies a unit of human occupation, or indeed jurisdiction, as much as anything that might be a pleasing object of depiction (Schama 1995: 10). By naming the territory, Captain Owen thus also traced the borders within which the Mabudhu chiefdom had jurisdiction according to the British government.

Contrary to the British depictions of Maputaland as an empty landscape on the borders of the colony, the area was bustling with trade: networks stretched to the Zulu in the south and the Portuguese traders in Delagoa Bay. One of the most well known traders of Maputaland during this time was John Dunn, a white hunter-trader with considerable influence with the Zulu royal house. Dunn made use of the tributary relationship between chiefs in Maputaland and the Zulu royal house to hunt extensively in the area (AFRA

1990: 48; Sumner Curry 2001: 82). Other game hunters followed his example. While the British colony did not stretch into these regions, its chiefs were held to their tributary relationships to the Zulu king. For all ends and purposes the landscape evaded direct political control.

In the late 1850s cattle disease precipitated a major resource crisis and affected the brisk trade in Maputaland (AFRA 1990: 48). This was compounded during the 1860s when endemic warfare, drought and famine struck the Delagoa Bay hinterland. The trading triangle was subsequently broken up. This isolated many people in the Maputaland region who were left without trading partners while the poor agricultural potential of the region made subsistence agriculture untenable. Several men from the Maputaland region were forced to seek work on the Kimberley diamond fields and others moved south to work on the Natal sugarcane farms (Bundy 1972: 376). At first, the Zulu king did not allow people from the north to travel through his kingdom. With pressure exerted by the colony of Natal, the king relented in 1872, claiming a portion of each migrant's wages, plus a cash capitation fee from Natal labour recruiters (AFRA 1990: 49).

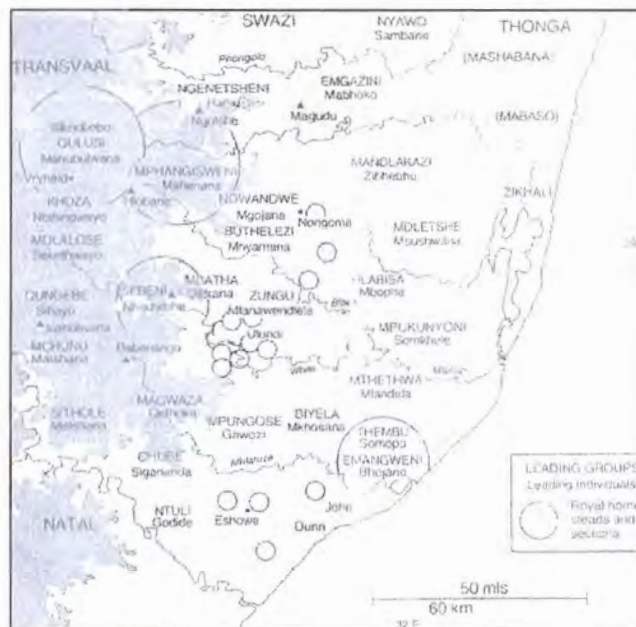
Throughout this period, more hunters and naturalists entered the 'empty space'. They either hunted on large scale, or tried to record and catalogue the variety and quantity of game in the region, as new resources of the colony (Drummond 1875; Leslie 1975). They did not attribute ownership of Maputaland to the indigenous people.

⁸ At present the word Maputaland is only used to refer to the area on the South African side of the border.

Maputaland: Penetration of an Impenetrable Space, 1879-1909

By 1879, the Zulu kingdom posed such political danger to the Natal colony that Wolseley sent Cetshwayo, the Zulu king, into exile. During this time, the Zulu royal family sent large numbers of their cattle to northern Maputaland for safekeeping as it was seen as an impenetrable space on the margins of the political landscape of Zululand. After deposing the Zulu king, Wolseley appointed thirteen chiefs to administer Zululand. He also drew the north-eastern boundary of the Zulu territory along the Pongola River (See Map 3 and 4, below).

Map 3: The Zulu Kingdom during Cetshwayo's reign (In Guy 1996: 22).



Map 4: Wolseley's settlement 1879 (In Guy 1996: 73).



Once the British troops left, the local chiefs scrambled for control of the area north of Zululand. With the backing of the British, two of the newly appointed chiefs, Dunn and Zibhebhu, appropriated cattle that the ousted royal family stowed away in Maputaland. They also demanded tribute from the chiefs in the region and sought to control migrant labour and trade (Guy 1994: 62-64, 72-78, 83-87).

Zibhebhu's continued evictions and harassment of people living in Maputaland led to widespread violence. It also led to the mobilisation of Cetshwayo's loyal supporters against Zibhebhu (Guy 1994: 190-191). With the help of some harassed tribes in Maputaland such as the Zikhali and his loyal supporters, Cetshwayo returned to Zululand in 1882 to confront Zibhebhu. A civil war ensued in 1883 and by mid-August of that year, Cetshwayo's faction retreated and fled north to Maputaland (Guy 1994: 204-209).

Cetshwayo's flight to Maputaland set a whole series of events in motion that drew the region into colonial politics. It was no longer simply conceived of as the impenetrable or empty space on the outskirts of the British colony and Zululand.

After Cetshwayo's death in 1884, his supporters were left starving in their hiding places in Maputaland (Guy 1994: 217-221). Due to their weakened position, Dinizulu (Cetshwayo's heir) asked the Transvaal Boer commando⁹ to help them in the battle at Etshaneni. In return for the part that they played in the defeat of Zibhebhu, the Boers claimed 800 farms (4 000 miles²) in Maputaland as their reward (Mountain 1990:8-9). Soon, growing numbers of Boers from the Transvaal started to claim land in these northern districts. Subsequently, chaos started to reign as dispossessed indigenous people roamed the landscape. By early 1885, the Boers' land stretched to the Indian Ocean and claimed five-sixths of the Zulu territory beyond the Zululand Reserve. Fearing that the Boers now had access to the sea and a means to keep their independence, the colonial government stepped in and drew a boundary that kept the Boers to the West (Guy 1994: 233-236).

To the south, the colony of Natal again experienced a shortage of labour as the indigenous civil war and migration to Kimberley absorbed the energies of young men. The period 1870 to 1886 saw the colonial government introduce new taxes, pass- and vagrancy laws in the Zululand Reserve to stimulate a flow of labourers to Natal (Guy 1994: 231). This flow halted to a trickle when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886, occasioning a great outflow of men to the Transvaal. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s severe droughts further enlarged the flow of men to the Witwatersrand (Bundy 1972: 376-380).

virtually wiped out certain species such as zebra, wildebeest and nyala in the colony of Natal. Many species were also rapidly diminishing in the Zulu kingdom (Lawes and Eeley 2000:19). Some colonists became aware of the depletion of game and started to preserve certain species on private reserves (Mackenzie 1991: 22; Yeld 1997: 15-16). They carefully emptied such landscapes of unwanted indigenous people and dangerous animals such as lions. The private game and nature reserves became safe hunting grounds for a socially influential class (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 440-441). In this regard, the European and American landscape artists had a great influence on shaping the colonists' image of an ideal, safe landscape devoid of people (Kriel 2002: 321). With spaces dedicated to hunting, the discourse about the pursuit of wild animals became very popular. Sport hunters such as Frederick Courtney Selous and George French Agnes¹⁰ were closely associated with the colonial state as their hunting activities affirmed individual, and by extension, imperial authority (Brooks 2000: 2).

Despite the forays that white hunters made into Maputaland, white settlement in the area was curtailed by the high incidence of malaria. The first missionary in Maputaland, Bishop Mackenzie, only arrived in 1887 (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 440-441). To keep his flock going and to finance the various activities of his church, the bishop and later missionaries depended on their prowess with the gun. Gradually, the missionaries and other white administrators to the area excluded Africans from game hunting and it became the exclusive pastime of the white elite (Mackenzie 1991: 20-21).

It was only in the late 1890s that the British colonial government started to earmark areas outside of the colony of Natal (but under their indirect rule) for nature

¹⁰ Agnes shot the first nyala known to western science (Sumner Curry 2001: 82).

conservation (Mthethwa 2002: 145). In 1897, the Lake St Lucia, Umfolozi and Hluhluwe nature conservation areas were proclaimed in British Zululand (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 451). They were quickly followed by the proclamation of the Mkhuze and Ndumu¹¹ Game Reserves in Maputaland. However, such was the extent of poaching in the Ndumu Game Reserve that a small police station was erected in 1907 to control hunting in that region (Mthethwa 2002: 145). The landscape was cut up, emptied of people and was devoted to the interests of its conquerors. In the latter regard, these game reserves were closed to anyone but the hunters.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902 slowed down the British efforts to transform Maputaland's physical landscape. The exigencies of the war however dispersed some of Maputaland's population. Meanwhile, the social landscape continued to transform as the colonial government tightened its labour-coercive screws by enacting the Identification of Native Servants Act (1901), the Amended Masters and Servants Act (1901), the Amended Squatters Rent Tax (1903), and the imposition of a Poll Tax (1905) on all males (Bundy 1972:385). In 1903, for instance, the Zikhali had to pay tax on 1 181 huts¹². Those that could not pay these taxes were forced off the land. Rents all over Natal rose sharply while security of tenure was prohibited by the suspension of all sales of Crown land to Africans in 1904 (Bundy 1972: 385). Another disappointment for black people in the region was that they did not get the expected voting rights after the Anglo-Boer War (Pelser 1968). In opposition to the racist legislation in South Africa, the Natal Native Congress (NNC) was established 1904 (Els 1993: 68-69).

¹¹ Formally however, Ndumu was only proclaimed a game reserve in 1924 (Mthethwa 2002: 145)

¹² State ethnologist note 13-856, CINDEK archive.

As the British government relented in their onslaught on the Maputaland landscape, scientists started to show an interest in the region. From 1899 onwards, various expeditions led by biologists traversed Maputaland in search of unique animal and plant species. These scientists collected vast amounts of plant and animal specimens or sent African helpers into the fever-ridden region to collect specimens for them (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 446-450).

During this time alternative views on wildlife preservation surfaced within the colony. Dr. Warren campaigned widely for the elimination of sports hunting in the game reserves of Natal, Zululand and Maputaland. He increasingly referred to the fauna in British Zululand not just as “interesting” but also as “threatened” and “defenceless” (Brooks 2000: 23-30). For the first time, wildlife sanctuaries became spaces set aside for the protection of animals from humans. Game reserves all over the landscape were increasingly fenced and guarded.

The making of a black and white landscape, 1910-1948

In 1910, South Africa became a Union. The colonial conquest of its landscape was complete and there were no more independent, empty or unowned spaces on its map. The Union Government then set about ordering this landscape into spaces for nature conservation, agriculture and for black and white occupation. It basically did this by moving black people around like chess pieces.

Through the 1913 Land Act, the Union government reserved certain parts of Maputaland and Zululand for exclusive occupation of African people. The Act also

prohibited Africans from owning or acquiring land outside scheduled areas. In Zululand and Natal, the already established Natal Native Congress (NNC) became a branch of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), which opposed the implementation of this Act throughout South Africa.

With time, more and more pieces of the landscape were seen as unfit for black occupation, and were set apart for the protection of nature and ultimately for the enjoyment of white people. For instance, in 1912 the Province of Natal established the Mkuzi Game Reserve. A year later, the Zululand Annexation Act (of 1913) created more off-limit nature reserves in Zululand (Thulo 2001: 8). In 1917, the new attitude towards animals as aesthetically and scientifically important was apparent in the public outcry that followed when government ordered the killing of seventy thousand head of wild animal species in Maputaland in order to rid the area of nagana (a type of sleeping sickness)¹³. Prominent biologists and members of the public were particularly vocal in demanding an end to the slaughter (Munnik and Mhlope 2000: 32). In 1924, the Ndumu Game Reserve was established in Maputaland, and later also the St Lucia and False Bay Parks elsewhere in Natal. By now resistance to these schemes had become the focus of black people's political attention (AFRA 1990: 36).

Inside the African reserves the Union government perpetuated the British system of indirect rule. Act 38 of 1927 empowered the governor-general to delimit the boundaries of tribal land and to appoint *anyone* as chief, headman or as regent. These conditions required serving chiefs to display loyalty to the government. The Zulu king Solomon kaDinizulu and a group of traditionalists who were friendly to the Union

government, took over control of the Zulu National Congress. At the same time, the Inkatha kaZulu party was established with the support of the Department of Native Affairs to defend the position of King Solomon (Cope 1985: 159, Els 1993: 85-86). This organisation was in direct opposition to the popular Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU). The complicity of Tribal Authorities to the Union government policies was aggravated by uneven economic developments within the reserves. In contrast to pervasive rural poverty, chiefs and headmen controlled vast grazing lands, allowing them to become relatively rich (Mackinnon 2001: 570-571).

Due to its relative isolation, parts of Maputaland remained hunting grounds for white people until the late 1930s (Mthethwa 2002: 146). In 1936, Austin Roberts proposed that tourists be allowed into the area to help finance the conservation of animals and plants inside Maputaland's reserves (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 452). The Union government gladly relented, and these parks were thrown open to tourists, making accessibility an important feature of financial success (Mackenzie 1991: 24). The financial needs of the nature conservation areas, not of the people who lived in the area, thus created the need to break the area out of its isolation.

Even the government of the United States of America showed interest in developing a tourist industry in Maputaland. The National Geographic Society of America hired a team of South African scientists to investigate the suitability of the area as a tourist resort. Between 1945 and 1947 three "Tongaland Expeditions" were undertaken to Maputaland under the leadership of G.G. Campbell (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 440-452). Although the expedition leaders were excited about the variety of

¹³ The government's anti-nagana campaign was based on the faulty premise that wild animals spread the disease. Dr J. S. Henkel discovered that the tsetse fly was actually responsible for the spread of the disease.

plant and animal life, they remained sceptical of the area's tourism potential due to the high incidence of malaria. They also warned that black people living in Maputaland were destroying this unique eco-system with their subsistence farming methods (AFRA 1990: 36). Hence the United States government withdrew from future involvement in developing tourism in Maputaland. However, these reports sparked considerable interest from the South African government in the region (Mthethwa 2002: 153-154). In response to these high-profile expeditions, the South African government established the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board in 1947¹⁴. The expressed concern of this Board was to control illegal poaching, nest hunting of sea turtles and destruction of indigenous forests by black people (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 451). The Board however lacked the power to forcibly relocate (black) people from declared nature conservation areas and to arrest those that trespassed on such land (Cock 1991: 13, 19-20).

Apartheid: Maputaland as malleable space, 1948-1994

In 1948, the Nationalist government came to power in South Africa and laid the foundations for the execution of its apartheid policies. These policies saw the creation of the KwaZulu¹⁵ homeland and the forced removals of black people from land earmarked for white occupation or for nature conservation. Moreover, inside KwaZulu various afforestation and nature conservation projects were also launched to foster economic growth. The Maputaland landscape now became even more malleable in the hands of

(Sumner Curry 2001: 82-83).

¹⁴ The Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board later became known as the Natal Parks Board (AFRA 1990: 42).

political powers. Because of the natural beauty of the Maputaland area, large tracts of land were cordoned off as conservation areas. In 1950, the Natal Parks Board established the small-scale Kosi Bay Nature Reserve, the Malangeni Forest Reserve and Sodwana Bay National Parks (Sumner Curry 2001: 85). Two years later, the Coastal Reserve was established along the coastline between the Mozambique border and St Lucia (Bruton, Smith and Taylor 1980: 452). With the declaration of each of these nature conservation areas, people were forcibly relocated without receiving compensation for their lost land¹⁶. They also lost access to water, grazing and fields, only to be dumped in overcrowded villages next to the conservation areas (Cock 1991: 13, 19-20). By contrast, roads, water and electricity were provided for the parks. Conservation thus came to symbolise a loss of control over resources and was perceived by black people as an elitist activity for the benefit of the white population only (Sumner Curry 2001). Black people were frequently arrested and imprisoned for trespassing on protected land (Turner 2001: 365-366).

The Department of Forestry further curtailed the living space of black people by launching extensive forestry projects in Maputaland and relocating people from such land. Despite large-scale resistance, government established 17 395 hectares of pine forest in the Mbazwane and Manzengwenya regions between 1958 and 1980 (Felgate 1982: 170-175). Small plots of eucalyptus plantations were also established all over Maputaland to create local employment (Mthethwa 2002: 155). The forced relocation of black people had reached such intensity that the Northern Natal African Landowners

¹⁵ The KwaZulu homeland consisted of forty-eight official pieces; not counting the one-hundred-and-fifty-odd small black freehold farms scattered through the Natal province (Walker 1981: 2-3).

¹⁶ Such was the extent of these land grabs that the Tembe-Thonga lost 70% of their arable land without receiving any compensation for it (Larsen 1999a: 36; Larsen 1999b: 23).

Association was formed to help people resist these removals. They were however only successful in delaying the removals somewhat (Mngadi 1981: 1-9).

In the 1960s the plantations in the Mbaswana-Sodwana Bay region attracted large numbers of semi-skilled workers and their families from other areas (Mountain 1990:99). This influx caused additional pressure on the small plots of land outside the plantation and nature conservation areas. In the 1970s this pressure was compounded when the Mabaso and Zikhali communities were forcibly relocated from the Sodwana State Forest and the Nhlozi Peninsula to Mbaswana (Khumalo 2001: 2). In and around Mbaswana, the sizes of subsistence agriculture plots shrank while severe drought exacerbated the poor agricultural potential of such land. Men who could not find work on the plantations or nature conservation areas were forced to become oscillating labour migrants to the Witwatersrand. Labour laws such as the Bantu Labour Regulations (Bantu Areas) Act (1968) compelled all Africans living in the “homelands” to register at Tribal Labour Bureaus, which placed them in specific work categories (Unterhalter 1987:153). The Ubombo district, which encompassed Sodwana Bay and Mbaswana, had the largest recruiting station for South African migrant workers to the Witwatersrand gold mines during the apartheid era (De Bruin 1987: 45).

In the early 1970s, the South African government appointed a Scientific Advisory Council to examine the continued viability of nature conservation in Maputaland. The Council echoed the recommendations of the earlier Tongaland expeditions and warned that Maputaland’s unique ecosystem was deteriorating rapidly due to the demands of the increasing human population in that area. They proposed more extensive nature conservation areas and the militant protection of Maputaland’s established parks

(Mthethwa 2002: 155-156). These proposals were met with increased resistance from local people (Sumner Curry 2001:87-88).

In 1977 KwaZulu became a self-governing “homeland”. The homeland government maintained a comfortable relationship with the apartheid government. Prime Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi filled all cabinet positions with prominent Inkatha¹⁷ members (Els 1993: 110-121). Chiefs in the KwaZulu government became the main executors of apartheid policies, regulating labour supplies to the mines and administering the passbook system. From the perspective of government the Zikhali and Mabaso chiefs and their Tribal Councils were very effective bureaucratic administrators. Yet my informants perceived them as decentralised despots who were inefficient, inaccessible and uncommunicative.

The KwaZulu government’s complicity to apartheid policies became clear in 1978 when Inkatha supported the official recommendations of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions reports¹⁸. They also embraced the subsequent “appropriate development strategies” proposed by the apartheid government, which suggested the extension of nature conservation and forestry areas. Fischer (1988) shows that development in the homelands centred on the creation of state symbols (not people) such as nature conservation areas, a cabinet and a nationalist identity. This was certainly true for the KwaZulu government who invested a lot of stock in its Zulu ethnic identity.

¹⁷ The IFP is a conservative political party with a strong traditional base. It seeks to uphold the patriarchal power of traditional leaders through emphasising the authenticity of customary law as legitimate indigenous law. As such, they promote the exercise of male power by chiefs and husbands (Serote, Mager & Budlender 2001:165).

¹⁸ The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions put the underdevelopment of the homelands down to an economic dependency model. In this model, the political aspects of racial and economic divides in South Africa were ignored (Nustad 1996: 62-65).

In 1982, the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources was established as an official department in the homeland government. This body took control of all nature conservation areas in KwaZulu, except for Sodwana Bay Park that remained under the jurisdiction of the Natal Parks Board. Initially, Mangosuthu Buthelezi criticised the Parks Board's attempts to remove chief Zikhali's subjects from Sodwana Bay¹⁹ saying that this proved "white greed" and that black people were merely "pawns" in South Africa (AFRA 1990: 31). His own Bureau promised to compensate local people who were relocated, and to provide them with a portion of revenue derived from tourism and limited harvesting rights (Mthethwa 2002: 174).

Not even a year later however the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources started to extend nature conservation areas in KwaZulu. In 1983 alone, they established both the Tembe Elephant Reserve and the Sileza Nature Reserve (Sumner Curry 2001: 86). The establishment of the former reserve occasioned the forceful relocation of at least thirty-two homesteads. Many of the removed people complained that they were not consulted about the removals, did not receive the promised compensation, and that their access to the park was restricted. In the area to which they were relocated they had no access to water. At the same time, tourism revenues were dismally small. Such were people's unhappiness with the situation that they accused the Tembe chief of colluding with the apartheid government. There was even talk of driving his headmen out of the district. All this was to little effect, as plans for the reserve steam-rolled through and the opposition was quelled. All tourism revenues were channelled to the coffers of chiefs and headmen (Mthethwa 2002: 156-159, 174-175).

¹⁹ Together with three other areas, the total population to be removed was 150 000 people (Walker 1982: 14-15).

Rumours also began to circulate that a nature conservation area would be established in Kosi Bay. Out of fear of being removed from their land, large numbers of people started to relocate to KwaNgwanasi (Manguzi) on their own accord. Those that stayed behind waged a drawn-out battle with the KwaZulu government over the establishment of the park (CORD 1991: 66-78). In 1987, the KwaZulu government won out and declared the Kosi Bay Nature Reserve (Mthethwa 2002: 159, 161).

At the same time, the KwaZulu government's Department of Agriculture and Forestry supported projects that extended forestry areas. In 1983 the Department entered into a partnership with the GENCOR Development Fund and with SAPPI (South African Paper and Pulp Industries) to initiate Project Grow (AFRA 1990: 43). The managers of Project Grow first sought to gain the approval and support of local chiefs, and signed a contract with chief Zikhali to develop eighty hectares of Eucalyptus plantations. Despite involving local people as small growers, participation in the project did not provide an alternative source of employment to wage labour. Many growers switched to the more profitable hauling and harvesting contracts. However, living conditions did not significantly change for the better. Firewood, grazing land for cattle and water became extremely scarce resources (Brooks 1999). A competing company, Mondi Ltd.²⁰ launched a similar project covering seven districts in Northern KwaZulu called Khulanathi. It was no more successful at improving local conditions, but managed to extend the forestry area in KwaZulu even further. The KwaZulu government supported these projects as schemes for economic development and the empowerment of rural communities. In effect, these projects allowed the timber companies access to new land and cheap labour (Brooks 1999: 4-6, 21).

In 1989 the KwaZulu Conservation Trust was established to channel money from the private sector towards conservation. SAPPI pledged R5 million to the Trust, and several other large South African companies also pledged their support to the fund (AFRA 1990: 43). Under the guise of economic development, these projects catered exclusively for the demands of the white domestic tourism market as they extended the large tracts of protected landscape. To cash in on the expected boom in tourism, the KwaZulu government set up the Isivuno Trust to develop tourist facilities in its parks. The Trust also paved the way for partnerships between nature conservation, private enterprise and local chiefs (Larsen 1999a: 36).

Just north of Sodwana Bay, Ovland Timesharing developed an elite tourist resort on the shores of Lake Shazibe in 1988. The resort cost R15 million to build and covered thirty-five hectares of tribal land. In return, the developers offered the Zikhali Tribal Authority a share in its profits. Though an environmental impact study was conducted, developers paid no attention to the fact that Lake Shazibe was one of only two permanent sources of water for the Zikhali people. The scheme also denied local people access to the lake for fishing, harvesting, and for grazing their cattle on the lake slopes (AFRA 1990: 43).

It was thus with some alarm that some of my informants heard about plans to link the Tembe Elephant Park with the Ndumo Game Reserve in 1988. The establishment of the Mbangweni corridor would have required the relocation of up to three thousand people. There were also plans to link the Tembe Park with various coastal reserves. Had these plans come fruition, the entire border along KwaZulu and Mozambique would have

²⁰ Part of the Anglo American group.

been under conservation and closed to human settlement. Fortunately, these plans were abandoned (Sumner Curry 2001: 97).

Two years later, the KwaZulu government indicated its intention to establish a Kosi Lakes Reserve. The Centre for Community Organisation Research and Development (CORD), the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) and the Mboza project mobilised resistance to this scheme. These three non-governmental organisations built on their experience of opposing apartheid policies, and tried to rally local people into action by distributing pamphlets and holding awareness workshops (See Appendix 4). Though the local Kosi Bay Tribal Authority supported these three organisations, Mangosuthu Buthelezi blamed “white trouble-makers” for stirring up bad feelings and for undermining his government’s efforts to preserve the remaining forests of the area. In the end, the authorities won out and declared the Kosi Lakes Reserve.

Criticism of the KwaZulu government’s complicity to the apartheid system was intense and throughout KwaZulu violence erupted between the supporters of Inkatha and those of the United Democratic Front (UDF)²¹. There were many casualties on both sides and a state of emergency was declared²² (Kotzé and Greyling 1991: 29, 44, 123; Liebenberg and Spies 1993: 514). The ability of chiefs to maintain a certain amount of popular support amidst these revolts rested largely on their continued control of diminishing communal land in the homelands (CORD 1991: 66-67). The situation was exacerbated in 1986 when the South African government planned to cede Ingwavuma, (a municipal district in northern KwaZulu), to Swaziland. Inkatha launched a politico-

²¹ Buthelezi claimed that the UDF is a proxy organisation of the ANC and aimed to undermine Inkatha (Kotzé and Greyling 1991:123). Newspaper articles of the time also frequently confused the ANC with the UDF.

²² This violence continued well into the 1990s.

cultural campaign in the area to ensure the South African government that the inhabitants of Ingwavuma were “true” Zulu and not Swazi or Thonga as the official commissions tried to prove (Kloppers 2002).

For the most part, people in Maputaland went along with the KwaZulu government's plans. They consistently voted for the IFP and blamed the apartheid government for forceful relocations. Many people remained loyal to “their” chiefs, even when the comrades started to question the chiefs’ complicity to the apartheid system. In my research area, people explained their loyalty to chiefs by saying that the chiefs had power to allocate land while the comrades could only give them trouble. However, by the late 1980s the continued onslaught on the living space of local people led to widespread violent protests against nature conservation projects in the area. Local people accused many chiefs in Maputaland of allowing nature conservation programs to dispossess them of their land. In response, twelve chiefs denounced KwaZulu’s conservation policies and threatened secession from the KwaZulu Tribal Authority system in 1990. In political retaliation, Buthelezi accused the twelve chiefs of being UDF allies. Almost immediately, the KwaZulu government withdrew financial support from development projects that had been initiated by one of the chiefs in question. Similar government tactics forced the other chiefs to back down on their position (Mthethwa 2002: 170-171).

The rift between chiefs, the KwaZulu government and regular people deepened shortly before the 1994 elections, when the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly passed the KwaZulu Ingonyama Trust Act. According to this Act, 2.9 million hectares of land in KwaZulu were transferred to the specially created Ingonyama Trust under trusteeship of King Goodwill Zwelithini (Makanjee 1989: 70). It was a final attempt by the ruling IFP

to keep a foothold in KwaZulu. Through transferring land from the Apartheid State (represented by the KwaZulu government) to the Zulu king, the IFP pre-empted attempts by a future ANC government to gain access to the land by abolishing chiefship. In this position, king Zwelithini became responsible for the “orderly release of communal land for development”. However, due to a lack of “administrative capacity” and “infrastructure”, very little in terms of development took place on land administered by the Trust (Payne 1998: 34).

Post-apartheid: The Triumphant Green Landscape, 1994-2001

In 1994 a democratically elected government abolished apartheid and vowed to rectify the spatial and economic marginalisation of black people. Although the ANC won the national elections by a large margin, the IFP still had a lot of support in large portions of the old KwaZulu homeland. With the creation of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the new ANC government sought to erase the boundaries between the black KwaZulu and white Natal. Throughout the new province, municipalities made up of elected representatives were established. In the former KwaZulu, these municipalities were layered on top of the existing system of headmen and chiefs (Fischer 2000:2-3; Ntsebeza 2001:317).

The new government promised to bring “development” and to redistribute land on a more equal basis. Towards this end, they introduced a land claims process that aimed to restore land to people that lost it due to discriminatory laws and forced relocations since 1913 (De Wet 2001:336). The Act was drafted in the early days of the new South Africa to reassure large numbers of black people that they would get back land that was forcibly

taken away from them. This Act also aimed to take the wind out of the sails of the Pan African Congress, whose policy was to return so-called African land to Africans (Thornton 2000: 3).

In 1995 the new national government introduced the Spatial Development Initiatives Programme (SDI) to rectify the spatial legacy of apartheid and to uplift conditions of life in the former homelands (See Map 2). These projects would supposedly narrow the economic gap between the marginal and other wealthier areas of South Africa (See Gelb and Manning 1998: ii).

With the amalgamation of KwaZulu and Natal, former government departments such as the KwaZulu Nature Conservation and the Natal Parks Board merged. This merger ushered in a new nature conservation philosophy. KZN Wildlife formulated a “nature conservation-based community development approach” to manage their parks. Their new approach was well clothed in the rhetoric of community participation, consultation and equitable development for the poor (cf. Harvey 1999: 37-39).

All of these changes created the superficial impression that the amalgamation of KwaZulu and Natal formed a seamless landscape. This was not exactly true. On the political front, the Ingonyama Trust still owned large portions of the former KwaZulu and the Tribal Authority system still remained. People living in the former KwaZulu also had different problems to confront than those that lived in the former “white” Natal. For instance, the vast forestry schemes initiated in the 1980s by SAPPI and Mondi Ltd. did not deliver on their promises of financial gain. In 1995 this became blatantly apparent after the fall of the Asian market for pulp and paper products when SAPPI and Mondi prioritised their own timber at the expense of the small growers'. In protest, local growers

embarked on industrial action blocking haulage traffic and threatening to burn down weigh bridges and depots in their areas. Their protest did not change SAPPI or Mondi's timber sourcing policies. Apart from the reduced income from forestry, local people also started to feel the environmental effects of the forestry schemes (Brooks 1999:6-11)

The LSDI's economic development plans targeted Maputaland as a politically disadvantaged and economically marginalised region. They planned to deliver economic development by transforming the area into an international eco-tourism destination (Jourdan 1998: 722-723). The LSDI's emphasis on eco-tourism made the continued existence of conservation areas an integral part of socio-economic development in the region.

This placed the government in an ambivalent position. On the one hand, all conservation areas were created during the colonial and apartheid eras by forcibly dispossessing black people of their land. Within the framework of a new government, these people could demand such land back through the land claims process. In fact, land claims were made to every one of Maputaland's green areas²³. These claims threatened to erase the apartheid legacy of fenced and heavily protected nature conservation (green) areas. On the other hand, the new government, which funded and initiated the LSDI, supported the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park's application for World Heritage status to the United Nations in 1997 (Douglas 1998:21).

People living within the borders of the proposed Site, protested widely against the declaration of the Site and attracted much of media attention. For instance, at Dukuduku, the government's attempts to move ten thousand people off their land near St Lucia were

met with open resistance and point-blank refusals. Residents also refused the government's offer of alternative accommodation on two sugarcane farms. Weeks before the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park's application for World Heritage status, the government declared that the Dukuduku forest was too damaged by the "squatters" to include it in the application (Anon 1998: 12). The rest of the proposed landscape was simply declared a "green" area while the people living there were quietly edited out of the picture. The official application wildly understated the number of people living in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park. It claimed that there were only six small private townships (Enkovukeni, Kwa Dapha, Mqobella, Mbila, Shazibe, and Hlabezimhlophe) with "a combined total population of approximately 200 families" in the area. In 1999, the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park was declared a World Heritage Site. It incorporated 220km of protected coastline, four wetlands, eight game reserves and many of the small nature reserves in Maputaland (Thulo 2001: 8). As a condition of the declaration, national laws²⁴ ensured that development would not threaten the "integrity" of the site (Van der Merwe 2000: 43). Hence successful land claimants were prohibited from moving back onto the land

In lieu of the possibility of moving back onto successfully claimed land within the World Heritage Site's borders, the government's land redistribution plan called for

²³ It was with considerable alarm that the media reported on the 'onslaught' of land claims on nature conservation areas and the large cuts that government made in its subsidies to these areas (See Anon 2001: 15, Larsen 1999a: 36).

²⁴ The Park has legal protection under the provisions of the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Management Act No 9 1997, the Natal Nature Conservation Ordinance No 15 of 1994 (referring to the following component areas: False Bay Park, Sodwana Bay National Park, St Lucia Game Reserve and St Lucia Park), the Forest Act No 122 of 1984 (referring to Cape Vidal State Forest, eastern Shores State Forest, Mapelane Nature Reserve, Ngalazi State Forest, Sodwana State Forest), the Sea Fishery Act No 12 of 1988 (referring to St Lucia Marine Reserve and Maputaland Marine Reserve) and the Sea-Shore Act No 21 of 1935. Coastal Forest Reserve and Lake Sibayi Freshwater Reserve were set aside under the KwaZulu Nature Conservation Act No 29 of 1992 (http://www.unep-wcmc.org/sites/wh/st_lucia.html Access Sept 25, 2002, 13:05).

market-based compensation (Grimond 2001: 5). One of the first land claims to be settled on this basis was that of the two communities who once lived on the eastern shores of Lake St Lucia. Initially, each family was promised R30 000, but in the final land settlement, they only received R16 000 (Khumalo 1999: 3). The claimants also received a share of the KZN Wildlife's Community Trust. However, they were no longer entitled to poverty subsidies from government. In the light of the high hopes that the communities had in terms of the land claims process, they were dissatisfied with the outcome. The R16 000 that each family had received was not even enough to build a house and income from the KZN Wildlife's Community Trust remained negligible.

Increasingly, discontent with the sluggishness²⁵ of the land claims process on nature conservation areas within the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park started to show. Claimants who received cash compensation were also distressed about the inadequacy of their settlements. Subsequently, land claim settlements on nature conservation areas in Maputaland increasingly started to revolve around "partnerships-in-conservation". Although successful land claimants could not move back onto their land, they were given "shares" in the eco-tourism businesses that were planned on their land (De Wet 2001:336). Government and developers alike hoped that this income would be enough to spur economic growth and development in the region.

A good example of such a land settlement was the resolution of the claim on the Sodwana State Forests and Cape Vidal in July 2001. Instead of taking the R50 000 offered to each family, the Zikhali people chose a share in the promised future earnings from eco-tourism in the area (Khumalo 2001: 2). Much was made of the potential of the

²⁵ In this regard, less than 20% of land claims in KwaZulu-Natal were settled by 2002 (Anon 2002: 22 and Sapa 2001: 6).

area to deliver large-scale economic growth (Koch, De Beer and Eliffe 1998b: 811). This optimism was fuelled in 2001 by the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park Authority's announcement that international investors have shown an interest in investing in the site.

Various authors show that local communities are not empowered by the partnership rhetoric or its token manifestations in practice. In practice, nature conservation areas remain very much the reserve of the authorities (See CORD 1991:66-67; Turner 2001:367-374 and Van den Breemer and Venema 1995: 3-5). In November 2000 this became abundantly clear when a group of divers discovered the rare Coelacanth on a reef just off Sodwana Bay. As the world-wide media attention and scientific interest in the site grew, KZN Wildlife prohibited divers from going anywhere near the fish. They then confiscated the project for their own gain (Bishop 2001a: 2). The find of a rare, almost extinct species in the conservation area of Sodwana Bay buttressed nature conservation authorities' management of the area and also legitimated nature conservation as a land use strategy in an area inundated with land claims.

While I was doing my research, the land area devoted to nature conservation in Maputaland was expanding as various individual developers and non-governmental organisations approached communities with business plans centred on wildlife reserves. These "developers" often echoed nature conservation's economic development promises to local communities in order to secure leases on ecologically valuable land. The trend to the expand nature conservation areas in Maputaland was set to continue as the governments of South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland were planning the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area. As part of the plan, previously occupied land would be rehabilitated for nature conservation. The likely forced relocation of these people was

politically justified in the light of the projected tourism revenues for local people. Some literature sources praised the foreseeable relocation and partnership with nature conservation authorities as “innovative approaches to conservation restitution” (De Wet 2001:337). Others were more cautious and noted that the main emphasis of Transfrontier Conservation fell almost exclusively on nature conservation with little emphasis on the socio-economic development of the people living on their borders (Brandon and Wells 1992:560).

Conclusions

The history of Maputaland after 1843 can be divided into two broad phases; colonial conquest and the extension of formal nature conservation. During the first phase, Maputaland was gradually mapped and conquered by the British colonial powers. By 1910, not a single piece of ‘unowned’ or unexplored land existed in the whole region. When the Union government came into power, every inch of the landscape had been demarcated.

The second phase in the history of Maputaland overlapped only slightly with the first phase and benefited from the “ordered” legacy of colonialism. In the second phase, the successive colonial, union and apartheid governments devoted ever-larger pieces of land to nature conservation in Maputaland. With each nature conservation area declared, people staying on the land were dispossessed and further impoverished. People in Maputaland experienced nature conservation as a highly politicised and violent form of

state intervention. In the history of the area, there were numerous cases where local people resisted the establishment of such areas.

The extension of nature conservation areas continued in post-apartheid South Africa despite the existence of the land restitution process. In this regard, a narrative of the destructive nature of people allowed the post-apartheid government to disinherit and forcibly relocate local people. This was amply illustrated by the land claim settlements on land included in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park World Heritage Site. Here, successful land claimants were prohibited from moving back onto their land by laws that aimed to protect the ‘integrity’ of the site.

In the next chapter, I will illustrate how the LSDI’s emphasis on the development of an eco-tourism industry legitimated existing nature conservation areas and paved the way for the declaration of more of these areas. The primacy of nature conservation as land use strategy in Maputaland also influenced the type of ‘development’ projects that were introduced to local people. One of the main reasons why craft production was selected as a development initiative was because it had such low impact on the natural environment and allowed the authorities greater control over those who harvested raw plant materials in parks.

Like Ferguson's (1990) “anti-politics machine”, development in Maputaland served to de-politicise a highly contested form of land use. Through the mechanisms of development, nature conservation was constructed as a resource in the economic transformation of the area. Local people were intimately tied to the fate of such areas since they were told that eco-tourism would bring economic salvation. The practice of nature conservation was thus disentangled from the violent intrusions that the state made

on the autonomy of local people. The LSDI also negates the historical political process through which the people in the Maputaland region became marginalised. As such, the LSDI hopes to develop the region by making it part of the national and international economy. I have shown in this chapter that Maputaland has in fact been part of the national and international economy since before colonialism. It is precisely this participation that has led to its current peripheral status.

Tribal Authorities played a leading role in the establishment of nature conservation areas in Maputalana, through their complicit relationships with the colonial, union and apartheid governments. Even when KwaZulu gained “independence” as a homeland, nature conservation areas continued to expand under an IFP government. In this regard, I showed how Tribal Authorities benefited from the income from these areas. In chapter four, I will focus on the post-apartheid relationship between chiefs, the land and regular people. I will show that the link between chiefs and the land was not cut and that Tribal Authorities find various ways to capitalise on “tradition”. Sometimes these strategies include the establishment of “community conservation areas”.

In the establishment and extension of nature conservation areas, women were particularly hard hit. Due to apartheid policies, these women could not leave the homeland and had to make do with ever-shrinking subsistence agriculture plots. In chapter five I will focus on the economic strategies that women developed to cope with the long absence of men and the meagre opportunities that subsistence agriculture presented. Women’s linkage to agriculture and food also made them more likely to resist the establishment of nature conservation areas since the competing land use strategies



impacted more directly on them. In chapter six I will look at the ways in which both men and women resisted the establishment and existence of nature conservation areas.