

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SUSTAINABLE HARVESTING OF  
BUCHU (*Agathosma Betulina*) WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE  
ELANDSKLOOF COMMUNITY**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Magister Artium in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies**



**Faculty of Arts**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that “Socio-economic aspects of the sustainable harvesting of buchu (*Agathosma betulina*) with particular emphasis on the Elandskloof community” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Samantha Williams

November 2005

Signed .....

Supervisor: Dr Thembele Kepe (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)



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## ABSTRACT

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SUSTAINABLE HARVESTING OF BUCHU (*Agathosma Betulina*) WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE ELANDSKLOOF COMMUNITY**

**Samantha Williams**

**MA Thesis, Geography**

The aim of this thesis is to explore the socio-economic factors that impact on the sustainable harvesting of buchu in the Western Cape of South Africa. Some of the factors that will be explored include poverty, natural resource tenure, legislation, and local practices with regard to the harvesting of buchu. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, which include documenting different local livelihoods, establishing the roles played by the harvesting of wild buchu within these livelihoods, and analyzing perceptions of different stakeholders regarding sustainable harvesting of buchu, the study employed two approaches. The first was a review of the literature, and the second, empirical research in the form of a case study (the communal land owners of Elandskloof, Western Cape) was utilized.

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*Agathosma betulina*, one type of buchu and cited as the best type of buchu, has gained popularity as there is a demand for plant material both locally and internationally. This demand has created some concerns for wild populations of buchu as much of the industry is still supplied by populations harvested from the wild. Cultivation of buchu has emerged as a possible pressure lifter to the wild populations, as a poverty reduction strategy (as rural people are also cultivating), and as a way to provide for some of the demand experienced in the market. The buchu industry is a very lucrative one and, therefore, many problems are being identified and experienced. Noting this, the study makes two broad arguments. Firstly, even though the buchu trade is dynamic and fraught with many difficulties, it is a trade that can benefit all stakeholders and, consequently, there is a need for new legislation or a review of the current legislation guiding the industry. Better monitoring and evaluating processes, as well as information and communication

platforms where stakeholders can interact, prove important. Hence, this should include the participation from stakeholders at all levels. Secondly, in order to establish effective policy guidelines, an understanding of the social dynamics that influences buchu harvesting is important for the resource sustainability as well as the trade.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLA	Advisory Commission on Land Allocation
ANC	African National Congress
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
C.A.P.E	C.A.P.E Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development Project
CPA	Community Property Association
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Natural Resources
NC	Nature Conservation
NTFP's	Non-Timber Forest Products
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WCNCB	Western Cape Nature Conservation Board



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Conditions of extreme poverty trap a large number of South Africans (May, 2000). On a global scale, it is estimated that one in every five people, of which two-thirds are women, lives in abject poverty (DFID<sup>1</sup>, 2002). In order to ensure food security, the poor engage in various exercises, which include exchanging goods, providing services, cultivating crops or hunting and gathering (May, 2000). In order to aid the poor, particularly the rural poor, the South African government has recognized that communities should be involved in the processes of their own development. Various strategies have been adopted and this is displayed in policies, which advocate for enhancing capacity of poor people to engage in community-based sustainable development (Donaldson & Marais, 2002; Kepe 1997).

Reed (2002) notes that during the 1990s, poverty and its implications gained priority on the international agenda. Conferences, such as Stockholm (1972), the Rio Conference (1992), and more recently the Johannesburg Earth Summit (2002), were a collective effort by the international development community to discuss pressing global issues, which included conservation of natural resources as well as poverty (Reed & De Wit, 2003). Reed (2002) further notes that experience, from strategies set out to deal with poverty and its implications, has mostly been rhetoric rather than practical.

In South Africa, many people are dependent upon land and natural resources (IUCN<sup>2</sup>, 1999). Land rights and issues relating to land are extremely sensitive, not only because of the racial basis with which it was distributed in the past (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994), but also because it has implications for access to and control over natural resources. How these resources are controlled also affects the lives of millions of people who depend on it. Poor rural people especially depend

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<sup>1</sup> Department for International Development, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> International Union for the Conservation of Natural Resources

on natural resources within the areas they occupy (Jehan & Umana, 2003). However, because of many pressing socio-economic circumstances, the poor have often been justifiably blamed for the over-utilization of natural resources in their local environments (Mortimore & Tiffen, 1995; Neefjes, 2000). This over-utilization often further disadvantages them, as it reduces the amount of natural resources available for their future use. In many instances, poor people are seen as both the victims and perpetrators of environmental degradation (Hope & Lekorwe, 1999).

The need to establish sustainable use of natural resources and to ensure sustainability of poor communities are concerns that are major constraints to sustainable development. Leach *et al* (1997) notes that what is needed is to bring people and the environment back into harmony. This, however, should not be done individually but should be integrated to other livelihood and socio-economic processes. Concerns regarding unsustainable use of natural resources in rural areas have been highlighted throughout the twentieth century, with emphasis being placed on over-exploitation of trees, wild plants and more recently medicinal plants in particular (Kepe, 2002). Medicinal plants have come sharply under the spotlight because of the high monetary values attached to some of these plants, as well as the rate at which they are being harvested (Coetzee *et al*, 1999). The focus, however, has been primarily on the resource's biological aspects and how over harvesting will lead to its ultimate extinction, while at the same time giving little attention to the impact this will have on local livelihoods of the poor who harvest these.

The indigenous Khoi-San people of the Western Cape have used *Agathosma betulina*, (better known as buchu) the focus of this study, for many years (Jodamus, 2003). It has been well documented that the Khoi people used it for almost everything, from stomach ailments to moisturizing their skins (Dugmore, 2003). More recently, due to its commercialization, buchu has become so sought after that it is being treated as a protected species, is highly vulnerable to extinction, and is being cited as the abalone of the land (Yeld & Ellis 2002). The longevity of this plant is being threatened because of its lucrative income

generating opportunities (Lovell 2000). Internationally, there is a huge demand for it, since its major uses are in the pharmaceutical and food industry (Coetzee *et al*, 1999). Locally, it is being distilled by large companies at profitable rates (Lovell 2000). According to the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB), the buchu industry generates approximately R150 million per year.

One way in which the sustainability of buchu might be ensured would be to develop enabling strategies that would promote sustainable harvesting and cultivation of buchu. By incorporating local role-players, this could yield beneficial results. Over harvesting of buchu as well as unsustainable cropping practices could lead to the inevitable extinction of the resource (Coetzee, 1998). Should this happen, local livelihoods of people depending on buchu income could be threatened.

This study, therefore, seeks to generate findings to inform policies that would result in the sustainable harvesting of buchu that grows in the wild. Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to the overall debate concerning poverty-environment relationships, by exploring the social dynamics of livelihoods derived from and harvesting practices employed by local people on buchu. As mentioned previously, most studies on buchu have predominantly been concerned with the biological aspects of sustainability, with minimal attention to the social dynamics affecting the use of this plant (see Jodamus, 2003; de Ponte Machado, 2002; Coetzee *et al*, 1999). The rural community of Elandskloof, Western Cape, will serve as a case study to explore these social dynamics relating to livelihoods derived from and harvesting practices employed by local people on buchu.

## **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The study's main aim is to explore the social dynamics of livelihoods derived from, and harvesting practices employed by local people on buchu with particular reference to Elandskloof, Western Cape Province. The study also seeks to understand social dynamics influencing harvesting and use of buchu, within a

wider community of stakeholders involved in the buchu use and trade. These include private farmers, processors, and users. The study has the following specific objectives:

- to document different local livelihoods and establish the role played by the harvesting of wild buchu within these,
- to establish harvesting frequencies of plant material harvested for each stakeholder group involved in the buchu trade,
- to analyze perceptions of different stakeholders, regarding sustainable harvesting of buchu,
- to review literature concerning social aspects of sustainable natural resource use and how this relates to the livelihoods of the poor.

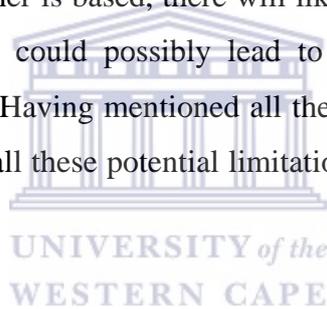
### **1.3. SIGNIFICANCE**

The study could prove useful for a range of role-players. These could include local and national policy makers, community members, commercial farmers, processors, academics, and non-government organizations. For all these role players, the study could contribute in a number of ways.

Firstly, it could help them gain a better understanding of the value that different stakeholders attach to buchu. This could prove useful for the implementation of policies regarding legal harvesting requirements. Secondly, the information on stakeholder views and perceptions of each other could possibly result in better co-operation between stakeholders, prompt capacity building between them, as well as mutual understanding about buchu and the requirements needed to ensure its sustainability. Thirdly, the study should contribute to the debate about whether or not natural resource use can and does make a meaningful contribution to local livelihoods and how it can aid in poverty alleviation. Fourthly, the prospect of cultivation of buchu in the area presents an opportunity to look into community participation and involvement in their own livelihood strategies. Lastly, the study is potentially contributing to the limited body of knowledge related to the social factors affecting the harvesting of buchu.

## **1.4. LIMITATIONS**

The study is likely to face several limitations. Firstly, there is the issue of language. Although the researcher is fluent in Afrikaans, the local language spoken in the case study area, and therefore the language used to collect data, careful attention would be needed while translating data into English when the thesis is being written. This might not be difficult to do but is likely to prove time consuming. Secondly, a potential limitation is related to data collection for illegal activities within the buchu trade. While illegal harvesters also form part of the stakeholder profile, it might not always be possible to obtain information on illegal harvesters' roles or perceptions on the buchu industry. Thirdly, because the study specifically focuses on buchu, other natural resources and agricultural products contributing to local livelihoods would receive secondary treatment in terms of the amount of data collected. Lastly, because the study area is located outside of Cape Town where this researcher is based, there will likely be lengthy times of absence from the field, and this could possibly lead to missing certain crucial issues relating to the research. Having mentioned all these, however, I aim to minimize the negative effects that all these potential limitations may have on the findings of the research.



## **1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.5.1 Rationale for the choice of the case study area**

The area of Elandskloof was selected as a case study site because of the combination of dynamics that are at play there. Geographically, it is situated 17 kilometers southeast of Citrusdal and approximately 185 kilometers from Cape Town in the Western Cape. It is surrounded by part of the Koue Bokkeveld Mountains and is reached partly by gravel road (Southern Africa Places, 2003). The inhabitants are mostly descendants of the Khoi people who lived in the area in the past. Afrikaans is the main language spoken by almost members of the community.

The area of Elandskloof is somewhat popular after being the first community to receive its land back under the new dispensation in South Africa (Mayson *et al*, 1998). Historically, the Dutch Reformed Church bought the land and established a missionary station there. However, in 1961, during apartheid rule, a white Afrikaner farmer bought the land and the local inhabitants had to vacate (Mayson *et al*, 1998). The Elandsklowers were scattered all over the Western Cape<sup>3</sup>. Upon restitution of the land to the Elandsklowers, the community was able to take legal authority over the farm in 1996. At present, the population on the farm is about 100 families (Yeld, 2004). No schools are available on the farm and basic resources such as electricity, sanitation, and running water are inadequate.

Other important factors that also contributed to the choice of the case study area include:

- Buchu grows wild in Elandskloof and is harvested communally. Issues relating to access, how much should be harvested, and how income is distributed, all form part of the major research objectives.
- The land restitution case of Elandskloof provides a context for the sustainability of the community as well as how the community is securing a livelihood during the post-settlement period.
- The location of Elandskloof is in close proximity to other stakeholders. It borders smaller commercial farms as well as land under the Western Cape Nature Conservation Boards auspice (Mayson *et al* 1998).

### **1.5.2 Summary of research methods**

This study forms part of a larger study and is divided into two major sections. The first identifies the social issues related to the sustainable harvesting of buchu. The researcher from UWC<sup>4</sup> carried out this part of the research. The second component of the research identifies the biological/ecological issues related to the

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<sup>3</sup> Personal communication with Mrs. E. Januarie (Community member)

<sup>4</sup> University of Western Cape

sustainable harvesting of buchu. The prospective PhD student from UCT<sup>5</sup> is conducting this part of the research.

This study's data gathering stage included a number of activities. Firstly, upon the development of a questionnaire, a pilot study (which included participatory methods) was carried out with several stakeholders. The primary target group was the community of Elandskloof, which consists of plus/minus 85 households and not 100 as Yeld (2004) notes. Because Elandskloof is communally owned, buchu in the area is seen to be a community resource. Consequently, all Elandskloowers have a stake in buchu use and harvesting. Therefore, the survey attempted to include all households (plus/minus 85) in Elandskloof. Among others, the survey sought to document the perceptions of the local stakeholders to buchu use and harvesting, how they value buchu as well as the contribution it is making to community livelihoods. The secondary group of stakeholders included small-scale commercial farmers and informal harvesters around Elandskloof, and information was gathered by means of informal interviews or group discussions. Secondly, the survey aimed to identify local perceptions on sustainability as well as harvesting practices. Questionnaires were selected because they provide a cheap means of collecting data from large numbers of people (Peil, 1995). During the analysis process, questionnaires have also proved to save time, especially if they are arranged into content subsections (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Using questionnaires has also been cited as a method of overcoming resistance in that it promotes the 'personal touch' (Peil, 1995). If handed out individually, it can encourage respondents to participate. Another data collecting procedure would include interviews (these would most likely take a more informal approach). Here again, the personal touch and interaction produced better results. Observation can also provide a more useful means of acquiring information (Peil, 1995). Even though an outsider can never be a full member of the group under investigation, participating over an extended period can help in closing that knowledge gap. Participant observers also get more information from strangers in the community through informal conversations. Lastly, secondary sources and available literature

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<sup>5</sup> University of Cape Town

relating to the issues under investigation was sought from books, journals, newspaper articles and the Internet.

## **1.6. THESIS OUTLINE**

The thesis comprises seven chapters and, following the introductory chapter (Chapter 1), the remaining chapters present key issues, which include:

**Chapter 2:** This chapter is a literature review that reviews literature on poverty, land reform, biodiversity conservation as well as the challenges faced by post-apartheid South Africa. Also included here is a discussion of what government is trying to achieve in terms of the above mentioned and how this is relevant within a rural context.

**Chapter 3:** This chapter provides a background of the case study area highlighting its early history, the restitution process that occurred, and current day livelihoods in the area.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter provides an overview, as well as various definitions, of sustainability.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter presents the findings of the study. Here, the various subsections and tables provide results of data gathered from the case study area.

**Chapter 6:** This chapter presents perceptions on sustainability from other stakeholders who include commercial farmers, the Rastafarian community in Citrusdal, local distillers, the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB), as well as the Agricultural Research Council (ARC).

**Chapter 7:** This chapter concludes with the key findings and suggestions for policy guidelines.

## **1.7. CONCLUSION**

This introductory chapter outlined the context of the study. A brief overview of what the study aims to achieve was provided by stating the study's objectives and highlighting its relevance. Some of the limitations that the study may encounter were also presented. A brief literature review and introduction to the case study area was provided and more discussion on the aforementioned will be provided in chapters to follow. The next chapter (Chapter 2) will provide a literature review on some of the key issues the South African government is facing as well as what

it is trying to achieve in order to redress some of the past injustices perpetrated on the majority of the country's people.



## **CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY: THE ROLE OF LAND REFORM, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

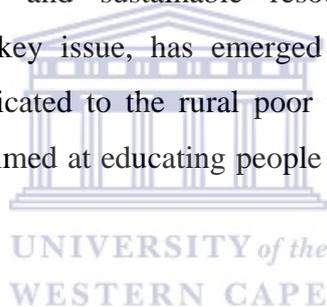
### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter set the stage for this thesis and what it concerns. It briefly highlighted some of the major problems identified in the thesis, defined the study's objectives and aims, provided some background on current trends as well as how the thesis can contribute to this knowledge. Lastly, it outlined how the thesis will be structured. The aim of this chapter is to present the background and context crucial for building on arguments made in the thesis. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this thesis or researcher seeks to understand the social dynamics influencing the harvesting and use of wild buchu (*Agathosma betulina*) in the context of rural poverty. Mounting concerns of unsustainable harvesting practices could ultimately lead to extinction of the resource and therefore, would have a detrimental affect on those livelihoods dependent on it. This chapter, more specifically, will present policy background relating to some key issues influencing livelihoods in rural South Africa. The most crucial of these key issues include land reform, poverty alleviation, and environmental conservation. It is hoped that through presenting these key issues as well as exploring the relationship between them, their relevance to this study will be apparent.

The first section of the chapter will look at the issue of land in South Africa as well as the land reform process. The need and importance of land reform is based on the fact that large scale land dispossession during apartheid resulted in skewed land ownership patterns, characterized by a minority owning more than 87% of the country's land. Government's main aim now is to try and 'ease' this major inequality by using land reform as a vehicle to drive this process. Those identified to benefit from land reform not only include people who were dispossessed from their land under apartheid legislation, but also the rural poor with no access to land or uncertain land tenure rights.

Rural poverty is the second key issue that government is trying to address. As a result, various enabling strategies are being developed and implemented to aid the rural poor. In this sense, the land reform program has been identified as one way in which government is trying to undo the great injustices of the past, by providing the poor with land and also returning land to those who were once dispossessed. The hope is that through land reform some of the strain of rural poverty will be eased, in that people would be able to contribute to their own livelihoods by utilizing the land and its natural resources sustainably.

The role of natural resources has also gain prominence. The realization of their value has mobilized government's powers to develop and implement programs that will highlight their importance in rural livelihoods. Government is now encouraging communities to make use of natural resources, but at the same time, adhere to conservation and sustainable resource practices. Biodiversity conservation, the third key issue, has emerged as an important development strategy and is communicated to the rural poor through various forms of rural development strategies aimed at educating people about resource degradation and sustainable resource use.



The following sections of this chapter wishes to explore the above-mentioned issues in more detail to highlight their importance within this study. The section directly following this introduction will look at land in South Africa as well as the land reform process. Rural poverty, and some of the government frameworks adopted to deal with it, will follow land reform. The chapter concludes with a look into natural resource degradation and biodiversity conservation in South Africa.

## **2.2. SOUTH AFRICA'S LAND REFORM PROGRAMME**

The issue of land in South Africa is a sensitive matter and it will be for a very long time (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994). This is so, because land under apartheid was distributed purely on a racial basis. Apartheid policies dispossessed many black people of land, but this issue did not emerge when these policies came in place.

Since the dawn of colonial occupation, native people were dispossessed and robbed of their land, became occupiers of it, and were paid to work on what was formerly theirs. Apartheid policies merely reinforced and accelerated the process of land dispossession in the race for white dominance. Even though colonial dispossession seems relevant to use as a basis for providing insight into land dispossession in South Africa, this thesis will not be able to delve as far back as the colonial era. The following section will therefore look at land dispossession administrated by apartheid policies as well as how the post-apartheid government is trying to redress these past injustices.

### **2.2.1.Land dispossession in Apartheid South Africa**

Many black landowners were dispossessed of their land due to apartheid legislation. The most conspicuous of these policies was probably the Native Land Act of 1913 (Mostert, 2002). Other racially discriminating land policies were the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act, the 1939 Control and Improvement of Livestock in Native Land Act as well as the Group Areas Act. Many people were forcibly removed from their land and concentrated on land that was either not suitable for agricultural use or inadequate for both residential and agricultural purposes. Under apartheid policies like the Native Act, a minority (12.6% of the population) owned 87% of the land, and the majority of South Africans were concentrated on overcrowded pieces of land reserved for black people (Van Zyl *et al*, 1996). Many of these areas were geographically remote and marginalized. The most popular of these gave rise to areas known as the ‘Bantustans’, located in the former homelands. Since apartheid policies thrived on the promotion of white supremacy, these areas (reserved for black people) became inefficient in that little or no employment opportunities were available and basic infrastructure and services were inefficient. The removal of black people from their land was also largely accelerated by the so-called ‘betterment schemes’<sup>6</sup> which promised

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<sup>6</sup> Betterment planning was implanted in the homelands from the 1940’s and its stated objective was in response to soil conservation rather than erosion. It divided the land into separate sections for residential, arable, and grazing purposes. People that use to reside near their arable fields were moved to compact villages (Mgwigwi 1999).

agricultural growth if people were to move to compact villages (Mgwigwi, 1999). Even though the promises of betterment planning never materialized, McIntosh and Vaughan (1999) notes that there exists evidence that suggests that it had genuine objectives to promote conservation and raise agricultural productivity. They further note that government resisted providing the range of resources, services, and infrastructure needed resulting in its downfall. With democratic legislation now in place, government soon realized the need to remedy land dispossession resulting from past discriminatory laws. Legislation included the process of land reform. This process has developed into three component parts. Discussion of these parts follows in more detail.

### **2.2.2. The three legs of land reform**

After the first democratic elections in 1994, mobilization of government's powers addressed two of the most fundamental problems facing South African society. First on the agenda was to address the problem of excessive poverty (especially in rural areas) and the second to redress or compensate black people for unfairly dispossessing them of their land. In this regard, the South African government realized the importance of and need for land reform. It acted accordingly by implementing it (Cousins, 1995; Van Zyl *et al*, 1996; Koch & de Beer, 1998; Donaldson *et al*, 2002). In the South African Constitution, the main section that deals with land reform is contained in sub-section 25 (7) of the Bill of Rights. Here it is stated that:

A person or community dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminating laws or practices is entitled to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to restitution of that property or to equitable redress.<sup>7</sup>

Many have expressed their views and opinions in favour of land reform (see Van Zyl *et al*, 1996; Brown *et al*, 1998; Turner, 1998) and what measures are needed to ensure its success, while others are not entirely convinced that access to land will

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<sup>7</sup>Constitution of South Africa, Section 25 (7):pg12 (Bill of Rights).

result in poverty reduction and economic prosperity for the poor (Greenberg, 1999; Wisborg, 2002). In South Africa, the land reform process has been identified as consisting of three sub-processes. Discussion of the three legs of land reform is below.

### *Restitution*

The main purpose of the restitution process is to restore land or to compensate people who were unfairly dispossessed of their land after 19 June 1913 (Brown *et al*, 1998; Wynberg & Kepe, 1999; Donaldson & Marais, 2002; Del Grande, 2003). This dispossession affected approximately 3.5 million people (Mostert, 2002). Even though removal of many people from their land occurred before 1913, this date was chosen because before it, there has never been a law that clearly defined the process of dispossession. The Restitution Act 22 of 1994 (as amended) was one of the first pieces of apartheid reform law (Hargreaves & Eveleth, 2003; Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, 2003). Its restitution process can be viewed as a sensitive process and therefore should follow a rigid administrative order. This process is also not an easy task, as years of oppression cannot simply be done away with overnight. The restitution process in South Africa, however, has settled many claims successfully. To date, cumulative statistics as at February 2004, indicate that from 48,463 claims lodged, 616,429 beneficiaries were allocated 810,292 hectares of land.<sup>8</sup> These figures might seem impressive but the settling of claims is still a continuing process that will take many years to meet the targets set out for the program. The targets set out by the land reform process as a whole, and the failure to meet them, have been hotly criticized by many (Ramballi & Maharaj, 2002 in Donaldson & Marais, 2002). The restitution process in itself received criticism that mostly deals with the time pace at which the claims take to be resolved. Some of the other major criticisms are that government departments do not have the capacity or adequate number of personnel to handle the process.

### *Redistribution*

The second leg of the land reform program is the redistribution process, which aims to allocate land to the rural poor and landless people with the emphasis of

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Land Affairs: Restitution page. Available at: <http://land.pwv.gov.za/restitution>

improving household economic status (Wynberg & Kepe, 1999; Sibanda, 2001; Del Grande, 2003). The aim of redistribution to the poor and landless is to give people land for residential purposes as well as for agricultural purposes. Government's initial target with agricultural land was set at redistributing 30% of the land within a 5-year period from the new government's inception. This target might have been too optimistic and in 1999, the now minister of Land Affairs announced that the land reform policy would rather shift its emphasis on economic development and poverty reduction (Ramballi & Maharaj, 2002 in Donaldson & Marais, 2002). A new target of redistributing land was also set at halving the number from 30% to 15%. This was also set to be done over a period of five years.

#### *Land Tenure Reform*

The aim of this process is to give people secure tenure rights or ownership to the property they occupy (Sibanda 2001 & Del Grande 2003). Under apartheid rule, discriminating conditions also excluded women from having any type of tenure ownership and, in rural areas, traditional authorities enforced this (Wynberg & Kepe 1999). Unfortunately, this could also be seen as a constraint hampering the tenure reform process. Kepe (2002) notes that the land tenure program has been the most neglected aspect of the land reform program and by September 2000 had not even started in earnest (Ramballi & Maharaj, 2002 in Donaldson & Marais, 2002). In South Africa, legislation and policies are now in place to safeguard landowners' rights to their land and property. Some of the legislation relevant to these rights includes the following:

- Extensions of Security of Tenure Act of 1997: safeguarding people's rights who live on other people's land against eviction.
- The Land Reform (Labour Tenants Act) of 1996: this is to grant labour tenants the right to occupy land they historically occupied as well as to acquire land.
- The Development Facilitation Act of 1995: aimed to speed up land development as well as making provision for serviced sites.

- Land Tenure Rights Act of 1993: intended to speed up the land delivering process, by identifying the rightful landowner, making tenure rights legal and binding, handling and settling any land disputes, and successfully transferring land.

It has been ten years since the inception of the land reform program, which has proved to be a daunting task. It has significantly affected the lives of the many beneficiaries already compensated, and will continue to, for the many who still await their share from the program. Rural people are the key stakeholders to benefit, but how has land reform influenced these livelihoods?

### **2.2.3. Land reform and rural livelihoods**

Since its inception, the land reform programme has met challenges, achievements, and varied views and opinions on how it will affect those it identified to benefit from land reform. By now, it is common knowledge that people living in rural areas are those who are hit the hardest by poverty. Their dependence on land and natural resources, therefore, is greater in the absence of any other income or economic opportunities. In order then for rural people to contribute to their own livelihoods, government realized the important role land plays and how it influences livelihoods.

The land reform and particularly the restitution process proved more complex than was thought initially. The Department of Land Affairs admitted this in its annual report in 1998 (Marais, 2001). In defense of restitution, it should be highlighted that claims for restitution of land are primarily done by communities and as with the land reform process, these claims are subject to verification in order to identify who is entitled to restitution of land or monetary compensation.

Even with the criticisms flaring up from all sides, the land reform process has brought relief to many who wanted to return to their land. Some of the more popular settled restitution cases include that of the Riemvasmaak community in

the Northern Cape, Elandskloof (Western Cape), Cremin (Kwa-Zulu Natal), Ratsegai (North-West), and the Ronaldsvlei community in the Northern Cape (Dawood, 1998). Apart from giving communities back their land, the government has also made financial compensation available in the form of a land resettlement grant (Marais, 2001). In 1999, the government suspended R16,000 per household in an attempt to get small black farmers on their feet, which formed part of a rural development strategy. Marais (2001) further notes that at the expense of its potential to reduce poverty, land reform has been mobilized to service the development of putative nodes of rural economic growth. The focus of the shift is now on developing and aiding farming entrepreneurs rather than just providing the rural poor with immediate monetary compensation.

### **2.3. ADDRESSING RURAL POVERTY**

The previous section provided an insight into the land reform program in South Africa and why it is necessary to have it. However, land reform is not the only strategy government has implemented to deal with the injustices of the past. The post-apartheid government has adopted various strategies to deal with rural poverty. These are laid out in several policy documents. Among the legal strategies and frameworks put forward by government to eradicate poverty, one form was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and what was later termed as a somersault from the RDP, gave rise to government's macro-economic policy entitled Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (Sono, 1999; Kepe, 2002). Another strategy put forward to deal with rural poverty is the government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS). As mentioned above, government adopted these strategies to redress some of the past injustices done to the majority of the country's people. Below, I will explore these strategies by highlighting their purposes, challenges, and success.

#### **2.3.1. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**

When the new government of national unity came into power in 1994, the realisation that apartheid policies left not only a fragmented society, but also a

fragmented intergovernmental system, prompted the need for transformation at both levels (John, 1995). This need for transformation gave rise to one of the first strategies adopted by the new government known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP envisaged a state body that would implement and facilitate development and economic growth that would be backed by public investment and social infrastructure goods (Chipkin, 2002). The first phase of the programme also focused on land restitution, land redistribution, and a centralised infrastructure development that would give emphasis to a rural development policy (Pycroft, 2002). Furthermore, the ANC (African National Congress) government saw the RDP as a partnership of:

...everyone, every organisation, every opinion-making group that can contribute...that's the protection this government needs to ensure that if anything goes wrong, it will be our responsibility collectively (Marais, 2001:237).

Thus, it sought to integrate all segments of South African society in a bid to alleviate some of the most pressing problems, such as poverty. This policy framework assumed that public investment in reconstruction and development would result in economic growth. Furthermore, it was hoped that if government takes on a leading role in collaboration with the private sector as well as the public, that it would result in government meeting its basic needs in providing for the state and the economy. Government's role in this regard would then be, as leader to the whole democratising process and therefore every government office together with even the smallest village council, to adopt the RDP. It was assumed, therefore, that change should primarily occur at a managerial level and that unity could be achieved in two ways. Firstly, that a single set of policies would reconcile the diverse groupings of people, and secondly, that government departments could be marshalled around these policies and new values adopted by the government (Chipkin, 2002). The reconstruction of civil society already represents a challenging task but to get the various governmental departments (national and local) to work in a harmonious and organised way represents an even greater task. This might have been why the RDP did not succeed in its ultimate

goals and it is suggested that even though it was not done official, the RDP was abandoned after just two years (Kepe, 2002). Marais (2001) notes that since the programme represents transformation, this prevents it from being discarded of formally and since not used as a tool for development, it is used as an accessory of an ascendant hegemonic project.

### **2.3.2. The Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Framework**

Adopted in 1996, the GEAR strategy, government's macro-economic policy, has been termed as a somersault from the RDP program. Chipkin (2002) notes that GEAR is a medium-term plan that would revive the constrained economic environment and therefore, contribute to improved growth as well as employment. In this view, the framework is seen to also contribute to poverty reduction (in the long-term) by creating employment. In GEAR, the role of government is also presented in a different view. In the RDP, government leads development, but in GEAR, the role of government is to act as facilitator (Marais, 2001; Chipkin, 2002). In GEAR, government stresses that growth will be achieved through job creation and redistribution but others noted that GEAR represented "a recourse to the policy goals and instruments of the past apartheid regime" (Aldezadeh, 1996 cited in Marais, 2001:163). In this light, GEAR was welcomed by the corporate sector and praised for responding to many of the concerns expressed by many businesses (Marais, 2001). Hence, the framework is seen to drive economic development but economic development does not necessarily translate into job creation as experience showed. Job losses experienced from 1994-1996 accounted for more than half a million, and with mechanised production, job losses on farms were estimated to be more than 200,000 (Marais, 2001). It would seem, therefore, that those critics of GEAR have ground to stand on when voicing their scepticism and disapproval of the framework. When job losses are the consequence of economic development, then the only ones benefiting from the framework are those in the corporate sector. Kepe (2002) notes that even with these alarming consequences and criticism of the framework, government is still set on promoting programmes related to GEAR.

### **2.3.3. The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy**

Another strategy adopted by the government to aid rural poverty takes the form of the Integrated Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS). This ten year plan aims to bring real change to South Africa's poorest areas, transforming rural areas by targeting the poor, women, youth and the disabled (Government of South Africa, 2000; Kepe, 2002). This strategy's strength is based on the fact that it targets those on the ground and if driven with enthusiasm and tenacity (on the part of government and the rural poor), it could achieve good results. Since it involves rural people in the Integrated Development process it empowers these individuals to take charge of their own livelihoods. Other main activities and benefits of the Rural Development Programme include:

- focussing on existing rural development programmes and therefore strengthening it;
- communities are mobilised to be actively involved in their own development;
- empowering and strengthening the capacity of local structures to ensure sustainability of development work carried out; and
- matching the development aims of communities to available opportunities and services, as well as integrating the work of different government departments so that national, provincial and local departments are all informed about development decisions (adapted from Government of South Africa, 2000).

In order to make frameworks and strategies like the above mentioned sustainable, it should not only be rhetorical, but their visions and objectives should be implemented. These policies are developed in response to the transition of democracy in South Africa. The implementation and functioning of some these have been slow, but as those government departments responsible for them are (re)structuring themselves, it is hoped that implementation and continuity of these

strategies will continue. If these continue, rural communities will act as active participants and co-decision makers in rural development.

#### **2.3.4. The use of natural resources**

It has been shown numerously, that poor rural people are the most dependent on natural resources to sustain their livelihoods (May, 1999; Neumann & Hirsch, 2000). In the absence of any other income, the rural poor find themselves engaging in various strategies such as harvesting resources from the wild, others might cultivate these, and some might engage in both the former and the latter, as well as trading and selling of these natural resources. Many of these resources are located within or adjacent to their living environments and take the form of non-timber forest products (Neumann & Hirsch, 2000). These resources can be seen as any resources gathered from the forest, which does not include commercially exploited timber. Also, included under non-timber forest products are plants, parts of plants, herbs, vines, and shrubs. Medicinal plants are especially sought after and trading of it is particularly common at informal markets.

The use of natural resources and the role it plays in rural livelihoods has gained acknowledgement from those in government positions but also from scholars who are actively involved in investigating the poor and their livelihoods. In South Africa's Constitution, the protection of the environment is provided for in the Bill of Rights (section 24 (b)) and, therefore, recognises its importance not only for those that are making use of it now, but also for future generations. Various other pieces of legislation provides for the protection of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

#### **2.4. NATURAL RESOURCE DEGRADATION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**

The previous sections explored rural poverty highlighting the various strategies the South African government is exploring to deal with rural poverty. Many of these strategies have one common objective; the eradication of rural poverty can only

occur if it has the rural poor as active participants in their own development. The need to have the rural poor engaged in their own development will also create a better understanding of their environment and how to avoid resource over-utilization.

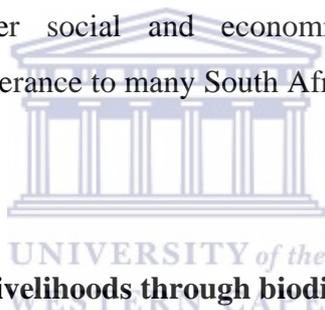
Many government policies and strategies recognize the role of natural resources and their value to rural livelihoods. Hence, government is encouraging rural people to make use of these, but in a sustainable manner. Identification of a serious problem in South Africa is natural resource degradation (Hoffman & Ashwell, 2001), and the rural poor is one of the perpetrators (Mortimore & Tiffen, 1995). Before democratic legislation regarding natural resources came into place, there were little or no clear indicators for natural resource use. These strategies (advocated by government now) call upon the rural poor to make use of natural resources but in some instances these very same strategies encouraged by government, come into sharp contradiction with legislation that calls for the protection of these resources. Apart from this contradiction, there is also the chance that these strategies will result in conflict within communities. The establishment of many rural development projects in these areas aims to have the community involved. In many parts of South African and the world, women are primarily concerned with harvesting, collecting or selling of natural resources. When these projects target women as key role-players, this might result in conflict where the community is still largely functional on a patriarchal system (Neumann & Hirsch, 2000).

South Africa is an ecologically diverse country ranking it as one of the top countries in biodiversity in the world. It boasts an abundance of marine biodiversity and a fauna population, which include many endemic wild animals and birds (Glazewski, 2000). Apart from its fauna, it also has a diversity of plants, primarily in the Western Cape and this has earned the region its international reputation. Various pieces of legislation such as the National Environmental Management Act (108, 1998), the Environmental Conservation Act (73, 1989), and the National Forests Act (84, 1998) are in place to ensure the conservation of

biodiversity (Barnard, 1999). Furthermore, South Africa is also a signatory to several national and regional environmental agreements committing it, therefore, to carry out certain actions with regard to biodiversity conservation (Kepe, 2002). The South African Constitution also provides for human rights with regard to the environment. In the Bill of Rights (Section 24, pg 11) it is stated that:

An environment that is not harmful to their health or well being and 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 degradation, (ii) promote conservation and (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

These rights are unequivocal, and while its immutable character is beautifully emphasized, many other social and economic pressures are making its implementation and deliverance to many South Africans difficult (Reed & De Wit, 2003).



#### **2.4.1. Enhancing rural livelihoods through biodiversity conservation**

Under apartheid dispossessions, communities and people were evicted from land, which was seen by government as sites of biological conservation or as nature reserves (Wynberg & Kepe, 1999). Apartheid policies and dispossessions did not succeed in evicting all communities from their land and the well-popularized community of Kosi Bay on the St Lucia shores (Kwa-Zulu Natal) resisted efforts to be removed from the area (Turner, 2000). In another example, efforts by the apartheid government to accommodate expansion of the Kruger National Park saw the removal of approximately 3,000 people. Through restitution, the Makuleka community was able to have their land restored to them in the Kruger National Park (Mahony & van Zyl, 2001). A condition put forward, however, was that the land should continue to be utilized for conservation purposes. Therefore, the

community has embarked upon pro-poor tourism initiatives to help them sustain their livelihoods (Mahony & van Zyl, 2001).

On a national level, the 'Working for Water Program' initiated by the South African government in 1995, is a government initiative, which aims to enhance biodiversity, while at the same time contributing to poverty alleviation.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of the programme is to clear alien vegetation in South Africa, imported for aesthetic and economical reasons. These alien populations caused havoc on the country's ecosystems by reducing biodiversity and affects water availability. Thus, the programme recruits local communities to help assist with the clearing of infested vegetation. The programme is seen, therefore, to restore ecosystems, increasing water availability whilst alleviating poverty. Hoffman and Ashwell (2001) note that in such a relatively short time, the success of the program is already evident. Not only has the program achieved many of its public awareness goals, but various other secondary projects and opportunities have aroused from it. Also, even though the Water program workers are employed on a temporary basis, they are encouraged to develop entrepreneurial skills, which might assist them in tendering for private jobs that include clearing of alien vegetation and fire fighting (Hoffman & Ashwell, 2001).

#### **2.4.2. The Land Care Programme**

In 1998, the Department of Agriculture published a document entitled '*Agricultural Policy in South Africa: A Discussion Document.*' The discussion document's main objective is to conserve agricultural natural resources, acknowledging the need to provide sustainable agricultural resources use. It further highlights the chief environmental concerns, which affect agriculture (Glazewski, 2000). Contained in the discussion document is a set of three principles and one of these principles highlights the role of humans as the primary custodian of the land. In this regard, the rights of the landowner are protected and

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<sup>9</sup> Working With Water Homepage. Available at: <http://www-dwaf.pwc.gov.za/wfw>. Accessed: 26/06/2004

government legislation, which is in place, will therefore strengthen the right of the land user. In strengthening the landowner's right, his/her responsibility for conservation, sustainable use of the land, and maintenance of biodiversity is reinforced. As a result, these considerations form an integral part of the Land Care Programme. The Land Care Programme is geared towards the conservation of agricultural resources. So to ensure the sustainability of agricultural activities, which might have a detrimental influence on the environment (Glazewski, 2000), the programme employs rural people and includes the following components:

- *Public Works for Resource Conservation:* the erection of structures for the identification of what is needed to help alleviate soil and veld degradation, bush encroachment, soil acidity, and invader plants. The erection of these structures is geared towards job creation and poverty relief whilst at the same time contributing to the reduction of and rehabilitation of degraded resources.
- *Capacity building:* this is to build upon existing structures in place and, furthermore, to train leaders and to develop skills of those involved in resource conservation and community upliftment.
- *Public awareness and education:* this component deals with the creation of awareness of resource conservation in schools and colleges among others.
- *Policy and Legislation:* this component will review all existing policy and legislation dealing with resource conservation.
- *Research and Education:* this will involve the establishment of an inventory to discuss research related issues regarding resource conservation projects and an evaluation of progress to date (adapted from Glazewski, 2000).

The Land Care Programme is therefore a mechanism whereby the conservation of biodiversity uses a grassroots approach. The community is involved in the process and act as the drivers of the programme but also as safe-keepers of the land and the natural resources. In this way, biological diversity can be maintained and so too lead to poverty reduction through job creation.

### **2.4.3. C.A.P.E. Conservation and the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier and Development Program**

The C.A.P.E. Conservation and the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier and Development Program are two innovative programs the South African government embarked upon to promote biodiversity, but at the same time, to also reduce the rate of natural resource degradation. The C.A.P.E. Program, entitled C.A.P.E. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development Project, is aimed at conserving the Cape Floristic Region, which has been identified as the most threatened floral region in the world.<sup>10</sup> The program builds on the successful Cape Strategy and Action Plan (C.A.P.E.), and it is believed that local communities will embrace it since it will bring benefits to people. Some of these benefits include the creation of a number of biodiversity employment opportunities, which will incorporate local people. One stated objective of the program is that it will identify the root causes of biodiversity losses, thereby identifying areas needing conservation. By establishing these areas and conserving them, this will ultimately lead to the conservation of the floral kingdom.<sup>11</sup> The project, which taken over a twenty-year period, will encourage environmentally best practices to mitigate affects on biodiversity.

Another government program aimed at biodiversity conservation is the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier and Development Program. This five-year development program forms a collaborative biodiversity initiative between the governments of South Africa and the Lesotho Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> The project focus will cover an area of approximately 13,000 km<sup>2</sup> along the eastern boundary of Lesotho with South Africa. One of the main aims of the project is to firstly put a management strategy in place for the whole region, thereby creating sustainable economic activities for the people living in the areas. It is hoped that current land-use will be enhanced in such a way that it addresses both the problems of the

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<sup>10</sup> South Africa- C.A.P.E. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development Project. Available at: <http://www.gefonline.org/>. Accessed: 11/11/2004.

<sup>11</sup> South African National Botanical Institute (SANBI) website: <http://www.nbi.ac.za/>

<sup>12</sup> The World Bank Group. Biodiversity in South Africa and Lesotho. Available at: <http://web.worldbank.org>.

biodiversity threats and aiding socio-economic growth requirements. The program has a short-term job-creation component,<sup>13</sup> which is specifically aimed at local rural communities. The project further wishes to create linkages with rural communities so that they may see the benefits of a healthy productive environment.

## **2.5. CONCLUSION**

The introduction of this chapter stated that crucial key issues in this chapter would help to present background needed for building on arguments made in this thesis. This chapter has attempted to highlight these key issues affecting livelihoods in a rural setting. It started out by presenting an overview of the land reform process in South Africa and how it influences rural livelihoods. Highlighting the various components of land reform and how this can help to alleviate some of the most crucial problems facing post-apartheid South Africa did this.

Rural poverty in South Africa was also discussed and some of the strategies developed and implemented by government have been highlighted. It can be concluded that these strategies have merit and their objectives seem doable but constraints, mainly on the part of government, is hampering their implementation and efficiency. The chapter concluded with an overview of natural resource degradation and biological conservation. Some of the programs government has embarked upon have shown how the rural poor might be able to benefit two-fold. Firstly, strategies developed by government to aid the rural poor require their active participation in the program. This could ease the problems of unemployment in rural areas and therefore provide an income. Secondly, since rural people are actively involved in the development of their environment, they act as caretakers in sustaining a healthy productive environment.

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<sup>13</sup> Maloti-Drakensberg Project. Available at:  
[http://www.safica.info/ess\\_info/sa\\_glance/fauna\\_flora/malotidrakensberg.htm](http://www.safica.info/ess_info/sa_glance/fauna_flora/malotidrakensberg.htm)

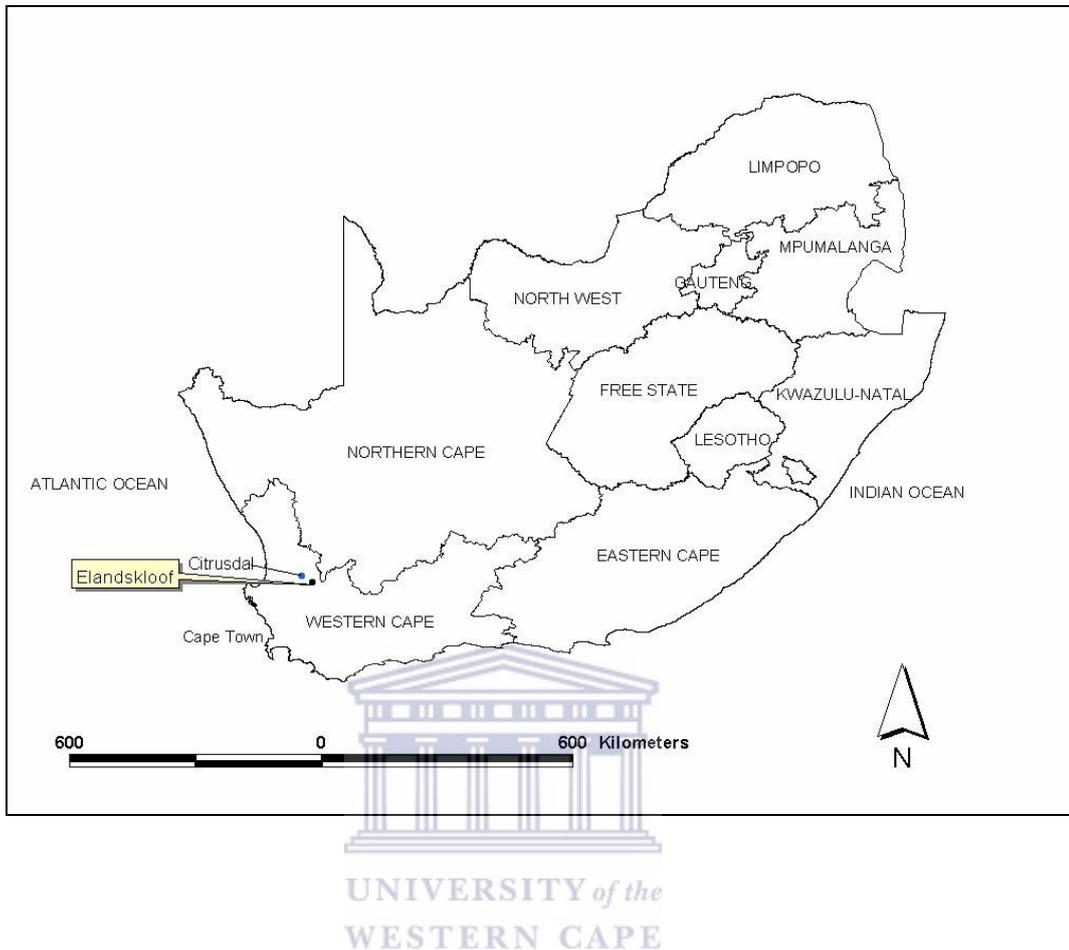
## **CHAPTER 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY AREA**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

As alluded to in Chapter 1, the basis of this thesis is a case study of buchu harvesting in the Elandskloof community. This chapter, therefore, presents a detailed description of the area and its surroundings, in terms of biophysical, economic, social, political, and institutional aspects. The case study area (see Figure 1) is situated in a catchment area in the Cedarberg Mountains ( $32^{\circ}00' - 32^{\circ}45' S$  and  $18^{\circ}50' - 19^{\circ}25' E$ ). It forms part of a pair of contiguous farms situated approximately 185 km outside of Cape Town and 17 km from the town of Citrusdal, in the Western Cape. Situated halfway between Ceres and Clanwilliam in the Cedarberg, the Koue Bokkeveld Mountains partly surrounds it (Anderson & Smith, 1992). The farm covers an area of about 718 ha and the surrounding mountain land, approximately 2,420 ha (Anderson & Smith, 1992). Most of the inhabitants are decedents of the Khoi and San people who lived in the area and the medium for communication is Afrikaans.

To put things into context, the chapter firstly, describes the Cedarberg area in which Elandskloof is situated. The area exhibits a rich history that had an immense impact on the region's background and which has influenced its development to a great extent. Apart from its rich history, the area also boasts an equally rich biophysical landscape, which is part of the reason for the choice of this area for the present study. Secondly, the case study area is introduced, where a descriptive overview of the area is provided. Particular emphasis is placed on the area's early history as well as the land reform process that took place. The chapter concludes with a brief look at present day livelihoods at Elandskloof after the land restitution process.

**Figure 1: Map of South Africa Showing the Study Area**



### **3.2. OVERVIEW OF THE CEDARBERG REGION AND ITS HISTORY**

The Cedarberg area lies east of the towns of Citrusdal and Clanwilliam in the Olifants River Valley, Western Cape (Taylor, 1996). As mentioned above, this area boasts a rich biophysical environment, which is characterized by a predominance of mountain fynbos that is typical in mountain catchments of the Western Cape. Its climate is Mediterranean and is characterized by hot dry summers and cold wet winters. The Cedarberg is better known as a wilderness area (Van Rooyen & Steyn, 1999), with a mountain range that stretches 90 km and is 25 km wide. The area's name is derived from the popular Clanwilliam cedar

tree, which at present, because of exploitation, is being threatened (South Africa Online Travel, 2004)<sup>14</sup>.

Before colonial occupation, during the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Cedarberg region, the area literally remained ‘unknown’ to the outside world (Anderson, 1993; Penn, 1999). This is apparently due to the inhospitable terrain, the unpredictable native Bushmen, and the general impression gained from those who have traveled in the area, that it lacked incentive and was not worth the risk (Taylor, 1996). According to Penn (1999), both the San and the Khoi people lived in this area. The San were known to be hunter-gatherers and predominantly occupied the region, but this soon changed because of continued harassment from the Khoi and later the European frontier farmers. This led to the retreat of the San people into the mountains where they may have lived for many years. Rock paintings found in many caves of the mountains is evidence of this (Mitchell, 1999).

European exploration, therefore, ‘opened’ the way to the Cedarberg region and its unknown wonders. The people who first occupied the area knew these wonders. Stock farming was one of the first activities of the European settlers who also later adopted a patch burn system aimed at encouraging game to concentrate in a specific area. The same treatment was given to encourage the production of *Agathosma betulina* (buchu) (Taylor, 1996). The settlers observed these practices from the local people. Later, they found various ways to gain dominance over these practices after seeing its incentives. As history has shown, many European settlers robbed and tricked many indigenous people out of their land and livestock in the Cedarberg region (Elphick, 1977; Mitchell, 2002).

The presence and role of the church accelerated the growth of the area. One of the first and oldest towns in the region is Clanwilliam. Missionary stations were also established and the population growth of small towns in the region soon expanded.

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<sup>14</sup> South Africa Online Travel (2004). Cedarberg Range and Olifants River Valley. Available Online at: [http://www.southafrica-travel.net/westcape/cawe\\_01.htm](http://www.southafrica-travel.net/westcape/cawe_01.htm) (Accessed: 10 December 2004)

The missionary stations in the region grew rapidly as the purpose of these was to ‘civilize’ some of the local people. In many of these areas, the church played an important role. In some instances, it also bought land to settle local inhabitants while the locals engaged in small-scale livestock farming or agriculture (Anderson, 1993).

One such missionary station, located in the Cedarberg region, was Elandskloof, the basis of this thesis. While Anderson (1993) notes that the acquisition details of the farm remain somewhat obscure, it is known that the farm was bought by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) from two joint owners, Stefanus du Pleses and Andries Janse van Rensburg in 1861. The church’s objectives with regard to the land acquired was to establish a missionary station in the area (National Land Committee, 1990; Jordaan, 1998). Many local ‘coloured’ people lived on the farm and farmed there for nearly a century. In 1962, the church sold the farm to two white farmers. This led to the eviction of the community, many of whom were direct descendants of the first inhabitants (Anderson, 1993). The section below focuses on the history of Elandskloof, particularly its early days as a missionary station, to the time of the forced removal of its inhabitants and the land claim process that followed.

### **3.3. ELANDSKLOOF: THE CASE STUDY AREA**

#### **3.3.1. Elandskloof before the removal**

History shows that conflict over land in Elandskloof is not new. Anderson (1993) notes that many farmers in the area were strictly opposed to the concept and establishment of missionary stations in the region in 1861. This opposition was due to the fact that these farmers wanted the land in the area to be privately owned by white farmers, in an effort to ensure the dependence on labour in the area, thus reducing labour costs. Therefore, missionary stations were seen as a threat to cheap labour. Regardless of these objections, after purchase of the land, the valley of Elandskloof became a missionary station. Oral history suggests that the inhabitants of Elandskloof paid about half of the money to purchase the farm

(Gillan, 1998). This would suggest that the first inhabitants made a significant contribution to the purchase of the land even though the land was registered in the church's name (Barry & Mayson, 2002). Oral history also further suggests that many Elandsklowers thought Queen Victoria of England had given them the land (Anderson, 1993; Barry & Mayson, 2000).

Early livelihoods on the farm comprised a variety of activities and the local 'coloured' community at the missionary station engaged in various activities to generate an income. The largest part of the community's income was derived from the sale of livestock and other domestic products (Anderson & Smith, 1992). The sale of the popular buchu tea was a main source of income as well as the sale of corn. Anderson (1993) further notes that Elandskloof was the hub of economic activity in the area in earlier times having a school, a church, and being financially vibrant.

Continued complaints from white inhabitants, against missionary stations and Elandskloof in particular, saw the establishment of the town of Citrusdal in 1916 (Anderson, 1993). Citrusdal served as an alternative to the 'coloured' financial and social centre point for the white community in the area. It was formally declared a village in 1922 (Anderson, 1993). The establishment of Citrusdal was clearly in response of the desires of white inhabitants to have their own centre of economic activity.

During the period of 1929-1930, economic depression prevailed in Elandskloof. There was uncertainty about land ownership and pressure increased from the white neighbouring farmers to have the church sell the land. The pressure from the white farmers on the DRC to sell the land was largely due to the fact that Elandskloof was the only farm in the Citrusdal area that was not privately owned by whites. Therefore, the residents of Citrusdal and the neighbouring white farmers regarded it as a 'swartkol'<sup>15</sup> (Anderson & Smith, 1992).

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<sup>15</sup> Blackspot

The end of Elandskloof, as its inhabitants knew it, came swiftly after 1948, when the Nationalist Party gained power in South Africa, and implemented discriminatory laws based on race (Anderson, 1993). The white farmers and those opposed to Elandskloof described the farm of Elandskloof as ‘unhealthy’ to the surrounding environment and further increased the pressure to have it sold (Anderson & Smith, 1992). This ultimately led to the sale of the farm in 1961, for R34 000 to two white Afrikaner farmers (Jordaan, 1998). The new owners were two brothers and they were very eager to have the community vacate their land. Resistance, however, on the part of the community resulted in them being locked out of their church and school, their fields burnt, and their livestock impounded or killed (Anderson & Smith, 1992). The new owners suggested that they would allow the community to stay on the land and that they would have first labour options. However, there was one other condition that the new owners proposed, that the inhabitants forfeit all their traditional rights. The community apparently refused these conditions, forcing the owners to seek their eviction. Attempts by the community to protest against the eviction failed miserably, and in 1962, they were finally evicted. Some Elandskloowers went on to ‘squat’ on the neighbouring farm, Allendale, owned by a white farmer, Mr. du Plessis, while others remained in the Citrusdal area. Many others scattered throughout the Western Cape (Barry & Mayson, 2000).

The area’s history tells a tale of prosperity, heartache, dispossession, and a community torn apart. Their determination to remain a community and to fight for the land, which they were dispossessed off, finally paid off some 30 years later when they were reunited with their land.

### **3.3.2. The land restitution case**

The area of Elandskloof set the stage for one of South Africa’s first restitution cases. The desire of the community to return to their land was always there after

eviction<sup>16</sup>. The then government promised the Elandsklowers that they would be returned within five years from eviction (Anderson & Smith, 1992). Sadly, this promise never materialised and the Elandsklowers lost contact with their land, families, friends, dreams, and aspirations.

Soon after the first democratic elections in 1994, the legal instruments to formally introduce land reform into legislation were established, and the mechanisms needed to set up the process sharply took shape. A radical change was needed in order for the newly elected government to redress the injustices done to the majority of this country's people. After this significant change in the country's political structure, the community of Elandskloof, many of who were squatting on the neighbouring farm, Allendale, was able to lodge a claim in 1992 to have their land returned. This claim was initially submitted to the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA), but this did not produce anything fruitful (Barry & Mayson, 2002). It was only after the passing of the Restitution of Rights Act 22/1994 that the Elandskloof claim was transferred to the Land Claims Commission.

In June 1996, a settlement was reached that would enable the community to get their land back. By using a Community Property Association (CPA) (Act 28/1996) as a juristic person, in whom ownership was registered, the Elandsklowers were able to take legal ownership of their land on 13 December 1996 (Barry & Mayson, 2000). The community did not return to the land immediately, as there were some community members who were claiming for individual parcels of land. Barry and Mayson (2000) further notes that the land reform process at Elandskloof was a complex process. By 2000, re-occupation of the community was not fully established.

Since the community claim's was submitted by using a CPA as juristic person, a community constitution had to be adopted as well as the establishment of a

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<sup>16</sup> Personal communication with Mrs Aletta Titus (19 September 2004) who lived on Elandskloof all her life, and together with her husband and young children were evicted from Elandskloof in 1962.

committee. This meant that the Communal or Community Property Association had to be restructured, thereby facing many challenges. Some of these included the identification of who was an Elandsklower and whether this person was eligible to land rights (Mayson *et al*, 1998). Additionally, the community experienced internal friction as many felt that those who stayed on in the area and fought for the land should be considered for land rights, while others who left the area should be excluded<sup>17</sup>. Schmidt (2002) notes that the cause of tension and conflict at Elandskloof was because most of the original Elandsklowers (evictees) were dead and that some of the older community members did not consider many of children and grandchildren wanting to return as Elandsklowers. This possible exclusion of descendants could not be done, however, and many people who claimed to be Elandsklowers came forward to claim their stake.

### **3.4. ELANDSKLOOF LIVELIHOODS**

Establishing who qualified as an Elandsklower made the process of returning to Elandskloof a gradual one. After the completion of the land restitution process, the people of Elandskloof returned to their land, many not the original evictees, but children, grandchildren, or family of those evicted in the 1960's. Families living at the farm presently consist of small households, approximately 85 households with some even as small as one person per 'informal' housing unit<sup>18</sup>. The Elandskloof community committee is active in its activities and consists of nine members. The committee is responsible for management and administration matters of the farm, but due to internal friction and conflict, the activity of this committee has been hindered at various times.

Very few formal housing units are located at Elandskloof, and the owners have built those found. Many Elandsklowers claim that upon restitution of their land they were told that houses and other physical infrastructure would soon follow. The issue of housing is a concern that the community feels the government has neglected or that they are just not delivering on their promises. The local school,

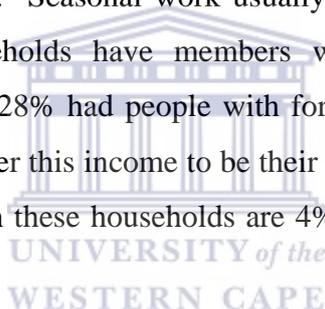
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<sup>17</sup> Personal Communication with Mr. Januarie (Elandsklower), 17 September 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Own observation during field visit, February 2005.

closed long before the eviction of the community, remains unused, and community meetings are now occasionally held here. The children of Elandskloof, therefore, are transported by bus into Citrusdal every day to attend school. The historical church building, which the first inhabitants of Elandskloof helped build, was renovated, but is also not used by the community. No minister is available on the farm and people attending church travel into town for Sunday church service. The tarring of the gravel road out to Elandskloof was to have commenced in January 2005,<sup>19</sup> but at present, no work has started.

In terms of employment, many of the community members are not formally employed, but a substantial number of them work as seasonal workers on surrounding farms or at the various citrus factories in town. At least 44.2%<sup>20</sup> of people interviewed noted that seasonal work is the most important form of employment and income. Seasonal work usually lasts for about six months per year. Very few households have members working formally, but for the households interviewed, 28% had people with formal jobs locally (Citrusdal and surroundings) and consider this income to be their most important (28.8%). Those who are self employed in these households are 4% of the study's population (see Table 1 and 2).



**Table 1: Type of Employment and Number of People Employed<sup>21</sup>**

<b>Employment Category</b>	<b>Number and Percentage of People</b>
Formal employment (Locally: Citrusdal and surroundings)	28% (21)
Other (mostly seasonal)	68% (51)
Self-employed	4% (3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (75)</b>

<sup>19</sup> Personal communication with chairperson of Elandskloof community committee, Mr Oerson Januarie (September 2004 & February 2005)

<sup>20</sup> This percentage is not a representative of the community but rather the sample used for the study, which included 52 of the 85 households found.

<sup>21</sup> The total of 75 is indicative of the overall number of people engaged in some type of employment for the 52 households.

No work is available on the Elandskloof farm and, apart from the wildflowers or buchu harvesting; resources located in the wild generate little or no other income. Since poverty is prevalent on the farm, government grants are an important source of the income contributing to these households when no seasonal work is available. Results from Table 3 indicate that government grants for children (46%) and disability grants (31%) are important sources of income, contributing significantly. In addition to these two types of grants, another important source of household cash is old age pensions (20%) (see Table 3).

**Table 2: Most Important Source of Income**

Source of Income	Percentage
Government grants	25.0% (13)
Formal job (local)	28.8% (15)
Buchu trading earnings	1.9% (1)
Other (seasonal work)	44.2% (23)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

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**Table 3: Type and Percentage of Government Grants<sup>22</sup>**

Type of Grant	Percentage
Old age pension	20.0% (7)
Disability grant	31.4% (11)
Child grant	46.0% (16)
Child grant for orphan children	3.0% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (35)</b>

Income derived from all these sources is important to many of these households. Additionally, due to very dry recent summers of 2004 and 2005, the orange, pear, and other fruit harvests on the farm have produced minimal harvest. The constant eating and trampling by cattle has also contributed to the loss the community

<sup>22</sup> The total of 35 is indicative of the overall number of government grants that are received within the 52 households surveyed in the study.

suffered with the fruit harvests. An initiative, established in the community, is the cultivation of buchu that grows wild in the mountains surrounding the farm. In 2004, the community embarked on a buchu cultivation project and eight individuals from the community were selected for it.

### **3.5. CONCLUSION**

The aim of this chapter was to describe the case study area as well the restitution process that occurred there. Before this was done, however, a description of the Cedarberg was given, providing some background that greatly influenced the development and history of the region as well as the case study area. The chapter has indicated that as a result of being torn apart as a community and dispersed all over the Western Cape, relationships and ties which once bound this community together were broken and replaced by a sense of frustration, anger, and a longing to return to their land. Adding to these frustrations, poverty still prevails in the area and is exacerbated by government's promises to provide adequate infrastructure to the area. Following the successful land claim, this has not yet materialized. The chapter has also shown that formal employment is minimal, making short-term or seasonal employment, government grants, and buchu some of the most important sources of cash income in the community.

## **CHAPTER 4: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATURAL RESOURCE USE**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous three chapters have provided the necessary background to take the discussion in this study further. The problem and objectives of the study were introduced (Section 1.2, Chapter 1), relevant policy issues (land reform, poverty, conservation and so forth) were discussed (Chapter 2), and the case study area introduced (Chapter 3). The aim of this chapter is to highlight another important aspect of the study—sustainability. As mentioned in the first chapter, this thesis is concerned with the sustainable use, harvesting, and management of wild buchu. Much has been said about the implications of unsustainable harvesting practices employed with regard to natural resources, including buchu, and these have clearly focused predominantly on the biological consequences should prevailing trends continue (de Ponte Machado, 2002). It has also been argued that the factors threatening the biological sustainability of buchu have various implications for other aspects of the users' livelihoods (Coetzee, 1998). Being broad in definition and scope, it is not possible to cover all aspects of sustainability. For purposes of this chapter, the review of sustainability only focuses on various ways of defining it and how these inform decisions on natural resource use and management.

Sustainability has become the fad of modern day thinking and is the most prominent phrase in development discourse (Adams, 2001). There is arguably no discussion related to the environment and development that does not contain discussion on sustainable development (Trzyna, 1995). Many world conferences have been held to discuss this concept, such as the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and the Earth Summit (Rio, 1992). In 2002, it was again strongly asserted when South Africa hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The need for sustainable development arose when the global community realized that current trends in human growth and development are causing concerns and threats to the world's natural resource base (Carley & Christie, 2000). These were global concerns and, therefore, required co-operation and involvement of all countries. Sustainability is also a universal concept

needing emphasis at all levels of development. Many countries have consequently pledged their support for sustainable development and adherence to the vision and objectives of its commitments and vision.

This chapter firstly discusses sustainability, briefly highlighting its origins and providing the key definitions of the concept. Secondly, three of the key ways in which sustainability is defined will be presented to illustrate the relationship between these and how they are linked. This is also done because the many definitions that have been provided for sustainability tend to focus on its biological aspects. However, sustainability is multidimensional and, as a result, encompasses among others economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental dimensions (UNDP, 2003). The environmental aspects can be differentiated further into biotic (flora and fauna) and a-biotic (water, soils, and minerals) dimensions. For the purposes of this chapter, the biological, economic, and social methods of interpreting sustainability will be explored in detail. The chapter concludes with a look at the key challenges of sustainability within a South African context.

#### **4.2. DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY**

The description of sustainable development has many definitions, but the one that seems to stand out came from the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) Report (Adams, 1990; Kirkby *et al*, 1995). This report, better known as the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, is hailed as a landmark document in the sustainable development debate, and therefore popularized the concept (Adams, 2001). After nearly 900 days of deliberation between 22 people from both the developed and developing countries, the idea of sustainable development was birthed (Redclift, 1987; Ekins, 1992). The Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). The Brundtland report proves important for several reasons. Adams (2001) notes that ‘Brundtland’ was a conscious attempt to revive the ‘spirit of Stockholm’, which is usually viewed as the key event that established the emergence of sustainable development. Another

important element of the report was that it recognized from the onset that environmental problems could not be addressed without looking at other issues such as poverty (WCED, 1987). Poverty is seen as both a major cause of environmental degradation and a major result. Therefore, it would be useless to try to undertake environmental problems without looking at factors underlying poverty and international inequality (WCED, 1987). Adams (2001) further adds that *Our Common Future* recognizes that unsustainable development could further lead to resource degradation and increasing the numbers of poor and vulnerable people. Apart from the important contributions made by the Report, its definition on sustainability also proposes two key concepts. The first makes reference to basic needs and the second sets limits. These limits are not set by the environment but by technology and social organizations. Hence, this definition is seen as a subtle move away from the historically conservationist thinking on sustainable development (Mawhinney, 2002).

Many other definitions have been coined, and there are many who believe that there is still some ambiguity around the subject (Adams, 2001; Mawhinney, 2002). This might be, as the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) puts it, because sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony. Rather, it is seen as a process of change in which exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technology and institutional change are made consistent with future needs as well as present ones (WCED, 1987).

The idea of sustainability has its origins in international environmental law and policies of the 1970's and the 1980's (Basiago, 1995). Sustainable development as a concept first appeared in the World Conservation Strategy that was drafted by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) (Basiago, 1995; Kirkby *et al*, 1995). Adams (1990) notes that nature and wildlife conservation can be viewed as the most deep-seated roots of sustainable development thinking. Sustainability has also been viewed to be coupled to futurity, which takes on a precautionary principle (Blowers 1993, cited in Basiago, 1995). The concept of futurity and the precautionary principle,

therefore, protect future generations from destructive actions by present generations. Even though its origins can be traced to an environmental-conservation background, sustainability's main concern is not only conservation of the natural environment, but also how the relationship between human activities and nature can be harmonized and balanced. In doing so, Becker and Jahn (1999) note that this ensures the preconditions of development for future generations.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, better known as the Rio Conference, officially established sustainable development as the most important policy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Basiago, 1995; Becker *et al*, 1999). The Rio Summit was the largest gathering of world leaders in history, and from it came a document known as the Agenda 21. This document became known as a blueprint on how to make development socially, economically as well as environmentally sustainable (Basiago, 1999). It, therefore, calls on development that integrates economic growth as well as environmental protection. Since Rio, many environmental declarations are now endorsing sustainable development. Thus, it is seen as the new paradigm of society, economics, and the environment. Basiago (1995) observes further that sustainability is also used in many domains such as biology, economics, sociology, urban planning, ethics and many other fields. However, it should be noted that sustainable development is more than just a clear-cut process. As it has been shown above, it does not only consist of biological sustainability but comprises various aspects of human activities. Having pointed out that sustainable development is not as straightforward as many might assume, it would mean that there are concerns that might affect its role and purpose.

One of the first challenges faced by sustainable development is that it is a concept that is poorly understood. In many cases, it is still used as a catch phrase without real understanding of its underlying purposes. Sheppard (2003) notes that there are many who still ask just what is meant by sustainability and the process of sustainable development. He notes that in recent years the answer to this question has been to realize that sustainability depends on, among other socio-economic

factors, an understanding of nature and political institution and processes. This might be where the confusion and uncertainty of sustainability occurs as it could still largely be seen to be an ecological process. Redclift (1987) remarks that studying the relationship between the environment and development has proven to be a complex process. Hence, if not studied as a multifunctional approach, it is bound to cause confusion. When trying to marry developmental plans and the environment, people from very different backgrounds, mindsets and agendas have to sit together in discussion and this is not always an easy task to perform (Trzyna, 1995). Confusion is bound to arise where consensus on the issue cannot be reached and the views and approaches advocated by those actively involved in the debate will remain subjective. This makes arriving at a consensus on sustainable development difficult. For this reason, it may not only asks how can this be overcome, but also how can these barriers between professions, disciplines, institutions and sectors be broken down (Redclift, 1987).

The main domains, under which sustainability is discussed in this chapter, are the biological, economic, and sociological domains. Other domains are mentioned briefly, by way of wrapping-up the discussion. By defining and discussing each of the three main domains separately, it is hoped that its relevance to the study will be usefully illustrated. The following sections describe sustainability under these three broad categories, beginning with biological sustainability.

#### **4.2.1. Biological sustainability**

Perceptions around sustainable development have predominantly been focused within biological and conservational perspectives (Kirkby *et al*, 1995). This is so, because the need for sustainability arose at a time when it was realized that the natural resource base on which human and economic activities depends was being used and degraded at a pace fast exceeding its renewal capacities. Sustainable development calls for the conservation and protection of the environment. However, for the protection of the environment to occur, the need to identify the threat and its underlying causes proves pivotal. Biological sustainability is an

important feature of sustainable development, but it is not the only feature of sustainability that needs to be strived towards. A number of activities and processes are included under the sustainable development 'umbrella' but for this specific section, the biological interpretation of sustainability is explored.

Basiago (1995) defines biological sustainability as the process whereby natural biotic capital is being preserved on behalf of future generations. Biodiversity, defined as "conserving genes, species and ecosystems"(Johnson *et al*, 2000:47), has become a great concern as natural ecosystems are deteriorating, decreasing the chances of survival for human, animal, and plant life. The need to conserve biodiversity, therefore, is the essence of biological sustainability. Furthermore, conserving biodiversity encompasses many benefits, which include maintaining the health of natural ecosystems for the benefit of human, plant, and animal life. Areas of biological diversity also offer large unstudied and undisturbed environments and encompass natural environments that humans interact with and are thus seen as 'psychologically restorative' (Basiago, 1995). During the Rio conference, the loss of biodiversity was identified as a major threat to sustainable development and this represents a threat to human development and activities (UN, 1999).

Evident is that the loss of biodiversity poses a real threat to human existence. Currently, it has become an important public policy issue at international, regional, and local levels (Mugabe, 1998). In many parts of the world, areas of great biological diversity are reaching their supporting limits. When this happens, it implies that an ecosystem or area has reached its carrying capacity; it would not be able to support and perform the functions it once did (Trzyna, 1995). Carrying capacity is defined as, "the optimum population of plants, animals or more controversially, people that can be sustained on a given area of land" (Johnson *et al*, 2000:55). Munro (1995 in Trzyna, 1995) adds to this definition by saying that carrying capacity would mean the capability that an ecosystem has to support healthy organisms while maintaining its functions and its ability for renewal. Munro further notes that there are many observers who feel that the global

carrying capacity for people has been exceeded. This means that the many ecosystems supporting these human activities and existence are also at risk. As scientific evidence has suggested, many of these ecosystems have already been depleted and degraded beyond their abilities for renewal (Sachs, 1993). Munro (1995 in Trzyna, 1995) notes that even though observers feel that the global capacity for the human population has been reached, this limit might be difficult to establish. If these limits were identified, then this would mean that a global consensus will have to be reached and this will prove problematic considering social and economical living space and all sorts of amenities in the various countries.

What is quite apparent by now is that population growth and natural resource use have grown exponentially during the last decades. Munro (1995 in Trzyna, 1995) notes that there are many reasons for this. The probability is that many are counting on technological advancements to deal with the problem of the degrading natural resource base. Basiago (1999), however, feels that should population growth and natural resource use continue to grow exponentially and technological advances take a more linear route, then human society will have to answer a very pertinent question, once posed by Malthus. The question is, if these trends should continue or take on the route mentioned above, is this bound to lead to a social catastrophe?

It has been mentioned above that biological, economic and social sustainability are part of a multidimensional approach towards sustainable development. It can be argued that each one is dependant on the other and that none can be achieved without the other. The underlying concerns of this study are how reported threats to the biological structure of buchu might impact on the many livelihoods that depend on it? As it has been shown above, biological sustainability is part of a wider network that encompasses many other components that also needs to be sustained or maintained at a level of satisfaction. Keeping the biological conditions at an appropriate level is important since these are needed to satisfy a variety of other conditions such as economic statuses. The following section will

define economic sustainability and will attempt to illustrate how it is dependent and connected to both biological as well as social sustainability.

#### **4.2.2. Economic sustainability**

For many centuries, there has been a belief that economic prosperity is what forms the cornerstones of a society. Issues and concerns related to the environment were given secondary treatment. This has changed, however, and the value of the sustainable utilization of natural resources is regarded as a prerequisite for economic prosperity (Ekins, 1992; Kirkby *et al*, 1995). Hence, economic sustainability is defined as a system of production that satisfies present consumption levels without compromising future needs (Basiago, 1999). The above definition clearly considers that the production and use of resources should occur in a sustainable manner.

Economic development and prosperity have long flourished on the assumptions that natural resources are unlimited and that economic growth will filter down to the poor segments of society (Basiago, 1999). However, this has proved to be incorrect. For many years, economists have placed great pressure on the markets to deliver products efficiently and timely. The result of this type of demand and thinking has left modern day societies with the realization that the world natural capital is not infinite and that poor people in many societies still remain poor and marginalized (Adams, 1990).

Economic sustainability is highly subject to the availability of costs and inputs, the costs of extracting or processing goods, as well as the demand for it (Munro, 1995 in Trzyna, 1995). All of these can be highly unpredictable over time and makes it difficult to envisage outcomes, even though measuring it might be done more easily. Calls for economic sustainability, therefore, require that the use of natural resources be optimized in the best possible ways, not impairing its renewal capabilities (Basiago, 1995).

As people strive for better living and economic conditions, there are those that fear that this will lead to a dilemma that will impact on future generations (Basiago, 1995; Kirkby *et al*, 1995; Adams, 2001). This race to achieve greater living standards, showing little or no regard for the impact it has on natural capital, might be blamed on theories that are often used in economic policies. These advocate that as natural resources become scarce, market prices will inevitably increase (Adams, 2001). The result would be that people would find cheaper ways to use natural resources more efficiently. Adams (2001) notes that the result would mean that the revenues generated from growth could be used to preserve nature. This might bring us to the ongoing debate, as Gowdy (1999 in Becker & Jahn, 1999) puts it, between ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ sustainability within environmental economics. Weak sustainability assumes that everything is substitutable. From the world’s biodiversity, non-renewable minerals and any natural feature are seen to have the potential for trade. Those who feel that technology might be the answer to degrading resources, and who still feel that the natural resource base is infinite, might tend to identify with this type of sustainability. Strong sustainability on the other hand makes a distinction between renewable and non-renewable minerals, and proposes rules and limits when utilizing these resources (Gowdy, 1999 in Becker & Jahn, 1999). A basic rule of strong sustainability is that it advocates for the resource stock to be kept constant over time thus, sustaining economic activities. Clearly, this then also takes on the concept of futurity and the precautionary principle. Strong sustainability is also not viewed to be achieved at the expense of the natural resource base on which economic and other human activities depend (Gowdy, 1999 in Becker & Jahn, 1999).

Various forms of capital interact in complex ways, and their natures and processes are different. They should be treated in a manner that does not place any of the forms (including biological, economic, and social) at the losers end (Basiago, 1999). Rather, these should be integrated and this should result in growth, development, and productivity occurring in a trickle down manner, which benefits those who need it most. In many cases the rich and those in developed countries are the ones who enjoy the benefits of the major forms of capital, leaving the poor

in a least favourable position. This brings this discussion to the social implications that are derived when economic and biological forms of capital, amongst others, fail to integrate. To refer back to the relevance of economic sustainability to this study, the following can be mentioned. The biological sustainability of buchu is being threatened (WildNet Africa News Archive, 2001) and therefore it also threatens the economic sustainability of those dependent on it. Incomes, derived from the resource, may become uncertain or totally lost in the absence of the availability of the resource. This might lead to social instability in a community or in individual households. In order, therefore, to understand how these social implications come about it might be useful to firstly describe social sustainability thereby tracing the link between biological, economic, and social sustainability. Social sustainability is discussed next.

#### **4.2.3. Social sustainability**

It has now been widely established that sustainability does not simply involve concerns associated with the environment and the economy. Thus, sustainability defined by Becker & Jahn (1999) in a social context would refer to the viability of socially shaped relationships between society and nature over long periods of time. Basiago (1999) adds an important element to his interpretation of social sustainability in that it implies a system of social organizations that relieves poverty. Through this definition, social sustainability is seen as creating a nexus between social conditions (such as poverty) and environmental degradation.

As mentioned above, when economic and environmental processes do not integrate or there is an abrupt disturbance in either one, this could hinder social sustainability and cause various social implications (Basiago, 1995). The relationship between development and current social norms are thus under pressure when these are not conforming to the norms of a community and hence stretches beyond that community's tolerance for change (Munro, 1995). The various implications explored by Basiago (1995) include linkages between racial discrimination and environmental damage. This he illustrates by highlighting how

poor minority communities are usually those located near areas of high industrial activities. This, he argues, is how poor people are burdened with environmental costs, further impacting on their already limited economic capital as well as imposing concerns that further influences their social stability. In a country like South Africa, Basiago's views bear merit, as experience has shown that it is usually the poor who are located near areas of high industrial activity or areas which are environmentally degraded. On the other hand, many poor minority communities in South Africa are located in isolated, neglected, far-away places. Those who have escaped from these areas often end up in informal settlements, or even 'ghettos'.

Thus, environmental problems are closely linked to internal problems within social structures. This statement is also highly debatable as there exists differences of opinions in development theory on whether environmental sustainability is a pre-condition of economic growth and poverty alleviation or whether economic growth and poverty alleviation are needed before environmental sustainability can be addressed (Basiago, 1999). To further help in arriving at a comprehensive definition of social sustainability, Becker and Jahn (1999) identify three main indicators of the concept. The first indicator is known to be analytical in nature and this suggests that development of society cannot be viewed without considering the natural elements that influence it and contribute to it. For society to be sustainable, then, all in nature should be relatively balanced and harmonized. The second indicator of sustainability within a social context introduces a set of normative commitments in development. Becker and Jahn (1999) note that this calls for justice and the protection of the natural environment made on behalf of future generations. In essence this second indicator can be seen as the crux of sustainable development in that the present generation is considering the needs of future generations. The third indicator for social sustainability requires a strategic approach. A strong commitment by human beings is needed for an action plan that will ensure the reshaping of the relationship between the environment and people. This would ensure future social stability and sustainability. In short, social sustainability is not likely without environmental

sustainability that takes into consideration the needs and the welfare of future generations. To further make social sustainability a continual process, the relationship between people and the environment should be regulated in such a way to ensure sustainability at both levels.

By reflecting on the relevance of this section to the goals of the study, the most important thing is that social sustainability takes heed of the role of poverty alleviation. Additionally, the protection of the environment and natural resources needs to be ensured for future generations. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the use of wild buchu has occurred for many years in the Western Cape. Before large-scale commercialization of the resource, people used it as a matter of necessity and usually for household purposes (Coetzee, 1998). It is feared that present day trends would result in extinction of the resource, affecting the livelihoods of future generations.

#### **4.2.4. Planning and ethical methods of sustainability**

Sustainable development calls upon preserving natural capital for future generations and its definition produces various key elements that can be considered at a planning and development level. Since sustainability proposes a concern for future generations, this according to Basiago (1995) identifies a *temporal* dimension. Another dimension the definition produces is *spatial* in nature. This is so, because there is a concern for the global environment (Basiago, 1995). These two dimensions are clearly considered in planning practices and future developments. Sustainability's relevance in planning theory can be found in its consideration when developing land use for present populations, while trying to minimize or avoid the effect that it will have on the spatial elements (environment). This also presents ethical considerations when these dimensions are viewed. Ethical sustainability in this sense proposes three ethical models in the sustainable development discourse that echo preservation, conservation and sustainable use (Basiago, 1995). It is well established also that natural capital is

not infinite and that many non-renewable resources can never be replaced by man-made structures.

### **4.3. SUSTAINABILITY AND CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

The above sections have attempted to define sustainability. These definitions have been provided to bring some clarity to sustainability, but in practical terms the question remains how these processes influence lives, the natural environment, economic and political as well as social structures. The following section looks at some of the constraints faced by sustainability in South Africa. The constraints that are highlighted present some of the most challenging issues faced in South Africa but are not limited to these.

#### **4.3.1. Biological resources**

As already mentioned in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4), South Africa is ranked as the third most biologically diverse country in the world. It boasts areas of rich biodiversity, such as the Cape Floristic Region and the Succulent Karoo, and contains between 250 thousand and 1 million species (Wynberg, 2002). Consisting of areas that contain many indigenous plants and species, these areas of great biodiversity and many others have undergone a transformation that is threatening its sustainability (Bond, 2002). It is noted that already 16.5% of South Africa's land cover has been transformed and another 10.1% degraded (UNDP, 2003). Much of the land degradation occurring can be attributed to unsustainable farming, grazing, and harvesting practices (Hoffman & Ashwell, 2001), but restricted and limited access to water resources is a contributing factor, accelerating the problem. Hoffman and Ashwell (2001) note that surface water is so unevenly distributed in both space and time and that it is not always readily available where it is needed. Much of the countries freshwater are being over-exploited by wasteful domestic, agricultural, and industrial activities, alien vegetation and forestry plantations (UNDP, 2003). South Africa, a water scarce country, is already making use of water transfer schemes, which includes transferring water from Lesotho. The province of Gauteng, for example, is almost

entirely dependent on transfer water schemes (Hoffman & Ashwell, 2001; Bond, 2002).

#### **4.3.2. Water resources**

With limited access to such an important resource, and one that is needed not only for human survival, but also for a range of livelihood activities that people engage in, unavailability of water can be viewed as a key obstacle to sustainable development. Bond (2002) ascribes the high infant mortality rate and water-related diseases amongst Black South Africans to the insufficient amounts of water available. Additionally, minimal efforts to improve the availability of water to rural farmers clearly affect their abilities to contribute to their own livelihoods. In this sense, social sustainability is undermined, people are not able to attain a level of economic sustainability and since water is limited, it makes water for irrigation or livestock use nearly impossible.

#### **4.3.3. The landless and tenure rights**

The process of land reform is giving the minority and the landless poor of South Africa the opportunity to own land, as well as to have secure land rights (also see Chapter 2, section 2.2). It therefore makes sense that land reform should incorporate within it a strong sustainability aspect, especially if the goal is to have land become of primary benefit to people's livelihoods. In the 1997 White Paper on South African Land Policy, a statement indicated the clear links between poverty, environment, and development. This suggests that land reform should be aimed at poverty reduction, which has been identified as another serious constraint undermining sustainable development. It has been well documented that poverty in South Africa is still persistent and it continues to have gender, race, family type and spatial dimension (UNDP, 2003). In practical terms, poverty is still felt hardest by women among the black majority, which consists of large families and is predominantly rural.

The above-mentioned are just some of the key factors influencing sustainability and its vision and objectives. There are many other factors, which pose great resistance to the ideological visions of sustainable development, and the pandemic HIV/Aids is one of the most serious. Experts suggest that there won't be any sphere of human activity that won't be affected by it therefore causing concerns that will definitely affect sustainable development initiatives.

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has attempted to define the concept of sustainable development in the context of natural resource use. Sustainability's relevance within the context of this study is coupled with fears of unsustainable harvesting, use and management of buchu, which could ultimately affect many livelihoods. This chapter defined sustainability and also highlighted three of the main themes under which it has been categorized. These three methods of defining sustainability clearly have relevance to the study. The first biological, has been advocated by many, but what this has done is overshadowed the various other methods of how sustainability can be defined. In the same way, biological concerns of wild buchu have been treated as primary and much has been said about these concerns. However, the literature lacks information that would help to understand what the social implications are when these biological concerns are viewed.

In conclusion, it remains a priority at an individual level to secure sustainability. Whether this is economic, biological, social or even political, sustainability can only occur where there is an understanding of the process as well as a real commitment to it.

## **CHAPTER 5: BUCHU LIVELIHOODS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN ELANDSKLOOF**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter, in which concepts such as sustainability (economic, biological, and social) were explored, was crucial for understanding this present chapter. As it is broad in scope and as there are limitations on this study's timeframe and scope, it was necessary to highlight those measures of sustainability, which are applicable to the study. The current chapter presents the different perceptions, documented through data collection, and attempts to draw on those notions of sustainability mentioned in the previous chapter. Furthermore, these ideas or perceptions are from experiences of individuals within the community of Elandskloof. These perceptions of sustainability are coupled with the perceptions of buchu livelihoods and buchu 'culture' as they all relate to livelihoods.

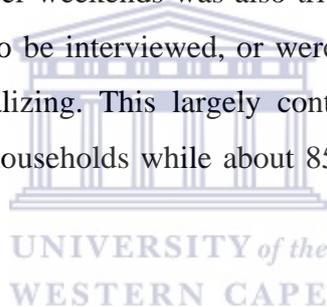
Firstly, a section introduces the buchu stakeholders at Elandskloof. Secondly, resource tenure and rights relating to buchu are discussed. Thirdly, the harvesting of buchu and the various processes linked to this are discussed. The fourth section deals with the trading of buchu at Elandskloof, followed by perceptions of sustainability with regard to natural resources such as buchu, as well as factors that are threatening the future livelihood of it. By way of conclusion, the chapter explores buchu cultivation at Elandskloof, which is new to the community but an integral part of the community's, as well as buchu's, future existence.

### **5.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS INVOLVED WITH HARVESTING AND TRADING OF WILD BUCHU IN ELANDSKLOOF**

For this study, one of the primary objectives was to document local livelihoods and to establish the role that buchu harvesting plays within these. Furthermore, perceptions around issues of sustainability, in relation to buchu, and some of the most threatening issues undermining the resource's longevity are key to understanding buchu livelihoods and sustainability. Respondents, who were targeted, involved people who harvest and trade with buchu, as well as those

cultivating buchu for the purposes of generating cash income. On the farm of Elandskloof, 52 respondents were interviewed by using questionnaires. This study site was used because of the various dynamics at play there. These include the fact that buchu grows wild in the area, that the community members harvesting and trading with buchu are poor and rural, and that the prospects of cultivating buchu has been initiated with the aim of poverty alleviation and community upliftment.

Data was gathered over a period of three weeks with about two to three interviews per day. Interviews were normally done during the day, with the exception of two that were done in the evenings. The researcher, however, found that this was not an appropriate means of data gathering. With no electricity on the gravel road out to Elandskloof, it was best to travel this road during the day. The prospects of conducting interviews over weekends was also tricky as this was the time people were least in the mood to be interviewed, or were just not found at home but in town, shopping or socializing. This largely contributed to the researcher only gathering data from 52 households while about 85 households are located on the farm.



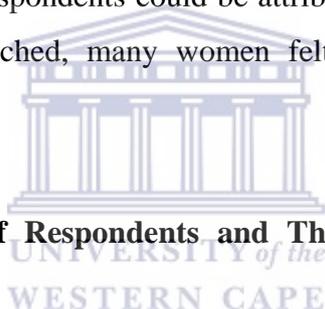
In principle, buchu harvesting at Elandskloof takes place once every two years. Respondents have added though, that if the need arises, or someone approaches the community committee with a request to harvest, then the matter is looked into. If possible, they would harvest a year following the previous harvesting year. This has happened with the 2002/2003 buchu harvests. At Elandskloof, every community member over the age of 18 and who qualifies as an Elandsklower, is allowed to harvest buchu from the mountain surrounding the farm.<sup>23</sup> When a given year is identified as a harvesting year, a community meeting is called. Here they discuss issues such as the actual starting date for reaping, as well as harvesting issues. Some community members have noted that even though a

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<sup>23</sup> A person must be able to provide evidence that he/she is an Elandsklower, whether this is by means of generation history or by marital proof of being married to an Elandsklower. No written document is available but the criteria for harvesting are known by and unanimously agreed upon by all community members.

commencing harvesting date is decided at this meeting, that there are always people who go and harvest days before they are supposed to. At harvesting time, the community harvests buchu from the mountains, and it is then sold. Because of this, the study has labeled Elandsklowers as harvesters and traders. Even though the respondents do not trade with buchu individually, they sell it to representatives of distilling companies. Thus, these individuals are regarded as harvesters and traders. For those also cultivating in the community, the study identified these individuals as cultivators as well as harvesters and traders (see Table 4).

The majority of respondents (69%) were male, 31% were females. Of those who identified themselves as harvesters and traders of wild buchu, 50% were male and 29% were female. The rest of the respondents were those who were harvesting, cultivating, and trading with plantation buchu (21%). The major imbalance in terms of the gender of respondents could be attributed to the fact that when these households were approached, many women felt that they would rather their husbands be interviewed.



**Table 4: Percentage of Respondents and Their Involvement with Buchu Activities**

<b>Sex of Respondents</b>	<b>Harvesting and Trading</b>	<b>Harvesting, Trading and Cultivating</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Males	50% (26)	19% (10)	69.2% (36)
Females	29% (15)	2% (1)	31.0% (16)
<b>Total</b>	<b>79% (41)</b>	<b>21% (11)</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

From the sample used for this case study, it can be generally assumed that in this community, families are based on a patriarchal system where the majority of households (53.8%) are headed by a male (see Table 5). This is especially so in smaller communities where the presence of nuclear families are still favourable (Dallos & Mc Laughlin, 1993). Households are characterized as being small and consisting of anything from one person to five people per 'informal' housing unit (75%). Households consisting of more than five members are not common, with

only 25% falling into this category. From the study sample, only 3.8% or 2 respondents indicated that Elandskloof serves as a secondary home or their ‘other’ home. More than half of the respondents are married (53.8%), while 32.7 % have never been married (see Table 6).

**Table 5: Respondents' Position within Households**

<b>Position in household</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Household head (HHH)	53.8% (28)	9.6% (5)
Spouse of HHH		11.5% (6)
Child of HHH	11.5% (6)	7.6% (4)
Other relative/acquaintance of HHH	3.8% (2)	1.9% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.1% (36)</b>	<b>30.6% (16)</b>

**Table 6: Marital Status of Respondents**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	53.8% (28)
Never married	32.7% (17)
Divorced	3.8% (2)
Separated	1.9% (1)
Widowed	7.7% (4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

From the educational profile of respondents, it can be seen that half of the respondents (50%) have secondary schooling education, while those with primary schooling constitute 40.4%. Those with secondary education consist largely of the younger respondents who had the opportunity to attend school beyond primary school level. Those with post-high school qualifications are 3.8%, a policeman and a college graduate. Only 5.8% of respondents have never attended school. The study sample can be characterized as a rather young group, with only 5.7% being 65 years and older (see Table 7). All these individuals, however, are still actively involved with buchu, with one respondent being 67 years of age. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, the majority of respondents are contracted as seasonal workers at nearby farms or at citrus or wine producing factories in town.

Household incomes are therefore largely boosted by additional incomes in the form of government grants. The majority of households, however, have an income of between R500-R1000 per month (see Table 8). These incomes are very important for the households, and almost all households (86.5%) listed buying food as the biggest household expenditure. Payment of school fees for their children also received a notable mention as another important expenditure.

**Table 7: Age Groupings for Respondents**

Age Range	Percentage
20-28	11.5% (6)
29-37	25.0% (13)
38-46	19.2% (10)
47-55	21.1% (11)
56-64	17.3% (9)
65+	5.7% (3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

**Table 8: Household Monthly Income**

Income Range	Percentage
< R500	17.3% (9)
R501-R1000	42.3% (22)
R1001-R1500	17.3% (9)
R1501-R2000	11.5% (6)
R2001-R2500	1.9% (1)
R2501- R5000	7.6% (4)
Above R5000	1.9% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

Since no formal work is available on the farm, some members (48.1%) keep a variety of livestock as a means of providing food and income. Chickens and pigs are the most common, while there are some respondents who also own cattle.

Income derived from the wild includes the annual harvesting of the popular ‘*tolbos*’<sup>24</sup> and the harvesting of buchu every second year. Many respondents noted that even though buchu is only gathered every second year, it is still important to their households. Hence, the most popular value that households attached to buchu was an economic one (73.1%) (see Table 9). The reason provided for this was quite straightforward. Respondents simply stated that it provided income when it is needed, especially for paying debts or acquiring goods, which cannot be easily acquired from seasonal earnings or government grants. Therefore, it is quite evident that people value the income derived from buchu. Only one respondent noted that buchu income or buchu in itself is not important to his livelihood or his household. In this respondent’s household, two solid sources of income are received every month. The respondent added that these income sources allow his household not to be dependent on income derived from the wild, from livestock or from buchu.

**Table 9: Value of Buchu for Households**

Value	Percentage
Monetary/Econ value	73.1% (38)
Cultural value	1.9% (1)
Health value	23.1% (12)
No value	1.9% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

### 5.3. RESOURCE TENURE AND HARVESTING OF BUCHU

As discussed earlier, the land restitution process ensured that the community of Elandskloof was granted access to and control of the land they lost decades before (see section 3.3.2, Chapter 3). When the community was resettled on their land, they were in control of what is known as the ‘*magie*.’<sup>25</sup> As mentioned in Chapter

<sup>24</sup> Locally known in Afrikaans as ‘*tolbos*,’ this is a wildflower scientifically known as *Leucadendron* sp.

<sup>25</sup> Many Elandskloofers claim that the boundaries of Elandskloof stretches far beyond the ‘*magie*’ even well into the town of Citrusdal. However, when the claims process was lodged the Elandskloofers only applied for the portion known as ‘*die magie*’ (center of the valley).

3 (Section 3.2.2), when the land was returned to the community, they needed to have a governing body in place. This governing body consists of nine members, who are responsible for administration of the farm, which includes the chairperson. After notice about elections of the committee is given, community members make nominations. Election of this body takes place every two years and is facilitated by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa. Adhering to this clause in the legislation (Communal Property Associations Act (28) of 1996) has ensured that Elandskloof was back in the hands of its rightful owners, and because the land is communally owned, it means that every person who can prove to be a legitimate Elandsklower has rights to occupy the land and to make use of its resources.

### **5.3.1. Access to and control over buchu**

The community owns the area where it lives and the surrounding mountains as well. *Agathosma betulina* is noted as the best type of buchu (de Ponte Machado, 2003) and grows wild in the Elandskloof mountains. The community has some local names for some areas of the Elandskloof mountains. The best spot to harvest buchu, according to community members, is the area of the mountain known as Uitkyk (Look Out Point). All the respondents indicated that Elandsklowers go everywhere when it is harvesting time. No one is restricted to one particular place on the mountain. However, apart from the community, outsiders (or non-Elandsklowers) are not allowed to harvest. Legitimate Elandsklowers, who do not necessarily live on the farm, are also allowed to harvest.

According to respondents the mountains are harvested every two years. Members of the community are allowed to use buchu from the mountain for household purposes or illness. Harvesting by the entire community, however, only takes place once it has been decided by the community and everyone is informed about the official harvesting period. Even though the community determines the buchu-harvesting period, permission to reap is still required from Nature Conservation. Respondents all cited that the committee obtains the permit on their behalf from

Nature Conservation. This is known because before harvesting begins, this is again explained at a community meeting and the community members are requested to contribute about R5 towards obtaining the permit. A permit is necessary because buchu is protected under the Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance 19 of 1974 (Cape Nature Conservation,<sup>26</sup> 2004).

People ‘occupying’ individual pieces of land do not legally own the land. Community members are allowed to grow vegetables, buchu, or to use the land as grazing ground, and they do not have to share their income with the community. However, since the land is communal property, individual members can never own or sell it. At present, those with specific pieces of land do not pay rent to the community.

### **5.3.2. Harvesting of buchu**

Harvesting time is an exciting period for the community of Elandskloof. From many conversations with community members, people indicate that at gathering time Elandskloof is a hive of activity. Old and young go out to harvest and some people add that the evening before harvesting starts, some people even sleep in the mountains. Harvesting usually takes place during the months of December, January or February. It normally last a few weeks, but respondents indicated that if it was decided to harvest in January, then the first few weeks of that month are really busy. At least 36.5% of the respondents noted January as a preferable and appropriate harvesting time, since schools re-open a few weeks into January and the buchu income becomes useful to pay school fees. However, harvesting times vary and there is no exact date that the community applies to have a harvesting period. In 2002 and 2003, they harvested twice in a row. This was so because someone with an urgent need to obtain money to pay her children’s school fees approached the committee and asked if the community could harvest again. After discussion, the committee decided that it could. Some respondents also indicated

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<sup>26</sup> Available online at the official Cape Nature Conservation website: [www.capenature.org.za](http://www.capenature.org.za)  
Accessed 6 December 2004.

that the best time for harvesting is not January, but early February (9.6%). The reasons provided for this is that the plant would have released its seed by then. Respondents felt that if buchu is to continue growing in the wild, then its seeds need time to be produced and be dispersed in the wild. In this way, respondents argue, buchu is able to reproduce itself.

For many respondents, it was difficult to explain the actual harvesting process. Some even compared it to riding a bike, once you know how it just comes when you go out to harvest. Some respondents commented that ‘once you know its buchu you’re looking at, you just start cutting’ (42.3%). This should be done quickly because you might miss out on the other buchu that is also standing nearby. No equipment is needed for buchu harvesting and apart from a sickle and a bag there is nothing else that the harvester needs. One respondent noted that if you do not have a sickle, you could also use a grass cutter. On more than one occasion, people were heard saying that people cutting with grass scissors or knives are irresponsible and do not harvest properly. Grass scissors or knives can, according to respondents, uproot a plant or even cause damage to the remainder of the buchu plant. For many respondents the harvesting process is as simple as looking for buchu, taking the ‘*polletjie*’ (local Afrikaans name for buchu plant) carefully, and starting to cut (50%). When respondents were asked how they knew they were harvesting appropriately, many would comment that ‘we’ve been doing it for years and where I’ve harvested the buchu it has just regrown, so I must be doing it the right way’. Others would also add that this is how they were taught by those who have harvested before them or their parents. Another important aspect that many respondents raised was that when they arrive at the harvesting site, the first thing they do is to check to see if they are safe. Many commented that the buchu grows amongst other plants such as the ‘*vlieëbos*’ and in between rocks, so before putting your hands in a bush to cut, the harvester should check if there might be snakes or dangerous insects. Very few respondents gave responses where careful attention is paid before cutting of the plant occurs. Here the response was that when you have a rather thick or big ‘*polletjie*’ take half together, bend it a little and then cut (7.6%). The same is done to the remaining bush, but

careful attention should be paid not to uproot or damage the plant. The number of responses for this category does not necessarily imply that the rest of the respondents do not pay attention. People have just been doing this for so long, and the two respondents who answered the question with this type of detail were people who have also had additional training with buchu and buchu cultivation.

The amount of buchu harvested varies according to individuals. However, there are those who harvest buchu with the intention of getting more than 60 kilograms per day. This would be so in the case of Kosie Visagie (see Box 1) who can be categorized as one of those people who really work hard at harvesting times. During the first few days of harvesting, it is quite common to gather large amounts, but as the reaping progresses, the buchu becomes less and fewer kilograms are brought back from the mountains. Very few respondents harvested less than ten kilograms on a day (13.4%) (see Table 10). From these, it is the respondent who said that he does not care about buchu as a formal job, one other respondent who is also formally employed, and some young women who brought home much less than five kilograms. The majority of the respondents (36.4%) would normally harvest anything between 20 and 30 kilograms, with some gathering a bit more (up to 50 kilograms) (13.4%). Of the seven respondents who reaped more than 60 kilograms were men who harvested anything from 75 kilograms to 90 kilograms (13.4%). Only one respondent indicated that he has on occasions harvested almost 120 kilograms per day. From conversations with respondents, it was indicated that the people harvesting so much buchu, do not harvest on their own. The argument is that they bring along other people to help them harvest. Even though this is not illegal to do, the community committee has in the past expressed its unhappiness about it. A community member notes that “by bringing outsiders along to harvest it usually creates the many arguments between community members at harvesting times.”<sup>27</sup> Additionally, more than one person pointed out that if it was decided that harvesting will start on Monday, then these individuals (who harvest so much) already start harvesting the Saturday evening. Respondents also indicated that the amount of buchu a harvester collects

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<sup>27</sup> Elandskloof spokesperson and community member Andries Titus: 19 August 2005.

depends on two things. Firstly, how much one wants to harvest and how far they are willing to walk and climb. Secondly, another important factor is also how well the buchu has grown since the last harvesting period. If there has been uncontrolled fires or thefts, this also minimizes the harvester's chances of getting large amounts of buchu.

**Box 1: Kosie Visagie<sup>28</sup>**

Kosie Visagie is an Elandskloof who considers himself as someone who 'really' harvests buchu. Kosie adds that because he is unemployed, he makes optimal use of the opportunity to gather buchu at harvesting times. He says that on the first day of harvesting he makes sure that he does not come back with anything less than 100 kilograms of buchu. To harvest this large amount usually takes him about 8 hours. Kosie is also very interested to learn more about cultivating of buchu. He adds that he has harvested buchu before at Piketberg and has learnt about the buchu cultivation process from farmers in and around there.

**Table 10: Buchu Harvested by Respondents<sup>29</sup>**

Amount of Buchu Harvested by Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 10 kg's	13.4% (7)
Between 10 kg's & 20 kg's	15.3% (8)
Between 21kg's & 30kg's	21.1% (11)
Between 31kg's & 40kg's	19.2% (10)
Between 41kg's & 50kg's	13.4% (7)
Between 51kg's & 60kg's	3.8% (2)
60 kg's and Above	13.4% (7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

Buchu harvesting is a labour intensive process. Harvesters usually go out to the mountain early in the morning, before sunrise, and come back just before or just

<sup>28</sup> Interview conducted on 25 February 2005, Elandskloof.

<sup>29</sup> These percentages indicate what respondents approximately harvest on the first day of the harvesting period and not throughout the harvesting season. These percentages are for the last harvesting period and indicate harvested buchu plants that were weighed before being sold.

after noon. The argument is that afternoons become too hot and exhausting for harvesting buchu. The buyer usually arrives at about three in the afternoon, and by that time everyone is usually back from the mountain to have their buchu weighed and to get paid for it. The time harvesters spend, however, on harvesting varies and is entirely up to the individual. One respondent claimed to spend more than ten hours per day harvesting. The majority (59.6%) spent anything from four to six hours, while others spent one to three hours (19.2%) or seven to nine hours (19.2%) (see Table 11).

**Table 11: Time Spent on Buchu Harvesting**

<b>Time Spent</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
1-3 hours	19.2% (10)
4-6 hours	59.6% (31)
7-9 hours	19.2% (10)
More than 10 hours	1.9% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

When respondents were asked how they would know if buchu was ready to be harvested, a common response was that ‘I know when I look at it.’ It was therefore important to probe a bit more and ask the question in a different way. It was then asked, how they would explain to an inexperienced eye what to look for in order to see if a buchu plant is ready to be harvested. The predominant response was to just check to see how the plant has grown (26.9 %). Respondents noted that they check the plant’s height and it should measure at knee height. If the plant were at knee height, then it would be appropriate to cut it. They go on to argue that if it is ten centimeters high or less, then it is not really worth it to cut as it is too small. Some respondents said that it is important to check the growth, but there are some other plant characteristics that might help to know when a buchu plant can be harvested. These respondents said it is important to check the leaves and to also feel how strong or thick the stem is (51.9%). When the stem is yellowish, they argue that it indicates that it is not strong or steady enough. Other respondents added that the most important thing is to see whether flowers have

been produced and also whether seeds have been released, or ‘*geskiet*’ as it is locally known in Afrikaans (19.2%) (see Table 12). Many of these respondents indicated that to check if seed has been released is probably the best indicator of buchu’s maturity. The community is right that buchu is a re-sprouter and therefore checking the size of the plant this will give you a good indication of the plants age.<sup>30</sup> Harvesting after allowing the plant three years of regrowth will enable the harvester to prune back 75% of the plant and this should ideally be done when the plant has released mature seeds (personal communication with Cobus Coetzee, Natural Botanicals: 23 September 2005). If buchu is to be managed in a sustainable way, then it is important for its seed to be allowed to be produced and dispersed to secure the long-term survival of the wild populations (de Ponte, 2003).

**Table 12: Buchu's Maturity and Accepted Condition for Harvesting**

<b>Respondents Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Look at its growth.	26.9 % (14)
Look at its height, but also to see whether it has flowered and released seed.	19.2% (10)
Look at its height, how big the " <i>polletjie</i> " is. Also check the leaves and how strong (thick) the stem is.	51.9% (27)
I know what mature buchu looks like and therefore just harvest.	1.9% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

Another query, that had some respondents battling to try to find ways of explaining it, was the question of at what height (above ground) does the respondent leave the plant after harvesting it. The purpose of the question was not to trick or confuse respondents but rather to gain insight as to how reapers gather buchu or what of the plant remains above ground level after harvesting. Answers once again varied, but respondents were quick to point out that one should not cut too short. As a harvester, one needs to make sure that they handle the plant very carefully and when they cut, that it should be done as neatly as possible. Pulling or uprooting the plant was some of the respondents’ main concerns of harvesting.

<sup>30</sup> Personal Communication with Dr Cobus Coetzee, Director of Natural Botanicals:Western Cape, South Africa:23 September 2005.

The rest of the plant (remaining in the ground) also depends on the plant itself. Respondents were quick to point out that it all depends on the plants growth and its width. The overall and most dominant responses to the remaining plant heights were that harvesters left a *'polletjie'* at about four to eight centimeters (71.1%). Some respondents (9.6%) claim to leave a plant at less than four centimeters, while some respondents noted that these individuals are not harvesting sustainably and therefore putting the plant at risk of being uprooted (see Table 13).

**Table 13: Estimated Height at which Respondents Harvest Buchu Plant<sup>31</sup>**

Height respondents cut	Percentage
Less than 4 cm	9.6% (5)
Between 4-8cm (to ground)	71.1% (37)
Between 9-13cm (to ground)	11.5% (6)
Between 14-18cm (to ground)	1.9% (1)
19cm and above (ground)	1.9% (1)
No answer	3.8% (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

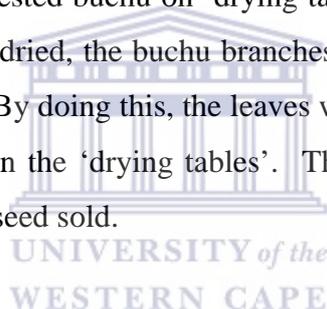
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It was quite ironic to hear that respondents were concerned about uprooting the buchu plant but at the same time indicating that they do harvest young buchu. Almost 29% of the respondents said that they do harvest young buchu, while the majority stated that they would rather pass a young plant (71.1%). These respondents added that they know if they leave the young plant for another year or two, then it would be a nice big buchu bush at the next harvesting period. Reasons provided by those who said that they would rather harvest a young plant than let it go, was that if they did not harvest it, someone else will. This is typically the notion that Garrett Hardin (1968) puts forward in explaining the theory of the 'Tragedy of the Commons'. Hardin notes that individuals find themselves in a position where they feel that if they do not overuse a resource then the next person will, to their benefit, leaving the considerate person without the benefit of that

<sup>31</sup> A measuring instrument was provided during data collection and respondents used this to point out at what height they left a buchu plant in the ground after harvesting.

resource (Burke, 2001). Certain individuals therefore have the benefit, but later the costs are shared collectively by the community dependent on the common resource.

When buchu is harvested, the whole top structure of the plant (leaves and branches) are harvested. The reaper does not select certain parts of the plant for sale. Respondents, however, noted that even though they sell the buchu as is, some of them do dry it and then use the leaves as herbs to treat different ailments. Selling the entire harvested plant to the buyer is locally known in Afrikaans as selling '*nat buchu*' (green buchu). In the olden days, the respondents argue, this was not the way it was done. Some of the older respondents noted that years ago people used to go out into the mountains for about a week and harvest buchu. While in the mountain, they would harvest and dry the buchu. The drying was done by placing the harvested buchu on 'drying tables' and covering it while it is drying in the sun. Once dried, the buchu branches would be taken and the leaves will then be shaken off. By doing this, the leaves would be placed on one side and the seed would remain on the 'drying tables'. The stems would then be thrown away and the leaves and seed sold.



As already mentioned, buchu harvesting can be a tedious exercise. Respondents were asked, firstly, if they had experienced any problems while harvesting, and secondly whether they believe buchu is accessible. Many respondents (80.8%) noted that they had not experienced any problems while harvesting compared to 19.2% of respondents who said that they have encountered some type of problem at one time or another. Two of the respondents who noted that they have experienced problems said that their buchu had been stolen (possibly by other members in the community) when they left their bags unattended while looking for more buchu. Some of the other responses regarding problems were near fatal incidents. One respondent, for example, claimed to have escaped a bullet, which he says came from a neighbouring white farmer. They 'claim we (Elandsklowers) steal their buchu, while it is actually them stealing our buchu.' The second half of the question posed to respondents with regard to buchu's accessibility was that the

majority of respondents (57.7%) generally felt that buchu was not accessible in comparison to those who thought it was accessible (42.3%). Motivation provided by those respondents, who answered that buchu is not easily accessible, was that buchu is not always located on the best spots, which are easy to locate. Many commented that one has to sometimes climb steep slopes, a difficult task for many. Buchu also grows in between rocks and its bushes can become quite thick. This, in itself, brings into play another factor that respondents thought of as more of a concern. There is also a danger element attached to harvesting with the possibility of being bitten by insects or even worse, snakes. Respondents also noted that when the buchu on the lower ends of the mountain have been harvested, then you have to walk a little further or climb a bit higher to access it. Most of the time, the bigger buchu plants are located at higher locations where it is not easily accessible. Searching for buchu can be quite tedious and respondents also noted that while one is looking for buchu, they should make sure that the plant is actually buchu. A common mistake sometimes made by those who do not really know buchu, is the harvesting of '*vlieëbos*.' This plant looks a lot like buchu, but when looked at very closely or smelled, it is easily established that it is not buchu. Many respondents noted that one or the other time they have mistaken this plant for buchu and, when they actually discover it is '*vlieëbos*,' they have to walk further or go and climb more slopes.

#### **5.4. TRADING OF BUCHU**

At harvesting time, the community of Elandskloof sells their buchu to any buyer with a good price. As mentioned before, people at Elandskloof harvest buchu and sell it to a representative who comes from a distilling company. It was apparent that respondents knew about some of the products manufactured from buchu and many added that if they had the facilities, capacity, training, and finances, that maybe they could distill their own buchu and so too generate an even better income from it. During the last three harvesting periods, the two most frequent buyers at Elandskloof were Mr. Graven, from Grassroots Natural Products, Gouda, Western Cape, and Mr. Godfrey from Paarl. Even though many respondents (38.4%) knew these buyers by name and what they do with the buchu, other

responded that they did not really know who the buyers were or knew where they were from (28.8%). Many other respondents who didn't know these two buyers just noted that buchu is sold to the distillers (26.9%).

A selling price for buchu is already negotiated with the buyer before he or she arrives. After the harvesters come back from the mountains, the buchu is weighed and the harvester gets his/her payment for the amount of buchu collected. Respondents agree that selling buchu is usually a problem free process. However, two respondents, one being on the community committee and the other also a community representative but not serving on the committee, added that sometimes this simple process is not as straightforward as it appears. Some of their comments related to the negotiating of a price for buchu, which will be harvested that season. This negotiation with the buyers can be tiresome and a selling price is not always reached with the first round of negotiations. Other problems relate to the actual weighing and selling of buchu. To add weight to some bags, it is rumoured, people have added stones in their bags. From conversations with respondents, it was also established that people would also mix the buchu with the 'vlieëbos'. When this is discovered, the buyer often paid less rands per kilogram for the buchu that he or she buys from the rest of the community to make up for the possible 'losses.' To help avoid these problems, bags are now numbered or marked when dispersed to the community in order to identify the transgressors. A respondent added that this dishonesty sometimes causes much frustration amongst some of the community members and the buyers.

Local knowledge of buchu and buchu harvesting is a strong characteristic of the people of Elandskloof. From many conversations with community members, this is something that is obvious and something that makes the people feel proud. This is definitely the case of Oom Wiela (see Box 2). The majority of the respondents know about this local knowledge of buchu even though many said that they are not really informed or know much about the buchu industry (71.2%) (see Table 14). These individuals, however, feel that their own personal experiences with buchu are also valuable. Some further added that they know about the basic legal

requirements for buchu and that harvesting, trading or being in possession of buchu is not allowed without a permit endorsed by nature conservation. Many of these individuals claimed that they know what to use buchu for and many noted that they believe its oil makes it so valuable. Some community members have also received training with regard to buchu cultivation and these individuals add that the training have also made them more aware of buchu's market value, distilling processes, and manufacturing. These individuals represent some of those respondents who noted that they're quite informed with buchu activities and the trade (25%).

**Box 2: Wilhelm "Oom Wiela" Noorman<sup>32</sup>**

Oom Wiela Noorman was born at Elandskloof on the 7 January 1944. As a young child, he remembers how they went out to the mountains at harvesting times with their parents. Oom Wiela also says that he learnt about buchu from his grandfather. While accompanying his parents out in the mountain, they stayed there for days or even a week at a time. During that time buchu was dried in the mountains and, money raised from the sale of buchu harvesting, went to the church. The church would then spend the money 'appropriately' on something that benefited the community. Even though the church was in charge of the money raised by buchu harvesting, people were happy to go out at harvesting time and were proud to work hard. Oom Wiela says, that after the eviction of the Elandskloof people, a loss was felt, not only because people lost their land, but also the right to harvest the buchu on their land. At present, Oom Wiela works formally at a car workshop in the town of Citrusdal, but adds that he does not miss attending buchu-harvesting season at Elandskloof. He usually applies for leave days at work to be apart of something he calls his heritage, something that is very close to his heart.

**Table 14: Respondents' Knowledge of Buchu Trade**

<b>Knowledge of trade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not much	71.2% (37)
Well informed	25.0% (13)
No answer provided	3.8% (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

<sup>32</sup> Interview conducted at Elandskloof, 2 March 2005.

## 5.5. PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

### 5.5.1. Perceptions on buchu's popularity

In this thesis' introductory chapters, it has been mentioned that fears of unsustainable harvesting practices, theft, and irregular mountain burning, are some of the factors threatening the future existence of buchu (Coetzee, 1998). Research has shown that many stakeholders fear that these practices might lead to the extinction of mountain buchu, which will have dire consequences for both commercial enterprises and local people alike (Minutes of Buchu Forum Meeting, 2002)<sup>33</sup>. Fears surrounding the rapid use of natural resources, such as medicinal plants, have spurred debate. In many instances, local people, who also use many of these resources for traditional purposes, are implicated in the overuse of these resources, coupled with that of commercial productivity. Some of the reasons for buchu's popularity are due to its lucrative income. But what is it that makes buchu so popular in comparison to other medicinal plants?

The majority of respondents (59.6%) believed that buchu is more popular than other plants because it can be used for different types of ailments and that this is something the market has also discovered. The second reason provided by a number of respondents (13.46%), is that buchu is important because of inherent properties such as its oil. Used in the cosmetics and food industry, buchu oil is partly responsible for the characteristic blackcurrant smell and flavour that is produced from it. Respondents were aware that the oil is used for body care treatments, such as lotions, perfume, or cosmetics, and that local distillers probably export it to foreign markets. There were also those respondents who believe buchu is more popular than its other medicinal counterparts are simply because traditional uses and age-old knowledge make it so much more popular (11.5%). Respondents added further that it is because this plant has been around for so many years and that its reputation and history have contributed to its popularity. One respondent also noted that amongst local people, for many years,

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<sup>33</sup> Minutes of the Opening Meeting for the Buchu Forum held on the 28 August 2002, Eisenberg.

there has been the belief that buchu makes you live longer. There were also a few respondents (5.7%) who thought that buchu is popular for its medicinal uses or inherent properties and this is what keeps its market going. These respondents believe that as long as the demand is there and as long as good money is paid for it, then buchu will be popular. From the interviews done, there were almost 10% of respondents who did not answer or who were unwilling to try and answer the question.

### **5.5.2. Threats to buchu**

In the case study area, it was found that the overwhelming majority of respondents knew about the reported threats to buchu (86.5%). People felt that unsustainable harvesting practices are the most threatening factor to buchu's sustainability. Respondents added to their responses that this is because many people do not know how to harvest. At Elandskloof, respondents believed that the community who currently live there, know how to harvest very well, but believed that it is the Elandsklowers, perhaps living in Cape Town or outside of Elandskloof, who do not know how to harvest appropriately. Some of the older respondents also noted that another contributing factor to unsustainable harvesting at Elandskloof might be that some of the young people are not trained to harvest appropriately.

Apart from unsustainable harvesting listed by respondents (26.9%), the other two major threats to buchu respondents listed were theft of buchu (30.8%) and mountain fires (42.3%) (see Table 15). Even though fire is thought to be good for buchu, many respondents added that it is not good if the mountains are burnt on a regular basis or if people set it alight. They continue that this should also not occur in dry seasons, as this is not only harmful to buchu but also for other vegetation, which also burn. When the fires destroy other types of vegetation, this might provide reasons as to why some small wild animals eat different types of vegetation not normally part of their diet, such as buchu. Therefore, apart from theft, unsustainable harvesting, and uncontrolled mountains fires, another less threatening factor that the community is contending with, are wild animals. Buchu

poaching or theft was observed to be less of a threat with regard to sustainability. It is argued that theft of buchu usually goes unnoticed or perpetrators are not caught. However, at the time of conducting the research, reports of buchu theft were flaring up in the community. Community members, who were returning to Elandskloof from work on the mountain pass, spotted a vehicle with a full load of buchu. Because of its distinctive smell, community members who witnessed the incident said they could smell that it was harvested buchu. There were no further investigations or confrontations made by those who saw the vehicle with buchu, because of fear. When a prominent figure in the community was asked about the incident, this was dismissed as gossip and people making up all kinds of stories. This person added that the vehicle might have been there, but how can it be proven that it was indeed buchu spotted on the vehicle.

**Table 15: Greatest Threat to Continued Existence of Buchu**

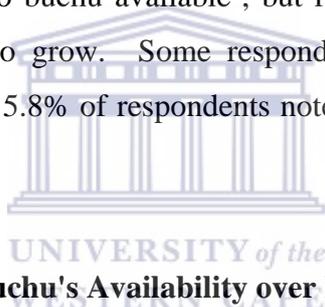
Threats	Percentage
Fires	42.3% (22)
Theft	30.8% (16)
Unsustainable harvesting practices	26.9% (14)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

The feeling amongst respondents with regard to the threats mentioned above was that respondents feared the loss of the additional income buchu harvesting provided. Those respondents who indicated that they are truly worried about buchu's future existence (92.3%), said that buchu harvesting is an important income activity and people depend heavily on it. This is especially so, because buchu harvesting usually occurs during December or the first two months of a new year. At this time, school (and, in some cases, boarding) fees need to be paid. Some respondents also felt that buchu has been around for so many years and that it is practically a part of their lives. As children, they grew up with it and many still use it in their homes as medicine. If buchu is threatened, they argue, then a part of the community's history and culture is also threatened. Respondents also

felt that buchu was important apart from its income, and if it becomes extinct, then this will mean that their children will not know or harvest buchu in the future.

Apart from those respondents who were worried about the reported threats, there were others who felt that buchu has been around for so long that they do not think that it will disappear soon. One respondent noted that, “We are talking about a plant that has been around for hundreds of years. I’m sure it won’t disappear just because people are using a bit more than before.” This kind of thinking might be why respondents thought that the availability of wild buchu is adequate (75%) compared to those that thought that it is not (21.2%). This observation was based primarily on what people saw when they went out into the mountains. People seemed unable to comment on the availability of wild buchu in other areas, but thought that Elandskloof had enough buchu. This response was further fuelled in the manner in which respondents supported their answer, noting that at harvesting times everybody gets as much as they want. It is just a matter of how much time and effort the harvester puts in, they argued. Respondents also commented on the amount of buchu that leaves Elandskloof at harvesting times. Although no respondent who commented on this could provide actual figures, many estimated that it could be anything between eight to ten tons or even more. A second reason listed by respondents as a means to support their answer (that there is enough buchu at Elandskloof) is that respondents felt that on the lower slopes or areas on the mountains, the availability of buchu might be less, but there are two reasons for this. The first is that the majority of people harvest on the lower land areas and buchu is young or less here. Secondly, the majority of good or mature buchu is located on the higher slopes or in areas where it is not easily assessable to people. One respondent (and the only one who spoke of buchu outside Elandskloof) noted that in the nature reserves, there is a lot of buchu. This is simply because these areas are not open for people. The respondent added that at Elandskloof, there is also enough but feared that this has become less in recent years and will continue so in the future. Few respondents (3.8%) did not know if wild buchu was adequate and listed no response.

In reply to whether there have been changes in the availability of buchu in recent years, varied responses were received. While there were those respondents who thought there was a change, they felt that it was a slight decrease (53.8%). Respondents noted that buchu had become less in recent years and some of the underlying factors contributing to this have been theft, fires, and unsustainable harvesting. These respondents noted, however, that the change has not been significant or any indication that buchu is on its way to becoming extinct. The second dominant response was that buchu has become less, but that this change has been moderate (30.8%). Again, factors such as fires, theft, and unsustainable harvesting were listed as the main contributors to this change. However, these respondents felt that unsustainable harvesting, especially by young people or people who do not know how to harvest properly, is largely to blame for the decreased experience with buchu. This decrease, on the other hand, should not be interpreted as ‘there is no buchu available’, but rather that most of the buchu is young and needs time to grow. Some respondents (3.8%) noted an extreme decrease in buchu, while 5.8% of respondents noted that there was no increase or decrease (see Table 16).



**Table 16: Changes in Buchu's Availability over Recent Years**

<b>Change</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Slight change	53.8% (28)
Moderate change	30.8% (6)
Extreme change	3.8% (2)
No change	5.8% (3)
No answer provided	5.8% (3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>

### **5.5.3. Attitudes on natural resource use and issues of over harvesting**

Buchu harvesting generates good income for the legal harvester (Blomerus, 2002). Respondents were, therefore, asked if they thought natural resources such as buchu could possibly play a role in poverty reduction. From the respondents, 98%

thought that buchu harvesting and trading could be seen as a poverty reduction strategy. The dominant reason respondents listed to support their answer was that the income from buchu is good (64%). As a result, many respondents felt that this income from buchu harvesting has helped them to pay for services or items that they usually could not afford or it has helped them to buy goods or items (such as seeds and fertilizers) to grow other foodstuffs, thereby making a significant long term contribution. The second reason why respondents felt that buchu can be used as a poverty reduction strategy is to cultivate it (17.3%) (see Section 5.7, this chapter). Many believed that if all community members do this successfully, then it could definitely provide income as well as work (at home) for many people. The third reason why respondents (15.38%) thought buchu can help in fighting poverty is that, if it is utilized sustainably, it can yield good income for a long time. Respondents felt that if buchu continues to exist in the wild then that income they derived from its harvesting is basically secured for years to come. Hence, it becomes a long-term investment. One respondent noted that he believes that buchu can help in fighting poverty but did not provide an explanation for the answer given. This is the same for the only respondent who does not believe that buchu can help with fighting poverty. This respondent noted that people do not harvest buchu every year and not nearly enough to say that it will/can help in fighting poverty. Furthermore, the income at that time is good, but people cannot live from that income everyday. This respondent also noted that because everybody is not yet cultivating, the long-term prospects for fighting poverty with buchu cultivation is not yet within everybody's reach.

As mentioned above (Section 5.2, this chapter), the harvesting and sale of the popular wildflowers, or '*tolbos*' as it is known to locals, provide another income for the community. These flowers are harvested every year and are very important for the households. Its importance was evident when 80% of respondents indicated that the '*tolbos*' is another important natural resource they harvest and this is so, because it provides an income when there is once again little or no seasonal work. There were also those respondents (10%), who felt that there was nothing else from the wild that they would list as very important to their

households. Wood was indicated by 6% of respondents, as another important source from the wild while 4% did not list a response to the question.

Given that this study's main objectives are to document livelihoods and perceptions of sustainability, it was important to establish what people's perceptions were in relation to how and when they think buchu harvesting is not good for the future existence of the resource within their area or beyond. From the respondents, 71% believed that it is unsustainable harvesting practices which include cutting the plant too short, uprooting the plant, harvesting a plant knowing that the plant's too young to be harvested, harvesting every year, and burning the mountain or doing it at the wrong time of the year. From this response, the first answer from many was that cutting too short is definitely not good for buchu's future existence. Some respondents also noted that there are people who would know that someone has already harvested a plant but if they see that they can cut off some more, they'll harvest it again. This is known locally as '*aaroptel*' (to harvest a plant twice). Many times, this might be dangerous if the harvesters do not know how to do it without uprooting the plant. At least 21% of the respondents felt that harvesting before a buchu plant has produced flowers or released seeds is also not good for future existence of buchu in their area. These respondents felt that harvesting any time before this is inappropriate and could possibly mean that plants, which are too young, will not get a chance to produce seeds. Four respondents (8%) did not provide an answer for the question.

At least 40% of the respondents believed that through training, people should be informed about buchu's value, and even though this value can easily be determined through monetary terms, they felt that people should be made aware of their loss from this natural resource. Buchu also needs to be allowed the maximum time to grow and interruptions (such as continued fires) should be avoided. The respondents, who noted this (17%), felt that in this way buchu can be sustained and, at the same time, protected. Another option for achieving sustainable use, harvesting, and management of buchu can occur (and was noted by 13% of respondents) when buchu is perhaps harvested in March. Respondents

noted that by this time, flowers have been produced and seeds have been released. Other responses that were included were to harvest or treat the mountains as you would with cattle grazing areas. Respondents noted that if one side of a mountain is harvested one year and the next the following, then it would take the pressure off the mountain buchu and so too the community would be allowed to harvest every year. This would help, therefore, in managing buchu in the wild sustainably (8%). There were also respondents who felt that sustainable use, harvesting, and management of buchu cannot be achieved if there is not some authoritative figure involved in this process (10%). Respondents noted that implementing the strictest type of laws would definitely help iron out some of the problems experienced in the buchu trade. These respondents felt that if there is a stringent code of conduct, then all involved in the buchu trade (and even those violating some of these laws already) would be careful not to end up on the wrong side of the law. No explanation or answer was given by 12% of respondents.

The community of Elandskloof has presented many perceptions or ideas above, on how wild buchu can be preserved and used in a sustainable manner. People noted that there have been changes in buchu's availability, that unsustainable harvesting, theft and other factors are present, and that this might threaten buchu's future existence. However, respondents felt strongly when they noted that buchu (whether wild or cultivated) would remain an important feature of local people's livelihoods (92.3%). Reasons provided for these responses included that buchu has been around for so long and that it is basically a part of the people. It can, in some ways, be seen as something cultural, therefore. People were quick to point out that while the demand is there, there will always be an interest in buchu whether for commercial purposes or other. Thinking of increases in market prices and demands, these respondents feel that buchu will be around and part of people's livelihoods as long as they can make an income from it. A diminutive figure of respondents (6%) indicated that they believe that a day could come where buchu will not be part of people's livelihoods. A reason these respondents list is that some of the young people are already not interested in buchu and buchu

harvesting and if they are not willing to carry on the tradition, then its importance will become irrelevant.

## **5.6. CULTIVATION OF BUCHU AT ELANDSKLOOF**

Cultivation of buchu has been identified as a possibility, to deal with some of the problems (foreseen and present) related to buchu sustainability. Some of these problems include the poaching of buchu, unsustainable harvesting, and regular mountain fires, which could all possibly lead to the extinction of the resource. Cultivation of buchu, however, is not widely practiced and still, in many cases, new to some stakeholders. In order to find alternatives or ways in which the future sustainability of buchu can be ensured, initiatives such as the Elandskloof buchu cultivation project has been launched. The community of Elandskloof is not the only community to benefit from this cultivation initiative, but three other communities, which include the Goedverwacht community (near Piketberg), have also been included in this project (Dietrichs, 2005).<sup>34</sup> The project is a joint effort by the communities, nature conservation, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), and a local distilling company called Afriplex (Yeld, 2004). From the Elandskloof community, a total number of eight individuals were chosen (one being a woman, see Box 3) to participate in the first phase of the project in 2004. This initiative (and as advocated by its sponsors) is to help uplift communities, who have the potential and resources, out of the gridlock of poverty and thereby, these individuals might be able to contribute to their own livelihoods (Cape Nature Conservation, 2004).<sup>35</sup>

As mentioned above, the Elandskloof buchu cultivation project was officially launched in February 2004, but planting of the buchu plants only occurred in September 2004. A reason for this is that even though the cultivated plants were ready in February 2004, the area or land where some of the plants were to be

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<sup>34</sup> Personal communication with Ms. Merle Dietrichs (extensions officer for Elandskloof buchu cultivation project), 10 March 2005; Elandskloof.

<sup>35</sup> Nature Conservation Website. Available at [www.capenature.org.za](http://www.capenature.org.za). Accessed 10 December 2004.

planted was not ready for the cultivated plants.<sup>36</sup> The individuals chosen for the first phase of the project also had to receive training about buchu cultivation and, in September 2004, their buchu plants were planted. Apart from the eight individuals chosen for this ‘official’ buchu cultivation project, three youths have also started cultivating their own buchu at Elandskloof. This exercise was part of an agricultural course that the young people were involved in and, during data collection for the study, these young cultivators were also included with the eight others as official buchu cultivators at Elandskloof.

**Box 3: Alletta “Auntie Lêtjie” Titus<sup>37</sup>**

Mrs. Aletta Titus was born at Elandskloof in 1940 and is one of the prominent people who fought to have the community of Elandskloof reunited with their land. Auntie Lêtjie, as she is known in the community is a woman of 65 years and still actively involved with buchu. She also tells of how buchu was once harvested at Elandskloof on behalf of the church. A portion of this money was for the community, but controlled by the church. At harvesting time, Auntie Lêtjie still goes out to harvest, even if she admits she does not go that far anymore. Mrs. Titus is the only woman on the buchu cultivation project and says with a positive attitude that she can cultivate or harvest buchu just as good as a man, if not better. Many of Auntie Lêtjie’s cultivated plants are growing well as she too suffered a few buchu plant losses with the dry season. She remains positive, however, about the cultivation project and adds that everyone will see its success.

The cultivation project, and mention thereof, is a heated topic at Elandskloof. This is because many community members are not happy to be left out of the pilot of eight households. Thus, this project has also stirred up much animosity between members of the community, as many are not in favour of the project. This is so because community members were under the impression that when the cultivation project commenced that it would be a collective exercise by the community and not based on individuals being chosen.<sup>38</sup> Considering the topic’s sensitive nature and the unhappiness of many of the community members, it was still crucial to find out what the community’s perceptions were around buchu cultivation and

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<sup>36</sup> Personal communication with Ms. Merle Dietrichs (extensions officer for Elandskloof buchu cultivation project), 10 March 2005: Elandskloof

<sup>37</sup> Interview conducted at Elandskloof, 2 March 2005

<sup>38</sup> Personal Communication with Mr. C van der Merwe (Community member), 3 March 2005: Elandskloof.

what cultivation might mean for buchu's future. One of the first questions that was asked was whether respondents thought buchu cultivation could influence their livelihoods. It was hoped to establish how people felt about cultivation, whether as solution or part of a broader problem. From the responses, many respondents did not feel that cultivation of buchu would influence their livelihoods significantly or at all (71.2%). Respondents were quick to point out that because they do not cultivate, it would not affect their livelihoods. Those who responded that it would not have an effect mainly noted two reasons for their response. The first was that even though they felt cultivation would be good for the community as a whole, this would possibly only be seen after the project proves successful. Respondents noted that it was still early days, successes have not been seen, and therefore, it is difficult to say whether it will be positive for those cultivating or even those not cultivating. The second reason that the respondents listed was that even if they were cultivating, they would still harvest buchu from the mountains. Respondents noted that as community members, this is their right and they would still want to exercise this right.

Respondents who felt that buchu cultivation would affect their livelihoods (whether positive or negative) also provided reasons for their responses (26.9%). Varied responses were received, of which some were positive while others felt that the influence would be negative. Some of the positive responses included that if cultivation is adopted more widely then it will make harvesting of buchu much easier. There will be little need to go out into the mountains as much, and it will be much easier if harvesting can just be done from home or your own plantation area. Other reasons provided were that non-cultivating people felt that they would not gain as much as those people who cultivate and who are still allowed to go into the mountains and harvest. Some respondents also added here that if this is the case, then it seems unfair that they could not also be allowed to benefit when the cultivated buchu is harvested. Some other concerns also raised by respondents were that if cultivation is adopted more widely then it could possibly cause some type of hybrid buchu to appear in the mountains. They feared that this might

cause buyers to pay less for the buchu and thereby, influence everybody's livelihood.

Apart from the conflict stirred up by the cultivation project at Elandskloof, the cultivators themselves have found that buchu cultivation can be a tedious process. Even though no real specialized equipment is needed, a lot of attention and care should be provided in order for the young plants to adapt more quickly after removal from the trays (seeds are planted in trays). From the 11 cultivators, 82% said that they have experienced problems with the cultivating process. The overwhelming reason provided was that the buchu plants were planted in summer and therefore suffered heat stress and some of the plants died. One respondent noted that he was actually responsible for some of his buchu plants dying. While he was removing some weeds in between his buchu, he disturbed some of the roots and air filtered through. Some of his plants died. One other respondent listed that he did not experience any problems.

Many respondents had mixed feelings and as already noted, fears, regarding buchu cultivation. Whether buchu cultivation is a viable option or not, the majority of respondents had the following to add with regard to cultivation. Forty-two percent of the respondents thought that it could provide an income, create work, and have long-term benefits. Respondents noted here that if they are cultivating, there is an additional income and at the same time, they are actually working. There were also respondents (50%) who felt that if cultivating occurs more widely, then it would take the pressure out of the mountain and by doing this, people are also preserving buchu. Four percent responded that they do not believe buchu cultivation is a viable option because not everybody is cultivating, and one respondent added angrily that he does not believe in cultivation and that cultivation will not solve any of the problems at Elandskloof. There were respondents, however, who believed that the cultivation of buchu at Elandskloof can help with problems related to over harvesting of mountain buchu. These respondents (65.4%) noted that some of the benefits of cultivation would be that there might be less pressure on the mountain buchu and thus, mountain buchu

might be able to have more time for regrowth (see Table 17). More people might also find that they do not want to go out and harvest in the mountain and would like to attend to or harvest their cultivated buchu at home. Others felt that cultivation can definitely contribute at a household level, leading to community upliftment.

**Table 17: Cultivation of Buchu as Solution to Over Harvesting Problems**

<b>Can Cultivation of Buchu Provide a Solution?</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
YES	65.4% (34)
NO	28.8% (15)
No answer provided	5.8% (3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%(52)</b>

With regard to legislation, those respondents, who felt that the arm of the law should be stricter, added that perpetrators of the law do so because they are not caught (85%) (see Table 18). These respondents feel that, if very harsh examples are made with these perpetrators, then there might be a fear of becoming involved in such activities. Some respondents, who said that they believe legislation can be made stricter, also noted that since the law is not working or can be disregarded by some as it is, then there is certainly place for it to improve or to be made stricter. Two respondents, or 3.8%, said that it could be made less strict and this way there might be less problems associated with buchu. There were also those respondents, who felt that they could not really be bothered with legislation, because whether it is strict or not, people will always find ways around it. Two respondents, who noted that they do not care about legislation, were quick to point out that this does not mean they do not care about buchu. Legislation, one respondent pointed out, only serves or protects people, likes the farmers.

**Table 18: Perceptions on Buchu Legislation**

<b>Legislation Should Be</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More strict	84.6% (44)
Less strict	3.8% (2)
Do not care	9.6% (5)
No answer provided	1.9 % (1)

<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (52)</b>
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## **5.7. CONCLUSION**

What was evident from this chapter is that buchu harvesting plays an important role in the life of the community of Elandskloof. Even though the community values its monetary worth, other values such as its cultural value, are also noted as important to the community. The purpose of this chapter has been to portray the livelihoods of people involved with buchu, as well as presenting their perceptions with regard to buchu and sustainable use, management, and harvesting. The chapter concluded with a look into buchu cultivation and what some of the concerns and ideas around the issue entails.

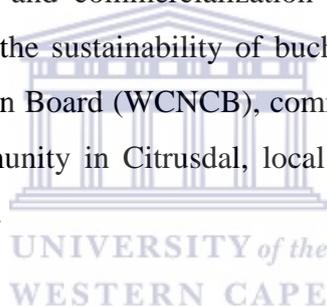


## **CHAPTER 6: HARVESTING AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF BUCHU: PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY BY THE PRIVATE FARMERS, DISTILLERS AND RASTAFARIANS**

### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 5 presented the case study of the harvesting of wild buchu in the Elandskloof community. The focus was on local importance of buchu, institutional arrangements regarding harvesting, perceptions of sustainability, and the introduction of cultivated buchu. The harvesters are members of a communal property association, meaning that buchu growing on land under their jurisdiction is commonly owned, making this case study unique.

This chapter acknowledges that the harvesting of buchu in Elandskloof does not happen in isolation. There is a wide range of other stakeholders, who are key actors in the harvesting and commercialization of buchu, and thus may have different perceptions on the sustainability of buchu. These include the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB), commercial farmers, the sub-culture of the Rastafarian community in Citrusdal, local distillers, and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC).



The first section of this chapter discusses legislation around buchu, the permit system and the WCNCB's position on buchu and related activities. This is followed by a section discussing perceptions of sustainability by commercial farmers in the Citrusdal area as well as the views and perceptions of some Rastafarian members from the Citrusdal community. The perceptions and role of local distillers are discussed next, followed by the role of ARC with regard to buchu and its sustainability. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

### **6.2. BUCHU LEGISLATION AND WCNCB ROLE**

As mentioned in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.1), buchu is protected under the Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance 19 of 1974 (as amended). The authority responsible for its implementation and the governance thereof is the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board. It, therefore, makes sense to explore the role and

policies of this conservation board as one of the key stakeholders in the buchu industry.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, buchu is protected flora.<sup>39</sup> Section 63 (1) (c) of the Ordinance states that no person shall pick any protected flora on land where he/she is not the owner and not in possession of a valid permit (Provincial Gazette Extraordinary, 2000). Furthermore, permission to pick protected flora shall not be granted unless an application is made to the Board, where the relevant name and addresses of the owners of the land is provided, reflects the species that will be picked and also providing the date or dates when such flora will be picked (Section 63 (2) (a, b & c). If a permit is granted to the applicant (applying for a flora picker with the intent of selling license), the validity for this permit continues for three years from the date of issue. Therefore, it is illegal to harvest or trade buchu without a permit endorsed by Cape Nature Conservation. It is also illegal to harvest buchu in nature reserves anywhere in the province. Additionally, whenever buchu is bought or sold, a receipt of its sale should be issued to the buyer (Minutes of Buchu Forum Meeting, 2002). Nature Conservation (NC) is aware that problems do indeed exist with regard to buchu and its management. Some of the most serious problems identified by NC include poaching in nature reserves, illegal harvesting on private land, absence of rotation in harvesting patterns, harvesting during flowering time, licensed merchants buying from illegal sources, unlicensed merchants, and harvesting in ways that damages the ecology of the plant.<sup>40</sup>

As a way of counteracting the negative activities relating to buchu use and trade mentioned above, NC has been and is involved in various projects with the aim of promoting rural development, while at the same time sustaining and protecting existing natural resources, including buchu. In one of these projects, it also acts as

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<sup>39</sup> Schedule 4 of Ordinance 19 of 1974 (as amended), Provincial Gazette Extraordinary, 17 February 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Problems highlighted by Mr. H Stadler (Cape Nature Conservation: Porterville) at a Buchu Forum Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 at Elsenburg.

a partner involved with the buchu cultivation project at Elandskloof. Their rationale for becoming involved with the community project is:

To ensure the survival of buchu in the wild and to support the economic development of rural communities, by teaching them the skills required to cultivate buchu as a commercial crop.<sup>41</sup>

Even though the permit system, as it exists, seems to be fraught with loopholes, it has an important role in ensuring some control in the industry. Since it is illegal and a criminal offence to trade buchu without a permit, nature conservation issues a permit on certain conditions. First, before a license is issued, an inspection is carried out by NC, to determine land tenure of the site where buchu will be harvested. Second, NC officials have to check on the status of the area or site where harvesting will take place. Through this permit system and the inspection of land, NC is 'able' to keep record of all buchu transactions and permits that are issued (Blomerus, 2002). Nature conservation, however, stresses that effective management of the industry and a firm control over buchu poaching can only be achieved with the honest help of all the stakeholders in the industry. In this regard, they have received positive responses from some local communities and farmers, who suggest that an increase on fines for the offenders can act as a deterrent. NC has stated that fines can go up to R10,000 or serving two to three years in prison.<sup>42</sup> Nature Conservation has also established an environmental crime unit in 2001 to address the growing problem of environmental crimes in the region, and boasts that it has had successes with this initiative.<sup>43</sup> While in the Western Cape the primary concern is with the poaching of marine resources such as abalone (Hauck & Hector, 2003), this unit's activities would also focus on buchu poaching. This is so because buchu is classified as a protected indigenous plant species and, according to a number of commentators (Geldenhuis, 2005; de Ponte 2003), is one of the most poached resources in the province.

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<sup>41</sup> "Empowering people to cultivate buchu" Available at Cape Nature's official website [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za) Accessed 26 July 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Problems highlighted by Mr. H Stadler (Cape Nature Conservation: Porterville) at a Buchu Forum Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2002 at Elsenburg

<sup>43</sup> "Combating environmental crime," Available at Cape Nature's official website [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za) Accessed 26 July 2005.

### 6.3. COMMERCIAL FARMERS' PERCEPTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY

In order to develop effective guidelines on what sustainable harvesting of wild buchu entails or put suggestions forward as to how this process can be enhanced, it is important to know what all stakeholders involved perceive as sustainable harvesting methods. Hence, it was necessary to document those perceptions from other stakeholders, which included commercial farmers who also harvest wild buchu. Perceptions highlighted here take account of farmers who are Elandskloof's neighbours, including the son of Mr. Smit from whom the farm of Elandskloof was bought in the 1960's (see section 3.3.1, Chapter 3).

In addition to perceptions gathered through secondary literature, a few farmers were approached directly. They were asked several questions on buchu, mainly about their involvement in the trade and its sustainability. The farmers established that at harvesting time, with the help of a distilling company, they contract experienced harvesters to help them harvest their mountain buchu. Grassroots Natural Products trained the harvesters contracted to the farmers. Two farmers neighbouring the farm of Elandskloof claim they harvest buchu every year and they are able to do so because they harvest different areas of their mountains every year.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to the Elandskloof harvesters, these farmers believe that it is not how short a buchu plant is harvested but rather how frequently an area is harvested that can potentially lead to the extinction of wild buchu populations. According to these farmers, they (and some of their other farmer counterparts) fear over-harvesting of buchu from the wild as this could possibly lead to buchu becoming drastically less, eventually being classified as an 'endangered species' (Minutes of Buchu Forum Meeting, 2002).

The farmers believe that the two most serious problems facing wild populations of buchu are the issues of poaching and mountain mismanagement. This is what Mr. 'Boetie' Smit regard as 'potentially' dangerous to buchu's future existence. Mr. Boetie's mountain farming area consists of approximately 200 ha and he is one of the farmers who contracts people to help him harvest his mountain buchu. He also

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<sup>44</sup> Personal communication with two farmers from Citrusdal, 19 August 2005.

fears running losses of buchu to poachers. Therefore, he remarks that he and some of his neighbours have no choice but to harvest buchu from their mountains every year. Fears of loosing out to poaching have even prompted some farmers to appoint people or 'Bushmen' to patrol their mountains.<sup>45</sup> The second problem farmers regard as serious is that of ineffective mountain management. The farmers who were directly approached claimed that they use an organized mountain management system that allows them to harvest buchu every year. As they do not harvest the same areas every year, they claim that this helps them to benefit as much as possible from their mountains but at the same time having the resource's sustainability in mind. However, as common with human beings, these farmers also point to others as the problem. With regard to mountain mismanagement, for example, one farmer claims that the farm of Elandskloof is badly mismanaged. He claims that while this farm used to produce anything from six to ten tons of buchu, these days "I am sure they do not even get anything near two tons from their mountains." This farmer suggests that if the community continues harvesting in their 'unorganized fashion,' then soon they will have nothing to harvest from the mountain.

Even though farmers do believe that there might be a threat towards wild buchu's future existence, such as poaching or unsustainable harvesting, they do not appear concerned that this might influence their livelihoods. One farmer argued, "Buchu will survive in the wild, it might not be as it was in the past, but it will not be exhausted beyond its renewal capabilities." This farmer further adds that they cannot harvest all the buchu as it grows in between rocks, and during harvesting, they tend to overlook many of these spots.

With regard to cultivation of buchu, many farmers feel that this is probably the future of buchu.<sup>46</sup> This is so, argues another neighbouring farmer to Elandskloof. This farmer started cultivating buchu six years ago and his cultivation area comprises of two and a half hectares of land. He notes that he has harvested his cultivated crops once and sold these to a local distiller, but that it is not an easy

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<sup>45</sup> Personal communication with Mr. Isak Burger (farmer) from Citrusdal: 16 February 2004.

<sup>46</sup> Personal communication with a farmer, Citrusdal: 19 August 2005.

process to cultivate buchu. This farmer and some others indicate that “we are still learning about this whole process” and some suggest that stakeholders need to communicate more to make the process even more effective. Even though ARC, distillers, and others advise them on cultivation, these farmers think that their counterparts’ experiences would help them more in finding ways of cultivating buchu successfully.

With regard to legislation and the permit system, the farmers share the concerns of distillers and the local people. One farmer notes, “The problem might not be with the permit system as it is, but rather the management.” In this sense, this farmer argues, “Nature conservation should not just issue a permit and that is the end of it.” They should in fact try to “do follow-up visits to the harvester’s land and some type of monitoring system should be implemented.” He notes, however, that nature conservation officials would probably just add that they do not have the manpower to control every facet of the industry.

It seems, therefore, that commercial farmers believe that the manner in which they harvest or manage buchu is effective and within the objectives of sustainable use of natural resources. A reason for this might be that many commercial farmers involved with buchu in Citrusdal have formed an unofficial group or body where they interact regularly with each other. From conversations with some of these farmers, there are even plans to register their cultivated buchu under one trademark name for all the farmers in the area belonging to this unofficial body.<sup>47</sup> This unofficial group of buchu farmers does not include members from the Elandskloof community.

#### **6.4. PERCEPTIONS FROM THE RASTAFARIAN COMMUNITY**

It has become quite clear that there are people within the buchu trade who perceive other people or fellow harvesters as the greatest threat to the future existence of buchu. These individuals would suggest that other potential dangers such as fires or unsustainable harvesting techniques are far less threatening than that of

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<sup>47</sup> Personal communication with farmers from Citrusdal, 19 August 2005.

informal harvesting and buchu poaching. From many of the recorded conversations with community members in Elandskloof, there were those people who thought that informal harvesting or buchu poaching by Rastafarians is the major threat to buchu's future existence. Some respondents in Elandskloof claimed that it is Rastafarians who do not know how to harvest appropriately or that they are contracted by people to poach buchu on private farms and even from the nature reserves.

Therefore, it was important to establish from the Rastafarian community what they thought of these statements and what their perceptions were on sustainable harvesting of buchu, as well as its future existence. A few individuals from the Rastafarian community in Citrusdal were approached. The only way this researcher knew to make contact with them was to do so when they were selling their goods in front of a local shop in the main road of Citrusdal. As no prior appointments were made with the individuals, I had to ask if it would be all right to interview them while they were attending to customers. A group of eight Rastafarians were present, three of them were busy attending to customers and the other five were just grouped together talking when I approached them. They were reluctant to talk at first, but when I introduced myself and assured them that I was not from nature conservation or the government, they seemed to calm down. One of these men told me that they do not talk about buchu or sell buchu in the streets. They know what the penalty is for doing this and they do not want trouble. I overheard, however, when some tourists were asking about buchu, how one Rastafarian told the visitors that if they could come back later the afternoon that he would have some for them and will only sell it for R10 (dry bunch).

As with all the other buchu stakeholders, there were some questions on sustainability that was important to ask from the Rastafarians. The first question posed to the group was whether they harvested, traded and/or cultivated buchu. From the five men willing to talk, only three said that they do harvest buchu, and one of them happened to be a community member of Elandskloof. The issue of cultivation of buchu seemed to be something that Rastafarians (or this group in

particular) do not agree with. These Rastafarians argue that they are “known to be very spiritual people and very in touch with the natural environment.” Therefore they noted that cultivation is not something that they believe in. A reason provided by one respondent was that, ‘man should not or cannot create what is found in nature.’ The cultivation of buchu is an important component of current trends in the buchu industry and even though the Rastafarian did not believe in it, it was still important to get their views on it. From other responses, it was noted that there is enough buchu in the mountains; hence, there is no need for cultivation. The general feeling from the Rastafarians was that the people cultivating are predominantly the white farmers who are in this ‘gold rush’ for the money.

There was an overall agreement in the group of Rastafarians that sustainable harvesting of buchu occurs where care and caution is taken during harvesting. Precautions (they cite) should include making sure the sickle the harvester uses is sharp enough and to make sure that uprooting of the plant does not occur. Apart from the one Rastafarian (who is an Elandskloof and therefore can harvest rightfully at Elandskloof), the other two added that they do not do reap frequently since they do not have permits. When asked where they gather from they just noted, “that we go everywhere, but this does not mean we are stealing.” These Rastafarians also believe that there are no real threats to buchu and that it is a hardy plant that has been around for many years. One added that ‘it is because these people are interfering, reproducing, and doing all strange things when in fact the environment can take care of itself.’ The issue around legislation and the permit system created more interest and many heated viewpoints. Some of these viewpoints included the fact that they (Rastafarians) believe that it is their right to harvest buchu, but that this is not taken into consideration by authorities. They are not disputing the fact that there are people who steal buchu and that they know that Rastafarians are also involved, but, they argue, because people know Rastafarians walk in the mountains, it is quite easy to generalize and say that they are responsible for poaching buchu. One respondent noted that “it is easy to implicate a group of people or just speculate who it might be than to pin pointing exactly

who might be responsible when so many people are involved in this trade.” Some other comments made by the group is that they know there is a active black-market for buchu, buchu seeds, and plant material and that many of the commercial farmers, distillers, Rastafarians and many other people, are responsible for some of the problems that exist with trade. In conclusion, there was a unanimous response or agreement by all the Rastafarians present that to them and their cultural practices, buchu is a powerful plant with wonderful healing properties. Thus, they claim that they do not believe that anyone being a true Rastafarian would consciously over-harvest, poach or contribute to unsustainable buchu practices for the purpose of generating cash.

## **6.5. BUCHU DISTILLERS’ VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS**

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the buchu industry has proven to be a growing industry and very profitable for those involved in it (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). The plant’s profitability can be cited as an attribute to its popularity and the commercial farmers, small-scale farmers, distillers as well as other stakeholders involved in the trade, all know this (Blomerus, 2002). While indigenous people have been known to use buchu over many centuries, it is the ability to process buchu that has benefit to it. As a result, it is important to understand distillers as an important stakeholder in the trade.

Some of the more established distillers in the Western Cape include Afriplex in Paarl (partner in buchu project at Elandskloof), Waterfall also in Paarl, and Grassroots Natural Products located near Gouda. At many of these operations, the distillation of buchu oil occurs through steam distillation techniques and the oil extract is used by industries that include the pharmaceutical as well as food industries (Landbou Burger, 2005). Presently, the buchu industry can be cited as doing well and growing, with estimated harvested material reaching up to 500 tons annually.<sup>48</sup> There are those distillers that are concerned about the booming buchu

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<sup>48</sup> Personal Communication with Mark Durrheim (buchu section head), Grassroots Natural Products, 22 August 2005.

industry. This is the case with Grassroots Natural Products<sup>49</sup> located in Gouda in the Western Cape.

In terms of threats to buchu's future existence in the wild, distillers such as Grassroots hold less drastic views and add that there is a misconception of buchu being wiped out.<sup>50</sup> The reported incidents of theft and over-harvesting are occurring but not as extensively or frequently as is thought. The head of the buchu section of Grassroots adds that there are reports that buchu has become extinct in the mountains of Piketberg, but he states further that his organization knows of some farmers in Piketberg who still harvest up to six tons of buchu. The major problem cited by Grassroots for the buchu industry's sustainability is that it is a free market and, because of its potential income opportunities, other dangers such as over-planting of buchu are ignored or overlooked. Grassroots adds that millions of plants are being planted and that they (Grassroots) have sold more than 800,000 new plants over the last few years. They fear that if the market becomes over-saturated then many farmers, both commercial and small, who have aspirations of good buchu earnings, will suffer disappointment as the market might become 'over consumed' with buchu plant material and buchu oil.

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This distilling company also feels that the market for *A. betulina* is being mismanaged and have raised their concerns with the WCNCB. In terms of community projects, they fear that these communities involved in buchu cultivation might have high expectations and with the market growing, prices might fall at the time when their crops are ready for harvesting. This would make these exercises worthless and the communities could lose out on a valuable source of income. They add that this might be the worst-case scenario and that the market might even expand to accommodate some of these extra crops, but how far the market can stretch is something that is uncertain.

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<sup>49</sup> A distiller of natural oils which includes buchu, but also provides other services such as the purchase of harvested buchu, provision of experienced harvesters to reap buchu on commercial farms, the sale of buchu plants, and the provision of advice on buchu planting, harvesting problems and queries.

<sup>50</sup> Personal Communication with Mark Durrheim (buchu section head), Grassroots Natural Products, 22 August 2005.

Other distillers also fear for buchu's sustainability and the industry at large. Some distillers' comments with regard to harvesting include that:

Timing of harvesting should rather be determined by the growth cycle of the plant and producers of buchu or farmers should not harvest their buchu earlier just to prevent the loss of crops to poaching (Minutes of Buchu Forum Meeting, 2002).

These distillers also state that the image of the buchu market needs to be protected as it could easily be seen as an industry controlled by poachers who destroy this natural resource.

In safeguarding buchu, in the wild or cultivated, distillers feel that the current legislation in place and the permit system can be reviewed and changes could definitely be made. According to Grassroots, there are sellers who have turned up at their doors with buchu, bearing no receipt or a valid harvesting license. Although they claim they turn these sellers away, this might not be the case with their competition and permit less buchu does enter in the system through other non-legal channels. A suggestion made by one distiller is that permits could or should be issued rather on quantities of buchu that a harvester can harvest. A permit should therefore only be issued after inspection has been done on the land and an assessment or estimation of the amount of buchu that could possibly emerge from the land was calculated.

## **6.6. THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (ARC)**

The role of ARC, based at Elsenburg in the Western Cape, in the buchu industry has included being at the forefront of research on the cultivation of buchu, but also providing assistance and guidance to all stakeholders in the industry. ARC states that the aim of their buchu research is "to gain knowledge on buchu cultivation," thereby assisting farmers with commercial cultivation of buchu.

From communication with ARC representatives, their focus now is to research the cultivation process, identify gaps, and investigate these. They hold the view that the experiences from farmers cultivating buchu prove important, if they want to continue making successful contributions towards cultivation within the industry.<sup>51</sup> ARC believes that continued pressure on wild populations of buchu affirms the importance of cultivation of the species; therefore, its relevance in the industry proves important. Even though there has been some research focusing on buchu and the industry, ARC feels that there are still some problems with regard to the industry. These include the lack of information on the actual size of the industry, what the amount for harvested buchu from the wild accounts for, the lack of knowledge of cultivation of the crop as well as the problems surrounding theft and poaching in the industry.

The buchu industry is viewed by the council as having a bright future, but the problems mentioned above should be investigated and viewed as urgent if the plant as well as the industry wants to remain sustainable. According to a representative at ARC, they are currently involved with various types of projects, which focus on the plant's biological ecology, but also using their expertise as a research unit to help rural communities with training and advice with buchu cultivation.

## **6.7. CONCLUSION**

The chapter has highlighted some of the views, fears, and perceptions from other stakeholders involved in the buchu industry. It can be concluded that this 'secondary' stakeholder group views the cultivation of buchu as an important characteristic for the future of buchu and the industry as a whole. Almost all stakeholders have placed much emphasis on cultivation and some have mentioned its importance to the future of buchu. Many concerns for this growing industry have also been raised. For those cultivating, this provides a wonderful opportunity for cash generation, but with alarms going off at every turn for the booming

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<sup>51</sup> Personal communication with Louisa Blomerus from ARC, Elsenburg, on the 11 August 2005.

industry, it seems as if the industry is being mismanaged with a minority reaping the benefits.



## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this thesis was to explore the socio-economic factors that impact on the sustainable harvesting of buchu in the Western Cape of South Africa. Some of the factors explored include poverty, natural resource tenure, legislation, and local practices with regard to the harvesting of buchu. In order to achieve the objectives set out for this study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2), two approaches were employed. Firstly, there was a review of the literature on poverty in South Africa, highlighting how poverty is creating a dependence on certain natural resources and how the rapid commercialisation of these resources, including medicinal plants such as buchu, are increasing significantly. The literature review also included a discussion on how the post-apartheid government is dealing with poverty, as well as amplified use of natural resource in South Africa (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3, Chapter 2). Additionally, the concept of sustainability was explored (see Chapter 4), in order to lay the foundation for understanding different perceptions on sustainability by various stakeholders involved in the buchu trade. Secondly, the research employed a case study approach, by using buchu harvesting in rural Elandskloof. The case study allowed for an in-depth understanding of otherwise complicated practices relating to the ownership, regulation, trade, and value of buchu.

This concluding chapter aims to consolidate several issues that have emerged from the study. This chapter is presented in three major sections. Firstly, there is a section that briefly revisits the poverty-natural resources debate and issues associated with these. Secondly, aspects of sustainability of the buchu trade and the way forward (as advocated by stakeholders), as well as what the findings of the study propose, are discussed. Lastly, the chapter concludes with an outline of what is possible for policy guidelines within the buchu trade.

## **7.2. POVERTY AND NATURAL RESOURCE USE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **7.2.1. Importance of natural resources to rural livelihoods**

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3) of this thesis, poverty is a feature of post-apartheid South Africa. The prevalence of rural poverty is what some authors believe is responsible for the great demand rural people place on natural resources found adjacent their living environments (Cocks & Dold, 2002; Shackleton, 2004). Although government is encouraging the use of natural resources by the poor, it is at the same time calling for the protection and sustainable use of these resources in many of its policies (Kepe *et al*, 2004). As many natural resources are being commercialized, the need for conservation of these resources proves important, as many rural people make use of these resources for both subsistence or for trading purposes (Makhado, 2004).

South Africa is currently ranked the third most biologically diverse country in the world (Wynberg & Kepe, 1999; Van Wyk, 2002), and boasts a rich natural resource base. For those depending on natural resources as a source for generating cash, the sustainability of these resources proves important. In some instances, such as in the case of the Elandskloof community, the harvesting of these natural resources is not merely for generating cash income, but these resources are also used directly within the households, as well as being regarded as a cultural feature of the community. Wynberg *et al* (2002) also provides evidence of this in their study of the importance of non-timber forest products (NTFP's) in South Africa. They use the case study of 'marula' and note that the use and sale of this resource forms an integral part of the culture of rural communities in Southern Africa, while at the same time trade with it helps to supplement other livelihood activities. As little or no other livelihood opportunities are available for poor rural households, these individuals are dependent, partially or fully, on natural resources for their survival. Evidence in this thesis also supports these other studies, which emphasise the contribution natural resources make to rural livelihoods, but also the general concern about the long-term sustainability of the resource base.

### **7.2.2. Commercialisation of natural resources**

It is now widely accepted that natural resources are used for both subsistence and trading purposes. As rural people have known the benefits of natural resources for a long-time, their commercial value has now become known well beyond rural areas and for this reason, their exploitation is accelerating at a great pace. As this study has also shown, medicinal plants have come, sharply, under the spotlight, as plants such as buchu have become sought-after. As a result of this, concerns for their future have been raised. This issue has been well documented throughout this thesis. Many medicinal plants are favoured for their healing properties, but many traditional healers are also making use of these within their practices. Van Wyk (2002) estimates that healers use about 3,000 different types of species. As the utilisation of these medicinal plants has increased, many types of plants have become vulnerable as commercialisation and market demands depend on raw materials in large quantities (Mander *et al*, 1995). Cultivation of buchu seems to be driving its commercialisation process at a rapid rate. With an annual estimated 500 tons of buchu harvested, the industry is doing very well and the demand for raw plant material is well exceeding the supply. This worries some stakeholders (such as local distillers, Chapter 6, Section 6.5) who believe that this demand could possibly have some negative implications. Since projects such as the Elandskloof cultivation project (also initiated in other communities) is seen as a poverty reduction strategy, over-planting could result in the market becoming flooded and sellers having to lower their prices for their crops. This could definitely have a negative influence on the whole poverty reduction agenda as aspiring cultivators await a good income on their crops. Poor rural households, who are cultivating, might feel it the hardest.

### **7.3. SUSTAINABILITY AND NATURAL RESOURCE USE**

Chapter 4 provided definitions and a discussion of the concept of sustainability. The study does acknowledge that various interpretations on sustainability are available, but the themes on sustainability, which have largely been the focus in the literature, have been those of environmental/biological sustainability, social sustainability, and economic sustainability (discussed in Chapter 4). Biological

sustainability, however, is thought to be the most defined form of sustainability, as fears for the degradation of natural resources are discussed broadly. Within an industry such as the buchu trade, for example, it might be difficult to define sustainability while there is little communication between stakeholders as to what sustainable use, harvesting, and management of buchu entails. At present, no protocol on harvesting exists but, as also shown in de Ponte Machado's (2003) study, this study also reiterates the recommendations of WCNCB and ARC, which encourage a three-year harvest rotation. After a three-year re-growth period, it would be possible for the reaper to prune back at least 75% of the plant. Harvesting can then commence when mature seeds have been released. From this study, it was found that various stakeholders have their own ideas of what they considered to be the sustainable use of buchu or what they perceived could ensure the sustainability of the species, as well as the trade. It was found, however, that many common viewpoints existed. Stakeholders acknowledged that there are factors, which are threatening the sustainability of buchu and the industry. Many thought that intervention should come from an authoritarian level, such as Nature Conservation. Suggestions put forward by stakeholders included a number of issues; some of the most dominant ranged from greater fines or penalties to be paid for transgressors to issues of harvesting rights (through permits), which needs to be reviewed. Lastly, but no less important, another common concern was the lack of communication between stakeholders, which they identified as another threat to buchu as to the industry's sustainability. If harvesters and/or producers of buchu share experiences and common concerns or just communicate over issues surrounding the resource, then this could possibly lead to better problem-solving of factors that are hindering the sustainability of buchu and the trade.

#### **7.4. WHAT POSSIBILITIES ARE THERE FOR POLICY GUIDELINES?**

The study has identified some issues that are note-worthy and might be able to enhance or even create new possibilities for policy guidelines regarding the sustainability of buchu. Several of these ideas have largely come from suggestions and ideas that stakeholders have put forward through interviews. These include aspects of the current policies that are in place, commercialisation of buchu,

planting, permits, resource ownership and the reliance on science for future trends or developments that might occur.

#### **7.4.1. Legislation/regulations**

Policy and legislation applicable to the buchu industry are primarily centred on the Conservation Ordinance 19 of 1974 (as amended). This Ordinance recognizes buchu as protected flora, and therefore, sets out specific regulations with regard to use, harvest, and trade of the resource (Chapter 6, see Section 6.2). There exists, however, the need to create new policies and legislation to protect buchu (Coetzee, 1998) and these need to be more specific. Policy makers and users of the plant should be educated, therefore, about its importance and its conservation. Could one way of this be the reviewing of the current permit system for buchu harvesting? Many stakeholders believe so. Stakeholders are calling for the requirements of these permits to be assessed and that, rather than being issued on a year or even three-year basis (for harvesting or trading), it should be issued on quantity-specific terms. By doing this, stakeholders acknowledge that a if harvester's quantity that he/she is allowed to harvest is exceeded, then the permit should be seen as expired after this time. Stakeholders note that this is done within the fishing industry of South Africa, with the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) quota. A harvesting protocol, as mentioned above, needs to be created whereby specific requirements for the landowner's crop need to be met before harvesting can commence. Rural people, such as the people of Elandskloof, would like to see more intervention on the part on NC during the actual harvesting period, while commercial farmers are calling for stricter penalties for transgressors. Also important to note is that many stakeholders felt that the permit system, its requirements and its regulation, needed revision. Hence, the study emphasizes that if the possibility arises to do so, then all stakeholders should be involved.

#### **7.4.2. Buchu cultivation**

Cultivation of buchu has been discussed throughout this thesis, as an alternative to the growing demand experienced in the market and act as a pressure lifter to the wild populations of buchu. Also important and as highlighted above, cultivation of buchu is also being used as a poverty reduction strategy. Some of the stakeholders included in the study are in favour of the cultivation of buchu, but many feel that if poor people are not benefiting, then its significance for stakeholders, such as rural farming communities, seems irrelevant. At present, the community cultivation projects are in their pilot phases. While not all community members can be included in these initial stages, it is important that all relevant role-players, from rural people to those in authority, ensure the success of these projects. By having those experienced ‘law makers’ involved or observing, it would result in a better understanding of the needs of aspiring rural cultivators. It would also provide insight on the whole cultivation process, which could lead to further recommendations and future improvements.

#### **7.4.3. Resource tenure**

Issues relating to natural resource ownership are another key aspect that the study has found to be complicated. An example would be that there are stakeholders within this chain who feel that buchu is part of their ‘culture’ and that they should be allowed to exercise their right to harvest buchu from the wild. As these ‘stakeholders’ are not landowners, they do not meet one of the key criteria for obtaining rights to harvest buchu legally (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4). This has implications as many of these stakeholders have been branded ‘illegal harvesters.’ Therefore, policy makers need to look into how stakeholders, who claim rights to the resource but do not have land, can be included within the trade. If possibilities of including these individuals exist, then would it not be wise to make sure that their views and roles are recognised?

Issues related to resource tenure, especially in the study area, is a subject that could possibly hinder the process of creating policies that will be applicable to all buchu users. As the community of Elandskloof are communal property owners,

they share common resources such as buchu. As mentioned earlier (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2), Gareth Hardin's (1968) notion on common pool resources is where people share common resources, little or no regard is given to the resources as individuals in the group know that, as common holders, the effects of their individual actions will be carried collectively by the group. Hardin terms this as the 'Tragedy of the Commons' and in this study area, this might hold value to some extent. Other community members have cited that powerful people in the community reap days before the official harvesting date commences, and even bring others to help them. As these people might harvest much of the available buchu, some other community members might be forced to harvest young plants to make a good income. As some respondents also noted, if they do not harvest their buchu, someone else, more likely to be a poacher, will. There could be other additional push factors, and not always common resource users' inconsiderate nature, that mobilise them to act in the manner they do. Another concern related to Elandskloof's communal landowners is, that while suggestions were put forward to issue permits on quantity specific terms, this might be problematic in a communal ownership system. This suggestion might prove useful for private farmers or landless individuals who would want to harvest buchu, but it might be difficult to prescribe to communal owners how much one is allowed to harvest. Even if this could be done, how many people would prescribe to these terms and as shown above, if powerful people harvest the best available buchu first, others might feel forced to harvest the younger plants.

#### **7.4.4. Research**

Finally, there exists a heavy reliance on science for producing answers to problems associated with sustainability of natural resource use. While the outcomes of science-based studies are important for determining quantifiable results, local knowledge that exists on the subject under investigation should not be overlooked. Those in the sciences are making calls for a merger between physical sciences and knowledge known only to local people. In doing so, the most appropriate ways to protect the resources under investigation may be found (Coetzee *et al*, 1999).

Many studies have been done on the importance of natural resources to those dependent on it and otherwise. The reliance on scientific evidence (as mentioned above) has created the misfortune of sometimes overlooking the contributions from social science studies, which simply illustrates how resources from the natural environment affect livelihoods. It is important, therefore, that this discrepancy not influence the sustainability of a resource such as buchu or the trade of it. This, in effect, could be prescribed to policy makers, that a combination of scientific evidence (whether of buchu's reproductive biology or ecology) is key, but understanding and incorporating how social networks and livelihoods are affected by use of the resource proves equally significant. Consequently, policy makers and those in positions of authority have the dual task of examining the scientific evidence, while also giving the same attention to the social aspects, to arrive at the best possible solutions for ensuring wild buchu's sustainability.

## **7.5. CONCLUSION**

In the introduction of this chapter, it was stated that the aim of this chapter was to capture some of the significant findings of the study, as well as proposing what the way forward might be for wild buchu and its trade. This study, therefore, acknowledges that harvesting and trading of buchu is dynamic and that the trade, as well as the administration, is fraught with difficulties. One of these significant difficulties, which many stakeholders also highlighted, is the lack of communication within the trade. From all stakeholders in the trade, it was noted that people are simply not talking to each other, that experiences of buchu are not shared, and that everyone is just about securing their own income from this resource. Consequently, many stakeholders indicated that for wild buchu's future sustainability, it is important that this insufficiency is addressed. In my final comment, therefore, communication within this trade is an area that needs intervention. This trade can be a benefit to all who are involved, but if stakeholders are not talking, then some of the major problems, as discussed in this thesis, will remain obstacles and counter any efforts for securing buchu's sustainability.

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