

**The practice and politics of state-funded rural  
development in the former homeland of  
Transkei, Eastern Cape**

by

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## Abstract

The subject of rural development has been at the forefront of South Africa's government discourse and policy. In post-apartheid South African rural development policy has paid significant attention to poverty alleviation, job creation and food security by attempting to commercialize agriculture in the former 'homelands'. This has been mainly encouraged through agricultural programmes such as Masibambisane Rural Development Initiative (MRDI) and the Massive Food Production Programme (MFPP). To support these agricultural development programmes, the South African government has directed a significant amount of its public budget towards their development. However, literature suggests that to a large extent these agricultural programmes have not succeeded in improving the agricultural situation as well as livelihoods of rural dwellers in the former 'homelands'. Despite the efforts made by the South African government, agriculture and field cultivation in rural areas continue to show a decline. Furthermore, many agricultural projects that have been initiated to improve the lives of rural people have been abandoned.

This thesis investigates the interface between the actors that are involved in agricultural development projects in Mquma Local Municipality in the former homeland of Transkei, Eastern Cape. Two irrigation schemes in Mquma Local Municipality are interrogated, namely Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme and Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme, as case studies for this study. The main objective is to investigate the causes of dissonances between the actors that are involved in these agricultural projects, as well as how these dissonances influence the outcomes of agricultural projects in Mquma Local Municipality. It is the micro-politics of development at the interface between the various actors that must be studied in order to gain a full and nuanced picture of why the irrigation schemes have faced challenges. This study uses the actor-oriented and social interface approach. The study identifies community politics, struggles over state allocated resources, power relations between the actors, lack of community involvement and a 'discourse of blaming' between the actors as key challenges that are hindering the success of these agricultural projects. It is hoped that this study can shed some important insights for policy makers on how to improve and implement state-funded agricultural projects that will be able to achieve government objectives and expectations of the rural people.

*Key words:* Rural development; actor-oriented analysis, development interface, agricultural projects, irrigation schemes, local government, Eastern Cape, former ‘homelands’,



## Declaration of originality

I, Sonwabile Lugogo (student No: 3057498) hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to the University of the Western Cape or any another university for the purpose of a degree. I acknowledge the work of others through references both in-text and bibliography.

Signed: 

Date: 27 November 2018



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I dedicate this thesis to my family, friends and my late mother Nokwakha Rosemary Lugogo.



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADM	Amathole District Municipality
ANC	African National Congress
CD	Community development
CIPRO	Companies and Intellectually Property Registration Office
CLRA	Communal Land Rights Act
DA	Democratic Alliance
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DRDAR	Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform
ECDC	Eastern Cape Development Corporation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LED	Local Economic Development
MFFP	Massive Food Production Programme
MLM	Mnquma Local Municipality
MMIS	Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme
MRDI	Masibambisane Rural Development Initiative
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NIS	Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme
NYDA	Youth Development Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RD	Rural Development



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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the study

The landscape of post-apartheid South Africa is deeply marked by its apartheid history. There is no clearer example of this than the former homelands, where millions of South Africans continue to live under communal tenure systems and traditional authorities. The ‘homelands’<sup>1</sup> or ‘bantustans’ spaces have been understood by Marxist scholars as labour reserves for the gold mining industry (Huynh, 2013). In the minds of many South Africans, they are remote and unimportant, while for others, they are ‘home’. The former ‘homelands’ “continue to be important sites of retreat, recuperation and retirement from the urban and industrial economy, for most of the African poor” (Neves, 2017, 2). In an article written by Phillips, Lissoni and Chipkin (2014), published in the *Mail and Guardian*, titled: “Bantustans are dead – long live the bantustans”, the former ‘homelands’ or ‘bantustans’ are understood to have played a major role in the nurturing of a black middle class, one that now holds the reins of government.<sup>2</sup>

Despite their significant role in pre-apartheid and the post-apartheid South Africa, the former ‘homelands’ continue to be confronted by significant challenges such as poverty, unemployment, lack of infrastructural development and inequality. Attempting to address these challenges the post-apartheid South African government has directed large amounts of public spending towards rural development and poverty alleviation. However there has been very limited improvements in rural livelihoods as many of the policy interventions such as land reform, smallholder support and rural development have been ineffective (Perret et al, 2005 in Pienaar and Von Fintel, 2013). Since South Africa gained democracy in 1994, the political freedom attained has not managed to change the dire economic circumstances of most people living in the former grand apartheid

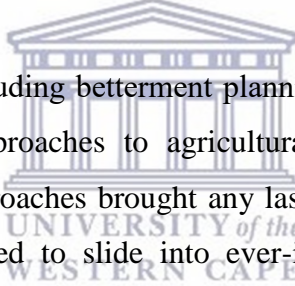
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<sup>1</sup> Homelands were areas set aside for African population by the apartheid government of the National Party. These areas were meant to prevent Black people from moving to urban areas. The idea behind their establishment was to separate Black people from White people and give the Black people the responsibility of running their own independent government. However, the apartheid government played a crucial role in influencing the governance of the homelands. In total ten homelands were created in South Africa. They were Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthutswana, Venda, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa and Qwaqwa. Black Africans were placed based on their culture.

<sup>2</sup> Phillips, L, Lissons, A, and Chipkin, I. “Bantustans are dead – long live the bantustans”. *Mail and Guardian*, 11 Jul 2014. Available Online: <https://mg.co.za/article/2014-07-10-bantustans-are-dead-long-live-the-bantustans>

territories (King and McCusker, 2007). The post-apartheid ‘rural development’ policy has done little to change the persistent poverty and under-development in South Africa’s former ‘homelands’ (Neves, 2017).

From colonial and apartheid government to the post-apartheid South Africa government, ‘rural development’ policy has paid significant attention to poverty alleviation, job creation, and increasing food security through attempting to commercialise agriculture in the former ‘homelands’. However, Fischer and Hadju (2015) argue that despite much policy attention on agricultural development in the former homelands of South Africa, efforts to raise smallholder engagement in agriculture and to break the trend of persistent rural poverty have failed. The outcomes of agricultural development programmes in post- apartheid South Africa continue to display similarities to those of the colonial and apartheid government. For example, Sishuta (2005) states that;



“Irrigation development (including betterment planning and farmer support programme) is one of at least three approaches to agricultural development in the homelands. Generally, none of these approaches brought any lasting benefit to the local population. Instead the reserves continued to slide into ever-increasing poverty and widespread environmental degradation” (Sishuta, 2005, 187).

In this context it is apparent that the introduction of extensive agricultural development programmes which aim to tackle rural poverty among the rural population have failed to yield the expected results (Hadju et al, 2012). Agricultural development programmes such as Masibambisane Rural Development Initiative (MRDI), the Massive Food Production Programme (MFPP) and so on are some of agricultural development programmes that have been introduced in the former ‘homelands’ by the post-apartheid government. These programmes, which are motivated by concerns over the lack of development in land and agriculture, appear to have not had any significant impact on the lives of small-scale black farmers living in communal areas or the former ‘homelands’. This is argued by some scholars to be the result of “rural development remaining highly polarized and continuing to reproduce a series of colonial dichotomies such as those between modernity and tradition, between commons and market, between the wasted land

and productive land, between urban and rural and between the local and global which in many ways hinder understanding of rural social and economic change” (Bank and Minkley, 2005, 4).

In discussing the failure of these programmes, some commentators have argued that the “top-down” approach that they adopt is one of the factors leading to their failure. For example, Jacobson (2013) states that the MFPP adopts a top-down planning and implementation approach that has undermined local agricultural practices, and its large-scale commercially oriented design has reduced the flexibility of local land use. A common theory shared by a number of scholars is that rural development programmes in the former homelands continue to fail because there are still similarities between the current rural development programmes and the pre-apartheid rural development programmes in that they all employ the same 'top-down approach' to development (Jacobson, 2013, Manenzhe et al, 2016).

Recent studies that have examined agricultural development in the former homelands of South Africa argue that there is a great decline in agriculture and field cultivation, despite the efforts made by the post-apartheid government (Manona, 2005; Liebenberg, 2015). The decline of agriculture development in the former homelands is also blamed on the failure or sluggishness of the land redistribution and restitution programmes, limited support and reduced government support of smallholder irrigation schemes (Machete, 2004). Other factors that impede the success of rural development projects include political, physical, infrastructural, socio-economic and cultural constraints (Makofane and Gray, 2007).

According to Averbek, Denison and Mkeni, (2011) the primary constraints to the poor performance and failure of irrigation schemes in South Africa consist of poor management, infrastructural problems, conflicts amongst the members and community, water inadequacies and theft. The reasons found by some researchers include, but are not limited to, conflicts between the projects members and the community members, low level of education, lack of commitment from the communities and project members, projects not addressing the needs of the community, lack of training, lack of extension services, and climatic conditions (Ndou 2012, Westoby, 2014, Sishuta, 2005). Also, the people in communal areas are believed to be lacking access to arable land (Musenwa et al, 2013). Thus, some of them do not engage in agricultural activities at all.

In addition to the reasons outlined above, the lack of clarity about land rights is also a significant constraint to the development of agricultural projects in the former communal areas of South Africa. In communal areas the traditional leadership is responsible for land allocation and management of communal resources, and this becomes a major challenge to agricultural development because it brings divisions amongst communities as a result of power struggles between community members and the traditional authority. The local community members also do not have a say in land issues in their communities. According to Cousins (2001);

The lack of clarity about land rights leaves “potential investors unclear about whether they should negotiate with central government, which owns the land, local government, which administers development of projects, or traditional leaders who claim to represent communities. As a result, the local residents are often excluded from decisions about the land they occupy and depend on for their survival” (Cousins, 2001 in King, 2005, 64)

The current study was largely influenced by the declining agriculture in my home town, which is Ngqamakhwe, under the administration of Mquma Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape. I grew up in the former homeland of Transkei in the Eastern Cape when field cultivation in my village was gradually declining. After completing my primary education in the early 2000s, few people in my village were cultivating their fields; the majority of people were only cultivating their gardens. At that time the fence that had been provided by the government to separate the residential area, cultivation fields and grazing land from each other (a legacy of betterment planning) had been largely destroyed, or vanished altogether. Those that were cultivating their fields had had to fence them by themselves. Also, the livestock which we used to herd as young boys was declining immensely, and this is still the case even today.

Between the year 2000 and 2010 there was a huge influx of agricultural development projects that were supported by the government in most of the villages in Ngqamakhwe, however I noticed that these agricultural projects were gradually failing and some of them were abandoned within a few years of being initiated. The participants in these agricultural projects were mainly the elderly members of the villages, despite the high rate of unemployment among the youth

population. Therefore, this study is largely influenced by my personal interest to investigate the reasons behind the failure of the agricultural projects which are initiated to bring employment, increase food security and decrease poverty in the former homeland of Transkei. It should be noted that in this study I do not attempt to investigate the physical contributors, rather I am interested in understanding how the interfaces between the actors in rural development shape rural development outcomes.

This study investigates two small irrigation schemes which are in Mquma Local Municipality. These two irrigation schemes were initiated by local community members in two respective villages, namely Mirlees and eZintukwini. Despite the two irrigation schemes being initiated by local community members, their approach and organization is determined by other external actors which are responsible for providing funding and technical support to these projects. The external actors include: the traditional authority, local government officials, provincial government officials and also national government officials. This study is undertaken within an 'actor-oriented' perspective which puts emphasis on the importance of giving due weight to how farmers and other actors shape rural development themselves (Hebinck et al 2001). The study is interested in investigating the interactions between these different actors, the power struggles and other dynamics, and how the actors themselves understand rural development within their communities.

## **1.2 Research statement**

Research that critically investigates the interface between the actors in rural development programmes in the former Transkei is somewhat limited in general, and especially in Mquma Local Municipality (MLM) where my study is situated. Agricultural development in the former homeland of Transkei is prioritized by the local government, as evidenced by the policies and strategies of Mquma Local Municipality, the former Department of Land Affairs, now Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). The development of irrigation schemes, cooperatives and agricultural projects is largely encouraged by local government including other spheres of government, and large amounts of public spending are set aside to assist people in

local communities who are interested in becoming commercial farmers. The farmers are encouraged to increase agricultural production and their productivity in order to fight poverty, unemployment and improve the economic situation of the MLM. However, despite all these efforts by the government, the reality on the ground is that these agricultural projects are constantly failing to produce enough crops for the local market (such as schools, local community members, local supermarkets and so on), or to provide employment for people in the communities and reduce poverty.

There seems to be a decrease in the number of people willing to be involved in these agricultural projects, and some of the agricultural projects initiated in the former 'homeland' of Transkei are closing down. The youth in the villages are nowhere to be found in these agricultural projects despite the high unemployment rate in the former homeland of Transkei. There are constant conflicts between the actors involved in agricultural development programmes. This study aims to contribute to the literature by exploring the dynamic interaction between the intervening agencies and the participants of two rural development programmes. The aim of this research is to investigate the causes of the dissonances between the actors and how these dissonances influence the outcomes of agricultural projects. As noted, the study adopts an actor-oriented approach and social interface approach, which seeks to understand the relationships and interaction between the actors involved in rural development programmes as a way of understanding what is taking place on the ground.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

The main objectives of the study are:

- To investigate why these agricultural programmes are formed (how they came into existence), who are the main actors, and what are their benefits to local communities.
- To investigate the relationships between the actors involved in these agricultural projects.
- To investigate how these agricultural projects are embedded in local power struggles in communities and at local government level.
- To determine the reasons that often leads to the failure of the agricultural projects in Mquma Local Municipality.



## 1.4 Rationale for the study

The former homeland of Transkei remains one of the relatively poor, densely populated and comparatively underdeveloped regions of the new South Africa (Lado, 1998). People living in communal areas continue to sustain themselves through diverse combinations of wage earnings especially social welfare grants (Neves, 2017). In this context, the agricultural sector is emphasized as a route to drive development in deep rural areas, particularly in the former apartheid homelands (von Fintel and Pienaar, 2015). However, agricultural programmes implemented to solve rural poverty, create employment and increase food security in the former homelands of South Africa are continuously failing to produce the desired outcomes and appear to be often overwhelmed by conflicts and power struggles between the actors. Recent studies in the former homelands of the Eastern Cape indicate that there is an increasing abandonment of farmlands, while the abandonment of agricultural projects is also reported to be common across the province (Hebinck and Lent, 2007; Hall and Aliber, 2010; Bank and Minkley, 2010 in Musenwa et al, 2013).

This study aims to enhance the existing rural development knowledge that seeks to understand the reason for the failure of agricultural development programmes in the former homelands of South Africa. If agricultural development programmes were effective, they have the ability to help retain people in rural areas and uplift the struggling economies of rural areas, thus limiting the high rural-urban migration in South Africa, especially for the youth population. Asfaha and Jooste (2006) state that it has been argued by some researchers that boosting agricultural productivity or income in rural areas can reduce the incidence of economic problems partially posed by rural-urban migration. However, in order for this to be achieved, proper planning and management is needed to ensure that agricultural activities are able to improve rural livelihoods. According to Khapayi and Celliers (2016) a better understanding of specific factors that limit the development of emerging farmers is important to effectively prepare policies, development strategies, programmes and models that can support and enhance the transition of emerging farmers into commercially viable (even if small-scale) operators.

As noted, many studies conducted in the former homelands of South Africa have offered explanations for the failure of agricultural development programmes in the former homelands of South Africa. Increasing abandonment of cultivation fields in the former homelands of South Africa suggests that rural people are not interested in engaging in agriculture and do not regard agriculture as a solution to poverty, unemployment and food insecurity. This is particularly apparent from the youth population in communal areas. Sishuta (2005) found that the youth have not shown any real interest in farming, with reasons varying from interest in wage employment and sport. Sishuta (2005) further argues that perhaps with poor job prospects everywhere in the former 'homelands', the rehabilitation of the agricultural programmes might prove a major incentive for the youth.

But Gilimani (2005) is cautious about the statement that people in rural areas do not find agriculture as an answer to their problems, he argues that this needs to be investigated and measured extensively. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the reasons why people living in communal areas are not engaging in agricultural activities, and to what extent does a focus on the interfaces between the various actors in rural development illuminate the dissonances that impede agricultural programmes in the former homeland of Transkei. There is little literature available that has thoroughly investigated these social interfaces and their influence on the outcomes of agricultural development programmes in MLM. The study aims to achieve this and add to the existing knowledge and literature through investigating the micro-community politics that arise as the result of the encounters between the actors involved in two irrigation schemes, namely, Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS) and Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS).

### **1.5 Brief introduction to agricultural projects in Mnquma Local Municipality**

State support is given to encourage the development of agricultural schemes, projects and cooperatives in the former homeland of Transkei, in the hope that they can become commercially viable. These small agricultural projects receive financial support, technical support, marketing support and so on from various spheres of government. The government departments championing the development of agricultural projects include the local municipalities, the

Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR formerly known as the Department of Land Affairs), Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), Department of Social Development and other government departments including various private institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In Mquma Local Municipality (MLM) alone where the research for this study was undertaken the municipality in 2012-2013 had approximately 112 agricultural projects that were registered in their database of small agricultural development projects. The registered agricultural projects included cash crop farming, poultry farming, pig farming, livestock farming and so on. According to the report from the Local Economic Development (LED) division under MLM, the irrigation schemes in the region had been initiated during the era of erstwhile Republic of Transkei and any infrastructure installed there has since decayed and the involved communities discouraged (Mquma Local Municipality 2013-2014). An initiative by the Department of Agriculture, Amathole District Municipality (ADM), and MLM has been the means of assisting in the facilitation and implementation of new irrigation projects in MLM.

According to Mquma Local Municipality (2013/2014), these irrigation schemes, projects and co-operatives are involved in different activities such as the production of large quantities of cash crops (for example cabbages, beetroot, spinach and potatoes), production of large quantities of citrus/pineapple, production of high quality pork, production of high quality mutton and high quality wool, production of high quality hydroponics for example tomatoes, production of large quantities of maize, production of large quantities of chickens and high quality eggs, and production high quality beef and poultry production (Mquma Local Municipality, 2013/ 2014).

For this study two irrigation schemes which are located in Ngqamakhwe, namely Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS), Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS) were selected. The two selected irrigation schemes for this study are discussed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One provided the background for the study. The problem and the scope of the study are discussed, and the chapter also introduced the research objectives and outlined the significance of the study. Chapter Two reviews literature relevant to the study. The first part of the chapter provides a detailed presentation of literature around the emergence of the concept of rural development (RD). It also discusses some of the theoretical frameworks that have influenced RD in the field of social sciences, and explains the theoretical framework selected for this study.

Chapter Three provides the background to the study area which is Mnquma Local Municipality. Chapter Four outlines the methodology that was adopted for collecting data for the study. The chapter gives a detailed discussion behind the selection of the research method and discusses data collection methods, the approach to data analysis and describes the journey of fieldwork.

The research results and analysis are presented in Chapters Five to Seven. Chapter Five discusses the framing and context of the Local Economic Development division and the development of agricultural projects in MLM. The chapter presents the case studies (Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS) and Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS)) that were selected as case studies, providing a detailed discussion on how they came into existence and the reasons behind their development.

Chapter Six introduces the actors that are involved in the development of NIS and MMIS. The chapter also discusses the contribution of the two agricultural projects to livelihoods and social development in their respective communities. The role of the traditional leadership in agricultural projects is also discussed. The chapter concludes by discussing the interface between local communities and government officials. Lastly, Chapter Seven discusses the power struggles and contestations between the actors at micro-level. Chapter Eight presents a conclusion and recommendations for the study.

## Chapter Two: Perspectives on Rural Development

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical context to the study to provide an understanding on how the topic was approached. The review of the literature from previous research provides an explanation of the existing knowledge and reasoning which led and guided me in undertaking this study. The discussion of the literature in this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief history of the emergence of the concept of rural development (RD) on the global stage. The second section discusses some of the theoretical frameworks that have influenced RD thinking and practice over the years, and how they have been shaped and influenced by social science researchers. The third section looks at the status of agriculture in South Africa and in the former homeland of Transkei in particular. The chapter concludes by discussing land tenure issues affecting agricultural development in South Africa. Special attention is given to the issues of communal land tenure since the study area in this research is communal land controlled by traditional authority structures.

“In rural development literature, agriculture is considered as the best vehicle to reduce rural poverty” (Machete, 2004, 1). Harrison (2001, 193) draws our attention to one aspect of agrarian development that is of great importance: the politics of development, that is, the power relations between peasant societies and the state or international organizations (non-governmental organizations or NGOs), bilateral donors and the international finance institutions (IFIs). As Ferguson stated in his influential book on top-down development programmes, *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1990), “again and again development projects ... are launched, and again and again they fail, but no matter how many times this happens there always seems to be someone ready to try again with yet another project” (Ferguson, 1990, 8). “A number of analyses of state-imposed agricultural development projects have suggested that states generally see peasants as the objects rather than the subjects of development” (Harrison, 2001, 193-194).

## 2.2 The Concept of Rural Development

Rural development (RD) is a multifaceted and much contested concept. While RD theory used to be somewhat consistent in terms of concepts and planning techniques or strategies, this is not the case regarding debates about the genesis of RD and the evolution of its objectives and strategies (Calatrava, 2016). The literature on the origins of the concept of RD is abundant (see Calatrava, 2016; Pandey, 1967; Ryser and Halseth, 2010). Most agree that the concept of RD as a distinct focus of policy and research emerged in the 1960s, and it gained full momentum in the 1970s when it was realized by policy developers and countries that despite the importance of economic growth and industrialization, rural areas and RD had important role to play in a country's development (SOAS, 2015).

According to Calatrava (2016), some scholars believe that the concept of rural development is a European invention, born in France in the mid-sixties, while others share a common opinion that the RD concept came into its own in the seventies linked to the World Bank programmes for developing countries. On the other hand, some scholars argue for the continuity between the end of colonial rule and the era of 'international development' agendas (Shenton and Cohen, 1996). Covan states that RD attracted much attention during the 1960s because of the continuous fall of the relative weight of agriculture as a source of income in countries with rural-based (agrarian-based) economies (Covan, 2014 in Calatrava, 2016).

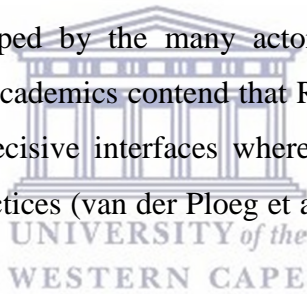
The RD concept is criticized by some commentators for lacking a precise definition, thus it has different approaches to it in different parts of the world (Sunday, n.d). A common definition for the concept of RD is the one provided by the World Bank in its Sector Paper on Rural Development published in 1975, "which sees RD as an economic strategy aimed at raising the low levels of rural income through agricultural modernization" (Sunday, n.d, 3). World Bank defines "rural development as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people - the rural poor... It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless" (World Bank, 1975 in Chambers 1983, 147).

RD is a particular and distinctive branch of development. It has been influenced by, and also influences, development thinking and practice (Scoones, 2009). Over the years, RD has focused

on uplifting the livelihoods of the rural population due to factors such as high unemployment, food insecurity, poverty, rural–urban migration, and women’s vulnerability. “In the past RD was regarded as synonymous with agricultural development”, since many economic activities in rural areas were mainly agricultural in nature (Lamberte et al, 1994, 1). However, the focus has evolved to include aspects like service delivery, infrastructure development, roads, drinking water supply, transport, tourism, education and so on.

Rural development programmes have exposed rural areas to greater competition and provided access to markets while globalization has brought RD policy to the forefront in many developing and developed countries (OECD, 2008). The provision of basic infrastructure services in rural areas is necessary for rural areas to adapt and achieve their RD mandate. It is argued that the changing rural situation requires the introduction of policy models that strengthen the capacity of rural areas to adapt (OECD, 2008).

Rural Development is actively shaped by the many actors, social movements and/or state apparatuses that are involved in it. Academics contend that RD is constructed through the many encounters that take place at the decisive interfaces where these agents meet and engage in complex and often contradictory practices (van der Ploeg et al, 2015). This thesis is interested in understanding RD in these terms.



### **2.2.1 Social Construction and Actors in Rural Development**

In this view, RD is born out of the interests, struggles and contradictions that emerge at each level and in particular at the local level (van der Ploeg et al, 2000). Understanding the social network structures and characteristics of various actors involved in different stages of RD is crucial in unpacking the social and political dynamics in the governance of RD. RD thus emerges as a redefinition of identities, strategies, practices, interrelations and networks. The practice of RD is constructed through the encounters between various actors at the development interface (van der Ploeg et al, 2015).

According to this approach, the actors involved in rural development programmes are characterized by the relations that they engage in. Long (2001) further argues that these relationships are often advanced through necessity, however the actors can also sometimes

choose these relationships in a voluntary, goal-oriented and knowledgeable way. The relationships between the actors have a direct impact on the outcomes of the success or the failure of the RD programme. It is important to remember that ‘development practitioners’ have their own position within this net of actors. As Gareau (2012) states:

“The development practitioners, or the ‘outsiders,’ and the local actors, or the ‘insiders,’ involved in the development schemes oftentimes come from different ‘worlds of knowledge’, in many ways they are ‘worlds apart’, they are involved in interactive networks of differentiated design, approaching issues of change from dissimilar, if not disparate, worldviews” (Gareau, 2012, 1597).

This thinking draws on work undertaken within an ‘actor-oriented’ perspective and the ideas of these academics are briefly reviewed in the next section.

## **2.3 Some theoretical frameworks that have influenced rural development thinking and practice**

### **2.3.1 The Actor-Oriented Approach**

An actor-oriented perspective in rural development sociology was developed in the social sciences at Wageningen University, and it has flourished from the 1980’s onwards. It originates from the Development Sociology group led by Norman Long (Roling and Leeuwis, 2001). Long (2001) explains the actor-oriented approach as follows:

“Although less well articulated in the literature on development until relatively late in the twentieth century, there has always been a kind of counterpoint to structural analysis in development sociology. This is what I have called the ‘actor-oriented approach’. Nourishing (either explicitly or implicitly) this interest in social actors is the conviction that, although it may be true that important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces (due to encroachment by the market, state or international bodies), it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base one’s analysis on the concept of external determination” (Long, 2001, 13).

The actor-oriented approach stresses the importance of giving due weight to how actors at a micro level shape development themselves (Hebinck et al, 2001). This approach is fruitful in, for



example, the study of (global) commodity markets and linkages (Hebinck et al, 2001). It is able to analyse the interfaces between the many actors involved in rural development programmes, from producer to consumer, including the cultural identifications and specific language strategies and discourses (Long, 2001). The actor-oriented approach “places a strong emphasis on the detailed life-worlds, struggles and exchanges that take place within and between specific social groups and networks of individuals” (Long, 2001, 27-28). It identifies ways in which individuals, households and groups try to deal with the RD intervention, integrate the planned intervention into existing strategies and use the intervention for their own paths of change (Arce, 2003).

The actor-oriented approach contributes to a deeper understanding of development policy processes and state-civil society relations. “Actor-oriented research has a long pedigree of analyzing the effects of state intervention and tracing out how various actors act vis-à-vis these expert-designed initiatives” (Long, 2012, 9). Social explanation requires addressing both ‘public concerns’ and ‘private dilemmas’ (Wright Mills 1953 quoted in Long 2001). The actor-oriented approach “aims to grasp precisely the ‘social concerns’ and ‘private dilemmas’ that are embedded in rural development programmes through a systematic ethnographic understanding of the ‘social life’ of development projects... from conception to realization, as well as the responses and lived experiences of the variously located and affected actors” (Long, 2001, 14-15).

The actor-oriented approach offers a significant advantage because “it begins with an interest in explaining differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear homogeneous” (Long, 2001, 13). One of the major advantages of the actor-oriented analysis, as mentioned by Long, (2012) is that:

“It aims to explore a wide range of actor capacities to shape the social and material world, giving special attention to the kinds of conflicts and negotiations linked to forms of social interface and to the emergence of practices that change existing livelihoods and identities, and which cannot easily be assimilated into existing everyday routines” (Long, 2012, 8)

### 2.3.2 Conceptualizing the Social Interface

The concept of the 'social interface' is also associated with the work of Norman Long (1989). Long defines the social interface as "a critical point of intersection or linkage between different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interests, are mostly likely to be found" (Long, 1989, 1-2). This interface concept is linked with the exercise of power and agency. In this view, "interfaces between the actors are characterised by discontinuities in interests, values and power, and their dynamic entails negotiation, accommodation and the struggle over definitions and boundaries" (Long and Villarreal, 1993: 143 in Hebinck et al, 2001, 5). The intervention context is always characterized by struggles between the involved actors to enroll others, or create acceptance of each other's meanings and points of view (Long, 2001).

The actors involved in the social interface create new meanings and bring their own interpretations of the intervention context. Thus, "studies of the social interface should aim to bring out the dynamic and emergent character of the interactions taking place and show how goals, perceptions, interests and relationships of the various actors may be reshaped by and as a result of their interaction (Long, 1989, 2). Studying the interface may provide an understanding of many different social interactions that structure the dynamics and success or failure of rural agricultural development programmes.

Long (2001) argues that the notion of the social interface becomes especially relevant as a way of exploring and understanding issues of social heterogeneity, cultural diversity and the conflicts inherent in processes involving external interventions. While there might be some degree of common interest between the actors involved in rural development, "they also have a propensity to generate conflict due to contradictory interests and objectives or to unequal power relations" (Long, 1999, 2). Social interface situations have been seen as "more complex and multiple in nature, containing within them many different interests, relationships and modes of rationality and power" (Long, 1999, 1).

It is important to note that interface study is not restricted to the face-to-face encounters between the local actors and the intervening agencies, but also focuses on the institutional and structural frames that affect the interactions between all the actors involved in development (Long, 1989).

The negotiations at the interface are sometimes carried out by individuals who represent groups, therefore their position becomes inevitably ambivalent since they respond to the demands of their groups as well as to the expectations of those with whom they must negotiate (Long, 1999). This in turn becomes challenging for the chosen leaders of the groups since some members of the development programme may feel that their messages are not being conveyed accurately or clearly enough to the implementers. Thus Long (1999) argues that one should also not assume that because a particular person 'represents' a specific group or institution, that he or she necessarily acts in the interests or on behalf of his/her fellows. And this may result in conflict between the members of the communities that are involved in rural development programmes.

Interface analysis requires not only understanding the struggles and power differentials taking place between the parties involved in rural development programmes, it also attempts to reveal the dynamics of cultural accommodation that make it possible for various world views to interact (Long, 1999). There are different parties that are involved in different economic, social, cultural spheres and interests, thus rural development programmes become a complex process which appears difficult to plan and manage (Ubels, 1989). Long (1999) argues that the concept of interface helps us to understand the differences in worldviews and cultural paradigms of the actors involved in rural development programmes. This concept is also characterized by different individuals or groups that have their own cultural or ideological positions (Long, 1999). Long continues:

“Opinions on agricultural development expressed by technical experts, extension workers and farmers seldom completely coincide; and the same is true for those working for a single government department with a defined policy mandate. Hence agronomists, community development workers, credit officers, irrigation engineers, and the like, often disagree on the problems and priorities of agricultural development” (Long 1999, 2).

“These differences are not merely personal idiosyncrasies but reflect differences laid down by differential patterns of socialisation and professionalisation, which often result in miscommunication or a clash of rationalities (Chambers 1983; Box 1984 quoted in Long, 1999, 2).

In this thesis, the concept of the interface becomes useful in understanding how differences in worldviews and cultural paradigms of the actors involved in rural development programmes shape the outcomes of the rural agricultural development programmes in the former homeland of Transkei, Eastern Cape.

### **2.3.3 Livelihood Perspectives**

Livelihoods perspectives have been central to rural development thinking and practice since the late 1990s (Scoones, 2009). According to Long (2001) they have challenged previous single sector approaches to solving complex rural development problems, by paying attention to the real problem and trying to understand things from local perspectives. Long (2001, 54) notes that the concept of 'livelihood' "best expresses the idea of individuals and groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions". Therefore, the livelihood approach becomes important in understanding how people gain their means of living and what are the combinations of resources they use and what activities are undertaken in order to live and survive (Chambers, 1995 and Scoones, 2009).

Long (2001) suggests that the concept of livelihood is not only restricted to making a living. He states that:

Livelihood implies more than making a living (i.e. economic strategies at household or inter-household levels). It encompasses ways and styles of life/living, and thus also value choice, status, and a sense of identity vis-à-vis other persons. It implies both a synchronic pattern of relationships existing among a delimited number of persons for solving livelihood problems or sustaining certain types of livelihoods, as well as diachronic processes (Long, 2001, 55).

The livelihood perspectives do not belong in any discipline in particular, therefore they can allow a bridging of divides, allowing different people to work together, particularly across the natural and social sciences (Long, 2001). Scoones (2009) argues that because they are focused on understanding complex local realities, livelihoods approaches are an ideal entry point for participatory approaches to inquiry, with negotiated learning between local people and outsiders.

Livelihoods are “both individually and jointly constructed and represent patterns of interdependencies between the needs, interests and values of particular sets of individuals or groups” (Long, 2001, 55).

Despite its significance in rural development thinking and practice, the livelihoods perspective has been criticized for its inadequate conceptualization of the structure–agency relation. Critics argue that the livelihoods ‘mantra’ of people-centredness and actor orientation means that it “places a strong emphasis on actors’ agency and the objective of understanding how these actors make a living in the context of stress” (Sakdapolrak, 2014, 20). Some commentators argue that the livelihoods perspectives have ignored the significance of structural power and politics in understanding rural development. Defending the livelihoods approach, however, Scoones (2009) draws attention to work by scholars such as Davies and Hossain (1987), Hyden (1998) and Hobley and Shield (2000) that does deal with structural questions, considering ‘transforming structures and process, policies, institutions and processes, mediating institutions and organisations’ sustainable livelihood governance. These scholars do address the social and political structures and processes that influence livelihood choices (Scoones, 2009).

This study will not adopt a ‘livelihoods’ approach to understanding rural development interventions in the Eastern Cape. My concern is with the micro-politics of rural development from an actor-oriented point of view, hence is closer to that of Long and the Wageningen school.

### **2.3.4 Community Development Approach**

In order to understand and analyse rural development programmes, it is critical to understand the concept of community development. “Community development is a broad term applied to a variety of disciplines in society, with origins that can be traced back to the 18th century” (Hart, 2012, 56). From its inception, community development has aimed at improving lives for all. Thus, it is a process conducted by the actors at a community level. It is considered as a process whereby local people can not only create more jobs, income and infrastructure, but can also help their community to become fundamentally better able to manage change (Cavaye, 2015). The concept of community development is often used as an approach for achieving successful rural development programmes.

The word ‘empowerment’ is widely used in this approach. Aliber and Hart note that in South Africa and other countries such as Ireland, discourses on empowerment are taken up in the development of national policies (Aliber and Hart, 2009). The members of a community are intended to come together and create a programme that will empower their community. In most cases these development programmes are supported by the state, government institutions and NGOs. The community members need to have a shared goal and a common interest in order for the development programmes to be successful. Smarte (2010) argues that community involvement is a very important aspect of revitalization for any community, no matter what size, as without community buy-in, a project may never get off the ground or will not be accepted once it is completed. Thus, Bonye et al (2013) states that some community development programmes initiated by governments and NGOs in some countries have been successful due to the acceptance and positive response from local communities.

Despite the importance of community development programmes in improving the livelihoods of the communities, however, there are several constraints facing community development programmes especially in developing countries. Warner (2000) writing on experiences from Fiji and Papua Guinea refers to these constraints as “conflicts”, arguing that such conflicts arise as the result of the pressure on individuals and groups in many ways, including the introduction of new technologies, commercialisation of common property resources, involvement of rural communities in conservation and privatisation of rural public services. These conflicts can also cause disagreements between the members of these community development programmes and the community as a whole in communities where these development programmes are being implemented. The conflicts can also result from power struggles between the community members, policy makers, community leaders and traditional authority structures.

Investigating the reasons for the failure of community-based projects in Folovhodwe, Limpopo, Ndou (2012) found the following contributory factors: lack of project management skills, access to and management of funds, lack of interpersonal skills, level of education in project members, lack of monitoring by government officials (government involvement), low levels of community involvement in community projects, members leaving the project, lack of commitment, lack of communication between project teams and members, and projects not addressing the needs of

communities. These were the leading factors of the project failures in the reviewed projects in Limpopo. The factors mentioned by Ndou (2012) can easily be seen in Warner's (2000) notion of development conflicts.

Ani et al (2015), writing on West Africa, found that the “conflicts” were between families, farmers, groups, communities, political and religious conflicts, as well as between the farmers and the nomads or mobile pastoralists. Such conflicts are seen to hinder the success of community development programmes. As Westoby (2014) noted in his book *Theorising the Practice of Community Development: A South African Perspective*, there are also political hindrances whereby people involved with community development programmes are influenced by political agendas. Westoby (2014) found top-down driven development versus bottom-up development to be affecting community development. He also identifies the lack of engagement between the government officials providing services and the community members receiving services on the ground as a problem.

In order to ensure that community development programmes are not destroyed by such “conflicts”, training of the community members and service providers needs to be prioritized. Westoby (2014) notes that the members of the community development programmes need to be taught not only “hard” business technical skills but also “soft” relational skills such as dealing with conflict among members of the irrigation schemes and the community members. Robertson notes that;

“Agricultural extension programs in the developing world have shifted to a decentralized, market-focused approach capable of supporting the local institutions and knowledge necessary to help farmers be productive and profitable. Such approaches have emphasized training front-line extension officers able not only to communicate technical and product information regarding the latest agricultural advances, but also to provide guidance to local populations about accessing markets, brokering investment opportunities, and facilitating inclusive farmer organizations” (Robertson, 2012,2).

The next section focuses specifically on agricultural development programmes.

## **2.4 The Status of Agricultural Development in South Africa**

Agriculture remains one of the leading sectors in community development programmes in developing countries. The World Bank (2007b) cited in Collect and Gale (2009) states that agriculture constitutes a large proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) in many developing countries, and it is the primary source of income and subsistence for many of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals and households. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) the majority of the population are employed in agriculture, and it constitutes large percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Staatz & Dembele, 2008; World Bank, 2007a in Collect and Gale, 2009).

### **2.4.1 The current status of agricultural development in South Africa**

The South African agricultural sector is dualistic in nature (Aliber and Hart, 2009). It comprises of a vibrant, well integrated, and highly capitalised commercial sector on the other hand, and fluctuating subsistence sector on the other hand (Vink & Kirsten, 2003; May & Carter, 2009 quoted in Aliber and Hart, 2009). The struggling subsistence sector is mostly in rural areas, especially in the former homelands. Commercial agriculture in South Africa produces about 95% of agricultural output and occupies most of the total agricultural land in South Africa (Aliber and Hart, 2009), while the black subsistence and smallholder producers who are predominantly located in the former homelands or rural reserves are producing only on 13% of South African land (Feynes and Meyer, 2003 in Aliber and Hart, 2009). This pattern has not changed significantly despite post-apartheid land reform initiatives. Following the fall of apartheid, the South Africa government has improved its expenditure on agricultural development significantly, with much investment being directed to improving agricultural development in the marginalised areas such as the former homelands (mainly areas that were colonial ‘native reserves’).

This has been evident in the revitalization and creation of irrigation schemes across South Africa. Some irrigation schemes that have benefited from the revitalization programmes include irrigation schemes that were created under the apartheid government and collapsed. For example,



Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme which was established in the early 1980s in the former homeland of Ciskei in the Eastern Cape and partially collapsed prior to democracy, was revitalised in 2001 (Mnkeni et al, 2010). These irrigation schemes were established to improve the socio-economic status of the rural poor.

In fact, in post-apartheid South Africa there has been little state support for (white) commercial agriculture; the focus has been on the black farming households, according to statistics derived from Statistics South Africa's Labour Survey (LFS), and Stats SA, 2002, 2006, and 2007 (Aliber and Hall, 2012). Much of the investments have gone to irrigation schemes, smallholder farmers and subsistence farmers. This contrasts with the era of colonial and apartheid government where commercial white farmers received a lot of support from the government. Lipton and Lipton (1994) in Porter & Phillips-Howard, (1997) expand the latter statement by arguing that the state played a major role in subsidising the white farmers that provided the bulk of market production, while black subsistence sector suffered discrimination in terms of land rights, pricing, marketing, extension research and infrastructure.

Many disciplines in the social sciences have explored rural development with a specific focus on agricultural development in the (now former) homelands both before and after apartheid. Scholars from the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, development studies, agriculture, geography and others have explored the question of agricultural development in the former homelands.

During the apartheid period, as explained below, government intervention in the homelands was characterised by large-scale, top-down rural development projects. In some homelands, up to ten to fifteen percent of land was allocated for capital intensive large-scale agricultural projects aimed at increasing production (Porter and Philips-Howard, 1997). Similarly, post-apartheid South Africa has also seen the government pushing and encouraging black commercial farmers, black smallholder farmers, agricultural projects, and irrigation schemes to be commercially intensive rather than focusing on subsistence agriculture.

## 2.4.2 The State of Agriculture in the Former Homeland of Transkei

Despite these interventions, agriculture continues to show a decline in the former homelands, especially in the former homeland of Transkei. The programmes implemented to improve socio-economic development in the Eastern Cape are continuously failing to produce the desired results. Scholars further state that “the hectareage of abandoned farmlands is increasing every year and the abandonment of agricultural projects is common across the province” (Hebinck and Lent, 2007; Hall and Aliber, 2010; Bank and Minkley, 2010 quoted in (Musenwa et al, 2013, 84-85). The decline in homeland agriculture therefore continues despite the money that is being invested into the sector. Some blame the low and declining productivity of homeland agriculture on inherently conservative, inefficient black farmers exploiting the land (Porter and Phillips-Howard 1997). However, there are numerous contributing factors behind the decline of agricultural activities in the former homeland of Transkei, including the physical environment. It has been argued that in the Eastern Cape province, extreme weather events like droughts and floods, gradual increases in temperatures and increased variability in annual rainfall appear to be common (Musenwa et al, 2013).

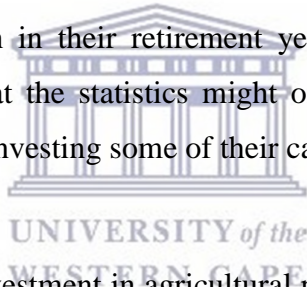


Several studies have been conducted with a specific interest in the impacts of agricultural development programmes in the former Transkei. For example, Porter and Phillip-Howard (1997) looked at the agricultural issues in the former homelands of South Africa with a specific focus on Transkei. Thomas (1984) looked at financing RD with reference to Transkei. Climate change impacts, lack of interest in agriculture, skewed investment in agriculture, political and socio-economic impacts are found to be the major contributing factors to the outcomes of disappointing agricultural development in the former homelands.

While poverty, unemployment and food insecurity characterize the former homeland of Transkei, Hendricks (2003) states that there is undoubtedly a very high potential for agricultural development and there are abundant natural resources to cater for the needs of the people in the former homelands. Agriculture has historically played a key role in sustaining living standards in the former homelands. For generations, it was supported by long distance labour migration which was also closely associated with household food production systems (Dzivakwi and

Jacobs, 2010). The view provided by Hendricks (2003) might be accurate because during the colonial and apartheid era in South Africa agriculture was a major livelihood strategy for most of rural population in South Africa, as there were no social grants to rely upon.

While there is extensive literature associating the people of the former homelands with agriculture, today the sources of household income are more diversified. Evidence shows that residents of the former homelands are heavily reliant on transfer incomes: pensions/grants and remittances from the state are a reported main source of household income in the General Household Survey (StatsSA, various years in Dzivakwi and Jacobs, 2010). Feynes and Meyer (2003) state that most rural inhabitants in the former homelands are the aged ... women and children reside on land more for social security purposes than for agricultural production (Feynes and Meyer, 2003 in Aliber and Hart, 2009). At the same time, many studies that have been conducted in the former homeland of Transkei reveal that most people involved in agricultural programmes are older women often in their retirement years or unemployed. Dzivakwi and Jacobs (2010), however, caution that the statistics might offer an inaccurate view of what is happening because people might be investing some of their cash transfers in small-scale farming.



There has in fact been substantial investment in agricultural projects in the post-apartheid period (Dzivakwi and Jacobs, 2010). The Eastern Cape provincial government appears to prioritize agricultural development in the province as one of the key economic sectors that will alleviate poverty and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in the Eastern Cape Province. Yet despite the efforts to improve the living standards of the poor people in rural South Africa, issues of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and high levels of rural-urban migration still persist.

A historical geography perspective is essential to understand the nature of current agricultural state in the former homeland of Transkei. For example, Drummond (1990) notes that a geography which employs both historical and political economy approaches, and moreover focuses on micro-level case-studies which take account of local resource management strategies, would be a valuable contribution to debates on the nature of past, present and future agricultural development in the former 'homelands'.

### **2.4.3 The History and Politics of Rural Agricultural Development: Continuities and change**

Since the colonial period governments have been imposing development projects on the rural poor and that have upset the rural poor's conditions of life and rarely presented a clear and secure improvement to their standard of living (Harrison, 2001). Phillip- Howard and Oche (1996) notes that government approaches towards improving traditional agricultural land use and management techniques, more especially in the developing countries have to date been 'top down' (Lado, 1998).

The history of agricultural development in rural South Africa dates back to many years ago. In 1894 the Glen Grey Act was introduced in the Cape Colony. This was generally known as a piece of legislation aimed at limiting the amount of land Africans could hold, but it also described land-use regulations that have recurred in policies to the present day (Hebinck et al 2001). This Act introduced the principle of limiting landowners to a single plot of land and set forth regulations that were extended to the former Ciskei and Transkei areas (Hebinck, et al, 2001). The legacies of this Act are still visible in the former homelands of the Eastern Cape. For example, studying the realities of the MFPP in the Eastern Cape, Madyibi (2013) found that communal tenure system allocates farmers in the Eastern Cape an average of 1.5 hectares of land.

Basically, farmers participating in the MFPP in the Eastern Cape are still constrained to a particular size of land. Adams et al (1999) acknowledges that land insecurity is still a major concern in the former 'homelands' among those using land to generate income, especially for women farmers. Scholars like Hebinck (2013) further argue that the post-apartheid South African government approaches to rural development continue to follow in the footsteps of colonial and apartheid governments. In other words, the post-apartheid government still adopts the same approaches that were adopted by the colonial and apartheid governments and this is apparent in the processes of trying to modernize agriculture in the former homelands, despite complaints from the communities that are supposed to be at the receiving end of the development.

The politics in agricultural development were highly visible in the decades after the 1930s when African people living in these areas (then known as 'native reserves') were forced to embrace

“betterment schemes”. The apartheid government in South Africa was “infamous for its spatial interventions through policies aimed at securing land for whites, segregating racial and ethnic groups, and controlling the movement of labor” (Fay, 2012, 60). But less well known is the resettlement of more than three million Africans from scattered settlements into villages, beginning in the 1930s and implemented gradually for decades thereafter (de Wet 1995a: 28 in Fay, 2012). The agricultural betterment schemes were intended to promote agricultural production in the ‘native reserves’, later Bantustans. As part of betterment, the South African government insisted that rural Africans should live in “villages” – whether they wanted to or not – and divide their land into residential, agricultural and grazing zones, to be administered by the Department of Agriculture (Fay, 2012).

These so-called rural development betterment schemes were embedded in power relations between the apartheid government of South African and the rural people living in the former homelands. The betterment schemes involved forced removals and forced re-planning of villages in a grid pattern with standard house and garden in order to concentrate the population in so-called “closer settlements”. The argument behind the betterment schemes was that closer settlements would combat erosion, rehabilitate land and improve agricultural production (Fay, 2012). The betterment schemes were done despite the people’s resistance and many people were forced to give up their productive lands and huge plots.

It is thus easy to see that the agricultural betterment schemes of the past were highly political and were resented by residents who saw them not only as top-down but as unjust. Agriculture development in South Africa especially in the former homelands has always been seen as a politicized programme (Bank and Minkley, 2005). And it must be remembered that current rural development interventions are implemented in a context that is highly politicized and shaped by a particular history. The continuity in forcing rural people to embrace ‘top-down’ rural intervention is still visible in the current post-apartheid government agricultural interventions. Madyibi (2013) studying the realities of Massive Food Production Programme (MFPP) which is one of the current agricultural development initiatives initiated by the post-apartheid South African government, found that many participants in the programme resent the rigid model that has been imposed on them by the MFPP initiative. He states that the participants of the MFPP feel that the MFPP disregards traditional methods of cultivation, undermines local practices and

knowledge, and disturbs prevailing labour patterns. This suggests that current development interventions in agricultural development have not departed much from the assumptions of old ideas such as those of ‘top-down’ development and are showing strong continuities with the past.

Jacobson discusses large-scale maize production schemes, also described by De Wet (1990), which are intended to increase agricultural production through ‘top-down’ planned-and-implemented schemes in the homelands (Jacobson, 2013). The same maize production schemes were studied during the apartheid period by De Wet (1990). Jacobson (2013) draws our attention to the current MFPP, arguing that despite the programme’s claims to be radical and new, it still employs the same tool and practices of the past without the consideration of their compatibility with local social and ecological context. In some of the projects in the Eastern Cape, farmers who are participating in the MFPP are made to grow ‘yellow maize’, using ‘hybrid seeds’ that are supplied by the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture, and in most instances, this is done without their awareness, in order to increase maize production and profits (Masifunde Education and Development Project Trust, 2010).

When discussing rural development in the former homelands, it is also crucial to note the role of traditional leadership and local elites. In post-apartheid South Africa, the chiefs and headmen are still responsible for most of the important processes that take place in the homelands. These processes include the allocation of land to the rural dwellers, with traditional authorities tasked with resolving conflicts between community members as well as the responsibility of looking after community resources. This is still the same system as the one that was practised in colonial and apartheid South Africa, when the colonial and apartheid governments utilized traditional systems, including the tribal authorities, as a means of controlling society and space (King, 2005). Ntsebeza, (2000) cited in King (2005, 65) suggest that “the use of traditional authority by colonial powers enabled them to exploit an ambiguity in the relationship between chieftaincies and their people, particularly in terms of the accountability and legitimacy of traditional systems”.

To date traditional authority continues to have influence in the former homelands. “The corrupt practices of traditional authorities were thoroughly questioned in the 1980s when resistance to some community leaders developed” (King, 2005, 67). According to Beinart (2012) the

generation of homeland politicians, chiefs, and bureaucrats were schooled and rooted in a system where corruption was taking place. Beinart further argues that “corruption exists where power can be translated into money, where media does not relentlessly expose it, and the state does not have control of it, where there is a culture of entitlement, and where separations between party, office, state and private wealth are not tightly drawn” (Beinart, 2012, 15).

The influence of the rural elite also has some traces of historical influence when it comes to the politics of agricultural development in the former homelands of South Africa. There is evidence that in many cases the beneficiaries of rural agricultural development schemes in rural areas have been the elites rather than the poor people in rural communities. This too is nothing new. Hebinck and van Averbeke (2013, 36) states that “land and rural development policies under apartheid were ambiguous”, arguing that such “programmes were designed in a ‘top-down’, ‘top-heavy management’ manner and their benefits tended to accrue elites...Interventions were entangled with patron-client relationships”.

#### **2.4.4 A Focus on Modern Commercial Agriculture**

An important continuity identified in the scholarly literature on agricultural development in South Africa is the belief in “modern”, technically sophisticated agriculture as the best vehicle to reduce rural poverty. The process of ‘modernizing’ agriculture involves encouraging the local producers or farmers to try new crops, new production methods and new marketing skills to increase production (Ellis and Biggs, 2001). This focus on modernity in policies intended to raise the standard of living of the poor means that agricultural development interventions are mainly focused on disseminating knowledge and information about more efficient techniques of production (Matunhu, 2011).

The pouring of money into extensive agricultural development in the former homelands is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. Many scholars, for example Hebinck, Fay and Kondlo (2011); Bank and Minkley (2005); and Beinart (2012) argue that agricultural development in the former homelands of Transkei can be seen as an extension or continuation of betterment and homeland policies that were implemented pre-1994. Hebinck et al (2011) argue that there are continuities in the relations between government bureaucrats, the experts they hire and the local people.

These continuities are embedded in the practices of state institutions with regard to planning personnel, relationships and policy languages. Hebinck et al (2011) substantiate their argument by showing how these continuities emerge in the encounters between experts, the state and the ‘communal farmers’.

Agricultural development programmes such as MFPP, Siyazondla Homestead Food Production Programme, Siyakhula Massive Food or Maize Production Programmes, which were designed to ensure socio-economic development in the Eastern Cape, are some of the programmes that resemble similar agricultural programmes that were developed in pre-democracy South Africa (Tregurtha, 2009). These range from pilot programmes to small agricultural development projects across the Eastern Cape. The Siyazondla Programme, for example, was designed to encourage homestead production to promote food security and, as such, was a crisis intervention which offered support in the form of starter packs (eg seedlings and fertilizer), infrastructure (eg irrigation systems, land fertility) and training and skills development (Tregurtha, 2009).

These agricultural development programmes are being implemented by the post-apartheid South African government as part of its strategy to develop sustainable agricultural development in rural areas. Aside from promoting food security, these programmes also attempt to promote black economic empowerment in the Eastern Cape agricultural sector (Tregurtha, 2009). Significantly, the development of these kinds of agricultural development project aims to encourage the rural people to shift from subsistence agriculture to a market-oriented form of agriculture (commercial agriculture). The government anticipated that through the creation of successful, commercially-orientated black farmers inequality in the agricultural sector would gradually decline and the introduction of agricultural development programmes would stimulate private sector development and bolster agricultural service markets in rural areas (Tregurtha, 2009).

To sum up, the democratic South African government has tried to tackle rural poverty among the South African population in several ways, not least through extensive agricultural development programmes (Hajdu et al, 2012). Despite the efforts by the government of South Africa to improve production and encourage commercialization of agriculture in the former homelands of the Eastern Cape, however, little has changed. Rural development in the Eastern Cape has remained highly polarized and continues to “reproduce a series of colonial dichotomies such as



those between the modern and traditional, between the commons and market, between the wasted land and the productive land, between the urban and the rural, and between the local and global which in many ways hinder rather than advance our understanding of rural social and economic change” (Bank and Minkley, 2005,4).

## **2.5 Issues of Land Tenure and efforts to increase land tenure security**

Land tenure is a critical issue when looking at the history and current politics of rural agricultural development interventions. Agriculture in southern Africa is often constrained by historical lack of land as well as labour issues (Bryceson, 2004 in Hajdu et al, 2012). These are issues that cannot be solved in a standard agricultural development context or fixed with the use of new technologies that could help improve the livelihood of the people. According to Oricho (1998), small farmer projects are often faced by several challenges such as the neglect of infrastructure, confusion over land rights, and underutilization of resources (Adams et al, 1999). Agricultural programmes on state-held land or communal land are often constrained by tenure problems.

As part of the transition to democracy, the new South African government led by the African National Congress (ANC) aimed at redressing the history of tenure insecurity and land dispossession by developing a land reform programme. The land reform programme was created soon after 1994 by the ANC government comprised of three elements. These were, firstly, *Land restitution* aimed at ensuring that persons or people who were dispossessed of property after 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices are entitled to restoration of that property or land to equitable redress. Secondly, *Land Redistribution* referring to the acquisition of land by the state for the purposes of redistribution to the persons or communities who have no land or who have no access to land. Lastly, *Tenure Reform* intends to provide security of tenure for the people and communities that have lived for a long time on land owned by others without secure rights (Rugege, 2004).

Despite the efforts made by the national government to address the problem of land tenure in South Africa, the land reform programme is faced with mounting challenges and it has been very slow so far. “Between 1994 and March 2010, over 3 million hectares of land were delivered through land redistribution and tenure to 189,633,000 beneficiaries” ... while “the costs incurred

for the purchase of land for redistribution and tenure was over R12 billion” (Makhado, 2012, 4). These figures demonstrate that there is clearly a problem with the land reform programme. The land reform process is running very slowly in South Africa and is currently coming under significant political challenge. The land issue has become one of the most pressing in the country and is in the media daily.

### **2.5.1 Issues of Communal Tenure in South Africa**

“The overall character of communal tenure is that rights to land and natural resources are shared and relative, with flexible boundaries between a variety of social units” (Cousins and Claassens, 2004, 139). However, in South Africa communal areas face issues with respect to land tenure due to the “hierarchy of social and administrative units or levels” (Cousins and Claassens, 2004, 139). The lack of adequate tenure reform in communal areas is highlighted as one of the key challenges in securing land rights, reducing conflicts and promoting agrarian development in South Africa (Bennett et al, 2013). As Cousins (2017) notes, some commentators suggest that the key legacy of the apartheid past is the continued tenure insecurity of one-third of the South African population who live in communal areas, under unelected chiefs or traditional councils. In relation to land tenure in communal areas, “the problem is compounded by the extent to which patriarchal elites, in particular traditional leaders, have captured the discourse of ‘the customary’ and are able to manipulate it to their benefit” (Claassens, 2011, 1)

Too much power when it comes to land allocation and control in communal land is vested in traditional authority. King (2005) warns that the power that is held by the traditional authority to shaping access to development opportunities disadvantages the poorest and most marginalised members of the community, who are less able to influence the decision-making structures. This illustrates that the power that is held by traditional authority especially in remote areas such as those in the former homeland of Transkei could hinder the development that is aimed at the poor communities because of ‘corrupt practices’ of the traditional authority (King, 2005).

In communal land there also exists a lack of clarity over land rights which become a major hindrance to infrastructure and service provision in land under communal tenure (Cousins, 2010). Cousins (2010) further argues that this is exacerbated by tensions between local bodies

and traditional authorities over the allocation of land for development projects. In addition, tenure insecurity in the former ‘homelands’ is under “severe strain as a result of overcrowding, weak administration, abuses by traditional leaders, tension over common property resource use, and lack of clarity over the roles and responsibilities of traditional authorities and local government bodies” (Cousins, 2007, 284). This is further exacerbated by the near-collapse of land administration systems, where magistrates no longer play a role in land matters (Cousins and Claassens, 2004).

Efforts by the South African government to address the communal tenure issues have been so far ineffective. When it was introduced, the Communal Land Rights Act (CLRA) No. 11 of 2004 was heavily criticized as it undermined rather than secured land rights of the rural people (Cousins 2010, Cousin 2007, Claassens, 2011, Bikam and Chakwizira 2014).

“The Communal Land Rights Act (CLRA) extends private ownership of land to rural ‘communities’. Within areas of ‘communally owned’ land it establishes a register of ‘new order rights’ vested in individuals. It also provides for a land administration committee to exert ownership powers on behalf of the ‘community’ it represents, and allows ‘tribal councils’ to act as such committees” (Republic of South Africa 2004 in Cousins, 2007, 287)

According to Claassens (2011) the CLRA gave traditional authority the power to administer communal land and to represent the community as owners of the land. As Bank and Mabhena (2011) note, “CLRA afforded too much opportunity for unelected traditional authorities to cement their control over local land rights” (Bank and Mabhena, 2011 in Bennet et al 2013, 28). As a result, the Act was contested in the Constitutional Court and declared unconstitutional in 2010. Revised legislation on communal land tenure remains to be introduced to parliament.

There is a strong demand on the ground for security of tenure rights of families and individuals, within a system that secures access to common property. According to Cousins (2017) it has been suggested by some commentators that the remedy to land tenure in South Africa is to extend the system of title deeds to all South Africans. However, caution should be exercised here. As Cousins and Claassens (2004) state, in relation to land rights, one view is that only land

titling (that is, private ownership) provides adequate tenure security – but forms of group title must be made available, as well as individual title, given the strong rural demand for a community-based form of tenure.

Like in most communal lands in South Africa, most people in the former homeland of Transkei live under communal land especially those that live in rural areas/ villages, therefore are directly affected by communal tenure insecurity. According to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (2012) many people living in communal areas already have secure access to agricultural land, but may not have tenure security and the means to make productive use of that land. This might be true in some instances; but in reality, most land under the Mnquma Local Municipality, studied in this research, is controlled by the traditional authority. The access to land is not guaranteed due to certain processes and conflicts arising within community members and traditional authority.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted some of the theoretical frameworks that have influenced scholars' understanding of the rural development concept and agricultural development practice. The first part of the chapter discussed the emergence of the rural development concept, revealing that this concept is a complex and much contested one. There are many debates amongst scholars about its emergence. Importantly, this chapter has argued that the practice of rural development is constructed through the encounters that take place at the interface between various actors that are involved in rural development. The theoretical frameworks presented here have been used to understand and discuss social encounters between various actors that are involved in rural development programmes. Since my concern in this study is with the micro-politics of rural development from an actor-oriented approach point of view, some of the theoretical approaches that have been influenced by Norman Long at the Wageningen University have been discussed extensively. The last part of the chapter drew attention to the status and history of agricultural development in South Africa, particularly in the former homelands. The chapter concluded by discussing some of the pressing national debates on land – in particular debates on communal tenure in South Africa, since the study area for this research is in one of the former homelands.

## **Chapter Three: Locating the Study – Mnquma Local Municipality**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the reader with information about the location of the study. The rural development projects selected as case studies are located in the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) of the Eastern Cape. The section begins by introducing the location of MLM within the province of the Eastern Cape. The population, demographics, livelihood status and climatic conditions of MLM are all briefly presented in this chapter.

### **3.2 Location of Mnquma Local Municipality**

Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) is a small local municipality in the Eastern Cape; it falls under the jurisdiction of Amathole District Municipality. The municipality is located in the south-eastern part of the Eastern Cape Province, in the former homeland of Transkei. It includes three small towns namely Butterworth, Ngqamakhwe and Centane. The municipality shares borders with four other local municipalities in the region namely Mbhashe, IntsikaYethu, Amahlathi and Great Kei Local Municipalities. This small local municipality comprises mostly of rural areas, although the transition to democracy in 1994 has seen a number of urban settlements developed. The latter are mainly found in Butterworth which is the capital of the municipality, where most local government offices are located, and better public services may be accessed. The municipality consists of a surface area of about 332 335 hectares, of which 132 934 hectares is arable. This is split as follows: 92651 hectares is dry land, 40 283 hectares is irrigable land and the remaining 199 40 hectares is grazing land (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2013/2014).



Figure 1: Map of the Eastern Cape Province

(Credit: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_municipalities\\_in\\_the\\_Eastern\\_Cape](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_municipalities_in_the_Eastern_Cape))

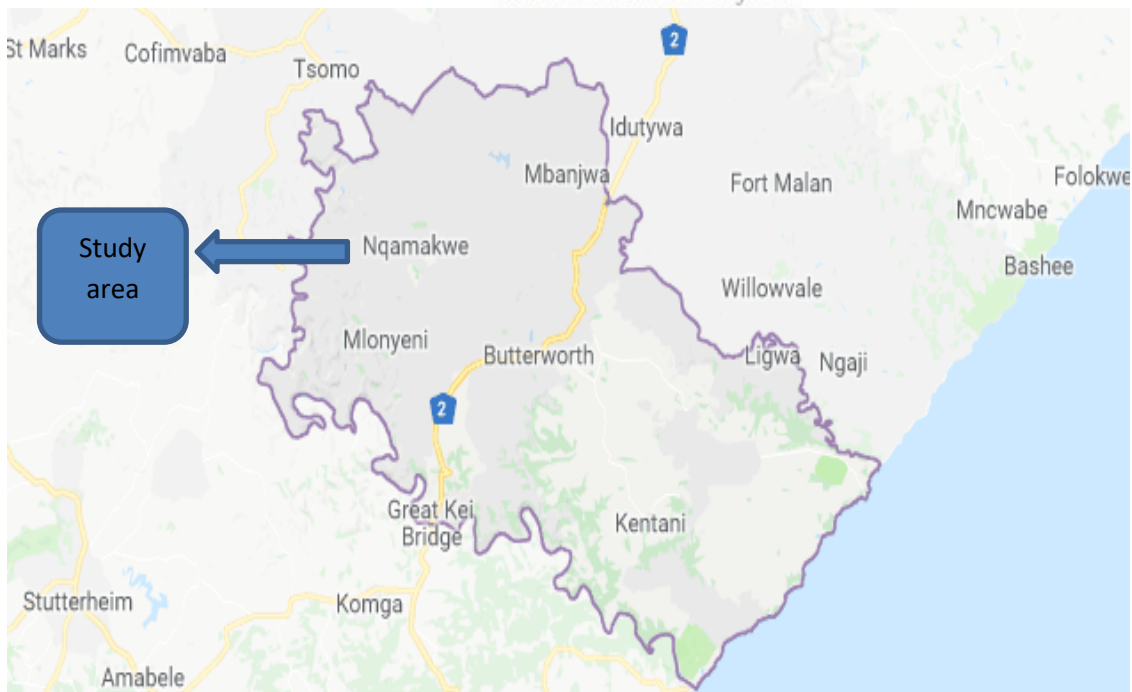


Figure 2: Location of Nqamakwe within Mmquama Local Municipality

(Credit: Map data, 2017 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google Maps.



Figure 3: A typical rural area in Ngqamakhwe: A picture of Njekeni village. (Image taken in May 2015)

### 3.3 Population and Demographics

In terms of population and demographics the MLM is dominated by isiXhosa speaking people. According to the Statistics South Africa (2011) census report, MLM had a total population of approximately 252 390 people, of which 99% were isiXhosa speaking people, with the remaining 1% of the population consisting of English, Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho speaking people. Ten years earlier, according to Statistics South Africa (2001), in 2001 the number of people who lived in the municipality was more than 280 000. These numbers reveal that there has been a decrease in the number of people living in Mquma Local Municipality in recent years (see figure 4). The female population make up 53.3 % of the total while 46.7 % of the population are male (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The larger number of females in the population is a consistent trend (see the figure below).

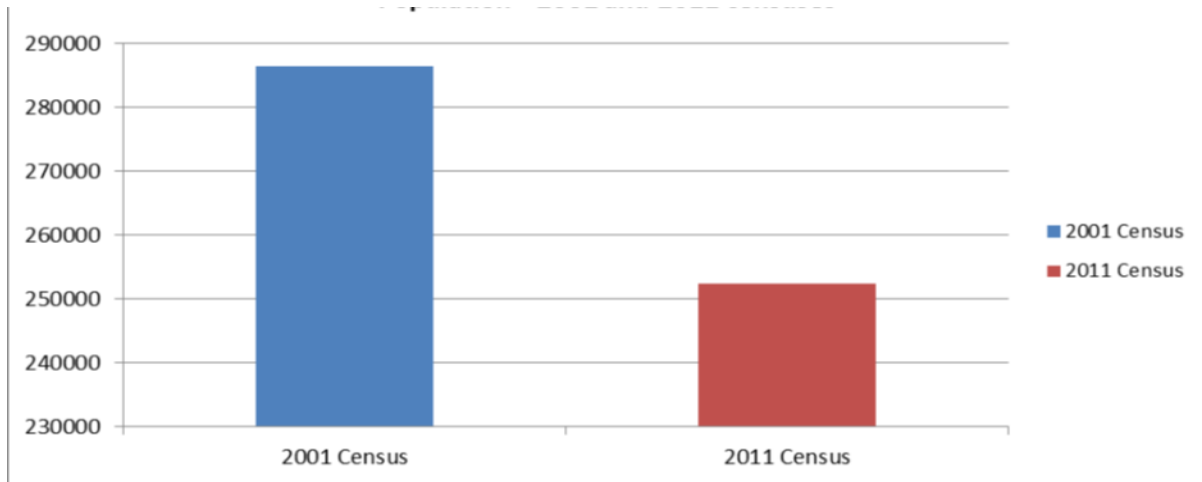


Figure 4: Population- 2001 and 2011 censuses (Credit: Statistics South Africa 2011 cited in Mnquma Local Municipality, 2017)

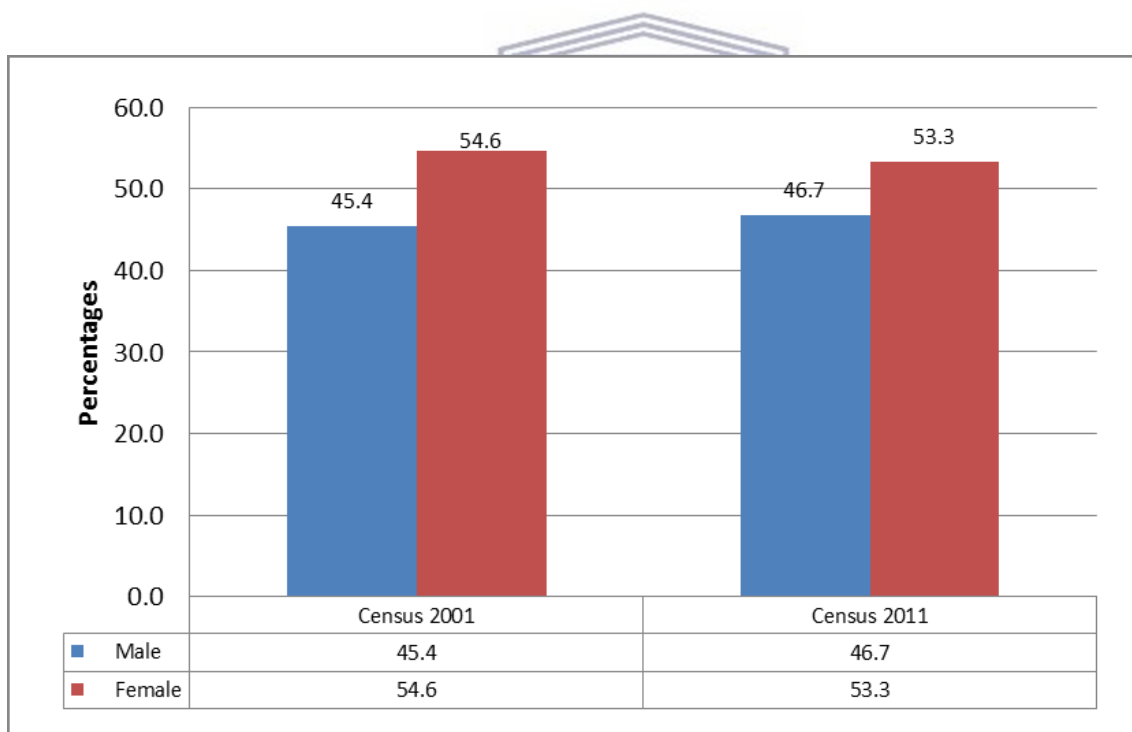


Figure 5: Population by Gender 2001 and 2011 (Credit: Stats SA 2011 cited in Mnquma Local Municipality, 2017)



The decrease in the population of MLM is mainly blamed on the high outward migration in the area. Over the last few years there has been high outward migration by the people of MLM, with many people from the area moving to bigger towns or cities across South Africa. The most common destinations are cities such as Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. It should be noted that in most cases this migration is not permanent as people still have ties to MLM and frequently visit during the holidays. People from MLM migrate for various reasons, for example seeking employment opportunities, better education, and better services. It should be noted that migration has long historical roots. Migration has deep historical traces in the former homelands as rural households historically supported their families with remittance incomes of family migrants working in mines and commercial mines in other areas (Perret et al, 2000 in Dzivakwi and Jacobs, 2010).

### **3.4 Livelihood status**

Similarly to most of the local municipalities in the region, MLM is one of the poorest municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province. In 2011 it was found that 30.1 % of the population were living in households with an income below the poverty line (Statistics South Africa, 2011). According to ECSECC (2015) cited in Mquma Local Municipality (2017), these numbers are declining; however, the municipality still has one of the highest levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in the Province of the Eastern Cape. The figures below illustrate levels of functional literacy (Figure 6) and the number of people living below the poverty line in MLM (Figure 7).

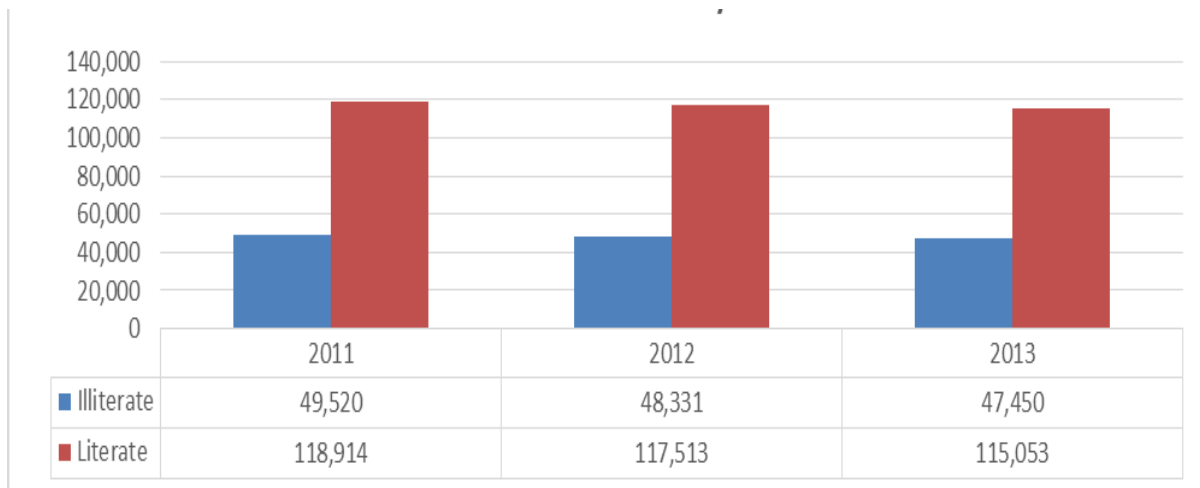


Figure 6: Levels of Functional Literacy (Credit: Stats SA 2011 and ECSECC 2015 cited in Mmquma Local Municipality, 2017)

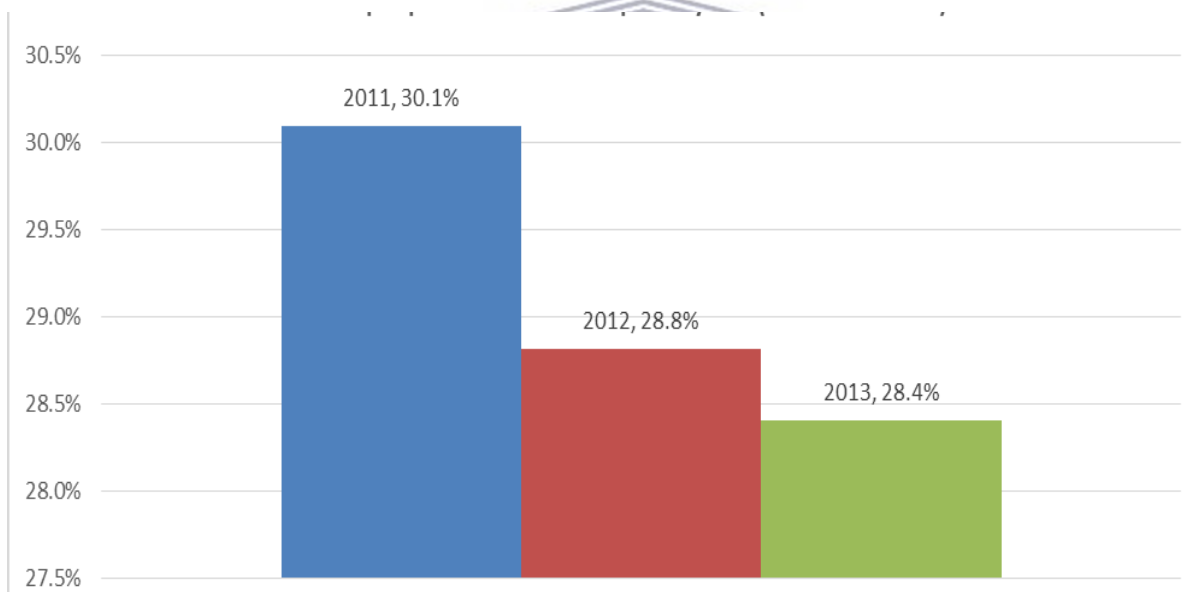


Figure 7: Share of people below the food poverty line (Credit ECSECC, 2015 cited in Mmquma Local Municipality, 2017)

The government through its community service sectors is the highest employer in the area, followed by agriculture and manufacturing in the goods producing sectors. According to the municipality's 2013/14 report, the percentage of people employed in the municipality was

estimated to be 25 % of the total population, while 11% of people were unemployed, and 64% considered to be economically inactive (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2013/ 2014). Based on the international standard definitions, the economically inactive and the unemployed are distinguished by whether an individual is looking and available for work (Leaker, 2009). According to Leaker (2009, 42) “the economically inactive include those who want a job but have not been seeking work in the last four weeks, those who want a job and are seeking work but are unavailable to start work, and those who do not want a job”. The majority of the people in MLM depend mainly on social grants for their livelihoods.

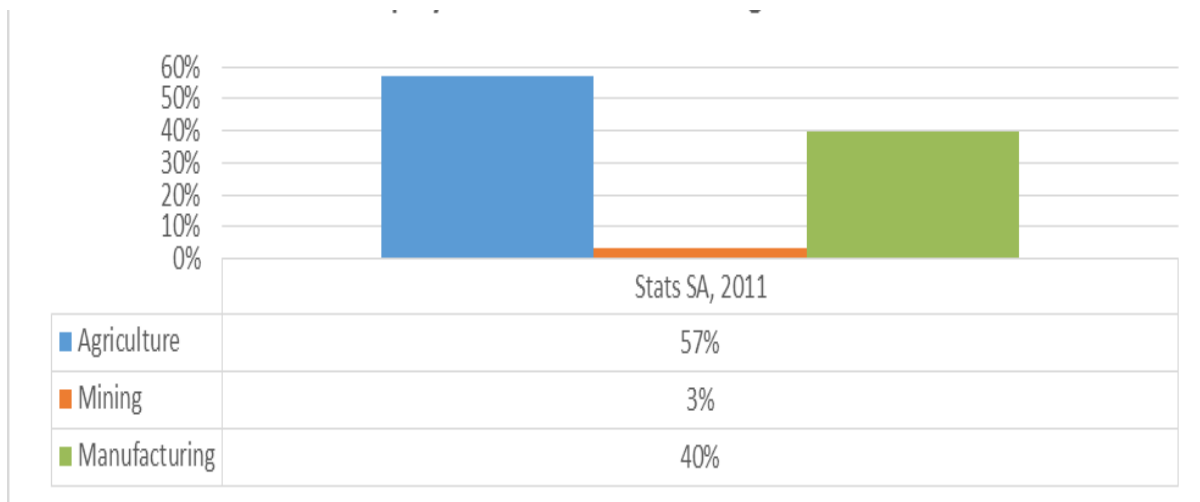


Figure 8: Employment in goods producing sectors in Mnquma (Credit: Stats SA, 2011 cited in Mnquma Local Municipality, 2017)

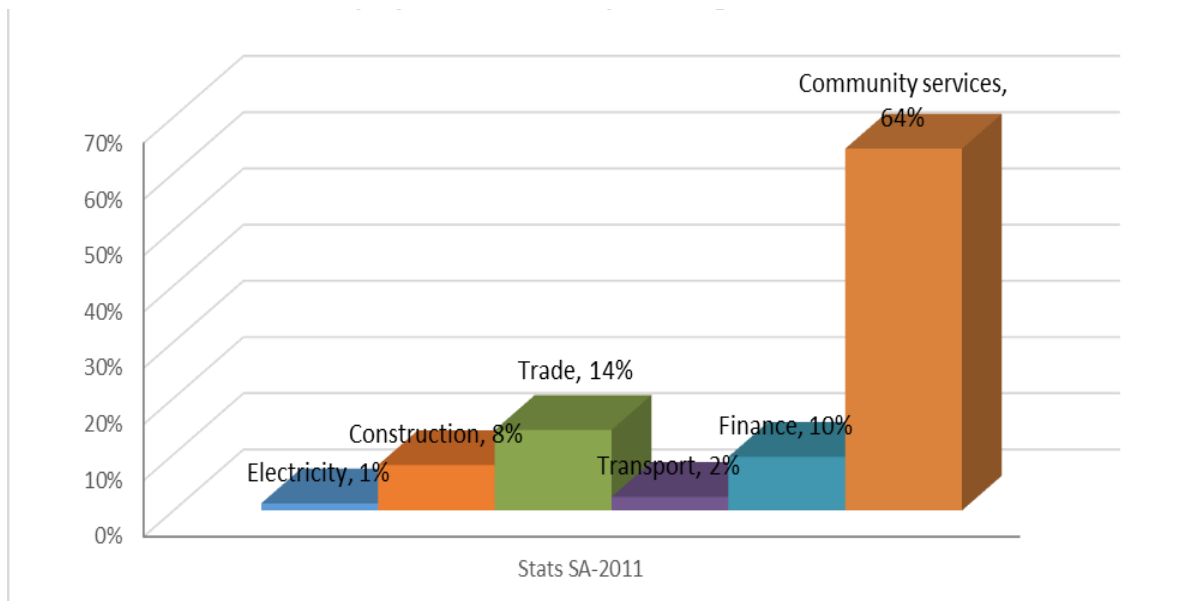


Figure 9: Employment in service producing sector 2011 (Credit: Stats SA 2011 cited in Mnquma Local Municipality, 2017)

Due to limited employment opportunities within the local municipality area, high priority has been placed on service delivery, skills development and social development. Agricultural development in the municipality has been identified as the primary focus area for job creation and food security. However, agriculture in most parts of the Amathole District municipality (ADM) has not yet developed beyond subsistence farming due to several constraints facing agriculture in rural areas. The district municipality report identifies lack of inputs, resources and the lack of interest from the youth as issues (Amathole District Municipality, 2010).

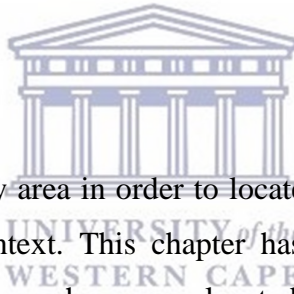
Despite these constraints, MLM sees agriculture as the best way for improving rural livelihoods in the region. For example, in one of its development strategies the MLM states that:

Being largely rural in its nature and motivated by soil typology and the amenable climate, the Mnquma Local Municipality has identified agriculture as its key economic driver which must be properly managed and exploited to ensure economic sustainability in the area. The Executive Management and the politicians reached a consensus decision to identify what came to be known as High Impact LED Projects [which] were identified as, farming in the form of cash and field crops production, essential oils, mariculture, and

cattle ranching. Secondary trade would include grain silos and processing, abattoir, leatherworks and thread processing (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2013/ 2014).

MLM considers its climatic conditions to be good for agricultural activities. The municipality has mild temperatures which range from a low 4 degrees Celsius in winter on high grounds to a high 33 degrees Celsius in summer accompanied by rainfall which ranges from 501 mm in winter up to 800 mm in summer along the coast (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2013/ 2014). Its temperatures and summer rains are considered to offer a conducive environment for farming in the area. The MLM (2013/14) report categorically states that being largely rural and due to soil typology and amenable climate, agriculture has the potential to function as the key economic driver in the local municipal area. Clearly, however, agriculture needs proper management and full exploitation in order to drive socio-economic sustainability.

### **3.5 Conclusion**



This chapter has introduced the study area in order to locate the studied two irrigation schemes within their social and physical context. This chapter has revealed that the Mnquma Local Municipality where these two irrigation schemes are located faces significant challenges such as poverty, high unemployment, illiteracy and food insecurity. Agriculture has been identified as one of the sectors that have the potential to change the situation of MLM. According to Mnquma Local Municipality there is high potential for agricultural production in the area and the climatic conditions are conducive for farming. This thesis is interested in exploring why, despite this focus on agricultural projects as a priority area, the projects appear disappointing and in some cases dysfunctional.

## Chapter Four: Research methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research process and the procedure that was undertaken to collect data for this study. The research methods used in collecting and analysing the data for this investigation of the dynamics of state-funded rural agricultural development programmes in Mngquma Local Municipality (MLM) are discussed. The chapter begins by introducing the research approach that was employed in collecting data. The next section explains in more detail the methods of data collection, which is the data collection process that was followed to acquire the data for this study. The analytical approach is then explained outlining the approach to presenting the data emerging from the interviews and observation. The last section of the chapter details the challenges that were encountered during the data collection.



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### 4.2 Qualitative Research

All research must involve an explicit (i.e. auditable), disciplined, systematic approach to finding things out, through the use of methods that are most appropriate to the question being asked (Hancock, Widrigde and Ocklefor, 2007). In this study I found the qualitative research methodology to be the most appropriate approach to answer the research question that was posed for this study. Qualitative research places focus on how people or groups can have somewhat different ways of looking at reality, whether it is social or physical reality. Qualitative research focuses on the description and interpretation of the meanings people make of their world including their behaviour, and it can also lead to a development of a new theory or concepts. The qualitative research approach is understood as an interpretative approach that relies on multiple types of subjective data (Denzen and Lincoln, 2000).

One of the major strengths of the qualitative research approach is that it may be useful for exploring “why” rather than “how many” (Milena et al, 2008, 1279). This is appropriate here since I am interested in exploring the dynamics between the actors in rural development

programmes and what causes these dynamics. “Qualitative research attempts to broaden and /or deepen our understanding on how things came to be the way they are in our social world” (Hancock et al, 2007, 4). A qualitative research method is suitable for this study since the main aim of the study is to understand the social relationships and power dynamics between the actors that are involved in rural development in Mnquma Local Municipality. “Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena” (Hancock et al, 2007, 7). Put in simple terms, it helps us to understand the social world we live in and why things are the way they are. Hancock et al, (2007) further explains that qualitative research is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions such as:

- Why people behave the way they do;
- How opinions and attitudes are formed;
- How people are affected by the events that go on around them;
- How and why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have (Hancock et al, 2007, 7).

In this study I am particularly interested in gaining answers to the first three questions.

The qualitative research method was considered advantageous for this study compared to quantitative research, because it deals with how people interpret their world whereas quantitative research deals mainly with numbers. As Sayer notes:

“Whereas quantitative data deals with numbers, qualitative data deals with meanings. Meanings are mediated mainly through language and action. Language is not a matter of subjective opinion. Concepts are constructed in terms of an inter subjective language which allows us to communicate intelligibly and interact effectively” (Sayer 1992:32 in Dey, 1993, 11)

Although qualitative research is widely used in the field of social science, some writers have criticised the qualitative research approach. One of the major criticisms levelled against the qualitative research approach has been that the results of a study may not be generalizable to a larger population because the sample group is small, and the participants are not chosen

randomly (Hancock et al, 2007). In this study the research question sought insights from a specific subgroup of the population. I was not concerned with the general population because the subgroup consisted of people who were directly engaged in the activity that was the focus of the research, therefore the small sample is considered appropriate for this study (Hancock, et al, 2007). The sampling method is explained in more detail below.

### **4.3. Methods of Data Collection**

According to Milena et al (2008) there are various types of instruments used to collect data for qualitative research. Qualitative research methods become powerful in providing valid data because they reject “the supposedly positivist ‘sins’ associated with survey methods of investigation, most particularly where data are elicited through closed questions using research-defined categories” (Dey, 1993, 15).

In-depth interviews and focus groups tend to be the most used instruments by researchers for the collection of qualitative data. For this study, in-depth interviews, group discussions, and observation were regarded as the most appropriate methods for generating data. The motive for mixing the data collection methods is explained by Bamberger (2012);

“A key reason for mixing methods is that it helps to overcome the weaknesses inherent in each method when used alone. It also increases the credibility of evaluation findings when information from different data sources converges (i.e., they are consistent about the direction of the findings) and can deepen the understanding of the programme/policy, its effects and context”. (Bamberger, 2012 in Peersman, 2014, 4)

In this way, the data collected may include field notes, interview transcripts, documents, photographs, video or tape recordings and so on (Dey, 1993). “Qualitative research methods involve the systematic collection, organisation and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or observation” (Malterud, 2001, 483).



At the same time, the researcher should also be cautious when using the data that is generated through qualitative research methods. As Malterud (2001) notes:

“The researcher must be prepared to use strategies for: questioning findings and interpretations, instead of taking them for granted; assessing their internal and external validity, instead of judging them obvious or universal; thinking about the effect of context and bias, without believing that knowledge is untouched by the human mind; and displaying and discussing the processes of analysis, instead of believing that manuals grant trustworthiness” (Malterud, 2001, 483).

The methods of data collections that were used for generating data for this study are discussed below.

#### **4. 3. 1 In-depth interviewing**

“The in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant’s perspective on the research topic” (Milena et al, 2008, 1279). When conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher becomes the student, while the interviewee becomes the expert on the topic that is being discussed. This is to allow the researcher to gain insights about the research topic that is being discussed through the perspectives of the interviewee. The in-depth interview in the field of social science is considered as the most appropriate research method because it allows the person who is being interviewed the chance to open up and talk freely about their personal feelings, opinions, and experiences (Milena et al, 2008).

To unlock barriers that might make the research participant uncomfortable in expressing himself/herself freely, a relationship of understanding between the researcher and the research participants must be created. For this relationship to be built the researcher must adhere to certain rules of conduct. For example, Hancock et al (2007) points out that:

A good interviewer needs to be able to put an interviewee at ease; needs good listening skills and needs to be able to manage an interview situation so as to collect data which

truly reflect the opinions and feelings of the interviewee concerning the chosen topic(s). A quiet, comfortable location should be chosen and the interviewer should give consideration to how s/he presents her/himself in terms of dress, manner and so on, so as to be approachable (Hancock et al, 2007, 17).

The effectiveness of the method depends greatly on the use of unstructured interviews “which involve a number of open-ended questions based on the topic that the researcher wants to cover” (Hancock et al, 2007, 16). The use of open-ended questions allows a “free-flowing conversation” between the researcher and the research participants by allowing both to discuss the research topic in more detail (Hancock et al, 2007). The semi-structured, in-depth interview gives the researcher the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on an original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee (Hancock et al, 2007). This approach also allows the researcher to be more focused to causal explanations (Milena et al, 2008).

In-depth interviews may differ in significant ways. The interview can be structured, with questions that are prepared and presented to each research participant in an identical way using a strict predetermined order (Hancock et al, 2007). Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, do not dictate the interview flow and its outcomes. This is usually the preferred method for qualitative research. As Hancock (et al, 2007) explain:

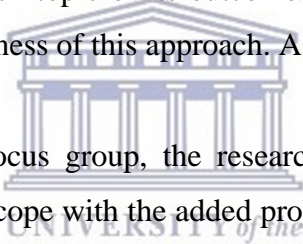
“Preparation for semi-structured interviews includes drawing up a “topic guide” which is a list of topics the interviewer wishes to discuss. The guide is not a schedule of questions and should not restrict the interview, which needs to be conducted sensitively and flexibly allowing follow up of points of interest to either interviewer or interviewee” (Hancock et al, 2007, 16).

The in-depth, conversational method was used in this study because in such interviews, “the participants are more confident, more relaxed and they feel more encouraged to express the deepest thoughts about a certain subject” (Milena et al, 2008, 1279). This study adopted more structured interviews for local government officials, however semi-structured or conversational interviews were used to gather data in the interactions with community members.

### 4. 3. 2 Focus Groups

The term ‘focus group’ “implies a group discussion to identify perceptions, thoughts and impressions of a selected group of people regarding a specific topic of investigation” (Kairuz, Crump and O’Brien, 2007 in Milena et al, 2008, 1279). The focus group resembles in-depth interviews, however it focuses on group transcripts. This approach is mostly taken to explore how participants interact with each other and how they influence each other’s ideas and opinions (Hancock et al, 2007). Focus groups have the potential to generate valuable information, especially when the participants represent small groups of common interest (Milena et al, 2008).

To generate honest responses from the focus group method, the participants must be comfortable and not feel threatened by the research topic or its outcomes. The role of the researcher is also important in influencing the effectiveness of this approach. As Hancock et al, (2007) notes:



“Acting as facilitator of a focus group, the researcher must allow all participants to express themselves and must cope with the added problem of trying to prevent more than one person speaking at a time, in order to permit identification of the speakers for the purposes of transcription and analysis” (Hancock et al, 2007, 18).

In the focus group the participants have the potential to influence each other’s responses and opinions. For example, participants act according to their personality and this is a risk in some situations because those with strong personalities may influence the opinions of those participants with weak personalities (Milena et al, 2008). I conducted several group discussions which allowed community members to debate issues amongst themselves, which gave me an insight into the dynamics at play. I do not believe that limiting the study to individual interviews would have generated similar insights.

### **4.3.3 Observation**

Hancock, et al (2007) define observation as a technique that can be used when data cannot be collected through other means, or when data collected through other means are of limited value or are difficult to validate. The observation method does not require direct interaction with the research participants. In most social science research observation is not necessarily required, however many researchers use it as a tool for studying the research environment. Observational insights can add valuable background information about the environment where the research project is being undertaken. “Observation can also produce data for verifying or nullifying information provided in face to face encounters” (Hancock et al, 2007, 18). Quinn Patton and Cochran (2002) further note that observational data may be useful in overcoming discrepancies between what people say and what they actually do, and it might also help the researcher uncover the behaviour of which the research participants themselves may not be aware.

In the case of this research, I closely observed the environment of the projects. For example, I noted machinery that was not functioning, storage buildings that were not finished, and so on. Through observation, I also noticed that in both the irrigation schemes there were no buildings/ storage facilities for keeping the produce and equipment of the irrigation schemes, as a result irrigation scheme members were using their own homes to keep their produce and the equipment used in the irrigation schemes. Through the information gathered during the observation of the environment in both irrigation schemes I was able to ask questions about the aspects that I observed. In this sense, observation was extremely useful in adding to the richness of the comprehensive story (McKechnie, 2008).

### **4.4 Fieldwork and interviews**

This study was conducted over a period of four months, from June to September 2015. This was after the University of the Western Cape had granted me an ethical clearance in November 2014. Data collection took place in the Eastern Cape in two small towns namely Ngqamakhwe and Butterworth, as well as at the projects themselves. The data was collected from two agricultural

projects which are located within MLM (Ngqamakhwe) in the former homeland of Transkei in the Eastern Cape.

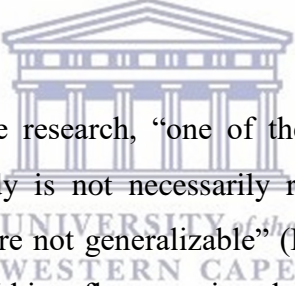
The primary data for the study was collected through in-depth interviews and focus groups interviews with the members of the two smallholder irrigation schemes, and community members of the two villages where the two smallholder irrigation schemes are located. Interviews were also conducted with the Local Economic Development (LED) division officials within MLM who are involved in the development of agricultural programmes in the area. I also interviewed officials of the local Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) who are based and working in MLM region. The primary data for the study was also collected through observation. The aim of the study is to understand the linkages and interactions between the various actors that are involved in agricultural development in MLM.

Secondary data for the study was generated using journals, books, articles, newspaper articles, government policy documents and some unpublished theses that have also attempted to investigate the question of rural development and agricultural development in the former homelands of South Africa. Reading in the fields of rural development, sociology, anthropology, agricultural sciences and development, geography, government policies on the development of co-operatives, smallholder and commercial agriculture formed the theoretical basis from which to analyse the data for this study.

In-depth interviews began in June 2015, after I had made an initial pilot visit to the area sites in the previous year (June 2014) to gather more information, do observation of the study area, and select the projects. In June 2014, I frequently visited the MLM and DRDAR offices, this was to gain more insights about the development of smallholder agricultural programmes in the region. I obtained a great deal of information about the agricultural programmes that fall under the MLM from the local government officials. The information obtained from the local government officials helped me in terms of selection of the particular smallholder irrigation schemes. It should be noted that by this time data collection had not officially begun, the information that was collected during this period was used to inform my research proposal for this study.

## 4.5 Case Study Approach

It is important to say a little more about the case study approach adopted here. This study was conducted as a case study of two agricultural irrigation schemes, namely Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS) and Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS). The case study approach is crucial for generating an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Crowe et al, 2011). The case study approach provides a comprehensive research strategy as an accumulation of information that is gathered to compile a clear story, not necessarily in a linear manner, but whereby the inferences and interpretations of the data are logically articulated in the development of the narrative (Simons, 2009 in Cassim, 2014). According to Strauss (1987, 219) “some case studies take the form of short descriptions which are included as cases within papers and sometimes even as separate chapters or sections within monographs. Or the author may briefly contrast two or more cases”. In the case of this study the latter approach was undertaken.



Despite its prominence in qualitative research, “one of the criticisms against the case study research is that the case under study is not necessarily representative of similar cases and therefore the results of the research are not generalizable” (Hancock et al, 2007, 11). However, Hancock et al (2007, 11) warns that “this reflects a misunderstanding of the purpose of the case study research which is to describe a particular case in detail”. For this study, an example is that if an agricultural programme works well or is not functioning as imagined. That does not necessarily mean that the agricultural programme would work better in other parts of the country, however “the lack of generalizability does not lessen its value in the area where it is based” (Hancock et al, 2007, 12).

According to Simons, (2009) different types of case studies are classified as intrinsic, instrumental or collective (Simons, 2009 in Cassim, 2014). Intrinsic case studies are defined by the researcher’s personal interest in the case itself. The case study is instrumental when an exploratory issue is prevalent, or a predetermined question is established. And if several case studies are identified the case study is considered collective (Simons, 2009 in Cassim, 2014).

This case study research was intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Being one of the people born and raised in MLM, the development of agricultural projects is an issue that I am actively influenced and affected by (although not directly) which made for the intrinsic interest within the cases (This is further elaborated in Chapter One of this thesis). Another reason for focusing on MMIS and NIS was driven by the fact that they are in close proximity with one another, and they are both located in Ngqamakhwe. The other factor that was influential for choosing MMIS is that it is located close to my home village. Also, I know MMIS from the time it was developed. Having grown up in the former homeland of Transkei, Eastern Cape, I have experienced some of the challenges that face the smallholder irrigation schemes in rural areas. My background and connection to the MLM meant that I was able to build relationships and trust in a way that an outsider might not have been able to do. However, in order to not let my positionality negatively influence my research findings and interpretation and analysis of my findings, I made sure that I continuously engaged in the process of reflexivity throughout the research process.

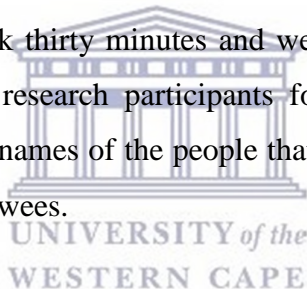
With regard to the issue to be explored, the case studies were selected based on the objectives of agricultural programmes which are set by the local government. This was to gain insight into the operation and nature of the two irrigation schemes, to see if these projects are working or not. One of the crucial factors for selecting these two irrigation schemes as case studies was the fact that they were supposed by the government officials to be working, however when I got there, I found that they were not functioning as envisaged by the officials. Two case studies were selected in order to explore dynamics at different sites and to draw a contrast between them.

#### **4.6 Interviewing process**

The official data collection for the study began in June 2015. In total 23 people were interviewed for this research study. The people that were interviewed included the smallholder irrigation scheme members, and other community members in the areas where these irrigation scheme members are located. The local government official from the Local Economic Development (LED) initiative which falls under MLM was interviewed, as well as the officials from the DRDAR who are based in Butterworth. The breakdown of interviewees is presented in (Table 1) below. The interviewees for this research were selected because they are the actors in the

development of both NIS and MMIS. Members of both irrigation scheme were selected because they are the ones who initiated the irrigation schemes from the ground. The members of both eZintukwini and Mirlees village were selected randomly. However, I made sure that I interviewed both the youth and elderly people in both villages in order to get an understanding of how they feel about the development of NIS and MMIS. I also made sure that I interviewed the members of MLM and DRDAR that are directly involved in the development of irrigation schemes within MLM.

Interviews with the members of the irrigation schemes took between one hour and two hours each. While the interviews with the members of both Mirlees village and eZintukwini village took between ten and twenty minutes, this was mainly due the fact that some of the interviewed respondents were not expecting to be interviewed by myself. So, in order to not waste their time I decided to make the interviews duration to be short as possible. The interviews with the members of MLM and DRDAR took thirty minutes and were conducted during lunch time. It should be noted that due to some research participants for this study requesting to remain anonymous, I decided not to use the names of the people that participated in this research study. Numbers are used to identify interviewees.



**Table 1: Research participants for the study**

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Respondent number</b>	<b>Date</b>
Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Male	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent No. 1	29 June 2015; 23 July 2015
Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Male	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent No. 2	29 June 2015; 23 July 2015
Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Female	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent No. 3	29 June 2015; 23 July 2015
Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Female	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent No. 4	29 June 2015; 23 July 2015
Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Female	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent No. 5	23 July 2015
Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Female	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent No. 6	23 July 2015



Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme	Female	eZintukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent 7	No. 23	July 2015
Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme	Female (Founding member)	Mirlees Village	Elderly	Respondent 8	No. 04	June 2015; 02 August 2015; 28 August 2015
Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme	Male (Husband of the founding member)	Mirlees Village	Elderly	Respondent 9	No. 28	August 2015
Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme	Female	Mirlees Village	Elderly	Respondent 10	No. 02	August 2015; 28 August 2015
Mnquma Local Municipality (Local Economic Development Division)	Female (LED Manager)	Butterworth	-----	Respondent 11	No. 22	June 2015; 07 September 2015
Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform	Male	Butterworth	-----	Respondent 12	No. 07	September 2015
Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform	Male	Butterworth	-----	Respondent 13	No. 07	September 2015
Mirlees Village	Female (former irrigation scheme member)	Mirlees Village	Elderly	Respondent 14	No. 28	August 2015
Mirlees Village	Female (former irrigation scheme)	Mirlees Village	Elderly	Respondent 15	No. 28	August 2015
Mirlees Village	Female	Mirlees Village	Youth	Respondent 16	No. 28	August 2015
Mirlees Village	Male	Mirlees Village	Youth	Respondent 17	No. 28	August 2015
Mirlees Village	Male	Mirlees Village	Youth	Respondent 18	No. 28	August 2015
eZintukwini Village	Male	eZintukwini Village	Youth	Respondent 19	No. 23	July 2015
eZintukwini Village	Male	eZintukwini Village	Youth	Respondent 20	No. 23	July 2015
eZintukwini Village	Male	eZintukwini Village	Youth	Respondent 21	No. 23	July 2015
eZintukwini Village	Female	eZintukwini Village	Youth	Respondent 22	No. 23	July 2015
eZintukwini Village	Female	intukwini Village	Elderly	Respondent 23	No. 23	July 2015

Focus group interviews were conducted with the members of MMIS Scheme and NIS between June 2015 and August 2015. I decided to conduct focus group interviews with the members of both irrigation schemes in order to save time and travelling costs to their villages. Two focus group interviews were conducted with the members of NIS, while three focus group interviews were conducted with the members of MMIS. Individual semi-structured or conversational interviews were also conducted with several selected respondents, such as the initiator of the project. All the interviews took place in the people's homes, as decided by the irrigation scheme members. In all these interviews open-ended research questions were drawn and asked to the irrigation scheme members. This allowed me and the members of the irrigation schemes to discuss some of the answers and statements that were made by the members of the irrigation schemes in more detail.

The in-depth interviewing was important in allowing me to probe further questions with the members of both irrigation schemes, asking them to elaborate on some of their statements and the answers that were given by the members of irrigation scheme (Hancock et al, 2007). I was able to return and ask further questions to the same people. In all the focus groups interviews I acted as the convener of the discussion between myself and the members of the irrigation schemes. The members of both irrigation schemes, mainly elderly people, were more than happy to share their opinion and answered all the proposed questions to the best of their ability. At first there was a misunderstanding with the members of the NIS, who initially thought I was there to help fix the irrigation scheme (This is discussed below as one of the challenges of data collection). The members of NIS were at first keen to simply document all the challenges that the irrigation scheme faced instead of answering the questions that were posed to them, but we gradually came to a better understanding.

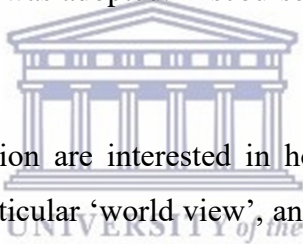
In-depth interviews were also conducted with members of the communities who are not directly involved or part of the irrigation schemes. I also made sure that I interviewed some people who were former members of the irrigation schemes from their homes. I was interested to find out why they had left the irrigation schemes. The directions to their homes were provided by the current members of the irrigation schemes. There was also one unplanned focus group interview

with three members of eZintukwini village which took place in a local shop where the three interviewed men were gathered enjoying themselves.

In-depth interviews with the local government officials from MLM within LED division and DRDAR were conducted in their offices. All the interviews were conducted in isiXhosa which is the language that is spoken by all the research participants. I recorded the interviews, and then translated all the data to English at a later stage.

#### **4.7 Data Analysis**

The data gathered from the interviews and observation was organized thematically for an in-depth qualitative analysis. In the data analysis I ensured that all the emergent themes were generated from the data itself, although I also incorporated theoretical ideas in my analysis. In analysing the data, discourse analysis was adopted. Discourse analysis focuses on text and talk as social practice.



“Researchers from this tradition are interested in how discourses are organized to be persuasive, or to present a particular ‘world view’, and would search for these patterns in the words that are used (linguistic repertoire) and the way that they are utilised (rhetorical strategies). Discourse analysis is the study of language in use, and any language use can be considered in this way...Researchers would also be interested in the *function* of discourse as well as its content” (Hancock et al, 2007, 13).

Discourse analysis of rural development thinking and policy may be found in various studies within the field of social sciences. Since this study is interested in analysing power relations, conflicts and dynamics between the actors that are involved in rural agricultural development programmes in Mquma Local Municipality, an actor-oriented approach analysis was also used. As explained in Chapter Two, the actor-oriented approach emerged from the work of Norman Long in Wageningen University. The actor-oriented analysis is important for understanding and analysing encounters that take place between different actors that are involved in rural development. This approach also opens up perspectives that are productive for future research and theoretical thinking (Long, 2012).

One of the major advantages of the actor- oriented analysis as explained by Norman Long is that it:

“Aims to explore a wide range of actor capacities to shape the social and material world, giving special attention to the kinds of conflicts and negotiations linked to forms of social interface and to the emergence of practices that change existing livelihoods and identities and which cannot easily be assimilated into existing everyday routines. Such social relationships and interfaces enrich the life experiences of actors through the ways in which they affect individual attachments and feelings” (Long, 2012, 8).

This captures what I hoped to achieve in my study.

#### **4.8 Research journey and challenges encountered**

In this final section of the chapter, I offer the research journey and the challenges that were encountered during the period of fieldwork. Collecting the data for the study was not easy as I was faced with many challenges during the data collection period. I had to visit the villages where irrigation schemes are located several times before I could secure dates for interviews. I also had to get to know the people from these two villages and gain their trust, especially the irrigation scheme members. That to me was a challenge because I did not know anyone from either village where the research study is located. I had to keep visiting both villages and build relationships with the people in both villages especially with the members of the irrigation schemes. This was very challenging especially securing a date that would be appropriate for all the members of the irrigation schemes.

I must note that setting up interviews with the local government officials was not problematic. All the officials of the local government showed good professionalism and they were keen to answer my questions and filled me in on some of the issues from their point of view concerning agricultural development in MLM, some of which were not initially included in my research questions.

I struggled a lot in getting the interviews with the members of NIS. I had to visit eZintukwini village several times before I could secure a date for the focus group interviews. I believe this was due to the fact that they did not know me. There was also a substantial misunderstanding which developed and took some time to resolve.

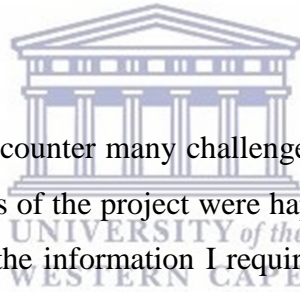
When I first met two members of NIS, I introduced myself as a student who is researching the agricultural development programmes that are supported by the local government in MLM area. They agreed to arrange a meeting for me where all the members of the irrigation scheme would be available. However, after waiting several days without hearing from them I decided to go back to eZintukwini village again.

On my second visit to eZintukwini village I was introduced by a community member to another member of NIS, where the equipment for the irrigation scheme is kept. My meeting with him was successful. He was very excited about the fact that I showed interest in agricultural development in rural villages. After a long chat with him he promised that he would try and persuade all the members of the project to get together so that I could ask them all the information I wanted to know about the project. We exchanged contact details and he promised to inform me about when I should go to the village again and conduct my first interview with all the members of the irrigation scheme.

After waiting for a few days, I received a call from him telling me that most of the project members had agreed to let me interview them and we decided on a date and time that the interview would take place. But to my surprise when I went to eZintukwini village as per agreement, only four members of the project were present for the first focus group interview. We went ahead despite the unavailability of most of the project members. After the first focus group, I wanted to know why other members could not come to the meeting. One striking answer I received from the members that were present for the interview was that “some of us are tired of being invited to meetings by people who promise to help us and then we never hear from them again”. This response made me realize that the irrigation scheme members thought I had come to help them with the challenges that the irrigation scheme was facing. I explained to the members that I was a student who was interested in researching about the challenges facing rural

agricultural development programmes in MLM. And I repeated that I could not provide them with the help that they required.

For my last focus group interview with the members of NIS, three more members of the project came to the interview that we had scheduled with the members that were present at the first interview. The interview proceeded as scheduled and the members that were available answered all the questions that I had prepared for the interview. They also expressed their opinions and some of their concerns especially about the local government officials. Although they were opening up to me, the members still wanted to know how my research was going to help them, and I had to explain that they were not going to get much help from my research. This made me feel wretched because I felt like the interviewed irrigation scheme members were expecting more from me. I felt like I was just wasting their time because I could not provide them with the help they needed. Despite the emotions that were involved, the interviews were conducted successfully.



Compared with the NIS, I did not encounter many challenges in conducting the interviews with the members of MMIS. The members of the project were happy to sacrifice a lot of their time to meet with me and provide me with the information I required. This I observed, was due to the fact that I was not the first researcher to conduct a study about MMIS – I was informed that many students have been there to conduct research about the project before me. The only challenge I faced in conducting the interviews with the project members was the unavailability of some of the irrigation scheme members. I would find one or two on a particular day and then when I visited the village again, I would find the person who had not been available and vice versa. This to me was a challenge because I wanted to interview all the members at the same time. As a result, I ended up conducting the focus group interview with only three out of the five members of MMIS.

In-depth interviews with the members of both villages where the studied projects are located were a challenge. At some points the community members would get angry at me saying that I am wasting their time and some of them became rude, since they did not know me. However, this was to be expected because they were selected randomly, and they did not have enough time

to think about the information I wanted to find out from them. Some of the community members wanted favours in return for letting me interview them. These favours varied from wanting a cigarette, a beer and so on. However, some of the community members of the community members were friendly and were interested in answering my questions as some of them felt that their voices were not being taken into consideration by the local government and their needs were neglected.

The only challenge that I faced when I conducted the interviews with the local government officials was that some of my questions were not answered. The officials of MLM and the DRDAR decided to omit some of the questions that were asked to them. Their responses were revealing in themselves. Their explanations for not responding to questions included answers such as “that is beyond our control”, or “it is not our place to answer that question”. This gave me insight into how they viewed their job and their responsibilities with regard to the agricultural projects.

The other challenge I faced was transcribing the data collected from the interviews, because the interviews were all in isiXhosa as all the respondents interviewed were isiXhosa speakers and I am also an isiXhosa speaker. The other challenge I faced was transcribing my research questions to isiXhosa as the initial questions were written in English. I tried to keep the translation as accurate as possible.

#### **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

It is mandatory for ethical issues to be present in any kind of research (Orb et al, 2001). In order to ensure that the rights of the research participants were protected and no harm could come to them during the fieldwork phase of the study, several ethical principles were considered. According to Orb et al (2001), the application of appropriate ethical principles is important for the protection of human subjects or participants in any research study. Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork an ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape was granted. To ensure that the research participants are protected I made sure that I abided by the Code of Research Ethics of the University of the Western Cape.

Orb et al (2001) state that the willingness to participate in a research study is solely dependent upon a participant's willingness to share his or her experience. I attempted to ensure that all the participants fully understood what my research is trying to achieve before they agreed to take part in it. For example, the local government respondents were given an information letter about my research and I explained to them in more detail what was written in the information letter. For the members of the irrigation scheme and the members of the community, I explained to them what I was researching and those who were not interested in taking part in the research were not pressured to participate. Since all the participants were isiXhosa speakers, the information was explained to them in isiXhosa to ensure that there is no misunderstanding. Despite this, misunderstandings still occurred at first, and I had to correct those as described above.

Permission to record the interviews or even write down the data from the interviews with the participants was requested. Some research participants did not have a problem with being recorded, however in some instances where they asked to remain anonymous, they were not happy to be recorded, and their wishes were obeyed. It was sensitive for some of the members of the community to discuss or talk critically about government officials and their community leadership, therefore I ensured them confidentiality. I also assured the research participants that I will not use their names without their permission and their wish to protect their identities would be obeyed.

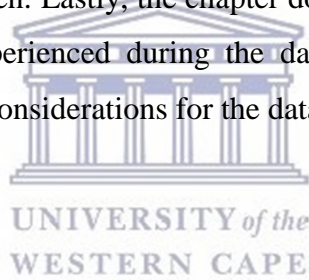
Before conducting my research, I first asked permission from the members of the irrigation schemes that the study focused on. Once the members of the irrigation schemes agreed to be interviewed for the study, I then asked them to agree on a date that would be suitable for them. All this process was done through communication with at least one member of the irrigation scheme through telephone conversations. Although the community participants were selected randomly, I was careful to ensure that I get their full consent. Those who refused to take part in the interviews were excused with an apology from my side. In the case of the government officials I first made appointments with them through face to face interaction, after explaining



my intentions. I asked to interview them during their office hours at a time that was convenient for them.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the research processes and methods that were followed in undertaking the study. The study is interested in understanding the social interface of the actors involved in rural development programmes in MLM area. To understand the social relationships and power dynamics between the different actors, the qualitative research approach was chosen as the most appropriate approach for gathering data for the study. The qualitative research approach has been discussed in detail to explain why it was a necessary approach for this study. The methods of data collection that were used for the study were discussed, followed by a description of how the data collection process was undertaken. Lastly, the chapter documented the research journey and explained the challenges that I experienced during the data collection process. The chapter concluded by discussing the ethical considerations for the data collection.



## **Chapter Five: The development of agricultural projects in Mquma Local Municipality and the role of the LED division**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the development of the agricultural projects, beginning with the framing of these projects by the Mquma Local Economic Development (LED) division. The chapter also introduces some of the secondary actors that are supporting the LED division in improving the agricultural situation in Mquma Local Municipality (MLM). After explaining the idea behind the set-up of the LED division by MLM, I discuss the role of the officials from the LED division, in particular how they reach out to the local communities and the kind of support they provide to the agricultural projects under MLM. Also, how do they mobilise other stakeholders to support agricultural projects? Thereafter the two specific case studies that are studied for this research are introduced. The chapter describes the origins and status of the two irrigation schemes (Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS) and Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS) during the time of the fieldwork. Based on interviews with the participants as well as observation, I outline how these irrigation schemes came to existence, who was behind their initiation, where they are located, what current equipment they possess, and who the current participants are.

### **5.2 Agricultural projects under Mquma Local Municipality and the framing of Local Economic Development (LED)**

Mquma local municipality has a list of about 120 agricultural programmes that are registered under its Local Economic Development (LED) division. These programmes include irrigation schemes, co-operatives and projects as defined by the Mquma LED division. Although the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) acts as the core department responsible for handling agricultural programmes within MLM, the municipality through its LED division plays a crucial role in assisting the existing and the emerging agricultural programmes in MLM (Interview with respondent 11, LED official, Butterworth, 22 June

2015). The other stakeholders involved in the development of agriculture in MLM include: the Amathole District Municipality (ADM), the Department of Social Development, WHIPHOLD,<sup>3</sup> the Department of Trade and Industry, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Aspire<sup>4</sup> and Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) (Interview with respondent 11, LED official, Butterworth, 22 June 2015). During fieldwork it emerged that the latter mentioned institutions had played a role in developing and supporting the two irrigation schemes that are studied in this research. However, the Department of Social Development played a major role by funding the development of Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme, and ADM which contributed in funding Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme in 2007.

According to the municipality, the purpose of the LED division is to implement economic development initiatives of the MLM in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders in the public sector, business and communities (<http://www.mnquma.gov.za/Content.aspx?pageID=165>). The LED division is responsible for creating an enabling environment for employment growth and improvement of the quality of life for the people who reside in MLM (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2015). Agricultural development in the region is identified by the LED division as one of the key focus areas that have the capacity to improve the lives of the rural poor living in the local municipality, and therefore all agree that it must be prioritised.

Based on the MLM development policy, the development of agricultural projects in MLM is meant to follow a 'bottom-up' approach instead of a 'top-down approach' (for development interventions that follow a 'top-down approach' see Philip-Howard, 1997; Fay, 212; Madyibi, 2013; Jacobson, 2013). The agricultural programmes are formed by the registration of five or more people with the purpose of creating a business through exposing their produce to viable markets. However, when registering the co-operative or the irrigation scheme, the members must have different surnames in order to be eligible to receive the necessary support they require from

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<sup>3</sup> WHIPHOLD is a black women-owned investment company which is focused on acquiring and building strategic investments in key sectors of the economy from mining and agriculture to cement manufacturing and financial services.

<sup>4</sup> Aspire is registered as the Amathole Development Agency. Its vision is to be a leader in the stimulation of economic development in Amathole District Municipality region, in order to improve the quality of life of Amathole District Municipality residents.

the government. This is an effort to prevent corruption or capture of the project by a single elite family.

The NIS and MMIS which are studied for this research are both planned from below by community members. Theoretically such interventions should deliver positive outcomes compared to ‘top-down’ interventions, because the project members are not forced to adopt preconceived agricultural practices and methods. In both the irrigation schemes studied here, the community members are responsible for planning and initiating the programmes from below, however the initiation of the projects required the support of the local government officials, including the traditional leadership of these villages that is responsible for allocating land for cultivation. This therefore differs in a significant way from agricultural projects such as MFFP projects where members of the projects feel like they are forced to accept development, because it is designed using a ‘top-down approach’ (Madyibi, 2013)

In order to reach out and offer help to people who want to initiate agricultural projects in local communities, the LED division officials coordinate workshops, information days, agricultural shows, training workshops and awareness programs within different wards in MLM (Interview with respondent 11, LED official, Butterworth, 22 June 2015). These initiatives are meant to teach and inform people about the importance of agriculture and how agriculture as a key economic activity can open job opportunities, reduce poverty, increase food security and how it can be an entity that contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of MLM. Through the help of ward councillors, the LED division officials identify interested farmers and assist them with registering and forming agricultural projects and developing business plans. The LED division officials travel to different wards to encourage community members to form agricultural projects in order to receive incentives. In order to be considered for technical and funding support they need to have a business certificate, tax clearance and formulate a constitution and a business plan. The MLM also mobilises other stakeholders in the region to offer financial and technical support to agricultural programmes. Existing agricultural programmes members are also encouraged to advise other people who are interested in farming in the region (Interview with respondent 11, LED Official, Butterworth, 22 June 2015).

The two agricultural projects that are the subject of this research, NIS and MMIS, were both developed in post-apartheid South Africa by the people in their respective communities. Despite

the assistance that is supposedly offered by the LED division to the emerging farmers in Mnquma Local Municipality, members from both studied irrigation schemes claim that they received minimal and unsatisfactory assistance from the municipality in developing the respective irrigation schemes in their communities (Focus group interview with Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme members, 29 June 2015; Interview with respondent 8, 04 June 2015, member of MMIS).

Both these irrigation schemes are part of the Siyakhula Food Production Programme located under the former Department of Agriculture (DoA). The Siyakhula Food Production Programme is a rural economic development initiative that targets grain food production through subsidizing input supplies, mechanization, marketing and agro-processing by means of a conditional grant scheme (Masifunde Education and Development Project Trust, 2010). Siyakhula Food Programme is a step-up program designed to introduce farmers into commercial production (Tregurtha, 2009). The next section considers each scheme in greater detail.

### **5.3 Introducing the case studies**



#### **5.3.1 Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme**

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Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS) is situated in Hlobo location in a small town named Ngqamakhwe. Hlobo location comprises of 12 different villages that fall under the leadership of the same traditional authority (chief). The different villages are near each other, they are separated by rivers, gravel roads, grazing fields, and family plots. NIS is located on approximately 16 hectares of fenced land. The project started as a result of interest in farming with the purpose of alleviating poverty and creating job opportunities for the people of eZintukwini village and Hlobo location. The activities done in the project include; cultivation of maize and vegetables (cabbage, spinach, beetroot and carrot). The NIS is located several meters away from the Mbinza River, between eZintukwini village and Mbinza River.



Figure 10: Image of Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme taken in 2010-2011 cultivation season (Credit: Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme Archives).



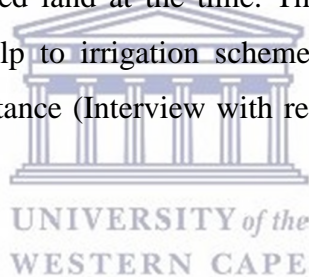
The project was founded in 2001 by a group of community members of Hlobo that are based in eZintukwini Village. The project was founded by Mr Nyandu and some community members of eZintukwini village which is located in Hlobo location. Realising that there was high unemployment, food insecurity and poverty in eZintukwini village, Mr Nyandu approached the members of eZintukwini village about his idea of starting an agricultural project in the community to address the challenges that were facing the community. An Imbizo<sup>5</sup> for all the members of the village was called to discuss how the project should be initiated. However, very few people from the village showed interest in joining the irrigation scheme. Only 13 members joined the project.

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<sup>5</sup> Imbizo is a gathering that is usually called by a traditional leader when there is an important announcement to be made or a conflict that has to be resolved within the community. Other community members also have the right to request an Imbizo from the community through the traditional leader when they want to make a special announcement or express their grievances.

To honour the person who came with the idea of initiating the project the project was named Ntuzenyandu<sup>6</sup>. The project members decided to register the project as a primary co-operative with the Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (CIPRO)<sup>7</sup> and all the required documentation was acquired for the project to receive funding and technical support from the government.

In the absence of the founding member of the project, it was not clear during my interviews with the existing members of the project how the idea of initiating the project came about, or how they heard about funding opportunities that are available for funding agricultural projects. However, the project was initiated and went ahead. After the project members acquired all the required documentation, they pursued help with funding and other necessary equipment from MLM, Department of Social Development and DRDAR and other government institutions. The members claim that they did not receive much help because their project had not started operating and they only had unfenced land at the time. The aforementioned institutions, they said, were only willing to offer help to irrigation schemes/ co-operatives that were already functional and required further assistance (Interview with respondent 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS).



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<sup>6</sup> The name Ntuzenyandu is the combination of the name and the surname of the founder of the irrigation scheme.

<sup>7</sup> In 2011 CIPRO and the Office of Company Intellectual Property Enforcement merged to form the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC). Currently CIPC is the office responsible for registering co-operatives and irrigation schemes as businesses.



Figure 11: Image of cabbages grown in Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme, picture taken in 2010-2011 cultivation season (Credit: Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme archives)

Despite not receiving the help that they required, some of the members of the irrigation scheme did receive training from MLM (for example in financial management, record keeping, dicing, tillage and so on). Also, some training was provided by the DRDAR. After not receiving the funding support or the equipment they required from the local government, the project was helped by the provincial government official who working in Bhishe at the time. The provincial government official helped the project by organising fencing material, the tractor and other necessary equipment they required in order to start farming (Interview with respondent 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS). The project also received some funding from the ADM to the value of R300 000 in 2007, but this funding from ADM came later after the project had started operating already (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2015).



The equipment currently available at NIS includes: fencing, the tractor, irrigation system, watering pipes, and the pump. During my first visit to the NIS, the members of the irrigation scheme claimed that their tractor had been taken away from them by the local chief of Hlobo due to disputes that arose between the community members of eZintukwini village and the members of NIS over the use of the tractor. As a way of resolving the dispute the tractor was confiscated by the local traditional authority. This incident is examined more closely in Chapter 7.

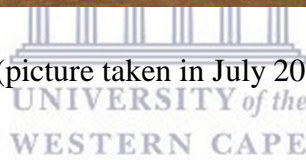
There is no storage for the produce at the irrigation scheme; the members use their own houses for storing their produce during harvesting season and storing the project equipment. During the time the interviews were conducted, NIS was not in fact operational, and it had not been operational from the year 2013. The members of the project were cultivating maize for themselves but only those members that were interested in doing so, not all the members of the NIS were participating. It is important however to note that – despite not being operational from the year 2013 – the NIS was listed as one of the current operational irrigation schemes in Mnquma Local Municipality in the year 2014-2015 by the LED division. This gives a false impression of the success of the project.

On visiting the site, I expected to find an operational project, however it was not the case. Some members were still optimistic that the project will resume again and return to its glory days as soon as all the challenges it was facing are resolved, but some had lost hope that the irrigation scheme would work again. Although the project was not operational during my visit to the site, the members of the project claim that it had been operating exceptional well prior to 2010 (Interview with respondent 2, 29 June 2015, member of MMIS). But the unfortunate passing of the founding member of the project who was its chairperson, accompanied by some other challenges such as losing its tractor, financial challenges and having troubles with their tax certificate, which blocked the project from accessing funding had been the main hindrance. At the time the project also had a problem with their pump, and they claimed that they did not have money to fix it, because the project was failing to make income and profit (Interview with respondent 4, 29 June 2015, member of NIS).

### 5.3.2 Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme



Figure 12: Image of Mirlees village: (picture taken in July 2015).



Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS) is in Mirlees Village in Nqamakhwe. Mirlees Village is one of the villages of Toboyi Location. Toboyi comprises of three villages which are in close proximity to one another and are only separated by rivers and areas of grazing land and plots. These three villages are under the leadership of one chief. MMIS has approximately 10 hectares of fenced land. The idea of starting the project was developed in the year 2005 and it started functioning in 2006. According to Mnquma Local Municipality (2015) the programme was started for promoting and enhancing food security, alleviating poverty and creating employment in Mirlees village. The activities in the project include production of cash crops for example cabbage, spinach, carrots, potatoes and maize and making of goods from the produce of the programme such as beetroot. MMIS is located about 20 meters away from Xilinx River, less than one kilometre away from Mirlees Village.



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Figure 13: Image taken during the opening of Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (Credit: Mirlees Masibambisane Archives)



Figure 14: A picture of one of the members of Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme posing with carrots produced in the irrigation scheme (Credit: Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme Archive).

The idea of opening the MMIS originated from an elderly woman in Mirlees village, Mrs Jobela. This retired teacher came up with the idea of starting an agricultural project in Mirlees village because she saw that the elderly and unemployed people in the village had nothing to do. After pitching her idea to the members of Mirlees village in an Imbizo which was organised by the local headman, many people in the village showed interest in joining the project. The initiation of MMIS was further boosted by the fact that one of the members who had joined the project was working for the DoA, as a result he knew the processes that were required for starting an agricultural project. During the one on one interview with the founding member of the project, she mentioned that prior to coming up with the idea of starting the project in her community she had been attending Women in Agriculture programs that are usually held in town (Ngqamakhwe), therefore she knew the right people and channels for registering and accessing support for the MMIS (Interview with respondent 8, 04 June 2015, member of MMIS).

The funding for purchasing the equipment that was required by MMIS was provided by the Department of Social Development. The members of the project claim that they first received R250 000 in 2005-2006 from the Department of Social Development, and they received another R300 000 from the same department in 2008 (Interview with respondent 8, 04 June 2015, member of MMIS). The members of MMIS could not disclose whether they were given hard cash by the Department of Social Development, or whether the project was funded using the same process that the MLM uses to fund agricultural projects (Interview with respondent 8, 04 June 2015, member of MMIS). The funding that was received by MMIS was used for purchasing fencing material, irrigation equipment and labour (for fencing and installing the irrigation system and clearing of the field) and seeds. The former DoA and MLM also played a crucial role in the initiation of the MMIS as they both provided various training inputs to two members of the project. The farming and business experience gained by these two members was passed to other members of the project.

The equipment that is available in MMIS includes a tractor and its equipment, watering pipes, jojo tanks, a water pump generator and fencing. The tractor was given to the project by the former national DoA, as a result of the project winning an award as one of the most promising agricultural projects contributing in the development of their communities. After winning several awards in the region and nationally, the members of the MMIS claim that the MLM promised to build them a dam, however this promise was never fulfilled by the local municipality.



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Figure 15: Image of the awards won by Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (Picture taken in July 2015).



Figure 16: Certificate of appreciation awarded to the Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme by the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (Picture taken in July 2015)

As in the case of the NIS, the challenges are immediately apparent to a visitor to the scheme. There is an unfinished storage building that is built in the premises of the irrigation scheme. However due to negligence, the winds and rains are damaging the storage building. Currently the members of the MMIS use their own houses to keep the produce of the irrigation scheme. In 2015 at the time of fieldwork, the MMIS had not been cultivated in the previous year (2014). The members of the project blamed this on the drought that was experienced all over the country. They also had a problem with their water pumping generator which needed to be fixed.



Figure 17: Image of Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (Picture taken in July 2015).



Figure 18: Image of potato seeds kept at the founder of the irrigation scheme`s home (Picture taken in July 2015).

## 5.4 Conclusion

There exists a clear need to create sustainable rural agricultural programmes that will provide food, jobs and incomes to the poor people of MLM. This chapter has looked at the framing of the agricultural development projects from the point of view of the Mnyama LED division, the main facilitator. It suggests how the LED division claims to be positioned to help and support irrigation schemes that are under MLM, and also what other institutions are mandated with supporting agricultural projects in the region. This is the intention of the LED division, although things do not appear to be working well on the ground. The two irrigation schemes that form the



case studies for this research are introduced in this chapter and described in terms of how they were formed and what are they actually doing. In both cases, it seems that the projects are at something of a standstill. The following chapters present an analysis of the dynamics involved between the key actors in an attempt to provide a nuanced account of rural development challenges in this context.



## **Chapter Six: The Local Economic Development irrigation schemes and official framings of ‘failure’**

### **6. 1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study and provides analysis of the data collected during the fieldwork. As has been discussed in Chapter Two, rural development is shaped by many actors, including the social movements and state apparatuses involved in it, and it is constructed through several encounters that take place at the decisive interfaces where these actors meet and engage in complex and often contradictory practices (van der Ploeg et al, 2015). The actors therefore become crucial in order to understand what causes the dissonances in agricultural development projects in my study area, Mngquma Local Municipality. The actor- oriented approach and actor interface approach are used to understand power relations and make sense of the interactions that take place between actors and are influential in shaping rural development projects. The actor oriented approach is able to analyse the interfaces between the many actors involved, from producer to consumer, including specific language strategies and discourses involved (Hebinck et al, 2001). This chapter seeks to understand how negotiations and interactions at the interface between the actors determine the success or failure of these agricultural projects.

The chapter begins by introducing the actors that are involved in the development of the two irrigation schemes, Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme (NIS) and Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme (MMIS). The contribution of both NIS and MMIS to socio-economic development in their respective communities including their contribution to MLM economy is discussed. The third section discusses the structure, influence and the role of the traditional authority in agricultural development projects. This section also focuses on the issues associated with land access, land availability and land tenure within communal land. The chapter concludes by discussing the interface between the government officials and the members of the NIS and MMIS. This last section pays special attention to how government officials and irrigation scheme

members view each other and how the ‘failure’ or slow progress of these irrigation schemes shapes their relationships.

## **6.2 Introducing the actors in the irrigation schemes**

The actors involved in rural development programmes are socially shaped by the relationships that they engage in. These relationships are sometimes developed through necessity, but actors can also choose (or even construct) these relationships in a voluntary, goal-oriented and knowledgeable way (Long, 2001 in van der Ploeg et al, 2015). The way the actors in rural development position themselves is a critical factor for the success of rural development programmes. This chapter focuses on the actors who are actively involved in the two studied irrigation schemes in MLM. It is important to know who the active actors in these agricultural projects are because it makes it easier to answer questions such as: What are their different roles? How do they interact and engage with each other? What are the factors that lead to conflicts between them? And so on.

Long argues that social actors must not be depicted as simply disembodied social categories (based on class or some other classificatory criteria) or passive recipients of intervention, but as active participants who process information and strategies in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel (Long, 2001). This section sets a pathway to the following sections of this research which aim to discuss how the actors construct their relations, networks, resource groups and positions in order for rural development to progress within their communities.

The actors involved in NIS and MMIS include, first, community members who are directly involved in these smallholder irrigation schemes; secondly, members of the community who are benefiting (or supposedly benefiting) from the smallholder irrigation schemes; thirdly, the traditional leadership that is responsible for making important decisions such as granting land rights for farming to the members of the small-holder irrigation schemes. (The traditional authority is also part of the structure of the local government according to the South African Constitution; however, findings from this study reveal that this is not working well. This is discussed in depth later). The fourth actor is officials from the local government institutions who

are responsible for providing start-up funding and technical support to the small-holder irrigation schemes.

### **6.2.1 Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme**

The NIS currently consists of 10 active members who are involved in running the day to day operations of the smallholder irrigation scheme development intervention. The idea of developing the irrigation scheme came from a retired member of the eZintukwini village who saw the need to start farming with the purpose of alleviating poverty and creating job opportunities for the people of eZintukwini village and Hlobo location. The member who came with the idea of starting farming in the village approached other members of community in eZintukwini village about starting the agricultural project. “Although the idea was pitched to almost every community member of eZintukwini village, only 13 members from the village joined the irrigation schemes” (Interview with respondent number 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS). According to the interviews with the current members of the eZintukwini village, other members from the village did not show interest in joining the project during its inception, despite being consulted.

Those who showed interest in joining the project were asked to contribute R50 as a joining fee. This money was used to cover the financial cost of travelling for the members who were selected to go to different government offices to try and register the irrigation scheme, so that it could access funding and technical support from the government. During the inception of the project it was much cheaper to join as a member compared to now. Currently members of the community who are interested in joining the project are expected to pay a joining fee of R400. The existing members believe that much work has been achieved in the project; therefore, it is only fair for new members to contribute R400 to the project as a joining fee (Interview with respondent 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS).

In the 10 remaining members, none of them are young. The members that are currently active in the project include both elderly women and men, who are either retired or not working and there is also one member of the project who is a teacher, however he is not very active in the project because he works away from home. Municipal government officials describe the NIS as a community development intervention programme that is meant to develop the village of

eZintukwini and to an extent the people of Hlobo location, but participation in the project not broad as it only consists of eZintukwini village (Interview with respondent 4, 29 June 2015, member of NIS).

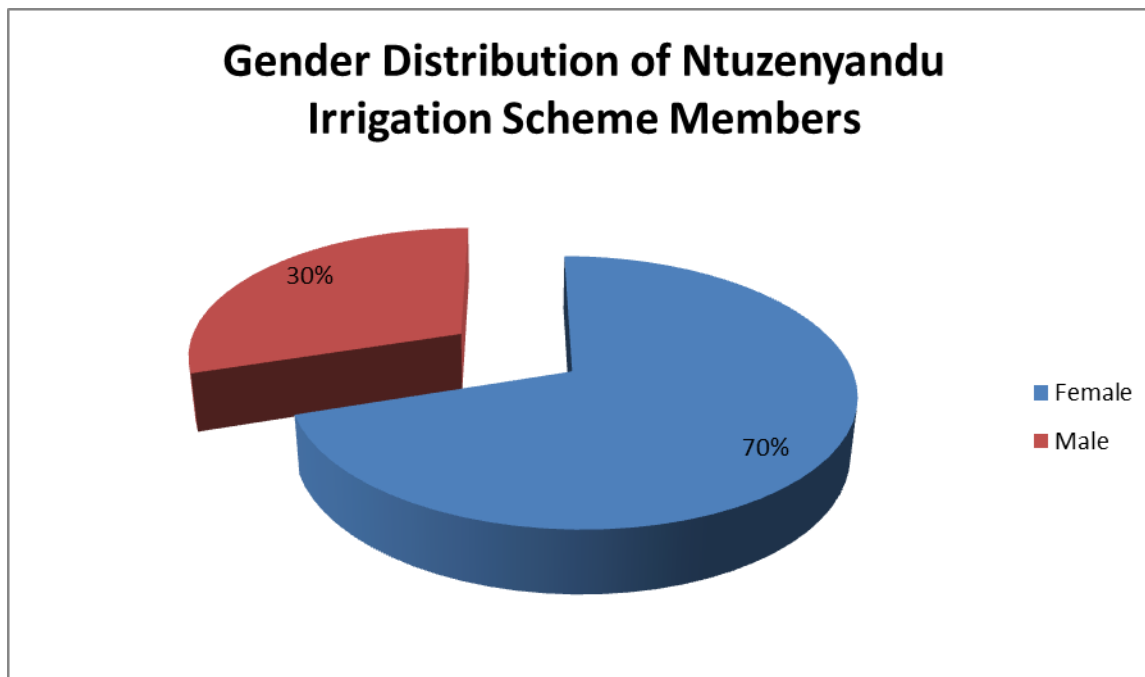


Figure 19: Gender distribution of members of Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme

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The lack of involvement from other members of the community in these projects has led to the manifestation of conflicts between some uninvolved members of the community and those who are part of the irrigation scheme. In this way, conflicts emerging within the village of eZintukwini can be traced to the changes brought about through the establishment of the NIS. Long and Jinlong (2009) argue that many changes in rural communities are accompanied by conflict over land and resources, leading to modifications in legal frameworks affecting land use and management, as well as to the deployment of technology and networks of technical and service personnel serving the farm. The conflicts that are apparent from NIS and their contributing factors will be discussed in greater detail later on.

## 6.2.2 Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme

Mirlees Masibambane Irrigation scheme (MMIS) was initiated in Mirlees village in the year 2005 and it started functioning in 2006. The idea of beginning the MMIS emanated with an elderly woman in Mirlees village. This retired teacher came with the idea of starting the agricultural project in Mirlees village because she saw that the elderly and unemployed people in the village had nothing to do. As she stated,

“I saw that most of the people in this village were going up and down in the village doing nothing. I saw this project as a way of creating employment for the people in the community; this also meant that it would also ensure food security in the community” (Interview with respondent number 8, 02 August 2015, member of MMIS).

The founding member of the project pitched her idea to the community members at an Imbizo which was organized by the local headman of the Mirlees village. She claims that most people in the village showed a lot of interest and were eager to join the project at the beginning, as they saw it as pathway to emancipate the village and the surrounding villages from poverty and bring in much needed employment opportunities.

From its inception, 31 community members of Mirlees village joined the project, including the founder. The irrigation scheme also earned the blessings of the local chief as he awarded the members farming land located close to the river for irrigation needs. Despite the high number of actors showing interest during the inception of the project, however, currently only 7 members remains in the project. The remaining members are five elderly women and two elderly men (Interview with respondent 8, 04 June 2015, member of MMIS).

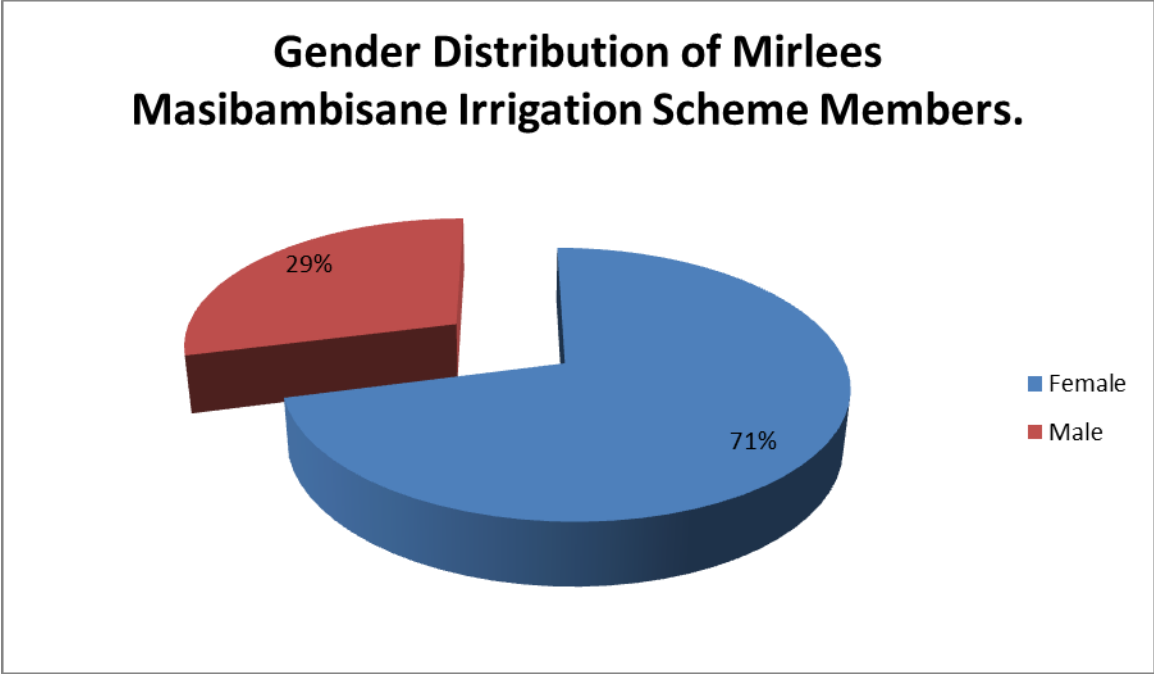


Figure 20: Gender Distribution of members of Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme



**5.2.3 Government actors**

There are two government offices that are directly involved in rural agricultural development interventions in MLM, local and provincial government respectively. These are: The Local Economic Development division (LED) under Mnquma Local Municipality, and the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR), which is the former Department of Land Affairs. There is also the office of the Department of Social Development which assists the small-holder irrigation schemes and agricultural projects within MLM with consolidation funding as a form of its social responsibility programme to assist the rural people with improving their livelihoods (Interview with respondent 11, 22 June 2015, LED official, Butterworth).

The LED division within MLM plays a central role in providing support to the smallholder irrigation schemes that are located with the municipality. In its policy, MLM has identified agriculture as the sector that should be exploited for the benefit of its rural communities, in order to create jobs and improve food security (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2013/2014). One of the officials explained it to me as follows:

Mnquma Local Municipality helps to coordinate workshops, information days, agricultural shows, awareness programs within wards on the importance of agriculture and how agriculture as a commodity can open job opportunities, through community development and how agriculture can be an entity that contributes to the GDP. The municipality is responsible for mobilizing relevant stakeholders and lobby from other organisations for assistance of farmers that contribute through farming/agriculture. In the financial year of 2014-2015, the municipality had set aside R300 000 to assist farmers, R260 000 to support emerging farmers and R60 000 for the revitalization of the existing agricultural schemes. The LED also assists communities to formulate cooperatives/ smallholder agricultural programmes, develop business plans. The LED officials also capacitate through training and skills development, and give advice with regards to the commodity that the smallholder agricultural programmes should concentrate on (Interview with respondent number 11, 22 June 2015, LED official, Butterworth).

Despite the vital role being played by the LED division within MLM, the DRDAR is the core department with responsibility for agricultural intervention programmes. While the MLM is there to assist and mobilise other relevant stakeholders to support the development of smallholder agricultural projects, the DRDAR is responsible for providing the agricultural development programmes with technical advice (this is provided through extension services), offering training support, and the provision of seedlings as well as funds for the smallholder agricultural irrigation schemes located within Mnquma Local Municipality (Interview with respondent 11, 07 September 2015, LED official, Butterworth).

The funding aspect is obviously very important. For example, the DRDAR assists the irrigation schemes with getting supplying contracts with the local supermarkets such as Gumbela, Georges and some local supermarkets such as Super Spar, Shoprite that are operating in Mnquma Local Municipality area. The DRDAR introduces the members of the projects (only those projects that are capable of producing the needed amount of cash crops) to the managers of the supermarkets and arrange contracts for the irrigation schemes to sell to the supermarkets so that the irrigation schemes can make profits for their produce (Interview with respondent 11, 07 September 2015, LED official, Butterworth). The following section discusses the contribution of both NIS and MMIS to the livelihoods of Mirlees and eZintukwini village people.



### **6.3 Socio-economic contribution: The contribution of smallholder agricultural development to livelihoods and social development**

According to the policy of Mquma Local Municipality (MLM), the agricultural development programmes in the area are developed in order to empower communities in the area through job creation and food security. In this section the contribution of the two studied irrigation schemes to the development of the livelihoods of people in communities where they are located is discussed. This is done in order to see if these projects are working before exploring the dynamics in more depth.

In its rural development policy MLM acknowledges that it has identified agriculture as its key economic driver which must be properly managed and exploited to ensure economic sustainability in the area (Mquma Local Municipality 2013-2014). The municipality put an emphasis on the development of the region in its LED strategy. MLM has identified what they call three areas of major intervention: “Poverty Reduction, Unemployment Reduction and Economic Growth” (Mquma Local Municipality 2013-2014). The municipality acknowledges that for these interventions to be successful the critical factors rely on the effective and efficient management of the resources in the area including the irrigation schemes. Therefore, the municipality sees the development of the irrigation schemes in the area as one of the critical solutions to poverty reduction, unemployment reduction, and increasing the economy of the region.

Based on the importance of the irrigation schemes in MLM as reflected in their development strategy, it is critical to explore exactly what contributions are being made by NIS and MMIS in the communities that they are based in, and in Mquma Local Municipality region as a whole.

According to the interviews with the members of MMIS the irrigation scheme is contributing a lot towards the development of Mirlees village and the surrounding villages. The project is offering seasonal employment to the unemployed people from Mirlees village. The data collected from in-depth interviews with the members of MMIS reveals that anyone who is willing to help in the programme from the village is welcomed to come and enquire about the availability of employment, during cultivation and harvesting seasons.

Employment in the irrigation scheme varies seasonally depending on what type of a job they will perform in that season. Not only do the employment opportunities which are available in the project vary seasonally, but the group of people employed is rotated seasonally, to give almost everyone in the community who is willing to work in the project a chance. The members of the community employed in a season are paid R50 each, on a daily basis. There is a separate bank account that the irrigation scheme has in which they keep their profits, and the profits are used to pay the people that are hired in the irrigation scheme. In each season 14 members from the community of Mirlees are hired (Interview with respondent 8, 28 August 2015, member of MMIS).

There were also job opportunities that were created when the irrigation scheme began, but which have now fallen away. For example, due to the lack of skills with the installation of machinery that is used in the irrigation scheme, the project had to hire an external contractor to install the water pump. The external contractor then hired people from Mirlees village to work on the installation of the water pump, so the members of MMIS had no powers to dictate who should be employed or not. The people that were employed included the unemployed youth and the elderly members of Mirlees village. Employment was also created in MMIS during the fencing of the irrigation scheme, clearing of the field and placing the Jojo tanks inside the irrigation scheme. This kind of employment was only created at the beginning of the irrigation scheme, and after the construction was finished the people that were employed in the project became unemployed again.

In contrast with this modest creation of job opportunities by MMIS, the same cannot be said of NIS. The members of NIS claim that due to unavailability of funds during the inception phase of the project, they had to do most of the work by themselves and relying on family and close friends for help. The only employment that was created was for fencing the irrigation scheme. The members of NIS claim that there were no jobs created during the inception of the irrigation scheme, and this was mainly due to the lack of funds to pay for the hired labour. This is despite the policy documents of MLM stating that any project which receives funding from the local government will have to employ the youth from the community or unemployed people from the community to perform the necessary labour, for example planting, transplanting seedlings, fertilizing, harvesting and packaging.

This intention was repeated by an LED official during data collection. The LED official stated that because agricultural activities are labour intensive and they require more people, the project members must sign an agreement with the municipality agreeing that should the project receive government support they will recruit casual labour and employ people from the neighboring villages/communities (Interview with respondent 11, 22 June 2015, LED official, Butterworth). However, the members of NIS claim that they were not aware of such an agreement although there were some documents that were signed when they received financial assistance from the MLM.

This confirms the lack of communication and understanding between the local government officials and the members of the irrigation schemes (this is further discussed in the last section of this chapter). Interviews with both members of NIS and MMIS revealed that there was not a single member from the surrounding villages who was or has ever been employed in both irrigation schemes. This is despite the MLM officials claiming that the agricultural projects must also benefit people from surrounding villages by providing employment opportunities and increasing food security.

During the in-depth interviews with the members of both irrigation schemes it was found that they are both selling some of their produce to the local people in the community at some point, and the people from surrounding villages were also benefiting from purchasing cash crops from these irrigation schemes. The irrigation schemes are also selling their fresh produce to the local schools and local supermarkets. According to the members of NIS, growing food to sell to the local schools and the members of the community was the main reason behind the development of scheme, as the aim was to ensure food security and sufficiency in the village (Interview with respondent 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS). This is not unproblematic however. For both NIS and MMIS it is very difficult to meet the contract arrangements with the local schools and the local supermarkets due to high demand from the schools and the supermarkets. The irrigation schemes are expected to produce the vegetables all year round, but both these irrigation schemes have low production capacity and they are failing to keep up with demand from the markets.

The irrigation schemes in MLM are also meant to contribute towards social development initiatives within their communities and surrounding villages. The MMIS seem to have been more successful in this regard. The MMIS is contributing with vegetables to the local elderly

home in the village. There is also a pre-school which works jointly with the local junior school that is supported by the MMIS. Both the elderly home and the pre- school were developed under MMIS. Both these initiatives are contributing to the social development of the people of Mirlees village.

According to the members of MMIS there are also some social services that the project is providing to the people of Mirlees village, and it has been doing so since it was developed:

“As the members of the project, we saw that there were people that are struggling in the community. Since this project was started in order to develop and empower the people of this village, we felt it was necessary for the project to do something to help those members of the community that are struggling” (interview with respondent number 9, 28 August 2015, member of MMIS).

The irrigation scheme helps the people that are affected and infected by HIV & AIDS with fresh vegetables and fresh maize during the harvesting seasons. The irrigation scheme members claimed that the vegetables are supplied to those who are infected with HIV & AIDS on almost monthly basis when the cash crops are available. The person who is infected with HIV and AIDS approaches the founding member of the project privately. Once that person has disclosed his or her status to the founding member of the project, the founding member ensures that she delivers vegetables to him or her at the end of every month. However, this is done discreetly in order to protect the beneficiary. According to the members of MMIS vegetables are virtually always available in the project. The irrigation scheme also contributes with fresh vegetables for a funeral if a member of Mirlees village passes away (Interview with respondent 8, 28 August 2015, member of MMIS).

According to the interviews with the members of MMIS, the members of the project also offer assistance to people from the other surrounding villages that are interested in getting involved farming in their villages by giving them information about where they can go to get the necessary help and information. There are also skills learned in the irrigation scheme, for example some members who were previously part of the irrigation scheme are now farming different vegetables in their own gardens.

Things do not seem to be working so smoothly at the NIS. There is a clear difference between the contributions that are made by both NIS and MMIS. Based on the interviews with the members of NIS there is no social programme that has been developed in eZintukwini because of the development of the irrigation scheme. The only contribution the NIS is making to the community of eZintukwini is selling fresh vegetables at an affordable price to the members of the community. Even during its peak years when the NIS was producing enough cash crops to sell to the local market, they did not set up any social development initiative in their community which would benefit the members of eZintukwini village.

Despite the success stories which are documented whereby the irrigation schemes were contributing to community development, it is important to ask what happens to food security in the respective villages when these irrigation schemes temporarily stop functioning. The NIS has been non-operational from 2013 and the MMIS did not operate in the previous year (2014). Despite their significance to rural development, both these irrigation schemes are unsustainable and inconsistent in terms of producing cash crops. They both do not guarantee food security and employment in their communities despite receiving support from the local government and other government spheres. Overall both these irrigation scheme depict a picture of failure. The community and government officials' explanations for the failure of both projects are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

#### **6.4 The role of traditional authority in the development of irrigation schemes**

There are varying degrees of power over activities such as land access, land allocation and control, and control of the resources that are allocated by the government for rural development in Mnquma Local Municipality. Power struggles take place during the encounters between the chiefs, headmen and the local members of the community. Significantly, traditional leadership in both Mirlees and eZintukwini village still holds power in allocating land, facilitating and negotiating conflicts between the members of the communities. These findings are consistent with those of Bennett et al (2013) who found that in the three areas they studied which are located in the former homeland of Transkei (namely Dududmashe, Nyandeni and Rockliff),

traditional authorities still retain a powerful grip over many aspects of local people's lives, especially in land access and control.

In communal land such as this, the hierarchical structure remains evident. There is a headman/woman<sup>8</sup> who is responsible for the village and acts as the main leader at the village level. The members of the village choose the headman/ woman. The responsibilities of the headman/ woman vary. They include, but are not limited to, facilitating village gatherings (Imbizo), resolving community disputes and conflicts, and informing the village people about the decisions that are taken at the higher level, whether by the local chief, or local government. The village headman/ headwoman is also responsible for informing the chief about the proceedings that take place in his/ her village and mandated with referring community disputes that s/he cannot solve to the local chief. Prior to granting land to the community members, the village headman must first consult the local chief.

Findings from a research study by Bennet et al (2013) in the former homeland of Transkei revealed that the headmen all concurred that their key roles within their respective areas of jurisdiction were the maintenance of law and order, and to act as custodians of the land on behalf of the chief. The latter is responsible for handling several villages that are under his authority. The chieftaincy position is inherited through patrilineal descent, rather than the chief being elected by the community to his position.

In both Mirlees village and eZintukwini village, the members of the irrigation schemes consulted the headmen and local chiefs because they had to grant permission for the initiative as well as land for the smallholder irrigation schemes. The members of NIS claim that before they started the irrigation scheme, they requested an imbizo with the local headmen. This was done to alert other members of the community who might want to be part of the development of the irrigation scheme, and explain what benefits the irrigation scheme would bring to the community of

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<sup>8</sup> Under the 1996 South African constitution “the institution of traditional authority is obliged to ensure full compliance with the constitutional values and other relevant national and provincial legislation. The right to equality, including the prohibition of discrimination based on gender and sex, has an important impact on the institution of traditional leadership. For example, under the new constitutional dispensation women may become traditional leaders in their traditional communities, which is contrary to the old and long observed African customary rule of male intestate succession, which excluded women from succession to the position of traditional leadership” (Khunou, 2009). This has somewhat altered traditional leadership in rural South Africa, as many women are included in traditional leadership in positions such as headmen (headwomen).

eZintukwini village. After the matter was discussed, the members of the irrigation scheme were referred to the local chief by the headmen to be granted land access to start the irrigation scheme.

The members of NIS assert that the chief did not give them the land they wanted due to the unavailability of arable land in their village. Despite engaging with the local chief of Hlobo location, the members claim that they were not granted land access, hence they had to combine plots/ fields that belonged to some of the irrigation scheme members in order to start the farming, fencing off only those portions of land that was in close proximity to form the scheme (Interview with respondent 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS). The local traditional leaders do not have the power to dictate what happens to family plots, and they are not involved in the processes that take place between families and close friends. The family fields belong to the family and they are passed down generation to generation, therefore traditional leaders cannot decide what happens to that land. The traditional leadership is however consulted when there is a dispute in the village over family land, or when a new community initiative is launched such as the irrigation scheme.

In contrast to NIS, the members of MMIS were granted their land for the irrigation scheme by the local chief. The irrigation scheme members claim that when the idea for starting such a project was first communicated to other community members through an Imbizo, which was held at the premises of the village headman, most people showed interest in the project. So, the local headman went on their behalf to enquire about a possible plot that he saw as fit for the project. The land identified by the headman for the project is located close to Xilinx river, and this land was original used for livestock grazing from the village. His request was successful, and the project was allocated 10 hectares of land by the local chief.

Communal land is not formally surveyed and currently no title deeds are issued. The members of the MMIS therefore do not have tenure security for the land that they are using, as there are no legal documents to show that the land belongs to MMIS, and indeed it does not – it is simply allocated for their use. This is also the case for NIS, as they also do not have tenure security, because there are no legal documents that show that the land that they are farming on belongs to their families.

Based on the findings from this study it is evident that land access for agricultural development in both villages is not a problem. The challenge with allocating land in both villages is that there

is minimal arable land available for farming, since most of the land in villages already belongs to certain families. However, for community development purposes, a compromise may be made, for instance in the case of land allocation to the MMIS. In special cases such as agricultural development for projects that will uplift communities, land is given anywhere in the village, even if that place is not meant for cultivation fields.

Although the chiefs have power to grant or not to grant land, the members of the community who are interested in farming can seek other alternatives, such as using family plots/ fields, or asking permission from other families that are not using their land. Borrowing unused land or leasing it from other people is common in villages in the former homeland of Transkei. For example, Bennet et al (2013) in their study found that in Dudumashe (which is located in Ngqamakwe under Mquma Local Municipality) people were making arrangements with each other to borrow unused arable fields for cultivation, due to unavailability of arable land. In this study the members of both irrigation schemes were found not to be using land borrowed or leased from other families in the village. The findings from this study revealed that there were no major problems with regards to land allocation and land access in both NIS and MMIS. These findings show that land availability is not a problem in MLM. However, finding land that is arable is a challenge, thus some alternatives have to be sought by farmers.

Since the establishment of the local government in 1995/1996, the role of traditional leadership in governance and development for the benefit of their communities remain unclear (George and Binza, 2011). According to George and Binza, (2011) the traditional leaders must be consulted on national and provincial government development programmes that affect traditional communities. In return the traditional leaders being part of the local government are supposed to engage with the other local/ provincial government officials pertaining challenges that are facing development programmes in their communities. Findings from this study show, however, that this is not working well in MLM, and that the role of the traditional leaders is unclear when it comes to engaging with local or provincial government officials. It appears that the power of the traditional authority in MLM surpasses those of the local and provincial government officials when it comes to matters pertaining agricultural development at community level.


In both NIS and MMIS findings show that there were no interactions between the local chiefs and the government officials prior and after the initiation of both irrigation schemes. These



findings confirm the unclear role of the traditional leadership in engaging with the local/provincial government officials to develop rural communities. The local/provincial government officials also do not have the power of granting land access and ensuring land tenure to members of the communities who are interested in farming. The traditional leadership retains all this power. The traditional leadership is not fully incorporated into the local government structures. However, the system that is practised in post-apartheid South Africa has not departed much from that of colonial and apartheid South Africa, when the colonial and apartheid government relied on traditional systems, including the tribal authorities, as a means of controlling society and space (King, 2005). The following section provides insights into the engagements and negotiations between irrigation scheme members and the local government officials in order to understand power struggles and interfaces between them.

## **6.5 The interface between government officials and local community members**

### **6.5.1 Encounters and negotiations between local communities and government officials**



Power relations between the irrigation schemes' members and local government officials were clearly evident during fieldwork. According to the members of the irrigation schemes, the local government officials are undermining them (Interview with respondent 3, 23 July 2015, member of NIS). This according to them is because the local government officials think that because they are old and not educated, therefore they are not aware of their rights since they are rural dwellers (Interview with respondent 1, 23 July 2015, member of NIS). This statement is not entirely true, as some of the irrigation scheme members are educated. For example, the founder of MMIS is a former teacher and there is also one member of the project that works for the DRDAR (the former department of Land Affairs. And in NIS there is a member who is a teacher. However, it should be noted that education is not only dependent on formal education.

RD is constructed through the many encounters that take place at the decisive interfaces where the actors meet and engage in complex and often contradictory practices (van der Ploeg et al, 2015). These encounters between the actors in RD have a direct impact on the failure or success of the irrigation schemes that are initiated at a local level. There is a reported case where

challenges emanated because of the encounters between NIS members and LED division officials. This finding clearly provides an understanding of the struggles and power differentials taking place between the actors involved in RD programmes (Long, 1999).

The members of NIS claim that the problem between them and the LED officials in MLM started when NIS was awarded a funding grant by the municipality, but they did not receive all the money that was awarded to the irrigation scheme. The money was awarded to the project in 2012. In total the funding grant that was awarded was R100 000. The members of NIS claim that they only used R33 000 from that amount and they do not know where the other amount went (Interview with respondent 2, 29 June 2015, member of NIS).

However it should also be noted that despite the members of NIS claiming that they were awarded R100 000 by the MLM, the report list of the projects funded for the financial year 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 depicts a different story, as it shows that the NIS was given funding amounting to R60 000 by the LED not the R100 000 that the irrigation scheme members claim they were supposed to receive (See appendix B). The members of NIS made many efforts to visit the LED offices under MLM to enquire about the remaining amount of their grant. But they claim that they did not receive a satisfactory answer from the municipal offices, instead they were told to wait or to come back again and this happened every time they went to the MLM offices. As one member claimed in frustration:

“For two years we have been going up and down trying to get the remaining funding from the funding grant we received in 2013 but even now we are still battling to find out where did that money go, Mnquma Local Municipal officials do not take us seriously, they keep sending us up and down instead of telling us what happened to the money” (Interview with Respondent Number 7, 23 July 2015, member of NIS).

During a group interview with the members of NIS, the members called the LED official that they were engaging with in an attempt to try and recover their remaining funding from the municipality. In my presence, the phone was put on speaker so that everyone in the room could hear what the LED manager had to say. The official of Mnquma LED claimed that the issue was being handled by the new manager of agricultural development in Mnquma Local Municipality, although he had not been working as the manager when the funding was awarded to the project.

The LED official stated that the matter would be handed over to the new LED manager, and a promise was made to the members of NIS that they would receive the remaining amount of their funding.

The irrigation scheme members were skeptical of this response as they claimed that in the past two years they have been engaging with the same official who was now going to hand the matter to the new LED official, and “how would the new LED manager know about something that took place two years ago, when that person was not even there” (Interview with Respondent Number 7, 23 July 2015, member of NIS). They saw this as another attempt on the part of LED officials to avoid the issue. The members of the NIS showed distrust towards the local municipality officials and appeared tired of engaging with the LED officials. They claimed that they have tried all the possible channels to receive this money from the municipality, however their efforts had been futile for the past two years (Interview with respondent 1, 23 July 2015, member of NIS).

In my follow-up in-depth interview with the LED official who was handling the case of the unpaid funding grant to Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme, I made the official aware of concerns of the members of the irrigation scheme. I also enquired about whether the issue was being handled.

The LED official replied that the members of NIS did not understand how funding from the municipality is processed. I was told that if the irrigation scheme applies for funding assistance from the municipality, the irrigation scheme is obligated to send a list of equipment/ things that they require to the LED division, and the municipality would buy everything that is on the list on behalf of the irrigation scheme and the equipment would be delivered to the irrigation scheme.

The LED division does not give out hard cash, they buy the necessary items. The things that are listed must equate to the funding grant that is awarded to the irrigation scheme. If there is money remaining from that funding grant, the members of the irrigation scheme must send another list of the things that they need, to ensure that no money is left because the remaining grants are consolidated to the next financial year budget. It appears however that the LED division is ignoring the fact that there is basically no storage in NIS, therefore if they request equipment/ items costing R100 000 they were going to require a place to keep all their equipment safe. These findings indicate that the local government officials do not know or understand the

challenges that these irrigation schemes face, such as unavailability of storage facilities, but they expect them to become commercially viable.

Having interviewed the members of NIS, it was obvious that they were not aware of this, because if they had been aware of it, they would not be going “up and down” to the LED offices trying to obtain the remaining amount of the funding grant they received two years ago from MLM. By the time I concluded my data collection with the members of the NIS late in 2015, the members of the project were still waiting for MLM to deliver the equipment that they have requested from them.

Neves (2017) asserts that contested rural governance and weak public administration further inhibit rural development in the communal areas. This is clear in this study. These findings show that there is a lack of communication or understanding between the members of the irrigation schemes and the LED division officials under MLM. The lack of engagement between the LED officials and the members of NIS is clearly an impediment to the success of the project (Westoby, 2014). My findings show a lack of communication between the LED officials and the members of NIS. The local municipality officials are failing to share the information with the members of irrigation schemes on how the processes of the municipality work. Also, the fact that the NIS members were not made aware of this from the outset, and were led to believe that they would still receive the remaining amount of their funding, can be the result of miscommunication or it might also mean that officials actually omitted information to keep the members of NIS in the dark. The engagement between the LED division and the irrigation scheme appears to be poor overall. There are certainly struggles at the interfaces between the local government and the members of the irrigation schemes.

### **6.5.2 Disappointments of rural development: The ‘blame game’ between government officials and local community members**

The irrigation schemes are failing to meet the expectations of the project members and the local government officials, and they lack consistency in terms of producing the expected yields. As a result of their failure to produce the required cash crops, there are growing frustrations amongst the actors which are leading to a ‘discourse of blaming’ amongst them. Similarly to colonial and apartheid governments, the post-apartheid South African government is quite fixed to the idea of

creating successful, commercially-oriented irrigation schemes, black smallholder farmers, and agricultural projects. However, the support that is offered to these agricultural projects is insufficient to enable them to become commercially viable, even at a local level. The lack of resources at the agricultural projects seems to be a major problem obstructing them from being successful. The local government officials have high expectations for these irrigation schemes, and when they fail, they start to look for people to blame. However, they do not offer them enough support to be self-sustainable. The high expectations from the local government officials and the low productivity of irrigation schemes result in the discourse of blaming.

It should however be noted that the failure of these two agricultural projects is not exceptional, as there is evidence of the failure of agricultural projects across South Africa (See Appendix D). In 2015 the Democratic Alliance (DA) released a statement seeking answers from the national Government on the reasons for the failure of state-funded agricultural projects in the Eastern Cape Province. In their statement the DA demanded that the Government should provide answers as to why there had been no progress made by the state-funded agricultural projects in the Eastern Cape despite the transfers of money to these projects. Three agricultural projects in particular were made reference to. These included Magwa and Majola Tea Plantations, Ncora Irrigation Scheme and Fort Cox Agriculture College.<sup>9</sup> Indeed the allegations made by the DA were substantial as there is evidence of many agricultural projects that have failed or showed no progress in the Eastern Cape and at a larger scale in South Africa.

The two studied irrigation schemes for this research are no exception to the failures of agricultural projects in South Africa, as they both display signs of failure. During the fieldwork both NIS and MMIS were not functional, and the NIS had been non-operational for the last two years, while MMIS had not been operational in the previous year (which was 2014). Although the members of the MMIS claimed that they had not cultivated due to the drought that was experienced in 2014, this is not an excuse as the agricultural projects are supposed to be functional all the time to improve and sustain the lives of the projects' members and the communities at large. One of the major problems shown in this study is that weak state capacity

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<sup>9</sup> This was posted on the online platform of the DA. Democratic Alliance News, 03 February 2015. "DA seeks answers on failed EC agricultural projects". Available: <https://www.da.org.za/2015/02/da-seeks-answers-failed-ec-agricultural-projects/>

and limited support for the irrigation schemes in MLM is partially to blame for the failure of these agricultural projects.

To an extent the failure of agricultural projects in South Africa is also visible in some of the land reform programmes. Cousins (2016) argues that the project failures of land reform have resulted in a public perception that the programme is in trouble. And in recent years the land reform programme has come under political scrutiny. Several contributing factors to the failure of land reform agricultural projects have been documented by researchers. For example, investigating the factors affecting the sustainability of land reform projects in Ehlanzeni District in Mpumalanga, Manenzhe et al (2016) found that the lack of farming skills, lack of education, inadequate access to markets among the beneficiaries of land reform programme, and the lack of support from the government, were some of the factors leading to the failure of land reform projects.

When agricultural projects fail, the frustrations among the actors rise and the ‘discourse of blaming’ becomes visible. The findings from the fieldwork demonstrate a strong ‘discourse of blaming’ between the members of the two irrigation schemes (NIS and MMIS) and the local government officials in MLM. Based on the findings from the fieldwork it appears that no one wants to take responsibility for the failure of these agricultural projects. The irrigation scheme members blame other community members for the lack of ‘involvement and jealousy’ (this is explored closely in Chapter Seven of this study) and also the government officials for the lack and insufficient support for the projects. While on the other hand the local government officials blame the members of the community for lacking farming passion and seeing agricultural development projects as a ‘quick money-making scheme’ without committing to farming. These are quotes from the interviews with local government officials:

“The members of irrigation schemes are lazy and if they were really committed farmers they would be making profits. They instead rely on government support for everything. The government is doing its best to help community members initiate agricultural projects. It is their responsibility to maintain them through the profits they make from selling their produce to the local communities, schools and local supermarkets” (Interview with responded number 11, 7 September 2015, LED official, Butterworth).

“The project’s members are provided with the necessary support ranging from technical to financial support by the government, but they still fail to make profits. The conflicts between irrigation scheme members and community members are not helping either. As they are the main course of the failure of some of the agricultural projects in Mnquma Local Municipality” (Interview with respondent number 12, 07 September 2015, DRDAR official, Butterworth).

The government officials see themselves as facilitators of agricultural projects in MLM, but nothing is happening, as the projects are failing to accomplish their objectives. This results in the expression of a discourse of frustration from the local government officials. The officials view themselves as powerless in interfering in community politics and this feeds the ‘discourse of blaming’ the community members themselves for the failure of the agricultural projects.

The members of the irrigation schemes are blamed for relying on the government funding for running the projects. Criticizing the members of NIS for failing to maintain and ensure the progress of the project, the LED official stated that if the members of NIS were really farmers their projects would have not failed despite the remaining amount of money that they claim they are yet to receive from MLM. The LED official emphasized that real farmers do not depend on grants in order to run and make their businesses successful, they rely on the profits they make from selling their produce. The understanding of the LED official “highlights the dominance of the view that smallholder farmers are incompetent, and that agricultural development means ‘doing like the already successful farmers (those who have been supported through decades of discriminatory policies) do” (Jacobson, 2013). The irrigation scheme members are also seen as lacking skills and ambition for farming, leading to the agricultural projects failing.

The members of irrigation schemes appear to be seen by the government officials as people who rely on “handouts” for running their projects. These “handouts” according to the LED official and DRDAR officials are agricultural equipment such as fertilizers, seedlings, seeds, tractors and so on. The irrigation schemes are blamed for failing to reinvest the profits they make from selling their produce back into the irrigation schemes (for buying necessary equipment and for the repairs of the existing equipment). According to the officials, this is why many agricultural projects in MLM are constantly failing. It is also mentioned that members from the communities

see agricultural development projects in their communities as a way of making quick money, and when they do not receive the money they expect they become discouraged.

“Some of the community members initiate agricultural projects having an assumption that they will receive hard cash from the government. When they realise that they will not receive money from the government they become discouraged to continue with the project, and that is the reason why there is high number of people leaving the projects” (Interview with respondent number 11, 07 September 2015, LED official, Butterworth).

In an interview with the LED official, it was emphasized that the members of the irrigation schemes are not really interested in farming, but they see the formation of the irrigation schemes in their communities as a way of making an income. It was further argued that the members just create irrigation schemes to make quick profits, without taking into consideration the hard work that comes with farming.

The local government officials also acknowledge that the lack of human and capital resources is one of the contributing factors to the failure of agricultural projects in MLM.

“Our department does not have enough trained staff members to advise all the irrigation scheme members in MLM. Due to the high number of agricultural projects in the municipality it might take us over a year to reach all of the projects. We also do not have enough vehicles for travelling to different rural areas on regular basis” (Interview with respondent number 12, 07 September 2015, DRDAR official, Butterworth).

“There are many irrigation schemes in Mngquma Local Municipality and the LED division cannot afford to supply all of them with agricultural equipment and financial support in each and every financial year. But we ensure that we do offer support during their early inception and after that they have to sustain themselves or seek funding from other institutions” (Interview with respondent number 11, 07 September 2015, LED official, Butterworth).



The local government officials in MLM are indeed failing to monitor all the agricultural projects in the municipality. For example, according to the members of NIS the last time they had a visit from the government officials to their irrigation scheme was back in 2012. The irrigation scheme members require constant visits from the local government officials in order to help them with technical support. For example, advising them on what crops to plant, when is it good to start planting and so on. The lack of extension officers visiting these irrigation schemes have direct negative impacts on their sustainability. The issue with the lack of personnel and other resources to monitor agricultural projects is a national problem that should not be blamed on local government.

The failure of these two agricultural development projects should not be solely blamed on the actors involved on the ground, it should also be blamed on the national government, especially the DRDAR. The DRDAR is supposed to play a coordinating role in partnership with other government department and local government bodies to ensure the success of the agricultural projects across the country.

On their side the members of both NIS and MMIS irrigation schemes claim that the income generated from selling their produce is barely enough to cover all the expenses that their irrigation schemes requires. This means that it is difficult for the agricultural projects to sustain themselves through their profits. The members blame the failure of the projects on the minimal support received from the local government, and the local government failing to fulfil their commitments to the agricultural projects. For example, the members of MMIS claim that their irrigation scheme could be one of the most successful irrigation schemes in the country by uplifting the community of Mirlees village and contributing to the creation of employment opportunities and food security in MLM. This has been hindered by the MLM failing to build the dam that they promised to build for them few years ago. This promise was never fulfilled by the MLM.

The discussion in this section has revealed many discourses of blaming that are apparent in the development of agricultural projects in MLM. The ‘discourse of blaming’ is not only limited to this section as it is apparent throughout this study. Findings show that the actors in agricultural development are shifting the responsibility of accepting the blame for the failure of these two

agricultural projects on one another. This seems to be a dominant way in which the actors shape themselves and view their responsibilities in these agricultural development projects.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has described the actors that are involved in both NIS and MMIS, and some of the dynamics captured in the research. The actors in both these irrigation schemes play an important role in ensuring the success and progress of these projects. When dissonances between the actors arise, the progress of the projects is disturbed, and this can lead to a failure of the project. The chapter has discussed the role of these irrigation schemes in socio-economic development in their communities and surrounding communities. Findings reveal that the MMIS has seen more success compared to NIS in terms of its contribution to the livelihoods of the people in Mirlees village. However, despite this slight difference between the projects in terms of success, overall both these projects are depicting a picture of failure overall.

The traditional leadership still holds power in allocating land in both Mirlees and eZintukwini villages. While the unavailability/ scarcity of arable land could be an obstacle, alternatives such as using family land or borrowing from other community members that are not using their farming land may be exercised. The role of the traditional authority in granting land for agricultural development is clear, and this has been done at least in one case. However, there is a lack of clarity in terms of the role of the traditional authority in engaging with municipal/ provincial government officials. The interaction between the traditional authority and other local/ provincial government officials when it comes to rural development issues is non-existent.

The chapter concluded by discussing the encounters between the local community members and the government officials. Findings show that accessing government and receiving correct information from the government officials is a challenge for irrigation scheme members. The communication between these actors is not effective. Many promises are made to the irrigation scheme members by the government officials, however in most cases these promises are often not fulfilled. This is resulting in members of the irrigation schemes losing trust on the government officials. As a result of this, both NIS and MMIS are failing to meet the expectations

of the scheme members and objectives of government. When these projects fail frustrations become visible from the side of both sets of actors.

Frustrations emanating from the failure of the agricultural projects are leading to the emergence of the ‘discourse of blaming’. The irrigation scheme members are blaming government officials for the failure of their projects, while on the other side the government officials are questioning the commitment of the irrigation scheme members to farming. The irrigation scheme members are seen as being “lazy” and relying on “handouts” in order to make these agricultural projects work. The government officials also point to the lack of resources such as human and financial capacity to monitor the agricultural projects in MLM as some of the contributing factors to the failure of rural agricultural projects in the region.



## **Chapter Seven: Micro community politics: Power struggles and contestations at a micro-level**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the power struggles and contestations that take place between the actors that are involved in the development of the studied small-holder agricultural irrigation schemes at a micro-level. The chapter aims to identify the power struggles, critical interface encounters and track the ongoing relationships between the key actors involved at a micro-level (Long and Jinlong, 2009). Studies of participation practice show that conflicts and power issues usually play a dominant role in shaping the dynamics at different levels and interfaces (Roling and Leeuwis, 2001). Power struggles and a ‘discourse of blaming’ were observed emerging from agricultural development projects at community level. These are explored and discussed more closely in this chapter. Drawing on insights from some theoretical frameworks that have influenced rural development thinking and practice, in this chapter I make use of the actor-oriented approach and the actor interface approach to understand the power dynamics and predicaments of rural development intervention and change in this context (Long and Jinlong, 2009).

The actor interface approach employed in this study provides an understanding and a more in-depth analysis of the interactions that take place between the actors that are involved in the studied rural agricultural development programmes in both the locations, where these two studied irrigation schemes are based. The idea of the interface embraces a more broadly social discontinuity based on discrepancies on values, interests, knowledge and power conferred to the actors involved in rural development (Long, 2001, Arce and Long, 2000, Long and Jinlong, 2009). The approaches used in this chapter are inspired by various scholars from the fields of sociology and anthropology that have scrutinized the dynamics and tradeoffs in rural development interventions.

The interactions between different actors involved in rural development interventions are often beset with many conflicts and power dynamics. According Long (2012) despite the interface

interactions assuming some degree of common interest, they also have a tendency to generate conflict due to contradictory interests and objectives or to unequal power relations between the actors. The main objective of this chapter is to highlight the power relations and social dynamics that are at play between the different actors involved in the two studied small-holder agricultural irrigation schemes at a micro-level.

This chapter also argues that personal relationships between the actors at a micro-level is one of the factors leading to conflicts in the development of agricultural development in MLM. The suggestion is that the nature of relationships between the actors normal have direct impacts on the outcomes of the success or the failure of the RD programme. Studies conducted in South Africa have found that rural development programmes are beset with significant challenges, which often lead to failure of these programmes. For example Westoby (2014) in his book titled *Theorising the Practice of Community Development: A South African Perspective* found that Community Development Programmes still require significant support on issues such as business technical skills and relational skills. The NIS and MMIS are not immune from these challenges. For example, in both irrigation schemes there is no concrete mechanism in place for dealing with conflicts among the actors in irrigation schemes. Also, Ndou (2012) investigating the reasons for the failure of community-based projects at Folovhondwe, Limpopo, found that the lack of project management skills and the lack of interpersonal skills were leading factors for the failures of rural community development interventions in Limpopo. Commonly, the social relationships between the actors produce and sustain new meanings and unintended outcomes of the intervention (Riepma, 2017).

The chapter begins by discussing conflicts and power struggles between the actors at a micro-level over the state allocated resources. The following section of the chapter discusses the struggles at the interface between the actors at micro-level. The ‘discourse of blaming’ is explored extensively in this chapter.

## **7.2 Struggles over state allocated resources: The story of the tractor**

To begin this section, I will first describe the story of the tractor that was allocated to the NIS by the provincial Department of Agriculture (Interview with respondent 1, 29 June 2015, member of NIS). I asked many questions about the tractor in order to gain deeper insight into what had

occurred. Note that specific references to interviews are not given here unless use is made of a direct quote, in order to protect the identity of the informants. This story highlights that in these irrigation schemes conflicts and power dynamics can easily arise as a result of internal conflicts over state allocated resources.

During the interviews with the members of NIS, the members raised the issue that the tractor which belonged to the project had been confiscated by the local traditional authority. They told me that there had been a disagreement between the members of eZintukwini village and the members of NIS. This disagreement arose as a result of members of the community who were not members of the scheme, demanding to use the tractor that had been allocated to the project by the Department of Agriculture. According to the members of the irrigation scheme, the members of the community became jealous of the project and they started making claims that the tractor was supposed to be used by all the people in the community who wanted to farm.

This raised much conflict in the community, and a meeting was called by some of the community members who were demanding that the tractor be made available for any member of eZintukwini who wanted to make use of it. I was told that in that meeting, the members of the community decided to write a letter to the chief of the village expressing their grievances on how the members of the NIS were denying other members of the community an opportunity to farm. As the highest authority in the village, the chief called both the community members of eZintukwini village and the members of NIS to a meeting in an attempt to resolve the issue.

The meeting was held, and no agreement was reached between the members of the community and the members of NIS. Both sides made many attempts to convince the chief to rule in their favour, however having heard the arguments from both sides, he could not come to a decision on how to resolve this issue that was clearly causing a conflict between the community members of eZintukwini village. Being the highest authority in the village, a decision was taken at the level of the local traditional authority to take the tractor away and keep it under lock and key. The local traditional authority would supposedly keep the tractor until an agreement was reached between the members of eZintukwini village and the members of NIS about who was eligible to make use of it.

The members of NIS claim that they made several attempts to try and convince the local traditional authority to return the tractor to them, as the project was struggling without it. However, their attempts failed. Several months passed and the tractor was not returned. As the result, the members started hiring a tractor from another village, a tractor which belonged to another agricultural project.

Matters got worse. After failing to return the tractor to the members of the NIS, it was noticed that the tractor was again in use.

“After several months the traditional authority started to use the tractor to cultivate for other people in the community ... and the money that the tractor made went to the local traditional authority... Not even a single cent that was made went to developing the community or towards the irrigation scheme” (Interview with member of NIS, 23 July 2015,).

The members of NIS took their case to the Department of Agriculture in Butterworth. Despite the members of NIS having reported the matter to the department, no actions were taken. The tractor remained in the possession of the local traditional authority. The members of the NIS started experiencing problems with the owner of the tractor that they were renting. These problems resulted from the tractor breaking down while in their possession. The members of the project claim that losing their tractor contributed hugely in some of the challenges that they have faced which led to the project being temporarily closed in 2013.

The story of the tractor provides a powerful illustration of the power of the local traditional authority as an actor in rural development programmes. Despite the members of NIS claiming that the matter was reported to the local government officials, nothing was done. This confirms that on the ground, the powers and functions of traditional leaders surpass those of elected municipal officials (Bikam and Chakwizira, 2014). It is evident that the traditional leaders in villages still retain power which has not been lessened by the election of local government officials. Traditional leadership intervention in rural development projects is problematic as this reduces the power of the local people to successfully continue with the initiatives. As this was indeed the case with NIS. This story appears to be an illustration of the fact that powers held by

traditional authority, especially in remote areas, can hinder the development that is aimed at the poor communities (King, 2005).

### **7.3 Dynamics within smallholder irrigation schemes: Struggles at the interface between the members of irrigation schemes**

Both NIS and MMIS are faced with conflicts between the direct active members involved in these two development intervention programmes. Some of the conflicts between the members of these smallholder irrigation schemes arise from what the remaining members from both irrigation schemes term as “greediness”. According to the members of these irrigation schemes members, not all members join the scheme because they want to develop the community; rather, they become the members of the smallholder irrigation because they want to enrich themselves by making income from the irrigation schemes.

One of the remaining members of MMIS mentioned that some of the members who had decided to quit the programme did so because they realized that the programme was not making any money for the members. As a result, they decided to leave the project and practice farming in their own gardens. She argued that money was one of the main reasons driving the members to drop out of the programme and it was also the reason many members of the community did not join the programme. van der Ploeg (2015) argues that in rural development initiatives, the balance between passion, rebelliousness and pride must be continuously adjusted over time, especially in the face of the setbacks which often have to be dealt with in community projects.

These findings are similar to those of Westoby (2014) who highlights that the formation of co-operatives (such as the community development programmes described in this study) is often framed in terms of job creation, and many people in communities form them not because they have a vision to develop their communities, but because they are hungry, and they also need food security and incomes. While MLM’s rural development policies frame rural interventions programmes as an opportunity to create employment and income for the rural poor, the reality on the ground reveals a different picture. Some of the community members are quitting smallholder agricultural development irrigations schemes because they are not making profits. The ability to earn income is the main factor attracting the community members to join irrigation schemes/ agricultural projects. When there are no incomes earned by individuals involved in these rural



development programmes they become discouraged to continue participating. This is also the case in NIS and MMIS as members are quitting the irrigation schemes. These factors have led to members of the communities labeling other members in the community in negative terms such as describing them as ‘greedy’. This therefore can cause possible conflicts in the community.

However, the remaining members of both smallholder irrigation schemes appear to have a good working relationship with each other. As one put it:

“We know why we have decided to start this project and that is why we are doing everything in our power to make sure that the project start functioning soon so that it can help the community again like it used to before” (interview with respondent number 01, 23 July 2015, member of NIS).

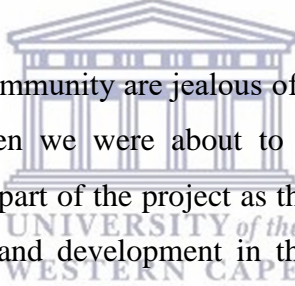
The members of these irrigation schemes, then, seem to be dedicated individuals who are involved in them exclusively for developing their communities through the creation of jobs and food security. van der Ploeg et al, (2015) argues that the local actors are usually people who love farming and have a strong desire to continue with it, to renew it in response to societal demands and keep farming viable for the next generations. The members of NIS appear to conform perfectly to this description, as they appear to have a passion for farming and developing their community.

#### **7.4 “Others are jealous”: Conflicts between the members of the smallholder irrigation schemes and community members**

The two investigated smallholder irrigation schemes in Mnquma Local Municipality were initiated in order to uplift the respective communities. However, they have not achieved that purpose due to local community politics between the members of the smallholder irrigation schemes and the members of the community that are not involved in the projects. It has already been stated that in both the studied smallholder agricultural irrigation schemes there is a low number of community members who are involved. This number continues to decline as more members are leaving the smallholder irrigation schemes. The lack of involvement in the irrigation scheme by other members of the community is causing division between the community members. The findings in this section provide an understating of many social

interactions that structure the dynamics and success or failure of rural agricultural development programmes.

The detachment between members of the community is most apparent in eZintukwini village. Tensions exist between the members of NIS and the other members of the community who are not part of the irrigation scheme. The conflicts between the members of NIS and other members of eZintukwini village who are not participating in the irrigation scheme are mainly caused by infighting over the state resources which are allocated to NIS by the government. The conflicts between the members of NIS and other members of eZintukwini village who are not part of the irrigation scheme are responsible for shaping the dynamics that are visible in the community of eZintukwini, as illustrated by the story of the tractor that was reportedly confiscated by the local traditional authority. According to the members of NIS, the conflicts in the village are caused by those 'jealous' community members who are not involved in the irrigation scheme. One of the interviewed members stated that:



“Some of the people in the community are jealous of the progress of this project because they are not part of it. When we were about to start the project everybody in the community was invited to be part of the project as this was the opportunity for us in this community to bring change and development in this community, but despite inviting everyone in the community, most people in the community chose not to join the project. Some people in the community thought this project would not succeed, hence they were reluctant to join. (Interview with respondent number 6, 23 July 2015, member of the NIS)

According to the members of the irrigation scheme, the NIS showed good progress during its early inception. However, the rejection and the 'jealousy' from other members of the community of eZintukwini village who are not part of the project has been one of the major constraints to the progress of the irrigation scheme. According to the members of NIS the people in the village who are not part of the project are sometimes jealous of the produce that the members of the project make in the project. As one respondent put it:

“They see our produce and see us delivering vegetables to schools and sometimes maize to the local shops and think that we are making money” (Interview with Respondent Number 06, 23 July 2015, member of NIS).

Community involvement is important to the revitalization of any community, no matter what size, as without the community buy-in a project may never get off the ground or will not be accepted once it is completed (Smarte, 2010). The story of the tractor is a clear indication that the members of eZintukwini do not share the same common interest for the development of their village. The different interests that are shown by the opposing community members of eZintukwini village are a direct cause of the negative dynamics that are apparent in the village.

The tensions which led to the NIS losing its tractor are just one example of conflicts between the members of NIS and other members of eZintukwini village which are cause for concern and are hindering the development of the irrigation scheme in the village. According to Roling and Leeuwis (2001) conflict resolution requires the development of a shared understanding of a situation, because of learning and improved communication between the actors involved. Among the members of eZintukwini village it appears that the conflicts are far from a resolution, and as a result the project has been severely affected.

The members of NIS accuse other members of the community of being against the project. One of the members of the irrigation scheme mentioned that during the early stage of the project, some members of the community were against the idea of opening the project in the village despite the benefits it would bring for the community. This statement makes it clear that the conflicts and divisions between the members of eZintukwini village existed even before the irrigation scheme was introduced in the village. During the interviews with the members of NIS it was indicated that there is a 'group of people' within eZintukwini village that is against the irrigation scheme, although the names and description of the people within this group were not disclosed. Therefore, the fight over the tractor between some members of eZintukwini village and the members of NIS was an addition to the already existing conflicts.

An in-depth interview with a member of eZintukwini village confirmed the statement made by the members participating in NIS. It was mentioned that not everyone from the village of eZintukwini village was involved in the group of people who were accusing the members of NIS of monopolizing the use of the tractor, which was meant for everyone who was interested in participating in agricultural activities in the village.

The members of Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme claim that they are not aware of what was discussed in a meeting which was held by some members of eZintukwini village who are against the irrigation scheme (see section 7.2). They assert that those community members do not understand or know how NIS managed to receive the tractor from the provincial government of the Eastern Cape, therefore they cannot just demand its services. To them all this is caused by what they term 'jealousy' from some community members who have been against the irrigation scheme since its inception. The members of the NIS feel that these community members gained even more ammunition against the irrigation scheme following the passing away of the founding member of the project. These findings confirm the existence of conflicts that preceded the project but are still at play between the community members where NIS is located.

The same conflictual relationships that are present at NIS are also visible in MMIS. According to the interviews with the members of MMIS the people in the community that are not part of the irrigation scheme on occasion go to the founding member of the project and demand the tractor.

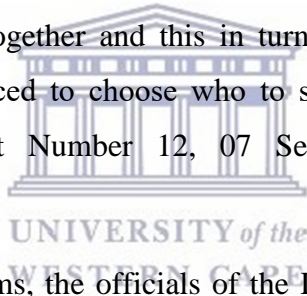
“Some people come here and demand the tractor for their personal use and they do not even offer to pay the petrol for the tractor I do not know whether they think that the department also pays the petrol for the tractor. They come here with claims that the tractor was given to all the people in the community, but they do not even know how we acquired this tractor.” (Interview with respondent number 8, 28 August 2015, member of MMIS).

The members of both villages where the irrigation schemes are located appear to think that the equipment of the irrigation schemes belongs to all the community members. Despite not being part of the projects, they want to make use of the equipment belonging to the projects. The tractor is the main resource that appears to cause or exacerbate conflicts in these irrigation schemes. In other words, the tractor is the much-contested resource that is the main cause of the conflicts between the members of the irrigation schemes and the members of the villages where the irrigation schemes are located. During interviews with the members of MMIS, one member mentioned that they were willing to rent out the tractor to the community members, but the latter are reluctant to pay for the services of the tractor, that is the reason they do not want to lend out the tractor to them.

In both irrigation schemes, the factors which are motivating the conflicts between the members of irrigation schemes and members of the communities which are not part of the irrigation schemes include: the use of the project equipment, “jealousy” from certain members of the community; and the lack of understanding about the ownership of the government allocated equipment to the irrigation schemes.

The local officials of the DRDAR acknowledged that they are aware of such conflicts within rural communities.

“Sometimes the conflicts between the community members are the reasons for the failures of these agricultural development programmes. In most cases you will find that there was a conflict many years ago between certain families or individuals and once a project is initiated in the community and both those individuals become members of the project, the conflicts start all over again. This is because they cannot work together or they are reluctant to work together and this in turn affects the progress of the whole projects as members are forced to choose who to side with between those members” (Interview with Respondent Number 12, 07 September 2015, DRDAR official, Butterworth).



Despite being aware of such problems, the officials of the DRDAR claim that they cannot get involved in resolving community conflicts. At the interviews with the local government officials from both LED division and DRDAR, it was stated that before initiating the project the community members are given training, therefore they should be able to conduct themselves professionally. However, it could be argued that the training offered to irrigation scheme members must not only be on hard business technical skills but should also focus on the relational skills such as dealing with conflicts among members of the irrigation schemes and the community members (Westoby, 2014). This will in turn help community members not to allow personal disputes to get in the way of developing their communities. The findings show that the involvement of the local government officials is limited or lacking when it comes to dealing with the problems facing the irrigation schemes. They are unable to completely dictate how the local community members should conduct themselves or run the irrigation schemes.

These findings are similar to those of Ndou (2012) who found that there was a lack of monitoring and involvement by government officials in the community development projects in Limpopo. The communities are expected to resolve their own issues, with the chiefs being the mediators and the highest authority tasked with issuing a judgment on the issues that arise in communities. The traditional authority is also failing to resolve conflicts arising between community members. This puts the development of irrigation schemes at risk because there is no rule of law from the local government to help combat challenges that are an obstacle to the progress of the irrigation schemes, despite the policies claiming otherwise.

The conflicts between the members of the villages where these irrigation schemes are located, clearly reveal RD struggles and contractions that emerge at each level and in particular at the local level (van der Pleoeg et al, 2000). There is a need to find innovative ways that must be used in order to avoid the conflicts that contribute to the failure of irrigation schemes in MLM. The MLM and the local DRDAR does not seem to have appropriate measures in place for combating the conflicts between the actors at a micro level. It is also clear that the traditional authority is failing dismally in this regard.

#### **7.5 “The youth are lazy”: Conflicting views between the elderly and the youth**

The findings from the study show that there is lack of youth participation in smallholder irrigation schemes in MLM. In both the studied smallholder irrigation schemes, there was not even a single youth from either community who is directly involved in the irrigation scheme. The results from this study are consistent with those of Cheteni (2016) who pointed out that there is a lack of youth participation in agriculture in Nkonkobe District Municipality (in the former homeland of Ciskei, Eastern Cape). Despite the declining youth participation in agriculture, research from the Status of Youth Report in South Africa suggests that many of the young people are neither at school nor working and majority of them live in rural areas (Magongo and Motimele, 2011). There is a strong need to attract the youth into agricultural activities to expand the agricultural sector in rural areas.

In-depth interviews with young and elderly members of eZintukwini and Mirlees village show that there are contradicting views between the youth and elderly members of the communities,

with regards to why there is a lack of youth participation in smallholder irrigation scheme development in the MLM. The elderly in both villages strongly believe that the youth members in the villages are 'lazy' and that is the main reason for not engaging in agricultural activities. Interviewing one of the members of MMIS the youth were described as follows:

“The youth are lazy, you only find them in shebeens, sport gatherings and other events that are not important, they do not care about putting food on the table. They depend on us elderly people in the community. They (youth) sometimes come here and work in the irrigation scheme when they need money, but you will find that most of them do not even finish their time, after getting paid they leave and go spend that money” (Interview with Respondent Number 08, 02 August 2015, member of MMIS)

These findings concur with those of Mkra (2014) who investigated perspectives of the youth and community members in Centane (in Mnquma Local Municipality) on rural agriculture and youth empowerment. Mkra (2014) also found that the youth in Centane were seen as lazy and not willing to participate in agriculture as it was hard work and time consuming. The interviewed elderly members of both villages viewed the young members of the community as being only interested in 'easy jobs' such as driving the bakkies/ light trucks that deliver the produce of the projects to different places where it is sold, or driving the tractor when cultivating. The youth supposedly aspire to fill their lives with entertainment and avoid all manual labour, such as that common to farming. They are not attracted to farming because it involves hard work and has low status, and would confine them to rural life, which they do not want (Brown, 2012).

In defense of themselves the youth in Mirlees village and eZintukwini village see the involvement in irrigation schemes as a waste of their time since it does not bring in any income. It is clear from the youth that they do not regard agriculture as an opportunity for earning incomes. Essentially, it does not make economic sense for them. Out of all the youth members that were interviewed, only two indicated that they would participate in agricultural activities. In the case of these two young people, to them participation is not undertaken for the development of their communities. One indicated that the only reason to participate would be the chance of earning an income, while the other indicated that the only reason would be to have something to do. However neither of these participants are actively involved in agricultural development.

“It becomes boring just sitting at home doing nothing; I would join the irrigation just to kill time” (Interview with Respondent Number 17, 28 August 2015, community member, Mirlees village).

“It is better to go and find a job in cities than join the irrigation scheme because even if I join, I will not make any money. It would be better if it was my own business whereby I get to sell the vegetables and the maize for myself knowing that all the profit made by the project will be mine” (Interview with respondent number 18, 28 August 2015, community member, Mirlees village).

“If there was some sort of payment by becoming the member of the project I would definitely join the project” (Interview with respondent number 21, 23 July 2015, community member, eZintukwini village).

It is apparent from these responses that agriculture does not have an appeal to the youth members in both Mirlees and eZintukwini village. However, these responses show that there is a lack of understanding of the agriculture sector as whole from the interviewed youth members. They seem to think that agriculture only revolves around irrigation schemes. This reveals that there is a need to educate the youth in rural areas about what agriculture entails and what are its benefits. The assumption that agriculture does not bring any income is somewhat untrue although in the case of the two studied irrigation schemes it is true. These findings show that if there were considerable incomes made from these agricultural smallholder irrigation schemes, the youth members would participate. This would also curb the high numbers of rural-urban migration in the process.

There are various reasons why active participation is hard to achieve in rural development; it includes people’s lack of knowledge, confidence, capital, skills (Oladele and Nxumalo, 2013). In this study the main reason for the lack of youth participation in agricultural activities appears to be a lack of knowledge about the sector as whole, the youth seems to think that there is no money made in agricultural activities. If this perception is to be changed, local government officials need to engage with the young people in all the surrounding villages and inform them about the opportunities that are available in agriculture outside of the smallholder irrigation schemes, which are communal.



The youth resort to moving to urban areas rather than remaining in rural areas and participating in agriculture. Cheteni (2016) cites an observation by Woolard as follows: “Woolard (2013) noted that most youth in South Africa were migrating to urban areas to look for jobs, partly due to the low status attached to farming and lack of growth in career” (Cheteni, 2016, 2). The youth members hold a view that it is better to go to urban areas and find jobs that staying at home and participating in agriculture that will not bring you any money.

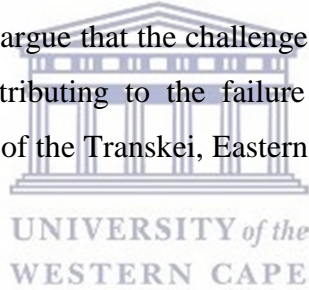
In contrast to the findings of Woolard (2013), the youth in both Mirlees village and eZintukwini village did not indicate that the reasons for wanting to migrate to urban areas was due to the low status of agriculture; rather their reasons are influenced by the need to make money which is something that the irrigation schemes in both villages are failing to achieve.

Actually, the community as a whole is showing disregard for being involved in smallholder irrigation scheme development – not just the youth. The low numbers of people from both villages involved in the two studied irrigation schemes is evidence to support this claim. If it were true that the problem is only youth members of the villages who are “lazy”, then more elderly members of both villages would be part of these smallholder irrigation schemes in their villages, instead of the few members from both villages. It appears that the people in these two villages are not necessarily interested in smallholder agricultural development in their communities. It can be argued that agricultural development is not seen as a solution to food security and unemployment challenges facing the people in Mquma Local Municipality rural areas.

This is apparent when one looks at the decreasing numbers of people involved in these agricultural development initiatives that are supported by the government. During observation on the state of environment in both villages, I noticed that the fields that used to be cultivated in most rural areas within Mquma Local Municipality lay uncultivated and there are also few people who are cultivating their gardens. It is clear that most of the people in the region are losing interest in agriculture despite the support from the government. There are other income streams that the people in rural areas rely on for income; one example is undoubtedly social grants.

## 7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that there are many conflicts between the members of both eZintukwini and Mielees village that have emanated as the result of the development of NIS and MMIS. Using the interface and actor-oriented approach the study uncovered some of the complex dynamics between the community members and the members of the projects. The conflicts result from the interactions and negotiations between the actors in rural development programmes in these communities. The development of both MMIS and NIS has caused divisions in the communities. The chapter has discussed the causes of dissonances in the development of NIS and MMIS between the actors at a micro-level. The ‘discourse of blaming’ between the actors at a micro-level is discussed extensively in this chapter. Power, jealousy, perceived laziness, lack or interest of indifference, and competition over state resources are discussed as the main causes of dissonances in the communities where the studied irrigation schemes are located. In conclusion I argue that the challenges discussed in this chapter are some of the leading factors that are contributing to the failure of rural agricultural development programmes in the former homeland of the Transkei, Eastern Cape, and have led to the failure of NIS and MMIS.



## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the causes of dissonances between the actors involved in rural development projects in Mnquma Local Municipality, as well as how these dissonances influence the outcomes of agricultural development projects in Mnquma Local Municipality. The main concern was to investigate power relations, interactions and whether these irrigation schemes are actually working or progressing. There is no doubt that if these irrigation schemes can achieve the objectives of the government and expectations of the local communities, they can improve food security, reduce unemployment and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Mnquma Local Municipality. This is also confirmed by the findings in this study, as when these irrigation schemes were still able to produce cash crops they had a real impact on the livelihoods of the community members.

This study adopted the ideas of rural development scholars in attempting to understand the interactions and relationships between the actors in agricultural development projects. Most important was the ‘actor-oriented approach’ which places great importance on how farmers and rural actors shape development themselves (Hebinck et al, 2001). This approach also places a strong emphasis on the detailed life-worlds, struggles and exchanges that take place within and between specific social groups and networks of individuals (Long, 2001). The social interface approach was also used. This is not only restricted to the face-to-face encounters of farmers and the intervening agencies, but also focuses on the institutional and structural frames that affect the interactions between the actors (Long, 1989 in Reipma, 2017). These approaches become powerful in understanding the dissonances and how these dissonances shape rural development in Mnquma Local Municipality.

The significance of this study is that it is one of the first studies to apply these approaches to investigate the causes of dissonances in agricultural development programmes in Mnquma Local Municipality. Although many studies have documented the failure of agricultural projects and the decline of agricultural activities in the Eastern Cape Province (See Jacobson, 2013; Bank and Minkley, 2005; Hadju et al, 2012; Aliber and Hall 2010), they have not sufficiently explored how social interactions and social relationships between the actors at a micro level contribute to

the failure of agricultural projects and the decline of agriculture in the former homeland of Transkei.

This chapter provides a summary and some concluding remarks on the findings of this study. The chapter is separated into two sections. The first section briefly summarises the results of the various phases of the research. The second section presents recommendations which I believe can lead to better planning and sustainable development of agricultural projects in Mquma Local Municipality. This can be best achieved through the adoption of a ‘bottom-up’ as opposed to the usual ‘top-down’ approach. These recommendations can also be used in drafting policies that will guide agricultural development in rural communities.

## **8.2 The Local Economic Development (LED) division and the development of agricultural projects in Mquma Local Municipality (MLM)**

Findings from this study show that the LED division is well positioned to encourage and support the development of agricultural development projects in MLM. Theoretically the supporting structure is well framed to drive the development of agricultural projects in MLM region. In practice, however, it is not working well, as is evident in the failure of both NIS and MMIS. In its rural development policy, the MLM has identified agriculture as a key focus area for development in the region in terms of employment creation, increasing food security and reducing poverty. It also has supporting institutions such as the DRDAR, ADM, Department of Social Development and so on. However, despite its favourable positioning, agricultural projects in the region continue to fail. Findings from the fieldwork show that although the municipality has a LED division which is responsible for encouraging and supporting agricultural development in MLM region, it does not have enough resources and human capacity to support the development of agricultural projects.

MLM has over 100 agricultural projects in the region. These projects are involved in different agricultural activities, such as cash crop farming, poultry farming, livestock farming and so on. All these projects are located in different villages, which are scattered all over MLM region. Findings from this research show that the municipality does not have enough people to monitor the progress of all these agricultural projects that are registered under its LED division. The municipality does not have enough resources to support all the projects in MLM region. This is

one of the many factors that are leading to the failure of agricultural projects in MLM. The LED division officials are unaware of what is happening on the ground at these irrigation schemes, because they barely visit them due to the lack of human capacity and resources.

Even the institutions that are supporting the LED division in encouraging agricultural development in the region also lack human capacity and resources. For example, DRDAR which is supposed to act as the core department in supporting agricultural development in MLM region does not have enough human capacity to monitor and evaluate the progress of agricultural projects. They also do not have enough resources, such as cars for travelling to these different agricultural projects which are scattered all over MLM region. This is also proved by the fact that the last time an extension officer from the DRDAR visited NIS was in 2012, and the fact that the DRDAR officials were not even aware that the NIS had stopped operating when I interviewed them.

Furthermore, the engagement between the different stakeholders that are supporting agricultural projects in MLM does not seem to be strong. For example, the role of the traditional authority is not clear as part of local government. The local government officials do not engage the traditional authority when it comes to matters that relate to agricultural projects in their communities. The local government officials engage directly with the members of agricultural projects. Excluding the traditional authority in making decisions that affect 'their' communities can have negative impacts on the progress of the agricultural projects. This was demonstrated in the failure of NIS, when the local government could not engage the local traditional authority in order to resolve the issue of the tractor that was taken from NIS by the local traditional authority.

### **8.3 The contribution of Ntuzenyandu Irrigation Scheme and Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme to rural development**

Results from the research show that the MMIS at some point was more successful compared to NIS in terms of its socio-economic contribution to the local community. The MMIS was offering seasonal employment to unemployed people in Mirlees village. The project was also contributing

to social development in the community, through its social initiatives such as the provision of fresh vegetables to an elderly home and the local pre-school in the village.

Despite some glimpses of success displayed by these irrigation schemes, one can easily conclude that they are both failing dismally when it comes to contributing to rural development. The MLM policy on rural development explicitly states that the development of an agricultural project in a community must lead to job creation and poverty alleviation in the community and surrounding villages. However, since its initiation the NIS has not contributed to any employment in eZintukwini village or surrounding villages. While also, MMIS has not employed people from surrounding villages. Although both these irrigation schemes were at some point selling their produce to the community members, schools and supermarkets, they are not consistent. This proved problematic as the irrigation schemes could not cope with the demand from the schools and supermarkets due to their low production.

It is clear that both these irrigation schemes are not sustainable. For example, both irrigation schemes were not operational during 2014 and 2015. These two irrigation schemes which are motivated by concerns over the lack of development in land and agriculture in MLM, appear to have not had any significant impact on the lives of irrigation scheme members and people living in Mirlees and eZintukwini village in the past year (2014). Findings from this study indicate that these irrigation schemes are not contributing to rural development as expected. Although at some point they were contributing to the socio-economic development in their respective communities and surrounding areas, overall, they depict a picture of failure. They are unable to sustain their contribution to rural development and they are both inconsistent in terms of producing cash crops. For example, NIS has been non-operational since 2013, while the members of MMIS had not planted in 2014. They both do not guarantee food security and employment in their communities despite receiving support from the local government and other government spheres. In summary, both these irrigation schemes depict a picture of failure.

#### **8.4 Interface between the government actors and irrigation scheme members**

Although these irrigation schemes are initiated by the local community members using a ‘bottom up’ approach, in order for them to be effectively implemented the community members need the support of the local and national government. The provincial government through the DRDAR

and the municipal government are the main institutions that are mandated with promoting and supporting the development of agricultural schemes in MLM. For the irrigation scheme members to receive support from the government they have to engage directly with the government officials. There are numerous encounters and negotiations that take place between the irrigation scheme members and government officials. In the case of this study, the engagements between the local government officials and the members of irrigation schemes are often unproductive.

Findings from this study reveal that although there might be some degree of common interest between the local government officials and members of MMIS and NIS to develop the irrigation schemes, this degree of common interest might also have a propensity to generate conflicts due to contradictory interests and objectives or to unequal power relations (Long 1999). This is clearly notable in the way that the relationship between local government and irrigation scheme members is constructed. The communication between the members of the irrigation schemes and the government officials is not effective. During their encounters it seems as if both irrigation scheme members and the local government officials are skeptical instead of being direct and honest with each other.

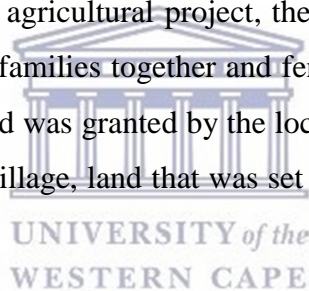
For example, the members of NIS spoke very openly with me about their dissatisfaction with the LED division officials, however when the call was made to the LED division official, the tone of the speaker changed, and he sounded like a person who is begging. I noticed that the speaker was agreeing to every statement that was made by the LED division official without questioning anything. This shows that the encounters between the members of irrigation schemes and local government officials are embedded in power relations. This lack of engagement between the government officials providing services and the community members receiving services on the ground is a problem that is leading to the failure of these irrigation schemes.

The government officials are not being honest with the members of the irrigation schemes. They make a lot of promises that they are failing to fulfill. The members of the irrigation schemes seem to be frustrated about their engagements with the government officials as they feel that they are not being taken seriously by the government officials. This lack of communication is resulting in a lack of trust from the side of the irrigation scheme members. For example, after the call was made to the LED division official, the members of NIS were skeptical of the response from the LED division official; they claimed that in the past two years they had been engaging

with the same officials who were now handing the matter of their remaining funding over to the new LED manager who was supposed to now oversee processing their request. This lack of communication between the members of the irrigation schemes and the government officials is one of the factors hindering the success of agricultural projects in MLM.

### **8.5 Communal land tenure issues**

During field work I observed considerable farming land that is unused in both villages. Many people in both these villages are no longer farming in their fields, therefore people who are interested in initiating agricultural projects can borrow the unused land from other families. There is also a chance to use family fields, if they are unused. While this does not always work, it proved to be effective when it was implemented by the members of NIS. After the local traditional authority of eZintukwini indicated that there was no arable land available in the village that would be suitable for an agricultural project, the members of the project decided to join the fields that belonged to their families together and fence them off to create the irrigation scheme. In the case of MMIS the land was granted by the local chief without any problems. Due to the scarcity of arable land in the village, land that was set aside for grazing was sacrificed for the project.



This shows that the majority of unused land in most villages in MLM is not suitable for cultivation or it belongs to certain families that are not using it. The scarcity of arable land in both villages presents an opportunity for the local traditional authority to redistribute previously cultivated land that is abandoned by families that are no longer interested in farming. However, this is also problematic, as it could lead to conflicts. Although some families are no longer interested in farming, they do not want to lose their ancestral fields which belong to their forefathers.

As many scholars have pointed out, land insecurity still remains a major challenge in the former 'homeland' for those using it to generate income, more especially for women farmers (Adams et al, 1999). Communal land is not formally surveyed and there are no title deeds issued for communal land. All the land is administered by the traditional authority, even the local government does not have the actual power over what happens under communal land. This hinders rural development in the former Transkei, as irrigation scheme members cannot secure



loans from the banks or other lending institutions and use their land as collateral. They cannot attract investments. The irrigation schemes solely depend on government support, as their options are limited and most of project members do not have enough money to invest in these irrigation schemes by themselves. The lack of tenure security is one of the factors making these irrigation schemes unsustainable.

To make these irrigation schemes successful the government needs to come up with innovative ways that will ensure tenure security under communal land. This will inspire the irrigation scheme members and give them a sense of ownership. In order to ensure the security of land tenure for irrigation schemes, the local government should consult with the traditional authority in order to award title deeds to irrigation schemes that are under communal land.

### **8.6 Power struggles between the actors at a micro-level**

This research has found that in the development of agricultural projects in MLM, conflicts and power dynamics can easily manifest as a result of internal conflicts within communities over state allocated resources. The conflicts illuminate power struggles between the various actors that are involved in RD. The power struggles can be between the project members, community members, policy makers, community leaders and traditional authority structures. The relationships between the actors normally have direct impacts on the outcomes of the success or the failure of the RD programme. This is striking in the case of NIS, where the community is divided, and infighting is taking place between the NIS members and some community members (who are not part of the project) over the tractor that was allocated by the provincial department of DRDAR. These are the conflicts that led to the failure of NIS.

This study reveals that the power of the local traditional authority in communal land surpasses the power of the local municipality. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that after the local traditional authority failed to solve the dispute between the members of eZintukwini village, the members of NIS were unable to use the tractor that was causing the dispute in the community. And despite several attempts to report the matter to the local government nothing was done to ensure that the tractor was returned to the members of the NIS.

This story about the tractor confirms that the powers and functions of the traditional leadership surpass those of the elected municipal/ provincial government officials (Bikim and Chakwizira, 2014). This example also provides a clear illustration of the power the local traditional authority holds as an actor in rural development interventions. The intervention of local traditional authority leadership in rural development, such as that experienced in NIS, reduces the power of the local people to successfully continue with the development of agricultural projects.

### **8.7 “Discourses of blaming”**

The ‘discourse of blaming’ is apparent throughout this study. The government officials are blaming the conflicts between the community members for the failure of NIS and MMIS. The commitment of the irrigation scheme members in agricultural development is also questioned. The failure of the irrigation schemes is attributed to the laziness of the irrigation scheme members, as they are viewed by the local government officials as people that rely on “handouts”. The government officials have low expectations for these projects, as they depict the members of the irrigation schemes as people that depend on the government support. This in turn contributes to the failure of the agricultural projects. According to Johnson (2013), the agricultural projects start to experience challenges when smallholder farmers start to depend on the government support and not and not take responsibility for their farming. This dependence on government had allegedly been created by pre-democratic agricultural interventions (Jacobson, 2013). Based from the findings of this research, it is clear that agricultural development in the former homelands of Transkei can be seen as an extension or continuation of betterment and homeland policies implemented pre-1994 (Hebinck et al, 2011; Bank and Minkley, 2005; and Beinart, 2012). The local community members are accused of starting irrigation schemes just because they think they will get money from the government, and when this does not happen, they supposedly become discouraged and lose interest in the project.

This study shows that none of the actors that are involved in the development of these agricultural projects want to take responsibility for the failure of these agricultural schemes. For example, the members of MMIS accuse the MLM officials of promising to build a dam for the irrigation scheme but this promise was never fulfilled. The NIS members are blaming the LED division for not releasing their remaining amount of funding they received from them, as one of

the contributing factors that had led to the NIS to be non-operational. The government officials are also accused by the irrigation scheme members for not being able to solve challenges that are faced by the agricultural projects. For example, the NIS members are blaming the government officials for failing to solve the dispute over the tractor between NIS members and some members of eZintukwini village that are 'jealous' of the project.

The members of both NIS and MMIS also blame other community members for the lack of involvement in agricultural development in their communities. As a result of not being involved in agricultural projects the community members become or are accused of being 'jealous' of the success of the projects, because they are not part of the projects. The young people in both villages are blamed by the elderly of being 'lazy' and only willing to work in 'easy jobs'. While on another side the youth in both villages appear to be not interested in joining these irrigation schemes, simply because there are no incomes received by the members. The only option that is seen as viable by the youth in both villages is migrating to bigger cities and finding jobs that will earn them incomes. In order to combat the conflicting views between the actors involved in these irrigation schemes, the economic viability of co-operatives should be scrutinized.

The discourse of blaming is apparent throughout this study. This shows that these irrigation schemes will only work when all the actors start to understand each other better. The study shows that the lack of communication and honesty between the actors involved is a major cause of this discourse of blaming. There is a need for all the involved actors to listen to each other's opinion and be able to see from each other's perspective. Committing and fulfilling the promises made to each other will tend toward more successful agricultural projects, that will be able to meet the expectations of the local communities and objectives of the local government policy.

## **8.8 Recommendations**

### **8.8.1 Policy Recommendations for the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) and community members in MLM**

- Before funding or supporting any agricultural projects, the government should first engage with all the stakeholders at the community level. These must include; all the

community members (youth and elderly), traditional authority in order to get their perspective regarding the development of agricultural projects in their communities. By enabling this process to take effect, the people can be able to voice their opinions, concerns and bring up strategies on how agricultural projects can be implemented from the ground to benefit everyone in the community. This could prove to be very important in limiting the conflicts between community members as a result of the development of agricultural projects.

- The government must take a leading role in agricultural development and monitoring the progress made by agricultural projects. The challenges facing the agricultural projects must become the priority of both Mnquma Local Municipality and DRDAR. The government officials should be more accessible to community members; they should have individuals assigned for each project (each official can be assigned to 10 or more projects). It must be made compulsory for agricultural schemes that once they receive funding support from the government they should submit progress reports to the selected government offices, documenting how the project performed each year. Through the findings of this research it appears as if the government actors see the support they provide to these agricultural projects as sufficient to make the project members into successful farmers. However, this is not working well. Therefore, government must make it its obligation to visit these agricultural projects on a regular basis. Clearly due to inadequate human and capital resources at a local level, this will prove problematic for the government officials. Therefore, this matter must be improved by the national government and it must be championed by the national DRDAR.
- Resolving conflicts at a micro-level between the actors is crucial for implementing successful agricultural projects. Based on the findings from this study it is obvious that the community members are failing to work together to drive the progress of agricultural projects in their communities. There should be structures that are created to solve community politics that are hindering the progress of agricultural projects. However, these should not only be facilitated by the traditional authority. The local government and provincial government officials should take a more commanding role as they are the ones that are funding and providing technical support to agricultural projects in Mnquma Local Municipality.

- The government should also consider providing an alternative to agricultural projects for rural people. From the findings of this study it is obvious that the development of agricultural projects is not working. These projects are failing as result of a variety of factors including community conflicts and lack of community involvement. This thesis proposes that instead of encouraging the development of new agricultural projects, the government should rather focus on encouraging individuals in local communities that are already involved in agriculture to expand their capacity. This can be done through supporting them financially (for example, in a form of payable loans), and providing them with all the technical support they require to maximize their production. To achieve this, the government should consider addressing the issue of land insecurity under communal land. Working for oneself and knowing you have something to lose should the agricultural project fail can yield good results.



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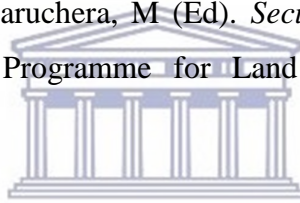


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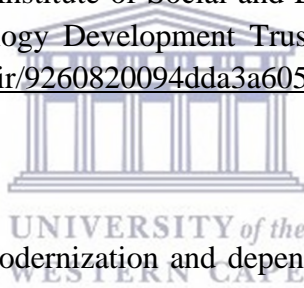
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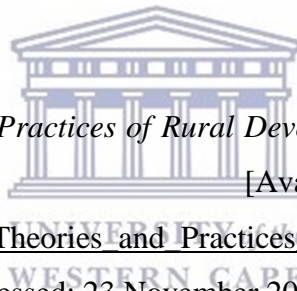
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## Appendix A: Interview Schedule

### Section A: Questions asked to the members of the irrigation schemes

- When did the project start and what was the idea behind its initiation?.....
- How was the start of the project funded?.....
- How many members were involved in starting the project?.....
- How is the project contributing in developing the community?.....
- What are the challenges that the members of the project face when it comes to running the project?.....
- How is the community involved in the project?.....
- What are the challenges that the project is facing and what strategies are in place to overcome those challenges?.....
- What is the relationship between the members of the project and the chief of the community?.....
- Who owns the land of the project?.....
- What happens to the money that is made through selling the crop yields/produce of the project?.....
- What is the contribution of the government in the project?.....
- Does the government offer training? If yes, what kind of training and for how long?.....
- How does the produce of the project reach the target market?.....
- How much influence does Mngquma Locala Municipality, Department of Agriculture or Amatole District Municipality have on the daily operations of the project?.....
- If there was any other option to make a living besides being involved in the project, would you still be interested in working on this project? .....
- What made you become involved in this project?.....
- Are there any other incomes that help with your household needs beside the income received from this project?.....
- Are there any people employed in the project beside the founding members of the project? If they are, who are they? And how are they paid?.....
- What equipment does the project currently have?.....
- Does the existence of this project reduce poverty and unemployment in the community?...

## **Section B: Questions asked to the members of the community**

- Do you see the existence of this project as a good development for this community?
- How is the community benefiting from the project?
- Does this project bring in economic opportunities to the members of this community especially the unemployed people of the community?
- Most of the projects like this one are developed to reduce poverty and give economic opportunities to the unemployed members of the community, do you think that this project offers such benefits to the members of this community?
- Do you see agricultural development as a good way of reducing poverty and increasing economic opportunities for the rural people?
- How do the founders of the project ensure that everyone in the community is involved in the project and everyone benefits from its existence?
- Do you think that agricultural development is the best/ the only way to for economic development in helping to reduce poverty and unemployment in rural areas?
- Do you prefer living in this community and getting involved in agricultural development to earn income or do you prefer going to the city to find employment?
- Do you know which steps are taken in order to open an agricultural project in your community?
- Since the development of this project in this community do you think there is any change in terms of poverty levels and unemployment levels?

## **Section C: Interviews with the government officials**

### **Questions asked to Mnquma Local Municipality Officials**

- What steps are taken to ensure that the people under Mnquma Local Municipality are aware of the agricultural development opportunities in their communities?
- Mnquma Local Municipality identifies agriculture as one of its key economic development drivers to ensure economic sustainability in the area, how much money is invested in agricultural development in each financial year and how are the potential co-operations/ projects identified in order to be given financial support for that that particular financial year?
- How does the municipality ensure that the money that is allocated to a project is put into good use and not wasted?

- How does the municipality ensure that in the development of agricultural projects benefits the whole community?
- Does the municipality receive anything from the projects that are given financial support for a particular financial year in order to circulate the money to benefit other agricultural development projects in other communities?
- Does the municipality have representatives that regularly check how the projects that are given funding are ran, managed, and developed or whether they are still in operation?
- What kind of training is given to the people that are given financial support?
- How does the municipality ensure that the money that is allocated the project is not mis-managed?
- What is the relationship between Mquma municipality and other organisations that focus on agricultural development in communities that are under Mquma municipality?
- What kind of support is given to the communities around Mquma municipality to encourage the community members to participate in agricultural development in their communities in order to reduce poverty and unemployment?
- What do you think is the reason for the failure of most agricultural projects in the region?

### **Questions asked to the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform officials**

- What is the role of the department in the development of agricultural projects/ co-operatives in communities under Mquma municipality?
- What kind of support does the department offer to the members of agricultural projects/ co-operatives in local communities?
- How are these agricultural development projects accessible to the department of agriculture?
- How does the department ensure that all the projects are monitored?
- What kind of challenges does the department face in terms of supporting the development of agricultural projects in the region?
- What makes most of the projects in Mquma Local Municipality fail?
- How does the department interact with the traditional authority to ensure effective development of agricultural projects in Mquma Local Municipality?
- What are some of the complaints the department receives from the local communities?
- How does the department ensure that these complaints are addressed?





**Appendix C: Description of Mirlees Masibambisane Irrigation Scheme by Mquma Local Municipality: Status Quo Report, LED Projects 2012/2013 and 2013/ 2014.**

• **MIRLEES AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVE**


NAME OF PROJECT	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	FUNDING	CHALLENGES
7. Mirlees Agricultural Co-operative	Nqamakhwe	Production of cash crops, Cabbage, Spinach, Carrots, Potato	Funding received 2013 from Mquma LED R5 000.00	The challenge is capacitation and training

Mirlees Agricultural Co-operative is a project situated at Nqamakhwe dominated by the elderly with the purpose of promoting and enhancing food security and alleviating poverty. The project is still in progress and the project members are still active.

**EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Fencing
- Irrigation System
- Tractor

## Appendix D: News Paper Articles



news24 archives  
Breaking News. First.

Rural upliftment project fails  
2012-10-11 10:45  
Johannesburg - A R500 000 vegetable-growing project aimed at providing food and jobs for one of the poorest areas in the North West has failed, Beeld reported on Thursday.

Only one of the staff members originally tasked with looking after the project was still on the premises.

A few years ago, the Tosca project was one of six vegetable tunnel enterprises that the Dr Ruth Mompoti municipality spent R3m on.



Kenny Ntshandase, municipal director of economic development, said the project and similar projects failed for several reasons.

"We provided the money for a start-up opportunity, with the aim being that the recipients would generate a profit, maintain the project and save a portion of the profits to reinvest and do the necessary repairs.

"These people just want salaries, but when they have to do the work, they aren't happy," he said.

After a storm destroyed the tunnels three years ago, there was no money available for repairs, as the project beneficiaries had been arguing amongst themselves about how profits would be shared.

Local resident Giel Theron, a former town council member, said part of the problem was a lack of mentorship, supervision, and expertise.

Available Online: <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/news/rural-upliftment-project-fails-20121011?mobile=true>

Farm abandonments crisis threatens food security, rural towns

August 1, 2014 TMG Editor

SOUTH Africa's rural areas are in a death spiral, with thousands of farmers abandoning their land.

Of the 276000 farming units in Gauteng, including both large-scale and small intensive farming units, 70% lie unused as farms, with the majority either standing idle or being used as scrapyards or second-hand car dealerships.

Emerging farmers are among the hardest hit. Hundreds have quit, claiming the government has abandoned them, leaving them to fend for themselves with no skills and little access to markets.

Agri-Gauteng chief executive Derrick Hanekom said Gauteng was in huge trouble with farm abandonments.

“Land carryover from old to new owners was done haphazardly. Land was given to communities who are not farmers and, because of a lack of skills, are unable to farm,” he said. “We are desperately trying to organise agriculture, with a big focus on micro-farmers who, if properly assisted, can produce large yields.”

He said the government did not have the skills to do capacity development in the sector.

African Farmers' Association of SA president Mike Mlengana slammed the government. “Farms were and are viewed as weekend party destinations,” he said.

“The consequence is farms which have the potential to produce vitally needed food are neglected, with no production occurring. The prevalence of abandonment is unbelievable.

“Getting a farm was about status, not production. We have farms which were highly active but are now useless.”

Mlengana said lack of money was one reason emerging farmers walked off their land. “Many don't have money to farm or buy feed, seeds, fertilisers or water.

“There were no proper checks and balances to see who really had farming knowledge. Many people lied when applying for farms.

“The government doesn't understand the complexity of farming. The ... destruction of South Africa's farms is a direct threat to food security.”

The revelations come at a time when Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti has published highly criticised policy proposals requiring commercial farmers to hand over half their farms to farm workers.

Professor Johan Willemsse of the University of the Free State's agricultural economics

department said the government's agricultural policies urgently needed revising. "They are plunging the country's rural towns into a death spiral, with farms collapsing. There are no proper support structures.

"To compete internationally, economies of scale dictate farms must expand and become heavily mechanised, which goes against what the government is doing."

He said the implication of farm expansion and mechanisation was the collapse of rural towns, where residents were heavily reliant on farms for jobs.

"There is virtually no government support for farmers. While most countries are making farms more productive to feed their cities, this is not even a debate here. To survive, we must rethink our policies. It is not about black or white, it is about feeding 50 million people."

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Rural Development departments did not respond to requests for comment. – Graeme Hosken

Available Online: <http://www.heraldlive.co.za/news/2014/08/01/farm-abandonments-crisis-threatens-food-security-rural-towns/>

