Battled Ground KwaNdebele – A Strategic-Relational Approach to

Land Reform and Traditional Leadership in a Former South African Homeland

Dissertation

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To my father, who made me begin it.

To A and L, who were the most worthwhile distractions of all.

To Hannah, who made me finish it.

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Acknowledgements

I believe, to express thankfulness and to acknowledge the contributions of others to one's own success should be the easiest and most natural tasks in life. Due to the limited capacity of the human mind, however, to say thank you in the right order and to remember all contributions that were made throughout the research and writing process of such an extensive dissertation turns out to be the opposite of easy. I shall try, nonetheless.

The primary target of any ethnographer's thankfulness must be the people who welcomed him to their home, to their life, and to their stories. This dissertational project would have been impossible without the people of Rapotokwane and Libangeni, their respective Traditional Councils, their Traditional Leaders, Councillors and administrators, and their willingness to share their knowledge with me. Many helpful people answered my numerous often ridiculous questions with utmost patience, but unfortunately many answers and perspectives are missing from the data presented below, due to limited time and space. I hope that their voices will not remain unheard and that one day I will present them in another project.

My local research assistants, whose real names I was asked to protect, were essential to my own research success in so many ways and I hope I have done them justice throughout the following chapters.

Every field research needs a base at which the researcher feels at home for the time being. It is the central place of planning and documenting, resting and meeting. During my time in South Africa, I was fortunate to have three such places. My host in Rapotokwane has been prominently mentioned throughout the entire dissertation and I hope he regards my way of presenting him and his ambitions as sufficient and authentic. The name of my host in Libangeni will remain unmentioned, as per her request, but I am most grateful to her for providing a comfortable and safe home throughout my stay in Libangeni. My third base, Sizanani Village near Bronkhorstspruit, is only briefly mentioned in this thesis. It is the place where my fascination for South Africa first emerged and where it was kept alive for many years. During field research from 2016 to 2018 I used Sizanani as a place where I could withdraw myself from the field to update field notes and analyse survey data, but it was also a place where energy, inspiration and curiosity could be replenished. The residents of Sizanani know how much they mean to me.

The field research that I conducted would have been impossible without the support of the University of Pretoria's Department of Anthropology and Archaeology. Through Olaf Zenker I met Prof Chris Boonzaaier, whose Head of Department Prof Pikirayi offered me an affiliation for the duration of my research. This not only aided the research visa application process but also granted me access to

ethnographer and good friend, and to Emmeline, Victoria, and Sebastian for making sure on a monthly basis that I would not give up.

The largest share of the financial means to this PhD project was derived from my father's estate. Incessantly, he worked his entire life to ensure that his children lacked in nothing. My mother, a journalist and an eternal adventurer at heart, endowed me with her thirst for knowledge and with an urge to develop and express my thinking through written language. It is a cruel kind of irony that the two people who would have been the proudest of my doctoral ambitions are not around anymore to receive a copy of this dissertation. However, I have also been blessed with a kind stepmother and with through and through supportive in-laws, whom I will always be much obliged to. I thank my brother and my sister; they are the Porthos and Athos to my Aramis. "All for one and one for all" has been a critical necessity rather than a romanticised literary ideal for us for quite some time and I do not know how I could have pulled this project through without them. The same is true of other family members and friends, who I hope are aware that they are more than just 'other' to me.

Hannah, my fiancé, knows what she means to me and how significant she has been to the success of this thesis, during field work and during the writing process. I must profess that she is the one who motivated me to keep writing when I lacked the words, who gave me confidence when I questioned my own abilities, who celebrated the smallest achievements when I could only see the remaining challenges.

I kindly ask those who feel they should have been mentioned to regard that omission as innocuous negligence on my part. It has been a long time since I started this project and the memories have faded. Nonetheless, be assured of my gratefulness.

Ngiyathokoza! Ke a leboga! Dankie! Thank you! Danke!

Zusammenfassung der Dissertation in deutscher Sprache

Die vorliegende Dissertation basiert auf insgesamt zwölf Monaten ethnografischer Feldforschung in Südafrika, durchgeführt zwischen Februar 2016 und März 2018. Forschungsort waren die Dörfer Rapotokwane und Libangeni im ehemaligen KwaNdebele *Homeland*[1] nordöstlich von Pretoria (s. Figure 2.1). Forschungsgegenstand waren die sozialen und politischen Wechselwirkungen zwischen der örtlichen Bevölkerung, ihren demokratischen und traditionalistischen Machtstrukturen, und den Landreformbestrebungen der nationalen Regierung. Das Ziel war, ein besseres Verständnis der Rollen lokaler Akteur*innen zu gewinnen, sodass folgende Leitfragen formuliert wurden: Inwieweit beeinflussen strategisch geprägte Basisprozesse die Landreform im ehemaligen KwaNdebele? Welche Strategien wenden lokale Akteur*innen an? Welche strukturellen Einschränkungen dieser Strategien sind vorhanden und haben Strategien trotzdem das Potenzial, signifikante Entwicklungen im Gesamtkontext herbeizuführen?

Die Dissertation ist in drei Teile gegliedert: Einleitungen (Kapitel 1 und 2), Hauptteil (Kapitel 3-9), und Fazit (Kapitel 10). Im ersten Kapitel stelle ich das Hauptthema Landreform anhand des nationalen Diskurses zu möglichen Zwangsenteignungen von Land zwecks Umverteilung vor. Hierbei wird auch die Signifikanz der *Traditional Authorities* (*Traditional Councils*, *Chiefs* und *Kings*) herausgestellt. Es folgt dann eine Beschreibung der Forschungsziele und eine zusammenfassende Vorstellung der Dissertationsstruktur, an welcher sich die vorliegende deutsche Zusammenfassung orientiert.

In Kapitel 2 werden die Feldstandorte, meine Person als Forscher, und die angewandten Methoden vorgestellt. Dies wird durch Goffmans dramaturgische Metapher unterstützt, um meinen reflexiven Ansatz zur Datenakkumulation und -analyse darzustellen. Ich werde Details zu den als Theaterbühnen verstandenen Feldstandorten vorstellen. Um meine eigene Perspektive auf den ethnologischen Diskurs zur Reflexivität im Feld zu verdeutlichen, werde ich einen Perspektivwechsel in die dritte Person erproben, sodass die Forschungsteilnehmer als Protagonisten und ich selbst als Antihelden-Erzähler vorgestellt werden können. Anschließend wird das methodische Vorgehen als *Performance* präsentiert, die eine Diskussion über *Multisitedness*, *Mixed-Method*-Ansätze und die von mir angewandte *Extended-Case*-Methode (ECM) beinhaltet.

Die dreigliedrige Struktur wird dann im Hauptteil wiederholt. Die Kapitel 3 und 4 bieten ausführliche Diskussionen des theoretischen Rahmens und der signifikanten diskursiven Kontexte. Die Kapitel 5 bis 7 präsentieren meine empirischen Daten. Die Kapitel 8 und 9 schließen den Hauptteil mit der Analyse

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[1] Diese Dissertation wurde aus gutem Grund in englischer Sprache verfasst. Manche südafrikanischen Begriffe, sowie Termini aus der *Structure/Agency*-Debatte und anderen akademischen Diskussionen, lassen sich nur schwierig ins Deutsche übersetzen. Um möglichst nah an der angedachten Bedeutung dieser Begriffe zu bleiben, habe ich davon abgesehen diese zu übersetzen.

ab. Diese drei Abschnitte des Hauptteils der Dissertation sind darüber hinaus mit eingeschobenen Kapiteln verknüpft, die ich als „*Entr'acte*" bezeichnet habe, wodurch die bereits genutzte theatralische Metapher noch weiter ausgereizt wird. Die getrennte Darstellung von Theorie, empirischen Daten und Analyse wird in der ethnografischen Literatur als unkonventionell angesehen werden. Während es in der ethnografischen Forschung unüblich geworden sein mag, ‚objektiv wahre' Daten zu präsentieren, so sehr reicht es meiner Ansicht nach nicht aus, die Theorielastigkeit der eigenen empirischen Daten lediglich nur anzuerkennen, statt zumindest zu versuchen, Theorie und Daten in der schriftlichen Darstellung zu trennen. Jede/r Autor*in tendiert dazu, Vorurteile und voreilige Schlussfolgerungen hinter labyrinthischen Handlungssträngen und unangekündigten Abweichungen zu verbergen, weswegen ich es für unverzichtbar halte, eine Textstruktur anzuwenden, welche dem entgegenwirkt. Ich hoffe, dass eine getrennte Darstellung von Theorie, empirischen Daten und Analyse theoretische und analytische Färbungen kompensiert, welche bei der Datenerhebung zwangsläufig – und zu einem gewissen Grad bewusst – im Feld angewendet wurden. Darüber hinaus halte ich es für wichtig, aufgrund gelegentlich verwirrender Terminologien des akademischen Diskurses direkt zu Beginn eindeutige Definitionen und ontologische Grundannahmen zu etablieren. Daher präsentiere ich jene theoretischen Diskurse, welche die zentralen Dimensionen für die Analyse beinhalten, vornean, bevor ich die empirischen Felddaten vorstelle. Weder behaupte ich durch eine solche Strukturierung, jene Tendenz der/s Forschenden, Theorie, Daten und Analyse zu vermischen, komplett neutralisieren zu können, noch soll der iterative methodische Prozess, welcher in Kapitel 2 veranschaulicht wird, rückwirkend verworfen werden. Ich erhoffe mir vielmehr, dass diese inhaltliche Struktur die Dimensionen, welche im Forschungsprozess den größten Anteil hatten, explizit herausstellt, sodass hoffentlich eine gewisse Transparenz entsteht, die es den Lesenden ermöglicht, meine einzelnen Forschungs- und Analyseschritte nachzuvollziehen.

Kapitel 3 bietet eine ausführliche Einführung in den zentralen theoretischen Rahmen dieser Dissertation. Die *Structure/Agency*-Debatte sowie drei verschiedene ontologische Ansätze werden vorgestellt. Die Diskussion wird durch eine Vignette eingeleitet, welche die Funktionsweise von *Structure* und *Agency* im südafrikanischen Feld veranschaulicht. Beginnend mit Weber, Durkheim und Marx, über die Perspektiven des Strukturalismus (Lévi-Strauss), des Poststrukturalismus (Foucault), der marxistischen Theorien bis hin zur Praxistheorie werde ich eine kurze Zusammenfassung der wichtigsten soziologischen Standpunkte der Debatte geben. Es folgen dann Zusammenfassungen der Beiträge von Bourdieu sowie Giddens zur besagten Debatte. Aufgrund der in der Eröffnungsvignette beobachteten strategischen und taktischen Praktiken der Handelnden werde ich mich dann besonders auf theoretische Ansätze zu Strategie und Taktik in der *Structure/Agency*-Debatte konzentrieren. Zuerst werden Definitionen von Strategie und Taktik nötig sein, wobei insbesondere unterschiedliche Grade räumlicher und zeitlicher Unmittelbarkeit als entscheidend dargestellt werden. Außerdem wird

intention (Absicht/Vorsatz) als entscheidender Parameter für strategisches Handeln festgesetzt. Hiervon ausgehend werde ich Jessops *Strategic-Relational Approach* (*SRA*) vorstellen. Unter Bezugnahme auf Kritik an Hays eher akteurszentrierter Interpretation des *SRA* werde ich dann ein taktisch-strategisches Spektrum vorschlagen, welches Akteur*innen und ihre Handlungen in vier Idealtypen einteilt: taktisch veranlagt (*tactically-inclined*), taktisch fähig (*tactically-able*), strategisch fähig (*strategically-able*) und strategisch willig (*strategically-inclined*), wobei hier die Mehrdeutigkeit des englischen Wortes ‚*inclined*' zu tragen kommt.

In Kapitel 4 werden die Ursprünge und Auswirkungen von drei zwar kontroversen – jedoch emisch sehr wichtigen – *binaries* (Binärkonstellation oder Zweiteilung) vorgestellt: Tradition versus Moderne, Demokratie versus *Chieftaincy* und *Black* Land versus *White* Land. Während dieses Kapitel eine ähnliche Zielsetzung wie Kapitel 3 verfolgt, wird der Zweck ein anderer sein. Das Ziel wird eine Dekonstruktion der genannten scheinbar dichotomen und hierarchischen Dualismen sein, um eine ihnen zugrunde liegende komplexe Dualität aufzudecken. Der Zweck dieser Übung wird jedoch nicht die Etablierung eines theoretischen Rahmens sein, sondern eine Einführung in drei der wichtigsten Kontexte meiner Feldforschung. Das erste *binary Structure/Agency* hat seinen Ursprung in einer akademischen Debatte und es ist höchst unwahrscheinlich, dass es in den alltäglichen Diskursen dieses Feldes unmittelbar zum Einsatz kommt. Im Gegensatz dazu sind die drei in Kapitel 4 diskutierten *binaries* in diesem Feldkontext ausdrücklich emischen Ursprungs. Aus diesem Grund wird die Forschungsrelevanz dieser drei miteinander verbundenen binären Paare anhand der von Hay vorgeschlagenen Verwendung des SRA als heuristisches Werkzeug der Diskursanalyse veranschaulicht.

Das zweite der vier *binaries*, „Tradition versus Moderne", erfordert einen Überblick der hierfür wichtigsten anthropologischen Debatten im letzten Jahrhundert (Unterkapitel 4.1). Obwohl dieser Überblick nicht ohne Weiteres auf emischen Perspektiven per se basieren kann, gipfelt er in einem Verständnis des *binary* Tradition/Moderne, welches das empirisch beobachtete Spannungsfeld zwischen diesen beiden Begriffen umfasst. In diesem Bereich können sowohl vermeintlich ‚traditionelle' als auch ‚moderne' Elemente nebeneinander existieren. Ihre Rolle unterliegt dabei ständigen Aushandlungsprozessen, da sie strategisch zum Vorteil jener eingesetzt werden können, die sie benutzen. Eine fast willkürliche Verwendung von solchen ‚Traditionalitäten' und ‚Modernitäten' wirft jedoch mehr Fragen als Antworten auf, insbesondere in KwaNdebele, wo eine traditionalistische Argumentationsweise häufig modernistische Ziele unterstützt. Ich gehe davon aus, dass einerseits sowohl die Strukturen rund um die beteiligten Akteur*innen als auch die Strategien, die sie anwenden, diese ‚Traditionen' und ‚Modernitäten' prägen. Auf der anderen Seite werden Strukturen und Strategien gleichzeitig von den bereits bestehenden vorherrschenden ‚traditionellen' und ‚modernen' Narrativen früherer Diskurse und Praktiken beeinflusst.

In Unterkapitel 4.2 beginne ich die Darstellung des dritten *binary,* „Demokratie versus *Chieftaincy*",
mit einem Verweis auf den strategischen Wert des *binary* „Tradition versus Moderne" und darauf, wie
es häufig auf eine Diskussion politischer Institutionen in Südafrika ausgeweitet wird. Nach einem
kurzen Exkurs zu der Bezeichnung „neotraditionell" und meinen Gründen, warum ich auf diese
verzichte, werde ich in die wissenschaftliche Debatte über *Traditional Authorities* und ihre Rolle in der
liberal geprägten Demokratie Südafrikas einführen. Das eine Lager dieser Debatte lobt *Traditional
Authorities* als *development brokers* (Entwicklungsvermittler), zugängliche Vertreter ihrer Untertanen
und sogar als nicht-demokratische Verfechter der Demokratie. Das Lager auf der anderen Seite des
Debattenspektrums betrachtet das *customary law* und den exklusiven Zugang zur Exekutivgewalt
durch das männliche Erstgeburtsrecht als eine Fortsetzung des *Homeland*-Systems und deklariert
daher *Traditional Authorities* als schädlich für das gesamte demokratische Projekt. Wissenschaftler,
die sich zwischen diesen Extremen bewegen, versuchen, die komplexen Realitäten in den betroffenen
Gemeinschaften zu erklären und verschiedene analytische Perspektiven zu präsentieren. Sie hoffen
auf diese Weise, eine höchst emotional geführte Debatte etwas neutralisieren zu können. Die
Diskussion der unterschiedlichen akademischen Perspektiven werde ich um einige rechtliche und
historische Hintergrundinformationen ergänzen. Es wird hierbei verdeutlicht, welche Rolle die
Traditional Authorities im *Homeland*-System Apartheid-Südafrikas und während des Übergangs zur
Demokratie spielten. Auch die seitdem hierzu verabschiedeten und geplanten Gesetze werden
erläutert. Anschließend wird die theoretische Diskussion mit Fokus auf die Beziehung zwischen Staat,
ländlichen Gemeinden und *Traditional Authorities* fortgesetzt. Insbesondere die Art und Weise wie
letztere Legitimität generieren und aufrechterhalten wird hier nochmal genauer beleuchtet.

Das vierte *binary*, „*Black* Land versus *White* Land" (Unterkapitel 4.3), betrifft zwei äußerst kontroverse
Themen: Land und Rassismus. Um Letzteres direkt anzusprechen, beginnt dieses Unterkapitel mit einer
Veranschaulichung der wesentlichen Rolle, die das Konzept der ‚Rasse' im Kolonialismus spielte,
ähnlich der dann bereits diskutierten kolonialen Dichotomie zwischen ‚Tradition' und ‚Moderne'. Die
Umsetzung der Rassentrennung in der südafrikanischen Geschichte war seit Beginn des Kolonialismus
eng mit der Frage des Landbesitzes und der Landbesetzung verbunden. Die Frage des
gleichberechtigten Zugangs zu Land war daher in den Verhandlungen über das Ende der Apartheid in
den frühen 1990er Jahren entscheidend. Um das Konfliktpotenzial zwischen *White* Interessengruppen,
die um ihre Eigentumsrechte fürchteten, und meist *Black* und *Coloured* Gruppen, die auf die
Wiederherstellung der Gerechtigkeit beim Landzugang hofften, zu verringern, wurde ein rigider
Konstitutionalismus umgesetzt. Sowohl Eigentumsrechte als auch die Verpflichtung zu einer
umfassenden Landreform wurden in der Verfassung verankert. Die erste Säule der Landreform ist die
Landumverteilung, die in dieser Dissertation – abgesehen von der Eröffnungsvignette zur landesweiten

EWC-Debatte[2] – am wenigsten von Bedeutung sein wird. Die zweite Säule ist die Eigentumsreform: Ich werde in Kapitel 4.3 die relevanten Rechtsvorschriften vorstellen und einen kurzen Einblick in die Praxis im Feld geben. Die dritte und im Kontext dieser Dissertation wichtigste Säule der Landreform in Südafrika ist die Landrückerstattung: Ich werde die relevante Gesetzgebung und die verschiedenen Phasen beschreiben, welche sie durchlaufen hat, und ich werde erklären, wie sie im nationalen Diskurs mit dem Verständnis von „Rasse" zusammenhängt. Nachdem ich eine Reihe verschiedener rassistisch geprägter Diskurse rund um die südafrikanische Landreform veranschaulicht habe, werde ich daraufhin versuchen, anhand empirischer Beispiele von Olaf Zenker und Deborah James die tatsächlichen Komplexitäten vor Ort darzustellen. Diese gehen über die dominante binäre Hautfarbentrennung hinaus. Damit ist dann Kapitel 4 und somit auch das erste Drittel des Hauptteils dieser Dissertation abgeschlossen.

Die Motivation, zwei *Entr'acte* einzufügen, was streng genommen eine Abweichung von der oben bereits rechtfertigten Trennung von Theorie, empirischen Daten und Analyse bedeutet, entspringt aus der Notwendigkeit einer historischen Einordnung. Geschichte operiert jedoch jenseits und zwischen den Grenzen klar definierter (ontologischer) Theorie und empirischer Daten und verdient es daher, außerhalb der streng getrennten Struktur behandelt zu werden. In diesem Fall stehen die historischen Inhalte jedoch nicht nur in losem Zusammenhang mit der ursprünglichen Argumentation dieser Dissertation wie dies bei einem Exkurs der Fall wäre. Vielmehr ist geschichtliches Vorwissen für das Verständnis der folgenden Empirie wesentlich und es verbindet diese mit der zuvor präsentierten Diskussion der *Homeland-* und Apartheid-Politik Südafrikas. Beide *Entr'acte* besitzen eine eigenständige Handlung, welche jedoch mehrere Entwicklungen aus den vorangegangenen und folgenden Kapiteln aufgreift und vorwegnimmt. Das erste Zwischenkapitel zwischen Kapiteln 4 und 5 fasst die Geschichte der *Southern Transvaal Ndebele* zusammen. Genauer gesagt liefert es weitgehend gesicherte, aber auch einige kontroverse Fakten darüber, woher jene Gruppen stammen, die sich heute als Nachkommen von Manala, Ndzundza und Litho identifizieren. Außerdem geht es um ihre Führungsstreitigkeiten und wie sie während der Apartheid in Südafrika zu ihrem eigenen *Homeland* kamen. Der erste Teil dieses Kapitels behandelt die verschiedenen Entwicklungsverläufe der Ndebele in der Kolonialzeit bis zum Beginn der Apartheid, während der zweite Teil die kurzlebige Geschichte des KwaNdebele *Homeland*s zusammenfasst.

In Kapitel 5, das sich dann schließlich mit den empirischen Daten befasst, werden qualitative Interviewdaten zu drei miteinander verbundenen Themen vorgestellt. Diese ergeben sich aus der Geschichte der *Southern Transvaal Ndebele*. Das erste wichtige Thema betrifft die Eingliederung und Anpassung der *Traditional Authorities* in die Strukturen des südafrikanischen Staats nach dem

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[2] *Expropriation Without Compensation*, siehe Kapitel 1.1

offiziellen Ende der Apartheid. Das Ziel soll hier sein, ein Licht auf jene Akteur*innen und ihre Standpunkte zu werfen, die sich an der Schnittstelle zwischen demokratischer und traditioneller Führung im ehemaligen KwaNdebele befinden. Das zweite Thema betrifft die Kontrolle über Land. In diesem Abschnitt werden Akteur*innen vorgestellt, die von der Umsetzung der Landreform profitieren sollen, und diejenigen, die auf strategische Art und Weise die rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen (aus)nutzen, um ihre jeweiligen Vorteile aufrechtzuerhalten und zu festigen. Das dritte Thema betrifft den anhaltenden Führungsstreit zwischen den Ndebele Königshäusern Manala und Ndzundza. Seitdem die Mbeki-Regierung im Jahr 2003 das erste Gesetz zu *Traditional Authorities* verabschiedet hat, kämpfen beide Parteien vor den Kommissionen und Gerichten des Staates um die offizielle Anerkennung als Königtümer und um die Degradierung ihrer Kontrahenten. Während in dieser Angelegenheit klar definiert zu sein scheint, was für beide Parteien auf dem Spiel steht, müssen die Auswirkungen des Herrschaftsstreits auf der Basisebene noch weiter untersucht werden. Nach einer Erörterung des Themas aus offizieller Sicht unter Berücksichtigung von Kommissionsergebnissen, präsidialen Bekanntmachungen und Gerichtsurteilen sowie Perspektiven einiger wichtiger lokaler Akteur*innen, werde ich daher in einem zweiten Schritt den Streit bis in die inneren Strukturen der Ndzundza-Führung verfolgen, wo ein Bischof und ein Prinz Pläne geschmiedet hatten, um den amtierenden Ndzundza-Führer zu ersetzen und das Ndzundza-Königtum wiederherzustellen.

Ein weiterer eher pragmatischer Grund für die gewählte Inhaltsstruktur ist Kapitel 6: Der Litho-Komplex. Während meiner Feldforschung habe ich viel Zeit und Energie darauf verwendet, die Machtdynamik der Litho Ndzundza von Rapotokwane und ihr jahrzehntelanges Streben nach der Rückgabe ihrer ehemaligen Heimat, die heute als Rust de Winter Region bekannt ist, zu verstehen. Im Laufe dieses speziellen Zweigs meiner Forschung wurde eine große Menge komplizierter und komplexer Daten gesammelt. Daher war es notwendig, diese Daten in einem eigenen Kapitel vorzustellen. Besagtes Kapitel wäre zu lang geworden, wenn ich versucht hätte, die empirischen Daten mit theoretischen und analytischen Überlegungen zu verbinden. Während der erste *Entr'acte* einen allgemeinen Überblick über die Geschichte der *Southern Transvaal Ndebele* und die wichtigsten Spaltungen der Gruppe in ihrer Geschichte lieferte, beginnt Kapitel 6 mit einer detaillierten Beschreibung dessen, was mit den Litho Ndzundza nach ihrer Trennung von den anderen Ndzundza geschah, nachdem sie KwaMaza verließen. Die Beschreibung ihres geografischen und genealogischen Ursprungs bildet die Grundlage für den darauffolgenden Abschnitt, in dem es um einige jener Führungsstreitigkeiten und Machtkämpfe geht, die ich während meiner Zeit in Rapotokwane beobachten und dokumentieren konnte. Der wichtigste und meiner Meinung nach wertvollste Teil dieses speziellen Kapitels betrifft jedoch den Kampf um die Rückerstattung der Rust de Winter Region. Ich werde die rechtlichen Entwicklungen in den zweieinhalb Jahrzehnten vor meiner Feldforschung zusammenfassen und dann mit Ereignissen fortfahren, die in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2017 und Anfang

2018 entscheidende Fortschritte einleiteten. Ich habe an mehreren wichtigen öffentlichen Veranstaltungen teilgenommen, wovon ich drei detailliert beschreibe, um die Dynamiken zu veranschaulichen, die in diesem speziellen Landrückgabefall ganz nah an der gesellschaftlichen Basis gewirkt haben.

Kapitel 7 basiert auf einer Umfrage, die zwischen September 2017 und Januar 2018 in Libangeni und Rapotokwane von meinem Forschungsteam und mir entwickelt und durchgeführt wurde. Ähnlich wie bei Kapitel 6 nimmt die Darstellung des Fragebogenentwicklungsprozesses und die statistische Auswertung der gesammelten Umfragedaten viel Raum ein. Daher ist die eingehende Analyse dieser Daten im Gesamtkontext der Feldforschung in Kapitel 8 zu finden. Die Umfrage zielte darauf ab, einige der Grundlagen zu identifizieren, auf denen diskursive Strategien und strategisch genutzte *binaries* aufbauen. Die Präsentation der Daten findet in einem anspruchsvollen interdisziplinären Umfeld statt und versucht, den Anforderungen sowohl anthropologischen als auch statistischen Schreibens gerecht zu werden. Um ethnographisch orientierten Leser*innen den Einstieg in die Argumentationsstrukturen und Verfahren der statistischen Analyse zu erleichtern, werde ich illustrativ untersuchen, inwiefern die Voreingenommenheit der Interviewer*innen während des Datenerhebungsprozesses einen Einfluss auf die Daten gehabt haben könnte. Anschließend werde ich die deskriptiven Daten präsentieren, welche aus 615 Fragebögen stammen und einen Einblick in den heterogenen Charakter der Region im Hinblick auf Muttersprache, Bildung und Beruf gewähren. Darüber hinaus liefert dieser Teil des Kapitels anschauliche Daten zur früheren Siedlungspolitik und zu aktuellen Landvergabepraktiken. In der Umfrage wurden die Befragten unter anderem gebeten, 26 konkrete und abstrakte Positionen nach der jeweils persönlich beigemessenen Wichtigkeit zu bewerten. Diese 26 Positionen wurden durch eine Hauptachsenfaktoranalyse in fünf verschiedene Cluster gruppiert. Die darauffolgende korrelative Analyse zielt darauf ab, vier verschiedene Fragen zu beantworten, die – auf einer abstrakten Ebene – mit dem theoretischen *Structure/Agency*-Rahmen dieser Dissertation in Zusammenhang stehen. Auf diese Art und Weise soll die Annahme untersucht werden, dass Strategie auf ermöglichende und zugleich einschränkende Weise zwischen Strukturen und Akteur*innen im Spiel ist. Es wird gezeigt, wie strukturelle Faktoren, wie Demografie oder infrastrukturelle Kapazitäten, den Zugang zu Institutionen und die Meinungsbildung von Akteur*innen beeinflussen. Außerdem wird gezeigt, dass Meinungen nicht unbedingt von diesen externen Faktoren bestimmt werden, sondern dass sich Praktiken aus einem komplexen Netz von Prioritäten und Möglichkeiten ergeben.

Der zweite *Entr'acte* fungiert als Brücke zwischen der Präsentation empirischer Daten und der theoriegeleiteten Analyse. Dieser Übergang wird schrittweise erreicht. Zuerst stelle ich den Aufbau und die Ergebnisse einiger im Feld durchgeführten Gruppendiskussionen vor. Anschließend wird dann die Analyse dieser Ergebnisse auf der Grundlage des theoretischen Rahmens dieser Arbeit fortgesetzt.

In diesem Prozess werden die drei Ontologien von Bourdieu, Giddens und Jessop auf ihre Eignung zur Analyse induktiver Daten aus einer Methode getestet, deren Entwurf eher auf pragmatischer Felderfahrung als auf theoretisch-deduktiver Strebsamkeit beruhte. Das Streben der *Extended Case Method*, bereits bestehende Theorien weiterzuentwickeln und umzustrukturieren, trägt in diesem Fall ausdrücklich dazu bei, die Grenzen besagter Theorien bei der Analyse ethnografischer Daten aufzuzeigen. Anstatt lediglich auf die in diesem sehr speziellen Fall vorhandene Disharmonie zwischen Methode und Theorie hinzuweisen, werde ich die Bewertung daher mit einer Reihe von Beispielen aus den empirischen Daten fortsetzen, die den wahren Wert dieser Ontologien aufzeigen. Um die Vorteile und Grenzen von Bourdieus Praxistheorie zu veranschaulichen, werde ich die drei öffentlichen Sitzungen analysieren, welche in Kapitel 6 ausführlich beschrieben wurden. Die umfassende Wirkungsweise der Bourdieu'schen Konzepte Habitus, Kapital und Feld wird hier diskutiert. Für die Giddens'schen Konzepte der *duality of structure*, *structuration* und *time-space* finden sich in den empirischen Daten wiederum Beispiele aus verschiedenen Kontexten. Dazu gehören unter anderem die sich wiederholenden Muster hinter den Führungsstreitigkeiten der Ndebele im Laufe der Geschichte, die Beziehung zwischen den Ndebele und dem südafrikanischen Staat sowie die strategische Wertschätzung von ‚Tradition' und ‚Moderne' durch traditionelle Führer und ihre Unterstützer. Jessops *SRA* wird auf die Probe gestellt, indem Fälle strategischen Verhaltens unter Umständen, die von *structured coherence* und *patterned incoherence* geprägt sind, analysiert werden. Ersteres wird durch die Stabilität der Manala-Führung seit den späten 1980er Jahren veranschaulicht, während Letzteres anhand von argumentativen Strategien veranschaulicht wird, die Sebatshelwa Matthews und sein Neffe Iggy Litho im Führungsstreit unter den Litho Ndzundza genutzt haben.

Jessops *SRA* wird in den Kapiteln 8 und 9 als Hauptanalysewerkzeug eingesetzt, während Bourdieus *theory of practice* und die *structuration theory* von Giddens dieses bei Bedarf um einzelne analytische Perspektiven ergänzen. Die offene Akzeptanz von Komplexität als sowohl konstitutives Prinzip sowie als dauerhaftes Produkt der strategischen Beziehung zwischen *Structure* und *Agency* im *SRA* liefert die überzeugendsten Argumente, um diese Ontologie in einer gründlichen Analyse der in den Kapiteln 5, 6 und 7 dargestellten empirischen Daten anzuwenden. Die Zielsetzung dieser Dissertation lautet, ein detaillierteres Verständnis der Prozesse an der gesellschaftlichen Basis zu gewinnen, durch welche Einzelpersonen und Gemeinschaften in der Lage sind, die Landreform im ehemaligen KwaNdebele zu beeinflussen. Dafür ist es wichtig, ein ontologisches Modell zur Hand zu haben, welches Licht auf sowohl strukturelle als auch agierende Kräfte im ehemaligen KwaNdebele werfen kann, und Jessops *SRA* erfüllt diese Anforderung. Eine ethnologische Anpassung des *SRA* muss jedoch in erster Linie sehr konkrete Strategien und Kontexte identifizieren, in welchen *structured coherence* die Handlungsfähigkeit beeinträchtigt oder *patterned incoherence* Handlungsspielräume eröffnet. Die Analyse in den Kapiteln 8 und 9 verfolgt daher sechs Ziele:

1. Die Identifizierung charakteristischer Merkmale strategisch-selektiver Kontexte in den Felddaten.
2. Die Identifizierung strategischer Werkzeuge, die den Akteur*innen innerhalb dieser Kontexte zur Verfügung stehen.
3. Eine Erklärung, warum nur bestimmte verfügbare Taktiken von den Handelnden gewählt wurden.
4. Eine Veranschaulichung, wie diese strategisch motivierten Taktiken den jeweiligen strategisch-selektiven Kontext veränderten.
5. Ein Einblick in die Art und Weise, wie vereinfachte binäre Argumente die Komplexität strategisch-selektiver Kontexte erhöhen können.
6. Eine Klärung der Auswirkungen, die dies auf die Handlungsspielräume der Akteur*innen hat.

Ich erwarte, dass die Abarbeitung dieser Ziele zu einem besseren Verständnis der Wirkungsweise von strategisch, praktisch und diskursiv eingesetzten *binaries* führt. Einzelpersonen, Gruppen, Gemeinschaften und Institutionen können durch die bewusste Verwendung von *binaries* ihre eigenen Ziele in einem positiven Licht darstellen. Sie können Strukturen und die Perspektiven anderer Akteur*innen zum eigenen Vorteil manipulieren, bzw. durch jene Kontexte erfolgreich manövrieren, in denen sich Manipulation als wirkungslos erwiesen hat.

Die Komplexität der Entitäten und Prozesse, die bei der Verfolgung dieser sechs Ziele untersucht wird, erschwert ihre Darstellung durch zweidimensionale Schriftsprache. Ich werde daher davon absehen, diese Ziele nacheinander abzuarbeiten. Stattdessen werde ich eine Reihe von empirisch identifizierten Themen vorstellen, die – in Anlehnung an Jessops kritisch-realistische Grundannahmen – auf tiefer liegenden abstrakten (nichtsdestotrotz realen) Mustern basieren, deren oft binärer Charakter dabei hervorragt. In Kapitel 8 werde ich mich nach dem Giddens'schen Vorbild an einer streng separaten Analyse von *Structure* und *Agency* versuchen. Zunächst werde ich die in Kapitel 7 vorgestellten statistischen Daten erneut untersuchen, um ein umfassendes Bild der strategisch-selektiven Kontexte meines Feldes und jener hypothetischen Handlungsmöglichkeiten zu zeichnen, welche diese potenziellen Akteur*innen bieten. Eine Reihe statistisch korrelierender Cluster und das Netzwerk, das sich zwischen ihnen erstreckt, veranschaulichen die potenzielle Komplexität, welche strategisch vorgehende Akteur*innen bewältigen müssen. Durch die Darstellung hypothetischer strategisch begründeter Handlungsoptionen und durch die Veranschaulichung der exponentiell verfügbaren Handlungsoptionen werden die vielfältigen strategischen Instrumente deutlich, welche den Akteur*innen in diesen Kontexten zur Verfügung stehen. Anschließend werde ich das *binary* Tradition/Moderne anhand jener kontextuellen Kontingenz untersuchen, welche es kreiert, und ich werde zwei empirisch beobachtete strategische Einsatzvarianten dieses *binary* beschreiben. Ich hoffe

auf diese Weise zu verdeutlichen, dass binär geprägte Taktiken einen gewissen kreativen Vorteil bieten, da sie den Kontext vereinfachen, aber durch die Auseinandersetzung mit ihm gleichzeitig das Potenzial haben, seine Komplexität zu erhöhen und so wiederum mehr Handlungsmöglichkeiten zu schaffen.

Kapitel 9 diskutiert drei zentrale Themen aus den empirischen Daten. Der Schwerpunkt liegt hierbei auf der Veränderung von Kontexten durch strategisch geprägte Taktiken, auf den Auswirkungen argumentativer *binaries* auf komplexe Kontexte, und auf den Effekten, welche diese wiederum auf individuelle Handlungsfähigkeit haben. Das Kapitel beginnt mit einer Untersuchung der vielseitigen Rollen, welche der südafrikanische Staat in den Forschungsdaten spielt (9.1). Ich habe festgestellt, dass der südafrikanische Staat in den Felddaten entweder durch einzelne Akteur*innen wie Regierungsminister, oder durch strategisch selektive Kontexte, oder durch strategisch und taktisch geprägte rhetorische Verweise auf den Staat als homogene jedoch handlungsfähige dritte Entität, repräsentiert wird. Diese drei Modalitäten veranschaulichen, wie sich der südafrikanische Staat und seine Bürger in einer strategisch-relationalen Geben-und-Nehmen-Situation befinden. Die darauffolgende Diskussion wird untersuchen, wie durch strategisches Verhalten strategisch-selektive Kontexte ausgenutzt und sogar verändert werden können. Der erste dieser drei thematischen Cluster konzentriert sich auf Beobachtungen staatlicher Abhängigkeit und zeigt, wie einige Akteur*innen, die diese Abhängigkeit von staatlichen Akteur*innen anerkennen, daraus ein gewisses Maß an *Agency* generieren können. Der zweite Cluster mit dem Titel „*Ignorance is Bliss*" bezieht sich auf Beobachtungen, bei denen die vorgetäuschte, vermutete oder tatsächliche Unwissenheit der beteiligten Akteur*innen insbesondere dem Staat und seinen Vertretern taktische Vorteile verschafft. Der dritte Themenblock basiert auf einem ambivalenten Verständnis des Staates als einerseits behindernde und andererseits ermöglichende Institution. Jessops Konzeptualisierung der *patterned incoherence*, ist ein potenzielles Resultat der *Structure/Agency*-Dualität, welches durch strategisch ausnutzbare inkohärente Strukturmerkmale gekennzeichnet ist. Ich nutze es in diesem Abschnitt, um darzustellen, wie die vielfältigen Verfehlungen und gelegentlichen Errungenschaften des südafrikanischen Staates im Bereich Landreform dazu geführt haben, dass die eigenen Strukturen des Staates oftmals von individueller und kommunaler *Agency* abhängig sind.

Unterkapitel 9.2 konzentriert sich auf Trauma und Herkunftslegitimität und unterstreicht das Potenzial binärer Argumentationsmuster, nicht nur sich selbst kontextabhängig anzupassen, sondern auch jene Kontexte nachhaltig zu manipulieren, in welchen sie angewendet werden. Jessops Annahme, dass Strategie jenen relationalen Austausch zwischen *Structure* und *Agency* aufrechterhält, auf welchen strategisch veranlagte Akteur*innen zurückgreifen können, wird bestätigt. Darüber hinaus lässt die beobachtete Korrelation zwischen der Weiterentwicklung binär geprägter Argumentationsstrategien

und ihrer sich über Zeit und Raum ausdehnenden Anwendung gewisse Rückschlüsse zu. Zum Beispiel, ermöglicht es der dialektisch-evolutionäre Austausch zwischen *Structure* und *Agency*, dass sich durch binär geprägte Strategien noch komplexere strategisch-selektive Kontexte entwickeln. Er bewirkt auch, dass wiederum strategisch fähige Akteur*innen ein noch besseres Gespür für strategisch relevante Nuancen entwickeln, sodass sie auf den sich ständig weiterentwickelnden Wegen ihrer eigenen argumentativen Handlungsfähigkeit operieren können. Je regelmäßiger bestimmte *binaries* als strategische und taktische Mittel eingesetzt werden, desto größer ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass diese sich selbst und die Kontexte, in denen sie eingesetzt werden, verändern. In diesem Fall war es so, dass die beobachteten Autochthonie-Diskurse, welche auf vergangenen traumatischen Erfahrungen basierten, in engem Zusammenhang mit einem ebenfalls empirisch beobachteten dichotomen Verständnis legitimer und illegitimer Herkunft standen.

Der dritte und letzte Teil von Kapitel 9 ist den Auswirkungen von immer komplexer werdenden Kontexten auf die individuelle Handlungsfähigkeit gewidmet. Der Verlauf dieses Unterkapitels arbeitet auf eine Diskussion konkreter strategischer und taktischer Handlungsmuster in den Felddaten hin. Der Zweck dieser Übung besteht darin, zu veranschaulichen, wie *Agency* im ehemaligen KwaNdebele, trotz der Vorherrschaft binärer Argumentationsmuster, und trotz nicht-binärer, zunehmend komplexerer Realitäten, gedeihen kann. Ich werde den Begriff „*Performance Legitimacy*"[3] als analytisches Konzept vorschlagen, welche auf den taktischen Fähigkeiten einer Person basiert. Erfolgreiche zwischenmenschliche Leistung erzeugt Effekte, die zu einer Steigerung des Vertrauens und der Akzeptanz bei (potenziellen) Anhängern führen können und stellt daher einen wesentlichen Baustein für Legitimität dar, unabhängig davon, wie diese im allgemeineren Rahmen generiert wird (z. B. Webers Idealtypen legitimer Herrschaft oder Krämers Basislegitimität). Sowohl Erfolg als auch Misserfolg sind Symptome von *Agency*, und ich schlage eine Einzelfallbewertung empirischer Beispiele vor, um mehr Einblick in erfolglose Taktiken zu gewinnen und die kreative Spannung zwischen binärem Diskurs und komplexem Kontext besser zu verstehen. Zu diesem Zweck werde ich mich auf eine Reihe empirischer Beobachtungen konzentrieren, die alle durch den taktischen Charakter der beschriebenen Handlungen verbunden sind. Es wird gezeigt, wie wichtig die Begutachtung taktischen Verhaltens vor Ort ist, wenn man verstehen will, inwieweit es einzelnen Akteur*innen im ehemaligen KwaNdebele gelingt, alltägliche Kontexte (manövrierend und manipulierend) zu meistern. Die Spannung zwischen binär geprägten Diskursen und komplexen gesellschaftlichen Realitäten birgt ein erhebliches Potenzial für Handlungsfreiheit. Unter der Voraussetzung eines ausgewogenen taktisch-strategischen Ansatzes, der sowohl den strategischen Wert diskursiver *binaries* als auch die komplexen Kontexte, in denen sie

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[3] Im Sinne von Legitimität, welche sich aus einer erfolgreichen Ausführung gewisser Tätigkeiten oder der Darstellung gewisser Ideale ableitet.

eingesetzt werden, berücksichtigt, sind Akteur*innen an der gesellschaftlichen Basis in der Lage, groß angelegte Prozesse wie die landesweite Landreform signifikant zu beeinflussen.

Es ist durchaus möglich, taktische Muster zu identifizieren und sie mit kontextueller Selektivität in Beziehung zu setzen. Die kontextuelle Komplexität, welche diese Muster gleichzeitig ermöglicht, einschränkt und verschleiert, wird jedoch immer zahlreiche offene Fragen hinterlassen. Kapitel 10 wird den Versuch unternehmen, einige dieser offenen Fragen aufzugreifen und ein kohärentes Bild zu entwickeln, das die vielfältigen Daten, die Interpretationen und die daraus zu ziehenden Lehren vereint. Dieser Prozess wird durch eine abschließende Feldvignette unterstützt, die drei verschiedene semantische Interpretationen des Titels dieser Dissertation *„Battled Ground KwaNdebele"* widerspiegelt. Die erste Interpretation stützt sich auf das Partizip Perfekt *„battled"* als Passivform im Präsens, was bedeutet, dass das folgende Substantiv *„ground"* umkämpft ist. Land im ehemaligen KwaNdebele wird umkämpft, um Eigentum zu erlangen, Kontrolle über Bewohner auszuüben, Zugang zu Ressourcen zu erhalten, es als Subsistenzbasis zu sichern, politische Macht auf-/auszubauen, und um kulturelle Identität auszudrücken. In diesem Fall wird die Landreform, der Kampf (oder die Schlacht) um das Land, in den Mittelpunkt gestellt. Die zweite Interpretation wird *„battled"* als Adjektiv (im Sinne von ‚durch Kämpfe gezeichnet') behandeln, welches den *„ground"* basierend auf dessen bewegter Vergangenheit beschreibt. Es werden jene in dieser Dissertation ausführlich beschriebenen Konflikte zusammengefasst, welche eng mit der Landreform verbunden sind. Die Narben, welche vergangene *„battles"* im sinnbildlichen Boden der Gesellschaft hinterlassen haben, sind noch heute zu beobachten. Dies zeigen die spaltenden Diskurse, welche die Dichotomien der Vergangenheit so anwenden, als ob die einzelnen Bestandteile jedes binären Paares einst tatsächliche Gegner in einer realen Schlacht gewesen wären. In diesem Abschnitt wird noch einmal auf die Bedeutung von Geschichte, Hautfarbe, *Traditional Authority* und die analytische Relevanz strategisch eingesetzter Binärsysteme wie Tradition/Moderne hingewiesen. Drittens bezieht sich die Zusammensetzung von *„battle"* und *„ground"* zu *„battleground"* auf ein Bourdieu'sches Feld; Eine Vielzahl von Akteuren befindet sich in einem Umfeld taktischen und strategischen Austauschs bei der Verfolgung verschiedener individueller und kollektiver Ziele. In dieser Interpretation des Titels wird das ehemalige *Homeland* als ein historisch und sozial definierter geografischer Raum verstanden, in welchem mehrere strukturelle und handelnde Kräfte wirken, um ein komplexes System zu bilden. In diesem System stellen Land, seine Kontrolle, und Konflikte lediglich einige Knotenpunkte dar, die sich auf viele andere wichtige Themen beziehen. Ich werde jenen theoretischen Rahmen, in den diese Diskussion über Struktur, Handlungsfähigkeit, Strategie und Komplexität eingebettet ist, abschließend zusammenfassen. Dann führe ich die analytischen Ergebnisse dieser Dissertation zu einem integrierten Verständnis dieses besonderen Schlachtfelds zusammen und schließe dann mit ein paar letzten Bemerkungen zu den erreichten Zielen dieser Arbeit.

List of Abbreviations

ACLA	Advisory Commission on Land Allocation
ANC	African National Congress
BAD	Bantu Affairs Department
CCZ	Christian Church of Zion
CDW	Community Development Worker
CLR	Communal Land Rights (Act)
CODESA	Conference for a Democratic South Africa
CoGTA	(Department of) Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
COLA	Commission on Land Allocation
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
CPA	Communal Property Association
CRC	Constitutional Review Committee
CRLR	Commission on Restitution of Land Rights
DA	Democratic Alliance
DCAD	Department of Cooperation and Development
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DRDLR	Department for Rural Development and Land Reform
DTA	Department of Traditional Affairs
EAC	Ekangala Action Committee
ECM	Extended Case Method
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EWC	Expropriation Without Compensation
GT	Grounded Theory
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IQR	Interquartile Range
KLA	KwaNdebele Legislative Assembly
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LCC	Land Claims Court
LRC	Legal Resource Centre
M	Mean
Mdn	Median
MP	Member of Parliament
MTPA	Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
NEG	Ndebele Ethnic Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHTL	National House of Traditional Leaders
NNO	Ndebele National Organisation
NP	National Party
ODP	Originally Dispossessed People

PAF	Principal Axis Factoring (analysis)
PTO	Permission To Occupy
RDF&TLA	Rural Development Facilitation and Traditional Land Administration (subdirectory)
RLCC	Regional Land Claims Commissioner
RPOI	Ranked Potential Occupational Income (variable)
RRSE	Ranked Received Standard Education (variable)
SA	South Africa(n)
Sacotso Mia	South African Christian Organising and Training in Social Mutual Investment Aid
SADF	South African Defence Force
SADT	South African Development Trust
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SD	Standard Deviation
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
SRA	Strategic Relational Approach
STK	Suiderlike Transvaal Kooperasie
TA	Traditional Authority
TCB	Traditional Courts Bill
TIM	Traditional Institution Management (chief directory)
TIRA	Traditional Institution Resource Administration
TKLB	Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill
TL	Traditional Leader
TLGF	Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework (Act)
TNNO	Transvaal Ndebele National Organisation
TSS	Tactical-Strategic Spectrum
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNISA	University of South Africa
ULTR	Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights (Act)
ZCC	Zion Christian Church
ZAR	South African Republic / Transvaal Republic

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Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Topic

To talk about land in South Africa usually triggers emotional responses. Just like the use of foul language, the topic of land and the reform of its ownership relations can turn a normal conversation into an emotional debate in an instant. No matter on which end of the economic, social or political spectrum one engages in an exchange on the matter, everyone feels treated unfairly or cheated when it comes to land. Unequal distribution of land ownership along the race-based lines of bygone Apartheid days being one of the most acrimonious residues of the past, central figures in South African politics have in the recent decade profited from this emotional upheaval by chastising the purportedly vain attempts of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) to fix the issue in the last 30 years. At a time when the country finds itself once again at the crossroads in its strive to overcome the crippling aftermath of colonialism, segregation and – in particular – Apartheid, putative quick fixes are conveyed among all political and cultural groups. The allegedly poor performance of land reform since 1994 and the widespread dissatisfaction with democracy's achievements have provided a stage for radical populist reform demands by a wide range of political groups and persons of public interest. Unfortunately, this contest for attention and public opinion provokes the conclusion by observers and insiders that many have an opinion, but few have the necessary insights to fully justify it.

To claim that a problematic situation is more complex than it seems and that it takes more than one or two easy fixes to solve it is admittedly not very innovative both in- and outside of academic research. Furthermore, it conveys an air of arrogance, which – when uttered in the wrong situation – has a destructive rather than creative potential. Nonetheless, I found that this is the right context to make that claim and that it must be continuously reiterated, because its lesson is too often ignored, forgotten or yet to be learned. This dissertation aims to shed light on some significant dynamics at the grassroots level of the South African land debate, which in my opinion should be more often accounted for. To encounter the dynamics around land that develop and persist in the everyday life of rural communities and to follow the entangled streams of power that affect these communities can help explain why land is still an issue almost three decades after South Africa held its first democratic elections. Even though such an endeavour may not be easy to present and digest, it will surely prove more productive than parroting untenable quick fix slogans on the stages of local and national politics.

To portray how complex underlying structures and strategies are beyond the deafening rhetoric of the public debate, I have conducted field research in two communities of the former KwaNdebele Homeland for a total of twelve months between February 2016 and March 2018. In this time, I lived

with these communities and documented their experiences with and perspectives on South Africa's land reform, the 'traditional' and 'modern'[4] forms of government, and their overall coping strategies in an often puzzling and frustrating social environment.

One may find it ironic to apply ethnography as an anthropological method to investigate a problem that would possibly not even exist if it were not for centuries of colonization. Post-colonial or decolonizing perspectives have referred to "anthropology as representative of all that is truly bad about research" (Smith 2012: 11) and they must be taken seriously in this arena. Nonetheless, I believe that, once researchers have been sensitised to its pitfalls, ethnography's roots in colonial structures and dynamics may very well provide the means to debunk colonial narratives and become part of the solution (Zenker 2016). As an example, one can refer to the unfortunate fact that a large part of the public debate on South African land reform seems destined to be fought out based on the concept of 'race' and the labels that complement it. In South-African public discourse – as in many others – references to Black, Coloured, White, African and Indian parts of the population are widely accepted and applied. Acknowledging that the usage of these terms is problematic as they reinforce their claims to legitimacy under reprehensible regimes is the first step. Secondly, however, one must also accept that an adequate description of local realities would fail due to lack of appropriate alternatives and that to ignore their impact in South African society would do no justice to those who suffer under their persistence. Just like proper names I regard them as socially and culturally constructed and that is why I have chosen to present them with initial capitals. Marking and deconstructing 'race'-based labels and other colonial residues as such, is one of the tools that ethnography provides to this context: "The goal of fieldwork is to recognize patterns. The goal of writing ethnography is to express them" (Goodall 2000: 8)

This chapter will provide a short introduction to the aforementioned topics and will sketch out the general structure and thesis of this dissertation. In the following section, I have chosen to introduce the reader to the public debate on land reform by summarising the developments in that matter during the first year of the presidency of Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018 and early 2019. This will hopefully sufficiently illustrate the South African land reform context around the time when I concluded my field research and began the writing process.

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[4] Except for officially used labels such as "Traditional Authority/Leader", which are usually capitalised, I shall present these terms and their different grammatical versions in inverted commas to signify that I refer to them respectively as one individually or socially constructed version of 'tradition' or 'modernity'. A full discussion of this vein of thought will be presented in Chapter 4.1.

1.1 Land is a Four-Letter Word

On 15 February 2018, Cyril Ramaphosa held his maiden State of the Nation Address as South Africa's President. After having been elected president of the ANC in December 2017 it took him less than two months to also gain the national presidency. His predecessor Jacob Zuma had been forced to resign due to immense pressure by his own party for multiple reasons. One out of many points that Ramaphosa addressed in his speech was the issue of land reform:

> This year, we will take decisive action to realise the enormous economic potential of agriculture. We will accelerate our land redistribution programme not only to redress a grave historical injustice, but also to bring more producers into the agricultural sector and to make more land available for cultivation. We will pursue a comprehensive approach that makes effective use of all the mechanisms at our disposal. Guided by the resolutions of the 54th National Conference of the governing party, this approach will include the expropriation of land without compensation. We are determined that expropriation without compensation should be implemented in a way that increases agricultural production, improves food security and ensure that the land is returned to those from whom it was taken under colonialism and apartheid. (TheSouthAfrican.com 2018)

Land redistribution, as referred to by Ramaphosa in his speech, constitutes one of the three legs of South Africa's land reform efforts put in place after 1994. It stands for governmental efforts to buy land from willing White farmers and distribute it to Black communities and investors. The second of the three legs is the land restitution programme, referring to the return of land to former owners, who were dispossessed due to racially discriminatory practices since 1913. The third leg, tenure reform, was designed to provide tenants legally binding rights to the land that they were denied rights to due to racially discriminatory practices. All three approaches of South African land reform will be more or less discussed throughout this thesis and will be characterised in more detail in Chapter 4.3.

At the time of his speech, Ramaphosa and the ANC executives considered land expropriation without compensation as a potential new tool to intensify land redistribution. Restitution and land tenure reform were not explicitly mentioned in that regard at that point. However, many participants of the public debate interpreted the possibility of expropriation without compensation as a potential overhaul of South Africa's entire land ownership relations and a restart in land reform policy.

Opposition representatives responded differently in the parliamentary debate on the following Monday after Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address. Mmusi Maimane, then leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), urged Ramaphosa to uphold constitutional property rights while redesigning the ongoing land reform process. Julius Malema, president of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), accused Ramaphosa of lacking seriousness on this matter and urged him to not waste any time. The response that, however, opened the metaphorical can of worms was the one by Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) leader Chief Mangosutho Buthelezi:

What has changed? What does the ruling party see now that it didn't see before? Why is [sic!] the Ingonyama Act suddenly become the enemy number one? […] Does the ruling party truly believe that bureaucracy in plush offices can administer traditional land better than those who have been the custodians of our people's lives and dignity since time immemorial? […] Surely the policy of land expropriation without compensation should not be used against the poorest of the poor. (Whittles 2018)

Buthelezi referred to the possibility that land expropriation without compensation may also be applied in the case of the Ingonyama Trust, which owns and administers approximately three million hectares of land in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province on behalf of the Zulu King[5], at that time Goodwill Zwelithini[6]. President Ramaphosa responded to this in a parliamentary session on 20 February 2018 in the following way:

The expropriation of land without compensation is envisaged as one of the measures that we will use to accelerate the redistribution of land to black South Africans. We will need to determine, collectively, how we can implement this measure in a way that promotes agricultural production, improves food security, advances rural development, reduces poverty and strengthens our economy. […] We will always seek to do what is in the interests of our people. This includes, Honourable Buthelezi, how we will handle the Ingonyama Trust issue. No-one is saying that land must be taken away from our people. Rather it is how we can make sure that our people have equitable access to land and security of tenure. We must see this process of accelerated land redistribution as an opportunity and not as a threat. We must see it as an opportunity to free all of us from the bitterness and pain of the past. (Variawa 2018)

In the days that followed, the topic of land expropriation without compensation (later commonly referred to by the acronym EWC) was controversially discussed in several arenas and culminated into the passing of a parliamentary motion that was brought in by the EFF to allow for an amendment to the constitution, in order to facilitate expropriation of land without compensation only one week after Ramaphosa's speech (Gerber 2018b). For that purpose, section 25 in South Africa's Bill of Rights (Chapter Two of the Constitution) would have to be changed, even though a multitude of legalese commentators insisted that it already enabled the state to conduct extensive expropriation with the compensation being nil (Plessis et al. 2021). The matter was thereafter referred to a joint Constitutional Review Committee (CRC), which would in the following months, starting late June,

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[5] Whenever the concrete empirical context or the respective interlocutors themselves provided emic terms for the description of a particular 'traditional' office to me I have used them in this thesis. When writing of these offices generically with reference to several ethnically distinct groups or based on public discourse with only distant connection to the research field, as in this particular case, I have relied on their English equivalent. This seems to also be the rule of thumb observed by most South African government agencies and the media. Admittedly, this constitutes a problem, because titles like Headman were established in the Apartheid era and later appropriated for members of Traditional Councils, who had qualified based on chiefly appreciation rather than on 'customary' lineage association. The latter would for example be referred to as *induna* in IsiNdebele, rather than Headman.

[6] Zwelithini passed away in March 2021 having ruled the Zulu Nation since 1968. His son Misuzulu kaZwelithini was appointed in May 2021 and officially recognized and crowned in the second half of 2022

investigate public interest on the matter and conduct public hearings and evaluate written submissions (Daniel 2018f, 2018e).

Nothing was set in stone at that point and parliamentary mills only slowly started grinding. However, already on 22 February 2018 the KZN House of Traditional Leaders warned of bloodshed (Ndou 2018) should land be taken away from the Ingonyama Trust as this was also recommended in a report published in November 2017 by the High Level Panel on the Assessment of Key Legislation and the Acceleration of Fundamental Change (HLP 2017) chaired by former President Motlanthe. What followed were threats and attempts of intimidation against politicians and land reform experts. This prompted the South African Parliament to publicly criticise the Ingonyama Trust for "ongoing public castigations and personal attacks on former chairperson of the High Level Panel on Key Legislation and the Acceleration of Fundamental Change, Former President Mr Kgalema Motlanthe, and former Panel Member Dr Aninka Claasen [sic!], and the unwarranted threats regarding the Panel's report and recommendations" (Parliament of South Africa 2018).

To some readers the prominent participation of South Africa's Traditional Leaders in this debate on land reform may appear bewildering at first sight as the country has been hailed as one of Africa's most 'modern' democracies in recent history (Oomen 2005: 2). In fact, the role of Traditional Authorities and Leaders in South Africa is and has been an ambivalent one on multiple levels. From an historical perspective, they have fulfilled a range of diverse roles in relation to the state: as opponents and facilitators of colonial governments, as profiteers of indirect rule under Apartheid, as supporters of the struggle against the Pretoria regime. While the persistent existence of Traditional Authorities and Leaders in South Africa throughout the centuries is generally regarded as a *fait accompli* in public discourse (Mbeki 1964: 47), their continuing existence despite their problematic involvement in the indirect rule schemes of colonial and segregationist governments has provoked outbursts of academic criticism in recent years (e.g. Mamdani 1996; Ntsebeza 2005). From a social perspective, they have been framed as the last antiquated bulwark against the liberal modernisation of South African society, but also as crucial development brokers that are capable of making the voices of little people heard on a larger scale. Krämer has observed that South African chiefs "are the key for local citizens to access the clientelist network of the state elite" and that they are often filling an important intermediary position "being an administrative agent of the state on the one hand, and being a representative of local interests on the other" (2016: 120). From a legal perspective, South Africa's constitution provides that "institution, status and role of traditional leadership, according to customary law, are recognised" ("Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" 1996: S 211 (1)), but from the beginning their status was designed to be of customary significance only. However, since 2003 several acts have been passed by South Africa's democratically elected governments to protect, establish and foster 'traditional'

forms of governance on a local and regional level (Ainslie and Kepe 2016), which has de facto reinforced Homeland[7] boundaries and allowed a range of Traditional Leaders to exert significant influence on communal, provincial and even national politics, in particular with regards to land reform. Particularly in the former Homelands Traditional Authorities maintain their influence in matters of land administration, local governance and jurisdiction. This influence is often not necessarily based on legal regulations, but on administrative pragmatism and the support of the local population. Traditional Authorities, their social role and contested legitimacy in a democratic Republic of South Africa, are subject to intense debate in academic and non-academic arenas, which will be extensively summarised in Chapter 4.2 of this dissertation. South Africa's government at the point of writing recognizes and maintains seven Kingdoms (South African History Online 2023) and a large number of chieftaincies, among which the aforementioned late Zulu King Zwelithini surely held the most influential position throughout the last decades. One other recognised Kingdom is that of the AmaNdebele in former KwaNdebele Homeland[8] (northeast of Pretoria), where I conducted the field research for this dissertation. Here the nationwide debate on EWC also influenced the local mood.

On 03 March 2018, *iNgwenyama*[9] Makhosonke II rallied his people at koMjekejeke near Wallmansthal to the north of Pretoria to celebrate the 38th annual commemoration of late King Silamba. I was present and while most speaking dignitaries in the course of several hours of ceremony praised the Ndebele leader and the ruling ANC for their promotion of tradition and custom, Makhosonke himself uttered rather critical thoughts in his long-awaited speech. Having been the senior leader of the Manala Ndebele for 31 years at that point, Makhosonke had won significant legal battles in 2017/18, which

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[7] The terms 'Homeland' and 'Bantustan' tend to be used interchangeably and have been equally subject to criticism. 'Homeland' is criticised for its euphemistic and counterfactual character as most people were forcefully resettled to these areas after having lived in many different places for centuries and could therefore in no way relate to the Homelands as home (Delius and Hay 2009: 215). 'Bantustan' is often used in a pejorative way, describing an area that lacks behind in social and economic development and thereby reflects the aim that the Apartheid regime had when creating them. Unfortunately, there is a lack of alternatives and therefore I will use the capitalised term 'Homeland' as a proper noun that is used in South African administrative parlance.

[8] Grammatically, the Ndebele label is modified by adding prefixes, as it is done in most Bantu languages. 'AmaNdebele' marks plural while a single Ndebele person is referred to as 'MuNdebele'. 'IsiNdebele' refers to their language and 'KwaNdebele' is the place of the Ndebele. This will also be found in reference to other South African groups such as 'IsiZulu' (language of the Zulu), 'SePedi' (language of the Pedi) or 'BophuthaTswana' ("the gathering of the Tswana people").

[9] I will refer to present Traditional Leaders according to the title that has been conferred to them by the South African Government. To past leaders I will refer by the title that has been predominantly used in literature with the disclaimer that these are subject to dispute. The use of higher 'traditional' titles is a delicate matter. Emic terms such as *'iNgwenyama'* (isiNdebele, 'King') or 'Kgôsi' (Setswana/SeSotho, 'Chief') are surely most appropriate for contemporary actors, especially where these titles can be acknowledged in person. Unfortunately, these titles were often translated into eurogenic terms such as 'King', 'Prince' and 'Paramount' in early writings. These have been criticised to inadequately draw a parallel between African and European monarchies. In reference to historical figures this translation posits another hazard, because many leaders were simply referred to as 'Chief'. Whether such a chief was an *iNgwenyama* or an *iKosi* makes a large difference on the ground, however. Nonetheless the South African government officially refers to its recognized monarchies as kingships.

confirmed him as 'King' of all AmaNdebele. His legal opponent Mbusi II Mabhoko III had not only seen his own office as *iNgwenyama* of the Ndzundza Ndebele being demoted by the courts and commissions, but the entire Nation of the Ndzundza Ndebele, which he claimed to represent, had been relegated to a lesser position under the leadership of the Manala Royal House. Leadership disputes have been a common occurrence among the Traditional Leaders of post-Apartheid South Africa, having been described as "corrosive" and "pervasive", because they result in "communities being denied access to key resources", sometimes leading to "violence and the destruction of life and property", and constituting "a major impediment to democracy and development" (Delius 2021: 209f). More context on this matter will be provided in Chapter 4.2, the First *Entr'acte* (1E), and Chapter 5. Makhosonke in this context blamed government officials of other ethnic origin to be undermining Ndebele culture and stressed the necessity for strong leadership for a united Ndebele nation. The greatest threat to Ndebele sovereignty in his view: governmental institutions hindering the Ndebele Kingdom's struggle to reclaim the land that was taken away by colonial and Apartheid oppressors. Makhosonke explained that all land between Pretoria, Bronkhorstspruit and Delmas had been claimed for restitution to the Ndebele Nation, an area that includes highly profitable mines, agricultural land, and significant settlements. But the government had rejected that claim with the explanation that the Ndebele had not lived in this area as a united cultural group, but merely as labour tenants. Thus, the descendants of these families would have to lodge individual claims and Makhosonke as their Traditional Leader could not represent them in this case. Makhosonke, however, did not use that many words to explain the matter. He preferred: "*They say we were servants to the Boers and therefore the land cannot be returned to the Kingdom. If we were servants, how did the Boers get the land if not by stealing it from us?*"[10]. What followed were appeals to rise up and fight for the land of the Ndebele Nation, mentioning places that ought to be in the hands of Ndebele leadership, among them such places that are controlled by Ndebele chiefs that are opposed to Makhosonke's kingship. He then continued to refer to President Ramaphosa's support for EWC: "*These laws must not embarrass us. If it does not help the Ndebele, it is useless. The Ndebele are already being undermined and must not lose more land*"[11]. Being one of the thousands of spectators, I immediately connected these words to the public concern of the Ingonyama Trust representatives that land reform could be used to take away land control from Traditional Leaders. Surely, Makhosonke would be concerned about this possibility as well, especially since expropriation was only discussed with regard to land redistribution and not its restitution at that point. The spectator next to me, however, upon my enquiry explained that he agreed with the King that it was necessary to demand an intelligently designed law which would be consequently implemented in order to bring successful change. Ironically these two different

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[10] *In loco* translated by personal interpreter.
[11] *In loco* translated by personal interpreter.

interpretations of the same utterance reveal the differing perspectives that exist within the nationwide discourse on land reform.

Returning to the initially mentioned discussion of EWC: South Africa's most prominent monarch, Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini, became the spearhead of Traditional Authorities opposed to EWC in the months that followed and repeatedly rebuked any legal act that would hinder 'traditional' administration of 'tribal' land (Daniel 2018h). He even threatened the national government that the Zulu Kingdom would secede should its land be subject to expropriation (Andersen 2018b). The National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) joined him in this criticism and warned the government of taking away land control from them and announced resistance should their influence be affected (Breakfast 2018b). Only a few days after Zwelithini and the NHTL issued their warnings towards the government, the ANC coordinator of KZN vowed that their 'traditional' land would remain untouched by EWC (Daniel 2018a), his motivation for such an act being subject to wild speculation. Even President Ramaphosa was forced to concede: "It is not government's intention to go and grab land from rural communities, land that is under the control of traditional leaders" (In Stoddard 2018). In October 2018 Zwelithini, once again, renounced the government's plans for land redistribution based on EWC and announced the cooperation in this matter with AfriForum, a civil group lobbying in favour of White/Afrikaner farmers (Daniel 2018i) and advising them on land defence strategies (Daniel 2018d).

In the meantime, the public hearings by the joint CRC featured sometimes intense debates by activists from all sides of the political spectrum (Daniel 2018b; Breakfast 2018c; Head 2018) but also calm and logically stringent contributions from legal and economic experts (Gerber 2018c). At the final stage of the hearings ANC leadership made an official statement in favour of a constitutional amendment that would allow land redistribution based on the right to expropriate land without compensation (Madia 2018). It therefore did not surprise that, in mid-November, the ANC and EFF MPs on the CRC adopted the motion in favour of an amendment of the Constitution's section 25 to allow for EWC. It was declared that: "Parliament must appoint a mechanism to draft the amendment and that this must be done before the Fifth Parliament rises before the 2019 general elections" (Gerber 2018a). In early December 2018 the CRC report was tabled in the National Assembly and a two third majority of ANC and EFF MPs voted in favour of amending the constitution (Daniel 2018c). An ad hoc committee was then tasked to draft a bill until the end of March 2019 (SAnews 2018a). However, a report was soon leaked and a draft version of the bill was publicly gazetted in December (Haden 2018). The general public was then invited to comment on the draft bill which was expected to be finalised after the general elections in May 2019 (Daniel 2019).

Even though this process implied no concrete legislative action towards a 'smash and grab' land reform, emotions began to stir even before the CRC released its final report. While some news

commentators (Berrien 2018) and international politicians (News24 2018; Goldman 2018) interpreted this action as a racially motivated step against White farmers, others put in doubt whether such expropriation could also include property other than land as the property clause of the Bill of Rights also includes other assets such as livestock or intellectual property (Hall 2018). Despite the sharp political rhetoric and ambitious plans around land expropriation, some political voices attempted to bring forward reasonable arguments, but remained largely unheard. The ANC land summit in May 2018 concluded that national, provincial and municipal governments actually already had the power to expropriate land and urged regional governments to 'test' the legal apparatus and Section 25 of the Constitution (Breakfast 2018a; Andersen 2018a). Earlier that month, the national Minister of Rural Development and Land Redistribution had pointed out realistic steps that should be undertaken to speed up land reform beyond EWC and also listed impressive figures as proof of the programme's success (SAnews 2018b). President Ramaphosa in the meantime also dedicated time and effort to a diligent redesign of land reform as a whole by forming a 10-person advisory panel in late September 2018. It was given six months "to review, research and suggest models for government to implement a fair and equitable land reform process that redresses the injustices of the past, increases agricultural output, promotes economic growth and protects food security" (Hall in Daniel 2018g).

By now the significance of South African land reform on a national and international scale during Ramaphosa's first year as South Africa's President should be sufficiently clear and therefore a fast-forwarded view at the state of this process at the time of writing is due. After further commissions, panels, reports, ministerial redesigns and office shuffles, public debates, lawsuits, bill amendments, parliamentary deliberations, a national election and a worldwide pandemic eventually two pieces of legislation emerged: the 18th Amendment Bill to the Constitution and the Land Expropriation Bill. The former eventually failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority in the National Assembly on 7 December 2021 (Simpson 2021) as the EFF denied their support claiming the bill was not radical enough. Thereafter, the governmental supporters of EWC thus bethought themselves of the argument that had accompanied the whole debate for years; the Constitution already implicitly allowed for expropriation without compensation (Plessis et al. 2021) and therefore went ahead with the Land Expropriation Bill, which was passed by the National Assembly on 28 September 2022 with a simple majority (Simpson 2022). It is aimed to repeal the "outdated" Expropriation Act 63 of 1975 (Coetzee and Marais 2021), whose update had been attempted by parliaments and governments since 2008. The bill was then passed to the National Council of Provinces, which reopened it for public comment (van Zyl 2023). In particular the bill's clause 12(3) has been subject to dispute ever since:

> It may be just and equitable for nil compensation to be paid where land is expropriated in the public interest, having regard to all relevant circumstances, including but not limited to –

(a) where the land is not being used and the owner's main purpose is not to develop the land or use it to generate income, but to benefit from appreciation of its market value;

(b) where an organ of state holds land that it is not using for its core functions and is not reasonably likely to require the land for its future activities in that regard, and the organ of state acquired the land for no consideration;

(c) notwithstanding registration of ownership in terms of the Deeds Registries Act, 1937 (Act No. 47 of 1937), where an owner has abandoned the land by failing to exercise control over it;

(d) where the market value of the land is equivalent to, or less than, the present value of direct state investment or subsidy in the acquisition and beneficial capital improvement of the land; and

(e) when the nature or condition of the property poses a health, safety or physical risk to persons or other property ("Expropriation Bill" Bill 23 of 2020)

1.2 Research Objectives

So why has land reform in South Africa remained allegedly unsuccessful in the past 30 years? Why are there still stretches of land under claim for restitution? Why are there still land tenants who do not own the title deed to the land they have been living on for decades? As long as these restitution and tenancy claims are not settled is there any sense in discussing EWC to redistribute the land? Must agricultural productivity be the main measure to evaluate land reform's success? Where does the narrative come from that redistributed land will suffer a loss of productivity? Why do South Africa's Traditional Authorities so vehemently oppose a more radical approach to land reform while presenting themselves as advocates of the landless masses? Are those Traditional Authorities that control vast amounts of land to be seen as legitimate representatives of the people they govern? What does all this imply for South Africa's democratisation process?

To aim at thoroughly discussing all these questions within one dissertation would be considered a Herculean task and I would not be the first one to fail at it. To present a solution for the entire South African land reform would be delusional and careless. Nonetheless these guiding questions must be taken seriously and I aim to retrace their origins at the grassroots level of rural South Africa. I do not regard top-down EWC as an economically and socially favourable fix for South Africa's ambitious land reform programme. Rather, I believe that an understanding for the grassroots processes that have impacted the reform process so far must be gained first in order to improve it. Looking at the national and regional land reform debate of 2018/19 that was characterized above, one finds that it has been dominated by the centre and not by the peripheries (Clarke 2011: Ch. 1), but it is mostly the poorer rural areas where land restitution and tenure reform are stalling. The purpose of this research venture was therefore the exploration of land reform processes in former KwaNdebele and to gain a better understanding of the roles that significant local actors such as tenants, claimants, Traditional Authorities and state administrators play in it.

Complex problems originate in complex contexts. The situations that one finds in the former Homelands, where many restitution and tenancy claims remain unsettled, are often beyond simple Black versus White dichotomy and involve complex networks driven by ethnic reservations, greed, revenge, pride, faith and loyalty. To give a well-informed and coherent answer to a complex question, thus requires a carefully defined focus, in an attempt to not allow complexity to take the shape of chaos and thus overwhelm the scientific enquiry. Furthermore, it requires the help of those who are familiar to the contexts from which the question emanates. In fact, I regard those individuals and groups that are central actors in the local land reform process not as methodological means to a yet undefined theoretical end. Rather I regard the grassroots processes of land reform in KwaNdebele to be essentially informed by strategic agency, which needs to be acknowledged and accounted for if

South Africa is to shake off the yoke of its segregationist past. Local actors portray an amount of agency that is not to be sneered at and they have learned to manoeuvre around the structures that surround them in their strive for land, wealth, power and justice. By focusing on the discourses, conflicts and alliances that take place in former KwaNdebele I aim to reveal some of the complexities that influence South Africa's land reform from the bottom up and to, furthermore, portray the role that traditionalistic leadership systems play in them. It will be shown how governmental policies, bureaucratic decisions, strategic constructions of history, fragile alliances and many more factors amalgamate to answer the <u>main research questions</u> of this thesis: To which extent do strategically informed grassroots processes influence land reform in former KwaNdebele today? What strategies are applied by local actors? What are the structural constraints to these strategies and do these strategies have the potential to cause significant developments to the overall context?

Having formulated a purpose statement and a range of research questions, I find it necessary to contextualise the theoretical framework within which they were brought to fruition after the data collection process. I have used terms such as structure, actor, agency and strategy. This indicates that my analysis was based on the theoretical framework provided by some of the outcomes of the Structure/Agency debate, i.e. "how far are we creative human actors, actively controlling the conditions of our own lives? Or is most of what we do the result of general social forces outside our control?" (Giddens 2009: 87). Countless contributions have been made to this debate and I have chosen to avail myself of three ontologies that it has produced to reach an understanding of the field.

Anthony Giddens's concept of 'structuration' is based on an understanding of structure and agency constituting a duality rather than a dualism. He suggests: "To enquire into the structuration of social practices is to seek to explain how it comes about that structure is constituted through action, and reciprocally how action is constituted structurally" (Giddens 1993 [1976]: 169). Giddens's duality of structure, in which a binary pair is not regarded as two mutually exclusive entities but as one entity whose two binary components are constitutive necessities of each other, has enabled me to incorporate binarily constructed worldviews and arguments from the field as part and parcel into the complexity of social reality in that same field.

Pierre Bourdieu's approach is similar and is based on his prominent conceptualisations of *habitus*[12] and *field*, among a range of others. The *habitus* is famously described by Bourdieu as "the feel for the game" (Bourdieu 1990 [1987]: 63f) while the *field* is often likened to a playing field, where games and competitions are practiced, a field of knowledge, a battle field or a "'field of struggles' in which actors

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[12] Most scholars discussing *habitus* and other Bourdieusian concepts use italics to denote the analytical concept, while meaning its real-life referent when written in non-italics: "*Habitus* thereby aims to shape our habitus – it aims to help transform our ways of seeing the social world." (Maton 2014 [2008]: 60)

strategically improvise in their quest to maximise their positions" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 53). These concepts have allowed me to liken the South African struggle for just and equal land access to a competition. The *field* that serves Bourdieu as an allegory to describe the simultaneous conditioning of the *habitus* and the constitutive powers of the same (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127, original emphasis), was so much more than a mere allegory in this research context; it was actual land, contested ground, that individuals and groups went into allegorical and literal battle for.

Taking the understanding of South African land reform as a battleground to the next level, my analysis was even more aided by clear-cut definitions of strategy and tactics, inspired by their original militaristic meanings. Bob Jessop's Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA) (Jessop 1996, 2009 [2007]) and Colin Hay's discussions thereof in the context of discourse analysis (Hay 1998, 2001, 2002), not only provided me with such useful definitions and allowed me to adapt them to the ethnographic ambitions of this research venture, but also provided a theoretical framework that enabled me to describe and analyse individual and communal practices in a new light. By embracing complexity and depicting it as the explanatory principle in a critical realist framework the SRA constitutes an ontology within which structure and agency evolve in a dialectical relation that culminates in states of structured coherence and patterned incoherence. By focusing on strategic action and the strategically-selective contexts within which strategically-inclined agents operate I was not only able to characterise the former KwaNdebele Homeland as an allegorical battleground; I also gained valuable insight into the grassroots processes that impact upon the national land reform process from the bottom up.

1.3 Thesis Outline

Having provided a thematic and theoretical introduction above, I now entertain the reader with a short outline of the chapters that follow. This dissertation is structured into an introductory part (Chapters 1 and 2), a main part (Chapters 3 to 9), and a concluding part (Chapter 10). The following Chapter 2 will introduce the field site, the researcher, and the methods that were applied. This will be aided by Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to depict my overall reflexive approach to data accumulation and analysis. I will present details on the field sites, understood as theatrical stages: how I came to find my field sites and what overall situation I found there. Embedded in a short discussion of post-modernist/post-structuralist ethnographic discourse I will then present myself and my research participants as anti-hero narrator and protagonists through the stylistic device of illeism. Thereafter the methodological procedure will be presented as a theatrical performance, which includes a discussion of multi-sitedness, mixed-method approaches, and the extended case method (ECM), all of which I applied.

The tripartite structure is then repeated in the main part of this dissertation: Chapters 3 and 4 provide thorough discussions of the theoretical and empirical framework; Chapters 5 to 7 present my empirical data; Chapters 8 and 9 conclude the main part with the analysis. These three sections of the dissertation's main part are furthermore interlinked with digressive chapters that I have labelled *Entr'acte*, thus extending the theatrical metaphor a little further and probably also self-mockingly reinforcing the cliché of ethnographers as novelists *manqué* (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 4). To present theory, empirical data and analysis separately, may be seen as unconventional in ethnographic writing, where they are usually presented together within topically arranged chapters. Likewise did/do most of those scholars who base their work on the ECM often keep theory, empirical observation and analysis very close in writing considering their overall research as concurrently empirical and theoretical at all points (e.g. Gluckman 1956; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Burawoy 1998). Many of the contributors of this dissertation's theoretical scope have even made the intermingling of theory and empirical observation their trademark:

> I delight in those books in which theory, because it is the air one breathes, is everywhere and nowhere - in the detour of a note, in the commentary on an old text, or in the very structure of interpretative discourse. I feel completely at home with those authors who know how to infuse the most decisive theoretical questions into a meticulously conducted empirical study, and who give concepts a usage that is both more modest and more aristocratic, sometimes going as far as to conceal their own contribution within a creative reinterpretation of theories which are immanent in their object. (Bourdieu 1996 [1992]: 178)

However, I have attempted a different approach for I regard the concealment of own contributions mentioned by Bourdieu above as counterproductive to researcher reflexivity in the writing and reading process. This is also due to my interpretation of the lessons taught by the ECM:

> But the extended case method is distinctive in that it assumes that we unavoidably bring tacit or explicit theoretical concepts to our observations in the field. Therefore, any given site or episode could always be theorized in many different ways, since what we 'see' in the field depends on the theoretical lens through which we view it. (Wadham and Warren 2014: 13)

Acknowledging the existence of such theoretical lenses, the incompleteness of any empirical data and the potentially biased interpretation thereof implies a certain need for transparency. As much as it has become unusual to present 'objectively true' data in ethnographic research, it does, in my view, also not suffice to acknowledge the theory-ladenness of one's empirical data but to then leave the written presentation of it, including its structure, unaffected. I regard it as a must to apply such stylistic devices that impede the tendency of every author to hide biases and premature conclusions behind labyrinthine storylines and unannounced divagations. Through a separated presentation of theory, empirical data and analysis I try to compensate the effects of the analytical processes and theoretical filters that were inevitably but to a certain extent knowingly applied in the field during data collection. Furthermore, acknowledging the sometimes confusing terminology of academic discourse with its often conflicting ontological, epistemological and methodological presuppositions implies a need for clarity from the very start. Therefore, I present the theoretical discourses that provide the central dimensions for analysis before the more extensive depiction of empirical field data to make them explicit. This is neither to say that their separate written presentation will render the researcher's tendency to conflate theory, data and analysis innocuous, nor is it meant to retroactively discard the iterative methodological process that will be illustrated in the following chapter. Rather do I hope that this structure of content will explicitly identify those dimensions that have had their largest share in the research process and will thus add a degree of transparency, which will enable the reader to retrace my research steps.

One may interpret the order in which I present theory, data and analysis as mirroring the procedural primacy of deductive theory, but I insist that this not the case. My general research approach aimed to be based on inductive and abductive reasoning. The theories and contexts that I present in Chapters 3 and 4 are none of my own. Structure/Agency, Tradition versus Modernity, Democracy versus Chieftaincy, and Black Land versus White Land[13] are binary pairs from academic and emic discourses

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[13] As I regard the written representations of binary pairs as constructed I will capitalize them throughout this thesis, thus treating them as proper nouns. While I have decided to separate the constituents of generic underlying binaries with a slash (X/Y), dichotomous and hierarchical binaries are marked with a 'versus' to highlight their antagonistic character.

that merely provide some of the analytical dimensions that I applied within my own theory building process. The majority of my basic theoretical considerations, such as the Tactical-Strategic Spectrum proposed in section 3.2.3, were found and refined after field research had ended, but to present their constitutive discourses first will, I hope, capacitate the reader of this dissertation to retrace their origins within the data presented thereafter.

Chapter 3 provides the reader with a thorough introduction to the central theoretical framework that this dissertation is based upon: a discussion of the Structure/Agency debate and three different ontological approaches to it. The discussion will be initiated by a field vignette, which illustrates the workings of structure and agency in the South African field. I will then provide a short summary on the debate's most essential sociological viewpoints, starting with Weber, Durkheim and Marx and moving on to the perspectives of structuralism (Lévi-Strauss), post-structuralism (Foucault), Marxist theories and ultimately practice theory. Thereafter a summary of Bourdieu's ontology of *habitus*, *field* and *capital* will be presented, which provides a relational perspective onto the debate. The following rundown of Giddens's *structuration* theory provides an insight into agents' dialectical relationship with the structures of their mind and the system that provides for and derives from them. The opening vignette and the agents' strategic and tactical practices therein will then provide me with the grounds to make a point in favour of contemplating the Structure/Agency debate – and more specifically the South African field setting – with regard to strategic and tactical actions and contexts. After differentiating between strategy and tactics based on different degrees of spatial and temporal immediacy and establishing intention as a crucial parameter in their relation, I will introduce the Strategic-Relational Approach as it was developed by Bob Jessop. Seizing criticism of Hay's more actor-centred approach to the SRA I will then suggest a Tactical-Strategic Spectrum which divides actors and their actions into four ideal types: tactically-inclined, tactically-able, strategically-able, and strategically-inclined.

Chapter 4 will introduce the origins and effects of three controversial yet important binaries: Tradition versus Modernity, Democracy versus Chieftaincy and Black Land versus White Land. While the aim of this task will be similar to the discussion in Chapter 3, the purpose will be a different one. The aim will be a deconstruction of these seemingly dichotomous and hierarchical dualisms to reveal their underlying complex duality. The purpose will, however, not be the establishment of a theoretical framework, but an introduction to three of the most significant contexts of my field research. The Structure/Agency binary originates in an academic debate and it is highly unlikely that it will be directly referred to in the everyday discourses of this or most other fields. Contrary to this, the three binaries discussed in Chapter 4 are, explicitly, of emic origin in this field setting. That is why the significance of

these three interrelated binaries will be illustrated by using the SRA as a heuristic tool of discourse analysis, as suggested by Hay.

The first binary having been Structure/Agency in Chapter 3, the second binary, Tradition versus Modernity, will require a similar overview of the most significant related anthropological debates throughout the last century. While this overview is, of course, not based on emic perspectives per se, it culminates in an understanding of the Tradition/Modernity binary that encapsulated the empirically observed tension between these two terms, but also a particular discursive arena in equal measure. In this arena both supposedly 'traditional' and 'modern' elements may coexist and their role is subject to constant negotiation processes as they are being used strategically to their beholder's advantage. However, an almost arbitrary use of 'traditionalities' and 'modernities' creates more questions than answers, especially in KwaNdebele, where traditionalistic argumentation often supports utterly modernistic goals. I assume that, on the one side, both the structures around the involved actors and the strategies that they apply shape these traditionalities and modernities. On the other side, structures and strategies are simultaneously being influenced by the already existing dominant 'traditional' and 'modern' narratives of previous discourses and practices.

I begin the presentation of the third binary, Democracy versus Chieftaincy, by reference to the strategic value of the Tradition versus Modernity binary and how it is often extended into a discussion of political institutions in South Africa. After a short excursus on the 'neo-traditional' label and my reasons for refraining from using it, I will introduce the academic debate on Traditional Authorities and their role in South Africa's liberal democracy. While one camp praises Traditional Authorities as development brokers, accessible representatives of their subjects and even non-democratic champions of democracy, the camp on the other side of the spectrum regards customary law and the access to executive power through male primogeniture as a continuation of the Homeland system and as detrimental to the entire democratic project. Those scholars that operate between these extremes try to account for the complex realities in the affected communities and present different analytical lenses through which they hope to make more sense of a highly controversial situation. I will then interrupt the discussion of academic perspectives to provide some legalistic and historic background information on some of the roles that South African Traditional Authorities played in Apartheid's Homeland system, during the transition to democracy, and on some of the relevant legislation that has been introduced since then. The theoretical discussion then continues with particular focus on the relationship between state, rural communities, and Traditional Authorities and the ways in which the latter establish and maintain legitimacy. Mario Krämer's work on Traditional Authorities in KZN will exemplify the co-dependent relationship between municipalities and Traditional Leaders, and it will introduce an

understanding of basic legitimacies that will enable an assessment of the situation through the theoretical lens of the SRA.

The fourth binary, Black Land versus White Land, concerns two highly controversial topics: land and racism. Addressing the latter straight away, the section begins with an illustration of the essential role that the concept of 'race' played to the colonial project, similar to the Tradition versus Modernity dichotomy. Because the implementation of race-based segregation is so tightly connected to the matter of land ownership and land occupation throughout South African history since the beginning of colonialism, the matter of equal access to land was a crucial stumbling block in the negotiations of the transition to democracy. In order to reduce the potential for conflict between White interest groups who feared for their property rights and formerly disenfranchised groups who hoped for justice to be restored with regards to land access, the *ultima ratio* was rigid constitutionalism: both property rights and land reform were enshrined in the constitution but their implementation was left to future governments. The first pillar of land reform is land redistribution, which will be the least significant in this dissertation apart from the opening vignette on the nationwide EWC debate. The second pillar is tenure reform: I will introduce the relevant legislation and I will provide a short vignette from the field with regards to the challenges that local municipal administrators face in the upgrading of land titles. The third and in this dissertation's context most significant pillar of land reform in South Africa is land restitution: I will describe the relevant legislation and the different phases that it went through, and I will explain how it relates to the matter of 'race' in the national discourse. The reopening of land restitution through President Zuma in 2014 will be discussed (1) in relation to the role of Traditional Authorities and their troubled relationship with democratic land administration institutions such as Communal Property Associations, but (2) also in respect of the increasingly racialized discourse that developed nationally on the back of the land restitution programme. After illustrating a range of different racially-infused discourses that revolve around land reform I will then try to relay the actual complexities that operate beyond the binary skin colour divide based on empirical examples by Olaf Zenker and by Deborah James. This will conclude Chapter 4 and thus the first third of this dissertation's main part.

The motive behind the *Entr'acte*, this divergence from the separation of theory, empirical data, and analysis, is necessary because I understand history to operate beyond and between the limits of clearly defined (ontological) theory and empirical data and thus deserves to be dealt with outside of the chosen 'segregated' approach. In this case, however, the presented content is not only loosely connected to the original argument of this dissertation as it would be the case in an excursus, parenthesis or any other kind of digression. Rather it is part and parcel to understanding some of the most crucial observations that follow and it furthermore relates to the previous discussion of

Homeland and Apartheid politics. It constitutes a plot of its own, yet it picks up and anticipates the developments in the chapters that frame it. This chapter-between-sections summarizes the history of the Transvaal Ndebele. More specifically it provides mostly established but also some controversial facts about where those inhabitants of former KwaNdebele who identify themselves as the descendants of Manala, Ndzundza and Litho came from, their leadership disputes and how they came to have their own Homeland in Apartheid South Africa. The first part of this chapter covers the different trajectories of the Ndebele in colonial times until the beginning of Apartheid while the second part summarises the short-lived history of the KwaNdebele Homeland until its dismantling at the dawn of democracy.

Turning towards my empirical data, Chapter 5 presents qualitative interview data on three interrelated issues that derive from the history of the Southern Ndebele and that remain significant and controversial to this day. The first topic will be the continued accommodation of Traditional Leadership within the post-Apartheid South African state. The section aims to shine a light onto those actors and their standpoints, who are located at the interface of Democratic and Traditional Leadership in former KwaNdebele. The second topic is related to the first and concerns the control over land. Those actors, who are meant to benefit from land reform's implementation, and those, who manoeuvre within its frameworks to sustain and consolidate their strategic advantages, are to be heard in this section. The third issue concerns the persistent leadership dispute between the royal houses of Manala and Ndzundza. They have fought for official recognition as kingships and for their opponents' demotion in front of the state's commissions and courts since the Mbeki administration passed the first piece of legislation on Traditional Leadership in 2003. While the stakes seem clearly defined in this matter, its effects on the grassroots level require further exploring. Therefore, after discussing the issue from the official perspective, taking into account commission findings, presidential declarations, and court rulings, and the perspective of some significant local actors, I will in a second step follow the dispute to the inside structures of the Ndzundza leadership where a Bishop and a Prince forged plans to replace the incumbent Ndzundza leader and to re-establish the Ndzundza Kingship.

Another more pragmatic reason for the chosen content structure is Chapter 6: The Litho Complex. Throughout my field research I have spent a substantial amount of time and energy trying to understand the power dynamics of the Litho Ndzundza of Rapotokwane and their decades-long strive to have their former home, which is known as Rust de Winter today, returned to them through the land restitution programme. In the course of this particular branch of my research a large body of complicated and complex data was accumulated, which depends on a variety of themes to render it understandable. Therefore, it was necessary to present this data together in one chapter; this chapter would have been too long had I attempted to pair the empirical data with theoretical and analytical

deliberations. While the first *Entr'acte* provided some general history of the Southern Transvaal Ndebele and the most essential leadership splits that occurred in their history, Chapter 6 begins with a slightly more detailed description of what happened to the Litho Ndzundza after their split from the main Ndzundza branch at KwaMaza and how they ended up in Rapotokwane. Furthermore, the depiction of their origins lays the groundwork for the following section, which deals with some of the leadership disputes and power struggles that I was able to observe and document during my time in the field. The most important part of this particular chapter, however, summarizes the struggle for land restitution for the abovementioned Rust de Winter region. I will summarize the legal developments in the two and a half decades prior to my arrival in the field and then continue with the crucial events that took place in the second half of 2017 and early 2018. I was able to attend multiple essential public meetings, three of which I will describe in detail to illustrate the dynamics that have captured this particular land restitution case at the grassroots level.

Chapter 7 is based on a survey that was developed and conducted in Libangeni and Rapotokwane between September 2017 and January 2018. In a similar fashion to Chapter 6, the presentation of the questionnaire development process and the statistical processing of the gathered survey data takes up a lot of room, wherefore the in-depth analysis of this data will be presented in Chapter 8. The survey aimed at identifying some of the foundations that discursive strategies and strategic binaries are built upon. Its presentation is situated in a difficult interdisciplinary setting, trying to cater for the demands of both anthropological and statistical writing. To ease the ethnographically inclined reader into the argumentative structures and the procedures of statistical analysis I will present an investigation into the potential influence that interviewer bias may have had during the data collection process. Thereafter I will present the descriptive data that derives from 615 filled out questionnaires, and which grants an insight into the heterogenous character of the region with regards to home language, standard education and occupation. It furthermore provides illustrative data with regards to past settlement policies and land allocation practices. In the survey respondents were asked to rank 26 items with regards to the importance they personally assign to them. These 26 items will be grouped into five different clusters through a Principal Axis Factoring analysis. The following correlative analysis aims at answering four different questions, which – on an abstract level – are relatable to the Structure/Agency framework that the theoretical level of this dissertation operates in. The assumption that strategy is at play in a facilitating and simultaneously restricting way between structures and agents will be confirmed this way. It will show how structural factors such as demographics or infrastructural capacities influence the access to institutions and the opinions that actors develop. Also, it will show that opinions are not necessarily determined by these external factors, but that practices derive from a complex web of priorities and possibilities.

The Second Entr'acte, in a similar fashion to the first one, functions as a bridge between the presentation of empirical data and theory-driven analysis. This transition will be gradually achieved by beginning with a presentation of group discussion set-up and outcomes and by then continuing the analysis of these outcomes based on the theoretical framework of this thesis. In this process these three ontologies by Bourdieu, Giddens and Jessop will be tested for their adequacy in the analysis of inductive data from a method setting whose design was driven by field experience rather than theoretical zeal. The motivation to pinpoint some of the challenges that these theories face when dealing with ethnographic data derives from the Extended Case Method's ambition to elaborate and reconstruct existing theory. Therefore, rather than merely pointing out the contingent disharmony between method and theory in this particular case, I will continue the assessment with a range of examples from the empirical data that illustrate the merit of these ontologies. To exemplify the benefits and limits of Bourdieu's theory of practice I will analyse the three main Litho land claim meetings from Chapter 6 which will reveal the extensive workings of *habitus*, *capital* and *field* throughout them. The Giddensian concepts of *duality of structure*, *structuration*, and *time-space* will be discussed through various examples. This will include among others the patterns behind Ndebele leadership disputes throughout history, the relationship between the Ndebele and the South African state, and the strategic appreciation of both 'tradition' and 'modernity' by Traditional Leaders and their supporters. Jessop's SRA will be put to the test by identifying instances of strategic conduct in circumstances of *structured coherence* and *patterned incoherence*. The former will be exemplified by the persistence of the Manala leadership since the late 1980s (see Chapter 5) while the latter will be illustrated by means of the argumentative avenues that were used by Sebatshelwa Matthews and his nephew Iggy Litho (see Chapter 6).

The SRA will be the main theoretical catalyst in Chapters 8 and 9 while theory of practice and structuration theory will occasionally provide analytical tools wherever necessary. The SRA's open embrace of complexity as the constitutive principle and perpetuated outcome of the strategic relation between structure and agency provides the most convincing arguments to apply it in a thorough analysis of the empirical data presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. To achieve the aim of this thesis, i.e. a more thorough understanding of the social grassroots processes through which individuals and communities influence land reform in former KwaNdebele, it is essential to have an ontological model at hand that can shed light on both structural and agential forces at play in the field and Jessop's SRA fulfils this requirement. However, an ethnographic adaptation of the SRA must primarily identify very concrete strategies and contexts where structured coherence prevents agency or where patterned incoherence provides opportunities for it. The analysis in Chapters 8 and 9 will therefore pursue six aims: (1) the identification of distinctive characteristics of strategically-selective contexts in the field data, (2) the identification of strategic tools that are available to the agents within these contexts, (3)

an explanation why certain available tactics were chosen by the involved agents, (4) an illustration how these strategically-driven tactics altered the respective strategically-selective context, (5) an insight into the ways in which the use of simplified binary arguments actually creates even more complex strategically-selective contexts, (6) and finally a clarification of the implications that this has on the range of agency of actors in the field. I expect that the pursuit of these aims will contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which the strategic practical and discursive use of underlying binary pairs helps individuals, groups, communities and institutions to present their own objectives in a favourable light, to manipulate structures and other agents' perspectives to their advantage, and to successfully manoeuvre those contexts where manipulation proves ineffective.

The complex character of the entities and processes under scrutiny in the pursuit of these six aims impedes their depiction through two-dimensional written language. I will therefore refrain from processing these targets one after another. Instead I shall present a range of themes, which – in dependence on Jessop's critical realist core assumptions – are based on underlying abstract but real patterns that are often binary in character. Chapter 8 will be dedicated to a separate analysis of structure and agency. First, I will re-explore the statistical data presented in Chapter 7 to paint a thorough picture of the strategically-selective contexts of my field and the hypothetical avenues that they provide to potential actors within them. A range of statistically correlating clusters and the network that extends between them will illustrate the potential complexity that strategically-inclined agents need to navigate. By elaborating strategically informed options of practice and by illustrating the exponentially available pathways of potential conduct the diverse strategic tools available to the agents within these contexts will become apparent. Then, I will explore the Tradition/Modernity binary based on the contextual contingency that it creates and I will delineate two major ways in which I have seen it used strategically. I hope that this way it will become clear how out of these strategic options, binarily informed tactics provide a certain creative advantage as they simplify the context but by engaging with it simultaneously have the potential to increase its complexity and thus create more avenues of agency.

Chapter 9 abandons the methodological bracketing approach of Chapter 8 and discusses three larger central themes in the empirical data. Its focus lies on the alteration of contexts through strategically-driven tactics, the impact of argumentative binaries on complex contexts, and the implications that these have on individual agency. The chapter begins with an examination of the versatile role, i.e. three different modes of representation, that the South African state plays in the research data (9.1). I have found the South African state to be represented through individual actors such as government Ministers, through strategically-selective contexts that are structured by the decisions made in governmental institutions, and through strategically and tactically informed rhetorical references to

the state as a homogenously depicted yet agential third party. While these three modalities illustrate how the South African state and its citizens find themselves in a strategic-relational give-and-take situation, the following discussion of three further empirical subclusters will explore the ways in which strategic conduct can exploit and even alter strategically-selective contexts. The first of these clusters focuses on observations of state dependency and shows how some agents who recognise and tolerate that dependency on the state can derive a certain degree of agency from it. The second cluster, entitled 'ignorance is bliss', refers to observations in which the feigned, assumed or actual ignorance of involved actors provided in particular the state and its representatives with tactical advantages, so much so that one may even assume strategically informed patterns behind it. The third thematic cluster, 'the state's flaws and blessings', is based on an ambivalent understanding of the state as both obstacle and resource, both nuisance and utility. In reference to Jessop's conceptualisation of *patterned incoherence*, which describes a potential state of the structure/agency duality characterized by strategically-exploitable incoherent structural features, I point out in this section how the diverse failings and few assets of the South African state in the land reform arena have made the state's own structures subject to individual and communal agency.

The second theme being discussed in Chapter 9 will focus on trauma and origin legitimacy (9.2) and it highlights the potential of binary argumentative patterns to develop not only themselves but to influence the complexities within which they occur. Jessop's assumption that strategy sustains the relational exchange between structure and agency to which the strategically-inclined agent can resort will be confirmed. Furthermore, the observed evolution of binarily informed strategies in correlation to their expanding application through time and space will suggest that the dialectical-evolutionary exchange between structure and agency allows binary strategies to create more complex strategically-selective contexts and more nuance-sensitive strategically-able actors operating on constantly evolving avenues for argumentative agency. The more regular particular binaries are used as strategic and tactical devices, the more they have the potential to change themselves and the contexts in which they are applied. In this case, the trauma-based autochthonous discourses that were found to underlie some of the empirical data were related to arguments that applied a dichotomous understanding of legitimate and illegitimate origins.

The third and final part of Chapter 9 is dedicated to an understanding of the implications of increasingly complex contexts on individual agency. This subchapter's trajectory aims at a discussion of concrete strategic and tactical patterns of agency in the field data. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate how agency flourishes in former KwaNdebele, despite the predominance of binary argumentative patterns that allegedly restrict discourses, and despite non-binary increasingly more complex realities that constitute a threat to less strategically-able actors. Based on my own empirical observations I will

introduce the term 'performance legitimacy' as an analytical concept, describing a kind of legitimacy based on an individual's tactical skills, i.e. their capability to choose and deliver the best possible interpersonal performance. Successful interpersonal performance creates effects that can result in an increase in trust and acceptance by (potential) followers and therefore constitutes an essential building block to legitimacy, regardless of how it is formed on a larger scale (e.g. Weber's ideal types of legitimate rule or Krämer's Basic Legitimacies). Performance legitimacy constitutes a stepping stone on the way to understanding why some agents' tactics fail while others succeed. Both success and failure are symptoms of agency and I suggest a case-by-case assessment of empirical examples to gain some more insight into 'failing' tactics to further understand the creative tension between binary discourse and complex context. For that purpose I will focus on a range of empirical observations that were all linked by the tactical nature of agential practice. It will be shown how essential the assessment of tactical conduct in the field is when trying to understand the extent to which individual agents in former KwaNdebele manoeuvre and manipulate the contexts within which they operate. The tension between binarily informed discourses and complex social realities holds a significant potential for increased agency. Under the precondition of a balanced tactical-strategic approach that takes into account both the strategic value of discursive binaries and the complex contexts within which they are deployed, grassroots agents are able to influence large-scale processes such as nationwide land reform.

While it is possible to identify certain tactical patterns and to relate them to the selectivities of the contexts within which they are performed, the contextual complexity which simultaneously enables, restricts and disguises them, will always leave numerous loose ends. Chapter 10 will be the attempt to pick up some of these loose ends and try to develop a coherent picture that unites the multifaceted data, the interpretations and the lessons to be learned from them. This process will be aided by one final field vignette, which resonates with three different semantic interpretations of this dissertation's title 'Battled Ground KwaNdebele'. The first interpretation relies on the past participle 'battled' as a passive form in the present tense, implying that the following noun 'ground' is embattled. Land in former KwaNdebele is contested in order to win ownership, to exert control over its residents, to gain access to its resources, to secure it as basic means of subsistence, to build political power, to express cultural identity and so forth. In this case land reform, the struggle (or battle) for the land, is established as the central focus. The second interpretation of 'battled' will regard it as an adjective that describes the following 'ground' based on the latter's troubled past. It will summarise the various conflicts interacting with land reform, which at that point will have been thoroughly described in this thesis. The scars that past 'battles' have left in the ground can still be observed today, as illustrated by the (sometimes divisive) discourses that apply the dichotomies of the past as if the constituents of each binary pair had ever been actual opponents in a real battle. The significance of history, skin colour,

Traditional Leadership, and the analytical relevance of strategically applied binaries such as Tradition/Modernity will be pointed out again in this section. Thirdly, the composition of 'battle' and 'ground' to form 'battleground' will refer to a Bourdieusian (battle)field; a variety of actors find themselves in an environment of tactical and strategic exchanges in their pursuit of various individual and collective objectives. In this interpretation of the title the former Homeland will be understood to be an historically and socially defined geographic space in which a multitude of structural and agential forces operate to form a complex system in which land, the control over it, and the violent conflicts that were fought on it constitute merely a few nodes that relate to many other significant themes and topics. I will recapitulate the theoretical framework that this discussion of structure, agency, strategy, and complexity is embedded in and then I will summarise the analytical findings to allow for an integrated understanding of this particular battleground.

Chapter 2 – Introduction to the Field

This chapter begins by introducing the two research sites Rapotokwane and Libangeni within the former KwaNdebele Homeland. I will lay out how I came to choose them as research sites and will describe their dominant characteristics regarding location, infrastructure, administration, ethnic diversity and land distribution. In the second part of the chapter I refer to the social conditions under which research was conducted and in that context I will provide a characterisation of my own academic and personal background to clarify the position from which I was able to collect and analyse data from the field. Finally, in the third part, I will sketch out the methods that were applied in the field and the methodology that they were based upon. The reader will note the theatrical analogies that I have applied in the subheadings of this chapter, which bring to mind Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor (Goffman 1990 [1959]). I do not wish to elaborate the nitty-gritty workings of his theory at this point as this has been done elaborately by other excellent scholars (e.g. Trevino 2003; Raffel 2013). However, I have found his basic conception of "theater as the metaphor for social life" (Masquillier 2016: 60) highly helpful in understanding my own role as researcher. I will elaborate on this in the course of this chapter. It does not do justice to Goffman's achievements to only apply his dramaturgical metaphor as a stylistic device, but to the reader it will clarify how I was able to reconcile professional academic realities and personal ethical ideals within the implementation and presentation of this doctoral project.

Throughout this dissertation persons of public interest such as politicians and other dignitaries are mentioned with their real names, as it was the case in the introduction. Persons fulfilling functions in an openly accessible environment, such as public meetings or public service institutions, at the time of research have also been mentioned with their real names as long as I regarded it necessary to mention that respective function in the description provided. To anonymise their names would have been superfluous as the local diligence in documenting proceedings of public events and positions makes it easy to remotely identify persons by their functions and their utterings. Whenever I received information in a private setting and under confidential circumstances the names of individuals have been altered and their relations in the social environment have been omitted to ensure anonymity unless they insisted on being named. My research assistants also asked to be mentioned with altered names only. I have marked anonymised aliases with an asterisk whenever the respective person is mentioned for the first time.

In my opinion, the term 'ethnography' and its different grammatical versions are applied rather liberally within the relevant literature. Often it is assumed that every reader is fully aware of its various meanings and facets:

> Ethnography is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races, and genders. Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes. (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 2f)

In my introduction I have similarly applied such a broad definition of the term 'ethnography' and will continue to do so. Nonetheless, I feel that quick clarification is needed with regard to what ethnography actually entails in order to support the following discussion. Due to the term's versatile fields of application and differing interpretations in Anthropology, Sociology, Education, Linguistics or other (sub)disciplines and the different definitions that these apply (Buscatto 2018), I shall only give a short and surely wanting summary of what Breidenstein et al. (2015 [2013]: 31-36) have pointed out to be ethnography's central characteristics. Their description covers the essential points on ethnography within the realm of Social and Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, which present themselves as generally ethnographically working disciplines. In their textbook the authors describe ethnography as historically grown "*Erkenntnishaltung*"[14] and as a research strategy within cultural sciences. In this context they introduce four trademarks that this entails: (1) The object of research are social practices. (2) Central methodological premise of ethnography is field research, which finds its roots in Ethnology. (3) Ethnography is not a method, but an integrated research approach that practices method opportunism with participant observation being the essential but not always crucial one of them. (4) The aim of ethnography is the translation of social practice into written language.

So when the term 'ethnography' is used this may either be a reference to it as historically grown research strategy that is informed by the assumption that the continuous presence of researchers in the lives of study participants, observed in their situational and institutional contexts, enables the documentation of their respective knowledge forms (i.e. 'ethnographic research'). Alternatively, it may also refer to a body of methods that enables the production of data in that research process with participant observation as connexional element (i.e. 'ethnographic methods'):

> Participant observation involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualize what you've seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly. When it's done right, participant observation turns fieldworkers into instruments of data collection and data analysis. (Bernard 2006: 344)

Or it may, finally, refer to the product of that research process, an ethnography as a monograph or research article within their own literary genre, presenting "the reader with a storyline: a narrative of social life" (Tavory and Timmermans 2009: 249).

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[14] German, attitude of cognition

2.1 Setting the stage

The research process began with a reconnaissance trip to the northern part of former KwaNdebele and the neighbouring Rust de Winter (sometimes also spelled Rust der Winter) region in early 2016 together with Olaf Zenker, the primary supervisor of this dissertation project. He had previously conducted research in this area (e.g. Zenker 2012b, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2018b; Jensen and Zenker 2015; Zenker and Hoehne 2018b) and his knowledge of the local history, the dominant legal battles and the people involved in them proved highly valuable in establishing contacts that would enable my own research. We were aware that a legal battle was waging for the restitution of Rust de Winter, formerly one of South Africa's most productive agricultural regions and known to contain valuable fluoride deposits and potentially other mineral resources. At the centre of attention in this restitution process were the Litho Ndzundza Ndebele of Rapotokwane and through one of Olaf Zenker's contacts we found our way to their Traditional Authority Offices.

Figure 2.1 An overview map of the research area with all significant settlements.
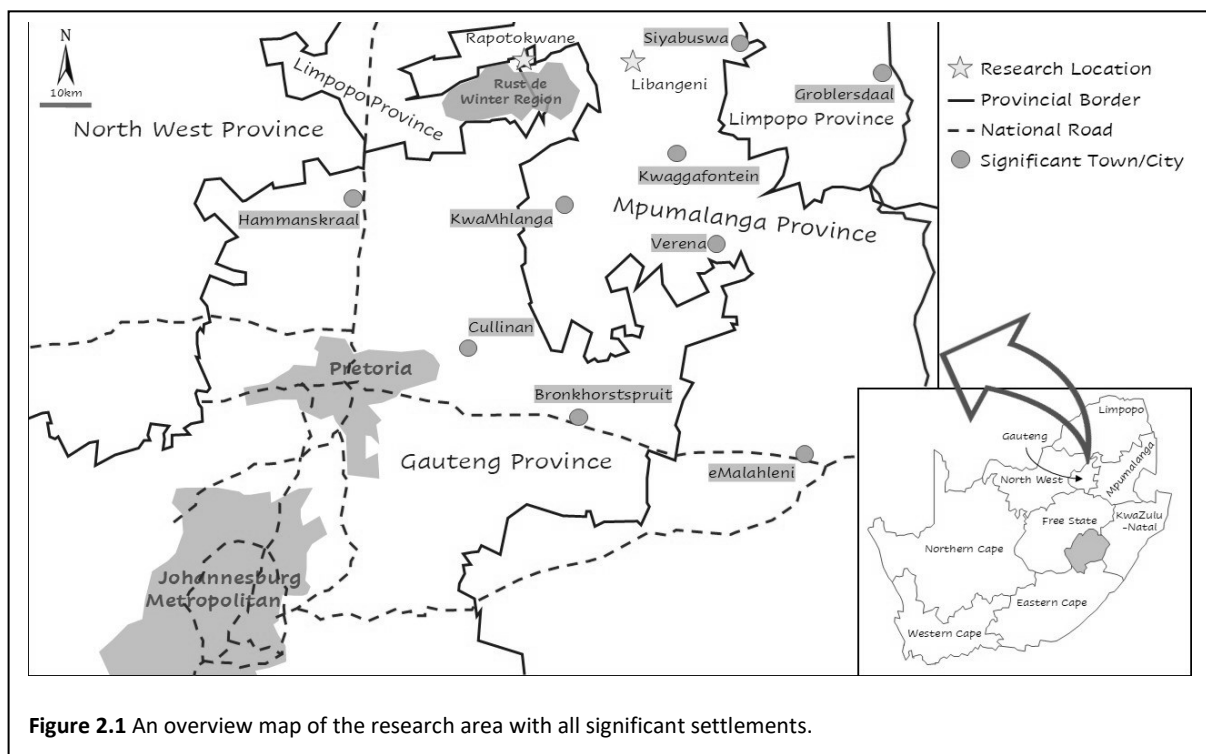
We met with the office's secretary and she referred us to Jonathan Mnguni, the chairman of the Traditional Council. On the phone he invited us to attend a meeting in Rapotokwane's community hall on the following Saturday, which we did. As we arrived at the meeting Alfred Mahlangu, who was chairing the meeting and has fulfilled different functions in the Lithos' land claim, enquired of the reason for our presence and then asked us to wait outside while the meeting proceeded. While we waited we were approached by Ignatius Litho, who introduced himself as a Litho prince and asked us to call him Iggy. We explained our interest of conducting research in Rapotokwane and he gladly offered his help. After the meeting had ended we received permission for my research venture from

the present officials and Iggy offered me to rent his vacated family home for that purpose. All terms were agreed and I would return to Rapotokwane in August and September 2016.

Rapotokwane (the village), also known as KwaLitho (the area of traditional jurisdiction) or Witlaagte (the farm plot that the village is located on), lies at the border triangle of the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo, on the side of the latter. The village is made up of roughly 800 households (according to the Traditional Council in 2017)[15] and is administered by the Bela-Bela Municipality. It has

Figure 2.2 Screenshot of Rapotokwane's settlement plan by the Department for Rural Development and Land Reform (2010). Gauteng Province in the south; Mpumalanga Province north and east; Limpopo Province in the centre and southwest.
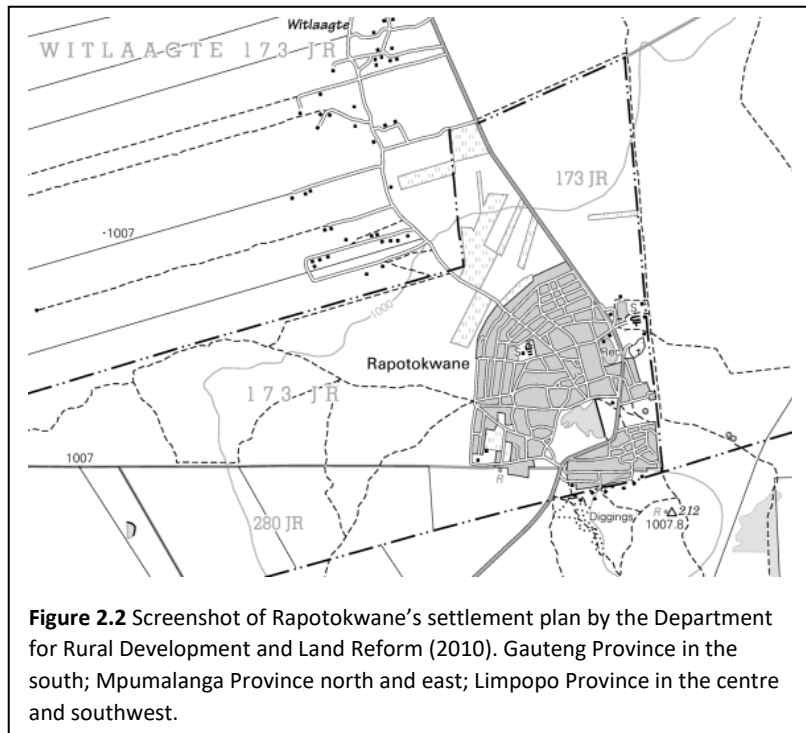
undergone several changes of demarcation throughout its almost 100-year-old history, which have always seen it at the outer geographic, social and administrative fringes of the respective system. More details on this circumstance will be provided in the First *Entr'acte* and Chapter 6.

Rapotokwane is located in a rural setting, surrounded by farms, and is usually only passed through by people travelling between the Rust de Winter area (to the South) and Nokaneng and Mmametlhake (to the North, former Bophuthatswana). The main road has only recently been upgraded by the provincial government of Gauteng and deteriorates abruptly at the borderline to Mpumalanga. A paved road through the village centre was constructed during my main research phase in 2017/18. Rapotokwane has a primary school, a high school, a clinic, a public library and countless churches. However, due to its location at the outer fringes of Limpopo Province and the Bela-Bela Municipality major government services are located at least an hour's drive away. The next police station is located in Rust de Winter, but it is very rare to see any official custodians of law and order in Rapotokwane on a regular basis. Thus, any kind of administration, negotiation, jurisdiction or mediation usually happens through the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Council, or, as the locals call it, "*The Tribal*".

Rapotokwane was established on the southern portion of the farm Witlaagte, which was bought by those families of the Litho clan that were driven out of Rust de Winter in the 1920s, the area that they

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[15] 2011 census: 682 households, population 2,787 (stats sa 2023)

are now trying to claim back under land restitution. Thus land ownership of Witlaagte's portions 3 and 11 lies with the descendants of these families and the Traditional Council administers it on their behalf, even though the title deed remained officially registered in the name of the responsible government minister at the time of my field research. Nonetheless they refer to it as communal land and the Litho ownership has not been contested up to date. While I conducted my research in Rapotokwane the Litho Traditional Council was headed by Chief Vuma N Mahlangu, who resided in Hammanskraal for most of the time. Although, based on principles of descendance, a closer affiliation to the Ndzundza Kingship is given 'traditionally', Chief Vuma and other council representatives have recently sought closer contact to *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke, in light of his recently won legal battles (see Chapters 1 and 5).

Other occupants in Rapotokwane have received the land that they live on through 'Permission to Occupy' (PTO), issued by the Traditional Council. Even though Rapotokwane is under the 'traditional' rule of an Ndebele council, approximately half of its residents are of Pedi, Tswana and Tsonga/Shangaan origin. This is due to Rapotokwane's former location within former Bophuthatswana until the 1970s and later as an exclave of KwaNdebele. Having been geographically and politically removed from the main Ndebele population, the village has often experienced non-Ndebele population influx. In the 1970s its residential sections Tsamahansi, New Stand and later Snake Park were established to house several hundred of new families that had been forcefully resettled by the Apartheid regime. This was part of a deal that would provide a new High School to the village in exchange for agricultural land being turned into residential plots.

Rapotokwane faces the same challenges that most of the former Homelands of South Africa face. Unemployment and substance abuse are high, especially among the younger generation. Many young men in Rapotokwane and other settlements of the region consume *Nyaope*, a heroin-like substance that is smoked in combination with Cannabis (see: Masombuka 2013). HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and alcoholism are illnesses that are found among all ages, genders and social strata. Even though crime levels appear to be lower in Rapotokwane than in larger settlements, nearly all of Rapotokwane's residents wish for public 'Apollo' street lights to reduce the occurrence of nightly break-ins. The ethnic diversity of the local population did not constitute any problems during the time of my research and I actually found it very encouraging. Unfortunately, a few months after my departure I received the news that protests had broken out among the Non-Ndebele speaking population against Litho Traditional Council paternalism.

To accommodate myself with the local population, I spent six weeks living in Rapotokwane in August and September 2016. Apart from establishing contacts and evaluating the social and cultural dimensions of the village, this time also served as a chance to establish a second field site with a

controlled change of parameters. On the one hand the aim was a field site that would still lie in the former KwaNdebele Homeland under the control of a Traditional Authority, including the existence of social conflicts around land and cultural predominance. However, on the other hand, the second field site was to be located in a much more urban setting and was to exhibit differing political structures from Rapotokwane in order to facilitate a comparison based on these differences. Such a place was found in Libangeni, a 35-minutes-drive to the east from Rapotokwane.

First contact was established through the late Headman Johannes Aphane, who chaired the Manala Traditional Council of Libangeni at the time of my research. He introduced me to *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II in September 2016, who then granted me permission to conduct my research. Aphane promised that he would arrange for my accommodation until my return in the following year and I would eventually begin my enquiries in Libangeni from May 2017 onwards.

Libangeni, named after a former King of the Manala Ndebele, is located in the centre of Dr J.S. Moroka Local Municipality in the northwest of Mpumalanga Province and in the north of the former Homeland of KwaNdebele. The municipality is part of Mpumalanga's Nkangala District, which is made up of six municipalities in total. In 2016 a community survey for the municipality counted just over 246,000 citizens of which roughly 3,800

Figure 2.3 Screenshot of Libangeni's settlement plan by the Department for Rural Development and Land Reform (2010). The central and western settlement areas are referred to as Vaalbank A and B, the latter being within Mdala Nature Reserve (note broad grey line surrounding the whole settlement on three sides). Allemansdrift B to the northeast borders the shore of Mkhombo Dam.

households are located in Libangeni (AFI Consult (Pty) Ltd 2022). Within 30 minutes of driving one can reach KwaMhlanga, which became KwaNdebele's capital in 1986 and today accommodates several administrative institutions in the former Homeland's government offices. Also nearby are Klipfontein, where the residence of Makhosonke II is located, Loding, the customary burial ground and 'original' Royal Kraal of senior Manala Leaders, and also the Royal Kraal of the Ndzundza Ndebele at eMthambothini (Weltevrede). Libangeni includes the proclaimed township of Vaalbank (population 12,800 in 2011) and the largely traditionally allocated settlement of Allemansdrift B (population 3,400

in 2011)(AFI Consult (Pty) Ltd 2022). The residents of these respective areas refer to their place of residence as either "Vaalbank" or "Allemansdrift" but almost never as "Libangeni" despite their administrative unification under that name. Vaalbank was developed in the 1980s to accommodate the upper middle class of the recently established Homeland including its political elite and provided a wide range of infrastructural services, which are still available today in most of its residential parts. This includes access to piped water, electricity, rubbish collection, road maintenance, primary and secondary education, municipal administration services, police services and medical institutions. Its neighbouring settlements Allemansdrift B and C on the other hand served the Traditional Authorities of former KwaNdebele as a source of income through the issuance of PTOs and the implicated fees. Allemansdrift A, also known as Mamathethe, was flooded after the construction of the nearby Mkhombo/Rhenosterkop Dam in the 1980s (see First *Entr'acte* for more information). In comparison to Vaalbank, the provision of public services in Allemansdrift B until today lags behind. Because of its significant distance to the other settlements Allemansdrift C was not included in my field research.

Libangeni falls under the 'traditional' jurisdiction of Makhosonke II of the Manala Ndebele. The offices of the Manala Traditional Council of Libangeni are located at the centre of Libangeni in the transitional zone between Vaalbank and Allemansdrift B. It was chaired by the late Headman Johannes Aphane during my research. However, similar to Rapotokwane where merely about half of the population identifies as Ndebele, a significant portion of Libangeni's inhabitants does not associate themselves to the Council's eponymous Manala Ndebele. The Ndzundza Ndebele have always outnumbered the Manala Ndebele in total numbers since KwaNdebele's inception. Also, the preferred languages among the local population are SeSotho, SePedi and SeTswana, which are linguistically much more closely related to one another than the local Traditional Leaders' IsiNdebele. Politics, in the 'modern' democratised interpretation of the word, have a much greater influence on local power relations in a place such as Libangeni, which is located at the geographical centre of its municipality and houses a large voter potential. Thus local counsellors are usually elected from the wider-supported pool of Non-Ndebele candidates. This entails the potential for conflict, not only between the different language groups, but also between the municipal administration and the Traditional Authority. In the course of my field research I was luckily out of town whenever violent protests, so-called *toyi-toyis*, broke out. These would be triggered by unpaid wages, poor municipal services, rising crime rates, or allegations of witchcraft. The social problems mentioned for Rapotokwane above, especially substance abuse among the youth and unemployment[16], exist throughout the whole region and thus constitute a large problem in Libangeni, too.

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[16] The 2011 Census found that only 22.8 percent of the population (ages 15-64) in Dr JS Moroka Municipality could be classed as employed (AFI Consult (Pty) Ltd 2022).

2.2 The Narrator and the Protagonists

> The tensions that guide the ethnographic writer's hand lie between the felt improbability of what you have lived and the known impossibility of expressing it, which is to say between desire and its unresolvable, often ineffable, end. (Goodall 2000: 7)

After my first two preliminary field visits in 2016 I returned to Germany and once permanent financial backing had been secured I made my way back to South Africa in late April 2017 to begin the main field research phase, which ended in March 2018. However, before introducing the methods that I applied to gain further insight into the matter of land reform and, for instance, its entanglements in strategic grassroots structuration mechanisms, it is necessary to provide further information on two crucial factors: first, the personal entangled-ness and internal limitations of the one who has written this account and, secondly, the boundaries and directions that were presented to him externally. Because I will analyse the data on the basis of Structure/Agency ontologies and critical assumptions from postcolonial theory, it would be wantonly negligent to omit a critical examination of myself, the researcher and author of this dissertation, as a fallible human being and the pitfalls that I experienced in the field. In my opinion, habitus, structuration, and strategy must be regarded as part and parcel of the entire research process and not only as handy dimensions for the purpose of field data analysis. Thus it is necessary to examine examples of those structures that have influenced the research process, to indicate where personal habitus may have influenced my own actions, and to sketch the strategically-influenced processes I may have been subjected to.

The realities of conducting and presenting anthropological research in the context of a dissertation project often require the researcher to identify as academically more qualified than the people they work with. Within the 'academic circus' the PhD candidate is practically obliged to present research findings as a personal achievement, while assistants and participants often find themselves honoured in the acknowledgements or dedications at best. Even with the noble motives of an advocacy/participatory knowledge framework researchers are often in a socially and financially more privileged position than the researched, and still engage with them for their own ulterior ambitions. From a cynical perspective, "conflicts of interest and emotion between the ethnographer as authentic, related person (i.e. participant), and as exploiting researcher (i.e. observer) are also an inescapable feature of ethnographic method" (Stacey 1988: 22). From the even more relentless, but nonetheless justified, accusatory perspective of postcolonial critique this makes the uncritical and careless researcher a showcase villain:

> Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated? While there are many researchers who can handle such questions with integrity there are many more who cannot, or who approach these

questions with some cynicism, as if they are a test merely of political correctness. What may surprise many people is that what may appear as the 'right', most desirable answer can still be judged incorrect. These questions are simply part of a larger set of judgements on criteria that a researcher cannot prepare for, such as: Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? Can they fix up our generator? Can they actually do anything? (Smith 2012: 10)

However, ethnography as a discipline, like the rest of the world, is not immune to history and under various headings and labels lessons have been learned in the past decades, because the "decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgment leading to that decision involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature and with each other" (Kuhn 1970 [1962]: 77). Because an extensive literature review of the so-called 'postmodern turn' (e.g. Best and Kellner 1997; Clarke 2011) would be inappropriate at this point, one representative example of such a lesson learnt would be the "new ethnography" (Denzin 1998; Goodall 2000), which is sometimes interchangeably referred to as "postmodern" or "poststructuralist" ethnography (Stacey 1988). Trying to mitigate ethnography's exploitative potential the postpositivist "turn away from modern discourses of truth, certainty, universality, essence, and system" (Best and Kellner 1997: 6) was successfully introduced. This includes the 'emic turn' (Pike 1967; Harris 1976; Headland 1990; Xia 2011) and most prominently the discussions that followed the "crisis of representation" (Denzin 1997; Berg and Fuchs 2016 [1993]) and *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Behar and Gordon 1995; James, Hockey, and Dawson 1997; Zenker and Kumoll 2013 [2010]). What used to be formulated as positivist scholarly essay has been converted into an "interesting conversation with readers" (Goodall 2000: 13) and therefore the way in which results have consequently been presented to academic and non-academic audiences within ethnographic text ought to have been deconstructed, evaluated and (re-)structured. The editors of *Writing Culture* proposed the following underlying characteristics for that purpose:

> Ethnographic writing is determined in at least six ways: (1) contextually (it draws from and creates meaningful social milieux); (2) rhetorically (it uses and is used by expressive conventions); (3) institutionally (one writes within, and against, specific traditions, disciplines, audiences); (4) generically (an ethnography is usually distinguishable from a novel or a travel account); (5) politically (the authority to represent cultural realities is unequally shared and at times contested); (6) historically (all the above conventions and constraints are changing). These determinations govern the inscription of coherent ethnographic fictions. (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 6)

Within these developments it was widely advocated to not only take a more critical stance towards mediating knowledge on 'culture' and 'society' in the form of written text. Many also supported the ongoing redefinition of ethnographers themselves on the inside and on the outside of academia. Most important among these innovations is the element of reflexivity, through which researchers and writers must question personal motivations, tensions, limitations and their effects on performances in- and outside of the field. Authoritative ethnography of "clearly defined others, defined as primitive,

or tribal, or non-Western, or pre-literate, or nonhistorical" was challenged to reform itself through an encounter of "others in relation to itself, while seeing itself as other" (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 23). Such an endeavour would necessitate impugning the cognitive and interpretive biases that confined and potentially misguided ethnographers in the course of their research.

What does this then imply for me personally as researcher? How can I portray my role in the field and the roles of the people that I have worked with in a way that appropriately acknowledges their agency and accounts for my own various limitations within the ethnographic methodology? Is it possible to outbalance the power of representation that ethnography endows onto the researcher?

> The challenge for presenting theoretical text, then, is to present theory not as objective truth but as a located and limited story, which is fully transparent about who the story teller is and how the teller came to know and present the story. (Daly 1997: 362)

This is where, for myself, Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor comes into play. I propose a similar but more nuanced character other than the aforementioned showcase villain with (neo-)colonial traits to describe the ethnographer within this particular research venture: the anti-hero narrator. In my opinion, it accounts for the six determinations within ethnographic writing mentioned by Clifford and Marcus above and it reconciles my own role as ethnographic researcher with the corresponding postcolonial critique of it.

Being popular in musical theatre, but also other genres, the anti-hero narrator most often presents the "dark turns toward cynical commentary […] to make frank observation and to serve as a conscience for the audience, helping guide them through these darker moments as personified stand-ins for skepticism and stark honesty" (Robinson 2015). They present and mutually create the storyline: not a neutral omniscient voice, but an essential (often tragically villainous) part of the plotline, and dependent on the other characters' performance to make the story appealing to the audience. (see quote above: 1; contextual). The anti-hero narrator may directly address the audience breaking through the fourth wall (2; rhetorical). They usually present stark opinions on the events told on stage disapproving or praising the different protagonists (3; institutional). As already mentioned an anti-hero is most often deployed in musical theatre, e.g. Che in *Evita*, Luigi Lucheni in *Elisabeth*, the Leading Player in *Pippin*, Aaron Burr in *Hamilton* (4; generic). The anti-hero narrator does not only aid the storytelling process but the character is also crucially involved in the plot with a personal agenda, which may include a tragic inner conflict of interests and can even result in open antagonism to the main characters. The audience is invited to approve or disapprove of the anti-hero's actions on stage, but the plotline depends on their authority of representation. The character of the anti-hero narrator is aware of that fact and often enjoys the implicit power of representation they hold. (5; political). And finally, a rhetorical question to sum up the parallels between Clifford and Marcus's recommendations

above and the anti-hero narrator: How boring would stories be, be they ethnographies or musical theatre, if the characters in each production did not evolve and always followed the same storytelling pattern (6; historical)?

Knowing which role one fulfils, including the unavoidable conflicts of interest and the perception that this role is necessary to tell the story itself, may calm the researcher's personal conscience for a short period. In the end, however, it is the relationship between anti-hero narrator and the other characters that makes this Goffmanesque perspective a viable one over a longer period. One must therefore ask: In which way does this perspective incorporate and empower the persons that were studied? It must take more than a rhetorical reinterpretation of one's own role to overcome the pitfalls of "research as a set of ideas, practices and privileges […] embedded in imperial expansionism and colonization and institutionalized in academic disciplines, schools, curricula, universities and power" (Smith 2012: x), to put it in a provocative way.

I found that the groups and individuals that allowed me to study their world had eventually become my protagonists, without whom there is no story to tell for me as narrator. I, as the anti-hero narrator, found myself on the same stage as them, only in a slightly different role. Even though the given account is based on an egocentric perspective, which must under any circumstance be acknowledged, ethnographers must discard all narcissistic ambitions, become vulnerable (Behar 1996) and accept that their report depends entirely on the actions of these protagonists. When executed with sincerity, this task can actually be an enjoyable one for everyone involved: "Ethnographers typically think of data as a gift from their informants with all the implications of reciprocity that gift exchange implies" (Falzon 2009: 1). Even more, these protagonists to a very large extent determine the narrator's action when their storylines intersect. The protagonists may cast aside their roles as characters and – if we extend the theatrical allegory – step up to become directors and playwrights, who have the power to determine how much information is revealed, and also when and where the narrator may collect it. They can restrict the narrator's access and may even use them to their own advantage. In the following I will provide some details on myself as the anti-hero narrator of this ethnographic act and on the ways in which my own storyline was influenced by the directing protagonists of my field research. The stylistic device of illeism, self-reference in the grammatical third person, has helped me to review my own actions, biases and limitations as if it was a story that I was told by someone else. Thus I hopefully manage to depict the scenery "through the lens of Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor" (Masquillier 2016: 73), which should be revealing enough to the reader and a task of reflection to myself.

> As Denzin […] has argued, "Self-reflection in ethnographic practice is no longer an option," and a significant aspect of the postmodern turn in qualitative/interpretive research has been an intensive focus on the presence and consequences of the researcher in the research—as an actor, designer, interpreter, writer, coconstructor of data, ultimate arbiter of the accounts

proffered, and as accountable for those accounts, and so on […]. No longer is Francis Bacon's phrase "About ourselves we remain silent" deemed acceptable […]." (Clarke 2011)

The narrator of this dissertation – let us call him JK – is a White, male, upper-middle class PhD student from central Europe with a background in Social and Cultural Anthropology, English and African Studies, Linguistics, and some limited experience in Economics, Geography, Archaeology, Sociology, Egyptology and Political Science. He conducted his first full ethnographic field research in Namibia with former hunter-gatherers in the course of his Masters studies programme at the University of Cologne (Kempen 2016). His first visit to South Africa occurred in the year 2009 when, straight out of High School, he worked there as a volunteer in Sizanani Village near Bronkhorstspruit (see Map 2.1 above), only a few minutes from the southern borderline of the former KwaNdebele Homeland away. Neither was he aware at that time that the latter had ever existed, nor did he expect to one day spend almost a year in two of its settlements as probably the only White, male, upper-middle class PhD student within an approximate 50 kilometre radius. Sizanani Village was built in the early 1990s by an Austrian Roman Catholic priest as a charity project and has since then hosted an HIV/AIDS hospice/clinic, a safe house for female victims of domestic violence, an orphanage, a school for children with disabilities, workshops, a conference centre and a care home for people with disabilities. The latter still exists up to this day and, being about an hour's drive away from Libangeni on a good travelling day, became JK's safe harbour, his back-stage, where he would keep important documents and where he would go regularly to remove himself from the field for analysis and planning during his field stays from 2016 onwards.

His accommodations in Rapotokwane and Libangeni were secluded to a certain extent but easily accessible to anyone seeking his attention through the gates that were always open during daytime. Thus those places remained part of the front-stage, where interviews would be held, surveys assessed and village rumours would be discussed. Whenever time was available in the afternoon JK would play football with the school children of Rapotokwane, offer them snacks, or participate in their birthday celebrations. In return they would provide him with the latest village rumours or teach him their language. At night, sometimes, people would knock on his door to drive them to the nearby clinic or to help them with the announcement of a community meeting the next day. Generally, his willingness to provide free transport to the people of the villages he lived in gained him valuable insight into their livelihoods and would occasionally establish valuable new contacts. However, his willingness to help and his open door also got him into trouble at times. Very soon after his arrival in Rapotokwane a couple of young men approached him with stories of poverty, hunger and illness appealing to his feelings of charity for financial support. Even though he was aware that their stories were likely to be untrue and that their appearance indicated regular consumption of *Nyaope* or alcohol he gave them small jobs to do and compensated them generously. On the one hand he went along with their stories

to obviate harsher inconveniences through them. On the other hand he hoped to gain an insight into their marginalized position within the village. Unfortunately, before he could gain further insight rumours spread of his loose affiliation with these men and his landlord and the Traditional Council advised him to avoid further contact with them. But still, he asked himself practical questions like: Is there nothing I can do to help these young men? Where is it necessary to cross a line to do what is right in my mind? How can I trust anyone in this place while most people seem to see me as a source of income or as an untrustworthy White stranger? How do I react if people see me as someone I do not want to be? Many of these questions remained unanswered to him.

In Namibia he learned Afrikaans from the Ju/'hoansi[17] and Damara people, who did not see any benefit in teaching him their own languages. However, he decided to use Afrikaans only in extraordinary circumstances in South Africa because of its negative connotations among the Black population. Thus, to prepare himself for this research venture he learned IsiZulu, which is abundantly represented among language learning literature and closely related to IsiNdebele. However, upon arrival in former KwaNdebele he soon realized that the local variations of SeSotho and SeTswana enjoyed much higher appreciation among the local population. At the end of his research time he would, however, manage to understand roughly what conversations were about in either of the languages. When later-on listening to early interview recordings, he realised why participants had occasionally given him an unexpected answer. He could now understand that his interpreter had not understood his often too complicated and abstract questions and had therefore improvised so that the answer turned out just as puzzling as the original question. Nonetheless, he relied on the interpretation of his assistants until the very end and it took him until his final month in the field to understand that Ndebele do not *'-bonga'* (IsiZulu 'thank') but they *'-thokoza'* (IsiNdebele 'thank'/'enjoy').

JK was obviously a stranger in this environment, but this circumstance brought along certain advantages. For example, being a stranger allowed him to ask questions that locally rooted people might not have dared to ask. If he went too far with his questions he was usually forgiven with a nervous laughter and then told to ask a different question. Also, people confided information in him that they might not have given to family members or neighbours who could have indiscreetly blabbered it out in front of the wrong person. Sometimes his interview partners would ask him to turn the voice recorder off so that they could entrust him with some more delicate details on local vice and intrigue. In turn, however, people were not afraid to ask him questions that they would not dare ask their neighbours: "*Why are you asking all these dumb questions?*" or "*Are you mad to stay in a place like this?*" Being a stranger also had disadvantages of course: he was usually among the last to be informed about developments and events. He had to regularly make an appearance at random

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[17] /' describes a dental click with a glottal stop

gatherings to stay on top of recent developments and nonetheless he often missed out because in the end nobody seemed to care whether or not he did.

The narrator of our story met Iggy Litho, Jonathan Mnguni, Nathaniel Mahlangu and Alfred Mahlangu for the first time at the community meeting in Rapotokwane where he introduced his research interest to them and to other dignitaries of the village. It was not a coincidence that all of them were there, because the meeting was about the land claim of Rust de Winter. Iggy Litho became his landlord, letting out his mother's abandoned home across the street from the Traditional Council offices. With his modern attire and self-confident conduct Iggy made a remaining impression and continuously contributed to JK's research experience: especially, when in May 2017 Iggy decided to move from Atteridgeville in Pretoria into his mother's house in Rapotokwane. From then on the two men shared the accommodation and the relationship grew more intense. Soon they discussed politics, religion and personal experiences, but also matters concerning the land claim of Rust de Winter, the lineage of the Lithos and its leadership implications. Iggy was convinced that his family had been cheated out of the Litho chieftaincy and in fact he saw Litho, and thus himself, as the disenfranchised heir to the throne of the entire Ndebele nation. This belief did not necessarily foster Iggy's popularity among some members of the local leadership elite. While Iggy's frankness and self-confidence always gained him a lot of attention, he had a close ally who would regularly succeed on the diplomatic level: Jonathan Mnguni, to most people in Rapotokwane simply known as Jonoti. He confided information in JK, too, because he knew that Iggy trusted him to a certain extent, but remained careful not to disclose too much. Jonoti, substantially older than Iggy but not less streetwise, had worked with Iggy's uncle Sebatshelwa Matthews Mahlangu on the restitution of Rust de Winter and before Sebatshelwa's passing made the promise to support Iggy in his strive to see the claim through to the end. In his position as Chairman of the Traditional Council Jonoti not only introduced JK to the village elders but also lobbied in favour of Iggy's family among them. When it became clear to JK that Iggy and Jonoti were not necessarily as popular among the local elite as they wanted him to believe, he experienced his first conflict of interests as anti-hero. On the one side he depended on them for accommodation, access to information and research authorisation. On the other he had to make sure that his close affiliation with them would not bar him from access to other groups. Especially with regard to Chief Vuma, who was openly challenged by Iggy during that time, JK had to apply utmost care and pay the appropriate respect. Iggy did not appreciate this and made sure JK knew that.

While the appropriate mixture of distance and intimacy was hard to maintain with Iggy and Jonoti, two other characters that were heavily involved in village politics initially seemed rather sceptical of our narrator's sincerity: Nathaniel Mahlangu and Alfred Mahlangu. On their respective but very different grounds they opposed Iggy and Jonoti's agenda. Both men were also involved in the land claim and

the power dynamics of the Traditional Authority. While Nathaniel eventually opened up to our narrator and shared information with him in exchange for assistance with literature research and advise on academic matters, Alfred seemed to never fully disclose his objectives and strategies. In such an environment JK had to carefully handle the information that he was given by the respective protagonists. He ensured confidentiality but also used his knowledge to probe its value in conversation with other protagonists. He had to manoeuvre around conflicts and intrigue, aware that he was part of a game that he could not fully control and in which a wrong utterance could cause an unforeseeable chain reaction.

But not only when interacting with these protagonists directly did he have to be careful. When conducting interviews among the local population he was not sure whether he could ask critical questions about the Traditional Authority system or enquire for details on the land claim. How could he tell who would appreciate such questions and whether the council would find out? This was also due to the fact that he could not tell if his interpreter would honour her promise of confidentiality, being a close relative of the Traditional Council secretary. Under these circumstances he did not only have to protect himself but also the people he interviewed. Thus, only after he got to know and trust his interpreter he dared to ask more open questions, but by that time several interview hours of innocuous banter had already been recorded.

In Libangeni, on the other hand, the situation was less tense. *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke and Headman Aphane were supportive of JK's enquiries and no open conflict for land and power dominated the village. It was merely expected from him that he provide a copy of his survey questionnaires to the Traditional Council. Headman Aphane, grown with age and experience in 'traditional' politics, established contact with a local landlady who forwarded our narrator to her 'sister'[18] for his accommodation. She took him in and looked after him as if he were her own son.

Aware of Aphane's benevolence, JK also asked him for assistance in looking for a research assistant. Ideally the research assistant should have been of younger age and originally not Ndebele to ensure less influence from the village elders. A female assistant would have opened the possibility to access information enabling a more gender sensitive perspective. Aphane, however, had his mind set on a particular candidate: Patrick M.*, male, Ndebele, and only a few years younger than JK's own father. Sceptical whether Patrick would be under the influence of Aphane's council or other interest groups, he probed Patrick's character for a while and eventually realized that he could not have found a better research assistant. Patrick introduced JK to government officials, principals, traditional healers, conspirators, royalty and its upper servants, initiation teachers, and administrators, but also to nurses,

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[18] In South Africa, family related titles do not necessarily refer to biological relatedness but may simply indicate close affinity, common church membership or temporal cohabitation of the same house.

patients, teachers, students, scoundrels, bead artists, revolutionaries, park rangers, paupers, dreamers and cynics. He repeatedly taught our narrator essential conventions of interaction, which were bound to be clumsily broken by JK eventually, but Patrick remained patient. Patrick was highly dedicated to making out all possibly interesting events and went out of his comfort zone in this regard. For example, it was only after the two of them had attended the returning of the Ndebele and Pedi boys from their time "*on the mountain*", the initiation school, that he confessed that his family had never participated in such customs and that it was also his first time to attend such events. When they visited the girls returning from initiation, Patrick expressed his deepest admiration of 'traditional and modern womanhood' and urged JK to incorporate even more female perspectives from the village inhabitants. Sometimes though, JK would have to remind Patrick to hold back his own agenda when interrupting interviews in unrelated matters.

However, Patrick also made our narrator aware of the necessary limits of trust and curiosity. He stressed the potential for conflict among Libangeni's different language groups and pointed out some individuals that might not be entirely trustworthy. When EFF representatives preyed on JK trying to extort money from him, Patrick directed them to the wrong address and stalled their enquiries until they gave up. Whenever JK and Patrick would meet representatives of the Traditional Authority, they had to act with caution. The *iNgwenyama*'s master of ceremony or his official historian were to be handled carefully to neither upset them personally nor to have them report any inappropriate questioning to their superior. On other occasions interview participants demanded that they be invited to Germany in return for their information or hoped to receive a share in the financial gain that they expected JK to have from the publication of his book.

Patrick helped JK to recruit a team of young adults that would help them conduct a survey. Their first additional team member was Lethabo*, who tested the first round of questionnaires with them and helped recruit further team members Lesedi* and Margaret*. The two women and two men roamed the neighbourhoods of Vaalbank and Allemansdrift B for weeks. On three days JK drove them over to Rapotokwane where they interviewed the local residents while he cooked lunch for them. Altogether they produced 615 complete questionnaires. Unfortunately, JK and Lethabo fell out once because his questionnaires indicated significant differences to those of the other assistants and JK enquired how Lethabo would explain that. Lethabo felt insulted that JK would insinuate that he was faking the questionnaire results and eventually they were able to settle the argument when Lethabo indicated the households to JK where he had conducted the outlier questionnaires. Another unfortunate situation developed when all interviews had been conducted and JK asked the team members to sit down and give him a wrap-up interview. One of them proudly reported having tried to convince the interview participants of their own opinions and that some of them even changed their original

answers after that. JK decided to not further comment on this methodological flaw, but asked two other assistants to conduct a few more backup interviews, because he knew he would potentially have to exclude the affected questionnaires.

Eventually, JK's research time came to an end in March 2018. He returned to Germany having ensured the people that had become dear to him that he would return eventually to present his findings. Furthermore, he wondered how he would be able to describe his relationship with those people that had granted him access to their world on the one side, but had also tried to restrict and manipulate him. True to the stereotypical cynicism of the anti-hero narrator, he found reassurance in the semi-sarcastic understanding of the following quote:

> Anthropologists often take a rather romantic view of their fields and their relationships to people there. They find it difficult to describe their informants as informants because they would rather see them as friends, and they may be proud to announce that they have been adopted into families and kin groups – not only because it suggests something about their skills as field workers, but also because it carries a moral value. They have surrendered to the field, and have been in a way absorbed by it." (Hannerz 2003: 208f)

2.3 The Performance

Ethnographic research promises several advantages to its disciples. The most prominent of them I have found to be the vast amount of qualitative and quantitative methods that it offers. Similar to the different techniques that actors can apply to enhance their performance, ethnographic researchers are presented with a generous toolkit of methods. They will look to those that have done the job before and will adjust whatever method they can find to their specific needs on stage or in the field. Similar, too, is the conduct of ethnographers and actors when they have been successful in the execution of these methods and techniques having received the desired amount of praise for it. They will repeat what was deemed successful, but will soon find that different audiences and projects demand different approaches. If they only repeat what they have found to work in the first place, either the audience or the performer are certain to get bored after some time. Also, ethnographer and actor alike will show pride in their achievements as long as this point of boredom has not yet been reached. In the following I wish to lay out the techniques/methods of my performance on the ethnographic stage, for another clichéd similarity between actors and academics seems to be the proud dissemination of *how* they did what they have done. From a methodological perspective I aimed to adhere to the following rules of thumb:

> 1) Qualitative and quantitative methods should be combined for catching social reality; 2) Objective facts and subjective attitudes should be collected; 3) Current observations should be complemented by historical material; 4) Observation of spontaneous life and direct, planned interviews should be applied (Jahoda in Flick 2018b: 3)[19]

As described, I conducted my research in two distinct settlements, which triggers the question whether my overall methodological approach was based on multi-sited ethnography . To be honest, I was never certain whether it was, because I opportunistically went to places where I was sure to find interesting information about my main themes and did not consider the spatial boundaries of my enquiries (Hannerz 2003). But what exactly was I following? Did this interest-driven mentality already qualify as "an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation" (Marcus 1995: 96)?

In those cases where researchers follow certain individuals or groups (e.g. Weißköppel 2009; Freire de Andrade Neves 2019) through space and time because they share a common characteristic of interest or fate the case is quite clear. In the case of Rapotokwane and Libangeni I could, however, find only few individuals who had some sort of connection to the respective other village and by that time my stakes had already been placed on these two sites. Alternatively, George E. Marcus has suggested that

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[19] I am well aware that the assumption of objectivity as scientific principle is highly controversial within Social and Cultural Anthropology and I acknowledge the constructed-ness of any information presented as such.

researchers may follow a variety of objects of study, for example a thing or a metaphor. Is it possible to define land as a thing and how can one follow it, if it is quite literally everywhere? Can one define land reform and Traditional Authorities as metaphors? No, that is not what I was following. Maybe I was following a "Plot, Story or Allegory" , tracing the different versions of Ndebele origin and land ownership. I could have also followed the "Life or Biography" of specific actors in the different land claims and rulership succession battles, but I was interested in including the larger picture of peripheral agency and overall structure, too. Surely though, I was following "conflicts" (Marcus 1995: 106-10) for land and power within the former Homeland, something that might fit Hannerz's definition of "some problem, some formulation of a topic, which is significantly *trans*local, not to be confined within some single place" (2003: 206, original emphasis). Strictly speaking though, none of these 'ideal types' that Marcus has suggested matches my research venture to its complete extent, maybe because it was not meant to be multi-sited. If I had simply designed a case study in one of the two villages my research purpose as outlined in the paragraph above might have been fulfilled nonetheless. But what counts as a single site and what counts as multiple sites anyway? Maybe northern KwaNdebele was to be seen as one field site and the two settlements were merely the locations of accommodation, a "single-site research with multiple sites" (Marcus 1995: 106) so to say.

From a practical perspective I have to acknowledge my extensive spatial movements throughout the course of my field research. Maybe it was multi-sited ethnography after all, not from an academically strategic, but more from a practical point of view. To reach Libangeni from Rapotokwane one has to drive 35 minutes across a provincial border and pass through Nokaneng, Semohlase, Sehokho (mostly Tswana settlements) and Loding (Ndebele), if one is not willing to drive on a dust road that was about to be upgraded as the end of my field research neared. There were also temporary research sites: I met with government officials all over the former Homeland and even in Nelspruit on the other side of Mpumalanga Province. I accompanied village elders to meetings with mining companies in Pretoria, attended 'traditional' celebrations in several places as far away as eRholweni and I explored the relationship between land claimants and park officials at Loskop Dam. On average I drove about 100 kilometres per day and I count every fraction of it as ethnographic work, because it became part of the research routine to travel between these places. After a while I knew each pothole by heart and the local residents would recognise my car from a distance and comment on it whenever the rental contract was renewed with a different make. Do such journeys and the complementary large carbon footprint indicate that this was multi-sited ethnography somehow? But has not ethnography always contained such travelling elements from its very start (Malinowski 1922) without being labelled 'multi-sited'? Then again all these distances do not seem to count anymore when Falzon suggests: "It seems that multisitedness actually means not just sites, but spatialized (cultural) difference – it is not important how many and how distant sites are, what matters is that they are different. This must be a

requisite, because without it there would be absolutely no point in moving around" (2009: 13). Surely, Rapotokwane and Libangeni both show a similar level of diversity, they are under administration of Traditional Authority and used to be demarcated as KwaNdebele at some point, but they also exhibit obvious differences regarding infrastructure, leadership and history. While residents of Rapotokwane are generally oriented towards Rust de Winter and Hammanskraal in the South-West, Libangeni is much better connected to KwaNdebele's hubs, specifically the former capitals Siyabuswa and KwaMhlanga, to the East and South. The land restitution struggle of the Litho provided a splendid case study on land reform. Libangeni on the other hand provided access to the royal Manala hierarchies and the context in which Traditional Authority is presented to a larger group of people. Additionally, it would have seemed ironic to conduct a study that claims to focus on the peripheries rather than the centre of land reform without establishing where the centre and the peripheries actually are in the larger picture. By including not only Rapotokwane but also Libangeni and the KwaNdebele mainland and the settlements that lie in between, I was able to establish the centres and peripheries of a region that seems to be multi-sited and ever-mobile in itself. The residents of both settlements and each person that I met on the road (travellers, police, traders, farmers, construction workers) were able to make their own unique contribution to a research venture that depended on a variety of perspectives. In a nutshell, multiple sites were part of this research, because it was only their ensemble that satisficed my research needs, even though originally I did actually not consciously include them with the motive of doing multi-sited ethnography as such. Candea's approach reconciles these questions and deliberations: to be aware of the arbitrary boundaries that one has knowingly, but yet with often too little acknowledgement, set to one's own field is one way to avoid an unachievable and therefore deceptive holistic ideal (Candea 2007). Thus, the question raised a few pages back, i.e. whether I have conducted multi-sited ethnography in the field, was not meant to produce a straight cut answer. Rather, it provoked an exercise that allowed me to describe and discover the explicit and implicit boundaries of this particular field 'site'.

Multi-sited ethnographic approaches are often criticised to not contain enough depth, because thick description is not possible when changing sites permanently. Such a methodological weakness cannot be denied, but I question whether thick description of everyday village life at a supermarket or tavern would have been helpful in establishing the workings behind land reform and traditional jurisdiction in the limited amount of time available to me. As laid out at the beginning of this chapter, proper ethnography demands the presence of the researcher in the field over a certain period of time, in an ideal scenario until they reach 'saturation' (Buscatto 2018). In this case, I spent a total of twelve months between February 2016 and March 2018 in KwaNdebele and its surrounding region and was nowhere near that mentioned saturation when I left again. To engage in thick description would have strained my time budget even further. This does not imply that I ever left the house without pen and notebook

to make notes about interesting events of everyday life and the people that I met. Rather than 'hanging out' at popular places I focused on my "investigation – as is used by detectives solving a crime – wherein one component leads to increasing understanding and insight, that leads on to the next piece of the puzzle, research question(s), and design" (Morse, Cheek, and Clark 2018: 19). In my 'investigation' of different components I considered Hesse-Biber's (2018) appeal to let theory and research interest drive the choice of method and not vice versa, choosing whichever method seemed most applicable to gain the insight I sensed was missing from my inquiries. In this case the application of both qualitative and quantitative methods presented an appealing rationale, because "social life is not defined by either quantitative or qualitative, or by simply the macro- or the micro-approaches. Mixing methods can enhance and extend the logic of qualitative explanations about the social world." (Creswell et al. 2006: 2)

Often I have adapted a pragmatic view in the choice of my methods. Not in a sense that I would have simply chosen the most convenient method to apply given the circumstances, but more in a way that I chose the one that seemed to respond to my personal curiosity in a given situation. I followed a qualitatively driven mixed-method approach conducting complementary triangulation. The implementation was influenced by transformative procedure with both sequential and concurrent elements. Methodological literature on mixed-method approaches is abundant and often terms are used with ambiguous or even contradictory definitions. To avoid any confusion I shall provide a quick round of provisional definitions for the terms used above.

- 'Mixed-method' refers to the application of both qualitative and quantitative methods and is different from multimethod approaches, which may be based on several methods of either qualitative or quantitative character. (Hesse-Biber, Rodriguez, and Frost 2016 [2015])
- 'Qualitatively driven' implies that a qualitative method provides the primary means of enquiry and that quantitative method are used in a supplemental way (Morse, Cheek, and Clark 2018). Irrespective of whether one defines participant observation, the connexional element of ethnography, as a method, as a metaphor (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 11) or as an ideal (Falzon 2009: 1), it cannot be contested that ethnography is always qualitatively driven.
- 'Complementary triangulation' means that data from both qualitative and quantitative methods are not integrated entirely into one harmonious depiction, but rather are "used to treat different aspects of the same phenomenon or even different phenomena, the representation of which may add up to a unified picture" (Kelle and Erzberger 2004 [2000]: 174). This approach is different from Denzin's (1978) original definition of methodological triangulation, which suggested the application of different methods to reciprocally increase the validity of results.

- 'Transformative procedure' refers to the use of a "theoretical lens", which "provides a framework for topics of interest, methods for collecting data, and outcomes or changes anticipated by the study" (Creswell 2003: 16). What is being transformed in this context must not be misunderstood to be the field or the research results but rather the (qualitative and quantitative) methods, according to the framework within which the researcher has opted to work.

- 'Sequential' proceeding refers to the chronologically distinct performance of methods, usually to allow findings of one method to improve the other. 'Concurrent' implies parallel performance of at least two methods to enable a broad variation of data types on the same phenomenon (Creswell 2003). Some authors use these terms interchangeably with 'between-method triangulation' and 'within-method triangulation'. I prefer to differentiate here, because I see within-method triangulation as an essential part of participant observation and actually ethnography itself, while between-method triangulation may be both sequentially and concurrently performed (Flick 2018a: 127).

If any of these definitions still seem to vague, the following description of the research procedure should provide sufficient clarification. Even though the application of a multi-method approach was part of my preliminary research design, neither did I know beforehand which methods I would apply, nor was I certain that these would succeed:

> When working within a qualitatively driven set of methodologies, it is important to acknowledge that the iterative, ongoing process of the researcher being led by data to new questions means that it may be difficult to state upfront the exact mixed methods design – the type of data collection and analysis that will ultimately be utilized. Locking one's mixed methods project into a particular mixed methods design template a priori would be particularly challenging when doing research from a qualitatively driven standpoint. (Hesse-Biber 2018: 7)

In hindsight, I am now able to classify my research approach using the above given categories. In order to render this rather abstract classification in more concrete terms I have designed a graphic depiction of my research procedure (see Figure 2.4) as it is often advised when mixed-method approaches are applied (Creswell 2003). It shows that field and theoretical framework influence one another (1): Interesting circumstances that take place in KwaNdebele generally, regarding land and Traditional Authorities, determined the research interest. The research objectives and their underlying theoretical approach then defined the initial research sites by responding to that interest in specific empirical instances. The sites – or rather their respective residents – then again outlined the spatial boundaries of the field by granting or restricting access to information.

The framework (2) then co-determined the choice of method and its specific design (i.e. the transformative procedure defined above), qualitative methods being prioritised (3, QUAL) and
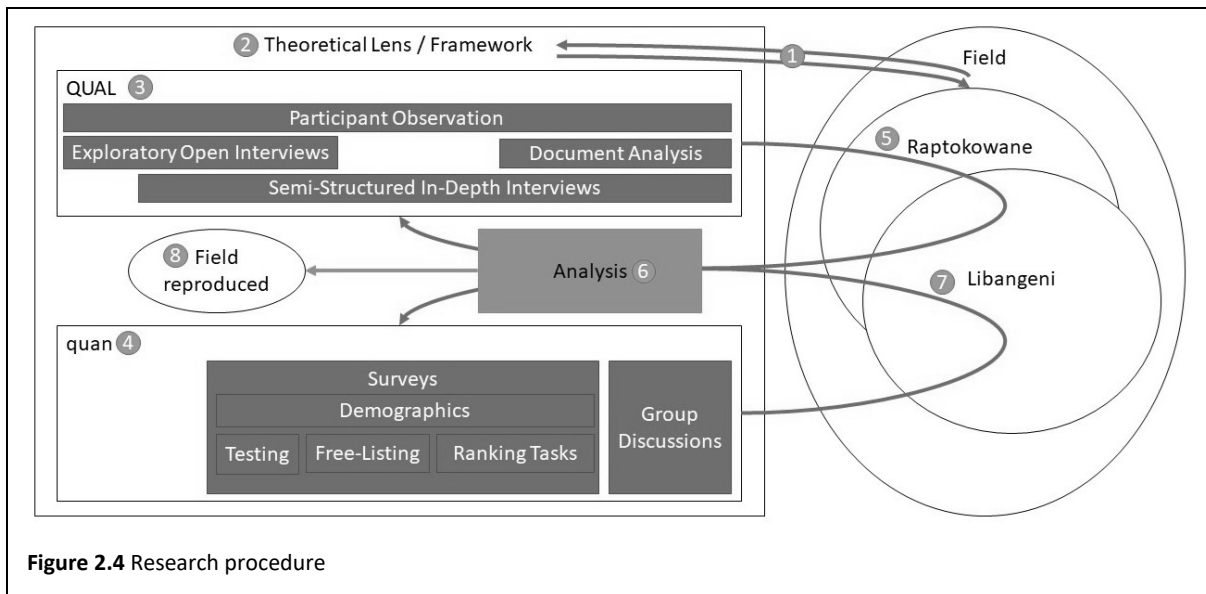
Figure 2.4 Research procedure

quantitative methods being supplementary (4, quan). In this case participant observation and exploratory interviews were conducted first in Rapotokwane (5). Once these first interviews had been accomplished, first adjustments were made after superficial analysis (6) for later interviews in Libangeni (7) and for potential quantitative methods (sequential process). The results were then superficially analysed in an iterative process and imported into the design of a first test survey. After thorough analysis, which takes accordingly more time when mixed methods are involved, the results are now presented in this dissertation, which can only be a reproduced and incomplete depiction of the field (8). It is still embedded in the theoretical research framework and must be seen as my personal biased rendering of what I believe to have learnt during my performance in the field.

Interviews were always recorded on my linear voice recorder (Olympus LS-P2) and in two cases on my phone (CAT S40), because I had forgotten to charge the recorder. Interview participants were ensured of their anonymity before each interview and participation was always voluntary. While exploratory interviews were still in process in Libangeni I was able to conduct first in-depth interviews in Rapotokwane (concurrent process). Altogether four surveys were conducted, two test rounds (both in Libangeni due to the larger sample population), one free-listing questionnaire (Libangeni) (De Munck 2009: 47-66), in which participants were asked to name three associations with a set of given concrete and abstract items and, finally, one questionnaire that asked people to rank specific items according to their personal perception of their importance on a five-level Likert scale (in Rapotokwane and Libangeni). In all surveys the participants were asked to indicate their home language, gender, area of residence, place of family origin, age, place of birth, level of education, occupation, significant disabilities, membership in political party and the number of their dependants. Furthermore they were asked to indicate the infrastructure access (electricity, water, rubbish collection etc.) of their respective plot and under which status (title deed, PTO etc.) they were occupying it. This was done to establish

whether there were differences between the different 'generations' and social strata of residents and whether certain factors could be singled out to have a connection with individuals cultural domains. A more detailed description of the survey development, including the design of the final ranking task questionnaire, will be provided together with their extensive discussion in Chapter 7. The surveys concluded with my contact details should the participants have further questions, which they never had, and the following remarks:

> "All information gathered in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially and anonymous. The interviewers have been instructed to neither record names, nor exact places of residence. The participation in this questionnaire to persons under the age of 18 is not permitted."

Finally, participant observation and in-depth interviews had helped me to single out the most common grievances of the local population and I often asked the interview participants what could be done to mitigate them. Most people shrugged their shoulders or pointed towards some 'higher power' (e.g. the government, Europe and America, or God's decision). Motivated by the creative freedom that dissertational research can grant to the academic novice to be innovative in the development of methods I decided to conduct discussion groups: a round of participants from Libangeni, sampled according to age, gender and home language affiliation were presented with three statements regarding current problems in their community. They were then asked to discuss each problem for fifteen minutes and to find answers to the questions: Who is to blame? Who can fix it? How can it be fixed? Patrick supervised and documented the discussions of the male groups and Margaret supervised the female participants while I waited outside and merely welcomed and afterwards bid the participants farewell with tokens of appreciation. The method design and the results will be discussed later in the Second *Entr'acte* (2E).

Very near to the end of my field research I gained access to the court files of the Litho land claim at the Land Claims Court (LCC) in Randburg (Johannesburg). I was allowed to take pictures of the files and included them into my reconstruction of the Litho land claim in Chapter Six.

I am convinced that the application of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the field enables the researcher to identify and fill a multitude of gaps if they are allowed to complement each other: "A precondition for this complementarity is, of course, that there is a theoretical framework within which the individual results can be meaningfully related to one another." (Kelle and Erzberger 2004 [2000]: 175). The Extended Case Method (ECM) seemed most appropriate to link all of my findings through theory. Developed since the 1950s in the presence of illustrious representatives, such as Max Gluckman and Michael Burawoy of the so-called Manchester school, ECM represents an epistemological way to link "empirical fieldwork data and theory" and is therefore often referred to as "theory-method package" (Tavory and Timmermans 2009: 258) or even "social theory in its own right"

(Eliasoph and Lichterman 1999: 228). ECM was designed to "describe and theorize how everyday practices in specific places were related to larger structures and processes" and set out to "focus ethnographic attention on 'trouble cases' such as situations of conflict and individual actions that did not conform to presumed societal norms" (Barata 2012 [2010]: 2). I have found Wadham and Warren's three steps for practical guidance within ECM the most helpful in establishing the implications of it in the field and the writing process:

> 1. Identify a ''good'' theory and a case (individual group, organization, or community) that is likely to both confirm and challenge the theory
> 2. Examine the daily lives of people within the chosen setting and identify any anomalies
> 3. Rebuild the theory to accommodate anomalies (2014: 6)

Burawoy's frequently-quoted suggestions "We begin with our favorite theory but seek not confirmations but refutations that inspire us to deepen that theory" (1998: 16) may of course provoke the enquiry whether this kind of ethnography might then actually be based on deductive reasoning. Most ethnographies are based on induction in its various embodiments and I find it hard to categorise my research or even ECM in general as either of them. Afterall the

> Interplay between induction (in which the researchers are never tabula rasa), deduction (in which the researchers are always open to re-think, modify, challenge, and reject the theory or hypothesis in their interaction with data), and abduction (in which the researchers always consider their conclusions as fallible and provisional) creates powerful iterative processes between data collection and analysis, and between data and theory." (Kennedy and Thornberg 2018: 14)

But why is it necessary to start with a theory in the first place? If we accept that researchers are both personally and theoretically biased when they enter the field like any human without cognitive superpowers, it would be hypocritical to assume that any data that they produce is not already filtered by their previous conceptions. Therefore, "the only intellectually honest course of action is moving from the theory to the field and back to theory" (Tavory and Timmermans 2009: 250). Even more, this interplay between theory and field enables the researcher to draw links between empirical observations and those macro-structures that influence these observations: "ECM engenders a multi-systemic episteme, drawing from both social constructivist and critical theories of science, recognizing both the micro-level world and the external structures that shape or constrain daily life" (Samuels 2009: 1608). The creative part, where the researcher is challenged to come up with new solutions and re-think the details, is defined by those observations that cannot be explained by the theory that was chosen. Actually, the researcher should be actively looking for these anomalies.

ECM was designed to be based on qualitative data, so how does it relate to mixed-method approaches, which include quantitative methods? In his widely referenced article *The Extended Case Method* Michael Burawoy calls for two different kinds of science: 'positive' and 'reflexive' science. ECM, he

explains, "applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique" (1998: 5). Quantitative methods, such as surveys, are depicted as part of positive science and therefore, unfortunately, disqualify for ECM in his perspective. He, however, also dedicates a whole section (12f) to an explanation why survey-based method fails to fulfil the criteria of positivist science. To me this implies that, if surveys are still to be regarded as scientific method, and if surveys are not part of positive science, and if there exists not a third kind of science, surveys must be part of reflexive science and thus are eligible to be used within ECM. Other researchers seem to have followed a similar interpretation:

> No techniques of data collection automatically fall outside the realm of an ECM study. (Samuels 2009: 1610)

> [ECM] can and should be used alongside other qualitative methods like interviews, or more quantitative approaches such as surveys. (Wadham and Warren 2014: 16)

> But the extended case method brings two potential reassurances: first, a commitment to transparency that should make clear when and how the researcher's own biases might come into play; and second, an affinity for mixed methods that allows for a combination of positivist and reflexive methods, with the aim of counteracting the shortcomings of both. (Wadham and Warren 2014: 18)

Burawoy and some other representatives of ECM seem to, furthermore, occasionally feud with the much more popular grounded theory (GT) approach and those that promote it (Tavory and Timmermans 2009: 244). Despite their common origin in qualitative post-positivist research there are some crucial differences between them.

Any textbook on ethnographic methodology introduces coding strategies as essential element to managing and developing field data for later analysis (e.g. Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke 2004 [2000]; Bernard 2006; Breidenstein et al. 2015 [2013]). A majority of ethnographic researchers sort and analyse their data on the basis of GT: "In terms of promoting inductive conceptual work, grounded theory has been exceptionally influential in the domains of qualitative research almost since its inception" (Clarke 2011: ch.1). I, too, digitalised my field notes, transcribed the majority of my interviews and thematically ordered the documents that I retrieved during my enquiries, all for the purpose of sorting them into coded categories. However, I did not adhere to the strict theory building processes that are recommended by GT textbooks (e.g. Dey 1999; Strauss and Corbin 2008; Clarke 2011; Flick 2018a) and its abundant contributions in various journals (e.g. Charmaz 1996; Thornberg 2012; Dunne 2011). Actually, the longer I stayed in the field, the more focused my field notes became. I had automatically begun to 'filter' them according to the observations I had already made and the theories that had already been established as relevant. Besides using coding software (MAXQDA) I also used analogue filtering techniques, especially when it came to different theoretical 'inspirations' that I had had in rather arbitrary situations in the field.

My research interest was from the start defined to be South African land reform and the involvement of Traditional Authorities within a Structure/Agency framework. The use of that transformative 'theoretical lens' as outlined above and the pragmatic 'investigation' style application of mixed-method indicate that this research was not designed to "build theory 'from the ground up'" (Tavory and Timmermans 2009: 245) as it would have been done in GT, because the most crucial difference between GT and ECM is the link between micro and macro:

> Crucially, the link between the macro-level context and micro-level action is established via preexisting theory, which clearly separates the extended case method from the better-known grounded theory approach to ethnography. (Wadham and Warren 2014: 6)

> One of the key differences between GT and ECM is whether a researcher explicitly uses a theory as the starting point to the boundaries of the case or treats the case as something produced in the social world. (Tavory and Timmermans 2009: 248)

I find it hard to determine the cause for the occasional side blows from ECM scholars towards GT around the turn of the century (e.g. Wacquant 2002), which would probably provide enough empirical data for a conflict-based case study of its own. Reform is in sight nonetheless. In recent years some have unfurled beyond the sociological arena opening up to more diverse applications of ECM (e.g. Eliasoph and Lichterman 1999; Samuels 2009; Wadham and Warren 2014). GT representatives have also furthered the development of their approach by acknowledging that the discovery of theory on the ground correlates with the researcher's theoretical framing in constructivist grounded theory (Glaser 2007; Charmaz 2014), informed grounded theory (Thornberg 2012) and the postmodernist interpretations of situational analysis (Clarke 2011; Flick 2018a). This is not to say that anything goes, because significant differences between the two approaches remain, but surely they would both gain academically if a certain degree of curiosity in each other's achievements were exercised.

In conclusion, the 'audience' of this chapter was presented with logistical and methodological context of this research venture. This was framed by Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to facilitate the depiction of my overall reflexive approach to data accumulation and analysis. I have presented details on the field sites as stage: how I came to find my field sites and what overall situation I found there. Embedded in a short discussion of post-modernist/post-structuralist ethnographic discourse I then presented myself and my research participants as anti-hero narrator and protagonists through the stylistic device of illeism. Finally the methodological procedure was presented as a performance, which included multi-sited and mixed-method approaches, capacitated and linked to theory through extended case method. Abandoning the dramaturgical metaphor, the following two chapters mark the beginning of this dissertation's main part. Chapter 3 will introduce important theoretical discourses of the Structure/Agency debate and Chapter 4 provides social and legal contexts that are necessary to understand the empirically gathered data.

Chapter 3 – Battling the Binary: a Theoretical Framework

To battle the binaries, as the title of this chapter suggests, implies that I aim to depict how the binaries that are presented from here onwards are not dichotomous, but rather represent merely the extreme ends of a range of discursive spectrums that disoblige to their true worth by being reduced to these binaries. This chapter will deal with Structure/Agency as an ontological binary that continues to inspire academic enquiries and discussions, and it will suggest conceptualisations of strategy and tactics, derived from the Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA), as conjunctive elements between structure and agency. This ontological account will provide guidance to the epistemological process of this thesis.

The Structure/Agency binary and the suggestion to interpret it in the light of strategy demand further elaboration regarding my motivation to include them in the theoretical framework. Ideally, theory extends the anthropological case to the world beyond and is therefore essential to every analytical process. The still open-minded yet careful anthropological novice – for want of more sophisticated synonyms – often enters the field with a rough idea of the different theoretical discourses of their discipline, but seldomly knows beforehand, which of them will be most suitable for the situation that they will face in the field. While certainly some theories offer better access to the field data than others, the range of acquainted theories will be limited by their previous experience both in the auditorium, the field or the ominous armchair. However, ultimately there will still be numerous schools of thought, philosophies, paradigms and theoretical discussions at hand, which will make choosing a defined set of them appear like the metaphorical walk on eggshells in the course of which it will be essential to mask insecurity but to avoid any blunt manoeuvres. The former would put the usefulness of the presented academic venture into question while the latter might quickly debunk it as a naive reproduction of underlying biases. The aforementioned novice will find it even harder to make a commitment to a certain set of theoretical approaches having been educated in a multitude of different academic schools. Advice such as "social reality can be analyzed most adequately through multiple methodological and theoretical perspectives" (Best and Kellner 1997: xii) may be encouraging in such a case. However, it does not help to overcome the fact that their theory awareness may often be characterised by mere surface knowledge and that complete in-depth acquirement of the limitless catalogue of social theory would not only be unattainable but also a waste of time. Unfortunately, the other extreme, that of early recommendations in grounded theory, "to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study" (Glaser & Strauss 1967 in Flick 2018a: 12) is not practicable for multiple reasons, either (see Clarke 2011; Dunne 2011). Thus, the novice is damned to resort to cherry picking from those theories and analytical dimensions that are familiar, and once they have decided

which ones to work with, that shallow knowledge that enabled this process must be abandoned in favour of a much deeper understanding of the inner workings of theory and field data.

Ultimately, I have found that the cornucopia of my own field observations will provide the necessary guidance in that case. The iterative methodological approach that was outlined in Chapter 2 has been turned into a recursive analytical one. The lesson that was learned by repeatedly adjusting methods according to the data that the field provided, was also applied by allowing the field to refer to those theories I already carried in my academic baggage. To illustrate this process I will provide a short vignette from my field research in Rapotokwane, which would also be appropriate in a chapter on methodological pitfalls. It will, hopefully, illustrate some of the reasons to assess my field data in the light of the Structure/Agency debate and emic strategies such as 'modern' and 'traditional' argumentation (see Chapter 4 for the latter).

In mid-May 2017 I approached one of the local Headmen to help me find a suitable research assistant in Rapotokwane. Throughout my field research he had been one of my essential contact persons in the community and as Chairman of the Traditional Council I expected him to have proper knowledge of the locally available qualifications. He was happy to help. In the early stages of my field research my access to the community was often filtered through the local elites of elderly Ndebele dignitaries. Surely, I had had conversations with passers-by and shop owners, but to gain valuable insight – especially from the younger, the female and the non-Ndebele speaking population – proved to be a difficult task. I suggested to him that we access the local High School to inquire for competent youngsters that would be willing and able to support my research with local knowledge and translation. My intentions behind this suggestion were the following: (1) I hoped that a young research assistant would help me access those generations that had little to do with the elderly elites. (2) I hoped that finding a research assistant through the school would neutralise the influence of the Traditional Council to a certain extent, even though I relied on the Headman as 'gatekeeper' to introduce me to the school management. (3) Knowing that the students at the High School were taught in both locally dominant languages (IsiNdebele and SeSotho) and English I hoped for sufficient language proficiency there. I do not know whether these deliberations of mine were initially clear to the Headman, but I think he soon realised that my enquiry at the High School would leave him and the Traditional Council in a strategically disadvantageous position.

While the students were enjoying their break on the school grounds and beyond, we arrived at the High School and introduced our enquiry to the principal, who immediately had one of his 11th graders in mind. She was called to his office and introduced to me as Tshepo*. Declaring that she would be willing to assist me with my research it was agreed that in the afternoon I would visit her grandmother, who was her legal custodian, to explain my research and the conditions under which she would be

working with me. However, later that day the meeting was postponed to the next day as the grandmother would not return home until the morning.

Around noon the next day my potential research assistant took me to her grandmother's house and I introduced myself and the research methods that would depend on her granddaughter's skills. She was happy for her granddaughter and asked me to write a letter of recommendation before the end of my research to ensure that Tshepo would get a good job after High School. Tshepo suggested that I address the school assembly the next morning to explain my research and ask them to mention it to their families, so that misunderstandings could be avoided if we turned up at their doorsteps for interviews. I agreed and was happy about her level of enthusiasm and devotion to the task ahead.

After I had addressed the High School students the next morning, however, Tshepo did not show up at the previously agreed upon time in the afternoon. When she also did not show up the day after and would not answer my text messages I asked two of the primary school boys who often paid me a visit after school to go and check on her. They returned with the message that the elders had disallowed her cooperation with me. I stood baffled. Who were these elders the boys referred to? Had the grandmother changed her mind? Had the Traditional Council intervened? Was the school against it? Why would she not tell me the reasons herself? I went to see her and asked for an explanation. With tears in her eyes she explained that her grandmother was a Sangoma, a traditional healer, and that Tshepo's late parents had appeared to her in a dream after my visit. They warned her that neighbours could become jealous seeing Tshepo working with me and that she would fall victim to witchcraft. Thus her grandmother withdrew her consent and Tshepo herself became too scared to be seen around my house. Aware that this was a battle I could not possibly win I simply asked Tshepo to give me a call should her grandmother change her mind. I immediately called the Headman, who had introduce me to the High School principal and explained the case to him, but he was in Hammanskraal for financial business and thus could not help immediately. The next day he explained that there was "*no sense in arguing with a Witchdoctor*"[20], which made me wonder if this was a welcome occasion for him to tactically install someone more convenient to him as my research assistant. He continued, "*Some traditions we should not engage with*" and also insisted we do not return to the High School to enquire for another student recommendation: "*They do not understand this village as we* [i.e. the Headmen] *do*." He advised that the matter should be solved within the Traditional Council office and we asked the Traditional Council's secretary for assistance. Their discussion of potential candidates was little fruitful and I was sent home to await further instructions. Ten minutes later, though, the secretary arrived at my plot and introduced her 'daughter' Cebile* as my new research assistant. She insisted: "*I*

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[20] This is often seen as a derogative term, which is only reiterated at this point to illustrate the sometimes problematic relation between Sangomas and Traditional Authorities.

am sure you will be happy with her and that there will be no need for another one." The die had been cast on my behalf. I was to work with a close relative of an essential Traditional Council functionary and I became doubtful whether I would gain unbiased access to the local population from now. Her young age and her access to Rapotokwane's considerably larger female half, however, kept me hopeful.

In the weeks that followed Cebile and I built enough rapport to exchange opinions beyond the standard rhetoric of interviewing neighbours. I taught her basic interviewing techniques and she taught me important phrases and mannerisms for approaching strangers at their respective home and in the streets. She shared her honest opinion on Rapotokwane's governance system, introduced me to marginalised groups and advised me how to ask more critical questions. Nonetheless she never spoke disrespectful of any village elders and made sure I spent sufficient interview time with them. Even though she found a more permanent job in Rust de Winter after a few months and was no longer available for further research, her help in interviewing the population of Rapotokwane and translating community assemblies proved to be very helpful and the process of finding her through the workings of ancestors and village politicians inspired my theoretical approach.

Initially, Tshepo's grandmother was happy for her granddaughter to have found a lucrative job, then she changed her mind due to a dream she had. First, Tshepo was eager to support my scientific research, but then she obeyed her grandmother's advice for fear of falling victim to witchcraft. First, the Headman was happy to help me personally, but soon realized that he would not have a say in finding my research assistant and that this could cost him and the Traditional Council insight into my enquiries. Then he was reluctant to challenge Tshepo's grandmother based on her qualification as Sangoma, but probably soon realized that he could use this situation to his advantage. Consulting with the other elders in my absence he managed to find a candidate that seemingly suited the Council's interests best, but also fulfilled some key demographic requirements to ensure that I would not have sufficient grounds to reject her. First, Cebile seemed merely a minor node in the Traditional Council's web of power, but then she turned out to speak her mind and pointed me to some marginalised members of Rapotokwane's society. First, I had to address school officials and ultimately all of their pupils before I could dare to address individual members of the community, but then the fact that I had adequately announced my enquiries ensured the interviews participants' willingness to share information with me. All these developments portrayed to me a simultaneously tense and harmonious relation between actors and the structures that surrounded them. The involved individuals – Tshepo and her grandmother, the Headman, Cebile, me – seemed to be in constant interaction with the social structures that surrounded them – the Traditional Council, the school, the job market, the ancestors, the belief in 'witchcraft', neighbourhood relations, research methodologies, et cetera.

The so-called Structure/Agency debate has kept scholars of social theory busy for a century or more, indiscriminately whether they defined themselves as sociologists, cultural anthropologists, linguists, political theorists or philosophers: "Consequently in facing up to the problem of structure and agency social theorists are not just addressing crucial technical problems in the study of society, they are also confronting the most pressing social problem of the human condition" (Archer 1996 [1988]: xii). I found the debate's central question best summarised by Anthony Giddens in one of his popular textbooks: "[How] far are we creative human actors, actively controlling the conditions of our own lives? Or is most of what we do the result of general social forces outside our control?" (2009: 87) A more refined discussion will be offered in the subchapter that follows. Giddens himself offered an approach that he christened *structuration* to solve this dilemma, "which conceives humans as knowledgeable actors that are both enabled and constrained by the social structures that are at once the consequence and condition of their actions" (Callinicos 2009 [1987]: xxi). Pierre Bourdieu introduced the concepts of *habitus* and *social fields* in his theory of *practice* aiming "to allow structure and agency (and, likewise, the individual and social, 'outer' and 'inner', etc.) their analytical integrity but also to relate them to each other" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 60). Bob Jessop's SRA understands complexity as the explanatory principle behind the relation of structure and agency in a critical realist framework. The SRA constitutes an ontology within which structure and agency evolve in a dialectical relation driven by the strategically-selective character of the former and the strategic conduct of the latter. These approaches will be discussed below and they will provide the theoretical lens through which the dilemma around land and leadership in former KwaNdebele can be analysed by focusing on the strategies and tactics that individuals and groups in this field apply.

The reader will have noted that the given vignette above contained some terms, such as 'battle', 'tactics' or 'strategy', which originate in military terminology. This is only to a small extent owed to stylistic mannerism on my side and rather reflects observations that I made from the very start of my field research. Already during my first encounter with the village elders, shortly described in Chapter Two, I noticed that they did not simply interact with me according to their individual character traits and personal susceptibility to European anthropologists. Rather they seemed to evaluate the overall situation, anticipate their fellow elder's (re-)actions and assess my usefulness to their own goals. Alfred Mahlangu was initially very careful not to disclose any information about the land claim and Nathaniel Mahlangu indicated interest in my academic work but refrained from sharing any crucial information until I had gained his trust. In opposition to that, Iggy Litho welcomed me with open arms and shared his opinions and knowledge while Jonoti Mnguni was always careful to only share information that he was completely certain of and would – if necessary – ask others for confirmation thereof.

Very early it was explained to me that Rapotokwane was divided and that different alliances existed. Many local actors tried to convince me to present their version of history as fact, to establish presumably lucrative investments from Germany to support their respective cause, and to convey intelligence that I had gained from opponents and allies alike. Needless to say that I respectfully rejected these advances the best I could. I experienced my ethnographic field in former KwaNdebele as an allegorical battlefield, a battlefield that relied on discursive binaries such as "Tradition versus Modernity", "Democracy versus Chieftaincy" and "Black Land versus White Land" as metaphorical weapons. Pushing this militaristic allegory even further I claim that the use of weapons such as the mentioned binaries depends on the strategy that the actors on a respective battlefield aim to implement. The vignette above contains instances of such strategic and tactical behaviour and the instrumentalization of discursive binaries: My proposition to search for a fitting assistant at the High School to meet certain demographic criteria; Tshepo's decision to adhere to her grandmother's authority and to avoid my house thereafter; the Headman's search for a new assistant that would not asperse the Traditional Council's authority.

'Strategy' as an originally militaristic term, etymologically derived from classical Greek, was for the longest time defined as the "art of war", but ended up being used in many more diverse contexts today and a "common contemporary definition describes it as being about maintaining balance between ends, ways, and means; about identifying objectives; and about the resources and methods available for meeting such objectives" (Freedman 2015 [2013]: xi). I have found that *strategy* as a concept is helpful to not only describe practice in a specific field, but that it provides a perspective, which enriches the debate around the primacy of structure and agency: "The term 'strategy' is not used here in the conventional sense of a plan consciously devised to attain a goal. It is, rather, a general way of organizing action […] that might allow one to reach several different life goals" (Swidler 1986: 277). In those cases where intentional practice plays a role it seems appropriate to assume a congestion of deliberations, intentions and patterns of action into strategies, which agents can use to adjust their practice over a longer period of time in order to achieve a change of the structures that surround them. In a later section of this chapter I will provide further information on *strategy* as a concept within anthropology and sociology and I will attempt to portray it as a feasible approach towards the Structure/Agency debate.

3.1 The First Binary: an Introduction to Structure/Agency

> Theories of structure and agency help us understand how individuals make sense of and act out their lives within a range of environments. They explore the co-existence of creativity and constraint and can help us better understand individual agency and power dynamics in a range of contexts (Tomlinson et al. 2012: 247)

The so-called Structure/Agency debate has different names, applies a variety of often synonymous terminology and its depiction depends on the perspective or agenda of whoever refers to it. Especially with regard to its key terms (on the one hand: person, subject, individual, agent, actor, subjectivity, conduct; on the other: society, system, structure, objectivity, context) many variants of the same underlying concepts are used, which I will apply synonymously in the course of this chapter, unless explicitly defined otherwise. Due to the fact that the debate is concerned with an ontological problem, which some have pointed out is rather a *problematique* of "unproblematic nature" (Hay 2001), the debate's depiction will specifically depend on the respective paradigm that is presented as favoured approach to solving its dilemma. Often these will be theories developed either from Bhaskar's and Archer's Critical Realism, Anthony Giddens's conceptualisation of 'structuration' or from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'practice', which highly depends on his idea of *habitus*. The latter two will be thoroughly discussed hereafter, while the former approach provides the basic ontological assumptions for Bob Jessop's SRA, which will be discussed later. I have decided to commence the daring task of summarising the Structure/Agency debate within a few pages by referring to the terminology and presentation applied in popular introductory resources (e.g. Callinicos 1999a; Kaspersen 2000; Parker 2000; Hay 2002; Krais and Gebauer 2017 [2002]). This is due to simple practicality with literature in this realm being more comprehensive.

Usually the assumed dichotomy between the individual and society is referred to as the dualism between agency and structure within the social sciences:

> Sociological theories can be categorized into two groups. First are theories where the individual and individual action define and constitute society. Here the individual and individual's actions receive so much attention that the theory cannot conceptualize and explain the existence of social institutions. Second are theories where society consists of structures that have an autonomous existence independent of individuals. The structure of society and social systems are emphasized more than the individual's possibilities of action, such that the actors appear to be constrained by structure. (Kaspersen 2000: 3)

Others may also refer to it as the opposition between subjectivism and objectivism:

> [O]bjectivism concentrates on the historical conditioning of interaction. [...] Social systems are systems in the strong sense, of having their own system-reproducing powers, whereas actors are agents only in the weak sense, of functioning as mediators of system-reproducing processes. [...] Subjectivism, on the other hand, concentrates on the historical productivity of social interaction, crediting human beings with creative subjectivity, the capacity for voluntary,

self-directing action. […] Actors are therefore agents in the strong sense, of bearing responsibility for outcomes, because, being free, they could have done other than they did, and systems are systems only in the weak sense, of exhibiting regularities. (Parker 2000: 54f)

These summaries of the debate's two extremes serve as a good orientation point for this overview. Most scholars will locate the starting point of the debate in the contributions of Weber, Durkheim and Marx, the so-called "founding fathers of sociology" (Grenfell 2014 [2008]-b: 9) in Europe. In simple terms Weber, on the on side, represented the perspective that human beings give meaning to the world and are the causes of social action (Brettel 2002: 433): "In all of his work, Weber was concerned with the chances of individualism and rational choice in a world of power struggles, bureaucratic organization and capitalist enterprises which militates against these chances" (Bendix in Lewis 1993: 51). On the other side, "Durkheim obtained the biological organism metaphor. Society was considered an organism, in which each individual part had its place and fulfilled a specific function so that the organism could reproduce itself" (Kaspersen 2000: 15), which laid the foundations of functionalist theory. While A. R. Radcliffe-Brown followed in this line to further structural-functionalism – based on the definition of society as an independent thing that defines individual action – Bronislaw Malinowski on the other hand stated that "in any sociological approach the individual, the group, and their relations must remain the constant theme of all observations and argument. The group, after all, is but the assemblage of individuals and must be thus defined" (Malinowski 1939: 938).

Karl Marx and those that followed in his theoretical footsteps are often placed at the centre of the spectrum of structure and agency, because Marx did not accredit the necessity to link them in a coherent conceptual model. He applied both "structural explanation and intentional understanding" (Callinicos 2009 [1987]: ix) synchronously without making their alleged contradictory character explicit. In doing so Marx bequeathed to his intellectual descendants a quirky dilemma. On the one hand, Marx wrote in his preface to the first edition of *Capital*, Vol. 1:

> But here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them. (Marx 2013: 9)

On the other hand, this rejection of methodological individualism raises further questions with regard to the ultimate agenda of Marxism:

> If we discard the concept of interests, how is it possible to have a theory of class struggle? Classes are conceived in Marxism precisely as groups of actors that share interests determined by a common position in the relations of production. Without the concept of interests, aren't these individuals reduced to automata? (Callinicos 2009 [1987]: xix)

Generations of Marxist scholars continue to discuss this seemingly contradictory character of Marxist theory, but unfortunately not all illustrious schools and scholars can be discussed in this chapter.

In the course of the tumultuous 1960s several conceptual developments around the primacy of structure or agency took place, similar and to some extent related to the aforementioned *Writing Culture* debate (Chapter 2). On the structure side of the debate's spectrum Claude Lévi-Strauss formulated a response to existentialism, which had already been developed in the course of the Second World War by French writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and which "offered a kind of 'philosophy of man' which stressed individuality and subjectivity" (Grenfell 2014 [2008]-b: 22). Lévi-Strauss "sought out to continue the tradition of Durkheim and Mauss" and "filled the gap left in their account of primitive classification with Saussure's theory of language" (Callinicos 1999a: 267). Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of the linguistic sign implies a separateness of language as a system and actual speech, which he depicts as its mere product:

> The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses. The sound-image is sensory, and if I happen to call it "material," it is only in that sense, and by way of opposing it to the other term of the association, the concept, which is generally more abstract. (de Saussure 2004 [1916]: 61)

Important to note: the arbitrary relation between *signifier* and *signified* in de Saussure's conceptualization of language allows the bracketing of context and reference and thus made it possible to conceive of language as an autonomous system. This enabled Lévi-Strauss to transfer its underlying logic onto a model of society: two parallel systems of which the more autonomous one (i.e. signifier/society) is "more real" and thus "precedes and determines the signified" (i.e. individuals) (Lévi-Strauss in Callinicos 1999a: 268). Thus structuralism, "the more or less single-handed invention of Claude Lévi-Strauss" (Ortner 1984: 135), was established as a paradigm that was designed "not to constitute, but to dissolve man" (Lévi-Strauss in Callinicos 1999a: 269). This anti-humanism was then developed by other prominent theorists of different theoretical schools such as Louis Althusser, a representative of structural Marxism, which located "the determinative forces not in the natural environment and/or in technology, but specifically within certain structures of social relations" and thus gave it a "functionalist flavor" (Ortner 1984: 139-41).

Somewhat towards the centre of the Structure/Agency spectrum, but still based on structuralism's basic assumption of society as a separate system, post-structuralism entered the scene in the late 1960s:

> There was always tension between this essentially closed conception of structure and the primacy which he [i.e. Lévi-Strauss, JK] gave to signifiers over signified. The decisive step in constituting *post*-structuralism lay in resolving this tension by, in effect, using the infinite

movement of signification to disrupt the stability of structures. (Callinicos 1999a: 274, original emphasis)

In other words, post-structuralist theory assumed that the Saussurian linguistic sign does not constitute a strictly unidirectional definition process from signifier to signified, but instead it is in itself recursive allowing signifieds to become signifiers of other or newly invented signifieds, which means that "fundamentally nothing escapes the movement of the signifier and that, in the last instance, the difference between signified and signifier is nothing" (Derrida 2004 [1967]: 316). It was concluded that every speech act, every interaction and every sort of sense making was merely constructed discourse, so that "the philosophy of Man *was* the philosophy of language. All human 'discourse' could be 'deconstructed' in terms which were analogous to language" (Grenfell 2014 [2008]-b: 23, original emphasis). This had not only philosophical implications, but also practical ones for a potential redefinition of science, because "if discourse does not mirror the world, but in some sense constitutes it, then maybe scientific theories could be seen as elements in strategies of domination" (Callinicos 1999a: 275f). Possibly, that is why the assumption of discourse as constitutive force behind history was ultimately not transplanted onto an outspoken coherent model of society and its actors. Instead it lead to various different conclusions among those illustrious scholars that were rather reluctantly categorized as post-structuralists.

Michael Foucault as one of them, described his own academic activity as *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the historical description of discursive practices, which consisted of "not – of no longer – treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 2002 [1972]: 54). Foucault moved concepts such as 'practice' and "field of knowledge"(Foucault 1979 [1977]: 27) into the spotlight of investigation around the same time when Bourdieu, one of his French peers, developed a rather different ontological account of practice, social fields and habitus. However, Foucault pursued the anti-humanist stance of Levi-Strauss and Althusser and deduced the constitution and articulation of individuals from his Nietzschean conceptualisation of power-knowledge, which "is not the attribute of any subject either individual or collective" (Callinicos 1999a: 278).

Many of these theories were refined throughout the 1970s and their popularity did to a large extent depend on political motives within and without the academic circus. As further notable contributions to the debate within the Marxist spectrum one may mention Political Economy and later Analytical Marxism (G.A. Cohen, John Roemer, Jon Elster). The former distinguished itself from structural Marxism by focusing on "large-scale regional political/economic systems" (Ortner 1984: 141) and problematised historical and thus capitalist/colonialist influence in anthropologically researched societies. The latter, similar to Rational-choice Marxism and Workerist Marxism, embraced

methodological individualism, "that is, the idea that social structures are reducible to the consequences of the actions taken by individual persons" but was criticized for its "Nietzschean pluralisation of power relations" (Callinicos 2009 [1987]: xvi-xviii). A new Weberian/actor-centred perspective constituted Harold Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology, which, among further achievements, was based on the assumption that "Social structures and the social order do not exist outside ourselves." (Kaspersen 2000: 22)

In the late 1970s and 1980s then practice theory in its different shapes and sizes entered the stage of social theory and its advocates promised to overcome the dualism of structure versus agency. The aim was not the assignment of primacy to either system/structure or subjects/agents but to portray the necessity of their complementary coexistence and to explain the character of their relationship(s). The system and those within it were to be explained as integral entity, which could be understood not by examining its separate parts but by portraying the dynamics and mechanisms that held them together, i.e. its practices: "At the core of the system [i.e. one that is composed of both structures and agents, JK], both forming it and deforming it, are the specific realities of asymmetry, inequality, and domination in a given time and place" (Ortner 1984: 149). Practice, in a simplified but appropriate definition to portray the wide range of possible applications, "is social science jargon for what people do in all contexts that involve human action" (Kurtz 2001: 151). What people do, whether they are viewed as independent actors or as parts of overarching structures, creates social reality, because what people do is ultimately the only thing that gives structures and agency a right to being regarded as existent in any sociological or anthropological ontology.

A multitude of theories have thus been introduced within practice theory to overcome the binary character of the debate, the most acclaimed and at once criticized of them being those of Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, who are at once comparable, yet distinct in their approaches (Callinicos 1999b). Both "encourage us to think relationally: [...] 'relations between' rather than 'either/or'" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 54). Anyone who has encountered the extensive *oevre* of either of these social theorists will know that to summarize any of their theories within a small subchapter and to cut down the body of the theoretical concepts that they developed to only their most prominent ones is bound to fail. I shall give it a try nonetheless, motivated by the unaccounted Nelson Mandela quote: "It always seems impossible until it's done"[21].

3.1.1 Bourdieu: Habitus, Capital, Field

Bourdieu's theory of practice is based on an "'ontological complicity' between objective structures and internalized structures" (Grenfell 2014 [2008]-b: 44) and aims to transcend the Structure/Agency

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[21] "People do not live by bread alone: they live mostly by catch phrases" – George Creely (also unaccounted)

dualism outlined above: "With *habitus*, Bourdieu aims to allow structure and agency (and, likewise, the individual and social, 'outer' and 'inner' etc.) their analytical integrity but also to relate them to each other" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 60). In *Distinction* (Bourdieu 2010 [1984]: 95), one of his major works, he summarizes practice in the following equation:

[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice

"This equation can be unpacked as stating: one's practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 50). Let me attempt to add further clarification on the three constituting elements of this equation and explain their relation to one another, which ultimately forms practice.

Habitus, as it is adopted by Bourdieu from the work of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas (Krais and Gebauer 2017 [2002]: 26-30), is one of the concepts that he developed together with Jean-Claude Passeron in the late 1960s (Bourdieu and Passeron 2018 [1970]). Krais and Gebauer (2017 [2002]: 70) describe *habitus* as unifying principle of person, coherent practice and identity. It is defined as an entity that is part and parcel of each individual actor: "It is a 'structure' in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 50). One's habitus consists both of *structured structures*, which have been formed by the effects of past experience echoing in the present, and which have been predisposed to function as *structuring structures*, which generate and define the actor's creative capacity now and in the future (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 53).

> The word *disposition* seems particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus (defined as a system of dispositions). It expresses first the *result of an organizing action*, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a *way of being*, a *habitual state* (especially of the body) and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity*, or *inclination*. (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 214, original emphasis)

Bourdieu has formulated several ways of referring to these two sides of the *habitus*: *opus operatum* (the finalised work) and *modus operandi* (the operational procedure), or the "*dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality*, or, more simply, of incorporation and objectification" (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 72, original emphasis). One's habitus is formed from early childhood onwards through interaction with the world and the agents therein. This precondition is then put to use to interact with that world and to shape it according to one's specific strategic or non-strategic needs. Thus the opposition between individual and society becomes irrelevant or is even negated as both depend on *habitus* and *habitus* depends on both.

To describe *habitus* Bourdieu has often used the concept of Noam Chomsky's generative grammar theory, wherein it is assumed that a person's specific language capacity is derived from an innate

universal grammar: "A person who knows a language has represented in his brain some very abstract system of underlying structures along with an abstract system of rules that determine, by free iteration, an infinite range of sound-meaning correspondence" (Chomsky in Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 203). Similarly, Bourdieu explains, the reason for appropriate social behaviour is located in the habitus of a subject and not in society. Agents do not follow an external social grammar, but an internal grammar of action. The main difference to Chomsky's universal approach, however, lies in the underlying structure's origin. While Chomsky describes it as an innate property, Bourdieu sees *habitus* as "dispositions *acquired through experience*, thus variable from place to place and time to time." (Bourdieu 1990 [1987]: 9, original emphasis). Social experience and internal social grammar (i.e. *habitus*) influence one another continuously, not in circular fashion but in an upwards spiralling orbital movement (Krais and Gebauer 2017 [2002]: 33). It is not the code of social rules and norms that creates the *habitus*, but the subject's activities, which are performed in response to them. In this regard it also differs from the more common term 'habit', which rather refers to one of the potential outcomes of *habitus*:

> The *habitus*, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history, and that it belongs to a genetic mode of thought, as opposed to existentialist modes of thought. (Bourdieu in Maton 2014 [2008]: 55, original emphasis)

If history is the underlying principle of *habitus*, habitus thus becomes the underlying principle of habit. World views, norms, knowledge, strategy and identity, but also body posture, emotions, verbal expressions, mannerisms and reflexes are incorporated into the individual's habitus and invoked when necessary. Habitus is not simply a mental entity but is located in the entire physical body, because it is the subject's body that performs practice and thus creates and expresses its own internal grammar. The body is the sensual manifestation of a person, the natural expression of an identity. Even though the identity of the individual's body will be largely socially produced, the relationship with their own body touches individuals personally, especially in those cases where bodily appearance determines practice (e.g. physical and mental fitness, gender, skin colour). While Foucault associates the "art of the human body" mostly to "the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful" (Foucault 1979 [1977]: 137f), Bourdieu acknowledges the individual's agency in maintaining or restructuring their habitus and thus the relation to their body:

> It is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the habitus may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the habitus performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective." (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 53)

Strategic conduct, according to Bourdieu, both originates in the *habitus* as "strategy-generating principle" (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 72), but may also target the habitus to trigger a transformation of the same. Even though it is stable, the habitus is not to be regarded as a closed static system, because it is expandable. The experiences that create habitus are very much heterogeneous and contradictory and most often do not harmoniously join together. Even though it hardly forgets its components, inner contradictions may occur and certain parts of the habitus may be replaced, exchanged or amended. It is important to note, though, that one person has only one habitus, not several, even though some scholars might analytically separate different dimensions of it (e.g. 'political habitus', 'family habitus', 'work habitus') or assemble a selection of habituses[22] that share a range of features within a certain group set (e.g. 'class habitus', 'legal habitus', 'gender habitus').

To detect habitus in real life researchers in Bourdieu's ontology depend on the concept of *field*, or otherwise *habitus* becomes so abstract that it takes an unrecognizable shape. Similar to most practice theories, Bourdieu assumed that society and individual produce one another (Krais and Gebauer 2017 [2002]: 78) and that practice depends on institutions, their appropriations, their reform, their creation:

> The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of *conditioning*: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field (or of a set of intersecting fields, the extent of their intersection or discrepancy being at the root of a divided or even torn habitus). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or *cognitive construction*. Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127, original emphasis)

Actors always find themselves within social fields, which have their own rules and their own stakes in a competition for power and influence. This may refer to society as a whole but also to subfields such as education, art, literature, academics and, yes, sports. Bourdieu's *champ* is often likened to a playing field, where football or other competitions are practiced, a field of knowledge, a battle field or a "'field of struggles' in which actors strategically improvise in their quest to maximise their positions" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 53). Every field provides different positions, hierarchies or roles, according to its own internal logic (which is not necessarily logical) and according to the capacities of the heterogeneous assembly of actors who are part of it. By participating in the game, agents not only accept the rules of the game but also the game itself. For example, by filing a land claim a South African community does not only accept the rules under which the land will be restituted but also the fact that land restitution is a viable entity. Accepting the game means performing practices of acknowledgement, investing into it, trying to do things in the right way, trying to understand regularities. Actors, despite accepting the

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[22] Most English translations of Bourdieu's texts apply this plural form of habitus, which I will adhere to. The Latin declination applies a long ū-vowel to indicate plural. Some scholars also use 'habiti' to mark plural in English, while in most original French texts the plural seems to be strategically avoided.

field and its logic, retain their own agency by appropriating the dynamics of the field and incorporating them into their habitus:

> A particularly clear example of practical sense as a proleptic adjustment to the demands of a field is what is called, in the language of sport, a 'feel for the game'. This phrase (like 'investment sense', the art of 'anticipating' events, etc.) gives a fairly accurate idea of the almost miraculous encounter between the habitus and a field, between incorporated history and an objectified history, which makes possible the near-perfect anticipation of the future inscribed in all the concrete configurations on the pitch or board. (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 66)

The game is of course defined by the practice of its agents and not by a fixed set of positions. New conventions can be introduced and the game will be played differently. Those actors who fill positions within the field will either strive to change or to preserve the field's logic, its playing rules, its *doxa* (in Bourdieu's terms), "the assumptions that 'go without saying' and which determine the limits of the doable and the thinkable" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 58). Even so-called rebels, though, will always be obliged to work within a certain framework:

> 'Personal' style, the particular stamp marking all the products of the same habitus, whether practices or works, is never more than a deviation in relation to the style of a period or class so that it relates back to the common style not only by its conformity […] but also by the difference which makes the whole 'manner'. (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 86)

In other words, if an actor decides that the rules must be changed, it will be necessary for them to, first, adhere to the rules in order to be accepted by the other field actors, because "Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127). The other actors constitute that field, which the individual intends to change. Once accepted by the others the ambitious rule-changer can rise to a more powerful position in the field by adjusting the personal habitus in order to, eventually, be in a position to initiate changes. At that point, however, "habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127), and thus they might eventually not be in favour of a change of the field's internal logic anymore (see also Bourdieu 1996 [1992]: 270). This interpretation is, of course, subject to challenge from a range of perspectives.

To complete Bourdieu's "inter-dependent and co-constructed trio" (Thompson 2014 [2008]: 65) we now turn to 'capital':

> Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is a *vis insita*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a *lex insita*, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world. […] It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its

forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory. (Bourdieu 1986: 241f, original emphasis)

As shown in the equation given at the beginning of this section, capital combines with habitus within an individual that will engage a field to ultimately produce practice. However, just like *habitus* and *field* constitute one another, *capital* also depends in its constitution on the other two entities. It accounts for the fact that actors within a certain social field need to be equipped with more than the appropriate habitus to succeed. This will not only be economic capital, but must be seen within a "wider anthropology of cultural exchanges and valuations" (Moore 2014 [2008]: 99) in which the term 'capital' unites a range of assets that, depending on the field that they are to be used within, co-determine the outcome of *habitus'*s performance:

> Bourdieu nominated four forms of capital: economic (money and assets); cultural (e.g. forms of knowledge; taste; aesthetic and cultural preferences; language, narrative and voice); social (e.g. affiliations and networks; family, religious and cultural heritage) and symbolic (things which stand for all of the other forms of capital and can be 'exchanged' in other fields, e.g. credentials) (Thompson 2014 [2008]: 67)

Bourdieu would eventually add further forms of capital depending on the investigated fields and he furthermore differentiated between different states that these capitals may have: i.e. embodied, objectified and institutionalized state (Bourdieu 1986).

Capital determines practices both as something that is tied to the individual and also as something that distinguishes social fields from one another. When an individual's habitus corresponds well with a field, this "well-formed habitus" (Moore 2014 [2008]) must be interpreted as cultural or social capital. That individual may, however, also need certain economic capital or at least symbolic capital that compensates lack of the former. What these kinds of capital are, however, depends to a large extent on how that respective field defines itself using capital. Bourdieu defines social fields as characterised through their differences. Crucial difference will be the common forms/shapes and the accumulated quantity of capital found within the individuals of these social fields, such as world view, taste, social practice and property. Differences, however, do also imply relations that are destined to establish an elevation of one field/group/individual above another. These relations are then translated into an ascription of these relations into prominent differences, i.e. classes.

For example, the traditionalistic leadership elite of a village in South Africa or elsewhere contains different forms and kinds of capital. This may be economic objectified capital, such as monetary funds or control over land. This may be cultural habitus capital, such as knowledge of lineages and other 'traditions'. This may be social embodied capital, such as the personal close affiliation with government officials or higher ranking Traditional Leaders. And, finally, this may be symbolic institutionalized capital, such as the fact that village inhabitants consult the Traditional Council first in cases of conflict,

instead of other state authorities. Regarding all these capitals, the leadership of the village will differ to a certain degree from the majority of the village inhabitants and will thus use these differences to distinguish themselves from them, thereby establishing an elevated and more powerful status for themselves. Surely none, maybe few, of them will earnestly identify and acknowledge this mechanism: "I call misrecognition the fact of recognizing a violence which is wielded precisely inasmuch as one does not perceive it as such" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 168). This last step from distinction to elevation is crucial, because as long as groups of individuals simply own different kinds of capital, but do not intent to deploy it to establish distinction, status and power in relation to others (i.e. strategic practice), this capital cannot be translated into class or field. It is thus shown that institutions such as Traditional Councils and Royal Houses depend on *habitus*. The rules to which extent capital establishes class are of course inscribed into the habitus of that specific group of individuals, but also in the habitus of those who are located outside of that class and who nonetheless accept these rules:

> When, owing to the quasi-perfect fit between the objective structures and the internalized structures which results from the logic of simple reproduction, the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e. as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned, the agents' aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product. (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 166)

3.1.2 Giddens: Structuration

Giddens's approach "is essentially dialectical: he notes the opposition between the entrenched positions which constitute the terms of a dualism, seeks to demonstrate the poverty of each, and transcends the dualism by offering a qualitatively novel 'third way'" (Hay 2002: 118). Structuration theory "conceives humans as knowledgeable actors that are both enabled and constrained by the social structures that are at once the consequence and condition of their actions" (Callinicos 2009 [1987]: xxi). Done deal? Unfortunately it is not that easy. While some scholars praise his social ontology for being "appealing in its disarming simplicity" (Hay 2002: 118), I have found that while more detail helps to better understand Bourdieu's approach, the opposite seems to be the case for Giddens. The more detail one adds to his conceptualizations the more it seems to build potential for confusion and the more questionable becomes his model. This may be due to the fact that Giddens approaches the Structure/Agency dualism by introducing a range of neologisms and new definitions for already established terms to differentiate the entities of his structuration framework. This can be confusing at times, which is why his seminal work *The Constitution of Society* (2004 [1984]) offers a helpful five page (373-77) terminological glossary containing 42 definitions, which I will not be able to showcase in its entirety. Until now I have very liberally, and possibly carelessly, treated a range of the dominant terms of the debate as synonyms, but because Giddens applies a rather strict regimen of terms, which will

cause confusion if not applied carefully, I shall present the following entries from his glossary as the most important ones for now:

Ontological Security	Confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity
System	The patterning of social relations across time-space, understood as reproduced practices. Social systems should be regarded as widely variable in terms of the degree of 'systemness' they display and rarely have the sort of internal unity which may be found in physical and biological systems.
Structure	Rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and instantiated action
Duality of structure	Structure as the medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organizes; the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but are chronically implicated in its production
Structuration	The structuring of social relations across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure

Giddens's glossary does not offer any definitions of actors/agents and agency, but elsewhere he explains:

> Agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place […]. Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently. (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 9)

His approach to practice begins with a knowledgeable agent: "A conception of action … has to place at the centre the everyday fact that social actors are knowledgeable about the conditions of social reproduction in which their day-to-day activities are enmeshed." (Giddens 1982: 29). These knowledgeable agents are, however, only knowledgeable, because they have overcome the "social predicament of human beings" (Parker 2000: 55), i.e. the necessity to establish the 'self' in connection to the own body:

> We can distinguish very definitely between the self and the body. The body can be there and can operate in a very intelligent fashion without there being a self involved in the experience. […] The body does not experience itself as a whole, in the sense in which the self in some way enters into the experience of the self. It is the characteristic of the self as an object to itself that I want to bring out. (Mead 1972 [1934]: 136)

To make such an establishment agents rely on other agents, submitting to their judgement and becoming an 'other' in the other's eye. Through communication with other subjects agents recognize themselves as the same (Parker 2010: 140f). "Human being is defined by reference to participation in social interaction and not by the properties of individuals" and it is social interaction that "gives

individuals access to language and an intersubjective context of use, which is the precondition of interpreting experience, and establishing meaning and knowledge" (Parker 2000: 56). This way, Giddens claims, the individual is able to establish ontological security (see definition above). However, in order to assure oneself of the established identity and security, the individual must permanently and unavoidably "monitor one's own behaviour in relation to that of others" (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 85). This ultimately recreates practices and thus agency, which "must be understood as a flow of events which stream through life in an infinite fashion, an incessant process analogous to processes of cognition and understanding which continue to run through our heads" (Kaspersen 2000: 36). This continuous stream of reflexive monitoring within social interaction and the reproduction of practices across space and time is what ultimately maintains social systems in the Giddensian sense (Parker 2000: 56f).

As an example, one could mention the ethnographic researcher from Chapter 2 having to accommodate to the ritual of greeting neighbours passing by his accommodation in the South African field, which appears to him more complicated than what he would do at home, i.e. the occasional nod or raising of the right hand once eye contact has been established. After several unsuccessful attempts to perform a proper greeting the standard greeting procedure should ideally be more or less experienced like this:

> *The younger agent (usually the researcher) spots a neighbour at a certain distance, and without waiting to establish eye contact shouts: "Sawubona! (One sees you = Hello)". The older agent looks around and spots the researcher: "Yebo! (Yes)". The younger agent: "Unjani?" (What kind are you? = How are you?). The older agent: "Ngikhona! (I am here = I am fine) Wena unjani? (You, what kind are you? = And how are you?). The younger agent: "Ngiyaphila! (I am well/alive)"*[23]

This exchange of greetings does not only curiously mirror on the linguistic level what Giddens has derived from Mead's separateness of body and self, i.e. the need to be established as agent through the recognition by others (*One sees you! Yes! What kind are you? I am here!*). It also shows that the researcher will have created mental *structures* (as defined by Giddens above) to render a satisfactory greeting performance in the respective social *system* (also as defined by Giddens above). In this case the language and the rules how it is to be used are the structures. The neighbours and their preferred way of greeting one another are the system (of interaction). The system responds to the agent's need to be ensured of their personal existence and acceptance and thus the agent creates mental structures that will guide practices and very likely repeatedly trigger the desired response. The reproduction of these practices by the agent in return establishes the system:

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[23] In this case I have used the IsiZulu version of the greeting ritual, which is linguistically structured the same way in most Nguni languages.

> Interaction is constituted by and in the conduct of subjects; *structuration*, as the reproduction of practices, refers abstractly to the dynamic process whereby structures come into being. By the *duality of structure* I mean that social structure is both constituted *by* human agency and yet is at the same time the very *medium* of its constitution. (Giddens 1993 [1976]: 128f, original emphasis)

Additionally to guiding the agent through practices, structures actually "enable (or empower) actors to interpret, evaluate, influence and control elements of the situation in which they act. […] Structures, as 'rules and resources', do not do anything, but they have their effect through being known and used by actors." (Parker 2000: 57). The same factors that bind the actor to the system also allow them to change it:

> The binding factors consist of the following elements: meaning and communication structures (signification), structures of control and power (domination), and structures of legitimization. These structures, which contain some rules and resources, are used by the actor in every action, and the decisive factor in relation to an analysis of social change is to examine more closely how these binding structures are reproduced and transformed. (Kaspersen 2000: 60)

Our exemplary researcher has, by establishing mental structures, been accepted into the social system of interaction in the local community. He could, however, also have tried to turn the structuration process around, because "to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 14). Applying a signification strategy, he could have tried to establish a new language. Applying domination, he could have used economic or political means to make people change their way of greeting. Applying legitimization our researcher could have refused the local way of greeting due to an allegedly flawed underlying logic and then tried to convince the neighbours to adopt his own way of greeting. Without a doubt, however, any of these strategies would have cost the researcher more resources of any kind than simply adopting the local system: "Subjective powers of agency therefore depend primarily on actors knowing how to do things, having a 'practical consciousness' of the appropriate rules for making sense of situations and a command of relevant resources." (Parker 2000: 58). This practical consciousness will instantaneously determine in which way the agent becomes active and only retrospectively a discursive consciousness will justify the way in which one acted. Some of these structuration processes may even be applied unconsciously: "Actors are agents because they could do otherwise but, being enmeshed in the routines of everyday life, they are generally repetitive, producing minor adjustments while following conventions" (Parker 2000: 58). In a nutshell:

> Individuals as knowledgeable actors are thereby implicated in their practices at three stratified levels. First, they reflexively monitor their actions in their purposive, intentional dimensions. Second, they are capable of supplying reasons for their activities (rationalization). Third, their actions have motives that can be located to varying extents in individual discursive consciousness (what can be said), practical consciousness (what is known tacitly but hard to put into words) and/or unconsciousness. (Zenker 2013: 33)

The aim of Giddens's redefinitions of crucial terms of the Structure/Agency dualism is ultimately to show that it is not a case of either subjectivism or objectivism, but to portray a framework, in which structure and agency are interdependent, a duality. On the one side agents are dependent on the system to establish structures and thus become empowered. On the other side the system can only exist if knowledgeable agents maintain it through their mental structures.

Several scholars have raised criticisms against Giddens's structuration theory, of which I can only mention a few at this point. First:

> Giddens chooses to highlight not the duality of structure and agency (and hence the analytical nature of the distinction between the two), but what he terms the *duality of structure*. […] That Giddens seeks to transcend the dualism of structure *and agency* by pointing to the duality of structure alone has troubled many commentators. (Hay 2002: 119f, original emphasis)

Second, by redefining the central terms of the debate Giddens employs a crucial trick. He differentiates between system and structure and assigns to 'system' a definition that is much closer to what is traditionally referred to as 'structure'. Even though his definition of 'system' conveniently allows for a consideration of both micro and macro processes without essential distinction between their influence on the history of society (Parker 2000: 53), his definition of 'structure' turns out to bear little potential for conflict when regarded within the context of the broader debate. In this case it would have to be rechristened as System/Agency debate, which he does not do. Also, by redefining structure as "memory traces" (see above), Giddens has practically deprived it of its "analytical integrity, disabling the capacity to capture either" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 60; see also Archer 1996 [1988]; Archer 1995).

Third and finally, while Giddens aims to transcend the ontological dualism by proclaiming a duality between structures and agency, he explains that only "two types of methodological bracketing are possible in sociological research" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 288) for structure and agency are figuratively two sides of the same coin. It can only be either institutional analysis (focus on structures/systems) or strategic conduct (focus on agents/agency), because "it is seldom if ever possible to capture simultaneously both […] aspects of a given situation. Consequently, when engaged in an analysis of 'strategic conduct' we must 'bracket off' our concern with the institutional context" (Hay 2002: 120) and vice versa. While rejecting the idea of an ontological dualism he thus establishes a methodological one, which raises the question whether the divide between structuralism/anti-humanism and action theory/intentionalism has been overcome or just been justified on redefined grounds.

3.2 Searching Common Ground: Tactics and Strategy

The debate continues, offering ever new refinements and modifications to the different solutions to its original dilemma. Roy Bhaskar's and Margaret Archer's versions of Critical Realism argue against transcending structure and agency and see them as "distinct strata of reality, as the bearers of quite different properties and powers. Their irreducibility to one another *entails examining the interplay between them*." (Archer 2003: 2, original emphasis). Nicos Mouzelis attempts to develop a theory that occupies the middle ground between Archer and Giddens by restructuring structuration theory in a way that maintains dualistic character to ascertain the objective dimension of social reality (1989). Alex Callinicos has investigated the relations of structures, agency and historical materialism and concludes that "Agents' structural capacities are […] determined by their relative access to productive resources, to labour-power and means of production" (2009 [1987]: 275). From a political science perspective Structure/Agency was also considered, for example, by Paul Roscoe (1993), who "adds to practice theory the powerful idea that political practices of agents are the major motivating factor of political evolution" and "practices of political agents exist in a recursive relationship with the social structures of their political communities" (Kurtz 2001: 151). In summary, however, all these approaches within practice theory (even though some of the mentioned scholars refuse to call it that) seem to agree "that society is a system, that the system is powerfully constraining, and yet that the system can be made and unmade through human action and interaction" (Ortner 1984: 159). Keeping this shortened summary of practice theory's perspective on the Structure/Agency debate in mind I invite the reader to remember the opening vignette, in which I told the story of how the Headman helped me to find a research assistant.

Those instances where the vignette's actors more or less skilfully managed to navigate through society's constraints, or even managed to manipulate the same make reference to tactical manoeuvres or even strategic intent. My personal aim in the field was a broad perspective onto Rapotokwane's society and I chose personal relations as strategic approach to access them. This prompted my tactical suggestion to enquire for a female student from the local High School to include those perspectives that seemed more difficult to access at that point. Concerning the other actors I can only make sophisticated assumptions regarding their aims, strategies, and tactics. It can, however, be assumed that the Headman's aim would have been a favourable outcome of my research for himself and his clique. For this purpose he would have required the capability to access strategically relevant information about my research process and to provide self-expedient information when necessary. In this case the system provided him with the possibility to tactically intervene to install a research assistant candidate of his liking. As a third example, I assume that Cebile was guided by three different objectives. First, maintaining a reasonably well paid job by enabling me to access relevant information,

thus making sure I was pleased with her work. Second, respecting and satisfying those structures that were essential for her own social and economic well-being within the village. Third, influencing the research process in a way that would empower the voice of her own generation and gender. Her strategy in this regard is hard for me to determine, but a central point of this chapter shall ultimately be that actors, who are caught between conflicting structural constraints, need a strategy to maintain their personal agency. Therefore, I assume that Cebile also had a strategy and that she applied different tactics to implement it.

3.2.1 Defining Strategy

The term 'strategy' is being used rather inflationary within the sciences, to the extent that novice researchers will become exasperated with the amount of literature that is provided on strategy by management and marketing, political sciences, biology, psychology, sociology, educational sciences, sports journalism, crime prevention and many more. Most scholars, however, use 'strategy' and 'tactics' rather nonchalant and do not provide clear-cut non-ambiguous definitions. Bourdieu, for example, when assessing the marriages of matrimonial lineages in Kabyle society in Northern Africa and the peasant society of the Béarn in South-West France (Bourdieu 1972) referred to subconscious strategies, which has been understood as highly controversial (Viazzo and Lynch 2002). Only few, like Laurel Cornell, provide a clear definition: "there should be three elements to a household strategy: policy – a formulation of long-term goals; strategy – identifying an advantageous position beforehand and moving a large-scale operation into it; and tactics – the everyday choices throughout the duration of the engagement" (Moch et al. 1987: 120). Admittedly, there is no room to adequately discuss the terms' origins in military jargon and I must refer those who want to dive deeper into the term's various fields of application to Martin Freedman's seminal book *Strategy* (2013). To perform the task of offering a more refined definition of 'strategy' and 'tactics' I shall in part rely on that same source and while remaining an amateur in military science, I have found that strategy and tactics are highly helpful in reconciling Bourdieu's and Giddens's ontologies in a perspective that was introduced by Bob Jessop as the Strategic-Relational Approach.

Even though they are often used to describe knowledge and practices that have been part of human culture and society for millennia, the semantic broadening and establishment of 'strategy' and 'tactics' outside of military jargon have only occurred relatively recently if one takes into account how long humankind has fought strategic wars: "Thus strategy was the art of the commander-in-chief 'protecting and directing the larger military movements and operations of a campaign,' while tactics was 'the art of handling forces in battle or in the immediate presence of the enemy'" (Freedman 2015 [2013]: 74). This differentiation between the two terms does not only make reference to the internal hierarchy of most military systems but also implicates time and space as essential parameters. While

tactics respond to imminent events in battle and aim to achieve an immediate effect, strategies are developed beyond the battlefield, taking into account lessons from the past and anticipating the course of future events. Most scholars, who operate within practice theory have stressed the importance of time and space within their respective ontologies and therefore I argue that temporal and spatial immediacy must remain crucial parameters of differentiating strategy and tactics when applying them in the non-military sciences, too. For the time being, I define 'tactics' as practices that are executed by individual or collective agents in immediate response to a certain situation, which are – under certain conditions – guided by strategic expedience. Now I want to focus on strategy as a concept that has much more to offer with regard to the previously introduced debate.

Even though they originate in militaristic realms, definitions such as Brodie's pragmatic understanding of strategy as "the pursuit of success in certain types of competitive endeavor" or Beaufre's philosophical approach of strategy as "the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute" (Freedman 2015 [2013]: 193f) open strategy as such to an understanding that lies beyond the 'art of war' definition. However, if one were to convey phrases such as 'competitive behaviour' and 'dialectic of two opposing wills' into a sociological definition of strategy, it would imply that strategy only takes place in antagonistic relations between two or more agents. If we were to follow a Nietzschean approach, wherein all individuals are driven by a continuous antagonistic relation to their surrounding world "arising from the endless struggle among a multiplicity of rival centres of power" (Callinicos 1999a: 119), the search for an appropriate definition of strategy could be finalised at this point. Yet then we would have failed in our quest to determine strategy's role in our analysis of structure and agency. Foucault offers a more nuanced definition:

> The word 'strategy' is currently employed in three ways. First, to designate the means employed to attain a certain end; it is a question of rationality functioning to arrive at an objective. Second, to designate the manner in which a partner in a certain game acts with regard to what he thinks should be the action of the others and what he considers the others think to be his own; it is the way in which one seeks to have advantage over others. Third, to designate the procedures used in a situation of confrontation to deprive the opponent of his means of combat and to reduce him to giving up the struggle; it is a question, therefore, of the means destined to obtain victory. (Foucault 1982: 793)

Note that Foucault liberally grants room to the antagonistic element, but he actually assigns certain conditions to it by locating it at the end of a chain of social processes that include strategy as part of both the formulation of an agent's specific aim and the analysis of potential opposition to the same. Thus strategy is not only defined through antagonism between a set of parties, but also as crucial element in any sort of intentional practice. Foucault's account of strategy is more detailed than the previous ones on offer, but it is unfortunately slightly tainted by his "view of the ubiquity of power" turning "all social relationships into arenas of struggle, touching the micro-level of social existence as

well as the macro-level of the state" (Freedman 2015 [2013]: 426). This ultimately leads to the problematic realisation that, even though Foucault's definition of strategy allows its application beyond a world of conflict and competition, his own "sense of the continuity of struggle without end" (Freedman 2015 [2013]: 426) negates the existence of such a world. If every intentional practice, every interaction between agents and every explicit long term aim become part of a power struggle and are only therefor strategic, then there is no need to investigate the deeper levels of strategic practice anymore, because strategy has become a common inconsequential denominator of all human conduct: "When everything, whether a written communication or a pattern of behavior, could be considered as strategy, then nothing was worth considering because the term was losing its meaning" (Freedman 2015 [2013]: 427). Apart from this demur, I furthermore intend to leave power as the principle of explanation of structure, agency and strategy out of the equation for it must be regarded as contingent being an actor-dependent entity. Nonetheless it may very well be an explanandum as one of the main motivating and supporting factors for strategic agents. Rather than focusing on power, I want to point to the beginning of Foucault's chain of strategic conduct and interrupt it between points two and three, leaving point three as merely one of many potential onward trajectories. This chain originates in an agent's deliberate formulation of an intention and their adjustment of practice to achieve a certain goal in response to surrounding structures and the other agents therein. This corresponds to Hay's definition of strategy:

> Strategy is intentional conduct oriented towards the environment in which it is to occur. It is the intention to realise certain outcomes and objectives which motivates action. Yet for that action to have any chance of realising such intentions, it must be informed by a strategic assessment of the relevant context in which strategy occurs and upon which it subsequently impinges. (Hay 2002: 129)

This definition requires a follow-up definition of 'intentional conduct', which Giddens defines as "an act which its perpetrator knows, or believes, will have a particular quality or outcome and where such knowledge is utilized by the author of the act to achieve this quality or outcome" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 10). Giddens provides this definition in his discussion of agency and furthermore questions the relevance of intentional and unintentional consequences to human agency, and establishes the difference of unconscious cognition, practical consciousness and discursive consciousness. While he concludes that agency "refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 9) and thus renders intention quasi irrelevant, another question emanates from Hay's definition of strategy as intentional conduct: Is intentional conduct always conscious or may it also be the result of unconscious human practice? For example, Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1972) and Freud (Shape 1970) suggest that it may very be the latter. I, however insist that this question must remain unresolved at this point and that it will require further debate in the neurosciences (Hassin, Uleman, and Bargh 2005) and philosophy (Hamlyn 1971). For the

purpose of discussion progress I will henceforth merely refer to strategy as intentional and neither as conscious nor unconscious. However, even then 'intention' may also be hard to identify at times:

> Strategy is often expected to start with a description of a desired end state, but in practice there is rarely an orderly movement to goals set in advance. Instead the process evolves through a series of states, each one not quite what was anticipated or hoped for, requiring a reappraisal and modification of the original strategy, including ultimate objectives. The picture of strategy […] is fluid and flexible, governed by the starting point and not the end point. (Freedman 2015 [2013]: xi)

3.2.2 The Strategic-Relational Approach

We have so far established that time and space help us to differentiate between strategy and tactics and that strategy implies intentional conduct which is oriented towards a specific aim. Keeping this description in mind we can now turn towards Bob Jessop's Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA). Jessop began developing the SRA in the early 1980s "in connection with debates in state theory and, somewhat later, analogous debates in critical political economy more broadly." He based his approach on the works of Marxist scholars such as Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas, Althusserian theory of conjuncture and autopoiesis theorists such as Niklas Luhmann. His approach, while still in development, "was then extended to issues of structure and agency in general and their spatio-temporal aspects" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 22). This culminated in the SRA's full layout as an approach to the Structure/Agency debate in a review (Jessop 1996) of Holmwood and Stewart's *Explanation and Social Theory* (1991).

Some basic ontological premises are essential to distinguish Jessop's SRA from most conventional practice theories. First, similar to Bourdieu, he treats structure and agency as relational, which implies that "relations rather than isolated entities should be the primary unit of analysis" (Jessop 2005: 41) and that they are mutually constitutive. Like Giddens, Jessop aims to analyse the dialectical logic that is the precondition for their existence (i.e. their relation). To him they are "not reducible to the sum of structural and agential factors treated separately" (Hay 2002: 127). Furthermore, he "focuses on 'the relations among relations', that is, 'an analysis of the relations among different relations comprising the social formation'" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 29). He does this "to emphasize not just that structure and agency were dialectically related but also that each moment in this dialectical relation contained elements from its 'other'" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 34). Methodologically the SRA thus differs severely from Giddens's methodological bracketing, which only examines either agency or structure/system at a time. This leads to another premise, which establishes the relation between structure and agency not as a fixed ontological system of relations, but rather as the result of a co-evolution from abstract to concrete. It is not a historically strict development of different structural and agential entities, but

rather offers the possibility that different perspectives onto a Structure/Agency relation may reveal different stages of its co-evolution ranging from abstract to concrete.

The SRA aims to provide for these different perspectives and Jessop's relational and co-evolutionary assumptions shall become clearer as I proceed in my description. He adopts the assumption by critical realists that the empirical (what is observed) is triggered by the actual (events that take place), which in turn is the result of the real (the underlying generative structures/causal mechanisms) (Jessop 2005). This perspective on society was adapted from the natural sciences where observations of natural phenomena (e.g. aurora borealis) will be explained based on actual events (disturbances in the magnetosphere caused by solar wind), which will be the result of real underlying natural laws (astrophysics). By operating on this spectrum of concrete and abstract, Jessop is able to develop a model of the conceptual development of the SRA which tracks the co-evolution of structure and agency through five stages of development (see figure 3.1).

The first row represents the original dilemma of the Structure/Agency debate: "the inadmissible dichotomy between (absolute) external constraint and (unconditional) free-willed action" (Jessop 2005: 49). External constraint and free-willed action are hereby depicted as underlying natural elements of society that are ontologically fully distinct, even though they are pure analytical constructs. This implies "if the distinction is analytical, structure and agency must be present simultaneously in any given situation" (Hay 2002: 127). Their co-presence allows these underlying elements to have interaction and to form relations. They alter one another and yield 'emergent structures' and 'socialized agents', or in other words a "structured context (an action setting)" and a "contextualised actor
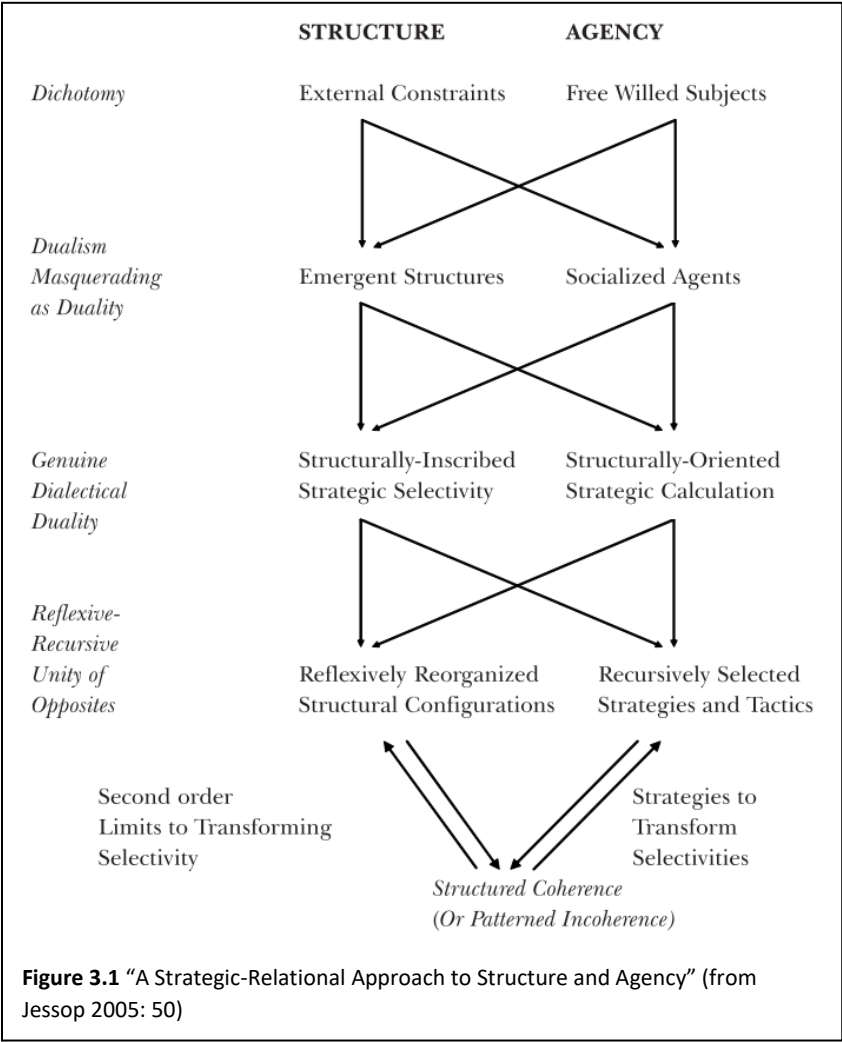
Figure 3.1 "A Strategic-Relational Approach to Structure and Agency" (from Jessop 2005: 50)

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(a situated agent)" (Hay 2002: 128). The arrows in Jessop's figure "represent the dialectical logic that underpins the SRA" (Jessop 2001: 1223). Both context and actor remain separate, an abstract and atemporal dualism, each being based on a certain composition of either predominantly structure or predominantly agency as distinct underlying entities. From a Giddensian perspective it is tempting to already interpret them as duality here in Jessop's second row. His choice to label this second row "Dualism Masquerading as Duality" I assume to be based on Jessop's critical assessment of Giddens's structuration theory. Even though he attests structuration a certain degree of abstraction when identifying its starting point in this row (i.e. the individual's longing for ontological security), Jessop mimics the critical realist critique, which imputes a lack of ontological depth to structuration theory: "For it treats structure and agency at the level of the actual rather than in terms of real mechanisms, emergent properties, tendencies, and material effects" (Jessop 2005: 45). Jessop explains that, in his view, structuration at this point actually "retains a dualistic form, because, at any given point in the analysis, it brackets one or other aspect of the resulting duality" (Jessop 2001: 1223). However, Jessop also locates the basic ontological assumptions by critical realists Bhaskar and Archer on that same second row, because their ontologies of structure and agency do, too, require a certain degree of influence from the respective other. Bourdieu remains unmentioned in most of Jessop's mediation of the SRA. Yet in the attempt to detect Bourdieu's ontology in row two, one would have to envision passive versions of *habitus* and *field* with the most limited amount of practice resulting from them.

Row three is where Jessop conceptualises a genuine duality and the SRA's first analytically practical appearance of the eponymous strategic relation, for this is where strategy and tactics come into play: "In short, the SRA is concerned with the relations between structurally-inscribed strategic selectivities and (differentially reflexive) structurally-oriented strategic calculation" (Jessop 2005: 48). Or in other words: "The key relationship in the SRA, then, is not that between structure and agency, but rather the more immediate interaction of strategic actors and the strategic context in which they find themselves" (Hay 2002: 128). Here structure and agency become a duality, because the intense dialectical exchange between them becomes visible. It allows "the self-same element(s)" to "operate as a structural constraint for one agent […] and as a conjunctural opportunity liable to transformation by another agent" (Jessop 1996: 124f). Structures are defined as strategically selective, because they privilege some actors over others, they encourage and discourage certain strategic actions, and they are only accessible thorough certain spatial and temporal horizons (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 48). Actions may be structurally constrained, but actors are capable of becoming strategic by reflecting on these constraints and orienting their own actions along their understanding of them, developing a 'feel for the game'. In my view, Bourdieu's and Giddens's ontologies can both be identified at this stage, too. *Habitus* can be seen as having established this third row through *tactical* conduct on the agency side in response to a specific *capital*-sensitive *field* on the structural side. Similarly, for the previously

mentioned exemplary researcher, who learned to greet in the Giddensian sense, the relation between agent and system was only rendered possible through tactical structuration of the own mind. Jessop himself explains that "structural constraints always operate selectively: they are not absolute and unconditional but are always temporally, spatially, agency- and strategy-specific" (Jessop 1996: 124), which, in my view, very well mirrors what Bourdieu's *field* is about. Similarly, Giddens makes the argument that "all social systems must be understood as stretching over time and space, or better, 'embedded' in time and space" (Gross 1982: 83). Even more, in the following quotation Jessop seems to echo Giddens's perspective that individual structuration constitutes the onset of social systems:

> Structures are irredeemably concrete, spatialized, and temporalized; and they have no meaning outside the context of specific agents pursuing specific strategies – even if these last are expressed at the level of practical consciousness rather than in an explicit, reflexive manner. (Jessop 2001: 1228; also Jessop 2005: 52f)

In row four, strategy – as we have defined it before as intentional long-term conduct – comes into play, because the processes that brought us to row three may be repeated: "For individuals and organizations can be reflexive, can reformulate within limits their own identities, can engage in strategic calculation about the 'objective' interests that flow from these alternative identities in particular conjunctures" (Jessop 2001: 1224). Here, due to the involvement of time and space in the SRA the differences between tactical and strategic behaviour come into play. Both short-term success and failure in the application of intuitive and (possibly also intentional) tactics can become part of a learning process that ultimately forms a long-term strategy for a specific intention. The strategic actor will also have reflected on the strategic selectivity of the spatial context that they operate in and will possibly attempt to choose a strategically more appropriate spatial dimension. Strategic intent is the crucial point that differentiates the row four perspective from the previous one: "Only intentional actors are capable of taking one step backwards in order to take two steps forward later on" (Elster 1984 [1979]: 35).

This does not mean that all strategic practice from here on is purely guided by rational calculation and neither that it lacks any kind of intuition. As I pointed out above, this is not a unidirectional process, but rather an overview that attempts to summarize the scope of Structure/Agency relations between the most abstract and the most concrete level. The intuitive 'feel for the game', which is not automatically rationalized and therefore less concrete than an explicit strategy that is subject to interrogation and contestation, may nonetheless be an explicit part of strategy in action if it has proven its worth. As an example, Freedman assigns the following quote to war strategist Napoleon Bonaparte:

> It was 'all in execution… nothing about it is theoretical.' […] 'With a numerically inferior army' it was necessary to have 'larger forces than the enemy at the point which is to be attacked or defended.' How best to achieve that was an art that could 'be learned neither from books nor

from practice.' This was a matter for the military genius and therefore for intuition. (2015 [2013]: 75)

Bourdieu and Giddens thus fit into the picture as well. The fact that both strategy and tactics are often referred to as specific 'arts' implies that their mastery depends on learned skills. The agent that appreciates their well-formed habitus as precious capital within a specific field will almost automatically perform better in a given situation than the one who does not. The agent who creates a mental structure may use their practical consciousness to assess its binding factors to find which one will most likely help manipulate the system to their advantage. Needless to point out that an unsuccessful habitus in one field may very well be successful in another, which implies that all agents occupy the third and fourth order of Jessop's schema. Not all strategy will always be crowned by the desired effects. If a strategy fails the most desirable effect for the agent will be a lesson learnt, while the worst case will be an even stronger structural resilience against the applied strategy.

On the structured side of row four in Jessop's schema it is asserted that unconscious (or reflexive) response to structural constraints actually reinforces them and that conscious (recursive) planning of strategies and tactics enables groups and individuals to exert agency upon these structures in a maintaining way. "Such processes, through repetitive strategic manipulations, become *structurally inscribed* in more or less stable, selective settings" (Lagendijk 2010: 1196, original emphasis). Irrespective of the reflexive and recursive elements that stabilize structures on this level, it "is impossible to conceptualize structural constraints outside specific time horizons and spatial scales of action since any constraint could be rendered inoperable through competent actors' choice of longer-term and/or spatially more appropriate strategies" (Jessop 1996: 126). The worth of these spatially and temporally appropriate strategies can, however, only be determined if the structural configurations are examined on a larger scale, for "while the outcome of any particular strategic intervention is unpredictable, the distribution of outcomes over a longer time frame will exhibit a characteristic regularity" (Hay 2002: 130). This once again indicates that strategic selectivity is just as consequential to social reality as its agential counterpart in this dialectical relationship.

This strategic relation between "Reflexively Reorganized Structural Configurations" on the 'Structure' side and "Recursively Selected Strategies and Tactics" on the 'Agency' side is what Jessop coins "Reflexive-Recursive Unity of Opposites" in row four. This 'Unity of Opposites' forms a triangular relation with row five where we find the outcome of their interaction being an "apparently self-reproducing social configuration" named "Structured Coherence" (Jessop 2005: 50). This 'Structured Coherence' can be seen as the area of interest for the structuralist perspective, because here the potential for transformation through agency is extremely limited. However, such a perspective will

have failed to identify the actual and the real dimensions beyond the empirical one, in critical realist terms. Jessop summarizes the genesis of structured coherence in the following way:

> [The] reciprocal interaction between structurally inscribed strategic selectivity and structurally oriented strategic calculation could lead through the usual evolutionary mechanisms of variation, selection, and retention to the formation of a configuration characterized by 'structured coherence'. One form that such structured coherence can take is the formation of a 'historical bloc', that is, the mutually implicated, structurally coupled, and historically co-evolving ensemble of economic, political, and socio-cultural relations (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 46)

Or from a different perspective: "Bourdieu's habitus, schemas and resources so powerfully reproduce one another that even the most cunning or improvisational actions undertaken by agents necessarily reproduce the structure." (Sewell 1992: 53)

Nonetheless, he concedes that in certain cases row five may also be characterised by systematic contradictions, which he labels "Patterned Incoherence". Action theorists and intentionalists will then gladly observe strategically conscious agents who attempt to exploit this incoherence and to transform the structural selectivities to their advantage. The possibility of 'Patterned Incoherence' has several causes: (1) the tendential character of the reproduction of structures and their strategic selectivities, (2) the capability for actors to circumvent structural constraints, (3) the fact that flawed strategic conduct may be outwitted by opposed strategic actors, and (4) inherent structural contradictions and strategic dilemmas within institutions (Jessop 2005: 51). These destabilizing factors will be of high interest in the analytical part of this thesis, because they offer an explanation to some important developments in the empirical data.

What strategy actually adds to our understanding of structure and agency is the much higher usefulness of an academic discourse that focuses on 'strategic action' and 'strategically selective contexts', rather than on "the abstract and arbitrary distinction between structure and agency" (Hay 2002: 127). Those, who attempt to solve the ontological 'problem' of structure and agency through empirical evidence, and those who searched for solutions to empirical 'problems' through ontological accounts will remain disappointed by the SRA as they were by all previous practice theories, because the Structure/Agency debate "is not so much a problem as a language by which ontological differences between contending narratives might be registered". An SRA-infused analysis will, just like most other developments within the debate throughout the past century, provide potential new explanations, because it can "interrogate the frequently unarticulated and/or uncontested assumptions which define the parameters of the strategic imaginary" (Hay 2001). Strategy, so to speak, constitutes a cumulative guideline for agency or a catalogue of conscious practice. Strategy and tactics subsume a body of knowledge helping actors to make choices that entail the highest likeliness for success. On the

other hand structures may also be interpreted as having strategic capacities because they determine which strategy will be most likely successful.

3.2.3 The Tactical-Strategic Spectrum

Before I begin to conclude this chapter, though, it will be necessary to return to the definition of tactics and strategy, more specifically to what distinguishes them in the interpretation of agency in the SRA and how this distinction can be useful for the chapters that follow. Colin Hay, whose definition of strategy was introduced above, offers a more

Figure 3.2 „Structure, strategy and agency in the strategic-relational approach" (from Hay 2002: 131)
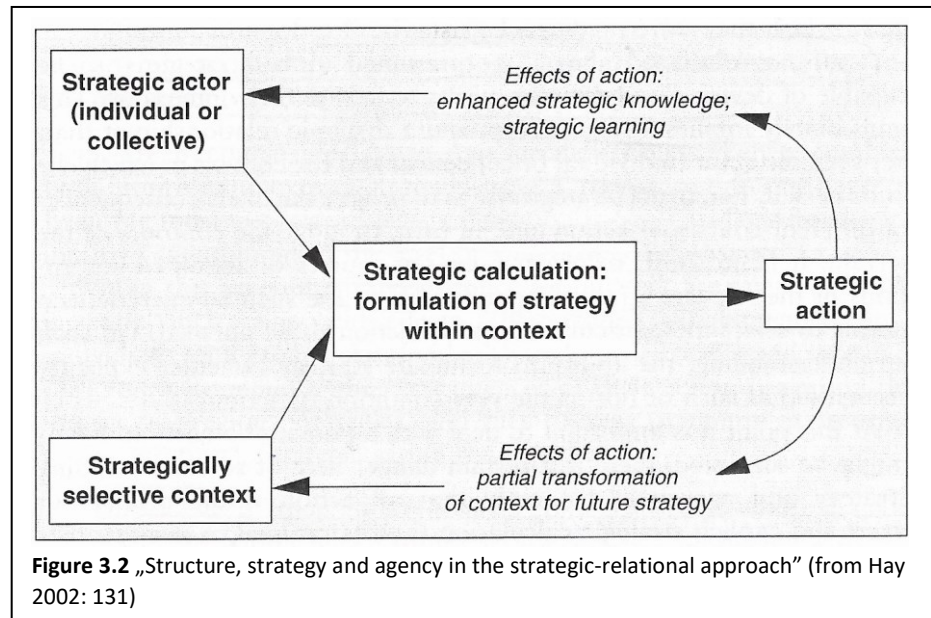
agency-centred perspective on the SRA (see figure 3.2) by focusing mainly on Jessop's rows three and four:

> Agents are viewed as 'conscious, reflexive and strategic' and, in reflecting on their behaviour and preferences can change them. The agent's strategic action both changes the structured context and contributes to the agent's strategic learning which changes her preferences and her view of her interests. (Marsh 2010: 218)

However, by defining agents as conscious, reflexive and strategic Hay runs the risk of slipping into rational-choice theory and it seems to be his ambition to prove that the SRA does not belong into this specific field. He therefore determines that "the ability to formulate strategy [...] is the very condition of action" and that "all action contains at least a residual strategic moment though this need not be rendered conscious" (Hay 2002: 132). I conclude from this that strategy could potentially be established as the dividing line between practice and action if their theories were to be understood as opposites (Therborn 1973). Most practice theorists would probably reject this perspective, though, but actors would then have the capacity to be strategic and thus become agents, but not everything they do would automatically be strategic and could consequently not be defined as action, which would disarm the rational-choice argument to some extent. Nonetheless, I remain critical towards Hay's defence against rational-choice comparisons, because he further differentiates between "intuitive, routine and habitual strategies and practices" along with "explicit strategic action". The former can be "regarded as strategic insofar as such practices are oriented towards the context in which they occur"

and is "manifest in 'practical consciousness'", while in the latter "calculations and attempts to map the contours of the context are rendered explicit and are subject to interrogation and contestation" (Hay 2002: 132f). He refers to Giddens's 'practical consciousness', which infers that "even when acting routinely" actors "are assumed to be able to render explicit their intentions and their motivations" and that they "are assumed to monitor the immediate consequences of their actions, whether intuitively or more deliberately, and to be capable of monitoring the longer-term consequences of their actions" (Hay 2002: 131). Unfortunately, in defining intuitive practices as strategic as well, he annuls his own previous argument, thus opening the gateway for suggestions that place his model close to rational-choice theory after all. Further, it complicates the differentiation between Jessop's rows three and four, whose distinction I still deem important to ensure a rich ensemble of perspectives. And also, his broad understanding of strategy revitalizes Bourdieu's "belief that strategies do not need to be conscious", which has been widely deemed as "unhelpful", because "it can lead to confusion about the objects and subjects of strategies" and has led scholars "to impute strategies to groups of persons when the only evidence consists of aggregate patterns of behavior" (Viazzo and Lynch 2002: 450). Hay's inflationary use of the term 'strategy' or 'strategic' mirrors ironically what he has criticized at a different point about the abundant use of the term 'network': "Choosing to label all aspects of social, political, cultural and economic life in terms of networks is no more and no less useful than dispensing with the concept altogether" (Hay 1998: 37).

In order to solve this dilemma I propose, not to fully abandon Hay's concept of strategy as the condition of action, but rather to complement it with a clear distinction between tactics and strategy when describing agents in a strategically-selective context. What Hay referred to as 'intuitive, routine and habitual strategies' I suggest to be understood as short-term immediate tactics based on the original militaristic definition. Furthermore I suggest to differentiate between *tactically-inclined* and *tactically-able* actors (see figure 3.3). The former I use to refer to any human being that is able to identify their own context-dependent immediate needs and to identify a way to respond to that need, e.g. a hungry baby that knows food is provided by parents and/or carers. The latter refers to any human being that is actually capable of effectively exerting that response, e.g. a crying hungry baby. While this differentiation may seem redundant at first glance it is crucial to acknowledge that there are plenty of everyday examples where any human may suffer the loss of their tactical ability at the hands of others or due to environmental constraints, despite their tactically-inclined predisposition. Similarly I find it crucial to differentiate between *strategically-able* and *strategically-inclined* actors. Strategy having been defined above as (long-term) intentional conduct which is oriented towards a specific aim, it is questionable whether an agent's ability to formulate a strategic aim is automatically followed by their inclination to adjust their conduct accordingly, e.g. a PhD student who is strategically-able to formulate a write-up plan may very well lack the inclination to follow it. This Tactical-Strategic Spectrum (TSS)
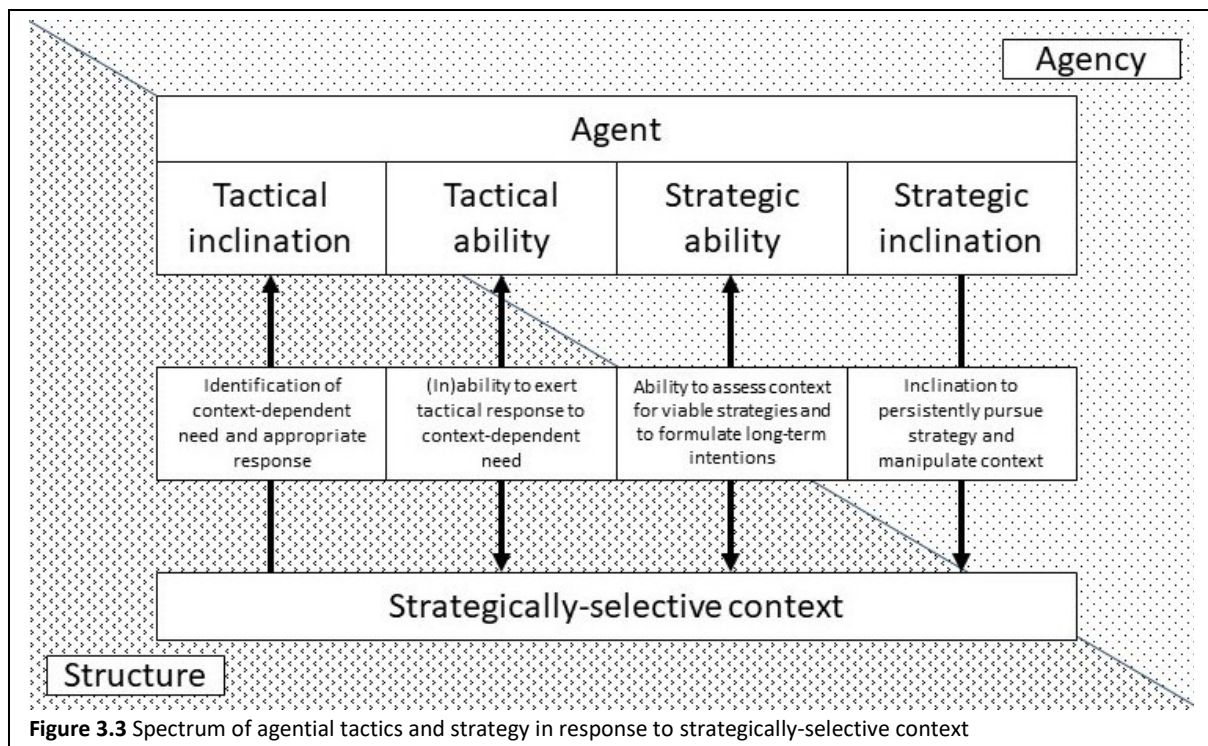
Figure 3.3 Spectrum of agential tactics and strategy in response to strategically-selective context

that begins with basic tactical inclination and very limited agency on one side and develops into strategic inclination with the potential to change structural constraints on the other side ultimately defeats the popular rational-choice allegation against many strategy-based theoretical approaches, the likes of which Hay tried to defend the SRA against. While the TSS presents strategic ability and tactical inclination as drivers of agency, it provides the possibility that a lack of tactical ability or a lack of strategic inclination may render action not rational at all.

Strategies depend spatially and temporally on the actor's dynamic assessment of the strategically-selective context that they are to be applied in. Mahatma Gandhi's strategy of non-violence worked in India, but could it have prevented the rise of Nazi Germany? The American Civil Rights Movement's strategy of civil disobedience worked well in the 1960s, but would it have worked just as well in the 18th and 19th century? Successful strategies will be developed from a perspective that takes previous and potential future developments from several contexts into account. Furthermore, a successful anticipation of the strategically-selective context's reaction towards a certain strategic move is essential: "A person, that is, must be an agent 'to which we ascribe not only simple beliefs, desires and other Intentions, but beliefs, desires and other Intentions about beliefs, desires and other Intentions' […] a person must be capable of acting upon anticipations about anticipations" (Elster 1984 [1979]: 17f). This perspective is not simply an anthropological one, but is mirrored by illustrious military strategists such as Thomas C. Schelling, who assumed that an actor's "'best' choice of action depends on what he expects the other to do, and that 'strategic behavior' is concerned with influencing another's choice by working on his expectation of how one's own behavior is related to this […] or more generally of the conditioning of one's own behavior on the behavior of others" (1960: 15).

Tactics do also depend on context but they are applied much more imminently. A prominent example would be the utterance of falsehoods. While parents will easily adjust their version of reality to their child when they enquire where the Christmas presents came from, the same parents will probably think twice before they lie to the police or their doctor. Tactics may be influenced by a certain strategy, but their actual performance is not ultimately determined by it. Even though the tactics of the Civil Right Movement were to abstain from physical violence it failed to uphold this strategic objective in some instances, due to conflicts of tactical intention or the lack thereof. The intention of a tactic that is guided by strategy is usually dependent on the intention of that strategy. It is however disputable whether tactical conduct is always guided by an explicable intention and therefore by strategy. Both frameworks, by Bourdieu and Giddens, allow for the assumption that tactics – may they be underlying the *habitus* or one articulation of the three binding factors of *structuration* – include sub- or even unconscious processes that do not necessarily need to be identified as strategic or tactical by agents themselves. I concur with that assessment. As an example of tactical conduct, Elster mentions the predator that will not run where the prey currently is, but where it anticipates the prey to go. For more deliberations on intentional conduct please consult the first chapter of Elster's *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1984 [1979]). For anthropological deliberations of tactics remember Bourdieu's conceptualization of misrecognition, active complicity and distinction above. A village leader, endowed with the tactical advantage of a diverse set of capitals, who routinely raises his voice in conversations and interrupts others, has always done so and has thus gained a certain dominance over the others. In Bourdieu's terms he has misrecognized this dominance over his subjects owing to their active complicity in accepting it as legitimate. However, once he is asked why he is shouting, he will either explain that this is simply his nature and that he is not meaning to intimidate anyone (he continues to misrecognize, remains non-intentional), or he will become aware of his tactical advantage and will henceforth intentionally use it to further his distinction from the others. Therefore I propose to locate tactics on row three of Jessop's SRA schema, the strategy-driven one towards the agency side and the non-strategic one towards the structure side. The lines along which entities are defined in the SRA, however, tend to be porous due to its focus on relations, which I fully appreciate.

Another example of the relational characteristic of tactics and strategy is demonstrated by the fact that tactics, which develop an intention of their own, can turn into a strategy. A commander who orders her troops to retreat from a combat sector may follow an overall strategy (e.g. attack on the enemy's centre of gravity) and thus its intention (i.e. win the battle). However, if she orders their retreat, because the entire battle seems hopeless, the original strategy has failed and thus a new exit strategy with the intention to save as many lives as possibly must be instantiated. Having thus illustrated the creative potential of strategy and its value in the Structure/Agency debate I conclude this section pointing to the following reference:

Everyone needs a strategy. Leaders of armies, major corporations, and political parties have long been expected to have strategies, but now no serious organization could imagine being without one. Despite the problems of finding ways through the uncertainty and confusion of human affairs, a strategic approach is still considered to be preferable to one that is merely tactical, let alone random. Having a strategy suggests an ability to look up from the short term and the trivial to view the long term and the essential, to address causes rather than symptoms, to see woods rather than trees. (Freedman 2015 [2013]: ix)

3.3 Summary

My intention for this chapter was to provide the reader with a thorough introduction to the central theoretical framework that this dissertation is based upon. My strategy to achieve this particular aim was based on a discussion of the Structure/Agency debate and three different ontological approaches to it. My first tactic was to presented a vignette, which illustrated the workings of structure and agency in the South African field. In the first weeks of field research in Rapotokwane I searched for a suitable research assistant and seemed to have found one at the local High School. Unfortunately, that assistant cancelled our work agreement after her grandmother had received a warning from the ancestors in a dream. This situation presented a chance for the local leadership elite to equip me with a candidate of their own liking to be my research assistant, who ultimately fulfilled that role to my complete satisfaction nonetheless. The way that the local actors strategically manoeuvred around the surrounding restraints and possibilities thus inspired me to base the theoretical framework of this dissertation upon the Structure/Agency debate and the SRA. I provided a short summary on the debate's most essential sociological viewpoints, starting with Weber, Durkheim and Marx and moving on to the perspectives of structuralism (Lévi-Strauss), post-structuralism (Foucault), Marxist theories and ultimately practice theory. Thereafter a summary of Bourdieu's ontology of *habitus*, *field* and *capital* was presented, which provided a relational perspective onto the debate. The rundown of Giddens's *structuration* theory provided an insight into agents' dialectical relationship with the structures of their mind and the system that provides for and derives from them.

The opening vignette and the agents' strategic and tactical practices therein provided me with the grounds to make a point in favour of contemplating the Structure/Agency debate – and more specifically the South African field setting – with regard to strategic and tactical actions and contexts. After having differentiated between strategy and tactics based on different degrees of spatial and temporal immediacy and having established intention as a crucial parameter in their relation I introduced the SRA as it was developed by Bob Jessop. The SRA is based on the ontological assumption that structure and agency are merely analytical entities that provide the means to establish a range of perspectives of different degrees of abstraction onto the relation between strategic selectivities and strategic calculation or – on an even more concrete level – between reflexively reorganized structural configurations and recursively selected strategies and tactics. Referring to Hay's more actor-centred approach to the SRA I pointed out that his differentiation between 'intuitive, routine and habitual strategies and practices' on the one side and 'explicit strategic action' on the other, potentially provides grounds for criticism. I therefore suggested a Tactical-Strategic Spectrum which divides actors and their actions into four ideal types: tactically-inclined, tactically-able, strategically-able, and strategically-inclined.

While this chapter set out to discuss the ontological ramifications of the Structure/Agency binary for this thesis, the following chapter will deal with more concrete binary pairs. It will aim to translate the rather abstract deliberations of this chapter into the context in which I conducted my field research. I have found the South African field setting to be a discursive battleground, which applies binaries as strategic tools and what seems to maintain it are "the individual choices of both leaders and followers, who engage in implicit exchanges with each other, each attempting to enhance his own safety, honor, well-being, esteem, or power" (Lewis 1993: 51). The next chapter's main intention will, however, be merely a contextualization of these processes, which will be aided by Colin Hay's analysis of discourse strategy (Hay 1995, 1996, 1998, 2001; Hay and Richards 2000).

Chapter 4 – Battle of Binaries: a Contextual Framework

In the previous chapter I summarized some of the most important ontological frameworks in the Structure/Agency debate including Anthony Giddens's structuration theory and Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory of habitus, field and capital. Referring to a vignette from my own field data I explained the debate's relevance to my personal theoretical approach. I then suggested *strategy* as a concept with the capacity to reveal the dialectical relation of the underlying analytical Structure/Agency binary. Under this assumption Bob Jessop's Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA) provided me with a framework that allowed for the partial incorporation of Bourdieusian and Giddensian perspectives. The SRA assumes that structure and agency are merely analytical (yet very useful) entities, whose real manifestations (strategic selectivity and strategic action) come into being through a relational exchange that is driven by strategic practice. Actors are herein seen as strategic responders to and creators of a strategically selective context. In order to forestall critique that would liken the SRA to rational-choice theory Colin Hay differentiates between two kinds of agential strategy (i.e. habitual and explicit). Hereupon I proposed a Tactical-Strategic Spectrum which divides actors and their actions into four ideal types: tactically-inclined, tactically-able, strategically-able, and strategically-inclined. In such a framework both 'habitual' non-intentional short-term actions and 'explicit' intentional long-term strategies could be accommodated without leaving the SRA vulnerable to the criticisms raised against rational-choice theory.

Chapter three set out in its title to battle the Structure/Agency binary. My main tactical manoeuvre in this encounter was to reveal the strategic-relational and thus actually non-dichotomous character of the Structure/Agency binary. Both the original controversial binary and its mitigative exploration within the SRA will serve as major analytical tool of my dissertation. The current chapter, however, is meant to retreat from such active involvement in binarily-informed battles and is designed to portray the workings of strategic-relational practices from an observing position. Despite their analytic potential the presented binaries merely serve as exemplary discursive tools of emic strategic practice and therefore an epistemologically inspired definition and discussion for analytical purposes will not be the aim in the following chapter. Nonetheless, it will be necessary to problematize them within an anthropological context and their colonial legacy, because the description of a battle of binaries is a task that lies beyond claims to objectivity. This task is comparable to that of a battleground correspondent, who must cooperate with the warring forces to gain access, but aims to look beyond their filtered perspective. Even to establish the existence of such a binary battle originates in scholastic interpretation, which does not mean that it is the result of pure imagination. In this case the battleground correspondent rather resembles an archaeologist, who has to piece together the proceedings of ancient combat from rather scanty artefacts.

One of my doctoral peers commented on a very early draft of this chapter: "*What are we getting out of putting emic binaries to battle*?". Interpreting 'we' as *pluralis auctoris* in this case rather than as universal reference to human discourse my main goals in this chapter will be the following: First, through the depiction of three binary pairs that (among various other binaries) I have found to function as popular discursive tools within the former KwaNdebele Homeland this chapter aims to introduce the reader to some of my field's most crucial discourses. These binarily-informed discourses provide some of the social, cultural, legal and political contexts within which the following three empirical chapters take place. At the same time, while the presented emic binaries may superficially represent separate dualistically informed discourses, they are actually interconnected and they weave a network of flexible and elusive argumentative alliances between them. Therefore, by putting these emic binaries to battle we are able to understand the rough outline of the battlefield while simultaneously getting to know the complex mechanisms that govern the outcomes of combat.

Secondly, putting emic binaries to battle reveals their strategic character. Through this militaristic allegory I aim to retrospectively establish a connection between this dissertation's contextual framework and its ontological assumptions as they were laid out in the previous chapter. To clarify the relevance of such binarily-informed discourses to the Structure/Agency debate and the SRA we must return, very shortly, to Hay's application of the SRA, which he has adopted as a heuristic tool "to explore how discursive paradigms privilege some interlocutors, discursive identities/ positionings, discursive strategies and tactics, and discursive statements over others" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 48). He rests his analysis on two core assumptions: (1) Actors "are presumed to be strategic — to be capable of devising and revising means to realise their intentions" (Hay 2001: §3.3) and (2) "in the same way that a given context is strategically-selective — selecting for, but never determining, certain strategies over others — it is also discursively-selective — selecting for, but never determining, the discourses through which it might be appropriated" (Hay 2001: §3.5). Contexts are discursively-selective, because agents who wish to develop cognitive access to them do so through "perceptions, misperceptions and representations. Such perceptions may or may not enhance the ability of actors to realize their intentions, and in certain contexts may militate severely against their realization" (Hay and Richards 2000: 15).

This implies – on the one hand – that actors need to adjust their own discursive strategies within a given context in order to gain access to certain social networks (Hay 1998) and other power structures (Hay and Richards 2000). All agents will have their "explicit strategic calculation [...] infused with intuitive assumptions at the level of 'practical consciousness'". These "frequently unarticulated and/or uncontested assumptions [...] define the parameters of the strategic imaginary" (Hay 2001: §3.3) and thus blur the line between intentional strategic rhetoric and non-intentional reproduction of the

"cognitive templates through which actors interpret the world" (Hay 2001: § 3.5). On the other hand, discursively powerful agents are capable of strategically manipulating the discourses of certain contexts to their advantage. Through skilled tactical rhetoric and strategically concerted dissemination or withholding of information such agents are capable of recruiting uninvolved actors for their cause, they may alter the perspective of those that are already part of the respective context or they may even create completely new powerful discourses (Hay 1995, 1996). Whether such manipulation would be aimed at another individual in an actor-centred approach, or whether an agent will attempt to "*manipulate the system to his advantage*" (Leach 1962: 133, original emphasis) in a perspective that acknowledges the potential of tightly bound structures, is a question of ontological assumption or methodological scale. In any case it must be assumed that the resulting manipulation of/through discourse constitutes a popular and highly powerful mechanism in any instance of structuration (in the Giddensian sense). This mechanism may either work in favour of a structured coherence wherein dominant discourses manipulate (and thus restrict) agency to an absolute minimum, or it may be used by agents to manipulate a discourse that is in a state of patterned incoherence (see Chapter 3). Strategic discourse manipulation will, for example, range from large-scale state propaganda (Lippmann 2008 [1921]) to the discursive and practical consciousness of working-class school children who establish a joking culture to undermine the authority of school officials (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 288-93).

Hay identifies discourse as a crucial – if not the most crucial – battleground where (structural) strategic selectivity and (agential) strategic conduct are in a continuous state of simultaneous negotiation, attrition, manoeuvre and alliance. He thereby facilitates a reconfiguration of the original SRA version – developed within Sociology and Political Analysis – into a version of the SRA that is guided by the merits of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Rather than focusing on the SRA's application in abstract state theory (Jessop 1993, 2009 [2007]) or in the analysis of meta-narratives in political, social and environmental discourses (Hay 1995, 1996, 2001), this dissertational project aims to depict grassroots processes. It focuses on the discursive tactics and strategies that individual agents apply to portray their perspectives and justify their positions, as it was for example previously done by Barth (2004 [1959], 1966). It furthermore aims to show how that same strategic behaviour creates a complex context that influences these perspectives and delimits the range of their available strategies and tactics in practice. However, this does not imply that the larger overall contexts such as media discourse or the role of the state shall be neglected, because they also feed into the strategically informed discourses that we find at grassroots level:

> At each stage of the analysis it is crucial to consider: the strategic resources at the disposal of the actors and organizations involved; the nature of the 'strategically-selective' […] context inhabited by such individuals and the organizations they 'represent'; their understandings of that context and the extent to which they are shared; the time-horizon over which their

strategies are couched; the strategies they formulate; and their outcomes (both intended and unintended). (Hay 1998: 36)

But why does it seem that strategic discourse is often informed by a common understanding of political processes and social relations that is based on seemingly dichotomous or hierarchical binaries? To my understanding, binarily informed discourses are easy to manipulate or be manipulated by, because, firstly, such oppositions "are very common in the cultural construction of reality" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2007 [2000]: 18) and therefore build upon preestablished patterns of argumentative conduct. Secondly, they are either based on the narrative that there are only two options to choose from (dichotomous), or the imputation that one element is subordinate to the other (hierarchical). Third and finally, they bear even more potential for manipulation when detailed knowledge is indeed crucial for a non-binary understanding yet they are easy to relate to despite the lack of that knowledge. This way they influence the perspective and understanding of those who attempt to appropriate the related discourse, while those who have successfully mastered the appropriation thereof may potentially use the dominant binaries to manipulate the respective discourse to their advantage. Especially with regard to the following exemplary discourses around Democracy versus Chieftaincy and Black Land versus White Land this is of utmost importance and I will provide further clarification below.

4.1 The Second Binary: Tradition versus Modernity

On the other side of Libangeni's stadium one finds Councillor Komape's house, which is jokingly referred to as Nkandla[24] by the locals due to its comparatively impressive size and appearance. It is, however, neither his ANC career nor his impressive abode that excite most of his visitors, but rather his knowledge of traditional medicine and his connection to the ancestors. Councillor Komape is a Sangoma. One of his students greeted us at the gate and provided Patrick and me with chairs, while she sat on the dusty ground, explaining that it was safer in case she was contacted by the ancestors in a fit of unconsciousness. Once the Councillor had finished talking on his mobile phone he joined us and begged me to ask as many questions as possible for he had nothing to hide. In our long interview – interrupted several times by the aforementioned phone before he eventually switched it off – Komape told the story of his career, both as a politician and as a Sangoma. Among other things he laid out his plans to reorganize the work of the local Sangomas: away from shady mixtures towards a catalogue of tried and tested remedies; out of secretive treatments in dark backrooms and into a cooperation with the local health clinics; rid of questionable self-proclaimed traditional healers in favour of a standardized certification of those with good expertise and training. At the end of our interview he invited me into his clay-walled and freshly thatched storage room, where I found four shelves stocked with countless yellow and orange Atchar buckets filled with herbs, powders and other traditional remedies. He explained how they were sorted, numbered and documented to ensure safe and efficient treatment to his clients. Proudly, the Councillor pointed out the room's sanitary conditions: "*There is no smell, no snakes, no dust in here.*" Before we left he offered an assessment of the health of certain political rivals on the national level: "*No I don't think he is being bewitched. He is having (pause) some disease that person.*"

This encounter reveals how binary categories such as 'traditional' and 'modern' seem to work along blurred lines of differentiation in KwaNdebele, making it difficult for the European observer to maintain them according to their own understanding. Many South Africans lead a life that includes both urban and rural environments, standardised 'modern' education and 'traditional' initiation schools, 'modern' medicine and 'traditional' Sangomas, Christian church membership and ancestral worship, the appreciation of both democracy and Traditional Leadership, White Weddings and the payment of *Lobola*, technological progress and garments made of beads and fur, Human Rights Day and Heritage Day. To interpret the pairing of these practices as contradictory would be Eurocentric and disrespectful towards the beauty of South Africa's multifaceted society: "If there is a lesson in the

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[24] Former President Jacob Zuma's private residence is located in the village of Nkandla (KZN). Its luxurious upgrading process involved the embezzlement of tax money, wherefore the name of the village has come to stand for inappropriate display of undeserved luxury in public parlance.

broad shape of this circulation of cultures, it is surely that we are all already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthonous pure-African culture […] (just as there is, of course, no American culture without African roots)" (Appiah 2003 [1995]: 124). If one was to assume that the Tradition/Modernity binary should therefore be neglected, ignored or even erased within ethnographic research in such a context, the following data makes a plea for the opposite.

Making acquaintance with the Councillor was very different from an interview that I had held four days before with one of his Sangoma colleagues. The elderly lady led me and Patrick to the storage room, made from corrugated iron in her backyard. At the heavily locked door she ordered us to take off our shoes and to sit down on the raffia mat on the floor immediately after entering. My research assistant Patrick, due to his devout Christian faith, was visibly uncomfortable in this environment. Bones and vessels of different kind, shape and size were piled upon each other, stocked upon wobbly shelves or hanging from threads above our heads. An unfamiliar scent surrounded us. Then she began to tell her story:

> *I got it through the dream. And one day when I woke up they showed me the bones just in the yard. And they said I must take the bones and use them. There were three bones. Agh I just did it one two. It went on and on and on up until one day when I was going to town. I remember just taking a taxi to town. I don't know where did I go. (laughs) Till today I can't tell. I came back being a Sangoma.* […] *It was roughly 4 months. I was wearing a two-piece and high heels and everything, but I came back wearing the cow skin and the goat skin. And the ancestors made it all happen for me. Well from there I went again somewhere where I paid for it. The first time I just went and I didn't pay for anything. The second time I think it was a, let me say, it was for the honours.* […] *It depends on the origin of the people. Nowadays some are... sorry to say that... are roping other people. Sorry to say that. They don't just look at the ancestors' work. They are looking at the commission.* [...] *It's a strange thing to us, the old Sangomas.* [...] *They are only looking for the money. They are not looking to cure a person.* [...] *If you can understand and focus on this thing, where there is lots of students there is nothing. There is nothing that they learn.* [...] *Where there are 20 or 15 students there is something wrong.*

Further in the interview she explained her rejection of modern medicine:

> *We are allowed to go to the clinic, but the disadvantage of it: The doctors want to go with us to the veld and* [want us to] *teach them these medicines. I for one refused, because they don't want to teach us about penicillin. They say it's a private thing. And therefore this is also my private thing.* […] *When I was in Johannesburg one Germany-man came. And he wanted to know about the cancer medicine. I took the container and showed him. Then he asked me "What do you mix inside here?". I in return asked him "What do you mix in penicillin?". He said "No, that's my secret". You know what he did? He opened a big suitcase like this (pointing at my field bag). It was full of 200 Rands* [notes]. *He said to me "You are a fool if you don't want the money". But my tradition is not for sale!*

She asked me to make a financial contribution of fifty Rand for each of us to thank the ancestors when the interview officially finished after thirty minutes. I wanted to hand her the money but she refused to take it and pointed to an empty calabash bowl next to me, where I was supposed to leave it.

The superficial ethnographer's gaze will identify elements in the interview's set-up that correspond to the point made above regarding the Councillor's transcended understanding of 'tradition' and 'modernity'. Also here, the distinction between what is stereotypically regarded as 'traditional' and 'modern' seems to fade. The shed made from corrugated iron with heavily padlocked doors – perceived as modern/Western elements – on the one side and the taking off of shoes and sitting on the floor on the other. The same is true for example for the cash note in the calabash bowl. These are, however, observations that were made and singled out by the European researcher's perspective. So what about the elderly Sangoma's own understanding of the binary in question? To her a two piece dress and high heels were the opposite of animal skins. The ancestor's work stood in clear opposition to monetary interests. She juxtaposed the veld and Johannesburg/Germany, 'tradition' and financial gain, herbal cure and penicillin. Nonetheless, she accepted that these spheres – irrespective of how they are to be labelled in her view – would interact and it is the outcome of her evaluation of that interaction that distinguished the elderly Sangoma lady and her more ambitious colleague, the Councillor, from another. Both portrayed no doubt about the meaning of 'tradition', its implications and its value. Nonetheless, I assume that they would have very likely disagreed on its preferable degree of expediency and its relation towards Western and 'modern' practices if they had met in my presence.

Even though an analytical definition of the Tradition/Modernity binary will not be the aim of this section, it is necessary to dig a little deeper into the debate around these terms within the social sciences. I do this to facilitate a better understanding of the binary's relevance in the discussion of strategic-relational practice. The (post-)colonial academic perspective – and therefore also the anthropological and ethnographic one – onto the Tradition/Modernity binary is problematic in a twofold sense. First, it bears potential for controversy due to its colonial burden and the consequent critical questioning of its analytical aptitude. It's use may therefore be likened to the opening of Pandora's Box, containing an emotional and belaboured debate, which has produced a wide range of definitions and conceptualizations of 'tradition' and 'modernity'. This has reached an extent where most sophisticated discussions and attempts to define either of these terms contain some kind of relativizing disclaimer (Kelly 2002: 266) as a figurative insurance policy against accusations of Eurocentric bias. Secondly, it is problematic as a *problematique*, a research question whose ultimate goal is not its solution but the creative tension that develops between different ontological and epistemological approaches to it (Hay 2001: §2). What used to be presented as a question of analysis has turned into one of ontological assumption. Whether one should speak of 'modernity' or 'modernities', 'tradition' or 'traditionalities', whether one must regard them as inseparable binary pair or as completely independent entities, or whether one denounces their existence altogether are no longer questions that can be sufficiently answered to a majority's liking. However, these are questions that through their intermediary tension become highly productive. Thus, by appreciating its challenges

and its productivity the Tradition/Modernity binary could turn out not to be the cursed inconveniences of Pandora's Box, but rather a spirit of Promethean creativity.

Let me proceed chronologically and first characterize the binary's dichotomous version, i.e. 'tradition versus modernity' as a tool of colonial strategy and anthropology as one of its facilitators. The political and cultural colonialization of Africa relied to a large extent on binaries of dichotomous and/or hierarchical character. Frantz Fanon as one of the earliest postcolonial voices on the academic stage identified such binaries as "manicheism delirium" (Fanon 1986 [1967]: 183) and described the colonial world as a "Manichaean world" (Fanon 2004 [1961]: 6) to grasp the "generic duality that spans the global world of colonized societies" (Bhabha 2004 [1961]: xiii). Many other scholars developed his approach further:

> The dominant model of power- and interest-relations in all colonial societies is the manichean opposition between the putative superiority of the European and the supposed inferiority of the native. This axis in turn provides the central feature of the colonialist cognitive framework and colonialist literary representation: the manichean allegory – a field of diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between white and black, good and evil, superiority and inferiority, civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and Other, subject and object. (JanMohamed 1985: 63; for more examples see also Gilroy 1999 [1993]: 52; Bhabha 2004 [1994]: 351; Gandhi 1998: 32; McEwan 2009: 122f)

While Fanon explained how such binaries served the colonial project to create the colonized Other based on *spatial* compartmentalization the 'tradition versus modernity' dichotomy also contained a powerful *temporal* dimension. It enabled strategies of temporalization to produce a colonial subject that was backward, caught in a previous, less developed, and therefore less valuable time. Spatial difference, which was based on life in Europe versus life in the colonies, was already a powerful discursive device and was expanded for the benefit of those colonisers living in the colonies to encompass also temporal difference. Next-door neighbours were constructed as primitive due to their alleged temporal backwardness in addition to their extraneous 'habitat': "For as soon as one draws a single line that ties past, present, and future and yet insists on their distinctiveness, one must inevitably place actors along that line. In other words, not everyone can be at the same point along that line. Some become more advanced than others" (Trouillot 2002: 225). The urge of Europe's Enlightenment to leave the dark ('traditional') past behind and to proclaim a bright ('modern') present leading to an ideal future was infused into European imperialism to justify the subjugation and versatile exploitation of those that were different and were therefore understood to be not 'modern' yet. The characteristic that is most cynical in the way such temporalizing binaries were constructed was the taboo that was established for scandalous hybrid categories in between the binary poles. While the colonial project claimed to aid such supposedly 'backward' and 'traditional' societies onto their way to 'modernity' in a 'civilizing' mission, it simultaneously rejected and undermined any aspiration by colonial subjects on

the way to achieve this goal. If "the barbarism of the native is irrevocable, or at least very ingrained, then the European's attempt to civilize him can continue indefinitely, the exploitation of his resources can proceed without hindrance, and the European can persist in enjoying a position of moral superiority" (JanMohamed 1985: 62).

The anthropological perspective onto this specific binary throughout the *past century* may be structured into three headings: 'modernity as contagion', 'modernity as necessity' and 'modernity as contingency' as suggested by Probst, Deutsch and Schmidt (2002: 4-11). The main concern of 'modernity as contagion' was 'colonial modernity', which implied the fear that supposedly superior colonial ideas and economic forces would disintegrate social cohesion and equilibrium in the colonized 'traditional' societies. This notion (with or without intent) reproduced an image of noble savagery, so that the "familiar ethnographic discourse on the nature of the African" became "a discourse built on the binary opposition between European modernity (epitomized by the rule of reason) and African primitivism (embodied in non-rational systems of cognition)" (Gikandi 2002: 140). This is, for example, observable in in Claude Lévi-Strauss' futile quest to "find a 'natural' society, an authentic primitive" (Torgovnick 1990: 222).

It took the dawn of decolonisation and the rise of nationalist movements in the colonies to cause a shift towards an understanding of 'modernity as necessity'. Influenced by modernization theory, anthropologists focused on the "dialectic between modernity and tradition" and "how the past, understood as tradition, would shape and contribute to the political and economic future of the new African states, leading to the study of nationalism and ethnicity". From then on "modernity was no longer conceptualized as a synonym for decay and contagion, but as a historical necessity and an object of social quest" (Probst, Deutsch, and Schmidt 2002: 8f). This posed, however, an extreme challenge to those African scholars, who had achieved such 'modern' status and realized they had been colonized all over again. Gikandi's (2002: passim) discussion of African philosophers and their dilemma of attachment to European modern conceptions of rationality reminds of Bourdieu's discussion of rebels within a specific social field. Both are faced with the ironic situation that, in order to change the rules of the game, it will be necessary to first adhere to the rules to reach a position that is powerful enough to instigate such change. By then, however, the respective agent will have reached a point of almost impossible return, because their adherence to the rules of modern rationality has already been imprinted on their philosophical habitus. To many a scholar the postcolonial project was worthwhile nonetheless and their interpretations are echoed by the likes of the elderly Sangoma lady above:

> That the West invented science. That the West alone knows how to think; that at the borders of the Western world there begins the shadowy realm of primitive thinking, which, dominated by the notion of participation, incapable of logic, is the very model of faulty thinking. (Césaire 2000 [1955]: 69)

For many of us the European model is the most elating. But we have seen in the preceding pages how misleading such an imitation can be. European achievements, European technology and European lifestyles must stop tempting us and leading us astray. When I look for man in European lifestyles and technology I see a constant denial of man, an avalanche of murders. (Fanon 2004 [1961]: 236)

The assumption by modernization theorists that an all-encompassing 'modernity' with a unidirectional course of development existed was challenged in the 1970s by observations that many post-colonial, and thus African, societies followed their own cultural logic. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979), by many referred to as the founding text of postcolonial theory, was based upon Foucauldian theory of power and discourse analysis and set out to deconstruct such binaries that sustained imperial and colonial regimes. He established the following:

Theses of Oriental backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality with the West most easily associated themselves early in the nineteenth century with ideas about the biological bases of racial inequality. […] To these ideas was added second-order Darwinism, which seemed to accentuate the 'scientific' validity of the division of races into advanced and backward, or European Aryan and Oriental-African. Thus the whole question of imperialism, as it was debated in the late nineteenth century by pro-imperialists and anti-imperialists alike, carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward (or subject) races, cultures, and societies. (Said 1979: 206)

Post-structuralist perspectives that argued for the deconstruction of colonial binaries (e.g. Russel 2006) or their respective parts (for 'modernity' see e.g. Latour 1993 [1991]; for 'tradition' see e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger 2003 [1983]), to reveal their colonial instrumentalization proved relevant and productive to the social sciences. An important objection to this approach must, however, be mentioned:

A major criticism of deconstructionism has been that it appears to debilitate the possibility of talking in terms of categories at all, particularly as major axes of differentiation, exclusion, disadvantage and inequality. The organisation of difference and identity is never merely relational and neutral, but serves as nodes for practices and discourses of inferiorisation and inequality. These take place at the level of intersubjectivity, discursive practice and structural effects. (Anthias 1999: 160)

Said's deconstruction of binary discursive approaches and his hope for an "unlearning" of Oriental and Occidental categories (Said 1979: 28) was repeatedly criticized from a wide range of perspectives (Gandhi 1998: 64-80; Loomba 2005 [1998]: 42-48). For example, Homi Bhabha, while pointing out the "originality of this pioneering theory" (2004 [1994]: 102), problematised that Said did not succeed in transcending the binary character of the overall debate and actually strengthened it by omitting those processes that can and do destabilize the Orientalist discourse. For that purpose Bhabha introduced the concept of hybridity and identified mimicry practices to portray anti-colonial/anti-imperial agency and to allow the debate to explore the terrain of a Third Space, where "we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (2003 [1995]: 209).

The deconstruction of the Tradition/Modernity binary and its related dichotomous dualisms did not only point to its strategic value in the colonial/imperial project (Said 1979: 7), but also changed the shape of its respective parts, which now appeared more contingent than they had ever before. The colonized Other had always been kept ambiguous in their stereotypical description in service of colonial strategy of social control as "both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants […]; he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces" (Bhabha 2004 [1994]: 118). Now this ambiguity took control of those categories that had been used to create otherness: "The idea of modernity, formerly conceived either as contagion or necessity, but in any case understood as a social and historical reality, changed shape, appearing now as a contingent process with nevertheless definite effects in the domains of cultural practice" (Probst, Deutsch, and Schmidt 2002: 10f). This contingency of modernity was coupled with the observation that binary perspectives involving 'traditional' and 'modern' categories continue to influence the (post)colonial discourse. This is often documented in an unexpected way as Chatterjee has shown in the case of India, where the "national was not always secular and modern, the popular and democratic quite often traditional and even fanatically anti-modern" (2011 [1986]: 23).

Despite the advancement of a certain political and discursive decolonization in the academic realm, 'tradition' and 'modernity' remain part of the discursive and lived realities of both (formerly) colonized and colonizing societies. Individuals and groups develop their own culturally embedded definitions through and beyond the colonial discourse in which the two terms not necessarily have to be contradictory or even complementary, which means that the "debate is not between modernity and its opponents, but rather between different versions of modernity, some of which offer alternatives to what is regarded, not always very accurately, as the western model" (Young 2003: 98). Early around the turn of the millennium therefore anthropological discussions around 'modernity' became pluralised; one now spoke of alternative or multiple 'modernities', for which Arjun Appadurai and Lisa Rofel are often given credit of initiating (Kelly 2002: 270). What had always been possible for its supposed counterpart – to talk of 'traditions' in the plural – was now applied onto modernity and thus opened a whole new perspective, which focused on the processes that shape culturally embedded images of 'the traditional' and 'the modern' and thus create a multitude of such. Formerly colonized societies were not necessarily unique in this regard from a historical perspective, because the European context had dealt with several modernities, too: starting with the "late fifth-century Latin term *modernus* which was used to distinguish an officially Christian present from a Roman, pagan past" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2007 [2000]: 130, original emphasis), moving on to the differing modernities of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau (Trouillot 2002: 225), towards an understanding of modernity as technological progress in electrification and mechanical forms of production (Kelly 2002:

268). The understanding of 'modernities' was not only meant as one that evolved through time, but rather one that allowed several parallel, yet different, conceptions thereof. For both 'tradition' and 'modernity' it was acknowledged that "there are 'realities' more so than there is a 'reality'" (Goodall 2000: 12). Especially, those that were associated to 'tradition' and thereby denied the access to 'being modern' by the colonial regimes of the past nowadays construct their own conceptions of 'tradition' and 'modernity' and apply them to the same extent to empower themselves (e.g. Behrend 2002; Meyer 2005). This process creates a discursive arena in which both 'traditional' and 'modern' elements may coexist and whose role is subject to constant negotiation processes.

> African cultures, which were every bit as 'historical' and 'dynamic' as their northerly counterparts, had their own teleologies, their own idea of the proper relationship between past, present and future. What then of *alternative* African modernities? They consist in signs and practices and dispositions – always negotiable, labile, responsive to the politics of changing material, moral and aesthetic conditions – that have been fashioned out of encounters with Europe and other 'elsewheres'. As this suggests, they are constantly in the making, partly the product of indigenous agency, partly a reaction to exogeneous forces. Their definition, in short, is an integral aspect of their construction. (Comaroff 2002: 130, original emphasis)

Objections towards the pluralisation perspective – similar to those towards deconstructionism – were, however, expressed promptly:

> We certainly want to speak of multiple trajectories of modernity (this is what a genealogical approach requires), but to speak of 'modernities' in the plural creates an illusion of relativist equality, as if 'their' modernity exists at the same level as 'ours'. We insist that at both the analytical and the empirical level, 'modernity' is usually a way of defining *inequality* in temporal terms […]. One needs to remain critical of such master-narratives of temporal inequality (Geschiere, Meyer, and Pels 2008: 5)

The pluralisation paradigm provoked a highly procreative debate, inciting Bruce Knauft to list statistics on the vast amount of books published in the 1990s that bear some variation of 'modern' title (2002: 10), followed by the accusation that "the proclaiming of alternative modernities has become so loose as to encompass almost any development that is not bound within a bell jar of traditional culture" (21); needless to say that he did so in his own book on 'modernity'. In the same volume Knöbl complained that "'theories' of modernization are likely to proliferate endlessly and, like the mythological Hydra, every 'theory' of modernization attacked and destroyed will only raise two in its place'" (2002: 158f).

And also in Sociology, where Anthony Giddens and other illustrious scholars (see Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994) eventually contributed to the discussion of so-called 'reflexive modernity' some commentators noted that a "brief glance through academic publishers' catalogues today would convince the uninitiated that 'the modern' was sociology's *raison d'être*" (O'Brien, Penna, and Hay 1999: 1). Unfortunately, there is no room – and actually no need – at this point to discuss the original Sociological (i.e. Marx, Durkheim, Weber) perspectives onto 'modernity' and their definitions of

'tradition'. For a brief summary of *earlier* understandings of 'tradition' and 'modernity' in Social and Cultural Anthropology see, for example, Monaghan & Just (2000: 62-70). Also the extensive critique of Giddens's more recent contributions, or the debates around the self-perception of Western society and science as either 'modern', 'post-modern', or 'late modern' and further possible variations that derive therefrom for 'traditional' lexemes must be left out. Neither does a discussion of 'modernity' as an era within an historical horizon, despite being always worth a short digression, apply here, nor does the discussion around globalisation, industrialisation, South African capitalism, developmentalism and modernization, which are "inherently intertwined" with the question of 'modernity' (Trouillot 2002: 224).

As mentioned above, the Tradition/Modernity binary as a *problematique* has proved highly productive in the academic arena and many of its contributions were inspired by and materialized through actual practices in the field. This dissertation aims to understand the respective binary merely as an emic strategic discursive device, but through this employment it will become clear that its twofold problematic character remains highly relevant. For the purpose of description and discussion the only definitions of these highly flexible terms that I dare to employ, based on literature review and experience in the field, are the following. I establish that (1) "tradition [should] be defined rather as that which is inherited, accepted, and preserved from previous generations than as that which is merely handed down or transmitted from previous generations" and (2) that 'modernity', which somehow "itself has become a tradition" (Gyekye 1997: 271) of a specific Eurogenic kind, should be oriented from the present towards the future.

I wish to shortly return to the examples of the two Sangomas above. I find it crucial to gaze beyond what is seemingly contradictory in the colonial interpretation of 'tradition versus modernity' in favour of the way that these practices are strategically labelled as either 'traditional' or 'modern' to furnish them with the best available leverage. While it would be speculative to make ex-post suggestions about the motivations that both the elderly lady and the Councillor had in presenting their 'tradition' the way they did, it is possible to relate their narratives to the circumstances that frame them. The elderly Sangoma lady explained that she received her calling to become a Sangoma in her teenage years, which I assume – with all age-related due respect – were before the end of Apartheid. Since then South African society has changed drastically. 'Modernity' has become accessible to more people than ever before, nonetheless people also show more pride in their African 'traditions' than they used to, due to a national discourse that assigns great importance and protection to each group's distinct 'traditions'. How to position oneself strategically in such a social environment? Initially, she told us, she rejected her calling but ultimately could no further ignore the will of the ancestors, portraying her own experience as one of a struggle between 'traditional' obligation to the collective and 'modern'

individualism. On the one side, she showed pride in her proficiency of English and her high level of 'modern' education. On the other side, she enumerated the sacrifices that she had been willing to make to follow her 'traditional' calling. Her narrative of rejecting a suitcase full of money in return for a herbal cancer cure represents her strategy of distinction, her tactics of creating an other self that she could have been. This 'modern' Other of her was consciously rejected in favour of a supposedly better 'traditional' self. Interestingly, several other Sangomas that I interviewed portrayed a similar need to differentiate themselves from the grand masses, to create an image of individualist struggle, which seems to pay off. Both of the characterized Sangomas estimated the total number of Sangomas in Libangeni at around 200, substantially more than the number of health professionals who live and work there. What it actually is that makes such distinction in favour of 'tradition' profitable must be subject to a different research project, but I speculate that it is somewhat related to what Jonathan Friedman has expressed as: "Where the future fades, people tend to invest in the past" (2002: 298).

Meanwhile, the Councillor's two careers as popular Sangoma and as charismatic ANC politician mirror the success of South Africa's post-Apartheid Black middle class, but they also indicate why such a strategy of distinction based on a dichotomous binary of 'tradition' and 'modernity' would not have worked for his specific case. First, a rejection of either side of the binary would have substantially damaged his career. Second, his unique position provided enough distinction from the faceless masses to maintain personal agency and economic success without having to choose either side of the binary. Third, by not being tied to the 'traditional' side of the binary he obtained the opportunity to negotiate a strategically more advantageous position for himself and his colleagues being recognized and accepted within South Africa's increasingly changing society. The Councillor accepted the binary discourse as such and positioned himself in between its poles thus inhibiting that Third Space that Bhabha identified as crucial in the process of overcoming the Manichaean delirium. This does, however, not imply that each agent operated on a different level of agency; it merely shows that whether a certain practice is associated with the past, present or future, whether it evokes sentiments of progress, stagnation or reversal, depends on agential strategy and the discursive resources that the strategically-selective context provides.

> Strategic analysis can be taken still further if we allow for a measure of self-reflection on the part of some actors regarding the identities and interests that orient their strategies. For actors can and do reflexively remake their identities and the interests that follow therefrom in specific conjunctures. (Jessop 1996: 126)

> A culture is not a unified system that pushes action in a consistent direction. Rather, it is more like a 'tool kit' or repertoire […] from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action. […] But if culture provides the tools with which persons construct lines of action, the styles or strategies of action will be more persistent than the ends people seek to attain. Indeed, people will come to value ends for which their cultural equipment is well suited (Swidler 1986: 277)

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Ann Swidler's deliberation on the role of 'culture' – which includes both 'traditional' and 'modern' ideas of 'culture' to my understanding – as both a tool kit and a manipulator of practice reveals the relationship between cultural context and strategic agent to be a reciprocal one, as also shown in the discussion of Hay's strategic adjustment and strategic manipulation of discourse above. Strategy needs, on the one hand, preconceptions of what cultural concepts such as 'tradition' and 'modernity' entail to make appropriate adjustments to discursive practice. A strategic formula of nonviolence, for example, will only prevail if tactics of fasting, public prayer or self-sacrifice rest upon a certain 'traditional' appreciation (Freedman 2015 [2013]: 349). On the other hand, such preconceptions can be manipulated through discursive strategies to change old or create new ('modern') cultural capital, as shown by Botma (2010) in his discussion of South African national identity in the aftermath of the Rugby World Cup victories in 1995 and 2007. 'Tradition' and 'modernity' are very useful categories in this case for their ambiguous character is easy to manipulate, while their appeal to spatio-temporal (and economic) dimensions bestows upon them a certain authority and relatability: "strategies and tactics are often concerned with the most appropriate spatio-temporal horizons, forms of spatio-temporal governance, the reflexive narration of past and present to change the future, and so forth" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 46).

Often agents will choose whatever 'traditional' or 'modern' label they feel most confident about for a specific argumentation of (re)presentation: "Actors thereby come to gravitate towards those social fields (and positions within those fields) that best match their dispositions and to try to avoid those fields which involve a field-habitus clash" (Maton 2014 [2008]: 58). Sometimes, however, the strategically-selective context will dictate the categories that they must use and the way they have to apply them. What remains crucial though is the acknowledgment of the strategic use made of a certain kind of rhetoric (Hay 2001: §5), as Manuela Carneiro Da Cunha has observed among indigenous populations, who make use of certain conceptions of 'culture' to access "cultural rights (and quite successfully so) for redressing political wrongs" (2009: 4). Appadurai also researched the rhetoric of culturalist movements, which make use of the "conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of a larger national or transnational politics". He describes them as "self-conscious about identity, culture, and heritage, all of which tend to be part of the deliberate vocabulary of culturalist movements", which act widely through "*deliberate, strategic*, and populist mobilization of cultural material" (Appadurai 1996: 15, emphasis added). Many argue that this also applies to the binarily informed discourse around 'Democracy versus Chieftaincy' in South Africa.

4.2 The Third Binary: Democracy versus Chieftaincy

> [Tradition] stems from the Latin verb *tradere*, which means 'to pass something (over)' or 'to hand something (over)'. Tradition, therefore, can be imagined as resulting from a process composed of actions that connect the present with the past. Such actions might well include 'strategic claims' to the past (Zenker and Hoehne 2018a: 8)

It must be understood that, despite the fact that I regard 'tradition' and 'modernity' as strategically deployable terms whose ambiguity provides those who use them with a lot of flexibility, the consequences of their realization are very real and powerful. And what generates power is prone to be maintained by those that profit from it through persistent strategically guided structuration, which explains the recurrence and resilience of certain 'traditional' and 'modern' characteristics. Many discussions on the interplay of 'tradition' and 'modernity' in Africa therefore evolve around the role of Traditional Authorities, in South Africa specifically regarding their involvement in the country's liberal democracy. Francis Nyamnjoh, a fervent defender of the institution of Traditional Authority on the academic level, for example, quotes his Cameroonian father, who is a Chief: "As far as I can remember, our traditions have always been modern, our modernities traditional" (2015: 15). The dilemma of many such discussions is the rhetorical alignment of a dichotomous interpretation of the Tradition/Modernity binary with a binary that makes hierarchical assumptions about the characteristics of both chieftaincy and democracy. Surely, many South African monarchs ground their rule on the foundations of 'tradition' and many ideologists will proclaim democracy as the only way into 'modernity' and vice versa. However, such perspectives are too simplistic and a more distinguished approach is needed to identify the strategic reasoning and structuring that give shape to this binary (Chabal 2009: 41; Williams 2010: 17). Similar to the previous section, however, I do not intend to 'solve' this binary's dilemma; I merely portray it to provide information on the contextual framework that my research occurred in.

Before I dive into this discussion, however, I find it necessary to provide a short disclaimer. Some scholars refer to African Traditional Authorities as 'neo-traditional' (e.g. Spear 2003; Krämer 2016, 2021; Zenker 2018b), which undoubtedly provides a range of analytical merits. However, I find this label problematic and will abstain from using it for three reasons. First, the label is used to describe the application of a "creolized mix of elements at once ostensibly old and audaciously innovative" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018a: 17) by today's Traditional Authorities. Unfortunately, by suggesting that today's African Traditional Authorities have succeeded in transcending the supposedly colonial hierarchical dualism of 'tradition' and 'modernity' and now operate on a continuum between these poles it retrospectively forces that same dualism upon this institution, because it suggests that previous 'traditional' institutions lacked such innovative capacities to be 'neo'. By awarding today's Traditional Authorities with this specific label of 'neo-traditionalism' one essentializes, and again

temporalizes, those elements that came before 'neo'. Secondly, the term is often used to refer to the alleged return, revival or resurgence of Traditional Authorities after being expected to disappear once democracy progressed on the continent in the 1990s (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018a: 8). But how does this current resurgence through adaptation differ from previous instances of long-term consolidation, political negotiation and argumentative adjustment? Why does an institution like chiefship, which seemingly "never actually went away" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018a: 39) deserve to be re-labelled as 'neo' only because it has done what it has always done?

> An analysis of chieftaincy over time illustrates customary leaders' ongoing efforts to negotiate and assert their legitimacy, to adapt to an evolving state, and to deal with changing political and economic conditions. The […] politics of custom demonstrate continuity within the institution of traditional leadership – contrary to much contemporary literature which draws attention to its unexpected resurrection. (Buthelezi and Skosana 2018: 111)

Ironically, this circumstance seems to be the reason for (*Pace*) Krämer's perspective, who indicates that "'neotraditionalism' is a conflictual process of tradition being reinterpreted and reconstructed by rulers and subjects alike to gain power, authority, legitimacy, and access to resources" and the term therefore "refers to the fact that neither in Africa nor elsewhere does a 'traditional authority' exist that has not been transformed—and has not transformed itself—under colonial or postcolonial rule." (Krämer 2021: 220). According to my understanding, this rationale implies by extension that any Traditional Authority (the *iNgwenyama* of the Ndebele Nation and the Head of the House of Windsor alike), at any point in time since the 15th century, should have been understood to be 'neo-traditional' by their contemporary scholars at that point in time. Such an understanding would render the term semantically confusing and analytically useless. Thirdly – and rather selfishly – I will not use the 'neo-traditional' label, because I regard it as analytically incompatible to my understanding of the binaries that I currently present as strategic discursive devices. As I have established in the previous section, both 'traditional' and 'modern' labels may be associated with very different content according to the strategic or tactical needs of the individual or collective agent or the strategic restrictions of the context; whether they are therefore seen as 'invented' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2003 [1983]), 'imagined' (Anderson 2016 [1991]) or 'constructed' (Said 1979) is a question of ontological assumption and epistemological interpretation that I will not discuss here. If such a rhetorical 'vessel', which can be filled with a vast variety of strategically selected contents, is modified to become 'neo-' I fear that it establishes an additional restriction for its potential contents and therefore its analytical scope. This would of course not be the case if the 'neo-' prefix were used emically, but I have not yet come across any empirical examples thereof in field and literature.

As the reader will have noticed I have capitalized the term 'Traditional Authority' throughout my thesis to denote it as a proper noun. I thus intend to express its constructed-ness and acknowledge that the

definition of 'tradition' within a 'Traditional Authority' depends on the interpretation and instrumentalization thereof by the same. As explained in the footnotes of Chapter 1, I will furthermore refer to South African Kings, Chiefs, Headmen and Council Members according to their officially awarded titles or the emically used terms. I am fully aware that these titles must be used with care as well, because the associated positions and offices are often contested, and because of their "reductively imprecise" character and their "weighty colonial baggage" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018b: vii).

In a binarily oriented debate such as this one, one will most often find three groups of academic contributors to it: those on either side and the ones that are trying to manoeuvre on middle ground.

> The spectrum of positions has been quite broad, ranging from strong denunciations of chiefs as anti-democratic despots to celebrations of traditional authorities as either embodiments of a specifically African democracy or as paradoxically improving the responsiveness of democratic governments precisely because they themselves are unelected. (Zenker and Hoehne 2018a: 10)

Zenker and Hoehne have criticized the often normative character of such debates around Traditional Authorities and customary law as unhelpful (2018a: 4). When it comes to academic and legalistic contributions to the issue, the proponents of a democratic understanding that involves "equal individual rights for men and women to be exercised democratically and inherited by all family members" (Zenker 2018b: 256) are the loudest voice to be heard. They do not beat around the bush with their scepticism towards Traditional Authorities, based on their involvement in colonial and Apartheid practices of racial suppression, segregation and exploitation (e.g. Mamdani 1996; Munro 1996; Myers 2008; Ntsebeza 2008; Claassens and Cousins 2008; Koelble and LiPuma 2011; Claassens and Budlender 2013; Claassens 2014). Proponents of "ethnicized hierarchical right based on patrilineality, seniority, and royalty to be exercised by a traditional council" (Zenker 2018b: 256) on the other end argue that if "chiefs are individuals with agency like every other individual in society, there is nothing inherently dictatorial about them as people or chieftaincy as an institution, just as there is nothing inherently democratic about presidents" (Nyamnjoh 2015: 3). Very often it is an aversion to unidirectional democratisation from 'the West' to 'the South' (Krämer 2014: 168), characterised by a liberal and progressive ethos, in favour of a version of 'African Democracy' that motivates such perspectives.

> Representative perspectives from the latter camp see traditional authorities as accessible decentralized institutions within failing states and as actors with basic legitimacy, who, precisely because of their nondemocratic nature, might further Africa's democratization locally. (Zenker and Hoehne 2018a: 4)

As an example one could mention Kate Baldwin's study of *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa*, wherein she sets out to explain the fact that Traditional Authorities tend to hold more substantive powers in Africa's more democratic states (2016: 4). While she admits that "the power of traditional chiefs lacks a democratic basis, has been altered by autocratic foreign administrations concerned primarily with serving the interests of colonizing countries, and is underpinned in part by coercion" (2016: 6) she finds that they often function as 'development brokers', who facilitate the cooperation between democratically constituted institutions and citizens. She understands that African voters are "sophisticated decision makers", who will likely cast their vote according to the cooperative potential between the Traditional Authority and respective democratic candidates rather than being simply coerced by non-democratic forces: "This indicates a more active and informed citizenry than commonly assumed, which bodes well for democracy in these countries" (Baldwin 2016: 15). In a nutshell:

> Looking at the literature, we see that traditional authorities in Africa have been defined quite inconsistently: as deeply democratic, paradoxically antidemocratic-and-thereby-democratic, and as deeply anti-democratic. However, numerous case studies have demonstrated the complexities of African political cultures on the ground, comprising traditional authorities and local governments in mutual entanglements that arguably defy easy categorization as either 'democratic' or 'anti-democratic' (Zenker and Hoehne 2018a: 13)

Therefore, some scholars have attempted to look beyond the simple dualistic discourse, which critics like Mamdani seem to have simply replicated and reversed in a bipolar judgement of the bifurcated state, chieftaincy and democracy, *Citizen and Subject* (1996). To achieve a fair assessment of this binary – of which Geschiere asks, "could it be that it remains impossible to do without them?" (2018: 71) – it seems crucial to abstain from an evaluation of its respective poles, because

> most Africans, in their everyday lives, are in some measure *both* subjects and citizens – and by all manner of subterfuge, may escape the obligations of the one for the benefits of the other. Indeed, the *analytical* challenge is to understand what kind of creative strategies and transgressions people fashion to make life under different, coexistent species of authority habitable – and, even more, to do so to their advantage. (Geschiere 2018: 53, original emphasis)

As an example of this, Jason Hickel has researched the discrepancy between the perspective of urban South African citizens onto democracy and that of rural Zulu migrants. He found that the rural rejection of the liberal-progressive interpretation of democracy as it was designed by ANC functionaries in the 1990s is based upon a fundamentally different understanding of nature and society and less upon pragmatic political calculation:

> According to my informants, the state of nature is one of sameness, disorder, and sterility, and fruition can only be realized by properly ordering the social world. As they see it, this requires the meticulous *differentiation* of social elements into sets of hierarchical oppositions –

oppositions that are considered crucial to establishing a kind of integrated wholeness or unity. (Hickel 2015: 9, original emphasis)

Hickel manages to avoid a judgement of either side of the continuum by focusing on the processes and structures that forge the sentiments that govern the binarily informed debate. He focuses on the legitimizing population and their motivation rather than on those that are being legitimized. By pointing to the significance of differences in the culture-dependent structure that guides the process through which society is being made sense of, he unfortunately opens a new can of worms: i.e. a structure-favouring perspective of the Structure/Agency debate. Based on his observations he rejects notions of manipulation and strategy, which to him imply that traditionalist actors "appeal pragmatically to concepts of culture and ethnic solidarity in a strategic bid for a more secure hold on resources – such as wages and houses – in a context of scarcity" (Hickel 2015: 20), which supposedly misconstrues their motivation. In my point of view, such an instrumentalist perspective, as he calls it, is avoided within the SRA, because it accounts for both individual strategically-inclined practice and the existence of real structural differences in culture-sensitive contexts. Not only does this need for differentiation that Hickel describes mirror the desire for distinction by the elderly Sangoma lady from my own descriptions above, but it also is a perfect example of a strategically-selective context in the sense that Jessop and Hay have described it.

I will return to the academic debate around democracy and Traditional Authorities further below in a presentation of Mario Krämer's disclosure of the legitimating processes that he has found to form the basis of 'traditional' powers in rural KZN. Nonetheless, this is a debate that primarily takes place far away from abstraction within the everyday lives of South Africans and therefore I find it necessary to provide a short summary of the political events that facilitated the historical and legalistic integration of Traditional Authorities in South Africa's democracy. I do not provide any information on South African kingdoms and chieftaincies in the pre-Apartheid eras at this point. For the Ndebele Kingdom before the establishment of the Homelands a detailed account will be provided in the First *Entr'acte* after this chapter. For now, it is, however, important to mention that extensive hierarchies existed among the Nguni and Sotho/Tswana groups of South Africa long before the beginning of systematic segregation (Thompson 2014 [1990]; Worden 2007 [1994]; Ross 2008 [1999]).

After its election victory in 1948 the National Party (NP) implemented Apartheid in South Africa. In the late 1950s the regime introduced the so-called 'Separate Development' policy, which aimed at locating African political power away from the cities towards the peripheries and thereby weakening urban resistance. The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 set up eight (later extended to ten) distinct 'Bantu Homelands', which had been drafted upon the outlines of the reserves established by the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 (Berry 2018: 84f). All "black South Africans

belonged to a particular Bantustan, and they were required to reside there unless they received permission from the apartheid government to live and work in the so-called white areas" (Williams 2010: 6). Each of these Homelands officially enjoyed a certain degree of self-government, which was however permanently directed by policies designed in Pretoria. Not only did this greatly extend the powers of local chiefs, but it established the principle of ethnicity as a founding principle of the homelands. Ethnic homeland loyalty was to replace national political aspirations in a move which the state hoped would defuse calls for the moral necessity of African self-government within South Africa itself (Worden 2007 [1994]: 121). While White land owners were largely compensated for land that the regime acquired in the Homeland creation process, Black and Coloured land owners and tenants were forcefully disappropriated and many were resettled to the Homelands. "Officially portrayed as rural enclaves where ethnically homogenous 'tribes' followed 'customary' lifeways, the bantustans became human dumping grounds, filled with people of varied ethnic backgrounds who lived crowded together in sprawling, impoverished rural slums" (Berry 2018: 85). From the promulgation of the Natives Land Act of 1913 until "the last years of white rule, an estimated six million blacks were uprooted from their homes and then shunted into townships or reserves" (Russel 2010: 187). 'Separate Development' created immense poverty among the Homeland residents, ignited tribalistic sentiments and created a ruling class of collaborators. In a continuation of the colonial policy of co-opting local chiefs (Native Affairs Act of 1920, the Native Administration Act of 1927, the Representation of Natives Act of 1936), the Homeland strategy gave local administrators considerable wealth, patronage and power; many of them were Tribal Leaders, their official title. This served a dual purpose: (1) creating local representatives of the state with vested interests to control popular opposition of the kind that emerged in the 1950s, and (2) an attempt to defuse critics by devolving political power to African authorities (Worden 2007 [1994]: 125). It was the implementation and the long-term effects of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, which ultimately motivates Mamdani's attribution of 'centralised despotism' (1996: ch.2) to the former and current system of traditional governance.

Eventually in 1994, on "the night of the first all-race elections, the homelands were formally dissolved and incorporated back into South Africa" (Russel 2010: 189). Tribal Leaders, from now on officially known as Traditional Authorities, nonetheless managed to maintain a lot of their political power despite the attempt by leading ANC members to substantially confine or even abolish Traditional Authorities in the 'New South Africa'. During the transition period between Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 and the aforementioned election in 1994 several traditionalist lobby groups resisted the Homeland dismantling process and stirred up violent protests to demonstrate their power. The reform process that had been initiated by State President F. W. de Klerk and the ANC was endangered and South Africa found itself on the edge to civil war in this transition period. Although representatives of Traditional Authority were not to partake in the early negotiation process between

the NP and the opposition parties, the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in March 1993 conceded that Traditional Leadership would play a role in the new constitution despite of most participants' aversion to that idea. From a strategic perspective CODESA and especially Mandela's ANC were pressured by several external factors and therefore faced a "narrow range of unenviable strategic choices" (Hay 1996: 260). First, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which had been established by Chief Buthelezi in 1975, had long collaborated with the Apartheid regime in the KwaZulu Homeland trying to re-establish Zulu nationalism. A massive uprising of violence in KwaZulu upset the negotiations due to the NP's alleged involvement in the riots (Ntsebeza 2005; Mandela 2008 [1994]: ch. 107-110). Secondly, the first-time non-racial elections put pressure on all parties and Traditional Leaders were seen as important vote brokers. Thirdly, the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), originally founded by Ndebele leaders as an anti-Apartheid group in 1987, was largely aligned with the ANC's agenda and successfully lobbied the party's leaders into sustaining traditional authority: "Mandela insisted that the ANC needed to mobilize broad support to overcome Chief Buthelezi's bid for national power and should work with CONTRALESA to this end" (Berry 2018: 87). Due to these factors the following points were, inter alia, adopted in Resolution 34 of the National Negotiating Council on 11 December 1993:

- Traditional authorities shall continue to exercise their functions in terms of indigenous law as prescribed and regulated by enabling legislation.
- There shall be an elected local government, which shall take political responsibility for the provision of services in its area of jurisdiction.
- The (hereditary) traditional leaders within the area of jurisdiction of a local authority shall be *ex officio* members of the local government.
- The chairperson of any local government shall be elected from amongst all the members of the local government. (Ntsebeza 2005: 270, original emphasis)

These guarantees and the direct inclusion of customary law in South Africa's new constitution (Zenker and Hoehne 2018a: 33) pacified the situation during Nelson Mandela's presidency despite their rather subordinate position. It allowed the international audience to put high hopes into South Africa's democratisation process and the new constitution was praised as an exemplary one (Krämer 2014: 167):

> Customary Law and traditional leadership are recognised in section 211(1) of the Constitution. Section 211(3) says: 'The courts must apply customary law when that law is applicable, subject to the Constitution and any legislation that specifically deals with customary law.' The Constitution, accordingly, allows for the parallel existence of a system of customary law and traditional authority. […] the Constitutional Court explained that, under the constitutional order, customary law 'feeds into, nourishes, fuses with and becomes part of the amalgam of South African law'. It explained that customary law must be seen as an integral part of our law. Like all law, its force and validity flows from – and is constrained by – the Constitution. (Williams 2017: 210)

Despite such recognition and reconciliatory overall tone in the Constitution, Traditional Authorities remained in a comparatively marginal position during the Mandela presidency. The Local Government Municipal Structures Act (no.117) of 1998 "restricted them to the administration of customary law, communal land allocation, and various ceremonial activities" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018a: 5). The act was supposed to be amended in 2000 and the necessary bill was heavily contested by Traditional Authorities (Muriaas 2002). A version published in early November 2000 suggested that, among numerous concessions of responsibilities, the function of Traditional Authority also included "To carry out all orders given to it by competent authorities;" ("Government Gazette No. 21727" 2000: 6). This version of the Amendment Bill was, however, scrapped and a much more generous, yet unspecific version of the bill was published at the end of that month (Ribot and Larson 2009 [2005]: 84) and subsequently rushed through parliament.

> The amendment increases the representation of traditional authorities from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of the total number of councillors. Further, traditional authorities would not only be represented at a local government level, but also at a District and, in the case of KwaZulu Natal, Metropolitan level. Traditional authorities, though, would not have the right to vote. (Ntsebeza 2005: 282)

The influence of Traditional Authorities from then on expanded after Thabo Mbeki took over the president's office (1999-2008). He and successor Jacob Zuma (in office from 2009 to 2018) introduced a rhetoric of 'African solutions' and 'African Renaissance'.

The next, in this case truly crucial, piece of legislature was passed nine years after South Africa's first free democratic elections: the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework (TLGF) Act of 2003. Its official goal was: "(i) to determine the role and functions of chieftaincy and (ii) to transform chieftaincy in such a way that it can coexist with elected democratic structures. […] Furthermore, the TLGF Act stipulates that chieftaincy and local councils should cooperate in development activities" (Krämer 2016: 123). The act gave Traditional Authorities "broad but largely unspecified functions in the field of development and the administration of their communities in accordance with 'custom' and tradition." Problematically, from the perspective of those in favour of leaving the past behind, the act "thereby effectively endorsed the tribal authorities set up under the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 as a legitimate foundation for a post-1994 'traditional' order" (Zenker 2018b: 249). In its section 25 the act furthermore established *The Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims*, which was chaired by Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo in its first term ("Government Gazette No. 26927" 2004). Nhlapo later resigned from the commission together with two other professors (Jan Bekker and Jess Peires) (IOL 2007) out of protest against its "colonial and Eurocentric concepts of levels of leadership" (Delius 2021: 216), but the label persisted and the commission is still commonly referred to as the Nhlapo Commission to date. Among other tasks, the commission was to dissolve issues regarding the

legitimacy of specific Traditional Leadership positions, contestations of incumbent positions and claims for recognition as Traditional Communities ("Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework" Act 41 of 2003: 25.2 i-ix). Mbongiseni Buthelezi and Dineo Skosana have criticized the TLGF Act and the Nhlapo Commission, because they not only make use of rather vague definitions of traditional leadership and customary institutions, but also because these definitions are being applied in a one-size-fits all approach "to which societies with very different vocabularies for leadership positions have been compelled to conform." These terms "do not align with the ways in which traditional authority is conceptualized in their vernacular contexts" (2018: 116). According to Buthelezi and Skosana, the overall relationship between South Africa's democratic government, the Nhlapo Commission and the Traditional Authorities as it is envisioned in the TLGF Act, exhibits striking similarities with that of the Apartheid Regime, the Ethnology Section of the Bantu Affairs Department and the former Tribal Authorities (Buthelezi and Skosana 2018: 128f). This relationship incorporates an understanding of state and chieftaincy that is based upon highly hierarchical binary assumptions. Delius has pointed out that the South African government "is seeking to enhance the powers of chiefs at the same time as supporting the application of inflexible rules of succession. More power with no mechanism to prevent incompetents from assuming office does not bode well for the future of local government in large parts of the country." (Delius 2021: 212)

Based on the TLGF Act the Communal Land Rights (CLR) Act of 2004 was passed in the following year. It "made Traditional Councils the decisive authority in land management, as they can replace land administration committees. Although the latter were originally designated to control land allocation, chieftaincy may continue to perform this function" (Krämer 2016: 124). Furthermore, it "recommended that CPAs [i.e. Communal Property Associations] should not be allowed within the former bantustans and that future legislation should provide for chiefs to obtain the title deeds of 'tribal' land" (Claassens 2014: 766). The CLR was declared invalid by the Constitutional Court in 2010 after having been challenged by the Legal Resource Centre (LRC) and a private law firm on behalf of the (predominantly Ndebele) co-owners of Kalkfontein/Katjibane[25] (and three other communities) (Zenker 2012a: 136). The co-owners of Kalkfontein had resisted land control through the Traditional Authority since the inception of KwaNdebele Homeland (Claassens and Gilfillan 2008).

In the meantime, however Traditional Leadership laws were passed on the provincial level, which substantially expanded the rights of Traditional Authorities. Eventually, in 2008 the Traditional Courts Bill (TCB) was introduced to Parliament, but was withdrawn after it became clear that it would not gain sufficient parliamentary support. It was, however, reintroduced in late 2011 and was passed by the

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[25] See also the following Chapter on the Pungutsha Ndzundza at Kalkfontein and their significance in relation to the other Ndebele groups, esp. the Litho Ndzundza.

National Assembly in March 2019. It then underwent examinations in the National Council of Provinces (Heywood 2019), Parliament's second chamber, and passed the National Assembly again in September 2022. At the time of writing, President Ramaphosa has not yet signed it into law. Critics argue that "The TCB envisages traditional leaders as the sole custodians and legislators of custom" (Claassens 2014: 762) and that it is "centralising power in the hands of senior traditional leaders and adding powers that they did not traditionally hold under custom" (www.customcontested.co.za 2019b).

In 2015 the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill (TKLB) – previously the Traditional Affairs Bill of 2013 – was introduced with the aim that it replaces the TLGF Act. It "redefines 'traditional community' in a way that makes it considerably more difficult for groupings to qualify for official recognition and shuts out ordinary people from important consultative processes that influence governance in these communities" (Berry 2018: 88). The TKLB furthermore "allows government departments to give roles that deal with any of government's functions (for example, health, housing, agriculture and education) to traditional leaders and councils […] without any guidelines on what roles can be given or how this should be done" (www.customcontested.co.za 2019a) critics from the University of Cape Town claim. Another point of critique is the bill's distinction between Khoi-San leadership structures and those Traditional Authorities of Bantu origin. While Traditional Authorities "have authority that is connected to a particular piece of land and whoever lives on it", Khoi-San "jurisdiction extends only over people who are considered part of the Khoi-San community and voluntarily affiliate through a rigid procedure of affiliation" (Clark and Luwaya 2017: 15). In the field, however, I encountered a range of public servants who appreciated the legislative initiative as it promised them clearer guidelines and more specific administrative tools (see Chapter 5). The bill was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa in November 2019 (Baloyi 2019), but in May 2023 the Constitutional Court in Cape Town declared the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act unconstitutional and invalid (Booysen 2023).

So how do all these laws actually manifest themselves on the grassroots level and is it purely through legal recognition that Traditional Leaders are legitimised? While I aim to answer such questions through illustrations from the field (chapters 5-7) and in the analysis (esp. Chapter 9) hereafter, I want to shortly explore which perspectives some other scholars have to offer in that regard. For a historical discussion of pre-colonial chiefly legitimacy please consult Delius's paper on *Chiefly Succession and Democracy in South Africa* (2021). For a more thorough discussion of definitions of 'legitimacy' and 'authority' in the context of Traditional Leaders I recommend Krämer's Chapter on "Challenging Neotraditional Authority in Namibia" (2021) and J. Michael Williams's book *Chieftaincy, the State, and Democracy* (2010). The latter suggests a *Multiple Legitimacies Framework*, which examines the origins of political legitimacy based on the possibility that "non-state institutions […] may crate alternative legitimacy formulas that are distinct from what the state promotes" (Williams 2010: 19). He

understands political legitimacy to be based on various sources such as *moral legitimacy* (i.e. based on underlying norms, values, myths, and symbols) and also on *performance legitimacy* (i.e. based on the actual implementation of rules, institutions, and policies). In a similar vein Mario Krämer, for example, cautions against a normative evaluation of formal regulations of chieftaincy and looks beyond the simplified binary divide by taking local perspectives onto democracy into account. In his KZN field, Krämer observed that "Political pluralism and competing political parties are perceived as a threat to order and stability […]. Political activists in particular equate multi-party democracy with political conflict (and the threat of violence) and the existing ANC hegemony with stability and development" (Krämer 2016: 132). His observations in this regard are similar to those made by Hickel, although here stability is rather associated to status quo 'modernity' than 'tradition' based on differentiation. In such an environment, Krämer argues, Traditional Authorities can take over the role of democratic opposition, providing checks and balances and becoming spokespeople for their citizens.

> On first sight and at the Municipality level, the relations between Municipality Council and ANC on the one hand, and *ubukhosi* on the other, are hierarchical. But the very fact that the Municipality continuously courts the *amakhosi*'s favour emphasises their mutual dependency. The *amakhosi* are regarded as indispensable for the success of development projects and many of them, despite their frequent complaints, are aware of the new opportunities arising from the limited capacity of local administration. Most *amakhosi* do not align themselves with the ANC in public. They rather try to play off the interests of the state against those of their communities in an intermediary and informal niche in order to consolidate their power and legitimacy. They have therefore lost interest in their official role as 'ex officio' members of the Municipality Council and hardly attend Council meetings. Instead, the *amakhosi* try to influence political processes by means of informal relations with civil servants and political office holders. (Krämer 2016: 127, original emphasis)[26]

Such strategic actions from both sides of the binary in question point to a relation that acknowledges and appreciates the vantage points of the respective Other.

> A clear-cut division between democratic and neo-traditional institutions is therefore impossible […]. The paradox is, however, that a basically undemocratic institution eventually plays a significant role in transforming, and at the same time upholding, the democratic model. (Krämer 2014: 178f)

Therefore, once again, I aim to convey that reality in all its complexity lies beyond the binarily informed approach, which in itself is a contributing factor to that same complexity by providing a discursive strategic device that conceals it behind a wall of essentialist perspectives. 'Democracy versus Chieftaincy', even though it is interpreted as a dualism from most popular and many academic perspectives, actually has the potential to constitute a duality in South African communities. From a strategic-relational perspective one must now ask: What strategically-selective context do local actors

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[26] *Ubukhosi* refers to the isiZulu term for 'chieftaincy', while *amaKhosi* denotes 'chiefs' in the plural.

find themselves in? How do they manage to maintain or establish individual and collective agency in such a context? And what role do binarily informed discourses play in this process?

Hereditary rulers are challenged to sustain a position that is powerful enough to complement democratic structures without questioning their legitimacy. Ideally, this question would be answered by the following trope: "The notion that a 'chief is a chief through the people' is not simply political rhetoric utilized in Parliament. Throughout the rural areas of South Africa, one is likely to find people using it as a way to praise or discredit their own traditional leaders" (Williams 2010: 26). Krämer explains the widespread acceptance of chieftaincy in South Africa's KZN through 'basic legitimacy', which he adapts from Popitz (1992) and von Trotha (1994). Such basic legitimacies are "situated between Weber's ideal types of legitimacy (tradition, legality, charisma) on the one hand, and a compliance that is based merely on habit, affect, or interests on the other" (Krämer 2016: 136). The accumulation of several of these legitimacies is what stabilizes and improves the standing of a Traditional Authority (Krämer 2015: 174). He distinguishes between four variations thereof:

- "the basic legitimacy of the value of order", which refers to a Traditional Authority's performance in the maintenance of stable and reliable circumstances. This can also imply the establishment of one-party rule to forestall political struggles as shown in his KZN example above.
- "the basic legitimacy of organisational capacity", which "refers to the capacity of the rulers to organise and coordinate members and groups of a society in order to serve an economic or political purpose considered to be of societal relevance".
- "the basic legitimacy of violent resistance", which "is based on resistance, if necessary by violent means, against a political order that is perceived as arbitrary and unjust".
- "the basic legitimacy of cultural affiliation which refers to the shared experience of rulers and their followers as being part of a common culture." (Krämer 2016: 137-9; also in Krämer 2014: 175; 2015)

These basic legitimacies conveniently correspond with previously mentioned dimensions and such that are currently under discussion. The demand for the 'value of order', for example, mirrors the observations by Hickel that negative national developments in South Africa are often associated with the introduction of liberal democracy, rather than the shortcomings by Traditional Authorities: "the ANC's democracy, and the party's platform of liberal rights, is 'ruining' families and 'killing' the country, causing misfortune on a massive scale that registers as declining marriages rates, rising unemployment, deepening poverty, and epidemic disease" (Hickel 2015: 2). The basic legitimacy of organisational capacity is oriented towards the future, it rests on imaginings of 'modernity' that leaders are supposed to fulfil and it is such basic legitimacy that Baldwin also identifies in her description of

chiefs as development brokers. In Krämer's account the basic legitimacy of violent resistance is catered for through the past struggle against Apartheid and the violent unrest in the transition period. However, due to many Traditional Leaders' failure to perform satisfactorily at the respective time as former collaborators, I have found this dimension to be often appropriated by either public performances or images that involve Chiefs carrying spears, shields and knobkerries, by the heroic stories of 'non-traditional' freedom fighters or through a strategic change of perspective that portrays violence against the 'terrorist' freedom fighters of the past as justified. The final basic legitimacy of cultural affiliation mirrors the discussion of 'tradition' above.

Krämer's basic legitimacies provide an analytical tool that reveals the versatile modes through which Traditional Authorities maintain and consolidate their hierarchical position. *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II regularly warrants the unity and stability of the Ndebele Nation at public events. The Traditional Council members of the Litho Ndzundza Ndebele in Rapotokwane repeatedly highlight the government funded infrastructure projects that they have negotiated for the village and those that are yet to come once their claim for land restitution succeeds. Prince James Mahlangu of the Ndzundza Royal House was charged under the Internal Security Act for supporting the resistance against the Apartheid regime's plans for KwaNdebele's 'independence' in the late 1980s (Abel 1995: 462). After the end of Apartheid he had a successful ANC career and remained Chief in Waterval. Until today, almost twenty years after his death, many Ndzundza proclaim that he should have been *iNgwenyama* instead of his brother Cornelius, even though Cornelius had opposed the regime, too. When Mbusi II Mabhoko III, Cornelius's son and current leader of the Ndzundza Ndebele, failed to wear 'traditional' attire and refused to personally address the crowd at the 2017 eRholweni celebrations, rumours went around that he would soon be replaced by a close relative who would end the leadership dispute with the Manala Royal House (see Chapter 5).

These examples show that it is both essential for Traditional Authorities to accumulate as many of these basic legitimacies through appropriate practice and it is also crucial that the understanding of these legitimacies is sustained and their imperative remains implementable through their followers. Just like any other system basic legitimacies operate within a certain "*strategic selectivity*, i.e., […] a system whose structure and *modus operandi* are more open to some types of political strategy than others" and the same is true for any actors that are part of the project of post-Apartheid South Africa: "the differential impact of the state system on the capacity of different class(-relevant) forces to pursue their interests in different strategies over a given time horizon is not inscribed in the state system as such but in the relation between state structures and the strategies which different forces adopt towards it" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 36). Such strategic practice can be administrative performances or skilful application of customary or state law. This dissertation, however, will argue that one of the most

precious tools that Traditional Authorities use is that of discourse around *both* 'tradition' *and* 'modernity'[27]:

> From my research diary (early Nov 2017): *Early meeting w/ X, important for Litho land claim and chieftaincy dispute. Meeting agreed at his attorney office in PRT CBD [Pretoria Central Business District], but rent not paid, move to McDonald's. Interview on procedures in land claim, see recording. After interview: in the car he asks for investment from GER once claim for RdW [Rust de Winter] is settled. Lit. [literally]: "We want to make the place modern, you know. Maybe Siemens want to build some wind turbines and then Benz can build a factory there."*

In conclusion, few comments capture the strategic-relational character of Traditional Authorities within a Democratic state as well as Geschiere's description of the contextual restrictions and agential intentions of chiefs in Africa today:

> [What] we are witnessing is not a more or less automatic 'return' to a stable fund of moral legitimacy but rather a *struggle* over the disposition of customary power with new *means* under new *circumstances*. These circumstances oblige chiefs to *walk a tightrope* between seductive new forms of enrichment and empowerment on one hand and, on the other, the need to retain their moral prestige as protectors of their communities in the eyes of their followers. (2018: 74, emphasis added)

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[27] Since the following was a private conversation I have adapted my notes to not reveal my interlocutors identity and replaced his name with an X.

4.3 The Fourth Binary: Black Land versus White Land

Both previously mentioned binaries provide a multitude of strategic applications. However, the success of narratives relies "in their ability to provide a simplified account sufficiently flexible to 'narrate' a great variety of morbid symptoms while unambiguously attributing causality and responsibility" (Hay 1995: 217), which is why the emotionally charged four-letter words 'race' and 'land' now come into play. "In the eyes of the South African public – and indeed the international one, inasmuch as it concerns itself with matters in the region – conflicts over land are primarily concerned with race" (James 2007: 225), despite the concept's highly problematic and obviously constructed character. 'Race' remains part of the lived South African reality and constitutes the seemingly insurmountable legacy of colonial ideology:

> Colonial and imperial rule was legitimized by anthropological theories which increasingly portrayed the peoples of the colonized world as inferior, childlike, or feminine, incapable of looking after themselves (despite having done so perfectly well for millennia) and requiring the paternal rule of the west for their own best interests (today they are deemed to require 'development'). The basis of such anthropological theories was the concept of race. (Young 2003: 2)

'Race' is probably one of the most powerful parameters of everyday practice, not only in South Africa, and is thus highly strategically-selective, especially in discourse around land reform. Imperialist and colonialist strategies of settlement and land-based domination have always centred around the idea of 'race' and have left their marks on the soul of Black South African identity. Especially, the loss of land and the forced removal of entire societies remains traumatic:

> Something in me died, a piece of me died, with the dying of Sophiatown; […] In the name of slum clearance they had brought the bulldozers and gored into her body, and for a brief moment, looking down Good Street, Sophiatown was like one of its own many victims; a man gored by the knives of Sophiatown, lying in the open gutters, a raisin in the smelling drains, dying of multiple stab wounds, gaping wells gushing forth blood; the look of shock and bewilderment, of horror and incredulity on the face of the dying man. (Modisane 1986 [1963]: 5)

Land therefore constituted a major stumbling block for the aforementioned negotiations during the transition period of 1990-1994. In 1994, 87 percent of South Africa's land was owned by Whites, who constituted ten percent of the entire population (Dugard 2017: 160). Needless to say that a reorganization of landed property was essential to facilitate not only equal political rights, but also an approximation of economic chances between the formerly segregated populations of South Africa. The representatives of the NP and other White interest groups, however, feared for their landed property rights and therefore a compromise had to be found in rigid constitutionalism. The interim Constitution of 1993 and the permanent Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

established a profoundly altered new state under constitutional supremacy, with an extensive Bill of (Human) Rights and with an independent judiciary […]. Constitutionalism thereby offered a viable strategy for containing profound political differences through constitutionally enshrining and thereby postponing political conflict to be resolved by future legislation and, if need arises, by an impartial judiciary. As a consequence, a balanced constitutional protection of both existing property rights and the right to redress for "race"-based violations of past property rights emerged as a strategic compromise […]. This includes the establishment, in subsections 25(4)-(9) of the property clause, of explicit constitutional duties for a substantial land reform programme, which allows for the restitution of former land rights, a more equitable access to land through land redistribution and legally secure land tenure through statutory tenure reform. (Zenker 2012b: 7f)

Land redistribution, tenure reform and land restitution were to become the three pillars of South Africa's ambitious land reform programme. Despite their different objectives and different legal tools these three approaches are unfortunately seldom differentiated in South African public discourse, which has incessantly turned into an arena of essentialised narratives centred around the matter of 'race' (van Zyl-Hermann and Verbuyst 2022; Zenker 2015c).

Land redistribution, a government-sponsored programme to buy White-owned land from willing sellers and redistribute it to qualified Black beneficiaries and thus ensure a more equitable access to land, will be the least significant for this dissertation's discussion. See, for example, Hebinck and Cousins (2013) for further detail. Overall, it seems to be a topic that is shunned by anthropological scholars, possibly because there "are no reliable statistics on land ownership or on land redistribution" (Dugard 2017: 167).

Tenure reform encompasses a wide range of issues, which include housing and service infrastructure, urban and rural residential zoning, access rights and protection from forced removal, land allocation and formalisation of ownership. Even though all of these are certainly relevant in the former KwaNdebele Homeland, I will focus mostly on those levels where state administrators and Traditional Authorities converge. A concise summary on tenure reform and the relevant legislature has been compiled by Kingwill et al. (2017). I will specifically focus on the outcomes of the Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights (ULTR) Act 112 of 1991 and the aforementioned Communal Land Rights (CLR) Act 11 of 2004. The former remains up to this day the government's central tool in transferring land ownership to tenants in- and outside the former Homelands, who were denied property rights due to past discriminatory laws. The latter was designed to regulate the role of Traditional Authorities and customary law in relation to land administration until it was declared unconstitutional in 2010. The "limited applicability in practice" (Kingwill et al. 2017: 51) and poor results of the ULTR Act, and the CLR Act's nullity have left the task of rural land administration in limbo as the following interview experience from my field data illustrates.

At the headquarters of Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality in Siyabuswa Patrick and I met Mr Mawela, Assistant Manager at the municipal Department for Land, Housing and Human Settlement. The walls behind his desk in the tiny office were covered with maps of the municipality's major settlements. Our conversation lasted over one and a half hours, rather unusual for interviews with local government administrators. Besides the history of the region, clashes of interest between state institutions and Traditional Authorities, and expectations for future legislation to resolve such issues we also spent a considerable amount of time studying these maps, specifically the one of Libangeni. Mawela pointed out to us the borderline between Vaalbank as a proclaimed (i.e. officially planned) township and Allemansdrift B as so-called communal land (i.e. state owned land which is administered by a Traditional Authority). He referred to them as R293 land and R188 land respectively, meaning the legal proclamations that defined the administrative background of the different housing zones under the authority of the Black Administration Act 38 of 1927 on land that was held by the South African Development Trust (SADT) until 1994 (Baylis 2011: 19). This distinction and some of the associated procedures "have persisted in law and regulation for these areas after 1994, and have been incorporated into new spatial planning and development rights processes" (Mashego 2017: 14f). To the East of the pointed out line plots were shaded blue, indicating their communal status, while to the West of it plots were mostly shown in bright yellow and some of them orange. Orange, he explained, were those plots that had already been upgraded from PTO (permission to occupy) to titled ownership as laid out in the ULTR Act. PTOs had been issued by the Homeland administrators during Apartheid, allowing tenants to occupy a certain piece of land while denying them proper ownership thereof. Originally, due to their "potential insecurity of tenure, a decision was taken in September 1999 that new PTOs will no longer be issued. Instead, tribal authorities are now expected to issue a more secure and formal right of tenure such as ownership with a formal title deed" (Kassier 2019). However, PTOs continue to be issued by some Traditional Authorities "mostly due to its less bureaucratic and less cumbersome nature" (Lexis Digest 2012)[28]. Mawela's explanations, however, had me slightly confused, because I knew that Patrick had recently acquired a PTO from the local Traditional Authority for a plot of land near Libangeni's stadium, which according to the map was located well within the limits of the proclaimed township area. Mr Mawela explained that this must have been due to a popular misunderstanding, which misinterprets the boundaries of the proclaimed township. Upon further questioning he admitted that the current demarcation of R293 and R188 land had already been established in the time of the KwaNdebele Homeland and thus should be known to the local land administering authorities by now. In summary, while Mawela's department was obliged to upgrade

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[28] Despite thorough investigation in the field and online, I was not able to retrieve official government statements on the continued procurement of PTOs after 1994. The given information on PTOs was provided by local interlocutors and the online resources of private law firms.

PTOs into title deeds by the ULTR Act of 1991, the local Traditional Authorities continued to issue PTOs in areas that were not even officially under their administration. He did not seem to be surprised nor in any way struck by the irony of these circumstances.

The main area of interest in this thesis will, however, be land restitution, especially in Chapter 6. Apart from their proclaimed targets, these two governmental reform programmes also differ regarding the dimensions of their social experience. Land tenure reform, on the one side, is first and foremost portrayed to be motivated by economic and legal considerations and only to a lesser degree makes use of the concept of autochthony, which "here refers to actors' own conceptions of a rightful link between an individual, territory, and group, often self-styling itself as profoundly 'authentic,' 'natural,' or 'evidently legitimate'" (Zenker 2018b: 244). Land restitution, on the other side, actually heavily depends on autochthony, because it operates in a legal and political framework whose historical realities partly operate beyond Western conceptualizations of property and rights in land. As shown above, 'tradition', which forms a crucial part of the autochthonous argument, may constitute a powerful discursive tool in the South African context and it becomes even more strategically valuable when spatial belonging and ownership are concerned: "Tradition is always in some sense rooted in contexts of origin or central places" (Giddens 1994: 80) or as my research assistant Cebile put it: "*Tradition is where you come from*". Furthermore, tenure reform and land restitution differ regarding their 'racial' implications. While the issuance of title deeds and delimitation of customary administration may imply a certain degree of ethnic friction, if protagonists of different cultural and linguistic origin are involved, the issue of 'race' is almost unavoidable when it comes to restitution.

> Mandated through the constitution of 1996, the legal and institutional particularities of the restitution process were laid down in the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994. This act provides several criteria according to which claimants are entitled to restitution in the form of either restoration of a right to land or equitable redress (usually financial compensation). The claimant can be an individual (or a direct descendant) or a community. The claimant has to have been dispossessed after June 19, 1913, *on the basis of racially discriminatory laws and practices*. Finally, claimants must not have received just and equitable compensation and initially had to lodge their claim before December 31, 1998. Significantly, restitution is not limited to former freehold ownership but includes a whole array of registered and unregistered land rights derived from labor tenancy, sharecropping, customary law, and beneficial occupation, among other things. The Restitution Act further established the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights as well as the Land Claims Court (LCC) as its key players. Subsequently, about eighty thousand claims (the official figures have shifted) were validated as legitimate and in need of resolution." (Zenker 2018b: 245, emphasis added)

> [T]he Act construed 'the state' as simultaneously functioning as the core reference point (as claims are lodged against the state, i.e., the Minister of Land Affairs), the champion of claimants through the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (under the same minister) and the judicial arbiter through the Land Claims Court (under the Minister of Justice). Within this setting, once Commission officials verified the validity of a claim, they were tasked with aiming for a settlement agreement between claimants and (usually white) landowners,

whereby the state would buy the land and, based on certain conditions, hand it over to the claimants. With or without such an agreement, however, each of the approximately 80,000 claims lodged initially had to be referred to the Land Claims Court for final settlement. (Zenker 2015a: 85)

Restitution struggled to kickstart, which led to the passing of the Amendments to Restitution Act of 1999, wherein it was regulated that not all cases needed to be seen by the LCC. A shift towards an administrational approach was supposed to speed up the process for which the Minister and her commissioners had the power to facilitate and conclude settlements by agreement. Only those cases that could not be resolved through administration would then go to the LCC.

The broader development of the land restitution process, unfortunately, allowed for racially biased interpretations, for example when in 1999 the responsible (White) Minister Derek Hanekom was replaced by (Black) Thoko Didiza under new President Thabo Mbeki. Although accusations of racism against this replacement and other employment politics within the Department of Land Affairs (DLA, from 2009 Department for Rural Development and Land Reform DRDLR) were quickly countered and ultimately debunked, "the broader political setting has lent itself too readily to racialised interpretations" (James 2007: 226). The more likely explanation is that President Mbeki's "African Renaissance" policy "to re-empower chiefs at the expense of rural citizens" (Zenker 2012b: 19) stood in stark contrast to Hanekom's guiding approach:

> From the beginning it was clear that the Department's policies for rural areas would be based on a mixture of individualism and communalism, stemming from the belief that 'decisions must be taken by the rights holders in democratic processes so that the interests of a minority cannot lead to the dispossession of the rights of others'. And that there would be very little patience with chiefs, unless they had high popular legitimacy. (Oomen 2005: 72)

Didiza as "'Africanist' minister with a tribal background […] was much more sympathetic to the interests of tribal authorities" (Zenker 2018a: 56). This shows how one and the same circumstance may be very easily interpreted with the aid of a variety of different binary oppositions, because this instance allows for all three binary pairs presented in this chapter to be applied in its interpretation process.

Despite such setbacks, after more than ten years in action respectable statistics on land restitution were presented.

> About six million people had been driven off their land by the series of racist land laws in the twentieth century. The commission had received 79,696 claims for restitution by 1998, the cut-off date for applications. Out of all the claims, 80 per cent were urban. By September 2007, 74,500 had been settled – about 93 per cent of the claims. They had disbursed 4.6 billion rand […] in compensation in lieu of the land. (Russel 2010: 190)

However, "State power (the ability to impose a new trajectory upon the structures of the state) resides not only in the ability to *respond* to crises, but to *identify, define and constitute* crisis in the first place"

(Hay 1996: 255, original emphasis): In 2009 Jacob Zuma was elected President and one of his re-election tactics for 2014 was the reopening of land restitution to cater for the needs of those that had allegedly been left out in the original round of settlements. The Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 thus reopened the lodgement period until June 30, 2019. Critics very early suspected that this amendment was not necessarily intended to benefit the poor and landless parts of the population because Zuma maintained close relationships with important Zulu leaders and he encouraged Traditional Authorities to claim as much land as possible on behalf of their ethnic group once restitution had been re-opened (Zenker 2018b: 247).

What interest did Traditional Authorities have in the reopening of land restitution? First of all they had been able, due to the abovementioned laws, to consolidate their influence in rural areas, especially in the former Homelands, where restitution claims were quite common. Here, former occupants had been disowned by the Apartheid regime to turn it into 'tribal' land. Most land that had already been restituted was administrated in Communal Property Associations (CPA): "While traditional authorities are not legally prevented from holding key positions within CPAs and trusts, and often do so, by law they must be democratically elected onto the committee like any other member" (Zenker 2018b: 249). CPAs were a thorn in the side of many Traditional Authorities. The CLR Act stripped many CPAs of their rights when challenged by a local Traditional Authority and this had turned into common practice also among government officials:

> Given the longstanding opposition from traditional leaders toward CPAs within 'their' territories, the DRDLR has also increasingly side-lined CPAs by discouraging their establishment wherever there is a traditional council, by refusing to transfer land to them, and by proposing corresponding amendments to existing legislation. (Zenker 2018b: 250)

The Amendment Act was declared invalid by the Constitutional Court in July 2016 (case CCT 40/15) and those claims that had been lodged before the deadline extension were 'ring-fenced' – putting all new claims since 2014 on hold until all those claims lodged before the original deadline had been processed (Zenker 2018b: 246). However, the damage was done in a twofold way on both sides of the skin colour binary. When Zuma re-opened land reform, he provided room for even more race-based activism: "the struggle to impose a new trajectory on the structures of the state is lost and won not in the wake of the crisis moment but in the very process in which the crisis is constituted" (Hay 1996: 274). This was also understood by more radical forces among the Black population. In Alec Russel's *After Mandela* interlocutor Professor Shadrack Gutto declared that: "Land reform had moved slower than it ought to have done and needed to be speeded up. Otherwise a demagogue could come to power by whipping up public opinion and using the land to gain popularity" (Russel 2010: 198). That was two years before Julius Malema was expulsed from the ANC, who then went on to found the abovementioned EFF in 2013 with the primary aim to speed up land reform through drastic

measurements such as land invasions and the demand for expropriation without compensation of White farmers. The successful 'spin doctor' not only occupied a void of expression for anti-White sentiments by reigniting militant anti-Apartheid language, but he and his comrades used Zuma's narrative of the unfinished land restitution process to point to the ANC government's alleged failure in land reform in general. In this vein also section 25 of the Constitution was challenged as depicted in Chapter 1. Even though military strategy and political strategy are inherently different, militant strategies can also be used for political purposes, thus EFF supporters appear in red uniforms, occupy land, and rely on relatable and simplified narratives to recruit additional members for their infantry. Such appearance and demeanour nurtured narratives among the White population that 'reversed Apartheid' or a 'White genocide' was imminent or actually already in place.

On the White end of the 'race'-based land binary, land reform's alleged malperformance and President Zuma's cronyism (Pauw 2017) furthered racist allegations of corruption and incompetence among influential lobby groups against the Black-led land reform. Such sentiments were combined with a lack of differentiation between land reform's three pillars and their rather different targets. Paired with a superficial interpretation of events unfolding in neighbouring Zimbabwe around the turn of the millennium food security became a code "for an old canard that blacks cannot farm" (Russel 2010: 190). Restitution cases of farms that heavily declined in productivity and employment opportunities after having been handed over to Black beneficiaries were portrayed as exemplary proof thereof, despite the existence of contrary examples, too (Russel 2010: 186). Such sentiments mirror the racist narrative that portrays the agrarian cultivation of South Africa as an achievement of White virtue within a *terra nullius* (Shiva 2001: 13) and must be seen as a recurrence of Apartheid ideology, "discourses which in their reception have the effect of sustaining, reproducing or extending relations of domination" (Hay 1996: 261). Decline in productivity on restituted and redistributed farms must be laid out on a case-by-case basis and any attempt to explain them based on skin colour or cultural values must be subject to utmost scrutiny.

Another narrative that applies racist discourse within the South African land debate are the so-called 'farm attacks' and 'farm murders' that have been portrayed as "emblematic and symptomatic of broader processes" (Hay 1995: 204) in South Africa, because they draw parallels to the contentious Zimbabwean example. The perceived heightened possibility of being attacked within the boundaries of one's own farms has made restitution efforts "a fraught and tense affair" (James 2007: 238), irrespective of the underlying motive of such an attack or the skin colour of the victims, and despite the fact that they are not directly "connected to the official land reform process in South Africa. But they do constitute part of the social context in rural areas where the programme is being implemented" (James 2007: 225). This is yet another example of how the use of certain narratives

shapes the strategic selectivity of discourse by abstracting a "series of independent primary narratives", collecting them under a generic headline such as land reform and thus "recruiting these stories to an all-embracing crisis discourse" (Hay 1996: 269).

Fortunately, South African society is often not as deeply racialised and divided as these broad observations might have us believe. Even within land reform discourse, which is a highly racialised one, efforts are being made to overcome this divide and to expose the underlying complexities which operate beyond the simple binary divide. As an example, Zenker adapts Lipsky's 'street-level bureaucrats' (2010) and renames them 'bush-level bureaucrats'. From a superficial perspective this move would suggest that he reproduces a binary perspective that represents the spatial movement of these actors towards "'the bush' as the metaphorical other of 'the street'" but also "connotes a shift within the still bifurcated state (Mamdani 1996) from dealing with prototypically urban 'citizens' under state law towards addressing rural 'subjects' still also living under powerful structures of 'customary law' and chiefly rule" (Zenker 2018a: 43). However, further on Zenker describes the developments around the so-called Kafferskraal land restitution case, in the course of which not only a shift in public policy and changes to the staffing of the responsible case administrators complicated the overall situation, but also competing claims to land and leadership among the Black claimants caused delays and legal insecurity. Early bush-level bureaucrats on this case followed a strategy of "ignoring the logic of 'customary law' and tribal leadership, but also effectively succeeded in sidelining members of the Ndebele Tribal Authority, who were legitimate claimants in their own right, as potential representatives of the claimant community" (Zenker 2018a: 50). Due to administrative changes on the national and provincial level, other bureaucrats took over at a later stage of the case and "reversed the earlier strategy of their Mpumalanga colleagues in now including the chief – not as chief, but in his function as the chief land claimant under state law" (Zenker 2018a: 54). Such cases illustrate how the unsatisfying state of land reform in South Africa is not the result of a simplistic binary blame-game, but rather is the result of complex networks of strategic actors and strategically-selective contexts.

Deborah James has documented the work of consultants who have been signed as contractors by the government to function as intermediaries between opposing parties within restitution cases:

> Such debates at the national political level and reported in the press have seldom centred overtly on matters of race. Racial conflict over land becomes potentially greater at the local level where dispossessed Africans attempt to claim restitution or become beneficiaries of old- or new-style redistribution, and where specific white farmers try to resist the pressure to sell or hold out for a better price. It is also at the local level, however, that restitution officers, consultants and other go-betweens have achieved unexpected success in mediating between the two and in defusing the explosiveness of racial dispute. These individuals' negotiation skills, backed by an astute awareness of the economies of modern-day farming, have achieved what expropriation could never do." (James 2007: 227f)

Because the state grants certain freedoms to such third party consultants beyond the tediousness of bureaucratic procedure, they are capacitated to develop strategies based on personal empirical experience. Gaining trust, careful persuasion of good intentions, and private conversations beyond larger groups are such tactics that are mentioned as most appropriate for tense negotiations. (James 2007: 229ff). Such examples portray the importance of an understanding of strategic selectivity in land reform contexts, because they operate beyond the simplistic binary perspective and at the same time make permanent use of it.

> Whether employed by the state in an official capacity or performing its activities on a consultancy basis, it is these individuals 'at the coalface' who carry the responsibility for implementing its policies. Far more than those higher up the chain of command, they find themselves mediating racial disputes between the whites who currently own the land and the blacks who aspire to gain access to or settle on it. They provide nodal points for race tension: it flares up but can also be resolved in the course of their interactions with black beneficiaries and white farmers alike. These two sets of actors partly owe their racially differentiated current positions – in government employ (if black), or in private consultancies (if white) – to the playing out of racial tensions within the realms of the DLA. But it is they who are charged with resolving or redefining racial tensions over transfer of land. (James 2007: 231)

4.4 Summary

The motivation behind putting emic binaries to battle – and thus the target of this chapter – was laid out to be twofold. First, this chapter provided an overview of three dominant contexts within which field research was conducted. It did so by focusing on three binary pairs, which are – as I have extensively shown – popularly applied for strategic and tactical purposes by actors who manoeuvre within these contexts. Putting these binaries to battle helped to create a palpable overview of a field that is affected by a range of controversies and to frame practice within it. Thus the binaries served a purpose not dissimilar to the way that they are often applied on the emic level. Ironically, the second target of this chapter aimed to achieve the exact opposite: to deconstruct simplistic binary narratives and to portray the underlying strategically motivated complexities of these contexts. By exploring binarily constructed discursive devices that are popularly applied to make crucial discourses appear more simple than they are, the battle of binaries made a case in favour of an analysis that understands discourse as strategic and strategically affected practice within the SRA as it was adopted by Colin Hay.

The first presented binary of 'Tradition versus Modernity' was introduced by two short anecdotes from my field research. These illustrated the different ways in which agents, in this case Sangomas, in the former KwaNdebele Homeland handle and manipulate understandings of what is 'traditional' and what is 'modern'. I then provided an overview of the role of dualistically informed concepts such as 'tradition' and 'modernity' within anthropology and described them as twofold problematic. This referred, first, to their controversial and burdensome character due to anthropology's complicity in the European colonial/imperial project in Africa. Secondly, I characterised these concepts as a *problematique*, which has proven highly productive on the academic stage and which nowadays provides bountiful perspectives and interpretations of the conduct of the aforementioned Sangomas as strategic and strategically influenced.

The second binary was framed as 'Democracy versus Chieftaincy' and picked up the previous binary by questioning the attribution of democracy as 'modern' and chieftaincy/chiefdom as 'traditional'. After a short discussion of the term 'neo-traditional' I continued by summarizing the controversial debate around the role of Traditional Authorities within South Africa's democracy. Post-Apartheid South Africa was given a strong liberal-progressive constitution and, in its first few years under President Nelson Mandela, allowed for limited influence from Traditional Authorities. This situation has changed since then and I listed and summarized some of the most important legislation that has been passed to strengthen the role of Traditional Authorities, especially in rural South Africa. Thereafter, I returned to the academic debate and presented Mario Krämer's conceptualisation of basic legitimacies, which facilitates an understanding of the social and cultural mechanisms that sustain the institution of Chieftaincy. The four basic legitimacies that Krämer has established were shown to be highly relevant

in the context of the former KwaNdebele Homeland and their appropriation constitutes a major strategic advantage to those who seek to maintain their influence in its various political arenas.

'Black Land versus White Land' introduced South African land reform and the way it is commonly understood on the basis of a binary understanding of 'race'. As colonial practice was problematized in the previous sections, the use of 'race' as a colonial tool of domination that continues to powerfully shape South African everyday life, was only shortly referred to in the beginning of this specific section. However, land reform in South Africa is fundamentally based on assertions of 'race' and its three pillars (redistribution, tenure reform, restitution) have been designed to specifically target current economic inequality and the redress of past injustices on the basis of 'race'. Land redistribution will be of little relevance to this thesis, and tenure reform includes a variety of reform projects of which merely those that involve Traditional Authorities will be relevant. To illustrate the vagueness of tenure reform legislation and its ambivalent implementation I provided another anecdote from my field research. Land restitution, though, will be highly relevant in its entirety and I provided a summary of its legislation and implementation challenges along with a problematisation of skin colour discourse that unfortunately complements it. Finally, I provided examples of individual and collective agency that illustrate the complexities behind the simplistic binary understanding of land reform based on skin colour. Once again, a perspective that accounts for strategic practice and strategically-selective context allows for a deeper understanding that lies beyond the simple binary and reveals the complexities of the battles that take place in between.

First *Entr'acte*: Ndebele Leadership History

This *entr'acte* goes against my own previously elaborated ambition to maintain a more or less strict separate presentation of theory and empirical data. Having introduced the four binaries that form the theoretical and contextual foundations of my argumentation in the previous two chapters the consequential next step would be the presentation of my own empirical data from the field. The motive behind this divergence from the original itinerary is both a literarily vain and a pragmatic one. First, a clear-cut changeover would neglect the cleverly devised transitions of theme and place that most ethnographers' inner novelist strives to uphold. Furthermore, I find that history, the most crucial concept for this chapter-between-sections, operates beyond and between the limits of clearly defined (ontological) theory and empirical data and thus deserves to be dealt with outside of the chosen 'segregated' approach. In this case, however, the presented content is not only loosely connected to the original argument of this dissertation as it would be the case in an excursus, parenthesis or any other kind of digression. Rather it is part and parcel to understanding some of the most crucial observations that follow and it furthermore relates to the previous discussion of Homeland and Apartheid politics. It constitutes a plot of its own, yet picks up and anticipates the developments in the chapters that frame it. Thus, once again modifying Goffmann's dramaturgical metaphor (see Chapter 2), this chapter-between-sections shall be referred to as First *Entr'acte*. The Second *Entr'acte* will be presented between chapters 7 and 8 to mark the transition from empirical data to analysis.

In order to understand the ways in which binarily informed discourses are applied in strategic conduct and are simultaneously shaped by strategically sensitive contexts among the people of Rapotokwane and Libangeni today, it is necessary to keep an eye onto the past. The struggle for land and power in former KwaNdebele is fought until this very day through oral and written accounts centred around a discursive regime of belonging (Zenker 2022) whose argumentation is buttressed upon the authority of history. It is important, however, to understand that what is referred to as history in such instances of strategic discourse may very well be contested. Therefore, please note that the following depiction of chronological events is the result of a thorough comparison of a variety of sources. On the one side it will present information that is widely regarded as fact, e.g. the year and outcome of the so-called Mapoch War. On the other side, I have had the ambition to present an array of alternative versions of events whenever these were potentially significant to the strategic arguments made by the agents introduced in this study. The following two accounts of the military campaigns of Mzilikazi in the early 19th century will serve as illustration of the latter.

During a six-week stay in KwaNdebele in 2016 I sought permission from *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II to conduct research in Libangeni, which falls under his customary jurisdiction. I visited the Manala Royal Residence at Klipfontein, north of KwaMhlanga, and was received in audience after being

introduced by Headman Aphane (see Chapter 2.1). After a short conversation, the *iNgwenyama* recommended that I interview Jeremiah Mabhena, the Royal Historian, for further information about the Manala Ndebele. I had already been introduced to the elderly historian by Aphane while we waited outside the *iNgwenyama*'s offices and we agreed to meet again for an interview in Klipfontein four days later. He arrived with a younger male companion, who was introduced to me as a student of his without mention of a name, and who remained quiet for the entire

interview. Early in the conversation Mabhena handed me the worn-out copy of a text that had seemingly been written a long time ago on a typewriter. He said: *"Maybe you heard about him? They caused us big trouble. […] Mzilikazi, he was planning to do that. He was running away from Shaka when he came here. Okay, many writers they change this thing, say we Ndebele were from this man."* The paper reads[29]:

> THE RELATIONSHIP OF MZILIKAZI OF ZIMBABWE AND AMANDEBELE OF TRANSVAAL
>
> Mzilikazi kaMashobane ran away from KwaZulu during the reign of Shaka. […] He sought refuge and he was granted on the basis of him being a humble man. He was then accepted as one of the AmaNdebele. He also accepted that he is a Ndebele. Hence his people are called AmaNdebele even today. […] The king Sibindi gave him a wife […] as a way of committing him not to run away. After he had settled he then asked Sibindi to give him soldiers to go and fight for cattle from the Basotho nation. […] When they defeated the Basotho nation he changed his plan. On his way back, before he reached the royal kraal of Sibindi, he whispered to some of his warriors to kill king Sibindi with his people. […] When he saw the smoke he then asked his soldiers to kill the other soldiers who were disarmed. He then ran away with a sizeable number of amaNdebele towards the north. During the fighting where Sibindi was killed many people were killed, and also the wife to king Mdala. This happened +/- 1825.

Mabhena focused his spoken and written efforts on dissociating the Manala Ndebele from those Ndebele who descended from Mzilikazi and ultimately settled in what is Zimbabwe today. He pointed out the betrayal committed by the latter and the incompetence of those who mistake him as one of the Transvaal Ndebele. Distinction as tool of strategic discourse has been introduced in Chapter 4 and will continue to be of interest in empirical data further on. Throughout my field research in former KwaNdebele I have found that the portrayal of history and the ramifications that result from it for present-day politics often employ the past acts of single leading figures to deduct the characteristics of entire groups in the here and now. To reduce history to the acts of senior male leaders and the practices that sustained them surely mirrors the highly hierarchical structures that most Southern African societies maintained in precolonial and colonial times: "To a considerable extent, men

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[29] I took the liberty of correcting some errors of spelling or grammar in written field data to enhance readability.

controlled women, elders controlled youths, patrons controlled clients, and […] chiefs controlled commoners" (Thompson 2014 [1990]: 23). Such strategically-infused discourse was once more presented to me only a few days after the interview with Mabhena. Iggy Litho, a member of the Royal Family of the Litho Ndzundza, also employed Mzilikazi's character to illustrate the Ndzundza Ndebele's second split between Magodongo and Litho Pungutsha (see section 1E.1.2 below) in a conversation we had in Pretoria. Many of the versions of history that he presented to me aimed to support his claims for the leadership of the Litho Ndzundza and the Ndebele Kingdom as a whole. In this case Mzilikazi's Ndebele were portrayed as the avengers of those who have been unrightfully deprived of power, as the executors of prevision:

> *Magodongo went the other way. But he never even ruled for six months, because Mzilikazi came. And when Mzilikazi came he wanted to pass through to go to Zimbabwe. So he sent two messengers. So Magodongo killed those two messengers. Now, Mzilikazi waited for his messengers to come and report, but they never came back. So they realise these people are fighting. So they went through; they captured Magodongo and his brother Mgwezane and all that. And […] they murdered him. Because, why? Mrhabuli told him that if you say you are taking this kingship from me, you will never rule. You don't have my blessings.* (27 September 2016)

The narrating efforts by both Mabhena and Litho clearly indicate the importance of historical relations and their strategic presentation in such a setting, because the portrayal of the past is of relevance for the agendas of the present. Although political norms and descent do by no means solely determine political allegiance and the outcome of power struggles, Van Warmelo's cynical and (if nothing else reductionist) comment shall in the following be applicable at multiple points nonetheless: "No wonder that here the only political knowledge worth having is that relating to kinship. Once a man's father, mother, mother's father, wife's family and his brothers, sisters and brothers-in-law are known, it is a matter of certainty to predict his political colour and future reactions" (in Delius 1983: 3). Furthermore, Mabhena's open dissatisfaction with such historians whose account differs from his own indicates the overall contingent and negotiated nature of (neo-)colonial South African historiography and its potential to be strategically framed or adjusted. A summary of past events in Africa always implies walking a tightrope, especially when *A History of X* titles (Thompson 2014 [1990]; Worden 2007 [1994]; Ross 2008 [1999]; Delius 2007; Nattrass 2017) are used. While these works are indispensable for the simple summary of consecutive events, sorted by dates and/or topics, they inhibit a certain risk whenever the authors assess the circumstances of a specific development, especially when the long-lasting tradition of Eurocentric historiography in Africa is considered. Many historical accounts depend on anthropological

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Interview information 1E.2

Prince Iggy Litho: My landlord and temporal housemate in Rapotokwane (see Chapter 2). Contender for the leadership among the Litho Ndzundza and senior member of their Royal Family. He was officially interviewed on 27 September 2016 in Pretoria and on 25 July 2017 in Rapotokwane. Further he provided information on numerous occasions in informal conversation.

data, which constitutes a problem due to the discipline's long involvement in colonial and Apartheid practices of White domination and privilege:

> Throughout much of the twentieth century, the discipline in South Africa had been divided between sociocultural anthropology and volkekunde. Sociocultural anthropology drew primarily on British social anthropology, was practised mainly at English-medium universities and tended towards liberal, anti-apartheid politics. By contrast, the Afrikaans-medium volkekunde (literally, 'knowledge about peoples') was based primarily on pre-World War II German Völkerkunde, equated an essentialised notion of 'culture' with an ethnic group in its key notion of 'ethnos', and was by and large supportive of apartheid principles (Zenker 2016: 297f)

Furthermore, written and published historical accounts will often differ from those that circulate in the oral realm of local identity and power politics. This is not to say that any of these accounts should be regarded as more or less authentic than any other, not to mention that none of them should be regarded as 'the truth'. I feel the utmost respect for those interlocutors who were able to not only enumerate previous Ndebele leaders by heart, but to also differentiate the subclans that developed from them and their respective movements through the Transvaal and their encounters with other groups. It would thus be inappropriate to rank all of these accounts according to their perceived authenticity. I refrain from any claims to absolute truthfulness in the following depictions and aim to present a wide variety of histories where they were made available to me in both written and oral form.

In the following this First *Entr'acte* entertains the reader with the event from two different periods. The first section will provide a rough outline of the early genealogy of the Southern Transvaal Ndebele, more specifically of the Manala of Silamba, the Ndzundza of Mabhoko and the Ndzundza of Litho. While the former two groups will be relevant in Chapter 5, the latter will be extensively discussed in Chapter 6. The second section will summarize the process of establishment of KwaNdebele Homeland from the 1960s onwards until 1994.

1E.1 Mmusi's Heirs

It is important to differentiate between various groups of Ndebele. The 'Zimbabwean Ndebele', who descended from the abovementioned Mzilikazi – a military leader who left the Cape and migrated north with his people during the so-called *Mfecane* (Nguni) or *Difaqane* (Sotho), the violent expansion of the AmaZulu under their leader Shaka – will only be of limited relevance in this case. The

Figure 1E.3 Map of Regional dispersion of Northern and Southern Ndebele groups in the former Transvaal with current national and provincial borders for orientation (from Lekgoathi 2009: 65)
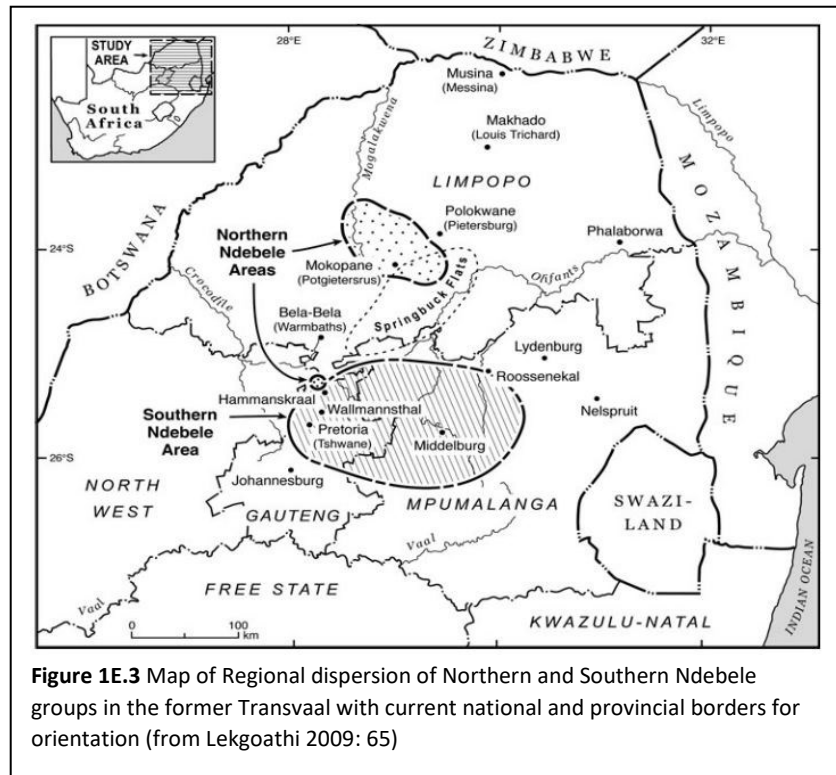
often problematised (e.g. Lekgoathi 2009) distinction between the South African 'Northern Transvaal Ndebele' and 'Southern Transvaal Ndebele' (see Figure 1E.3) was introduced by Nicholas Jacobus van Warmelo, chief ethnologist in South Africa's Native Affairs Department from 1930 to 1969, who observed that the northern communities had been heavily influenced by northern Sotho and Tswana languages and social practices while the southern groups showed clearer evidence of their Nguni origin (Van Warmelo 1974 [1937]). While these mostly linguistically informed labels and the data they were derived from must not be regarded as politically innocent (Lekgoathi 2009: 65f), they have become part of South African politics in the 20th century and continue to influence negotiations of power and belonging in the 21st century. Other South African researchers that have investigated the origin of the Ndebele and their different groupings in the *volkekunde* tradition include Massie, Fourie, Potgieter, Maré and Breutz. Their work has been extensively summarised and discussed by Van Vuuren (1992: 73-82) and will not be explicitly elaborated upon due to limitations in space and access. However, I must partly depend on their findings to assemble a reasonable account of historical developments, being nonetheless aware that their research results are in no degree indisputable.

Although the exact origin of the Transvaal Ndebele remains subject to dispute, it is generally assumed that their rise as a separate cultural, political and linguistic entity did occur sometime between 300 to 500 years ago (Lekgoathi 2009) depending on interpretation of their lineage and migration patterns. Van Warmelo found that the Transvaal Ndebele "had already been in the country for so many

generations that only the direction from which they had come, namely the South-East, was not yet forgotten" (in Lekgoathi 2009: 64). Fourie dates their arrival in the Transvaal to the year 1500 while others claim that they "are undoubtedly of Zulu descent, and came from Zululand early in the 19th century" (Massie in Van Vuuren 1992: 74). This chronological and geographical uncertainty within literature and narration is also due to the aforementioned existence of several Ndebele groups, which is certainly based upon the label's etymology: "'Ndebele' is a category word used by the Sotho to define Nguni-speakers in general (usually in the Sotho form Matebele). It refers to the 'strangers from the east' that were in their midst" (Schneider 1986: 5).

According to my local interlocutors' concordant accounts the Transvaal Ndebele originated from a common leader named Mafana, who left the Hlubi groups of Drakensberg to settle at Emhlangeni near Randfontein (see Figure 1E.4). Mafana was then succeeded by his son Mhlanga and his grandson Mmusi as political leader of the Ndebele people. Mmusi "built a settlement called KwaMnyamana at the later Wonderboompoort [near Bon Accord], north east of the present Tshwane [Pretoria]. After his death, by the 18th century, his sons - Manala, Ndzundza, Mthombeni (Kekana), Dlomo, and Mhwaduba (Masombuka) - jockeyed for power" (Makhura 2007: 101). The monarchical system among the Bantu-speaking groups of Southern Africa was built on hereditary principles of patrilineal descent. In most Nguni traditions, such as the Ndebele, a Chief would be given a so-called 'Royal Wife' from a specific family to give birth to the future heir of the chieftaincy. She would stay in the *indlunkulu/ibandla* (the great/royal house). The left-hand wife, known as *ikohlo*, would usually be the

Figure 1E.4 Map of migration patterns and most important settlements for the Manala of Silamba (until 1926) and Ndzundza of Mabhoko (until 1883) (adapted from Van Vuuren 1983). Significant rivers, current provincial borders and towns have been added for orientation.
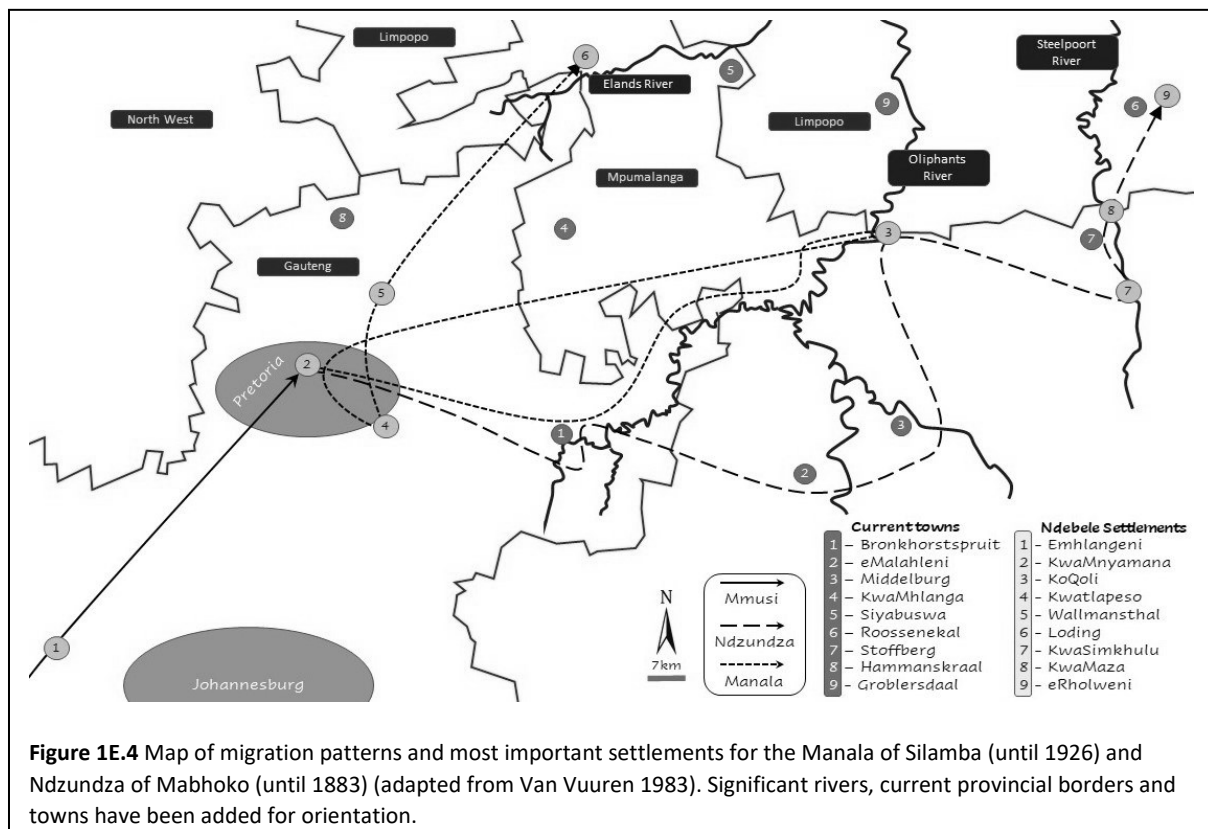
first one to get married to the chief, but her sons would merely have the right to rule as regents as long as the rightful heir was too young or in any other way unfit for office. The right-hand wife was referred to as *iquadi*. Chieftaincy was, however, of consensual nature as well, which could ultimately result in the split of a certain group in the event that leadership disputes arose (Thompson 2014 [1990]: ch. 1). The name of a leader was then often established as a name for his followers, although it is unlikely that this practice resulted in the creation of such ethnic categories as they are nowadays widely used in South Africa.

A variety of accounts exists regarding the sons of Mmusi, their number and their specific names. What most of my interlocutors and most written sources, however, agree upon are the names and fates of these four sons: (1) Masombuka (also known as Skosana) was Mmusi's firstborn son (Van Vuuren 1992: 112), but was merely born by Mmusi's third wife and therefore never made claims to the kingship (Jeremiah Mabhena 2016); he later supposedly joined Ndzundza's followers. (2) Manala was the first son born by the royal wife (*indlunkulu*) and therefore predestined to become the heir to Mmusi's leadership. (3) Ndzundza was born by the second wife (*ikohlo*) and would eventually challenge Manala's leadership (Van Vuuren 1992: 112). (4) Mthombeni (also known as Yakalala and Gegana/Kekana) followed Ndzundza but later separated from them after a battle with Manala to migrate North towards Hammanskraal (Skhosana 2010: 3). Most sources do not agree regarding the fates of the other sons, but it is assumed that most of them migrated to the North as well, where their descendants assimilated with the local Tswana, Pedi and Venda groups. They are assumed to be the ancestors of the Northern Transvaal Ndebele (Breutz 1989: 406ff). Dlomo supposedly migrated to Natal, but later re-joined the ranks of Ndzundza (Kwa-Ndebele Monumentekomitee 1983: 33).

For Chapters 5 and 6, Manala and Ndzundza will be most relevant descendants of Mmusi, because their fates and the ones of those that followed in their line of succession until this day influence the political landscape of former KwaNdebele. An heir could be excluded from the chieftaincy if his eyesight was impaired, if he "tried to take over the chieftainship by force", or if his father decided to exclude him after consulting with the private council (Myburgh and Prinsloo 1985: 20). What exactly happened in the case of Mmusi's sons is subject to dispute up to this very day, but it can be roughly summarized as follows: When the time came that Mmusi was too blind to govern, he wanted to offer the regalia (*namxali/namrhali*) to Manala, who was out hunting near the cattle posts at the time. Ndzundza's mother then used animal skins to dress her son as Manala to deceive Mmusi into handing the regalia to Ndzundza instead. Manala had very hairy skin just like his father. This plan eventually worked out after failing a few times and Ndzundza was declared successor of Mmusi. When Manala returned, he learned of his brother's treason and called for revenge (some accounts attribute the call for revenge to Manala's son Ncagu), which then caused Ndzundza and his followers to flee (Van Vuuren

1992: 113; Breutz 1989: 403). Different versions of this account were delivered by my interlocutors. Some highlighted Mmusi's call for fatal vengeance upon learning that he had been betrayed, and the furtiveness of Ndzundza and his mother when they stole the regalia, and their subsequent cowardice when running away from open confrontation. Others argue that Manala's mother was not an actual Ndebele woman and therefore not eligible to provide her son Manala as Mmusi's heir, or that Manala despite being the firstborn was actually not fathered by Mmusi. Another account explains that Mmusi was well aware that Manala would not be a good leader due to his stubborn character, which is why he sent his son away to hunt wildebeests to hand over the regalia to his favoured son Ndzundza in the meantime. Who presents which version of events largely depends on their own upbringing and family origin, their political allegiance and other interests.

> Three wars were fought between the two brothers before peace was made at the Bhaluli (Oliphant) River through the mediation of a wise man named Mnguni. It was resolved that (1) Manala was to rule west of Bhaluli and Ndzundza east of it; and that (2) in a conscious deviation from the normal exogamy rule, Manala could marry a wife from Ndzundza and Ndzundza could marry a wife from Manala. The issue of seniority remained something of a grey area. On the one hand, the story makes it clear that Manala was the rightful heir to Musi; on the other, the Ndzundza seem to have succeeded in holding on to the *namxali*. (Peires 2014: 11, original emphasis)

Figure 1E.5 Skeleton genealoy of the descendants of Musi in short, according to Van Vuuren (1992: 185-194) and own field sources. The lineages of Manala and Ndzundza have been highlighted for better overview.
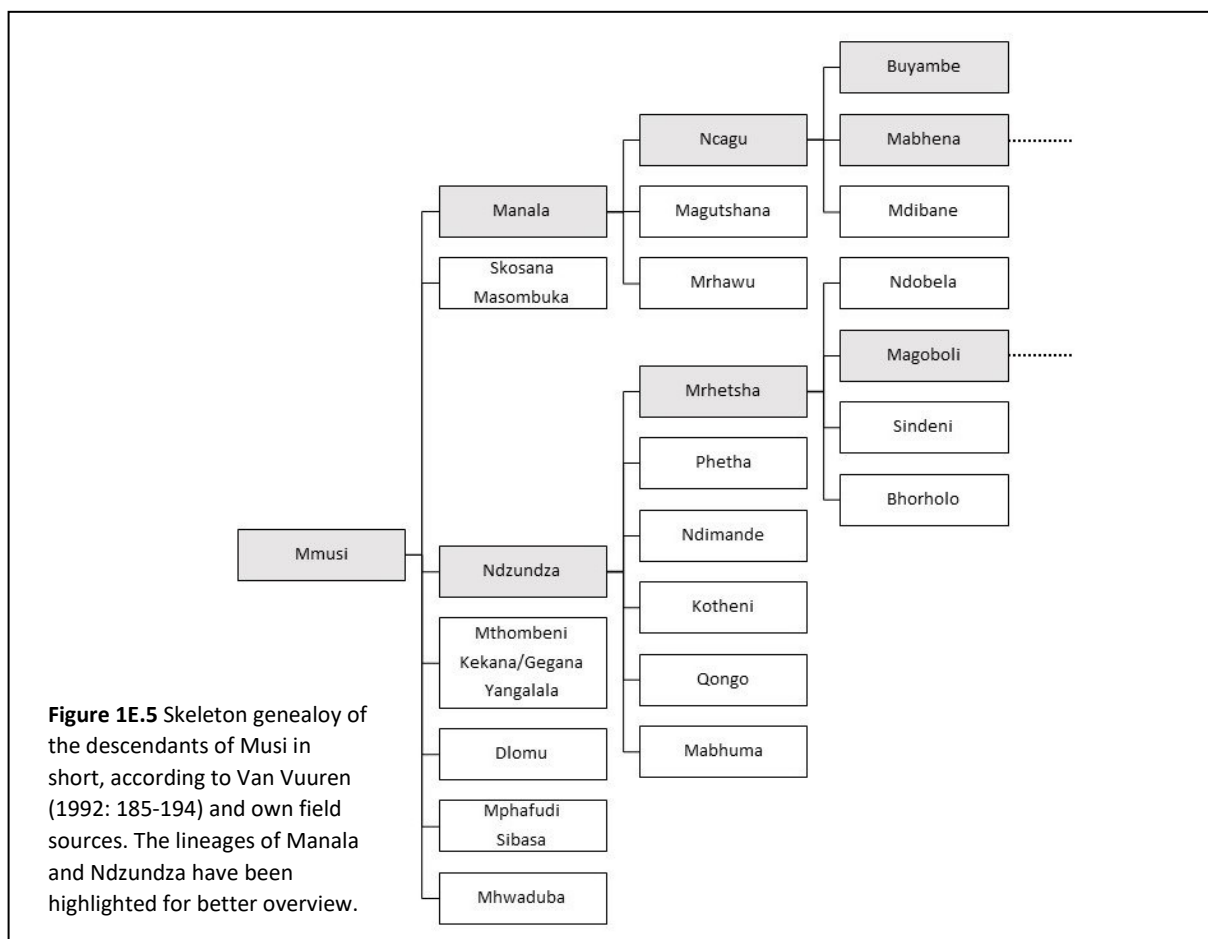
From the conversations with my interlocutors it did not become entirely clear what the relations between Manala and Ndzundza were afterwards. Most written sources relate that "the two branches of the Southern Ndebele […] lived in peace, separated by over a hundred kilometres, and developed separately." (Nielsen 1996: 4). Some of my interlocutors mention only a battle near today's Cullinan and negotiations near Middelburg at Olifants River with a subsequent intermarriage agreement between the followers of Manala and Ndzundza to maintain peace. Van Vuuren locates the peace agreement of the Oliphants River at KoQoli near today's Loskop Dam. Other interlocutors of mine claim that the Manala were eventually integrated into the different Ndzundza and Kekana clans and only resurfaced as separate ethnic entity near the establishment of KwaNdebele Homeland. Most sources agree Ndzundza ensured the fellowship of several of his brothers when he moved to the eastern Transvaal and thus his people rose to a respectable size in the following years.

1E.1.1 Manala

The Manala remained rather small in population size. For several generations they followed the conservative rules of succession. After shortly settling at Mmusi's former homestead at KwaMnyamana (near Bon Accord Dam north of Pretoria) (Van Vuuren 1992: 115), Breutz mentions that Manala and his followers stayed with some Northern Ndebele groups for a while. Migrants from another group were generally welcome as the size of a Chief's people and the amount of cattle that he controlled determined his power and prestige. The subsequent Manala leaders settled on the Pienaarsrivier at a place they named Kwatlapeso/Kwahlapheso (Mooiplaats farm between Pretoria and Bronkhorstspruit) (Breutz 1989: 398+403), which corresponds with the information given by Jeremiah Mabhena. A governmental research memorandum of unknown authorship, found in the LCC archives (unknown 1996: 1f), locates them at places called Ezotshaneni (Kleinzonderhout farm) and Embilaneni (Donkerhoek farm) within the same area, which correspond with the popular settlement patterns among the local groups at the time, establishing several homesteads within a wider area (Nattrass 2017: 28).

> Whereas small chiefdoms, comprising little more than a central hamlet or village and its immediate vicinity, were controlled directly from the center, large chiefdoms consisted of a series of "concentric 'circles' of diminishing control", from the core, where local subchiefs were loosely allied to the paramount. Down to the nineteenth century, this regional system was maintained despite a gradual increase in population. (Thompson 2014 [1990]: 25)

During the aforementioned incident with Mzilikazi, Manala leader Sibindi and other members of the Manala Royal Family were then killed and significant numbers of Manala were incorporated into Mzilikazi's army. Thereafter, the Manala split into three groups, who all descended from Zidli somehow: the descendants of Mgibe, of Makerane, and of Silamba. The latter's branch is today widely regarded as senior to the others. Written accounts differ regarding Silamba's relation to his

predecessor Sibindi; Breutz (1989: 448) identifies Silamba as Sibindi's grandson, while Myburgh & Prinsloo (1985: 144f) and Van Vuuren (1992: 194) identify them as (half)brothers. Van Vuuren explicitly points out that several contradictory versions of descendance exist and he counts up to fifteen different genealogies regarding the sons of Zidli from whom the three Manala groups supposedly descended (1992: 157). In his genealogy he therefore reserves two different positions for Mgibe as either son or grandson of Zidli (see 1E.6).

Figure 1E.6 Skeleton genealogy of the descendants of Zidli in short, according Van Vuuren (1992: 194f). The two different potential relations of Mgibe with his relatives have been highlighted for better overview.
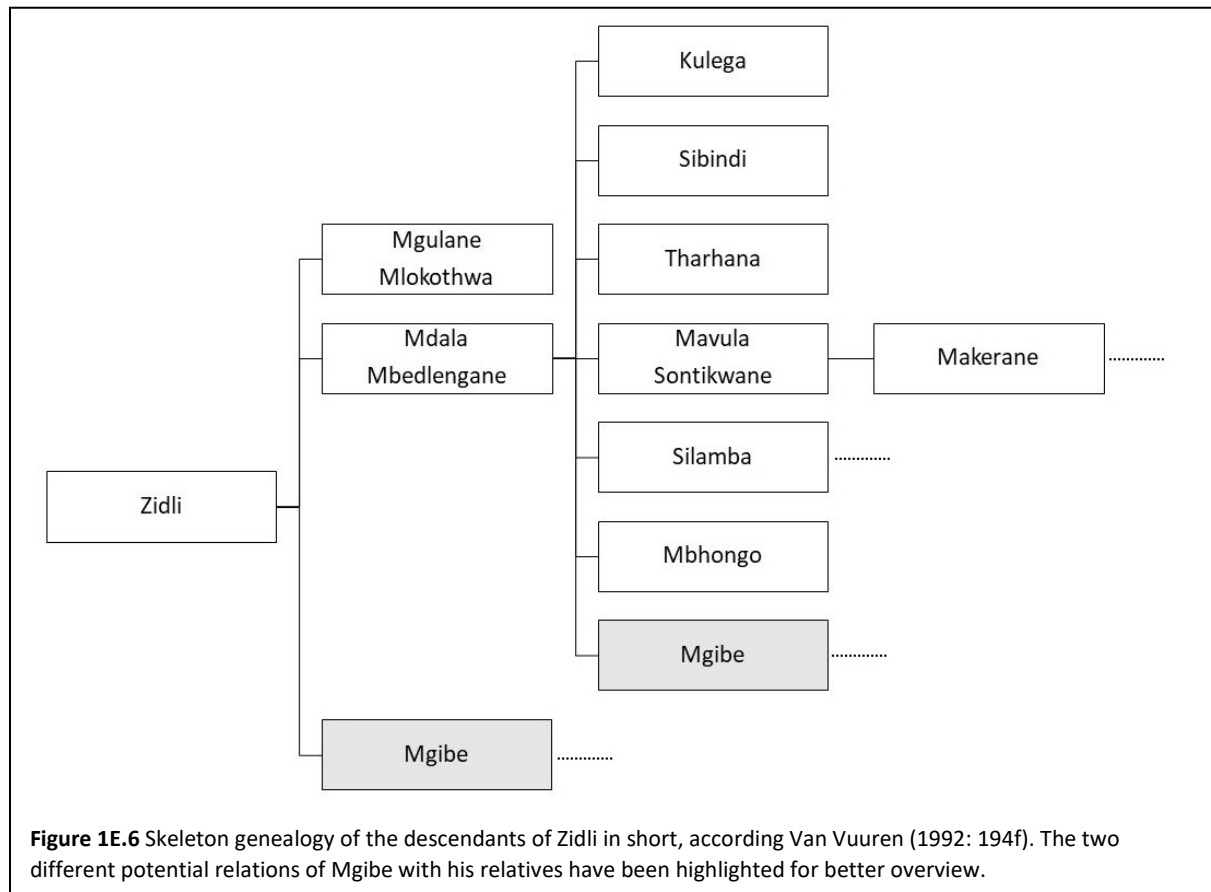
Also other family relations that triggered the three-way split are unclear. Jeremiah Mabhena, representing the Silamba lineage in his function as Makhosonke II's historian, explained that Sibindi's brother Mdala (father and son in Van Vuuren's genealogy) was not able to take the chieftainship, because he was mourning for his wife (compare to the Mzilikazi paper by J. Mabhena above). Therefore his uncle Mavula Sontikwane acted as regent on his behalf. Then Mdala passed away and his brother Mgibe acted as leader on behalf of Mdala's son Kuleka. J. Mabhena then claimed that Mgibe killed Kuleka once he reached the appropriate age to rule. Kuleka's brother was Silamba, who supposedly avenged his brother and reclaimed the chieftaincy for his lineage. Silamba then apparently pacified the situation by suggesting a three-way split and relocating his people to Wallmansthal, north of Pretoria. The settlement at Wallmansthal, where the Berlin Lutheran Mission provided land for settlement to the Manala under Silamba from 1873, was commonly referred to as koMjekejeke/Matsheketsheke. However "in 1915 a dispute arose between the Berlin Mission on Wallmansthal and the Tribe and they

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left the farm and later bought Roodekopies 167-JR during 1926 on which they settled" (Mouton 1996:13).

> *The mission wanted the people to do away with their culture, to do away with their traditions. So that started a conflict between the church and the King Silamba, who did not agree. He did not want his people to lose their culture and their traditions, their language, their laws and norms. That is why they bought Roodekoppies portions three and four. That is Loding.* (Ishmael Ndlovu* on 20 June 2017, see Interview Information Box 5.1 in the following chapter)

This settlement at Roodekopies (also often referred to as Rooikoppies or Rooikoppen), the village of Loding, until this day constitutes an important Traditional Council to the Manala Ndebele for its offices are located near the burial grounds for the Manala Royal Family.

1E.1.2 Ndzundza

The descendants of Ndzundza on the other hand – much more significant in population size and political influence – engaged more prominently in violent conflicts with European settlers and other African Kingdoms throughout the 18th and 19th century. Ndzundza took his people east towards Witbank/Emalahleni and they settled at KwaSimkhulu northeast of today's Middelburg, where his descendants stayed until the end of the 17th century before they moved further north towards Stoffberg where they erected the settlement named KwaMaza (see map in Figure 1E.4 above). Mahlangu – nowadays one of the most common surnames and a popular praise name (*isinanazelo/isithokozelo*) among the Ndzundza – was the most prominent leader of the Ndzundza at KwaMaza and it was his succession that caused the next split only five generations after the split from Manala. The leadership dispute arose around the turn of the 18th and 19th century when Mahlangu's six sons took turns in power. However, it gets more complicated from there:

> *Now in the house of Mahlangu there were three wives there. The first one was Maridili's mother, and the second one was Mgwezane's mother, the third one is Phaswana's mother. Maridili had a younger brother known as Kawule or Mdalanyane. And Mgwezane had a younger brother known as Dzela followed by Mrhabuli.* […] *Phaswana is the one who led the tribe first before Maridili* […] *followed by his younger brother Kawule* […]*. And then from there then came Mgwezane: the father to Gembe, Magodongo and Tsotsoro. After his death Dzela took over the leadership,* […] *but the leadership ended with Dzela and from there it went to Mrhabuli. So while he was ruling* […] *Magodongo* […] *killed Sokwena and also killed the father of Sokwena, who is Mrhabuli. And he took the leadership or chieftainship by power, which is very much contradictory to the believe of the Ndebeles that the good leader must not take power by force.* (Paul Mahlangu)

Interview information 1E.7
Paul Mahlangu: Respected community member of Rapotokwane and referred to by several local authorities for historical information. He was interviewed on 20 September 2016 at my Rapotokwane accommodation together with Jonathan Mnguni, who had arranged the interview.

There are, however, other sources that claim Mrhabuli helped his nephew Magodongo to seize power as he despised his own sons (Myburgh and Prinsloo 1985). Breutz has associated the cause of the split to Mrhabuli's son Litho Pungutsha, who showed little respect towards his father. Mrhabuli therefore handed the royal insignia to his nephew and thus provoked Litho's separation from the rest of the Ndzundza (1989: 442). This identification seems, however, to be faulty, because my interlocutors identified Sebajelo as Mrhabuli's son, who initiated the split, while Van Vuuren (1992: 119f) identifies Sebajelo as Kawule Mdalanyane's son. Sebajelo then fathered Litho Pungutsha after whom the group was thereafter named. Whenever my interlocutors among the Litho Ndzundza referred to the circumstances of their split from the main Ndzundza branch at KwaMaza it turned into a very emotional affair and it became difficult to maintain a reasonable overview (see Figure 1E.8).

Figure 1E.8 Skeleton genealogy of the descendants of Mahlangu in short, according to P. Mahlangu and Iggy Litho (left) and Van Vuuren (1992: 186-190) (right). The lineages of Magodongo and Litho have been highlighted for better overview.
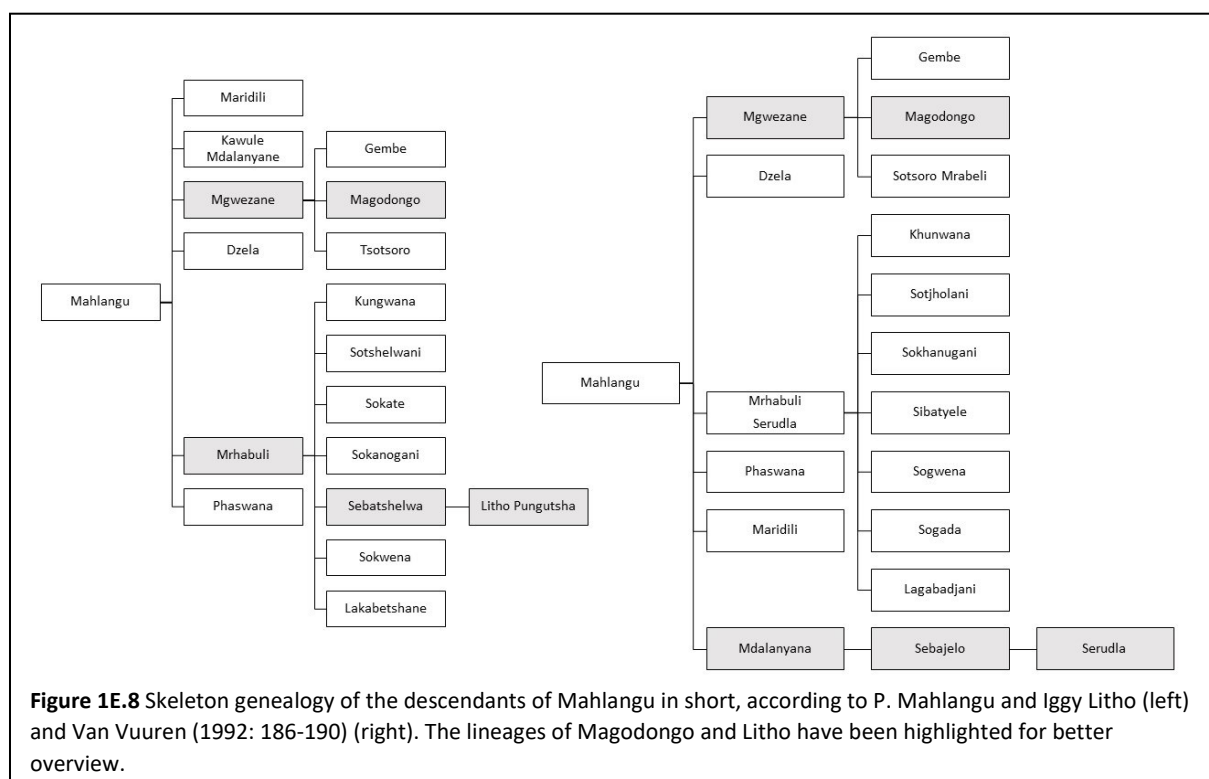
In a (much needed) nutshell, two groups of the Ndzundza developed from there: on the one side those under Magodongo, who had allegedly taken power by killing his uncle Mrhabuli and his cousin Sokwena, who would from now on lead the most populous part of the Ndzundza Ndebele; on the other side a smaller group that did not accept his leadership, mostly descendants from Mrhabuli and Mdalanyane, who would later form the Litho Ndebele at Mogotlholo/Rust de Winter (see below and Chapter 6). The decision to secede from Magodongo would be of major advantage to them in the violent years to come and has motivated the Ndzundza lore that Mrhabuli prophesized the hardship of the coming years to Magodongo on his deathbed. Shortly after the split, the Ndzundza under Magodongo encountered Mzilikazi while Litho Pungutsha was spared, as mentioned in Iggy Litho's statement above. While my own sources describe Mzilikazi's raids on the Transvaal Ndebele in the

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1820s as separate events, some scholars assume a temporary coalition between Magodongo's Ndzundza and Sibindi's Manala against Mzilikazi (Rasmussen 1978: 33). However, ultimately both Manala and Ndzundza bemoaned their leaders after this encounter. Written sources do not agree on the number of Magodongo's heirs and their line of succession. While Breutz (1989: 443) only identifies Mabhoko as Magodongo's son, Van Vuuren mentions altogether eleven male descendants (1992: 186-190). According to Rasmussen, Mzilikazi returned once more to the region shortly after the first raid to also kill Magodongo's heir Somdeyi (1978: 42). Magodongo's son Mabhoko survived Mzilikazi's raids and under his leadership the mountain fortress koNomtjharhelo and its headquarters eRholweni were erected further north (to the east of today's Roossenekal) in very rough terrain that would make it difficult for any enemies to frontally attack the Ndzundza. In the following years small and middle-sized conflicts with White settlers and other African groups developed, but the Ndzundza remained undefeated under Mabhoko as their leader. Many White farmers were forced to either leave the region or to pay tribute to the Ndzundza Ndebele as their rulers (Delius 1989: 229). Non-Ndebele groups that searched for protection in the aftermath of the Mfecane and Mzilikazi's raids were incorporated into Ndzundza society, resulting into "a chiefdom in which the aristocracy was most clearly 'Nguni' but in which the commoner stratum was composed of an amalgam of Sotho and Ndebele-speaking groupings" (Delius 1989: 230). Until this day Mabhoko remains one of the most esteemed former leaders of the Ndzundza and has been used as praise name by several of his royal descendants. Mabhoko was succeeded by his son Mkhepuli Soqaleni around 1865. Mkhepuli's son Fene was still too young to rule when his father died in 1873, wherefore his uncles Gobongo (for a few years) and Nyabela (until 1883) ruled the Ndzundza Ndebele as regents.

Nyabela, whom Van Vuuren refers to as the most prominent historical figure among the Ndzundza (1992: 129), only ruled the Ndzundza for approximately four years, but ultimately made pivotal decisions that changed the fate of all Ndebele in the Transvaal. These decisions were of transregional nature and related to the aftermath of the leadership disputes within the powerful neighbouring Pedi Kingdom. The Pedi had successfully recovered from Mzilikazi's raids under their Paramount King Sekwati, who also protected Mabhoko's Ndzundza under his political umbrella (Delius 1989: 229). Sekwati's militarily skilled son Sekhukhune contributed to this success, but the two temporarily became estranged from each other (Delius 1983: 85-87). Even though Sekwati had favoured his stepson Mampuru, Sekhukhune secured the kingship over the Pedi after his father's death in 1861. Mampuru and Mojalodi, another contender for the Pedi kingship, settled among Mabhogo's Ndzundza for a while, which strained the relationship between the two kingdoms in addition to Mabhoko's refusal to accept Sekhukhune's paramountcy (Delius 1983: 92). In the following years Sekhukhune led his army into several campaigns against neighbouring chiefdoms to subdue challenges against his rule; this involved a one-day campaign against Mabhoko's neighbouring Ndzundza Ndebele in 1863 that he

initiated to secure the support of the local White settlers against a potential Swazi invasion. Eventually, in 1876 the South African Republic (also Transvaal Republic, ZAR) declared war on the Pedi kingdom, which was "principally directed against the Mafolofolo settlement" (Delius 1983: 178) established by Sekhkhune's Christian convert brother Johannes Dinkwanyane. Delius has, however, pointed out the futility of searching for one single cause for the war and rather identifies a complex relation of very different economic, political and social causes (1983: ch. 8). The ZAR campaign against Sekhukhune's Pedi failed despite support by the neighbouring Swazi kingdom and provoked the annexation of the unstable Transvaal Republic by the British Empire in April 1877. The British administrators decided that Sekhukhune's Pedi had to be defeated to stabilize the region and ran another war campaign against them in 1878/79, which resulted in the destruction of the Pedi capital and the capture of Sekhukhune. In 1881 the British withdrew their direct control of the Transvaal again and handed Sekhukhune over to the ZAR authorities in Pretoria, who released him and allowed his return to the Eastern Transvaal. There his former opponent Mampuru had taken control of the Pedi kingdom under the auspices of the British imperial administrators. This situation ultimately escalated on 13 August 1882, when Mampuru "sent a band of assassins to murder Sekhukhune" (Delius 2021: 220). Mampuru was thereafter granted refuge among the Ndzundza by regent Nyabela. The re-strengthened ZAR demanded Mampuru's extradition to try him for murder, which Nyabela refused and thereby initiated the downfall of his own reign:

> In 1882, after a refusal by Mahlangu [i.e. Nyabela] to hand over Mampuru, war was declared and a Boer commando of 2 000 men, along with African allies, set out to attack the network of Ndzundza strongholds. But the Boers' hopes of a quick victory soon faded. Despite their heavy artillery, siege guns and mortars they could not penetrate the formidable defences of these settlements. The commando members were not prepared to risk direct attacks so they tried to use dynamite to blast the fortifications to smithereens and even attempted to tunnel underneath some to lay their charges. But while some smaller strongholds were destroyed and their occupants indiscriminately killed, this tactic proved to be much less successful than had been hoped. Instead the Boer forces laid siege to the capital, Erholweni, and the other major strongholds. They captured Ndzundza cattle and destroyed their crops. After eight months of war the inhabitants were starving. […] Eventually they could hold out no longer and in July 1883 Chief Mahlangu [i.e. Nyabela] surrendered. (Delius and Cope 2007: 195)

The so-called Mapoch-War[30] ended with the capture of Mampuru, who was sentenced to death, while Nyabela was imprisoned in Pretoria until 1898. Nyabela was thereafter forced to remain at KwaMkhina (Derdepoort near Pretoria) and not allowed to return to the Steelpoort River. The surviving Ndzundza were scattered throughout the Transvaal as indentured labourers on the farms of White settlers, who had participated in the war. "All of their land was subsequently divided into seven hectare plots and rushed by commando veterans on a first-come, first-served basis" (Nielsen 1996: 4).

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[30] 'Mapoch' denotes the Afrikaans version of Mabhogo's name.

At the end of a bitter and prolonged war, individuals who had belonged to a powerful and independent chiefdom with rich resources found themselves scattered across the breadth of the Transvaal. Their villages had been destroyed and their land had been alienated. They had lost their stock and their weapons. (Delius 1989: 234)

Neither the formal end of indenture, nor the release of the Ndzundza Royal Family, nor the South African War (1899-1902) contributed to the Ndzundza's deliverance from farm labour and political insignificance. Fene, on whose behalf Nyabela had ruled, eventually succeeded his uncle in 1903 and ruled at KwaHlanga near Delmas until 1922. Under Fene's son Cornelius Mayisha the Ndzundza were forcefully removed from KwaHlanga. They found refuge among the Bantoane people of Moutse (Northern Sotho), who allowed them to settle at Kwarrielaagte for some time. Then the nearby farm Weltevreden to the west of today's Siyabuswa became a new home to them in 1923 (Nielsen 1996: 5; Ritchken 1990: 432) with the permission of local Chief Mathebe of the Bantoane. The farm was eventually purchased in 1935 (McCaul 1987: 5). Here Mayisha's direct descendants have headed the senior branch of Ndzundza-Mabhoko from then on until this day. "The purchase of the farm was secured with assistance from the other main cluster of Ndzundza living under Matsitsi" (Nielsen 1996: 5), Nyabela's brother, who had escaped imprisonment and whom Nyabela had "sent to 'Kafferskraal' to re-establish chiefly guidance and the male initiation ritual" (Zenker 2018a: 46). Under Matsitsi's son Mtshatshane the group was eventually resettled by the government to Nebo District in 1939 (Nielsen 1996: 5). Even though crucially different renditions of Matsitsi's prison escape exist and his mandate from Nyabela to lead the Ndzundza is occasionally put into question (Delius 1989: 239ff), his descendants also constitute an important branch of the Ndzundza lineage today.
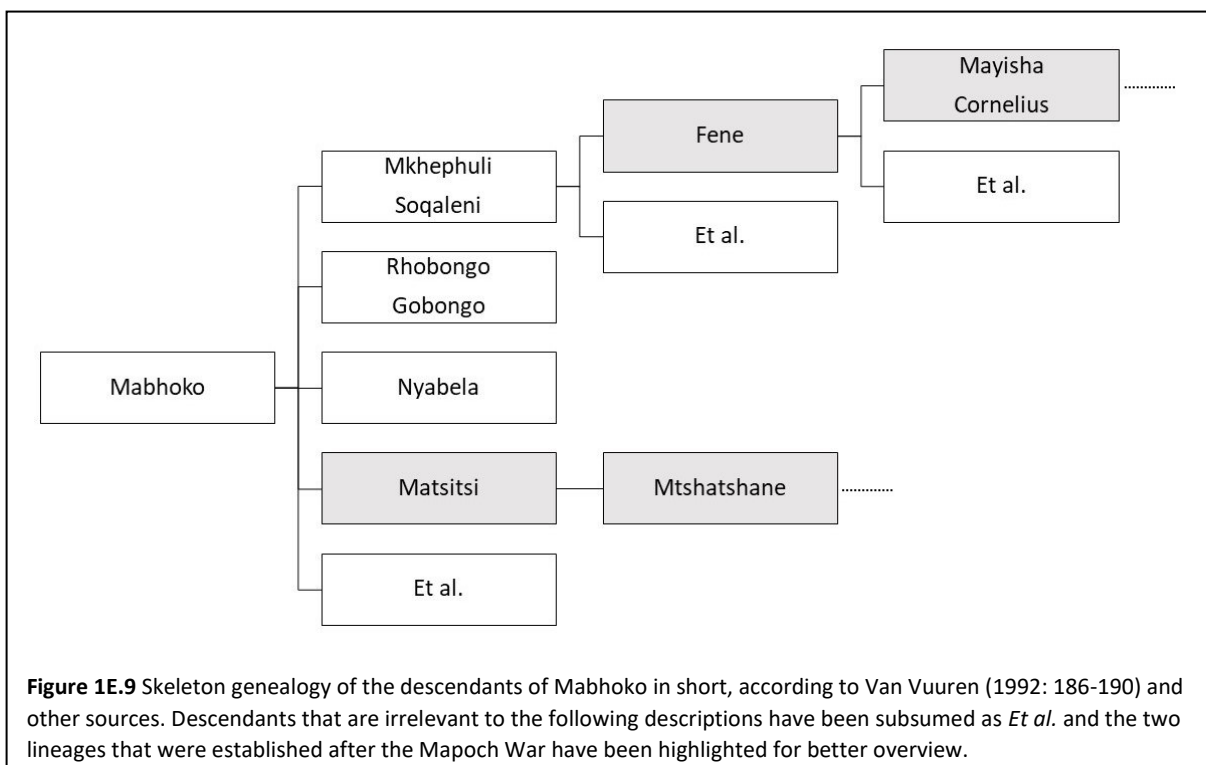
Figure 1E.9 Skeleton genealogy of the descendants of Mabhoko in short, according to Van Vuuren (1992: 186-190) and other sources. Descendants that are irrelevant to the following descriptions have been subsumed as *Et al.* and the two lineages that were established after the Mapoch War have been highlighted for better overview.

1E.1.3 Litho

The Ndzundza under Sebajelo, who had rejected Magodongo as leader (see Figure 1E.8) and would later be known as Litho Ndzundza and Pungutsha Ndzundza, were spared the violent confrontations with Mzilikazi's army and the ZAR commandos. They enjoyed relatively peaceful circumstances for a long time. From KwaMaza, where the split had occurred, they moved approximately 150km north towards Zebediela/Moletlane (southeast of today's Mokopane). Van Vuuren claims that they took this route to avoid Mzilikazi's army (1992: 141). They stayed among the local Sotho/Tswana speaking population for a while. I was not able to deduct where Sebajelo passed away from my sources, but his son Litho Pungutsha took a local wife from Zebediela, which indicates that he could have taken over the chieftaincy of the group at some point during their stay in this region. Eventually, Paul Mahlangu explained, they were asked to leave after several minor skirmishes with the locals. From there they moved in a southwestern direction with the intention to find the Manala and reconcile with them. On their way, Litho's people settled at Modimolle (north of today's Bela-Bela), at Hlanganene (east of Bela-Bela) and Masananeni/Lukraal (Northern Hammanskraal). At Masasaneni Litho died and among his present-day descendants his grave is assumed to be somewhere in an industrial area between the Apies River and the N1 highway. For Chief Litho, referred to by some local elders as 'the son of Swatshele', Van Vuuren (1992) has listed five wives of which three originated from Ndebele Masilela families. One wife is listed as NaMngoma and another as NaTshetshe, which indicates non-Ndebele origin for both. The fifth wife, according to Van Vuuren, was a Masilela woman, who had a son named Windvoël. However, none of the Litho representatives I spoke to recognised more than two wives of Litho and Windvoël as a son of Litho was commented upon with disdainful disregard. According to an incomplete document that was handed to me by one of the contenders for the Litho chieftaincy and which was supposedly compiled by former state ethnologist P.-L- Breutz (see Boeyens and Morton 2019) Litho had only two wives, the first being of Sotho origin and the second being his "tribal wife".

> *Litho had a wife from the people of Zebediela. She was known as NaSibuthuma. Now, you see these Ndebeles they had a culture to marry in the family of Masilela. Now they said 'No even if we have married NaSibuthuma, but her children especially Sethinda as the firstborn cannot lead us because their mother is of the Sotho tribe. So we want someone who is a woman from the Ndebeles. Especially this particular family of Masilela.' Now, in this family of Masilela there was a boy born there, known as Jas-David Kgobongwale Mahlangu, who was the son of Litho, from the second wife. Now this fight caused the tribe to split. And the son of NaMasilela, who was Jas-David, took over the leadership and the other group of the elderly wife of NaSibuthuma had to move away and came to this site (points north) [direction of Kalkfontein/Katjibane]. Now this other group who agreed that the son of NaMasilela who was Jas-David, should lead the tribe also moved away from that area and went as far as the present Pyramid [i.e. near Wallmansthal]. (Paul Mahlangu, 20th September 2016)*

Sethinda's people, nowadays known as Pungutsha Ndzundza, settled at Kalkfontein/Katjibane (see map of KwaNdebele in sections 1E.2.2 below) and have maintained friendly relations with Litho since

then. Whether Jas-David, known by a multitude of names (David, *ou* Jas, Mkatshana, Somakhoba, Khobongwane), successfully reconciled his group with the Manala of Wallmansthal is not known, but Breutz has recorded a longer presence of his people in the area (Breutz 1989: 446f) and my interlocutors mentioned a former Litho settlement named KwaKenke near present-day Pyramid. After a short period at Matolonkwane/Emdolongwane (Zonderwater between Cullinan and Rayton) they finally arrived at Mogotlholo (today's Rust de Winter region), where Jas-David ruled until his passing in 1908. The sub-clans of the Litho Ndzundza in Rust de Winter lived in separate settlements spread throughout the fertile area. Some of the settlements are to this day referred to with their Ndebele names (e.g. Somaqhobodike, Emtopi, Erubhini-Elibovu) by Rapotokwane residents.

His son Hosia Sokale followed as leader of the Litho Ndzundza. Shortly after the establishment of the South African Union in 1910 it became clear that the government wanted the local Ndebele population removed from the fertile area. The region was not demarcated for occupation by Black Africans according to the 1913 Natives Land Act. Negotiations begun in 1917 but soon failed and the Litho Ndzundza started collecting money to buy alternative land. Hosia Sokale unexpectedly died during an influenza epidemic in 1918 without issue and the chieftaincy was passed on to Hosia's half-brother Witbooi. He acted as a regent on behalf of Hosia's brother Lazarus, who was too young to take office at the time. In the time of Witbooi the descendants of Litho were eventually forced to leave Mogotlholo and to purchase two portions of the nearby farm Witlaagte between 1921 and 1926.

Around the same time as the descendants of Litho established their new settlement Sopotokwane (today Rapotokwane) at Witlaagte, the descendants of Silamba became their indirect neighbours at Loding (approximately 20km distance). The descendants of Mabhoko remained scattered throughout the region until the establishment of KwaNdebele Homeland in the 1970s: "The squatter law of 1887 prevented Ndebeles settling unoccupied land in large numbers" (Ritchken 1990: 431). Even though the descendants of Mmusi roamed the Transvaal for centuries and played a significant role in its political landscape, the numerous leadership disputes, splits, violent conflicts and the consequential migration brought about their far and wide dispersion. Seemingly, they constituted a minority population wherever they settled so that the National Party's Apartheid regime did not consider them for their own territory of settlement when the Homeland/Bantustan policy was introduced in the late 1950s (see Chapter 4).

> By the 1960s most Southern Ndebele no longer living on white farms had settled in Lebowa and Bophuthatswana. Tribal authorities for the Ndebele were established under these homeland administrations in the 1960s. The government had not originally proposed a separate Ndebele homeland, as it had intended that the Ndebele should integrate with other 'black nations', and 'disappear'. (McCaul 1987: 4)

1E.2. The Rise and Fall of KwaNdebele

KwaNdebele, referred to as "a seething cauldron of violent confrontation" (Murray 1995: 234) and "a belated afterthought in the grand design of 'separate development'" (Murray 1995: 243), has become an epitome of so many things that were wrong about Apartheid and the Homeland system. Especially in the late 1980s and the 1990s researchers took great interest in the violent clashes around Homeland 'independence'[31], the regional significance of the Southern Transvaal Ndebele, and the ways in which the Homeland's creation influenced its surrounding societies. However, while its history certainly provides plenty of explanation for today's power structures and struggles, and while it is essential in understanding the life stories one encounters in Rapotokwane and Libangeni, KwaNdebele also constitutes a challenge to the diligent researcher. Not only does its history contain disputed and contradictory facts if one compares the various (un-)published accounts thereof. It also challenges the researcher with the plain absence or inaccessibility of information due to the former regime's aversion to critical journalism (Haysom 1996: 65).

The history of KwaNdebele's establishment, of its troubled twenty years as a Homeland, and of its ultimate termination at the dawn of democracy has been of high significance in the context of my field research. If one aims to understand the historically founded power struggles of today's Manala and Ndzundza Ndebele one must always include KwaNdebele's history. It constitutes an illuminative reference point for the rhetorical strategies that local actors apply to this day and to the narratives that sustain dominant power structures. I undertook, however, little effort to amend the already excellent accounts that have been written since the late 1980s on the matter by gathering further historiological data of my own. I focused on the use of historic reference as a strategic tool rather than on its verification and completion. I have used a range of previously written accounts and own field recordings to compile the following overview of the events that took place from the 1960s until 1994. To the ambitious reader it may lack entertaining elaboration, but I have decided to keep it as short as possible in order to proceed to the presentation of my own field material more quickly. As always I feel the need to disclaim that this overview is incomplete and only covers the most crucial events and those that are related to this dissertation's central topics.

1E.2.1 1948-1973: The First Steps

In November 1948 Titus Thugane Mabhena became regent of the Manala Ndebele at Loding. On 26 May of the same year the National Party (NP) had won South Africa's general election and

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[31] The Homelands/Bantustans were never actually independent states. South Africa was the only country that recognised them as independent. The TBVC states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei) extended recognition to one another. Therefore I have opted to mark Homeland 'independence' as political label, rather than as a reference to actual status.

subsequently implemented Apartheid in South Africa and its protectorate South West Africa (Namibia). As an example of such Apartheid legislation, the Bantu Authorities Act was passed in 1951, which brought a much larger number of chiefs and their subjects under the government's direct control (Delius and Hay 2009: 216). It established three different levels of administration for Black Africans: the Tribal Authority, the Regional Authority, and the Territorial Authority:

> The tribal authorities consisted of a chief with councillors. The authorities were granted administrative, executive and judicial powers. A chief could appoint half of his council, subject to state approval, while the state nominated the other half, based on the size of the polity. Regional authorities exercised control over two or more areas with tribal authorities, and governed the establishment and maintenance of educational and health institutions, public works, and agricultural and stock affairs. The highest tier governed over two or more areas for which regional authorities had been established. These territorial authorities held the same powers as regional authorities, but also powers relating to the administration of Africans as prescribed by law. What Minister for Native Affairs Hendrik Verwoerd called an imitation of 'traditional tribal democracy' was widely recognised as a farce. (Kelly 2015: 278)

On 2 August 1957 (1959?[32]) the first Ndebele Tribal Authority was established in Nebo through Government Gazette No. 1139 (Van Vuuren 1992: 139; Zenker 2014: 511; 2018a: 46). Matsitsi's grandson Chief Poni Mahlangu and his uncle Jack of the Ndzundza that had formerly settled at Kafferskraal (see Figure 1E.9) accepted being recognised as Tribal Authority within Lebowa's Nebo District. This implied abandoning any claims to the former Ndzundza strongholds along the Steelpoort River leading to a fallout with the senior Ndzundza leadership at Weltevreden (Ritchken 1990: 434; Phatlane 1998: 36f; Nielsen 1996: 5).

While the NP was busy implementing its new Apartheid policies in the 1950s and 60s, most Ndebele farm labourers increasingly suffered under harsh conditions. The mechanisation of farm work and the rejection of farm labour by younger Ndebele led to widespread evictions from farms and to the integration of Ndebele communities into Lebowa and Bophuthatswana (Ritchken 1990: 434; Phatlane 1998: 37). On 19 June 1959 the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act came into effect and laid the foundations of the Homeland system.

On 9 October 1960 William Mbongo Mabhena took over the leadership of Manala-Mbhongo (Silamba's Manala, see Figure 1E.6) after the death of his uncle Titus (Van Vuuren 1992: 173), who had acted as regent on William's behalf. A governmental intervention became necessary, however, after the descendants of Titus claimed the chieftaincy for their own lineage (Breutz 1989: 448f). In the following year of 1961 the Tswana Territorial Authority (Bophuthatswana) was established on 21 April. Within it the descendants of Litho, who had resettled to Witlaagte forty years earlier, gained their own Litho-

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[32] In those few cases where sources did not concur regarding the time of a certain event, the date that I understood to be less likely correct has been set into parentheses and marked with a question point.

Ndebele-Ndzundza Tribal Authority at Sopotokwane (later officially renamed Rapotokwane, see Chapter 6). In the same year David Mabusa Mabhoko II Mahlangu[33] became *iNgwenyama* of Ndzundza-Mabhoko at Weltevreden (Kwa-Ndebele Monumentekomitee 1983: 38). Neighbouring Lebowa became a Territorial Authority on 1 September 1962.

Meanwhile, most Ndebele were still dispersed around the Transvaal in Bophuthatswana, Lebowa or so-called 'Black Spots', Black communities on land that was designated to be occupied by Whites only by the South African government. Thus, several groups began to lobby for a common Ndebele identity and for their own territory. In 1965 the Ndebele Ethnic Group (NEG), chaired by Koos Mthimunye, was formed in Pretoria townships to lobby for Ndebele language radio programs and for official recognition as ethnic unit (Nielsen 1996: 6). Makhusana Mahlangu, a member of the Ndzundza Royal Family was arrested that same year for encouraging Ndebele to leave the farms and to move to Nebo (Ritchken 1990: 434). Soweto resident Isaac J Mahlangu launched the Ndebele National Organisation (NNO) to seek a territory for an Ndebele nation in 1967 (Abel 1995: 437). On 5 November of that year several Ndebele organisations joined together in Mamelodi (East Pretoria) to become the Transvaal Ndebele National Organisation (TNNO), aiming to fight for official recognition of all Ndebele groups and to establish their own Homeland (Nielsen 1996: 6).

On 22 September 1967 the Manala at Loding followed the example of the Litho Ndzundza and the Ndzundza at Nebo: the Amandebele aba-ga-Manala Tribal Authority was established inside of Bophuthatswana through Government Gazette 1467 (unknown 1996: 4). In April 1968 *iNgwenyama* David Mabhogo Mahlangu of the Ndzundza visited Manala and Kekana leaders in Bophuthatswana and Lebowa to establish elite support for a common Homeland of Northern and Southern Ndebele (Nielsen 1996: 7). A few months later, on 22 November, he then also accepted the recognition of Weltevreden as Ndzundza Tribal Authority within Lebowa (Phatlane 2002: 405), a step which his father had so harshly criticised in the case of the Nebo Ndzundza more than ten years earlier. Simon S Skosana was chosen as the first chairman of the newly established Tribal Authority (Phatlane 1998: 38).

In March 1971 The Bantu Homelands Constitution Act (later also known as: Black States Constitution Act, National States Constitution Act, and Self-governing Territories Constitution Act) was passed. It laid out a template procedure enabling the South African government to easier grant 'self-governance' and 'independence' to the Homelands (Phatlane 1998: 44). Only few months passed before it would be applied in the cases of Bophuthatswana and Lebowa, which established Legislative Assemblies on 1 May and 1 July respectively, setting them on the way to reach 'self-government' in the following

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[33] While I acknowledge the significance of all mentioned and unmentioned actors to the course of history, I have – as a service feature to the readership – underlined those actors that were of high importance to the events that unfolded in KwaNdebele in the late 1980s.

year. The territory governed by the Tswana Legislative Assembly included the Tribal Authorities of Litho Ndzundza, Pungutsha Ndzundza, and Manala in Bophuthatswana's Moretele District. The Lebowa Legislative Assembly controlled Moutse and thus the Ndzundza Ndebele at Weltevreden

In March of the following year (1972) the Bantu Affairs Department (BAD) met with TNNO leaders and Tribal Leaders to discuss the creation of an Ndebele Homeland (Phatlane 1998: 39). On 21 April it was announced that a Homeland exclusively for the Southern Transvaal Ndebele had been approved. The Northern Ndebele were excluded from these plans because of their alleged assimilation to Sotho and Tswana culture and language (Lekgoathi 2003: 56). Their leaders were informed on 18 May to either accept their integration into Bophuthatswana (self-governing territory from 1 June 1972) and Lebowa (self-governing territory from 2 October 1972) or to relocate to Weltevreden (Lekgoathi 2003: 56). In September the BAD released two alternative draft plans for the creation of KwaNdebele around either Weltevreden or around Nebo (Nielsen 1996: 10), but in April 1973 the department issued final plans for the creation of KwaNdebele around Weltevreden (Phatlane 1998: 39f). The Ndebele in Lebowa's Nebo District and the Northern Transvaal Ndebele groups were left out.

1E.2.2 1974-1981: The Establishment of KwaNdebele as a Homeland

The first official step towards the establishment of KwaNdebele as a 'self-governing' Homeland was made on 5 July 1974 when the Ndzundza Tribal Authority was elevated to Regional Authority status (Abel 1995: 437; TRAC 1987: 3). Despite there being only one Tribal Authority in this area, enough land had been added to Weltevreden's territory and thus to Ndzundza's jurisdiction for the South African government to justify this step (Phatlane 1998: 40). By 1974, seven farms from Bophuthatswana (Moretele), Lebowa (Moutse) and White areas had been added (51,000ha in total, see Figure 1E.10 map) (Ritchken 1990: 435). The new Regional Authority was excised from Lebowa while other Ndebele Tribal Authorities (Manala, Litho, Pungutsha) remained in Bophuthatswana for the time being. However, in July and September 1974 first meetings between the BAD and Ndebele Tribal Authorities (Ndzundza, Manala, Litho, Pungutsha) were held to prepare the creation of a joint Ndebele Regional Authority, which would imply the excision of the remaining Tribal Authorities from Bophuthatswana (McCaul 1987: 5).

In 1975, 10,000 people were forcibly removed from 'Black Spots' near Middelburg (Doornkop and Kromkrans) to Siyabuswa (Nielsen 1996: 10). The population of KwaNdebele was estimated to be around 50,000 at this point (Ritchken 1990: 435). New consolidation proposals by the Commission for Cooperation and Development recommended to incorporate the remainders of Lebowa's Moutse District into KwaNdebele (Phatlane 2002: 409). To add Moutse 3 with its Philadelphia Hospital in Dennilton to KwaNdebele presented an easy way for the new Homeland to gain its own hospital

without having to build a new one (McCaul 1987: 51). In addition, Moutse's fertile agricultural land and its mineral resources (Delius and Hay 2009: 218) promised to create jobs within the Homeland, whose population largely commuted to Pretoria for work. Moutse representatives were however not officially informed of these plans until late 1980 (Abel 1995: 437). Also in 1975, William Mbhongo III of the Manala passed away and was succeeded by his brother Buthi Mbhedlengani Alfred Mabhena, who acted as regent on behalf of young Enoch Makhosonke Mabhena (Van Vuuren 1992: 174).

Figure 1E.10 Map of KwaNdebele consolidation phases and relevant surrounding Homeland territories. Today's main roads and some significant water bodies are included as orientation marks. (Sources of data: TRAC 1987; Van Vuuren 1992: 54; Murray 1995: 244; Government Printer 1986, 2003, 2006)
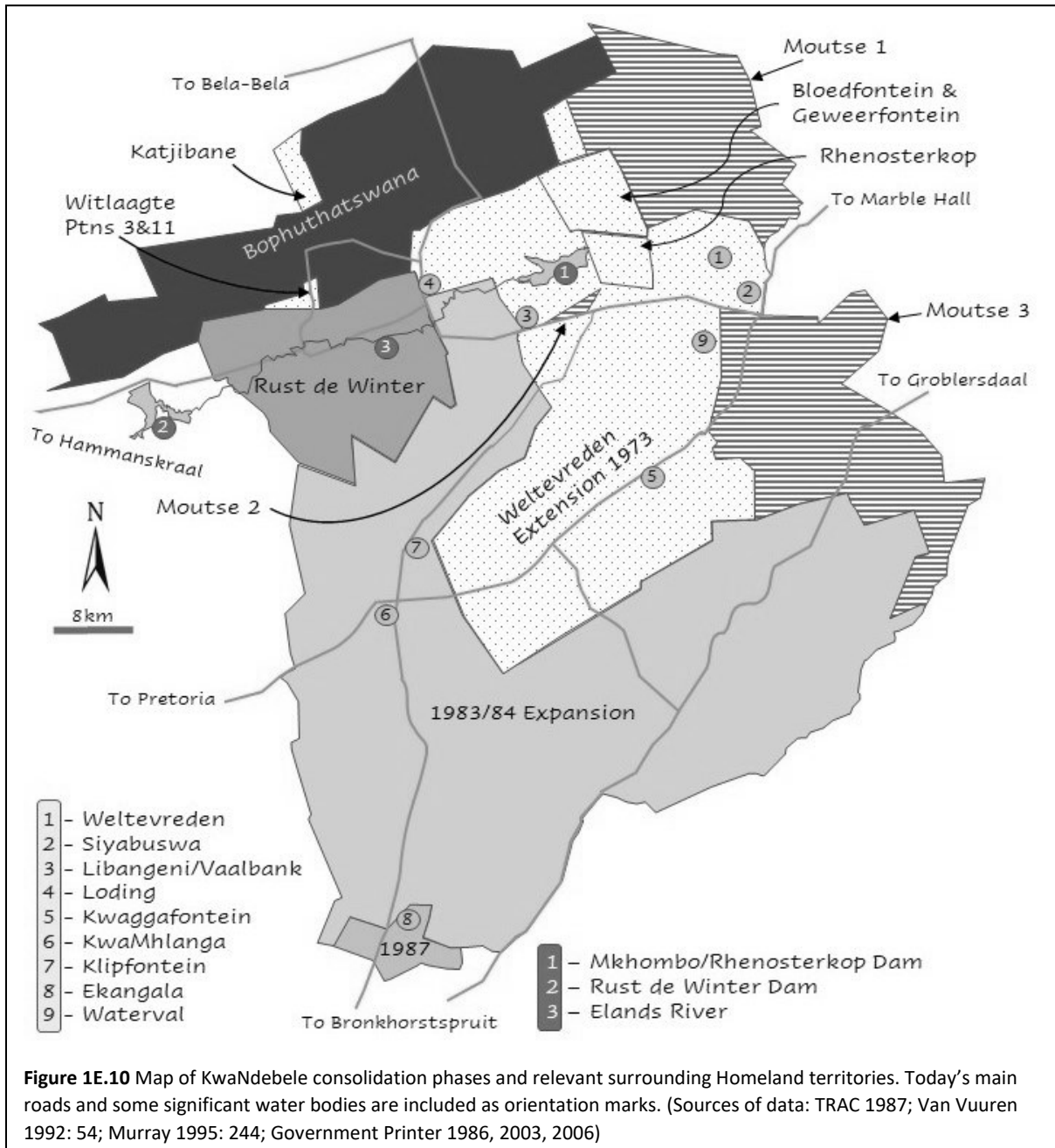
In the following year of 1976, the Ndzundza leadership at Weltevreden replaced Simon S Skosana as chair of the Ndzundza Regional Authority for his alleged closeness to Apartheid officials (Ritchken 1990: 437). Together with other pro-independence representatives he oversaw the establishment of a 'cultural group' named *Mabangalala* (Phatlane 2002: 408). Its members would later be referred to as

Mbokotho[34] (Phatlane 1998: 81; Delius and Hay 2009: 218), a vigilante group that terrorised the population and violently suppressed government critics.

Eventually, the South African government issued Proclamation R871 on 20 May 1977, thus merging the Litho (under Chief Lazarus Mahlangu), Manala (under regent Alfred Mabhena), and Pungutsha (under Isaac Mahlangu) Tribal Authorities into the Mnyamana Regional Authority (McCaul 1987: 5; Phatlane 1998: 41). The Amandebele-a-Moletlane Tribal Authority (Northern Ndebele) near Hammanskraal tried to secede from the Moretele Regional Authority in Bophuthatswana on 21 July to join Mnyamana Regional Authority, too (Phatlane 1998: 41). Its attempt was, however, momentarily ignored by South African and Bophuthatswana authorities and the secession never became official (Lekgoathi 2003: 62f). On 7 October the 'South Ndebele Territorial Authority' was established (Notice no. R2021, Proclamations R253, R254, R255)(TRAC 1987: 3; McCaul 1987: 5) by combining both previously established Ndebele Regional Authorities of Ndzundza and Mnyamana (Manala, Litho and Pungutsha), the latter having herewith been excised from Bophuthatswana's Moretele district (Ritchken 1990: 436f). This was widely regarded as the first step towards yet another 'independent' Homeland state. On 6 December, Bophuthatswana became the second South African Homeland to reach 'independence' after Transkei had done so in 1976. Venda (1979) and Ciskei (1981) would follow soon. On 1 December in the following year (1978) the Bophuthatswana Citizenship Act came into effect (Phatlane 1998: 43). Frustrated by persistent Northern Ndebele secessionist attempts to join KwaNdebele, Bophuthatswana President Lucas Mangope said all Ndebele in Bophuthatswana had to either become citizens of the country or leave by February 1979 (Lekgoathi 2003: 63). 10,000 families were relocated from places such as Winterveld or Majaneng (Hammanskraal) to KwaNdebele in the following months (Ritchken 1990: 436; Nielsen 1996: 9).

On 1 October 1979 KwaNdebele eventually reached Legislative Assembly status, the second official step towards 'independence' (KwaNdebele Constitution Proclamations R204, R205, R206). The new Kwa-Ndebele Legislative Assembly (KLA) was composed of 46 members from four Tribal Authorities and former chairman of the Ndzundza Regional Authority Simon S Skosana was elected Chief Executive Councillor by the assembly (Abel 1995: 437). Five other KLA members were appointed to his executive council. Dr. Piet Koornhof (SA Minister of Cooperation and Development)
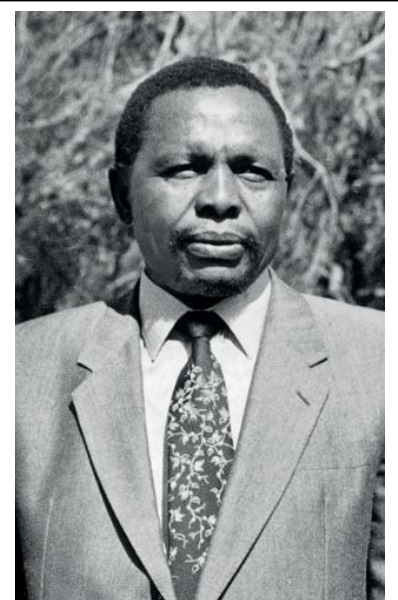
Figure 1E.11 Photo of Simon S Skosana, Chief Executive Councillor (1977-1981) and Chief Minister of KwaNdebele (1981 – 1986), President of vigilante group *Mbokotho* (Source: Delius and Hay 2009: 218)

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[34] IsiNdebele, 'millstone' or 'grinding stone'

officially inaugurated the KLA at Kameelrivier Stadium in front of 2,000 attendants (Phatlane 1998: 44f). Later that year, the KLA gave the Pungutsha Tribal Authority control over the land at Kalkfontein (Katjibane), whose diverse democratically organised communal authorities had resisted the establishment of a Tribal Authority for some time (Ritchken 1990: 439; Zenker 2012a: 132). Protests against this step were violently suppressed by *Mabangalala* vigilante groups (Ritchken 1990: 427; Phatlane 1998: 75).

By the year 1980 the population of KwaNdebele was estimated to be around 166,000 people. (Murray 1995: 245). On 21 August 1980 the KwaNdebele authorities officially requested self-governing territory status (McCaul 1987: 6) and two months later on 24 October Proclamation R210 officially excised Moutse (sections 1, 2 and 3, see map 5.2.1) from Lebowa and placed it under the control of the Department of Cooperation and Development (DCAD). (Haysom 1996: 71; Phatlane 2002: 409). In January 1981 Ndebele leader Andries Mahlangu was murdered after opposing the incorporation of Moutse into KwaNdebele. Piet Maqhawe Ntuli (KwaNdebele Minister of the Interior and SS Skosana's right hand) was subsequently charged with murder, but the case was later withdrawn even though his own son had given evidence against him. (Abel 1995: 437)

In February 1981, Skosana publicly denied 'independence' ambitions for KwaNdebele (TRAC 1987: 5), but in the same month signed an agreement with *Holiday Inn* on casino and hotel rights in the region (Phatlane 1998: 46). Gambling was banned in South Africa and could only be legal in 'independent' Homelands. On 1 April then, KwaNdebele obtained 'self-governing' status the third and final step required before 'independence' (TRAC 1987: 3). South African State President Viljoen opened the KLA (same 46 members as before). Simon S Skosana was declared Chief Minister and, among others, his right hand Piet M Ntuli became Minister of the Interior and Ndzundza Prince Cornelius became Minister of Education and Culture (Phatlane 1998: 45f).
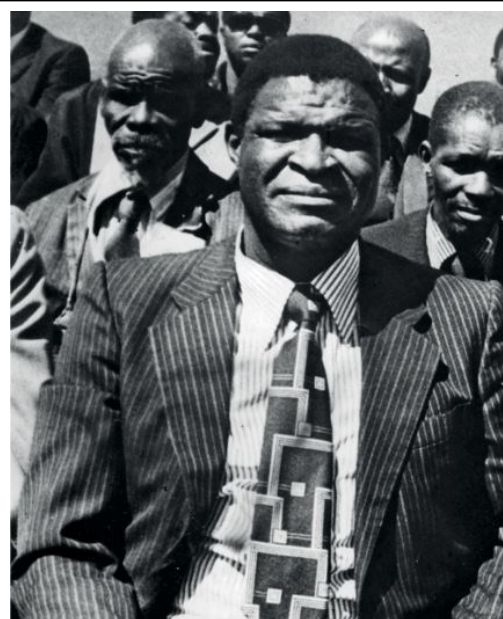
Figure 1E.12 Piet Maqhawe Ntuli, SS Skosana's right hand, KwaNdebele Minister of the Interior, Vice-President and unofficial head of *Mbokotho* (Source: Delius and Hay 2009: 219)

1E.2.3 1982-1985: Preparations for 'Independence'

In 1982 KwaNdebele reached an official population estimate of 200,000 people (Phatlane 1998: 61). 55.4 percent of recent immigrants came from White farming areas, 29 percent from Bophuthatswana,

8.5 percent from White urban areas (Murray 1995: 245) and 5 percent from Lebowa (Ritchken 1990: 435). In May, SS Skosana and his cabinet met with Piet Koornhof in Cape Town to discuss 'independence'. The KLA thereafter passed a motion requesting the state to prepare for 'independence' (Phatlane 1998: 57). The fact that, also in this year, outspoken Homeland 'independence' critic Prince James Mahlangu became Chair of the Ndzundza Regional Authority thus increased tensions between the Ndzundza-Mabhoko Royal Family and the KwaNdebele government (Ritchken 1990: 437f). This may have triggered cabinet members to seek support from the leaders of Manala, promising them a paramount position on the basis that the land to the west of the upper Olifants river (where KwaNdebele is located) was historically agreed to belong to Manala in the peace agreement of KoQoli (see section 1E.1 above) (Ritchken 1990: 440).

The so-called Van der Walt Commission, which had been tasked with the territorial consolidation of Homeland boundaries since February 1979 (Geldenhuys 1981: 29), proposed in February 1983 that the remainders of Lebowa's Moutse be incorporated into KwaNdebele (Abel 1995: 439). In addition other farm land was suggested for incorporation to include settlements like Moloto, Verena and parts of Ekangala to further KwaNdebele's 'independence' process. This extension would have increased the Homeland's size from 98,000 to 341,000 hectares (see Figure 1E.10 Map)(Murray 1995: 244). On 2 August Prime Minister PW Botha approved the commission's advice but promised not to incorporate Moutse into KwaNdebele without further talks (Abel 1995: 439). On 18 August the South African Parliament nonetheless passed the Laws on Co-operation and Development Amendment Act to legally secure Moutse's excision from Lebowa. Moutse was hereby stripped of its representation in Lebowa Legislative Assembly (Abel 1995: 439). In October then, Gerrit Viljoen (Koornhof's successor as Minister of Cooperation and Development) publicly announced the plans to incorporate Moutse into KwaNdebele. PW Botha met with representatives from Moutse and Lebowa on 18 November. Urging them to settle their disputes with the KwaNdebele administration he denied any responsibility for the ongoing dispute (Nielsen 1996: 21). On the same day SS Skosana handed a memorandum to the South African government officially requesting 'independence' (McCaul 1987: 9).

In another settlement that the Van der Walt Commission had suggested for incorporation into KwaNdebele, Ekangala, first houses were occupied in December of 1983 (TRAC 1987: 7). The newly established township near Bronkhorstspruit had been predominantly developed for residents from eastern Johannesburg townships (e.g. KwaThema and Tembisa) (Haysom 1996: 67). Therefore only half of the township and the neighbouring industrial estate Ekandustria were located within KwaNdebele boundaries at this point (McCaul 1987: 19). In May of 1984 the Ekangala Action Committee (EAC) was formed to negotiate the future development of the new township (Haysom 1996: 67).

For 1984 the population of KwaNdebele was estimated to have increased to around 262,000 people (Ritchken 1990: 435). Two new governmental departments were established in KwaNdebele on 1 April: Health and Welfare, and Finance and Economic Affairs (McCaul 1987: 10). Also in April, the South African Defence Force (SADF) finished training the first batch of KwaNdebele's army and police forces (Cooper 1989). Upon request by the KLA, South African State President Viljoen amended the KwaNdebele Constitution on 6 July 1984 to exclude women from voting in the upcoming KLA elections even though no other Homeland discriminated against women in that regard (Phatlane 1998: 72). The elections were held from 15 to 17 November: 56 KLA members were nominated in advance (48 by four Tribal Authorities, 8 by SS Skosana)(Abel 1995: 440), 16 members (one unchallenged) were elected by men over 21 only (30,698 votes cast in total)(Phatlane 1998: 72). The new KLA was opened by SS Skosana on 24 April in the following year (McCaul 1987: 10). The four Tribal Authorities had been defined less than a month before the election in the KwaNdebele Traditional Authorities Act (8 of 1984) on 19 October 1984. It recognised four 'tribes' (Manala-Mbongo, Ndzundza-Mabhoko, Litho-Ndzundza, Ndzundza-Pungutsha) and, in an attempt to strengthen the 'independence'-friendly yet dramatically outnumbered Manala leadership, two kings (Manala & Ndzundza).

The leadership of one of these officially recognised tribes, in the person of Chief Lazarus Mahlangu of the Litho Ndzundza, wrote a letter to the government requesting for Witlaagte to be reincorporated into Bophuthatswana motivated by SS Skosana's interference in traditional matters in early 1985 (Ritchken 1990: 438). In July, SS Skosana responded by withdrawing Lazarus Mahlangu's recognition as Chief of the Litho Ndzundza (Ritchken 1990: 438). According to Van Vuuren, Frederick Sorhulubi was installed as acting Chief, a grandson of Windvoël, whose existence is widely denied among the Litho Ndzundza today (Van Vuuren 1992: 145). Lazarus Mahlangu was, however, re-established as Chief of Litho-Ndzundza after a court ruling in October 1985 that declared Skosana's actions illegal (Ritchken 1990: 438). In the same month (11 October), the Amandebele-aba-ga-Manala Tribal Authority was officially divided into the Manala-Mbhongo (Silamba) tribe and the AmaNdebele-akwa-Manala-Kwa-Mgibe tribe (Government Gazette No. 93). On the one hand it doubled the amount of officially recognised Manala authorities in the Homeland. One the other hand it corroborated the three-way split that had occurred after Mzilikazi's invasion (see Figure 1E.6 above). The Manala of Makerane had been subordinated to the senior Manala-Mbhongo group by this point and its leadership resided in close proximity to Loding in Allemansdrift C (Van Vuuren 1992: 164).

Apart from matters of Traditional Leadership, the year 1985 also brought serious administrative and territorial changes to KwaNdebele politics. A new KwaNdebele Department for Citizen Liaison and Information, basically responsible for KwaNdebele state propaganda, was established. (McCaul 1987: 10). On 9 February Gerrit Viljoen announced the full incorporation of Ekangala into KwaNdebele (TRAC

1987: 7). Violently suppressed protests erupted in the following months. (Haysom 1996: 67f). EAC members were attacked by vigilante groups (likely Piet Ntuli's *Mabangalala*) and South African security forces for several months (TRAC 1987: 7f). EAC vice-chair Peter Kose was kidnapped and tortured several times for opposing Ekangala's incorporation into KwaNdebele (Haysom 1996: 67-70). Vigilante violence in Ekangala allegedly forced nearly a third of the community to flee the area by the end of the year. In April 1986 the remaining population of Ekangala demanded from the government that they be resettled back on the east Rand where they originally came from (TRAC 1987: 9). Chris Heunis (SA Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning) announced consolidation proposals on 25 September that recommended KwaNdebele land to the North of the recently built Rhenosterkop Dam – more precisely farms Bloedfontein and Geweerfontein (see Figure 1E.10 map), which had been under KwaNdebele administration since 1979 – to be reintegrated into Bophuthatswana (Abel 1995: 443). Rust de Winter was supposed to be incorporated into KwaNdebele to create a more contiguous territory linking Witlaagte with KwaNdebele's heartland. It was furthermore supposed to accommodate those Ndebele from Bloedfontein and Geweerfontein who would have to be resettled after reintegrating the land into Bophuthatswana (Murray 1995: 248f). On 18 November South African government officials declared that Moutse would definitely be incorporated into KwaNdebele despite the attempts of its officials to stop the process. Ethnic violence between Northern Sotho and Ndebele followed in the weeks thereafter (Haysom 1996: 71-73). On 5 December Minister Heunis repeated that Moutse would definitely be incorporated into KwaNdebele on 31 December. Violent and peaceful protests erupted in Moutse after a meeting with Moutse Chief Tlokwe Mathebe. SADF and police used violence to suppress any kind of opposition. In the same month, mass recruitment for *Mbokotho* vigilante group began (Haysom 1996: 189). Its members were involved when a group of youths from Mamelodi was assaulted during a picknick and abducted for allegedly encouraging local youths to revolt (Ritchken 1990: 427). Eventually, on 31 December Proclamation R227 officially added the entire Moutse District to KwaNdebele (Phatlane 2002: 409) and thus increased the Homeland's population by 120,000 people with the stroke of a pen (McCaul 1987: 10). Moutse youth set up barricades against a looming KwaNdebele 'invasion' (Haysom 1996: 74).

1E.2.4 The Year 1986: 'We are not Prepared to be Governed'

At the beginning of 1986 the capital of KwaNdebele was Siyabuswa. Back then its eastern boundaries were limited by the Moteti, a branch of the Elands River. On the eastern side of the Moteti lies Maganaubuswa, a neighbourhood that has since then been incorporated into Siyabuswa in the post-Apartheid rezoning process. In 1986, however, these settlements were not only separated by a stream and administrative boundaries, but by politics, too. Siyabuswa's name, literally meaning 'we are governed', was chosen at the settlement's inception to signify its proximity to the Ndzundza Royal

Kraal. Maganaubuswa, on the other hand, means 'we are not prepared to be governed' my research assistant explained. Just like its sister settlement Kgobokwane on the other side of the Groblersdaal road it was mostly inhabited by non-Ndebele speakers in its founding days. In consideration of the KwaNdebele Uprising (also referred to as KwaNdebele War, KwaNdebele Riots, or KwaNdebele Troubles) that shook the entire region in 1986, the two settlements' names could also have been a cynical foreboding.

On 1 January 1986 KwaNdebele vigilantes invaded villages in Moutse 3 to the east and south of Siyabuswa. Moutse residents were left to defend themselves while police forces remained inactive. Four vigilantes were stoned to death in the attempt to kidnap the Chief at Kwarrielaagte (Haysom 1996: 74). Under the battle cry "*Mbokotho*" the vigilantes killed and abducted regime opponents, especially in the villages of Moteti (the source of the aforementioned stream) and Maganaubuswa/Kgobokwane (Delius and Hay 2009: 219). Under the supervision of <u>Piet Ntuli</u> and <u>SS Skosana</u> 380 men were tortured at Siyabuswa Community Hall (Abel 1995: 444):

> *The strong man punched my chin with his fist and slapped my cheek. Mr Skosana hit me twice with his sjambok* [i.e. a heavy leather whip]. […] *Then hosepipes were put through the windows and much water was poured into the hall until it was approximately three centimeters deep. Big packets of Omo* [washing powder] *were put into the water so the floor became very slippery.* […] *I was kicked and beaten with sjamboks and saw the same thing being done to others . Because the floor was so slippery, my body just spun around.* […] *We were told to move to the other hall.* […] *We were beaten as we passed the other hall. In the second hall there were men who called themselves Mbokotho, they all had sjamboks. They compelled us to shout 'siyabuswa, siyabuswa, siyabuswa'* (Mr PD in Haysom 1996: 76)

Under the threat of torture and death the men were forced to take petrol bombs that they were told to use on Moutse Chiefs and other leaders (Haysom 1996: 77). Only on 25 January *Mbokotho* would officially be established as an organisation. <u>SS Skosana</u> was its president, <u>Piet Ntuli</u> was vice-president and other local politicians more or less voluntarily became members of its executive committee (Abel 1995: 448). To use violence to suppress critical opinions was not a new strategy, however: violent actions against opposition by the vigilante group's predecessors (e.g. *Mabangalala*) can be dated back as far as 1975 (Ritchken 1990: 427). The so-called *Mbokotho* terror and forced removals continued for weeks. On 28 February, students and teachers at a High School in Siyabuswa were teargassed and sjambokked. The principal had called upon *Mbokotho* and police forces to discipline students after holding a meeting (Ritchken 1990: 427). On 18 April students in Vlaklaagte marched to the local Headman to bring forward complaints about *Mbokotho* (TRAC 1987: 18). When the students publicly demanded a response to their grievances on 28 April, they were attacked by *Mbokotho*. Even though police forces intervened, the village continued to be terrorised (TRAC 1987: 18). Vlaklaagte resident <u>Jacob Skosana</u> tried to protect his daughter and was abducted to Kwaggafontein, where he was

murdered by *Mbokotho* members (Murray 1995: 246). The newly-created (1 April) KwaNdebele Department for Law and Order remained largely inactive (McCaul 1987: 10).

The incorporation of Moutse into KwaNdebele has widely been regarded as a trade-off in exchange for the KLA's support of KwaNdebele 'independence'. Moutse was not the only land that changed administration in early 1986 in the South African government's bid to further the 'independence' process. Control over the farm Rhenosterkop (see map E1.2.1) in direct proximity to the Ndzundza Royal Kraal at Weltevreden was handed over to the Manala Tribal Authority, whose leadership had expressed support for 'independence' (Ritchken 1990: 440). Furthermore, SS Skosana's government was treated to a newly built capital at KwaMhlanga and a new Independence Stadium at Siyabuswa as he announced in February 1986 (Abel 1995: 448). Unsurprisingly, PW Botha (State President since September 1984) announced on 7 May that KwaNdebele would become 'independent' in December (TRAC 1987: 20).

The Lebowa Legislative Assembly called upon the South African Supreme Court to void the incorporation of Moutse into KwaNdebele on 4 March (Abel 1995: 450) and on 19 May Chief Mathebe of Moutse filed a lawsuit against South Africa, KwaNdebele and Lebowa to invalidate Moutse's incorporation into KwaNdebele. In November the legal challenge of Moutse's incorporation into KwaNdebele was however rejected by the courts, but remained subject to appeal.

Eventually the violent escalation reached its peak between May and July 1986. On 12 May The Ndzundza Royal Family, represented by Princes James Mahlangu and Cornelius Mahlangu, called a mass meeting (ca. 20,000 people) at the Royal Kraal in Weltevreden to consult on *Mbokotho* atrocities with two government ministers being present (Abel 1995: 452; TRAC 1987: 20). The day after, Jacob Skosana, who had died defending his daughter from *Mbokotho* two weeks earlier, was buried. His funeral in Vlaklaagte was however violently dispersed by police forces and South African army forces. Thousands attended the event, despite restrictions having been put in place by the local magistrate. The crowd retaliated against government and *Mbokotho* members (TRAC 1987: 20-22). On 14 May a previously scheduled follow-up mass meeting was held at the Ndzundza Royal Kraal, even though it had been prohibited by the local magistrate. 25,000 people headed towards the site nonetheless (TRAC 1987: 22). The SADF intervened to disperse the gathering, turning the gathering into a violent confrontation and provoking acts of civil disobedience in the entire Homeland. Petrol bombings of *Mbokotho* and Government property were committed by youths and ANC comrades in the following weeks. Several people were killed on this day and the weeks that followed (Abel 1995: 452f; Ritchken 1990: 429). As the anger against *Mbokotho's* atrocities grew stronger in the population, the more it rejected the idea of an 'independent' KwaNdebele. Throughout June and July KwaNdebele civil servants staged stay-away protests against *Mbokotho* and 'independence' (TRAC 1987: 24).

The response from the South African government and *Mbokotho* was even more suppressive violence. On 11 June the South African government issued an emergency decree ordering curfews and movement restrictions for KwaNdebele and its surrounding Black settlements (Abel 1995: 453). The day after, a general state of emergency was imposed (Murray 1995: 247). This did not stop Piet Ntuli and several *Mbokotho* members to assault people at Tweefontein as revenge for the death of one of Ntuli's guards. Six people were shot dead by Piet Ntuli in the presence of South African security forces and one victim remains missing until today (TRAC 1987: 26). On 26 June even stricter emergency regulations were issued by the security forces (TRAC 1987: 27). Hundreds were detained in the following weeks. A local priest recorded that up to 160 people died between 12 April and 25 July in violent clashes between security forces, pro- and anti-independence activists (Abel 1995: 454). In these ten and a half weeks over 300 people were detained, over 50 were abducted and tortured by *Mbokotho*. On 29 July, eventually Piet Ntuli was killed by a car bomb outside Simon Skosana's house in Siyabuswa. The bomb was allegedly planted by South African Security Police to prevent Ntuli from destabilizing the Homeland any further. Later the ANC would however take credit for the killing (Abel 1995: 454; TRAC 1987: 28f). Excessive violence erupted in the days that followed in response to Ntuli's death. SS Skosana blamed Police Commissioner van Niekerk for Ntuli's death and replaced him with Brigadier Hertzog Lerm in early August (Phatlane 2002: 413), who imposed even stricter 'security' measures on the population (Abel 1995: 457).

The tide had, however, turned against Skosana's regime and 'independence'. Between 7 and 12 August the Tribal Chiefs and the KwaNdebele cabinet summoned the KLA to revoke 'independence' plans and to outlaw *Mbokotho* (Abel 1995: 455; TRAC 1987: 13f). On 11 August 200 'independence' opponents were released from prison as part of a deal that involved Prince James Mahlangu persuading students to go back to school (Abel 1995: 456). Skosana and those KLA and cabinet members that still supported him had, however, already identified a new public enemy: the Ndzundza Royal Family. On 12 September SS Skosana met Minister Heunis to plot actions against its members (Abel 1995: 458). Throughout October and November, Lerm's police forces repeatedly raided the Ndzundza Royal Kraal and made several arrests (Abel 1995: 458). Even Princes James and Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu and nine other Ndzundza representatives of the Ndzundza Royal Family were detained and records of the Tribal Authority were seized between 10 and 12 November (Abel 1995: 458).

Then yet another change of significant actors occurred. First, on 4 October Enoch Makhosonke II Mabhena succeed his uncle Alfred Mbhedlengani as leader of Manala-Mbhongo (unknown 1996: 4; Breutz 1989: 449)). Mbhedlengani had acted as regent on Makhosonke's behalf until his death on 20 July that year (Van Vuuren 1992: 174). Unconfirmed rumours claim the regent took his own life: being an *Mbokotho* member he allegedly feared the wrath of his subjects. Secondly, SS Skosana died from

diabetes-related illness in a Johannesburg hospital (Phatlane 2002: 413) on 16 November 1986. Between 17 and 27 November Klaas Mtshiweni stood in as acting KwaNdebele Chief Minister. On 26 November the KLA held a special session to elect Skosana's successor. Recently released from jail Prince James Mahlangu lost in a secret ballot against pro-'independence' hardliner Majozi George Mahlangu (Abel 1995: 459). MG Mahlangu continued Skosana's crusade against the Ndzundza Royal Family thereafter. In December Prince Cornelius Mahlangu was forced to resign from his post as Minister of Health (Murray 1995: 247). One thing, however, was sure: the 'independence' project had suffered a severe blow through Mbokotho's violence and Skosana's death. 11
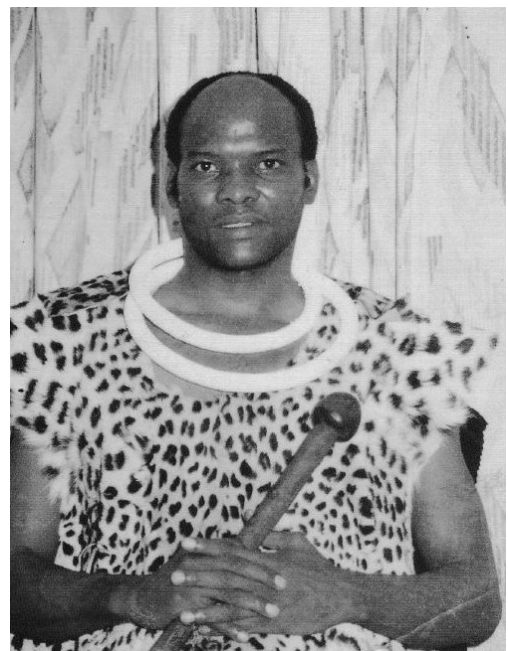
Figure 1E.13 Portrait of young *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II in 1995. (Source: KoMjekejeke Commemoration 1995 leaflet)

December 1986, the originally intended date for KwaNdebele's 'independence' (TRAC 1987: 20), passed without any further noteworthy developments.

1E.2.5 The Years 1987 and 1988: Is 'Independence' off the Table?

In early 1987 the KwaNdebele government under MG Mahlangu continued its campaign to contest the legitimacy of the Ndzundza Royal Family leadership and to discredit its representatives (Phatlane 2002: 413). Princes James and Cornelius were arrested and released repeatedly. Allegedly further attempts were made in the meantime to recruit the new Manala leadership for the pro-'independence' course. In April and May further members of the Ndzundza Royal Family were ousted from governmental positions. Solly Mahlangu was removed as KLA speaker. James, Cornelius, Andries and Solly Mahlangu were excluded as Tribal Authority members and thus automatically lost their KLA membership (Abel 1995: 461f). On 6 May MG Mahlangu's government excluded all opposition from the KLA through detention. It forced the remaining assembly to rescind the 'independence' cancellation from August 1986. In response to MG Mahlangu's renewed ambitions for 'independence' riots, school boycotts, destruction of government and *Mbokotho* property occurred. *Mbokotho* members petrol bombed the Ndzundza Royal Kraal (Phatlane 2002: 414) and Princes James and Andries Mahlangu were detained in Johannesburg (Abel 1995: 462f). In July Princes Cornelius and James were then charged under the Internal Security Act. In September they were tried on charges of intimidation and public violence (Abel 1995: 464). Until February 1988 *Mbokotho* and police forces continued to aggressively intimidate,

abduct and torture opposition members. Police commissioner Lerm imposed severe restrictions on the Ndzundza Royal Family.

In late 1987, yet another blow was dealt to the Moutse and Ekangala communities. Lebowa's challenge of the Moutse excision was rejected by the Appellate Division in September. On 2 December Ekangala and the neighbouring industrial area Ekandustria were officially incorporated into KwaNdebele through Proclamation R170. And KwaNdebele's 'land-grab' did not end there. Following the 1985 consolidation recommendations from Minister Heunis, government appraisers examined the Rust de Winter region for a potential incorporation into KwaNdebele in December 1987 (Abel 1995: 466). On 18 April 1988 South African State President PW Botha declared the Rust de Winter area a released area for the purpose of acquisition by the South African Development Trust (SADT) (Proclamation No.78). In the following two years R97 million would be paid out to 68 White land owners in the area in exchange for their land (Mouton 1996: 1).

On 10 February 1988 a coup attempt by the Progressive People's Party against Bophuthatswana's president Lucas Mangope failed after an SADF intervention. Through its intervention the South African government undermined the 'independence' narrative, despite having tolerated a coup in Transkei in 1987 (Cooper 1989: 183). The KwaNdebele administration passed an Indemnity Act on 29 April 1988, similar to the one in Ciskei and Lebowa, to retroactively protect it from legal action resulting from the unrests of the past two years (Phatlane 1998: 84). This Act and the events in KwaNdebele's neighbouring Homeland made 'independence' even less popular among the population, wherefore in May PW Botha declared that KwaNdebele 'independence' was halted until popular support could be ensured. At the same time though, he met with Lebowa's new Chief Minister Ramodike to encourage a merger with KwaNdebele to facilitate 'independence' for both Homelands (Abel 1995: 476+478).

Resistance to 'independence' and Apartheid also thrived in 1987 and 1988 despite the regime's efforts to discredit and suppress the opposition. 'Independence' opponents founded the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) in Johannesburg in late September 1987. It linked Traditional Authorities with UDF-led anti-Apartheid campaigns. It aimed

> to unite all traditional leaders in the country, to fight for the eradication of the bantustan system, to 'school the traditional leaders about the aims of the South African liberation struggle and their role in it', to win back 'the land of our forefathers and share it among those who work it in order to banish famine and land hunger', and to fight for a unitary, non-racial and democratic South Africa. (Van Kessel and Oomen 1997: 569)

Founding members of CONTRALESA included Ndebele Chiefs such as James, Cornelius, Andries and MK Mahlangu (Abel 1995: 465). In March 1988 the Supreme Court in Bloemfontein upheld the Moutse excision from Lebowa but invalidated Proclamation R227, which had incorporated Moutse into

KwaNdebele (Abel 1995: 467f). On 26 October 1987, six Ndebele women under the leadership of Paulina Machika and with the support of Prince Andries Mahlangu challenged the validity of the KwaNdebele Constitution in Supreme Court due to its disenfranchisement of women (Abel 1995: 473; Phatlane 2002: 414). A Supreme Court judgement on 20 May 1988 declared Proclamation R205, which laid the foundation for KwaNdebele's Constitution, null and void and declared the 1984 election results invalid, due to female disenfranchisement (Abel 1995: 477; Phatlane 2002: 415). Therefore, on 15 September, the South African Government decreed that the KLA must resolve on 7 December 1988 and that new elections must be held the following day (Abel 1995: 479). Between 8 and 10 December the new KLA was elected: Anti-'independence' candidates won all available seats. Ninety percent of voters inside the Homeland were women. MG Mahlangu lost his mandate to a local headman but ensured retroactive nomination for the Assembly through the Sokhulumi Tribal Authority (Abel 1995: 479).

1E.2.6 1989-1994: 'Independence' is Off / Anticipations of Freedom

On 3 February 1989 Jonas Masana Mabena was elected Chief Minister of KwaNdebele by the new KLA (Abel 1995: 479). A few weeks before on 11 January KwaNdebele women protested against the harassment of King Mabhoko's family in Pretoria. They also demanded MG Mahlangu's expulsion from the Homeland (Abel 1995: 479). Majozi George Mahlangu and 13 Mbokotho members were charged with murder, attempted murder, arson and assault later that year (November) (Abel 1995: 480). As a response to the Moutse judgement, the South African government tabled the Alternation of Boundaries of Self-Governing Territories Bill on 6 April 1989 to limit court interferences in the future Homeland formation process. However, only ten months later in February 1990 new South African State president Willem de Klerk lifted the ban on the ANC and ordered Nelson Mandela's release from prison; negotiations to end Apartheid in South Africa began. On 30 April 1990 these events encouraged the KLA to replace Jonas Mabena's KwaNdebele government with the Ndzundza Royal Family. James Mahlangu became KwaNdebele Chief Minister, Cornelius became Minister of Works and Water Affairs, Solly Mahlangu became Minister of Interior and Manpower (Abel 1995: 480).

On 6 July 1992 Ndzundza *iNgwenyama* David Mabusa Mabhoko Mahlangu died. His son Prince Mayitjha II Cornelius III Mahlangu inherited the Ndzundza Kingship and was appointed *iNgwenyama* according to the KwaNdebele Traditional Authorities Act. Between 26 and 29 April 1994 the first democratic elections in South Africa took place. On the first day of the election the term of James Mahlangu's KwaNdebele government ended and one day later, on 27 April KwaNdebele was officially reintegrated into South Africa. All of the other nine Homelands – Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei, Lebowa, Gazankulu, Qwaqwa, KwaZulu and KaNgwane – were also simultaneously dismantled in accordance with the so-called Interim Constitution that came into force on that day.

Chapter 5 – KwaNdebele's Aftermath and Democracy's Conundrums

Very soon after I started working with Patrick he suggested we see a good friend of his who was knowledgeable regarding the history of the AmaNdebele and who could tell me a lot about current political relations in the region. We met Ishmael Ndlovu on his plot of land, where he was busy consulting with a local architect on an extension to his house. Patrick, born with an Ndzundza surname, and Ishmael, a Manala by birth, had grown up together and it was Ishmael, who furthered Patrick's education after he had dropped out of school. During the KwaNdebele 'independence' unrests he

was among those youth, who opposed *Mbokotho* with acts of violence against government representatives. Initially, he recalled during one of our conversations, all Traditional Leaders supported the KwaNdebele government and became members of *Mbokotho*. Also Prince Cornelius, government Minister at the time and future *iNgwenyama* of the Ndzundza, supported 'independence', because he had been promised that he would run the future Kwaggafontein casino. It was only when the population began to turn against the government, due to *Mbokotho'*s atrocities, that Cornelius, his brother James and other royalty sided with the ANC comrades. Ishmael proudly told me about a petrol bomb attack that he committed against a Traditional Leader of the Manala, who was known to be a supporter of *Mbokotho* and 'independence'.

> *He used to drink at a tavern on the mountain.* […] *The informers told us, now he is there.* […] *Brother, you know a petrol bomb I make it with ease.* […] *Then he came out carrying a gun. When they entered the cars, the cars were burning. (whistles) He never came back to that area, because he was attacked by the people. He was not with the people, he was against them. When I was on trial they used to come with a combi from the Tribal Authority. They were going to attend the court that was going to judge me. So they were not good people to us. But because we are good Christians we said let's forgive, let's hold hands.*

The Manala leader survived and Ishmael spent four years in prison. He had been found guilty of treason and public violence in front of a South African court in Groblersdaal. Nowadays Ishmael occupies a comfortable senior position at the Department of Culture, Sport & Recreation of Mpumalanga, which also grants financial support to Traditional events such as the annual commemoration of the defeat of Nyabela's Ndzundza at eRholweni. In fact, during my field research he was one of the strongest supporters of Traditional Leadership as an institution and at the same time one of the harshest critics of some of those that occupy its offices. Even though his surname indicates hereditary affiliation with Manala, he regularly indicated to me that he personally favoured the leadership of Ndzundza. Ishmael's story shows how history continues to be of relevance in former KwaNdebele, but it also serves as living proof that individuals determine their own fate despite that historical blanket.

In the following I present qualitative interview data on three interrelated issues that derive from the history of the Southern Ndebele and that remain significant and controversial to this day. Their analysis at a later point will show that such issues shape the fates of individuals and simultaneously open up strategic possibilities to them. The first topic will be the continued accommodation of Traditional Leadership within the post-Apartheid South African state. Especially with regard to the former's involvement in the Homeland system and its nowadays blurry boundaries of governance this matter has been discussed within the academically published framework in Chapter Four of this thesis. The following section aims to shine a light onto those actors and their standpoints, who are located at the interface of Democratic and Traditional Leadership in former KwaNdebele. The second issue is related to the first and concerns the control over land. The design and pitfalls of land restitution and tenure reform have been introduced in the Chapter 4.3 as well. Those actors, who are meant to benefit from land reform's implementation, and those, who manoeuvre within its frameworks to sustain and consolidate their strategic advantages, are to be heard below. The third issue proves to have unsettled the former two even further, because it concerns the continued leadership dispute between the royal houses of Manala and Ndzundza. They have fought for official recognition as kingships and for their opponents' demotion in front of South Africa's commissions and courts since the Mbeki administration turned its focus upon Traditional Leadership in general. The strive for official recognition as kingship is superficially motivated by the access to government funds, the control over land and political influence: "Conflicts among the Ndebele over succession were both a cause and effect of the co-optation and conversion of African chiefs, through the Native Administration Act of 1927, into salaried officials and administrative factotums of the segregationist state." (Lekgoathi 2009: 69) However, the leadership dispute is also related to the way people on the grassroots level communicate with one another and the way they present themselves and their history to outsiders such as myself.

The empirical data that I present below was provided by a selection of interlocutors. I must acknowledge, the fact that all of the chosen interlocutors are male is unfortunate. The majority of my interview partners was female, but most of them were often reluctant to share and elaborate their honest opinions regarding political matters. Much less were they the ones to be found in crucial positions regarding Traditional Leadership, leadership disputes and land reform. I therefore decided to treat this fact as an empirical observation rather than flawed implementation of method. Throughout my research South African provincial and municipal governance and administration have proven to be influenced by long established male-dominated social hierarchies in many different ways.

5.1 Tribal becomes Traditional

Very early in our series of recorded interviews and informal conversations, Ishmael let me know how he sees the current state of Traditional Leadership in South Africa:

> *A Traditional Leader is supposed to be like a pastor. He is supposed to lead the church. Then in your church there are members of different political parties, but you cannot say 'My church please vote for the ANC or the IFP.' You cannot say that. You are going to be wrong. But now the ANC is going for these people, because they know that these people have influence. The IFP is gunning for Traditional Leaders, because it knows that in the Rural KZN people believe in the amaKhosi and also elsewhere in the Republic. Remember the Republic of South Africa has given more powers and more resources to municipalities and provinces and not to Traditional Councils, because they are afraid that if Traditional Councils are self-sustained they would be autonomous and not take instructions from elsewhere. So they are buying votes. Government is buying votes from Traditional Leaders. It will buy cars and provide grants.* (20 June 2017)

I questioned Ishmael's suggestion that structures of administrative governance such as municipalities and provinces and the legislation that they were based on could be influenced by party politics to the degree that he described. He adamantly contradicted, adding a dimension of agency to his argument:

> *When they don't give them resources, they disempower them and then Traditional Leaders have lost their self-esteem. They don't believe in themselves. If a Chief and a Counsellor call a meeting at the same time, the majority will come to the Counsellor, because people are looking for jobs, houses, water, and what-what in this place. All services are given to the* [democratic] *council and people understand people with services more than ceremonial matters.* […] *The politicians still say Apartheid was not good, but I see that Apartheid is perpetuated the other way round. They still do what was done by Apartheid to these Traditional Leaders. When they don't give them resources, they still disempower them further.* (20 June 2017)

And he continued with his accusations against democratic leaders and their stratagems:

> *There are more poor people than during Apartheid, while we have got more resources than we had at that time. The little resources that we had were at least driving us forward. Now a lot of resources are going into the executives' pockets. If you check the salaries of Traditional Leaders you will see they get very little. You won't like it. And then when you take what Counsellors are getting, they are getting a lot. And then they will justify it, because councils are doing a lot of work. That is because they took the jobs away from the Traditional Leaders.* (20 June 2017)

Ishmael recommended that Patrick and I see the officials at CoGTA (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs) to learn more about the interrelations of Traditional Leadership and Municipal Government.

Mr Mkhabela is a busy man: his phone rings ceaselessly, his office is filled with co-workers when he is present, his schedule shows one appointment after another, and his voice seems to try to make up for a certain lack of time by seemingly uttering several words at

> **Interview information 5.2**
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> **Mr Mkhabela*:** Director at Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). He was interviewed in the presence of some colleagues of his on 24 July 2017 at the CoGTA offices in KwaMhlanga.

once in a fast-paced cascade of explanations. Nonetheless, Mr Mkhabela generously took an hour to educate Patrick and me on the work of CoGTA. He began by explaining that, even though Traditional Authorities had been accommodated in the new Constitution of South Africa, their role as an institution had not been defined for several years until the TLGF Act was passed in 2003 (see Chapter Four). The Act enabled provincial governments to pass legislation that would define the role of its Traditional Authorities; in this case he referred us to the Mpumalanga Traditional Leadership and Governance Act (3 of 2005). Based on this legislation CoGTA was mainly established to provide services to Traditional Authorities and to support them in the tasks assigned to them by the legislators.

> *Remember, when you compare Traditional Leadership as an institution to the municipality: the municipalities are far advanced, far developed, but these ones* [i.e. the Traditional Authorities] *are still at an infant's stage. So you need to actually incubate them, build them up.* [...] *We are here to strengthen that institution.* (27 July 2017)

The main tools of his department to achieve this task were administrative grants, capacity building, provision of offices and the supply of vehicles to selected leaders. Throughout the interview he recited an impressive number of institutions and structures that were involved in these tasks: the Traditional Institution Management chief directory (TIM), the Traditional Institution Resource Administration subdirectory (TIRA), the Rural Development Facilitation and Traditional Land Administration subdirectory (RDF&TLA), the three districts of Mpumalanga Province (Nkangala, Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni) and their municipalities, which accommodate 60 Traditional Communities with their Traditional Councils and Traditional Leaders. Within Nkangala region only two of the seven municipalities accommodate such Traditional structures. Two Kings and eleven Chiefs were assisted by 104 registered Headmen at the time of the interview. Their Traditional Councils were constituted by up to 30 council members of whom 40 percent must be directly elected, while the remaining 60 percent were chosen by the Traditional Leaders and their executive council advisers. Mkhabela explicitly pointed out the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) and its Section 81, wherein Traditional Councils are linked with the municipalities within which they are located. Traditional Leaders are therein granted the right to participate in municipal meetings and to contribute their opinions on development projects. This Act was amended by the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act in 2019, more than two years after most of my interviews (see Chapter 1), but back then its bill was welcomed by Mkhabela who anticipated his department's tasks to become even better defined and its administrative tools to become more efficient.

However, he also listed a few challenges that his department was facing: first, the expectation by Traditional Leaders to be accommodated as employees of the government as they used to be under the Homeland system, which however is not provided for by the legislation in the new South Africa. Secondly, Mkhabela complained about the impatience of some TAs (Traditional Authorities) and their

lack of understanding of governmental budgets. The third challenge his department had to deal with, he explained, were claims by groups and individuals to certain leadership positions that they had been allegedly disenfranchised from under the previous regime. When I asked whether his department had to also deal with tensions between democratically elected representatives and Traditional Authorities, he admitted that tensions between Headmen and Councillors did cause problems occasionally. Obviously uncomfortable to discuss such a matter he first hesitated and then explained these issues were to be handled by the respective councils at grassroots level and that he would rather proceed to talk about land administration. The discussion that followed will be summarised in the following section to maintain the outlined thematic structure. However, the matter of land provided access to another valuable interview partner. Mkhabela suggested that I attend a scheduled meeting at Tweefontein, where land matters were to be discussed between the Manala-Mgibe Traditional Council and one Mr Bheka Ngwenya.

The meeting at Manala Mgibe Traditional Council, two days later on 26 July, took place in a rather unspectacular manner. The Traditional Council members had asked for assistance from CoGTA with a development project, which had been offered to them in the area. Among others the aforementioned Bheka Ngwenya was present, a smartly dressed sophisticated young man, who acted as Senior Land Use Manager of CoGTA at the time. He very quickly cut

to the chase and asked the Manala-Mgibe leaders: Are there any land claims on the land in question? Is the land in question located within their traditional jurisdiction? The first question was answered with uncertainty while the second one was adamantly answered in the affirmative by the elders. Ngwenya took his laptop out and asked the council members to identify the piece of land on a map. After a moment of confusion and uncertainty regarding the piece of land's exact whereabouts it turned out the piece of land had not been gazetted since 1985. It seemed that there were several land claims on it and that it was actually outside of the official jurisdiction of Manala-Mgibe. The meeting thus ended with even more insecurities among the Traditional Council members. Thereafter, I approached Ngwenya for an interview and he agreed on the condition that I come to his offices in Mbombela (Nelspruit) at the other end of the province. I agreed and after an *ex-ante* emailed list of questions of mine and several unfortunate delays we finally met at his Mbombela office. Right at the beginning he explained his personal understanding of the role of Traditional Leadership:

> *The important thing, I think, is that we have to look: where are these Traditional Authorities and Traditional Councils coming from?* [...] *This thing started when the Homelands were established. Remember people were displaced and they found themselves in these Homelands. And when democracy came in, it got rid of the Homelands.* [...] *But then it created Traditional Councils within those areas of the former Homelands. So when you locate it, the Homelands*

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were never removed. Because, from where I'm sitting, they were simply replaced by Traditional Councils. But because of democracy, [...] which covers everyone, it does not matter whether you are in a Traditional Authority, you are still subject to the law that binds the people in the suburbs. [...] So it [democracy] created that environment, while making sure that the Traditional Leaders, because the Homelands were run by Traditional Leaders, they still remain for heritage purposes. (16 October 2017)

He continued, similarly to the way that Mkhabela had done it before, by explaining the basic legal framework that governed his work.

The Traditional Councils were left there with the demarcations that were in place to preserve heritage customs so that you don't lose them, not for services. They can't provide water, they can't provide sanitation, they can't provide electricity, they can't provide basic services, they can't do that. The only thing that they are supposed to do is to look after their constituencies on the basis of customs, and by extension what they are also doing: They allocate land to people within their areas of jurisdiction. And those areas of jurisdiction are defined by gazette, not by ownership. They don't own the land. Sometimes they will behave as if they don't know that fact. They will give you the impression that they don't know. But they know. They have in position the gazette notices that show the jurisdiction, but they don't have title deeds. The people that have title deeds are people who were successful on restitution and they therefore formed what you call CPA. It is very rare that you find a Traditional Council that has ownership of the land. The ownership of that land is with the national government. They are custodians of the land on behalf of the government. (16 October 2017)

Up to that point Mr Ngwenya made very clear that the powers of Traditional Authorities were kept properly in check by the present legislation and the institutions that implement it. I therefore asked him about critical voices from the University of Cape Town (see Chapter 4.2), who claim that TAs have more power today than they used to during the Homeland system. He contradicted: "*No they don't have power. People who are saying that they have power are ill-informed. Everything that is done is governed by legislation. The legislation clearly demarcates their power.*" (16 October 2017) He also rebuffed the claim that Traditional Leaders do not receive the necessary education to understand their rights and duties as Patrick and other interlocutors had often alleged. Also according to Ishmael Ndlovu, the earnest supporter of Traditional Leadership, the education and training of Traditional Leaders through the state had to be improved:

If democracy means that our Traditional Leaders must remain where they are, it means our Democracy will never bear fruit. We must come up with a way of empowering Traditional Leaders. They must be taken to formal schools, where they are being taught things like management, administration, governance, legal aspects of constitutional matters, how to interpret important documents like the Constitution. If we empower them, things are going to change, but as they are they are like a toothless dog. They are not helping us with anything. Theirs is only about demanding resources and not being given them. That is why most of them steal. Wherever there is a mine the Traditional Leaders will steal money. It is because they don't have any. But you cannot steal when your stomach is full. (Ishmael Ndlovu, 20 June 2017)

Ngwenya called such claims straightforward untrue, because his own department was involved in extensive capacity building processes for Traditional Authorities all over the Province. He explained

the lack of progressive momentum within Traditional Leadership was less due to lack of support, but rather a symptom of incongruity between the institution itself and the people that it was supposed to lead:

> *From where I see it, the system of Traditional Leaders will die on its own. It will not stay forever, because people are also getting frustrated by Traditional Leaders, who are not pro-development. We are changing, […] you can see with technology, you cannot stay on the approaches of yesterday. We must move with the future. So people will get tired, people want development, people want their areas upgraded.* (16 October 2017)

Furthermore, Ngwenya stressed that he was actually rather frustrated by the extent to which government had to support Traditional Authorities and expand their jurisdiction boundaries. The Traditional Courts Bill was in his point of view absolutely unnecessary: "*In a new democracy we do not need traditional courts. There are a lot of human rights issues. These people are not skilled to interpret law. There will be flaws in all the processes. So there is no need to legalise it.*" However, towards the end of our conversation, as if he had been reminded of his professional position at CoGTA, he seemed to feel the urge to relativise many of his criticisms against Traditional Authorities:

> *Traditional Councils will always give you a good insight into the issues of the area. Whatever you want to do, they will tell you experience-knowledge about that specific area. That is something both can gain from. Such knowledge is very important. So to keep them in existence structurally, that means in terms of those councils, it also facilitates the participation. Because if something has to happen you will know who exactly is affected by it. Their existence is relevant, but there must be clear lines in terms of rights and functions. They must understand their role.* (16 October 2017)

So far I have provided views from three government officials, who deal with Traditional Leaders on a daily basis: one supporter of the institution and critic of democratic power politics, one who shied away from providing personal opinion, and one who had more critical views of Traditional Leadership and described its foreseeable expendability. But what about the 'royal' perspective?

Another gentleman I met at the *iNgwenyama*'s offices on the day I first met the aforementioned Royal Historian Jeremiah Mabhena (see Textbox 1E.1) was Hendrick Kgomo, Chair of Kingdom Administration. He wrote minutes of my conversation with Makhosonke II and made sure that my monetary token of appreciation to the Kingdom was appropriate. A year later I visited him at his Vaalbank home and got the chance to ask further questions about his work for the *iNgwenyama* and the daily affairs that occupy the local leadership.

> **Interview information 5.4**
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> **Hendrick Kgomo:** Chair of Kingdom Administration and personal secretary of *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II. Headman at Vaalbank and former Ward Councillor and union representative. He was interviewed on 01 July 2017 in his house in Vaalbank.

Learning that Kgomo had been a Ward Councillor and union leader before he gained his position at Makhosonke's court, I asked him whether it made a difference to him, moving from democratically organised institutions to one that is based on hereditary principals of leadership. He explained:

> *I don't see any clash between those two, because before you become a Traditional Leader you are a person. That's the first thing. You can be a Traditional Leader in any democratic way. I don't see anything wrong in that.* […] *Previously the country was led by tradition. So you cannot just remove tradition, because tradition is the foundation of the people. Even if you bring a democratic government in, it must tie up with tradition so that they can move together. And it's possible and it is easy and it is working.* (01 July 2017)

Furthermore he pointed out that the Municipality and the Traditional Authorities were responsible for very different tasks and that therefore no conflict of power could arise from that. Upon my mentioning that competencies do occasionally overlap and questioning whether this does not entail the need to work beyond official boundaries, Kgomo explained that in his view the communication between institutions always depends on the people within them; if there are people in the right positions, who understand both sides, there is no need to worry. He praised the *iNgwenyama*'s ability to accommodate not only differing political understandings, but also different cultures within his area of jurisdiction:

> *Fortunately we have a King that includes each and every culture. He doesn't care of what culture you are, as long as you know your culture and do it in your way, but accept to be under his authority. You also, you can come here and do your own culture in your own way, as long as you accept to be under his authority. Very open-minded!* (01 July 2017)

The real challenge for the cooperation between TAs and democratic government, according to Kgomo, was the unequal extent of governmental involvement of the nine confirmed Kings on the national level. Until all nine Kings received the same degree of appreciation and power, South Africa could not move forward he claimed. In this case he referred to Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini, whose paramount position among the Traditional Leaders of South Africa was envied by many smaller kingships. The Zulu monarch's predominance is also founded in his control over the Ingonyama Trust, which controls wide swaths of land in KwaZulu-Natal. Thus the matter of land control and allocation was also discussed with Mr Kgomo.

5.2 Homeland Land Reform

The interview with Henrick Kgomo seemed to have already reached an end, but then Patrick insisted on asking him one last question: What could Traditional Leadership do to stop the increased abuse of illegal drugs among the younger population in rural areas? Kgomo explained that poverty reduction through economic development was the best way to combat drug abuse and that such development was strongly supported by the *iNgwenyama* and his officials. He explained how they scrutinised any application for land allocation in that regard:

> *I always ask these people: how do you access your funds? If you can give us an answer, then we know we have good people, because we don't want to give a site to people to make business and then later you find out that person is selling drugs and doing wrong things. And then we are blamed for giving the permission.* [...] *You must know that we are not the government. We only have people which we are leading. There is poverty among those people we are leading.* (01 July 2017)

This gave me the opportunity to ask Mr Kgomo what should happen to the land in the future South Africa to foster better development. To him the answer lied clearly in the hands of 'traditional' land control:

> *If I am having a title deed, then I am entitled to go to the bank and borrow money with the house and the land as security. And then the bank gives me the money, and if you can't pay they will take the land. And then the bank will go back with the land to the White people. So after a while you will not have a place to stay and no land and no money. And then you come back again to the Traditional and say 'No, I don't have money'. Then we say 'We gave you land. Where is the land?'; 'The bank has taken it'. So that's why we are saying the best way is for the land to remain with the Traditional Leaders, so that the Traditional Leaders can intervene when you want to give the land to the bank. If they want to borrow you money, give it without touching the land. Otherwise all the land will be under the bank and people will be without land again. The government must not give anybody a title deed. All the title deeds must be held by Traditional Leaders in order to protect the people."* (01 July 2017)

A similar, actually almost identical, argument was presented to me by Jeremiah Mabhena, for whom the confusion of Mzilikazi's Matabele with the Transvaal Ndebele indicated the contestability of many historic accounts at the beginning of the First *Entr'acte* of this thesis. He was to talk to me one more time in August 2017. Together with his previously so quiet companion we met once again at *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II's offices in Klipfontein. Questioned on the merits of tenure reform, which envisions the conversion of all PTOs that were issued on state-owned land into individual title deeds for those, who currently occupy the land, Mabhena explained:

> *If you owe somebody money, they cannot take that land away from you. It is protected with a PTO. With a title deed they can take everything, even your house.* [...] *If we sit down with the King and say give us a place for the people, who have no money, they can sit there with PTOs. Alright the people who have money they can buy the place. They know if there is a problem*

they can pay. But these poor people they must have PTO. For us it is good, because it helps the poor people. (17 August 2017)

But how does this argument look from the administrative side? Regarding the control and administration of land, Mr Mkhabela of CoGTA explained that those communities that had bought land under colonial rule and Apartheid would have had to register the land in the name of a chief or a missionary, who would hold the title deed on the community's behalf. For the majority of land in former KwaNdebele, however, the South African state held the title deed. The Homeland had been constituted on a number of farms that were bought or expropriated by the government and which were controlled by the Tribal Authorities in trust of the respective community that was settled on them. Mkhabela explained: *"Out of all the Traditional Communities and Traditional Councils that I told you about none has a title deed of that land. That land belongs to the state."* (24 July 2017) There were two proclaimed townships with some kind of municipal administration when KwaNdebele was a Homeland: Siyabuswa and Vaalbank (Proclamation R293, see Chapter 4.3). The rest of the land was administered through the issuance of PTOs on so-called Trust Land. These PTOs are no longer provided for in the new legislation Mkhabela explained; the new dispensation officially applies *"wall-to-wall municipal boundaries"* and thus renders the issuance of PTOs redundant from a theoretical legal point. Furthermore tenure reform demands the upgrading of old PTOs into title deeds. From a practical point, however, today's TAs continue to issue PTOs, because the legislator has not provided an alternative to them. That is why, for example, a whole new area of Allemansdrift B was being allocated through PTOs during my time in the field

This new wall-to-wall approach also implies a change of system regarding 'traditional' jurisdiction. Before, a Chief's jurisdiction over a certain group of people was based on the fact that they lived on the land controlled by him. Today, a Traditional Authority's area of jurisdiction will no longer be determined by the land controlled by it. Title deed holders in Vaalbank are subject to the jurisdiction of *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II, his Chiefs and Headmen, even though it was proclaimed as a township in 1976/77 (SPP 1983: 147). Simultaneously, other residents of Vaalbank will have obtained a widely accepted PTO for a plot of land within the proclaimed township, even though the Traditional Authority ought to legally have no power to do that. Even though such circumstances were to be prevented by the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (16 of 2013, SPLUMA), Mkhabela admitted that its guidelines had been widely ignored by municipalities and Traditional Authorities alike in what he referred to as a gentlemen's agreement: TAs continued to issue PTOs in areas agreed upon with the municipality to generate income, while the municipalities could focus on service provision rather than land distribution. This, however, implied that the municipality remained responsible for basic service provision in neighbourhoods established through PTOs making good communication and extensive planning together with the Traditional Authority essential. I questioned whether PTO holders were

aware that the involved institutions were denying them their rights, but Mkhabela rebutted the accusation by pointing out that every PTO holder had the right to obtain a title deed once the land had been mapped and numbered in the nationwide formalization process. I asked Mkhabela how the Traditional Authorities felt about the transformation of PTOs into title deeds. He pointed to a colleague, who had silently listened to our conversation up to now and asked him to comment, which in turn sparked a debate between Mkhabela, his colleague and another one who had also eavesdropped on the conversation.

> Colleague 1: *They* [i.e. the TAs] *don't feel comfortable. They don't like the system, because it takes away the little income they get from it. In fact, saying they are generating income through the sale of land is a fallacy because they are selling it below the value. You will get it very cheap. A huge land at a very low price.*
> Colleague 2: *But the PTO is only a piece of paper, not even a receipt. It has no legal effect, no tenure security. So how can you charge more than a few hundred* [Rand] *for it?*
> Mkhabela: *It all depends what you mean by security, because the property is yours anyway. There is no way it can be taken away from you. The only thing is that you can't actually have collateral with that. You can't take it to the bank. You can't take it anywhere, it's just a property. It has got no value.*

While the two colleagues continued their discussion, Mkhabela and I returned to our conversation about land administration under Traditional Authority, wherein he suggested my previously mentioned meeting with Bheka Ngwenya at Tweefontein.

Ngwenya, as director of Land Use Management in CoGTA, made his opinion on the issuance of PTOs very clear:

> Traditional Leaders are allocating land where they are not supposed to, even as we are speaking. They are selling those stands, and they are not doing it for free. If they were doing it for the people they would be doing it for free but they are not. They're taking money that is not accounted for. (16 October 2017)

Regarding land reform in general he also insinuated that Traditional Authorities were rather interested in frustrating the reform process:

> *The Traditional Leaders are not in support of such programmes of land tenure upgrading, because they feel that such programs… once people have secured tenure they will identify themselves outside a Traditional Authority. The Traditional Authorities will lose power, a power which they officially are not supposed to have. I always say whatever they are saying is mal-informed. It is not an argument because we are living in a new democracy, which introduced land reform.* […] *You have people who are frustrating land reform processes, because of their own self-interest. Because when you ask these people where the levies are going you won't get an answer.* (16 October 2017)

I also asked for his opinion on the involvement of Traditional Authorities in land restitution cases. Even though he indicated that he was not responsible for land claims professionally, he explained:

> *They are claiming, they want what is not theirs. They must claim what is theirs and they will get it. People who got land for themselves – and they were able to prove that they are the real owners of those lands – they were made to have a CPA and they did have a CPA and that is fine. […] If the Traditional Leaders want to take over the restitution process, the onus is upon them to prove that they are the legitimate owners of those lands. They have to prove [it] to those commissions that will be set up.*

And he continued:

> *If there are so many people that can actually prove that they were displaced under Apartheid, where does then the King come in and claim the land only through his name? If I was removed from land that I legally owned, and then you want to claim it as a King where is that fair? It doesn't make sense. It does not matter that you are the King of a jurisdiction, but that does not mean that you own everything within that jurisdiction. […] The process cannot prejudice against people who are the real owners of land just because there is a Chief, too.*

Exactly such an argumentation, as criticised by Bheka Ngwenya, was applied by Jeremiah Mabhena when he described the land claim lodged by the Manala Royal House on behalf of the Ndebele nation. In both interviews with him Mabhena explained that an area within the triangle of Pretoria, Bronkhorstspruit and Delmas had been claimed, that their own researchers had found sufficient evidence to support the claim, but that governmental institutions had responded that the Ndebele could not possibly have owned that much land. He made clear that the King expected the title deed for the claimed land to be issued very soon nonetheless, and that an even greater area, including Pretoria itself would be claimed afterwards: *"If you read the history very well and if you did your research very well, the Ndebele were the first people in the Transvaal at that time."* (17 August 2017). He insisted that the reopening of land restitution in 2014 was not a mistake, because many people were supposedly left out in the first round of claims. Now these people had the *iNgwenyama* on their side, who claimed on their behalf and made sure that restituted land would be managed sustainably for the entire community. According to Mabhena, CPAs have not worked in the past, CPA farms are supposedly lying in ruins and the only way that they could be properly managed would be through a cooperative that is chaired by the King, who holds the title deed. From William Mawela at the municipal land administration office (see Chapter 4.3) and others Patrick and I had learned that a group named Mmahlabane Trust (sometimes also "*Mahlabane*") had successfully claimed some farms between Libangeni and Klipfontein. As he had made such a strong statement in favour of land restitution, I asked Mabhena whether he had heard about the Mmahlabane Trust and how the cooperation between the Trust and the *iNgwenyama*'s administration worked out. He responded peevishly:

> *This is nonsense. There is no such a thing. It is just a robbery. It's just politics. […] Our politicians, when they want followers, they talk lies. They promise everything, which is wrong. They just want followers to win the game. And they will win yes, but at the end of the day, when it comes to law, you will find it is not true.* (17 August 2017)

He continued explaining that most local politicians will claim that they meet with their constituents once every three months, but he never saw his local councillor answer questions from a large crowd. I wondered why Mabhena answered the simple question about a well-known local institution by ranting about local politicians until he indirectly gave the answer himself. Patrick asked who his Councillor was and it turned out it was Stephens Aphane, who was also sitting on the board of that same Mmahlabane Trust I had asked about two minutes earlier.

We met Councillor Aphane two weeks after our last conversation with Jeremiah Mabhena. This had, however, proved more difficult than expected and it took numerous phone calls and Patrick's social skills and persistence to finally meet the Councillor. Aphane explained the land in question concerns the farms Leeuwfontein, Zandspruit and Kloppersdam, most of which are located within Mdala Game Reserve. First removals occurred in this area in 1953

and continued until 1985 (Kloppersdam and parts of Zandspruit were part of the 1983/84 KwaNdebele extension). In 1988 the KwaNdebele government initiated Mdala Nature Reserve and Mkhombo Nature Reserve, which were finally proclaimed in March 1996 (Gazette No. 132). Findings of human remains in 2010 were associated to the violent invasion of Moutse (Khoza and Masinga 2010) and the "Kloppersdam Mbokotho concentration camp" (Phatlane 1998: 131). This sparked speculation that the reserve had been planned to hide evidence and protect *Mbokotho* members from potential prosecution under a future government.

When restitution became possible in the 1990s a long process of finding potential beneficiaries throughout Limpopo, Gauteng and Mpumalanga began, Aphane explained. About 400 IsiNdebele- and SeSotho-speaking households were identified and therefore the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) recommended registering an entity that could speak on behalf of all claimants. It was decided to register the Mmahlabane Trust, whose name according to Aphane refers to the spears of Mzilikazi; the downs of the area were used by local groups to hide from the infamous warmonger (see First *Entr'acte*). All necessary restitution processes were eventually passed and a co-management agreement was concluded, which envisioned a sixty percent beneficiation of the Mmahlabane members while the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) would continue to administer the reserve and ensure that forty percent of the reserve's yields would benefit the surrounding communities. The claim was officially settled in April 2005 and title deeds for Leeuwfontein and Zandspruit were received in February 2016, while transfer of the title deed for Kloppersdam was still outstanding at the time of the interview due to competing land claims in the area. Unfortunately, several claimant families were not happy with this agreement: some wanted to return to the land to

plough it and graze their cattle while others demanded financial compensation instead. The former was not possible because the largest part of the farms was proclaimed as conservation area and the latter was not encouraged by government officials for comprehensible reasons. Aphane admits that out of the original 400 families only 30 nowadays attend the regular Trust meetings even though the MTPA tries its best to generate benefits such as jobs and natural produce (e.g. thatch grass or animal skins) for them.

Eventually, when the land restitution process was reopened in 2014, disgruntled Mmahlabane members lodged their own separate claims on the exact same land. The same issues allegedly also bothered the Moutse CPA, which had closed a co-management agreement with the CRLR and the MTPA for the neighbouring Mkhombo Nature Reserve. Aphane made very clear that he was in favour of the reopening of land claims for clearly many people had been left out in the first round of claims and he was happy to accommodate these people within the Trust as long as they understood that they could not return to live on the farms. He blamed the current circumstances on the poor management within the responsible department:

> *The intention was, to accommodate those people that were left out during the first claim period. But as soon as they reopened it, even our own members went back to land claims. And the Commission will not chase these people out as long as they can tell one little bit about the farms. They will lodge, they will assist you and give you a reference number. Even today, if you go to the land claims office with a farm number and ask them to print out the information of how many people have lodged a claim on it, you will see how many they have accepted even though it has already been settled.* (31 August 2017)

He continued explaining that the reopening of land restitution was introduced to the local population without proper education on the matter; supposedly in late 2015 the Regional Land Claims Commissioner's office (RLCC) advertised land claims for an entire week in Vaalbank's community hall without the necessary education on who qualifies as valid land claimants.

I questioned Aphane on the relations between the Mmahlabane Trust and *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II. He praised the King's understanding of land claim procedures. After the establishment of the Trust its representatives went to Klipfontein to introduce themselves, because they were in his area of jurisdiction. He supported their claim in front of the CRLR, affirming their belonging in the area, but indicated that they must tolerate the local Ndebele people on the claimed farms. It was furthermore agreed that the Ndebele population must benefit as long as they belong to the immediately neighbouring communities. In 2015 a rumour spread that the reserve would be converted into a grazing farm. The Mmahlabane trustees were against it, because they saw the area's potential in privatised tourism rather than grazing. The matter went to the *iNgwenyama*'s office and he issued a

statement that he would not allow the reserve to become a grazing farm. Thereafter the grazing conversion was off the table.

In light of Aphane's praises of the *iNgwenyama*, I decided to mention that an undisclosed member of his council (i.e. Jeremiah Mabhena, see above) had spoken out quite adamantly against the Mmahlabane Trust in front of us. He responded:

> *There are people within the Traditional Leadership who think that, if you issue a title deed to a person, it means that this person will have more power on this area than those. Before the title was given to the King. He was holding a title on behalf of the community. Now because of the claim, some portions of that will be given out.* […] *In terms of jurisdiction it is under the King. So if a certain portion is cut out from that to be integrated into Mmahlabane, other people from the Traditional Leadership fear that the Trust will not recognise them. But we respect the King, we respond to the Chiefs. At every function we pay our respect to the King. I know that there is that specific claim of people who say 'No these people are not wanted here, because they will not accept the King.'*

Aphane furthermore blamed individual sympathies and antipathies for a lack of co-operation. Cattle owners, he explained, are traditionally well respected while people without cattle are beggars. Today these beggars have the same rights and will receive the same share of land, which then creates quarrels between these groups. Speaking of quarrels… allow me to now turn to the leadership dispute between Manala and Ndzundza, which was mentioned briefly in previous chapters.

5.3 "Tradition cannot solve its own problems": the Commission and the Courts

On 19 December 2017 Patrick and I left Libangeni early in the morning to head east together with a befriended married couple of his. We were going to attend the annual commemoration of King Nyabela at eRholweni, where his Ndzundza people had suffered the brutal defeat of 1883. Upon arrival at the municipal offices of Roossenekal (named after ZAR fighters Stefanus Roos and Frederick Senekal, who died in the conflict) we met with Ishmael Ndlovu, who had our names registered for VIP treatment, and we were shown to the community hall, where a breakfast buffet had been arranged. We shared a table with the local Acting Deputy Mayor and one Mr Skosana, who turned out to be one of the event's main organisers. Our table witnessed a lively discussion concerning the ANC's electoral conference that had ended only one day before seeing Cyril Ramaphosa win the party's presidency, which would soon make him President of the Republic. However, the conversation soon stirred towards the history of the place we found ourselves in and the fact that I had come from Europe to witness the celebrations that were to occur on this day at eRholweni. Mr Skosana volunteered to give a tour of the grounds to those VIPs who were interested. After a dusty and bumpy ride from Roossenekal to the foot of the mountain that holds the so-called Mapoch Caves, Patrick, his two friends and I found ourselves to be the only VIPs interested in Mr Skosana's tour though. First he laid out the development of the 1883 war between Nyabela's Ndzundza and the ZAR commandos that besieged the mountain fortress of koNomtjharhelo. We proceeded further onto the grounds of the former settlement, where more and more cars, tents, *braai* stands, mobile toilets and piles of empty beer bottles cluttered the paths. We parked our car near the renown statue of King Nyabela, which had been unveiled exactly 47 years before on 19 December 1970 by the KwaNdebele government (Kwa-Ndebele Monumentekomitee 1983: 39). *"The first statue of a Black man in South Africa"*, Mr Skosana proclaimed.

We walked towards the entrance of the caves and passed families partying between the homestead foundation walls and grave stones of their ancestors. Skosana explained how important these walls and tomb stones were to the success of land claims, especially those large black marble stones that were decorated with golden calligraphy writing and permanent photographs of the deceased, which had obviously only recently been erected. When the path to the caves became too arduous for old bones and high-heeled shoes we turned back and had our pictures taken and printed in front of the aforementioned statue by a professional photographer. We thanked Mr Skosana who had to return to the preparation of his speech and took our seats on the nearby grandstand. The event soon began with dance performances, speeches and announcements. The announcement that King Mabhoko would soon release his own brand of maize meal was among the less excitingly noticed ones.

Mbusi II Mabhoko III, who inherited the leadership of the Ndzundza Ndebele from his late father *iNgwenyama* Mayitjha II Cornelius III in 2005, arrived a little while after the event had started. He was dressed in a casual checked shirt and a blue jacket wearing merely a headband made of cheetah skin and thus stood out from the crowd of Chiefs who were entirely dressed in animal skins and moved towards him to welcome him in the customary procession. By the time they had reached him, however, he had already made it halfway to the grandstand and he did not wait to be escorted in the typical slow moving procession of humming and shuffling. He continued his speedy stride, shook a few hands here and there, gave an occasional smile

Figure 5.5 A leaflet advertising the Ndzundza King's new brand of maize meal.

to people he seemed to know, and took his seat approximately ten metres away from Patrick and I. The event continued with speeches, music and dance performances. Towards the end, the royal guest of honour *Kgošikgolo* Billy Mampuru III, who at the time was also embroiled in a leadership dispute with the officially recognized BaPedi King Victor Thulare III (Delius 2021; see also Oomen 2005), made an entrance that bore much more 'customary' panache than the previous one of his host. In his speech, the widely popular Mampuru reminded the assembled dignitaries of the close friendship between the Pedi and the Ndzundza since the 1883 Mapoch War (see 1E.1.2 and 10.1). Addressing Mabhoko III directly in English he said: "*Respect and love your people, because God's judgement is awaiting.*"

A range of representatives of the Ndzundza Royal Family introduced themselves thereafter as the crowd awaited Mabhoko's annual speech. The obligatory praise songs were recited thereafter, but those around us reacted not as anticipated with cheerful excitement and attention. Patrick asked our neighbours and explained to me that these were not the praises for Mabhoko III but for Chief Poni Maphepha II of the Nebo Ndzundza. Maphepha took the stage to deliver a rather erratic rendition of a speech, which he seemed to hold without manuscript and under the influence of alcohol. Among other things he lamented the decreasing attendance of the annual celebration and speculated that the local Chiefs were to blame for this development as they failed to discipline their subjects. This statement was not greeted with applause by those in the stands. Another random matter that apparently enraged him were police protection orders that aimed to protect children and women from domestic abuse: Who gave democratic leaders the right to decide that men were not allowed to beat their wives, even though the wife is usually at fault? He closed with the words *"I'm sorry to say it, but that's how it is."* After his speech the dignitaries dispersed and the crowd was left wondering why Mabhoko had not spoken. We made our way to the car when we met Ishmael Ndlovu, who explained

that Mabhoko had decided against speaking, because he had found the provided stage to be much smaller than the previous years and that he did not want to endorse such humiliation to his office. As we drove back to Libangeni, Patrick, his friends and I speculated that the reason for Mabhoko's refusal to speak could have also been his recent defeats in the South African courts.

INgwenyama Enoch Makhosonke II Mabhena of Manala-Mbongo and *iNgwenyama* Mayitjha II Cornelius III Mahlangu of Ndzundza-Mabhoko were both declared Paramount Chiefs (Kings) under the KwaNdebele Traditional Authorities Act. As mentioned in Chapter 4.2 the TLGF Act set up the Commission on Traditional Leadership, Disputes and Claims, also known as 'Nhlapo Commission', to attend to the "loose ends" of the "old order" (Peires 2014: 7). It was "mandated to regularise and restore the dignity of the institution of traditional leadership" (Nhlapo Commission 2008: 41). It therefore held a first public hearing in KwaMhlanga in June 2005 to "determine whether the paramountcies of Ndzundza-Mabhoko and Manala-Mbongo were established in accordance with customary law and customs" (Nhlapo Commission 2008: 7). Among others (e.g. Buthelezi and Skosana 2018; Delius 2021) Jeff Peires, a former member of the Nhlapo Commission, has adamantly criticised it for its composition of expert members, its methodology and its theoretical approach. He has described the one-sided public hearings in KwaMhlanga and he criticized the Commission's working definitions and the audacious ignoring of the 1927 deadline (recommended in the White Paper on Traditional Leadership) in the TLGF Act and by the Commission. His critique foreshadows that the Commission would reach a highly controversial decision in this particular case.

The most crucial historical development that was singled out by the Commission to reach a decision was the encounter between Manala and Ndzundza at Balule (Olifants) River (see 1E.1). One argument that the Commission brought forward in favour of the Manala favouring version of events was the fact that Cornelius III did not object to it during the hearings (Nhlapo Commission 2008: 51). This derivation is arguably inappropriate as the *iNgwenyama* was in ill health and passed away on the evening of the Commission's departure (Peires 2014: 13). In its final statement the Commission furthermore stressed that the Ndebele Kingdom was destroyed in the war of 1883 by the ZAR and that it would have to be restored under the auspices of the Republic of South Africa. Ironically, it was only the Ndzundza-Mabhogo lineage that suffered under this aforementioned defeat, while the Manala Ndebele and other Ndzundza were located safely on the Wallmansthal mission grounds and elsewhere. Manala representatives furthermore managed to convince the majority of Commission members that Manala had not been in favour of the Homeland system at KwaNdebele's inception. Therefore Ndzundza had been treated better by the regime's authorities, wherefore the number of senior Manala leaders had decreased. This contradicts the fact that the KwaNdebele government actually allowed for the establishment of a separate Manala-Mgibe authority and expanded Manala's territorial authority

(Rhenosterkop and potentially Rust de Winter). Another debateable argument brought forward by the Commission was that "AmaNdebele as a nation, with only 10 senior traditional leaders between them, are too few to constitute two separate kingships." (Nhlapo Commission 2008: 54). In this case it seems that a favoured outcome, guided by government policy, determined the eventual Commission finding that "the creation of dual kingship was irregular" (Nhlapo Commission 2008: 59). Ultimately, the Commission only founded its final decision of 29 April 2008 on one simple analogy: "The late *Ingwenyama* Cornelius Mayitjha III and Enoch Makhosonke II reiterated their wish before this Commission to see amaNdebele united under one king. […] Such unification therefore, can only be determined by custom. In terms of custom the Manala is [sic!] the senior house" (Nhlapo Commission 2008: 56f).

Having not only failed to unite the Ndebele under Ndzundza leadership, the Ndzundza had now also lost their kingship to Manala as sole Ndebele paramountcy of the Ndebele. This was confirmed by another Nhlapo Commission report in 2010, which had investigated the status of the late *iNgwenyama* Cornelius III. The Ndzundza leadership was apparently unable to determine an heir to the throne at the time of the investigation. While most sources agree that Mbusi II Mabhoko III inherited his father's throne in the year 2005 at the age of twenty, two regents are also mentioned for the time after 2007, namely Prince Sililo Johannes Mahlangu and Prince Chillies Mahlangu. It is not clear how long these regents were in place and for what reason they had been instated. The former of them was invited by the Nhlapo Commission in mid-2008 to testify in a hearing to which he reluctantly appeared, but he refused to participate verbally. The Commission thus based its judgement on the evidence given in the 2005 hearings. Because the Commission had determined in 2008 that the Ndzundza-Mabhoko paramountcy was not a kingship in terms of the TLGF Act (Nhlapo Commission 2010: 103) it unsurprisingly concluded on 29 July 2010 that Mayitjha II Cornelius III as an individual had been irregularly appointed *iNgwenyama* and thus posthumously demoted him to Senior Traditional Leader (i.e. Chief/iKosi). In the same report the Commission also dismissed the claim by Johannes Dlize Mabena, a descendant of former regent Titus Thugane Mabena, for the position of King of aManala [sic!] (Nhlapo Commission 2010: 437-470).

The findings and decisions made by the Nhlapo Commission and other institutions regarding the leadership dispute were often obscured and adjusted to fit the preferred narrative by my interlocutors. For example, Ishmael Ndlovu explained it the following way:

> *The current King of the Ndzundza, according to the Commission* [i.e. Nhlapo]*, was supposed to be given that status of being a King of the Ndzundza. See, in our culture you do not unseat a reigning King. You cannot do that. When a man has been declared King or Chief, traditionally or customarily so be it… until one day maybe God calls that person. That is what the Commission understands from the side of our tradition. That is why he was not dethroned or*

demoted. They respect this. Which means the Western Roman Dutch Law and the customary law they must work together. But you can see that the Western law is still above ours. But they do recognise that you cannot remove a King that is already there. (20 June 2017)

On 05 November 2010, three and a half months after the Nhlapo Commission had determined that Ndzundza-Mabhoko was neither a kingship nor that it had a King, President Jacob Zuma sent a glimmer of hope for the humiliated Ndzundza leadership. It came in the form of Government Notice No. 1027. Therein Zuma listed the officially recognised kingships and its kings: on fifth position stood the "AmaNdebele of Manala and AmaNdebele as a whole: King Enock Makosonke Mabhena". The notice however continued: "I further hereby recognize the following deemed kingships and kings, [for] which recognition will lapse on the death of the incumbent king" and on fifth and last position among the fortunate listed leaders was: "Ndzundza-Mabhoko: King Mbusi Mahlangu [i.e. Mabhoko III]" (Zuma 2010: 3f). The President thus made use of an amendment to the TLGF Act, which came into effect on 25 January 2010, wherein it was stated that he was no longer obliged to implement the Nhlapo Commissions decisions. These were now only to be regarded as recommendations.

In May 2016 Judge AC Basson delivered her judgement (published 29 July 2016) at the Gauteng Division of the High Court of South Africa in case number 87483/2014. The applicant was Enoch Makhosonke Mabhena. Among the eight respondents were inter alia the President of the Republic of South Africa, the Nhlapo Commission, the Minister of CoGTA and Mbusi Mahlangu, also known as Mabhoko III. The case dealt with the question "whether the President of the Republic of South Africa had the necessary power to declare the eighth respondent (Mr Mbusi Mahlangu) as a deemed King of the deemed Kingship of the Ndzundza-Mabhoko" (Basson 2016: 2).

I asked Ishmael Ndlovu why Makhosonke had been so offended by Zuma's declaration that there would be so-called deemed king for some more years:

> *He was worried about the material benefits of this other King, his salary, the motorcades, the security personnel, the allowances. He didn't want him to be equal to him in that regard. That is why they struggle.* […] *They are not officially equal, but they are only equal in terms of what they benefit. Let's accept it. These were only meant for the current King. When he is no more we will have something like a Principal Traditional Leader.* […] *It Is going to be very difficult for the subjects, for the followers and the other communities, because the struggle affects the people. As you listen to the people you can understand that they don't love and they don't trust. They don't want to associate with some other people*. (20 June 2017)

In her judgement Basson stressed that "it falls outside the scope of these proceedings to determine whether the Commission's factual findings were unreasonable or irrational" (Basson 2016: 14). Ultimately, she decided that "the President had acted outside his powers" (Basson 2016: 24), because "the Commission investigated and made its decisions on 21 January 2010, before the new Act [i.e. the amendment of the TLGF Act] came into operation. […] The procedures under the old Act thus remained

in place to be followed in respect of the final stage of the procedure, that is, the President's notice" (Basson 2016: 21). Thus the notice regarding the Ndzundza Kingship and its leader were set aside. On 23 September Judge Basson furthermore dismissed the application for leave to appeal by Mabhoko III and CoGTA Minister Des Van Rooyen (Yende 2016), who then petitioned the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein to overturn Basson's decision (Mabena 2017). This petition was turned down by the Supreme Court on 20 February 2017 according to my interlocutors.

Ishmael Ndlovu, certainly one of the most knowledgeable and honest persons I met during my field research, unfortunately once again obscured the Nhlapo Commission judgement and the objective of the High Court case. Also in our second interview he insisted that the Nhlapo Commission recommended that Mabhoko III enjoy the same privileges and status as Makhosonke II until his death. The leader that follows him in the Ndzundza lineage would then not be regarded as King but as Principal Leader. The case at the High Court, according to Ishmael, was about instigating this demotion immediately.

When I interviewed Hendrick Kgomo in July 2017 he made it very clear that all issues had been solved by the courts and that it was now time to move on and heal the stigma in the people's minds. It was Mabhoko's continued legal challenges to the court verdict that did not allow the conflict to end and for the division between the Ndebele to be overcome. Kgomo did not differentiate between the Nhlapo Commission findings and the argumentation of the High Court judgement though, explaining the court had ruled "*The King is one King. There is no way there can be two Kings for the same nation*." Asking him why a traditional matter had to be tried in front of a state court and not in a traditional one, Kgomo laughed and said: "*You can't be a player and a referee at the same time. Tradition cannot solve its own problems*." He nonetheless admitted that Ndzundza would continue to play a significant role in the Kingdom and envisioned a position of Principal Leadership for that lineage. Jeremiah Mabhena, however, took a less conciliatory stance by insisting that Ndzundza was now nothing more than a normal chieftaincy, the way it had always been meant to be. Mabhena explained that solely the Apartheid government was to blame for the current conflict.

> *In '67 it was the first meeting of the Ndebele. The government of that time sent two professors to the meeting. They said to the Ndebeles: 'We are here to tell you every nation is going to have their own land and they will govern themselves.' But the government said: 'The person which must stand up first is William Mbongo Mabhena.'* [i.e. the Manala leader] *He stood up and we said 'Bayete Bayete'* [i.e. a salute given to high-ranking leaders among the Nguni groups in South Africa] *and we sat down. Then they no more called for Mabusa* [i.e. the Ndzundza iNgwenyama] *to stand up. Then when they told us we will get our Homeland and we will govern ourselves, William Mbongo stood up and said 'Yes, tell the government, the entire Transvaal belongs to the Ndebeles and our original place is here at Pretoria.' I think the government then decided they must oppress him. Then we were oppressed, because of those words. Manala was forced to be under Bophuthatswana. We suffered there. Then they established the Ndebele*

Homeland. (…) They gave an entire region to Ndzundza. That's when we went to talk to Litho and Katjibane and those people are also Ndzundza. We agreed with them that we would build our own Mnyamana region. (17 August 2017)

He continued explaining that Manala was so badly suppressed by the regime that they had no other option but to support *Mbokotho* and 'independence', even though they despised both of them. Allegedly, Ndzundza was being favoured by the Skosana government, all government ministers having been of Ndzundza descent just like the Chief Minister. Only through this kind of privilege did the Ndzundza royalty gain the necessary prominence to oppose 'independence' without fearing for their lives, he claimed.

Jeremiah Mabhena had a strange habit that I observed on the four occasions that I saw him. At the *iNgwenyama*'s audience and our first interview in the second half of 2016, at our interview in 2017, and also during his speech at the annual Silamba commemoration at koMjekejeke (Wallmansthal) in early 2018 he always carried a small red book with him: *Indigenous Public Law in KwaNdebele* (Myburgh and Prinsloo 1985). The book seemed to give him a feeling of scholarly authority and whenever he referred to certain customs and traditions he gently tapped its cover. As Lekgoathi has observed, through "published texts, selected narratives of power, authority and succession rights gained the status of trustworthy, even authentic, proof, privileging informants' claims over those of their unwritten counterparts"(Lekgoathi 2009: 70). Interestingly, the mentioned book was produced under the auspices of the Skosana KwaNdebele government according to its foreword. Even more intriguing might be the fact that the book was the only openly referenced literary source next to the Bible in the Nhlapo Commission report of 2008. The 2008 and 2010 Nhlapo Commission reports neither include citations, nor do they indicate the used literature, even though most of their content is obviously copied from other sources such as the ones mentioned in the First *Entr'acte* of this dissertation. This makes the reports a textbook example of plagiarism. It does not surprise that some Traditional representatives have lost trust into state institutions if one considers the degree to which the Commission reports exhibit formal and methodological flaws of grossly negligent nature.

5.4 "Working hand in glove": the Bishop and the Prince

There exists another potential reason for Mabhoko's aversion to addressing the public in person at eRholweni in December 2017. This one was located much closer to the Ndzundza monarch's Royal Kraal in Weltevreden than the mediocre event stage of eRholweni or the High Court in Pretoria.

The external appearance of the African Christian Church at Waterval, a few kilometres south of Weltevreden, does superficially not differ much from those many other churches in the densely settled neighbourhoods of the former Homeland. In general, Waterval's grid streets, developed in a haste during those years when thousands of families resettled to the newly established KwaNdebele, provoke less spectacular sensations than the almost mythical ambience of eMthambothini (the Royal Kraal at Weltevreden) or the Mapoch Caves at eRholweni. However, the

church's somewhat spartan environment is upgraded by its charismatic leader Bishop Mthombeni, who makes the impression to know every trick in the book and in the two interviews that he granted me he skilfully presented himself as a man with power and ambition. As soon as Patrick and I had sat down in his office, Mthombeni produced a list of organisations that he was involved in and the offices that he held within them, which included a construction company, a disability care home, and a chieftaincy. He showed us pictures of a trip to the Netherlands in 1996 that a Dutch missionary had sponsored to raise funds for a bible college in KwaMhlanga. On a later occasion he would ask me whether I could not organise such a trip for him to Germany, which I had to humbly decline with reference to the limited funds of a doctorate student.

He then pointed to an organisation on position seven of the mentioned list – Asisikimeni Community Development and Advice Organization – for which he acted as Chairperson. This organization, he explained, was deeply involved in the leadership dispute between the royal houses of Ndzundza-Mabhoko and Manala-Mbhongo and would be an essential part in the resolving of the conflict. I asked him to elaborate on that matter, but he simply handed me a letter and asked me to read it. It was dated 09 May 2017 and addressed to the national Department of Traditional Affairs (DTA). Therein the legal representatives of Makhosonke II referred to the 20 February 2017 dismissal of the Supreme Court petition by the Minister of CoGTA and Mabhoko III. They enquired what further proceedings this entailed and continued by demanding that President Zuma's contested government notice no. 1027 from November 2010 be publicly revoked. Further they demanded that all titles bestowed upon Mabhoko III be erased and that all his benefits be cancelled and retroactively reimbursed to the Kingship of Manala-Mbhongo. The letter's writers not only brought forward such enormous demands,

but had, possibly in an attempt to humiliate him, also misspelled Mabhoko's name in three different ways, despite their obvious familiarity with the case. The DTA's response letter referred the legal representatives to CoGTA of Mpumalanga Province for questions regarding budget allocation, but reassured them that the judgement's implementation was already on its way. It furthermore informed them that Mabhoko's legal representatives had filed an application to review the original 2008 Nhlapo Commission report, which determined Manala as the only kingship within the Ndebele nation. Mthombeni then handed me another piece of paper, which was dated 12 September 2016 and bore CoGTA's letterhead. It was a written reply to National Assembly question number 1681, brought forward by high-ranking DA member HCC Krüger. Therein the government confirmed that it regarded the Ndzundza Ndebele as a recognised kingship, but remained rather vague in its definition and avoided making any concessions that would have supported two equal kingships within the Ndebele nation. Nonetheless, Mthombeni insisted "*The government have committed themselves that the Ndzundza have their own kingship*" and then declared that Prince Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu would soon be elected as leader of the Ndzundza until the conflict with Manala could finally be resolved. He explained that Ndzundza would not accept to be led by Manala, that Mabhoko III had failed the nation and had officially been removed as King, and that the nation could not possibly stay without a leader. He then proceeded to show us seven further pieces of correspondence to portray Asisikimeni's involvement in the envisioned replacement of Mabhoko III.

(1) The first letter, dated 24 August 2015, by Asisikimeni addressed Mabhoko himself and requested a meeting at the Royal Kraal on 06 September to discuss urgent matters. According to Mthombeni, Mabhoko did not partake in the meeting. (2) The next letter, dated 05 November 2016, was also formulated on behalf of Asisikimeni and addressed the President of South Africa, the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, and the Ministers of CoGTA on the national and provincial level. It brought forward a list of several grievances against Mabhoko III. These included among others his absence at meetings, the moving of the Royal Residence away from its original location, his failure to address high rates of death during initiation rituals in 2013, embezzlement of public funds and demanding monetary donations from his Chiefs without subsequently accounting for their usage. The letter concluded with the request that a meeting be facilitated by the government officials between Asisikimeni, CoGTA and the Ndzundza Royal Family. Two response letters from CoGTA, dated (3) 10 November 2015 and (4) 28 June 2016, merely acknowledged receipt of Asisikimeni's letter and promised the Minister's response at the earliest opportunity. (5) The next letter from Asisikimeni to CoGTA was dated 08 November 2016, one year after the previous one, and requested the Minister to respond. It furthermore drew the Minister's attention to the fact that Mabhoko III had in the meantime lost his court case against Makhosonke II, but continued to hold office as King of Ndzundza. (6) This letter was responded to in an email by a secretary at the department, who had been assigned to investigate the accusations and

therefore requested a meeting with the Bishop and his team. (7) A letter from Asisikimeni dated 25 November 2016 then addressed the entire Ndzundza-Mabhoko royalty and called for a meeting at eMthambothini to discuss the High Court judgement and decide on future leadership. Explicitly invited were only Chiefs of the senior Ndzundza branches like Ndzundza Pungutsha and Sokhulumi, Mabhoko III having been prominently omitted in the invite.

Having spoken to Jeremiah Mabhena only two weeks before, who had blamed the leadership conflict on Apartheid policies, I asked Mthombeni who in his opinion was to blame for the current situation. His response was in line with the observation made by Buthelezi and Skosana that "competing claimants and their followers challenge their rivals' genealogical status and adherence to local custom." (2018: 123). He explained:

> *As we understand, the two brothers of Ndzundza, Cornelius and James, they started a fight. Yes, James demanded the kingship back from his brother. Then his brother he said 'No let me take this kingship to Manala' other than giving it to James. And then Manala it is where he started to speak to* [President] *Mbeki, and then they launch a commission to start researching about the chiefs. It started there.* (31 August 2017)

Through this narrative Mthombeni conveyed that control over the fate of the Ndzundza Kingship had always been in the hands of Ndzundza-Mabhoko and no other entity. It was only lost due to the actions of the direct ancestors of the judicially defeated incumbent, whom he wished dethroned permanently. I steered the conversation back to the person of Prince Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu. Mthombeni explained that, while Mabhoko had remained silent, in the meantime a meeting had occurred with Makhosonke II to inform him of the intended replacement of Mabhoko III through an *imbizo* (public assembly) by Prince Andries as an Acting King. He would lead the Kingdom until an agreement with Manala could be reached. I wondered out loud whether the Ndzundza Royal Family would agree to such an approach. Mthombeni replied:

> *The Royal Family does no longer speak with one voice.* […] *Mabhoko was not removed by us. He was removed by the government. And it is not Andries who removed him. He was removed by the government as you see in these documents. So we as Ndzundza nation, we cannot stay without a leader. That is what we* [i.e. Asisikimeni] *are doing*. (31 August 2017)

He continued to explain that ultimately Manala had to decide whether they wanted to try make peace with Ndzundza under a new leadership: "*It happened in 1986. We don't want that. Now if Manala continues about that, it is going to happen again. We are trying to avoid that*." In making reference to 1986, the year of the beginning of the anti-independence uprising in KwaNdebele, he implied that the streets, homes and offices of the former Homeland could experience the same kind of violence again. 1986 was also the year in which Makhosonke II ascended to the Kingship of Manala after his uncle

allegedly took his own life fearing the revenge of the angry protesters that attempted the assassination of significant representatives of the Manala Royal Family (see the story of Ishmael Ndlovu above).

We met the Bishop again three months later on 07 December 2017. Patrick had gone out of his way to secure a meeting with him and Prince Andries Mahlangu, whom the Bishop foresaw to be the next *iNgwenyama* of Ndzundza. Before meeting the Prince we had another long conversation with Mthombeni at his church offices though. The summer rains had come: the Bishop struggled with a common cold and complained about the leakages in his office roof when we arrived in pouring rain. However, when I enquired regarding the latest developments around the kingship his face lightened up. Mabhoko III was losing control: his security guards had been removed by the government and so had been his salary and other benefits. "*He received a salary from the government to unite the Nation but he failed*." Mthombeni proclaimed. And still the incumbent seemed to make no effort to rise to the occasion, which also hampered preparations for the aforementioned upcoming annual commemoration at eRholweni. No public announcements had been made so far and no other royal Traditional Leaders had declared their participation yet. Then Mthombeni explained that things would look much different in the years to come, because a prophecy had been fulfilled. The prophecy had been made by the Bishop of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC Star/Naledi) and an old lady living at KwaMaza. They predicted that a member of the Ndzundza-Mabhoko Royal Family would bring peace to the Ndebele nation, if he were to undergo a leadership initiation ritual at KwaMaza to become its new Chief. Mthombeni explained: "*As God used his prophets in the Old Testament so does He use them today. People cannot ignore the relevance of such prophecies.*" The ritual had been performed on 11 November 2017 at KwaMaza, the former Ndzundza settlement at the Steelpoort River where the Litho Pungutsha lineage had split from those Ndzundza under Magodongo's leadership. It involved the slaughtering of a cow and the use of its organs for proceedings that Mthombeni did not want to describe in detail. The hope was now, once Prince Andries Mbangwa was officially recognised as Chief of KwaMaza by the government, that the population would also accept him as a new leader of Ndzundza. Mthombeni founded this hope furthermore on Mbangwa's opposition to Homeland 'independence' in the past. He showed me a 1988 newspaper article on the court case against the disenfranchisement of women in KwaNdebele (see 1E.2.5). The article entitled *Five very unlikely suffragettes fight for the right to vote* was accompanied with a half-page picture of the Prince being surrounded by approximately twenty women, who seemed happy to have him in their midst. Then Mthombeni took out his smartphone and showed us pictures of the ritual. After having examined the newspaper article and the ritual pictures with the appropriate amount of interest I questioned Mthombeni whether Makhosonke would accept Andries as *iNgwenyama* of the Ndzundza. In his response he reiterated the threats of civil war that he had made during our first interview:

This thing is going to cause a revolution. Like 1986, there was a revolution that occurred among the Ndebeles. We are afraid that this revolution will happen again, if Manala continue saying that he is the King of the whole Nation. He is going to cause that revolution again. We want to plead with him to stop claiming the kingship of the entire Ndebele Nation. We as Asisikimeni we don't like that. We want this unity again. Manala was at Bophuthatswana and the Ndzundzas they brought him here to build the Ndebele Nation. When the Ndebele government was built, suddenly he changed his ambition to be above Ndzundza. The Ndzundza they don't accept that. […] *Manala must choose: conflict or peace. Ndzundza do not accept him as their King. They are prepared to fight, viciously*. (07 December 2017)

I then wondered when and how they could convince Makhosonke of that danger of revolution. Mthombeni admitted that there had already been another recent meeting with the *iNgwenyama* wherein he had been made aware of the ritual having been performed at KwaMaza. At the meeting they proposed the establishment of a mixed commission to find a solution to which Makhosonke agreed. On 16 December the public protector would come to Klipfontein for a dinner to discuss the conflict among other matters. Later during my field research I learned that the dinner had been postponed due to the ANC electoral conference. Our conversation then steered into a different direction and we agreed to meet again after lunch to go and meet Prince Andries at Weltevreden.

Arriving at Prince Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu's house, the rain that had hours before challenged the roof of the Bishop's office had subsided. Nonetheless it had flooded the sandy roads between Waterval and Weltevreden and also seemed to have filled several buckets inside the Prince's kitchen. From the kitchen table, where we sat down for our conversation, one could see the fading painted walls of eMthambothini, the old Royal Kraal, in the not so far distance and a radio played loud Christian music in the corner.

Interview information 5.8

Prince Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu: Member of the Ndzundza Royal Family. Former school principal, KLA member and 'independence' opponent. He was interviewed on 07 December 2017 at his home in Weltevreden.

Mahlangu went to turn the radio off once I asked him for permission to record our conversation. He explained that he had given several interviews to other researchers before and therefore knew about the challenges of making good recordings. Reminiscing the time when he supported the research of Chris Van Vuuren of the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria he was spreading an air of academic sophistication. Nonetheless he remained friendly and down-to-earth throughout the conversation, which seemed to discontent the Bishop, who insisted on officially introducing "*His Royal Highness, the future King of the AmaNdzundza*".

As an opening question I asked Prince Mahlangu to tell me his life story and how he related to the current conflict. He began by referring to the 20 February petition rejection by the Supreme Court. Once again it seemed that the court case had been made out to be about more than it legally was. Mahlangu harshly criticised Judge Basson: "*The judge said the Ndzundza nation did not have and did*

not deserve kingship. And that was a very pathetic case, because we as Ndzundzas we know exactly we were born and bred knowing exactly that we are in existence and our kingdom or kingship existed 500 years back." To support this claim he began to recite the lineage of his people starting with the Ndebele migration from the Drakensberg to the Transvaal. He then reminisced the time that the Ndzundza arrived at Weltevreden and turned it into an arable settlement.

> *Since Mayisha took over, there was no problem. They were working hand in glove with the other group, the other Ndebele called AmaNala* [i.e. Manala] *under King Makhosonke. King Makhosonke I and Mabhoko I they never quarrelled. They actually consolidated their differences and made peace. Each one had to compromise and stayed among themselves with their subjects. That was until 1950. There was no school here. King Mayisha asked for a teacher from Manala. They seconded a teacher from Lodini* [i.e. Loding] *in 1951. The late King Mayisha he respected the Manala and the rituals. A delegation was sent to Manala to negotiate for a wife. NaThubana was given to Mayisha as one of his wives. She gave birth to three kids here. She was the one, who was significant to get the teacher here. There was a very close relationship. That teacher taught me in 1965 from his classroom. He went back to Lodini in 1966, but not without bringing more teachers from Manala. There was no Apartheid between Ndzundza and Manala. We also got a teacher called Derek Masombuka from Witlaagte. We got many teachers from other Ndebele, because in our area there was no learned person at all, because education came late this side. Our people were still primitive, they came from far away areas. But then in 1979 the AmaNdebele obtained the status of Tribal Authorities. AmaNala that side and we Ndzundzas this side. And then they went for Territorial Authority status and then they obtained status of own government. I was one of the prominent parliamentarians of the past, because I am a teacher by profession and the late King asked me to come to his rescue by resigning from my post as a principal. Then I was seconded to parliament.* […] *The reason I was designated was because we were to fight against the intended action of KwaNdebele parliament of opting for an island in an ocean, which was independence. And yet people were fighting for the liberation of the country. So we did not want to opt for an island. We intended obtaining liberation of the country. So we struggled and successfully we obtained a success in obtaining that liberation for our people, though we were tortured by the system. I was detained for 18 months in Petersburg. October 1976* [1986 more likely]. *I returned back home in April 1988.* (07 December 2017)

Prince Andries explained he had always had a good relationship with the people of Manala, especially during his time as principal of a school in Loding (1980-1982), and he underlined his own pacifist motivation: "*In the riots, it cost a lot of lives. There was bloodshed. People died innocently somehow. They were molested. I don't like people doing that to one another. I want us to negotiate instead. Confrontation doesn't solve.*"

As a way forward he envisioned a meeting between the Public Protector and the Manala and Ndzundza royalty at a round table, including public security representatives and religious leaders. Dialogue and involvement of the wider population were to be the driving forces beneath this reconciliation. Once a decision had been reached among the leadership elite, it should be disseminated to the grassroots through a public vote. A result of that process, he hoped, would be the re-establishment of an Ndzundza Kingship and his ascension as leader of the AmaNdzundza.

According to our rituals the position of Mabhoko is not to be left vacant as it is right now. It must be filled in in a day's time. But because of the differences among the royalty itself, it is so difficult to find a proper person for that job. They discriminate me, even though they do not have a person that is conducive for the post. That is the main problem. But most of AmaNdzundza prefer me. That is why we are preparing to have that post very soon. I am going to be among the leaders. We are going to lead this people. Currently we are paving some ways through legal action. But the ritual says that the post must not be left open as it is. Not necessarily the kingship, not necessarily that, but the leadership. There should be royal leadership, because our people are getting lost now. They don't know where to get advice from. There is so much more that could be done through Traditional Leadership. But there is no Traditional Leadership now. (07 December 2017)

And he underscored his competence to lead the Ndzundza Ndebele once more before our interview reached an end:

There are some elements in the Royal Family, who are contemplating for the same post as I am, even though they do not qualify. Their strategy is to divide the people. They spread lies, but they have been fruitless, because people are thirsty for information. It is known that I am one of the people who usually cut the cake into size. My opponents are afraid of me, because when they sit at the same table, nobody can outclass me. (07 December 2017)

We also discussed matters concerning land reform and the role of Traditional Leadership with the Prince. However, to include them at this point would go beyond the practical scope of this chapter.

Neither the Bishop, nor Prince Andries would make an appearance at eRholweni that year and news of success or failure of their plan to replace the Ndzundza leadership and reinstate the kingship were not made public after my departure. On 03 March Makhosonke II hosted the 38th annual commemoration of King Silamba at koMjekejeke (Wallmansthal), where an impressive number of Ndzundza Chiefs called for Ndebele unity under senior Manala leadership. Makhosonke himself addressed the issue rather late in his speech, but stressed that the Ndebele would be outdone by other South African nations, if they did not appear as a united body lead by tradition and custom: "*If we do not unite now, one day the Constitution will read: 'Once there was a people named AmaNdebele'*"[35].

Despite his successes Makhosonke has also faced harsh criticism recently. He refuses to visit and support the Loding community where the original Royal Kraal and the graves of previous Manala Kings are located. He had the marriage with his *indlunkulu* wife, given to him by his brothers, declared void in court and remarried 26-year-old Princess Sekhothali Seeiso from Lesotho (Mahlangu 2019; Mahamba 2019). Ageing at around sixty he has thus far not been able to father a male heir to the throne, which already stirs fears that another leadership dispute lies ahead. Furthermore, there have recently been allegations of corruption involving coal prospecting near Loding. Ninety boreholes had been drilled in the area and it was agreed that the community should receive R1100 per borehole. The

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[35] *In loco* translated by personal interpreter

mining company claimed it had paid the due amount in full, but no money arrived at the local council. The money was traced by the community and found to have been deposited in a covered account with no access for the community. When I asked Ishmael Ndlovu, whom he suspected this account belonged to, he asked in return '*Who has owned Roodekoppies for nearly hundred years*?' and nodded southwards in the direction of Klipfontein, where Makhosonke II holds court.

Almost three years after I left former KwaNdebele I received the news that Prince Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu had been murdered in the evening of 9 January 2021. The identity of two gunmen who shot him outside his parents' home and their motive remain unidentified at the time of writing, but I was let know that the police never fully investigated as it was understood to be a matter of traditional contention. Ikosi Sipho Mahlangu, chair of the National House of Traditional Leaders and first son of late Prince James Mahlangu was quoted saying: "Prince Andries Mahlangu leaves us in a very difficult position because he was one of those that were leading the unity programme that the Royal Family had started where he was unifying the Royal Family and also unifying the Ndzundza nation." (Masemola 2021)

5.5 Summary

This concludes the first of three empirical chapters. It covered a range of topics that will often be presented and discussed separately as distinct research inquiries. First, there was the relation between Traditional Authorities and the South African state and the different ways in which this relation is shaped by laws, administrative structures, and power dynamics. Then there was the question of land reform, in particular tenure reform and land restitution, and an insight into how both 'traditional' actors, civil servants and politicians regard one another in this particular arena. And finally there was the issue that has been corroding Ndebele leadership structures from within for several decades: the leadership dispute between Manala and Ndzundza. First, this issue was discussed from the official perspective, taking into account the findings of the Nhlapo Commission, presidential declarations, and court rulings, and how significant local actors made sense of them. Secondly, the effects of the dispute were followed to the inside structures of the Ndzundza leadership where a Bishop and a Prince forged plans to replace the incumbent Ndzundza leader and to re-establish the Ndzundza Kingship. While each of these contexts would have provided sufficient empirical data to warrant a chapter of its own, I found it crucial to present them together to illustrate their connectedness through structure, agency, and strategy.

All of the presented actors had one or two things to say on all of these issues, just like most of the interlocutors that remained unmentioned in this chapter. All of them navigated a multitude of fields (in the Bourdieusian sense), and when asked about them, presented themselves, their agenda, their history, and their loyalties in a light that was obviously guided by strategic ambition. Despite being Manala by birth, Ishmael Ndlovu presented good reasons to dislike the *iNgwenyama*, and despite that dislike he was a fervent supporter of Traditional Leadership in general. Hendrick Kgomo defended the continuation of PTOs, because to him they protect Black Africans from losing their land all over again. Bheka Ngwenya, despite being professionally tied to 'traditional' land administration expressed the view that modernisation will inevitably erase Traditional Authorities one day. Bishop Mthombeni, faced with the demotion of the Ndzundza through a variety of democratic institutions, nonetheless believed that it was the incumbent's failures that had caused this downfall and that a replacement would be sufficient to motivate government representatives and 'traditional' opponents to revoke numerous court rulings and commission reports. Jeremiah Mabhena, the *iNgwenyama*'s Royal Historian enjoyed his reputation as expert and ultimately his self-confidence and sophistication seem to have convinced the members of the Nhlapo Commission to believe his version of history despite the existence of a multitude of contradictory accounts. He thus successfully analysed and manipulated already existing structures to create new more advantageous ones for his seniors.

At the same time it was shown how tactical ability and strategic inclination are nonetheless subject to a range of strategic selectivities. Mr Mkhabela and his colleagues tolerated the continued issuance of PTOs, because they did not have the resources and the legal guidelines to effectively and efficiently replace the old system. Councillor Aphane, who tried his best to administer the land that had been successfully reclaimed, was faced with numerous legal battles due to the botched re-opening of land restitution and the discontent of his co-claimants. Finally, Prince Andries constitutes the saddest example of strategy being restrained by contextual selectivities: his leadership ambitions threatened those who benefited from the status quo and his strategically expressed admonitions of reignited revolutionary violence ultimately seem to have been related to the violence that ended his life.

Chapter 6 – The Litho Complex

The small settlement of Rapotokwane on the farm Witlaagte became a new home to the Litho Ndzundza Ndebele in the early 1920s. They had to leave their previous settlements around today's Rust de Winter Dam, some 25 kilometres away. Rust de Winter (sometimes also spelled Rust der Winter, especially when referring to the local farms 178 JR and 180 JR of the same name), being a fertile region with abundant water resources and moderate climate provided excellent grazing grounds for the Pretoria-based farmers during the dry winters of the South African Highveld. The area was not demarcated for Black occupation in the 1913 Natives Land Act and very soon it became clear that the descendants and followers of Litho would not be able to remain in what they referred to as Mogotlholo. All negotiation efforts remained fruitless and they were offered a portion of the nearby farm Witlaagte for purchase, even though it was nearly ten kilometres away from the next natural water source and provided poor vegetation for grazing. Nonetheless, the newly wedded women of the clan went to Witlaagte to perform the necessary rituals to allow the coming generations to peacefully settle there. Wearing the blankets of married Ndebele women, they rolled on the ground to plead with the land to treat their soon to be born children well. The dusty blankets were then carried back to Mogotlholo to deliver the message that the rituals had been performed. Thus, the new village was named Sopotokwane, meaning "*The place where we have rolled*"[36], which was also the name given to the first male child born there.

In 1961 the Tswana Territorial Authority (Bophuthatswana) was established and in it the Litho-Ndebele-Ndzundza Tribal Authority. Despite their own tribal representation the local Ndebele population remained a minority in the larger area, being surrounded by Tswana and Pedi. Furthermore, Chief Minister of the Bophuthatswana Legislative Assembly and later President of Bophuthatswana Lucas Mangope from the beginning followed a strategy of Tswana nationalism and disapproved of the *So-* prefix of Sopotokwane as it indicated Ndebele origin. It was exchanged for the Tswana prefix *Ra-* and therefore the village until today is generally known and referred to as Rapotokwane. When in the early 1970s plans were developed for an Ndebele Homeland, the Litho Ndebele leaders supported this idea to gain independence from Tswana majority rule. The village was demarcated as one of two exclaves (the other being Katjibane/Kalkfontein further north) of the newly established KwaNdebele Homeland, which was granted self-rule by the Apartheid government in 1981. While the neighbouring Bophuthatswana had nominally been declared an 'independent' state in 1977, the majority of KwaNdebele's population rejected this idea for their own case resulting in the previously discussed uprising in 1986, which halted the 'independence' process until the final dismantling of all Homelands

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[36] Conversation with Jonathan Mnguni, 30 November 2017

in the course of South Africa's transition to democracy 1990-94 (see 1E.2). The end of Apartheid also brought new provincial borders, demarcating Rapotokwane as part of Mpumalanga Province. However, in 2005/06 the provincial borders were redrawn, which left Rapotokwane on the Limpopo side of the provincial border, while the rest of former KwaNdebele remained in Mpumalanga.

6.1. Litho Origins

Rarely any discussion among the Ndebele elders of Rapotokwane goes by without reference to their origins. These origins may be based on spatial movements, hereditary descent, but also religious and customary practices. While some elders are able to recite their family's praise song by heart and thus explain their relationship to the earliest Ndebele leaders, others may be able to automatically point out the directions in which their people supposedly migrated hundreds of years ago. Church membership goes beyond individual avowal of faith in Rapotokwane; it indicates family origins, it influences political allegiance and explains the adherence or rejection of customary rituals. While the phrase "*Tradition is where you come from*" is often used to strengthen claims to autochthony in arguments over land rights (see Chapter 4.3), it is most regularly used by Rapotokwane residents when referring to their diverse origins.

The most relevant lineages of the Southern Transvaal Ndebele have been extensively discussed in chapter 1E.1 and will only be amended by a little more information on the Litho clan at this point. The descendants of Sebajelo, who had denied allegiance to Magodongo as leader of the main Ndzundza branch around the turn of the 18th to the 19th century at KwaMaza, were eventually known as Litho lineage. This group had neither encountered Mzilikazi nor was it involved in the Mapoch War. Literature and oral accounts differ regarding the exact order of chiefs among the Litho Ndzundza after the split. They also differ crucially regarding the question from which house (wife) of Mahlangu they descended. However, it is certain that they left the area around today's Stofberg and took a north-western route towards Zebediela and joined forces with the Kekana people for a while, but after a few minor skirmishes along the way with other people they settled between today's Bela-Bela and Hammanskraal. The place is mentioned as Lukraal or Masesanene by those who refer to the grave of Chief Pungutsha Litho Mahlangu. He died around the early middle of the 19th century. Nowadays it is assumed that his grave lies somewhere at the northern fringes of Hammanskraal.

Jas-David, whose brother Sethinda split off and settled at Katjibane, eventually settled in the area that is today known as Rust de Winter. Their main settlement was named Mogotlholo, where Jas-David died in 1908 having fathered ten sons with four different wives. His first son Hosia took over the chieftaincy and died ten years later during an influenza epidemic without leaving any children. It is, supposedly, during his leadership that White settlers arrived in the area and began constructing the Rust de Winter Dam (finished 1935), which until today feeds into a canal system that provides the farms of the region with water. The chieftaincy was passed on to Hosia's half-brother Witbooi. He acted as a regent on behalf of Hosia's brother Lazarus, who was too young to take office. In the time of Witbooi, the descendants of Litho were eventually forced to leave Mogotlholo and to purchase two portions of the farm Witlaagte between 1921 and 1926. Having until then settled in an area of 30 000

to 40 000 hectares, the Litho Ndzundza were now forced to settle on 500 Morgen (ca. 430 hectares). In 1931 the last group of the Lithos moved from Rust de Winter to Witlaagte. The phrase "*500 Morgen*" is until this day referenced whenever an elder of Rapotokwane wants to depict the ruthless reduction of their living space by the colonial regime. I was denied the privilege of seeing the original title deed of the two Witlaagte portions and most interlocutors identified differing places where it is kept or denied knowing of the document's whereabouts, but it's content was treated as common knowledge by the village elders. The title deed of 1926 supposedly lists Witbooi as an acting Chief, which up to this very day is cause for dispute (see 6.2). Nonetheless, the land was officially registered in the name of the relevant department's minister's name: "The tribe got title to the land though it was held in Trust for them by the Minister of Native Affairs." (Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture 2016: 47).

Once Lazarus was old enough to take office, the chieftaincy was handed over to him. A number of interlocutors mentioned his repeated suspension as leader, blaming his temperamental nature or his lack of leadership skills. The only official source I could identify on the matter was, however, his aforementioned temporary suspension in 1985 through KwaNdebele Chief Minister Simon S Skosana after Lazarus had asked the South African government for Rapotokwane to be reintegrated into Bophuthatswana (see 1E.2.5). While Van Vuuren mentioned one Frederick Sorhulubi as acting Chief in this instance, most of my interlocutors explained that Witbooi, and later Patrick, took over on Lazarus's behalf whenever he had been suspended. Up to this day Lazarus has a reputation in Rapotokwane. While some admire his disciplinary rule and his way to negotiate with the Apartheid authorities and the KwaNdebele government, others despise him for exactly those reasons. Liza* (65) told me the story how she was arrested in Hammanskraal in 1969 after an altercation with a boyfriend. Lazarus put her into jail for weeks and she received twenty lashes on her back through his hands. "*I hated him till he died*", she proudly proclaimed in our interview conversation (25 May 2017).

In the 1960s and 1970s several fights broke out in the village. The starting point was supposedly a deal with the Apartheid government: Rapotokwane would receive a High School on the condition that non-Ndebele people, mostly Shangaan/Tsonga from Giyane, would be allowed to settle there. While Lazarus and his followers supposedly negotiated and supported the deal, some of his opponents took advantage of ethnic hostilities and attempted to force Lazarus to resign. Monique* (Interview 1 June 2017), who arrived in Rapotokwane in the 1930s after having been born and raised in one of the outer settlements of Mogotlholo, remembered that Lazarus was kidnapped, packed in a sack and thrown into the dam at the centre of the village one night in 1965. He was however rescued by his supporters. The riots, which another one of my interlocutors referred to as *NoLtswayile*, took place along neighbourhood borders and local elders refer to this time as "*sleeping under the trees*", because it was not safe to sleep in one's home for fear of petrol bombs. "*Parents were afraid for their children so they*

hid them in the dirty washing boxes", Liza remembered. Eventually the Shangaan families settled in newly established village sections named Tsamahansi and New Stand and the High School was built.

Another change that came about in Lazarus's time was the abandonment of initiation schools in 1968. As Anton* (Interview 1 June 2017) explained to me "*They dropped the mountain school. Our tradition now is the bible.*" Therefore, those Ndebele of Rapotokwane, who want to participate in initiation practices today must travel to other settlements while the local Pedi and Shangaan population holds their initiation schools for boys in the veld surrounding the village. Some of my interlocutors claimed that the abolishment of initiation schools worked in the favour of some influential families. Supposedly, initiation schools were occasions to 'test' an initiate's descent, if they had been born outside of the village and to investigate the 'true' fatherhood in the cases of those who had potential chances to inherit political power. To mention off record that a political opponent might actually be an 'illegitimate' child or should be bearing a different surname was a common tactic that I observed among Rapotokwane's political actors (see below).

One of the most impressive residences in Rapotokwane is the former house of Lazarus, which was being lavishly renovated by a distant relative of his as I left the village in early 2018. When Lazarus's widow passed away in August 2017 some high-ranking clan representatives and Headmen made a statement of disrespect by arriving late after all speeches were over. Lazarus passed on in 1995/96 without leaving any sons. What followed was a quick succession of (Acting) Chiefs (i.e. Patrick, Nicolas, Witbooi II), who were Witbooi's (great-) grandsons as both his immediate sons were regarded unfit for office. Eventually Witbooi's great-grandson Vuma took over the chieftaincy from his brother Witbooi II some five or six years before I began my field research in Rapotokwane in August 2016.

6.2. Leadership Disputes

Rapotokwane is located in a rural setting, surrounded by farms, and usually only passed through by people travelling between the Rust de Winter area and Nokaneng or Mmametlhake. It has a primary school, a high school, a clinic and a public library. However, due to its location at the outer fringes of Limpopo Province and the Bela-Bela Municipality major government services are located at least an hour's drive away. The closest police station is in Rust de Winter, but I witnessed no regular visits of any official custodians of law and order in Rapotokwane. The relationship between Rapotokwane's elected ANC councillor and the local population was seen as poor by most inhabitants. Thus, any kind of administration, negotiation, jurisdiction or mediation usually happens through the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Council, or, as the locals referred to it, '*the tribal*'. As previously mentioned, Rapotokwane was bought by those families of the Litho clan that were driven out of Rust de Winter in the 1920s. Thus, land ownership practically lies with the descendants of these families and the Traditional Council administers it on their behalf. They refer to it as communal land. Other occupants have received the land through PTO, issued by the Traditional Council.

However, during my time in Rapotokwane, the Litho clans presented themselves as divided and those Headmen that sat on the Traditional Council fought one another for power. The conflict among the 'traditional' elite in Rapotokwane arose from two different historical facts; the first being that Witbooi at the time of the Rapotokwane purchase was named as an Acting Chief. Some explained this through the fact that his brothers were simply too young to rule and Witbooi therefore served as Regent. Another group, however, claimed that the Litho Ndzundza had decided after the passing of Jas-David to become a more democratic society that would only need a Chief as an official representative when dealing with the Pretoria government and other African groups, but not as decision maker. The latter explanation, however, became increasingly unpopular among the local elite and thus rather the status of Witbooi and his brothers and nephews was at the centre of the debate.

The second contributor to the dispute lies in the role of Jas-David's four wives (see Figure 6.1 for orientation). As laid out in the First *Entr'acte*, a Chief would be given a so-called 'royal wife' from a specific family to give birth to the future heir of the chieftaincy. She would stay in the *indlunkulu/ibandla* (the great/royal house). The left-hand wife, known as *ikohlo*, would usually be the first one to get married to the Chief, but her sons would merely have the right to rule as regents as long as the rightful heir was too young or in any other way unfit for office. The right-hand wife was referred to as *iquadi*. In the case of Jas-David a fourth wife existed, which according to an incomplete document that was handed to me by one of the contenders for the chieftaincy was defined as substitute *indlunkulu* (royal). This five-page document was supposedly composed by South African state ethnologist P.L. Breutz, but as it was handed to me in a highly politically charged context and as

I had no way of verifying its origin, it must be treated with caution and should probably be regarded as a fabricated ethnographic artefact. That same document, however, also mentions Jas-David's *ikohlo* (left hand) wife as his Christian wife. Her two sons, Hosia and Lazarus, eventually took over the chieftaincy. Due to the fact that both of them had no eligible heirs of their own the descendants of the other sons of Jas-David continue to argue about their respective priority of succession. When I presented the Breutz document to one of the local elders he exclaimed "*This is shit!*" and told a story in which the substitute *indlunkulu* wife was merely a matter of "*vat 'n sit*"[37], i.e. a concubine. He declared the document a blunt fabrication.

Figure 6.1 A simplified skeleton genealogy of the descendants of Litho. Group 1: the male descendants of Jas-David's *ikohlo* wife Mtshabo/Nomakgoba from the Masango family. Group 2: the male descendants of Jas-David's *iquadi* wife NaZokwe from the Masilela family. Group 3: the one male descendant of Jas-David's first *indlunkulu* wife Mayaphana from the Aphane family. Group 4: the male descendants of Jas-David's 'substitute *indlunkulu*' wife Leah from the Masilela family. Sources include oral accounts, publications (Myburgh and Prinsloo 1985; Breutz 1989; Van Vuuren 1992) and documents of unknown origin. *This tree does merely serve as an orientation and is subject to dispute.*

Current Chief Vuma N Mahlangu, also referred to as Kgobongwane or Mkatshane, is the great-grandson of Witbooi, who had served as acting Chief and originates form the *iquadi* (right hand) wife. Opponents of this line's claim to power have mentioned that Witbooi was heavily disabled and thus none of his descendants should qualify as Traditional Leaders. Vuma was instated a few years ago by

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[37] Afrikaans, "grab and sit" or "take a seat", refers to an unmarried couple living together.

the Royal Family with strong support from Alfred Mahlangu and his half-brother Hendrik "Buibui"[38] Mahlangu, who are/were[39] descendants of Mqotjhwa, who supposedly had the same mother as Witbooi, but is mentioned as Motlholwa in the ominous Breutz document. The first 'royal wife' of the *indlunkulu* had a son called Solomon, who, however, never became Chief and whose descendants (if there are any) are unknown. Therefore, there are claims for the chieftaincy by the descendants of John-Soselembe, son of the substitute *indlunkulu* wife, who others claim was merely a concubine. John-Soselembe had a son called Sebatshelwa Matthews, who claimed the leadership over the Litho Ndzundza for himself and actually envisioned himself as the leader of a newly united Ndebele nation under his chosen name King Litho V. His nephew Ignatius Mahlangu, whose signature generally reads "*Prince: Iggy Litho*", and who was known to me as Iggy (see Chapter 2 and Textbox 1E.2), has continued this struggle for power after the passing of Matthews. He made an attempt to wrest the chieftaincy from Vuma during my field research in late 2017. Back then he united most clan heads against Chief Vuma due to allegations of corruption and relayed to me that he aimed to take the chieftaincy himself. However, some of his closest allies uttered concerns about his occasional temperamental outbursts being a hinderance to these ambitions and explained off-record that they preferred Hosea Sokale II[40], Vuma's cousin from the *iquadi* lineage, to take over.

In the following I shall attempt to characterize some of the most crucial actors in Rapotokwane's leadership dispute in late 2017. Some of them are more familiar to me than others and it is surely unfair of me to describe the characteristics and motivations of the latter after having spoken to them only a few times. It is nonetheless necessary to portray them, because even a superficial description allows me to depict the tensions that took hold of Rapotokwane's leadership at the time.

Chief Vuma took office at a rather young age (in his early 30s). Several interlocutors described him to me as humble and respectful towards the elders and praised his ambition to lobby for better community support from the government. Even though we only spoke a few times very shortly at official events, I got the same impression. One of his *indunas* described him to me as "*young in years, but grown in spirit*". While most dignitaries at a National Arbor Week celebration in Rapotokwane sat in the shade to gossip, he had his working gear on, helped to plant a tree and went on a tour around the village to clean the streets of litter. More critical voices, however, uttered concern about the fact that he lived in Hammanskraal and regularly remained absent from council meetings despite repeated requests by members of the Traditional Council and the Royal Family for him to move to Rapotokwane

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[38] Derived from 'Babuyele', meaning 'the people have returned'.
[39] Hendrik passed away in 2017
[40] Hosea Sokale II was only mentioned to me twice, in very short informal conversations. I have neither met him, nor was I able to establish his exact relationship to the other Lithos of the *iquadi* lineage as he has not been named in the, admittedly by now outdated, literature on the Transvaal Ndebele. He is therefore not to be found on the genealogy in Figure 6.1.

permanently. At a public event held by SASSA I witnessed how he jumped to his feet to dance during a choir performance and the crowd cheered him on. However, he was quickly reined in by one of his older *indunas* who seemed to regard this behaviour as inappropriate for a man of his standing. His public support for gender equality on official committees also did not gain him support from most of the Traditional Council elders. In another instance he had secured investment into the farm plots outside the village through a project named *1 Household 1 Hectare* by the DRDLR. However, he had omitted informing the land holding clans and the Traditional Council of this project, and when external families began to move on the plots in question, a community meeting had to be held to calm the anger of those affected (January 2018). Around September 2017 reports from Hammanskraal arrived that Vuma had begun to surround himself with an entourage lacking any ties to the village. Together with them he had allegedly wrecked his two office cars after several consecutive nights at the taverns, which left two of his entourage members dead. Another incident that tarnished his reputation included the alleged embezzlement of provincial funds for the construction of a paved road through the village. This information was relayed to me by his declared opponents and I was not able to confront him with these accusations. Therefore, they must be treated with utmost care.

The events that, at the time, seemed to have severely tarnished his reputation as Chief slowly unfolded from August 2017. Rust de Winter is rich in Carbon Fluoride and in 2008 the SepFluor Mining Company from Centurion (between Johannesburg and Pretoria) reached out to the communities surrounding Rust de Winter as they wanted to establish a new mine next to the already existing Vergenoeg mine on the farm Kromdraai (209 JR). A forum was founded including representatives from nine villages and their ward councils within a 25 kilometre radius, which meant incorporating bodies of governance from three different provinces (Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng) and four different municipalities (Bela-Bela, Tshwane, Dr JS Moroka, Thembisile Hani). For the Rust de Winter community one Mr Baloyi was to represent them on the forum and for Rapotokwane one Mr Mathebe, both supposedly upon recommendation by Chief Vuma and possibly by the Ward Councillor. In 2010 the mining license was granted, but then in 2011 environmental regulations and community involvement guidelines from the French and German investors threw the project back until 2017. Once funding was secured and all regulations were fulfilled, SepFluor reached out to the members of the forum again for the development of a training centre for the mine workers. Rapotokwane was found to fulfil all requirements for the R23 Million[41] project that promised to improve the village infrastructure immensely. Chief Vuma, signed the lease agreement on behalf of the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Council and Mr Baloyi and Mr Mathebe signed as witnesses on 30th August 2017.

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[41] approximately EUR 1.5 million at the time

It is not clear what exactly happened afterwards. Somehow both SepFluor and the Provincial Department of Mineral Resources realized that Baloyi and Mathebe had not been mandated by the communities they were supposed to represent. Furthermore, Chief Vuma had not received permission from the respective Litho clan representatives that held the tenure rights over the land where the training centre was supposed to be built. SepFluor cancelled the lease agreement and got into direct contact with the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Council and the Litho Royal Family. I was allowed to attend a meeting in late November 2017 between representatives of SepFluor, the Traditional Council and the Royal family at the company's offices in Centurion. It was established that Baloyi and Mathebe were friends of Chief Vuma and that they had no family connection to Rapotokwane whatsoever. The Traditional Council and the community itself had been side-lined by Vuma from the very beginning and had had no say in the engagement forum nominations or the training centre project. Explaining why they had accepted Vuma's nominations for the forum, one company representative explained: "*We cannot remove what Kgôsi has put*" to stress her point that it was not the mining company's fault that the Chief had not consulted his Council on this matter. As the mining company did not want to get involved into internal quarrels and since the project could not be delayed any further, the training centre would be built on the new mine's premises and the residents of Rapotokwane could merely hope to profit from the jobs created there.

The events that led up to this meeting with SepFluor finally convinced Alfred Mahlangu to temporarily suspend his support for Vuma after having supported him for the longest time. Alfred Mahlangu, Pretoria-based attorney, and his late half-brother Hendrik were some of the main supporters of Chief Vuma when he was instated. They vouched for his descent from the Royal Family when claims arose that he was merely an 'imposter' as it could not be 'verified' whether his father actually descended from Sozilani; he was allegedly neither conceived nor born in Rapotokwane and had not attended any initiation school[42]. Alfred and Hendrick also guaranteed popular support from the members of the local very popular Christian Church of Zion (CCZ)[43], which was led by Hendrik. However, when the latter suffered a fatal stroke in August 2017 and Vuma's popularity with the Council and the Royal Family continuously decreased, Alfred joined Vuma's critics and supported their efforts to gain more information from the mine regarding the training centre affair. On the one hand he explained in great detail to SepFluor's representatives at the aforementioned meeting that several allegations of corruption and other misconduct against Vuma had been raised. Vuma also failed to show at three council meetings that had been called to give him the opportunity to respond to the allegations against him, Alfred continued to explain. The Traditional Council members passed the resolution to remove

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[42] Interview with Iggy Litho and Jonathan Mnguni, 25 July 2017
[43] According to one interlocutor of mine, CCZ is an offshoot of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) of Moria outside Polokwane, Limpopo.

Vuma as Chief of Litho but they left the final vote to the representatives of the Litho clans, who decided to merely suspend him until further notice. On the other hand, Alfred qualified these circumstances to the SepFluor legal team and to those members of Traditional Council and Royal Family, who understood Vuma's eventual removal as Chief to be a done deal at the time; the ultimate authority to install or remove a Chief however lied with the Premier of the Province.

As it turned out the Premier of Limpopo Province would never be informed of Vuma's suspension. A trip by the Traditional Council members to CoGTA in Polokwane was scheduled for the week after the meeting with SepFluor. It was, however, cancelled because the offices in question were supposedly not receiving visitors in the weeks before Christmas. It was decided to postpone the official removal of Vuma as Chief of the Litho Ndzundza until January 2018. When I returned to Rapotokwane in the second half of January from a one-month absence, it seemed that everyone had changed their mind about Chief Vuma in the meantime. I enquired what had caused this change, but most involved actors replied: "*There are reasons for that*"[44]. These reasons would only later reveal themselves to me. I got the impression that Alfred had been playing tactical games all along, trying to gain more time by transitionally siding with Vuma's opponents to then stall the removal process from within by pointing out the administrative obstacles of removing a Traditional Leader. The time gained this way was made use of by Vuma to approach, confront and persuade critics individually after their initial anger over the lost investment had subsided. Furthermore, the Chief's critics were made aware of the disadvantages that an open power struggle implied to the involved actors individually and for their land claim ambitions (see more below).

As Alfred did not reside in Rapotokwane during my time in the field, I merely got to know him through small talk at official events and in one 38-minute interview in a crowded and noisy environment. At those rare occasions that we spoke he struck me as an astute character, who used jokes and compliments to establish a personal connection, but he would also use his knowledge as an attorney to assert himself as someone to be taken seriously. Speaking to White

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Interview information 6.2

Prince Alfred Mahlangu: Attorney based in Pretoria, confidant of Chief Vuma Mahlangu, and crucial actor in the Litho land claim. He was interviews on 7 November 2017 in Pretoria.

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people he would immediately switch to fluent Afrikaans and rarely missed an opportunity to mention that the late "*Baas*" General Smuts, who supposedly owned a farm in Rust de Winter, used to refer to his late father Petrus Mahlangu as a "*slim kaffir*"[45]. At public events in Rapotokwane he would, however, present himself as an advocate of those community members who did not speak any

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[44] Informal conversation with anonymous village elder on 22 January 2018 at his home in Rapotokwane

[45] Afrikaans, "*smart kaffir*". The word "*kaffer*" in Afrikaans constitutes the most insulting term for a Black person in the former Apartheid countries South Africa and Namibia.

languages other than IsiNdebele by demanding that verbal contributions be made exclusively in IsiNdebele or by organising a translator.

Chief Vuma's and Alfred's main challenger in this instance was the abovementioned Ignatius Mahlangu, mostly known as Iggy Litho (see interview information textbox 1E.2). With Iggy being my landlord (see Chapter 2.2), I had the chance to get to know his family history and his character. Descending from Leah, the substitute *indlunkulu* wife of Jas-David, Iggy and his brothers were raised to believe that they had been cheated out of the chieftaincy. He would regularly debate any historical accounts of Ndebele history that were presented in his vicinity, energetic emotional corrections and sceptical challenging of sources being his main discursive tools in that regard. Many times when I summarized my own understanding of a certain development or presented a compiled Ndebele family tree he asked: "*Who told you this? How do you know they are telling the truth?*" or "*Who gave you this? How do you know it's not fake?*"[46]. I stayed alone in his late father's house for the first months of my field research, but Iggy moved to Rapotokwane in May 2017 after his fellow campaigners had convinced him that he could not claim the chieftaincy while residing with his family in Atteridgeville (western Pretoria). Iggy revealed his plans for regaining power and wealth for his family to me: once the land claim that his uncle Matthews had begun was successful, he would declare himself Chief of a whole new branch of the Litho Ndzundza in Rust de Winter and leave those governed by Vuma behind in Rapotokwane. In those situations, he pointed to the other side of the road to the offices of the Traditional Council and Lazarus's former house, which neighbours it, and started a rant about the stupidity of "*these fools claiming to be chiefs*"[47].

By the elders on the Traditional Council and in the Litho Royal Family he seemed on the one side to be accepted as a motivator and authentic representative of the Litho clan. On the other side, his occasional outbursts of anger and lack of diplomatic restraint made even his most loyal supporters question his qualification as Traditional Leader. Rather than attending any of the local churches and thus gaining access to their valuable social networks he stayed at home following Nigerian televangelist TB Joshua. Rather than employing local youth in the farming project that he established after his return to Rapotokwane, he made use of cheaper Malawian and Zimbabwean workers. Rather than dressing in the usual simple shirt and jacket for official occasions, he would usually wear expensive looking branded clothing. On the one side this made him stand out prominently among the local 'traditional' elite, but on the other side his urban appearance may have also contributed to a certain scepticism from the same. His personal past was also a regular point of disapproval raised by the villagers, some

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[46] E.g. Conversation with Iggy Litho, 22 November 2017
[47] Conversation with Iggy Litho, 20 August 2016. I repeatedly asked Iggy for permission to use the information he shared so openly, to which he happily agreed. I suggested replacing his name with an alias, which he declined on multiple occasions. In fact, he insisted that I use his real name as he stressed that there was nothing to hide.

of them being obviously intimidated by him. Some confided in me that years ago he had been arrested on suspicion of murder and went on hunger strike until the charges were dropped. His own version of events was that he spent time in jail for stealing copper wire but was released through divine intervention after fasting for seven days, which resulted in his rebirth as a Christian.

When asking Iggy in January 2018 why the suspension of Vuma, for which he had claimed to be the main agitator, had been halted, he produced accusations of cowardice against the members of the Traditional Council and the Royal Family. However, one month later I learned that Vuma had promoted Iggy to the status of Headman, which at the time implied a relatively comfortable monthly governmental salary of R8800 (ca. EUR 600 at the time). Thus, the cancelled ousting of Chief Vuma may have also been connected to Iggy's new source of income. Iggy and I remained in loose contact after my departure from South Africa in early 2018. He left Rapotokwane again soon after and continued to stay in Atteridgeville.

The members of the Traditional Council constituted further agents of power politics in Rapotokwane. Often the Council was criticised for not representing all sub-clans of Litho and this critique was closely associated with Vuma's leadership style. Instead of having representatives from all ten houses of Litho when I began my research, it consisted merely of six elderly gentlemen of the Mnguni, Mahlangu and Ndala families, the most influential of them being Jonathan Mnguni, generally known as Jonoti.

Visiting Rust de Winter Dam on one final trip together, Jonoti made a vow to Iggy Litho and his uncle Matthews before the latter's passing[48]. He promised to fight for the restitution of the farms of Rust de Winter to the Litho clan, and to restore the Litho chieftaincy to the 'rightful' lineage. He was Iggy's strongest supporter during my time in Rapotokwane: he encouraged him to move to Rapotokwane and to begin agricultural investment to secure local support. At the same time the two men often disagreed. While Iggy insisted on listing the accusations brought forward against Vuma, Jonoti could not see the benefits of such a document, which may have compromised his

> **Interview information 6.3**
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> **Jonathan 'Jonoti' Mnguni:** Chairman of the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Council during my time in Rapotokwane. While we had multiple informal conversations at various occasions, he was formally interviewed only once, on 25 July 2017 in the presence of Iggy Litho.

position as Traditional Council Chairman. While Iggy criticised Jonoti for recinding Vuma's suspension after having been confronted by him individually, Jonoti blamed Iggy's lack of support among the local population on his unpredictable and sometimes irate character. When Iggy was attacked by one of his ill-treated agricultural workers with a knife after withholding his salary for several weeks, Jonoti told me "*This is the scar of abuse*" insinuating that it was Iggy's own fault.

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[48] Conversation with Iggy Litho and Jonathan Mnguni, 16 September 2017

Jonoti's strongest opponent on the Traditional Council was Bani Mahlangu, who belongs to the same lineage as Alfred (see figure 6.1). When he addressed me at a public meeting he openly criticised Mandela's reconciliation politics and insisted that it was a mistake to have allowed non-Ndebele to settle in Rapotokwane. He seemed to expect me to agree with his xenophobic perspective, probably due to my own Whiteness. We spoke very little after that and I never formally interviewed him. Jonoti claims that Bani regards him as a traitor of his people for marrying a Pedi woman. In return Jonoti and Iggy insinuated that Bani was fathered in an extramarital affair. His name allegedly originates in the moment that his mother's husband came home to find a child in her arms, asking "*Ngubani?*" (Who is that?), indicating that she must have conceived the child from another man. Instead of customarily referring to him with the Ndebele name Mahlangu, Jonoti repeatedly referred to Bani by the Tswana surname Makgathulela in his absence, thus not only alluding to the contested fatherhood but also casting doubt on his Ndebele-ness.

Former Chairperson of the Traditional Council, Nathaniel Mahlangu, is nowadays without official function in Traditional affairs. The Baptist preacher and long-time doctoral candidate at the University of Pretoria continues nonetheless to be involved in leadership disputes and the land claim. In several conversations that I will refer to further below he expressed more or less disapproval for Chief Vuma, Alfred Mahlangu, Sebatshelwa Matthews, Iggy Litho and Jonoti Mnguni. In

contrast, the former two never even mentioned his name to me. The latter two have portrayed him to me as an angry old man, who in his time as Chairman of the Traditional Council used every chance to suppress the less important sub-clans and denied the relatives of Matthews access to Traditional Council resources when planning his funeral. It was furthermore claimed that he had to leave the council due to mental instability. The fact that the old man was born out of wedlock was brought up on several occasions to discredit his knowledge of the Litho lineage.

6.3. The Land Claim

The following information was compiled from various sources: interviews with Iggy Litho, Jonoti Mnguni, Alfred Mahlangu and Nathaniel Mahlangu, as well as archival records from the LCC and documents presented to me by the aforementioned persons. This includes correspondence between the CRLR, the RLCC and the different claimant parties. Unfortunately, some of the retrieved documents were either incomplete, in undecipherable condition, or presented with characteristics that raised doubts regarding their authenticity. Information from research reports by commissioned researchers was included in the summary of this case as well. These sources often contradict one another and are sometimes contradictory in themselves. Nonetheless an attempt was made to summarise the proceedings of this land claim in as much detail as possible.

The story of the so-called 'Litho Claim' for restitution of Rust de Winter begins during South Africa's transition to democracy 1990-1994. The release of Nelson Mandela and his ANC comrades initiated ground-breaking political changes and thus Petrus Mahlangu, father to Hendrik and Alfred Mahlangu, decided to act and occupy the land that the Litho forefathers had been forcefully evicted from. However, most people in Rapotokwane were hesitant to support him as they lacked the financial means to sustain the costs of potential legal consequences. Thus, it was only Petrus and a few others that were arrested for their attempt to regain the land that they regarded as traditionally theirs. The ANC's coordinator of the Land and Agricultural desk Derek Hanekom then brokered a deal with Petrus and his companions, arranging the withdrawal of charges under the condition that they abstained from further irregular land occupations. He promised them that soon they would have the possibility to legally claim back their land and that they would have the chance to lease the land until the process was finalised[49].

Hanekom was able to arrange this deal since most of the farms in Rust de Winter are state-owned up to this day. In the second half of the 1980s the Apartheid regime forced most farmers in the Rust de Winter area to sell their land (see Zenker 2015c) to the STK (Suiderlike Transvaal Kooperasie)[50] or the SADT. The area was meant to be integrated into KwaNdebele to connect Witlaagte with the KwaNdebele heartland. To gain support for 'independence' from KwaNdebele's government and from the neighbouring Manala-Mbhongo Tribal Authority, which would have gained control over the area, was most certainly the main motivation, (see 1E.2). However, the incorporation of Rust de Winter into KwaNdebele never became reality as the Homeland was dismantled in the wake of South Africa's first

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[49] Interview with Alfred Mahlangu, 7 November 2017
[50] i.e. according to Alfred Mahlangu, I was not able to confirm any further information on this institution.

democratic election in 1994. Most farms were leased to tenants thereafter, few of them coming from Rapotokwane. Among them was the family of Alfred Mahlangu, more specifically his father Petrus.

The fact that most of Rust de Winter was state-owned played a significant role in the transition time as it enabled land restitution claims even before the dawning democratic elections:

> Under mounting pressure also from NGOs and communities who launched a series of demonstrations and symbolic land re-occupations in the 'Back to the Land' campaign, the NP thereupon decided to institute its own limited restitution programme, but only for land claims on state-owned land. In June 1991 it established an Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) (renamed the Commission on Land Allocation (COLA) in mid-1993). This body was tasked to receive submissions and make recommendations (later, limited decisions as well) on the disposal of state land. Significantly, claims on privately owned land were specifically excluded from its terms of reference. Those entitled to make submissions included but were not confined to communities or families who had previously been removed from that land. (Walker 2008: 56, original parentheses)

Therefore, around the same time as the Rust de Winter occupation by the Lithos, in 1993, the Manala Royal House sent a memorandum to the ACLA, demanding that more land be allocated to them for jurisdiction and settlement. Specifically, they demanded control over eight farms in the eastern and southern parts of the larger Rust de Winter area, arguing that they were being treated unfairly as merely three Tribal Authorities were working under them while Ndzundza had nine. Even though the Royal House acknowledged the presence of the Litho Ndzundza in that area until the 1920s it straightforwardly formulated:

> *We submit that to merely rely on the historical grounds of occupation of the land by the Tribe* [i.e. Litho Ndzundza] *over the period stated above, is not sufficient on its own to expect the Commission to recommend to the State President that that land must now be allocated to the Tribe as such.*

The memorandum laid out a vision of a trust that would administer the land on behalf of the Lithos and would leave half of the concerned farms under the title control of the Manala Royal House. One month later, Nathaniel Mahlangu in his function as Chairman of the Litho Ndzundza Tribal Authority also contacted the ACLA and laid out their claim to the state-owned farmland in Rust de Winter. He attached five affidavits of eye witnesses of the Rust de Winter expropriation, among them one signed by Petrus Mahlangu. Iggy repeatedly stressed towards me and others that the Litho land claim was the first to be filed in South Africa, which is incorrect regarding the official land restitution framework established in the Restitution of Land Rights Act. Possibly, Iggy made reference to this particular ACLA application for his nonetheless contestable claim to originality.

In August of 1993, the ACLA, chaired by Justice McCreath, published its recommendations for Rust de Winter, which included that all applications for restitution should be disregarded, the land should be divided into 34 agricultural units, and the nature reserve around Rust de Winter dam should be

readjusted. From further correspondence it can be concluded that the ACLA recommendation to not restitute the farms of Rust de Winter merely referred to the 68 White farmers who had been disowned in the late 1980s. The recommendation was, however, even-handedly applied to all potential land claimants by those land restitution institutions that were established in late 1994. The planning process for this transformation of Rust de Winter was taken over by the Department of Agriculture. In early 1994, therefore, Nathaniel Mahlangu called upon the Transvaal Division of the Supreme Court (later renamed into North Gauteng High Court) to demand explanation from the Minister of Agricultural Development, the Minister of Regional and Land Affairs, and the Chief Minister of KwaNdebele to explain their decision to not restore Rust de Winter to the Lithos and instead sell economic units to the Rust de Winter Development Company. Nathaniel Mahlangu in his founding affidavit explained that none of the Litho elders had been consulted on this matter and thus demanded that the decision be reviewed. Attached to his application and founding affidavit were several documents of which not all could be retrieved from the LCC archives. Next to documents to support his accusations against the respondents, Nathaniel and his lawyer attached statements by the livestock farmers in Rust de Winter, the neighbouring Bakgatla Ba Mocha people and members of the Kalkfontein community (Katjibane, Litho Pungutsha) to support the Litho claim for restitution of Rust de Winter. The application was settled on the basis that meetings would be held involving all stakeholders.

All of these events took place even before South Africa had a democratically elected parliament, let alone legislation that could provide structure to a land reform process at large. However, shortly after Nelson Mandela's election as South Africa's first democratically elected president, and Derek Hanekom's appointment as Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, the situation in Rust de Winter escalated:

> The land was then advertised for prospective farmers and a selection process of the applicants was done. The settlement of the successful candidates was planned for June 1994 but this action never realized because the Litho Ndzundza Tribe threatened to go to Court and obtain an interdict preventing the State to go ahead with the planned actions. The Litho Tribe was of the opinion that they as a major interest group were not sufficiently consulted regarding the future utilization of the area. […] On 21 July 1994 members of the Litho Ndzundza Tribe occupied the offices of the Rust der Winter Development Company and the house of an official. Their aim was to draw attention to their plight as a tribe who had lost their land at Rust der Winter. It was also stated that they had 'taken over' Rust der Winter and will continue to invade the area until the Minister of Land Affairs transferred the area in the name of the Tribe. The situation was later defused in a peaceful manner. (Mouton 1996:2f)

Unfortunately, Alfred Mahlangu was not able to comment on this passage, but it must be assumed that it refers to the final stages of Petrus Mahlangu's land occupation campaign. In one of the many court documents that were produced in the following years, however, Litho representatives rejected the allegation that threats were made. Rather mediation was sought by the courts to prevent the

selling of the 34 agricultural units. It had been feared that the Manala Royal House, having previously expressed interest in Rust de Winter, could become a potential buyer and could thus undermine Litho's influence in the region.

When in late 1994 the Restitution of Land Rights Act was assented by South Africa's new parliament, Derek Hanekom's promise that the Litho Ndzundza would soon be given a way to legally claim their land back was fulfilled (see Chapter 4.3):

> The principal institutions that are created to manage the process are the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights ('the commission') and the Land Claims Court (the 'LCC'). The function of the commission, broadly speaking, is to receive and to investigate claims for restitution and to attempt to resolve them through mediation and negotiation. If a claim cannot be resolved by those means it must be referred by the commission to the LCC for the LCC to exercise its wide powers of adjudication. The LCC may, amongst other things, order the restitution of land or a right in land to the claimant, or order the state to grant the claimant an appropriate right in alternative state-owned land, or order the state to pay compensation to the claimant, or order the state to include the claimant as a beneficiary of a state support programme for housing or the allocation and development of rural land, or it may grant the claimant alternative relief. (Nugent 2004: 2; see also Zenker 2014: 506)

Unfortunately, the situation continued to escalate. A report by the DLA mentions that throughout 1994 negotiations were held to find solutions for the ongoing conflicts between the Lithos and other interest groups: "The division of land between various parties would always be difficult to solve, since there even was discord between the members of the tribes on who should negotiate with the Department" (Mouton 1996: 7). Based on the agreement of early 1994 to involve local communities in the development process of Rust de Winter, numerous meetings took place in 1994/95 between officials of the DLA and different stakeholders. This resulted in the formation of the Rust der Winter Land Forum, wherein farm plots were allocated to some Litho families for tenancy and it was agreed that no further claimants would join in the scramble for Rust de Winter. In March 1995 it was then decided that a steering committee was needed to take over from the DLA regarding ownership and development of Rust de Winter. Claiming that land was being allocated without their agreement the Litho Ndzundza withdrew from the forum agreement. The Lithos maintained the narrative that government institutions had been against any restitutions in Rust de Winter from the very beginning and applied it in later correspondence as well. Even during my time in the field, the narrative was upheld that government institutions had been against the Litho land claim from the very beginning due to financial interests.

The official land claim was submitted on 30 October 1995 in the name of Chief Vuma's uncle Chief Patrick Mgoma Mahlangu on behalf of the whole "*Litho Ndzundza Tribe*". However, it was financially and organisationally spearheaded by Alfred's father Petrus Mahlangu and by Nathaniel Mahlangu as Chairman of the Traditional Council. Both Alfred and Nathaniel made no positive mention of the other

in their interviews with me and claimed the creatorship of the land claim for themselves or their respective ancestors. The land claim form lists the following area as being claimed: "*The whole of the area known as Rust de Winter inclusive of Kromdraai in the South, Riekertslaagte in the East, Pienaarsriver in the West, and Tambotipan in the North*". It furthermore stated that compensation had been paid for the land, but the amount was unknown. As additional information Chief Patrick mentioned that the matter had been handled before, but the outcome of the negotiations with Minister Hanekom were not satisfying. The form is then amended by an annexure providing the history of the Lithos summarised in twenty bullet points, which have contributed to previous descriptions in this thesis. Here it is explicitly stated by the applicants that the "*Siyabuswa/Libangeni/Rust de Winter settlements, in Northern Kwa Ndebele maintains* [sic!] *a strong form of traditional life, opposed to the Southern Kwa Ndebele settlements*". This traditionalistic argument seemingly aimed to qualify a historic account of the hereditary rulers of the group. The claim form refers to other annexures such as maps, but these have not been provided at the LCC archives.

Another claim was submitted by the Vuku Zenzele, a farming cooperation, claiming two farms in the area. The Bantwane tribe, the Amandebele Tribal Authority, and the Kekana Royal Executive Council were other groups that demanded farms. Iscor Ltd., South Africa's former parastatal steel producer, owned the mineral rights for two of the largest farms in the area and demanded to be part of any process regarding redistribution or restitution of land. The Manala Royal House did not legally claim the land but demanded more land to be put under their jurisdiction claiming they had been discriminated against in comparison to the Ndzundza chieftaincies.

What made the situation even more complicated was the fact that Rust de Winter, being mostly state-owned, had been chosen as location of the future land reform pilot project of Gauteng Province. The other two branches of land reform, redistribution and tenure reform were to be tested here in a sophisticated development scheme under the assumption that land restitution would not take place in this area. Enclosed with the Litho land claim form was a letter from Durkje Gilfillan, back then attorney at the LRC and later RLCC for Mpumalanga and Northern Province (Zenker 2018a), which is addressed to the CRLR. She demanded that the land reform pilot project for the Rust de Winter region be halted until the community of Rapotokwane had elected a representative land claims committee that would be able to negotiate with the project's Technical Committee. The cooperation between RLC and the Lithos did not last long and ended that same year (1995). Generally, several legal teams seem to have been involved in the Litho matter and it is persistently difficult to determine the origin of most archival documents in this case as letter heads seem to have regularly changed.

Already in 1995 the CRLR realized that several groups had an interest in Rust de Winter and thus invited all potential stakeholders to file their restitution claims as soon as possible in order to handle all claims

at the same time (Government Gazette No. 16755 of 1995). The aforementioned 1996 DLA report by Mouton was thereafter compiled, which included ethnographic information on the different claimant groups and recommendations regarding the validity of their demands. Already before the cut-off date for land claims, this report advised that "[s]ince the land in question never belonged to the Litho Tribe nor were they forcefully removed from any such land, their claim on historical grounds or any claim for restitution should be disregarded" (Mouton 1996: 12). This recommendation was indiscriminately applied to all pending claims on the Rust de Winter area, deeming them "frivolous" (ibid.). Throughout the following years, the CRLR insisted that the Litho Ndzundza had never properly owned any land in Rust de Winter and thus were not eligible for restitution. Further, an ethnographic memorandum, attached to the DLA report from February 1996 states that there can be no doubt whether the Lithos occupied large parts of Rust de Winter between the 1870s and the 1920s. However, it is argued that the land in question should not be allocated to them "on the grounds of historical occupation (which would tempt the tribe also to claim Emdolongwane domain near Zonderwater) or the restitution of land rights (the tribe was never forcefully removed from land that belonged to it)" (Mouton 1996, 2nd annexe: 3). The CRLR's reasons for the "decision not to deal with the matter as a restitution claim is purportedly that the claimant could not show that it had been dispossessed of the property" (Judge Moloto 2000).

The Lithos and their legal advisers therefore compiled an extensive commentary on the report and disputed its recommendations on 14 pages. As an example among many, the Lithos claimed that they occupied Rust de Winter as early as 1840 and that no White settlers occupied the region at the time. Furthermore, they claimed that the report and the communication with Minister Hanekom were dominated by race-based bias. Their written response also states very clearly that "it is clear from the evidence that Litho never paid rentals to anyone and when they were forced off the land which they occupied, they bought their own land and lived there independently". An air of animosity seems to have characterized the relationship between CRLR and the Lithos from the very beginning. Correspondence between the Commission, Hanekom's DLA and the Litho attorneys documents further accusations and shortcomings on the part of the former two, such as crucial reports and forms getting lost in the course of 1996. In July of that year the CRLR informed the Lithos that their case had been forwarded directly to Hanekom's desk. The RLCC explained in their letter that the restitution claim could only be verified for one of the claimed Rust de Winter farms. The remaining farms were, according to the letter, subject to dispossession prior to 19 June 1913 and any claims would therefore not fall under the ambits of the CRLR. Minister Hanekom would deal with their case under the redistribution scheme rather than restitution. This was then again countered by an extensive letter of accusations against the Commission and Minister Hanekom, but eventually stated that the referral to the minister's desk under terms of an option for redistribution of land to the Lithos was acceptable. In

October 1996 the Lithos received notice that their claim would no longer be handled by the CRLR. Because no further notice from Minister Hanekom was received, the Lithos assumed their case was still pending.

In early 1997 the official recommendations for Rust de Winter were published by DEMACON, a development management consortium for the Land Reform Pilot Programme of Gauteng Province. Even though it recommended including neighbouring communities in the planning process and predicted economic gain for them, the potential for restitution claims was ignored in the report. The recommendations foresaw twelve interconnected ranches to be established and run by private entrepreneurs. In January 1998 the state land in Rust de Winter was advertised for sale. These plans were countered by the Lithos in early 1998 through an application to the High Court in Pretoria. They demanded an order that would prevent the Minister of Land Affairs from selling, disposing or alienating in any way the twelve government-owned farms under claim by the Litho Ndzundza. Furthermore, it was declared by Chief Patrick Mahlangu in the Notice of Motion (case number 2354/98) to the court that:

> *It came as a complete shock to me and the members of my tribe that the Respondent* [i.e. Minister Hanekom] *and/or the Land Claims Commission has not furnished us with a reply to our claim, neither have they, as they are legally obliged to do, furnished us with written reason for any decision taken.*

To depict the immoral conduct of Hanekom's department towards the local population it was then also mentioned that the steering committee, which acted on his behalf, purportedly forced two members of the Litho Ndzundza into unaffordable lease agreements for their farm plots in Rust de Winter. The DLA on their side expressed utter incomprehension for the legal actions of the Lithos as they had in late 1996 agreed for their case to be handled within the redistribution framework. Furthermore, the Department's Director General pointed out that none of the involved governmental institutions had been consulted prior to the High Court application and thus urged the Litho representatives to re-join negotiations and withdraw their court application. This is what eventually happened under the condition that all land claimants would be given a 30 days' notice prior to any alienation of land. The settlement remained subject to dispute, however, because it did not offer any legal means to the Lithos to prevent the continued distribution of landed property in Rust de Winter.

On 31 December 1998, on the last possible date for lodging claims for restitution, however, two further claims for Rust de Winter were submitted on behalf of the Litho Ndzundza. One of them was submitted by consultant Mokgale Andrew Tladi, claiming Rust de Winter, Roossenekal, Mokgabudis Neck, Monyamane, Bon Accord Dam Farm, and Matolokwane. His claim did not receive a reference number at that time and plays no significant role in the current Rust de Winter land claim. He was not mandated by the people of Litho and was therefore dismissed. The involved actors were not able or willing to

give further information on the matter and generally referred to it as a corrupt case. Mr Tladi successfully claimed a farm near Rustenburg and became a farmer eventually (van Rooyen 2012), but seems to have stayed active in the land claim business until 2016, when his claim for restitution of 20 farms in the City of Tshwane was rejected (CRLR 2017). The second claim that was submitted on that day was filed by Iggy Litho's uncle Sebatshelwa Matthews on behalf of the Litho clan and the whole Ndebele nation. This claim included not only the 18 farms that Petrus had claimed in Rust de Winter but claimed more than 70 farms in the whole southern Transvaal area. This was based on the assertion that Louis Botha in his time as South Africa's Minister of Native Affairs (1913-1919) allegedly declared the Transvaal to belong to the Ndebele. Furthermore, the narrative that the Transvaal was *terra nullius* before the AmaNdebele arrived is applied by the claimants in this case. According to Iggy Litho, Judge Bam of the LCC has ruled the Litho land claim to be representative for the whole Ndebele Nation, omitting a definition of the same. I have neither been shown nor have I found any documents whatsoever to support Iggy's claim though.

It appears that the original 1995 claim, which had been submitted by Chief Patrick Mahlangu, and the 1998 claim, submitted by Chief Matthews Mahlangu, were not treated by the RLCC of Gauteng "as different claimants, but rather as different claims submitted on behalf of the same claimant group" (Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture 2016: 12). Therefore they both initially received reference number P0050. However, at a later stage Chief Patrick's claim, who was succeeded as Chief by his younger brother Nicolas (also Nicholaas) in 1998 after only three years in office, was given reference number Z0231. There are differing accounts regarding Matthews's motivation for lodging a second claim. Alfred Mahlangu reports that at that time a dispute arose between Petrus and Matthews; the latter expressed concern about Z0231's dependence on Petrus's financial resources, which caused a quarrel and eventually led to Matthews initiating claim P0050. Other sources indicate that Matthews saw the land claim as a chance to build reputation for his own sub-clan and to raise his chances to take over the chieftaincy. Especially the enormous spatial extent of his claim (between 86 and 790 farms, depending on the counting method) and the foundation of a trust in his name ('King Litho V') to administer it support that perspective. Iggy and Jonoti, however, explained that Patrick's and Petrus's claim, which would eventually become claim Z0231, had been rejected by the CRLR and therefore simply a second claim was necessary to uphold the chances to regain the land under question. Furthermore, they accused the initiators of Z0231 to have failed to inform the potential beneficiaries about the progress made in negotiations and that their hidden intention had been for the claimed land to become the private property of the ruling families and therefore a "*democratic claim such as ours*" (Iggy Litho)[51] on behalf of the whole community became necessary.

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[51] Interview with Iggy Litho and Jonathan Mnguni, 25 July 2017

6.3.1 The Course of Events in the 'First' Litho Claim: Z0231 by Chief Nicolas et al.

In September 1999, the LCC was called upon by then Chief Nicolas Mahlangu who expressed high dissatisfaction with the work of the Minister of Land Affairs, the Premier of Gauteng Province and the CRLR. In his founding affidavit he claimed that Litho representatives had been systematically excluded from meetings of the Pilot Reform Steering Committee. Furthermore, complaints were raised about the inactiveness of Minister Hanekom regarding the restitution/redistribution of Rust de Winter, which is where the issue was referred to in 1996, hoping for discretionary solution of the same. On 17 June 1999 Hanekom was replaced by Thoko Didiza as Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs after President Mbeki took office. Only few days before, on 4 June, a notice was issued to the Litho attorneys that Portion 27 of farm Rust de Winter 180 JR was to be sold to the current tenant, South African Jeep Club. This notice was issued in accordance with the agreement from the High Court settlement one year before. Such a sale had the potential to complicate the matter of restitution immensely, should the land claim be decided in favour of Litho. Litho's attorneys contacted the relevant institutions (state attorney, land affairs, provincial director) and demanded immediate cancellation of the sale, but it seems they received no answer. Due to all these reasons, Chief Nicolas claimed that a satisfactory solution and interim relief to the Rust de Winter issue could only be achieved in court.

The case was given reference number LCC116/99 at the Land Claims Court of South Africa in Randburg, Northern Johannesburg. The representative of the CRLR used this occasion to defend his institution against the allegations that were brought forward by the Litho Ndzundza and their attorneys. It was pointed out that the claim did not meet the technical requirements to be dealt with under the restitution paradigm and that it had been accepted by the Lithos that it would be dealt with under land redistribution. Furthermore, it was argued that a settlement had been achieved at the High Court, which allowed the Ministry of Land Affairs to sell land as long as notice was given. The final and most important argument, however, was that the Lithos had not applied all available legal tools to get the decision of the CRLR to reject their claim reviewed. While the argument by the respondents that this matter had already been dealt with and settled in front of the High Court (*res judicata*) was dismissed, Judge Moloto decided on 27 December 2000 that the Lithos' application for interim relief must be dismissed due to formal shortcomings. They had not applied for review of the CRLR's decision to refer their case to the Minister for handling within the land redistribution framework. The judge stressed the importance of appropriate proceedings to avoid chaos in the administration of government:

> Coupled with the applicant's failure to show clearly when the dispossession took place, if at all, and his acceptance of the section 6(2)(b) referral, it seems the applicant has not demonstrated that it has a serious question to be tried. As the applicant is not without a remedy (the applicant can apply to have the section 6(2)(b) referral reviewed) I am of the view that the balance of convenience does and should favour the respondents. (Judge Moloto 2000)

In February 2001, Chief Nicolas, on behalf of his people, applied for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein against this judgement. This triggered a meeting between the different parties and the judge in early March. It was agreed that the Lithos would apply for official review of the Commissioner's decision to reject the land restitution claim, but they made clear that the application for appeal would not be withdrawn to keep it as an option should the review process fail. It was accepted that the application for leave to appeal would not be heard until finalisation of the review. Nonetheless they requested for the application for leave to appeal to be set down in November 2002 and the hearing in this regard was held in January 2003. Judge Moloto did not find any reason to reject this application.

In early 2004 Petrus died and his sons took over some of the major consulting roles in the Z0231 land claim. In Rapotokwane, rumours are upheld that he was murdered by one of his local opponents. The land claim case was heard in Bloemfontein on 27 August 2004 under case number 572/2003 and only two weeks later Judge Nugent announced that "it is doubtful that the commission was entitled to decline to consider the present claim and instead to make alternative recommendations" and that "given the history of this matter, […] there is every reason why the claim […] should be considered by the LCC and brought to finality" (2004: 7f). Z0231's legitimacy was confirmed and it was handed back to the LCC, which resumed the case in October 2004. From the documented pleas it becomes apparent that both Minister of Land Affairs and Premier of Northern Province (former name of Limpopo Province) did not contradict any claims that were brought forward by Chief Nicolas Mahlangu.

In April 2007, archaeological consultants Pelser and van Vollenhoven were approached by the legal representatives of Z0231 to conduct field research in Rust de Winter and to record all available evidence on the Lithos' former settlements. A preliminary report was used in a pre-trial session in 2007 and the final report was made available to Litho's legal representatives in September 2009. It is unclear to which degree the report has been made use of yet as Nathaniel Mahlangu presented it to me as his final and ultimate weapon in the land claim case and urged me not to tell anyone about it. However, it was referred to as a major source of information in a report by Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture (2016), which was commissioned by the CRLR. The unpublished archaeological report sums up:

> More than 20 sites linked to their [i.e. the Litho Ndzundza] history was [sic!] visited and recorded, some of which are also known through oral records. […] These settlement sites and burials, indicate a thriving community that had settled on the landscape on a permanent basis and on a large scale, practicing traditional subsistence farming and livestock herding, before being forced to move to a different location. Although an apparent effort was made to "erase" traces of their settlement in some cases, this was not successful, and the evidence of the Litho's [sic!] presence in the area is clear. (Pelser and van Vollenhoven 2009: 3)

The next documented session in court took place on 6 and 7 October 2009 for the purpose of recording eye-witness statements of the time of expropriation of Rust de Winter. This had been applied for on

preliminary basis by the Litho representatives to ensure that these statements could be recorded before the witnesses' passing. Around the same time *in loco* inspections were conducted with the court officials (Judge Miya), indicating the places where burials and initiation schools had taken place. Chief Nicolas had in the meantime passed away and the list of farms under claim had been increased to 17. A transcript of a witness statement recording session, ordered by the Litho attorneys was available in the court files (CD1+2/LC116/99/JDA). It includes statements from 1933-born Mr Masala, 1920-born Ms Kosiwe Witbooi, 1925-born Ms Mothoa, 1924-born Ms Ditabo, 1926-born Mr Masilela, 1929-born Johanna Mahlangu, and 1932-born Priscilla Mahlangu. This includes two of Petrus's four widows; he married seven times. An exemplary statement by one of the elders in response to a question by Litho lawyer Jansen was the following:

> MR JANSEN: *What would the problems have been do you think, if your people had resisted?*
> *– The problem was Gigi, the forced removals.*
> COURT*: What is Gigi?*
> MR JANSEN*: Sorry, yes, what is the Gigi?*
> *– This Gigi people they were coming with the big truck and break your house, loading your belongings, throwing you out on the side of the road. They can put you there or anywhere. So to avoid that, we decided to leave before they can forcely* [sic!] *remove us.* ("Transcription under case number LCC116/99 dated 6 October 2009": 17f)

The following months went by without any noteworthy progress in the court case. However in the meantime, according to Alfred Mahlangu, the CRLR, supposedly unaware that the claim was being heard at the Appeal Court, handled claims by labour tenants from Rust de Winter. This would inevitably complicate the matter. In April 2011 an application was submitted to the LCC by law firm Mketsu & Associates for seven other claimant communities to participate in the court case. This includes claim numbers Z0159, Z0004, P0189, Z0132, Z0157, Z0137, P0124. An April 2012 letter by the attorneys of Z0231 (i.e. the first Litho claim) to the LCC officials explains:

> *Since 2010 the claimants have attempted to get the matter ready for hearing. Unfortunately it then transpired that a number of other claimants exist that were never identified during the RLCC processes in 1997 to 1999. In addition, it has come to light that some of the cadastral units are owned by private persons who will have to be joined. It has further come to light that the department of agriculture has settled a considerable number of emerging farmers on the land despite the fact that the land claims are still pending.*

The situation grew more complicated and thus it was agreed in May 2012 that the court case would be halted until all plaintiffs had organised legal presentation and the CRLR had conducted research on their individual cases. Alfred Mahlangu explained to me that the aim was an out-of-court arrangement between all claimants and the RLCC, which could then be presented to the court to turn it into an official court order. However, this did not preclude the option that the case could be negotiated in court once again should no settlement be found under the auspices of the Commission. It appears that

throughout this time both Litho claims had officially been handled as one by all government institutions; P0050 was not even listed as a conflicting claim with Chief Nicolas's claim in the court files.

6.3.2 The Course of Events in the 'Second' Litho claim: P0050 by SM Litho/Mahlangu

Most information accumulated on this case was derived from observations, conversations and interviews with the involved actors, but also from a 250-page compilation of documents, bound together, that was placed with the court files of LCC116/99. It had been compiled by the *Ama-Ndebele Nation and Kingdom Alliance* and *Sacotso Mia Trust*, a joint venture that was supposedly lobbying in favour of Matthews's ambitions to become King of the united Ndebele Nation. Sacotso Mia (South African Christian Organizing and Training in Social Mutual Investment Aid Trust) with its president Enoch Munano seems to have entertained several projects through the years and obviously clashed with different government institutions on several occasions. Iggy Litho when asked about Sacotso Mia and their cooperation with his uncle responded rather aggrieved and referred to it as scam on some occasions. Some documents seem to suggest that Munano tried to capture Matthews's claim at some point. The 250-page binder, which seems to have been sent to the LCC in July 2012, was intended to support accusations against CoGTA and other governmental departments, who supposedly failed to adhere to court rulings and their responsibilities towards the clients of the venture. This refers not only to the land claim but also to trainings and registration events, which Sacotso Mia conducted on behalf of different departments. Next to copies of bills, bank statements, death and birth certificates the binder also contains information on the case of P0050.

Even though most government documents summarising the claim assume that both claims were treated as one and the same for the largest part of their history, both involved claimant parties reject that assumption. From correspondence it becomes clear that very early P0050 and Z0231 fought their own battles. In early 2000, not even two years after the claim had been submitted, Matthews contacted the RLCC in Gauteng to inquire about the status of his claim P0050. The response letter let him know that it would take time to investigate his claim, but it becomes obvious that the representative who wrote it was unaware that Z0231 was being heard at the LCC at the same time and that both claims had been treated as one previously.

Furthermore, it seems that in 2008 the LCC was also called upon by P0050 under case number LCC139/08. As no judgement seems to have been made in this case, no official description of the case is available. From the information available in the Sacotso Mia binder it can be deducted that the case had been brought forward by several Traditional Leaders to have their land claim cases joined under the reference number P0050, simultaneously accepting Matthews as senior leader. Whether all these mentioned leaders actually wished to participate in the claim cannot be confirmed as no signatures or

official support letters from their offices are provided. However, a court order by Judge Jordaan from the North Gauteng High Court (case: 25744/2010) indicates that the "Ama-Ndebele Nation and Kingdom, His Majesty Sebatshelwa Mahlangu [i.e. Matthews] and Sacotso Mia Trust" succeeded in demanding assistance from the Department of Home Affairs to identify all potential beneficiaries of claim P0050. A follow-up letter to the Department refers to Zimbabwean and Mozambican immigrants in need of registration as potential descendants of the AmaNdebele Kingdom. A registration of such beneficiaries ought to have taken place at a shopping centre in Mamelodi East, but did not materialise as the Department of Home Affairs showed little motivation to abide by the court order.

The files refer to Iggy Litho's uncle Matthews as King Litho V who was allegedly cheated out of his kingship by the Apartheid government and rival Traditional Leaders. Matthews based his restitution claim on three basic pretensions: First, the Lithos are the righteous heirs to the leadership of all AmaNdebele. Second, Matthews's Litho sub-clan was unlawfully deprived of their right to the Litho chieftaincy. Third, the AmaNdebele are supposed to be the true rulers and owners of the Transvaal. Dissimilar to the case of Z0231 and the connected court case LCC116/99, his land claim for Rust de Winter is thus not actually based on the assumption that all technical conditions of the Restitution of Land Rights Act have been fulfilled. These would be dispossession after 19 June 1913 on the basis of racists laws and practices, no compensation received, restitution application filed before 31 December 1998 (see also Chapter 4.3). In P0050's case, Rust de Winter forms merely the basis for a much larger claim based on historical assumptions about the supposedly faulty leadership succession of the AmaNdebele and the property rights that this leadership position entails. Iggy wholeheartedly believes these assumptions to be true but seems to have continued the legacy of his uncle with little success.

To support the assumption that the Transvaal ought to be in the possession of the AmaNdebele Matthews compiled a list of properties, which were supposedly promised to his predecessor King Litho III (i.e. Jas-David) by Louis Botha in his function as Minister of Native Affairs in 1916. The Sacotso Mia binder contains a list of 790 properties, which were supposedly registered in the names of Ndebele groups between June 1912 and June 1913. It was submitted to the CRLR in November 2004. To support this claim a document of questionable authenticity was attached to the list (see Figure 6.5[52]). Other documents to support Matthews's claim were added, but they exhibit manipulation clues such as changes in handwriting and remnants of whiteout.

Matthews's claim to the Ndebele Kingship seems to have been officially initiated in June 2006. In 2007 he was interviewed by the Nhlapo Commission (see Chapters 4.2 and 5.3 for information on the Nhlapo Commission). He was let know that his issue would take much more time as the conflict between

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[52] I apologise for the poor graphic quality of Figures 6.5 and 6.6. I had to take non-flash photographs of all relevant files in a poorly lit room, as the LCC does not allow photocopies of their files.
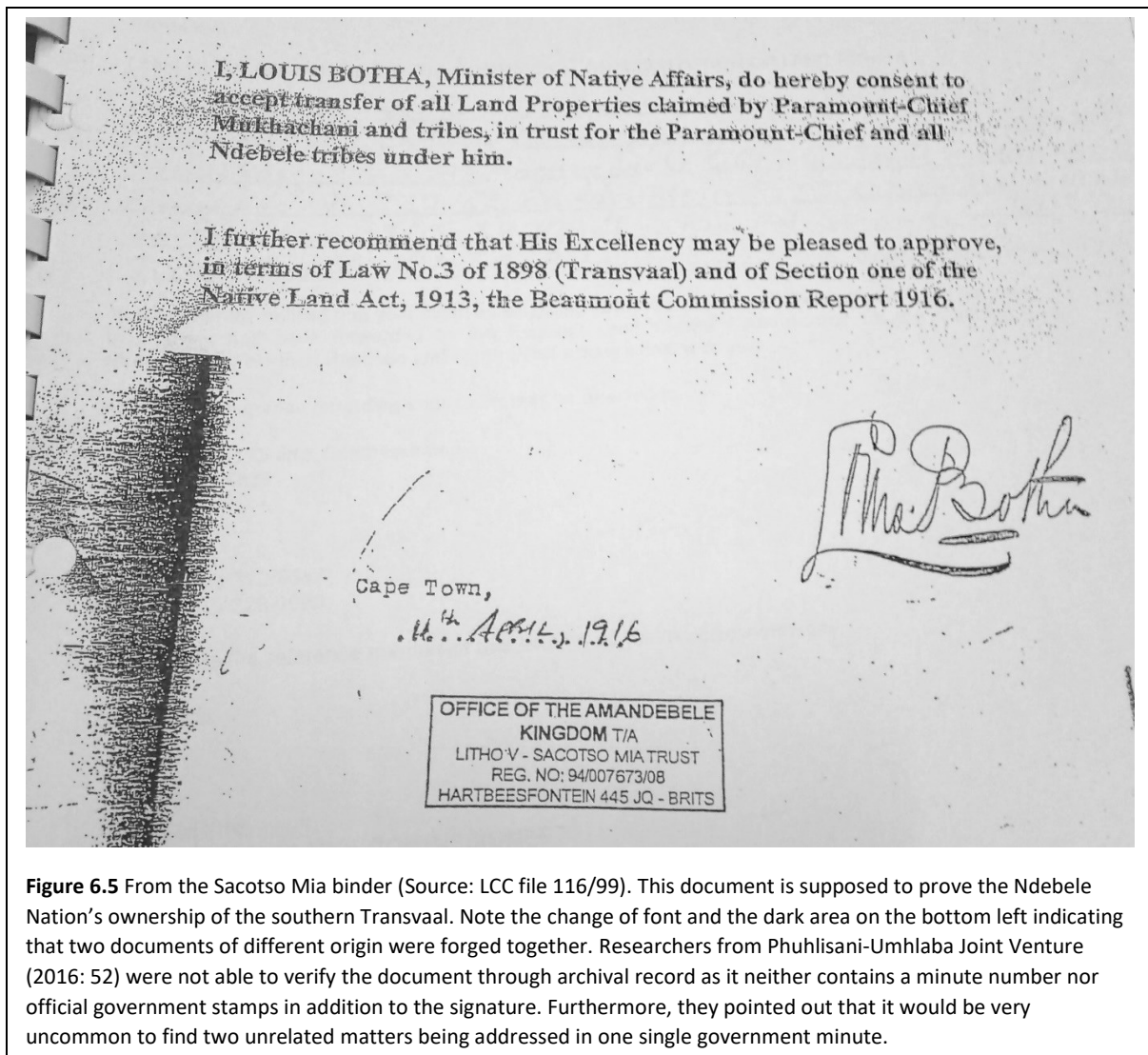
Figure 6.5 From the Sacotso Mia binder (Source: LCC file 116/99). This document is supposed to prove the Ndebele Nation's ownership of the southern Transvaal. Note the change of font and the dark area on the bottom left indicating that two documents of different origin were forged together. Researchers from Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture (2016: 52) were not able to verify the document through archival record as it neither contains a minute number nor official government stamps in addition to the signature. Furthermore, they pointed out that it would be very uncommon to find two unrelated matters being addressed in one single government minute.

Manala and Ndzundza was more urgent at that time. The Nhlapo Commission recognised Manala as the sole legitimate Ndebele Kingship in 2008 and in 2010 declared late Ndzundza monarch Cornelius III to have been irregularly appointed *iNgwenyama*. Later in 2010 President Zuma, however, declared Ndzundza leader Mbusi Mabhoko III a deemed King (see Chapter 5.3). Matthews was seemingly not informed by the Nhlapo Commission of these events and merely learned about them from the newspapers. He instructed his attorneys to submit a complaint to the Minister of CoGTA. Enoch Munano, President of Sacotso Mia, then drafted a "*verified lineage of the AmaNdebele Kings and Regents as narrated by Soselembe to his son Sebatshelwa*" and labelled himself "*researcher*". Not a word was lost about his business association with that same Sebatshelwa (i.e. Matthews) in the document. This "verified lineage" indicates that Manala supposedly abdicated from the throne and shows that Magodongo originated from Mahlangu's *ikohlo* wife (and thus could not be more than regent). It labels all Litho chiefs after the split from the Mabhoko Ndzundza as Kings and states that Matthews originates from the great house (*Ndlukulu*) of Litho and thus the other rulers of Litho could merely be regarded as regents (see Figure 6.6).
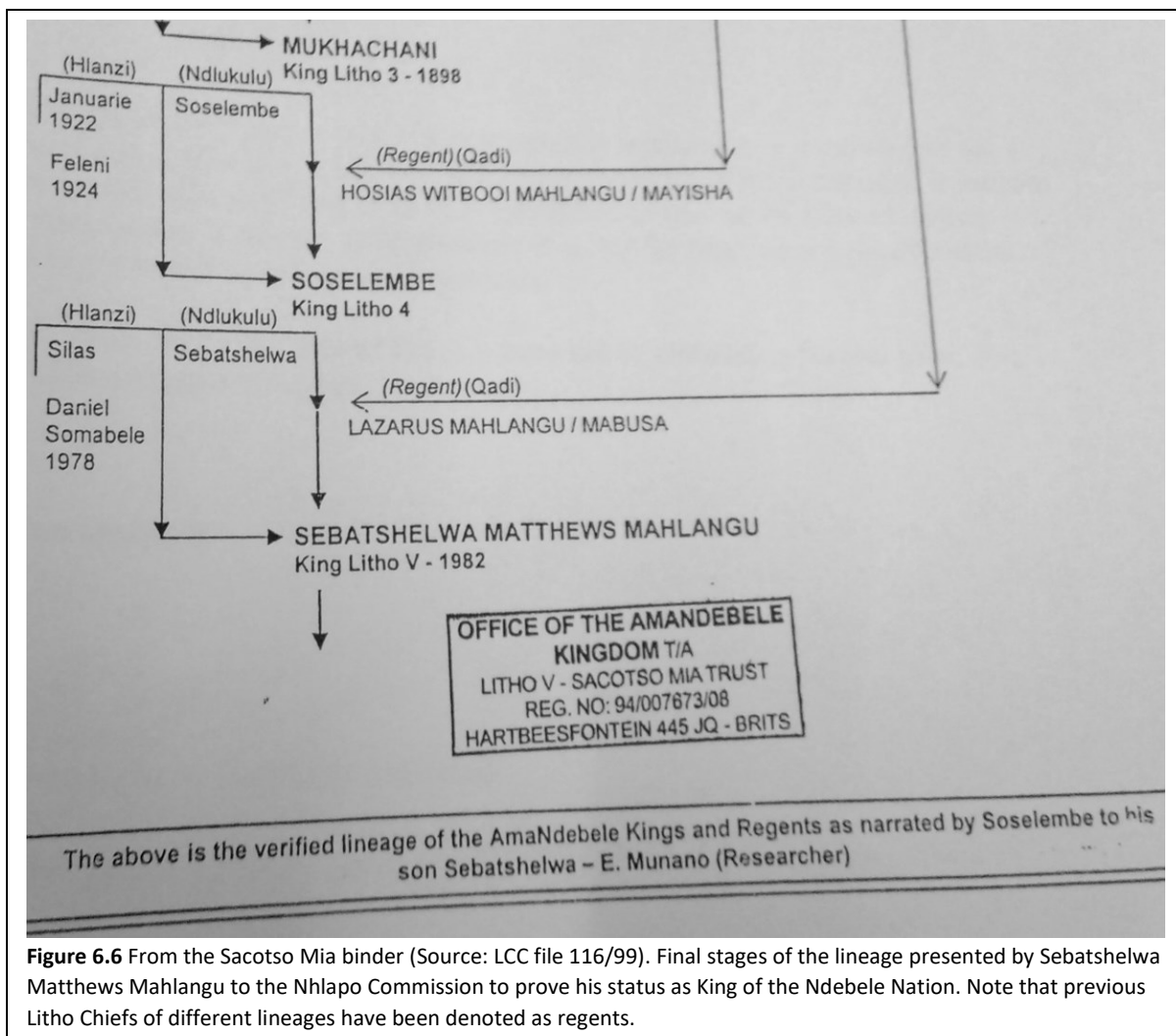
Figure 6.6 From the Sacotso Mia binder (Source: LCC file 116/99). Final stages of the lineage presented by Sebatshelwa Matthews Mahlangu to the Nhlapo Commission to prove his status as King of the Ndebele Nation. Note that previous Litho Chiefs of different lineages have been denoted as regents.

In a 'discussion document', which was sent to CoGTA in July 2012, and which is part of the Sacotso Mia binder in the LCC files, Sacotso Mia and the Ama-Ndebele Nation and Kingdom Alliance have compiled statements on Traditional Leaders, traditional health practitioners, land reform, business investment, capitalisation, public administration, child care and an "*audit of +- 5 000 to 5 million land claim beneficiaries*". In the discussion paper Sacotso Mia refers to itself as empowering agency, which supports Traditional Leaders and health practitioners and makes a case for an intensified engagement between South Africa's Royals and the democratically elected government to face current and future challenges. As an example, the discussion paper refers to a judgement made by King Litho IV (Soselembe Mahlangu, Matthews's father), which was passed together with the major paramount chiefdoms of the time, and which was "*so well balanced that not even the Highest Court in the whole World [sic!] could object to it*" (4). The following description of the judgement content remains trivial. Even though the cursory intention of this example may have been support for 'traditional' jurisdiction in general, it follows another motive, too: establishing assumptions about the historical acceptance of Matthews's royal bloodline in the community of the highest South African Traditional Leaders. The discussion paper then continues with a proposal to reform and strengthen the role of 'traditional'

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institutions and lays out five different structural levels of 'traditional' administration, which could supposedly better the cooperation between Traditional Leaders and state officials in favour of job creation. One way in which Sacotso Mia suggests to assist this strengthening process is to "*Convert all trust land and Government-owned Tribal* […] *Land to Tribal* […] *owned Land by registering that Land in the names of the respective communities in the Deeds Office*" (15) and further to "*allow Traditional communities* […] *to maintain land registered and grant freehold land ownership rights in their areas of* [sic!]*, with the power to confine such rights exclusively to members of their own tribes*" (16). Further demands call for a strengthening of Traditional Authority roles and more specific descriptions of their duties in the Constitution. The discussion paper ends with a listing of supposedly annexed documents regarding the land claim of King Litho V, i.e. P0050.

After the described discussion document was sent to CoGTA it seems that a meeting between Sacotso Mia, Matthews's *Nation and Kingdom Alliance* and CoGTA representatives materialised only few days thereafter. A letter submitted one week later by Sacotso Mia to Minister Richard Baloyi (Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs from October 2011 until July 2013) summarises the grievances that developed from that meeting:

> *His majesty King Litho-V demand that the Honorable Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs shall be kind enough to supply a Letter of Undertaking to His Majesty King Litho-V, to guarantee that the Third appointed Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims, shall not sell / Develop / Lease / Renovate / and or Rezone any of the Ama-Ndebele Nation and Kingdom Alliance Land and Kingship claims until the Second Phase of Dispute of Ama-Ndebele Nation and Kingdom Alliance Kingship among UMusi of NdzundzaMabhoko III-MbusiMahlangu (the Regent) and UMusi of ManalaMabena-Makhosonke II (the Abdicator), in line with and pursuant to UMusi of NdzundzaLitho-His Majesty King Litho-V Land and Kingship Claims, attached here to, as undertaken in writing by the Commission on Traditional Disputes and Claims on the 16th of July 2007.*

The erratic caption and word order of the sentence may on first sight distract from the fact that Matthews in this case brings together his three claims to power that were laid out above. He claims that the land under discussion is already the property of the Ndebele Nation. He claims that he is the true King of the Ndebele by labelling the Leaders of Ndzundza as Regents and those of Manala as Abdicators. And he leaves out of question whether he actually represents the people of Litho altogether by furnishing himself the title of 'King Litho-V'.

Alfred Mahlangu claims that P0050 remained relatively dormant while his own group's claim Z0231 fought legal battles at LCC and Supreme Court of Appeal. Allegedly Matthews and the other representatives wanted to observe developments in the competing claim and used the publicity that the Rust de Winter issue received to propagate Matthews's ambitions to be recognized as King Litho V. Iggy when asked why P0050 remained relatively passive throughout those years claims that the

government dragged its feet on the issue due to mining interests in the area. It seems that, even though P0050's representatives always wanted their claim to be handled separately from the claim that was driven by Petrus, Nathaniel and Chiefs Patrick and Nicolas, they would not refrain from claiming the successes but also the legal and administrative obstacles that Z0231 had faced when presenting their own case.

However, once it became clear that Z0231 had a real chance of succeeding at the courts in Randburg and Bloemfontein, P0050 also became active again. Eventually, CRLR and LCC realized that both claims had merit and were fought by different groups of representatives on behalf of almost the same set of beneficiaries. It therefore became necessary to unite them and the responsibility to unite the claimant parties was assigned to the RLCC. Only if the representation of the Litho Ndzundza in front of the land restitution institutions was clear could they continue with the process. According to both Iggy Litho and Alfred Mahlangu a first attempt to consolidate both claims was made in 2013 with a settlement proposition by the CRLR, but it proved unsuccessful for which all involved parties continue to blame each other.

6.3.3 The Consolidation of the Claims

My personal research encounter with the Litho Ndzundza and their land claim began in early 2016. I shortly met Iggy, Jonoti and Alfred at a community meeting in Rapotokwane, but I did not get the chance to talk about the land claim. When I came to Rapotokwane for the duration of six weeks later that year (August/September 2016) I was able to get better insight into the land claim. Iggy, now Chief Coordinator of P0050, was in good spirit. He claimed that final government research reports concluded that the Litho Ndzundza fulfilled all prerequisites to regain the land in Rust de Winter that they had been evicted from almost a century ago. Furthermore, the recent court ruling in favour of ring-fencing land claims (see Chapter 4.3) that were filed before the end of 1998 was kindling hopes for a speedy settlement of the Rust de Winter matter. Unfortunately, at that stage my personal relationship to the involved actors was not yet based on enough rapport to gain further insight.

When I returned a few months later in April 2017 Iggy continued to be positive about the soon to come handing over of land and laid out his plans to transform Rust de Winter into a major site for renewable energy production. At that point he was not yet sure whether "*All Whites must go*"[53] or whether he would prefer a tenancy system with the local farmers. However, Jonoti Mnguni, who was treasurer of P0050 at the time, qualified that no land could be transferred as long as Z0231 and P0050 fought their own battles. Apparently, the CRLR had set 20 May 2017 as a deadline for both claims to agree on cooperation, telling both involved sides to give them a joint committee for both claims and the land

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[53] Conversation with Iggy Litho, 25 April 2017

shall be theirs. That date went by without any further mention of the land claim whatsoever. Few weeks later, Iggy, Jonoti and P0050's chairman Paulus Mahlangu started discussing the effects of Section 10(4) of the Restitution of Land Rights Act (Act 22 of 1994), which reads:

> (4) If there is any dispute as to who legitimately represents a community for the purposes of any claim under this Act, the regional land claims commissioner having jurisdiction may in the manner prescribed in rules made by the Chief Land Claims Commissioner in terms of section 16, in order to have a person or persons elected to represent the community -
> (a) take steps for drawing up a list of the names of the members of the community;
> (b) direct that a meeting of such community be convened and an election be held at that meeting;
> (c) take such other steps as may be reasonably necessary for the election.

It was not clear who exactly evoked Section 10(4). While both land claim parties portrayed its initiation through their own lawyers, it seems appropriate to assume that it was proposed by the Commission[54] once the abovementioned deadline had passed without any noteworthy progress. The activation of Section 10(4) was cause for several community meetings on both sides, which cannot in their entirety be summarised at this point. It resulted, however, in three public meetings with the Land Claims Commission chaired by Mr. Mkhacani wa Mkhacani[55], who seemed linguistically and socially unable to cope with the people of Rapotokwane.

The First Meeting under Section 10(4)

On 16 September 2017 the Community Hall of Rapotokwane was too small to accommodate all those that had come to attend the meeting with the RLCC. An estimated 500 people attended the meeting. A tent was erected next to the hall and a sound system was installed to make sure everyone had a chance to participate in the meeting. The Commission representatives were seated at the centre of the stage, while Chief Vuma, his entourage, and Alfred Mahlangu were seated closer to the window on the stage's left side, where there was more of a breeze on this
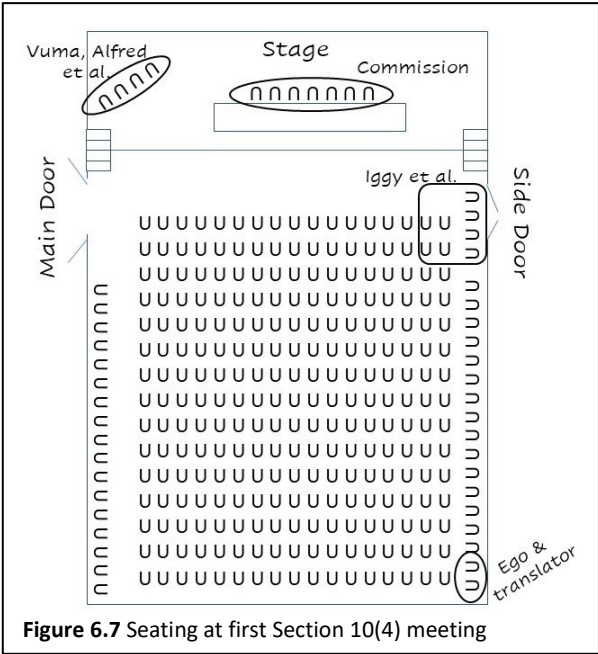
Figure 6.7 Seating at first Section 10(4) meeting

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[54] In the field, 'the Commission' was used to refer to CRLR and RLCC and any other linked institutions and actors synonymously

[55] The exact title of Mr Mkhacani wa Mkhacani's position and his exact departmental association were not obvious from his introduction at the events and could also not be retrieved from online sources. He refused to speak to me in person and his co-workers also showed little willingness to cooperate without higher level authorization. As he was generally referred to as "Mkhacani" by his co-workers and clients, I shall henceforth make use of this abbreviated version of his name, too.

hot day. Iggy, Jonoti and their fellow representatives of claim P0050 seated themselves in front of the stage on the right side. Here they appeared as part of the mass of beneficiaries but were still positioned prominently enough with overview of the main entrance and with an opportunity to exit through the side door for deliberations (see Figure 6.7). Alfred made sure that his position as the Chief's right hand in this matter was known to all by repeatedly calling out the traditional "*Bayete*!" and "*Ndabezita*!" to announce the Chief's presence.

Even though papers with the proposed agenda had been distributed and no objections had been raised in this regard, very soon it became clear that this meeting would not go as planned by the Commission. Their original intent was the nomination of a committee of elders that would be able to verify the originally dispossessed households of Litho. Those households would then each elect representatives, who would then choose a committee to present both claims simultaneously. The Litho Ndzundza are made up of ten sub-clans and thus the Commission proposed the selection of one elder for each. However, Chair Mkhacani left the *modus operandi* open for discussion and asked for contributions from the people present.

The proposal of choosing elders was met with intense opposition by the majority of the crowd. Some complained that they were unaware of their clan belonging but were still able to identify those ancestors that had been originally dispossessed. Others complained that the clan names were not properly presented by those at the front as their praise songs had been omitted and thus their authenticity was not guaranteed. Iggy Litho and P0050 Chairman Paulus Mahlangu complained that their clans had not been mentioned as *indlunkulu*, the Royal House. What followed was a very lengthy discussion, in which Chair Mkhacani appeared increasingly lost between the public demands and the information that he was provided by Alfred at the side of the stage. Alfred's Z0231 group supported the election of elders according to clans as they would supposedly ensure the representation of all children of Litho. Iggy's P0050 group, however, proposed the selection of family representatives based on the names of those on the list of ODPs (originally dispossessed people), claiming that today's interpretation of clans would not appropriately represent those whose ancestors had been betrayed for their home. While the Commission representatives claimed that they were unaware of the origin of the ODP list, the majority of those involved in the land claim sustained the narrative that it had been retrieved from the archives of the former regimes, listing those families that were involved in the 1926 Witlaagte purchase. This, however, excludes the family of Petrus Mahlangu and his sons; Petrus and his ancestors may have lived in Rust de Winter, but allegedly did not contribute to the purchase of new land in Witlaagte. Iggy's proposal, a selection of family representatives according to the ODP list, received 227 votes while the clan-based model received only 66 votes. Iggy openly revelled in this

decision as if he had landed the first blow to his opponent in a boxing match. Score: 1:0 for Iggy so to say.

Iggy's demand for a selection of representatives according to written proof of actual disappropriation rather than according to traditionalistic structures in this case was solely a tactical move to exclude Alfred's family from the process. It unveils that any means, may they be rational or irrational, 'traditional' or 'modern', democratic or despotic, seemed to be justified by the ends in this struggle for land and power. This is mirrored by the respective plans for Rust de Winter administration after the claim. On several occasions Iggy and his companions explained that they wished to see individual title deeds for all 105 originally dispossessed families, unified in a CPA or a Trust, which has gained him a lot of support from the masses. However, this is uncertain to materialise as both Iggy and Jonoti expressed scepticism towards any democratic procedures and institutions on several occasions. Also, Jonoti's statement that Iggy should become the new Chief of an independent Litho branch in Rust de Winter raises doubts whether a basic democratic structure such as a CPA would be a feasible structure to attain that goal. Alfred on the other hand likes to portray a more balanced approach to the matter. He explained that the land could not be administered by one Chief and his family alone and that it must be under the auspices of a CPA. It should, however, leave room for influence from the side of Traditional Leadership through council members and other checks and balances. He acknowledged that two land claims filed by men fighting for chieftaincy cannot possibly end without the influence of Traditional Authority structures. Also, Alfred explained,

> one of the main evidence that we put forward, for us to convince the Land Claims Commission, is the fact that we went to show them the graves of the Traditional Leaders, of the Chiefs. So how can it be, going forward, we ignore them? […] We need to accommodate both principles. (7 November 2017)

Nonetheless it remains questionable to which extent he is honest about his stance in this matter, too.

At the community meeting the ODP list was then read out and the descendants of these people met all over the community hall and outside to choose their representatives. After twenty minutes they returned and were to announce their representatives. Late Chief Hosia was the first name to be read out and Iggy made his way to the front to register as the representative of Hosia's descendants. Alfred, who sat next to Chair Mkhacani, leaned over, said something, and Chair Mkhacani announced that there was a dispute of origin in the named family and thus no representative could be chosen. Iggy stood baffled, a comeback for Alfred. Score: 1:1.

Cases of disputed relatedness were few afterwards and most family representatives were presented without challenge. While the other family representatives were announced in a very lengthy process, Alfred and Iggy met for consultations, in which it seemed that Alfred tried to propose a compromise,

but Iggy refused. After all other families had registered their representatives the descendants of Hosia Mahlangu were called to the front in an attempt by Mkhacani to mediate. When this failed he proposed that an elders committee be selected to settle the dispute and nominations should be given by those present in any given order. Alfred smirked triumphantly as this gave him the chance to install his supporters. He had successfully turned the confrontation in his favour. Score: 2:1 for Alfred.

However, once a few elders were nominated, Iggy raised his voice and questioned to what extent those elders that were involved in the succession dispute could function as mediators. He gained a round of applause and several people supported his demand for Alfred's supporters to recuse themselves from the elders committee, which they eventually did when the protests grew to an unbearable volume. This seemed to be the end of this exchange of blows between Iggy and Alfred with the virtual scores being tied at 2:2.

What followed were accusations of selfishness and corruption against the '*descendants of Serudla*' (i.e. the entire Litho leadership), while younger attendants blamed tribal politics in general for the stalling land restitution process. At this point Chair Mkhacani lost his patience and mumbled in XiTsonga, his native language: "*I tried it your way, but that one is stupid. Now we will do it our way*."[56] Unfortunately, a sufficient amount of people in the hall understood his words, which caused turmoil and several complaints about his Commission's work. Tension was rising and therefore the meeting was abruptly discontinued by chair Mkhacani and another meeting was announced for 11 November. Alfred, Chief Vuma and other representatives of Z0231 left in a hurry. Iggy was in a festive mood after that meeting as he interpreted it as a victory against Alfred and Chief Vuma. He predicted that Z0231 would very soon be defeated, and he declared that he would force all Litho leaders to provide a blood sample to proof their relatedness to the disowned forefathers, even if it meant unearthing the remains of late Chief Hosia to get a DNA sample. This, he promised, would show that he was the only true heir to the Litho Chieftaincy.

However, two weeks later in October, Iggy had to put that project on hold. He and the main Litho representatives were called to meet with the Commission to dissolve the dispute regarding Chief Hosia's legitimate succession. Nathaniel Mahlangu reported to me that the matter was very quickly settled when the Litho family tree was presented to Iggy and he was forced to admit that other branches had a much closer genealogical relation to the late Chief Hosia. Iggy, unwilling to admit defeat towards me, explained that he had been advised by his lawyers to let the matter rest until enough financial resources were available through the land claim to take it to the next level in the form of a DNA test.

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[56] *In loco* translated by personal interpreter

Surprisingly, reconciliatory events followed. As previously mentioned, Hendrik Mahlangu unexpectedly died in late August 2017 before the first meeting under Section 10(4). Alfred's attempts to initiate a consolidation of the claims had been suppressed until then by his brother and other actors such as Nathaniel Mahlangu. At the meeting with the Commission he invited Iggy to negotiate and this set a precedent for the following developments. The circumstances had changed: Hendrik's passing, Alfred's loss of support from the local CCZ church because of that, Iggy's 'tactical retreat' on his claim to be the true heir to the chieftaincy, the initiation of Section 10(4), and eventually Chief Vuma's crumbling support after the SepFluor training centre scandal. Every involved actor had to make concessions. Many Litho elders were forced to withdraw support for Chief Vuma during that period if they did not want to suffer reputational harm. Alfred joined the Traditional Council in their attempt to suspend Vuma and began negotiations with Jonoti and Iggy behind closed doors.

Iggy, having been made aware that the implementation of Section 10(4) could take up to 18 months, was willing to find an agreement. At the end it was agreed that both claims would work together and provide a joint committee to negotiate with the Commission. That committee was supposed to be made up of five representatives per claim with at least two female members on each side. This compromise was enabled by the agreement that the two claims would not be merged into a new claim to maintain their 'ring-fenced' status, and to allow P0050 to continue their claim for financial redress on the other Transvaal farms beyond Rust de Winter. Alfred and his Z0231 claim thus managed to keep their claim alive and to remain on the list of potential beneficiaries, which may have been difficult if P0050 had been established as the only legitimate claim under Section 10(4). A meeting was called on the weekend before the Commission's next arrival to reveal the news to the involved beneficiaries. The 5+5 committee plan was agreed upon by the majority of those present. No-one was hesitant with praising their own achievements. Chief Vuma claimed his leadership had facilitated an air of progress, Iggy claimed he had overcome personal grudges in favour of the benefit of his people, Jonoti claimed he had assembled everyone around the negotiation table, Alfred claimed he had envisioned this compromise long time ago, and Nathaniel praised his own stratagem in assigning the relevant posts to those who deserved it.

The Second Meeting under Section 10(4)

On 11 November 2017 the Commission returned. Fewer people attended the meeting compared to the previous one. One person in particular was missing: Alfred. His son died a few days prior to the meeting. As sad as these circumstances may have been for him, it spared him the confrontation with Chief Vuma, who attended despite the Traditional Council's recent efforts to remove him (see 6.2 above). Before the official meeting started, representatives of the two claims addressed the crowd, explaining that a compromise had been negotiated due to the extensive time that the full

implementation of Section 10(4) would take. The attendants were also informed that the members for the proposed 5+5 committee had also been decided upon and that it was now up to all potential beneficiaries to confirm them. Interestingly, Alfred was not among those selected for the Z0231 side. Nathaniel Mahlangu revealed to me in a later conversation that Alfred had been cooperating with both sides and had shared information with Iggy and was thus left out in the distribution of posts by his own people.

The meeting with the RLCC then turned out more turbulent than the two claimant parties had anticipated. Early on, furious interjections expressed dissatisfaction regarding the non-involvement of the majority of beneficiaries in the decision to join the claims. Further attendants criticised the Commission for their poor performance at the previous meeting and for not providing printed minutes of the same at this one. Especially the fact that 65 family representatives had been determined during the last meeting, but none of them had been involved in the 5+5 committee decision caused turmoil. This urged Chair Mkhacani to early on utter his first threat to leave the meeting if people did not start being productive. Several of these warnings of his were to follow.

Then Senior Restitution Adviser Nonqaba Mehlomakulu took the stage. Speaking without microphone and thereby successfully getting the crowd to calm down she declared that Section 10(4) was still active and thus its procedure had to be maintained: "*We want to give you land, but we have to stick to the rules.*"[57] After protests from P0050 and Z0231 representatives she added that this process could, however, be abbreviated as long as the beneficiaries declared a united approach of both claims, which would enable them to select representative committee members. Therefore she asked the crowd, whether the claims were working in unity, receiving affirmative response from most attendants. Objections were ignored. Regarding the committee that was to be selected she explained that the Litho Chief would have an *ex officio* seat on the committee referring to common legal practice of involving chiefs into land matters.

Then, suddenly Chair Mkhacani took the stage again and declared that the verification of family representatives, which had begun at the previous meeting, had to be continued. Thus abruptly all calmness that Mehlomakulu had managed to establish in the previous minutes was gone. Her own response to his interjection provided even more confusion: on the one side she declared that she would not want to waste time on the issue of family representative verification, on the other she explained that archival records would not suffice to establish all potential land restitution beneficiaries and thus others may come forward to demand inclusion in the process. While names from the ODP-list and names of those that were supposed to represent the respective descendants were read out,

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[57] *In loco* translated by public translator

drinking water was being distributed, which caused additional turbulence. Several people raised their hands to get attention from the bottle carriers, which Mehlomakulu interpreted as objections prompting Mkhacani to once again threaten with an early termination of the assembly. What followed was a medium-sized mass panic of people trying to seize the stage to confirm their family's status as beneficiaries, which once again caused the Commission to change their agenda and suspend the verification process. The people slowly calmed down again.

To follow was the nomination of committee members. Chair Mkhacani once again managed to excite the crowd by explaining that the 5+5 decision of previous negotiations was invalid, but that these proposed members may be selected for the committee nonetheless. Interestingly, he furthermore announced that this election was to be performed by the family representatives, even though their verification had just been suspended by him. Realizing that this suggestion would end in even more complaints and confusion he then offered to leave the hall with his commission for ten minutes so that the crowd could consult on their own regarding the nominations. Once Chair and commission had left the hall, everything went very quick. The 5+5 committee members were agreed upon, plus 4 additional members whose clans felt left out, plus the Chief as *ex officio* observer. The result was presented to the Commission who then asked the committee to select their Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Treasurer. Iggy asked for more time to decide on these posts but Mkhacani and Mehlomakulu were eager to finalise the process. They agreed on Iggy Litho to chair the committee while the other four offices were equally assigned to the two claims, among them also Nathaniel Mahlangu. Mkhacani announced that the verification of family representatives would continue in the future and that a status report on the claim would be given in February/March 2018.

6.3.4 A Fragile Truce, a Stakeholder Meeting and a Controversial Research Report

In early December 2017 I finally convinced Nathaniel Mahlangu to grant me an interview. He had been rather sceptical of my research interest as he had seen me with Iggy on several occasions but he eventually shared his side of the story. Regarding the land claim he revealed that clues to the grave of the late Chief Litho had been found at Carousel (north of Hammanskraal) and that this could be used in a new claim, which was under way. The new claim would demand compensation for the land that was lost for the settlement of the Tsonga/Shangaan people that came to Rapotokwane in the 1960s and 70s. A completely new land claim committee would be assembled for this purpose, which would run independently from the Rust de Winter claim and the newly established committee. He stressed the importance of confidentiality in this matter as this information could destabilize the relationship to Iggy's P0050 group. Nathaniel was never afraid to utter death threats should I disclose any confidential information to his opponents. As it took only a few weeks until the relationship with P0050 soured again due to circumstances out of my control, and because the news that he presented as

sensational secret had already reached me through other village residents at that point, I have taken the liberty to disclose them now several years later.

In mid-December, Iggy received notice from the CRLR that for six Rust de Winter farms a lodged claim had been gazetted on behalf of both Z0231 and P0050. The claims did not receive a joint reference number, but now that it was agreed to cooperate they could be handled simultaneously. The six farms that were gazetted were the government-owned farms in Rust de Winter and their settlement would constitute the first phase of the restitution, while the privately-owned farms would be taken care of in a second phase. Opponents of this land claim were invited to file complaints against this decision until the beginning of April 2018.

Therefore, on 3 February Iggy called a meeting to inform the beneficiaries about this development to diligently fulfil his duties as Chair of the newly elected committee. However, it turned into a major blow to his reputation. Very early during that meeting he was lectured by Alfred, who was not even seated on stage, what his duties were as a Chair and how to lead the meeting. Then several complaints were thrown in by random attendants about the lack of printed information, which was broadened to a general critique of the committee's work. Most of the land claim committee members seemed unaffected by the interjections; they stayed calm and explained that everything was done as diligently as possible to make sure to not be outwitted by the Commission's representatives. Having spent plenty of time with him I could however tell that Iggy was starting to lose his patience. When Iggy and the committee's secretary Reymond Mnguni explained the Commission's letter and the attached gazette notice, they were interrupted again by a man in the crowd, who accused the committee of wasting time, demanding that the document be copied and handed out to every single person immediately. In that moment Iggy lost his temper and responded in an undignified way to the man's provocation. His committee colleagues intervened and told him to sit on the side of the stage and took over the proceedings. Alfred continued the meeting without Iggy's 'assistance'. His reputation as Chair of the Litho land claim committee suffered severely on that day and both Alfred and Nathaniel could not hide a smirk when they left the community hall.

The abovementioned meeting also served to inform the beneficiaries that a stakeholder meeting had been announced by the CRLR to be held on 16 February 2018 in Rust de Winter. That day, the buildings of the Department of Water Affairs in Rust de Winter saw representatives of very different origin and interest: the representatives of the Litho Traditional Council and the Royal Family were there, the significant actors of the land restitution committee, other land claimants and the tenants who occupied local farms. Also attending was André van Zyl, the lawyer whose firm had been representing Z0231 in the last decade. Van Zyl had been informed by the Commission few days before that there would no longer be funding for two *pro bono* lawyers on this case even though they were still officially

two separate land claims and thus he was asked to withdraw. He refused. Interestingly, Iggy's legal representative for P0050, Hewu Attorneys, did neither receive such a notice nor an invite to the meeting. Hewu's representative intended to attend nonetheless but was involved in an accident just before the meeting. This unnerved Iggy and had him suggesting that "*Something is fishy about this meeting. But I am too brilliant. I am too much smart for these people*". Nonetheless the atmosphere was relaxed and cheerful before the meeting started. There were government officials from the Office of the RLCC of Gauteng, who joked that everyone would have to speak Venda from now on as Cyril Ramaphosa, a Venda by surname, had replaced Jacob Zuma as South Africa's President on the previous day. Nathaniel Mahlangu joked about starting to learn German instead, so that I could grant him asylum in my home country.

Then the stakeholder meeting began and from the very beginning it seemed that Mr Mkhacani, who had repeatedly lost control over the proceedings of the previous two meetings, tried to create an air of authority and intimidation. During the initial round of introduction of the approximately 30 attendants he lectured Alfred that he would not be allowed to attend in two different functions (claimant and land tenant) and forced him to choose in which capacity he was attending the meeting. Furthermore, he did his very best to patronisingly point out the procedural shortcomings of Reymond Mnguni as secretary of the Litho land claim committee:

> Mnguni: *Well there are a number of apologies that we would like to render from our side. From the newly established land claim committee: uMaMathike (?) […], who apologised for not being here as additional member of the committee. We have Lebogang…*
> Mkhacani: *(interrupts) No no, finish with the first apology.*
> Mnguni: *Sorry?*
> Mkhacani: *Finish with the first apology.*
> Mnguni: *Yes, that is a lady, she is an additional member of committee.*
> Mkhacani: *Alright.*
> Mnguni: *Yes. Then the next one…*
> Mkhacani: [interrupts] *we haven't heard the apology, we only heard the names of the people.*
> Mnguni: *Oh okay, she is not available, due to duties at work.*
> Mkhacani: *That's the part I want, the apology part of it. You shall continue.*
> Mnguni: *[…] (unintelligible), she is also not available, I don't know, she was not actually sure. I just heard in case anything can happen, let's put the apologies.*
> Mkhacani: *She is not available?*
> Mnguni: *Yes*
> Mkhacani: *You don't know what happened?*
> Mnguni: *She was doubtful, but…*
> Mkhacani: *(interrupts) That one is not an apology. Let me explain an apology. An apology is a word from someone who was supposed to come to a meeting but was unable to come to the meeting, because of a particular reason. The person has requested you to tender that apology and to give us that reason. So if every someone did not tell you anything, that's not an apology. That person is absent. Okay, Continue!*

As the meeting proceeded Mkhacani gave a summary of the claim and the process of finding a joint committee for the two competing claims. He furthermore explained that a service provider had been appointed with the task of conducting research regarding the development of property relations on the farms claimed by Iggy's uncle Matthews. The pronouncement of the Commissioner's decision, based on that service provider's research report, he explained, was the main reason for the stakeholder meeting. He explained that some farms had been accepted for restitution and some had not. He then clarified in detail the proceedings should the decision by the Commissioner not be accepted by any of the involved parties. This explicitly involved negotiations at the LCC, the Supreme Court of Appeal, and the Constitutional Court. He also gave a summary of the legislative processes that land restitution in South Africa had undergone. 25 minutes into the meeting, Mkhacani then finally asked his Project Manager Mr Serumula to announce the results of the research report.

Serumula then explained that the area claimed under P0050 was comprised of 86 farms[58], which also included all 18 farms that had been claimed by late Chief Patrick on behalf of Z0231. However, the

Figure 6.8 76 farms investigated by Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture. Position, shape and size of farms according to research report and map 2528_2004_ED5, DRDLR. Places, borders and national roads added for orientation.

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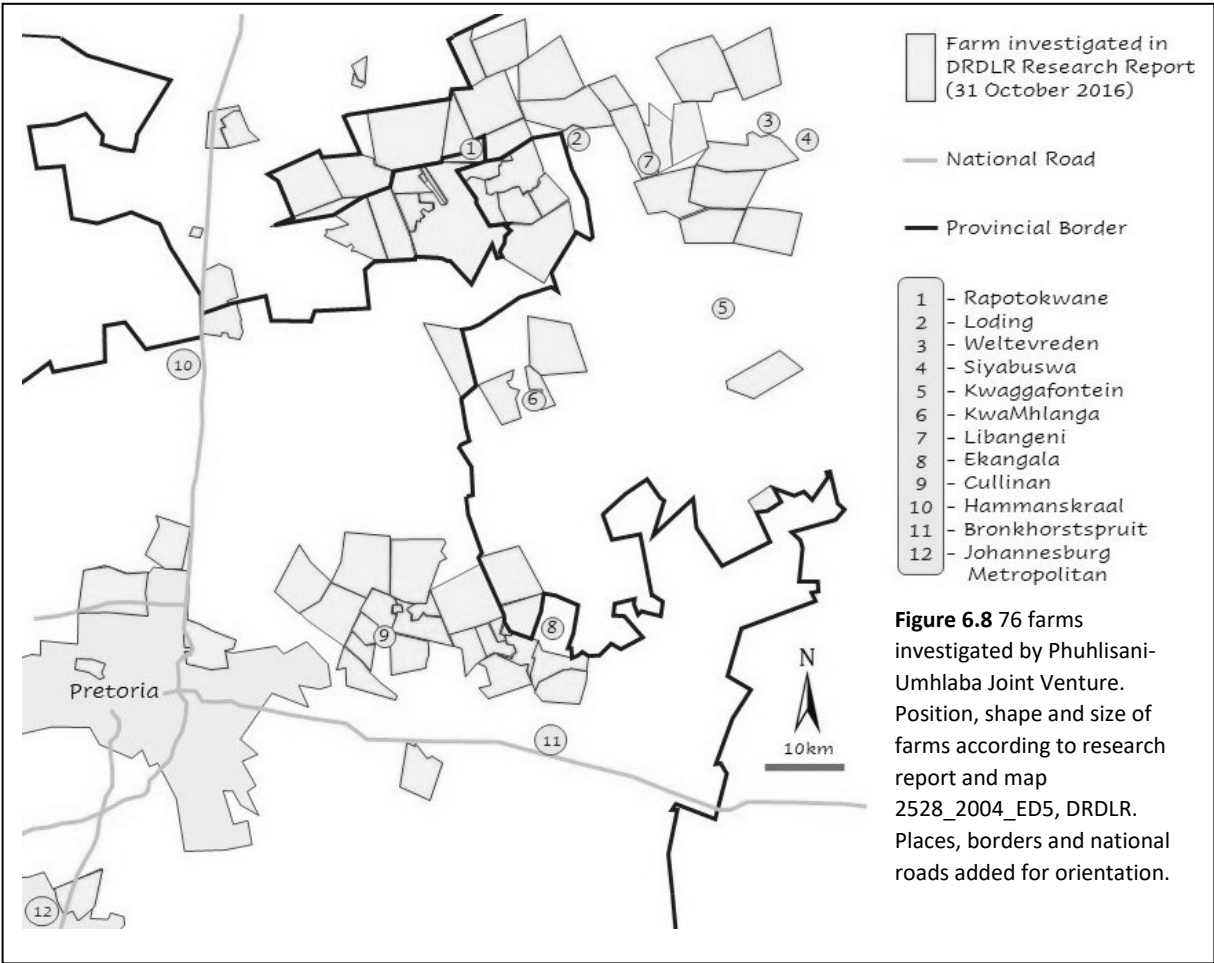
[58] It is unclear where the stark difference between the 790 farms, which Matthews supposedly claimed according to Iggy and the Sacotso Mia binder, and the 86 farms mentioned by Mr Serumula originates. Possibly, the number 790 refers to farm portions; e.g. the farm Rust de Winter 180JR apparently consists of 199 portions.

report was only drafted for 76 farms, because some farms were omitted by the department, due to reasons he was not willing or able to reveal. He announced, however, that another research report was being drafted by a different research venture on the missing ten farms. He continued by stating that "*the outcome of the research was that 68 farms do not comply. And then only nine farms were found to be valid.*"

The report on the 76 farms was drafted by researchers from Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture, located in East London (Eastern Cape Province), who seem to have initiated research in late 2015 and submitted their report to the Commission in late 2016. Upon official request, it was made available to me through the abovementioned Mr. Serumula on 05 April 2018. According to the report, research had been conducted within that year on 35 farms in Gauteng Province, 15 farms in Limpopo Province, and 25 farms in Gauteng Province[59]. These investigated farms constitute the largest part of the land claimed by Chief Sebatshelwa Matthews Mahlangu, Iggy's uncle and initiator of claim P0050. As this area overlaps with the farms claimed by late Chief Patrick Mgoma Mahlangu on behalf of the same community it is also deemed valid for his case. The report includes the following facts and recommendations.

For eight complete farms a valid claim could be established for the Litho Ndzundza as a community on the basis that the land had been used by them since approximately 1903 for settlement, farming and as burial grounds. For Witlaagte a valid claim was established for the two portions (Ptns 3 & 11) that had been bought in the 1920s, where ownership rights had been registered with governmental institutions instead of the tribe. The remaining portions of the farm on the northern side of the provincial border (Limpopo/Mpumalanga) had been claimed but were not awarded to the Lithos. The fact that Witlaagte was only in part validated for restitution could possibly explain the confusing inconsistency regarding the total number of farms that were investigated, those that were validated and those that were rejected[60]. Five out of the eight farms that were recommended for complete restitution are the result of a recent rearrangement of farm borders and originally constituted only two farms in the north-west part of the wider Rust de Winter area[61]. Thus, the number of farms that were recommended for restitution may appear more generous than what it actually implies. Strangely, a passage in the research report recommends the restitution of 14 properties (Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture 2016: 20) while then listing only the abovementioned nine farms in detail. Whether this diversion in the number of farms that the researchers found to be eligible for restitution is a simple mathematical error or whether this is due to misunderstandings or manipulation of some sort can only

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[59] 35 + 15 + 25 = 75 (≠76)
[60] 68 + 9 = 77 (≠76)
[61] Farms 181 JR, and 184 JR had sections excised from them which were then registered as 687 JR, 696 JR, and 697 JR.

be speculated. According to the report 23 farms contained evidence for a valid restitution claim, but not for the Litho Ndzundza in particular. It was found that on 24 out of the 76 farms a competing claim for restitution exists, out of which five had already undergone a successful settlement process. On 35 farms no or insufficient evidence was found to sustain a valid claim for restitution. The report formulated several grievances regarding the cooperation of all involved parties, which impaired the research performance.

Figure 6.9 Farms claimed under Z0231 according to LCC files. Portions 3 & 11 of Witlaagte 173 JR and the entire farms Rust de Winter 178 JR, Rust de Winter 180 JR, Rooikop 181 JR, Melkhoutfontein 183 JR, Leeuwkraal 184 JR, Leeuwkop 687 JR, Masombuta 697 JR, Mtshayise 696 JR were recommended for restitution. Position and size of farms according to the research report and map 2528_2004_ED5, DRDLR. Places, borders, local roads, water bodies and mines were added for orientation.

Continuing his summary of the research report, Mr Serumula explained that some farms were found to be eligible for restitution, but not specifically to the Litho Ndzundza. Other places may have been inhabited by them at some point but were expropriated prior to the promulgation of the Natives Land Act in 1913, which technically excludes them from restitution under the Restitution of Land Rights Act. After further technical explanations Serumula, visibly relieved that he had managed to deliver the news without disturbances, handed back to Mkhacani. The latter then explained what needed to be done by those who opposed the gazette notice, which Iggy had failed to successfully explain to the land claim beneficiaries two weeks before. He explained further:

> *You have claimed as a community. As a community where you have got rights, where you qualify in terms of the basic minimum requirements, on those nine* [farms]. *On the rest you don't.* […] *Now in those other farms the research found that you had rights there. You may have been dispossessed, but not as a community, as individuals. You were labour tenants. And the land claim is a community claim. So, in that regard, as a community, on those ones* [where] *you*

were removed individually, you don't qualify. That's what the Act says. We don't have a community of labour tenants, because if you are a labour tenant, it means the owner of that land he tells you the rules of how he wants you to live in there. You stay there and live according to the rules of the owner. But as a community… a community… people have shared rules, culture and tradition.

After stressing that there was no proof that a shared system of norms and traditions had existed beyond the nine farms in Rust de Winter he continued by mentioning two precedents in Limpopo. There, he claimed, it had been similarly decided by both CRLR and LCC that labour tenant claims could not be handled under the same case number as a community claim and that the community which was removed must be the same community that later lodged a claim. Addressing Iggy directly, who sat in the very back corner of the room, he explained that legal action against the Commissioner's decision at the LCC was possible, but that this would have to be signalled to the CRLR within 30 days. Regarding those 68 farms, where supposedly individual families had labour tenant rights, Mkhacani continued, it would be possible to lodge new claims on their behalf as restitution had been reopened in 2014. Doing so, he failed to mention that the report saw no evidence for any valid claim on 35 farms of the investigated 76, and that newly lodged claims would not have the privilege of being prioritised under 'ring-fenced' status. In the aftermath of this meeting it became evident that Mkhacani's 30-day-deadline for lodging a complaint against the Commissioner's decision was probably not chosen at random. The deadline corresponds with the time that the land claim commissioner's office allows itself to hand out requested documents, such as the abovementioned research report. In this case it would have been necessary for the Litho representatives to take legal action against the Commissioner's decision without having seen the report on which this decision was based.

After having finished his legalistic soliloquy Mkhacani asked Iggy as the Chairman of the Litho Land Claims Committee to step forward and acknowledge receipt of the letter, which officially informed him of the (partial) rejection of 68 farms for the land claim his uncle Matthews had lodged. Iggy, trying to hide in his corner, pretended not to be present. Mkhacani now depended on Reymond Mnguni, whom he had only a few minutes earlier patronized in front of the assembly, to identify Iggy as Chairman and to convince him that no harm would be done if he accepted the letter and signed the acknowledgement of its receipt. Stubbornly and obviously feeling offended by Mkhacani's decision to hand him the rejection letter for 68 farms in front of all his (former) opponents and supporters, Iggy made his way to the front and signed. Thereafter the floor was opened for questions. This included critical remarks by Nathaniel Mahlangu, Iggy Litho, Attorney Van Zyl, and those tenants working on the farms that were validated for restitution. Ironically, for a second time within a few minutes Mkhacani depended on someone he had previously attempted to score off, as he needed Alfred to calm down the crowd and to translate angry interjections.

After the stakeholder meeting had ended, Iggy called for a short-notice meeting of the Litho land claim committee once the officials had left the room. I was also excluded from the meeting, but loud and angry discussions in IsiNdebele were heard all over the local government buildings. It seemed that opinions differed regarding the further proceedings in this case. While Iggy called for legal action and vowed to take each and every government official involved in the rejection of the 68 farms to court, Nathaniel and other representatives of Z0231 preferred waiting for the second research report to decide on legal action. Afterwards, Iggy and his P0050 group joined me at the road side where I had waited for them and theories of conspiracy were developed: allegedly Alfred Mahlangu, attorney Van Zyl and Mkhacani had colluded to embarrass Iggy and his allies.

On the following Monday I drove Iggy and Jonoti to Hewu Attorneys in Pretoria, where it transpired that interest in Iggy's land claim had been lost several months ago. Nonetheless a local representative agreed to meet with Iggy and called Z0231's lawyer André Van Zyl to schedule a meeting. Afterwards we drove to Pretoria's central business district to meet with Paulus Mahlangu, P0050's official Chairman. He promised to compile a letter of complaint to the RLCC applying his experience as paralegal. In early March 2018, shortly before leaving my field site, I received a copy of this document, which not only included a letter of complaint, but also a summary of the so-called Beaumont Commission Report of 1916, legal correspondence, a map supposedly indicating the location of Ndebele groups in the Transvaal in 1913 and further 'proof' that P0050 was an *entirely* valid land restitution claim. Most of these documents relate to Matthews's Sacotso Mia campaign in their argumentation. At the point of writing, it is unknown whether the Commission ever responded to Paulus's complaint.

On 24 February, Iggy led a group of researchers to KwaMaza, the place where the descendants of Mrhabuli were supposedly robbed of their right to the Ndzundza Ndebele throne by King Magodongo. Several times Iggy referred to Mabhoko's fortress around the eRholweni caves as a punishment for taking the leadership over Ndzundza away from his own lineage. In his view, Magodongo's people stole the kingship and were forced to live in primitive caves while Litho's people lived on open pastures at Mogotlholo. He had found local elders that would confirm his version of history, but they refused to cooperate with the researchers he brought. I was not part of this excursion but Iggy had planned to bring me there as well in the week thereafter. However, depressed by the elders' refusal to cooperate he called our visit off. Additionally, he confided in me that he considered to step down from his post as Chairman of the land claims committee to focus on his ambitions in agricultural business. He was crestfallen by the way he had been treated by the beneficiaries and the CRLR representatives. In follow-up conversations online, Iggy remained sparse with information regarding any land claim proceedings,

but he indicated that he was still involved as the Chairman of the committee. The last contact to him was in July 2021.

Nathaniel Mahlangu presented himself in a much more positive mood to me after the Commission's decision[62]. Most farms in Z0231's claim had been confirmed and Matthews's megalomaniac plan to claim most of the former southern Transvaal had received a major blow, which boosted the confidence of his long-time critics. The compromise for the two groups to run parallel without a joint reference had been a central strategy to avoid defeat together with Iggy. As nine farms in Rust de Winter were still under investigation he remained hopeful that soon a lot of land would be returned. He boasted about his tactic to grant Iggy the Chairman post, as he had embarrassed himself in front of the beneficiaries and would do so again once the news broke that his claim had been largely declared invalid.

The entire complex of the Litho Ndzundza Ndebele, evolving around the strive for land, money and power, exhibits instances of strategic and tactical conduct but also strategic adjustments due to shifts of discursive and practical context. I had to leave the field before further legal action was taken in the land claim or before any further developments occurred around the question of Traditional Leadership in Rapotokwane. While I loosely stayed in touch with Iggy Litho and Nathaniel Mahlangu it was difficult to remain up to date on further development, especially since both actors showed little enthusiasm to share information regarding the land claim. Therefore the analysis in Chapters 8 and 9 will solely depend on the empirical data gathered until March 2018.

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[62] Interview with Nathaniel Mahlangu, 22 February 2018

Chapter 7 – Investigating the Foundations of Strategy at the Grassroots Level: a Survey

So far I have presented field data from two different but interrelated settings, which both revolved around access to land, land reform and Traditional power. In the First *Entr'acte* I laid out the leadership disputes and settlement patterns of the Southern Ndebele after their arrival in the Transvaal before summarising the developments around the establishment of KwaNdebele and the violent conflict that evolved from its planned 'independence' from the 1960s to the 1990s. Taking the history of the Southern Ndebele leadership as a basic starting point for Chapter Five, I then provided field data that comprised grassroots perspectives regarding three interrelated contemporary issues deriving from that history. The relationship between municipal government and Traditional Authorities, diverse perspectives onto land reform, and the leadership dispute between Ndzundza-Mabhoko and Manala-Mbhongo were illustrated through interviews with some of the involved actors within the surroundings of Libangeni and the Traditional centres of power in Siyabuswa and Klipfontein. In Chapter Six the focus moved away from the politics of the former KwaNdebele heartland to one of its former exclaves and the land claim of Rust de Winter, which has sparked covert and open conflict among the Traditional Leadership of Rapotokwane and other significant actors.

This chapter not only bridges the geographical gap between Rapotokwane and the KwaNdebele heartland by presenting field data from both field sites. It also aims at identifying some of the common foundations that discursive strategies and strategic binaries in both settings are built upon. I intend to achieve this through the additional use of quantitative data: a survey that was conducted in Libangeni and Rapotokwane. As shown in the previous two chapters, individuals and groups in former KwaNdebele apply a set of strategic practices and discourses to present their own objectives, to manipulate others and to manoeuvre around those structures where manipulation proves difficult. Especially those strategies which apply dualistically informed discourses have proven highly popular and often effective even though their elementary binary character is also challenged by those who apply them. In this chapter I aim to present field data that enriches these qualitative observations with data that shows that these strategies are not only available to the local leadership elite, but are actually rooted in the structuration processes among the wider populations of Libangeni and Rapotokwane. Even more, it will reveal a network of correlations between topics, institutions and demographic factors that portray the complex structures that everyday strategists have to manoeuvre to achieve their long-term goals.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part will introduce the reader to the survey setting and the questionnaire design. It will furthermore introduce certain methods of statistical analysis by means of investigating potential factors of interviewer bias. The second part of the chapter will provide

brief descriptive statistics of the survey results while the third part will dive much deeper into the statistical analysis through correlative statistics. Four across-the-board hypotheses will be investigated in the course of subchapter three. To sound a note of warning: the majority of social and cultural anthropologists are historically not necessarily recognized for their distinguished exclusive use of quantitative statistical methods. Many an ethnographer has not been professionally educated on the matter of correlative statistics, which includes myself, being widely self-taught and having depended on economists and psychologists to provide the occasional tutoring. I have therefore decided to scatter methodological explanations and interpretative aids throughout the description of my quantitative field data attempting to abide by anthropologically accepted manners of writing. What may seem puzzling or needlessly complicated and repetitive to some anthropological scholar may appear trivial or even tenuous in the nitty-gritty details to those who have been professionally trained in the noble trait of statistical analysis. Working with interdisciplinary ambitions thus requires diligence and neatness from the author, while readers will have to exert tolerance and patience.

7. 1 Survey technicalities

In the following I will lay out the steps that led to the final questionnaire design, summarising its contents and providing some detail on the way the survey was conducted. From there I will proceed by investigating potential influence that interviewer bias may have had on the survey results, which will assist my aim to explain the statistical procedures that were necessary to turn raw questionnaire data into analysable survey results. One challenge for this chapter is the coalescence of statistical exactness and efficiency on the one side and ethnographic depth and reflection on the other. As a service to the readership, I have therefore summarised all statistical tests that will be referenced below in Table 7.1. in subchapter 7.5 to aid interdisciplinary understanding[63].

7.1.1 Questionnaire Development and Survey Procedure

As described in this dissertation's methodological introduction (Ch. 2.3), four different questionnaire versions were tested before conducting the main survey. The first trial questionnaire (referred to as 'T1', 19-21 Sep 2017, n = 28) was a complete failure as most respondents struggled to understand the concepts they were asked to discuss and the interviewers recommended a different approach to the question design. T1 responses were thus entirely excluded from the analysis. The second round of data collection ('T2', 02-07 Oct 2017, n = 33) tested a questionnaire design that was ultimately more successful as neither interviewers nor respondents struggled to give satisfactory responses. After a free-listing task with 20 respondents ('T3', 13-17 Oct 2017) the contents of the T2 design were then updated in the fourth round of data collection ('T4', 23-26 Oct 2017, n = 30). The free-listing results served as content generator for the survey and will not be presented or analysed in this dissertation due to lack of space; see Chapter 2 for further details on methodology or consult De Munck (2009: 47-66). The T4 questionnaire version was then adopted as main survey design[64] ('S1', 10 Nov 2017 – 15 Jan 2018, n = 552) without any noteworthy changes. It consisted of five different sections, which will be discussed in detail below. Patrick and Lethabo[65] conducted the tests and the free-listing task (T1-T4). I attended their first interviews, explained certain questions and asked them for feedback. Once they and I were confident about their interview technique I left them to conduct the interviews without supervision.

In all of the tests and the final questionnaire design basic personal data (i.e. demographic information such as home language, age and place of family origin) was requested from the participants ('Section

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[63] Smaller tables and figures will be embedded in the text while larger tables are shown in subchapter 7.5 for the sake of readability.

[64] See section 7.6 for the final questionnaire design in English.

[65] As previously mentioned, all my research assistants who were introduced in Chapter 2 asked to be anonymised. All names mentioned in this chapter are aliases.

One': questions 1A-1L). In 'Section Two' (2A-2E) information regarding the living standard of respondents (e.g. power supply, waste management and sanitary facilities) was assessed to facilitate a wealth grouping based on quantitative data among the respondents.

Table 7.2: Survey Sections Overview				
Section	*Data source*	Number of items	Type of question	Example Items
Section One - Demographic Data	T2, T4, S1	12 (1A-1L)	Various	home language, gender, age …
Section Two - Living Standard	T2, T4, S1 (exempt from analysis)	5 (2A-2E)	multiple choice	Running Water, Public Access Electricity …
Section Three - Land Status	T2, T4, S1	2 (3A+3B)	multiple choice	Main occupant, family member, PTO, Title deed …
Section Four - Institutions	T2, T4, S1	15 (4A-4O)	Checkbox (yes/no)	Police, Traditional Authority, Church …
Section Five - Personal Importance	T4, S1	26 (5A-5Z)	5-point Likert Scale	Education, Order and Security, Traditional Lifestyle …

This procedure ultimately did not prove as conclusive as expected in the analysis due to the relative similarity among respondents' answers. This section was drafted on the basis of designs from previous personal research experience (Kempen 2016; Rockenbach et al. 2022), which seem to have been inappropriate in this setting. It was therefore excluded from the here presented data as it would have drawn a distorted picture of the actual living circumstances in the three settlements.

The latter two test versions (T2 & T4) and the final questionnaire (S1) furthermore asked under which status the respondents occupied the piece of land they live on ('Section Three': 3A-3B) and asked them to indicate the institutions whose services they and their household members had used in the past year ('Section Four': 4A-4O). To ensure a uniform survey procedure and to keep the data quantifiable respondents were given a list of 15 institutions to choose from. These 'Section Four' items included: Health Clinic/Hospital, Traditional Healer, Social Worker, Public School, Initiation School, University/College, Police, Traditional Authority, Church, Ward Councillor, Community Development Worker[66], Crèche / Day-Care, Lawyer / Attorney, SASSA[67], Financial Institution / Bank / ATM. The list was developed in cooperation with the research assistants and early test questionnaire respondents. As the design and content of these specific questions did not change in the second and third trial questionnaire (T2 & T4) and the final version (S1), all of the collected responses will be included in the statistical analysis below.

In 'Section Five' (5A-5Z) respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale to what degree a range of 26 listed concrete and abstract entities were of importance to them personally (1 = 'very unimportant', 2 = 'unimportant', 3 = 'undecided', 4 = 'important', 5 = 'very important'). The list of

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[66] CDW: A group of public servants established under the Mbeki Presidency in 2003, who were supposed to link municipal government and outlying townships, being responsible for social and economic development (Gray and Mubangizi 2009).
[67] South African Social Security Agency

entities was generally referred to as 'items' and its compilation was largely directed by my own research interest and lessons learnt in previous interviews. However, I took my assistants' advice and requests to heart: one of them cared dearly for the nearby nature reserves, thus 'Conservation and Protection of Nature' was added to the list. Others struggled to convey the two items 'Tradition' and 'Modernity', wherefore their baseline characteristics were split in two: on one side the cultural aspects – producing the two items 'Traditional Lifestyle' and 'Modern Lifestyle' – and on the other their temporal aspects, which, after further consultation, were represented by the four items 'Your Personal Past', 'South Africa's Past', 'Living for the Day' and 'Making Plans for the Future'. The evaluation of 'Section Five' will entirely depend on the final test questionnaire and the large-scale survey (T4 & S1).

All test questionnaires (T1-T4) were answered by Vaalbank residents while the final 60-question survey (S1) was conducted in Allemansdrift B and Rapotokwane as well. Participation was voluntary and not remunerated. Respondents had to be at least 18 years old and were offered questionnaires in three different translations by the research assistants, see Table 7.3 for details. The interviewers would go through the list of questions and fill in the answers on the respondents' behalf (pen & paper), who would also be offered a copy for reading. Most interviews lasted 20-30 minutes although some of them could take up to one hour depending on the interview circumstances.

Table 7.3 Location of Enquiry * Questionnaire Language						
			Questionnaire Language			
			English	IsiNdebele	Northern Sotho	Total
Location of Enquiry	**Allemansdrift B**	*Count*	27	104	78	209
	% within Location of Enquiry		12.9%	49.8%	37.3%	100.0%
	Vaalbank	*Count*	37	56	171	264
	% within Location of Enquiry		14.0%	21.2%	64.8%	100.0%
	Rapotokwane	*Count*	19	58	65	142
	% within Location of Enquiry		13.4%	40.8%	45.8%	100.0%
Total		*Count*	83	218	314	615
	% within Location of Enquiry		13.5%	35.4%	51.1%	100.0%

Patrick and Lethabo recruited and trained Lesedi and Margaret as additional interviewers. I attended their first interviews, gave some advice and saw it implemented by them without problems. On random occasions I would join their interviews to ensure that quality was upheld, but generally I allowed the two women and two men to conduct the interviews on their own accounts without direct intervention. They decided to divide the neighbourhoods of Libangeni among themselves to make sure that no households were interviewed twice. These 'territories' roughly coincided with their own neighbourhoods to allow for short walking distances and sufficient rapport for easier access to interview participants. On three days the five of us travelled from Libangeni to Rapotokwane, where the neighbourhoods were chosen randomly by the interviewers on the first two days (28-29 Nov 2017).

On the third day (05 Dec 2017) I pointed out those neighbourhoods that had so far been neglected by the team and asked them to focus on certain roads. Throughout the data collection process I asked them to maintain a balance of male and female respondents and to also ensure that a diverse sample was gathered with regards to age and home language. While the former was aggravated by the fact that a lot of male inhabitants of former KwaNdebele work in Pretoria or on the surrounding farms and are thus more difficult to get hold of during the week, the latter two goals were more or less achieved (see section 7.2 below). According to the 2011 census, Vaalbank, Allemansdrift B and Rapotokwane had a total population of approximately 19,000 people. As my own statistical capabilities were technically and intellectually limited while in the field, I relied on a range of openly accessible sample size calculator websites to determine the necessary sample size rather than doing the maths myself. The recommended sample sizes ranged between 377 and 427, depending on the availability of test specifications in the interface.

Just like many other significant parameters, education access in South Africa has changed dramatically since the end of Apartheid and the denotation of education standards has changed over time, too. In order to make the responses to question 1H ("Level of Education") statistically analysable it was necessary to quantify the participants' responses on a scale from 0 (= 'low') to 10 (= 'high') together with my research assistants and to *ex post* code the answers given according to that scale. They took into account the relative effort that a certain level of education required to achieve, the political and social obstacles that would hinder access to education and the potential career that a certain education would facilitate. The variable that was derived from this process will be referred to as Ranked Received Standard Education (RRSE). With regards to the occupations that were indicated by the respondents in question 1I the research assistants and I ultimately decided to rank them according to the potential income. Jobless and students were ranked lowest (0) while teachers and medical professions were among those ranked highest (10). Vague occupation statuses like 'self-employed' (n = 59), 'employed' (n = 7) or 'owner' (n = 6) were ranked as 5 by the research assistants. When referring to Ranked Potential Occupational Income (RPOI) below, this constructed scale will have been applied to turn the responses into a comparable variable.

7.1.2 Testing for Interviewer Bias

As the questionnaire's Section One, Section Three and Section Four remained the same throughout the T2, T4 and S1 designs their responses were included in the descriptive analysis, amounting to a total sample size of 615 filled-in questionnaires. However, out of these total 615 questionnaires only 456 (79.5 percent) could ultimately be used for analysis of 'Section Five'. The items offered for evaluation in survey test T2 differed too much from the final design, thus eliminating 33 questionnaires from analysis. Further 126 questionnaires had to be eliminated from the analysis of 'Section Five' based

on information that came to light after the majority of interviews had been conducted. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I conducted wrap-up interviews with the four interviewers: one of them then proudly explained having tried to convince some respondents of their[68] own ostensibly more sophisticated opinion in the interviews. As this interviewer was clearly unaware that this was not the intended merit of the exercise, I have only myself to blame for this mistake. Nonetheless all of their questionnaires had to be excluded wherever respondent opinion had been documented, i.e. 'Section Five'. Subsequently I asked the other three interviewers whether they had committed a similar mistake, which they denied. I believed them on the basis that I had conducted a superficial comparison of their results and that I could not identify any obvious anomalies that would have indicated straightforward interviewer bias. I had digitalized all questionnaire responses from paper questionnaires to MS-Office Excel spreadsheets at that point. My analytical means were rather limited in the field and after returning from South Africa my capacities were eventually amended by the purchase of IBM's SPSS software and by progressively learning how to use it. Contrary to my preliminary conclusion the software's Kruskal-Wallis test inconveniently identified the three remaining interviewers as a regularly significant variable for 24 out of 26 items listed in 'Section Five' (see Table 7.4 in section 7.5 for further details; a thorough explanation of this table will be provided below). This indicated that interviewer bias may have played a role in the data collection process. It must therefore be assessed whether the available information points to a conscious manipulation of questionnaire responses or whether context-dependent social dynamics are more likely the origin of these inconveniently significant differences between the survey subsamples of the three remaining interviewers.

When comparing the values of two or more variables, statistical analysis offers a range of methods that ultimately aim to establish a certain measure of significance, expressed by the so-called p-value, which may lie between 0 and 1. In most cases of statistical survey analysis, and also in this dissertation, significance $p < .05$ is regarded as strong evidence that the data significantly deviates from null distribution, which would presume that the data only underlies the influence of chance. In other words, if p is lower than .05 there is a less than 5 percent chance that differences between the values within two variables are the result of random distribution, mathematically speaking. To reach that p-value a range of tests must be chosen from. These depend on the characteristics of the involved variables, the value distribution of these variables and the kind of association, correlation or difference that one hopes to confirm or reject.

To compare variables that operate on a nominal scale, such as Interviewer Identity, Home Language, Location of Enquiry or Gender with one another a Pearson Chi-Squared (X^2) or a Cramér's V (V) test are usually the tests of choice (see Table 7.1 in section 7.5). Based on the actually observed counts and the

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[68] I have decided against revealing this research assistant's alias or gender.

mathematically expected counts in a crosstabulation of two variables a X^2-test indicates whether observed values deviate from an expected distribution. Cramér's V in addition provides a correlation coefficient, which may tell us how strong the effect that causes this deviation is and in which direction it operates (Field 2013: 7.2.4). Whenever the crosstabulation produced expected counts lower than 1 or more than 20% of expected counts were lower than 5 (Field 2013: 18.4.2), so-called exact testing (Fisher's exact test) was necessary, rendering a X^2 distribution useless otherwise. Unfortunately, due to the relatively large sample SPSS failed to provide reliable results due to the limited available computing capacities and limited temporal resources, an issue also described by Field (2013: 18.3.2.). A single calculation could take up to 1 hour in this case. Therefore the *p*-value was determined through a Monte Carlo simulation (10,000 sampled tables; 99% confidence interval), which proved just as effective (see Table 7.1 in subchapter 7.5 for an explanation of the term).

The first step in finding out why there are significant differences between the three remaining interviewer subsamples was comparing the potential demographic influences of their sample populations, i.e. the personal data that they provided in 'Section One' of the questionnaire. As described above, the interviewers divided the neighbourhoods of Libangeni among themselves to ensure an evenly distributed spatial sample. Understandably, results revealed a significant relationship between interviewers and location of enquiry, X^2 (4, *n* = 456) = 162.390, *p* < .001. This fact is also reflected in the Home Language indicated by the respondents. For example, were residents in Allemansdrift B more likely to speak IsiNdebele while those in Vaalbank B were more likely to speak SePedi and SeTswana as Home Language, X^2 (7, *n* = 473) = 39.625, *p* < .001. Similar patterns can be observed in Rapotokwane, where those living in Tsamahansi and Snake Park are more likely to speak XiTsonga and SePedi while those living in Chachaneng and Mzimkhulu mostly speak IsiNdebele at home, X^2 (42, *n* = 142) = 103.790, *p* < .001. The former two neighbourhoods were established more recently (since the 1970s) while the latter neighbourhoods are part of the founding settlement of Sopotokwane (1920s and 30s). With regards to Gender no significant difference could be identified between the Interviewers, which implies that they were apparently not influenced by their own gender when looking for their interview partners, X^2 (3, *N* = 615) = 4.638, *p* = .205.

Three further demographic variables to be compared with the Interviewers as independent variable did not operate on a nominal measure and thus required different tests. To compare Age (a metric variable) with the three remaining interviewers (nominal variable) a one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was conducted. "The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of three or more independent (unrelated) groups." (Statistics.laerd.com 2015). Whether a regular ANOVA or a Welch ANOVA was used depended on the homogeneity of variances throughout the entire analytical process. The former

was conducted when Levene's Test showed that equal variances could be assumed ($p > .05$) while the latter was applied for the opposite case. In this case the Welch ANOVA indicated that a significant difference existed between the three interviewers with regards to the average age of their respondents, $F (2, 321.41) = 6.740$, $p = .001$. A Games-Howell Post Hoc test revealed that the oldest of the three had significantly ($p = .001$) older interview partners on average ($M = 50.11$, range 18-96) than one of the younger other two ($M = 40.48$, range 20-78). The assumption that older interviewers instinctively chose older people to be interviewed is however undermined, if the previously excluded interviewer – the youngest of the bunch – is added back into the equation. Their interview respondents were 54.5 years old on average (range 20-91). Interestingly, the difference between the four interviewer subsamples is no longer significant with regards to age when the Rapotokwane cases are analysed on their own, $F (3, 138) = 1.668$, $p = .177$, which means that the location of the enquiry (i.e. the respective Libangeni neighbourhoods) may have influenced the age structure of the four survey subsamples. If more precise census data on the entire population of Libangeni and its neighbourhoods were available, one could compare the local age structures with the interviewer results and would possibly conclude that certain neighbourhoods are home to younger or older populations. As this is merely a personal evaluation, however, it must *ad interim* remain unexplained why the oldest and the youngest interviewer had a significantly older survey population than the other two.

To test for significant differences between the interviewer subsamples with regard to RRSE[69] and RPOI[70] (both ordinal variables) it was necessary to conduct a Kruskal-Wallis test (also referred to as H-test), a nonparametric version of the ANOVA based on ranks of data, already used in Table 7.4 above. Regarding education no significant difference could be found between the three remaining interviewers, $H (2) = 3.139$, $p = .202$. In the case of RPOI, however, a significant statistical difference between Lethabo and all of his three colleagues emerged, $H (3) = 13.459$, $p = .004$. Figure 7.1 below shows that this significant difference may have been caused by his higher amount of respondents assorted to the highest category. However, the graph also shows that Lesedi's subsample contains less respondents in category 2 than the others and it spikes in category 5, which will be caused by her high amount of 'self-employed' ($n = 40$) respondents. Nonetheless her sample was not flagged as a significantly different by the Kruskal-Wallis test. This indicates that all quantitative data and the statistical results that derive from it must be handled with care and regularly backed up by graphic illustration to understand the full extent of their explanatory potential:

> Statistics, as all students of research methods are taught (or *should* be taught), are
> theoretically and socially constructed phenomena, and must be interpreted as such. They are

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[69] RRSE: Ranked Received Standard Education, see last paragraph of section 7.1.1 above
[70] RPOI: Ranked Potential Occupational Income, see last paragraph of section 7.1.1 above

also extreme examples of synopsis at work, with all sorts of distortions and deceptions hidden within them. (Jenkins 2007 [1992]: 60)

Figure 7.1 Drop Lines Graph, RPOI * Percent of Interviewer
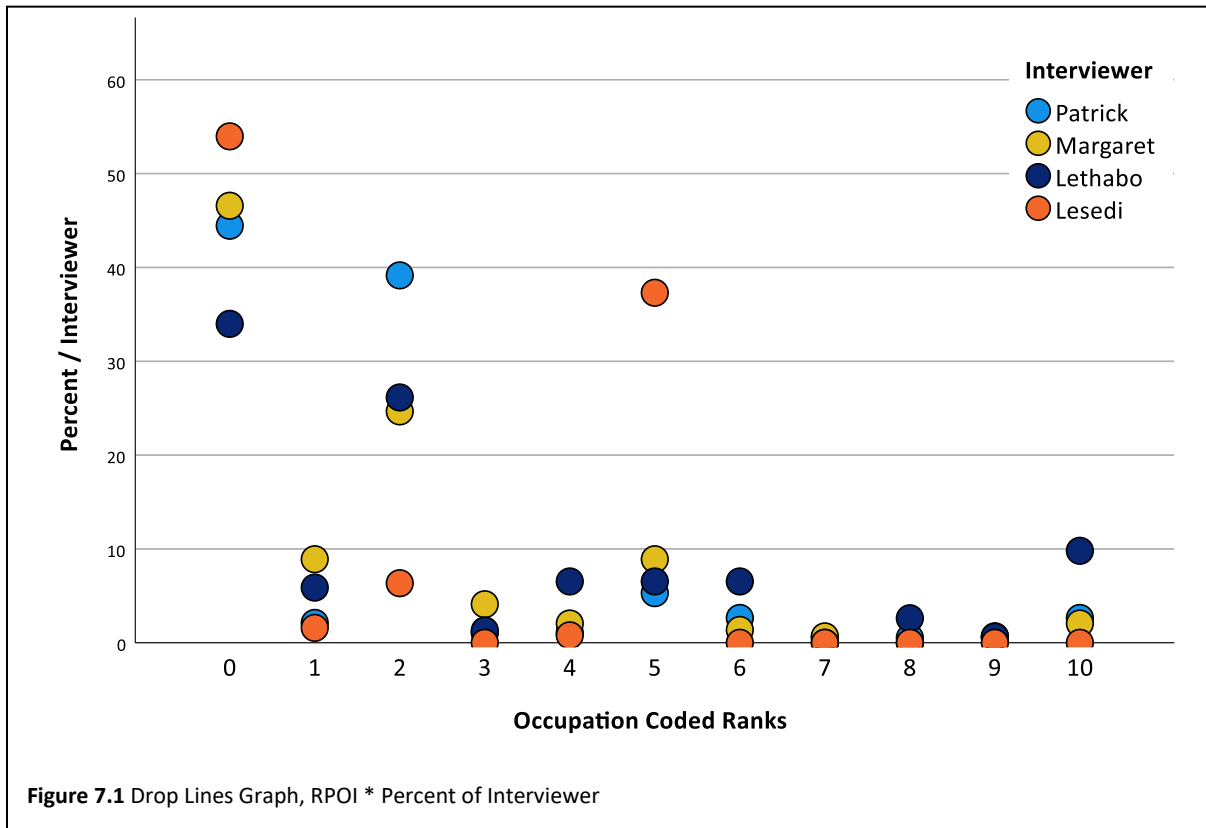
Summarising the investigation into possible interviewer bias by comparing the interviewers and their subsamples with one another, the following can be said. First, interviewers conducted the survey in different neighbourhoods; due to historical settlement patterns this implies that differences of ethnic affiliation (through home language) and possibly age and occupation (income) can be mirrored in the sample populations of the individual interviewers, thus providing a possible explanation for significant differences between the interviewers with regards to the questionnaire's 'Section Five'. Second, no statistically significant differences were found between the interviewers' samples with regards to gender and education.

The comparison of the three interviewer subsamples along demographic factors, however, does not refute the suspicion that biases may have influenced the respondents' answers in 'Section Five'. It merely provides a potential alternative explanation for significant differences wherever they occur. However, it must be established for which items listed in 'Section Five' this is even relevant. Where can interviewer bias be dismissed and where do results have to be taken with a grain of salt? To determine the extent to which potential interviewer bias may have influenced responses, it must be established how far the results differ according to each interviewer and whether this actually may have influenced the overall picture. The second step in this investigation therefore necessitates a direct

comparison of the three interviewer subsamples separately with regards to their responses given in 'Section Five'.

As shown above, the analysis of survey data requires the construction of mathematical variables. This involves a necessary degree of abstraction and simplification that will not do justice to the concepts that form the basis of these variables. I find it therefore important to mark these variables as entities that are distinct from the original lexical concepts that they derive from. As the reader will have noticed, some demographic factors such as Home Language, Age and Gender have been capitalised above to mark the constructedness of the corresponding variable that is necessary for survey analysis. The same applies for acronym variables RPOI and RRSE. For 'Section Five' I have, however, decided to mark the variables derived from the 26 items that were offered to the respondents for evaluation even more explicitly with a dashed underscore. Traditional Leadership, as it is discussed all over this dissertation as a complex and wide-ranging topic, is for example depicted as Traditional Leadership when referring to it purely as a variable that derives from the answers of 456 survey respondents. The same was done for the institutions listed in 'Section Four' as will be explained further below.

The item responses in 'Section Five' were tested for normal distribution both via graphic depiction, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p < .001$) and Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < .001$). Normal distribution could, however, not be established for any of the offered items. While conventional approaches would reject the application of an ANOVA in such a case, some studies have contradicted that approach describing the ANOVA as robust to such violations (Schmider et al. 2010; Blanca et al. 2017). Thus, the responses were analysed both via parametric one-way ANOVA (or Welch ANOVA when homogeneity of variances was not confirmed) and non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis or Mann-Whitney-U tests (the latter for binary independent variables) and the results of both were then compared. Table 7.4 shows: for 24 out of 26 items both Kruskal-Wallis test and ANOVA indicated significant differences between two or three interviewers. In this case the asymptotic significance for the Kruskal-Wallis test and the ANOVA significance will merely indicate whether a significant difference was found between the interviewer groups for this specific 'Section Five' variable. It does not yet determine, which subsample is 'responsible' for this. Therefore the table offers the pairwise adjusted significance for the Kruskal-Wallis test in the second column and the appropriate Post Hoc test for the ANOVA in the fifth column. Pairwise comparisons will indicate, whose interviewer subsample differs significantly from the others. The three interviewer subsamples have been listed separately as #1, #2 and #3 as I do not wish to disclose the alias of the already excluded interviewer (#4). Only the values for those pairings where one or both tests delivered significant results are listed. In those cases where one test provided a significant result but the other did not, the non-significant result has been marked by a red box. The only items from 'Section Five' that are not listed in this table, because they were statistically

'harmonious' in responses, are <u>Traditional Leadership</u>, H (2, N = 453) = 3.224, *p* = .200 and <u>Respect</u>, H (2, N = 452) = 2.021, *p* = .364.

Table 7.5 gives an overview of how the 26 items of 'Section Five' were rated by the respondents on a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important) in total. I have marked those items that scored the highest mean (*M*, above 4.75) and median (Mdn, if 5) blue for an easier overview. Furthermore, low standard deviation (*SD*, below 0.4) and interquartile range (IQR, when 0) have been marked blue for indicating little diversity of opinion among the respondents. Marked in red are *M* and Mdn below 4 and *SD* and IQR higher than 1, indicating less popularity and agreement for these items. The same formatting has been applied in Table 7.6. The thresholds for highlighting certain values were set by me personally according to personal preference and serve merely as rough orientation for the statistically untrained eye. A comparison of these three tables allows for the 26 'Section Five' variables to be categorised in the following way.

First, <u>Traditional Leadership</u> and <u>Respect</u> did not show any significant differences between the interviewers as stated above. Thus it can be assumed that interviewer bias has had little to no influence on the responses here.

Second, in some cases the significance between the interviewers is purely mathematical and does not restrict their validity. For example, in the cases of high-scorers <u>Education</u>, <u>Money</u>, <u>Faith in God</u> and <u>Making Plans for the Future</u> the responses all point towards concordant (see *SD* and IQR) mean values that range between 4.75 and 4.99. The more answers concentrate at one extreme of the 5-point Likert scale, the more likely a few outliers will create significant differences between the three subsamples. The ultimate interpretation from these results, however, remains the same: they are widely regarded as '(very) important'.

Third, in other cases the explanation for the significant differences between the interviewers may be apparent in the data itself. <u>Modern Lifestyle</u>, <u>Politics</u>, <u>Ancestral Worship</u>, and <u>Your Personal Past</u> indicate higher levels of disagreement (*SD* > 1.000, IQR > 1) than most other items across the total survey population and also coherently in the three separate interviewer subsamples. In this case the significant differences between the three interviewers for these variables can be explained by the items' overall contentious character and the fact that the interviewers were on the move in different spatial and social environments. Nonetheless the results must be handled with care.

Fourth and finally, handling data with care must also be the maxim in the case of the other sixteen variables. Here, no obvious reason to dismiss the significant differences between the interviewers' subsamples can be identified and therefore interviewer bias cannot easily be discarded as potential influence. However, Tables 7.4 and 7.6 reveal that no single agent can clearly be identified as main

factor for the significant variations. Interviewer #1 differed significantly from their colleagues in Powerful Communal and National Leadership, Well Working Government Services, Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid and Living for the Day. In interviewer #2's subsample the items Order and Security, Conservation and Protection of Nature, Democratic Rules, Freedom of Speech and Land Reform produced significantly different results from the other two interviewers. Interviewer #3's results differed from the others in Traditional Lifestyle, Ubuntu[71] and Making Your own Decisions. In these four variables all interviewers varied significantly from one another: Equality Between all South Africans, Equality Between Men and Women, Owning Your Own Piece of Land and South Africa's Past.

The investigation into potential interviewer bias can thus be concluded as follows. One of the four interviewers admitted having tried to manipulate the answers given by respondents through discussion. All of these answers were excluded from the analysis. The other three interviewers denied having influenced the answers of the respondents according to their personal preferences. Even though there are significant differences between the responses given to them by the survey participants for most items in 'Section Five', *none of the interviewers can be singled out* as crucial factor. Interviewer bias as conscious manipulation by a single actor should therefore be regarded as *very unlikely*. Rather it is likely that demographic differences in the research population and non-controllable social mechanisms, triggered by the interviewers' own social identity (such as gender, age, ethnicity) may have influenced the respondents' answers. This does, however, not necessarily constitute a problem if Burawoy's theorem that "context is not noise disguising reality but reality itself" (Burawoy 1998: 13) is taken to heart in the following analytical process from an anthropological perspective (see Chapter 8.1). Indeed, if we accept Jessop's ontology of strategically conscious agents within strategically-selective contexts to be applicable to social reality in general and to the three research assistants in particular, it would be surprising to actually not find any statistically significant differences between the three interviewers.

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[71] Ubuntu (Zulu, 'kindness', 'personality', literally 'being human'): A popular African philosophical approach that stresses the inter-connectedness of social human beings, "a collection of values and practices that black people of Africa or of African origin view as making people authentic human beings" (Mugumbate and Chereni 2020: vi).

7. 2 Descriptive Statistics Overview

The descriptive analysis of the survey data was a simple and straightforward process. This subchapter summarises the total sample population's demographics, the status under which their land was allocated, the institutions used within the past twelve months by their household members and it introduces Factor Analysis as one way to approach the variables that derive from the responses in 'Section Five'.

			Location of Enquiry			
			Allemansdrift B	Vaalbank	Rapotokwane	Total
Home Language	**IsiNdebele**	*Count*	109	75	67	251
		% within Location of Enquiry	52.2%	28.4%	47.2%	40.8%
	SePedi	*Count*	62	129	44	235
		% within Location of Enquiry	29.7%	48.9%	31.0%	38.2%
	SeTswana	*Count*	6	14	10	30
		% within Location of Enquiry	2.9%	5.3%	7.0%	4.9%
	XiTsonga	*Count*	21	17	15	53
		% within Location of Enquiry	10.0%	6.4%	10.6%	8.6%
	SeSotho	*Count*	4	10	4	18
		% within Location of Enquiry	1.9%	3.8%	2.8%	2.9%
	IsiZulu	*Count*	1	10	1	12
		% within Location of Enquiry	0.5%	3.8%	0.7%	2.0%
	IsiXhosa	*Count*	2	6	0	8
		% within Location of Enquiry	1.0%	2.3%	0.0%	1.3%
	other	*Count*	4	3	1	8
		% within Location of Enquiry	1.9%	1.1%	0.7%	1.3%
Total		*Count*	209	264	142	615
		% within Location of Enquiry	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7.7 Home Language * Location of Enquiry

The first core demographic factor in the questionnaire concerned language. Respondents were asked to indicate their Home Language (1A). Table 7.7 grants an insight into the region's heterogenous linguistic character while also revealing how the settlement policies of the past continue to influence the neighbourhoods of today. Especially the differences between Allemansdrift B and Vaalbank with regards to the percentages of IsiNdebele and SePedi speakers stand out.

Out of 615 interview respondents 417 (67.8%) identified as female, while the remaining 198 (32.2%) identified as male (1B). As explained above, finding male participants was complicated by the local labour patterns and the daily social routines. With regard to age the interviewers also struggled in assembling an evenly spread sample (see Figure 7.2), especially within the female population. This can be explained by local labour structures, but is more likely due to the long-term effects of the HIV/Aids pandemic in South Africa.

In 'Section One' respondents were also asked to indicate their place of birth (1F) of which an in-depth analysis would however require temporal and academic resources that are not proportional to its potential contribution to this dissertation's main objective. Therefore these responses have been excluded from the analysis.

Figure 7.2 Population Pyramid with Age and Gender distribution (*N* = 615)
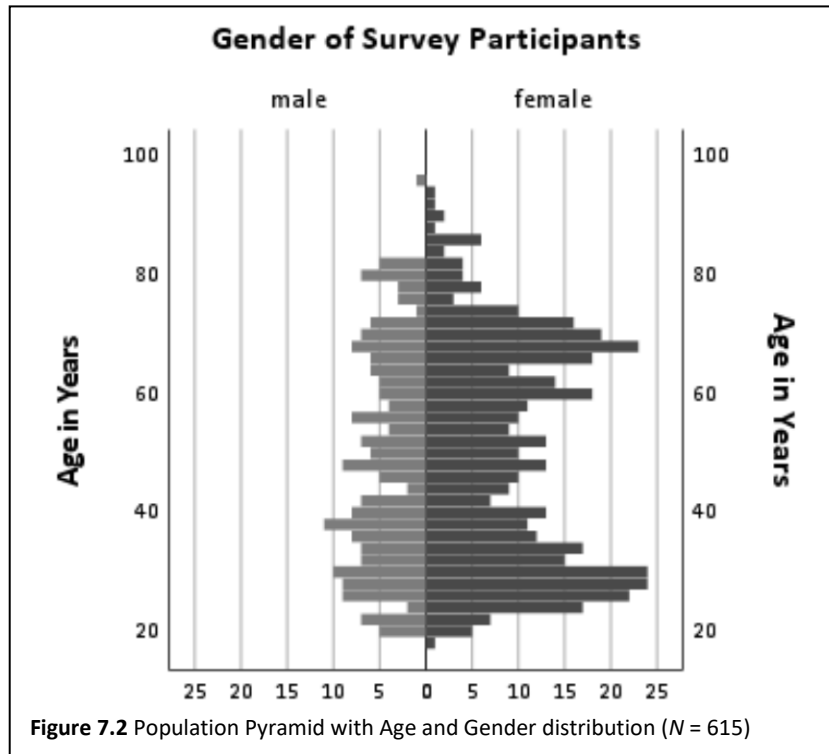
Other information gathered in 'Section One' of the questionnaire included the respondent's level of education (1H). Most striking here are the high counts of people who have received almost no standard education (Figure 7.3), especially in the higher ages (Figure 7.4). This bears witness to the systematic deprivation of standard education by the Apartheid regime and the Homeland governments.

Figure 7.3 Bar diagram, counts for RRSE (*N* = 615)

Figure 7.4 Scatter Plot, Age Groups * RRSE (*N* = 615)
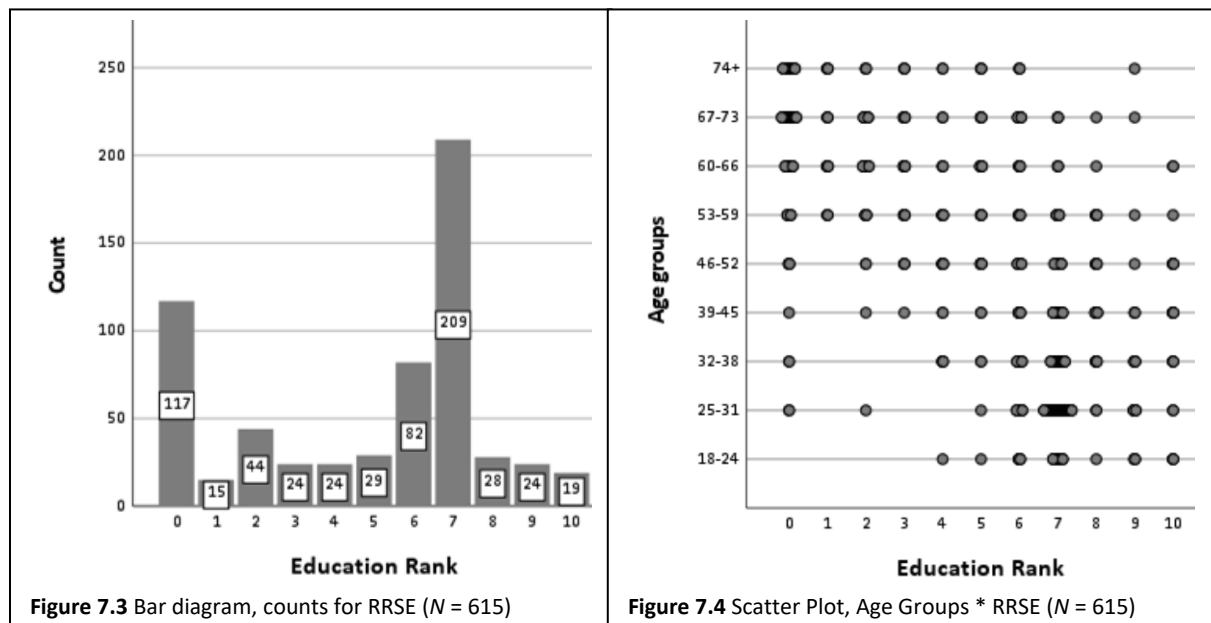
In the same way respondents' occupation (1I) has been summarised in Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6. The amount of people who have indicated no income generating occupation (Level 0) at the time of the interviews predominates in this statistics. The scatter plot reveals that mostly young people up to the age of 31 struggle to find income generating work and that pensioners constitute the majority of level

2 counts. It can also be assumed that those above the age of 60 who were assigned to levels 1 and 2 should actually be pensioners who did not indicate that they received the state grant for any reason[72].
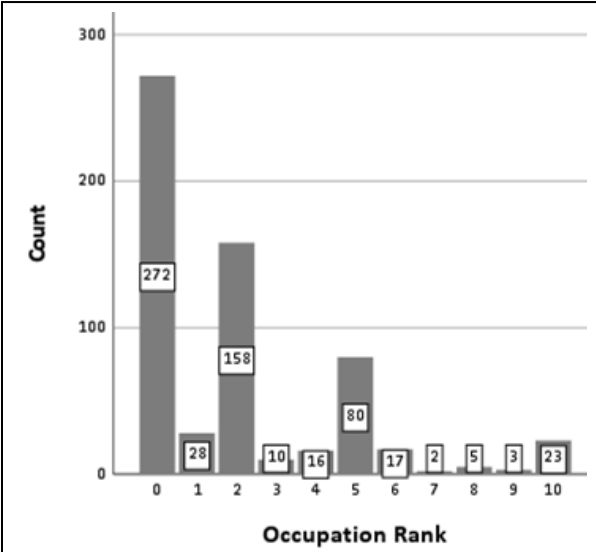
Figure 7.5 Bar diagram, counts for RPOI (*N* = 614)
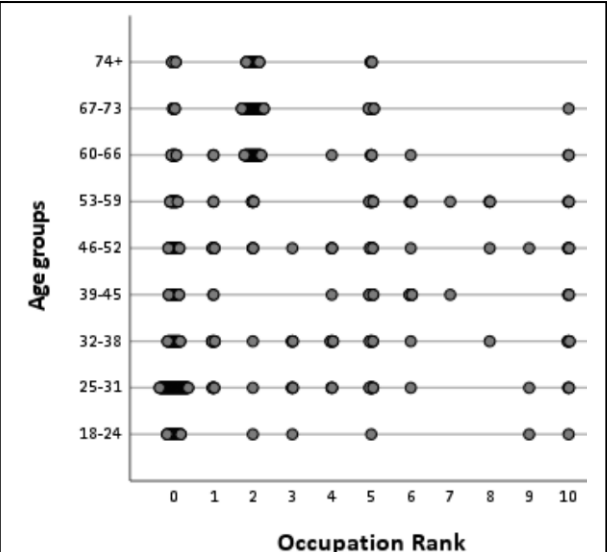
Figure 7.6 Scatter Plot, Age Groups * RPOI (*N* = 614)

In total 71 out of 614 respondents indicated some kind of serious disability (1J), that is 11.5 percent of the entire survey population. The same amount indicated having an ANC party membership while 29 respondents were members of the EFF and 11 belonged to other parties, amounting to 18 percent of the respondents having some sort of official political affiliation. Further, respondents were asked to state the number of people dependent on them (1L). On average each respondent would indicate 3.83 dependants, range 0-18. A relatively high number of 36 respondents did not provide a valid answer to this question. Possibly they could not provide a definite number or had tactically motivated reservations against this enquiry.

The time of arrival at the respondent's current area of residence (1E) and the respondent's place of family origin (1D) remain the last questions of 'Section One' to be discussed at this point, because they document the settlement process of the three survey locations. Figure 7.7 illustrates, first, the intensification of settlement in the region after the coming into effect of the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959. As a more concrete example: out of the 52 respondents whose families settled at Allemansdrift B and Vaalbank until 1979, the year in which KwaNdebele reached Legislative Assembly status, 27 respondents (52 percent) indicated Bronkhorstspruit as their place of family origin. Seventeen of these families arrived in 1968 and 1969, thus documenting the pattern of forced removals that took place at the time. Secondly it shows the establishment of Vaalbank as a proclaimed township after 1976/77 (SPP 1983: 147), which experienced an increase in population of approximately

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[72] Any resident of South Africa over the age of 60 is entitled to the "older person's grant" as long as they do "not earn more than R86 280" as single person or "R172 560 if married" (SASSA 2020). In this case respondents were classified as pensioner based on the occupational status stated by them in the survey, not based on their age.

3300 between 1980 and 1983 (McCaul 1987: 11). Only five out of 263 respondents in Vaalbank identified the township as their family's place of origin while, for example, 23 named Mamathethe (Allemansdrift A) at this point, which was first forcefully cleared and then flooded by the newly-built Mkhombo/Rhenosterkop Dam in the 1980s (see maps in Figures 2.1 and 1E.10). Thirdly, the histogram documents the establishment of Sopotokwane (later Rapotokwane) at Witlaagte in the 1920s with nineteen respondents from Rapotokwane indicating their family's arrival between 1910 and 1930. Fourteen of these respondents name Rust de Winter (also referred to as "Mrhudlulu" or "KwaLitho") as their family's place of origin, among them also younger and middle-aged respondents, who seem to have adopted their family's understanding of belonging to the former area of residence. Altogether 42 out of 142 respondents from Rapotokwane indicated what is today known as Rust de Winter as their family's origin, while only 23 identified Rapotokwane or one of its specific neighbourhoods as their family's place of origin.

Figure 7.7 Stacked Histogram, Time of arrival at current residence: Location of Enquiry (*N* = 582)
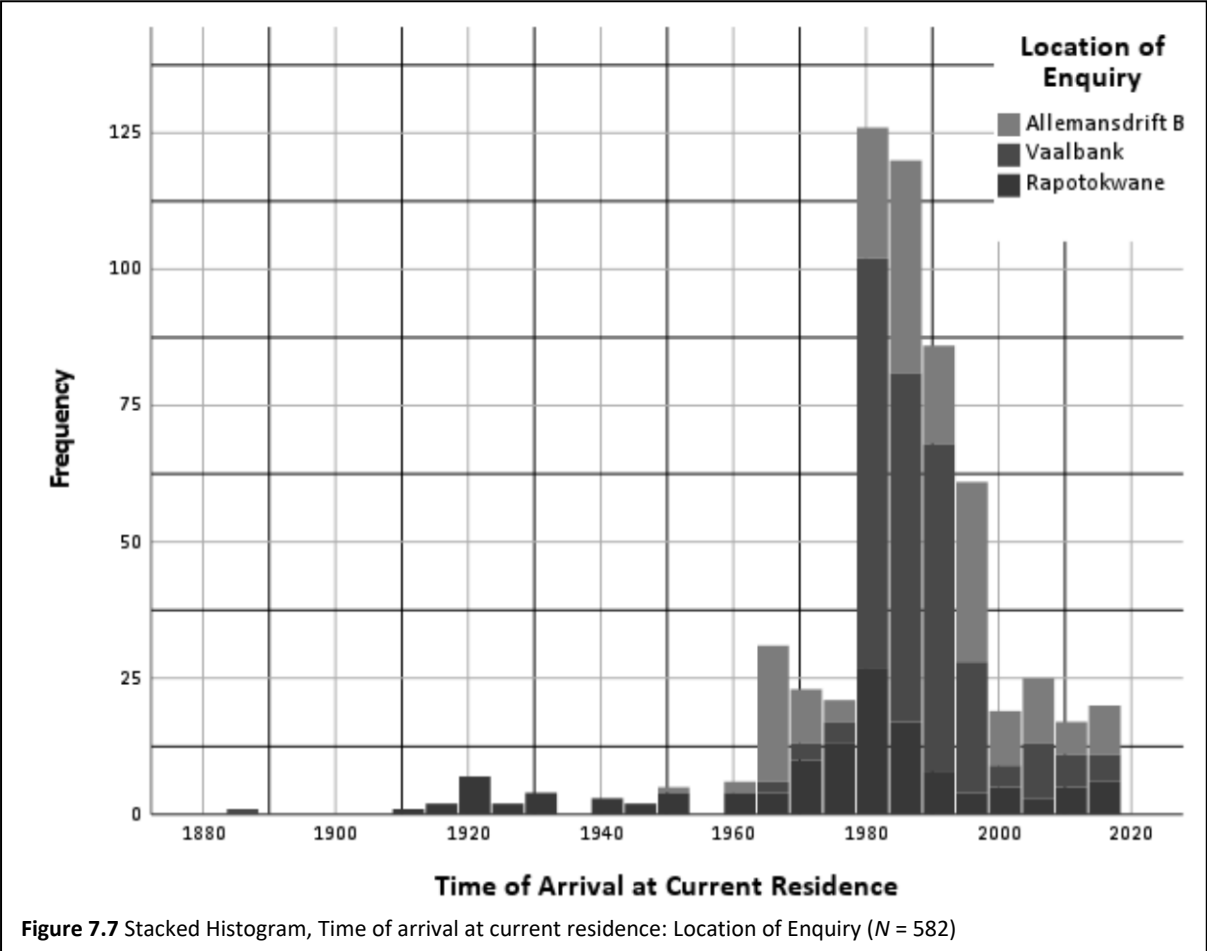
As explained above, the data on the respondents' living standard from 'Section Two' was excluded from the analysis entirely, because it proved non-conclusive.

In 'Section Three', survey respondents were asked to indicate the status under which they occupied the piece of land they lived on (3A, *N* = 610). In total 54.6 percent indicated that they were the main occupant while 41.8 percent were a family member of the main occupant. The remaining 3.6 percent were tenants or other rights holders. This question was followed up by the request to indicate how the land in question had
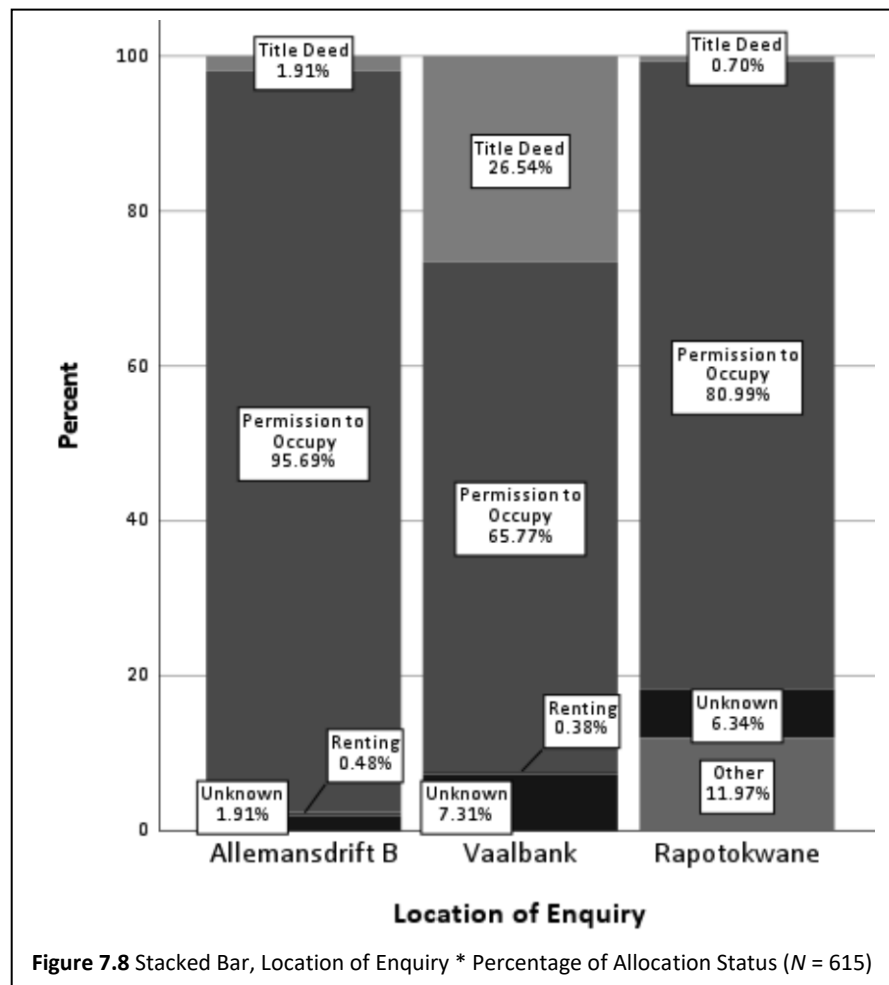
Figure 7.8 Stacked Bar, Location of Enquiry * Percentage of Allocation Status (*N* = 615)

been allocated (3B). The responses have been summarised in bar diagram 7.8, sorted according to settlement. It shows the predominance of PTO-based land allocation in the region with Vaalbank having the highest percentage of title deed holders at 26.54 percent; see Chapters 4.3 and 5.2 for details on land allocation and tenure reform in the region. Allemansdrift B has always been an area allocated through the local Traditional Authority and saw the development of an entire new neighbourhood at the time of my field research. These new stands were all allocated through PTOs by the Manala Traditional Authority in Libangeni. While one could argue that this is proof of the little effort that has so far been made to implement tenure upgrading (95.69% PTO allocation), it shows as well that unitary land allocation to a certain extent seems to create a degree of certainty among the Allemansdrift B residents: only 1.91 percent indicated that they did not know their allocation status. A binary comparison between respondents whose allocation status was known/unknown produced significant differences between the three settlements, X^2(2, *N* = 615) = 7.083, *p* = .029, a comparison of column proportions showing a significant difference between Allemansdrift B and the other two settlements. While the PTO/title deed ratio of Rapotokwane is similar to the one in Allemansdrift B, the response 'other' was chosen by 11.97 percent of Rapotokwane respondents (*n* = 17) and specified as either 'inheritance' or 'communal land'. As explained in Chapter 6, portions 3 & 11 (also referred to

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as portions B and D) of the farm Witlaagte were bought by the Litho Ndzundza through communal fundraising in the 1920s. Even though the title deed was officially issued "to the Minister of Native Affairs of Union of South Africa in trust for the 'Ndebele tribe of Natives'" (Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture 2016: 208), the community widely regarded the land as their communal property under the administration of the Litho leadership elite. While portion 3 was eventually registered in the name of "Ndebele Stam Tribe", portion 11 nonetheless remains registered in the name of the "National Government of the Republic of South Africa" (Government Gazette No. 41270, 2017) at the point of writing. Thus 17 out of the 42 respondents who identify Rust de Winter as their place of origin also claim some sort of communal ownership of the two historical Witlaagte portions.

In 'Section Four' of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate which out of 15 listed institutions had been used by them and their household members within the last twelve months. As explained above, the list of institutions was compiled in a co-effort with Patrick and Lethabo and not all of them are equally relevant to the overall research interest of this dissertation. The variables that derive from the answers given in the survey will be marked with a dotted underscore, e.g. the institution "Financial Institution/Bank/ATM" from the questionnaire is here summarized by the variable Bank. The variables Bank, SASSA, Church, School and Clinic achieved the expected high access
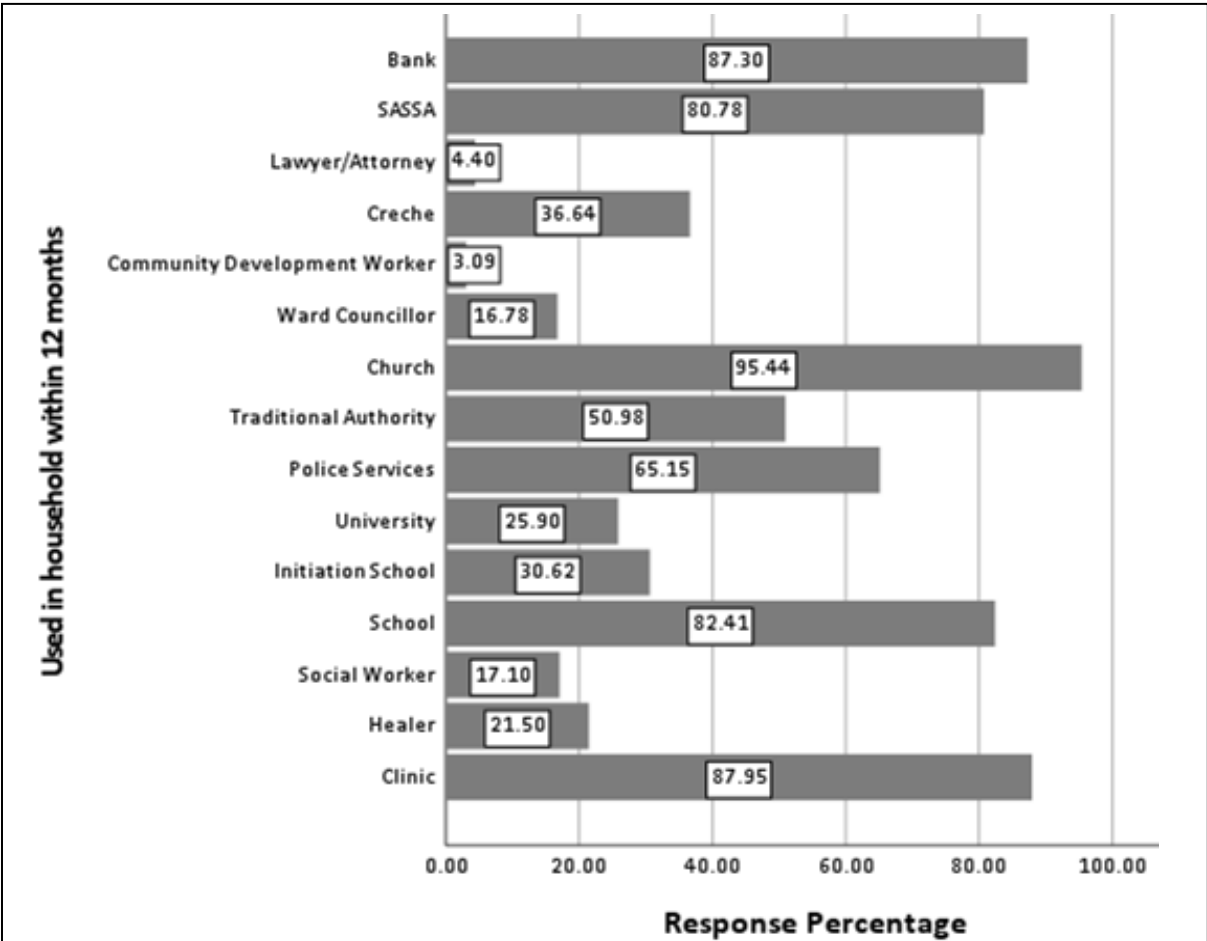
Figure 7.9: Bar diagram, Institutions used by household members within the last twelve months (*N* = 614)

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rates among the respondents and their households. More surprisingly, municipal services such as CDW, Ward Councillor and Social Worker proved much less popular than their 'traditional' counterparts Traditional Authority, Initiation School and Traditional Healer. While some of these first observations can be explained by contrasting such results with further demographic data (see section 7.3.1 below), one can already identify tendencies of preference among the surveyed population.

Descriptive data for 'Section Five' has already been presented in subchapter 7.1 and summarized in Table 7.5. Mean and median high scorers were Respect and Education, where the lowest score was 4 (important) in each case. Faith in God and Making Plans for the Future were also widely ranked as very important; their lowest score was 2 (unimportant). Other high scorers with a slightly more diverse set of responses including some 1 (very unimportant) scores were Ubuntu and Money. The lowest scorers on average were also among the most diversely rated as those values marked in red indicate. Modern Lifestyle, Politics and Ancestral Worship were the three lowest average scorers with Politics being the only variable with a median as low as 3 (undecided). The respondents' personal importance rating of their personal and the national past was also ranked very diversely as their IQR of 3 indicates.

Even though the research assistants and I had certain sets of items in mind that belonged together when designing 'Section Five' of the questionnaire, an explorative factor analysis was conducted, which allows the grouping of several variables into a certain number of virtual variables (factors) with the aim of data reduction. I performed a Principal Axis Factor Analysis (PAF) to investigate whether these sets coincided with the most important independent factors from the actual survey results (Schermelleh-Engel, Werner, and Moosbrugger 2007: 16). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .741, indicating relatively good data for factor analysis, and Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that correlations between items were sufficiently large for performing a PAF. The anti-image correlation measure of sampling adequacy was > .5 for all 26 items and thus cleared all of them for use in the PAF. A consideration of factors with Eigenvalues ≥ 1 yielded empirical justification for up to nine factors (Guttmann 1954; Kaiser 1960), but an examination of the scree plot only provided sufficient justification for five factors. Such a five-factor solution accounted for 29.82 percent of the total variance. The varimax-rotated five-factor solution was chosen as it must be assumed that the resulting factors are independent from one another. Ten items loaded highly (> .5) on one of seven factors (Hemmerich 2015-20) while the highest values for each item did not fall below .236. For four items a single factor could not be assigned as they loaded on two factors with only marginal differences between the two values (see Table 7.8). Dubbing the five factors with working captions will surely have to rely on stereotypical conceptualisations, but for the sake of readability in the following discussion I have attempted nonetheless to assign fitting names to them.

- Factor 1 ('**Rehabilitation'**): Well Working Government Services, Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid, Land Reform, Owning Your Own Piece of Land

- Factor 2 ('**State Obligations'**): Democratic Rules, Powerful Communal and National Leadership, Freedom of Speech, Equality Between all South Africans

- Factor 3 ('**Traditional Dispositions'**): Traditional Lifestyle, Traditional Leadership, Ancestral Worship

- Factor 4 ('**Echoes of Modernity'**): Modern Lifestyle, Making Your Own Decisions, Equality Between Men and Women, South Africa's Past, Your Personal Past

- Factor 5 ('**Solidary Providence'**): Education, Ubuntu, Money, Respect, Faith in God, Making Plans for the Future

- Not assigned to a single factor: Order and Security, Conservation and Protection of Nature, Politics, Living for the Day

These factors – in particular Factors 1-3 – actually roughly coincide with the originally expected pattern of items. They will play a more important role in the correlative analysis below and so will further results from this questionnaire section.

This concludes the descriptive overview of the gathered data. As shown above, certain factors such as place of residence or age may very well have a certain influence upon other factors such as land allocation status or education. In the following section, such correlative statistical analysis is taken a step further by systematically testing the correlation of variables from different sections of the questionnaire with one another.

7. 3 Correlative Statistics / Dependency Analysis

This third subchapter openly violates a crucial guideline of statistical analysis by testing multiple hypotheses on the same data set, thus inflating the probability of Type I errors (Field 2013: 2.6.1.7.)[73]. In my perspective, however, the way in which the results of such multiple testing are used in this particular case mitigates this methodological flaw to some degree. The survey and its statistical analysis do not constitute the primary method of this research venture's overall methodological approach. As laid out in Chapter 2 the quantitative data that was gathered in the survey served two purposes. First, it was to provide descriptive information that could immediately contribute to the gathering of qualitative data in the field, a kind of *methodological supplementation*. Secondly, the results that were produced by correlative statistical analysis beyond the research field complemented the extensive body of qualitative data. Such *analytical complementation* could, however, only be realized under the precondition that these results be treated under the same principles as the data that was collected qualitatively. The ethnographer must therefore treat the quantitatively produced data as if it was an informant's utterance or their own observation of an event, implying that it may just as well have been influenced by individual agendas, been filtered by researcher bias, or be grounded in cultural misunderstandings. As long as the objectivity that is traditionally assigned to statistics (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 87f) is not taken for granted and the data that statistical analysis has produced is assumed to be a product of subjectivity – and that includes human (mathematical) error – multiple testing and the increased risk of Type I errors should be regarded as a minor problem.

Four guiding questions of correlation will be offered here while several more could surely have been derived from the given descriptive data and then tested by using correlative statistics. Importantly, one must not mistake correlation with causality. Some correlations are obvious and easily explained, such as the fact that Age and Number of Dependants (both metric variables, tested through Pearson's correlation coefficient) positively correlate, $r = .419$, $p < .001$, meaning the older a respondent the more dependants they had. Others are, however, harder to identify and test. For example a highly significant strong association was found between RRSE (ordinal variable) and Political Party Membership (nominal variable), $X^2(1, N = 615) = 69.122$, $p < .001$. The fact that respondents were less likely to hold a party membership, when they had achieved less than Standard Six or Grade Ten, does not provide enough evidence to draw any direct conclusions and one will actually fail to find an easy explanation for this observation. In other cases, a second glance will be necessary to identify reproducible correlations. If one correlates RRSE and RPOI in the given survey sample in its entirety,

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[73] "A Type I error occurs when we believe that there is a genuine effect in our population, when in fact there isn't. If we use the conventional criterion then the probability of this error is .05 (or 5%) when there is no effect in the population – this value is known as the α-level." (Field 2013: 2.6.1.6.)

the results will indicate a slightly negative correlation that is however non-significant according to Spearman's Rho, r_s = -.047, p = .240, implying that education and occupation are unrelated. If one, however, excludes students and pensioners from the sample, the result will become significant, indicating a slightly positive correlation effect, r_s = .132, p = .004, meaning that those with a higher level of standard education will also have more profitable occupations. If one were to exclude those respondents that indicated being unemployed, one will get even more robust correlation values, r_s = -.218, p = .002, but this would carelessly confound the actual situation in the research area.

Unfortunately, not all observations will be discussed and seconded by correlative analysis in this chapter as it would go beyond the scope of main objectives. Furthermore, it will be necessary to restrict this venture to bivariate correlation, meaning that only the correlation of two variables or variable sets will be tested in the following. Such pairings will be marked by an asterisk (*) between the variable labels. This asterisk is not to be mistaken by the indicator of statistical significance behind p-values, which is often applied in statistical publications (e.g. p = .023*). Throughout the following discussion I will continue to provide examples of the conducted statistical method. In those cases where the method has been sufficiently elaborated I will present merely those findings that were found to be significant both in the mathematic and ethnographic sense.

7.3.1 Do Demographic Variables Correlate with the Regular Use of Certain Institutions?

As explained above, questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate which institutions from a list of 15 items had been made use of by members of their household within the previous twelve months. Comparing the responses with the respondents' demographic data and testing for potential correlations requires keeping a peculiar specification in mind, however. Most demographic data collected in this survey related to the respondents personally while the enquiry of institutions used within the past twelve months referred to their entire household. Thus, certain personal demographic variables such as Age or Gender will carry very little explanatory power when the remaining household members are unknown. Such cases have been excluded.

The results of the institution enquiry in 'Section Four' can be analysed according to the Location of Enquiry – similarly to the data on Home Language, Land Status and Time of Arrival at current residence in 7.2 above. The crosstabulation of these 15 variables by the location of enquiry reveals the following (see Table 7.9): Variables Clinic, School, Church, Bank, and SASSA produce high access rates for all three settlements while Attorney/Lawyer and CDW score very low across the board.

Table 7.9: Institutions used within last year by household members*Location of Enquiry (*N* = 614)

			Allemansdrift B	Vaalbank	Rapotokwane	Total
			Location of Enquiry			
Institutions used in household in last twelve months	**Clinic**	*Count*	187	232	121	540
		% within Location	89.5%	87.9%	85.8%	
	Traditional Healer	*Count*	30	81	21	132
		% within Location	14.4%	30.7%	14.9%	
	Social Worker	*Count*	17	66	22	105
		% within Location	8.1%	25.0%	15.6%	
	School	*Count*	177	228	101	506
		% within Location	84.7%	86.4%	71.6%	
	Initiation School	*Count*	70	95	23	188
		% within Location	33.5%	36.0%	16.3%	
	University	*Count*	51	94	14	159
		% within Location	24.4%	35.6%	9.9%	
	Police Services	*Count*	144	196	60	400
		% within Location	68.9%	74.2%	42.6%	
	Traditional Authority	*Count*	84	145	84	313
		% within Location	40.2%	54.9%	59.6%	
	Church	*Count*	204	251	131	586
		% within Location	97.6%	95.1%	92.9%	
	Ward Councillor	*Count*	9	69	25	103
		% within Location	4.3%	26.1%	17.7%	
	CDW	*Count*	3	16	0	19
		% within Location	1.4%	6.1%	0.0%	
	Crèche	*Count*	43	143	39	225
		% within Location	20.6%	54.2%	27.7%	
	Lawyer/Attorney	*Count*	2	21	4	27
		% within Location	1.0%	8.0%	2.8%	
Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.	**SASSA**	*Count*	180	200	116	496
		% within Location	86.1%	75.8%	82.3%	
Percentages and totals are based on respondents.	**Bank**	*Count*	188	233	115	536
		% within Location	90.0%	88.3%	81.6%	
Total		*Count*	209	264	141	614

In the case of Rapotokwane, the data indicates that Police Services and Universities are used less often than in Libangeni, which can be explained by the village's remoteness. While the next police station is located 11 kilometres away in Rust de Winter, tertiary education requires the long journey to Siyabuswa, Modimolle or Pretoria. This explanation would, however, be based on purely structuralist assertions and would merely due to geographic distance disregard the agential capabilities of the population of Rapotokwane to access these services. As shown in the First *Entr'acte* and Chapter 6, the population of Rapotokwane – and actually of whole former KwaNdebele – is able to endure the hardships of (un)voluntary migration and to regularly cross vast spatial distances to develop their careers and maintain their livelihoods.

Rapotokwane also scored lower than the Libangeni settlements regarding the use of initiation schools, which can be explained with the abolition of initiation schools in Rapotokwane in the late 1960s, but also by the customary four-year time span between the ritual among most Ndebele groups. Other groups, such as the local Pedi, organise initiation schools annually. Vaalbank residents stand out as making more use of Traditional Healers, Social Workers, Ward Councillors and childcare facilities than their equivalents in Rapotokwane and Allemansdrift B. This can, on the one hand, be explained by Vaalbank's more generous infrastructure with regards to social services. Regarding Traditional Healers, on the other hand, it also points to the suggestion that improved infrastructure will not necessarily eliminate the demand of seemingly non-modern institutions.

However, this simple comparison through crosstabulation does not yet allow for the investigation of correlation, which in turn allows for the analysis of further subgroups within the survey sample. Using Cramér's V, a "measure of strength of association between two categorial variables" (Field 2013: 740), one may not only find out how likely a correlation between the variables is, but also how strong it is. Table 7.10 for example shows that a significant correlation ($p < .05$) was found in 13 cases between the used institutions and the location of enquiry. However, the value of Cramér's V is usually interpreted along the lines of Pearson's

Table 7.10: Cramér's V for Institutions used within last year by household members*Location of Enquiry (*N* = 615)		Value V	Monte Carlo Sig. *p*
Institutions used in household in last 12 months	**Clinic/Hospital**	.048	.498
	Traditional Healer	.195	< .001
	Social Worker	.197	< .001
	School	.161	< .001
	Initiation School	.173	< .001
	University	.229	< .001
	Police Services	.266	< .001
	Traditional Authority	.157	.001
	Church	.094	.071
	Ward Councillor	.255	< .001
	CDW	.152	.001
	Creche/Day-Care	.321	< .001
	Lawyer/Attorney	.155	.001
	SASSA	.115	.020
	Bank	.103	.037

correlation coefficient r (Hemmerich 2015-21a), meaning that a small effect is assumed around V = .1, a moderate effect for V = .3, and a strong correlation effect if V > .5. In this case the four highest values confirm some of the observations that were made above with regard to differences between the settlements for University, Police Services, Ward Councillor, and Crèche. Differences in infrastructure may here produce significant differences between the three locations of enquiry. The significant difference between the locations regarding universities and childcare facilities also partially supports the suspicion from section 7.1 above that there may be location-dependent differences in the age structure, with Vaalbank having a younger population than Allemansdrift B. As respondents were asked to indicate the use of these institutions for their entire household and not only for themselves, it could serve as an indicator of the overall demographic settlement structure of Libangeni. Once again,

however, this suspicion cannot be proven without further official census data and more detailed information on which specific household member accessed these institutions.

With regards to Home Language and institution use, I opted to test for significant correlations separately for each settlement. In Allemansdrift B the following institutions produced *the only significant* differences between the language groups:

- 50 percent of respondents from SeTswana speaking households (total *n* = 6) indicated having used a Social Worker, while only 3.7 percent of IsiNdebele speaking households (total *n* = 109) used one, *V*(7, *n* = 209) = .388, *p* = .004

- 44 percent of respondents from IsiNdebele speaking households (total *n* = 109) indicated having used an Initiation School, while only 22.6 percent of SePedi speaking households (total *n* = 62) used one, *V*(7, *n* = 209) = .252, *p* = .048

The mathematical significance of the former observation probably originates in the low count of SeTswana speakers in the survey sample. In Vaalbank *no significant differences* were found between the Home Language groups with regards to the institutions that had been used by their family members in the last twelve months. In Rapotokwane, however:

- 46.7 percent of respondents from XiTsonga speaking households (total *n* = 15) indicated having used a Traditional Healer, while only 7.5 percent of IsiNdebele speaking households (total *n* = 67) used one, *V*(6, *n* = 142) = .388, *p* = .020

- 84.1 percent of respondents from SePedi speaking households (total *n* = 44) indicated having accessed a school, while only 25 percent of SeSotho speaking households (total *n* = 4) used one, *V*(6, *n* = 142) = .288, *p* = .048

- 34.1 percent of respondents from SePedi speaking households (total *n* = 44) and 100 percent of IsiZulu speaking ones (total *n* = 1) indicated having accessed the Ward Councillor, while only 6 percent of IsiNdebele speaking households (total *n* = 67) had recently approached him, *V*(6, *n* = 142) = .389, *p* = .002

- 93.2 percent of respondents from SePedi speaking households (total *n* = 44) indicated having made use of the services of SASSA, while none of the respondents from IsiZulu speaking households (total *n* = 1) did so. Neither did those households where the language was classified as 'other' (total *n* = 1), *V*(6, *n* = 142) = .343, *p* = .012.

Deviations between the expected and observed counts for each value of the Home Language variable are indicators for certain tendencies among the population. As an example, it seems that the local ANC Ward Councillor is more popular among SePedi speakers than among IsiNdebele speakers in Rapotokwane, even though he is closely associated with the family of late Chief Lazarus Mahlangu. Secondly, seemingly less IsiNdebele speakers made use of a Traditional Healer than expected, while

this was counterbalanced by the XiTsonga speaking respondents in Rapotokwane. This resounds the narratives by some of my interlocutors in qualitative interviews, who claimed that the local Shangaan population is much stronger rooted in 'tradition' than the politically dominant Ndebele. The fact that the local Traditional Authority was not flagged as a significant variable in the comparison of the Home Language groups should be kept in mind for discussion in Chapter 8.

RRSE is closely associated to personal trajectories and thus its influence on the use of certain institutions by all household members must be regarded as contingent at best. For the following ten pairings the X^2 test indicated statistical significance nonetheless.

Pairing	X^2 (10, N = 615)	Monte Carlo Sig. p	Specifications
Table 7.11: Significant X^2 results for Institutions * RRSE			
RRSE * Clinic	19.720	.033	Respondents with higher standard education were less likely to have a household member who accessed a clinic or hospital within the past twelve months.
RRSE * Initiation School	42.269	< .001	34.7 percent of respondents with education ranks 1-5 had a household member who had accessed an initiation school within the past twelve months. For education ranks 6-10 that was only 21.38 percent. A pairwise comparison of column proportions indicated a significant difference between rank 0 and ranks 5-7 (p < .011)
RRSE * University	34.041	< .001	Respondents ranked 9 or 10 were 2.5 times more likely to have a household member in university than the lower eight ranks. A pairwise comparison of column proportions indicated a significant difference between rank 10 and ranks 0-2 and 6-7 (p < .023)
RRSE * Police Services	28.383	.002	A comparison of column proportions indicated that the only significant (p = .025) difference was between those respondents ranked 6 (51.2 percent access of police services) and those ranked 7 (72.7 percent).
RRSE * Traditional Authority	23.999	.007	Those respondents of very low standard education (Rank 0) were the least likely (33.3 percent access rate) to have a household member who accessed the Traditional Authority in the last twelve months (average 50.9 percent).
RRSE * CDW	21.869	.025	Respondents ranked 8 or 10 (M = 13.25 percent) were 5.89 times more likely to have accessed a CDW than those in the other ranks (M = 2.25 percent).
RRSE * Crèche	20.115	.026	A weak tendency for correlation can be observed indicating higher personal standard education implying higher likeliness of having a household member who used the services of a child care provision. However, a pairwise comparison of column proportions did not yield any more specific significant results.
RRSE * Lawyer/Attorney	21.939	.025	Only 4.4 percent of respondents confirmed having used the services of a legal consultant. 8 respondents ranked 10 (15.8 percent) and 4 respondents in rank 4 (16.7 percent) responded in the affirmative and thus caused a significant result here.
RRSE * SASSA	98.044	< .001	Respondents with higher education, especially those ranked 10, were less likely to have someone in their household who accessed the South African Social Security Agency in the previous twelve months.
RRSE * Bank	25.296	.006	A clear split between those ranked 1-5 and those ranked 6-10 was observed here. Those respondents who have been ranked higher in standard education were more likely to have a household member with access to banking services.

What do the observations for these pairings of personal RRSE and institutions used by all household members imply? In some cases, for example the pairing of RRSE * University, the correlative relationship is logically obvious. In other cases, such as RRSE * Traditional Authority it must be critically questioned whether a lower degree of standard education inhibits the access to Traditional Authority or whether the access to it fosters education. For pairings such as RRSE * CDW the correlation is of mathematical nature as very few respondents indicated having accessed their CDW within the past twelve months, causing expected counts as low as .46 and ten of them at less than 5, which raises the suspicion that a X^2 analysis may have been unsuitable (Field 2013: 18.4.2) despite exact Monte Carlo significance testing. The same applies to the pairing RRSE * Lawyer/Attorney. Monetary considerations are likely to be at play with regards to the pairing RRSE * SASSA, where respondents with higher received standard education were less likely to have accessed SASSA within their household in the past twelve months. This is especially noteworthy, because, as shown above, the RRSE variable correlates to a certain degree with the RPOI variable. A case where this assumption of causality does, however, not hold is the pairing RRSE * Initiation School, where those ranked the lowest in standard education were the most likely to have accessed an initiation school. As initiation schools generally demand stately financial contributions it would have been expected that they were more accessible to households with higher education. Not only must this assumption be rejected due to the results from the RRSE * Initiation School comparison, but also when RPOI is brought in as its own variable. With regards to any correlation between the potential income from the indicated occupation and the institutions that were recently accessed by the household members the following observations were made.

	X^2 (10, N = 614)	Monte Carlo Sig. p	
Table 7.12: Significant X^2 results for Institutions * RPOI			
Pairing			Specifications
RPOI * Social Worker	26.920	.006	The most significant differences were identified between ranks 0 and 2 (p = .011).
RPOI * University	20.904	.022	78.3 percent of respondents in rank 0 had no household member with access to tertiary education while 52.2 percent of those that were ranked 10 did.
RPOI * Police Services	17.885	.046	This pairing subsequently proved to be statistically not significant (p = .057) in a comparison of column proportions
RPOI * Traditional Authority	32.845	< .001	While all other ranks were relatively similar, rank 5 stands out with a rather low access rate of 28.7 percent. Ranks 2 (p < .001 in pairwise comparison with rank 5) and 4 (p = .016) present relatively high reliable access rates of 60.1 and 75 percent respectively.
RPOI * Ward Councillor	30.515	.002	The comparison of column proportions indicated ranks 0 (12.9 percent) and 5 (8.8 percent) to portray significant lower access rates than rank 1 (39.3 percent) at the p = .006 level.
RPOI * CDW	38.583	.007	A slight tendency towards households with higher potential income having more likely accessed the Community Development Workers can be observed here.

RPOI * Crèche	30.099	< .001	For this pairing a rather balanced distribution can be observed with a slight tendency for higher income households to have more likely accessed a child-care facility. In a comparison of column proportions no pair of ranks could be identified as significantly different.
RPOI * SASSA	103.450	< .001	A negative correlation between RPOI and SASSA access is shown in the data: the higher the occupational rank, the less likely their household members will have accessed SASSA in the previous year. Over 80 percent of those ranked 0 to 4 had accessed SASSA while that was only the case for 13 percent of those ranked 10.
RPOI * Bank	20.512	.038	Apart from the surprisingly low percentage (79.1 percent) of people with access to banking facilities in rank 2, no obvious correlation could be identified here.

Some of these correlations appear easily explainable. For example one can assume that occupations with a better income allow better service access for the entire household, as in the case of universities and childcare facilities. In reverse, lower income implies dependency upon welfare institutions like SASSA. It is, however, what these results do not flag as significant that is most telling. Occupations do seemingly not influence whether a household has better or worse access to health care, primary and secondary education, or executive and administrative institutions such as Ward Councillors, Traditional Authorities or Police Services.

No significant correlation was also found regarding the use of institutions and party membership. The number of dependants also did not correlate with the institutions used, that is apart from a weak correlation for Number of Dependants * School, η = .289, p < .001, which was understandably expected to be stronger.

Correlation between the institutions used within the household and the Land Allocation Status of the household's plot was particularly observable in the comparison of 'Title Deed' and 'PTO' households. Interestingly though, a statistically significant correlation between Land Allocation Status and the variables Traditional Authority or Ward Councillor (as representative of the municipality) could not be established. Respondents from title deed holding households were more likely to indicate having accessed a social worker (39.2% v 13.8%), an initiation school (45.9% v 30%), a university (51.4% v 22.6%), a CDW (8.1% v 2.5%), a crèche (56.8% v 33.5%), and a lawyer or attorney (10.8% v 3.3%). For those households holding merely a PTO for their land the SASSA access rate was higher than among those holding title deeds (83.5% v 67.6%). As shown above, title deeds are predominantly held in Vaalbank. This means that the direction of causality must be put into question in this case and the interconnection of further factors such as neighbourhood dynamics and linguistic settlement patterns must be considered here. For example, respondents from the Vaalbank population indicate a notable higher RRSE and RPOI (see Figures 7.10 and 7.11).
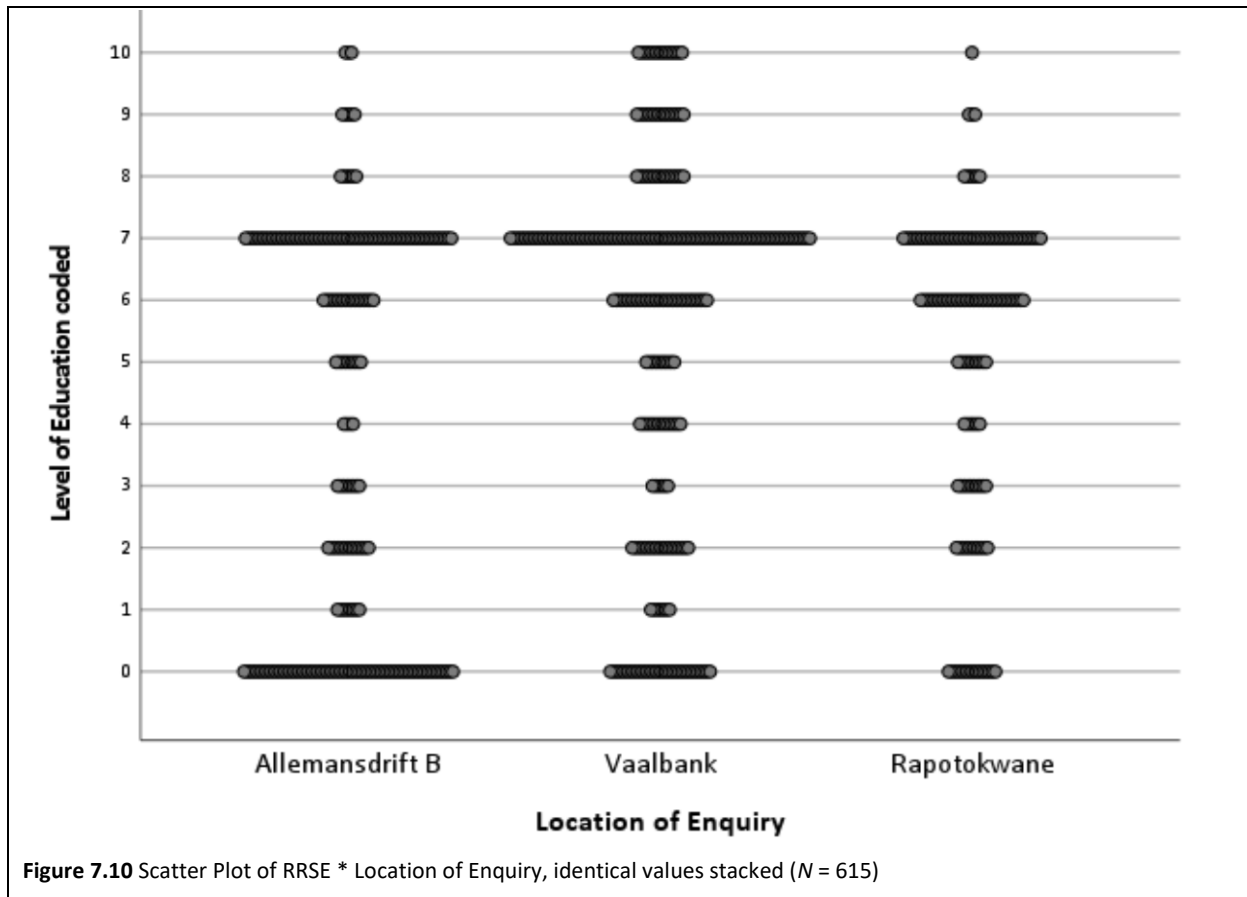
Figure 7.10 Scatter Plot of RRSE * Location of Enquiry, identical values stacked (*N* = 615)
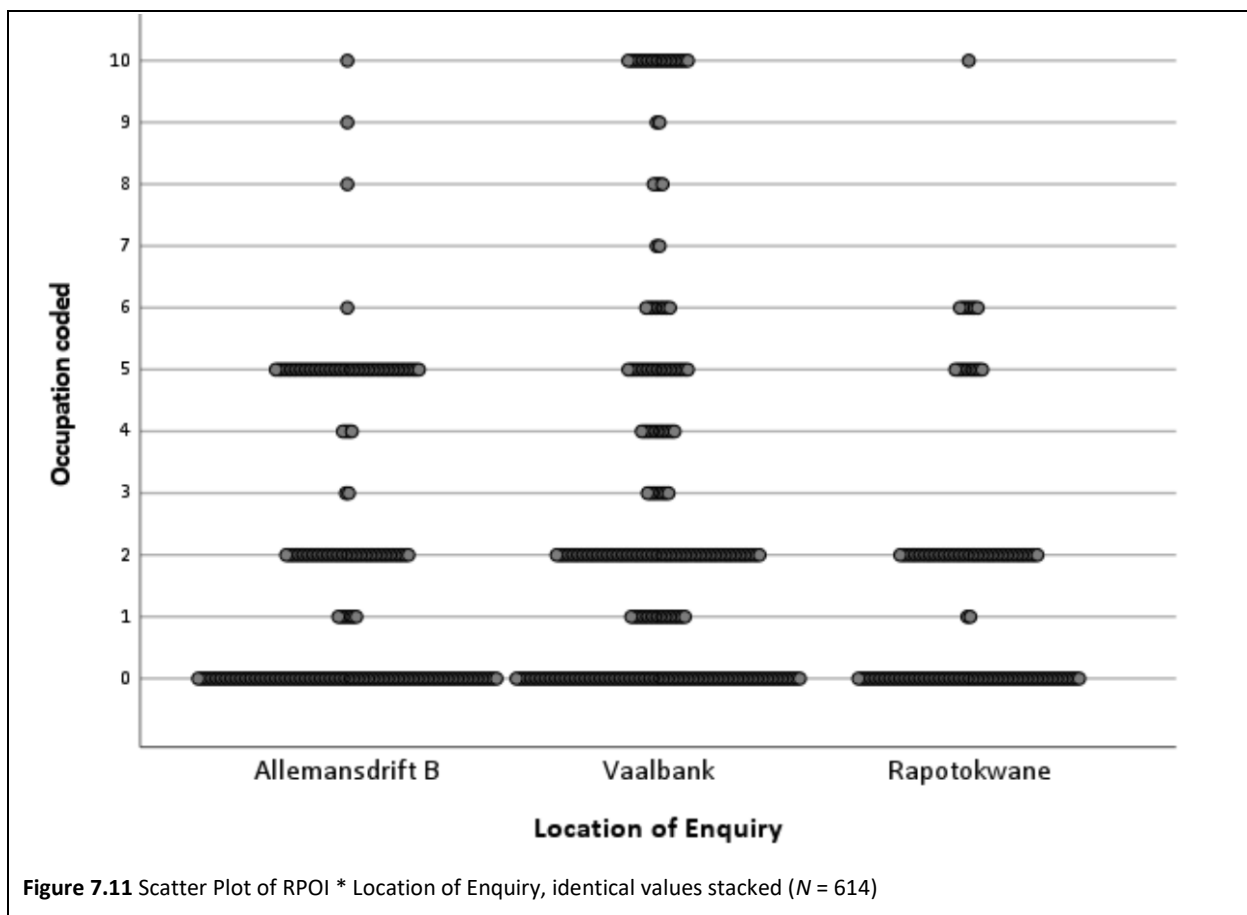
Figure 7.11 Scatter Plot of RPOI * Location of Enquiry, identical values stacked (*N* = 614)

The guiding question for this section was, whether demographic variables correlate with the regular use of certain institutions. Or in less concrete/more generalized terms: *Does the survey data suggest that, what people do is influenced by who they say they are?* In this case, there is some evidence that the place of residence, the language spoken at home, the standard education that people have received, and the potential income that their occupation generates have some influence on the services that people (can) make use of. Whether this data is enough to conclude that strategic contexts have an influence upon strategic conduct will have to be discussed in the chapters that follow.

7.3.2 Do Certain Demographic Groups Show Preference of or Indifference towards Certain Abstract and Concrete Entities?

In this section the respondents' demographic data and their responses in 'Section Five' will be compared to find out whether home language, place of residence, gender, age, occupation and education could have had an influence on the importance that individuals assigned to certain concrete and abstract entities. The tests that have been applied to answer this question include the previously discussed one-way (Welch) ANOVA, the respective Post Hoc tests (Tukey HSD/Games-Howell) and the Kruskal-Wallis test. Robust tests of equality of means (Welch ANOVA) could not be performed for some constellations when at least one subgroup had 0 variance. Furthermore, a Mann-Whitney U test (also known as Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon or Wilcoxon rank-sum test) was conducted to test for correlation between Gender (as binary variable) and the respective Likert scale ratings. A T-Test was not possible at this point as several variables contained up to 12 extreme outliers and normality could not be established for any of the 26 'Section Five' variables. As no linear correlation could be identified between Age (metric) and most listed items (quasi-metric), the Pearson correlation coefficient could not be used and instead a Spearman rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's Rho) was applied to test for significant correlations (Walther 2020b). This test is widely used to compare ordinal variables whose r_s value is generally regarded as equal to r with a weak effect size between .1 and .3, a medium effect between .3 and .5, and a strong effect above .5 (Cohen 1992). The same test was applied to investigate any potential correlation between the variables of 'Section Five' and the respondents' education and occupation (RRSE and RPOI variables both ordinal), complemented through testing via Kendall's Tau-b correlation coefficient. While Kendall's Tau-b produces a p-value that underlies the same guidelines as above (significance if $p < .05$), there is no strict rule of thumb for the interpretation of its τ_b, which ranges between -1 (perfect negative monotonous relation) and 1 (perfect positive monotonous relation). Some sources interpret its absolute value as equal to the correlation coefficient r (Walther 2020a) as it is the case with Spearman's Rho. Other sources, however, point out that Kendall's Tau is usually 66-75% smaller than r (Field 2013: 7.7), but do not offer any alternative benchmarks instead. Further, some studies have shown that Kendall's Tau is more appropriate for

smaller sample sizes and that it tends to underestimate the actual degree of association (Göktaş and İşçi 2011). Therefore both tests were conducted to complement one another and reduce the risk of committing Type II errors, "which occurs when we believe that there is no effect in the population when, in reality, there is" (Field 2013: 2.6.1.6).

Rather than listing all significant results in tabulated form at this point, I have decided to merely point out the most relevant correlations for each of the 26 items, sorted according to the grouping established in the factor analysis at the end of subchapter 7.2.

The four items that were captioned '**Rehabilitation'** above produced the following results: SeSotho speakers rated <u>Well Working Government Services</u> as less important (n = 15; M = 3.67) than their IsiNdebele (n = 166; M = 4.33), SeTswana (n = 26, M = 4.5) and IsiZulu (n = 11, M = 4.64) speaking neighbours. In Vaalbank (n = 227, M = 4.11) this item was rated significantly lower than in Rapotokwane (n = 106, M = 4.42) and Allemansdrift B (n = 116, M = 4.58). SeTswana speakers assigned a higher priority to <u>Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid</u> (n = 26, M = 4.69) than those respondents, who speak IsiNdebele (n = 170, M = 4.17), SePedi (n = 179, M = 4.13) or SeSotho (n = 15, M = 3.80) at home. In Rapotokwane this noble target was rated slightly, yet significantly, more important (n = 108, M = 4.44) than in Vaalbank (n = 228, M = 4.05). Similarly Rapotokwane respondents also rated <u>Land Reform</u> as more important to them personally (n = 108, M = 4.39) than those in Vaalbank (n = 226, M = 4.13). Weak positive correlation, which was significant, was also found for Age (r_s = .105, p = .013) and RPOI (τ_b = .080, p = .026) meaning that age and potential occupational income have most certainly little to no influence on the importance that people assign to the land reform project. While differences of age only played a minor, yet significant, role with regards to <u>Owning your own Piece of Land</u> (r_s = .109, p = .010), residents of Allemansdrift B (n = 116, M = 4.79) found this item significantly (p < .001) more important than their neighbours in Vaalbank (n = 229, M = 4.37). Interestingly, neither of the two land-related variables resulted in significant differences between title deed and PTO holders.

The four items grouped together as '**State Obligations'** revealed the following: <u>Democratic Rules</u> were regarded as slightly more important by younger respondents (r_s = -.117, p = .006) and by those with a higher RRSE (τ_b = .133, p < .001). Respondents from Allemansdrift B considered <u>Powerful Communal and National Leadership</u> significantly (p < .001) more important (n = 114, 4.38) than those who reside in Vaalbank (n = 225, M = 3.96); so did those with a higher RRSE (τ_b = .091, p = .010). <u>Freedom of Speech</u> was slightly more important for those respondents of younger Age (r_s = -.166, p < .001) and of higher RRSE (τ_b = .154, p < .001). <u>Equality Between all South Africans</u> proved only a little bit, yet significantly (p = .003), less popular in Vaalbank (n = 226, M = 4.19) than in Rapotokwane (n = 104, M = 4.39) and Allemansdrift B (n = 114, M = 4.44).

Two out of three items that were captioned '**Traditional Dispositions'** constitute the only variables that produced significant results for a differentiation between respondents based on Gender. Traditional Lifestyle was regarded as less important by female respondents (n = 313, M = 3.80) than by male ones (n = 141, M = 4.11), U = 25,257.50, p = .008. The same was the case regarding Traditional Leadership (female: n = 313, M 3.82; male: n = 140, M = 4.09), U = 24,889.50, p = .012. Both were furthermore regarded as more important by older respondents, Traditional Lifestyle * Age: r_s = .224, p < .001, Traditional Leadership * Age: r_s = -.138, p = .002. Traditional Lifestyle was furthermore regarded as more important by respondents with a lower RRSE (τ_b = -.153, p < .001). Ancestral Worship produced significant results for Age (r_s = .086, p = .035) and RRSE (τ_b = -.071, p = .030), too, but these results showed very little difference between the concerned groups.

The five variables grouped together as '**Echoes of Modernity'**, arguably one of the more controversial group titles, reveal the most disagreement among the respondents regarding the personal importance of Modern Lifestyle. Vaalbank residents seem to find this item significantly (p < .001) more important (n = 229, M = 3.65) than those in Rapotokwane (n = 108, M = 3.04), and particularly more than those who live in Allemansdrift B (n = 117, M = 2.85). This is also mirrored by the observation that title deed holders value Modern Lifestyle more (n = 60, M = 3.95) than those that hold a PTO (n = 349, M = 3.22) or claim other versions of land entitlements (n = 17, M = 2.76). With regards to Home Language, IsiNdebele (n = 170, M = 3.08) and XiTsonga (n = 38, M = 3.03) speakers were far more critical of Modern Lifestyle than the local IsiZulu (n = 11, M = 4.18) speakers, F (7, 35.78) = 3.109, p = .011. With regards to Age, younger respondents assigned a higher degree of personal importance to Modern Lifestyle than older ones (r_s = -.212, p < .001). If one considers the correlation between Age and RRSE as illustrated by Figure 7.4's scatter plot above, it will not surprise that those that were ranked higher with regards to standard education also show more support for Modern Lifestyle (τ_b = .202, p < .001). Making Your Own Decisions produced several significant results, being more important for younger respondents (r_s = -.229, p < .001) and those with a higher RRSE (τ_b = .161, p < .001). Furthermore, there were significant differences between all three settlements, F(2, 223.63) = 21.442, p < .001: Vaalbank (n = 226, M = 4.30), Rapotokwane (n = 108, M = 3.90) and Allemansdrift B (n = 116, M = 3.52). This may also have had an influence on the significant (p < .001) differences regarding Making Your Own Decisions between PTO (n = 345, M = 3.90) and title deed holders (n = 60, M = 4.58). With regards to Equality Between Men and Women Rapotokwane respondents indicated a higher personal priority (n = 107, M = 4.23) than their counterparts in Allemansdrift B (n = 115, M = 3.79). It furthermore proved slightly more popular among younger respondents (r_s = -.147, p = .001) and those with a higher RRSE (τ_b = .084, p = .015). South Africa's Past was regarded as more important in Vaalbank (n = 227, M = 3.92) than in Allemansdrift B (n = 115, M = 3.12) and Rapotokwane (n = 108, M = 2.47). Younger respondents were slightly more concerned with the national past than their older counterparts (r_s = -

.098, p = .019) and so were those with a higher RPOI (τ_b = .083, p = .018). Your Personal Past, however, produced no significant results.

In the '**Solidary Providence'** group, no significant correlations with any demographic factors were found for Education, Respect and Faith in God. Similar to the observations made for Land Reform above with regards to Age and RPOI, a significant weak positive correlation was found between the personal importance of Ubuntu * Age (r_s = .137, p = .002) and Ubuntu * RPOI (τ_b = .143, p < .001). Regarding Making Plans for the Future a weak negative correlation for Age was found (r_s = -.097, p = .019), meaning that younger respondents rated it slightly higher. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there was very little variation regarding the personal importance rating of this item in correlation with RRSE (τ_b = .078, p = .029). Money, despite its overall high appreciation (M = 4.87), was regarded the least important among SeTswana speakers (n = 26, M = 4.65) and most important among SeSotho and IsiZulu speakers (n = 15 + 11, M = 5.00), H (7) = 19.803, p = .006.

With regards to the four ungrouped items the following observations were established. Similar to Modern Lifestyle, Politics was one of the more controversially rated items. IsiZulu speakers regarded Politics as significantly (p = .014) more important to themselves (n = 11, M = 4.27) than SeSotho speakers (n = 15, M = 2.67). Furthermore, a weak positive correlation effect between personal importance of Politics and RRSE was observed (τ_b = .086, p = .011). The statistically most significant (p < .001) pairing for this item was observed with regards to land allocation status. Title deed holders rated Politics as more important (n = 59, M = 3.98) than PTO holders (n = 349, M = 3.22). For Order and Security the only statistically significant result was a slight difference between Allemansdrift B and the other two settlements, which shall not be further elaborated upon as its mean and median values were too close to derive an overall tendency. Living for the Day produced significant results with regards to Home Language, Location of Enquiry, and RRSE, but none of these results were indicative of stark contrasts between the involved groups. Conservation and Protection of Nature did not produce any significant results when compared with the available demographic data.

The guiding question for this section was, whether demographic variables correlate with the importance that people assign to certain abstract and concrete entities. Or in more abstract terms: *Does the survey data suggest that, how people feel about more or less important things is influenced by who they say they are?* The results of 'Section Five' produce the highest number of significant results when correlated with respondents' Age, the Location of Enquiry and the respondents' RRSE, suggesting that these may have a crucial impact on the priorities that people assign in their everyday practices. Home Language is another, less dominant, variable that seems to influence the importance rating. The lowest number of significant results was achieved when correlating the 'Section Five' variables with RPOI, Land Allocation Status and, least significantly, Gender. This does not imply that these latter

demographic factors do not influence how people feel about certain concrete and abstract entities. It merely means that the available data does not suffice to make a statistically justified judgement at this point. This may be due to the questionnaire design, interview technique and procedure or due to an unidentified factor that was not tested for in this survey. Whether this data is enough to conclude that strategic contexts have an influence upon strategic discourse will have to be discussed in the chapters that follow.

7.3.3 Does Preference of and Indifference Towards Certain Entities Correlate with the Regular Use of Certain Institutions?

In the previous two subchapters demographic factors such as Age, Gender, Home Language and Location of Enquiry were used as independent variables, assuming that these variables could not be influenced by the institutions that respondents used and the entities that they rated more or less important. For example, a person's age could explain their attitude towards 'traditional' or 'modern' lifestyle but not vice-versa. Surely one could argue that certain preferences may very well influence the place where people choose to settle and that some families may adjust the languages spoken at home due to personal preferences and attitudes in response to external circumstances, but for the sake of mathematics these factors had to be assumed to be independent variables for the time being. Now, when investigating potential correlations between the institutions that respondents indicated to have been used by their household members within the past twelve months (naturally dichotomous variables: 'yes' or 'no') and the importance rating that they assigned to any of the 26 items from 'Section Five' (quasi-metric/ordinal variables), the direction in which these variables influence one another is less clear and thus more complicated.

The task is furthermore aggravated by the fact that most available literature recommends the calculation of a rank biserial correlation when investigating the relationship between ordinal variables and naturally dichotomous ones (Khamis 2008; Hemmerich 2015-21b). Unfortunately, IBM's SPSS, which was the software of choice in the analytic process, does not directly provide such a procedure and my personal mathematical skills did not suffice to conduct it independently with the available temporal and financial resources. A point-biserial correlation, which is catered for in SPSS through Pearson's correlation coefficient, was inappropriate due to extreme outliers and lack of normal distribution and equal variances in the 'Section Five' variables. Thus a range of alternative tests was conducted to compensate this methodological shortcoming and the potential two-way relation between the investigated variables. This involved, first, a Mann-Whitney-U test, because it operates with a linear function of the rank biserial correlation (Willson 1976) and should thus provide equivalent p-values. Secondly, the Eta-coefficient, which is "appropriate for a dependent variable measured on an interval scale [...] and an independent variable with a limited number of categories" (IBM 2020: 17),

was calculated. The Eta-coefficient ranges between 0 and 1 and "has the desirable property of accurately reflecting the strength of the relationship between two variables when they are not linearly related" (Breaugh 2003: 88). Jones (2019) recommends a figure of 0.2 as a minimum level for acceptance of association between two variables based on Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Scale. The commonly used benchmarks are .2-.39 for weak association, .4-.69 for moderate association and .7-1.0 for strong association between the variables.

Mann-Whitney-U and Eta-coefficient do, however, treat the binary variable (Institution used? Yes/No) as independent and the ordinal/quasi-metric 'Section Five' variables as dependent. To test this relationship in reverse, a different strategy had to be applied. Howell (2001) and other sources suggest the use of X^2-based tests when comparing ordinal and binary variables. Therefore, Cramér's V was used to establish the exact/Monte Carlo significance and the correlation coefficient with the Institution variables as dependent ones. In addition a comparison of cross-tabulated column proportions (adjusted through Bonferroni correction) was conducted to allow for further investigation into the assumption that the importance assigned by respondents to the 'Section Five' items should be regarded as independent (metric/interval) variable. As these procedures produced a large amount of computed data for 390 pairings (15 institutions x 26 items), I will only discuss those pairings that are significant from the argumentative perspective of this dissertation's overall research objective rather than from a statistical or mathematical point of view.

The most important findings can be summarised as follows. Out of the 390 pairings Mann-Whitney U and Cramér's V simultaneously produced significant results in 85 cases. For further 17 pairings only the Mann Whitney-U test produced significant p-values and Cramér's V produced significant results for further 38 pairings. This amounts to 140 pairings out of 390 that produced one or two significant p-values. The larger amount of significant pairings for V may, however, be due to the fact that it is based on a X^2 statistic and "the rule [...] that all expected counts should be greater than 1 and no more than 20% of expected counts should be less than 5" (Field 2013: 18.4.2) was violated for some very popular 'Section Five' items, where the lower ranks could not register (m)any counts. The Cramér's V results must therefore be taken with a grain of salt and scrutinized further through more detailed attention to the data.

The difference in mean scoring between those respondents that had someone in their household who had made use of a respective institution and those that did not was 0.15 points for all 'Section Five' variables. The overall tendency that respondents who indicated the utilization of a specific institution in their household were more likely to assign a higher importance score to the items on offer was observed, $r = .203$, $p < .001$, implying that the more institutions a respondent's household had used the higher were their overall importance ratings in 'Section Five'. Furthermore, one could observe a

stark contrast in the amount of statistically significant pairings that each variable produced. On the one hand more than sixty percent of pairings produced some kind of statistically significant result when they involved Initiation School, University, Making Your Own Decisions or Modern Lifestyle. On the other hand, Ward Councillor, Traditional Authority and School each only produced two significant pairings and Church did not produce any, possibly due to its high access rate of 94.5 percent. A similar tendency was observed for Respect, Faith in God and Living For the Day, which merely produced two significant pairings each.

The Eta-coefficient, assuming the (quasi-)metric 'Section Five' variables to be the dependent ones, reached the critical .2 benchmark in only 6 out of 390 pairings, the highest value observed being .251 for the pairing University * Modern Lifestyle. Respondents, who had household members attend University rated Modern Lifestyle 0.68 points more important on average than those, who did not. For this pairing Cramér's V indicated a correlation effect of .301. However, keep in mind that no conclusions regarding the direction of the association can be drawn. Both directions are possible, i.e. perceived importance of a modern lifestyle impacts the attendance of university or vice versa. Respondents who found Modern Lifestyle unimportant (2) were more likely to have no household member attending university ($p < .001$), while those who rated it very important (5) were more likely to have a household member with access to tertiary education ($p < .001$).

Modern Lifestyle and Making our Own Decisions produced significant p-values for nine out of 15 pairings each. The former showed significant correlations with institutions such as Traditional Healer, Social Worker, Initiation School, Police and CDW. In all nine cases the mean rating of Modern Lifestyle was higher amongst those that had used the institution than amongst those who had not. Making Your Own Decisions produced Eta-values above .2 for two pairings, with University (η = .224) and Creche (η = .210). In nine out of ten significant pairings respondents' answers produced a higher mean importance score for Making Your Own Decisions when having accessed the institution in question. The odd one out was in this case the pairing Making Your Own Decisions * Traditional Authority, where the item was rated 0.26 points less important amongst those who had confirmed contact to the TA. Those who assigned a very important (5) score to Making Your Own Decisions were significantly (p = .041) less likely to have someone in their household, who accessed the TAs services in the past year. The inverse conclusion, that those who had accessed the Traditional Authority had an overall different attitude towards Making Your Own Decisions could, however, not be confirmed with significant values for Eta-coefficient (η = .122) or the comparison of column proportions. The only other significant correlation that was found for Traditional Authority as an institution was the pairing Money * Traditional Authority, V = .133, p = .042, where those that assigned an important (4) role to money were more likely to be found amongst those, whose household members had recently used the

services of a Traditional Authority (p = .038). However, no further significant values surfaced for this specific pairing and for Traditional Authority as a whole.

Regarding Cramér's V results, overall a weak correlation effect (V > .1) was indicated for 211 pairings and a moderate correlation effect (V > .3) was reached in 4 cases while no strong correlation values (V > .5) were found. The highest value, V = .355, was produced by the pairing Social Worker * Your Personal Past. Those respondents that decided to rate Your Personal Past as undecided (3), p = .010, and very important (5), p < .001, were significantly more likely to be found among those who indicated 'yes' for Social Worker. Those, who chose unimportant (2), p = .001, and important (4), p < .001, were more likely to be found amongst those, who were booked for 'no' for Social Worker. Vice versa, those who used a social worker indicated that their personal past was more important (M = 4.21) to them than to those that had not (M = 3.61), η = .199.

Another significant pairing was Initiation School * Traditional Lifestyle, V = .324, η = .190. The opinion that people indicated regarding Traditional Lifestyle was to a significant degree (p < .001) influenced by the question whether someone in their household had recently attended an initiation school. Respondents from households with initiation school attendance (24.6%) were more likely to choose one of the Likert scale's extreme ends (i.e. either 1 = very unimportant or 5 = very important) than those without initiation school attendance, where the middle ranks (2 = unimportant, 3 = undecided, 4 = important) were more likely to be chosen to describe it. On average, respondents from households with initiation school attendance found Traditional Lifestyle 0.47 points more important on the Likert scale. Respondents who found Traditional Lifestyle very important (5) were further more likely to have accessed a Traditional Healer (p < .001), a University (p < .001) or a Crèche (p = .001) than those that gave it a lower rating. In return, those that had accessed these facilities gave Traditional Lifestyle a significantly higher average rating on the Likert scale.

Traditional Leadership as a 'Section Five' item, as opposed to the 'Section Four' institution Traditional Authority, showed significant associations with the following six institutions: Traditional Healer, U = 15808.000, p = .018; Initiation School, U = 15842.000, p = .005; University, U = 16738.500, p = .004; CDW U = 2854.00, p = .039; Crèche, V = .216, p < .001; Lawyer/Attorney, V = .175, p = .018. None of these pairings produced an Eta-value above the .2 benchmark nor a moderate correlation value for V. Interestingly, the pairing Traditional Leadership * Traditional Authority produced insignificant results for all applied tests.

Among those respondents, who had university students in their household Democratic Rules was rated 0.32 points more important on the Likert scale than among those who did not, U = 15529.000, p = .001. While the Mann-Whitney-U test and the Eta-coefficient produced insignificant results for the pairing

Democratic Rules * Initiation School, meaning that there is no indication that the attendance of such an institution within the household influences the individual democratic attitude, Cramér's V for this pairing was significant nonetheless, V = .148, *p* = .040. The comparison of column proportions showed that those who had rated Democratic Rules important (4) were significantly (*p* = .004) less likely to have accessed an Initiation School in their household. For the four other options that people could choose from during the rating process there was no significant difference, however. The opposite tendency was observed for the pairing Democratic Rules * Traditional Healer, where those that found Democratic Rules very important (5) tended to have less likely (*p* = .006) accessed a Traditional Healer, while those who had rated it merely important (4) were more likely (*p* = .002) to have not done so. In return there was no evidence to suggest that the usage of a Traditional Healer may have influenced the importance rating of Democratic Rules with both *U* and η remaining beyond the significant thresholds.

Politics, one of the most controversially rated 'Section Five' items, produced eight pairings with significant U and V results. These included the institutions Traditional Healer (*U* = 13688.000, *p* < .001), Social Worker (*U* = 11247.500, *p* < .001; η = .208; V = .326, p < .001), Initiation School (*U* = 15742.000, *p* = .005, *η* = .208), University (*U* = 15536.500, *p* < .001), CDW (*U* = 2395.500, *p* = .004), Crèche (*U* = 20919.500, *p* = .004), Lawyer/Attorney (*U* = 3549.000, *p* = .004), Bank (*U* = 8975.500, *p* = .015). In all eight cases the respondents who had recent users of the respective institution in their household, rated Politics between 0.31 and 0.82 points more important than those who had not. While this suggests that the in-house use of these institutions may have influenced the respondents' opinion of politics, the inverted assumption that their opinion of politics may have influenced the use of these institutions can also be supported through the data. In all eight cases, those who found Politics very important (5) were significantly (p-values between .000 and .037) more likely to have indicated the recent use of these institutions. It should be noted that the two rather political institutions Ward Councillor and Traditional Authority did not produce any significant correlation values when paired with Politics.

A certain pattern of significant correlation values was also identified for a group of 'Section Five' items. The three variables Freedom of Speech, Equality Between all South Africans, Equality Between Men and Women simultaneously related to Traditional Healer, Social Worker and University via significant V values, and also via significant U values for CDW and Bank. A similar, but less clear-cut pattern could also be identified for the 'Rehabilitation' group, where at least three of the four variables (Well Working Government Services, Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid, Land Reform, Owning Your own Piece of Land) significantly related to Social Worker, Initiation School and University through significant V values.

The guiding question for this section was, whether respondents' preference of or indifference towards certain abstract or concrete entities correlated with the use of certain institutions by their household members. Or in more abstract terms: *Does the survey data suggest that what people do has anything to do with the way that people feel about things that may be important?* Altogether, some patterns of correlation between the importance ratings that respondents assigned to the items in 'Section Five' and the institutions that had been recently used by their household members could be observed. The following qualifications must, however, be made: first, no pattern of correlation could be identified that may have suggested that a single item or a cluster of 'Section Four' or 'Section Five' items may have significant influence upon the remaining ones. It became clear that individual preferences and institutional connections correlate in an unforeseeable and unexpected way. Secondly, some items were more interrelated than others in the sense that they showed more significant correlations to any other items. This does not imply that these variables were more or less important to respondents than the others or that these variables have more influence on opinion or institution access. It merely means that these variables are more useful in indicating contrasts and associations among the surveyed population. Third and finally, on the one hand assumptions based on the 'Tradition versus Modernity' binary could not be confirmed based on the governmental institutions that had been accessed. No significant correlations were found between Traditional/Modern Lifestyle, the four temporal dimensions (Your Personal/South Africa's Past, Living For The Day, Making Plans For The Future) and Traditional Authority/Ward Councillor. On the other hand, other institutions such as Initiation School and Traditional Healer play a more significant role in the investigation of this strategic binary. Whether this data is enough to conclude that strategic conduct and strategic discourse influence one another will have to be discussed in the chapters that follow.

7.3.4 Do the Preferences of or Indifferences towards Certain Abstract and Concrete Entities Correlate amongst One Another?

To conclude the survey data analysis, all 'Section Five' items were compared to one another to find out if a correlation could be found between certain items. Comparing each 'Section Five' variable with every other 'Section Five' variable produced 325 pairings of potential correlation. Both Spearman's Rho and Kendall's Tau-c were used in this case, the latter of which is recommended for testing for correlation between ordinal variables with the same amount of possible values (Khamis 2008). The same rules of thumb apply to its correlation coefficient interpretation as to Kendall's Tau-b, whose strengths and weaknesses were explained above. As the PAF analysis, presented in section 7.2 above, was based on a similar procedure, producing the suggested five groups of variables, such additional testing may appear somewhat redundant. Contrary to common practice in some statistically oriented

disciplines I have opted against treating these groups as single dimensions, but rather decided to investigate the interrelation of the 'Section Five' items in more detail.

208 pairings out of 325 produced statistically significant results for both Kendall's Tau-c and Spearman's Rho. There was no pairing where only one of these tests produced a significant result. On first sight, the factor analysis results were confirmed with all of the six groupings showing high significance and weak to moderate correlation values between the grouped variables, except for Education * Money, τ_c = .021, p = .251, r_s = -.053, p = .259. The four ungrouped variables showed a certain degree of correlation among one another with four out of six pairings producing significant test results, the exceptions being Order and Security * Living For the Day, r_s = -.063, p = .179, and Order and Security * Politics, r_s = -.091, p = .054. Among all tested pairings the pairings that were grouped together in Factors 1-5 contain the highest values for r_s, Land Reform * Owning your Own Piece of Land being the high scorer with .485. The highest value for τ_c was .354 for Traditional Lifestyle * Traditional Leadership.

In total 64 percent of possible pairings produced significant test results. Other pairings of variables that had not been grouped together in the factor analysis produced significant results, too. For example, strong correlations seem to exist between some variables of the 'Rehabilitation' and the 'State Obligations' groups:

-   Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid * Freedom of Speech , τ_c = .223, p < .001, r_s = .320, p < .001
-   Equality Between all South Africans * Land Reform, τ_c = .216, p < .001, r_s = .312, p < .001
-   Equality Between all South Africans * Well Working Government Services, τ_c = .235, p < .001, r_s = .337, p < .001
-   Powerful Communal and National Leadership * Well Working Government Services, τ_c = .256, p < .001, r_s = .354, p < .001

Another pairing that included relatively high τ_c and r_s values was Modern Lifestyle * Making Your own Decisions, τ_c = .262, p < .001, r_s = .349, p < .001. With more specific regard to the research question, a closer look at those variables that concern dimensions of 'Tradition v Modernity', 'Democracy v Chieftaincy' and 'Black Land v White Land' lends itself. There were *no significant correlation* values found for the following pairings:

-   Traditional Lifestyle * Modern Lifestyle, τ_c = .012, p = .742, r_s = .026, p = .585
-   Traditional Lifestyle * Democratic Rules, τ_c = .051, p = .131, r_s = .070, p = .135
-   Traditional Lifestyle * Land Reform, τ_c = .031, p = .351, r_s = .043, p = .362
-   Traditional Lifestyle * Owning Your Own Piece of Land, τ_c = .020, p = .531, r_s = .029, p = .538
-   Traditional Lifestyle * Freedom of Speech, τ_c = -.006, p = .848, r_s = -.009, p = .852

- <u>Traditional Lifestyle</u> * <u>Living For The Day</u>, τ_c = .023, p = .484, r_s = .033, p = .487
- <u>Traditional Lifestyle</u> * <u>Making Plans For The Future</u>, τ_c = .036, p = .127, r_s = .072, p = .125
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Powerful Communal and National Leadership</u>, τ_c = .012, p = .728, r_s = .016, p = .731
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Equality Between all South Africans</u>, τ_c = .037, p = .272, r_s = .053, p = .278
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Modern Lifestyle</u>, τ_c = .035, p = .312, r_s = .053, p = .260
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Land Reform</u>, τ_c = .024, p = .465, r_s = .034, p = .470
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Owning Your Own Piece of Land</u>, τ_c = .046, p = .134, r_s = .070, p = .137
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid</u>, τ_c = .012, p = .705, r_s = .018, p = .705
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Making Your Own Decisions</u>, τ_c = .006, p = .871, r_s = .010, p = .838
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Equality Between Men and Women</u>, τ_c = -.039, p = .247, r_s = -.053, p = .268
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Living For The Day</u>, τ_c = .033, p = .316, r_s = .048, p = .311
- <u>Powerful Communal and National Leadership</u> * <u>Making Your Own Decisions</u>, τ_c = .021, p = .531, r_s = .031, p = .159

In return, the following topically relevant pairings indicated *some degree of statistical significance*:

- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Democratic Rules</u>, τ_c = .104, p = .002, r_s = .146, p = .002
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Powerful Communal and National Leadership</u>, τ_c = .165, p < .001, r_s = .228, p < .001
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Ubuntu</u>, τ_c = .085, p < .001, r_s = .150, p < .001
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Your Personal Past</u>, τ_c = .110, p = .00, r_s = .149, p = .001
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>South Africa's Past</u>, τ_c = .079, p = .022, r_s = .109, p = .021
- <u>Traditional Leadership</u> * <u>Making Plans for the Future</u>, τ_c = .051, p = .027, r_s = .104, p = .027
- <u>Traditional Lifestyle</u> * <u>Your Personal Past</u>, τ_c = .094, p = .007, r_s = .127, p = .007
- <u>Traditional Lifestyle</u> * <u>South Africa's Past</u>, τ_c = .103, p = .003, r_s = .137, p = .004
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Your Personal Past</u>, τ_c = .134, p < .001, r_s = .179, p < .001
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>South Africa's Past</u>, τ_c = .228, p < .001, r_s = .297, p < .001
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Living for the Day</u>, τ_c = .116, p < .001, r_s = .163, p < .001
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Making Plans for the Future</u>, τ_c = .081, p = .001, r_s = .159, p = .001
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Democratic Rules</u>, τ_c = .161, p < .001, r_s = .219, p < .001
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Freedom of Speech</u>, τ_c = .095, p = .005, r_s = .134, p = .005
- <u>Modern Lifestyle</u> * <u>Equality Between Men and Women</u>, τ_c = .146, p < .001, r_s = .196, p < .001
- <u>Democratic Rules</u> * <u>Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid</u>, τ_c = .144, p < .001, r_s = .200, p < .001
- <u>Democratic Rules</u> * <u>Land Reform</u>, τ_c = .116, p < .001, r_s = .164, p < .001
- <u>Democratic Rules</u> * <u>Owning Your Own Piece of Land</u>, τ_c = .098, p = .001, r_s = .151, p = .001

Ultimately, whether certain pairings produce significant results while others do not, merely serves as an indicator to which degree the survey population's importance ratings develop in the same direction. They do not imply causality, e.g. the more important someone rates Modern Lifestyle the more they appreciate Freedom of Speech. Rather these results serve as an indicator, which conscious and non-conscious associations may be in operation.

The guiding question for this section was, whether respondents' preferences of or indifferences towards certain abstract or concrete entities correlated with one another. Or in more abstract terms: *Does the survey data suggest that the importance that people assign to one thing influence how they feel about the importance of another thing?* The high amount of bivariate correlations (64 percent) indicates a strong network of interrelated topics. Some of these connection were expected, and they confirmed the results of the factor analysis, which grouped the items that were offered in 'Section Five' into five distinct groups/clusters. Furthermore a certain correlation between these clusters was identified. However, certain pairings that one would have expected to correlate due to their relation in context did not provide enough statistical evidence to link them beyond hypothetical assumptions. Whether this data is enough to conclude that strategic discourses influence one another will have to be discussed in the chapters that follow.

7.4 Summary

This chapter aimed at identifying some of the foundations that discursive strategies and strategic binaries are built upon. It did so in a difficult interdisciplinary setting trying to cater for the demands of anthropological and statistical writing. To ease the ethnographically inclined reader into the argumentative structures and the procedures of statistical analysis I presented an investigation into the potential influence that interviewer bias may have had during the data collection process; such investigations should be standard procedure for any statistical method that involves human uncertainty factors and will usually not be explicitly presented to such extent. Thereafter I presented the descriptive data that derived from 615 questionnaires, and which granted an insight into the heterogenous character of the region with regards to home language, standard education and occupation. It furthermore provided illustrative data with regards to past settlement policies and land allocation practices. In a Principal Axis Factoring analysis, the 26 items that respondents had been asked to rank with regards to the importance they personally assigned to them were grouped into five different clusters, four items remaining ungrouped. The correlative analysis that followed aimed at answering four different questions, which – on an abstract level – were relatable to the Structure/Agency framework that the theoretical level of this dissertation operates in.

1. Is what people do influenced by who they say they are?

Some evidence was found that the place of residence, the language spoken at home, the standard education that people have received, and the potential income that their occupation generates have some influence on the services that people (can) make use of.

2. Is how people feel about more or less important things influenced by who they say they are?

The results suggested that age, place of residence and education may have an impact on the priorities that people assign in their everyday practices. Home language was a less dominant variable but still seemed to influence the importance rating. The available data did not suffice to make a statistically justified judgement about the influence that income, land allocation and gender may have on the importance assigned to the offered items.

3. Does what people do influence the way they feel about more or less important things and vice versa?

A range of statistically significant connections between the institutions used by survey participants and the importance rating was found. However, a foreseeable pattern using binary categories such as the previously introduced 'Tradition versus Modernity' could not be established. It became clear that individual preferences and institutional connections correlate in an unforeseeable way. Similar to the secondary aim of Chapter 4 – i.e. to deconstruct simplistic binary narratives and to portray the

underlying strategically motivated complexities of certain contexts – this section revealed that many an amenable binary may become challengeable upon thorough investigation.

4. Does the way people feel about one more or less important thing influence the way they feel about another one?

The high amount of bivariate correlations (64 percent) indicated a strong network of interrelated topics. Some of these connections were expected and confirmed the results of the factor analysis. However, certain pairings that one would have expected to correlate due to their relation in content did not provide enough statistical evidence to link them beyond hypothetical assumptions.

The assumption that strategy is at play in a facilitating and simultaneously restricting way between structures and agents was confirmed through the quantitative data from this survey. It has shown how structural factors such as demographics or infrastructural capacities influence the access to institutions and the opinions that actors develop. Also, it has shown that opinions are not necessarily determined by these external factors, but that individual practices derive from a complex web of priorities and possibilities. In conclusion, it can be said that this chapter's main objective – to get a closer look at the foundations of strategy – was fulfilled.

We have reached the end of this dissertation's presentation of empirical data. All of its data? No, only its most important data. In the chapters that remain I will link my theoretical deliberations from Chapters 3 and 4 with the empirical data from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to reach the analytical stage. Of course, this analysis will make reference to the empirical data that has already been presented, but it will also introduce some additional observations to illustrate and support points that need to be made. The following Second *Entr'acte* will ease the reader into this transition by providing additional field data (discussion group results) and by exemplifying the analytical steps that will be conducted throughout the chapters thereafter.

7.5 Larger Tables

Table 7.1: Summary of statistical tests referenced in this chapter (in order of appearance)			
Test Name	Symbol	Aim	Specifications
Pearson's Chi-Squared	X^2	To identify associations between **nominal** and **ordinal** variables	A comparison of expected and observed counts in a crosstabulation that considers degrees of freedom and total number of cases.
Cramér's V	V	To identify correlations between **nominal** variables	Similar to Pearson's Chi-Squared, it additionally provides a correlation coefficient.
Monte Carlo simulation	p	To provide a value that describes the degree of **significance**. A popular alternative to exact significance tests	"Involves creating a distribution similar to that found in the sample and then taking several samples […] from this distribution. From those samples the mean significance value and the confidence interval around it can be created." (Field 2013: 6.4.4)
One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)	F	To identify correlations between **independent nominal** and **dependent metric** variables	Compares the means of three or more independent groups. A regular ANOVA was calculated if homogeneity of variances was confirmed by Levene's test. A Welch ANOVA was calculated in those cases where that was not the case.
Levene's Test		To establish whether **homogeneity of variances** exists in the data	Tests the null hypothesis that population variances are equal. Unequal variances are assumed when $p < .05$
Post Hoc Games-Howell		To identify the **pairings** that produced significant results in a Welch ANOVA	A pairwise comparison of means of all different combinations of treatment groups after identifying an overall difference between groups via ANOVA. Significant differences between two groups are assumed when $p < .05$
Post Hoc Tukey HSD		To identify the **pairings** that produced significant results in a regular ANOVA	A pairwise comparison of means of all different combinations of treatment groups after identifying an overall difference between groups via ANOVA. Significant differences between two groups are assumed when $p < .05$
Kruskal-Wallis	H	To identify correlations between **independent nominal** and **dependent ordinal** variables.	A nonparametric version of the ANOVA based on ranks of data
Kolmogorov-Smirnov & Shapiro-Wilk		To test the **distribution** of variable data for normality	Null hypothesis that normality exists must be rejected if $p < .05$
Mann-Whitney-U	U	To identify correlations between **independent binary** and **dependent ordinal** variables.	A nonparametric version of the ANOVA based on ranks of data. Specifically used if the independent variable is binary.
Principal Axis Factoring (PAF)		A type of **factor analysis** with the aim to reduce data by recognizing underlying connections of data by using the variance-covariance matrix of multiple variables.	A range of equally scaled variables is compared and grouped into several virtual variables (factors). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy describes the portion of variance among variables which might be caused by underlying factors present in the data. High values (close to 1.0) designate that a factor analysis might be useful. Bartlett's test of Sphericity indicates whether a factor analysis will deliver dependable results. The Varimax rotation is a mechanism of adjustment that produces more conclusive results.
Pearson Correlation Coefficient	r	To test for linear correlation between two **metric** variables	Data must not contain extreme outliers and must have normal distribution. Generally a rule of thumb is applied: r = .1 weak correlation effect, r = .3 moderate correlation effect, r = .5 strong correlation effect (Cohen 1992)
Spearman Rho Correlation Coefficient	r_s	To test for linear correlation between two **ordinal** variables	A rank correlation coefficient similar to Pearson's r but with less sensitive preconditions as it is based on a comparison of ranks of data rather than linear parametric data.

Kendall's Tau-b	τ_b	To test for correlation between two **ordinal** variables	Similar to Spearman's Rho, contains a correction for ties and more appropriate for smaller sample sizes
Kendall's Tau-c	τ_c	To test for correlation between two **ordinal** variables.	A version of Kendall's Tau-b that was specifically designed for a comparison of ordinal variables with the same amount of possible values.
Eta-coefficient	η	To test for correlation between **independent nominal** variables and **dependent metric** variables	Accurately reflects the strength of the relationship between two variables when they are not linearly related. (Breaugh 2003: 88)

Table 7.4: Significant Kruskal-Wallis test results and one-way ANOVA results including Post Hoc Test for Interviewer * Personal Importance of X

			Kruskal-Wallis Test		ANOVA + Post Hoc Test		
			Asymp. Sig.	Pairwise Adj. Sig. (Bonferroni)	Type / Post Hoc	ANOVA Sig.	Post Hoc Sig.
Interviewer * …	**Education**	#1 #2		< .001			.002
		#1 #3	< .001	.126	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	. 007
		#2 #3		< .001			< .001
	Order and Security	#1 #2		< .001			< .001
		#1 #3	< .001	.161	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	.038
		#2 #3		< .001			< .001
	Traditional Lifestyle	#1 #3	< .001	< .001	Welch / Games-Howell	.008	.006
		#2 #3		.004			.158
	Modern Lifestyle	#1 #3	< .001	< .001	Regular / Tukey HSD	< .001	< .001
		#2 #3		< .001			< .001
	Conservation and Protection of Nature	#1 #2	< .001	< .001	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	< .001
		#2 #3		< .001			< .001
	Politics	#1 #3	< .001	< .001	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	< .001
		#2 #3		< .001			< .001
	Ubuntu	#1 #3	< .001	.064	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	.022
		#2 #3		< .001			< .001

(Table 7.4 continued)

Money	#1 #3	.003	.002	Welch / Games-Howell	.006	.009
Democratic Rules	#1 #2	<.001	.001	Welch / Games-Howell	.001	.001
	#2 #3		.002			.125
Powerful Communal and National Leadership	#1 #2	<.001	<.001	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	<.001
	#1 #3		<.001			<.001
Making Your Own Decisions	#1 #3	<.001	<.001	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	<.001
	#2 #3		<.001			<.001
Faith in God	#1 #3	.001	.024	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	.003
	#2 #3		.001			<.001
Ancestral Worship	#1 #2	<.001	.004	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	.008
	#2 #3		.001			.001
Freedom of Speech	#1 #2	.003	.004	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	<.001
	#2 #3		.027			.629
Equality Between all South Africans	#1 #2	<.001	<.001	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	<.001
	#1 #3		.374			.035
	#2 #3		<.001			.098
Equality Between Men and Women	#1 #2	<.001	.003	Regular / Tukey HSD	<.001	.008
	#1 #3		<.001			<.001
	#2 #3		<.001			<.001
Well Working Government Services	#1 #2	<.001	<.001	Welch / Games-Howell	<.001	<.001
	#1 #3		<.001			<.001
	#2 #3		<.001			.073

(Table 7.4 continued)

Fixing the Wrong of Apartheid	#1 #2	< .001	< .001	Welch / Games-Howell	.002	.002
	#1 #3		.172			.032
Land Reform	#1 #2	< .001	< .001	Welch / Games-Howell	.006	.004
	#2 #3		.002			.250
Owning Your Own Piece of Land	#1 #2	< .001	< .001	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	< .001
	#1 #3		< .001			< .001
	#2 #3		< .001			.017
Your Personal Past	#1 #2	< .001	.001	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	< .001
	#1 #3		< .001			< .001
	#2 #3		< .001			< .001
South Africa's Past	#1 #2	< .001	.003	Welch / Games-Howell	< .001	< .001
	#1 #3		< .001			< .001
	#2 #3		< .001			< .001
Living for the Day	#1 #2	.006	.027	Welch / Games-Howell	.048	.080
	#1 #3		.013			.121
Making Plans For the Future	#1 #2	< .001	.001	Welch / Games-Howell	.004	.007
	#2 #3		.001			.009

Table 7.5: Summary Personal Importance of X ('Section Five')						
	N	Range	Median	Interquartile Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Education	454	4-5	5	0	4.89	0.313
Order and Security	453	2-5	5	1	4.56	0.579
Traditional Lifestyle	454	1-5	4	1	3.90	1.062
Modern Lifestyle	454	1-5	4	2	3.30	1.197
Conservation and Protection of Nature	453	1-5	4	1	4.33	0.675
Politics	453	1-5	3	2	3.33	1.188
Traditional Leadership	453	1-5	4	1	3.91	0.974
Ubuntu	451	1-5	5	0	4.79	0.455
Money	453	1-5	5	0	4.87	0.423
Democratic Rules	451	1-5	4	1	3.97	0.888
Powerful Communal and National Leadership	446	1-5	4	1	4.12	0.851
Respect	452	4-5	5	0	4.91	0.281
Making Your Own Decisions	450	1-5	4	1	4.00	1.071
Faith in God	452	2-5	5	0	4.88	0.355
Ancestral Worship	450	1-5	4	2	3.47	1.188
Freedom of Speech	444	1-5	4	1	4.08	0.808
Equality Between all South Africans	444	1-5	4	1	4.30	0.735
Equality Between Men and Women	447	1-5	4	1	3.98	1.015
Well Working Government Services	449	1-5	4	1	4.30	0.800
Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid	452	1-5	4	1	4.19	0.885
Land Reform	449	1-5	4	1	4.22	0.832
Owning Your Own Piece of Land	452	1-5	5	1	4.52	0.757
Your Personal Past	452	1-5	4	3	3.72	1.186
South Africa's Past	450	1-5	4	3	3.61	1.161
Living For the Day	452	1-5	4	1	4.37	0.680
Making Plans For The Future	452	2-5	5	0	4.85	0.393
Valid N (listwise)	422					
Light Grey: Median = 5, Mean > 4.75, Std. Deviation < 0.4, IQR = 0			Dark Grey: Median < 4, Mean < 4, Std. Deviation > 1, IQR > 1			

Table 7.6: Descriptive Results of Importance of X * Interviewer								
		Valid N	Invalid N	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation	IQR
Education	#1	171	0	4	5	5	4.91	.284	0
	#2	146	1	4	5	5	4.77	.420	0
	#3	137	1	4	5	5	4.99	.120	0
Order and Security	#1	171	0	4	5	5	4.80	.405	0
	#2	145	2	2	5	4	4.21	.576	1
	#3	137	1	2	5	5	4.65	.589	1
Traditional Lifestyle	#1	171	0	1	5	4	3.73	1.041	1
	#2	146	1	2	5	4	3.89	.940	0
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.12	1.172	1
Modern Lifestyle	#1	171	0	1	5	2	2.94	1.041	2
	#2	146	1	1	5	3	3.17	1.123	2
	#3	137	1	1	5	4	3.89	1.241	2
Conservation and Protection of Nature	#1	171	0	2	5	4	4.44	.604	1
	#2	146	1	2	5	4	4.10	.572	0
	#3	136	2	1	5	5	4.43	.795	1
Politics	#1	171	0	1	5	3	3.20	1.079	2
	#2	145	2	1	5	3	3.05	1.114	2
	#3	137	1	1	5	4	3.77	1.272	2
Traditional Leadership	#1	171	0	2	5	4	3.94	.805	0
	#2	145	2	1	5	4	3.83	.995	1
	#3	137	1	1	5	4	3.95	1.133	2
Ubuntu	#1	169	2	1	5	5	4.80	.402	0
	#2	145	2	1	5	5	4.67	.590	1
	#3	137	1	4	5	5	4.91	.294	0
Money	#1	170	1	3	5	5	4.94	.270	0
	#2	146	1	2	5	5	4.86	.455	0
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.79	.521	0
Democratic Rules	#1	169	2	2	5	4	4.10	.776	1
	#2	145	2	1	5	4	3.78	.740	0
	#3	137	1	1	5	4	4.00	1.105	2
Powerful Communal and National Leadership	#1	168	3	2	5	5	4.49	.675	1
	#2	142	5	2	5	4	3.92	.636	0
	#3	136	2	1	5	4	3.88	1.062	2
Respect	#1	170	1	4	5	5	4.91	.293	0
	#2	145	2	4	5	5	4.90	.306	0
	#3	137	1	4	5	5	4.94	.235	0
Making Your Own Decisions	#1	170	1	2	5	4	3.71	1.053	1
	#2	143	4	2	5	4	3.85	1.192	2
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.53	.718	1
Faith in God	#1	169	2	3	5	5	4.87	.355	0
	#2	146	1	2	5	5	4.82	.455	0
	#3	137	1	4	5	5	4.97	.169	0
Ancestral Worship	#1	170	1	1	5	4	3.56	1.249	3
	#2	143	4	1	5	3	3.17	1.030	2
	#3	137	1	1	5	4	3.65	1.216	2

(Table 7.6 continued)

Freedom of Speech	#1	166	5	2	5	4	4.23	.600	1
	#2	143	4	2	5	4	3.94	.679	0
	#3	135	3	1	5	4	4.04	1.085	2
Equality Between all South Africans	#1	166	5	3	5	5	4.51	.548	1
	#2	141	6	2	5	4	4.08	.622	0
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.28	.945	1
Equality Between Men and Women	#1	168	3	1	5	4	3.95	.999	1
	#2	143	4	2	5	4	3.62	.956	1
	#3	136	2	1	5	5	4.40	.945	1
Well Working Government Services	#1	196	2	3	5	5	4.66	.546	1
	#2	143	4	2	5	4	3.98	.611	0
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.20	1.037	1
Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid	#1	170	1	2	5	5	4.36	.790	1
	#2	145	2	2	5	4	4.09	.645	0
	#3	137	1	1	5	4	4.07	1.148	1
Land Reform	#1	169	2	2	5	5	4.34	.831	1
	#2	144	3	2	5	4	4.08	.638	0
	#3	136	2	1	5	4.5	4.24	.983	1
Owning Your Own Piece of Land	#1	170	1	3	5	5	4.91	.312	0
	#2	145	2	2	5	4	4.16	.704	1
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.44	.961	1
Your Personal Past	#1	170	1	2	5	4	3.71	1.155	3
	#2	145	2	1	5	4	3.24	1.107	2
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.26	1.085	1
South Africa's Past	#1	169	2	1	5	3	3.14	1.207	2
	#2	145	2	1	5	4	3.67	.965	1
	#3	136	2	1	5	4	4.12	1.068	1
Living For the Day	#1	169	2	2	5	4	4.27	.622	1
	#2	146	1	2	5	4	4.42	.673	1
	#3	137	1	1	5	5	4.42	.745	1
Making Plans For The Future	#1	169	2	3	5	5	4.89	.346	0
	#2	146	1	3	5	5	4.75	.448	0
	#3	137	1	2	5	5	4.90	.370	0
Light Grey: Median = 5, Mean > 4.75, Std. Deviation < 0.4, IQR = 0					**Dark Grey:** Median < 4, Mean < 4, Std. Deviation > 1, IQR > 1				

Table 7.8: Rotated Factor Matrix[ab]					
	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Personal Importance of Education	0.026	0.080	0.037	0.060	0.391
~~Personal Importance of Order and Security~~ [c]	0.066	0.240	0.026	0.031	0.256
Personal Importance of Traditional Lifestyle	0.004	-0.039	0.631	0.026	0.055
Personal Importance of Modern Lifestyle	-0.131	0.133	-0.036	0.484	0.237
~~Personal Importance of Conservation and Protection of Nature~~ [c]	0.084	0.238	0.229	0.135	0.201
~~Personal Importance of Politics~~ [c]	-0.025	0.269	0.259	0.185	0.076
Personal Importance of Traditional Leadership	-0.032	0.146	0.729	-0.058	0.140
Personal Importance of Ubuntu	0.017	0.000	0.066	0.105	0.382
Personal Importance of Money	0.105	0.225	-0.015	-0.167	0.329
Personal Importance of Democratic Rules	0.047	0.604	0.095	0.091	0.066
Personal Importance of Powerful Communal and National Leadership	0.179	0.676	0.158	-0.113	0.097
Personal Importance of Respect	0.071	-0.022	0.055	0.058	0.468
Personal Importance of Making Your Own Decisions	-0.007	0.082	-0.071	0.437	0.179
Personal Importance of Faith in God	0.023	-0.015	-0.029	0.058	0.378
Personal Importance of Ancestral Worship	0.203	0.073	0.409	0.030	-0.149
Personal Importance of Freedom of Speech	0.211	0.501	-0.029	0.173	-0.044
Personal Importance of Equality Between all South Africans	0.379	0.432	-0.067	0.182	0.033
Personal Importance of Equality Between Men and Women	0.228	0.271	-0.104	0.471	-0.045
Personal Importance of Well Working Government Services	0.510	0.349	0.067	-0.009	0.044
Personal Importance of Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid	0.552	0.140	0.033	0.067	0.022
Personal Importance of Land Reform	0.650	0.027	0.062	0.108	0.161
Personal Importance of Owning Your Own Piece of Land	0.576	0.116	0.090	-0.132	0.159
Personal Importance of Your Personal Past	0.144	0.037	0.241	0.342	0.061
Personal Importance of South Africa's Past	0.077	-0.080	0.206	0.580	0.067
~~Personal Importance of Living For the Day~~ [c]	0.236	0.035	-0.008	0.167	0.230
Personal Importance of Making Plans For The Future	0.302	0.092	0.003	0.138	0.412

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

b. Highest absolute values for each variable marked in grey

c. Not possible to identify predominant factor due to marginal difference (range .006-.016) between the two highest values.

7.6 Final Questionnaire Design

Randomised Survey No.1 English

Dissertation Project by Jonathan Kempen (M.A.)

Freie Universität Berlin (Germany) & University of Pretoria

Freie Universität Berlin

Interviewer initials:

Date and time of interview:

1A: Main Home Language		1B: Gender	
1C: Area of Residence		1D: Place of Family Origin	
1E: Time of Arrival at current area of residence		1F: Place of Birth	
1G: Age / year of birth		1H: Level of Education	
1I: Occupation		1J: Disability (if yes, please specify)	
1K: Membership in Political Party		1L: Number of Dependants	

	Please indicate the facilities that your current accommodation provides.			
2A	Public access electricity (Eskom)	Private access electricity (Solar or generator)	No access to electricity	
2B	Running water (pipe)	Water delivery (truck)	No personal access to water	
2C	Rubbish collection (dust bin)	Public rubbish disposal site (dump)	No regulated access to rubbish disposal	
2D	Flushing toilet	Pit toilet	No private access to sanitary facility	
2E	Brick walls	Corrugated iron walls	Traditional walls	Other

3A	Under what status have you acquired the right to occupy the piece of land you live on?	
Main occupant	Family member of main occupant	Tenant (paying rent to main occupant)
Guest	Other (please specify)	

3B	How has the land you live on been allocated?
Title deed (where from?)	
Permission to Occupy (where from?)	
Renting (where from?)	
Unregulated Occupation (how?)	
Unknown	
Other (please specify)	

4	Please indicate which of the following institutions you and the people in your household have made use of in the past 12 months.	
Health clinic / hospital	Traditional Healer	Social Worker
Public School	Initiation School	University/College
Police	Traditional Authority	Church
Ward Councillor	Community Development Worker	Crèche / Day-care
Lawyer / Attorney	SASSA	Financial Institution/Bank/ATM

5	In the following, please indicate to what degree the listed items are of importance to you **personally**.				
5A	Education				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5B	Order and Security				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5C	Traditional Lifestyle				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5D	Modern Lifestyle				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5E	Conservation and Protection of Nature				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5F	Politics				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5G	Traditional Leadership				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5H	Ubuntu				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5I	Money				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5J	Democratic Rules				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5K	Powerful Communal and National Leadership				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5L	Respect				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5M	Making your own Decisions				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5N	Faith in God				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5O	Ancestral Worship				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5P	Freedom of Speech				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5Q	Equality Between all South Africans				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5R	Equality Between Men and Women				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5S	Well Working Government Services				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5T	Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5U	Land Reform				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5V	Owning your own Piece of Land				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important

5W	Your Personal Past				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5X	South Africa's Past				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5Y	Living for the Day				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important
5Z	Making plans for the future				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Undecided	Important	Very important

End of questionnaire
Please note:
All information gathered in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially and anonymous.
The interviewers have been instructed to neither record names, nor exact places of residence.
The participation in this questionnaire to persons under the age of 18 is not permitted.
For further enquiries regarding the academic purpose of this questionnaire please contact
076 641 5108 or jonathan.kempen@fu-berlin.de.
Thank you for your participation!

Interviewer notes:

How many non-involved people were present during the interview?

Were there any interruptions during the interview?

Did the interview partner need help in answering the questions? Which ones?

Did the interview partner make an impression of drunkenness or intoxication to you?

Did the interview partner receive a questionnaire copy for reading?

Did the interview partner talk about non-related issues during the interview? Which ones?

Any further comments?

Second *Entr'acte*: Bringing Theory and Data Together

The First *Entr'acte* of this thesis followed the introduction to theory and context (Chapters 3 and 4) and it presented some of the historical background needed to understand the empirical data presented thereafter (Chapters 5 to 7). It was designed to bridge the gap between theory and the empirical. This Second *Entr'acte* follows a similar motive. In this case it functions as a bridge between the presentation of empirical data and the analytical process. It presents the results of a group discussion setting and relates these results to the theories laid out in Chapter 3. However, in order to make these theories of value to the overall analytical approach of the following chapters it is then necessary to reinvoke Burawoy's line of reasoning in the Extended Case Method:

> Instead of inferring generality directly from data, we can move from one generality to another, to more inclusive generality. We begin with our favorite theory but seek not confirmations but refutations that inspire us to deepen that theory. Instead of discovering grounded theory we elaborate existing theory. […] we seek reconstructions that leave core postulates intact, that do as well as the preexisting theory upon which they are built, and that absorb anomalies with parsimony, offering novel angles of vision. Finally, reconstructions should lead to surprising predictions, some of which are corroborated. These are heavy demands that are rarely realized but ones that should guide progressive reconstruction of theory. (Burawoy 1998: 16)

This Second *Entr'acte* will therefore illustrate and test Bourdieu's theory of practice through an analysis of the three Litho land claim meetings described in Chapter 6.3. Three methodological brackets derived from Giddens's structuration theory will be examined through the relationship between Ndebele leaders and the South African state, individual argumentative strategies, and the significance of time and space in the field setting. Jessop's SRA will be put to the test by identifying instances of strategic conduct in circumstances of structured coherence and patterned incoherence: the former will be exemplified by the persistence of Manala leadership since the late 1980s, while the latter will be presented with the argumentative avenues of Sebatshelwa Matthews and his nephew Iggy Litho as a case in point. By applying these three theories to the data and conducting a first set of analyses, this chapter not only functions as a stylistic bridge that reminds the reader of the ontological framework, but it initiates the process described by Burawoy above by testing our favourite theories.

2E.1 Group Discussions: Set Up and Results

From the very beginning of my time in the field, I identified a certain pattern in most interview conversations. My requests for the interlocutor to reveal something about themselves, their personal or their family's history were usually answered only very briefly: "*My/our parents came from… and then we had to leave, and then we came here to… Now we just live here with our children*."[74] Hoping to get more information than that from the interlocutors I would often follow up by asking them to describe the life in their village, the changes they had witnessed throughout the years, or South Africa's most urgent challenges. These kinds of questions seemed to be much more in line with what the interlocutors were willing to share their opinion on. The exchange would therefore sooner or later revolve around the things that were going wrong in their village, in South Africa as a whole and the groups of people or institutions that were to blame for them. These problems included violence, drug abuse, unemployment, loss of cultural identity, corruption, and many more. By and large most interlocutors seemed to locate both the origin of these problems and the capacity to solve them outside of their own field of influence. Rather than saying "*I/We/the community need(s) to do X, Y and Z to solve this problem*" they would for example explain "*The government/the chief/the police should do a better job to solve this issue*." To my interlocutors the power to make a significant change was located within institutions and offices that were out of their reach. I therefore interpreted their self-perception to be informed by structures and by very little awareness of their own personal agency. As an interest into the interrelation of structure and agency guided my research approach, I decided that it was necessary to investigate further in a more systematic manner.

Throughout the first two weeks of February 2018, after the large survey had been concluded (see Chapter 7), Margaret, Patrick and I invited several people to join us at a church building in Libangeni. The building was somewhat beyond the beaten bath behind the stadium and the newly built water supply tank, but it was located neatly between Vaalbank A and Allemansdrift B and was thus equally reachable to those residents that had been invited. These gatherings were of course not intended to be of a religious nature; they were discussion groups that aimed to establish where the inhabitants of Libangeni located the agency to deal with problems in society. For each session, I had asked Patrick and Margaret to recruit people that fulfilled certain demographic factors with regards to age, gender and home language. Through the survey process I had already come to realize that it would be very difficult to gather an evenly distributed sample with regards to all significant demographic factors. Thus I resorted to merely those three factors that would in my opinion have the greatest influence on the course of a discussion: (1) home language, because the language spoken in a discussion would have the power to subdue or unnecessarily provoke minority opinions; (2) age, because opinions are formed

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[74] Generic paraphrasing, not an original quote

through life events and the systems that they take place in; (3) gender, because many rural South African societies (such as the one in former KwaNdebele) widely exhibit signs of male-dominated hierarchies, which would disadvantage female contributions in a discussion that involved men. Altogether we invited eighteen groups of up to seven participants according to the sampling parameters laid out in Figure 2E.1. Even though seven people had been recruited for each discussion group, multiple no-shows reduced the average number of participants to 4.16 per discussion group.

Figure 2E.1 Discussion group sampling: three language groups, three age groups, two gender groups

For each session one group of male and one group of female participants had been invited. Upon arrival the participants received a cooled soft drink and were divided according to gender: the men gathered in the church office in the northern half of the plot together with Patrick; the women gathered in the main building to the south together with Margaret. These groups of up to seven people were then asked to discuss four topics (see Figure E2.2) provided by Patrick and Margaret as discussion leaders. Each topic was based upon our previous interview and survey based research and the briefings were printed out in three languages (IsiNdebele, SeSotho, English). The groups were given up to fifteen minutes per topic to discuss it and define: Who is to blame? Who can fix it? How can it be fixed? The answers were written down by Margaret and Patrick. The groups were free to name multiple (individual/group) agents or institutions per question. Some also elaborated in their written statements as to why they had chosen a particular group as the one to be blamed or to be the one to fix the problem. Once the discussions were over, I re-joined the groups and thanked the participants for their time compensating each of them with R20 for the hour they had invested.

Female groups took 35 minutes on average to discuss all given topics, male groups took 42 minutes. While the main aim of the described sampling parameters was to ensure a controlled discussion environment, I will not invest too much attention into the analysis of the responses given by the participants according to their age, home language, or gender. The groups were too small and too few to appropriately project the given answers upon entire demographic factors of Libangeni society. At this point, merely the responses to the given problems – not the persons that provided them – and the location of agency within the discourse that develops from them are of interest. A brief summary of the discussion results follows. Please refer to Figure 2E.2 for the topic briefings given in the discussion rounds.

Who is to blame?	Who can fix it?	How can it be fixed?	Who is to blame?	Who can fix it?	How can it be fixed?
Topic 1: In recent interviews we found that many young people in Vaalbank and Allemansdrift B are not satisfied with the performance of their traditional leaders. Also, they are beginning to lose interest in traditional lifestyle.			**Topic 2**: In 1994 (24 years ago) the new government of South Africa designed the Restitution of Land Rights Act, which promised to return land to those that had been disowned during Apartheid and before. The restitution process was supposed to be over by 2005, but the deadline was extended to 2011. In 2014 the application for restitution was reopened until June 2019. It takes a lot of time to return the land it seems.		
Topic 3: A research group has found out that only one quarter (25 percent) of the people in Vaalbank own the land that they live on (title deed). In Allemansdrift B only 2 percent own a title deed. Most people hold only a PTO, which does not provide full property rights to the land that they live on.			**Topic 4**: In a survey we found out that many people in Vaalbank and Allemansdrift B regard democratic rules and politics as unimportant. However, South African law depends on people to practice Democracy and political freedom.		
Who is to blame?	Who can fix it?	How can it be fixed?	Who is to blame?	Who can fix it?	How can it be fixed?

(Center: Fifteen minutes each)

Figure 2E.2 Discussion Group Questions and Procedure

Topic 1: Dissatisfaction with Traditional Leaders

The crosstabulation in Table 2E.1 compares the main agents being named by the discussion groups in Topic 1 for questions 'Who is to blame?' and 'Who can fix it?'. As the groups were allowed to name multiple agents, the table may appear confusing at first glance. Allow me to explain below.

Table 2E.1: Topic 1, Main agents named for Questions One and Two, multiple answers possible

		Traditional Leadership Count	Local Council Count	Parents Count	Government Count	Community Count	Youth Count	God Count	**Total Count**
Topic 1: Who is to blame?	Traditional Leadership	7	3	2	2	5	1		**11**
	Local Council	1	2			2			**3**
	Politics	1						1	**2**
	Parents	2		2	1				**3**
	Democracy	1			1	1			**2**
	Government	2			3	2			**3**
	Community	1				1			**1**
	Elders				1	1			**1**
	Youth						1		**1**
	Total	**10**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**6**	**2**	**1**	**18**

(Column header spanning: Topic 1: Who can fix it?)

There were 18 groups in total (bottom right cell), a majority of which (11, top right cell) identified Traditional Leadership in its many variations (i.e. Chiefs, Headmen, the institution itself) as the origin, but also the solution (10, bottom left cell) to this specific problem. The top left cell lists the number of groups (7) that saw Traditional Leadership simultaneously as cause and solution to the problem. On the one hand this means that, out of the eleven groups that had identified Chiefs and Headmen as the ones to be blamed, four groups did not see them as part of the solution. On the other hand, three

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groups that had not seen Traditional Leadership as the problem's origin, now identified it as the institution that could fix it. While only one group identified the community as the one to be blamed, six groups saw it as part of the solution, including the one group that had blamed the problem on the community. Five groups added explanations with their response to Question One: three groups saw a lack of communication and poor information from the Traditional Leadership, the Local Council and the elders as the reason for the youth's disinterest for 'tradition'. One group blamed the government's lack of respect towards Traditional Leaders, while another blamed parents for not teaching their children about 'traditional' values.

The suggestions on how to deal with young people's disinterest and disapproval of 'traditional' matters that were provided by the discussion groups in response to Questions Two and Three roughly contained three main elements: a common effort by two or more institutions or social entities (e.g. Traditional

Figure 2E.3 Topic 1: Code Cloud of Responses to Question Three

Leadership and the community), a kind of public event (e.g. a meeting, a commemoration or a public workshop), and the dissemination of cultural knowledge (e.g. through explicit teaching or improved personal conduct). Other less popular suggestions involved empowerment of Traditional Leaders, their improved ability to lead the community, the instillation of respect towards Traditional Leadership as an institution, and the resolution of power sharing conflicts between state government and Traditional Authorities. Interestingly, most groups focused on the cultural aspect of this topic. Merely one group's contribution identified the source of dissatisfaction as a political one while at the same time, as shown in Table 2E.1 and Figure 2E.3, democracy was seen as a source of the problem and the government and the local council were seen as a part of the solution.

Topic 2: Slow Land Restitution

		Traditional Leadership Count	Govern -ment Count	Administrators / Officials Count	Politicians Count	ANC Count	Local Council Count	Elders Count	Disowned Communities Count	Total Count
	Table 2E.2: Topic 2, Main Agents named for Questions One and Two, multiple answers possible									
	Topic 2: Who can fix it?									
Topic 2: Who is to blame?	Traditional Leadership	5	1	1			1	1		**5**
	Government	3	8	1					1	**12**
	Administrators / Officials	3	1	1	1		1			**4**
	Politicians	1	1		1					**2**
	Apartheid		1							**1**
	ANC					1				**1**
	Local Council	1		1			1			**1**
	Total	**7**	**9**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**18**

With regards to the slow moving land restitution process twelve of the eighteen discussion groups identified the government as being the one to be blamed, but only nine of them also saw the capacity for the government to fix the matter. Some groups clearly distinguished between elected representatives (i.e. Council Members, Politicians) on one side and governmental administrators or civil servants who are not elected, such as the Land Claim Commissioner, on the other. Two groups elaborated their choice. The first explained that regular changes of political offices and the repeated exchange of officials before processes were finalized were to blame. The other group explained that the Traditional Authorities should be the ones to be blamed as they used to control the land during Apartheid. Five groups found that Traditional Authorities were the ones to blame for the slow land restitution

Figure 2E.4 Topic 2: Code Cloud of Responses to Question Three

process, but seven believed that they could be the ones to fix it. In these cases the groups suggested that Traditional Leaders should function as negotiators or knowledgeable historical and social mediators between the community and the government. In one case they were regarded as the

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rightful owners of the land. Other, less popular suggestions, involved a more active community that put pressure on government and its administrators (3), government putting more pressure on its own officials (4), and a restructuration of the Land Claim Commissioner's work to speed up processes (3). One group explained that no new claims should be allowed and another group regarded land restitution as a process that cannot be improved as it is a very complicated matter.

Topic 3: Slow Tenure Upgrading

		Topic 3: Who can fix it?						
		Municipality Count	Traditional Leadership Count	Community Count	Local Council Count	Society Count	Government Count	**Total Count**
Topic 3: Who is to blame?	Municipality	11	4	1	2	1	1	**15**
	Traditional Leadership	3	5			1	2	**7**
	Government					1		**1**
	Total	**11**	**7**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**18**

Table 2E.3: Topic 3, Main Agents named for Questions One and Two, multiple answers possible

Fifteen out of eighteen groups identified the municipality and its superintendent's office as the ones to blame for the low number of title deeds in Vaalbank and Allemansdrift B. Seven groups also blamed the local Traditional Leadership, one of them explaining "*for not providing information when allocating land to the people*". Out of those that had blamed the municipality, only eleven groups saw it as part of the solution. More specifically, some groups mentioned institutions such

Image 2E.5 Topic 3: Code Cloud of Responses to Question Three
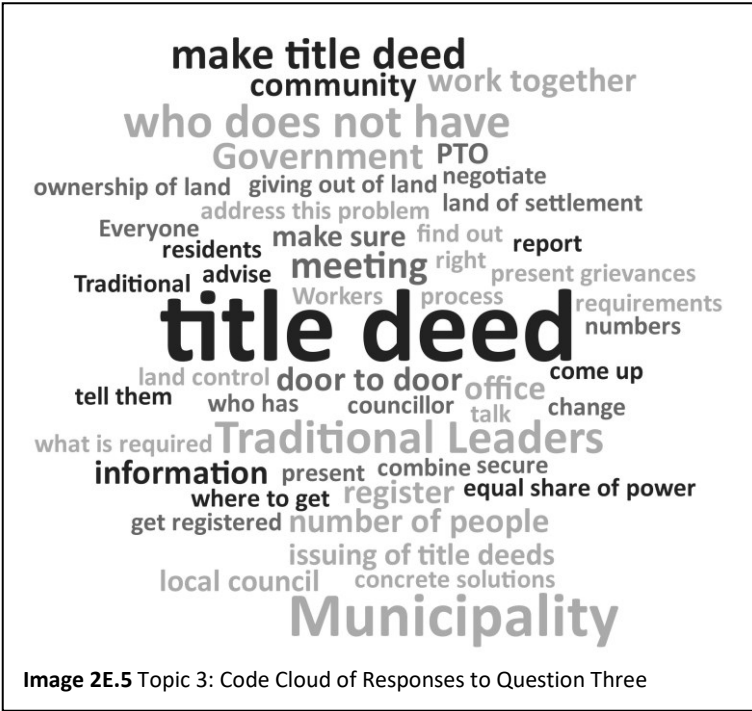
as the Local Council, the government, the community or the Traditional Leaders that could put pressure on the municipal administration to fix the problem. The suggestions on how to fix the problem were a combination of these elements:

- a proactive process by the municipality whereby the municipality establishes which plot owners do not have a title deed through door-to-door visits or TA records and then actively offers them a title deed in exchange for their PTO (4)

- better information of the public (4)
- a power sharing process between TAs and the municipality (4)
- a proactive community that puts pressure upon municipality officials (3)
- the termination of PTOs in exchange for title deeds from the Traditional Authority (2)
- a centralized coordination of tenure upgrading though the municipality and the Traditional Authority (9).

Topic 4: Dissatisfaction with Democracy

Table 2E.4: Topic 4, Main Agents named for Questions One and Two, multiple answers possible									
		Topic 4: Who can fix it?							
		Government	Politicians	Local Council	Community	The People / Society	Mayor	New President	Members of Parliament	**Total**
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	**Count**
Topic 4: Who is to blame?	Government	4			2	1				**6**
	Politicians		1							**1**
	ANC	1			1	1				**3**
	Jacob Zuma	1		1						**2**
	Local Council			2	1			1		**4**
	Members of Parliament			1			1		1	**2**
	Ministers							1		**1**
	Mayors							1		**1**
	Democracy	1						1		**1**
	Total	**6**	**1**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**18**

For the last topic, the discussion groups named a wide range of political institutions regarding who or what was to blame for the low appreciation of politics and democratic rules. Government and some of its entities, single parties or persons or democracy itself were blamed. Two groups explicitly specified their answer by mentioning corruption in government. Another group explained that governmental neglect of the rural areas was the

Figure 2E.6 Topic 4: Code Cloud of Responses to Question Three

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main reason and another group explained that democracy instilled disrespect among young people. While some groups remained within the spectrum of political institutions when it came to fixing the problem, six groups mentioned the community or society as a whole as the crucial agent that could drive change for the better. With regards to how that change could be brought about, a wide range of strategies and tactics was presented by the groups, which all pointed to one central demand: stop corruption. For government and its actors to increase democratic ambitions in the population they suggested that it should follow the rules (6), commit to serve (2), fulfil given promises (1), explain democracy to the public (1), improve service delivery (4) and improve communication between the lower and upper branches of government (3). The options of action that were listed by the discussion groups for democracy's ideal rulers, the people, included voting for a different party (3), stricter disciplining of youth (1) and public protesting (1).

2E.2 Group Discussions: Making Sense of the Results

Where do these results portray the workings of structure and agency? My initial suspicion that when dealing with problems in society many people in Libangeni would locate the agency to make a change for the better outside of their own field of influence was only partially confirmed. There was admittedly an overall trend by the discussion groups to locate agential potential away from themselves in institutions such as government and Traditional Leadership. However, while it seemed self-evident to most groups what these institutions would have to do to solve the presented problem, some groups also ascribed agency to themselves and those that were part of their own life. They located the power to make influential decisions in their midst. They found agents for change within families, society, the community, or as democratic citizens. For all four topics there were certain trends towards a majority of opinions as to who was to blame, who could fix it and how it should be done. For example, it was clear to the majority that corrupt politicians in their various positions were to blame for democracy's decline in popularity and that stopping corruption was the best way to reverse that trend. Fifteen groups located the power to make that change amongst the political institutions themselves. However, six groups also identified popular action in the shape of voting, protesting and education as a source of change; in this case the groups consisted of young (18-30) and middle-aged (30-60) women and men. On the one side, the very fact that different (minority) opinions were expressed indicates that agency was at work here. On the other side, the fact that these minority opinions could be characterized by a certain demographic feature, i.e. being below the age of 60, shows that structure may also have had an influence.

Another indicator for a wide acceptance of structural constraints in these group discussions is the participants' acceptance of the discussion design itself and of the information that they had been provided in it. None of the groups rejected the discussion procedure. None of the groups questioned the information that we had given them in the briefing. None of the groups explicitly rejected the notion that the information given to them constituted a problem to society. *None* of them answered the question "Who is to blame?" with "nobody". *None* of the groups responded to the questions "Who can fix it?" and "How can it be fixed?" that there was nothing to be fixed. *None* of the groups, for instance, stated in Topic 1 something similar to: *it is good that young people lose interest in 'traditional' lifestyle and that they are unhappy with their Traditional Leaders, because it will allow them to live a more 'modern' life.* When discussing Topic 3 none of the groups laid out the advantages of PTOs and the risks of title deed based land allocation. The given discussion framework gave the participants the option to do so, even though it would have potentially made the one-hour discussion more exhausting to them personally. All groups stayed within explicit and implicit boundaries that had been set by the researcher (me), the discussion leaders (Margaret and Patrick) or by their peers.

Certain technical terms and wordings that had been used in the topic briefings, which are rather unusual in emic discourse, were repeated in the group discussion's written responses. While it could well be that Margaret and Patrick had adopted the terminology that I had frequently used in their presence, when they documented the discussion results, it strikes me that these terms were not abbreviated to locally more popular terms. Rather than referring to 'Traditional Leadership', 'Land Claims Commissioner' and 'democratic rules' I had expected terms such as 'Chiefs', 'the land claims' and 'democracy'. Regardless of whether this wording was chosen by the discussion leaders or the participants themselves, it shows that a tactical adjustment of the terminology to the dominant discourse of the research setting was made. This adjustment should therefore be considered as a potential instance of structuration in the Giddensian sense or as 'feel for the game' in Bourdieu's terminology.

2E.3 Does the Data Match the Theory?

The method described above was by and large dictated by the circumstances of the field. It was not designed to deductively prove or disprove any particular theory. It merely tested the observation-based suspicion that Libangeni residents tend to locate the power to makes changes for the better outside of their own range of agency and thus largely remain inactive. I regard the data that this method produced as an impression of real-life practice or at least as some obscured mirror image thereof. The data from these discussion groups clearly indicate that structure and agency are both simultaneously at play. So if the outcome of this method is a representation of practice as a product of both structural and agential processes, how well can it be accommodated in the three ontologies by Bourdieu, Giddens and Jessop that have been laid out in Chapter 3? Furthermore, how well can these theories accommodate the data that was presented in the previous three chapters?

2E.3.1 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and the Data

With regards to Bourdieu's theory of practice, which he, as we recall, summarised in the equation "[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice" (Bourdieu 2010 [1984]: 95), the discussion group method only provides very limited insight into its workings. The discussion groups' responses and the process that led to them can easily be documented as practice. The discussion group set-up and the social mechanisms that govern the exchange of opinion are also widely known and controlled for and thus represent the *field* with its rules of the game (*doxa*) in Bourdieu's equation. However, it will be difficult to learn more about *habitus* and *capital* in this specific design. While it should be assumed that every individual that participated in the discussions had their own habitus and capital, there is no way to tell how they may be characterized and how they may have influenced the outcome of the discussions. I personally was not in the two rooms for the main discussions, there were no recording devices in the rooms other than pen and paper for the discussion leaders Patrick and Margaret. I did not interview the participants individually and did not have the time to get to know them, their habitus and their capital. Surely, one may try to deduct certain tendencies according to the core demographics that were used to sample the groups, if we were to assume that a certain group habitus was developed in the short amount of time. However, this approach would not only disregard the participants' individual agency, it would also make it impossible to differentiate the effects of *habitus* from those that are mainly informed by *capital*. With the data available it is therefore impossible to make any kind of statement on the habituses and capitals that interacted to create practice in the group discussions.

In the case of other previously presented empirical data, Bourdieu's practice theory may be more helpful. Picking the proverbial cherries from the cornucopia of analytical possibilities that Bourdieu's ontology provides, I have chosen to have a closer look at the meetings that were described in Chapter

6.3. The two community meetings in Rapotokwane under Section 10(4) of the Restitution of Land Rights Act (Act 22 of 1994) in September and November 2017 (see Chapter 6.3.3) I will henceforth refer to as 'first meeting' and 'second meeting' respectively. The stakeholder meeting in Rust de Winter in February 2018 after the two Litho land claims (case numbers P0050 & Z0231) had been consolidated (see Chapter 6.3.4) will be referred to as the 'third meeting'. These three particular meetings varied with regards to the numbers of people present, the venue, and the social context within which they were held. While the first meeting involved circa 350 people, many of whom had to attend the proceedings from a tent outside the Rapotokwane Community Hall, the second meeting in Rapotokwane was attended by significantly less people (circa 200), and the third meeting involved merely two and a half dozen stakeholders, lawyers and government officials at the government offices in Rust de Winter. The first meeting was held in an environment of open confrontation between the representatives of the two competing claims. The second meeting saw these parties expressing a wish for reconciliation and cooperation. The third meeting reignited distrust between the claimant groups and government officials, which seemed to have smouldered under the surface all along.

In my view, Bourdieu's conceptualisations of *field* and *habitus* can be very well identified and analysed throughout these events. Schwartzman's understanding of meetings and Bourdieu's theory of practice share some common approaches. For example, "meetings are complex, collaborative productions that require participants to employ a great deal of taken-for-granted cultural knowledge to produce and sustain this event for themselves" (Schwartzman 1989: 77). This mirrors the relationship between Bourdieu's *habitus* and *field,* which he describes as "a sort of ontological complicity, a subconscious and pre-reflexive fit", which "manifests itself in what we call sense of the game or 'feel' for the game" (Bourdieu 1990 [1987]: 108). Further, "by agreeing to participate in a meeting one accepts the social structure and cultural values that the meeting produces and reproduces" (Schwartzman 1989: 281), similarly to what Bourdieu has described as the rules of the field, or *doxa*: "the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e. as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned" (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 166). To acknowledge meetings as distinct fields within which actors operate, restricted by playing rules and guided by their habituses' feel for the game, facilitates the illustration of Bourdieu's ontology in three particular ways. First, a "field is, by definition, 'a field of struggles' in which agents' strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field" (Jenkins 2007 [1992]: 85). To identify the significant actors of a field, and in particular the struggles between them, will be easier within a meeting, where struggles are more overtly delivered and the sought after capital is more explicitly defined than in everyday village life or in the postal exchange between lawyers, claimants and government institutions. Secondly, as meetings themselves are restricted in time, space and with regards to the eligible

attendants, the potential pitfall of having a field whose boundaries are somewhat "imprecise and shifting, determinable only by empirical research" (Jenkins 2007 [1992]: 85) is contained. Third and finally, the relationship between strategy and field may be much easier observed and portrayed when the field as such is clearly defined within the framework of a meeting and the strategic ambitions of the actors within it are also more or less apparent from their contributions to that meeting

Bourdieu recommended three steps for applying his concept of *field*: (1) Understand the role of power within the field, (2) delineate the positions and connections, i.e. the 'objective structures', within the field, and (3): "the habitus(es) of the agents within the field must be analysed, along with the trajectories or strategies which are produced in the interaction between habitus and the constraints and opportunities which are determined by the structure of the field" (Jenkins 2007 [1992]: 86; see also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 104-7; Grenfell 2014 [2008]-a: 221f). With regards to the first and second Bourdieusian steps of analysis, enough information has been provided in Chapter 6 to understand how the land claim meetings, the land in Rust de Winter and the leadership struggles within the Litho Ndzundza are connected. To spell out the situation *before the first meeting* very briefly: a successful land claim of the Rust de Winter region (circa 18 farms) under the leadership of claim Z0231's spokespeople would not only have increased the influence and wealth of the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Authority in the entire region, but it actually would have strengthened the overall leadership position of the descendants of Jas-David's *iquadi* wife NaZokwe, including current Chief Vuma and the descendants of Petrus Mahlangu, in particular Alfred Mahlangu and Nathaniel Mahlangu (see Figure 6.1 for details). A success for claim P0050 would in return have substantially improved the position of the descendants of Jas-David's '*substitute indlunkulu*'[75] wife Leah, including most prominently late Sebatshelwa Matthews's nephew Iggy Litho. P0050's claim is much more extensive (76 farms were investigated on P0050's behalf by 2018) and its representatives insisted that their claim was much better researched and lobbied for. Thus any farm that would be restituted in addition to those claimed by Z0231 or any farm that was only restituted because of P0050's 'superior' argumentation, would be a boost to Iggy Litho's leadership ambitions. These constellations derive from a long history of leadership disputes and thus all three meetings can only be regarded as subfields of several overarching fields of power.

While it can surely be argued that the role of power and the overall constellation of 'objective structures' between the meetings' main actors did actually constitute a constant factor between September 2017 and February 2018, three crucial developments *around the first and second meeting* must be considered nonetheless. The unexpected passing of Hendrik Mahlangu in August 2017 put his brother Alfred into the spotlight of Z0231's affairs, who subsequently lobbied for cooperation of the

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[75] Status contested

two claims with success. The loss of reputation and influence by Chief Vuma through allegations of corruption and nepotism, particularly with regards to the *SepFluor* mine incident (see Chapter 6.2), made a change of local power relations more likely, irrespective of the land claim outcomes. And finally, Iggy Litho's realization that his claim to the Litho Ndzundza chieftainship and his 'blood relation' to late Chief Hosia Mahlangu would not stand in court, made him open up to the idea of compromise and cooperation. *After the second meeting* two further developments changed the role of power and the 'objective structures' that would influence the third meeting. Chief Vuma made the tactical move to offer Iggy Litho a Headman's position on the Litho Ndzundza Traditional Council, thus making him financially and politically dependent upon the incumbent. Iggy Litho, who up to then had asserted his agenda through stubbornness and intimidation of opponents, was chosen as Chairman of the two claims' joint committee; he was now going to be judged according to his ability to lead the unified land claims and to negotiate with the RLCC representatives.

To understand the role of the field of power and the basic structure in these three meetings, as Bourdieu recommends to do, it does however not suffice to look at the two land claims and the leadership struggles behind the scenes. A third and very significant party in the three meetings was the RLCC and its main representative Mr Mkhacani wa Mkhacani. National and provincial government have played an important role throughout the Litho claims' decade-long history since the early 1990s. Throughout the years the Litho Ndzundza have dealt with a multitude of judicial and governmental institutions with regards to the land in question: the KwaNdebele Government, the ACLA/COLA, the DLA/DRDLR, the CRLR, the North Gauteng High Court, the Land Claims Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal, the Premiers of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng, and a multitude of government ministers. The RLCC here thus only represents the end of a line of multiple institutions that have influenced the trajectory of the Litho claim through their mandates. Ultimately, the power to reject or validify claims and to initiate restitution procedures lies with the RLCC, represented by Mr Mkhacani and his colleagues, in this case. Especially with regards to the third meeting this power hierarchy became obvious. However, the RLCC was also under a lot of pressure to solve the Litho land claim since the July 2016 Constitutional Court judgement that all land claims lodged before the original 31 December 1998 deadline had to be settled before any new claims could be attended to. Thus, the RLCC representatives also depended upon the cooperation and willingness for compromise between the two land claims.

Moving on to the Bourdieusian third – and in my view most crucial – step of identifying field structures, habituses, and strategies, the following four dimensions are to be investigated on an exemplary basis: pre-meeting moods, status display, rhetorical and argumentative tactics.

On the morning of the first meeting, excitement and great expectations dominated the mood around Rapotokwane Community Hall. The RLCC team set up a tent and a speaker system in addition to flags and displays with their logo as if to announce the arrival of a famous circus or an annual fair. Claimants excitingly greeted those relatives, allies and also adversaries they had not seen for several months or those they actually met for the first time. Claimants who arrived from Hammanskraal or the suburbs of Pretoria and Johannesburg exited their cars with a smile that usually marks the faces of those who return to the place of their youth after a long time of absence. Some few, however, could not hide their scepticism about the results that might be achieved today and they would be confirmed in that regard later in the day. The second meeting saw a much less anticipating environment: the RLCC representatives kept their flags and displays at the offices, the tent was missing and the sound system was only functional in the latter half of the event; the community hall was still littered with polystyrene containers from the previous weekend's event, and no-one had arranged for additional chairs to be transported from the Traditional Council offices. The participants were not shy to reveal their scepticism even though a unification of the two claims was imminent. Too many things could still go wrong and some attendants distrusted the 5+5 committee solution, which had been presented at a pre-meeting on the previous weekend. To me, it seemed that open confrontation was much more anticipated and actually appreciated as a social situation by the majority of participants, rather than one of compromise and conditional cooperation. This was also expressed in Iggy Litho's anticipation of "*fishy*" tactics by the RLCC representatives on the morning of the third meeting. It seemed as if he actually wished for a clearly defined and singled out opponent after having had to join forces with Z0231's representatives, whom he had fought for several years. The habituses and structures within the hostile triangle of P0050, Z0231 and government agencies had incorporated and learnt to appreciate the conflict for power and land. The rules of the game – developed throughout the more than twenty years of open and covert confrontation, litigation and negotiation – were based on antagonistic core assumptions and the players of the game and their habituses struggled to perform their game routine when these premises were changed. The field had changed, the habituses therein seemed to resist that change. Bourdieu refers to a clash between a field's *doxa* and an individual's or a group habitus as *hysteresis* (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 83; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 130). It is likely to occur, when a social field changes quicker than the habituses within it, because *habitus* will attempt to maintain a certain routine of practice.

While the overall mood changed in the course of these meetings, other factors remained persistent. For example the way in which status was displayed through seating position, clothing, arrival and departure rituals. Younger male actors such as Chief Vuma or Iggy Litho dressed themselves in fashion brands associated to the wealth that 'modern' South Africa provided. Older participants such as Jonoti Mnguni and his female counterparts dressed in fine but simple church attire or traditional Ndebele

blankets, choosing a message of 'traditional' grounding to convey through their attire. Iggy Litho seemed to locate a certain prestige or authority in being associated to me, wherefore he was eager to arrive at meetings together with me. He was irritated when I would not sit with his group but rather at the back of the hall to maintain a better overview, to have a safe zone for *in loco* translations and to express impartiality. I doubt that his reaction was an honest expression of personal affection as he asked me repeatedly to introduce myself as a consultant or legal adviser before meetings that we attended together. Rather, I assume that his intention was to utilize my own European Whiteness and my diligence in note taking to create an impression of sophistication and professionalism towards potential adversaries. These characteristics can surely be regarded as *capital* in the Bourdieusian sense. Attire, associates and reputation served the meeting participants as a way to distinguish themselves from the others, to assure their allies of their own value to the cause, and to bare teeth to their opponents.

When speech and communication are understood "as both constituting and constituted activity in these settings" (Schwartzman 1989: 35), rhetorical and argumentative tactics do not only have the potential to reveal "the power, authority and reputation of their author(s)" (Jenkins 2007 [1992]: xv) and thus their individual/group capitals. They also show us how strategy and field are connected through the tactics of rhetorical and argumentative practice, because without speech there would be no meeting, but without meeting speech would struggle to make sense.

Early in the field and throughout all three meetings I noticed that the way in which the representatives of each land claim referred to their own claim differed substantially. P0050's representatives brought up their own case number whenever the discussion allowed for it. The almost mantic citation of the case number seemed to reassure the speakers of their claim's recognition by the state system and it allowed them to portray their familiarity with the case and its workings. When asking Jonoti Mnguni, one of P0050's main representatives, what their opponents' case number was, however, he responded "*I don't know. They never say. They are this unprofessional.*" Z0231's representatives never mentioned their case number and referred to it as "*our claim*" or "*the claim for Litho*" implying that there were no other legitimate competitive claims, and that claim P0050 was merely an overambitious attempt by a misled splinter group of the 'original claim'. Asking Alfred Mahlangu to name their own reference number, he struggled to recall it and eventually gave me the reference number for the linked LCC case (LCC 116/99), but not the actual reference number. I and many others only got to know the reference number from a November 2017 government gazette. It seemed that, in their attempt to create an exclusive air of authenticity around their own claim by negating the need for distinction between the two claims, Z0231's representatives had actually forgotten their claim's case number.

The first meeting was dominated by the attempt to intimidate opponents. Alfred Mahlangu, who just like Iggy Litho generally introduces himself as a 'Prince', and whose father was one of the essential actors to prepare the first Litho claim filed by Chief Patrick Mahlangu in October 1995, made sure that all attendants were aware of his closeness to Chief Vuma by repeatedly announcing the presence of that very leader with calls of "*Bayete Ndabezita, Bayete*!". Rhetoric, in this case, simultaneously established the positions of the field, but also allowed the speaker to allocate themselves an advantageous position. Iggy Litho, his opponent, would demonstrably address the crowd with the distinct 'traditional' greeting "*Lotjhani AmaNdebele*" and would speak of the 'traditional' Ndebele ways of dealing with disputes, clearly hoping to appeal to those with a strong sense of ethnic identity. He thus established his own position in the field closely to those that were still undecided and that could help him build a majority.

Another rhetorical tactic during the first meeting was the interruption of opposing views. For that purpose, the supporters of Z0231's claim made use of their direct access to Chair Mkhacani, who seemed to interrupt any interjections as soon as Alfred Mahlangu gave him a nudge. P0050's supporters, then again, seemed to have spread out throughout the hall to make their numbers appear even more impressive when shouting and booing to interrupt opposed contributions. At the start of the second meeting, Chief Vuma expressed his frustration with such tactics and threatened to leave the hall, if people did not discuss in an orderly manner, causing Mr Mkhacani to interrupt any discussion as soon as it digressed ever so slightly from the topic at hand. In the same meeting RLCC representative Ms Mehlomakulu managed to calm down the attendants' emotions by forcing them to listen carefully after refusing to use the available microphone. This shows how similar objectives – i.e. to gain control over discussion proceedings and to then exclude opposing or inconvenient views – produced very different practices due to differing capitals and positions on the playing field. During the third meeting yet another, rhetorical tactic with a similar objective was applied by its most essential actor: Mr Mkhacani continuously smiled even when delivering negative news or when reprimanding the attendants for violation of protocol. However, his rhetorical and argumentative muscle flexing went even further: he demanded a rollcall and asked several attendants to justify their participation at the meeting. Now that the two claims had been united and he was no longer dependent on the Lithos' cooperation his commission found itself in a less vulnerable position. It seemed that not only his position on the field had improved, further he was able to actually redesign the field to his own advantage. Furthermore, he was already familiar with the research report findings and probably anticipated the negative reaction that it would trigger among some of the Lithos. To display authority and superiority thus seems to have been his main tactic to nip emotional responses in the bud. His overbearing confidence was challenged only once when Iggy Litho was asked to come to the front and sign for the receipt of a letter. Iggy Litho simply pretended not to be present, using rhetorical silence

to disrupt Mkhacani's apparent predominance in the oratorial genre. This unusual and obviously unexpected behaviour challenged Mkhacani to such a degree that he – for once – had to ask other Litho representatives for help.

The citing of established rules as an argumentative tactical action (Schwartzman 1989: 80) presupposes that a rule-governed context is given. A field that operates on the assumption that pre-established rules and norms of conduct will be strictly upheld redounds to the advantage of those whose arguments depend on the reference to rules that may not even be directly connected to the field itself. For example, each meeting opened with a prayer, the presentation of the Chief's praise song, the search for translators, the filling in of attendance lists, the presentation of the agenda, and the rendition of apologies on behalf of those community members unable to attend. These recurring elements established meeting fields within which the appeal for orderly progress and the reference to well-known practices constituted an argumentative advantage. Chief Vuma, whose authority had been legitimized through the presentation and reception of his praise song, took advantage of the undivided attention that he knew he would receive whenever he rose from his chair to deliver appeals for unity and fairness. Community members who introduced themselves by reciting their own clan's praise lines did so knowing that such an ability was highly respected by the others and that no-one would dare to interrupt them in the process as the meeting had been initiated by that same ritual. They would later also demand that the representatives of each clan recite their own lineage to prove their eligibility.

Others focused on the meeting's administrative legitimacy, which had been established through bureaucratic procedure (attendance lists, presentation of agenda). They demanded information to be made available in written format to portray their own adherence to protocol and to discredit those that could not fulfil this demand. The request by community members to have the minutes from previous meetings handed out aimed at making the RLCC's representative Mr Serumula appear unprofessional. Mr Mkhacani's insistence on the irreversibility of the printed-out agenda and his reproach of Raymond Mnguni when presenting the apologies at the third meeting cemented his governmental authority in front of the notoriously unruly Lithos (see Chapter 6.3.4). However, this particular instance also revealed how differently the field's established rules could be interpreted. To the Lithos, in this case represented by Raymond Mnguni, the presentation of apologies seemed to be an opportunity to demonstrate their own communal strength through the quantity of apparently involved stakeholders. To Mkhacani it however constituted a bureaucratic necessity, whose purpose seemed merely the fulfilment of protocol, and from his perspective it was to the detriment of the Lithos, because they were unable to ensure full meeting attendance or because they lacked the understanding of the exercise's purpose.

The pointing out of past precedents (Schwartzman 1989: 80) was an argumentative tactic preferred by Mr Mkhacani in particular. In the course of the first meeting, he recited section 10(4) by heart to present his personal expertise with divided communities. He repeated this mannerism with other laws at the third meeting where he quoted a range of laws and court judgements to convey to the Litho representatives that a challenge of the research report outcomes would stand little chance in court. His habitus, formed by previous experiences, exemplified one of those cases where a well-formed habitus is used as capital within a particular field. While this particular tactic aimed at improving the speaker's own position in the field, other practices aimed at downgrading the position of opponents. Associating opposed opinions with a vice or other negative characteristic was common practice at all three meetings, in particular *ad hominem* attacks that aimed to discredit particular speakers personally rather than their argument. While a range of community members blamed the RLCC for the chaotic procedure of the meetings and accused in particular chairman Mkhacani of unprofessional conduct, they also accused one another. Younger participants accused older ones of vanity and stubbornness, while the older generation reprimanded the greed and lack of respect of the younger generation. Women accused men of being secretive while men labelled critical women as hysterical. At the third meeting, where the crowd was much calmer and controllable, Mr Mkhacani seemed to take a great delight in lecturing Alfred Mahlangu and Raymond Mnguni for violating the protocol that had been drafted by his own department with phrases such as: "*I do not want you to confuse us.* […] *You confuse us and yourself*. […] *You have just confirmed my fears*." (for more see Chapter 6.3.4) He thus not only portrayed his power as Chair of the meeting, but also pointed out their respective intellectual shortcomings. Both Alfred and Raymond seemed intimidated by him throughout the remainder of the meeting and dared not to criticise the report recommendation that was presented thereafter; they merely focused on shortcomings in the researchers' methodology but would not dare to criticize the conclusions of Mkhacani's department. These tactical *ad hominem* attacks portray how habitus and body, body and field position, field and strategy, strategy and habitus are inextricably interconnected in Bourdieu's ontology.

The final example of argumentative tactics during the Litho land claim meetings concerns the corroboration of certain positions using cosmology and ideology (Schwartzman 1989: 136). This example furthermore allows us to question parts of Bourdieu's ontology. At the end of the first meeting when it became clear that no progress would be made on that day, one enraged beneficiary loudly blamed the entire delay of process and the division among the claimant families on the "*descendants of Serudla*"[76] (i.e. Litho, the group's founding leader), implying that the enmities within the Litho Royal Family caused division amongst the land claim beneficiaries. Chief Vuma picked up this thought and

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[76] *In loco* translated by personal interpreter

urged the participants of the second meeting early on: "*Do not dwell on the ancestors, but think of today!*"[77] Then towards the end of the meeting, Chief Vuma in a similar post-traditionalist vein demanded that at least forty percent of members on any committee should be female. He was applauded for this suggestion and thus a gender-based quota was accepted for the newly established land claim committee. Nonetheless, this decision was amended by Iggy Litho, who insisted that only those who had sufficient knowledge of the claim, and in particular its historical and ancestral roots, should qualify to be on the committee. This effectively excluded anyone below the age of forty. According to Bourdieu the dispositions that form part of the habitus incline the habitus bearer to act in a particular way (e.g. Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 65; 1996 [1989]: 4). In this particular case this would lead us to believe that the habituses of Chief Vuma and those attending the meeting inclined them to renounce ancestral relations and gender based discrimination, but they were also inclined to suggest and accept age-based discrimination. While the persistent generational hierarchy of many rural South African communities can be identified as the origin of the latter decision, the former two present an intriguing dilemma in Bourdieu's conceptualization of the interplay of habitus and practice. The relevance of ancestral leadership structures and patriarchal power struggles to the Litho land claim and the related leadership debates should be obvious by now. Chief Vuma and Iggy Litho both based their claims to the Litho leadership and to the control of land on argumentations of royal descent; in my presence neither ever questioned the underlying male-only leadership system of the Lithos. Thus I must assume that their post-ancestral appeals and demands for gender equality originate either (1) in rational choice (leaving personal dispositions aside and making popular demands to ensure support) or (2) in fields that lie beyond those under investigation (in national gender equality and modernization discourses). Are Chief Vuma and Iggy Litho to be seen as rational manipulators of public opinion or were they and their followers influenced by fields that lie beyond our scope of investigation?

Bourdieu admits that no field exists in isolation from other fields and that actors do have the option to act against their habitus' inclination. Where the borders of these fields lie and how it is possible to identify the origins of practice seems insufficiently explained even though Bourdieu offers a seemingly simple advice: analyse the field by analysing actors, because they are personifications of the field:

> One does not have to choose between the structures and the agents; between the field, which creates sense and value in the properties objectified in things and incorporated in persons, and the agents, who put to use their qualities on the playing field, which is thereby defined.[78] (Bourdieu and De Saint Martin 1978: 6, own translation)

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[77] *In loco* translated by personal interpreter

[78] "On n'a donc pas à choisir entre les structures et les agents, entre le champ, qui fait le sens et la valeur des propriétés objectivées dans des choses ou incorporées dans des personnes, et les agents qui jouent de leurs propriétés dans l'espace de jeu ainsi défini"

From an epistemological standpoint this advice presents us with a significant problem: If the rules of the field have become naturalised in the *habitus* to such an extent that the habitus constitutes some sort of mirror image of the particular field, the implication must be that *habitus* generally operates at a level of unconsciousness where the habitus bearer does not reflect upon – much less makes adjustments to – their own habitus. Bourdieu's understanding of the individual's ability to reflect upon their habitus goes even further, proclaiming that informants are simply not capable of such a degree of reflection: "The relationship between informant and anthropologist is somewhat analogous to a pedagogical relationship, in which the master must bring to the state of explicitness, for the purposes of transmission, the unconscious schemes of his practice." (Bourdieu 1995 [1977]: 18; see also Jenkins 2007 [1992]: 53). Under this premise, however, the outlines of and boundaries between habitus and field will inevitably remain hidden to the researcher, because the subject of enquiry itself fails to distinguish between habitus and field while being unaware of the fields' effect upon their own habitus. How will the researcher be able to differentiate between the different fields that this particular habitus inhabits, if the habitus bearer herself is incapable of doing so? The researcher depends upon agents to "confront events that cause self-questioning, whereupon habitus begins to operate at the level of consciousness and the person develops new facets of the self" (Reay 2004: 437f). If every aspect of individual finalism, "which conceives action as determined by the conscious aiming at explicitly posed goals, is a well-founded illusion" (Wacquant 1989: 73) in Bourdieu's perspective, then the ultimate consequence must be that habitus is merely a concoction of indistinguishable fields. Thus, if *habitus* and *fields* are hardly distinguishable, it must be questioned whether they are even useful to the scientific enquiry. Even more, to assume that Chief Vuma, Iggy Litho, Mkhacani wa Mkhacani, Alfred Mahlangu, Nonqaba Mehlomakulu and all other attendants of the aforementioned meetings would fail to lay bare the implicit rules that they followed and that they would fail to rationalise their own intentional and non-intentional actions, would suffice to accuse any researcher of that "epistemological arrogance of structuralism, where the social scientist (like mother) knows best" (Jenkins 2007 [1992]: 95).

2E.3.2 Giddens's Structuration Theory and the Data

At first glance, Giddens's structuration ontology seems to fit much better with this specific research method. What he defined as *Ontological Security*, "Confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 375), resonates with the fact that none of the discussion groups challenged the truthfulness of the brief topic introductions that they had been provided with. The acceptance of the discussion format by the participants resonates with the Giddensian understanding of *Structure*, which is defined as a set of rules and resources that produce social systems and exist only as memory traces

(Giddens 2004 [1984]: 377). The discussion responses, above assumed to be practice that results from the interplay of structure and agency, constitute a kind of system, "a patterning of social relations […] understood as reproduced practices" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 377). Simultaneously, together with the already existing mental structures of the participants, they can be understood to form a *duality of structure*, which describes structure as being "both the medium and outcome of the conduct that it recursively organises - a medium because it is through its use that social conduct is produced, and an outcome because it is through the production of this conduct that rules and resources are reproduced in time and space" (Mouzelis 1989: 615). The workings of *structuration*, as already mentioned above, were portrayed by the repetition of topic briefing terminology by the groups in their responses rather than shorter emic terms. However, the reference to previously unmentioned institutions and actors in the group answers also points to an influence of structures from the participants' own life experiences. Remember, Giddens mentions three "modalities of structuration" upon which actors draw "in the reproduction of systems of interaction" simultaneously "reconstituting their structural properties" (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 28), which Stones summarises in the following way:

> (1) a situated agent's deployment of *power* on the basis of their access to 'objectively existing' structures [i.e. *facilities*] of *domination*, and in the context of others' greater or lesser access to these structures of *domination*; (2) a situated agent's deployment of *sanctions* on the basis of more or less mutually acknowledged social *norms* embedded in the 'objectively existing' structures of *legitimation*; and (3) a situated agent's engagement in *communicative* action on the basis of her *interpretation* of the 'objectively existing' available structures of *signification*. (2001: 182, emphasis added to highlight the terms used by Giddens in his own illustration)

To some degree all three of these modalities of structuration can be identified in the given group discussion setup. However, Giddens's structuration theory also has its limits with regards to this specific method. The fact that Giddens's definitions of *System* and *Duality of Structure* are vague enough to allow for their simultaneous application to the discussion group responses echoes the common criticism that his solution to the Structure/Agency debate is one of redefining the most prominent terms rather than exploring their potential interrelation (Hay 2002: 121). Furthermore, while Bourdieu's practice theory seems inappropriate for application to this specific research data because the data does not allow for the investigation of individual *habitus* and *capital*, Giddens's ontology misses the mark as it seems to leave the individual and their agency unaccounted for in this case.

Duality of structure can clearly be identified in the given group discussions, but what about a hypothetical *duality of agency* in which agency is simultaneously the way in which a system expresses itself (medium) and the ultimate target of that system (outcome)? Some may claim that *duality of agency* and *duality of structure* are ultimately six of one and half a dozen of the other, but also Stones demands that Giddens's *duality of structure* should be complemented by "'a duality of structure *and*

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agency' (indicating that structure is the recursive medium of agency, and that agency is involved in the production of structure)" (Stones 2001: 195 original emphasis). He further introduces a *duality within agents* to describe the process whereby "the structure enters into the person […] such that we can say *both* that agency is a part of the person and that social structure is a part of the person" (Stones 2001: 184 original emphasis). To identify a *duality of agency* or a *duality within agency* was not possible in this method setting. Neither could the way in which individuals influenced the discussion result through the structures that they carried within them be documented, nor could the extent to which the setting influenced their opinions be defined. The agency side of the metaphorical coin that is ascribed to Giddens's understanding of Structure/Agency surely was underrepresented in this case. In a certain way, this method mirrors Giddens's support for methodological bracketing wherein it is assumed that only one side of the same coin may be investigated and that it is not possible to capture both structure and agency simultaneously.

Different to Bourdieu, who provided systematic instructions on the analysis of field and habitus (see above), Giddens has repeatedly stressed that structuration theory "should be utilized only in a selective way in empirical work and should be seen more as a sensitizing device than as providing detailed guidelines for research procedure" (Giddens 1989: 294), which has translated into a certain vagueness in most empirical applications of it. In his seminal work *The Constitution of Society* he dedicates the final chapter to "Structuration Theory, Empirical Research and Social Critique" (2004 [1984]: 281-354), and provides a ten-point summary of structuration theory that results in three guidelines for empirical research:

> First, all social research has a necessarily cultural, ethnographic or 'anthropological' aspect to it. […] Second, it is important in social research to be sensitive to the complex skills which actors have in co-ordinating the contexts of their day-to-day behaviour. […] Third, the social analyst must also be sensitive to the time-space constitution of social life. (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 284-86)

As Gregson has pointed out these "guidelines themselves are of dubious worth for empirical research projects" (1989: 239) as they merely state the obvious and lack the necessary specification to turn them into actual methodological and analytical guidelines. In further publications Giddens's recommendations are repeatedly adapted (as summarised by Jones 1999: 112), which has prompted other social scientists to compile their own guidelines for the application of structuration theory to empirical research. Examples thereof have been summarised in a couple of articles, for instance by Phipps (2001) or Pozzebon and Pinsonneault (2005). The former has identified five dimensions that derive from structuration theory for empirical studies (2001: 200). The latter have listed three central elements that will aid the analytical process using structuration theory (Pozzebon and Pinsonneault 2005: 1357f). Giddens introduces two ways of accommodating structuration theory in empirical

research through methodological bracketing: *institutional analysis* and *strategic conduct analysis* (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 288ff). This was later complemented by Cohen's introduction of *system analysis* (Cohen 1989: 89f) and Stones's *strategic context analysis* (Stones 1991). To make it easier to analyse circumstances with various influences in the Structure/Agency spectrum these approaches place an *epoché* upon a range of factors for the time being, temporarily excluding them from the analysis (Giddens 2004 [1984]: 80). "The designation is prompted less by what these forms of analysis include than by what they leave out" (Stones 1991: 675).

Trying to relate some of the empirical data presented in previous chapters to structuration theory I shall primarily focus on examples from Ndebele leadership history, the relationship between Ndebele leadership, land, and the South African state, and examples from the leadership dispute between the royal houses of Manala and Ndzundza. This may at first glance seem like a vast range of contexts to cover in an exemplary analysis, but I shall apply methodological brackets to narrow the focus on (1) the strengthening and shaping of institutions through the duality of structure, (2) the strategic potential of structuration, and (3) the significance of time and space to the abovementioned examples.

Applying the first of these methodological brackets I have found that particularly the relationship between Ndebele leadership and the state illustrates the workings of the duality of structure: large ethnic groups and their respective leaders have continuously drawn upon mental structures that had been shaped by the surrounding system for their own behaviour. Groups of individuals thus reaffirmed the rules of the political systems (in particular pre-Apartheid colonialism, Apartheid, the Homeland system, and Democracy) that surrounded them through their own mental structures. Similarly, the empirical data has introduced individuals representing a particular institution, who aimed to legitimize that institution by persistently using certain discursive binaries. In this case the common institutional association with that binary fed into the individuals argumentative structure and thus reaffirmed the seemingly inherent characteristics and basic assumptions of that institution.

The First *Entr'acte* of this dissertation mentions several instances in Ndebele history when a group of people would split up and move into different directions because a leadership dispute had occurred, the dispute between Ndzundza and Manala being the original documented precedent among the Transvaal Ndebele. Splitting up was surely not regarded as a desirable outcome, but it occurred with such regularity that it seems reasonable to regard it as a well-established structure within the political system of the Southern Transvaal Ndebele and other Nguni groups (Ross 2008 [1999]: 17). It seemed to be a political resource that prevented bloodshed between leadership competitors. These conflicts regularly occurred during transitions of power after the reign of a regent, who had ruled on behalf of an incapacitated leader due to young age, physical or mental disability, or cultural taboos. In particular the regular refusal by outgoing regents and/or their descendants to give up power – or their attempts

to reclaim that power at a later stage – once the 'rightful' heir claimed it back, illustrates institutionalized mental structures that have developed into a systemic political feature. These challenges in turn only became feasible, because violence as one major deterrent to making controversial claims to power was mitigated by the 'split and move' option. Splits thus became a facilitating device for maintaining contested power. Temporary transitions of power from a senior lineage to a secondary regent constituted a convenient occasion to instigate challenges of power. Using the modalities of structuration at work in this case, the duality of structure becomes apparent. The agreement between collective actors to *sanction* splits in order to avoid open confrontation became the *norm* and thus competitive claims to power were *legitimated*. Individual and collective ambitions for *power* were *facilitated* through rules of succession and surrogacy, and also through the mitigation of the deterrent of violence and thus resulted in new structures of *domination* by a breakaway Chief and his group of followers.

Also the intervention of the state in these matters constitutes a recurrent feature in the history of the Ndebele. The leadership dispute between Sekhukhune and Mampuru for the Pedi throne and the ZAR government's intervention after Sekhukhune's assassination constitute a direct link to the Mapoch War, the following disintegration of the Ndzundza Kingdom and the scattering of its people throughout the Transvaal. In 1960 an intervention by the Pretoria government became necessary to force the descendants of late Manala regent Titus Thugane Mabhena to cede the Manala leadership to rightful leader William Mbhongo Mabhena. This dispute, however, continued over years and was eventually heard in front of the Nhlapo Commission where it was judged in favour of William's lineage. Throughout KwaNdebele's existence the reciprocal interference of leadership affairs between KwaNdebele's government and its Tribal Leaders is apparent. Chief Lazarus Mahlangu of the Litho Ndzundza was removed by SS Skosana when he criticized the latter's interference in tribal matters. Chiefs and Headmen became members of the KLA. The KwaNdebele governments of SS Skosana and MG Mahlangu systematically harassed Ndzundza opponents of 'independence' and thus fostered Manala ambitions to become more powerful in return for supporting 'independence'. The post-Apartheid leadership dispute interventions by the Nhlapo Commission, by President Zuma, and by the courts are thus no historical precedents and actually seem to be yet another representation of a persistent underlying systemic feature that has been sustained throughout decades. By reciprocally interfering into each other's affairs both representatives of Traditional Leadership and decision makers of the South African state have created a system whose central structures are based on modalities/binding factors of *domination* (through law or threat of violence), of *legitimation* (by reference to 'traditional' practice or by claiming to be a mediating entity) and of *signification* (by acknowledging political systems and defining the roles within them).

The way in which the duality of structure strengthens the position of particular institutions also becomes apparent by observing how a binary such as 'tradition' versus 'modernity' is used by powerful actors. Hendrick Kgomo, Makhosonke II's right hand at court, described 'tradition' as the foundation of the people to justify the leadership entitlement of Traditional Authorities. The Sangomas mentioned in Chapter 4 used popular understandings of 'modern' and 'traditional' ways of living, healing and leading to portray their own work in a particular light. Bheka Ngwenya, a significant administrator of land use at CoGTA, painted a picture of Traditional Authorities that located their origin in the Homeland system, and he explained their continued existence through the democratic state's noble gesture of allowing them to be brokers of culture but nothing more. He thus established an underlying binary in which Chieftaincy and Apartheid occupy one side and Democracy and tolerance occupy the other. He continued to proclaim the inevitable demise of Traditional Authority ("*the approaches of yesterday*") in South Africa through the unstoppable forces of technology and development ("*We must move with the future.*"), expanding the underlying binary to include 'tradition' and 'modernity' on the respective sides of it. All of these actors, by using binary understandings of 'tradition' and 'modernity' and by associating them to a certain systemic entity, have engrained the binary character of these concepts into the structures of their own discursive awareness and the systemic discourses that surround them. The structurally engrained character of these discourses in the system of overall social discourse also becomes apparent in the factor analysis results in Chapter 7. Here statistical correlations revealed similar survey respondent ratings among items such as Traditional Lifestyle, Traditional Leadership and Ancestral Worship on one side (captioned 'Traditional Dispositions') and Modern Lifestyle, Making Your Own Decisions, Equality Between Men and Women, South Africa's Past, Your Personal Past on the other (captioned 'Echoes of Modernity').

The appreciation of 'tradition' and/or 'modernity' was also expressed beyond the verbal exchange between researcher and interlocutor by the differing performances of Ndzundza leader Mbusi II Mabhoko III and Pedi monarch Billy Mampuru II at eRholweni in December 2017. Mabhoko, who disregarded several 'traditional' practices at the event, stood in stark contrast to Mampuru, who acknowledged and adhered to 'traditional' proceedings and values. It seems that this was also one of the reasons for the latter to publicly reprimand the former ("*Respect and love your people, because God's judgement is awaiting*"). These two very different ways of conduct in a ceremonial setting reveal how the mental structures of individuals may clash with the system in which they express them. While it would be inappropriate to speculate on Mabhoko's inner motivation to act as he did, the accusations made against him by his political opponents, draw a picture of someone, whose upbringing has primed him to understand chieftaincy more as a question of entitlement rather than a question of building basic legitimacy among followers. On the one hand, Mabhoko's ability to act against the known rules of 'traditional' conduct in this particular instance shows that actors generally retain the capability to

reflect upon their actions and that they have the ability to choose according to their own preference, rather than obeying the system that surrounds them in a particular situation. On the other hand, he presented himself as a 'modernized' Traditional Leader, who wears Western clothing, does not waste time for slow ceremonial entrances, and who functions as advertising mascot on bags of maize meal. This ambition backfired and induced lasting damage to his popular reputation. Unintended consequences (see Giddens 2004 [1984]: 9-14) such as this particular one reveal the inflexibility of systems and the sanctions that a violation of structures may imply, the most persistent structure (in the Giddensian sense of rules and resources) in this particular case probably being: "*Ikosi kuyikosi ngesitjhaba. Isitjhaba sitjhaba ngekosi*"[79] (Groenewald 1998: 127). These two phrases are evocative of Krämer's four basic legitimacies, all of which Mabhoko seemingly violated. His *cultural affiliation* was cast into doubt by his behaviour described above and by Mampuru's admonishment. The *value of order* was infringed upon by Mabhoko's recent defeats at court, demoting Ndzundza to a chiefdom under *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II. His ability to practice *resistance* against these infringements on Ndzundza autonomy remained questionable as he refused to personally address the topic in front of the crowd. Instead he sent his uncle to speak on his behalf, whose inebriated rendition not only raised doubts regarding the Royal Family's ability to challenge the state's judicial and administrative institutions, but it also disproved their own *organisational capacity*. Rather than suggesting ways to reignite support for the Ndzundza Traditional Leadership, Mabhoko's uncle criticized the subordinate Chiefs and Headmen for failing to coerce larger numbers of subjects into attendance at the annual commemoration. Mabhoko's failure to cater to these basic legitimacies was predicted by Bishop Mthombeni only a few weeks before eRholweni: "*He received a salary from the government to unite the nation but he failed*."

The second methodological bracket investigates the strategic potential of structuration. I focus on knowledgeable agents and their followers, who manage to reflect upon the way in which their own conduct shapes the systems they inhabit and more or less manage to adjust their practice to influence the shape of the patterns of social relations around them, thus taking control of some part of the structuration process. Some of the abovementioned examples can very well be analysed from this perspective: e.g. the Sangomas' choice to present their work in the light of the Tradition/Modernity binary to shape the structure of the conversations we had. However, I have chosen to list different examples to portray the great range of possible applications of structuration theory.

Starting with the way in which individuals can take control of structuration and actually defy the structures that they are faced with, the case of Ishmael Ndlovu springs to mind. He was born with a Manala surname and as an employee of the state his work dictates that he supports those Traditional

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[79] The chief is a chief through the nation. The nation is a nation through the chief.

Authorities that are deemed legitimate by the government, which implies that he ought to be a supporter of an Ndebele Kingdom led by Manala. He repeatedly stressed that his office was responsible for allocating funds to cultural events such as eRholweni (Ndzundza) and KoMjekejeke (Manala) and that he assisted both Royal Families in organising these events. However, during my time in the field, I never saw Ishmael at events with an explicit connection to the Manala Royal Family. His negative experiences with the current Manala leader throughout KwaNdebele's anti-'independence' struggles and the cases of corruption that he witnessed in association with the Manala Royal Family, had rearranged his devotion in this regard. In our interviews and conversations he continuously presented a narrative to me that was much more sympathetic to the Ndzundza branch of the Ndebele royalty. I treat his disregard for both 'traditional' loyalty and professional duty in favour of opinions created out of personal experience as a prime example of individual agency. He used normative arguments trying to convince me that Traditional Authorities were being subdued by the democratic state and that a greater number of more powerful Traditional Authorities would work to the advantage of the South African population. Further, he justified his own actions and those of the individuals and institutions he supported through grossly adapted synopses of the Nhlapo Commission's reports and the subject matter of the May 2016 court ruling that invalidated President Zuma's promotion of the Ndzundza leader Mabhoko III to a deemed King. His communication and his normative understanding thus reveal his way of taking control over legitimation and signification in our conversation, but even more importantly in his interaction with the surrounding social system. I documented several instances in which interlocutors' renditions of the Nhlapo Commission report and the various court rulings relating to the leadership dispute differed significantly to the original documents. By and by it became more difficult to differentiate between instances of conscious adaptations of facts on the one side and the naïve repetition of false facts on the other. This shows that the personal preferences of a range of individuals can develop into forces of structuration, changing the preconditions of entire discussions.

A different way of discussing strategic structuration involves the presentation of institutional agency. As elaborated in Chapter 4, Traditional Leadership as an institution in South Africa has not only shown that it is able to adjust to a range of political systems, but also that it is capable of manipulating the system to its advantage; 'neo-traditionalism' has been part of Traditional Leadership in South Africa throughout its history:

> At different moments during colonial and apartheid South Africa, some rulers aligned themselves with the government *for strategic purposes*. Attempts to keep their place by customary authorities have taken a variety of forms and deployed a wide range of *strategies* and *tactics*. When the state goes the route of instituting commissions, they have had to *adapt* their claims to fit the goals, rationales, and procedures of contemporary administrations, presenting them in defensive, resistant, or assertive modes *depending on the orientations and attitudes of the regimes* (and commissions) with which they have to engage. And many have done so quite skilfully. (Buthelezi and Skosana 2018: 127f, emphasis added)

Apartheid officials did not envision a separate Ndebele Homeland at the inception of the Homeland system in the late 1950s. Rather, they hoped that Ndebele groups would integrate and assimilate in Bophuthatswana and Lebowa and eventually become irrelevant to 'separate development'. The opposite happened. First, civil organisations started to lobby for Ndebele interests in the second half of the 1960s and they soon expressed demands for their own Homeland. Then, the Tribal leaders became involved as primary negotiation partners and they changed the minds of Apartheid officials. When KwaNdebele 'independence' became an issue, the Tribal Leaders became once again significant players with the power to turn the tide. The Ndzundza leadership, originally in favour of 'independence', changed their mind and through individual leaders such as Prince James Mahlangu became one of the project's harshest critics due to SS Skosana's despotic leadership style and the atrocities committed by his *Mbokotho* militia. The Ndzundza Royal Kraal provided a forum for the grievances of KwaNdebele's population, while smaller Tribal Authorities did not have the power to oppose the regime. This shows how institutions, provided they can assemble sufficient support by a significant number of people, may very well strengthen and channel the agency of their members to challenge dominant structures (i.e. the understanding of Traditional Leaders being subservient to the KwaNdebele government) and systems (i.e. separate development). Moreover, the successful ex-post challenge of Moutse's incorporation into KwaNdebele through Chief Mathebe and his supporters (who all wore traditional attire in court) (Abel 1995: 467), shows that one institution's strategic modality (in this case legitimation) can trump the prevalent modality (domination) of an entire system. Ndebele Traditional Leaders in cooperation with UDF and ANC founded Contralesa to pressurise the Pretoria government, and they supported women's rights advocates to invalidate the previous KLA elections (see 1E.2.5). Once Apartheid came to an end, Ndebele Traditional Leaders made themselves heard at CODESA through Contralesa, which – among other factors such as the uprisings initiated by the Zulu-dominated *Inkatha* group – is regarded as a crucial factor that ensured the continued provision of Traditional Authorities in the new South African Constitution (Ntsebeza 2005: 269). The legislative changes to the advantage of South African Traditional Leadership after the end of the Mandela presidency – originating according to many observers in the individual agency of President Mbeki – aided the consolidation of Traditional Authority in former KwaNdebele. Nonetheless the Traditional Authorities are also due their strategic credit in that regard. Particularly the Manala Royal House has managed to change its public image from one of collaboration with the Apartheid regime to one that cares about its citizens. To me, representatives of Makhosonke II's court (Jeremiah Mabhena and Henrick Kgomo) presented him as the champion of the little people and protector of the people's land against ruthless investors and greedy banks. They stressed, however, that the functionality of a system

depends on individuals and their ability to communicate, bridging the gap between institutional and individual agency.

In light of a lack of alternatives, municipal land administrators entered into what Mr Mkhabela of CoGTA called "*a gentlemen's agreement*" that allowed Traditional Authorities to continue issuing PTOs and in return the municipalities in Mpumalanga could focus on providing essential services such as water, electricity and education rather than tenure upgrading. This particular example shows how Traditional Authorities have not only managed to change a bound system (i.e. creating a Homeland, preventing 'independence') but to also prevent an already changing system to maintain some of its existing structures (i.e. the accommodation of TAs in the Constitution, the continuation of PTOs). The frustration that land reform experiences through the reluctance of Traditional Authorities to support tenure upgrading was attributed by Bheka Ngwenya to a divergence of understandings of land ownership, land control and power over those that inhabit such land. According to him Traditional Authorities base their operation on structures that assume 'tribal' land to be under their control and by associating land control with power over the people that live on it. They thus justify a vested interest to inhibit tenure reform as it would take away that power by granting full land rights to their subjects. A similar explanation was given by Councillor Aphane when we discussed the dismissive comments by Traditional representatives regarding the Mmahlabane Trust land claim. From the viewpoint of the democratic state, however, this train of thought is void as it is based on several misinterpretations of the legal framework: the land belongs to the state, 'traditional' power is not based on land control and should actually only be of ceremonial significance. This would constitute a prime example of the way in which inert mental and social structures that were formed during the Apartheid era have persisted and thus fall foul with the effort of agents that have adopted the structures of the system of the new democratic South Africa. Ngwenya, however continued to explain that individual Traditional representatives were actually cunning actors who merely pretended not to understand laws and regulations. They supposedly supported the narrative that their interference with land reform was based upon misunderstandings, while it was actually strategic calculation that motivated them. Also Councillor Aphane admitted that many former members of his Trust, who had filed another claim on the same land, did so merely motivated by strategic calculation rather than a misunderstanding of the land claim system. They hoped that their erratic claims would pressurise the Mmahlabane Trust stake holders in allowing cattle farming on the land in question and the CRLR into handing out financial compensation. This particular case reveals that, while methodological brackets may provide a necessary filter to gain a better overview over the processes at hand, it remains essential to operate beyond these brackets in the final instance.

Attending to the third and final chosen methodological bracket I shall briefly cover the role of time and space in the discussed issues. Briefly, because it is beyond all question that they are of relevance as the provided maps and the timelines of the First *Entr'acte* reveal. Beyond that, time and space gain relevance as crucial systemic and agential forces in the following two examples.

Time-space turns action into practice and activities into rituals; it gives actors the ability to become agents. The ritual that Prince Andries Mahlangu underwent at KwaMaza to fulfil a prophecy and add legitimacy to his claim for the Ndzundza throne carries both spatial and temporal meaning. To travel to KwaMaza implies not only movement through space back to where the Ndzundza Ndebele once settled, but also to move back in time to the point where they experienced their last crucial leadership dispute before migrating north and rising to even greater power under the leadership of Mabhoko. The time-space meaning associated to a ritual is essential in turning the practice of slaughtering an animal and uttering particular words into 'traditional' empowerment. The freshly erected tombstones at eRholweni that serve as evidence in land claims, as Mr Skosana explained to us, not only confirm a spatial connection between the deceased's descendants and the place itself, but also establish a temporal connection to these ancestors while simultaneously defying Western rules of temporal authenticity through their modern design and obviously recent erection. The relationship between space-time and those who erect a tombstone makes that act strategically relevant: agency = structured practice + time-space, so to speak.

Nonetheless time and space may also restrict agency, especially when they are discriminatorily applied. The Nhlapo Commission, for example, ignored crucial spatial and temporal facts on the one hand: the fact that Ndzundza and Manala existed as separate kingships for more than 400 years; the fact that Ndzundza had grown to become a much more relevant kingship due to its expanding spatial control along the Steelpoort River; the fact that the violation of generic rules of succession had become common practice among all Southern Ndebele lineages over hundreds of years. On the other hand the Commission chose one particular point in time, i.e. the dispute between Ndzundza and Manala, and two particular spatial arrangements, i.e. the agreement that each brother would settle on either side of the Balule river and the Apartheid government's decision to create KwaNdebele to the west of that river, to come to their conclusion that there could only be one Ndebele Kingship, being held by the descendants of Manala.

Ending this discussion of structuration theory's relevance to the empirical data of this dissertation I believe that both merits and also limitations of the Giddensian approach become clear. Ultimately, structuration theory remains an ontological approach with vague methodological guidelines and therefore a variety of conclusions are possible. Some questions therefore remain unanswered. For example, wouldn't the assassination of Prince Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu make more sense if we

assumed a *duality of agency* rather than a *duality of structure*? In the former case Mbangwa was identified as an imminence to the system of Mabhoko II's leadership. Here, the system as such had primacy over the individual's agency, the act of murder being the medium of the system's purpose, i.e. the continuation of Mabhoko II's power. If we were to assume the latter duality of structure to be applicable in this case, it would actually raise even more questions. Can this particular expression of the duality of structure, in which one agent's conduct eliminates the entire agency of another agent for ever, be properly explained solely through modalities such as domination, signification and legitimation? If actions such as this particular one simultaneously maintain a system but also deprive it of its normative legitimation, does methodological bracketing not reach its limits? At which point does ethnography reach its limits in determining conscious and unconscious actions, distinguishing intended and unintended consequences?

2E.3.3 Jessop's Strategic-Relational Approach and the Data

Jessop's SRA assumes that structural and agential forces whenever they interact beyond the abstract level have both already incorporated characteristics of the other in previous encounters. The "relation among relations" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 29), as he refers to it, implies that any observation of structure at work will automatically reveal some characteristics of the agencies that shaped it and vice versa. The relation between structure and agency must not be seen as one between fixed ontological entities but as the end result of an evolutionary process from abstract to concrete. This ontological assumption makes methodological bracketing practically impossible or at least uncalled-for because it would require a retrospective identification of ontological entities with clearly defined structural and agential properties. Rather than attempting to identify entities such as *habitus*, *capital* and *field* or *system*, *structure* and *structuration* within the discussion group setting, the SRA calls for an investigation into all dimensions of the structural, agential and strategic forces that have ultimately produced the participants' responses.

The discussion group setting allows us to investigate the third, fourth and to some extent the fifth level/row of Jessop's schema of Structure/Agency evolution in particular (Jessop 2005: 50, see also Figure 3.1). The third level is introduced as the relation between *Structurally-Inscribed Strategic Selectivity* on the structure side and *Structurally-Oriented Strategic Calculation* on the agency side. This is where agents perform tactical practice in response to an environment that responds better or worse to the chosen tactics (see Chapter 3.2 for the working definitions of tactics and strategy). The discussion round participants found themselves in such an environment, where they had to navigate and manoeuvre a given set of tasks and rules. The discussion design and the given information were accepted as such and not explicitly challenged. However, once the participants began to reflect upon the given topics and questions, a reflexive element was added to their conduct and the method design

itself was filled with creative content by the participants. While the participants' cooperation in the discussion group context can be regarded as tactical as they reacted to an immediate situation, their creative responses actively shaped this context that they found themselves in and added a strategic element in relation to that same context and the world beyond it as they were discussing potential solutions to its problems. Jessop describes this stage on the SRA's fourth row as *Reflexively Reorganized Structural Configurations* on the structure side and *Recursively Selected Strategies and Tactics* on the agency side. The agents reflected upon their own conduct, their own experiences and the conditions that they were surrounded by (shaped by the responses of other participants) when they gave their answers. The structural context recursively changed with each participant's input to the discussion and made it more strategically selective, closing and opening particular argumentative pathways for those who wanted it to go one way or the other.

Jessop's model of strategically informed evolutionary exchanges between structure and agency culminates in the triangular relation between the aforementioned entities of row four and the "apparently self-reproducing social configuration" (Jessop 2005: 50) of *Structured Coherence* or *Patterned Incoherence* on level five. In this particular case this instantiation of the Structure/Agency relation was not identifiable within this particular method's setup due to the restricted temporal and spatial frame of the discussion rounds. The given discussion results, however, allow us to make a careful judgement on the discussed fields. In Jessop's terms the discussion group responses either point to a state of *structured coherence*, which implies limited potential for transformation through individual agency, or *patterned incoherence*, which is characterised by systematic contradictions that carry the potential for system manipulations and long-term transformation. Comparing, for example, the responses given to the questions *Who is to blame?* and *Who can fix it?* a similarity in responses points towards the identification of a state of structured coherence by the participants. In Topic 3, i.e. the discussion of prolonged tenure upgrading in Libangeni, 11 out of 18 groups identified the municipality as the institution that is to blame for the delay, but simultaneously also as the institution with the ability to fix the situation (see Table 2E.3). On the other hand the results of Topic 4, i.e. the discussion of democracy's lack in popularity in Libangeni, revealed that merely 4 out of 18 groups identified the government as the one to be blamed and simultaneously as the one to be able to fix the matter (see Table 2E.4). A range of nine different institutions, actors and abstract entities was identified by the participants as being to blame for the lack in democratic confidence and eight were given as potential fixers of the issue. None of these entities were, however, mentioned as a significant entity by more than a third of the participating groups. This result points towards a state of patterned incoherence, at least as it is perceived by a select group of Libangeni residents. It remains nonetheless important to regard these results merely as an exemplary indicator of these states, which are ultimately the result of complex processes that would require much more detailed research.

In a way the SRA takes the operation of structure and agency in the discussion group setting for granted without requiring an actual identification thereof. This provides it with a strong selling point, because it allows for an investigation into the more empirically observed workings of strategy without having to laboriously identify every single original entity that led to the end result. The acknowledgement of the complex processes that the relation between structure and agency has produced, observed in one version of social reality at merely one particular stage in the ongoing exchange between them, makes it possible to let the result speak for itself without reference to its biography. This assessment is grounded in Jessop's appreciation the complex dynamics that underlie his SRA model. When dealing with complexity it is necessary to acknowledge that "reality extends beyond the horizon of what we can possibly know or even conjecture about" (Rescher 2019 [1998]: 51f). From this Socratic insight Jessop draws the conclusion that complex ontologies such as the SRA require "that we select simplifying entry points into that complexity and recognize that all knowledge is partial, provisional, and incompletable" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 229). To Jessop, it is crucial that the perception of complexity as chaos be avoided and he therefore introduces a range of (not necessarily transparently structured) distinctions, such as "complexity in general" versus "specific modes of complexity", "descriptive complexity" versus "ontological complexity" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 225-28). Furthermore, he introduces the concept of 'contingent necessity' to grasp how "events and phenomena are the product of the non-necessary interaction among different causal chains to produce a definite outcome that first became necessary through the contingent articulation of various causal chains" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 229). Discussing two distinctive ontological features of complexity – i.e. first its relation between possibility and compossibility, and secondly complexity's self-potentiation – Jessop derives three sets of implications for scientists dealing with complexity. Ontologically,

- (a) the same causes can lead to different and/or divergent effects;
- (b) different causes can produce the same effects;
- (c) small causes can entrain very big effects;
- (d) big causes can produce quite small effects;
- (e) causes are followed by contrary effects;
- (f) the effects of antagonistic causes are uncertain
  (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 229, citing Schriewer 1999, citing Morin 1980)

Epistemologically, Jessop suggests combining "concepts, assumptions, and principles of analysis from different theoretical domains and to link them to a given, theoretically defined explanandum." (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 230). Methodologically, he describes "the dual movement from abstract to concrete along one plane of analysis and from simple to complex as more analytical planes are introduced in order to produce increasingly adequate explanations" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 231). Furthermore, "to avoid infinite regress, it is essential to define the material, social and spatio-temporal limits of any explanandum." (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 233)

My summary of Jessop's deliberations on the concept of complexity and its implications for delineating boundaries of the analytical process is incomplete and oversimplified. However, it exemplifies where I think that his sociologically informed epistemological and methodological suggestions need to be adapted to the inductive approaches of ethnography. If ethnographic analysis moved from abstract to concrete and from simple to complex, as he suggests, it would not only have to divide the field into deductively predefined analytical planes, but it would possibly exclude the researcher and their relationship with the field as an emergent entity. Furthermore, a direct ethnographic adaptation of Jessop's methodology would define emergence as a solely structural phenomenon, while I understand ethnography to have the privilege to regard each individual agent as "new beginning in the constitution of complexity" (Luhmann 1995: 23) and therefore an emergent entity in themselves: "A complex system is not constituted merely by the sum of its components, but also by the intricate relationships between these components. In 'cutting up' a system, the analytical method destroys what it seeks to understand" (Cilliers 1998: 2). Furthermore, the SRA's abovementioned strength of acknowledging and embracing the complexity between structure and agency as a given must, in my humble opinion, be amended by approaches that enable it to move beyond methodological and analytical pragmatism, if the aim is not only documentation of the empirical, but also the identification of actual mechanisms to be manipulated to make changes for the better. This implies the identification of concrete strategies and the empirical recording of instances where structured coherence prevents individual agency or where patterned incoherence provides opportunities for change. Above's group discussion design falls short in this regard, but ultimately it was not designed to prove or disprove any of the three given ontologies. In the following I present two examples from my empirical data that I have found to illustrate the workings of strategy in relation to states of (1) structured coherence and (2) patterned incoherence.

Consider the difficult situation that the Manala leadership found themselves in in 1990. They had, just like a range of Ndzundza leaders, been more or less forcefully enlisted as *Mbokotho* members by the Skosana regime in the second half of the 1980s. While prominent Ndzundza Princes eventually renounced *Mbokotho*, sided with the comrades of the ANC and supported anti-independence protests after the incorporation of Moutse and the consequent widespread violence of 1986, the available literature and most of my interlocutors report that Manala continued to support KwaNdebele's regime and the government in Pretoria. Piet Ntuli (head of *Mbokotho*) was murdered in July 1986, SS Skosana (KwaNdebele Chief Minister) died of diabetes in November 1986 only one month after young *iNgwenyama* Enoch Makhosonke II Mabhena took over his royal duties as Manala leader. His uncle Alfred Mbhedlenghani had acted as regent and allegedly took his own life fearing for revenge by anti-independence activists. After Skosana's death MG Mahlangu took over as Chief Minister, whose government continuously bullied the Ndzundza Royal Family and sponsored Manala representatives

to gain their support. In late December 1988, however, he lost the repeat election triggered by a group of women's voting rights activists, who had won in court with the support of prominent Ndzundza leaders. The next KwaNdebele Chief Minister was JM Mabena, a representative of the Manala section in the KLA, who was supported by the parliamentary Ndzundza representatives whose anti-Apartheid candidate Prince James Mahlangu stood little chance to gain the necessary votes (Phatlane 1998: 181f). Mabena was only in office for fourteen months, because the release of Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders in early 1990 encouraged the KLA members to finally elect Prince James Mahlangu, second son of Ndzundza *iNgwenyama* David Mabusa Mahlangu, as Chief Minister. After having been systematically promoted by previous regimes in exchange for their support, which culminated in Mabena's election, the Manala leadership's strategic position all of a sudden seemed grim to say the least. The Ndzundza clearly formed the political elite of the Homeland with Prince James as Chief Minister and Contralesa's influence upon the country's future leaders from UDF and ANC. Furthermore, the Rust de Winter incorporation, which would have substantially extended the territorial authority of Manala, was soon to be abandoned together with the entire Homeland system. Anti-independence activists such as Ishmael Ndlovu, who had actively fought the Manala leadership, would soon be released and stood to gain influential government positions.

It can be assumed that the Manala leadership, just like most Traditional Authorities, bided their time during the Mandela presidency, unsure of what their role in the new South Africa would be. The Manala-Mbhongo Tribal Authority initiated a half-hearted attempt in the transition years (1990-94) to gain control over some of the Rust de Winter farms that they had been promised by the previous government. Just like for other claimants such as the Litho Ndzundza the prospects for a successful claim were however dismal in light of the government's own development plans for the area (see Chapter 6.3). Eventually, the TLGF Act of 2003 was passed and it provided some essential guidelines that could be exploited to the advantage of Traditional Authorities in general. In the Act's preamble the South African state committed itself to providing "appropriate support and capacity building to the institution of traditional leadership" ("Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework" Act 41 of 2003: 1). Furthermore, in its section 28, it stated that all previously acknowledged 'tribal' institutions and leaders would be recognized as a transitional arrangement, which entrenched "the controversial tribal authority boundaries established in terms of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951" (Claassens 2014: 767). Knowing that the state had committed to further financial and administrative support and that their territorial sphere of influence was secure in the interim the Traditional Authorities could focus on establishing their own legitimacy in the eyes of the state.

The TLGF Act also established the Nhlapo Commission, which was tasked with the dissolution of issues regarding the legitimacy of specific Traditional Leadership positions. This crucially changed the

strategically-selective context for all Traditional Authorities, but to a very large extent for both Ndebele Kingships. As previously mentioned (see Chapters 4.2 and 5.3) the Commission's approach has been criticized by several scholars due to its hieratic methodology and its rather Eurocentric terminology (see Peires 2014; Comaroff and Comaroff 2018a). Buthelezi and Skosana even go so far to impute the same essentializing misconceptions to the Nhlapo Commission that its indirect predecessor, the Ethnology Section of the Bantu Affairs Department, applied. Their main criticism: the Commission swept away the intricacies of each group's bespoke political leadership system and the basic legitimacies established therein in the here and now. Instead it went for "tracing clear genealogical lines going as far back as possible to determine who should be recognized in the present" (Buthelezi and Skosana 2018: 120) assuming that "by virtue of identifying the 'rightful' male successor to any office, the dispute surrounding it is effectively resolved" (Buthelezi and Skosana 2018: 116). This continuance of two crucial Apartheid policies (i.e. the association between Chiefs and a particular territory, and the imputation of leadership positions according to genealogical lines and non-negotiable rules of succession) coupled with the government's disinclination to finance two independent Ndebele Kingships worked to the advantage of the Manala leadership in particular.

A detailed chronology of events on the leadership dispute of Manala and Ndzundza in front of the Nhlapo Commission and the courts has been given in Chapter 5.3 and the result is well known by now: Manala was awarded the official recognition as Kingship of the entire Ndebele nation while Ndzundza and its leaders were demoted to a position that was still to be determined when I left the field. What is apparent at this point are certain patterns that have developed since Makhosonke II took over as leader of Manala in 1986. As strategically well-positioned and calculative agents the Manala leadership managed to position themselves at the fault lines between the politically much more prominent Ndzundza leadership and other institutions. When the relationship between the Ndzundza Royal Family and KwaNdebele's government began to crumble Manala was recruited to provide pro-'independence' support and stood to gain further political influence from that. When the Ndzundza representatives failed to state their case in front of the Nhlapo Commission, Manala managed to present their own lineage as the 'rightful' one. When young Mbusi II Mabhoko III failed to address the worries and needs of his followers, Makhosonke II reached out to other Ndzundza leaders and promised a united Ndebele Nation.

On the structural side we find a continuous structurally inscribed strategic selectivity that is expressed in four apparent ways. First, since the late 1980s the strategically-selective context has privileged the less 'troublesome' Ndebele Traditional Authorities with regards to their adaptability to political circumstance and their own history of leadership successions. The less conflicts occurred in the past of a particular branch regarding leadership disputes and influence upon matters of the state, the more

likely they were to be acknowledged in relation to the state, its legislation and its administration. Second, the South African state assumes the power to determine the legitimacy of Traditional Authorities, either based on political preference or on inflexible rules of succession and arbitrarily chosen time horizons. Third, the Apartheid state depended on co-opted Tribal Leaders and the new South Africa's governments were willing to maintain cooperative Traditional Authorities to their own advantage (as political supporters, brokers of cultural identity, land administrators, etc.). Fourth, the fact that Manala and Ndzundza existed as separate kingships in different political spheres with different histories for several centuries was disregarded by the Apartheid government when it created a common Homeland for them, and it was also disregarded by the Nhlapo Commission and the political framework behind it. Furthermore, the commonly accepted perception that Ndebele of Ndzundza descent are more numerous than those of Manala descent[80] in the former Homeland and the Commission's non-recognition of that fact bear a painful resemblance to state-sanctioned minority rule under Apartheid. While this last expression of structural strategic selectivity might appear as an inconsistency as such, its structural persistence through time constitutes yet another coherent factor that worked in favour of the Manala Royal Family. This reciprocal interaction between the Manala Royal Family (in particular its leader Enoch Makhosonke II) on the one side and the various state structures on the other side, has developed into structurally coherent formation that is very hard to break open for those that were not able to position themselves into a strategically advantageous position. This inability may have been due to individual failure to make the right strategic decisions like Mbusi II Mabhoko III in his style of litigation and leadership. Or it may have been caused by structural barriers such as the Nhlapo Commission's chosen methodology or the laws and regulations that caused the invalidation of President Zuma's problematic Government Declaration No. 1027 through High Court Judge AC Basson.

While the relation between the South African state and the Royal House of Manala illustrates a state of structured coherence, a thematically similar relation portrays features of patterned incoherence. Sebatshelwa Matthews Mahlangu, Iggy Litho's uncle, passed away some years before I had the chance to meet him. However, I had the privilege to read some of his legal correspondence and to experience some of his character traits through his nephew, who – as several informants confirmed – exhibited very similar characteristics in his particular ways of making sense of the world and deducting argumentation strategies from that. I assume that Matthews fully appreciated the state's power to legitimise and demote Traditional Authorities after the promulgation of the TLGF Act and he identified a divergency between the aforementioned governmental legitimation strategies and the state's non-consideration of his own lineage. According to his personal interpretation of historic developments, a

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[80] According to common assumption. Reliable figures are, however, hard to come by.

particular selection of rules of succession based on 'traditional' precedent, and the Nhlapo Commission's guidelines, it was his lineage that had the ultimate right to rule the Ndebele Nation in the here and now. To him, the status quo had come about through the ex-post falsification of the outcomes of two crucial splits and the disenfranchised status of his own clan among the Litho. Following the Commission's line of argumentation that regarded chiefly legitimacy as based on hereditary principles rather than basic legitimacies and political identity, he created a narrative according to which Manala abdicated from his royal privileges after losing the royal insignia to Ndzundza, thus making Ndzundza's lineage the senior of the two. As Magodongo, father of Mabhoko, was not only allegedly born by Mahlangu's *ikohlo* wife but also took the leadership over the Ndzundza by force from Sokwena and Mrhabuli at KwaMaza, his lineage could not possibly provide the legitimate *iNgwenyama* of *AmaNdzundza* wherefore Matthews regarded the lineage of Mabhoko as mere regents. The Litho Ndzundza were thus the 'rightful' providers of the Kingship over the entire Ndebele Nation, beginning with Sebatshelwa, son of Mrhabuli, as King Litho I[81]. According to Matthews, Sebatshelwa was followed by Pungutsha (Litho II) and Mukhatchani (Litho III, also known as Jas-David). From that point the already thoroughly discussed leadership dispute that troubles the Litho Ndzundza until this day unfolded. Matthews claimed in the ominous Sacotso Mia binder (see Chapter 6 for more details) that his father Soselembe was King Litho IV, which made himself King Litho V, the other Litho lineages that held stately recognized power since Jas-David's death being labelled as regents by him.

Matthews's narrative, which his nephew and his supporters had internalized as the truth, was built on structural premises that seem to contradict each other from a binarily informed perspective. Iggy Litho's argumentation of his uncle's and his own case may have appeared contradictory at first glance, but it merely mimicked some of the structural properties that surrounded them. Take, for example, the role of written historical accounts on one side and oral accounts of history on the other. The South African state acknowledges the potential validity of oral history in land claims and claims to Traditional power. It, however, also reserves itself the right to compare these accounts to written sources. This was the case in the RLCC research report that investigated 76 farms that had been claimed by Matthews. While the report acknowledged oral evidence, it also consulted "deeds records (transfer histories), archival information, secondary research reports, research and reports written for the Commission and for lawyers" (Phuhlisani-Umhlaba Joint Venture 2016: 17). In some cases the report concluded that the oral history alone did not suffice to validify the claim (e.g. farms Tambootie Pan 175 JR, La Rochelle 177 JR), while in other cases it did suffice despite absence of written documentation (e.g. farms Melkhoutfontein 183 JR, Leeuwkraal 184 JR). Similarly the Nhlapo Commission used written

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[81] Please acknowledge that this rendition of events and relations will be highly contested by other Traditional Leaders and that there is no basis for this version in the available ethnographic literature.

sources (i.e. Myburgh and Prinsloo 1985) and oral accounts in favour of Manala, but did not mention written sources that favoured Ndzundza's perspective as well (e.g. Van Vuuren 1992). While it is surely an admirable and probably inevitable walk on a tightrope for many state administrators to make a judgement based on often conflicting oral and written sources, this methodological suspense has opened a space for strategic conduct. On the one hand, as oral accounts are acknowledged to bear a significant degree of authenticity, their transformation into written format is perceived as an additional authorisation of their content: Enoch Munano, President of Sacotso Mia and business associate of Matthews, labelled himself as "*researcher*" and drafted a "*verified lineage of the AmaNdebele Kings and Regents as narrated by Soselembe to his son Sebatshelwa*", the latter being Matthews and his father. This way, his own interpretation of the Ndebele royal lineage could be presented as robust written evidence. On the other hand, this procedure could also be pushed too far when documents were forged to produce evidence for unsustainable claims: Matthews presented a document to the Land Claims Commissioner wherein Louis Botha endowed Litho Chief Jas-David with 790 properties in the Transvaal in 1916; Iggy Litho presented a family tree of the Litho clans to me, which was allegedly designed by state ethnographer P L Breutz, to prove his own clan's royal status. Both documents bore clear signs of forgery and could not be verified using other sources, despite the word "*original*" having been added by an unknown hand at the top of the dubious family tree. The interplay between written and oral sources thus opens up possibilities for strategic adaption, which at the same time causes written sources to lose their assumed inherent authentic value in particular as they may incorporate the potential disputability and individual agenda of oral accounts.

Related to this example is the incoherent relation between the negotiability of historical fact on the one side, and the crucial significance of historical events to present circumstances on the other. As the discussion of the Nhlapo Commission findings has shown, the factual existence of the Ndzundza Ndebele as separate kingship from Manala for several centuries was ex-post wiped away by the mere fact that Manala was the first born son by the *indlunkulu* wife of Mmusi. By attempting to right the wrongs of the past, more wrongs were committed by denying the Ndzundza the fact of their own historical achievements as a separate kingship. Similarly, Iggy Litho's claims were all based on the relevance of past historical developments and the wish to see them corrected in the present. Simultaneously he projected renegotiations of the facts upon that historical past according to his individual understanding thereof. The fact that Ndzundza had become a powerful kingship after the raids of Mzilikazi while Litho and Manala stayed rather insignificant to Transvaal politics, was entirely disregarded by him. That it was the Ndzundza Royal Family joining the ranks against KwaNdebele 'independence', and that it was their organization Contralesa that among others pressured CODESA into accommodating Traditional Authorities in the new Constitution, were insignificant to the historical seniority of Litho that he propagated. On several occasions Iggy Litho complained about the 19 June

1913 cut-off date in the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994. It prevented him from staking claims to other areas that the Litho Ndzundza, other Ndebele groups, and even the Tswana whom he regarded as being originally Ndebele had occupied before said date – all of whom he claimed to ultimately be his subjects as the virtual leader of Litho. When I argued that this would open up the possibility for South African Khoi and San groups to claim most of South Africa as factual firstcomers, he reacted angrily and claimed that there had never been any other people in the whole Transvaal before the Ndebele arrived.

The third and final example of patterned incoherence concerns the South African state's violation of its own principles. The Apartheid government violated its own rules and ideological narratives on several occasions: it elevated the Ndzundza Tribal Authority to the status of Regional Authority despite failing to fulfil the legal preconditions therefor; it ignored the common ancestry of Northern and Southern Ndebele in favour of one territorially contiguous Ndebele Homeland; it violated principles of ethnic affiliation when incorporating Moutse into KwaNdebele; and it disregarded Bophuthatswana's supposed 'independence' when intervening in the coup of 1988. While the post-Apartheid state has surely less blatantly violated its own rules and regulations, the expansive corruption under President Zuma (Pauw 2017) has allowed the image of a hypocritical state to continue and prosper in the eyes of those that have to deal with it. Iggy Litho's basic assumption when dealing with representatives of the state seemed to be that his counterpart would not play by the rules trying to outsmart him and his allies. This perspective was fostered by previous negative experiences of the Lithos with state representatives throughout their decade-long fight for land restitution. By maintaining this assumption, even correctly rejected claims for restitution and challenges to his royal descent could be rendered questionable and morally depraved. This way he saved face and could continue to make his claims to royal privilege and vast stretches of land. Ultimately, he painted a picture that saw the state as flawed institution that discriminated against him rather than acknowledging the flaws of his own arguments.

While it seems that Matthews and Iggy mimicked the structural properties that surrounded them, which would practically prove the primacy of structure, the inconsistency of these structural properties opened up space for their individual agency. They identified the patterned incoherence of South Africa's Traditional Leadership system and the argumentative pathways that it opened up. Furthermore, they also identified the structured coherence that control over land in South Africa is concomitant with wealth and power. Thus, the SRA allows us to understand and identify the elements of strategically-selective context that guided Matthews's ambitions and the strategies that he and his nephew and their supporters developed from that.

2E.4 Summary

This chapter-between-sections functioned as a bridge between the presentation of empirical data in the previous three chapters and their theory-driven analysis in the two chapters that follow. This transition was gradually achieved by beginning with a presentation of group discussion set-up and outcomes. I then continued the analysis of these outcomes through the theoretical lens of the three main ontologies of this thesis. It was found that all three ontologies had their limits in the analysis of inductive data from a method setting whose design was driven by field experience rather than theoretical zeal. The motivation to pinpoint some of the inadequacies of these theories derived from Burawoy's ambition to elaborate and reconstruct existing theory in the ECM framework rather than building theory from the ground up with every new batch of empirical data. Therefore, rather than merely pointing out the contingent disharmony between method and theory in this particular case, I continued the assessment with a range of examples from the empirical data that illustrated the merit of these ontologies.

For Bourdieu's theory of practice I analysed the three main Litho land claim meetings from Chapter 6 and exemplified the extensive workings of habitus, capital and field throughout them. This was done by following four central dimensions throughout these meetings: pre-meeting moods, status display, rhetorical tactics and argumentative tactics.

The Giddensian concept of duality of structure, and how institutions are strengthened and shaped through it, was discussed by taking a closer look at the patterns behind Ndebele leadership disputes throughout history, the relationship between the Ndebele and the South African state, and the appreciation of both 'tradition' and 'modernity' by Traditional Leaders and their supporters. The strategic potential of structuration was illustrated by the individual strategic argumentation of Ishmael Ndlovu, and the ways in which Traditional Leaders have occasionally succeeded at manipulating state institutions and policies to their advantage since the inception of Apartheid. Finally I also pointed out the relevance of time-space in all of these examples, in particular how it both strengthened and restricted agency in the presented field data.

Jessop's SRA was put to the test by identifying instances of strategic conduct in circumstances of structured coherence and patterned incoherence. The former was exemplified by the persistence of the Manala leadership since the late 1980s. The latter was illustrated by means of the argumentative avenues of Sebatshelwa Matthews and his nephew Iggy Litho. The SRA will be the main theoretical catalyst in the following two chapters while theory of practice and structuration theory will occasionally provide analytical tools wherever necessary.

Chapter 8 – Bracketed: Complex Contexts and a Strategic Binary

I introduced the SRA as a theoretical contribution to the Structure/Agency debate besides more prominent ontologies such as Bourdieu's practice theory and Giddens's structuration theory in Chapter 3. In addition I introduced my own definition of four modes of agential interaction with strategically-selective contexts: tactically-inclined, tactically-able, strategically-able, and strategically-inclined conduct. Previous to this chapter, in the Second *Entr'acte*, I then portrayed how these theories and definitions can be applied to the empirical data of this research venture on an illustrative basis and concluded that to some degree all three of them have their particular merit in the analytical process. The SRA's open embrace of complexity as the constitutive principle and perpetuated outcome of the strategic relation between structure and agency provides the most convincing arguments to apply it in a thorough analysis of the empirical data presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. To achieve the aim of this thesis, i.e. a more thorough understanding of the social grassroots processes through which individuals and communities influence land reform in former KwaNdebele, it is essential to have an ontological model at hand that can shed light on both structural and agential forces at play in the field and Jessop's SRA fulfils this requirement. I have, however, made it clear that an ethnographic adaptation of the SRA must primarily identify very concrete strategies and contexts where structured coherence prevents agency or where patterned incoherence provides opportunities for it.

For the following analysis I have therefore formulated six aims, which will be pursued in this and the following chapter. The analysis aims to (1) identify distinctive characteristics of strategically-selective contexts in the field data, and to (2) list a range of strategic tools that have become available to the agents within these contexts. I will also point out (3) which of these available tactics were chosen by the involved agents and why, and (4) how these strategically-driven tactics have altered the respective strategically-selective context. More specifically, my aim is to (5) illustrate the ways in which the use of simplified binary arguments actually creates even more complex strategically-selective contexts, and to (6) highlight the implications that this has on the range of agency of actors in the field. This will grant a better understanding of the ways in which the strategic practical and discursive use of underlying binary pairs helps individuals, groups, communities and institutions to present their own objectives in a favourable light, to manipulate structures and other agents' perspectives to their advantage, and to successfully manoeuvre those contexts where manipulation proves ineffective. In particular the apparent conflict between binarily influenced strategic and tactical conduct on the one side, and non-binary realities that become increasingly complex through the use of these binaries on the other side, will reveal a field of practice in which individual agency has great potential as long as it is well-balanced between these two poles.

The complex character of the entities and processes under scrutiny in the pursuit of these six aims impedes their depiction through two-dimensional written language. I will therefore refrain from processing these targets one after another. Instead I shall present a range of themes, which – in dependence on Jessop's critical realist core assumptions – are based on underlying abstract but real patterns that are often binary in character.

Taking inspiration from Giddens's methodological bracketing I dedicate the remainder of this chapter to a separate analysis of structure and agency. First, I will re-explore the statistical data presented in Chapter 7 to paint a thorough picture of the strategically-selective contexts of my field and the hypothetical avenues that they provide to potential actors within them. Then, I will explore the Tradition/Modernity binary based on the contextual contingency that it creates and I will delineate two major ways in which I have seen it used strategically. Chapter 9 then abandons the methodological bracketing approach and discusses three central themes in the empirical data. However, both chapters pursue the same six aims that were formulated above in no particular order.

8.1 Exploring the Contexts

As sufficiently discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, a mixed-method approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the field offers a range of advantages and disadvantages to the researcher. An example of the former is surely the extended perspective onto the researched field that is provided by supplementary quantitative data. The qualitatively driven Chapters 5 and 6 both provided glimpses into the strategies that agents apply on a day to day basis. Chapter 7 on the other hand presented quantitatively generated data that aimed at illustrating some of the contexts within which agents develop their strategies. The extensive complexity of these contexts became visible through the identification of a range of statistical correlations, of which some were anticipated and others seemed utterly unpredictable. In the following section I revisit some of these observations to further explore the complex contexts that local individuals and groups navigate. For that purpose I find it helpful to keep Jessop's characterisation of context as a strategic terrain, similar to the Bourdieusian field, in mind; he refers to the explicitly strategic context in the here and now as 'current conjuncture':

> From a genealogical viewpoint, the current conjuncture is the *necessary* product of *contingent* interactions among different sets of causal mechanisms in the past and present. From the viewpoint of strategic-relational context analysis, the current conjuncture is an asymmetrical strategic terrain that offers different material, spatio-temporal, and social opportunities for different actors to pursue different objectives in a heterogeneous set of time-space geometries ranging from the immediate 'here-now' to world society in an indeterminate future. (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 233, original emphasis)

In order to understand how this current conjuncture relates to the tactical and strategic actions of the individuals and groups that are the source of my field data it will be necessary for me to project subjectively generated assumptions (in simpler words, to speculate) about their hypothetical abilities and motivations within that same context. Further, I do assume that the information that was generated in the survey is either tacitly known by these actors already or at least acquirable to them through Giddens's modalities of structuration (without need for an extensive survey on their part). Both the survey and its statistical analysis were merely methods that allowed me as an outsider to translate that tacit knowledge into one of many potential renditions of reality.

The investigation into potential interviewer bias during the survey data collection process (see Chapter 7.1.2) was triggered by one of the research assistants openly admitting to having influenced participants' opinions in the questionnaire's 'Section Five'. This raised the question whether other interviewers had committed the same methodological flaw. When regarded as empirical observation rather than methodological pitfall, this fortunate data bycatch illustrates the social dynamics at play within this particular field very well. Of the remaining three interviewers none could be statistically singled out for having produced significantly different answers for the questionnaire section in

question, because the data produced by each of them differed at several points from the others. Two potential explanations were derived from this. Either, structurally complex and therefore hardly controllable factors such as the interview environment, the interviewers' personal identity markers and their mannerisms may have repeatedly influenced the answers given for a range of items in the questionnaire's 'Section Five' in a distinct pattern. Or, all of the involved interviewers, at one point or another, allowed their own personal preferences to (probably unconsciously) influence the responses given by the survey participants through item presentation or subsequent debate. As I have argued in Chapter 7.3, this does not mean that quantitatively acquired data should be pre-emptively excluded from the ethnographic project, but rather it is the ethnographer's responsibility to treat the quantitatively produced data as if it was an informant's utterance or their own observation of an event, extracted from a world of individual agendas, researcher bias, and cultural misunderstandings.

Because I assume Jessop's SRA to be of analytical merit, which stipulates that the interviewers be regarded as tactically- and strategically-able agents who are contextually embedded just like their surveyed counterparts, it would be unreasonable to expect no variation at all in the analysis of the data that they have produced. Both of these potential explanations – the strategically-selective embeddedness of the interview situation and the widespread tactical inclination of all involved interviewers and interviewees – point towards an understanding of the situation that does not function without the assumption of complex (and therefore unreproducible) processes being constantly at work.

When comparing the demographic data of the survey participants that each of the four interviewers recruited, no significant differences were found between these four subsamples regarding the distribution of the participants' Gender and Ranked Received Standard Education (RRSE)[82]. Significant differences in the composition of the four subsamples were found regarding the distribution of Home Language, Age and Ranked Potential Occupational Income (RPOI). However, this distribution did not correlate with the interviewers' own home language, age and occupation. As each of the interviewers had their own 'territory' in Libangeni, it is more likely that historical settlement patterns are reflected in this observation (further discussed below). If any personal bias had been involved in the selection of interview participants, such as choosing people who spoke the same language at home or who belonged to the same gender, this would have been reflected in the data, which was not the case. Rather, I assume that interviewers simply interviewed whoever they could find being at home in a

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[82] A reminder: Survey data is always produced in a highly constructed research process; real entities are being translated into questionnaire items which, combined with the respondents' answers, are then turned into statistical variables. To mark the constructedness of statistical variables that are necessary for survey analysis and to distinguish them from their real-world counterparts, variables describing demographic factors have been capitalised or abbreviated in this thesis. 'Section Four' items are presented with a dotted underscore while 'Section Five' items were marked with a dashed underscore (see also Chapter 7).

particular neighbourhood. This is supported by the disproportionate representation of young and old women in the survey sample, which mirrors the social and demographic realities of rural South Africa. Statistically and ethnographically the area of residence must be regarded as a strong demographic denominator. It can thus be concluded that the interviewers were less guided by their own social preferences when recruiting survey participants, but rather that the availability of participants was determined by the given demographic structure of Libangeni's different neighbourhoods. This implies that the participant selection process was more structurally guided than by individual strategically-inclined agency.

Leaving the interviewer bias investigation aside, a range of other observations from the descriptive analysis (see Chapter 7.2) help depicting the social landscape in former KwaNdebele. For example, local actors find themselves in an environment where concrete commodities such as Money and Education, but also more abstract values such as Respect, Faith in God, Making Plans For The Future, and *Ubuntu* are highly valued among the population (see Table 8.1). This means that any strategically-inclined agent will have to respond to these widely accepted priorities in order to gain effective support for their agenda. On the other hand, Politics, Ancestral Worship and a Modern Lifestyle received the lowest importance ranking among the surveyed population and thus it can be assumed that any association with or prioritisation thereof yields a smaller potential for popular support. One way in which such dissociation may be executed is the association with the respective binary opposite, as long as such a binary is available in locally established discourse. For example, in order to be less regarded as a stereotypical politician that has been allegedly corrupted by the amenities of 'modernity', influential

Table 8.1: 'Section Five' items ranked by Mean (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)(N = 422)	
Respect	4.91
Education	4.89
Faith in God	4.88
Money	4.87
Making Plans For The Future	4.85
Ubuntu	4.79
Order and Security	4.56
Owning Your Own Piece of Land	4.52
Living For the Day	4.37
Conservation and Protection of Nature	4.33
Well Working Government Services	4.30
Equality Between all South Africans	4.30
Land Reform	4.22
Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid	4.19
Powerful Communal and National Leadership	4.12
Freedom of Speech	4.08
Making Your Own Decisions	4.00
Equality Between Men and Women	3.98
Democratic Rules	3.97
Traditional Leadership	3.91
Traditional Lifestyle	3.90
Your Personal Past	3.72
South Africa's Past	3.61
Ancestral Worship	3.47
Politics	3.33
Modern Lifestyle	3.30

local agents may choose to declare their appreciation of Traditional Leadership and portray 'traditional' items and mannerisms.

Similarly, the regularity with which household members of the interview participants made use of certain institutions can reveal something on the strategic options that are available depending on the chosen institutional environment. Institutions linked to basic services of subsistence such as health care (Clinic/Hospital and Traditional Healer) and financial welfare (Bank and SASSA) were accessed by a wide range of respondents, as expected (see table 8.2). However, also other institutions that provide an added benefit of social connectivity and solidarity such as Church, Initiation School, and Traditional Authority proved to be highly popular among the surveyed households. On the other hand, institutions that aimed to provide similar benefits based on the infrastructures of the state, such as Community Development Workers (CDW), Ward Councillor and Social Workers proved to be less popular.

Table 8.2: Institutions ranked by percentage of access by surveyed households (N= 614)	
Church	95.44
Clinic/Hospital	87.95
Bank	87.30
School	82.41
SASSA	80.78
Police Services	65.15
Traditional Authority	50.98
Creche	36.64
Initiation School	30.62
University	25.90
Traditional Healer	21.50
Social Worker	17.10
Ward Councillor	16.78
Lawyer/Attorney	4.40
CDW	3.09

As stated above, this implies that the difference in popularity will provide discursive and institutional environments that can be exploited strategically. Institutions that gain a lot of attention also provide a range of interaction points for those who seek social contact for their strategic goals. To those who prefer to get less attention institutions that involve less actors will provide a strategically convenient environment. Such rather straightforward implications for a strategically-inclined individual that seeks to 'exploit' the context in question are based on a perspective that interprets these institutional environments and their dominant discourses as separate fields in the Bourdieusian sense, e.g. a field of religious devotion or a field of local politics. In the perspective of Jessop's SRA they, however, constitute multiple entities within one and the same complex current conjuncture. This is illustrated and expanded on by findings from the correlative analysis, which supports the impression of much more complex contexts with particular strategically-selective properties that are less clear and extensively interrelated.

The correlative analysis of demographic factors and accessed institutions suggested that Location of Enquiry, Home Language, RRSE, and RPOI had some influence on the range of accessed institutions. A potential explanation for this finding may – as in most observations based on demographics in Chapter 7 – be found in the place of residence of the survey respondents. A set of three factors must be taken into account here. (1) *Language segregation*: Apartheid and Homeland settlement plans continue to have a persistent effect on the language structures of certain neighbourhoods. The researched neighbourhoods experienced the largest influx of new residents in the 1980s with clusters of streets and plots being occupied by families who had been removed from the same area, which inevitably

influenced the language that would be spoken at home in these areas. For example, in Rapotokwane's two neighbourhoods Tsamahansi and Snake Park the proportion of people speaking XiTsonga and SePedi is significantly higher to this day, while those living in Chachaneng and Mzimkhulu predominantly speak IsiNdebele at home. (2) *Differential planning*: the neighbourhoods of Libangeni were established and developed with very different intentions by the ruling Apartheid and Homeland elite. Libangeni's Vaalbank was planned as a well-developed proclaimed township with sufficient infrastructure for a range of necessary institutions such as schools, offices and clinics for the isiNdebele speaking elite of the Homeland. Allemansdrift B on the other side was not officially a township and was therefore under direct control of the Tribal Authority, to which the large numbers of families had to pay their dues. While Vaalbank was designed to create a comfortable environment to the Homeland's political and administrative elite, Allemansdrift B was used as a dumping ground for newcomers, a labour reserve for neighbouring Vaalbank and Siyabuswa, and a source of income to the 'Tribal' elite. Even though the democratically elected communal and provincial governments have attempted to even out the significant differences in infrastructure and service provision since 1994, they are still significant enough to explain the observed disparity in access to a range of services. (3) *Individual tactical/strategic response*: the differing access to services and institutional infrastructure in the neighbourhoods may have reverse effects on other demographic factors. It was established in the interviewer bias investigation that the Location of Enquiry strongly correlates with Home Language, Age and RPOI. Those residents with better income will be tempted to move to a 'better' part of town. Similarly, younger families will attempt to move closer to schools whenever plots become available in Vaalbank (respondents in Allemansdrift B were on average six years older than in Vaalbank), which in turn will have an impact on the level of RRSE in the neighbourhoods as older residents will generally score lower than younger ones in this regard due to the massive improvements in public education that were made since 1994.

This analysis presents a context wherein the access of institutions is not solely determined by the individual's strategic assessment as suggested by the descriptive analysis above. Historic spatial segregationist planning, the resulting (non)accessibility of institutions and the strategic and tactical ways in which other individuals and groups have responded to that context have an impact on the individual's utilization or avoidance of certain institutions. This means that the choice of those, who aim to gain attention by focusing on popular institutions, or who try to avoid the public eye by operating in less frequented environments, will not only be guided by the strategic choice of institution that others have made before them, but it will also depend on diverse arbitrary factors.

When searching for significant correlations between the priorities that people assign in their everyday practices and demographic factors, the highest number of significant results was produced with

regards to the respondents' Age, Location of Enquiry, RRSE, and – to a slightly lesser extent – their Home Language. As outlined above, these demographic factors are all tightly interrelated with the place of residence being a central explanatory factor. Knowledge of this circumstance will enable the strategically-inclined individual to seek support in those neighbourhoods where residents share their respective prioritisation. For example, somebody lobbying for Well-Working Government Services, Fixing the Wrongs of Apartheid, Owning Your Own Piece of Land, and Land Reform (items that were grouped together by the factor analysis and entitled 'Rehabilitation' by me) will be more successful in securing support in Rapotokwane and Allemansdrift B than in Vaalbank. At first sight, this could be explained by the fact that over 26 percent of respondents in Vaalbank indicated that they already possess a title deed while less than two percent did so in Allemansdrift B and even less than one percent in Rapotokwane. Ironically, when leaving the place of residence out of the equation no statistically significant differences were found between title deed and PTO holders with regards to these noble remedial goals cited above. However, in return title deed holders assigned a higher degree of importance to Politics in their personal life than those whose land has been allocated by PTO. In fact, when correlating demographic factors with the importance rating of all 26 'Section Five' items, Land Allocation Status, RPOI and the respondents' Gender produced the fewest statistically significant results. This implies that these three factors must be assumed to have little influence on the way in which people assign their priorities with regards to the prominent societal matters that were included in the questionnaire. Contradicting expectations that derive from my own qualitative and quantitative data and commonly accepted facts, this last finding challenges the understanding of strategically-selective contexts as being accessible through strategic calculation alone. As pointed out, the indicated priorities among the survey population differed significantly when comparing neighbourhoods, which also happen to differ with regards to their proportion of title deed holders. However, the difference in land allocation does not seem to have a statistically measurable influence on these differing priorities, contrary to what one would have expected. Furthermore, South Africa is one of the world's most unequal countries with regards to income and gender equality (stats sa 2020). Rural South African society widely continues to maintain a range of strict gender hierarchies as shown by the fact that my interlocutors in significant governmental and administrative positions were exclusively men (see Chapter 5). Throughout my time in the field, I observed that an open display of occupational and financial success through demeanour and material lifestyle was a widely accepted practice even in this rural and economically stressed environment. From all of this, one should conclude that prominent distinction markers such as occupation, income and gender have an effect on the way individuals assess their social surroundings, but the statistical data does not support this as explained in the upper half of this paragraph. As acknowledged in Chapter 7 this may raise critical questions regarding the

statistical method and analysis, but I insist that it is rather a crucial observation as it has implications for the assessment of strategically-selective context by the strategically-able individual.

The analysis of *descriptive* data above suggested that strategically-able individuals will assess strategically-selective contexts in rather straightforward ways: knowledge of popular binarily informed discourses can be exploited to gain and sustain popularity and the differential frequentation of institutions can be used to gain or avoid attention. The *correlative* analysis of *demographics* and *institution access* then made things more complicated, but at least comprehensible: institutions are understood as separate Bourdieusian fields with a deep history; strategically-inclined individuals with intimate knowledge of historical settlement and development patterns possess a clear advantage. The *correlative* analysis of *demographic factors* and *importance rating* (survey: 'Section Five') now joggles this comprehensibility: some factors that were expected to be of relevance due to intimate knowledge of the context seem to play a rather insignificant role; the strategically-inclined individual depends not only on discursive dexterity and intimate knowledge of the strategically-selective context, but also needs to rely on instinct and ignore those dimensions that may seem relevant at first but that are actually negligible for no obvious reason. This lack of predictability or (from an academic analytical standpoint) lack of reproducibility is a strong indicator for a context that is neither simple nor complicated, but complex.

The complex character of this strategically-selective context is further illustrated by looking at the correlative analysis of accessed institutions and personal importance ratings. It concluded that some variables were found more useful in indicating contrasts and associations among the surveyed population. However individual preferences and institutional connections were found to correlate in an unforeseeable and therefore complex way. For example, on one hand, the institutions that represent the Tradition/Modernity binary on the political level (i.e. Ward Councillor and Traditional Authority) were found to have no significant influence on the way people prioritize temporal dimensions in their everyday life. On the other hand, Initiation Schools and Traditional Healers seemed to play a statistically significant role in the investigation of this strategic binary, contrary to their 'political' counterparts. This implies that, even though the Tradition/Modernity binary may locally be applied for discursive and other strategic purposes, its institutional manifestations and their interplay with the binary's abstracted values are less definable and more dynamic than the conventional Eurocentric perspective would stereotypically assume. A more thorough discussion of this matter follows in the second half of this chapter.

One crucial step in the statistical analysis of the 26 'Section Five' items was the factor analysis. Originally designed to "reduce a data set to a more manageable size while retaining as much of the original information as possible" (Field 2013: 17.2.) this technique allows a more thorough

understanding of the underlying structure of a set of variables based on the way they correlate with one another. The result were five different groups of items that I captioned 'Rehabilitation', 'State Obligations', 'Traditional Expositions', 'Echoes of Modernity', 'Solidary Providence', plus one set of four items that could not be assigned to one single factor. The implication of this is that survey respondents who ranked each of the 26 items according to the importance that they personally assigned to them, responded similarly to certain sets of items, thus forming prioritisation clusters. Correlations were more significant among items of a particular cluster, implying that respondents who responded to a particular item in a certain *positive or negative* way were more likely to rate the other items in the same cluster in a similar fashion. This does not imply that there were no correlations between items of different clusters. As shown in 7.3.4 there were plenty of correlations between items of very different clusters, e.g. between the items included in Factor groups entitled 'Rehabilitation' and 'State Obligations'. Then again, some items revealed less trans-cluster correlations, e.g. the 'Traditional Dispositions' items showed only few correlations with those grouped as 'Rehabilitation' and 'Echoes of Modernity'. Some items that were expected to correlate, e.g. Modern Lifestyle and Equality Between all South Africans, did not do so. Others that were not expected to correlate did so anyway, e.g. Traditional Leadership and Democratic Rules. Handily, the strongest correlation (depending on mathematical method used in the analysis respectively) between items was identified for the two pairings that represent both central themes of this thesis with Land Reform * Owning your Own Piece of Land and also Traditional Lifestyle * Traditional Leadership being the highest scorers.

Figure 8.1 Visualization of 'Section Five' factor analysis clusters; curved lines depict a few examples of cross-factor correlations

In order to decipher what this means for our understanding of this particular strategically-selective context that tactically- and strategically-inclined individuals need to navigate, a visualisation of these clusters becomes necessary. This particular interpretation of the Factor Analysis structures the collected data into a sort of map (see Figure 8.1) on which 22 of the 26 items belong to a particular cluster while the remaining four are loosely located in between. This map must not be regarded as an actual guidance device for discourse in the researched areas; the survey's list of 26 'Section Five' items is too short to reflect all more or less dominant local discussion points. Furthermore, out of the 325 item pairings 208 produced significant *p*-values; an accurate yet perspicuous graphic visualisation thereof requires software-based modelling skills that go beyond the capacities of this particular research(er). What this graphic representation however reveals is the close or distant relation of different topics and discourses. From a Bourdieusian perspective the map may be used to describe several fields and subfields that individuals and their habituses inhabit. The habitus is on one side conditioned by the field and on the other it contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127). This means that, in the Bourdieusian perspective, an individual who finds themselves navigating a context with the above described clustering of priorities will adapt their habitus accordingly. Somebody wishing to address matters of land reform, for example, will also have to be prepared to encounter and respond to the other three topics within that particular cluster and they will therefore increase their knowledge and adapt their perspective onto them, thus re-conditioning their own habitus. By doing so, they will sustain and possibly even strengthen these particular clusters as other actors will see themselves obliged to do so, too. This hypothetical inference seems also very similar to the Giddensian duality of structure: individual conduct is produced through the use of structures and simultaneously the rules and resources that these structures contain are reproduced and maintained (Mouzelis 1989: 615). However, what both perspectives neglect is the crucial role of the individual's tactical inclination and strategic ability in complex contexts that provide countless pathways for agency. In this case, as previously mentioned, 26 items provided the potential for 325 *bivariate* correlations of which 208 (64 percent) proved statistically significant. A more thorough *multivariate* correlation analysis and additional undoubtedly available and relevant items/variables would *exponentially* increase these figures and reveal even more correlations beyond the identified clusters. Add the previously discussed correlation with demographic factors and accessed institutions, plus any further factors that were not tested for in this survey, and you will end up with a context that is more complicated than any two-dimensional graphic illustration can represent let alone more complex than any ontological model may fathom. This complexity offers not only ambiguities and analytical frustration but also countless pathways for agents with intimate knowledge of this context to navigate and exploit it. While the Bourdieusian *field* concept – and to a lesser degree the Giddensian interpretation of these results – ascribes the upper hand to *field* and *structure*, the

potential underlying complexity that emerges from this survey and Jessop's acknowledgement of the individual's capacity to respond to that complexity draw a very different picture.

According to Jessop, both structure and agency in their *observed* and *actual* representations carry within them traces of the respective other due to previous dialectical encounters. Assuming that this is also the case in the social context that is here described through survey data entails the following. A range of binary concepts are provided by the strategically-selective context as illustrated by some of the correlations outlined above and in the subchapters below. Once strategically-inclined individuals and groups make use of a particular binary such as Tradition/Modernity in a discursive setting they enter into the dialectical relation between structure and agency that Jessop has described. They not only allow the context to influence their own conduct, but by using the discursive binary strategically-inclined individuals ever so slightly alter the context towards a more stable or a more fragile state, depending on their intentions and performance. Adding a temporal dimension into this observation the question arises what happens to a discursive binary after it has been applied repeatedly over a long period of time. My hypothesis is that the strategic and contextual implications of any discursive binary will change over time and the potential for that change is increased the more individuals appropriate it in a strategic manner. This explains why, on the one side, the factor analysis revealed clusters around 'traditional' and 'modern' items, while on the other side the analysis also revealed significant correlation between the way people felt about <u>Traditional Leadership</u> and <u>Democratic Rules</u>. The Tradition/Modernity binary, and in particular the discourses that it is embedded in, have been shown to have undergone significant changes throughout space and time (see Chapter 4.1 and 8.2 below). I assume one of the reasons behind that change to be this particular binary's prevalent strategic discursive application.

On first glance, the dynamic and complex structure of the context that the survey attempted to describe could lead to the following two conclusions: (1) The more complex a context presents itself to the actors that navigate it, the more it motivates them to use simple discursive binaries in a strategic manner. (2) As a consequence of that same strategic action that applies binarily-informed tactics the context

Figure 8.2 Context-Agent Complexity Cycle
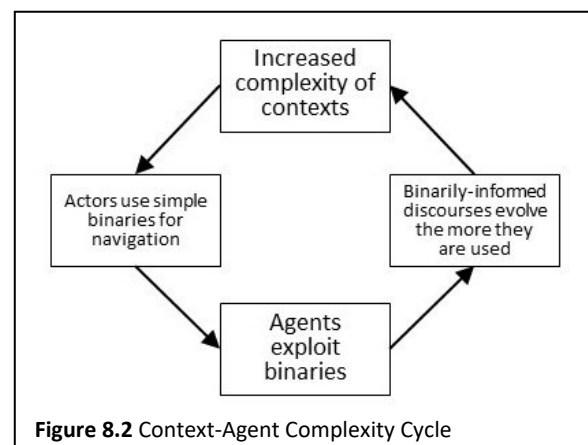
becomes even more complex, because any interaction between agents and structure accelerates the dialectic between the two. On second glance, however, this would imply that the complexity of any context is automatically and exponentially increased over time (see Figure 8.2). That is because the

two conclusions above are based on a linear understanding of these processes. As Jessop has pointed out, the "'complexity of complexity' […] excludes any simple algorithm to generate explanations of complex

Figure 8.3 Adapted Context-Agent Complexity Cycle
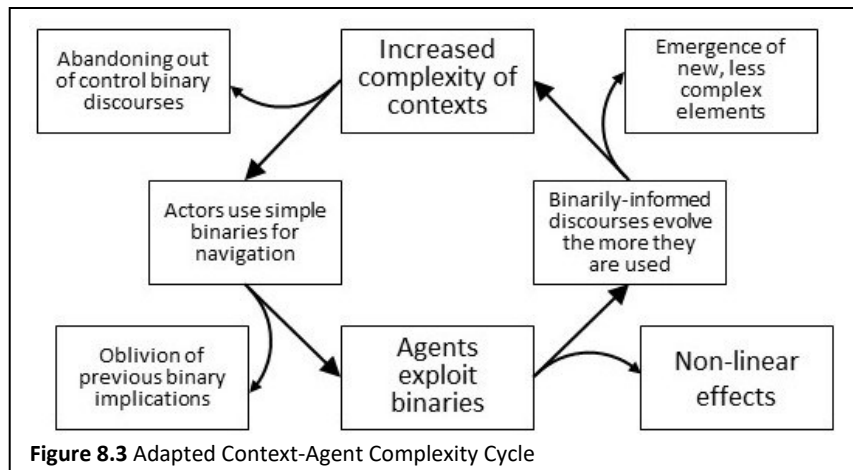
phenomena" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 229). The context-agent complexity cycle described above is only one out of many other potential discursive phenomena, albeit a prominent one. There are multiple ways in which this cycle can be interrupted or diverted (see Figure 8.3). For example:

(1) Powerful actors or groups of actors may decide to abandon certain binarily informed discourses as they may have become too complex to fulfil the demand for simplification.

(2) The intensified development of a certain binary may lead to a loss of awareness of its origins and previous meanings.

(3) Remember the six ontological cause-effect implications that Jessop derived from the world being an infinitely complex open system mentioned towards the beginning of Chapter 2E.3.3[83].

(4) Luhmann has pointed out that "systems of a higher (emergent) order can possess less complexity than systems of a lower order because they determine the unity and number of the elements that compose them; thus in their own complexity they are independent of their material substratum." (Luhmann 1995: 22)

Further, graphically less displayable, explanations for a reality that does not escalate into exponentially increasing complexity through the exploitation of strategic discursive binaries include, for example, the divergent characteristics of different binaries. Some binaries are rather flexible, while others are rather rigid. Depending on the context some binaries may be overly popular while others are barely used, which could explain why some evolve rapidly while others evolve rather slowly. In some contexts the effects are predictable when a certain binary is applied discursively while in others the effects are utterly unpredictable. Nonetheless the circular relationship between complex contexts, tactically-able actors' inclination to simplify these contexts through binaries, strategically-inclined actors to use them to their own advantage, and the evolution of these binaries into more complex contexts is not only

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[83] "(a) the same causes can lead to different and/or divergent effects; (b) different causes can produce the same effects; (c) small causes can entrain very big effects; (d) big causes can produce quite small effects; (e) causes are followed by contrary effects; (f) the effects of antagonistic causes are uncertain" (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 229, citing Schriewer 1999, citing Morin 1980)

possible but, in light of the discussed survey results, probable and furthermore adequate throughout the following analysis.

As sufficiently illustrated, Jessop adopts the assumption by critical realists that the empirical (what is observed) is triggered by the actual (events that take place), which in turn is the result of the real (the underlying generative structures/causal mechanisms)(see Chapter 3.2.2). By operating on this abstract to concrete spectrum he develops a model that tracks the strategic-relational co-evolution of structure and agency through five stages of development. It begins with the underlying 'real' dichotomy of structure and agency and ends in a triangular relation between *Reflexively Reorganized Structural Configurations* on the structure side, *Recursively Selected Strategies and Tactics* on the agency side, and the "apparently self-reproducing social configuration" (Jessop 2005: 50) of *Structured Coherence* or *Patterned Incoherence* as the ultimate 'empirical' outcome of the two. If we adapt this ontology to binarily informed discourses, it should be possible to identify a range of underlying binaries that operate beyond their empirically observed representations. While Chapter 4 concluded with the highly relevant observation that the discussed binaries do by no means mirror the complex character of social realities in the field, such an exercise permits us to assume that these complex social realities are in fact shaped by underlying binaries. In the following section a prominent example of such a binary is re-examined.

8.2 A binary revisited: Tradition/Modernity

The Tradition/Modernity binary was briefly mentioned in the discussion of context-related correlative analysis above, but ultimately it deserves a more thorough analysis based on the empirical data presented in this thesis. The binary has been extensively explored in Chapter 4.1; using ethnographic data from the encounters with two Sangomas in Libangeni the subchapter illustrated a certain transcended understanding of both 'tradition' and 'modernity' on the emic level. From a theoretical anthropological perspective it discussed the long-obsolete colonial understanding of 'tradition versus modernity' as a dichotomy that allows colonizers to force a discursive temporalized hierarchy upon the colonized. Further, the chapter presented Probst, Deutsch and Schmidt's (2002) threefold approach of structuring anthropology's problematic (post-)colonial relationship with 'modernity': modernity as contagion, modernity as necessity, and modernity as contingency. Bringing the latter of the three and the ethnographic vignettes of the two Sangomas together, I concluded the subchapter in pointing out the strategic merit that a flexible understanding of 'tradition' and 'modernity' entails for those who apply this discursive binary pair in their everyday life.

Both the qualitative and the quantitative data presented so far refute the empirical existence of a strictly dichotomous 'tradition versus modernity' binary. As mentioned in the first half of this chapter, the lack of significant correlation between the household access to 'traditional' and 'modern' political institutions and the individual prioritization of particular temporal dimensions suggest that the stereotypically temporalized relation between 'tradition' and 'modernity' is absent from the data. In a similar vein, however, the quantitative data indicated that 'tradition' and 'modernity' nonetheless exist as thematic concepts that contain some of their stereotypical properties. The factor analysis of 'Section Five' produced five clusters. One of them, captioned 'Traditional Dispositions', contained three items: Traditional Lifestyle, Traditional Leadership, and Ancestral Worship. The former two items, as mentioned above, produced one of the highest bivariate correlation values of the statistical analysis, implying that survey participants rated these two items in a highly similar way. Another of the five clusters contained the items Modern Lifestyle, Making Your Own Decisions, Equality Between Men and Women, South Africa's Past, and Your Personal Past. Based on common perceptions of the 'political' implications of 'modernity' it was possible to directly explain the correlation of the former three items. However, the latter two items were concerned with the past and therefore would not correspond to the current understanding of 'modernity', situated in the present and orientated towards the future, indicating that these five items had a different common denominator that tied them together. Struggling to define what this common denominator might be – assuming that one exists to begin with – I settled for 'Echoes of Modernity' as a caption for this cluster, the arguably naïve rationale being that 'modern' perspectives in the first two decades of the 21st century may not only be based on

concrete values such as gender equality and personal freedom, but also on collective and individual experiences in the past that may have provoked them. This interpretation on the one side abandons the temporalized understanding of the 'tradition versus modernity' dichotomy while simultaneously acknowledging 'tradition' and 'modernity' as related yet distinct individually prioritised – and therefore discursively exploitable – themes or clusters.

As analytical aides I have 'recycled' the three categories introduced by Probst, Deutsch and Schmidt mentioned above. Nevertheless I have rearranged their order and audaciously reinterpreted them to suit my analytical needs. The aim of the following sections will be to illustrate the contingent relationship between 'tradition' and 'modernity' as distinct discursive realms and how that *contingency* creates opportunity for strategic creativity. Two empirically identified ways in which these two entities have been used as a strategic discursive devices (i.e. *contagion* and *necessity*) will then demonstrate how the primary simplification of these entities as a simple binary results in a secondary intensification of the complexity between and around them.

8.2.1 Contingency and the Diversification of Fault Lines

Probst, Deutsch and Schmidt's description of 'modernity as contingency' refers to the shape that 'modernity' took in the anthropological discourse after its post-colonial deconstruction and re-interpretation, "appearing now as a contingent process with nevertheless definite effects in the domains of cultural practice" (2002: 10f). In a similar vein I was able to identify certain strategies applied by the two Sangomas whose perspectives on the binary in question were used for illustration in Chapter 4.1. However, taking these strategies and perspectives beyond the mere literary exemplary application and towards a more thorough analytical understanding requires a closer look at the contexts within which they, and by extension most of my interlocutors, presented themselves to me. How did the strategically-selective context suggest 'modern' and 'traditional' themes to be strategically applied as distinct discursive entities with yet flexibly defined qualities? Returning once more to the quantitative data provided by the survey may provide further insight.

The notorious 'Section Five' importance ratings were generally higher the more institutions had been accessed by the respondents' household members. While – as a precaution against misinterpretation – this observation is to be kept in mind whenever such particular correlation values have been presented above and below, it raises the question what caused respondents with a wider range of institutional connectivity to rate most of an arbitrary set of 26 concrete and abstract items as more important to them personally than those with less institutional interactions. While this question surely deserves further more thorough investigation in other research ventures, I allow myself to suggest two speculative explanations at this point. (A) Either people with less social interaction have less reason to

appreciate the entities that constitute the social reality that surrounds them. In other words, the less structural interaction points an actor searches/finds, the less opportunity/motivation they have to make use of their own agential abilities. (B) Or, virtually in reverse, people who show a greater appreciation for the world that surrounds them will seek to be more socially connected. In other words, actors with higher agency are more likely to interact with the structures that surround them. I ask the reader to keep these two sides of the same explanatory coin in mind for later reference.

'Section Five' provided two explicitly 'traditional' items: Traditional Lifestyle and Traditional Leadership. Both of these variables produced a diverse set of correlations and observations. Respondents from households with recent initiation school attendance (24.6%) were more likely to have 'extreme' opinions about Traditional Lifestyle (i.e. either 1 = very unimportant or 5 = very important). Respondents from households with no recent initiation school attendance were more likely to choose the provided Likert scale's middle ranks (2 = unimportant, 3 = undecided, 4 = important). On average, respondents from households with initiation school attendance found Traditional Lifestyle 0.47 points more important, which is not a considerably large margin in comparison to other items. This observation allows for two deductions. First, the experience that people have directly and indirectly made in/with initiation schools is directly relatable to the way they feel about Traditional Lifestyle. I was able to record how Initiation Schools received extreme reviews among the population during my time in the field. Some people praised the strengthening of personal bonds and cultural identity among the initiates. Others lamented the high rate of deaths among male participants that had occurred in previous years due to poor sanitary conditions and lack of medical supervision during circumcision rituals. With regards to local opinions on female initiation schools I was barred from the discussion due to me being a male foreigner, but from conversations with Patrick I could deduct that also here public opinion seemed to diverge. Secondly, the observation that initiation school experiences can trigger extreme notions about Traditional Lifestyle indicates the mouldable qualities of the 'traditional' label. 'Tradition' seems to be a term that welcomes the projection of personal experiences onto it and by providing a large catchment area for a wide range of social activities and institutions its discursive persistence under flexible terms and conditions is ensured.

Significant correlations were also found for Traditional Leadership and a range of recently accessed institutions, i.e. Traditional Healer, Initiation School, University, Crèche, CDW, and Lawyer/Attorney. In all cases the importance rating for Traditional Leadership was significantly higher when one of these institutions had been accessed by the household as against those where this was not the case. The latter two institutions can be disregarded due to their wide-ranging lack of relevance among the survey population, which allows occasional outliers to render a pairing statistically significant. With regards

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to Traditional Healer and Initiation School a rather straightforward explanation based on thematic relation suggests itself. However, an explanation why respondents who had a member of the household attend University or a Crèche rated Traditional Leadership significantly more important than those who did not is less straightforward. Surely, a range of hypothetical scenarios comes to mind, similar to the one of Councillor Komape, whose ambition it was to establish Traditional Healing as centrally licensed profession and academic field of study. Furthermore, it is crucial to keep in mind the point raised above: the more institutional interaction the respondents' households had, the higher the importance rating in 'Section Five'. However, this makes another observation even more crucial to note: there was no statistically identifiable difference in the appreciation of Traditional Leadership when comparing those participants whose household members had recently made use of the Ward Councillor's or the Traditional Authority's services in comparison to those who had not. This observation implies that, despite the observed tendency that increased institution interaction positively influences importance ratings, the (non-)appreciation for Traditional Leadership is not significantly influenced by previous experiences with institutions that are fundamental to the political landscape of the researched villages. Again, two potential explanations for this observation come to mind. (A) Either, Traditional Authority and Ward Councillor play such an insignificant role to the majority of survey respondents that their answers were random enough to produce no statistically significant correlation. (B) Or, the two institutions are regarded as solely political while Traditional Leadership is regarded as a purely cultural/customary concept that has nothing to do with them. In the early phases of my field research, doing door-to-door interviews, I asked my interlocutors what was so 'traditional' about the local Traditional Authority. Most of the time they answered to the effect of: there is nothing 'traditional' about the TA; they are 'traditional' because they used to be 'tribal' which was rebranded in the transition years (1990-94).

The presentation of all of these findings creates a contingent image of 'tradition', which seems to simultaneously be informed by individual experience and open to individual interpretation, yet detached from political institutions. Thus the question arises how a concept that seems to statistically evade any stereotype can be accessible as such a valuable strategic tool. Ultimately, the survey data also measured up to some more conventional expectations, for example along lines of Age and Gender. Both Traditional Lifestyle and Traditional Leadership were regarded as significantly more important by men and by older participants. Further, Traditional Lifestyle found larger appreciation among those participants with a lower RRSE. The latter observation must, however, be taken with a pinch of salt as the data also established a generally lower RRSE among the older population. With regards to ethnic affiliation it was observed that IsiNdebele-speaking households in Allemansdrift B were almost twice as likely as SePedi-speaking ones to have made use of an initiation school in the previous year, which corresponds to the fact that this part of Libangeni has been historically dominated by Ndebele

leadership and culture. In Vaalbank, the former proclaimed township and residential area of choice for many local language groups, in turn no differences in this regard were observed. In Rapotokwane, three observations related to Home Language were made. First, 46.7 percent of Tsonga/Shangaan speaking households had recently made use of a Sangoma while only 7.5 percent of Ndebele speaking households had done so. This observation squares with the commonly accepted notion that most Ndebele families in Rapotokwane abandoned 'traditional' practices several decades ago in favour of devout Christianity. Secondly, SePedi and IsiZulu speaking households were significantly more likely to have recently approached the Ward Councillor than the local Ndebele, which – even though the local Ward Councillor at the time had family ties to the Lithos – does not surprise given that village governance was controlled by the Litho Traditional Council and the democratically-elected councillor was the only available alternative to them. Third, there were no significant differences between the local language groups with regard to accessing the Traditional Authority, which underpins its political relevance rather than its cultural one.

With regards to Modern Lifestyle a range of stereotypically informed expectations were confirmed. For example, it received a higher degree of appreciation among the younger survey population. The item was rated as significantly more important by the residents of Vaalbank in comparison to the other two survey locations, possibly due to better infrastructure and a younger population. This particular item was also rated more important by title deed holders than PTO holders, the majority of the former reside in Vaalbank. Those respondents whose household members had recently attended University rated Modern Lifestyle 0.68 points more important on average. Making Your Own Decisions, an arguably 'modern' item, produced several significant results, being more important to younger respondents and to those who had received better standard education. Furthermore, there were significant differences between all three settlements, residents of Vaalbank ranking Making Your Own Decisions the highest. In nine out of ten significant pairings respondents' answers produced a higher mean importance score for Making Your Own Decisions when having accessed the institution in question, which is in line with the findings above. The odd one out was in this case the pairing Making Your Own Decisions * Traditional Authority, where the item was rated 0.26 points less important amongst those who had confirmed contact to the TA.

All of these latter observations point to a strategically-selective context around 'tradition' and 'modernity' with plenty of stereotypical fault lines defined by age, gender, education, language and place of residence, which throughout the centuries have made these abstract concepts accessible as a strategic binary in the first place. However, the excessive strategic use and adaption of this constructed binary throughout history has – in particular in the context of rapid social change in KwaNdebele since the 1980s – created an exponentially growing amount of strategic-relational conjunctions, producing,

on the one side, seemingly contradictory circumstances: For example, Vaalbank residents found Modern Lifestyle more important, but Traditional Healers were more than twice as popular in this particular part of Libangeni than in the other two researched areas. Or, the younger respondents were, the better their education was, the less likely it was that their family had recently accessed social security provider SASSA, but youth unemployment in South Africa is among the highest in Southern Africa having reached about 43 percent at the time of the survey (World Bank 2023). On the other side, the more contingent and the more diverse the fault lines of the Tradition/Modernity binary become due to the apparent contradictions that occur in relation to it, the more flexibly it can be used as a strategic tool.

Looking at the leadership dispute among the Litho Ndzundza the debate mostly focused on arguments of origin and performance legitimacy, which will be discussed in Chapter 9. One discussion point that was raised to me very early during my time in the field was the status of Chief Witbooi at the time of the Witlaagte purchase. In the purchase agreement and the title deed he was named as Acting Chief, I was told. Some explained this through the fact that his half-brothers were simply too young to rule and Witbooi therefore served as a regent, thus following the 'traditional' historically well-established practice of leadership succession. Another group, however, claimed that the Litho Ndzundza had after the passing of Jas-David decided to become a more democratic society that would only need a Chief as an official representative but not as decision maker. The latter explanation, however, became increasingly unpopular among the local elite and thus rather the status of Witbooi and his brothers and nephews was at the centre of the debate. This shows how the same circumstance (i.e. the mentioning of Witbooi as Acting Chief on an almost century old document) could be interpreted in both 'modern' and 'traditional' ways due to the contingent character of the discursive binary formed by them. In the following I present two further more prominent strategies around the binary in question.

8.2.2 Contagion: the Convenient Menace - Necessity: the Inevitable Excuse

The narrative of 'us versus them' in all of its various shapes is a repeatedly identified strategic tool throughout my field data. The overused trope of 'tradition versus the world' is one example thereof and it presented itself as a strategic tool that was conveniently applied and adapted by certain interlocutors. Different to the original understanding of 'modernity as contagion' constituting a threat to an idealized understanding of 'pure tradition', I deliberately also include other potential threats at this point, as well as perspectives that regard 'tradition' as the bulwark against a vague menace looming in the undefined distance.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II urged his subjects to stand united as one Ndebele nation at his speech at the annual KoMjekejeke celebrations. He did not directly refer to the leadership dispute which at the time caused a certain unrest among the Ndebele population of the former Homeland. Rather, he depicted other South African Nations as a threat to the existence of all Ndebele; the Ndebele as a people were – according to him – being outsmarted into non-existence by others without explicitly defining the latter. His ulterior reasoning behind this warning of danger from the outside seemed to be that a nation united against a common (yet undefined) menace will be more willing to settle internal disputes.

In previous interviews with the *iNgwenyama*'s personal secretary Hendrick Kgomo (see Figure 5.4) and with Royal Historian Jeremiah Mabhena (see Figure 1E.1) a similar picture was painted when we discussed the privileges that the Zulu Traditional Leadership elite enjoyed in comparison to the Ndebele representatives. Kgomo explained that South African society had its foundation in 'tradition' and that therefore any democratic government that tried to do away with 'tradition' would lose the support of the people. In this line of argumentation 'tradition' was used synonymously with Traditional Leadership. He also explained that any citizen who found themselves living in the area of the *iNgwenyama*'s jurisdiction was free to practice their own culture as long as they accepted his authority. Thus, he established the *iNgwenyama* as a political figure, whose power was primarily based upon his subjects' residential status and his jurisdiction within a certain location, rather than on the societal consolidation of the culture he claimed to be spearheading. Both Kgomo and Mabhena repeatedly and independently from each other portrayed the *iNgwenyama* as the guardian of his subjects with regards to land reform, explaining that PTOs were an excellent protection against the exploitation of land occupants by greedy corporations. They explained that title deeds used by land owners as collateral for bank loans would inevitably lead to mass expropriation and therefore the PTO-based system should stay in place and ideally the Traditional Authority should hold all title deeds to protect its citizens. Mabhena went even further explaining that the re-opening of land restitution gave Traditional Authorities the chance to claim on behalf of those people who had been disadvantaged in the first settlement phase. Kgomo then explained that other Traditional Leaders, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, had lost sight of their duty to protect the land and the people due to corruption and state-sponsored amenities. He suggested that all recognised Royal Families must receive the same financial support from the government while Mabhena in turn expressed his general frustration with any non-traditional institutions, dismissing them all as "scam" and "politics". Mabhena's lack of differentiation between governmental actors and private institutions such as the previously discussed Mmahlabane Trust, which seemed to easily enrage him, exemplifies a grievance that many public servants and politicians, who dealt with Traditional Authority representatives on a daily basis, expressed towards me. While

most of them ascribed it to a certain ignorance among the 'traditional' elite, I assume that Mabhena's argumentation was much more guided by strategy than he might have freely acknowledged.

Makhosonke II and his senior advisers Kgomo and Mabhena craftily designed an argumentative circuit. In a first step 'tradition' is self-evidently declared to be synonymous with Traditional Leadership, which in turn is presented as a political institution whose representatives have the obligation to protect their subjects. The postulate that 'tradition' is the same as Traditional Leadership is crucial here and this can be seen as a direct symptom of the abovementioned contingency that characterises 'tradition'. Then in a second step it is assumed that 'traditional' subjects cannot be trusted to own land wherefore it is the responsibility of Traditional Leaders to protect that land by owning it on the people's behalf, which goes to prove that people need 'tradition'. While this argumentative circle depends on a range of postulates, two of them could only be expressed under the assumption of an exterior threat. First, Traditional Leadership is a political institution, because other South African cultures have always and will always constitute an exterior menace to the Ndebele people. Second, people who own the title deed to their land will lose the land, because the only motive for banks to grant loans is, upon seemingly inevitable debt default, the confiscation of land that served as collateral. And because all non-traditional institutions act in collusion, it is once more the responsibility of 'tradition' to save the day. Furthermore, whenever Traditional Leadership fails it is not the fault of 'tradition': as can be seen by example of the begrudged Zulu Royals, who have supposedly only failed their own people after having been corrupted by 'modernity'. Ironically, Kgomo's solution to the problem was not a reduction of government funded allowances to the Zulu leadership but an increase of the same for the Ndebele and all other acknowledged kingships.

There were, however, also examples of 'tradition' itself being portrayed as the menace, which could allegedly only be halted by fully embracing 'modernity' as an inevitable necessity. One excellent example thereof was ironically found at CoGTA: Director of Land Use Management Mr Bheka Ngwenya. His perspective onto Traditional Authorities was that they originated in the Homeland system and that their persistent existence constituted a continuation of that system. He claimed that local TAs knew very well that they did no longer own the land and that they had no official authority to administer it either. Any claims of unawareness of that fact were only audacious pretence in an attempt to cling onto the power formerly granted by the Apartheid government, he explained. He painted a picture wherein the only thing that stopped TAs from taking full control again was South Africa's democratic constitution and the laws that derive from it. To him the only purpose of TAs had to be the maintenance of cultural heritage and any attempt to have them be part of state administration entailed the risk of state failure. The new traditional court bills being discussed at the time were unnecessary in his regard as most TA representatives were generally not skilled enough to interpret the law. This lack of skills he

put down to a seemingly inherent incompetence among TA representatives rather than a lack of empowering education offers for them. He rebutted claims of some of my other interlocutors, who had lamented that Traditional Leaders had simply no way of getting to know their rights and duties due to a lack of education programs. According to Ngwenya these offers existed but Traditional Leaders were either intellectually not able or strategically not willing to appreciate them. Thus, the future of Traditional Authorities was already clear to him: the people would inevitably one day get rid of their Traditional Leaders and Traditional Authorities as they longed for modernisation and the expunction of all remnants of the Homeland system.

Ngwenya's perspective conflates two strategic uses of the Tradition/Modernity binary. On the one side he portrays 'tradition' as the menace that seems to endanger the democratic order in South Africa, contrary to the appreciation that government representatives have persistently expressed towards Traditional Authorities through rhetoric and policy since the Mbeki presidency. This way he conveniently justifies the existence of his own government department and his lucrative senior position, by depicting himself as being at the front line of protecting land and people from the resurrection of the Homelands by setting boundaries and reining in overambitious Chiefs. On the other side he portrays 'modernity' as an inevitable necessity and thus excuses his dismissive opinion of Traditional Leadership. One potential strategic use of 'modernity' derives from its seemingly inevitable character. If 'modernity' is presented and understood in such a way that it will definitely happen under any circumstance, it seems futile to fight its arrival. And if 'modernity' is regarded as the binary opposite of 'tradition', what a better excuse is there to abandon the latter than the former's apparent inevitable necessity? Whether such reasoning is successful, however, depends on the context within which it is expressed and in particular for representatives of 'tradition' this particular strategy can become a walk on the tight rope.

Alfred Mahlangu and Iggy Litho changed their strategic approaches when circumstances around the Rust de Winter land claim changed. Realizing that their attritional conflict over land control and political dominance in the village had reached a turning point they decided to call a truce and join forces (see Chapters 6.3.3 and 9.3). A strategically-able individual will continuously observe the strategically-selective contexts that they operate in and, if they are strategically-inclined, adjust their strategy accordingly. In a similar way the Manala Royal House abandoned the 'traditional' approach to political power and land control in the transition years of 1990-94, as extensively discussed in Chapter 2E.3.3. Several groups staked claims to Rust de Winter at the time, in particular the farms that had been expropriated by the South African government to consolidate the KwaNdebele Homeland in the wake of its failed 'independence'. Submitting a memorandum to ACLA in 1993 the Manala Royal House demanded that the control over eight farms in the area be given to a Manala-controlled Trust. Even

though the historical presence of the Lithos in the area was acknowledged in the memorandum, it was straightforwardly argued that this must be ignored in favour of an economically and politically more viable alternative, i.e. the Manala-led trust. The demands remained unanswered, similar to so many groups who tried to claim their share in Rust de Winter, which turned more and more into a literal and figurative battleground. Eventually, it seems that the Manala Royal House abandoned its 'non-traditional' strategy of argumentation, which had disregarded the Lithos' historical grounds for restitution, and returned to 'traditional' arguments in the succession dispute in front of the Nhlapo Commission (see Chapter 5.3).

While Makhosonke II was surely not opposed to the amenities of what South Africans refer to as 'modern' lifestyle, the strategy adjustment surely served him well, winning the Nhlapo Commission's endorsement and several related court cases in the aftermath, based on one particular colonial interpretation of supposedly century-old rules of succession (Delius 2021). His eventually defeated opponent Mbusi II Mabhoko III of the Ndzundza Royal Family clearly struggled more to adjust his strategy to the respective context. At the one occasion when I had the privilege to observe him at eRholweni in 2017, I witnessed the tension between 'tradition' and 'modernity' that can potentially arise when the context is not quite right for an open embrace of either of the two. Long before his arrival at the annual commemoration of King Nyabela, the face of latter's great-great-great-grandnephew Mbusi was presented on several displays around the central stage. One of the banners announced the release of a new maize meal brand that would bear Mbusi Mabhoko's name. Leaflets announcing the maize meal with the words "COMING SOON TO A SHOP NEAR YOU" and three different phone numbers for pre-orders were also being distributed. The young Ndzundza leader seemed to have embraced his role as a mascot and now tried to generate income by advertising consumables rather than his 'tradition'. Once he had arrived Mabhoko repeatedly disregarded customary procedure. He wore a smart Western suit and shirt instead of the 'traditional' full-body animal skin attire, which his Chiefs and Headman wore, and which also Makhosonke II showcased three months later at KoMjekejeke. Mabhoko proceeded from his car to the seating area in a fast pace giving the Ndzundza elders little chance to perform their entrance procession, and he sent his inebriated uncle to hold the widely anticipated annual speech instead of delivering it himself. All of these disregards for 'tradition' in favour of 'modern' conduct were surely a contributing factor to *Kgôsi* Mampuru's following public admonishment and for the publicly perceivable discontent among the population and the extended leadership circles of the Ndzundza in the months that followed. It seems that the Ndzundza leader had embraced the inevitably necessity of 'modernity' as an inevitable excuse. And at the same time he had misunderstood what kind of 'modernity' his people craved for in a context where infrastructure, education and stable jobs are much more necessary than maize meal mascots and opulent celebrations in the mountains.

8.3 Summary and Way Forward

The achievement of the six aims that were formulated at the beginning of this chapter was explicitly acknowledged to be a task for two chapters and two different analytical approaches. I was able to achieve the following so far. I identified distinctive characteristics of strategically-selective contexts in the field data by analysis of the survey data. A range of thematically related clusters and the network that extends between them illustrated the potential complexity that strategically-inclined agents need to navigate. Diverse strategic tools available to the agents within these contexts were also illustrated by elaborating strategically informed options of practice and by illustrating the exponentially available pathways of potential conduct. I also pointed out that, out of these strategic options, binarily informed tactics provided a certain creative advantage as they simplified the context but by engaging with it simultaneously had the potential to increase its complexity and thus create more avenues of agency.

However, I claim that in particular the last three aims formulated at the beginning of this chapter have not been sufficiently covered. Therefore the following chapter aims to focus more on: the alteration of contexts through strategically-driven tactics, the impact of argumentative binaries on complex contexts, and the implications that these have on individual agency. For that purpose I will abandon any ambition to follow Giddens's example of methodological bracketing and be fully committed to a thematically driven discussion.

Chapter 9 – Unbracketed: Legitimacy Discourses and Tactics

As this chapter is merely a continuation of the analytical process that was initiated in the previous chapter, a simple recapitulation of aims and achievements must suffice at this point. Six analytical aims were formulated at the beginning of Chapter 8: a characterisation of (1) strategic-relational contexts and (2) available strategic tools, (3) an illustration of chosen strategies, and (4) a description of how these strategies have changed the strategically-selective context they were applied in. Furthermore, clarification was promised on (5) how the strategic use of discursive binaries creates additional contextual complexity and (6) what implications these dynamics have for individual agency.

Based on survey data I was able to begin the analytical process by characterising some of the strategically-selective contexts that my field data originated from. I also listed a range of hypothetical strategies that strategically-inclined actors could choose to follow in such a context. I then used the Tradition/Modernity binary to illustrate which of the available tactics was chosen by some of the most relevant individuals and communities in the field. Furthermore it was shown how the use of simplified popular binaries provoked discourse around them to evolve and how therefore the context within which they occurred became even more complex.

This chapter begins with an examination of the versatile role that the South African state plays in the research data and how some strategic practices seem to have become structural elements of the contexts within which they occur. Further, it will show how patterned incoherence creates a strategically exploitable space for local actors to manipulate said contexts. The following discussion of trauma and origin legitimacy once more highlights the potential of binary argumentative patterns to develop not only themselves but to influence the complexities within which they occur. Based on empirical observations of performance legitimacy, the final discussion of the significance of tactics concludes that the tension between binarily informed discourses and complex social realities holds a significant potential for increased agency. Under the precondition of a balanced tactical-strategic approach that takes into account both the strategic value of discursive binaries and the complex contexts within which they are deployed, grassroots agents are able to influence large-scale processes such as nationwide land reform.

9.1 The Roles and the Stratagems of the South African State

It is estimated that South Africa had a population of 57 million people in 2017 when my research survey was conducted. In that year the ANC, South Africa's ruling party since 1994, had 989,000 members (Patel 2020), which equals 1.74 percent of that population; other major South African parties are unfortunately more secretive regarding their membership statistics. Among the survey respondents of Libangeni and Rapotokwane 11.5 percent indicated having an ANC membership card. In total, 18 percent indicated being a member of a political party. In comparison, the seven largest parties in the United Kingdom had 993,034 members in total in 2019 (Audickas, Dempsey, and Loft 2019), i.e. 1.29 percent of the UK's population at that point. Even when statistical shifting effects due to the exclusion of under-18s from the survey are taken into account, the large proportion of politically affiliated survey participants in Libangeni and Rapotokwane remains impressive on a national and international level, even if one were to question the motives behind such memberships.

Furthermore, the survey data suggested a correlation between the higher importance of Politics[84] in participants' lives and the recent use of a Traditional Healer, Social Worker, Initiation School University, CDW, Crèche, Lawyer and Bank, implying that individuals with a higher degree of institutional involvement were more likely to appreciate the importance of political activities and vice versa. While it has previously (see Chapter 8.2.1) been noted that 'Section Five' importance ratings were generally higher the more institutions had been accessed by the respondents' household members, this observation is particularly noteworthy as Politics received the second lowest importance rating on average among all 26 'Section five' items.

These two statistical findings – a disproportionately high amount of political party members among survey respondents, and a correlation between the personal importance of Politics and the use of public institutions – indicate a strong presence of and even a significant degree of appreciation for the South African state as a politically constituted entity. This, however, stands in stark contrast with some survey data and some of the opinions and observations that I recorded in the field. For example, there was no significant correlation between the Land Allocation Status of survey respondents and recent household access to Traditional Authority or Ward Councillor, indicating that on the household level tenure reform as one of the state's most important reform projects had no measurable impact on people's political connectivity. While this quantitative observation makes the case for an assumption

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[84] It must be reiterated at this point that the inherently ambiguous character of the term 'politics' was soundly discussed in the survey design process. Through thorough testing we established that the survey item Politics was commonly associated to the power dynamics between individual and institutional representatives of the democratic South African state on the national, provincial and municipal level. The 'politics' of, for instance, Traditional Authorities, school policies, and land use were only regarded as being of a political nature by test survey respondents and other interview partners when a clear involvement of the South African state's diverse power structures was evident in current affairs.

of political complacency among the survey population, the Lithos' even more difficult relation with past suppressive South African governments has left many of them until this day in an understanding of not being part of the nation state and its administrative and legislative apparatus (see also section 9.2 below for further discussion). This is despite the democratic South African state having granted them the substantial citizen's rights which the Apartheid governments of South Africa and Bophuthatswana denied them for decades. Further, they continue to make extensive use of the state's powerful legal apparatus to fight for these rights. This ambivalent relationship with the South African state is also exemplified by individuals such as Ishmael Ndlovu, who was imprisoned in the course of the KwaNdebele Uprising but later became a senior government official (see Chapter 5). Back then he was captured and sentenced for throwing a petrol bomb into the car belonging to a senior Manala leader who Ndlovu believed to be a fervent supporter of *Mbokotho* and a conveniently vulnerable collaborator of SS Skosana's oppressive government. Despite having been freed from prison because of South Africa's transition to democratic majority rule, and despite being an influential employee of the state and a member of the ANC himself, he accused past democratic administrations of implementing a new Apartheid. He directly blamed the power politics of democratic leaders for the inability of Traditional Authorities to lead their people into a more prosperous future. According to him, Traditional Authorities were kept poor and powerless by the government since the Mandela presidency, having become mere foot soldiers that are being used to implement centralist ANC policies and to deliver votes to those that kept them in a subordinated position.

When discussing the different roles of the South African state in Rapotokwane and Libangeni it is however crucial to differentiate between three different modalities in which the state is (re)presented here, the first being the individual agents that represent the state's institutions by virtue of their office. Alfred Mahlangu described the circumstances of the unlawful occupation of land in Rust de Winter by his father Petrus as an act of opportunism (see Chapter 6.3): Petrus realized that change was imminent in South Africa and that this could be the decisive moment for the Lithos to regain what was rightfully theirs. His aim was to retake Rust de Winter at a time when the tides turned in favour of South Africa's Black population and where the realities of the here and now were being re-written. Land invasions had become a popular means to gain governmental attention for the injustices that persisted in a country in transition, especially in those areas where land ownership was unclear due to halted Homeland consolidations and governmental restructuring. It is unclear whether Petrus would have been more successful with larger popular support by the Litho clans or if the little that he achieved had actually been his primary goal all along. He was offered a deal by Derek Hanekom, who functioned as the ANC's coordinator of the Land and Agricultural desk at the time, and who would go on to become Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs in the new democratic government after the 1994 elections. The deal involved the end of the occupation of Rust de Winter by Petrus and his followers, Hanekom's

withdrawal of charges for the illegal land occupation, Petrus's option to obtain land in Rust de Winter through tenancy, and Hanekom's promise that institutionalized ways would be put in place to allow for the restitution of Rust de Winter to the Lithos.

Clearly, the deal between Alfred Mahlangu and Derek Hanekom involved two strategically-inclined individuals that successfully negotiated a mutually beneficial deal in a time of structural uncertainty, an uncertainty that will have closed the conventional avenues of navigating strategically-selective contexts while simultaneously opening up new more convenient pathways and shortcuts. This begs the question how more institutionally stable circumstances in the following years impacted the relationship between the state and the Lithos. It can be answered by taking a closer look at the second mode in which the South African state is represented in the political everyday of Rapotokwane and Libangeni. This is through the strategically-selective context that its institutions create. For example, the 1993 ACLA recommendation for Rust de Winter, which suggested a rejection of all applications for restitution, was even-handedly applied to all potential land claimants by those land restitution institutions that were established in late 1994. The fact that the ACLA originally only referred to the 68 White land owners who had been expropriated but supposedly fairly compensated (Zenker 2015c) in the late 1980s was either misunderstood or strategically ignored by the Department of Agriculture for a substantial length of time with regards to claims made by the Litho, the Manala, and other African communities. If it was a misunderstanding, it must have been a very plausible appearing one: not only land restitution institutions accepted it as policy guidance, but also those in charge of land redistribution and tenure reform assumed restitution to be irrelevant in Rust de Winter. The region was chosen for redistribution in Gauteng's land reform pilot project that same year. In this case, the context (which was based on false assumptions and interpretations) would have guided the tactics of land officials. However, it seems more plausible that the initial misinterpretation of the ACLA report was already a strategic device by decision makers within the administration. A blanket rejection of all restitution claims in Rust de Winter opened up lucrative development opportunities on this vast stretch of state-owned land. Furthermore, the DLA report of 1996 clearly states that, while there can be no doubt whether the Lithos occupied large parts of Rust de Winter between the 1870s and the 1920s, their claim for restitution on historical grounds should be rejected as it would "*tempt*" them to lodge claims for further areas that they previously occupied. It becomes clear that the rejection of the Litho claim was based less on legislated principles, but rather on the strategically informed concerns of state administrators at the time.

Both Hanekom's strategically guided negotiations as a representative of the state, and the 1993 ACLA recommendations that constituted a government policy enabling and motivating contextual factor, are captured in the following – admittedly rather abstract and thematically unrelated – application of the

SRA. Among other observations, Jessop concludes his analysis of multiscalar metagovernance in the European Union with the following:

> [The] SRA emphasizes the strategic selectivity of institutional arrangements. […] they are never neutral among actors, interests, spatio-temporal horizons, alliances, strategies, tactics, and so on. They also have their own distinctive modalities of success, failure, tension, crisis, reflexivity, and crisis-management. These selectivities and modalities depend on specific institutional, organizational, and practical contexts and few generalizations are possible about them (Jessop 2009 [2007]: 223)

While institutional arrangements are often regarded as structural features, Jessop's observation opens up the possibility of agency being at work within them through the agents that enforce these arrangements, but also through the strategic selectivity that has been inscribed in them through previous entanglements with strategically-inclined agents. Thus any interaction between the citizens of former KwaNdebele on one side and personalized or institutionalised representations of the state on the other is bound to be informed by strategic elements of conduct on both ends in one way or another.

In this context, the third presentation mode of the South African state in this particular field becomes apparent when considering that strategically-able agents require tactical tools to exert their agency in strategically-selective contexts: that is in this case, the state as a strategically-driven rhetorical device. This explains the above-mentioned apparent ambivalence between the acknowledgement and appreciation of the state and its political institutions on one side (cf. party membership statistics), and the widespread frustration with and rejection of the state in its everyday realisations on the other. The criticism of the state as it was expressed by Ishmael Ndlovu and the Lithos was not applied within a direct confrontation with the former's representatives and institutions, but was rather articulated for my sake in my position as an attentively listening interlocutor and researcher. This allowed them to illustrate their frustrations with the state and to put their enduring struggle into perspective. I do not wish to imply that I regard their illustrations as baseless or exaggerated, but I assume that their particular way of depicting the state was intentional, based on their long-term experiences and intentions and thus guided by strategy.

There were, however, also instances where the state was referenced as part of rather tactically informed exchanges in a seemingly spontaneous yet conscious way. The removal of Mabhoko III as Ndzundza King by the government was identified as the sole reason for the power struggles within the Royal Family by Prince Andries Mahlangu, despite leadership disputes having been a constituting structural element of Ndzundza leadership throughout the centuries (see Chapters 1E.1 and 5.3-4). Similarly, when asked why land claim P0050 had remained dormant for such a long time, Iggy Litho blamed the government for "*dragging their feet*" due to mining interests in Rust de Winter rather than

elaborating on the leadership conflict that had triggered the counterproductive existence of two separate claims in the first place (see Chapter 6.3.2). In both cases the South African state constituted a handy scapegoat to my interlocutors, whose aim it was to consolidate their own reputation and that of the group they claimed to represent. This particular scapegoat lent itself to the conversation through the thematically called for omnipresence of the state in the matters that were being discussed between us and through the simultaneous lack of a personified state representative in our conversation who could have contradicted the narration.

In both strategically and tactically informed exchanges, rhetorical references to the state as a seemingly homogenous agential force depend on a highly essentialised binary of *The People / The State* that eludes any reference to the structural and agential complexities of either. For example, in his erratic speech at eRholweni in 2017, Chief Maphepha lamented the existence of police protection orders that aimed to protect women and children from domestic violence (see Chapter 5.3). The target of his tirade were not the police, the court system, or the actual perpetrators of domestic violence, but rather politicians, who allegedly had no respect for 'traditional' matters. This lack of differentiation regarding the branches of government and the state's social and criminal justice systems may have been triggered by his inebriated state but it ultimately exemplifies this particular homogenised perspective upon the state apparatus in its entirety. Of course the person applying this essentialised binary and those who wish to associate with them are temporarily excluded as part of the state for the sake of rhetorical tactics.

The state has been manifested in a strategic-relational interchange with its citizens through these three modalities, which also once more illustrate how strategically-selective contexts can be described, what tactical tools they provide, and why some of these tools are more feasible for strategic use than others. The South African state is a constitutive element of a strategically-selective context, whose current conjuncture is a complex terrain composed of a multitude of interrelated asymmetrical battlegrounds. While these battlegrounds have already been extensively presented at this point, the concrete ways in which the state was incarnated as a contributing strategic tool or even as a strategically involved party are still to be discussed. In this regard I have identified three prominent thematic clusters, which also add further clarity on how the strategic use of certain tactical tools can manipulate strategically-selective contexts: 'dependence upon the state', 'ignorance is bliss', and 'the state's flaws and blessings'. All of these clusters are in one way or another showcased in the following vignette.

Two business partners, originally from Bangladesh, agreed to open a shop on a quiet road in Vaalbank's residential area. They received permission to do so by Headman Aphane, who decided that the matter should not be mentioned to the municipality as the planning bureau would surely have objections. He explained to me that he owed a favour to the gentleman who was renting out his garage to the two

merchants. He thus consolidated his relationship with the landlord of the garage and it also served the neighbourhood, because other shops were much farther away and small essentials such as sweets and phone credit were not significantly more expensive at the little shop than at the local franchise supermarket. The shop, however, also had unintended consequences: it became a popular meeting spot for the neighbourhood including local users of illegal drugs, who consumed and traded *Nyaope* on the vacated plot across the road from the shop. The situation remained like this for several months and most neighbours got accustomed to it. Then, however, the two merchants had a money-related disagreement, which led to a violent confrontation, in which one of them tied down the other and made death threats to him if he did not leave town. After the assault the victim approached the police who decided to refer the matter to Headman Aphane as he had allowed the shop in a residential area in the first place. He relied on his previous tactics to involve as few people as possible to reduce the risk of public attention. The two men had already caused too much uproar, because in the course of the violent confrontation, some opportunistic neighbours had looted the shop. Thus he decided to keep the matter private among those actors that were already involved and that he had close relations with. He demanded R3000 (ca. EUR 200 at the time) from the gentleman who had committed the violent offence against the other. The money was however not given to the victim. Aphane claimed that the money had been added to the communal administration fund of the Traditional Authority to support cultural activities. Some neighbours however witnessed how he distributed the money among the involved stakeholders (i.e. police, landlord, himself). When I asked him whether the matter had been reported to the *iNgwenyama*, he shrugged it off and said that he should not be bothered with such trivial matters. The assault victim remained empty handed and lost confidence in any of the local authorities, he told me. Out of spite he opened a new shop on the other side of the road where the local drug users had previously traded. This not only caused an upheaval among the neighbourhood dynamics – drug users now trying new hideouts and people having to assess their neighbourly loyalties, if they wanted to make use of the new shop – it also provoked another violent clash between the two shop owners, which resulted in the involvement of higher municipal authorities, who enforced a ban on all trading in the specific neighbourhood from then on.

It is easily assumed that late Headman Aphane acted the way he did out of corrupt ambitions. When he was approached by the Bangladeshi merchants and the garage landlord he had the opportunity to settle a score with the landlord and to provide an additional service to the community. However, he also knew that an official municipal permit for retail business in a residential zone was unlikely and an application was in the best case a time waster. Thus he decided to keep a low profile regarding the matter. Even when the situation escalated into physical violence and looting he tried his best to keep higher authorities out of the picture by demanding and distributing bribes. He was fully aware of the power hierarchies between his council, the *iNgwenyama*, and the municipality and he knew that his

position and reputation were in danger of serious damage, just because of some seemingly antiquated zoning regulations. The first of three thematic clusters generates an impression of the state as the dominating entity in an asymmetrical interdependence between its institutions and local actors, in the latter's case particularly Traditional Authorities. As another prime example of this asymmetrical interdependence serves Mr Mkhabela's (the industrious Director at CoGTA's KwaMhlanga offices) description of his department's main task, likening the support that the state provides to Traditional Authorities to incubating infants (see Chapter 5.1). Similarly, Ishmael Ndlovu compared the official role of Traditional Authorities to that of pastors who are supposed to be non-political in their task of guiding their followers. In his view it was the state, represented by the governing party, who eventually turned them into puppets of political agenda by making them dependant on government funding.

Prince Andries not only criticised the state for removing Mabhoko III as leader of the Ndzundza Ndebele, but he also admonished its administrators for failing to instate a successor for the position, pointing out that 'tradition' was being violated by leaving the leadership position vacant for longer than the customary one-day period (see Chapter 5.4). He further explained that people were desperate for leadership and that he would be happy to provide it if only the government let him. This exemplifies very fittingly how criticism of the government's performance as illustrated before goes together with the acknowledgement of the state's privilege to appoint and recall Traditional Leaders. This latter dependence by grassroots actors upon the state to use its power, their dependence upon these structures to exert agency and to get involved in the practices of its subjects, has also been observed in the extended discussion of the Manala v Ndzundza leadership dispute. It was the Nhlapo Commission, established in the TLGF Act and composed by government ministers of the Mbeki administration, that forced the subsequent Zuma government to take away senior Traditional Leadership privileges from the Ndzundza Royal Family. After an amendment of the TLGF Act in early 2010, which allowed the President to regard the Nhlapo Commission findings as mere recommendations, President Jacob Zuma declared Mabhoko III to be deemed King of Ndzundza, thus reinstating these privileges. Ultimately, this made the latter a leader whose privileges originated solely in the powers of the state's executive branch rather than being founded in the usually evoked 'tradition' and popular support. Ironically, the privileges of the state's judiciary branch then allowed it to void the President's declaration due to legal technicalities and thus relegated Ndzundza and its leader to their subordinated status under Manala. In this context, the state in its function as sovereign was regarded by my interlocutors as simultaneous opponent, ally and arbiter. Hendrik Kgomo, senior official at Makhosonke II's Royal Court at the time of my research, expressed the opinion that "*Tradition cannot solve its own problems*" and therefore the involvement of the state in Traditional Leadership matters was justified, although President Zuma's meddling with the recommendations of the Nhlapo commission was seen as inappropriate. Bishop Mthombeni painted a picture wherein the

state was willing to provide Ndzundza with its own kingship, but it had been Mabhoko III's leadership failures that had forced the government to demote the King (see Chapter 5.4). Together with Prince Andries he envisaged negotiations with Manala under the guidance of a chosen commission and the Public Protector of South Africa that would result into two separate kingships, legitimated by a public vote. This allows the conclusion that sufficient awareness exists among the crucial actors in the field regarding the strategically-selective context that they find themselves in, which is among other elements constituted by the primacy of the state's democratic system over the structures of the 'traditional' domain. In return this awareness implies the potential of adjusting personal conduct so as to utilize strategies that are favoured by the context. Or even more, acknowledging one's own dependence upon the state allows strategic agents to appropriate the state's resources and to influence policies and agendas in one's own favour as shown above, so that significant advantages can be achieved in other contexts that are not even directly related to the state as such.

Other cases where local actors' dependence upon the state became obvious included the tensions between Traditional Leaders and local Councillors as mentioned by Mr Mkhabela. These arose around the former demanding reinstatement as employees of the state as it was the case during the Apartheid and Homeland era, while the latter were now regarded as more effective brokers of influence and power. Mr Mkhabela's frustration with vague and outdated policies and his positive anticipation of the new legislation (i.e. Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act of 2019) must also be regarded as a symptom of dependence upon the state by local grassroots bureaucrats. Finally, the influence of the state and the dependence of its citizens also becomes apparent in other arenas. The Mmahlabane Trust's obligation to cooperate with the MTPA in the administration of restituted land or the Lithos' reluctant participation in land forums and steering committees concerning the industrial development of Rust de Winter serve as examples thereof.

'Ignorance is Bliss', the second thematic cluster, refers to instances where the feigned, assumed or actual ignorance of involved actors provided in particular the state and its representatives with tactical advantages, so much so that one may even assume strategic patterns behind it. Considering that Vaalbank is a popular township in northern KwaNdebele it is unlikely that municipal bureaucrats never noticed the little neighbourhood shop operating out of a residential garage. It is also unlikely that the local police were not aware of it, given that a popular drug den had been established on the other side of the road. Both institutions only got reluctantly involved when the situation was officially reported to them after it had escalated into public violence. While the allegation '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*'[85] must generally be expressed with care, I claim that the alleged ignorance by representatives of institutions representing the state was in this case applied as tactical device. Ultimately, ignoring the

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[85] French, "*shame on anyone who thinks evil of it*".

irregular shop did not hurt anyone as long as the two men running the business got along with each other, and ignoring it also saved the bureaucrats working hours and nerves. Whether this particular conduct is a long-term and intentionally available and therefore a strategic device among state institutions and their employees in the research area I do not dare to judge due to lack of intimate knowledge. However, I also recorded instances where citizens' ignorance proved blissful to state administrators.

On July 1996 the Regional Land Claims Commissioner informed the Lithos that their claim for restitution had been forwarded directly to Minister Derek Hanekom's desk and that there was little evidence to support a restitution claim on more than one of the claimed farms. Hanekom would therefore deal with their case under the land redistribution scheme rather than restitution. The Lithos agreed to this step, seemingly unaware that this referral would allow administrators to offer them less land, in a different place, at a potentially much later point in time. Furthermore it allowed the Department of Land Affairs to advertise Rust de Winter for sale in early 1998, which was ultimately only stopped through a High Court application by the Lithos, the following negotiations, and additional land claims by Matthews Mahlangu and other claimant groups just before the land claim deadline expired at the end of the year. The Lithos' insufficient knowledge of land reform terminology and legislation would have almost allowed government actors to create a *fait accompli* that would have made the restitution of Rust de Winter to them practically impossible. The Lithos eventually challenged the CRLR at the LCC, but their application for interim relief was dismissed in late 2000 due to formal shortcomings. The Lithos escalated this decision to the Supreme Court of Appeal, which in the second half of 2004 decided in their favour and ordered the LCC to consider the claim and finalize it. The CRLR in the meantime, however, exercised a different version of blissful ignorance: claiming to be unaware of the Lithos' application to the Supreme Court, local restitution administrators settled claims with (former) labour tenants in Rust de Winter and issued title deeds on some portions of land, according to Alfred Mahlangu. It seems that the objective shifted from maintaining Rust de Winter for development and redistribution towards making sure that anyone but the Lithos got hold of it. A pattern seems to emerge from the court files and from my own observations that in particular the executive representatives of the CRLR and RLCC have – on the one hand – in the past claimed ignorance of ongoing legal processes on their own behalf when convenient. On the other hand, they were able to exploit the lack of legal expertise among the Lithos and to impede their access to crucial information. For example, the research report that was presented at the stakeholder meeting in Rust de Winter in February 2018, had been finalized two years earlier in 2016. The RLCC representatives were aware of its findings for a significant amount of time, but only made it accessible to the Lithos once their two claims had been unified, which was their ultimate objective as it allowed them to move the claim onto the next settlement stage. A unification of claims P0050 and Z0231 would surely have been harder if

their quarrelling leaders had been aware of the limited stakes at play, defined by the research report. After the presentation of the report Mr Mkhacani announced a 30-day-deadline for lodging any complaints against the report's recommendations, the same amount of time that the land claim commissioner's office allowed itself to handle document access requests. This way the Litho representatives were forced to take legal action against the Commissioner's decision without direct access to the report on which this decision was based.

Ignorance as a tactical device could also be observed in day-to-day land administration. The Manala Mgibe leaders at Tweefontein had attracted a potential investment for a piece of land which they assumed to be within their jurisdiction (see Chapter 5.1). Bheka Ngwenya identified the concerned piece of land on his laptop and not only told the elders that they were mistaken but also that the land in question had not been gazetted in over 30 years and thus its ownership was unclear. While it can be argued that this situation may have weakened the long-term relationship between the South African state and the Traditional Council in question, at that particular point it put Mr Ngwenya in a more powerful position. The situation even provided him with a talking point when we met for an interview several months later, when he scandalized their lack of knowledge regarding their own jurisdiction boundaries. He explained that many Traditional Leaders believed or pretended that 'traditional' jurisdiction over a certain area implied land ownership and that restitution and tenure upgrading meant loss of power for them. In fact, some Headmen I had interviewed and even Royal Historian Jeremiah Mabhena claimed this to be true. It is difficult to assess, whether these Traditional Leaders were simply mal-informed and mistaken or whether they consciously lied so as to present themselves and their ambitions in a different light. Due to a lack of further empirical evidence this question must remain unanswered, but the fact that this question has been proposed at all illustrates the strategic value that the concept of 'ignorance' constitutes in this particular strategically-selective context.

The third thematic cluster, 'the state's flaws and blessings', is based on an ambivalent understanding of the state as both obstacle and resource, both nuisance and utility. The context within which the Vaalbank neighbourhood shop conflict occurred bore characteristics of what Jessop describes as patterned incoherence. The compensation that the violent businessman was ordered to pay by the Headman was not given to his former partner whom he had assaulted, but it was used to minimise the involvement of higher authorities. When the assaulted businessman reported his former partner to the police they referred him back to Headman Aphane, because he was the one who had given permission for the shop to be opened in the first place. This implies, (1) because Headman Aphane, the businessmen and the landlord had operated outside of laws and regulations the police assumed that same privilege for themselves, and (2) the police identified the existence of the irregular shop as the origin of the violent altercation. In other terms: because a set of individuals had disregarded

municipal regulations (i.e. in legal terms an administrative offence) the police as custodians of law (and thus representatives of the state) thought it justified to ignore the alleged physical assault and restraint (i.e. a criminal offence) and to refer the matter to one of the original administrative offenders and to accept bribes in return (i.e. another criminal offence).

A similar, but less successful, retaliatory logic was used in reverse by the representatives of the Ndzundza Royal Family in mid-2008. The Nhlapo Commission, an institution founded and funded by the state, had earlier that year awarded the Ndebele Kingship to Manala based on questionable methodology and argumentation. Thus, when the Commission held further hearings to determine whether Mayitjha II Cornelius III had been irregularly appointed *iNgwenyama*, any Ndzundza representatives who had been summoned refused to interact with the Commission members. Ultimately, this strategy failed them as he was thereafter posthumously demoted to Senior Traditional Leader. In general, the Nhlapo Commission's dubious legitimation, its questionable working definitions and methodology, and its incoherent argumentation have created a certain distrust towards the government's ability to regulate 'traditional' affairs, amongst those who saw their Traditional Leadership positions demoted or even abolished. Similarly, generic accusations of corruption but also concrete examples of disrespect for the law – such as the quickly abandoned murder investigation after Andries Mahlangu's gruesome assassination in January 2021 – have lowered respect for police work among the population. Accordingly, individual and collective actors can use these failures of the state as justification for their own disrespect of regulations and laws. These situations exemplify a strategically-selective context within which the state provides a versatile range of opportunities and hindrances to strategically-inclined individuals. Similar to the contingent Tradition/Modernity binary which provides a range of tactically and strategically applicable discursive tools (see Chapter 8.2), the South African state's selective implementation of its own laws enables strategically-inclined groups and individuals to avail themselves of rules and regulations at their own discretion or to *ignore* them when they seem inconvenient.

A lot of patterned incoherence in the empirical data evolves around the administration of land and the fight for it. As a minor example thereof serves Mr Tladi, who claimed a range of government owned pieces of land such as Rust de Winter, of which the majority were immediately rejected as frivolous because he could not prove a single historical connection to them. Nonetheless, he eventually successfully claimed a farm near Rustenburg (van Rooyen 2012) and continued his scheme of filing dubious land claims. Also, the fate of the Mmahlabane Trust is a case in point. While the reopening of land restitution through President Zuma was welcomed by one of its leaders, Councillor Stephens Aphane (i.e. not Headman Aphane), he criticised its implementation through the state's bureaucrats (see Chapter 5.2). Their interpretation of the new law permitted individuals and families who had

previously successfully claimed a particular piece of land to submit yet another land claim if they were dissatisfied with the conditions under which it had been restituted.

As extensively discussed the survey data pointed towards the participants' place of residence being a dominant determinant, not only with regards to basic demographic factors but also regarding institution access and indirectly also with regards to the importance ratings of 'Section Five'. An individual or an entire group may be faced with totally different strategically-selective contexts depending on the neighbourhood where they live. In a context, where the place of residence can have such an immense statistically detectable influence, the question of power over that land whereupon residency takes place appears even more intriguing. Because land proves to be such a significant issue, minor contingencies and incoherences in its state-designed administration system bear even more potential for strategic manipulation as strategically-inclined agents will dedicate even more available resources to exploiting these. This rather abstract hypothesis can be exemplified through re-examination of the continuing deployment of PTOs through the local Traditional Authorities. Officially Traditional Authorities are no longer in charge of land administration and post-Apartheid legislation disregards PTOs entirely, apart from demanding their exchange for title deeds. Through the creation of wall-to-wall municipalities that are in charge of land administration also former 'Tribal Lands' fall under municipal authority (i.e. Bela-Bela Municipality for Rapotokwane, and Dr J.S. Moroka Local Municipality for Libangeni). In return the 'traditional' jurisdiction of Traditional Authorities now also includes areas that used to be formally proclaimed townships (i.e. Vaalbank in Libangeni). While this design is not incoherent in itself, the circumstances are dominated by its improvised implementation. The post-Apartheid municipal administrators have not only struggled for decades to exchange PTOs for title deeds but also failed on a large scale to allocate new plots using title deeds. Even more, the bureaucrats seem to disagree among themselves whether PTOs should continue to be issued or not, which I witnessed when Mr Mkhabela's colleagues began to argue passionately in my presence. PTOs not only continue to exist but are also being issued for newly developed neighbourhoods. What Mr Mkhabela described as a gentlemen's agreement between municipalities and Traditional Authorities has created an incoherent hybrid system that allows plenty of opportunities for strategic exploitation. Title deed owners in formerly proclaimed townships such as Vaalbank are now under the jurisdiction of the Traditional Authority even though they might not even culturally identify with it. Residents obtaining newly developed plots in Vaalbank, where land was allocated with title deeds until 1994 as it was a proclaimed township, thus receive a PTO from the TA instead of a proper title deed. Because the state failed to implement the system that it designed itself, the Manala Traditional Authority in Libangeni ended up with wider-ranging factual land control than before the transition to democracy. This shows how patterned incoherence of structures opens opportunities for manipulation.

As already discussed in 2E.3.3, the transfer of oral history into written accounts constitutes a particular tactical aid provided for by the South African state. In the case of Sebatshelwa Matthews it was used to provide dubious evidence supporting his claim to the Ndebele Kingship and to all land in the former Transvaal. I assume, however, that he was not the first to identify a particular tactical advantage in written records. The leaders of the first Litho land claim Z0231 also appreciated the significance of written and oral evidence, having early on recorded and transcribed eye witness statements of the original Rust de Winter expropriation in the 1920s. The same seemed true for Jeremiah Mabhena, who at seemingly every public and private occasion carried a copy of *Indigenous Public Law in KwaNdebele* by Myburgh and Prinsloo (1985) with him. The small red book was seemingly not only a way for him to portray sophistication. It must also have been a lucky charm for the Nhlapo Commission investigation, having been the only literary source (apart from the Bible) referenced in the report, which granted the Ndebele Kingship to Manala. This goes to show that the competent use of written sources and the written documentation of oral accounts may also constitute a strategically valuable tool in government-related contexts.

Another strategically important yet often taken for granted tool provided by the South African state would be its court system. One of the Lithos' main strategic objectives throughout their struggle for restitution of Rust de Winter seems to have been the prevention of any further development or distribution of land there. A large portion of letters from lawyers representing Litho make reference to intended development projects or sales, the ultimate threat always being a court application to stall the process and to deter investors. This was surely motivated by the presumption that investment would make the land more profitable and thus even less likely to be restituted due to economic interests. In a way the Lithos and their various legal advisers knew how to use the court system to their advantage as an escalation to the courts was one of their main tactics when their ambitions were frustrated by restitution administrators. This became apparent in the emotional turmoil after the February 2018 stake holder meeting in Rust de Winter, where Iggy Litho and his allies immediately threatened legal action at court against the RLCC and the previously presented research report. Throughout their quest for restitution the Lithos occasionally also used tropes of former times, the sad truth being that they also were supplied by the state at some point. Most legal statements expressing dissatisfaction with the decisions made by Minister Hanekom's department were often accompanied with accusations of immoral conduct and race-based prejudice against the White Minister and his colleagues. Once Hanekom was replaced by Thoko Didiza under Thabo Mbeki's administration in 1999, these allegations were developed into a narrative that pictured the Lithos as being discriminated against by the government due to their Ndebele heritage rather than due to their skin colour alone.

In conclusion, this thematic discussion of the different roles in which the South African state was represented in my field data has achieved the following. First, by observing that the state was represented both through individual representatives but also through structural-institutional features a strategically-selective context was established in which strategic and tactical devices are essential. Therefore, secondly, the state was characterized as the provider of a range of tactical tools in exchanges where it was often only indirectly represented through the respective topic that was being discussed. In this instance the essentialised binary The People / The State was shown to be a recurring discursive device. Further the identified pattern of feigned, assumed or actual ignorance being predominantly strategically exploited by state representatives provided an example of a tactical device becoming so regularly applied that it seems to have achieved almost structural properties. A third achievement of this discussion was thus an illustration how strategic conduct may change strategically-selective contexts. An example thereof was presented above in the characterisation of individuals and groups being dependent upon the state, because once they accepted the primacy of the latter they were able to convert their compliance into strategic advantages in other significant contexts. While the discussion around the state being simultaneously obstacle and resource to local agents focused on a range of available tactical tools, it also revealed further examples of how an exploitation of contextual patterned incoherence through strategically-inclined actors may have a manipulating effect on these contexts. The following discussion aims to add further understanding of how the strategic use of simplified binaries actually creates additional complexity, which in turn creates added potential for patterned incoherence and agency.

9.2 Trauma and Origin Legitimacy

One of the recurring themes in many conversations during my time in former KwaNdebele were the traumatic events that the communities had experienced in the past. In Rapotokwane, the families that descended from Litho regularly referenced the forced removal from Mogotlholo and the surrounding settlements (see Chapter 6), which became Rust de Winter thereafter, on an anecdotal basis whenever discussions of a political nature arose. The phrase "*500 Morgen*" seemed to have developed its own semantics in the parlance of the village elders. Originally, the phrase stood for the spatial restraint that the Litho Ndzundza experienced when they moved from Mogotlholo (30-40 thousand hectares) to Witlaagte's portion 3 (Ptn B), which measures merely 500 Morgen (approximately 430 hectares). The phrase was, however, also used on other occasions where reference was made to colonial land theft, for example when Robert Mugabe in neighbouring Zimbabwe resigned as President in the face of an impending coup d'état in late 2017.

> Elder 1: *You see what they did to him?* (points to his phone) *After all this time. This is not right. He gave them freedom.*
> Elder 2: *Eish, he gave back the land.*
> Elder 1: *Yes, after how many years on 500 Morgen, the people of Zim got their land back. Why? Because of Uncle Bob!*
> Ego: *But some people say he only gave it to his own supporters while most Zimbabweans were left out.*
> Elder 1: *It is still better than 500 Morgen!*
> Elder 2: *Yes. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. We are still on 500 Morgen because our government they are dragging their feet. Mugabe,* (claps his hands) *he turned to action.*
> (30 November 2017 on the side of the road outside Rust de Winter)

The traumatic forced removal was also engrained in the village's original name, Sopotokwane. Meaning "the place where we have rolled", it made reference to those women who rolled on the dusty ground pleading with the land to treat the future generations well after having lost their home. The village name also partially relates to the traumas that were experienced under Tswana rule when the village became part of Bophuthatswana. Not only was the name changed to Rapotokwane to express Tswana dominance, but around the same time the village experienced the riots that became known as *NoLtswayile*. These riots were caused by the policy-led resettlement of external Non-Ndebele families onto the outskirts of the village and some residents' reluctance to accept other cultural groups. Even though both portions 3 and 11 of the farm Witlaagte 173 JR were bought by the Lithos in the years 1924 and 1926 respectively, the title deed for this land has been held in stewardship on their behalf by all governments since then. Thus, until the end of Apartheid, the Lithos found themselves at the mercy of colonial, Apartheid and Homeland governments despite having actually purchased the land they were living on. Out of these developments a range of underlying strategically used binary constructs was persistently derived.

The Lithos' difficult relation with past suppressive South African governments leaves many of them until this day in an understanding of not being part of the state and its administrative and legislative apparatus: 'We/The Government' or 'The People/The State' or 'We Down Here/Those Up There' are binaries that I found were often invoked in everyday conversations. Furthermore, the rejection of the non-Ndebele families that were forcibly resettled to Rapotokwane from Giyane and other places in the late 1970s and early 1980s persists in the views of several village elders (Litho/Non-Litho, We/Others), which seems to have developed into more general xenophobic sentiments among the younger generations (Locals/Foreigners, Insiders/Outsiders), expressed through the widespread rejection of Zimbabweans, Malawians or Zulus in the village's labour structures.

These two traumas, the forced resettling to less valuable land and external domination by other ethnic groups and oppressive governments, have left a persistent mark on the collective consciousness of local power structures. In this case they constitute a context that makes a range of argumentative long-term strategies and short-term tactics available as shown by the dialogue above. Taking for granted that the suffering of one's ancestors is extended into one's own suffering, or making the own case stand for a greater injustice (*500 Morgen*), are examples of the former. Furthermore, the invocation of these traumas ultimately reconstructs the underlying binary categories of Victim/Perpetrator, which fully disregard any underlying complexities and grey areas (Kampfner 2020: 88). Crucially, the Lithos have not only managed to derive rhetorical and argumentative devices from their troublesome past, but they have succeeded at turning it into a structural advantage. Disregarding the suffering that other groups may have experienced around or among them, the Lithos have transformed the aforementioned binary from 'Victim/Perpetrator' into 'Former Victim (Litho)/Non-Victim (Others)'. Less than half of the Rapotokwane households that were interviewed in the survey presented in Chapter 7 indicated the predominant use of IsiNdebele at home (47.2%)[86]. Others spoke SePedi/SeSotho (33.8%), XiTsonga/Shangaan (10.8%), SeTswana (7.0%) or other languages at home. Despite this apparent balance between Ndebele and Non-Ndebele residents, village politics and in particular village leadership are exclusively dominated by the Litho Traditional Council and those that associate themselves with the Litho Royal Family. This dominance can be explained through the Lithos' now widely unhindered control over the land that the village is located on. Through the Traditional Council the descendants of those who were denied this privilege for decades now control the land and thus most people that live on it, while the democratic state has gradually forfeited its sphere of influence in the village. From this circumstance and the aforementioned experiences of displacement and discrimination certain mannerisms and argumentative tools seem to have derived that associate

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[86] In the 2011 census, less than one third of Rapotokwane residents indicated IsiNdebele as their first language (stats sa 2023).

a stronger degree of belonging to those whose ancestors settled here in the first place, disregarding those who were left no choice but to join them there more than five decades later. For example, to demarcate the village and its ethnic affiliation a range of people would never speak of 'Rapotokwane' in public. They referred to the village's name with its original name, emphasizing the So- prefix of Sopotokwane to ensure everyone's awareness of their defiance of Tswana linguistic paternalism. The same group of people referred to the farm Witlaagte and the surrounding areas, occasionally even the entire Transvaal, as 'KwaNdebele'. Making it very clear that they did not refer to the former Homeland but to any area where Ndebele had ever settled, they stressed every single syllable to convey the name's literal meaning, 'the place of the Ndebele'. Furthermore, some of them even dropped the initial /k/ making it sound like a possessive construct, 'WaNdebele' meaning something to the effect of 'belonging to the Ndebele'.

According to Yuval-Davis 'belonging' involves three analytical facets for which the Lithos constitute a prime example. "The first facet concerns social locations", which is not only exemplified by the Lithos' racialised experiences of segregationist Apartheid but by the 'ethnic otherness' that they experienced in relation to Tswana-majority rule in Bophuthatswana and as a small, spatially segregated sub-clan in former KwaNdebele. The second analytical facet of belonging "relates to people's identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings", which corresponds to their narratives of displacement from Mogotlholo and the state-sponsored denial of land ownership in Witlaagte. And finally, the third facet "relates to ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging" (2011: 12), which is expressed through their political domination of village politics through the Traditional Council and the discursive and practical exclusion of later-comers. As Zenker has pointed out, belonging and politics of belonging may be based on very different understandings of autochthony, but ultimately the triad of individual, territory, and group will very often be subject to strategic calculations ranging from land rights to citizenship rights and beyond (Zenker 2022). This triad, however, takes a different shape in the former KwaNdebele heartland, where territorial affiliations and past traumas are historically different, being both effective and affected in the sense of the Giddensian duality of structure.

Traumas stemming from forced removals are not unique to the Litho of Rapotokwane. In the KwaNdebele heartland, in particular in Libangeni and its surroundings, the traumas of the past have also left their traces. As shown in Chapter 7.2, out of the 615 survey respondents only 65 (10.57 percent) named their place of residence as their family's place of origin. Only 8.88 percent (n = 42) of all interviewed Libangeni residents (n = 473) indicated that their family's origin was in the settlement with only five out of 263 respondents in Vaalbank identifying their current residence as their family's place of origin. Nonetheless, the dominant traumas outside of Rapotokwane do differ. The Litho elders

focused on their ancestors' suffering for strategic argumentation. However, in everyday conversations and debates in Libangeni the 'Mapoch War' defeat of 1883 and the subsequent enslavement and scattering of the Ndzundza Ndebele throughout the Transvaal played very little role. Also the non-belonging and constant ethnic minority position that most Ndebele had to endure at the hands of White colonial and Apartheid governments through squatter laws and racist settlement politics until the creation of KwaNdebele in the 1970s were not included as arguments into common discourse. Actually, many romanticised these past circumstances as times of knowing one's place in society and being able to maintain peaceful coexistence with other local groups (see Chapter 5.4). If anything, events that had occurred in people's own lifetime and that had scarred them personally rather than their ancestors caused emotional reactions: the forced resettlements that people experienced during the creation of the Homeland, the anti-independence uprising, the violent invasion of Moutse, and the oppressive regime of SS Skosana and his *Mbokotho* militia. It seemed that these experiences had torn out some of the pieces that constitute the kind of belonging that the Lithos have maintained and strategically developed for themselves. Simple requests, like asking people for their age in a survey, could lead to emotional outbreaks due to memories of forced *Mbokotho* recruitments. On a different occasion, I asked a former KwaNdebele police man after fifteen minutes of polite conversation whether he would be willing to tell me of his professional experiences before the first democratic elections. For reasons that were hard to decipher he became mute immediately and his by-standing wife informed us that we had outstayed our welcome. Patrick thereafter speculated that our interlocutor had not wanted to incriminate himself, while I sensed that I had simply asked too much in requesting stories from a past that seemingly continues to haunt an entire region. These instances may not have been strategic in themselves but they paint a picture of a context in which trauma has the potential to be strategically utilized.

Prince Andries Mahlangu, Bishop Mthombeni, and Ishmael Ndlovu all made reference to the violence of 1986 (see Chapter 5). The Prince substantiated his own qualification as potential new leader of Ndzundza by pointing out his own peaceful inclinations, implying that some of his contenders may actually be willing to reignite the violence of 1986. The Bishop expressed an indirect threat that similar violence could occur again if Manala did not allow Ndzundza its own independent kingship. Ndlovu recalled the violence that he had suffered at the hands of the Apartheid government and the humiliation that collaborators from the Manala Royal Family had caused him. He thus, despite being a Manala by birth, justified his open rejection of the Manala claim to the Ndebele Kingship, because they had facilitated the violent campaign for Homeland 'independence'. Instead he expressed his support for the Ndzundza leaders in this matter. In these three cases, the recollection of traumatic events as a strategy to justify one's own standpoint with regards to leadership succession politics in the KwaNdebele heartland is based on a strategically-selective context that favours particular binaries that

leave no room for nuance: 'Peace/War', 'Peace Makers/Warmongers', or 'Cooperation/Escalation'. In turn, Jeremiah Mabhena applied a different binary perspective (Victim / Perpetrator) to justify the misguided actions of past Manala leaders. According to him, Manala leaders had no other choice but to join *Mbokotho* as they did not have the means to resist their violent tactics. He then, however, continued to complement his trauma-based argumentation into one based on agency. The reason that Manala found themselves in this position was, according to Mabhena, actually Ndzundza's initial collaboration with the Skosana regime, which left the Manala leadership weak and suppressed and the Ndzundza Royal Family well-established and powerful, giving them the necessary popularity to actively oppose *Mbokotho* and Skosana once public opinion shifted. Such strategically flexible ascriptions of agency were also brought forward by Mthombeni, who applied a narrative that was the opposite of Mabhena's regarding the traumas that helped create the Homeland in the first place. The latter explained that the suffering experienced by Manala in Bophuthatswana prompted them to join forces with the Litho (Witlaagte) and Pungutsha (Katjibane) Ndebele branches to establish Mnyamana Regional Authority which would become the foundation of KwaNdebele. The Bishop, however, explained that it was the Ndzundza leadership that saved Manala from suppression in Bophuthatswana by inviting them to create an Ndebele Homeland together.

This particular complementation of underlying discursive binaries with a unidirectionally applied ascription of agency illustrates not only the practical operation of strategic discourse, but it furthermore confirms Jessop's assumption that strategy is sustained through the relational exchange between structure and agency to which the strategically-inclined agent can resort. Because it was observed how originally binary arguments evolved as their application expanded through time and space (see Chapter 2E.3.2), the inference suggests itself that the dialectical-evolutionary exchange between structure and agency has allowed strategy to create more complex strategically-selective contexts and more nuance-sensitive strategically-able actors. The more often particular binaries are used as strategic and tactical devices, the more they change themselves and the contexts in which they are applied. In this case, the trauma-based binaries that were found to underlie the empirical data developed into arguments that applied a particular understanding of legitimate and illegitimate origins.

While the deceiving 'Former-Victim (Litho)/Never-Victim (Others)' binary that stems from their ancestors having been forcibly removed from Rust de Winter nowadays grants the Litho the exclusive control over Rapotokwane, this binary's strategic value has created a new branch of tactical argumentation. The Lithos' claim to exclusive control over and the linguistic demarcation of their land is based on a strategically-selective context that offers binary origin-based perspectives as promising argumentative strategies. The seemingly notorious compulsion to legitimize their belonging in the

place where they are in relation to the other ethnic groups that surround them resonates with constant reference to their ancestral origins, because the legitimizing trauma of the ancestors seems to have been transferred through these 'original' connections. This particular autochthonous tendency regarding Witlaagte is, however, complemented by their ambition to regain control over Rust de Winter, which they regard as their 'original' home. 17 out of the 42 survey respondents (Chapter 7.2) who identified Rust de Winter as their place of origin also claimed some sort of communal ownership of the two historical Witlaagte portions. Their well-documented moving patterns, their documented purchase of Witlaagte, and their ancestral relation to other Ndebele groups are historical origins that the group has explicitly utilized to legitimize their ongoing struggle for the restitution of Rust de Winter. Similarly, Jeremiah Mabhena instrumentalised the widely acknowledged facts of the Manala's settlement history to justify the land claim that had been lodged between Pretoria, Bronkhorstspruit and Delmas: *"If you read the history very well and if you did your research very well, the Ndebele were the first people in the Transvaal at that time."* (17 August 2017). In this case his hardly confirmable *terra nullius* claim is paired with the core assumption that spatial and ethnic origins go hand in hand with political representation and property rights. To him, the origins of the Manala Ndebele and *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke's family origins suffice to create legitimacy for this particular land claim. His extensive efforts to establish distinction between the Ndebele of the Transvaal and Mzilikazi's Ndebele whose descendants eventually settled in what is Zimbabwe today (see First *Entr'acte*) must be understood as not only a mere act of conveying identity. Rather, it establishes his own people's origins that ultimately serve the purpose of laying claims to land and power.

Two deductions can be made from these origin-based arguments. First, a significant difference of origins can be utilized to establish the legitimacy of a particular privilege: one can either have origins that qualify them as part of an ethnic group (such as the Lithos or the Manalas) or a leadership elite (Royal Family), based on a typical In-Group/Out-Group binary constellation. Secondly, the extensive temporal depth that is opened up through these references to origins of all different kinds, allows for a highly flexible implementation of argumentative binaries even if they appear contradictory at first sight. The claim of Rust de Winter, with Rapotokwane as the materialised allegory of the Lithos' prolonged suffering, for example, creates an initially contradictory appearing train of thought. On the one side, the Lithos claim Rust de Winter as the place where they originally belong, ergo making Rapotokwane the place where they do *not really* belong as they were forced to move there. On the other side, they exercise nearly exclusive control over Rapotokwane as their ancestors purchased the two Witlaagte portions in the 1920s. They effectively exclude anyone who does not descend from Litho from local power structures, which ultimately makes them the *only ones* who legitimately belong in Rapotokwane. This putative contradiction could ultimately be non-contradictory, considering that enough time has passed for the Lithos to have buried their ancestors in both places, wherefore they

belong in both places (Chabal 2009: 49+63). The same should, however, then be true for all the 'others' who are excluded from belonging to Rapotokwane by the more ethnically-aware members of the Litho clan. A similar argumentative flexibility can be identified in Jeremiah Mabhena's narrations. If the traumatic raids of Mzilikazi on the Manala Ndebele suffice to establish them as two different ethnic groups, surely the battles between Mzilikazi and the Ndzundza Ndebele would have sufficed, too. The violent conflicts between Manala and Ndzundza at Balule River that Mabhena described in great detail to me would also suffice to establish them as two very distinct ethnic groups. Even more, to him the land claim between Pretoria, Delmas and Bronkhorstspruit (see above) is justified because the area named KwaTlapeso, where the Manala Ndebele settled after the split with Ndzundza (see First *Entr'acte*), was supposedly *terra nullius* at the time as referenced above. He does, however, not apply the same argument in the case of the land claimed by the Mmahlabane Trust (see Chapter 5.2). The land in question was definitely not *terra nullius* when the Apartheid regime added it to KwaNdebele's territory in 1973 and 1984, which is the only reason why it falls under Makhosonke II's traditional jurisdiction today.

This shows, not only that this particular strategically-selective context has granted more substantial rights to those with 'proper' origins. It furthermore reveals that the discursive strategies of this strategically-selective context can be implemented on a highly flexible basis, even – or maybe especially – when their underlying binary structures seem contradictory. The increased complexity that derived from the extensive use of strategic binaries over time and space has opened new avenues for argumentative agency.

The successful strategic use of origins has in turn led to a manipulation of other only remotely related contexts incentivizing argumentative strategies that nonetheless expand on the concept of 'legitimate' origins. While spatial, ethnic and customary origins are widely used as argumentative tool to ensure communal persistence and dominance, this focus on 'original' factors is also applied in individual struggles for power within the local Traditional Leadership, because "by far the most significant aspect of origin is the relation between the living and the dead" (Chabal 2009: 28). In particular the descent and kinship of contenders for power plays a crucial role as shown, for example, by the importance of praise songs during public meetings and elsewhere. To know one's own line of descent and to know the vulnerabilities of one's competitor's family tree is crucial in asserting one's stakes in local power. Some contested family tree links may have been existing for several generations as the dispute around Jas-David's fourth wife Leah reveals among the Lithos. The question whether her status was that of a substitute *indlunkulu* (Royal Wife) or that of a concubine constitutes the power struggles among the Litho today; her descendants strive to claim the chieftaincy for their own ranks four generations later. Other origin-centred weaknesses may have only been constructed rather recently and may have been

purposefully escalated by political opponents. For example, Jonoti Mnguni mentioned that his fellow councilman's name, Bani, originated in the incident that his mother's husband came home to find a child in her arms, asking "Ngubani?" (Who is that?), indicating that she must have conceived the child from another man. He presented it as a joke, laughing and slapping my shoulder. However, because both men were openly at odds in several regards at the time, I assume that this anecdote was intended to discredit Bani's origin-based legitimacy as member of the Traditional Council.

Another, more significant, example of challenging an opponent's power through the lack of 'original' proof was presented to me by the opponents of Chief Vuma. They insinuated that the abolishment of initiation schools in Rapotokwane in the late 1960s acted in his favour. Several senior male interlocutors explained that initiation schools and the male bonds that developed from them created an arena where family secrets, accusations of infidelity against mothers and wives, secret crushes or infertility could be discussed in confidence. This knowledge could then be used to make a judgement on a young man's true descent. In Vuma's case the accusation of him being an 'imposter' or an illegitimate child was expressed by a considerable number of interlocutors. One of Vuma's *Indunas* proudly presented the meeting place he was building in his backyard for local men, where he hoped that such fatherhood verifications could take place again so that the rumours of the Chief being an illegitimate child would finally end. This shows how contexts (no initiation schools) make certain strategies more or less viable (no culturally accepted verification of descent possible). Some may then see this as an opportunity to put their own spin onto the situation (Chief as an alleged illegitimate child), which in turn forces others to come up with their own strategies (building a male-only gathering place) to counter these strategies. This ultimately creates a different strategically-selective context in which old verification strategies are expressed in a new way.

With regards to the leadership dispute between Ndzundza and Manala, the contestants' origins were never seriously challenged. However, the origin of the leadership dispute itself was presented in a variety of lights. Jeremiah Mabhena blamed a range of Apartheid officials for the dispute as they had promoted Ndzundza during the establishment of KwaNdebele. Bishop Mthombeni blamed the Ndzundza Princes James and Cornelius for disagreeing on the leadership succession of the Ndzundza. Ishmael Ndlovu blamed greed and vanity of individual leaders on both sides of the aisle, speaking negatively about both Makhosonke II and Mabhoko III.

In other arenas, the high flexibility of origin-based arguments developed into obscure situations. In eRholweni the descendants of those that had fought to protect the mountain fortress partied between the homestead ruins and tombstones of their ancestors. These tombstones had only recently been erected but were portrayed to me as crucial proof in ongoing land claims. And not even the institutions of the state were immune to the high flexibility that strategic argumentation based on a binary

understanding of origins offers when the Nhlapo Commission posthumously demoted the late *iNgwenyama* Mayitjha II Cornelius III of the Ndzundza Ndebele to the status of Chief.

The abolishment of initiation schools was officially grounded in the Christianisation of Rapotokwane's leadership, several interlocutors explained. In general, religious affiliation and the display of religious devotion play a significant role in rural South Africa, not only on a cultural but also on a social and political level. One day I gave Jonoti Mnguni a lift to neighbouring Marapyane. As we entered the village we encountered one of the provisional police checkpoints that are common all over South Africa. I joked that being a White European in a former Homeland meant being stopped every single time when passing one of them. Jonoti looked at me with a grin and touching his ZCC Naledi (Zion Christian Church - Star) badge he said: "*But they will not stop you when you are with me.*" Indeed we were not stopped this time and in the weeks thereafter I could not help but notice the same badge in the chest pockets of several police whenever I passed a checkpoint in the area. However, the influence of the local churches goes beyond minor privileges in everyday life; through their authority they are tightly interlinked with the origins of influential individuals as shown for example by the highly politicised involvement of Bishop Mthombeni in the leadership dispute of Manala and Ndzundza. In Rapotokwane, Hendrik Mahlangu was Bishop the village's popular CCZ church and he spearheaded Z0231's land claim until his passing in August 2017. His influential position allowed him to vouch for Chief Vuma's family origins when it became the latter's time to ascend to the chieftaincy and in the years thereafter he ensured continued support from the Traditional Council. It was only when Hendrik passed away that support for Chief Vuma seemed to fade, because Hendrik's brother Alfred, who now increasingly took charge of land claim affairs, had less stable connections to the CCZ as he is based in Pretoria.

Another case in which (lack of) church affiliation played a significant role was that of Iggy Litho, who did not attend any of the local congregations but rather followed Nigerian TV pastor T.B. Joshua. Even his allies acknowledged this as a disqualifying factor for his chieftaincy ambitions. Instead of relying on respectable village elders to verify his genealogical origins, Iggy would therefore present documents such as the aforementioned dubious family tree that was supposedly compiled by former state ethnologist P. L. Breutz or the family tree compiled by his late uncle and the latter's former business associates (see Figure 6.6). The dubious authenticity of these documents did not seem to matter to him and his supporters while his opponents openly called out blunt fabrications of official looking documents. While the examples of both Alfred Mahlangu and Iggy Litho are still somewhat related to the question of legitimacy based on socially confirmed origin, they expand into a so far neglected territory: failure of strategy. I will discuss the question why strategies and tactics fail sometimes in more detail in the following section.

9.3 Performance Legitimacy and the Significance of Tactics

Picking up the deliberations on legitimacy and in particular Iggy Litho's exceptional approach to it, the remainder of this chapter is dedicated to similar observations but with special focus on the last analytical aim of this chapter: an understanding of the implications of increasingly complex contexts on individual agency. More specifically, I will illustrate how some tactics fail while others succeed and through this illustration I hope to convey the understanding that both success and failure are symptoms of agency, which incessantly works within the creative tension between binary discourse and complex context.

As shown, the verification or challenging of legitimate genealogical descent was catered for through very different strategies: traditional knowledge (praise songs), confidential consultations (initiation schools), gossip and hearsay, vouching (church authority), or written evidence (documents). These strategies to verify one's origin and thus legitimise one's leadership ambitions roughly correspond with Weber's three pure types of legitimate rule, i.e. rational legal rule, traditional rule, and charismatic rule (Weber 2019: 341ff). In other cases, however, I found the legitimacy ascribed to certain individuals to rather originate in habitual or interest-based compliance. For example, in the SepFluor mine case (see Chapter 6.2) representatives of the company explained that they had accepted Chief Vuma's two nominations for the community engagement forum assuming that these men represented his community. "*We cannot remove what Kgôsi[87] has put.*" one representative of SepFluor explained to stress her point that it was not the mining company's fault that the Chief had not consulted his Council in this matter. In this case, the mining company's unquestioned acceptance of Vuma's decision may be explained through their previous experiences, which had shown that decisions by the local Chief automatically reflected the preferences of the community. Alternatively it may have simply suited their interest to quickly establish the necessary institutions to get the building of the new mine on the way. Their decision to withdraw from the training centre agreement to avoid getting caught in 'traditional' disputes indicates that the latter was probably their guiding motive. Krämer situates his four basic legitimacies (value of order, organisational capacity, violent resistance, cultural affiliation, see Chapter 4.2) somewhere between these two extremes, Weber's pure types of legitimate rule on one side of the spectrum, and compliance based on habit, affect or interest on the other (Krämer 2016: 136). These basic legitimacies are largely based on the conduct of a range of Traditional Authorities and political institutions that Krämer observed in KwaZulu-Natal.

In the KwaNdebele heartland I was also able to identify some of Krämer's basic legitimacies, albeit occasionally only historical remnants of them. In 1986, when the KwaNdebele Uprising began and SS

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[87] SeTswana, 'Chief'

Skosana's regime terrorised the Homeland's population on a whole new level, the Ndzundza Royal Family had to make a critical decision. Should they continue to support Skosana's regime, which had provided them with influential executive positions and financial support? Or should they take the side of the terrorised people of KwaNdebele and the annexed territories of Moutse? Under the leadership of Princes Cornelius and James they opted for the latter. They hosted mass gatherings at the Royal Kraal for people to express their anger at SS Skosana and Piet Ntuli's *Mbokotho* militia. The second meeting was violently attacked by the South African army and from then on several senior Royal Family members joined the struggle against Homeland 'independence' and the Apartheid regime. One of them was Andries Mbangwa Mahlangu, cousin to Princes Cornelius and James. His support for the struggle was one of the explicitly mentioned reasons for Bishop Mthombeni to champion him for the Ndzundza Kingship when we met (see Chapter 5.4). Mthombeni was a man who aimed to impress through his achievements. When we first met he presented a list of charities, enterprises, and committees, in which he held a range of different positions. When the time came to openly challenge Mbusi II Mabhoko III for the leadership of Ndzundza, Andries Mahlangu and the Bishop and other 'traditional' dignitaries performed a leadership ritual at KwaMaza. This was regarded by them as an act of peace rather than an attempt to escalate the conflict; repeatedly Mabhoko III's failures as a leader were presented to me as if they were the catalyst that would reignite KwaNdebele's violent potential similar to what occurred during the KwaNdebele Uprising. To them the only way to avoid future bloodshed among the Ndebele was a new Ndzundza leader who would negotiate equal privilege with the Royal House of Manala. The two men together thus fulfilled all four of Krämer's basic legitimacies: Andries's fight against the Skosana regime (violent resistance), Mthombeni's civil society achievements (organisational capacity), Andries's initiation at KwaMaza (cultural affiliation), and the threat of widespread violence if they failed at their endeavour (value of order). Their opponent Mbusi II Mabhoko III, according to them, lacked all of those basic legitimacies. Due to his young age he had not been part of the struggle and showed little public respect for those relatives who had. The list of grievances that Mthombeni had compiled and submitted to state institutions all the way up to the President proved Mabhoko's lack of organizational capacity. With regards to his cultural affiliation Mabhoko remained absent from major cultural events at the time, which is the only grievance brought forward against him that I could observe first hand. Despite the event taking place only five minutes away from the Royal Kraal in Weltevreden, he remained absent from the 2017 public birthday celebration in honour of internationally renowned Ndebele artist Esther Mahlangu, which even the national Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture attended. Also other culturally significant festivities that I attended, such as the annual commemoration of Prince James Mahlangu at Waterval, were characterized by the chronic absenteeism of the incumbent Ndzundza leader. Mabhoko's poor performance at the only public event that he attended during my time in the field (i.e. eRholweni) has

been extensively discussed already. Maphepha II publicly scolded his own Chiefs for declining attendance numbers at the celebration, which provided further evidence against Mabhoko's organizational capacities and his lack of appreciation of the value of order. With regards to his opponent, Makhosonke II, I was provided with testimony for a significantly better organizational capacity. Councillor Aphane of the Mmahlabane Trust gave him a positive testimonial regarding their cooperation, and the *iNgwenyama*'s secretary Hendrick Kgomo described in much detail his superior's policies on attracting positive investments to the former Homeland.

When combing through my own data in search of evidence of further basic legitimacies I was, however, also able to identify a different kind of legitimacy that derived less from abstracted underlying legitimizing concepts such as Krämer's basic legitimacies or the previously discussed legitimacy based on trauma and origin, but rather it derived immediately from the performance[88] of direct tactical actions. In these cases strategic (long-term) practice, oriented along the lines of certain basic legitimacies that dominated a particular strategically-selective context, was complemented or even replaced by (short-term) tactics due to various reasons.

In the latter half of 2017, Chief Vuma was very close to being suspended as Chief of the Litho Ndzundza. Several allegations of improper behaviour had amassed, his attempt to outflank the Traditional Council in the SepFluor mine incident had come to light, and several instances of insufficient communication caused discontent among influential clan members. Very quickly Iggy Litho expressed his ambition to replace Vuma, and others named a cousin of Vuma as potential candidate for the chieftaincy. However, before the end of January 2018 things were back to normal and most village elders were hesitant to discuss the matter any further. The popular South African trope 'A Chief is a Chief through his People' suggests that the members of the Traditional Council and the Royal Family will, at least for some time, have weighed Vuma's skill set against that of his most prominent contenders but they decided in his favour after all. On the one hand Vuma was criticised for his repeated absence from council meetings, his distant Hammanskraal residency, his sometimes too energetic public enthusiasm and lack of dignified customary panache, the allegations of corruption against him, and his dubious entourage. Some will have criticised his 'modern' lifestyle, his public support for gender equality, and his demonstrative hands-on approach at public functions, while others will have taken a liking in these traits. Many of my interlocutors, on the other hand, praised his respectful ways with average village residents, his support for struggling members of the community, his calm and inconspicuous way of speaking in public, and the increased investment into village infrastructure since the beginning of his

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[88] While I am aware that the terms 'performance' and 'performativity' have repeatedly been allocated a range of specific definitions and purposes in the anthropological realm and beyond (e.g. Austin 1962; Butler 2002 [1990]), I use it here and below in the broadest most generic sense, referring to a particular mode of conduct and to how successful someone is at executing a prescribed task.

chieftaincy. The fact that Iggy Litho was well known to have a disputatious and occasionally highly emotional character surely worked in Vuma's favour, too. Ultimately I am, however, convinced that the continuance of Vuma's chieftaincy was less based on the personal opinions that the village elders had of him and the other contenders based on their adherence to basic legitimacies. Rather than promising to change his behaviour according to more socially accepted codes of conduct, Vuma sought four-eye conversations with the elders to convince them. His performance was effective. Ex-post, none of them were willing to provide much detail on these conversations to me; only one of the elders confirmed first-hand that he had had a personal conversation with the Chief. He indicated that Vuma's convincing arguments had been a mixture of personal intimidation and financial concessions before ending our short exchange with the words "*There are reasons for that*."[89] Vuma also disarrayed his most outspoken contender Iggy Litho by offering him the position of a Headman on the Traditional Council. As another village elder sarcastically put it a few weeks later: "*Vuma realized that the greatest noise comes from the stomach and that Iggy is hungry.*"[90]

Surely these developments give credit to Chief Vuma's organisational capacity and to some extent one can speculate that some village elders will have been motivated by their appreciation of the value of order, knowing that replacing him would have boosted the ambitions of other more turbulent clan members. However, despite being able to identify projections of Krämer's basic legitimacies in this vignette, I believe that it was primarily Vuma's tactical conduct, his individual performance, that allowed him to defeat the internal rebellion and thus add legitimacy to his chieftaincy. He could have assessed Rapotokwane's strategically-selective contexts and devised a strategy based on changed practice and arguments that took into account the criticisms and demands that had been raised to him as Chief. However, instead of adapting his leadership style in the long-term (i.e. strategic conduct), he relied on his direct interpersonal skills to win over his critics spending little thought on the long-term ramifications (i.e. tactical conduct). It is out of question that Vuma's reliance upon his interpersonal performative skills generated a degree of legitimacy to his personal chieftaincy. The defeat of opposed village elders, which was the immediate result of his performance, despite his numerous shortcomings as a leader, created a precedent that could potentially be used to mitigate any future challenges. This kind of legitimacy, which is based on an individual's tactical skills, the capability to choose and deliver the best possible interpersonal performance, I describe as 'performance legitimacy'. Williams has used this term previously in his Multiple Legitimacies Framework to denote it as one constitutive element of political legitimacy next to moral legitimacy (Williams 2010: 4-30) (see also Chapter 4.2). Even though I must have come across his usage of the term during literature research for this dissertation,

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[89] Informal conversation with anonymous village elder on 22 January 2018 at his home in Rapotokwane
[90] Interview with anonymous village elder on 22 February 2018 at his home in Rapotokwane

it just so happens that it developed independently during the analytical process[91]. For lack of appropriate alternatives I will nonetheless continue using it according to my own understanding. However, having re-discovered Williams's deliberations on performance legitimacy at a later point, I acknowledge that my understanding of it as result of tactical short-term conduct, rather than strategic long term practice may have unconsciously (and at least in part) originated in his perspective:

> Obviously, in the long-term, legitimacy must be based on something more than performance or expectations of performance, but in the short term, it is possible that rulers can generate trust if they are able to deliver the political and economic goods that are promised (Williams 2010: 28)

One could argue, on the one hand, that such performance legitimacy is merely a snapshot of Weber's charismatic manner of legitimate rule (Weber 2019: 374ff) and I have no doubt that it has the potential to contribute to the development of such a state over time. Vuma's great-granduncle Lazarus, one of his prominent predecessors as Chief of the Litho Ndzundza, would be such a case in point. Lazarus, who passed away in the mid-1990s, had a reputation for his temper and harsh disciplinary rule that outlasts his reign. However, still today he is also praised as a canny negotiator with Apartheid and Homeland officials and as outspoken critic of unpopular KwaNdebele Chief Minister SS Skosana. Under his leadership the 'un-Christian' initiation schools were abolished, a step that was achieved through his alignment with the teachings of local charismatic churches (see 9.2 above). He negotiated the building of Rapotokwane's Litho Secondary School and defeated those who violently opposed the aforementioned resettlement of Non-Ndebele to the village. Reference to his leadership by today's residents is usually accompanied by admiration on one side and utter hatred on the other, but it never questions the legitimacy of his rule. Similarly, before Iggy Litho's ambitious uncle Sebatshelwa Matthews passed away he had his ally Jonoti Mnguni vow that he would proceed with the restitution claim of Rust de Winter and that he would help Iggy, who was present for this dramatic moment on the shores of Rust de Winter Dam, to restore the descendants of Leah's lineage to the chieftaincy. Even though Jonoti and Iggy fell out repeatedly during my time in the field, several years after Matthews's passing, the alliance that was founded in his performance and charismatic powers remained intact. The charisma of both Lazarus and Sebatshelwa lasted beyond their physical demise and constituted a strategic factor to those who followed in their footsteps.

On the other hand, one could argue that the performance legitimacy as it has been described in the case of Chief Vuma above was solely based on affect and personal interest on the part of the village elders. While it is surely true that the village elders, in particular those that were initially opposed to Vuma as Chief, will have weighed their options and the tactical implications associated to them, I argue

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[91] The same is true of the term's recently established use in parts of political sociology in particularly since Zhao's reassessment of Weber's sources of legitimacy (2009) in the context of China's quest for state legitimacy.

that these deliberations will have been swayed by Vuma's clever performance as a negotiator. Ultimately, my understanding of performance legitimacy is not supposed to question or redefine previous theoretical contributions to the legitimacy debate. It is founded on the assumption that legitimation strategies that rely on certain structural preconditions such as those that are built on Weber's pure types of legitimate rule or Krämer's basic legitimacies are to some extent reproducible and may therefore give a range of options to strategically-able actors. Whether any ambitions for legitimate rule are successful however depends on the strategically-inclined agent's ability to reflect on their particular situation, to choose the most suitable strategy, and on their ability to turn strategy into practice. In other words, the best strategic knowledge and assessment can be rendered worthless if the tactical performance falls short of expectations. In return, if the legitimacy-seeking agent relies solely on their performance skills to achieve legitimacy without having formulated a long-term strategy, or if they have chosen an inappropriate strategy, they might succeed in the immediate future (if their performance is good), but in the long run they will almost certainly fail at some point. This shows that performance legitimacy as an analytical concept depends on other legitimation theories. Whether performance legitimacy is therefore regarded as merely a first cut towards Weber's charismatic rule, a catalyst through which interest-based compliance is triggered, or a rebranded version of basic legitimacy is irrelevant at this point. Successful interpersonal performance creates effects that can result in an increase in trust and acceptance by (potential) followers and therefore constitutes an essential building block to legitimacy, regardless of how it is formed on a larger scale.

Having a closer look at performance legitimacy, i.e. the legitimacy that derives, either directly or by extension, from well-performed tactical interpersonal encounters, allows for a valuable perspective onto a highly relevant question at this point: why do some strategically-able actors fail while others succeed? To answer this question it is necessary to have a closer look at tactics, because they are the constitutive elements of good performance, which in an ideal case is strategy turned into practice. Particularly when they fail, tactics are hard to evaluate for a multitude of reasons. First, it is hard to determine whether the tactics of a certain performance are influenced by strategy or not. They can be aimed at the most favourable outcome in the here and now with little regard for the strategically-selective context. Or they can be a small part of a long-term plan with a clearly identified intention, an acknowledgment of the strategic selectivity of context, and an anticipation of a particular response from the respective context. Secondly, in instances where tactics fail to produce the desired effect two explanations offer themselves. Either the chosen strategy was inadequate, or there was no strategy in the first place. Thirdly, the fallout from failed tactics may vary to great extents, because contexts are complex. A false tactical move can be detrimental in one scenario while in a different one it might only be noticed by the agent themself. Fourth, tactics is generally used as a plural noun for good reason, because it is rare for one tactical element to be at work on its own. If one particular tactical approach

fails, good performers will be able to mitigate the effects by resorting to another potentially more suitable approach. Fifth, successful performers may turn their most effective tactics into strategy, which holds the danger of resorting to them on a one-fits-all basis with little attention on the long-term consequences. Ultimately, to integrate all of these explanations for potential tactical pitfalls into one ontological model seems overambitious and I suggest a case-by-case assessment of empirical examples to gain some more insight into 'failing' tactics.

How differently agents may perform tactically in the same strategically-selective context is shown by a comparison of two prominent actors in Rapotokwane politics: Alfred Mahlangu and Iggy Litho. Both actors found themselves immersed in Rapotokwane politics during a time of substantial change. To me, Alfred proved himself capable of easily adjusting the way he presented himself to any given situation. For example, in one moment he was the Benz-driving lawyer and business man with an unusual fondness of the Afrikaans language. The next moment he was the Chief's right hand, calling himself a Prince and promoting the adherence to customary ritual and hierarchy. Then again he would facilitate negotiations between the two warring land claims and express his deep disappointment in the Chief hoping to save the training centre deal with SepFluor. His highly diverse habitus capital provided him with a luxurious range of tactical tools, versatility being his greatest strength. When Vuma, who had enjoyed the support of Alfred's family from the very beginning of his Chieftaincy, faced suspension and potentially permanent disempowerment, Alfred swapped sides. During the meeting with the SepFluor representatives he presented Vuma as an ousted leader, while simultaneously pointing out the bureaucratic hurdles that would still have to be overcome to officially replace Vuma as Chief. Knowing that removing a Traditional Leader through the chronically slow-working bureaucratic institutions would be a complicated and lengthy process that could easily be stalled or even cancelled allowed him to slow down the deposition process from within to buy the time, which Vuma needed to change the minds of his opponents. However, this versatility would occasionally also cause him problems. He was not chosen to be part of the joint land claim committee, because he had negotiated with P0050 representatives and provided them with information without letting his Z0231 colleagues know of this stratagem in advance. When Mr Mkhacani wa Mkhacani chaired the stakeholder meeting in Rust de Winter (16 February 2018) he seemed eager to exert dominance towards the Lithos and one opportunity to patronize them was the round of introductions: Alfred's multitude of different capacities in which he presented himself seemed to irritate the Chair and he forced Alfred to choose one of these roles and to speak only in that particular function.

In May 2017 Iggy Litho moved from Atteridgeville in Pretoria to Rapotokwane after having been persuaded by Jonoti Mnguni that his permanent presence in the village would be necessary to increase chances for him to claim the Litho chieftaincy. He soon began to turn his attention to farming, wanting

to show the locals how he could manage the land: he was given a field for ploughing by the Traditional Council, he bought farming equipment and seedlings, he found an experienced local subsistence farmer that would support him with knowledge and labour, and he borrowed a tractor from the Council, too. All of this he did with a vocal confidence that seemed slightly out of place in Rapotokwane, because Witlaagte is known for its barren soil and salty ground water. Nonetheless, many praised his ambition to establish for-profit agriculture and supported his plans, possibly because he bravely ignored any sceptics. He also stood out for dressing in the latest urban fashion whenever he was not on his field. On the occasional visit from by his wife and brothers they presented themselves similarly in bright designer clothes and with an unhidden dislike of life in the rural community. His preferred mode of conduct during discussions was the contrary of a careful listener, rather he would draw all the attention to himself and let his self-confidence do most of the work. Without hesitance he challenged facts and if necessary adjusted his version of the truth to fit his own agenda. Iggy's way of presenting himself and arguing with others provided him with a tactical advantage: people noticed him and some were intimidated by him, and he appreciated it. For example, some browbeaten neighbours pointed out to me that he had spent time in prison for murder. When I confronted him with that accusation he chuckled and calmly responded that he had stolen some copper wire and actually only spent a few weeks in jail until the charges were dropped. He seemed to appreciate the sinister reputation nonetheless.

However, most of his tactics also had negative consequences and his strategy as the pro-active odd one eventually failed. He lost respect on too many fronts. He eventually fell out with the local farmer who had assisted him, also with buyers, and with the local population for hiring foreign field workers at much lower wages. Several crops of spinach and marrows were damaged by hail or insufficient water supply and he could barely afford to finance his own expenses, much less the wages of his workers with whom he eventually also fell out. Even his allies reprimanded Iggy for illtreating his workers; one of them eventually injured him with a knife in a drunken stupor and many witnesses thought he deserved it. This agricultural failure and the lost investments probably motivated him to trade the salary of a Headman in exchange for withdrawing his challenge against Vuma. The loud, angry and escapist way of arguing that had previously helped him to rise to prominence had now forsaken him. Nonetheless he did not abandon this particular strategy and would not own up to the fact that it had been his own need for cash that kept Vuma in office. Instead he told me the Traditional Council members that had changed their minds about Vuma were cowards and traitors of their own people. Eventually, becoming abusive against members of the public at one of the internal land claim meetings was one of the key moments that saw him lose authority and eventually made him express regret over having moved to Rapotokwane (see Chapter 6.3.4). It became clear that the countryside was not his

natural domain and I was not surprised to learn that he had moved back to Pretoria soon after I left the field.

Both Alfred Mahlangu's political and social versatility and Iggy Litho's attention seeking 'odd one out' approach had their advantages and disadvantages. The crucial difference is that Alfred's tactics seemed to be based on a strategic assessment of every situation while Iggy solely relied on those tactics that he had grown accustomed to use without regard for their long-term sustainability. If it is assumed that Iggy's tactics were part of his strategy, his strategy must have been misaligned to the strategically-selective context. If it is assumed that Iggy's tactics were not a direct part of his strategy, it seems that he allowed his own tactics to sabotage that strategy. Either way, the comparison of these two very different agents in the same strategically-selective context reveals how an empirical assessment of tactics and strategy can help to understand the forces of agency at work in social reality. While the implications of the increasing complexity of strategically-selective contexts for the range of individual and communal agency have been subtly indicated at several point, this subchapter's trajectory has all along aimed at a discussion of concrete strategic and tactical patterns of agency in the field data. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate how agency flourishes in former KwaNdebele, despite the predominance of binary argumentative patterns that allegedly restrict discourses, and despite non-binary increasingly more complex realities that constitute a threat to less strategically-able actors. For that purpose I focus once more on a range of empirical observations that were all linked by the tactical nature of agential practice.

Even though public meetings have already been extensively discussed in the Second *Entr'acte* and the significance of large public commemorative celebrations has become clear, it is necessary to return to the topic once more to explain their significance for performance legitimacy and tactical conduct. In the field I witnessed almost two dozen scheduled meetings and celebrations, most of which were open to the general public. In my understanding, their significance to the local power dynamics originated in the opportunity to openly confront opponents or to test the leadership skills of ambitious community members. They were often the next available step of escalation whenever a situation seemed to get out of control. In order to make complex conflicts more understandable it was helpful to gather all involved actors in one room and let them reveal parts of their strategy through tactical conduct. I assume that this was one of the reasons why the representatives of the two Litho land claims ignored the deadline set by the CRLR for both claims to agree on cooperation based on a joint committee (see Chapter 6.3.3). The open confrontation at a public meeting was necessary for them to see what the respective other had in their arsenal and how far they were willing to go. Furthermore, the meetings were not only an opportunity to gain insight, but they were also crucial for the execution of tactical stratagems; this could be observed when Iggy Litho's temper, when provoked, made him

lose face in front of other claimants. Nathaniel Mahlangu later claimed credit for the idea to make Iggy Litho Chairman of the committee so that others could witness his shortcomings as a leader on a larger stage. To save face was allegedly also Mbusi II Mabhoko III's primary motive to delegate the honours of publicly addressing the crowds at eRholweni to his uncle. The official reason was the insufficient size of the stage, but surely he also feared the scrutiny of his subjects after having suffered harsh defeats in court in the year before.

On the more interpersonal level, in interviews and informal conversations, I also witnessed tactical behaviour. The aim was either to portray confidence and strategic skill or to discredit opponents. The 5+5 land claim committee decision by the Lithos was presented by every involved person as a personal victory and a defeat of the respective other group. In my first interview with him in 2016, Iggy Litho explained that the land claim would soon be settled and that he was already making plans to develop the area economically. After the first land claim meeting he continued his efforts to appear confident claiming that he would soon prove his descendance from late Chief Hosia. When he failed at doing so, however, there was no further mention of the matter in my presence. Acknowledging a minor defeat was seemingly not consistent with his ambitions. Even in situations of uncertainty he resorted to spontaneous attempts to portray confidence. Before the Rust de Winter stake holder meeting he suspected that it would not bring about the developments that he had promised his supporters. Given the enormous scale of his uncle's claim, based on highly subjective interpretations of history, even he must have found it hard to have faith in absolute success. Thus he proclaimed to me and Jonoti Mnguni that he expected foul play by the government officials but that he was too clever to let others outsmart him. After the meeting his façade crumbled and he verbally thrashed out in anger accusing government representatives and other committee members of conspiracy against him and his uncle's legacy.

Another tragic example of misalignment between tactical ambition and strategic capacity was given by Nathaniel Mahlangu's attempt to portray himself as a diplomatic mastermind even though he displayed two obvious weaknesses. First, he tried to make an impression of academic sophistication and cunning intellect, which was however unsustainable. His dissertation project was based on a few very old newspaper articles and his own slightly distorted memories. The archaeological report about Rust de Winter that he presented as his secret weapon against the RLCC and the P0050 group had been openly accessible for some time and was even referenced by a range of land claim institutions in the LCC files. One interlocutor, when they eventually decided to share their opinion of him, pointed out their dislike for his porous academic vanity and hubris. Secondly, he struggled to say anything persistently positive about both his allies and his foes. After several hours of polite and innocuous conversations between us he suddenly made death threats to me if I were to disclose any of the shared information to other village residents. In return, when asking other community members about him

they had nothing good to say about him either. Allegations of mental instability and irreverence against late Sebatshelwa Matthews were raised. Furthermore, the fact that Nathaniel was born out of wedlock was used to discredit his family ties to the Lithos. It seemed that too many bridges had been burned in the past and therefore he now struggled to maintain his number of loyal allies.

Similarly, from the way in which Bishop Mthombeni presented written documents to illustrate his evidence-based challenge of the current Ndzundza leadership it became clear that this was a mannerism that he applied tactically to appear more sophisticated. Any other interlocutor would have summarized the content of the documents to us or would have described their own perspective as a starting point. However, Mthombeni visibly enjoyed watching Patrick and me studying the papers trying to make sense of it all. Similarly, when he introduced us to Andries Mahlangu he insisted on making a swanky introduction to "*his Royal Highness*" to reinforce the impression of powerful sophistication. Prince Andries, however, did not seem to require such grand gestures; to him it sufficed to mention his previous collaboration with other renowned researchers to create an air of simple sophistication.

The ambition to present oneself in the best possible light can be seen as a tactical necessity. The attempt to make opponents lose face or to mitigate one's own risk of doing so is regarded as legit stratagem. However, the falsification of factual truths that are constituted beyond the interpersonal tactical exchange bears a certain risk that must be assessed beforehand. For example, in an attempt to exploit the advantages of 'traditional' discourse in their first land claim application the Litho elders stressed that "*traditional life*" was much stronger in the Northern regions of former KwaNdebele around Siyabuswa, Libangeni and Rust de Winter in comparison to its southern regions. Such claims stand in clear opposition to my own observations and the common perception of interlocutors in Rapotokwane. In this case the potential benefit of a slightly counterfactual claim seems to have outweighed the risk of being called out for it in a context in which truths, definitions and perceptions were being challenged on a national scale already.

A similar device that I identified was the tactical adjustment of the truth in the presentation of court decisions. Even though the majority of relevant court rulings were openly accessible to me, a couple of interlocutors made adaptations to the truth when depicting their version of them. Their depiction of judgements and court proceedings was so convincing at the time that, for my part, they temporarily succeeded to sow considerable doubt of my own understanding of current affairs. In a social environment where, due to a lack of knowledge or limited digital infrastructure, access to judicial and administrative records is limited, it seems plausible that oral renditions by trusted community representatives are not only the most common medium through which that knowledge is disseminated. It further makes sense that individuals with a certain degree of performance legitimacy

can use their trusted position to render a version of reality that is more suitable to the discourse of their strategic intentions. For example, Iggy Litho confidently explained that an LCC judgement had been delivered by a certain Judge Bam which declared the Litho land claim to be representative of the entire Ndebele nation. No evidence of such a ruling was ever provided to me nor could I find any evidence of his claim in the LCC archives or online. Iggy was, however, not the only one to misconstrue court decisions. In December 2000 Judge Moloto of the LCC rejected an application by the Lithos to have their case heard by the LCC based on a technicality. At the time the question was not whether their restitution claim had any merit, but whether they would be allowed to have it heard as a restitution claim rather than a redistribution case. In conversations with me, several Litho representatives repeatedly misconstrued the Moloto judgement, saying that the restitution case had been rejected as a whole by the judge. This may be comprehensible as the Supreme Court of Appeal's Judge Nugent in September 2004 not only ordered the LCC to handle the case but also confirmed it as a valid restitution claim.

The May 2016 judgement by Judge AC Basson concerned the question "whether the President of the Republic of South Africa had the necessary power to declare the eighth respondent (Mr Mbusi Mahlangu) as a deemed King of the deemed Kingship of the Ndzundza-Mabhoko" (Basson 2016: 2). It did not relate to the question whether the Nhlapo Commission recommendations had been correct or not. Nonetheless, Ishmael Ndlovu who made no secret of his personal dislike for Makhosonke II presented a different picture. According to his understanding the Commission had decided that the current Ndzundza leader may remain *iNgwenyama* until his death and then his successor would continue under a slightly lesser title. The way he presented it, Makhosonke II had challenged this decision and demanded an immediate demotion of Mabhoko III through the court as he was unwilling to share wealth and power. Both representations are false: it was the Nhlapo Commission that came to the conclusion that Mbusi II Mabhoko III was not a rightful *iNgwenyama* and it posthumously even denied his father that title. The Basson judgement merely invalidated President Zuma's interim declaration, in which he had re-promoted Ndzundza, based on a legal technicality. The judgement was also misrepresented by Andries Mahlangu, who declared: "*The judge said the Ndzundza Nation did not have and did not deserve kingship".* While Mahlangu's utterance may by rhetorical extension be regarded as true, it nonetheless distorts the legal constellation to such a degree that in hindsight I regard it as false and therefore as intentionally misleading. The question, however, arises why these men misrepresented the contents and legal context of these judgements. The most straightforward explanation that they were simply misinformed is improbable. Andries was vying for the Ndzundza Kingship and he will have made sure to familiarize himself with the most pressing legal issues around this position. Ishmael held a senior position in the Ministry that supplied the Royal Houses with funds to host cultural events. It is unlikely that such a misconstrued version of events had been

communicated within his department. I therefore conclude that they intentionally misrepresented the judgement out of tactical reckoning. In particular in Andries's case this conclusion is supported by the fact that he expressed an explicit dislike for the female judge of White Afrikaans descent. Even from a more abstract, less lurid, perspective the misrepresentation of the court proceedings and their contexts makes tactical sense. Reference to a higher authority of any description is a helpful rhetorical device, for example if one is supported by a prophecy (Mthombeni's claim that Andries's leadership had been prophesised), legal documents (Matthews's dubious forgeries), or a commission decision (Ishmael's claim that Ndzundza had been awarded temporary kingship by the Nhlapo commission). If this strategy fails nonetheless, it is easier to discredit the inconvenient decision of a single judge due to perceptions of discriminatory practices, than to adjust one's interpretation of said prophecy, documents, or commission report.

Tactical actions may be based on underlying or open discursive binaries. They may be based on long-term strategy with a clear intention in mind or they may simply be the product of the agent's situational assessment in the here and now without further consideration of the long-term effects or of other related contexts. Due to this versatility, tactics are at work everywhere at any time, wherever and whenever agent and context encounter one another. While it is possible to identify certain tactical patterns and to relate them to the selectivities of the contexts within which they are performed, the contextual complexity which simultaneously enables, restricts and disguises them, will always leave numerous loose ends for the researcher. There is no question that Chief Vuma's tactical abilities created a degree of performance legitimacy, but it remains unclear what exactly was said between him and his Headmen and whether that performance legitimacy suffices to make his leadership stand out in the history of the Litho Ndzundza in a similar fashion to that of his great-granduncle Lazarus. Alfred Mahlangu presented himself as a versatile negotiator and canny supporter of the Chief, but part of his tactical performance was the obscuring of his actual strategic ambitions. After all, a core element of strategy is the anticipation of the actions of others and to prevent others from anticipating one's own actions; the researcher is merely yet another one of these others and just as embedded in a strategically-selective contexts as the people he works with. Nonetheless, this subchapter has shown how essential the assessment of tactical conduct in the field is when trying to understand the extent to which individual agents in former KwaNdebele manage to manoeuvre and manipulate the contexts within which they operate.

9.4 Summary

In this chapter, and the previous one, I claim to have achieved the analytical aims that were formulated at the beginning of Chapter 8. I was able to apply Jessop's SRA to the field data and I managed to adapt his abstract approach to the demands of ethnographic writing by using empirical data not only as illustrations of ontological theory, but by allowing the underlying themes of the data and their correspondence with the SRA to tell a significant story.

As explained towards the end of Chapter 8.1, I assume that the use of binarily informed argumentative structures in common discourses carries a high potential for an increase in contextual complexity. The assumption at that point was that agents may depend on binaries to overcome contextual complexity at first, but that they thereby contribute to the intensification of that same complexity. However, what the analysis throughout the last two chapters has revealed is that complexity is not only something that must be overcome, but that it is something that offers room for manoeuvre and therefore increases the potential for agency. For example, an understanding of the ambivalent roles of the South African state, its structures, contradictions, and incoherences, was shown to have opened a range of strategic options for agential forces. The significant caveat to ensure that agency flourishes in complexity is however a certain balance between the permanent systematic consideration of that complexity on one side and the staunch classification of entire contexts into binary categories on the other. Binaries can improve individual performance, because when they are used in the right environment they provide an understanding of the context, upon which strategies and tactical arguments can be built. Thus they can provide actors with confidence in their own strategic approach. For example, the Lithos' political domination of Rapotokwane derives itself from historical patterns of suffering that in turn originated in binary segregation and Apartheid policies. However, a non-binary understanding of the complexity of context will improve the ability to formulate strategy as it enables the agent to identify multiple potential avenues of practice that operate between argumentative extremes. It allows agents to anticipate the actions of others and to understand the interconnectedness of structural entities. At the same time that careful evaluation of complex contexts and strategies can consume valuable cognitive, temporal and social resources. The balance between these extremes is key for a maximisation of agency, which was illustrated through a range of tactical patterns that individuals and groups apply in former KwaNdebele.

The following Chapter 10 will provide a summary of the entire thesis and will attempt to interlink the analytical findings with the research objectives that were formulated at the very beginning of this venture.

- Conclusion -

Chapter 10 – Battle(d)Ground

Thanks to the linguistic potentials of the English language the title of this dissertation, *Battled Ground KwaNdebele*, alludes to a range of meanings. I will restrict myself to three interpretations even though more interpretations of the phrase 'battled ground' and further derivations of it may surely be grammatically and semantically possible. First, the past participle 'battled' can be interpreted as a passive form in the present tense. The following noun 'ground' is being battled (for); land in former KwaNdebele is contested in order to win ownership, to exert control over its residents, to gain access to its resources, to secure it as basic means of subsistence, to build political power, and to express cultural identity. This interpretation establishes land reform, the battle for land, as the central study focus. Secondly, 'battled' can be understood as an adjective that describes the following 'ground' based on its troubled past; the land in KwaNdebele has seen multiple conflicts that originate and reach beyond its official borders. In this case the echoes of past events such as segregationist policies, leadership disputes, forced migration, and war are established as contributing factors to the land reform debate. The scars that past 'battles' have left in the literal and metaphorical ground can still be observed today, as illustrated by the often divisive discourses that apply the dichotomies of the past as if the constituents of each binary pair had ever been actual opponents in a real battle. Thirdly, 'battle' and 'ground' can form the composite noun 'battleground', which may refer to actual violent battles that occurred in KwaNdebele, but which in this dissertation's context may also refer to a Bourdieusian (battle)field; a variety of actors find themselves in an environment of tactical and strategic exchanges in their pursuit of various individual and collective goals. In this interpretation of the title the former Homeland is understood to be an historically and socially defined geographic space in which a multitude of structural and agential forces operate to form a complex system in which land, the control over it, and the violent conflicts that were fought on it constitute merely a few nodes that relate to many other significant themes and topics. This third titular interpretation with its implied ontological assumption and the analytical framework that derives from it, if investigated thoroughly, promises to shed further light on the dimensions covered by the former two interpretations. In this chapter I aim to integrate the findings of previous chapters into these three interpretations of the dissertation title. I will refrain from extensively summarising each of the previous chapters as I have provided an extensive outline of the thesis in Chapter 1.3 and there are summaries at the ends of most chapters. Instead I provide a vignette from the field, which not only entertains all three of the above described meanings of the dissertational title, but which also connects some of the loose ends of previous chapters.

10.1 Of Celebrations, Processions, History, Time Travel, and Cinematic Endeavours

At some point in mid-2017 my research assistant Patrick (see inter alia Chapter 2.2) told me about a cultural event that he was involved in as a member of its organising committee. He was very proud of this commitment and I promised that I would attend once the time came. A few weeks later he handed me an invitation to the *Somakhawula Heritage Celebration*; the left side was formulated in IsiNdebele while the right side was in English. Apart from the usual organizational details the invitation stated: "*Somakhawula Cultural Project is a Non-Profit Organization based at Kameelrivier B in the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality. The objective of this organisation is to receive and promote African culture and traditions with the aim of restoring pride among indigenous people.*" On 9 September 2017, the day of the event, I had to attend a community meeting in Rapotokwane in the morning so that I did not manage to arrive at the event's official starting time. When I finally reached the event hall next to Kameelrivier B's stadium, located approximately halfway between Libangeni and Siyabuswa, the event was in full progress, but I was lucky that most of the honorary guests had not yet arrived. Once Patrick saw me he shouted out with joy and handed me a VIP badge, proclaiming that I would get to make an entry together with all the Traditional Leaders that were expected to arrive any minute. I thanked him and declined, but he insisted.

When the time came and the Traditional Leaders formed up for their entry performance, I was positioned in the front row between shields, knobkerries and animal skins. The men began to slowly proceed towards the event hall, humming and shouting while repeatedly bowing forward in a pattern that I could not decipher. They slapped their knobkerries against thin rods that had been placed behind their shields, which created a vibrant atmosphere. Occasionally, one of them would jump to the front and fend off an imaginary foe with kicks, shouts and the portrayal of his weapons, while the others cheered him on. Being a tall White foreigner lacking any 'traditional' animal skin attire or accessories I felt ridiculously out of place and as soon as the procession entered the event hall I slipped away and filmed the procession of men and the following women from afar as they made their way around the hall to their reserved seats.

Once the event resumed with dances and speeches, I made my rounds to the stalls where different groups presented their artwork, education projects and government programmes. I encountered an older gentleman dressed in the same traditional attire that the Chiefs had showcased only moments earlier. Assuming that he must have been part of the procession I gladly responded to his greetings hoping to learn what he thought of my previous cultural integration and how it could be reconciled with his views of Ndebele tradition. However, it very quickly turned out that he was not at all interested in talking about 'tradition' as such but rather into selling me accessories that he carried around in an old supermarket carrier bag. When he sensed my lack of enthusiasm for impala tail neckties, he angrily

walked away. Among the stalls I then found a representative of Kghodwana Village. The name sounded familiar and I was elucidated that it was a government-sponsored cultural village and museum. The Somakhawula Heritage Celebration ended without further noteworthy developments and a few days later I decided to make a stop at Kghodwana Village while I was on my way to Bronkhorstspruit. Located on a hidden dirt track that leads to a small coal mine, half-way between KwaMhlanga and Ekangala, the village could be easily identified by its entrance gate, decorated with the famous Ndebele wall paintings (see Schneider 1986). I found a few persons at the museum and they let me know that the museum's director was not around, but that I should return on 29 September for another cultural event.

I returned to Kghodwana a few weeks later. It was a cold and cloudy morning and on the road I was harassed by a corrupt traffic policeman who only let me go after I mentioned my personal research permission by Makhosonke II. My mood however lightened up when I arrived at the village and I was greeted by a surprised but happy Ishmael Ndlovu (see textbox 5.1). He explained that the village and its museum were one of the most prestigious projects of his department[92]. We warmed ourselves at the central fire place as there was still plenty of time left before the official start of the event; on our left a group of Sangomas were engulfed in a passionate debate. The main speaker proclaimed: "*Man is slave in South Africa. Man is closer to God than woman. They* [i.e. the government] *hate God, that's why they hate man*." After the encounter with the policeman I was still not in the mood to join the controversial discussion and therefore I turned to a Chief from Kwaggafontein who stood to my right. During introductions I explained my research interest and he soon asked me to follow him so that he could give me some information material. From a corrugated iron shack that was hidden in the tall golden grass surrounding the village he retrieved an old booklet. It was written in IsiNdebele, Afrikaans, and English and was entitled *The Ndzundza-Ndebele and the Mapoch Caves* and had been issued by the former KwaNdebele Homeland government with a message by Chief Minister SS Skosana on the first page (Kwa-Ndebele Monumentekomitee 1983). The Chief allowed me to take the booklet so that I could make a copy of it and I returned it to him a week later.

The booklet summarizes the events that led up to the so-called Mapoch War, the military developments of the 8-month-long siege of eRholweni and the consequences that the defeat of the Ndzundza had. It culminates in the 'resurrection' of the Ndebele Nation under SS Skosana's leadership in KwaNdebele and the erection of the famous Nyabela statue at eRholweni in commemoration of the war which was unveiled on 19 December 1970. The booklet is a delicate source due to its open political association to SS Skosana's government and the Apartheid regime that initiated and supported his ambitions for KwaNdebele's 'independence'. To my knowledge the publication has only been

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[92] Department of Culture, Sport & Recreation of Mpumalanga Province

referenced by two other academic authors in different contexts at different times (van Jaarsveld 1985, 1986; Phatlane 2001, 2002). While its truthfulness can surely be contested and the political intentions behind its publication must be acknowledged, the booklet allows for a few interesting observations. First, it never questions the legitimacy of the Ndzundza leadership or their ambitions to represent and lead the Homeland's population. Manala, in fact, is only mentioned at two points, at the separation from Ndzundza and at the establishment of KwaNdebele. This shows that the booklet was published at a time when the Skosana government was not yet openly at odds with the Ndzundza leadership. Secondly, the last section concerning the statue of Nyabela makes reference to the past efforts by the Ndebele leadership to have Mapoch's Gronden[93] declared a National Monument and to increase the protected area to establish Ndebele influence in the area once again. Such ambitions of territorial expansion of the Ndebele's sphere of influence can be seen as foreboding of the annexation of Moutse only a few years later. Third, many of the developments described in the booklet's account have been repeated, almost word by word, by several of my interlocutors in the field. This begs the question whether the accounts provided in the booklet are more authentic than its publishing background would make the reader believe, or whether dubious facts have been adopted by oral historians in the aftermath of violent *Mbokotho* oppression and KLA propaganda.

The event at Kghodwana turned out to be much different to the one at Kameelrivier B. It was part of an education programme organised by the Freedom Park Centre in Pretoria. Several school classes took part in the so-called time travel history project. They were educated on the 'traditional' lifestyle of the Ndebele people around the end of the nineteenth century. Girls were instructed how to cook, paint houses and how to plaster the homestead's ground with cow dung, while boys were instructed in thatching, the butchering and grilling of goat meat, and the basics of political organisation. Teenage girls performed group dances, and a Sangoma presented drum-accompanied dances and vivid narrations of the ancestors. Among these activities, however, a young man with a professional video camera was busy shooting scene after scene for a film about the events that took place in 1882.

After Pedi leader Sekhukhune was assassinated under the auspices of his half-brother Mampuru, the latter had to seek refuge among the Ndzundza Ndebele under their leader Nyabela (see Chapter 1E.1.2). The South African Republic (ZAR), whose Pretoria government had charged Mampuru with murder, demanded his extradition, but Nyabela refused. The ZAR army under the command of General Piet Joubert soon began its attack on eRholweni and its fortress koNomtjarhelo. Some sources claim that this was just a pretext to enforce ZAR-controlled taxation (Boyd 2017: 14; Mahlangu: 10), but ultimately this version of the events leading up to the traumatic Mapoch War defeat of the Ndzundza in 1883 (Delius and Cope 2007) was the one presented on that day in Kghodwana Village. Legend has

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[93] The Afrikaans name of the area around eRholweni.

it that, before the declaration of war, negotiators from Pretoria approached Nyabela to demand Mampuru's extradition, but Nyabela simply declared that they would have to cut him open to find Mampuru, because he was in his stomach. This story does not imply that Nyabela followed a cannibalistic diet, but that he would have rather had his stomach cut open (in battle or during execution) than to give up the royal refugee. This story is often interpreted as proof of the deep loyalty between the Ndzundza and Pedi leaders and their contempt for the colonial powers.

This situation was to be one central scene in the time travel documentary that was filmed on 29 September 2017 in Kghodwana Village. I was the only White person in the village on that day and when I was kindly asked by Ishmael Ndlovu to impersonate the envoy from Pretoria I agreed under the condition that I would not have to speak Afrikaans, which would surely have made my performance even less believable. Cameras rolling, I approached a local Chief who played King Nyabela and his council of elders together with a Coloured gentleman, who had originally been chosen to impersonate the main messenger. I then demanded "*Give us Mampuru! We know you are hiding him!*", which was then passionately and with much more panache translated into Afrikaans by my companion. My request was, as expected, turned down with just as much passion by the Nyabela impersonator.

The time travel documentary then took an unexpected turn. Instead of depictions of the siege of eRholweni, the brutal defeat of the Ndzundza, and their subsequent scattering into near-oblivion across the Transvaal, the camera now filmed a group of dancing students dressed in ANC-colours holding up portraits of the late Oliver Tambo. The former ANC leader would have celebrated his 100th birthday in 2017 and most government-sponsored events honoured him in one way or another that year. Numerous orators were then filmed who praised both Nyabela and Oliver Tambo for defending the country against colonial oppression. Statements such as "*enough is enough*" and "*the land must go back to the indigenous people*" were some of the few English phrases expressed by *Kgošikgolo* Billy Mampuru III who made an appearance at the end of the event. After his speech the honorary guest was invited to join the tasting of a goat that had been freshly slaughtered and cooked earlier and I said my goodbyes to Ishmael, the Chief from Kwaggafontein and my fellow thespians. I never saw the final cut of my first and last attempts at cinematic acting.

10.2 Battled Ground: the Land

Especially towards the end of the Kghodwana Village time travel event, when the various orators referred to King Nyabela's and Oliver Tambo's legacy, the number of explicit remarks to land restitution and redistribution increased. On the one side, this might have seemed surprising as neither of these illustrious historic figures were able to claim great achievements in this particular regard in their lifetimes, compared to other South African icons such as King Shaka or Nelson Mandela. During King Nyabela's reign the Ndzundza suffered the most significant defeat since Mzilikazi's raids more than 50 years earlier, they lost the control over vast stretches of land, and the population was scattered throughout the Transvaal and forced into White-dominated agricultural labour. Oliver Tambo maintained a diplomatic working relationship with Homeland leaders such as Buthelezi (KwaZulu), Mangope (Bophuthatswana), and Mathanzima (Transkei), but also remained sceptical whether the 'independence' of Homelands would aid the struggle for justice in South Africa (Callinicos 2017 [2004]: 389f). Due to his ailing health, Oliver Tambo's involvement in the negotiations at CODESA was limited and he died in 1993 and thus never lived to see South Africa's first democratic elections or the land reform efforts that his ANC comrades passed into law. Ultimately Oliver Tambo will be remembered for his diplomatic successes in class and race politics on the international level and inside the ANC (Callinicos 1999c) and for his preparatory efforts to the design of South Africa's new constitution (Odendaal 2022), rather than for any concrete land reform achievements. In this context one could either assume that the land reform remarks at Kghodwana Village originated in a haphazard attempt to link the two figures to the most urgent issues of the day. Alternatively, an understanding offers itself in which it is the underlying trauma associated to these two historic figures that warrants the demands for a more effective redistribution and restitution of land. In this case, the loss of land experienced at the violent hands of the ZAR and the untimely passing of Oliver Tambo before he could witness South Africa's first democratic elections function as incentives to retrieve the lost lands of the Ndzundza and to eventually conclude the anti-Apartheid leader's quest for a just South Africa. In either case it becomes clear how the matter of land reform is ubiquitously connected and related to political and historical discourses of various kinds in former KwaNdebele.

I began this dissertation with reference to the highly emotional responses that one will often encounter in South Africa whenever the question of land reform is raised in everyday life. I established the relevance of research into the controversies of land reform by summarizing the national and regional public debate around land reform in 2018/19 and the political instrumentalization of simplistic catchphrases such as Expropriation Without Compensation (Chapter 1.1). A range of provocative guiding questions were deducted from the described circumstance whose direct and thorough discussion I immediately rejected as unrealistic, but at the same time I formulated the aim to retrace

the origin of these questions at the grassroots level in rural South Africa (Chapter 1.2). I assumed that South Africa's current land reform problems originate not only in the policies of government and in the rhetoric of opposition parties, but mostly in the places where its (lack of) impact is most significant, i.e. the former Homelands. I expressed the ambition to shed light on some of the dynamics that influence land reform on the ground, literally and figuratively. The purpose of this research venture was therefore the exploration of land reform processes in former KwaNdebele and to gain a better understanding of the roles that significant local actors such as tenants, claimants, Traditional Authorities and state administrators play in it. The main research questions of this thesis were formulated as follows: To which extent do strategically informed grassroots processes influence land reform in former KwaNdebele today? What strategies are applied by local actors? What are the structural constraints to these strategies and do these strategies have the potential to cause significant developments to the overall context? Land reform and its impacts have thus provided the inaugural research questions and aided the definition of a research objective.

The legal and historic framework behind land reform were introduced in Chapter 4.3, in particular the genesis of its three pillar approach and the binary race-based discourse that accompanies it. While land reform's ambition to make amends for past injustices and current inequality along skin colour lines is indirectly based on that same binarily informed discourse, the aim of this particular subchapter was an illustration of some actual complexities that operate beyond this particular binary. Land redistribution, i.e. the first pillar of the land reform programme, has remained by and large undiscussed except for some other issues that related to it by proxy such as the illustration of the EWC debate or the government's failed attempt to relegate the Litho land restitution claim to the redistribution scheme (see Chapter 6.3).

In Chapter 5.2 I referred to tenure reform and the challenges that public servants face in its implementation, especially when former 'tribal land' is concerned. The continued issuance of PTOs through local Traditional Authorities despite the fact that these are no longer recognized by law constituted one central observation. This particular issue, which one interlocutor referred to as "*gentlemen's agreement*", i.e. the municipality allowed the continued allocation of land through PTOs by the Traditional Authority to be able to focus its resources on other more urgent projects, was analysed from two different perspectives. In Chapter 2E.3.2 I used Giddens's structuration theory to reveal the agential powers that Traditional Authorities hold when they are able to manipulate a changing system to their own advantage. In Chapter 9.1 I identified the precondition for such manipulation to be a certain patterned incoherence, as defined in Jessop's SRA, in the implementation of governmental legislation. In particular with regards to the relation between the state and local grassroots actors it became clear how the state itself has created strategically-selective contexts in

which strategically-inclined agents can exploit a range of tools, provided by the state, to their own advantage, even if this impedes the state's commendable land reform ambitions.

Land restitution constituted the most significant and most widely discussed of the three land reform pillars in this dissertation. In Chapters 5.1 and 5.2 I presented perspectives by municipal and provincial administrators, successful land claimants, and Traditional Authorities. Administrators pointed out the legal limitations that Traditional Authorities have with regards to land control before and after successful land claims and that their limited rights and duties in the realm of customary law should not be positively or negatively affected by any land reform project. One particular public servant stressed the legal irrelevance of Traditional Authorities to land restitution claims, who should theoretically only be involved in the process if they had individually or as part of a community claimed land. The actual involvement of Traditional Authorities in everyday land administration and their de facto control over many ongoing land claims due to popular support or legal ignorance within the community, was brushed away by this particular interlocutor. He argued that people would soon grow tired of 'tradition', wishing for 'modernity' and thus ridding the nation almost automatically of Traditional Authorities. In Chapter 8.2.2 I used this perspective to illustrate how a certain understanding of 'modernity' is strategically portrayed as inevitable by local actors and in Chapter 9.1 I pointed to a significant power hierarchy between state, Traditional Authorities and other local actors with strategic implications in land administration.

The representative of the Mmahlabane Trust, an institution that administers a successfully reclaimed stretch of land near Libangeni, pointed out that they intended to work well with the Traditional Authority, but that successful land claims with little direct connection to the local Traditional Authority were often regarded as a threat to the powers of the latter. Furthermore, the Mmahlabane Trust representative expressed his frustration with the implementation of reopened land restitution as it allowed members of his own group to reapply for restitution due to their frustration with the existing settlement agreements. In Chapter 2E.3.2 this example was used to illustrate how individual and collective strategic calculation can influence land claims even beyond the final settlement phase. Furthermore, in Chapter 9.1 it showcased land claimants' dependence upon the state and how that dependence can both strengthen and impede restitution ambitions.

From the perspective of the Traditional Authorities, the 2014 reopening of land restitution was welcomed. It allowed them to claim vast stretches of land on behalf of the people they supposedly represented. These claims were, however, often based on faulty interpretations of the law and flexible definitions of legal representation and leadership, as suggested by a range of official land administrators. Nonetheless, the land claims allowed Traditional Leaders to present themselves as people's advocates and the government and the courts as the preventers of universal prosperity. In a

similar vein, 'traditional' representatives argued that PTOs provided greater protection of property rights to their holders than title deeds as it allowed the Traditional Authority to intervene whenever land was used as collateral in bank loans. In the eyes of Traditional Authorities both land restitution and tenure reform were only good if land control ended up in 'traditional' hands afterwards so that they could protect claimants from losing the land again, for which government administrators would be to blame from their point of view. Such an understanding of 'tradition' as the protective structure against the menace of 'modernity' was discussed in Chapter 8.2.2 to illustrate how land reform in the former Homeland is very much entangled into binary discourses such as Tradition/Modernity.

In Chapter 6 I presented empirical data on the restitution land claim by the Litho Ndzundza of Rapotokwane, who have claimed a large agriculture and mining area known as Rust de Winter to the north of Pretoria. The claim has remained unsettled since the early stages of land restitution due to various delays, most significantly due to governmental reluctance to accept the Litho claim as restitution case, the following extensive court proceedings and quarrels over representation among the Lithos themselves. It was shown how the decade-long restitution struggle of a particular community is inextricably connected to questions of historical origins, leadership disputes, and the involvement of strategically-inclined individuals and the tactics they apply. The chapter extensively covers a crucial time in the land restitution process in 2017/18 when two competing land claim groups agreed to form a joint committee which would represent them in negotiations. Based on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *field* I analysed three public meetings that were held in this context in Chapter 2E.3.1. I clarified the role of power, delineated the objective structures that defined the events, and analysed the habituses of participants based on pre-meeting moods, status display, rhetorical and argumentative tactics. This way it became visible how public meetings, whose outcomes invariably influence the success and failure of restitution cases, are further influenced by individual strategies and by social dynamics that can quickly get out of control.

One of the two competing Litho land claims, named after the attributed case number commonly known as the P0050 group, was originally spearheaded by Sebatshelwa Matthews Mahlangu, who claimed Rust de Winter and many more areas in the former Transvaal on behalf of the Litho Ndzundza. His claim was, however, based on a row of historical interpretations that are widely contested. He regarded himself not only as the legitimate heir of the Litho Ndzundza, but he also claimed the leadership over the entire Ndebele Nation to belong to the Litho Ndzundza. His restitution claim was based on this assumption and on a dubious document in which the land ownership of the Transvaal was promised to the Ndebele by Louis Botha in 1916. Matthews's argumentation and that of his nephew Iggy Litho, who continued the land claim and the struggle for leadership after his death,

derived from an assumed patterned incoherence in the governmental structures that administer land reform and Traditional Leadership affairs. Their strategy was elaborately discussed in Chapter 2E.3.3.

Throughout Chapter 9 the Litho land claim was analysed from three different angles applying Jessop's SRA as the main analytical tool. The troubled relationship between the Litho Ndzundza and the South African state, directly and indirectly related to the land claim, their historical trauma of land dispossession and heteronomy, and their ongoing internal leadership disputes depend to a large extent on binarily informed perspectives and argumentative strategies. The large strategic potential of binary perspectives in complex contexts was acknowledged in conjunction with these findings and from a more general perspective it was elaborately discussed at the end of Chapter 8.1. However I also established that inflexible strategies that fail to acknowledge context complexity hold a greater risk for failure (see Chapter 9.3). I therefore concluded that under the precondition of a balanced tactical-strategic approach that takes into account both the strategic value of discursive binaries and the complex contexts within which they are deployed, grassroots agents are able to influence large-scale processes such as nationwide land reform.

All of these discussions related to land reform in former KwaNdebele indicated a strong connection between individual ambitions, frustrations, and strategies on one side, the contextual legal technicalities and practical realities of land reform on a second side, and further directly and indirectly related issues that influence these strategies and contexts on a third side. This also became evident in the survey data presented in Chapter 7 where respondents' relationship to land and to land reform correlated to several other factors. Especially these 'external' battles that the involved actors of land reform are faced with must be acknowledged and understood in order to gain further insights into the workings of land reform at the grassroots level.

10.3 Battled Ground: the Confrontations

The discussion and vignette above have illustrated the embeddedness of land reform into a multitude of other practices and discourses. This context of land reform was explored with the help of three common local binaries in Chapter 4 and an elaborate but not at all comprehensive historical summary in the First *Entr'acte* (Chapter 1E). In the following I will (1) point to the common ground that the Kghodwana time travel project and many local struggles for land and power share with regards to the significance associated to accounts of history. The relation of the empirical data in this thesis to the observed strategic exploitation of history will almost inevitably lead to discussions of (2) the relevance of 'race', (3) the relationship between the South African state and its Traditional Leaders, and (4) the strategic application of narratives of 'tradition' and 'modernity'. By showing how these allegorical battlegrounds are integrated into one another it will hopefully become clear how land reform cannot be regarded as a simple socially isolated issue.

As explained in the opening remarks of this chapter, the ground in former KwaNdebele has seen many battles, both literally and figuratively. Thus any debate on land reform, any restitution claim, and any ambition for land control depends on the events of the past and their often strategically adjusted interpretations. At Kghodwana the time travel project portrayed a particular version of history, not only with regards to the political upheavals that led to the Mapoch War, but also regarding the reenactment of everyday tasks in an Ndebele village in the late nineteenth century. Both the practical lessons in gender-specific division of labour and the filmed re-enactment of anti-colonial lore aimed to promote an idealized image of Ndebele culture and its relations with the neighbouring Pedi Nation, embedded in the current governmental promotion of cultural diversity and national unity. The instrumentalization of history is thus an important strategic factor that needs to be reckoned with, which was also illustrated by the booklet that the Chief from Kwaggafontein lent me. Through this little publication SS Skosana's Homeland government had not only expressed the desire to document a certain version of history but had also laid the foundations for its future territorial expansions into Moutse and Rust de Winter.

The first half of the First *Entr'acte* summarises the events that led to two significant splits in the leadership structures of the Ndebele after their arrival in the Transvaal and tracks the migration patterns of the three resulting groups: the Manala, the Ndzundza-Mabhoko, and the Litho Ndzundza. The Mapoch War and its origins in the conflict of succession among the neighbouring Pedi are also part of this summary. The second half summarised the political events that led to the establishment of KwaNdebele as an Apartheid Homeland, the troubled years of its existence and its dismantling in the wake of democracy. In the context of land reform particularly past patterns of forced migration, the repeated loss of and search for land, and the century-long severely restricted self-determination of the

Ndebele and other neighbouring populations were not only significant but their strategical application was visible throughout the field data.

In the second half of Chapter 5 I presented data on the post-Apartheid leadership dispute between the elites of the two main Ndebele branches, Manala and the Ndzundza. The so-called Nhlapo Commission used controversial methodology and a selective line of historical argumentation and recommended to not only unify the two Ndebele Kingships but to award a single kingship to the Manala lineage with its current leader Makhosonke II. This recommendation, paired with the subsequent court battles, illustrated the significance of history and the various interpretations thereof. The Commission controversially based their decision on merely one single event that occurred several centuries ago, disregarding all other arguments that contradicted their findings. I described the ensuing inner leadership struggles among the Ndzundza Ndebele that derived from the official demotion to a lesser status under Manala. The interlocutors that were involved in the challenge to the current Ndzundza leader Mbusi II Mabhoko III expressed their concern that the lack of competent leadership in their own ranks and the threat of external domination through the Manala could not only lead to a loss of cultural identity but to outright violence not dissimilar to the KwaNdebele Uprising of 1986/87. This shows how also more recent history can be instrumentalized in the local struggles for the legitimation of 'traditional' power through the state.

In Chapter 6 it was shown how history itself can be reinterpreted and contested. The abovementioned controversial argumentation of late Sebatshelwa Matthews according to which he (or after his death his nephew Iggy Litho) should have been the paramount leader of the entire Ndebele Nation, is a case in point. His aspiration was based on a range of disputable historical assertions. First, Matthews claimed that by allowing his brother Ndzundza to take the royal regalia (*namxali/namrhali*) in the course of the first leadership split Manala technically abdicated from the Ndebele throne. Secondly, when the Litho lineage split off from the remaining Ndzundza at KwaMaza they did so because Magodongo had illegitimately taken the Chieftaincy by force. His descendants could therefore only be regents until the descendants of Litho reunited with them to reassume leadership. Thirdly, Matthews argued that Leah, the mother of his father John-Soselembe, had been late Litho Chief Jas-David's Royal Wife (*indlunkulu*) and therefore the currently ruling descendants from Jas-David's right-hand wife (*iquadi*) NaZokwe did so illegitimately. All of these claims were widely disputed by other interlocutors and they are not supported by any ethnographic literature. During my time in the field the leadership ambitions by Matthews's next of kin, his nephew Iggy Litho, caused major upheavals in the local power structures and almost led to the replacement of Rapotokwane's current Chief Vuma. Furthermore, it was a contributing factor to the temporary unification of the two competing land claims.

Any claim for land restitution depends on the evaluation of historical narratives as the claimants need to prove that they were dispossessed after 19 June 1913 on the basis of racists laws and practices without adequate compensation (Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994). In the case of the Litho Ndzundza their history of dispossession was repeatedly challenged by government institutions and the courts for almost three decades. Together with the injustices that they experienced at the hands of multiple governments since their expulsion from Rust de Winter this fact has contributed to a widespread attitude that is – to put it mildly – critical of the South African state, its administrators and political representatives. This relationship was thoroughly discussed in Chapter 9.1 and the implications of land control that derive from the traumatic experiences of the past, hinted at above, provided ample discussion material in Chapter 9.2. It was shown how the presentation of history was often influenced by underlying binaries such as The State/The People or The Lithos/The Others.

In subchapter 2E.2.2 I tested Giddens's methodological bracketing to examine (1) the strengthening and shaping of institutions through the duality of structure, (2) the strategic potential of structuration, and (3) the significance of time and space. Referring to a range of observations from Ndebele history and from references by interlocutors to that history I was able to track structuration processes and to illustrate the merits and limitations of the Giddensian ontology. In subchapter 2E.2.3 I illustrated Jessop's concept of structured coherence, one of the two potential final states that the relational structure/agency trajectory of the SRA culminates into, by reference to the past losses and wins by the leadership of the Manala Ndebele since the late 1980s. I concluded that a structurally coherent reciprocal relationship between the Manala Royal Family (in particular its leader Enoch Makhosonke II) on the one side and the various state structures on the other side had developed, which proved hard to overcome for strategically-inclined outsiders because of past precedents.

The discourse on 'race' is directly implicated in the land reform project and the related political debates (see Chapter 1.1) as it tries to rectify the injustices of the past that were committed with skin colour being the essential denominator. In Chapter 4.3, as mentioned above, I provided some historical and legal context on South African land reform based on the often used Black (owned) Land versus White (owned) Land binary. Land reform itself would not even be a constitutionally enshrined necessity if distinction and discrimination based on 'race' were not so dominant in the lived everyday realities of South Africa's citizens, now and in the not so distant past.

Due to its colonial and segregationist past South African society today continues to be severely affected by the socially constructed implications of skin colour and in everyday life these effects are continuously manifested through practice. In their attempt to make the Mampuru-Nyabela-Tambo documentary more authentic the organisers at Kghodwana chose the two event participants with the lightest skin tone to play the envoys from Pretoria. Even though I pointed out my wanting acting skills

and my aversion to making use of my mediocre Afrikaans, my Whiteness alone seemed to fully qualify me for a speaking role in this particular film adaptation. Other trade-offs in historical and film-aesthetic authenticity seemed to matter less to the organizers. Some of the actors wore sunglasses and blue jeans with their animal skin attire while others visibly held smartphones and miniature versions of South Africa's national flag (adopted in 1994) in their hands. Most of the acting school children continuously 'spiked the lens'[94], the elders with speaking roles often mumbled to the extent of unintelligibility, and no exterior microphones were used despite strong winds that morning, which surely must have negatively affected the sound quality. From this experience and many similar ones where my Whiteness had a distinguishing effect it stands to reason that, rather than anything else, skin colour seems to be a factor that can significantly impact contexts and social interaction.

My personal experiences as a White European field researcher in a predominantly Black and Coloured social environment left aside, strategic references to skin colour have been mentioned at several points throughout previous chapters. For example, I came across direct and indirect allegations of racially motivated discrimination against individuals, e.g. against government Minister Derek Hanekom in old correspondences regarding the Litho land claim (Chapter 9.1) or against Judge AC Basson in the Ndebele leadership dispute (Chapter 9.3). These were basically used as *ad hominem* allegations to invalidate the respective actor's morals and thus by extension the legitimacy of their decisions. Further, Alfred Mahlangu repeatedly portrayed a certain affinity towards the Afrikaans language and told the anecdote of his father having been a neighbour to General Jan Smuts whenever a White person was in the room. Despite my own obvious lack of Afrikaner descent he delivered this performance for me, too. As the interlocutors that he performed this way for were seemingly exclusively White individuals I assume that this was context-dependent practice that aimed to create a certain rapport. Finally, there were also instances where past precedents of White domination were brought forward to justify demands in the present. Hendrick Kgomo rejected the issuance of title deeds to PTO holders as he feared that the land would eventually end up in the hands of White investors, thus repeating the trauma of widespread loss of land (Chapter 5.2 + 8.2.2). In a more vindictive fashion Iggy Litho declared that eventually "*All Whites must go!*" once the restitution of Rust de Winter was finalized (Chapter 6.3.3); it was clear that this was motivated by a grievance originating in past experiences rather than an ambition to implement Black Economic Empowerment.

These examples illustrate how the social and material ground of former KwaNdebele continues to be battled by 'race', either as a chronic afterpain of the darker Apartheid ages or as part of intentional context manipulation. As if the simplified worldview of Apartheid's architects had ever actually succeeded in overcoming the complexities of reality – its simplified logic having been manifested in

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[94] i.e. looking straight into the camera, a feature commonly avoided in film making.

the ideological and physical battles of the past – the many salient debates of today's South Africa seem inextricably relatable to this particular legacy. However, in comparison to the other two binaries introduced in Chapter 4, I observed discursive applications of the Black Land versus White Land dichotomy on a much less regular basis and in a seemingly less strategically guided way. So if skin colour is such an important factor in the South African context, in particular with regards to land reform, then why does it seem to play only a minor role in the field data presented in this thesis?

Three straightforward answers offer themselves in this context. First and foremost, I know for certain that a significant number of my interlocutors resented arguments infused with dichotomously applied Black versus White rhetoric. Secondly, it seems plausible that the skin colour binary was being taken for granted in several exchanges due to its sheer societal omnipresence. Because in most conversations all of the involved actors understood the binary's meanings and implications there was no need to expatiate on them. However, in order for the strategic merit of the skin colour binary, provided by the strategically-selective context within which it is implicitly available as a strategic tool, to become effective it needs to be expressed in a verbal, written or other explicitly identifiable manner. Therefore, a strategic exploitation of the binary must be presumed unlikely in the situations where it was not explicitly referred to or at least alluded to in another way. Thirdly, it is very much possible that many of my Black and Coloured interlocutors refrained from formulating 'racially' biased arguments due to my own Whiteness. This would indicate that the binary in question is after all commonly used in a context-dependent tactical, if not strategic, way. Ultimately, I must assume that it was a combination of these three explanations and other not yet identified factors.

While a proper understanding of South African land reform always constituted the main research interest, it was obvious from the start of this research venture that it would have to be investigated in tandem with the role of local Traditional Leadership due to their many obvious entanglements in the field; this is also acknowledged by the subtitle of this dissertation. The inaugural discussion of EWC (Chapter 1.1) illustrated the extensive multi-level involvement of Traditional Authorities in the local and nationwide land reform debate. So far this chapter's discussion of the research findings will have been sufficiently evocative of that circumstance to justify this secondary research focus to the readers. In the following I will therefore refrain from extensively repeating the various intersections of these two areas of interest; instead I refer to further significant research findings in the realm of Traditional Leadership that nonetheless bear direct and indirect significance for land reform.

Events such as the Somakhawula Heritage Celebration take place on a regular basis in the everyday lives of rural South African communities. Apart from song and dance performances by local groups they provide an arena for local elites to address the participants and for local sales people to advertise their services. Some of these events are hosted by Traditional Authorities as commemorations for late

leaders, e.g. KoMjekejeke for Manala leader Silamba or eRholweni for Ndzundza leader Nyabela. Other events are organised by NGOs, private groups or municipalities to promote cultural identity and advertise societal diversity such as Somakhawula. Most events, in one way or another, receive funds through local and provincial government. Irrespective of the financial and organizational support structures of these events, it seems that such cultural promotion is not possible without the presence of Traditional Leaders. At Somakhawula and at other events that I attended the Chiefs were granted the opportunity to make a special entrance to the event hall, followed by the chance to address the attendants on the 'traditional' issues of the day. In a similar fashion, the Kghodwana time travel event was honoured by the participation of a respectable number of 'traditional' dignitaries, most prominently Kgošikgolo Billy Mampuru III. They addressed the pupils, played significant roles in the documentary and orated the depicted history for the cameras. This persistent involvement of Traditional Leaders in public celebrations of custom and culture was referred to by one of my interlocutors in the following way: "*The Traditional Councils were left* […] *in place to preserve heritage customs so that you don't lose them* [i.e. the customs][…]. *The only thing that they are supposed to do is to look after their constituencies on the basis of customs*" (Bheka Ngwenya, 16 October 2017; see also Chapter 5.1).

In Chapter 4.2 I contextualised the role of Traditional Leaders in South Africa, starting with the academic debate on their continued existence beyond the transition to democracy. Furthermore I provided a summary of the legal framework and challenges that derive from it. Both of these, the debate and the legal framework, depend to a large extent on history and they have significant effects on the land administration in the former Homelands and on land restitutions claims beyond them (see above for both). Another significant concept in this context is 'legitimacy', which was discussed with reference to Krämer's Basic Legitimacies in the subchapter in question. 'Traditional' legitimacy was discussed in several chapters (4, 6, 2E.3, 8.2.1, 9) thereafter, because the legitimacy associated to individual office holders or to the institution of Traditional Leadership itself has direct implications on local land reform and land administration efforts.

The abovementioned leadership dispute between the Manala and Ndzundza Ndebele was prominently featured in the field data. I began the second half of Chapter 5 with my own observations at the 2017 commemoration of King Nyabela at eRholweni. Several of them focused on the incumbent Ndzundza leader Mbusi II Mabhoko III, particularly his performance in front of the crowd and his refusal to speak publicly. Subsequently I summarised the commission and court processes that had led to the unification of the two Ndebele Kingships under *iNgwenyama* Makhosonke II (Manala), and Mabhoko III's demotion. I compared the official recommendations and rulings to the perspectives presented by some of my more involved interlocutors: government officials, representatives from the Manala Royal

Court, and Ndzundza conspirators who hoped to substitute the incumbent Ndzundza leader. Apart from the historical arguments mentioned above, my interlocutors also presented perspectives that were intended to vindicate or challenge the 'traditional' legitimacy of the involved main actors. The Manala representatives simply argued that the decisions made by state institutions (the so-called Nhlapo Commission and the High Court) had to be accepted if one did not want to challenge the sovereignty of the democratic constitution. One government official, while acknowledging the government's authority to determine the legitimacy of Traditional Leaders, rather audaciously misrepresented the recommendation by the Nhlapo Commission to justify his support for the persistence of the Ndzundza Kingship. While these two perspectives used the South African state as the decisive legitimizing factor, the internal contenders of the Ndzundza leadership challenged the legitimacy of Mabhoko III's leadership due to a range of individual failures on his behalf.

Among the Litho Ndzundza, leadership disputes and contestations of legitimacy also played a significant role. The ambition by Sebatshelwa Matthews Mahlangu to become Chief of the Litho Ndzundza and by extension *iNgwenyama* of the entire Ndebele Nation was recapitulated above on the basis of the implicated historical claims. While the significance of family origins is sufficiently displayed in this particular example, other practices among the Litho corroborated the strategic value of collective and individual origins even further. Politics and administration in Rapotokwane are dominated by the Traditional Council which is controlled by the descendants of those whose ancestors in the 1920s purchased the two Witlaagte portions on which the village is located. Individuals and groups whose origins can be traced back to the original removal from Rust de Winter *de facto* exert more political power than those who joined them in a similarly involuntary fashion only a few decades later. I observed that calling the family origins of opponents into question was a popular tactical tool to manipulate the local power structures. The incumbent Chief Vuma was also subject to allegations of illegitimate family origins. The legitimacy of his chieftaincy was however only under actual scrutiny when several allegations of improper conduct were accompanied by a corruption scandal. Eventually Vuma managed to outperform his critics through intimidation and by making concessions and he remained Chief. In my analysis in Chapter 9.3 I have hypothesized that this performance added further legitimacy to his chieftaincy.

Both leadership dispute contexts, among the Litho Ndzundza and between the Royal Houses of Manala and Ndzundza have direct and indirect implications for land reform and vice versa. The temporary fragility of Vuma's chieftaincy coincided with the sudden occurrence of cooperative sentiment between the two land claims. The prospect of success in the land claim motivated Iggy Litho to suspend his leadership ambitions for the time being. The award of the Ndebele Nation leadership boosted the

significance of the Manala Royal House to an extent that it was able to further lobby for a restitution claim to a vast stretch of land (approximately 1,000 km^2 in eastern Gauteng[95]) (Makwitting 2019).

In Chapter 2.1 I mentioned that I had to seek permission by the local Traditional Councils for my field research. In Libangeni local Headman Aphane even recommended that I request permission from the *iNgwenyama* himself. When I asked an elected local ward councillor for an interview, he first ascertained that I had received research permission by the Traditional Authority. On the road to Kghodwana Village a policeman tried to extort a bribe from me under false pretences, but as soon as I mentioned my research affiliation to the *iNgwenyama* he backed down. These observations are somewhat inconsistent with the mere customary role that Traditional Authorities ought to play according to South African legislation. The relationship between municipal and provincial government structures and Traditional Authorities in former KwaNdebele was thoroughly illustrated in the first half of Chapter 5, also regarding land reform. The relation to the state, from the perspective of land claimants and Traditional Leaders alike, was analysed in Chapter 9.1 and it was concluded that, while there is surely a certain dependence upon the state by Traditional Leaders, this dependence could in return be transformed into strategic advantage.

The survey analysis revealed a few findings on Traditional Leadership and Traditional Authorities. Most significantly, out of the 26 concrete and abstract items for which respondents were asked to state the degree of importance they associated to them personally, 22 items were sorted into 5 different clusters in the factor analysis. One of these clusters contained three items: Traditional Lifestyle, Ancestral Worship, and Traditional Leadership. This allowed for an understanding in which Traditional Leadership was stereotypically associated to other 'traditional' elements of society. The strategic exploitation of their association with 'tradition' has been illustrated by the involvement of Traditional Leaders in heritage celebrations but also political contexts alike. The strategic use of the Tradition/Modernity binary was yet another important analytical focus and it helped understand strategically-selective context within which the data was collected.

In the field and throughout the data analysis I came across a multitude of implicit and explicit discursively applied hierarchies and dichotomies; most of them were based on an underlying binary construct. The most prominent of them was surely Tradition/Modernity. This prominence may originate in my own *ex ante* research interest and the resulting cognitive bias that no ethnographer is immune to. However, references to what is stereotypically conceived as 'traditional' and 'modern' and a strategically guided discourse that derives from their binary origin were abundant in the field data,

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[95] For reference, Pretoria covers an area of 687 km^2.

which not only becomes apparent in the discussion above but it also allows me to conclude that my primary research interest was justified.

Both events in the vignette above, Somakhawula and Kghodwana, depended on the rendition of 'tradition' in one shape or another. This included explicitly 'traditional' song, dance and procession performances and speeches by Traditional Leaders. However, these 'traditional' elements were accompanied by elements one would stereotypically associate with 'modernity'. For example, my seemingly spontaneous inclusion into the entrance procession at Somakhawula may have been motivated by a range of factors that I will refrain from speculating on, but ultimately it seems to correspond more with the 'modern' narrative of an inclusive post-Apartheid South Africa than with the 'traditional' segregated approach that was fostered by former regimes. Another example constitutes the flaunting of 'traditional' weapons and attire composed of beads, thick colourful blankets or animal skins. This was contrasted by the particular elder who seemed to depend on the sale of such 'traditional' items, and who – supposedly driven by 'modern' economic virtues – showed no interest in a conversation on 'tradition' with me. The 'traditional' attire was often complemented by 'modern' elements that would express party affiliation (predominantly ANC) or economic status (e.g. expensive fashion items or technology).

The problematic character of the Tradition/Modernity binary in the anthropological arena and beyond has been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4.1. As with most binaries that were presented and discussed in this thesis, the argument has been throughout that simple binaries do not suffice to fully reflect the complexities of reality. Nonetheless the empirically observed representations of these binaries or their constituent entities indicate that binaries can be 'useful' as they might serve a range of strategically guided purposes. For example, on the invitation to the Somakhawula Heritage Celebration it was explicitly stated that the promotion of 'tradition' was motivated by the ambition to restore pride among the indigenous population. Similarly, it can be assumed that the learning activities at the time travel event were delivered with a range of intentions in mind such as strengthening cultural affiliation and creating an idealized identity among the students. Propagating the popular trope that "*tradition is where you come from*" (geographically and temporally) the binary in question was used to suggest 'tradition' as means to distinguish one's own identity through cultural practice in contrast to the 'modern' nation state where this distinction is allegedly getting lost (see subchapters 4.1 and 8.2.2). However, the vignette above also illustrates how the use of binaries may also create seemingly incoherent situations when these binaries are applied in complex contexts in which very different contextual and agential forces interact. The learning activities were strictly divided according to the gender of the participants, which – as illustrated by the stark misogynistic conversation between the Sangomas by the fire in the morning – shed Ndebele tradition in a more controversial light. In stark

contrast to this, the oppression of Ndzundza Tribal Leaders under MG Mahlangu's KwaNdebele government was ultimately halted when women's rights activists succeeded in court and voided the previous KLA election in which women had been denied the right to vote. Also, the 'modern' achievements of Oliver Tambo and the ANC, which were hailed in multiple speeches towards the end of the Kghodwana event, also include the ever-ongoing struggle for gender equality (Odendaal 2022: ch. 36).

Through these examples it becomes clear that binaries such as Tradition/Modernity, Men/Women, Ethnicity/Nationality are essential in understanding the everyday battles that occur on the societal (battled)field of former KwaNdebele. More importantly, however, even though binaries may appear to be used dichotomously in common discourse, their constituent parts do rarely occur in a mutually exclusive way.

As mentioned above, the survey data analysis produced five different thematic clusters, one of them being dominated by 'traditional' items. The clear association between 'tradition' and Traditional Authorities which is observable in the vignette above and throughout the data is thus also statistically indicated. However, as mentioned in Chapter 8.2.1, some of my interlocutors questioned the 'traditionality' of their local Traditional Leaders, some civil servants even admitting that the 'traditional' sphere of influence extended far into the realms of 'modern' municipal government. Furthermore, the survey analysis revealed correlations between the explicitly 'traditional' questionnaire items and rather 'modern' ones. In Chapter 8.1 I interpreted these cross-cluster correlations as avenues for agency and depicted the strategic use of binaries as a contributing factor to an increasing contextual complexity. Therefore the following subchapter is necessary to illustrate how agents and contexts interact through strategy and which role the ominous binary plays in this interaction.

10.4 Battleground: Complexity and Strategies

In this Chapter the term battleground refers to a multitude of structural and agential forces that operate in former KwaNdebele to form a complex system in which land, the control over it, and the violent conflicts that were fought on it constitute merely a few nodes that relate to many other significant themes and topics. The matter of land reform and other relevant topics have been discussed above. This subchapter aims to summarise findings that illustrate the complexity deriving from the interplay between strategic conduct and strategically-selective context. In the following I will first recapitulate the theoretical framework that this discussion of structure, agency, strategy, and complexity is embedded in. Secondly I will establish a connection between that framework and the vignette given above. The third and final step of this subchapter will then aim to summarise this dissertation's analytical findings to allow for an integrated understanding of this particular battleground.

In Chapter 3 I provided a summary of a range of perspectives in the structure/agency debate, most prominently Giddens's structuration theory and Bourdieu's theory of practice. Both of these ontologies have included the concept of 'strategy' in one way or another. However, dissimilar to Jessop's Strategic-Relational Approach, they have certainly not presented it as the major driving force behind the structure/agency duality that they propose. The SRA describes an abstract-to-concrete evolutionary process in which structure and agency exist as distinct underlying entities that engage in a strategically driven exchange making them gradually develop the more they interact. This exchange then produces the actual and empirically observable manifestations of structure and agency that have adapted to the characteristics of the respective other. I have argued that, in my humble opinion, the SRA allows for the incorporation of both the Giddensian and the Bourdieusian ontology at one point or another in the described structure/agency co-evolution, even though Jessop might disagree with that interpretation. The strategic-relational evolution of structure and agency does neither imply that these entities develop in unidirectional or linear fashion nor does it assume their development to be synchronous. Jessop makes it very clear that the process through which strategy gradually transforms the abstract structure and agency dichotomy into concrete empirical observations of structural configurations and agential strategies and tactics is a complex one. This implies not only that the transformation process is non-linear and non-predictable and therefore irreversible, but also that the different variants of the structure/agency relation whose formation Jessop has summarized in his five-stage co-evolution model (see Figure 3.1) may concurrently exist and operate.

In order to turn these very abstract ontological assumptions into useful analytical lenses through which themes, patterns and dynamics in the empirical data could be made visible I followed Hay's suggestion to focus on *strategic action* and *strategically-selective contexts* (Hay 2002: 128). These two terms

however required further clarification (see subchapter 3.2.3). With regards to strategic action it was necessary to distinguish between tactics and strategy. Strategy was defined as long-term intentional conduct that anticipates the strategic conduct by other actors and takes into account the potential long-term effects in the relevant contexts. However, in order for strategy to materialise into practice one requires tactics. Tactics were defined as actions performed in immediate response to a given context, possibly but not necessarily under the guidance of previously established strategy. The process through which strategies are implemented through tactics I have later on (Chapter 9.3) also referred to as performance. In order to defend the strategy-based approach against common rational-choice allegations, I suggested a spectrum of agential tactics and strategy (Figure 3.3) in which I differentiated between tactically-inclined, tactically-able, strategically-able and strategically-inclined conduct. Varying degrees of agential freedom and structural constraint were thus accommodated. By alluding to the militaristic origins of strategy and tactics the Giddensian understanding of human agency, "defined as having at least the potential to resist and manipulate structural constraints, and sometimes to use genuinely creative powers to innovate and transform the structural conditions of [...] social existence" (Parker 2000: 7) was thus incorporated into this particular focus suggested by Hay. Strategically-selective contexts I have widely interpreted and applied in a similar fashion to Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *field*, because both of them privilege some capitals/strategies over others, they encourage and discourage certain strategic actions, and they are only accessible thorough certain spatial and temporal horizons. Actions may be structurally constrained, but actors are capable of becoming strategic by reflecting on these constraints and orienting their own actions along their understanding of them, developing a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990 [1987]: 63f).

The assumption of strategically-selective contexts and strategic conduct sustained the empirical data analysis. Therefore the identification of strategies and tactics, of strategically restrictive and of manipulable contexts became the main objective. The findings, when understood as an amalgamation of multiple factors, have warranted the allegorical use of the term 'battlefield' to describe the researched social environment. In particular the relation between binarily informed discursive strategies and tactics on the one side and the high degree of complexity in the contextual setting on the other illustrated the potential for agential creativity that emanates from strategic conduct and strategic selectivity.

The investigation of strategy in a particular field setting depends to a certain degree on sophisticated speculation. The researcher must determine whether the actors in an observed situation were guided by tactics or strategy, whether they achieved the intended outcome, and whether the specific context would have allowed for a different course of action for a similar or better outcome. To a certain extent the researcher may query the individuals and groups in question to answer these questions. However,

this may not always be possible and the response may not always be satisfactory. Alternatively, the researcher may rely on their own experience with and understanding of the involved individuals within the context in question. To come to a conclusion regarding the strategic significance, effect, and potential of the observed conduct and context the researcher will then have to assess the reliability of their own interpretation and formulate a plausible conclusion. In this case it is however essential that the researcher exercises reflexivity, becoming aware of their own involvement in the observations and the origins of their own strategic momentum. To further illustrate the delineations of the paragraphs above I refer, one last time, back to the guiding vignette of this chapter.

Due to my own direct involvement in the given vignette I am able to reflect on the methodological guard rails and epistemological limitations that were described in Chapter 2. The vignette illustrates the multi-sitedness of my field research mentioning my coinciding commitments in Rapotokwane and at Waterval, my regular car journeys between the former Homeland territory and other locations (such as Bronkhorstspruit in this case), and the necessity to flexibly expand the field's geographic definition to previously discounted locations (such as Kghodwana). Furthermore, by immersing myself into the situation at hand (participating in the procession and in the time travel documentary) and by subsequently removing myself out of that immersed state I have provided one apparent example of the way in which I conducted participant observation. Another parallel between the vignette and the methodological deliberations in Chapter 2 is the theatrical/acting dimension that both contain. While reflexivity was a constant accompaniment during the data collection and the analytical process, I have framed the obligatory self-reflective exercise that is presented in most contemporary methodology chapters in a particularly 'dramatic' way. Possibly my use of Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor was inspired by my experiences as an amateur film actor in late September 2017. My own involvement in these activities, however, is relevant beyond the purely methodological discussion as it allows insight into the role of strategy, more specifically into strategic conduct (mine) and strategically-selective context (including the tactics and strategies of others).

Strategy and tactics having been defined above, the explicit delineation of my own intentions, my expectations, and their temporal framework will help to understand how my strategic conduct contributed to the presented field data. Deviations between my own intentions and the actual outcomes of the described context situations may indicate the strategic conduct of others and thus the strategic selectivity of the given context as a whole. My intention was the gathering of empirical data on land reform and the Traditional Leadership system. I assumed that the most reliable and relevant information could be acquired through interpersonal relationships and an explicit interest in the dynamics between 'traditional' and 'modern' aspects of society. Thus, I aimed to foster these relationships with a select group of individuals such as Patrick and Ishmael over a longer period of time,

which allowed me to have thorough interviews with government officials, public servants, Traditional Leaders and to participate in significant public events. Also in the case of the two events described in the vignette above my close acquaintance with these two individuals surely contributed to an expansion of the participatory dimension (i.e. the participation in procession and film acting) of my methodological approach. Ironically, this particular form of participation had originally not been part of my strategy as I had planned to stay in the background to make conversation with the involved individuals rather than presenting myself in the quite literal front row of proceedings. However, both of my contacts at Somakhawula and Kghodwana had their own intentions.

Patrick's intention as my research assistant was to provide me with a 'traditional' experience and in his understanding that could be achieved by positioning me in the front row as the Chiefs assembled for their entry performance. In this strategically-selective context it can be assumed that Patrick operated beyond conventional practice, but at the same time he must have somehow acted within the boundaries of what was socially and culturally acceptable. His involvement in the organizing committee of the Somakhawula Celebration and the non-segregationist agenda formulated by the organization to promote pride in cultural diversity surely facilitated his tactics. I assume that there were also people who disapproved of my integration, but possibly they were not in the position required to intervene in Patrick's stratagem. I assume that Patrick's tactical actions were guided by strategy as he seemed to have arranged my event participation several weeks before. Similarly, Ishmael Ndlovu's status as government representative and the rapport that he and I had built on previous occasions put him in a position where he could suggest my involvement in the historical reenactment. Whether it was originally his idea to include me to support my research, or whether he had been approached by other organisers because of my skin colour, I do not know, but he was surely the one gifted with the right social capital (in the Bourdieusian sense) to initiate my inclusion. In Ishmael's case, I assume that his suggestions were rather spontaneous and based on a tactical evaluation of the given context rather than a long-term strategy, also because he was surprised to find me at the event.

Patrick's actions illustrate successful strategic conduct in a strategically-selective context that is characterised by a particular patterned incoherence as it resulted in the front row participation of a White European in a 'traditional' Ndebele performance. Ishmael's conduct must have been of tactical nature as it lacked the necessary temporal depth and a distinguishable strategic intention. It was, however, also successful as it operated in a state of structured coherence engaging factors such has political hierarchy and the omnipresent skin colour distinction factor (see above). My own performance to a certain degree exemplifies strategic failure accompanied by eventual tactical success. The ambition to remain an inconspicuous back row observer that would use these events to

meet new potential interlocutors on matters of land reform and Traditional Authority was derailed by the seemingly more appropriate strategic designs of my companions. My tactical decision to accept the change of circumstance and to go along with their plans produced valuable (and in my view somewhat entertaining) empirical data.

The vignette showcases further examples of strategic momentum such as the Mapoch Caves booklet whose authors propagated a version of history that suited their strategic ambitions in the 1980s; the long-term effects of which I have observed to still produce a particular reading of history and to influence the collective identity among the local Ndebele population. An example of tactical conduct guided by strategic consideration were the references to land reform scattered throughout the speeches held at Kghodwana. Many high-ranking Traditional Leaders have a rather ambivalent relationship with the national land reform project. On one hand, tenure reform has been perceived by a range of Traditional Leaders to diminish their local powers as it includes the upgrading of PTOs into title deeds. Also the establishment of democratically structured CPOs on restituted land within the boundaries of their jurisdiction has been frowned upon by many Traditional Authorities. On the other hand, legal changes and pragmatic adaptations to the local realities by public servants have allowed for significantly more 'traditional' influence in restitution cases in recent years. Furthermore both restitution and redistribution of land are popular demands in public discourse that need to be taken into account by the less powerful local leaders whose chieftaincy is based to a significant degree on popular support. Thus the speeches at Kghodwana remained rather vague in this regard, presenting emotionalised rhetoric and innocuous slogans rather than concrete reform suggestions.

This dissertation has presented a multitude of examples of strategic momentum: patterns of concrete strategies and tactics, context-induced strategic restrictions and possibilities, manipulation of contexts through strategy, strategies being derived from the selectivity of context, the triumph of strategy over tactics, the adaptation of successful tactics to turn them into strategy. Some of these examples were recapitulated throughout this chapter, but I will refrain from relisting all of them. Instead I shall attempt a summary of the analytical findings that these observations have contributed to.

Throughout this dissertation I have shown that the South African land reform process is not only complicated but that it surely is complex, producing often unpredictable scenarios and dynamics and being influenced by a multitude of factors such as power struggles, collective identities, and government agenda. As expressed at the end of Chapter 4, I therefore believe that a perspective which accounts for that complexity with the aim of understanding some of the structural and agential forces at work will be more helpful than simplistic political campaigns such as EWC. However, I have also showcased the usefulness of binarily informed representation tactics by introducing my theoretical framework and my contextual framework (Chapters 3 and 4) using such binaries. Binaries can be

useful, they break down complex discourses into simplified but comprehensible categories and thus allow for an effective delivery of information. This way they grant access to discourses that are highly relevant but otherwise only accessible to a narrow circle of experts and therefore they are of high strategic and tactical value.

With regards to the 'first binary', i.e. Structure/Agency in Chapter 3, the SRA suggests that the empirically observable complex relation between strategic agents and strategically-selective context originates in the underlying real dichotomy between structure and agency. When expanded into other binarily structured discourses this assumption would imply that an abundance of complex realities can be based on a variety of simple underlying dichotomous binaries. Jessop's ontology thus complements the interpretation of binaries as simplification tools with the crucial insight that the origin of the complex reality that one seeks to simplify may very well be an underlying dichotomous binary. To escalate this discussion of the role of the binary even more, a crucial inference from Jessop's five-stage co-evolution model was my hypothesis that any interaction with a given complex context, even its discursive simplification, will lead to its progressive (but non-linear) evolution into even higher complexity (see Chapter 8.1), which only remains containable due to new emergent properties (see Figure 8.3). When a binary is used by a strategically-inclined agent in a strategically-selective context, the SRA postulates that both agent and context adapt (ever so slightly) to that interaction. If that strategically valuable binary is used repeatedly by a variety of agents in a variety of contexts over a longer period of time, and if both agent and context persistently adapt to that exchange, then the progressive transformation of the binary in question is inevitable. A particularly popular binary will therefore undergo more adaptations and thus its underlying complexity and the variety of its potential interpretations will increase. This hypothesis harmonized in particular with the statistical findings on the Tradition/Modernity binary presented in Chapter 7 and discussed in Chapter 8. In summary, binaries were understood to fulfil three different but interconnected roles (1) as tactical simplification tools of complex contexts (e.g. EWC debate), (2) as potential origin of complex environments (e.g. colonial racism as the origin of land reform demand), and (3) as catalyst and symptom of increasingly complex social environments (e.g. 'traditional' legitimacy based on descent).

When strategically-selective contexts change, strategically-inclined agents must adjust their strategies. When multiple agents fail to acknowledge that change or deny their own strategic failure, that dissonance may produce systematic contradictions, strategic dilemmas and discursive paradoxes which Jessop has subsumed under the label 'patterned incoherence'. Such a variety of contingencies and contradictions may hinder but also enable strategically-inclined agents as shown in this dissertation. I have illustrated how agential and structural forces within the South African state apparatus have produced various inconsistencies that have enabled a range of individuals to

strategically exploit its legal and administrative structures, particularly in the land reform arena. I have shown how historical references and reinterpretations are used strategically in an environment where written historical accounts must be questioned for their political agenda and oral histories contradict one another. With regards to the Tradition/Modernity binary I have argued that its underlying dichotomy persists in an often subconscious manner while it is at the same time strategically deployed well beyond its original definitions and boundaries.

Complexity is not necessarily a hindrance for agency; in fact I have argued it creates potential avenues for agency. The analysis of survey data has shown that skilled agents with intimate knowledge of a certain social environment can use that knowledge to navigate and even manipulate these contexts. The more complex a context presents itself the more potential it provides for such conduct. This is also due to the apparent tension between binarily informed public discourses and the complex realities within which they are instantiated. Binaries can improve individual performance, because when they are used in the right environment they provide an understanding of the context, upon which strategies and tactical arguments can be built. However, well-founded non-binary understanding of the complexity of context will improve the formation of strategy; operating between argumentative extremes such an understanding offers multiple potential avenues of practice to the strategically-able agent. It allows agents to anticipate the actions of others and to understand the interconnectedness of structural entities. At the same time that careful evaluation of complex contexts and strategies can consume valuable cognitive, temporal and social resources. The balance between these extremes is key for a maximisation of agency, which was illustrated through a range of tactical patterns that individuals and groups apply in former KwaNdebele.

These deliberations are based on my analytical interpretation of the field data. I have encountered numerous strategically-able and strategically-inclined individuals that have succeeded in maintaining that balance between simplified binary argumentation and an awareness for the actual complexities of the contexts within which they operate on a day to day basis. These local agents who operate on the grassroots level of former KwaNdebele's society have a crucial influence on the performance of larger nationwide programmes such as land reform, land administration and Traditional Leadership. One of the more prominent examples of this was the Litho land restitution case. Due to its 'ring-fenced' status its protagonists had the power to grind the entire nationwide restitution process to a halt. In order to move the case forward land reform administrators, Traditional Leaders and significant local agents had to agree to cooperate and to seek compromise. This process was characterized by ample strategic momentum among all involved parties. Most significantly, I have pointed out that the Litho leadership's sense of belonging, both in Rapotokwane and Rust de Winter, constituted the essential corner stone of their strategic practice. Grassroots agency was also illustrated by the successes and

failures of certain individuals relying to varying degrees on tactics and strategy. The observation that rather different individual strategic approaches could produce very different outcomes and the discussion around tactical performance legitimacy have sufficiently illustrated the significant effects that each individual with their unique habitus, capital, and agency can have on/in this particular battleground.

10.5 Final Remarks

Any conclusion that follows an analysis of complexity is bound to have a few loose ends here and there. Any attempt to understand every empirical detail, all underlying social connections, and the entirety of the system under investigation is bound to fail. Any claim to full success must be regarded as suspicious. Nonetheless I am confident that I have succeeded at most of the objectives that I laid out in Chapter 1. The purpose of this research venture was the exploration of land reform processes in former KwaNdebele and to gain a better understanding of the roles that significant local actors such as tenants, claimants, Traditional Authorities and state administrators play in it. I have aimed to make visible some of the complexities that influence South Africa's land reform from the bottom up; I have achieved that aim to the extent that the obvious value of strategic and tactical assessments of local grassroots processes became apparent to the readership. I am convinced that without access to the knowledge of those whose tactics and strategies turn land reform into actual practice any political attempt at reforming the established system will fail. I regard the grassroots processes of land reform in KwaNdebele to be widely informed by strategic agency while I simultaneously acknowledge the structural obstacles that particularly marginalized parts of the population are faced with on a day to day basis. I have illustrated a wide array of strategies being applied in various arenas related to land reform and Traditional Leadership. Throughout this process I have emphasized some of the evident and underlying binarily informed aspects of strategies and contexts. I have also pointed out the structural constraints that may simultaneously hinder and enable these strategies.

Throughout the writing process I was tempted to formulate policy advice on how, in my humble opinion, land reform in South Africa could be adjusted to become more effective. I was also tempted to suggest a range of stricter definitions of the rights and duties of Traditional Leaders in order to make them part of the solution. I will nonetheless refrain from elaborating these ideas of mine as they are merely the result of my own ponderings, which are based on a relatively short time (12 months) in a relatively small region of South Africa. Every case of land restitution, redistribution and tenure reform must be understood to be unique because of a particular strategic momentum. Every Traditional Authority is constituted of strategically-selective contexts and strategically-inclined individuals. Ultimately, all findings that were summarised in this chapter and the processes that have led to them in previous chapters merely provide a glimpse of an ever-changing complex environment and therefore it would be cynical to express generalized judgements and political recommendations. Nonetheless I remain hopeful at this point that South Africa will one day attain the ambitious goals that were once formulated by Oliver Tambo and likeminded comrades and I am certain that academic projects like this one can contribute to that process by providing valuable analytical tools.

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Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit mit dem Titel

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