

**Development and Transformation of Policy Matters
on Traditional Leadership:**

KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leaders Focus Group Research
Project "Traditional Leadership in Transition - in Search of a
New Middle Ground "

**Discussion Document
April 1998**

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New Middle Ground "

**Chief Directorate -
Traditional Affairs**

Note

The content of this research document has no official status, and the document therefore does not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the Chief Directorate of Traditional Affairs. It attempts to reflect on the result of research conducted in KwaZulu-Natal on the role of traditional leadership.

This document is being made available against the background of the ongoing process of constitutional development. The object of the document is therefore to support the constitutional process by making relevant and useful information available to interested parties.

**KWAZULU-NATAL TRADITIONAL LEADERS FOCUS
GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT**

**“Traditional Leadership in Transition – in Search of a New
Middle Ground”**

April 1998

**This project was made possible with a grant from the United States Agency for
International Development**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is on field research in KwaZulu-Natal on the role of traditional leaders. It was conducted 4 to 9 December 1997 at the request of then Deputy Director General Mandla Mchunu from the Department of Constitutional Development. The actual field work was undertaken by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs(NDI), Street Law and Dr. Susan Booysen. However, this work could not have been possible without the assistance of many organizations, government officials, political parties and individuals in the province and throughout the country.

The study was based on the recommendations of Mchunu, and was similar to research conducted in the Eastern Cape Province at the request of Speaker Gugile Nkwinti. Mchunu saw the possibility that this could be done in other provinces and provide information of particular relevance to the Directorate of Traditional Affairs.

The project gained momentum under the wise guidance of Richard Sizani then Chief Directorate of Traditional Affairs for the Department of Constitutional Development. Sizani saw this exercise as an interesting way to access the traditional communities in KwaZulu-Natal to assist his work with the amakhosi. Under his direction, NDI was introduced to key individuals who assisted in the process including: Lalita Singh, IFP MP; Mario Ambrosini, Consultant; and Michael Mabuakhulu, ANC MPL. These individuals assisted in notifying the proper political structures in the province to the wishes of NDI and the goals of our research. While the ANC in the province did not officially assist NDI, they were aware of the work being undertaken.

The Honorable Inkosi N.J. Ngubane, Minister of Traditional and Environmental Affairs gave NDI his support and assistance. He placed NDI in contact with the Director of Traditional Affairs Mr. B.P. Nyandu. The field workers of the Ministry escorted NDI into the villages and introduced the field staff to the specific Inkosi of the village. After introductions, the field workers left NDI and Street Law in the village to conduct the focus group research.

The research was guided exclusively by NDI and Street Law. NDI chose specific areas of the province that the Institute wanted to target. Nyandu was informed and simply connected NDI with the appropriate field staff. The amakhosi were not forewarned to the presence of the NDI and Street Law field staff. As a matter of fact, Nyandu insisted on confidentiality in regards to the amamkhosi so as to ensure the validity of the research. Also, around Ixopo, NDI and Street Law were denied entrance into two villages on 7 December. In one village, NDI

and Street Law were literally chased out of the village by the Inkosi's eldest son. However, the access was accommodated in the four other communities.

This report gives a voice to the rural people of KwaZulu-Natal in governmental deliberations. While not a scientific sample of all rural people in the province, the report does provide a rich description of perspectives from a traditional community in 1997.

Finally, this report could not have been possible without the close cooperation between NDI and Street Law. The partnership between these organizations has allowed NDI to access communities and people all throughout South Africa that professional research firms simply cannot reach. The grassroots work of Street Law is exceptional and their ability to understand the local situation sets them uniquely apart from other groups in South Africa. Also, Dr. Susan Booyesen, Head of the Political Science Department at the University of Port Elizabeth, authored this exceptional report. As co-author of the report of traditional communities in the Eastern Cape, Dr. Booyesen had particular insight into the issues facing traditional communities in South Africa.

20 April 1998
Patrick Henry
Program Officer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This focus group research project records the "voices" a range of rural communities in isolated parts of KwaZulu-Natal. It provides perspectives on their feelings and perceptions of changing systems of elected and traditional government.

TRANSITION AND CHANGING VALUES:

A number of factors condition the perceptions and feelings regarding traditional and elected leadership in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The first concerns the "field of experience" and the fact that the experience of the political for the communities in this project is largely a local level phenomenon, with little known of the wider provincial and national political worlds. The second is broken down into political transition and the different needs of urban or rural communities.

The "field of experience" of these rural focus group participants is unabashedly local only and then heavily swayed towards knowledge of the traditional system. Participants have a self-acknowledged community focus on life. For them national and provincial politics exist as highly distant worlds. They relate their perceptions of change in politics in South Africa solely in terms of conditions and events in the local community. They acknowledge that they do not know much at all about national politics; even party politics is a fairly foreign concept to them.

DIVERGENT NEEDS FOR SYSTEMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The participants recognise that the systems of government, and of traditional leadership, have changed and that new realities demand new approaches. There is an acceptance of the changes that systems of traditional leadership have undergone. They recognise that their experiences and needs are different from those of people, including people from Zulu culture, who live in cities or townships. They increasingly accept elected forms of government as an integral part of their lives.

Changing values and expectations characterise the personal level transition for the participants. They share urbanised South Africans' expectations of development and higher standards of living. They want employment in order to achieve these objectives. Despite their commitment to the system of traditional leadership, the things that they aspire to are the things that they acknowledge as the predominant functional domain of elected local (and national) government).

MOOD AND ISSUE CONCERNS:

Two major issue concerns colour the lives and the political orientations of these focus group participants – employment and development. There is an astute recognition of the interconnectedness between social problems. There is also no doubt that without the resolution of these two base issues, there is little hope for their future. The main responsibility rests with national government, and they acknowledge local, elected government (working via provincial government) as the conduit to “getting out the message of the needs of the community”. Their only security, though, rests in relying on the “known”, their Inkosi as the mouthpiece of the community. It is both these basic needs and the communities’ recognition of avenues of redress that structure the mood.

Unemployment is the root concern. This colours their perceptions of all development and social delivery. They acknowledge good progress in social delivery, “but without jobs, we cannot pay, and our lives do not really change”. Crime and social decay constitute the second category of issue concerns. Participants are worried by the decline in social stability and security. They hope for action and law enforcement by the national government. They revere their Amakhosi for effectiveness in maintaining law and order and ensuring conflict resolution in their own communities.

THE THREE SPHERES OF ELECTED GOVERNMENT

Tiers of affinity and alternating positive and negative assessments characterise the participants’ feelings about the three spheres of government. Feelings about national government are conditioned by their perception of its cultural distance from “the Zulu nation”. They feel closer to provincial government, mainly because of the cultural factor. The limited outreach activities of provincial and local government further restrict the opportunities for contact and understanding. Local level elected government is granted some legitimacy because of the facts of operation on community level and some personal contact. This is positively associated with acquaintance with community needs. Local level elected government for the time being is granted some “moratorium of judgement”, because of recency of elections and inception. This is countered by perceptions of lack of achievement in the specific local community and sometimes by a perceived hostility to the system of traditional leadership.

FEELINGS ABOUT TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

Feelings on the system of traditional leadership stand in the context of political and social transition. These people from isolated rural KwaZulu-Natal, living in traditional systems, combine strong support for

traditionalism with recognition of the role of elected leadership. This recognition is linked to the perception that the spheres of elected leaders are instrumental in social progress. They all out for a system that combines their cultural heritage with one that will best facilitate development. They hope for a system that will demonstrate its caring and understanding of the needs of the community.

The Amakhosi are frequently cited as the "voice of the community". They provide the interface with the outside world; they are the caring father figures. The most regularly cited day-to day functions of the Amakhosi are those of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. They also control the land. A rich mosaic of accolades to "The Good Amakhosi" emerges from the discussions. The tributes emerge consistently, across the demographic boundaries of the current focus groups. Shortcomings are also noted. These include inaction and inability to affect outcomes.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTED AND TRADITIONAL LOCAL LEADERS:

Cooperation and shared responsibilities between traditional and elected local leaders are what participants from these rural communities most desire. There is support for the system of traditional authority, but this combines with the acceptance of elected local government. They desire unity, mostly in aid of achieving social progress and development. They observe that the elected councillors often have more power than the Amakhosi. However, elected local government loses in relative status, because they lack community contact and intimate knowledge of needs.

The need for a cooperative relationship is by far the strongest sentiment that emerges. There is consistent acknowledgement too that this relationship has to be interactive and interdependent. These communities want to see an approximate balance in the powers allocated to each entity. They stress, for instance, that they would like to see an important role for the elected councillors. But their status should not exceed that of the Amakhosi.

People from these KwaZulu-Natal communities want to see this cooperative, function-sharing local leadership structure devote itself to development. The traditional leaders may be the community voice and local level coordinators. The elected councillors have the required link-ups to the other spheres of government. The combination of these strengths could help these communities see their desire for development come true. These KwaZulu-Natal focus group research findings are also identical to the results of the NDI 1996 Eastern Cape traditional leader project.

METHODOLOGY

This research report is based on ten focus groups that were conducted in rural to deep rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal from 4 to 9 December 1997. Each of the groups consisted of between six and ten participants. Trained moderators conducted the discussions. The moderators were chosen on the basis of compatibility with participants in terms of language, culture and gender. The discussions were based on a discussion guide (see Appendix 1). The guide was available in both Zulu and English. All focus group discussions were conducted in Zulu. Access to communities was negotiated through the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Traditional Affairs and his designated fieldworkers.

Composition and location of the focus groups:

The focus groups represent a spread across gender, age and traditional leader status. Geographically the groups vary as well. The groups were spread across a number of areas in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, the Midlands and Southern KwaZulu-Natal. There was a slightly stronger focus on the northern parts of the province than the rest. All of the communities where the groups were conducted are in isolated, and fairly isolated, parts of rural KwaZulu-Natal.

The voices that are heard in this report are voices from people that probably have never been surveyed before. These are voices from pockets of political opinion that are known to exist in outlying rural areas of the province, but are not yet fully understood. This report hopes to contribute to such an understanding.

The four main locations of the groups were:

- Nongoma in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, two groups in two different but adjacent locations. One of the Nongoma groups consisted of young men (18-22) and the second of older men (35 to 60 years).
- Wasbank/Uitval in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, three groups in the same location. Two of the groups were female (one younger, ranging from 16 to 35 years old, and one older women in their forties to early sixties). The third group consisted of approximately middle age to slightly older men.
- Msinga in the northern part of the Midlands, near the town Pomeroy, two groups in one location. One of the Msinga groups consisted of traditional leaders only (Indunas and Inkosi counsellors) and the other comprised community men of 60 years and older.
- Dududu in the Mkwazi-Ezembeni area of southern KwaZulu-Natal, three groups in one location. Two groups of women were conducted (one younger, 19 to 35 years old, and one of older women aged 40 to 60). The men in the third group were between 18 and 35 years old.

Table 1: Location and composition of rural KwaZulu-Natal focus groups

Date	Location	Demographic description	Number of participants
4/12/97	Nongoma	Men, rural, 18-22 years, senior secondary students, want to vote in 1999	10
4/12/97	Nongoma	Men, rural, 25-50 years, mostly unemployed, rural, low education	10
5/12/97	Wasbank/Uitval	Women, no formal education, 30-65 years, unemployed/community life engagement, rural	10
5/12/97	Wasbank/Uitval	Women, 25-50 years, no formal education, unemployed, voted in 1994	10
5/12/97	Wasbank/Uitval	Men, 25-70 years, voted in 1994 and 1996, rural, little or no formal education	9
6/12/97	Pomeroy/Msinga	Men, 50-75 years, Indunas and Inkosi's counsellors, rural, various education levels, mostly lower	9
6/12/97	Pomeroy/Misinga	Men, unemployed and pensioners, 60-80 years, little formal education, rural	7
9/12/97	Ezembeni/Dududu	Women, 19-35 years, rural, self-employed, uneducated and educated community workers	8
9/12/97	Ezembeni/Dududu	Men, 18-38 years, unemployed, some still attending school, middle-level education, rural	7
9/12/97	Ezembeni/Dududu	Women, 40-60 years, rural, unemployed and self-employed, low to mid-level formal education	6

Modus operandi in access to local communities and in group recruitment:

The focus groups were conducted with the sanction of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial leadership, as well as with the assistance of the respective Amakhosi. Access to these communities is impossible without such cooperation. Amakhosi, Indunas, Amakhosi's counsellors and immediate family of the Amakhosi were screened out of majority of the groups. One group specifically consisted of Indunas and Counselors, and these opinions are considered and noted separately. Despite the controls for blood relations to the Amakhosi and Indunas, all community members are closely involved with one another and mostly also related to one another.

Fieldworkers of the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Traditional Leadership approached the Amakhosi either a number of days prior to or on the day of the focus groups. The fieldworker then accompanied and introduced the research team, consisting of NDI coordinators, Street Law moderators and the author of this report. In some cases the research team was introduced through a formal community meeting arranged by the Inkosi.

The research team screened participants. The team had the final say in selecting the six to ten participants. In most cases more than double the required number of participants were available. People outside age parameters, or too closely involved in the traditional leadership system, could therefore be screened out. One group specifically of traditional leaders could also be composed. In other cases, the research team itself recruited some or all of the participants after receiving the go-ahead from the particular Inkosi.

It has to be borne in mind that access on the basis of "Inkosi's blessing" may affect results. For instance, it may inhibit criticism of the Amakhosi and other traditional leaders. It may also facilitate praise for the traditional system. The research results certainly indicate support for the system of traditional leadership. However, considering the deep-rural location of these groups, this trend is not surprising. In-depth analyses of the trends in the discussions furthermore foster confidence in the validity and reliability of the research results. Support for the traditional system was not unconditional, there was a continuous recognition of shortcomings and fallibility of the traditional leaders, and elected authorities often were credited for modest achievements. Whereas participants in some cases were initially shy or slightly suspicious, all discussions became relaxed and participants did not contradict themselves in the course of the focus group discussions.

On the technical level of observation and transcriptions, this report is based on:

- the observation and direct verbal translations of four of the ten focus groups,
- full and summary transcriptions of the other six focus groups,
- debriefing forms completed by each moderator after completion of a focus groups, and
- two debriefing sessions that were conducted with the focus group moderators.

FIELD OF POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPECTATIONS – CONTEXT TO PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS

A number of factors condition the perceptions and feelings regarding traditional and elected leadership in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The first concerns the "field of experience" and the fact that the experience of the "political" for the communities in this project is largely a local level phenomenon, with little known of the wider provincial and national political worlds. The second major factor is broken down into political transition and the different needs of urban or rural communities.

The relatively isolated and rural to deep-rural locations of the focus group participants directly condition their experiences of the levels of politics and government (national, provincial and local). It also affects their level of acquaintance with elected local government. Elected local government remains distant; it is often not seen to impact on the respective communities. Their "field of experience" is unabashedly local-only, and then heavily swayed towards knowledge of the traditional system. Elected local government is acknowledged, not regularly respected, and still being given a chance to prove itself.

The communities in this research project, mostly implicitly, recognise that the systems of government and of traditional leadership, have changed and that new realities demand new approaches. There is an acceptance (often reluctant) of the changes that systems of traditional leadership have undergone. Elected local government is seen to have essential functions, especially in contributing to development, but the legitimacy of elected local councils remains low. The communities are certain of their own need for a particular form of local governance that can take care of their cultural-economic needs. Simultaneously, they recognise that their experiences and needs are different from the needs of people who live in cities or townships, including other people from a background of Zulu culture.

Field of experience:

Participants have a self-acknowledged community focus on life. For them national and provincial politics exist as highly distant worlds. They relate their perceptions of "change in politics in South Africa in general" solely in terms of "conditions and events in the local community". They acknowledge that they do not know much at all about national politics; even party politics is a fairly foreign concept to them. The sentiment emerged that even if they voted in 1994, they had little awareness "what it was all about".

"I can't say anything about the whole of South Africa. For us it is just this community..." (young woman, Dududu)

Changing values and social realities:

A strong, underlying dynamic in the group discussions is that of changing values and expectations. The participants may be isolated and rural, but they have exposure via mass media (especially the occasional current affairs television) and migrancy. They are firmly linked into the expectations of development and higher standards of living. Subsistence and traditional community life do not suffice. They want employment and improved lifestyles, albeit combined with a strong component of Zulu culture. Despite their consistently stated commitment to traditional systems of governance, the things that they aspire to are the things that they acknowledge as the predominant functional domain of elected local government (functioning in its relation with national level government).

"This is the one thing that kills us. If you switch on your TV... You envy what you see... that you could be living the same type of life"
(man from Wasbank)

Considering the local level nature of political experience, it follows that few people in these communities would want to give national level elected government the final say in matters that directly affect their lives. Balancing this, however, is their expressed need to learn more about the new forms of government. Participants stress that it is often "by default" that they continue to live by the norms of traditional politics.

"Since we were born, we have only known the Amakhosi. We don't know that other government. The only thing we know is the Amakhosi. We would like to see the elected council explaining, informing us. Because we have no knowledge, our trust is only in our Amakhosi"
(older woman, Wasbank)

MOOD AND ISSUE CONCERNS

Perceptions of change since the 1994 and 1996 elections:

Participants have divergent opinions on the extent of change to their lives in the period since either the 1994 national/provincial or the 1996 local government elections. Assessments of the extent of change are conducted in terms of experiences within the local communities. There are few observations that specifically relate to broader provincial and national level politics.

Participants acknowledge a wide range of social changes. They see that houses have been built, they especially note many improvements in education – for instance better access, some assistance with books and stationery, much better pre-primary educational facilities, some now have access to water, electricity and telephones. Young participants tend to be more positive and optimistic than the older ones. It is especially the young who optimistically note the changes in education, who give credit for improved clinics and electrification and who talk about the development that they see.

Older participants also acknowledge positive social change, but tend to focus on their own “relative exclusion”. “Relative exclusion” takes on three forms:

- it is other communities (townships, the cities), more than their own, that have experienced the benefits of development;
- they themselves have received a certain form of social development (for instance toilets), but would have preferred another (for instance, water);
- there have been improvements (for instance education, clinics), but are still expected to make financial contributions.

“There are good things happening. The young people now are getting education” (young man, Nongoma)

“There have been big changes Most people can’t see these, because they are not happening in their own areas” (old man, Msinga)

“The is now more development, especially since 1996” (young woman, Dududu)

A number of participants simply provide knee-jerk, outright negative denials of having witnessed social change. “Nothing has changed” becomes their protest phrase against relative exclusion. The discussion trends show that the participants are aware of changes elsewhere, and almost invariably have seen at least something improve in their own community. However, two factors push against full credit for the changes. First, there is an ongoing gap between needs-expectations and delivery. Second, because of a lack of jobs, they cannot afford payments for education, clinics, water and electricity.

Given the traditional, conservative nature of the communities in this project, it is not surprising that various participants are outraged, sometimes only concerned, when considering changes in human rights. Some of the men in

the groups thought that women and children have acquired too many rights in the new South Africa. Participants from both genders denounce the legalisation of abortion as contrary to Zulu culture. On a more general level, the participants link the new South Africa to the advent of social decay – crime, breakdown of law and order and abolition of the death penalty.

The base issues:

Two major issue concerns colour the lives and the political orientations of these focus group participants – employment and development. There is an astute recognition of the interconnectedness between social problems. There is also no doubt that without the resolution of these two base issues, there is little hope for their future. There is an unsettling recognition that within their own communities there are limited things that they themselves can do to achieve the objectives of employment and development. The main responsibility rests with national government, and they acknowledge local, elected government (working via provincial government) as the conduit to “getting out the message of the needs of the community”. Their only security, though, rests in relying on the “known” -- their Inkosi as the mouthpiece of the community. It is both these basic needs and the communities’ recognition of avenues of redress that structure the mood.

A cross-section of participants shares a sentiment of confusion and feelings of disempowerment. They are often bewildered by the combination of socio-political change surrounding them and their concurrent lack of capacity to influence events around them. They talk about seeing facilities and services, whilst they struggle for survival. They end up “not liking those things installed for us”.

“These changes to me are like a small packet of sweets. When you have snacks, you just nibble here and there. How can you appreciate snacks when you are very hungry?” (young woman, Wasbank)

Progress, but no means to pay:

There is progress in social delivery, “but without jobs, we cannot pay, and our lives do not really change”. This is a consistent sentiment across the range of focus group locations. Unemployment is the root concern of all focus group participants. This colours their perceptions of all development and social delivery. The combination of unemployment and social delivery serves to make participants despondent. The reminders that they are falling behind are evident all around them – improved education, but they cannot afford the supplementary payments; water, electricity, telephones, clinics, but they cannot afford to pay for services.

*“Ever since we voted, houses are being built. But we cannot find any jobs”
(man, Wasbank)*

"Ever since the elections, many schools and tall buildings have been erected. But schools do not help us in any way to find jobs" (man from Wasbank)
"The government ... want us to pay for everything. Where should we get the money? This is really painful" (man from Uitval)
"Our kids were promised free education, but there is nothing like that. What happens if I go to the clinic? I receive nothing... I don't see anything good" (young woman, Wasbank)

The recurring sentiment from the group discussions is that the creation of employment has become the prerequisite for giving credit to government. Until employment has been created, the "government is not delivering on its promises" is likely to refrain through discussions on social conditions in South Africa.

"If this government can create job opportunities, then we would love this government" (older woman, Wasbank)
"There is nothing that makes me happy, because we sit at home with our children and no work" (older woman, Dududu)

Most groups talk about improvements in some, even many, of the following areas: education, houses, clinics, roads, water, electricity, telephones, community buildings and toilets. These now have been assimilated into their lives. Hungry for change, they look for further change. Continued lack of access to running water is one of the persistent needs from this part of the country. The inadequate condition of most roads is another.

On the one level, "needs fulfillment" therefore emerges as an evasive social goal. Participants recognise improvements in their social conditions, but assert that their needs are not being fulfilled. Whilst they acknowledge the reality of change, the continuing need for further rural development overshadows their images of levels of delivery. On another level, the contradiction between acknowledgement of change and "there is no improvement to our lives", can be explained by the feeling that their own voices have not been heard in planning the deliveries to their communities. They are getting new things. These may be pumps, a new courthouse, or a hall. But often these are not the things they would have chosen for themselves. They implicitly wish that they were consulted. They repeatedly express the wish that government would come and ask them their feelings – like the moderators do, they say.

"We would like to see that community forums be established to determine what our communities lack" (young man, Dududu)

A fair number of participants stress that development requires time. They expect more positive things to come their way. Part of their reasons for speaking out, they feel, is to get people to take notice of these people in the faraway corners of KwaZulu-Natal.

There is a fairly widespread perception that change only happens in other places, mostly not in the rural communities. There is a deep sense of neglect of the rural areas. In the first place, most of the other provinces are perceived to be better off than KwaZulu-Natal. Exceptions are the Northern Province and the Eastern Cape. There is consensus, however, that much more gets done for the townships and the cities than for the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. They acknowledge that these perceptions are fuelled by current affairs visuals on television.

Crime, insecurity and social issues:

Crime and social decay constitute the second category of issue concerns. Participants often worry about the decline in social stability and security. They lament inaction by the government and law enforcement agencies. Simultaneously, they revere their Amakhosi for effectiveness in maintaining peace and law and order. Conflict resolution and peacekeeping actions by the Amakhosi provide them with the personal reassurance and security that they feel they need in this fast-changing world.

"The Inkosi solves problem that otherwise would lead to bloodshed" (young woman, Dududu)

"You cannot sleep in your house without locking yourself in. Before elections, it was so peaceful..." (man, Wasbank)

Abortion and the absence of the death penalty are two consistent complaints. Participants from both genders mostly oppose the legalisation of abortion. Abortion is against the values of Zulu culture and tradition, they say.

Violence, the youth that "nowadays are disrespectful", and "children and women who now enjoy too many rights" are further issues that negatively affect the perceptions of life in the community. Issues of bail and lack of punishment for the perpetrators of crime are also high on the agendas of these deep rural communities.

NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT -- PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Tiers of affinity and ups and downs of positive and negative assessments characterise these rural focus group participants' perceptions of the three spheres of government in South Africa. The participants' experience of national and provincial government is limited. Because of their local level of experience, they do not directly relate to the activities of the geographically more distant levels of government. In addition, the limited outreach activities of provincial and local government further restrict the opportunities for contact and understanding. There is a supplementary perception that the national government is rather alien, because of perceived cultural hostility "to the Zulu nation". Even if there is only limited contact with the provincial government, affinity is strengthened by the perception (or experience) that it is culturally friendly and offers better possibilities for geographic access. Local level elected government is granted limited legitimacy because it operates on community level. It is therefore positively attributed an acquaintance with community needs. Local level elected government for the time being is granted some "moratorium of judgement", because of recency of elections and inception. Nevertheless, this is countered by both perceptions of lack of achievement in the specific local community and sometimes by elected politicians' perceived hostility to the system of traditional leadership.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT:

Most participants have only broad, vague perceptions of anything that national government does. It is beyond their field of experience and they do not relate to it. They have virtually no contact with its representatives and have little knowledge of its processes or functions. There is consensus that Members of Parliament are distant and absent. There is also alienation from national government in the sense that they perceive it as hostile to, or ambivalent towards, the "culture of the Zulu nation". National government, the participants from these isolated rural communities say, has its own time frames and its own ways of making decisions -- the community does not feel part of this.

"National government does things in its own way. We don't know what it is doing" (young man, Nongoma)

"Don't ask us about that government. We are only concerned with things here in our place" (older woman, Wasbank)

"You know... the government does not know its people" (older man, Wasbank)

Perceptions of performance:

Despite their self-acknowledged lack of understanding of the processes and programmes of national (and provincial) government, participants insist that there are "broken promises". This is a popular rhetorical theme when the

people from these distant communities in KwaZulu-Natal speak their minds. They feel that the government has not fulfilled all or some of its undertakings to people like them. Participants commonly believe that national government does not understand the problems of the local community. They feel that national government does not consult with them. These communities feel that they ought to have been directly consulted before decisions were taken on issues such as the legalisation of abortion and the banning of the public display of traditional weapons – policies that in their opinion impact on Zulu culture. National government is seen as culturally different from these communities.

Participants have a perception that national government ignores the rural areas of South Africa. Development, they say, goes to the urban areas, “to those areas that we see on TV”. Sentiments like “nothing happens here” and “they don’t bring us anything” surface in various discussions.

Participants have practically no direct, or indirect, contact with Members of Parliament, irrespective of political party. They do not know these people, and they do not know what they do. A small number report that they have on single occasions seen an MP around their area.

“Actually, we don’t know if the national government is doing its work... We don’t have any contact (young woman, Dududu)

“We do not know the Members of Parliament... In Pomeroy, they once saw one of them” (older man, Msinga)

Despite the political distance from national government, it still enjoys legitimacy. Participants accept this government and look to it for the fulfillment of the pressing community needs. These communities do not propose an alternative to their national government – they simply want to feel that they are acknowledged in the processes of the national government.

“We have to accept what they do, because we voted for them” (older woman, Wasbank)

Perceptions of the functions of national government:

National government is seen as responsible for development, but it is not directly credited with the improvements that have been realised (for instance in education, water provision, electrification and clinics). Such improvements, “development”, often become associated with local government.

The participants from these isolated KwaZulu-Natal settings have no doubt that it is the responsibility of the national government to create opportunities for employment. This is their main need and they expect their legitimate national government to address this for them. They themselves feel helpless, unable to do so.

National government is also seen as responsible for purse-string issues. "It should bring investment. That is what it has to do". Others stress that it is the national government that controls the provinces' purses.

"The national government is the one who has to solve the country's main problems... Create jobs, bring in laws for detention and no bail" (Induna, Msinga)

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT:

Perceptions of provincial government performance:

Participants do not think that the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal has had a major impact on their lives since the 1994 election. They point to the provincial government's subsidiary position to national government. Provincial government serves mostly as a conduit for funds and information, they say. Provincial government depends on national government and does not have full control over its own actions. Participants do not offer much in terms of concrete evidence of performance, but impressionistically assess that the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal performs better than national government.

The cultural closeness of these outlying rural communities to the provincial government appears to be the basic criterion for these communities' evaluations of government performance. Much of their perception of relatively good performance of provincial government is anchored in the perceived cultural closeness, better understanding than national government of the needs of the people, and better accessibility than national government.

"The provincial government is better than the national government, because they are much closer to our traditional leaders. They can see things for themselves" (Inkosi's counsellor, Msinga)

"The province knows the problems of the people, they operate where we can reach them" (young male student, Nongoma)

"The provincial government is better than the national, because they are much closer to our traditional leaders" (traditional leader, Msinga)

Perceptions of the functions of provincial government:

Many see provincial government as functionally impotent. They recognise that national government holds functional sway over the provincial government. It controls both purse strings and powers. There appears to be a solid understanding that it is the national government that provides funding to the provinces and the function of provincial government to "divert that funding to the people on the ground". There is a related perception, however, that the province needs more funding.

Whilst participants see the provincial government is not just a downward conduit for funding from national government, they also stress that the provincial government should be the bottom-up messenger. This messenger should take the story of the people's needs to national government, possibly after having received this message from the local elected leaders.

Not all participants have neutral or benevolent observations of the relationship between provincial and national government. The group of traditional leaders from Msinga has strong resentment. "The national government is always an obstacle" and "the national government took away power from the people" are some of the things they say.

"The province does what it is supposed to do. When it cannot, it always gives us the reasons, like the national government stopping it" (older woman, Dududu)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

Perceptions of local government performance:

These KwaZulu-Natal rural communities have a generally positive perception of elected local government. There are negatives as well, but the positives outweigh the criticisms. Their positive perceptions are a function of elected councillors being seen to try to help the community, being sympathetic to community needs and being culturally close. There is a fair amount of patience to let local government develop into its new role. There is a strong view that "local government is taking the right direction", that they are trying.

*"We should give them time. They will improve a lot of things"
(male student, Nongoma)*

These participants' overriding reason for the positive view of elected local government is rooted in the expectation that local councils will bring development. The majority of participants keenly grant a significant governance role to elected government, especially because of its envisaged role in development. A common understanding is that local level politicians have strength in the fact of their understanding of the problems that the community faces. There is also an inherent faith in the local councillors "having the ear" of the higher-up authorities.

"Once the local councillor goes to the province, then the problem gets solved" (young woman, Dududu)

There are also various criticisms of the elected councillors. It is felt that the councillors are still learning their work, that local government generally is slow to get off the ground, and that political parties hamper them in their work.

Some participants also blame a perceived lack of optimal performance by the elected councillors on divisions that they think the political parties create. Many feel that the elected councillors should be doing much more to make themselves known in the rural communities.

"The councillor is the one who should be in contact with us, but up till now I have not seen this happening" (older man, Wasbank)

*"They hide their remoteness by going around and shaking hands"
(young woman, Dududu)*

*"The councillors are everywhere. We saw them emerge after the elections...
But it is still the Indunas who are here when we have a problem"
(young man, Nongoma)*

"The councillors can't help us, because our nation is divided. Our political parties brought about this division. They want decisions to be taken in ways that would please their members" (older man, Wasbank)

As these community quotations indicate, people have a desire to know their elected councillors better. The councillors often only make occasional appearances in the communities. Many participants have never encountered them. Whilst only a small number of participants mention elitism and absentee representation by councillors, they would like to see regular report-backs by the councillors to the community.

"It would be good if they can stay in our area, so that we can get to know them" (young woman, Wasbank)

A minority of traditionalists, especially the traditional leaders themselves, rejects elected local government on the basis of a strict adherence to exclusive traditional authority. They condemn elected councillors for showing a "lack of respect for the traditional authorities". At best, this extreme minority tolerates the councillors. The type of sentiment in the following quotation was isolated, not shared by the big majority ordinary of ordinary community people.

"If it was not for the King, we believe that those councillors would have been killed by now" (traditional leader, Msinga)

Perceptions of the functions of local government:

A fairly common perception amongst these rural group participants is that local government is trying its best, but is mainly hampered by two factors: not enough power and being relatively new.

Development is the main function that is attributed to local government. It is understood that local government is the third tier of elected government, but participants are clearer on local government as the messenger to convey the

needs of the community to national government than they are on local government as the implementation arm of national government. The function of local government, say these people, is to find out the needs of the community and to take their grievances to the provincial and national government. Some of the specific functions that local government is seen to be attending to, include water, roads and electricity. Local government is also seen to be convening meetings and to talk to the individuals and traditional leaders in the community.

"Whatever we need, the local government brings it to us from the provincial and the national government" (male student, Nongoma)

Participants also feel that local government ought to have more powers. They are seen to be weak, but to be putting in a fair effort. Local government is seen as the community's link to national and provincial government. It is local government's task to provide contact with the outside political world. Participants in various groups report that they have contact with their local councillors. They may also go the councillors if they experience problems. Sometimes they come across them at community meetings.

**TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP
-- PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

Socio-political transition and traditional leadership:

Feelings on the system of traditional leadership stand in the context of political and social transition. People from isolated rural KwaZulu-Natal living in traditional systems combine strong support for traditionalism with recognition of the role of elected leadership. This recognition is linked to the perception that the spheres of elected leaders are instrumental in social progress. Recognition also extends to the gradual acceptance of political change, democracy and elections. The acceptance of change and transition is already firmly embedded. Rural people living under systems of traditional authority appear to be calling out for the combination of their cultural heritage with a system that will best facilitate development. They also ask for a system that will demonstrate its caring for and understanding of the needs of the community.

Table 2: Sentiments regarding traditional leadership and transition

SENTIMENTS IDENTIFIED	REASONS FOR SENTIMENT
Confusion about the changing system of political power	Amakhosi not keeping up with change People don't have adequate knowledge of the alternatives Don't know their councillors Hope that traditional leaders can get more powers
Frustration because of loyalty to traditional leaders who are not being assisted	Realise traditional leaders have become disempowered These leaders need education Government not giving recognition Amakhosi not keeping up with modern world
Loyalty and connectedness to traditional leaders	Sense of umbilical cord connection Seen as their own, caring people They continue to do their best Likened with a parent
Threatened loss because the traditional leaders care	Amakhosi know the community Representatives always present in community, while government is far away
Entering governmental void	Local councils still new Community knows traditional leaders have less power, but don't know is councils can take their place Experience a governmental void, feeling of being pushed out

Small amount of rejection

Feeling that traditional leaders not active enough
Not doing their best to attend to problems
Not involved in politics, but sometimes show favouritism

One of the most notable sentiments that people in these rural communities harbour towards their traditional leaders turn out to be that of loyalty. The Amakhosi, the Indunas and the Inkosi's counsellors are seen to link together in a system that provides social and cultural security and a small amount of social change. For both pragmatic social advancement reasons and personal and cultural affinity reasons (see below) these rural people are even defensive about their traditional leaders. Participants also observe that the government has slipped in not educating the traditional leaders about the role of the elected local councillors.

"We hope that we can build a clinic here, so that it can be seen as the Inkosi's initiative... We don't just want to see him talk about development" (older woman, Wasbank)

"The Amakhosi saw the role of the councillors as an interference in their affairs, basically because the government did not educate them about the role of the councillors" (young man, Dududu)

"All the Amakhosi want is development in their areas. They need to be educated about changes" (old man, Msinga)

Experiences of the system of traditional leadership stand against the sharply contrasted background of transition. These rural people are confused about the coming together of the modern and the traditional. They do not know who to turn to and who to believe. They do not know who has the responsibility to take care of their needs.

"I find this difficult... Sometimes we are told it is the councillor who brings about these changes, sometimes we are told that the Inkosi is responsible. This confuses me. I do not know who should now be the ruler of the people" (young woman, Wasbank)

Functions of the Amakhosi, Indunas and Inkosi's counsellors:

There is much convergence between the group participants in their views on the hierarchy of functions in the system of traditional leadership. There is little doubt that the Amakhosi play socially integrative and political mediation functions in these communities. They also serve as conduits to pass on valuable information to the communities. This information may concern the availability of jobs. There is little questioning of the hierarchy of traditional leaders' continued importance to these communities. Simultaneously, these participants notice the lack of interface of these traditional leaders with the

demands of modern politics. Because of the ongoing social importance of the traditional leaders, because of their integration into society and culture, the participants ask for education and training for these leaders, for cooperation and joint roles with the elected authorities. They think it is fair that these traditional leaders also be empowered. In addition, the participants are not ready to sacrifice the known (traditional leaders) for the largely unknown (elected local government). The Amakhosi is generally considered to be the "voice of the community". Participants acknowledge that in recent times there has been a reduction in the powers of the Amakhosi. Previously "nobody could go beyond the word of the Amakhosi". The traditional leaders themselves see the Amakhosi as the representatives of God on earth. Ordinary community participants have a somewhat less revered interpretation – father rather than god, they say.

Images of the Amakhosi:

The following images and symbolical roles of the Amakhosi can be extracted from the group discussions. The Amakhosi is commonly seen in the roles of:

Father figure:	Cares, advises, informs of opportunities
Custodian of Zulu culture:	The symbol of Zulu identity, pride and self-respect
Peacemaker:	Resolves conflict, keeps the peace
Source of security:	Helps prevent crime, makes community feel safe
Representative of the community:	Knows needs of the community, makes these known to outside world
Link to outside world:	Liaises with other spheres of government
Gatekeeper:	Decides what is best for community, what development to allow

The major roles of conflict resolution and peacekeeping:

The most regularly cited day-to-day functions of the Amakhosi are those of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. The conflicts in the lives of these rural KwaZulu-Natal communities range from the invasion of fields by other people's cattle, and family disputes, to resolving Gauteng battles when these spill over into KwaZulu-Natal when the migrant workers return home. Bigger cases are sometimes taken to the police – with less effect.

*"The Inkosi solves problems which otherwise would lead to bloodshed"
(younger woman, Dududu)*

There are fewer references to the role of the Inkosi in control over land. Participants refer to control and possession of the land by the Amakhosi, rather than trusteeship of the land. They acknowledge that they depend on the Amakhosi for their access to the land.

The Amakhosi as the “voice of the community”:

The Amakhosi are frequently described in terms of caring father figures (both by men and by women). The Amakhosi are the ones who they say know the needs of the community, who make these needs known to the outside world, and who (within limits of resources and skills) “take care of the needs of the community”. They are also seen as the only figures of political authority that are accessible to the community. They are described as the “glue” that keeps together these communities.

“Our trust is only in our Amakhosi. They give us our voice” (older man, Msinga)

As deeply conservative rural communities, these participants also view the Amakhosi as the custodians of Zulu culture, as symbols of pride and of identity. The Inkosi is also specifically the community representative of the King. He is the “local eyes” of the King, the person who “has to see that things are done in the proper way”.

The role of the Amakhosi in political decision-making:

The participants insist that their traditional leaders should fulfill both concrete and symbolical functions. The Amakhosi may be the voice of the community, but they also need to be given the formal opportunity to speak out for their communities. All groups strongly oppose the limitation of traditional leadership to ceremonial functions only. Traditional leaders should be involved in all decisions that affect the community, they say.

“The Amakhosi and the Induna are always here... But the Government, it is far away” (older woman, Wasbank)

Opinions vary on the exact role of the Amakhosi in political decision-making. Participants appear to be easily led to punt for maximum traditional leader inputs into decision-making functions. Many participants feel that the Inkosi should have “a voice”, or participate in, all decisions taken. Others feel that the Inkosi should have the final say, ranging upward to the point of granting a final say in “all decisions that affect the community”. This, however, is neither their current experience nor are these functions that they spontaneously had cited as the things that the traditional leaders should do.

Table 3: Perceptions of the hierarchy of traditional leadership and respective functions

LEVEL OF TRADITIONAL LEADER	FUNCTIONS PERFORMED
Amakhosi	Maintain law and order, peace (often when migrants return) Solve conflicts between communities, families (family disputes, cattle, grazing) Prevent and sometimes solves crime Manage the land, the fields Give permission erection of structures Get informed about entries and departures of members of community Responsibility for cultural rituals Find out the needs of the people Tell the King what the people want Liaison with the outside world Negotiation with elected councils
Inkosi's Counsellors*	Problems first taken to them. If they do not succeed then on Amakhosi Approach the Inkosi on behalf of the people, and report back to them Move around, find out the issues Sometimes seen as the ones who deal with development
Indunas	The Inkosi's eyes and ears The Inkosi's messengers Problems are taken to them; they and counsellors solve them Direct representatives of the Amakhosi Convene meetings for the Amakhosi to come and address

* Most participants interchange the roles of the Inkosi's counsellors and the Indunas. The strongest difference is that the Induna for them is predominantly the messenger. Different groups also would first report problems either to the counsellor or to the Induna.

Indunas and Inkosi's counsellors see themselves as superior to the elected councillors (and to other elected spheres of government). The traditional leaders are superior, in their opinion, because they "are chosen by God and therefore cannot be replaced every five years". These "little gods", however, also acknowledge their powers having become frayed at the edges.

*"The elected leaders come and go, but we are chosen by God"
(Induna from Msinga).*

"In a place where there is no Inkosi... You walk there, the place feels dead. It is the Inkosi who gives the area respect" (Inkosi's counsellor, Msinga)

"We still do our job, but nowadays it involves mostly culture. Beyond this, we cannot do anything (Induna, Msinga)

The Amakhosi and non-involvement in politics:

A consensus sentiment across the different focus group locations and demographic composition is that the non-involvement of the Amakhosi in party politics is non-negotiable. The participants also agree on the reasons why the Amakhosi should be above party politics: fairness, peace, unity and development.

They fear that there will be bloodshed if the Amakhosi are seen to be taking political sides in community disputes. The Inkosi, as the father figure, has to be seen to be just to all of "his children". The Amakhosi have the duty to promote unity. The need for unity rises as one of the core values of these rural communities. They also stress that divisions and conflict, perhaps due to an Inkosi, who is seen to be partial, will be counter-productive in their achieving development.

Group participants did not want to be drawn on the specifics of their political experiences of their own Amakhosi. They consistently steered this debate to arguments on why non-involvement in politics should be the norm. There were a number of references to favouritism, but these were not seen to have been of a political nature.

A rich mosaic of accolades to "The Good Amakhosi" therefore emerges from the discussions conducted in these outlying areas of rural KwaZulu-Natal. The tributes emerge consistently, across the demographic boundaries of the current focus groups. Both women and men, both the young and the old from these isolated communities, acknowledge and ask for a continued role for the Amakhosi, Indunas and Inkosi's counsellors in their traditionally oriented type of community.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTED LOCAL COUNCILLORS AND TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

Cooperative relationships and shared responsibilities:

Cooperation and shared responsibilities between traditional and elected local leaders are probably what participants from these rural communities most desire. There is support for the system of traditional authority, but this combines with the acceptance of elected local government.

The creation of unity is a crucial consideration in the minds of these rural people. Participants often feel that councillors have the responsibility to cooperate with the traditional leaders, and thereby build community unity. They state, as a matter of fact, that the councillors often have more power than the Amakhosi. However, elected local government loses in status to the traditional leaders, because the elected representatives have less community contact than their traditional counterparts.

"The council can take initiatives to the government, but the Inkosi only goes if he is invited to go there" (older woman, Wasbank)

"There should be a situation whereby the councillors, Amakhosi and Indunas should sit down and discuss the matters that will bring the upliftment of living standards" (young man, Dududu)

The need for a cooperative relationship is by far the strongest sentiment that emerges. There is consistent acknowledgement too that the relationship between the elected and traditional entities is interactive and interdependent. These communities want to see an approximate balance in the powers allocated to each entity. They stress, for instance, that they would like to see an important role for the elected councillors. But these councillors should not have more status than the Amakhosi.

Regarding the need for cooperation, the participants stress that in this rural, traditional type of community "nothing is possible without the Amakhosi". It is inevitable therefore that there has to be cooperation. Building houses is one example given – in these communities, the government cannot build houses without the cooperation of the Amakhosi.

"Both the councillor and the Inkosi are important, because the councillor can't do anything without the Inkosi" (male student, Nongoma)

"We as the community should talk to the councillors and we must use the Inkosi and Induna. This unity solves problems" (young man, Nongoma)

"If there is unity between the councillors, Inkosi and Induna... Then there will be progress' (young man, Nongoma)

“Division” of functions between elected and traditional leaders:

The perceptions on the division of powers and authority between elected and traditional local government vacillate between current reality and desired ideal. When asked about traditional authority, the participants interchangeably talk about what “is” and what “should be”. Participants have a range of interpretations of the ways in which the relationship between local councillors and the hierarchy of traditional leadership ought to be structured. They also have different interpretations of what the ideal relationship would be.

Many participants view the ideal system of local government in terms of fairly vague systems of interaction between the elected and the traditional leaders. The hierarchy of traditional leaders could link in a variety of ways to the three spheres of elected government, it is suggested. Each community appears to have both its own practices and relatively unique perceptions of the ideal set-up. For instance, the Amakhosi should liaise with national and provincial levels of government; the Inkosi’s counsellors with provincial government; the Indunas with local government. The King, in this scheme of things, should link with both national and provincial government. The bottom line, in all cases is that all agencies should work together for development and employment.

This sentiment sustains the strong consensus that traditional and elected local representatives ought to work hand-in-hand. There are slight variations from community to community on who should do exactly what.

“Let us balance these two. Let us have our tradition and at the same time let us have people who are aware and informed about development, in order to develop our communities” (young man, Dududu)

“After the election we were told to work hand-in hand, the Amakhosi and the councillors, to solve our problems in the villages” (older woman, Dududu)

Illustration of envisaged cooperation:

The case of development initiatives (also see below) provides an illustration of some details of the envisaged cooperation. There is a fair consensus that councillors have to liaise with provincial or national government in order to bring development to the community. The councillors have to inform the Amakhosi of initiatives. The Amakhosi will call a meeting to consult with the community. Many participants add that the Amakhosi then have the power to give the go-ahead or not. This last step may be formality. Many participants stress that it would be the Inkosi who first alerts the councillor to the needs of the community, and then “instructs” the councillor to act. Other participants feel that the Inkosi should have a higher status than liaison with local councillors. They stress that councillors are on par with Indunas, and that the Inkosi should link up with provincial government.

“The Inkosi can only listen to what we need. And then the council will be sent in” (young man, Nongoma)

Participants from various groups stress that the Inkosi in his own domain (as controller of the land) cannot be overruled by elected authorities. However, on most issues, the Inkosi cannot decide on his own. Some participants feel that the Inkosi should be allowed to overrule elected government, even Parliament. When probed on the substance of such rulings, participants mention cultural issues such as the death penalty and abortion.

"The Inkosi represents the gods on earth. If you do not respect the Inkosi, you do not respect God. You cannot restrict his status. That is final... The council cannot do anything without the Inkosi" (Inkosi's counsellor, Msinga)

There also are less conciliatory minority opinions in these communities, turning in favour of desired, sole authority of traditional leaders. Some base this sentiment on a value judgement in favour of traditionalism. Others cite confusion about a system of "dual power". In this case, practical considerations are foremost.

"If we have a councillor and an Inkosi at the same time, whom should we work with? This situation is not right..." (older man, Wasbank)

Corroboration through Eastern Cape survey findings:

Participants in the November-December 1996 focus groups agreed that traditional leaders should have a real say in political decision-making. Support for traditional leadership was based these leaders being closest to the community, best understanding their needs and often being best able to solve problems. One respect in which the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape traditional leadership studies diverged is in the nature of cultural attachment. Whereas Eastern Cape participants had a predominantly functional attachment to traditional leaders, their KwaZulu-Natal counterparts have a strong, additional, emphasis on their pride in the cultural tradition of Amakhosi.

Building on this background, the NDI Eastern Cape focus group study concluded that most participants:

"... would like a joint role for both traditional leaders and elected leaders. For some, traditional leaders continue to be the closest to their communities and the most effective in addressing their problems, but they simultaneously see movement away from traditional leaders as perhaps inexorable..."¹

The elected councillors were accepted too by these communities. However, the participants felt, the councillors need the assistance of the traditional

¹ See Lake Research for the National Democratic Institute, March 1997, "Making democracy work: a report on focus groups in South Africa"

leaders to understand the community needs. As in the case of KwaZulu-Natal, attachment to traditional leaders did not imply a rejection of elected leaders.

Responsibility for development:

A number of the fairly negative perceptions regarding traditional leadership relate to their perceived inability to affect development, which happens to be the predominant issue concern for these rural KwaZulu-Natal communities. Traditional leaders are simply not seen as primary, major players in the field of development. They do not have the power, and are not adequately connected to provincial and national government, to be able to broker more opportunities for the community. Participants feel that, on the one hand, this is a combined function of the system of governance and of organisation of the spheres of government (described in their own words). On the other hand, however, they acknowledge that on the personal level the traditional leaders are inadequately equipped to fulfill this function. Firstly, they do not have the full understanding of how to access the outside political and economic world. Secondly, they also need more personal educational empowerment.

Local government councillors ought to be responsible for bringing development to the community, is the opinion of many of the participants. The Inkosi, however, are also "granted" crucial roles in development. These roles include pinpointing and reporting the exact needs of the community to the outside world and government institutions, the final gate-keeping function regarding what form of development the community needs, and when this should happen. Participants also stress that perhaps councillors could actually be doing more for development, if only the community would take their problems to the councillors.

"Local government brings whatever we need from the province and the national government" (young man, Nongoma)

"It is because the Inkosi tells the people what the community needs, that we get development" (young woman, Dududu)

"We should give the local government time. They will improve a lot of things. We are looking to the councillors for development"
(young man, Nongoma)

"The development that is coming, is coming through the local government"
(older woman, Wasbank)

Participants often point out that the role of the Inkosi in recent times already has moved somewhat from previously dealing with family disputes to them nowadays also being involved in development. It emerges, however, that traditional leaders in this respect predominantly fulfill a role of community liaison, rather than a role of substantive initiative. The traditional leaders therefore acquire the function of representation and voice.

The Amakhosi are seen already to be playing the following range of roles in the development function:

- They consult with the community and find out what their needs are,
- They tell outside people what the community needs,
- They provide the social stability, without which no development would be possible,
- They are already involved in development to the extent that they help resolve issues of livestock disease and community health,
- They convene meetings where the community discusses proposed developments,
- They liaise with councillors on proposed developments, and
- They coordinate and approve development proposals, for instance for roads, clinics and water.

Participants rightly point out that the Amakhosi do not exercise much discretion in their development roles. They observe that most of the time the Inkosi simply agrees to all matters regarding development, as long as he gets consulted.

There is a persistent minority counter-opinion that the Inkosi should be given the powers to assume full responsibility for development. Development is seen as a unifying activity, and therefore as a natural extension of the Inkosi's existing roles.

"Local government is still too young. It cannot walk. It does not have the powers to create development opportunities in this area" (Inkosi's counsellor, Msinga)

APPENDIX 1

Discussion Guide
South Africa
National Democratic Institute
December 1997

KwaZulu Natal

I. Introduction (15minutes)

A. Introduce yourself

B. Explain what focus group is ...

- A discussion not a conversation
- No right or wrong answers, just ideas and opinions
- Feel free to disagree with other people in the group
- Every one should participate, because everyone's opinion is important

C. Explain the purpose of the group...

- Sponsored by the National Democratic Institute, which is not associated with government or any political party, and the Street Law.
- To better understand how the local leaders are feeling about the direction the country is going in and about some of the issues we are facing.
- One of many groups, all across the province

D. Explain tape recorder...

- So I can listen later and take notes
- Names will not be used, every thing is confidential

E. Explain presence of others...

- Researchers working for NDI to give them a different perspective.
- Interpreter.

F. Have participants Introduce themselves

- First name.
- Job or leadership position

II. Mood (22 minutes)

[Try to hear from every one at least once during this section]

- A. **7 minutes:** if you had to use one word or phrase to describe your feeling about South Africa these days, what word or phrase would you use?
- B. **4 minutes :** Lets think about the direction the country is going in. do you think its going in the right direction or the wrong direction? Why do you say that?
- C. **4minutes :** Think about how things are going here in your village. Are things going in the right direction or the wrong direction ? Why do you say that ?
- D. **7 minutes:** Two years ago, in 1994 South Africa had its first election, when everyone was able to vote. Since then, how have things changed here in your village ?
- What has changed since the local elections in 1996 ?
 - What has changed for better ?What has changed for the worse?
 - What are the biggest problems here?

III. Leaders - Part 1 (28 minutes)

- A. **10 minutes :** Think about the problems you face here in your village. Who can help solve them ?
- Who do you go to when you have problems? Who are the leaders who can help solve the problems you face ?
 - Who are the leaders in this village? What do they do? Tell me something about them.
 - Have new people become leaders in your area since the local elections ? How has it changed?
- B. **10 minutes:** Are Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna important in this area?
- What do the Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna in this area do ? Imagine I am from another country visiting here for the first time. How would you describe to me what Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna, do?
 - Since the elections, has their job changed ?
 - Do Ingonyama, Inkosi and induna have more powers or less power than they used to? Why do you say that?
- C. **5 minutes:** How do you decide who becomes Ingonyama, Inkosi and Induna in this area? Who decides ?
- What's good about that ? What's bad ?

D. **3 minutes** : Are Ingonyama, Induna and Inkosi in this area politically neutral, or not really ?

- What's good about that ? What's bad ?

IV. Levels of government (39 minutes)

In South Africa, we now have many levels of government. There is the national government, there is the provincial government, there is local government, and there are Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna. I would like to talk about how we can compare each of these parts of government.

A. **7 minutes** First what are your impressions of the national government. How is the national government doing ? What are they doing a good job on ? What are they doing bad on ? [*probe for both good and bad*]

B. **8 minutes** : Do you know who your Member of Parliament is ?

- How often do you see your Member of Parliament ?
- What are the main responsibilities of your Member of Parliament ? What is their job? What should they do ?
- Are there any problems that people could take to the Member of Parliament, and get help on ? What kind of problems can an MP help solve ?
- Some people say that after we elected Members of Parliament they went off to Cape Town and we have not heard from them since. How do you feel about that statement do you agree or disagree with it ?

C. **8 minutes** : What are your impression of how the provincial government here is doing ? What are they doing a good job on ? What are they doing a bad job on ? Why do you say that ?
(*probe for both good and bad*)

- What is the difference between the provincial government and the national government ? What problems are better for the provincial government to work on ?
- Is the provincial government better or worse than the national government ? Why do you say that ?
- How do you think provincial government here differs from other provincial governments ? What's better and what's worse ?

D. **8 minutes** : Now let's think about local government What are your impressions of how the local government is doing ? What are they doing a good job on, and what are they doing a bad job on ? Why do you say that ?

- What is the job of the local government ? What kind of problems is the local government responsible for ?
- In 1996, there were local elections. Since then, what has changed ?
- Have things gotten better or worse ? In what ways better ? In what ways worse ?

- How does local government compare to the local government in other places ?
- Is local government functioning in this area ?
- Is there a local government office in this area ?

E. 8 minutes : How often do you see your local councilors ?

- What are the main responsibilities of your local councilors? What is their job ? What should they do ?
- What kind of problems can you take to your local councilors and get help on ? What kind of problems can local councilors help solve ?
- What kind of job are local leaders doing in this area ? What are they doing a good job on ? What are they doing a bad job on ?

V. Leaders - Part 1 (37 minutes)

A. 10 minutes How would you compare what local councilors do to what Ingonyama, Induna and Inkosi do ? How would you explain the difference ?

- What kind of problems are better solved by local councilors, rather than Ingonyama, Induna or Inkosi [*Probe for Specific examples.*]
- What kind of problems are better solved by Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna, rather than local councilors? [*probe for specific examples*]
- Who do you feel is responsible for the development in the community ?

B. 10 minutes : Have you ever known Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna to disagree with decisions made by other government officials ? Tell us about it. [*PROBE for specific examples.*]

- Have you ever known Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna to disagree with local councilors ? With provincial government ? With national government ? [*PROBE each*]
- Who did you agree with more ? Which side were you on ? Why ?

C. 7 minutes: Should Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna be able to overrule decisions made by elected parts of the government ?

- When should Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna be able to overrule decisions made by the local government ? The provincial government ? The national government ? [*PROBE each*]

D. 10 minutes: Now that we've talked about it how would you summarize what Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna should do ? What their job is ?

- How would you summarize what the other levels of government should do ? Local government
Provincial government ? National government ?
- Of all these levels - Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna , local government, provincial government, national government - which one affects this village the most ? Why do you say that ?
- Which one do you rely on the most to solve problems ? Why do you say that ?

VI. Arguments (26 minutes)

Now, I'd like to get to your reaction to some arguments that other people have made, concerning this subject of Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna and other levels of government .

A. **8 minutes** : Some people say that Ingonyama ,Inkosi or Induna are the ones who know our communities best, and it is important for them to have a say in all the decision made by the government that affect our communities

- How many of you mostly AGREE with that statement ? How many DISAGREE ?
[COUNT OUT LOUD]
- How do you feel about that statement ? Do you agree ? Disagree ?
- Are there some kinds of decisions Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna should have a say in, and some they should not ?
- Who would sort this out ?
- How should this be decided ?
- You should decide ?

B. **8 minutes** : Let me read you a different statement. Some people say that Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna are important to our history, culture, and local communities, but that our newly elected government should have the final say about the laws that affect us all. They say that Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna should play a ceremonial role only.

- How many of you mostly AGREE with that statement ? How many DISAGREE ?
[COUNT OUT LOUD]
- How do you feel about that statement ? Do you Agree ? Disagree ?
- Should Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna only play a ceremonial role, or should their job include other things ?

C. **5 minutes** : Which do you agree with more - that Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna should have a say in most decisions, or that the elected government should have the final say ? Why do feel that way ?

D. **5 minutes** :In the end, which is more important - to have strong Ingonyama, Inkosi or Induna or to have a strong elected government ? Why do you say that ?

- Can you have both at the same time ?
- How can this be resolved ?