

HOUSEHOLD, PRODUCTION AND THE ORGANISATION
OF COOPERATIVE LABOUR IN
SHIXINI, TRANSKEI.

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TR90-40

This dissertation is entirely my own work and has
not been submitted previously for any
degree at any other University.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Heron', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and includes a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right of the line.

Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1990.

ABSTRACT.

Incidences of cooperation in agricultural activity are widespread phenomena in low-income third world communities. Two forms of cooperative labour groupings are identified in Shixini, Transkei. These are the work party and the ploughing company. It is argued that different organisational principles operate in the different cooperative forms. Work parties are based on principles of neighbourhood while ploughing companies are organised around kinship relationships. Factors which determine the principle of organisation are social values; the wider South African economic system; ecology; reciprocity; the constitution and structure of the household; economic differentiation; and labour demand and supply.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first is an overview of the Shixini social, economic and political systems. This chapter discusses the influence of the wider South African politico-economic system on agricultural production; the Shixini/Transkei political context; kinship and its relation to social organisation; and the likely effects of an agricultural 'betterment' scheme on the area. The second chapter is an overview of agricultural production in Shixini. It is found that the most significant determinants of agricultural production is the structure and constitution of the household and the way in which stock is distributed in the community. The third and fourth chapters describe and analyse Xhosa work parties and ploughing companies. Argument is lead as to the reasons for the specific organisational principles operating in each case. The penultimate chapter is an analysis of sacred and secular ritual. It is argued that both ritual forms reveal cooperative principles of organisation. Secular ritual dramatises the organisation of work parties while sacred ritual dramatises kinship relationships and so, the organisation of ploughing companies.

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INTRODUCTION.

This dissertation is concerned with describing and analysing the logic underlying the organisation of cooperative labour in Shixini in the Willowvale district, Transkei. The focus is on agricultural activity because it is in these arrangements that cooperation is most common. In looking at cooperative work I focus on two forms of cooperative labour, the work party and the ploughing "company".

Different organisational principles operate in these two forms of cooperative labour. In the organisation of work parties the organisational principle is neighbourhood and community while ploughing companies are organised on the basis of kinship. The organisational principles underlying the organisation of these cooperative arrangements are not mutually exclusive. Kin work for kin in work parties and, in ploughing companies, kin are often neighbours. In both these cooperative arrangements the geographic location of participants are influential in their organisation. Ploughing companies are generally limited to fellow sub-ward members. The logic of this is that if company members live too far away the logistics of organising company tasks becomes difficult.

My understanding of cooperative work arrangements has been governed by the notion that human action takes place within a

specific context. In this dissertation I have attempted to describe the context in which work takes place as broadly as possible. In the first instance I have, influenced by the world systems theorists (Wallerstein 1974, 1979; Wolf 1982), argued that in order to understand production in Shixini it is essential that cognisance is taken of the historical and economic context in which these activities take place.

My view of the context extends beyond the perception of interlinkages between the wider economy and Shixini to include ecology. Here I have been influenced by the work of Sansom (1974) and Chambers et al (1981). There is no doubt that the ecology of a certain area has a determining influence on agricultural production. In my analysis of work parties I indicate that a factor influencing the demand for labour is rainfall. Rain, because it accelerates the growth of weeds, precipitates the need for weeding to be done as quickly as possible. Rainfall also limits the time available for ploughing. It is impossible to plough after heavy rain because draught oxen tend to slip and the soil is not broken up by the plough. If the soil is not broken up by the plough it is necessary to re-plough - a considerable waste of time and energy.

The South African economy and the ecology of the area are the two external factors which influence production. There are a number of internal factors which affect the organisation of cooperative labour arrangements. The most important of these is economic differentiation. In looking at differentiation my

analysis has been influenced by Spiegel's (1979) work on Lesotho. In Shixini wealthier households, particularly those better off in terms of stock holdings, are able to recruit labour with greater ease than poorer households. Through brewing more beer wealthy households are able to hold larger and a greater number of work parties while poorer households hold fewer, smaller, work parties.

Within the context of differentiation the concept of the household and the developmental cycle becomes important. Here I have been influenced by the work of Spiegel (1979; 1982) and Chayanov (1966). The utility of the developmental cycle is that it shows, firstly, that a household's labour resources change over time and, secondly, that as the household moves through the developmental cycle its production capacities and needs change.

The final internal factor influencing the organisation of co-operative arrangements is the values of the society. I argue that in Shixini there is an ethic of mutual help or, in emic terms, ubuntu (humanity) (see Willsworth 1979, on the value of ubuntu and how it influences mutual help in a South African township). The value of ubuntu, although influenced by a specific need for cooperative work arrangements, underlies the idea of cooperation. People who do not help other people are seen to be lacking in ubuntu. Ubuntu is an ideal which is expressed in ritual oratory with people talking about how it is important that they help each other and that they work because this is the way they are: "We Gcaleka help each other".

These factors delineate the context in which human action takes place. My other theoretical orientation is an attempt to understand how social institutions such as ploughing companies arose. I answer the questions: "Why are there ploughing companies and why are there work parties?" in terms of the history of the Transkei believing, like Lewis (1968: xviii), that "the structure of the present is not fully revealed without reference to its development over time".

Although I stress the importance of 'context' I do not believe that human action is determined by the context and instead hold the view that the context places limits on human action and choice. Within a specific situational context individuals make decisions, fight, work, divorce, marry, engage in ritual, participate in local level politics, and die.

In arguing that people make decisions within specific contexts I have been influenced by the work of Barth (1966), Boissevain (1974), Holy and Stuchlik (1983) and Riches (1979). In looking at ploughing companies I analyse the strategies which individuals employ in their attempts to join ploughing companies. I also look at how companies form, how they split and how they organise ploughing activities in the ploughing season.

When first deciding to study cooperative labour arrangements I found the logic which underlies these phenomena incredibly elusive until my own analytic knife was applied. It is therefore not unlikely that other researchers, using different analytic

principles and coming from different theoretical backgrounds, would interpret and analyse the data that I have collected differently.

I divided up the factors which underlie the organisation of cooperative labour into macro and micro variables. Under macro variables fall the following: (i) the wider South African economy and to a certain extent the world economic system, (ii) the ecology of the area and how climatic changes such as rainfall create labour bottlenecks which are solved through cooperative work arrangements, (iii) the South African political system including the policy of separate development and how discriminatory policies which favoured white farmers effectively destroyed the agricultural base of black rural areas forcing these people to rely on migrant labour, (iv) the Transkeian political system and the way in which it is realised at village level especially in terms of the changing autonomy which people have to the means of production, (v) finally, the likely impact of a 'betterment' scheme on Shixini people which, if it was imposed in its present form, would fundamentally change community and neighbourhood social and economic relationships.

Under micro variables I include the following: (i) the organisational basis of the sub-ward and how it creates a category of potential workers, (ii) the kinship system and the way in which it specifies a range of potential cooperators in ploughing, (iii) the value system and the way in which it disposes people to help each other, (iv) the structure and constitution of the household

in terms of which the household is **able** to engage in cooperative work arrangements and **needs** to engage in these activities, (v) economic differentiation in terms of land and stock holdings and how these affect production and the household's role as labour giver or receiver.

Some theoretical problems.

The dissertation deals with production and the factors affecting production and as such can be placed under the rubric of 'economic anthropology'. This raises the questions of what is meant by the term 'economic'? What is an economic action? What are economic criteria?

The debate as to the use of the term 'economy' has been raging for a considerable period of time in both anthropological and other circles and the indications are that it will continue. The most important approaches to the nature of the 'economic' are those outlined by formalist, substantivist and Marxist anthropologists.

The formalist economic definition as cited by Robbins (1968: 88-100) is that "Economics is the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses" (p.96). Robbins argues that we have limited means (money, power, time) in which to achieve unlimited wants (sex, capital accumulation, sleep, hoeing) and thus people make a decision to invest time, or some other resource, in the completion of an activity at the expense of other activities.

This definition has undergone serious attack as it was seen to be so broad that 'economy' and 'economic' lost their meaning because there was no difference between an 'economic' action and any other action - "any kind of human behaviour falls within the scope of economic generalisations." (Robbins 1968: 97).

Substantivists viewed the subject of economic enquiry as the analysis of "the instituted process of interaction between man and his environment, which results in a continuous supply of want satisfying material" (Burling 1968: 171). Substantivists classified economic systems in terms of reciprocal, redistributive and market systems of exchange and thus were more concerned with the distribution of goods than with their production (Prattis 1987: 16).

The substantivist view of the economy was attacked on many fronts. Godelier (1973: 21) attacked this view of the economy as being "functionalist empiricism" as it was more concerned with the visible manifestations of production, i.e. distribution, than with production itself. Godelier argued that in order to understand the logic of an economic system it was necessary to analyse the production and the circulation of goods (Ibid: 22).

Structural Marxists, such as Godelier, define the economic as "the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services" (1978: 55). For Godelier there are actions which are economic and those that are not. He therefore skirts the formalist problem of seeing all human action as economic and the

substantivist problem of seeing economic systems in isolation and only in terms of the distribution of goods and services.

A problem with Godelier's definition of the economic is its materialist bias. Godelier argues that all human activities are economic provided "**the functioning of which involves the exchange and use of material means**" (1978: 55, his emphasis). In Godelier's view every transaction has to have an explicit material dimension in order to be labelled 'economic'. Burling (1968: 169) points out that economists frequently deal with nonmaterial aspects of life and therefore an exclusively materialist focus in defining 'economics' is inappropriate. It often happens that a service, something nonmaterial, is exchanged for a service. Godelier's definition is therefore problematic because the exchange of nonmaterial goods, such as services, would not be economic.

Given that there are specific problems with all three views of the meaning of an 'economic' action, how do we solve the impasse? I would argue that if an action is concerned with, or results in, an economic benefit to either party then that action is economic. Thus if I, as a member of parliament, vote in a certain manner in exchange for which I am given a farm in the Cape then I am making an economic decision within a political context. Thus an economic action, or decision, is economic if there is a material dimension to the exchange when seen in its totality. Thus, the action of watching an opera, Robbin's (1968: 92) favourite example, is economic because money, something that is material,

is exchanged for something non-material, the beauty of the opera. My definition of the economic is not all encompassing and there are some actions which are not economic in that there is no material dimension to the action. The exchange of affection is not economic because, hopefully, what is exchanged between both parties is pleasure and love - unless of course one partner is using affection to gain some material favour.

Is the act of participating in a work party when one does not have one's own garden an economic action? I would argue that such an act is economic because, firstly, the receiver of labour receives a material benefit - a greater yield. It is obvious that the action is economic in terms of the receiver of the labour but is it economic in terms of the giver? I would argue that the action is economic both in terms of the definition given above and also in terms of the giver receiving some benefit at a later stage. This benefit might be nonmaterial: he might be supported in some argument in the future. How do we understand this arrangement as the giver is providing a service, his labour, and the receiver likewise is returning a service, political support? Two nonmaterial services have been exchanged. The action is still economic because the holder of the work party obtained a material benefit from the volunteer's work. The holder of the work party received a material benefit from a nonmaterial service.

It is thus important to see an action in its totality and over time in order to define whether it is economic or not. A final

problem needs to be ironed out. What is the relationship between morality, reciprocity and economic activities/actions? Holding to my definition that any action is economic if it is related to the exchange and use of material resources, a moral action can be seen to be economic if a material advantage or disadvantage arises out of that action. In terms of my definition of the 'economic' reciprocal and moral activities and relationships can easily be defined as economic or not. Thus an economic transaction differs from a social transaction because a social transaction, the exchange of affection, has no material dimension attached to it.

It remains to outline the relationship between morality and reciprocity. In this dissertation two types of moral relationships are outlined - that between kin and that between members of the community. The value of ubuntu is a moral value which stresses that members of a community should help each other. The negative side of this value is that if people do not possess ubuntu they should not be helped. Thus in this case there is strict reciprocal relationship between people who acknowledge the value of ubuntu and those that do not. The value of ubuntu is related to reciprocity in the sense that it provides a framework in which mutual help takes place but where, seeing that all people should possess ubuntu, help is sometimes not reciprocated.

The morality of kinship, on the other hand, is different. Kin are obligated to help each other, and through helping a poor

kinsman a person displays ubuntu, and therefore the issue of reciprocity is unimportant. The act of helping a kinsman is a moral act arising from obligation. It is not expected that this help be reciprocated as through helping a kinsman a moral obligation is being discharged. If one has to attach a reciprocal label to such an act we can define this type of reciprocity as "long-term" as "the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite" (Sahlins 1972: 194).

The reasons for helping people, as expressed by informants, are different in each case. In ploughing companies people express the reasons for helping someone through the idiom of kinship and there is no explicit expectation of return: "I help him because one should help one's family". People say that they participate in work parties because they expect that help to be returned: "I help him so that he can help me", but the time when this help will be returned is not immediate and indeed some people participate even though they do not have land. People participate in these arrangements for a variety of reasons. Young people without land participate because they want to make an impression on the people who might give them land at a later date, or they might need to borrow some sugar, or because they are obligated to the person for holding the work party because he helped at a ritual that they held.

Are some actions more moral than others? It is a truism to state that in some contexts questions of morality are more important than in others, and that some relationships are more

moral than others. The only way in which one can speak about the moral nature of an action is to understand the context in which the action takes place. The action must be understood in terms of the history, kinship links, and type of action itself so as to understand the 'moralness' of the relationship. One can obtain an idea of the degree of 'moralness' if one notes what is being done and what is being reciprocated. If the exchange is clearly unbalanced, as is often the case in ploughing companies, then it would be fair to argue that the exchange is dominated by issues of morality. Where a person helps another and it is clearly not to his benefit to do so we can argue that there is a moral motivation behind the action. Where a man helps his kinsmen in ploughing and receives no material benefit in exchange, we can argue that the relationship is more moral than the case where all resource contributions to the company are equal - this, however, is seldom the case and it is here that we can understand the structure of ploughing companies and the morality of kinship.

I argue that the principles underlying ploughing companies are fundamentally different to those which underlie the organisation of work parties. Ploughing companies are kinship based and as the contributions to the company are widely differentiated the organisational principles on which ploughing companies are based are predicated upon moral criteria and not each members' contributions to the companies resources. Work parties are different as they have an explicit short term focus and all the participants contribute time and labour.

The reciprocity which underlies these different cooperative arrangements is different in each case. Ploughing companies, because they are long-term in focus and moral in nature, are characterised by long-term reciprocity. Work parties, on the other hand, because they are short-term in focus and participants all contribute the same amount, are characterised by medium-term reciprocity. The reciprocity in this case is medium and not short-term because one can argue that the people of Nomphe form a moral community. They all need each other in order to engage in agricultural production and there is an expressed ethic of mutual help - people help each other because it is necessary to do so and because it is right that they do.

Methodology.

The research for this dissertation was done under the auspices of the Shixini Development Research Project (SDRP) under the leadership of Dr Pat McAllister at Rhodes University. This was a multi-disciplinary research project the aim of which was the development of an alternative to a 'betterment' scheme which was being implemented in the area at the time.

Just over six months of field work was carried out between January 1988 and January 1989. Field trips were timed to fit in with the agricultural cycle. The activities of weeding and hoeing were observed twice in 1988 and 1989. Fieldwork was conducted over the following periods: January/February (28 days); March/April (30 days); May/June (30 days); July/August (21 days);

September/October (24 days); November/December (31 days); January/February (18 days); February (seven days); and April (four days).

I relied on the traditional method of participant observation in all my time in Shixini and attended and participated in work parties, beer drinks, family crisis meetings, rituals, and weddings. Tape recordings of speeches made at formal occasions were made. In addition the participant observation method was supplemented by formal open ended interviews with a number of people and ploughing company heads. For each work party and ploughing company a list of participants/members was taken. The head/organiser of the cooperative group was asked to list the members/participants and list these people's clans (and, if female, in addition to their own clan, their husband's clan); their section; their contribution to the ploughing company; and how they were related to the head/organiser.

Basic socio-economic data was obtained through the application of a general household survey. Demographic data such as household size, structure and age of members were obtained. In addition data such as cattle holdings, number of migrants, number of pensioners, ploughing company membership and attitudes to the 'betterment' scheme were also obtained.

A further survey, applied to 33% of all households in Nompha selected on a random basis, looked at agricultural production. Data on maize yields for both fields and gardens, number of times

weeded, application of fertiliser and manure, and the use or non-use of fertiliser was obtained. A subsidiary survey which looked at area of arable holdings, ploughing company membership, stock holdings and the utilisation of work parties was applied after the general agricultural survey.

My results included the following : (i) a description of the way in which agricultural production is organised; (ii) an identification of the important factors which influence agricultural production in the area; (iii) the identification of principles of cooperation; and (iv) a description of the context in which production takes place.

The major application of the research is that it gives an important clue to the structure of indigenous organisational structures. This is seen to be important as local development institutions can be formed using these pre-existing structures. For any development intervention to succeed local cooperatives have to be formed. The success of these cooperatives is linked to the ease with which they match the pre-existing structures identified in the research.

Chapter outline.

The aim of the first chapter is to provide an overview of the social, economic and political context. The first part of the chapter is a description of Shixini in the context of the wider South African socio-economic context. In this section I outline the negative impact of migrant labour on rural agriculture; the

opportunities for people to find employment in South Africa; and the opportunity costs associated with migrant labour as opposed to agricultural production. The second section is an outline of the Transkei political structure. I start at the level of the household and end with the district authority and magistrate. The third section is a brief history of Nompha, the sub-ward in which this research took place. The local history of the sub-ward is reported as it was seen by Nompha inhabitants. The structure of the sub-ward and its sections is also described. The next to last section is a discussion of "Kinship and social organisation". This is an important section because throughout this thesis I argue that kinship is an important principle of socio-economic life. The final section is a description of 'betterment' and the likely effects of 'betterment' on the lives of Shixini inhabitants.

The first part of the second chapter is an attempt to characterise the people of Shixini as rural proletarians displaying peasant characteristics. I outline the conservative ideology of 'Red' people and ask if it is a useful concept and conclude that it is more useful to view the people of Shixini, both Red and School, collectively, because they all stand in a similar position to the wider capitalist economy. The next section is a description of the mode of production as it is realised in Shixini (displaying pre-capitalist and capitalist relations) in terms of Sahlins' (1972) framework. The following section in this chapter is an analysis of the household, the

factors governing household production, an analysis of the developmental cycle and the utility of the concept. I analyse a number of correlations that I draw between a number of variables (number of consumers and workers in the household, area of arable land, and stock holdings) and the yields that households obtain from their agricultural enterprise. It is found that the most significant element in contributing to yields is the household's access to stock. Leading from the previous section and my overview of the effects of migrant labour I include a brief analysis of the role of migrant labour in agricultural production.

Chapter three is a description and analysis of work parties. I begin by giving a brief overview of cooperative arrangements in Africa highlighting the different foci of various researchers. Some researchers stress reciprocity as an important principle underlying this form of cooperation while others stress kinship and rural differentiation. I argue that all of these principles are vital for an understanding of cooperative labour. Different tasks have different resource requirements and therefore are organised differently. Arising from the resource demands of the task, different organisational principles will be used in different types of economic cooperation. I then outline the importance of reciprocity and draw a distinction between long-term, medium-term, and short-term reciprocity. Having discussed reciprocity and its importance in understanding cooperative labour I argue that part of the context in which cooperation

takes place consists of the dominant values of the society. My description of the value of mutual help is illustrated by looking at what is said in the speeches at formal occasions such as the beer drinks that take place after work parties.

Two types of work parties are then identified. The tasks associated with each form and the way in which they are organised are analysed. Both these work parties are organised on the basis of neighbourhood and community but the size of each arrangement differs. A number of cases are described under each type. The final section is a discussion of economic differentiation and its influence on the organisation of cooperative labour. I conclude that an understanding of the way in which resources are distributed is vital to our understanding of the organisation of work. Differentiation underlies the rationality of cooperative labour, creating the **need for** and the **possibility of** cooperative labour.

Having focussed on the work parties, or amalima, I turn in the next chapter to ploughing companies. This chapter has an explicit historical focus and I see the introduction of the plough and the changes which were brought about through its adoption as crucial. The historical section is divided into two sections - a description of the pre-plough economy and a description of the post-plough economy. I also give a brief history of the plough in Kaffraria and analyse the effect of the plough on production, the division of labour and the environment.

The ploughing companies are then described. I first look at the constitution of Nompha ploughing companies. A breakdown of the relationship of members to the head of the company is given. It is found that 70% of all members are agnatically related to the head, 16% cognatically, 6% affinally and only 8% of all members are not related. A description and history of a number of ploughing companies is then given. Central to this chapter is my argument as to why ploughing companies are kinship based. The reasons for this are complex but the two most important elements to answering this question relate to the morality of kinship and to the association of cattle and kin arising out of marriage and the ancestor cult.

The next section is an analysis of fission in Nompha ploughing companies. Two cases of fission are given - the first where fission is amicable and the second where it is precipitated by conflict. I argue that fission in companies is directly related to a company's resources and its work load within the seasonal context. The final section of the chapter is an analysis of the ways in which people can gain access to a company's resources or become members of a company.

The penultimate chapter is an analysis of ritual. The aim of this chapter is to show how the two organisational principles (neighbourhood and kinship) are reflected in ritual. Two types of ritual are described. For each ritual type an analysis of seating arrangements and the distribution of beer is given.

Secular ritual is linked to the organisation of work parties and sacred ritual to ploughing companies.

CHAPTER 1: SHIXINI: A SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW.

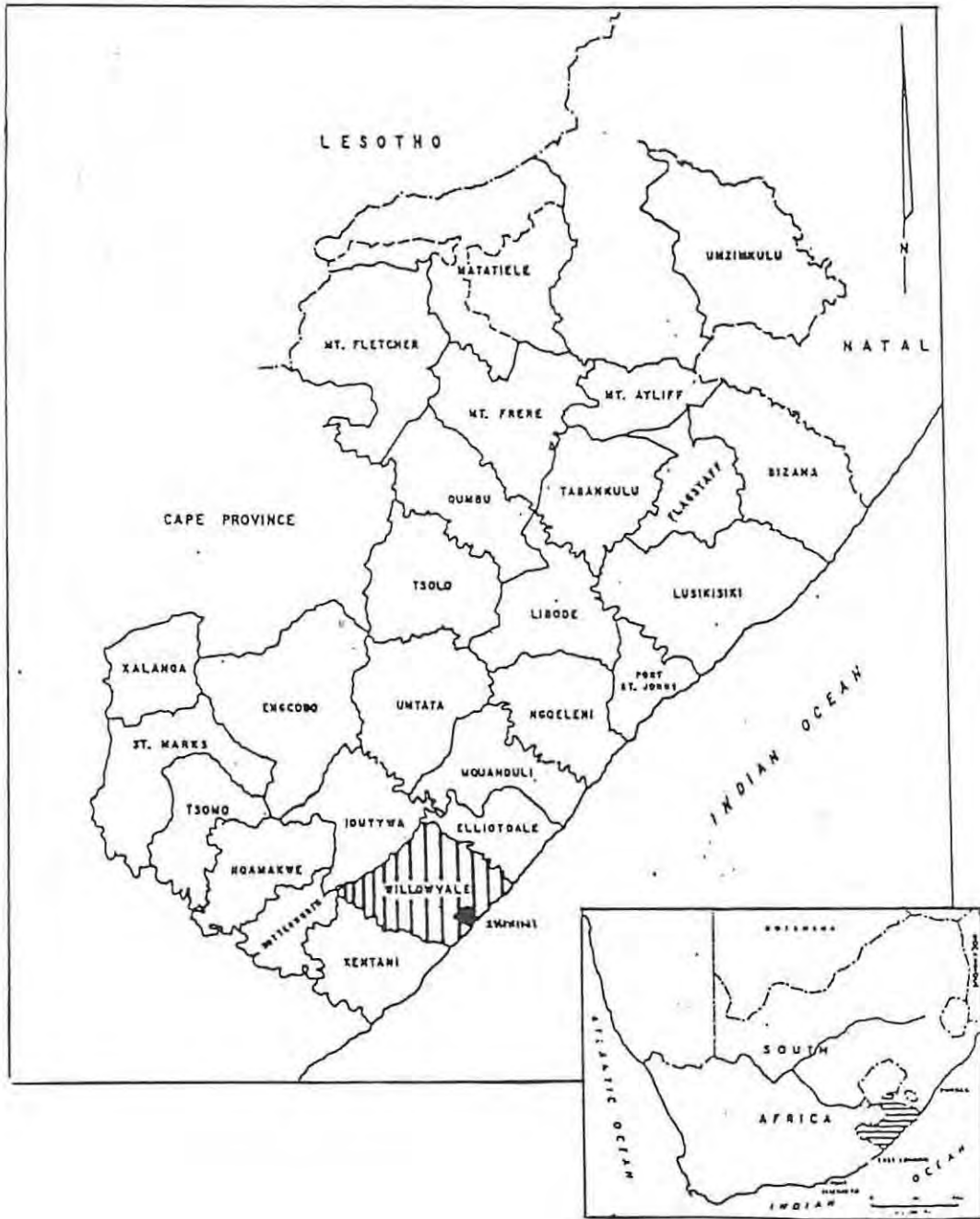
Shixini is located in the Willowvale district of the Transkei, one of the so-called "homelands" in the Republic of South Africa which took 'independence' from the South African government on October 26, 1976 under the policy of separate development. Shixini is inhabited by Xhosa speakers who are historically identifiable as members of the Xhosa chiefdom and the people identify themselves as Gcaleka.

The Transkei is independent in name only and relies on the South African tax-payer to meet most of its needs. In the 1987/1988 financial year payments from South Africa to the Transkei were R1 037 098 000 (Race Relations Survey 1988: 868). Most Transkeians are dependant on South African mines and industry for the provision of jobs, and most Transkeian men work as migrant labourers in South Africa. The mining industry is the largest single employer of Transkeian migrants employing 140 948 adult men in 1987 (23 792 fewer employees than in 1986). Total money earned by Transkeians on the mines and formally remitted home was over 19 million rand in 1987. (Ibid: 312,335,338).

The wider South African context.

The effect of the wider South African context on the people of the Transkei is most visible through the migrant labour system. Through working as migrants productive men are withdrawn from agricultural production and the burden of agricultural work falls

Map 1: Districts of the Transkei.



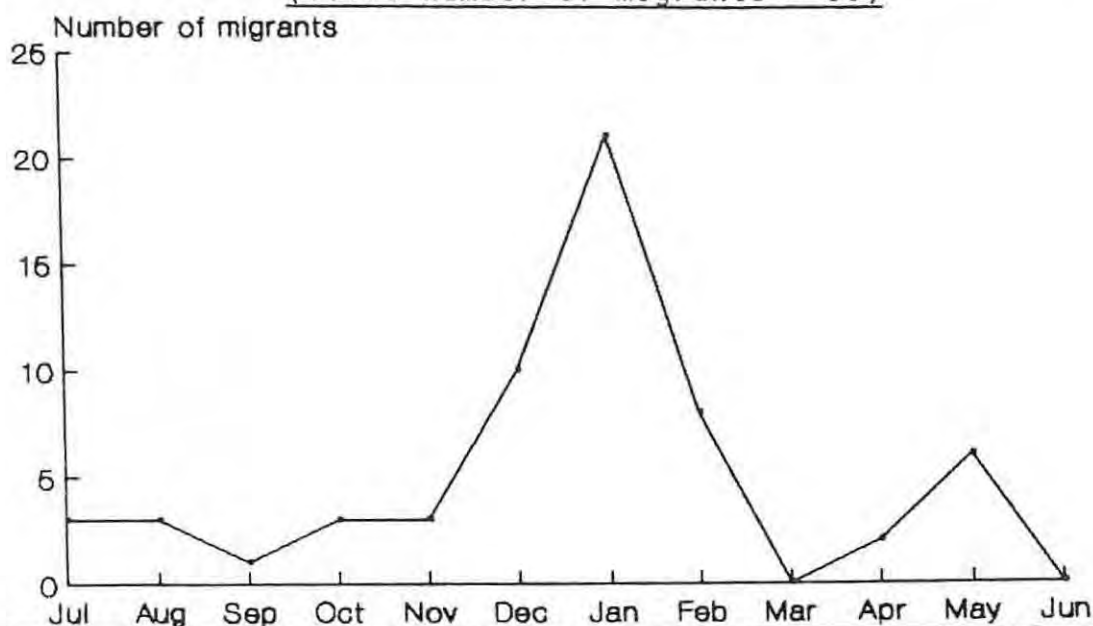
heavily onto the shoulders of women. The absence of men due to migrant labour has meant that women are playing an increasingly important economic role and one could argue that the maintenance of rural society rests firmly in the hands of women.

The labour shortages resulting from the migrant labour system are most acutely felt at particular times of the agricultural productive cycle. The demand for labour is highest in the months from October (when the people start preparing the ground for planting) to the beginning of March (when people start harvesting). Only in the months of December, January and February (the peak weeding season) is the demand for labour partly met by returning migrants.

The following graph shows that most migrants return to Shixini in the December, January, February period. There are thus acute labour shortages at the time when people are supposed to be preparing the ground for planting. The problem is partly met through the use of ploughing companies but there are still large numbers of people who end up planting late in the year because the ploughing companies, of which they are members, are too large and therefore their land is not ploughed timeously (see Chapter 4).

Graph 1: Months of return of male migrants to Nompha in 1988.

(Total number of migrants = 66)



The effect of migrant labour on rural agricultural production is complex. Some researchers, e.g. Spiegel (1979), have argued that agriculture is underwritten by remittances from migrant labour. Spiegel (1979: 2) found that there was a positive correlation between crop yields and cash inputs deriving from migrant labour in Lesotho. Other researchers, e.g. May (1985), have argued that migrant labour only indirectly affects agricultural production because of its impact on rural differentiation and concluded that in the Transkei

[A] household's participation in the migrant labour system no longer simply undermines the subsistence economy in the supplying region, as was the case in the past. Largely, this is because the productive base of these areas has been effectively destroyed. However, it is not true to argue that access to a wage income significantly improves households ability to farm, or its "modernity". Instead, migrant labour would appear to perpetuate the dependency of peripheral areas ... upon the South African core, for daily subsistence. (Ibid 1979: 33).

With the destruction of the productive base¹ in these areas greater comparative advantage is to be found in migrant labour than agricultural production. With greater advantage being found in migrant labour the attraction of agriculture has been reduced.

[The] growth of the modern sector, which introduces new consumer goods and new employment opportunities, tends, under the socio-economic conditions prevailing in Africa, to reduce the attraction of and, over time, the returns to indigenous farming. (Low 1986: 26).

Since the late 1800's maize production per person has declined in the Transkei (Bembridge 1987: 69). With decreasing production the returns from agriculture have not been able to compete with the returns from migrant labour. In this situation the average rural Transkeian has little choice than to work for wages in South Africa. This has meant that migrant labour has become more important for meeting basic subsistence needs than agriculture.

The long term outlook for people in black rural areas is extremely grim. In South Africa, where most Transkeians find employment, unemployment is increasing. There is a trend in South Africa away from labour intensive to capital intensive technology (Race Relations Survey 1987/88: 299). This means that there will be an increasing demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers. This is particularly evidenced in the mining industry where in 1987 JCI (Johannesburg Consolidated Industries)

¹ The 'productive base' refers to the elements which are essential for agricultural production to take place. If land, labour and capital were no longer available one could argue that there is no base on which agricultural production could be built and that therefore, the productive base has been destroyed.

retrenched 2310 workers (about 10% of their total work force) because of mechanisation (Ibid: 335).

The increasing demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers at the expense of unskilled workers because of capitalisation has been demonstrated by Crankshaw (1987) who has shown that the most dramatic increase in unemployment is amongst people who fall into the unskilled occupational category. If this trend continues unemployment in the Transkei, because of the lack of training and other educational facilities, will increase dramatically. People, in order to survive, will be forced to increase agricultural production, but will lack the necessary capital as access to wage labour will become increasingly difficult.

The South African political system has placed people (such as the people of Shixini) on the rural periphery of South Africa into a situation where they remain in a dependency relationship with South African capital. They do not have the means for self advancement (specifically capital and access to education and technical training) while the South African government is subsidising white agriculture and education to the short and long term disadvantage of black people in general and rural black people in the 'homelands' specifically.

Lipton (1977: 75-82) argues that the subsidisation of white agriculture has given white farmers a competitive advantage over peripheral farmers. Peripheral farmers, although spending less per kilogram produced, are not able to be price competitive with

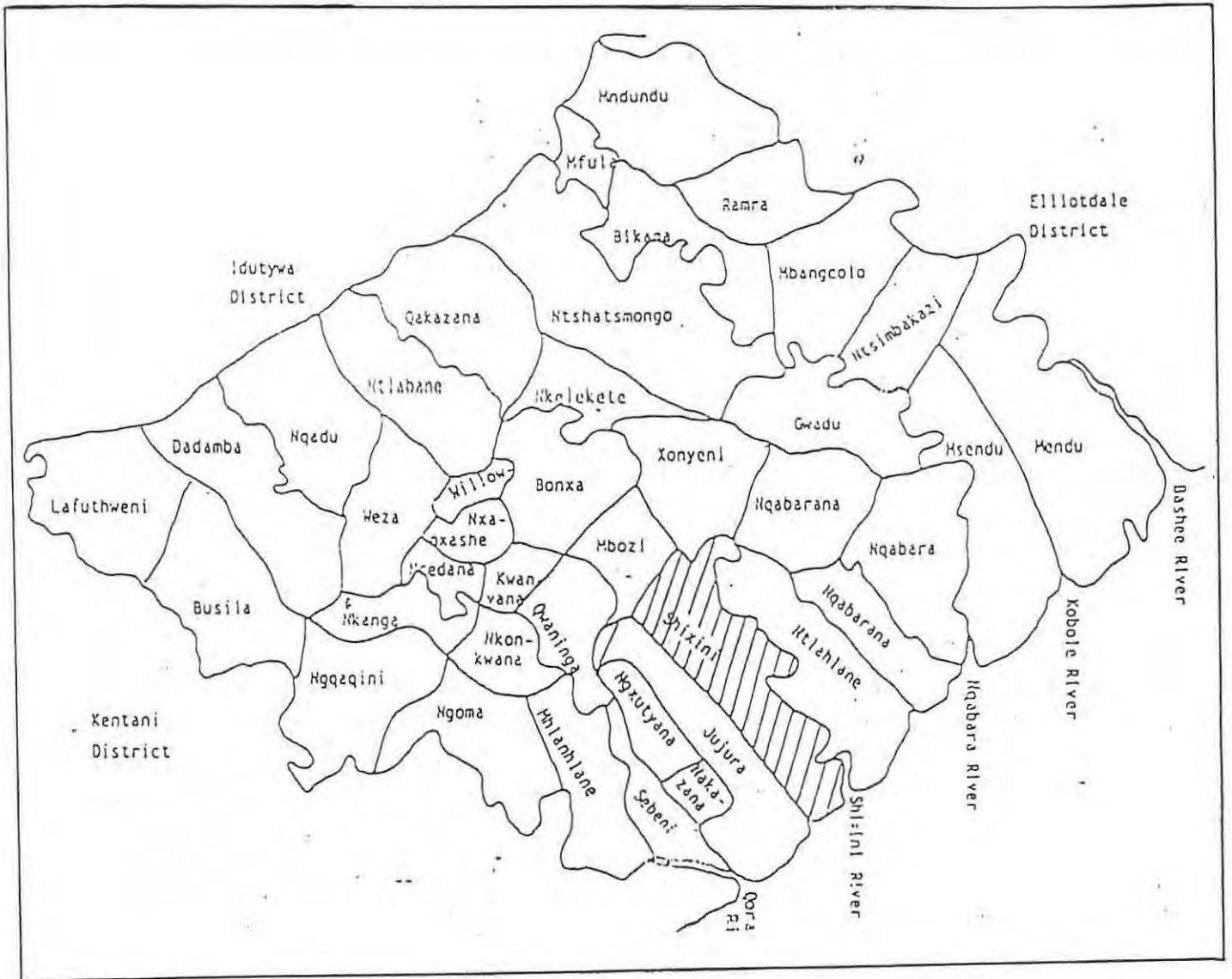
white farmers whose costs are mostly met by the South African government. Related to this is the fact that the South African government has invested huge amounts of money into developing infrastructure and sophisticated marketing structures for white agriculture. The white farmer is better positioned to get his produce to market. Black agriculture lacks the necessary infrastructure, capital support and marketing channels which would make agricultural production, as opposed to migrant labour, a worthwhile enterprise.

The political context.

The Transkei is divided into a number of regions each headed by a paramount chief, these regions are, in turn, divided into a number of magisterial districts. Each district is divided into a number of Tribal Authorities (TA) and these TA's are divided into administrative areas. This administrative area is called a ward and the central political figure is the ward headman. The ward is divided into sub-wards each headed by a sub-headman (isibonda, plural izibonda²). These sub-wards are divided into sections (usually about three sections per sub-ward) and the sections might, in some cases, be divided into sub-sections. The final politico/economic unit of importance is the individual household

2 In the strict sense of the word isibonda means headman. Hammond-Tooke calls sub-headmen (the people who are the principle political figures at the level of the sub-ward) ibhodi (1963: 304). Throughout this thesis I call sub-headmen izibonda as this is the term that the people themselves use.

Map 2: Willowvale district, Transkei showing Shixini ward.



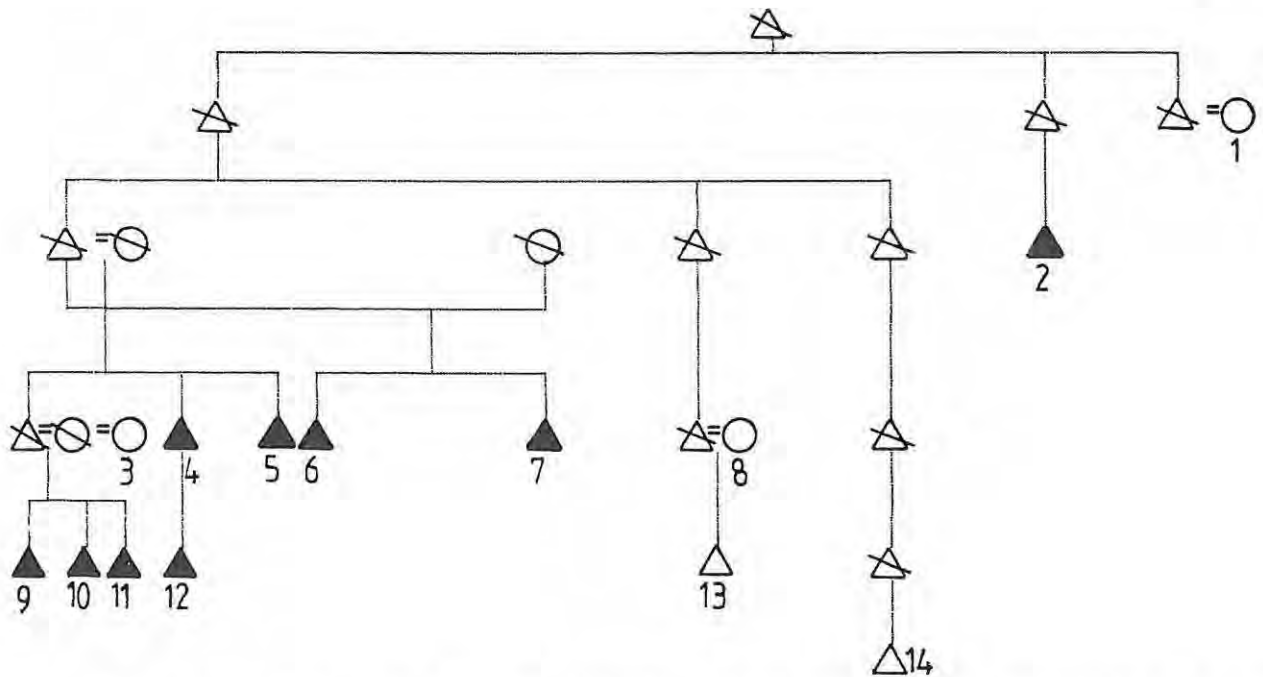
in the context of its agnatic cluster and its membership of the local lineage³ segment.

Each homestead is economically independent and provides for its own subsistence. The homestead head (male) is the political leader of the homestead and it is in the homestead that disputes and economic strategies are settled and discussed. The homestead is usually a part of an agnatic cluster and this is also a dispute settling body (Hammond-Tooke 1984: 84). The following case demonstrates how conflict between members of the agnatic cluster are solved at family meetings.

Case: A conflict between Madlamini of the Dlamini clan and Mampinga of the Mpinga clan had now reached crisis point. A meeting was held to settle the dispute. Present were all men of one of the local Tshawe agnatic clusters in Nompha and one man from the Kwemnta clan who is a councillor (amaphakathi which McLaren (1963: 122) translates as "a middleman, intermediary between chief and people, a councillor, advisor, agent; a headman".) to these Tshawes. Matikiti is seen as a family member and is present at all family meetings. The following incomplete kinship diagram identifies the male participants in the meeting. The diagram excludes the two protagonists (Mampinga the wife of 5 and Madlamini who is Kwemntas' brothers' wife), Kwemnta and other members of the local clan who were, for a variety of reasons such as migrant labour, not present at the meeting.

3 I use the term 'lineage' in the same sense as Hammond-Tooke (1984: 91) where

"The Cape Nguni lineage can be considered as a set of people the relationships between whom are structured on a genealogy, which can be used to solve certain problems to do with agnatic cluster solidarity, relationships between these clusters, the acceptance of potential members of the cluster and the selection of an elder to preside in ritual matters".



The two women had been accusing each other of witchcraft and attempted murder. The one woman was also accused of aborting her male foetus. The two protagonists were brought into the hut and each one was interviewed by the senior men (junior men observing). The dispute was settled through bringing it into the open and allowing the protagonists to say their piece.

The older woman was seen as the trouble maker and she was told by her husband's brother's son (who is also the Nompha isibonda, number 9 in diagram):

You are very old to carry on like this. Be a mother as you are a mother to your daughters! If somebody does something to you call me aside and I will talk to the people who made you angry. Next time if you don't like what somebody has done to you report it immediately to sibonda's house.

The izibonda.

The presiding political figure in each sub-ward is the isi-bonda. He is responsible for a number of tasks which include the allocation of land in conjunction with the men of the section to which the person will be moving. In the allocation of land the section has to agree to the person moving into their area.

Izibonda are required to be present at all TA meetings and reports back to the people of their sub-wards. They thus work as messengers for the TA. They are also responsible for making announcements to the people with regard to school fees, other levies, and recently notice about where and when people should move because of the 'betterment'⁴ scheme. Each isibonda is also a member of the local school committee.

The job is not a popular one and all the izibonda that I have spoken to say that if they had a choice they would not like to do the job. The rationale behind this is that it is a lot of work, which is unpaid. Izibonda being required to attend TA meetings at Komkhulu (the place of the chief who is also head of the TA) which for some is quite a distance away.

The job is also difficult because it is often the case that izibonda have to make unpopular announcements to the people of their areas. It is thus very easy for them to become unpopular. This was especially true during the time of 'betterment'. The 'betterment' scheme is not popular as it requires people to move from their old sub-wards into a village situation (see below for the problems that people perceive with 'betterment'). The izibonda were at the front line of any dissatisfaction arising from the 'betterment' scheme and some of them feared for their lives. At this time one isibonda in Vulandi sub-ward bought

4 In the text I place the term 'betterment' in inverted commas showing that the term is a misnomer in that it does not benefit anybody.

himself a firearm for protection. The izibonda were warned that they should not go out at night in case they were attacked and that they should fence their properties.

One isibonda said that he didn't like the job and went on to say:

In the old days if you were an isibonda you did not travel as much as today. You do not gain anything from being isibonda and you are not paid for doing this job. You lose money by going to town because you do not get the money you spend on the bus to get to Gatyana [Willowvale].

Other problems are that if someone exceeds his mark [boundaries set out for each homestead by the 'betterment' scheme] you must report him to the chief so that the chief can take that person to the Tribal Authority and you are acting as an informer. When someone steals something you must take him to the chief. If people come and report a problem at night you should go and solve the problem.

We izibonda are checking that people stick to the marks of the trust [the 'betterment' scheme] and if one does not stay inside his mark we go to him and tell him that this is wrong. That person wants to beat you and these people do have weapons and would have killed us as they do in the townships [a reference to the uprisings in the South African townships].

Izibonda are theoretically elected by the people of the sub-ward and can be removed if they are perceived to be doing a bad job. This is the ideal situation but in practice the chief can, and does, appoint or remove izibonda.

The role of the izibonda can be divided into two areas of responsibility. Firstly they work independently of the TA and the chief in the allocation of land and the settlement of disputes. Secondly they work under the auspices of the TA in that they are

required to attend meetings and act as messengers for the chief and the TA.

The chieftainship.

In pre-colonial times the chief was seen as a father-like figure whose role was that of an **owner** and not a **controller** of the means of production (Peires 1981: 32). The chief could allocate land as the owner of the means of production but he did not have any immutable right to the produce grown on the land which he had allocated. The chief's power was not fixed and his power lay in his ability to meet the needs of his subjects. There was a definite transactional element to the relationship between chiefs and commoners and the Xhosa situation was much like the Tswana where

...the rights and duties of an incumbent are not immutably fixed: the chief and his subjects are thought to be involved in a perpetual transactional process in which the former discharges obligations and, in return, receives the accepted right to influence policy and command people.(J.L.Comaroff 1974: 41).

At this time land was available and people could, if they were dissatisfied, move away. The chief, therefore, was only a chief because of the favour of the people and it was thus expedient for the chief to have the wishes of his subjects foremost in his mind (Peires 1981: 32). Power, defined as access to resources, was decentralised at the level of sub-ward. Disputes were also settled at this level. The loci of power lay in the chief's power of redistribution, specifically of land and cattle, and not

in his control of the means of production. (Sansom 1974: 147-148).

All this changed with the arrival of the colonial government. Where previously the chief had power through his relationship with the people and his councillors (amaphakathi) he now became subject to the whims of the colonial government. The transactional relationship between chief's and commoners was finally destroyed with the Natives Administration Act where commissioners were given the power to depose or appoint chiefs (Stadler 1987: 121). The autonomy of the people was finally destroyed with Proclamation R400 which made it illegal for people to criticise their chiefs. This entrenched the power of the chiefs but at the expense of their legitimacy to the people (Haines et al 1984: 7).

The history of chieftainship in the Transkei paints a picture of a gradual erosion of the transactional relationship between chiefs and commoners. From pre-colonial times where the chief depended on the good will of his people to the present day where he is subject to the government for his position. A rift exists between the chief and the people and power has been centralised at the level of national government. Power was centralised with the colonial government through the Natives Administration Act of 1927, with the South African government through the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, and finally with Proclamation R400 of 1963 (Streek and Wicksteed 1981: 10-17).

Chief Mandlenkosi Dumalisile is the chief of Shixini. He is also a cabinet minister in the Transkei's ruling military council. The residence of the chief is called Komkhulu ('The Great Place'). It is here that meetings which affect Shixini as a whole are held. At meetings which I have attended a range of issues have been discussed. These include matters relating to the 'betterment' scheme; the payment of school levies, taxes and fines; and issues relating to the agricultural extension officer.

These meetings are usually not well attended. Meetings which were held at Komkhulu where the idea of the 'betterment' scheme was first introduced were only attended by about 10% of all adult people in Shixini (McAllister 1988: 2). Meetings are not well attended for a number of reasons. Firstly it is difficult for some people to get to Komkhulu which is quite a distance away from the more distant sub-wards. Secondly there is always bad news at these meetings and it doesn't really make a difference if people attend or not - they will get to hear the news from their isibonda.

The Jingqi Tribal Authority (TA).

The Tribal Authority system was established in terms of Proclamation No.180 of 1956 (Streek and Wickstead 1981: 18; Hammond-Tooke 1975: 206). The TA is responsible for the collection of taxes, the allocation of funds for the development of infrastructure (e.g. roads and schools), the allocation of land (it usually rubberstamps recommendations from the izibonda if the

individual's taxes are paid up), and also acts as a court and can administer fines.

The Jingqi TA is based at Kwitshi next to Komkhulu and administers the areas of Shixini and Ntlahlane. The TA consists of the chief and his selected councillors. There are izibonda who are members of the TA but this is not necessarily the case. It is an enormously powerful body and its decisions impact on every facet of an individual's life.

The District Authority and the Magistrate.

The heads of the various TAs in the Willowvale district form the district authority, and the tribal authorities from the Willowvale, Kentani and Idutywa districts form the Gcaleka Regional Authority (Hammond-Tooke 1975: 207). The head of the Gcaleka Regional Authority is Paramount Chief Xolilizwe Sigcawu, and his Great Place is at Nqadu between Willowvale and Idutywa (Hammond-Tooke 1956: 51).

The Regional Authority used to be an administrative and advisory body but in 1982 (in terms of the Regional Authorities Court Act) it gained jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases and therefore has the same power as a magistrates court (Segar 1986: 57). The Regional Authority must also approve matters which affect any of the administrative areas under its jurisdiction e.g. in 1979 the Regional Authority had to approve the 'betterment' scheme for Shixini (McAllister 1988: 3).

The magistrate performs much the same function as the Regional Authority. The magisterial system and the Regional Authority are parallel bodies which have both civil and criminal jurisdiction. The magistrate does have an administrative function and it was necessary that he, too, approved the 'betterment' scheme for Shixini.

The most important person in the local administrative structure is the chief. The Chief is powerful in that he appoints or removes izibonda, in the TA he also appoints members and, finally, he is also important in terms of his position in the government as a Cabinet Minister. It is the chief who has the most power to affect the life of the individual who exists right down at the bottom of the political structure.

A brief history of Nompha sub-ward.

Most of the research for this dissertation took place in Nompha, one of the sub-wards of Shixini. Nompha borders on the Shixini river in the north-east, Ngwevu sub-ward in the west and Ndlelebanzi sub-ward in the south.

The sub-wards in Shixini are named after people or after the oxen of chiefs. There are many different stories of who Nompha was and of how Nompha as a sub-ward came to be. The one story is that Nompha was circumcised with Chief Sarhili, his half brother. During the 9th Frontier war Sarhili crossed into Bomvanaland and settled between the Mthatha and Umngazi rivers (Hammond-Tooke 1956: 44). People say that while Nompha and Sarhili were fleeing

from the colonial soldiers Nompha collapsed. Sarhili sent him back and gave him the area of land which we now know as Nompha.

Nompha is divided into three sections, Komkhulu, Ngwevu and Tembu. These sections vary in size and there is a dominant clan associated with each section. Komkhulu has 39 households (58% of all the households). Ngwevu has 19 households (28% of all households). Tembu is the smallest section and has 9 households (13% of Nompha households). Sections are not limited to specific geographic areas. Part of the reason for this is that some households have moved from their old sections because of the 'betterment' scheme but at the same time have held onto their identity as members of the section where they were previously located. Section membership is partly geographic and partly political. Although there is a vague correspondence between geographic area and section membership, it is not necessary that section members all live in an exclusive geographic area.

Komkhulu is the area associated with members of the royal Tshawe clan (for the story of Tshawe see Peires 1981: 13-19). It is here that the isibonda resides and this is where Nompha first settled. His grave is still recognised and identified by people in the area.

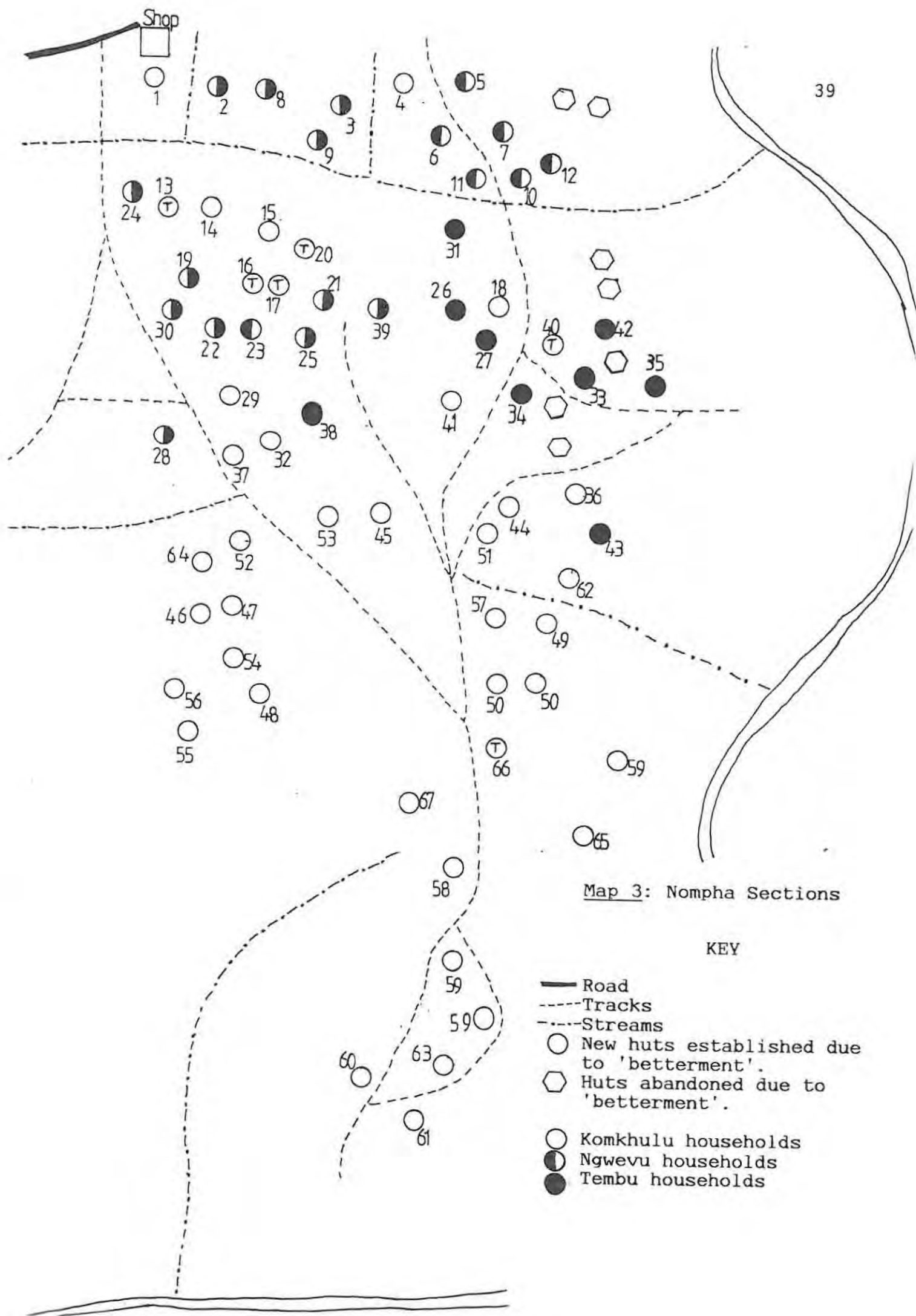
A male informant told me the story behind Tembu section. While collecting wood a group of women came upon strangers hiding in the forest. They dropped their wood and ran screaming back to the men shouting that there were strange people in the forest.

The men collected their weapons and went to investigate. There they found people living on berries and roots who were half starving. These people were brought back to Komkhulu and given food and drink. The strangers' leader said that his clan was Tshawe and they had run away from Tembuland where people were fighting and burning their houses. The strangers were given land on which to live and this area came to be called Tembu.

Ngwevu section came about when members of the Ngwevu clan moved from a number of other areas to Nompha. They were given the land bordering on Ngwevu sub-ward and the section was called Ngwevu.

Precisely when the section system developed is unknown. People say that the sub-ward was split into sections when people found that they were not getting enough meat and beer at feasts held in their area. They then split into three and at feasts held in Nompha they are each given their own share. The sections act as izithebe (hospitality groups) in Nompha and when people of Nompha attend feasts at another sub-ward all the sections combine to form one isithebe group.

Hammond-Tooke (1963) describes how among the Mpondomise izithebe groups are not based on location section affiliation (see map Ibid: 303) but on factors such as kinship. In Zingcuka location, Tsolo, Transkei there were five sections and 31 izithebe. In Shixini sections are izithebe and they are responsible for the distribution of food and drink at feasts.



Map 3: Nompha Sections

KEY

- Road
- - - Tracks
- · - · Streams
- New huts established due to 'betterment'.
- ⬡ Huts abandoned due to 'betterment'.
- Komkhulu households
- ◐ Ngwevu households
- Tembu households

Kinship and social organisation.

The question of the utility of kinship as a principle of social organisation is exceedingly complex. In some societies, it seems, according to Hammond-Tooke (1984: 84) and Kuckertz (1985), that kinship only has utility in ritual and has no bearing on the organisation of productive activities. In other cases researchers have shown that kinship is an important organising principle both in ritual and economic life (Gulliver 1971; Bloch 1973). In this dissertation I argue that, in Nompha, kinship is vital in the organisation of ploughing companies and neighbourhood is important in the recruitment of work parties (see Chapter 3, 4, 5).

Before we enter the debate it is necessary to describe the kinship system as it is found in Shixini. The Xhosa kinship system is much like other Southern Nguni people. Marriage is patrilocal and, sometimes, polygynous (Hunter 1979: 15). All people are members of an exogamous clan (isiduko) defined by Wilson (1982: 116) as a number of lineages whose members claimed descent from a common ancestor. Clan exogamy is practiced and one may not marry a person of the same clan as oneself, or a person of the same clan as one's paternal grandmother and maternal grandparents.

Clanship, other than specifying a range of marriage partners through the exogamy rule, also specifies appropriate behaviour between members of related clans where the exogamy rule applies.

Members of the same clan are classificatory kin and are obligated to help each other. Clan membership creates a range of reliable links with other people because they are seen to be kin. This is expressed in sacred ritual (see Chapter 5) where clan identity is reinforced. In a marriage ceremony the obligation that a person has to his/her clan was made explicit:

Here you are Kholeka [the name of the bride] at this homestead. Now we have handed you over to your husband. Even here at your marriage home you are free to come closer to the home where you were born. Msuthu [the praise name of the bride's clan, Vundle] any Vundle who will pass here, no matter where he is coming from, if that person is a Vundle take him into your house. Give him the food that you have as usual.

It is never the case that all members of a specific clan are present in the same local area (Hammond-Tooke 1984: 80). Because clans are widely dispersed Hammond-Tooke argues that a more appropriate unit of study would be the agnatic cluster - a clan remnant living in the same neighbourhood (1984: 84).

There has been much debate as to the importance and even the presence of lineages in all societies. Hammond-Tooke (1984) concluded that (i) lineages are never, because they are widely dispersed, present in their entirety (p.80); (ii) are not corporate groups and are thus not mobilised in productive activities (p.82-84); and (iii) there is no vernacular term for a 'lineage' (p.85); amongst the Southern Nguni. Instead he argues that "the only socially relevant group is the often tiny agnatic cluster" (p.87) which consists of a group of agnatically related households, usually not extending further than four or five

generations, who live in the same area and are usually neighbours.

Although I agree with Hammond-Tooke's identification of the agnatic cluster as an important social grouping I would also argue that the social and ritual importance of the agnatic cluster does not exceed its economic importance. Like Gulliver (1971) I argue that kinship, because it creates a genealogical blueprint in the minds of people (Hammond-Tooke 1984: 83), is important in the organisation of some economic activities such as ploughing. In Chapter four I show how all ploughing companies in Nompha are organised around principle of kinship. In Chapter five I show how sacred ritual reinforces the role of kin in economic life because of its dramatisation of kin relationships and the association of cattle.

There are two other groups of kin, other than agnates, which are important. These are cognates and affines. The importance of cognates are recognised in ritual. Holbrook (1986) describes a ritual in Shixini where a group collectively known as abatshana were explicitly recognised in the sharing of beer and meat. He defined abatshana as "people who could claim a connection to the Cirha clan [the officiating clan of the ritual that he analysed] through the matriline" (Ibid: 12).

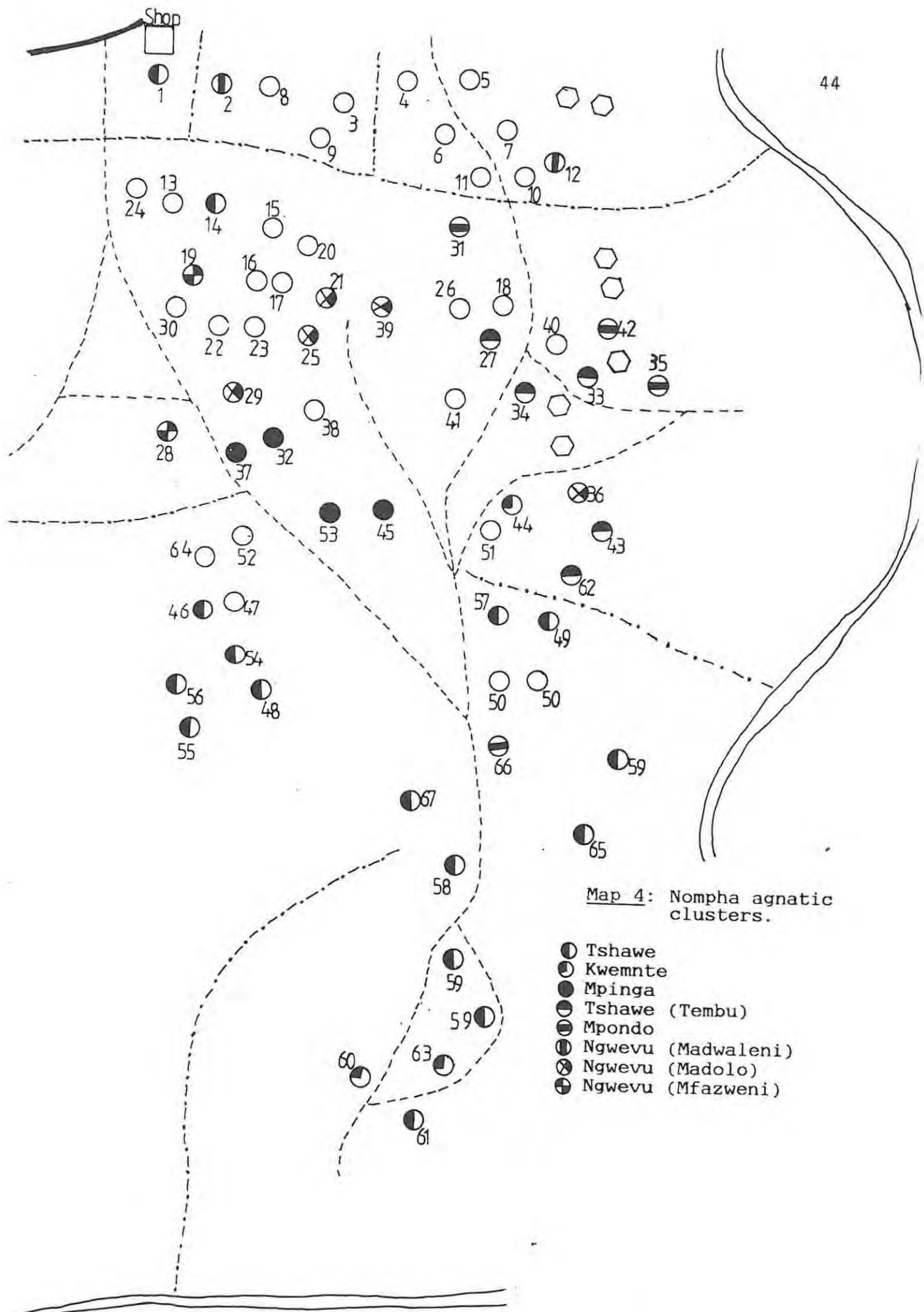
Affines are also obligated to help each other. The obligatory relationship which exists between affines is partly because of the transfer of cattle in bridewealth transactions but are un-

derwritten by the relationship between brothers and sisters. It is through the sister's marriage that brothers obtain bridewealth cattle enabling them to marry. The closeness and mutual obligation is not only transactional and one often comes across references where brothers express that their married sister should come to them for help if she or her husband are ever in need.

My sister, she is the only one. There was another one called Ntombikayise, the second born after whom I was born, who died. I mean to say now Kholeka you are our beloved sister. We still wish to do a lot of things for you. Tshawe because everything was bad we have good wishes for her. Something that our father forgot to do we will do. [Kholeka] if anything should happen tomorrow I want you to cross the Shixini river and go to my homestead and tell me "I have a shortage of this and this Makhutsumbela [her younger brother]" or you can go to Mwalase [her older brother] down there at Kwatentsa and tell him "I have a shortage of this and this". (Speech made at wedding mentioned above).

Amongst the Tshawe of Nompha there are two agnatic clusters (see Map 4, overleaf). The first cluster consists of all the Tembu Tshawes, who moved into Nompha from Tembuland (see the story of how Tembu section came to be, above). The second cluster, mentioned in the previous case, consists of Dilikile (no.59)⁵, his father's brother's children as Dilikile's father's brother is now deceased (no.61), Sihonono (no.46), Nonjenane (no.56), Hloniphile (no.67), Manguyana (no.55), Gulayo (no.57), Ntohtolo (no.49), No-Awala (no.54), Mnyeliswa (no.48), Nojoyni (no.58) and Myuntsu (no.65). All these people live together (the

5 Numbers in brackets refer to Map 4, overleaf.



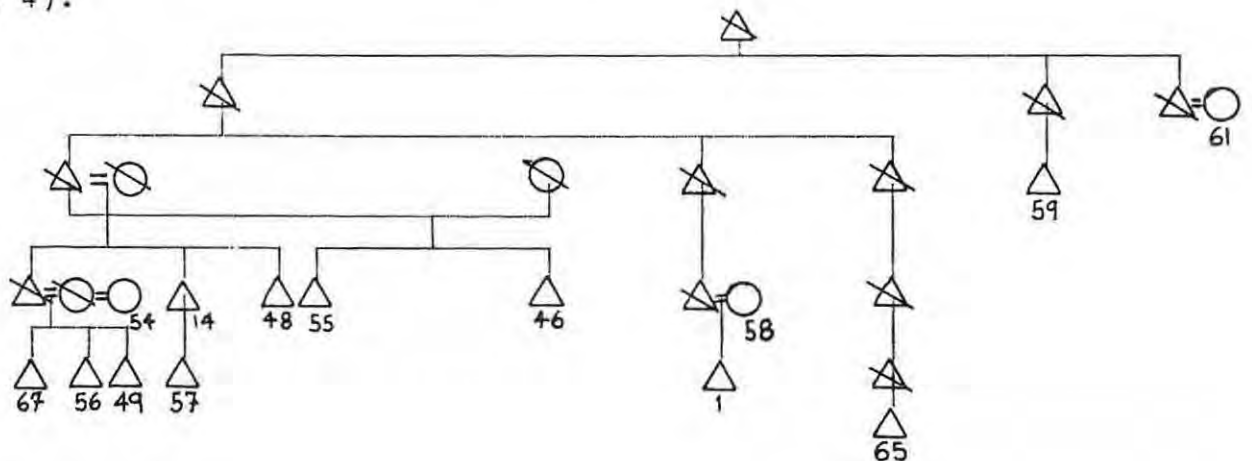
Map 4: Nompha agnatic clusters.

- Tshawe
- ◐ Kwemnte
- Mpinga
- ◐ Tshawe (Tembu)
- ◐ Mpondo
- ◐ Ngwevu (Madwaleni)
- ⊗ Ngwevu (Madolo)
- ◐ Ngwevu (Mfazweni)

map is not drawn to scale) and cooperate in ploughing (see Chapter 4).

Gotyombane (no.14) and Msheyeni (no.1), although still taken as members of the agnatic cluster, live further away. Msheyeni moved away from his mother's (site no.58) because of the 'betterment' scheme. This site is in the old 'betterment' area and it was expected that he would have to move. He thus moved into the new residential area. Gotyombane moved out of his old homestead when his first wife died.

These people are related to each other according to the following kinship diagram (Numbers relate to household numbers on Map 4):



The agnatic cluster is not a corporate group in the sense of owning property but, being potential heirs, they do all have a common interest in each other's property. All these relatives (male heads of households), and other local clan members are called together before one of them holds a ritual. The person holding the ritual calls the members together and so that he can

announce the ritual and explain its purpose. This is then discussed and a day is set for the ritual. All these people are supposed to attend the ritual and they are always the first to arrive.

Dilikile, when he wanted to organise an ukusindela⁶ for his father's brother's wife's son, called his agnates together. The people who attended the meeting were, from the diagram on the previous page, No's 14, 48, 46, 55, and 67. There were few speeches and the following conversation took place:

Dilikile: Matshawe [the clan of the agnatic cluster], I would like to tell you this thing. Nonasile [Dilikile's father's brother's wife] visited me and told me that she wants to hold ukusindela for one of her children. She told me that she has already got an ox from Siswana [a man from another area from whom Nonasile bought the ox]. I have told her that we are going to meet and set a date for the ukusindela because people are planting now, but now I don't know what to do because she is not here. I told her that we are going to meet and set the date. She told me that she is going to see Siswana and tell him that the ox is needed because she is going to use it. I think she will be back today.

Gotyombane: [Dilikile's FBS] Tshawe we do hear you and now we are waiting for Nonasile to tell us that she has the ox because we can't say anything when she is not here. Nonasile thought of a good thing when she decided to do ukusindela for one of her children. If she has the ox we will do that thing on Saturday because people are planting during the week.

These meetings are held more to announce that a ritual will be taking place than as a basis for the organisation of these

⁶ Ukusindela is a ritual which is held for children. The ritual is held for boys and girls and is used to protect them from future illness by calling on the help of the ancestors. It is also held for children who are sick and who have not had ukusindela done for them before. Sindela means "escape for, be safe to" (McLaren 1963: 152).

rituals. What is more important is that they reinforce kin identity and clanship. This identity is reinforced in the first instance by referring to each other by the common clan name (in this instance Tshawe). During the ritual itself other kin become as important and these close kin (geographically and genealogically) become subsumed under the wider descent set⁷.

The individual in Nompha is part of a wider network of kin relations. He/she is firstly a member of a clan which is dispersed over a wide geographic area. Secondly he is a member of an agnatic cluster in his own sub-ward. Thirdly he is a member of a household and through his household he is linked to a large number of affines. I would thus argue that kinship creates a framework through which socio-economic life is organised. The way in which kinship relations are dramatised varies through the different fields of human endeavour. The agnatic cluster, clan, and abatshana are explicitly recognised in ritual and where cattle are used in productive activities.

I would thus conclude that kinship as well as specifying the obligations and relationships between people also creates a cognitive map in the minds of people which is then utilised in the organisation of production.

⁷ Descent set is here defined as "...a collectivity characterised by the possession of a common characteristic, namely, having one's name on a specific genealogy." (Hammond-Tooke 1984: 91).

'Betterment' in Shixini: A brief history and synopsis.

In 1980 a 'betterment' scheme was introduced in Shixini. 'Betterment' and its potential impact on the people of Shixini has been well documented (see de Wet & McAllister 1983, 1985; McAllister 1986, 1988, 1989b) and this section will outline the impact of 'betterment' on socio-economic life as perceived by the people on which it is being imposed.

Basically 'betterment' planning involves the division of an area into residential, arable and grazing land. There is no need to outline in any detail the history of 'betterment' or the likely effects of 'betterment', as seen by researchers, on communities where it has been imposed. The topic, it could be argued, has been exhausted and there are a number of researchers who have written on the subject e.g. Beinart (1984); de Wet (1985: 57-89; 1987, 1989); de Wet & McAllister (1983, 1985); McAllister (1986, 1988, 1989b); O'Connell (1981); Yawitch (1981); amongst others.

The majority of these writers see 'betterment' as having a negative socio-economic effect on the lives of people.

Throughout the reserves, betterment was rejected largely because it was seen as unwarranted interference and because it was associated with economic hardship and deprivation. Various non-material costs of betterment have also been recognised. Stock limitation ignored the social and religious importance of cattle; the move from one kind of residential pattern to another caused social disruption; and communities subjected to betterment lost political control over important areas of their lives. (McAllister 1989b: 347).

Land use and residential patterns were re-arranged, but without any lessening of the human or animal pressure on the land. This has led to the people of Chatha as well as of countless other similar settlements having been moved against their will, and having experienced social disruption. Although some communities have benefitted, many have found themselves economically worse off and with parts of their environment more ecologically vulnerable than before. (de Wet 1989: 345).

The Shixini plan involved the division of Shixini into five residential areas, nine arable areas and the remaining land was given over to grazing.

As the 'betterment' scheme will have important negative socio-economic consequences for the people of Shixini it is an inappropriate development intervention. The following problems with 'betterment' are perceived by the people. In the general household survey the people of Nompha (all 67 households) related the following problems with the 'betterment' scheme.

<u>Table 1</u> : Nompha peoples' perceptions of the problems with 'betterment'.	
VIEWS OF THE BETTERMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES
Number of occurrences	31
No space for animals	31
Smaller gardens and fields	26
Expensive to move	14
Leave ancestors graves	10
Strangers living close	10
No room for expansion	6
Leave good existing gardens	3
Don't know soil in new areas	2
Soil not good in new areas	2
Don't know	2
Leave kin	1
Unsanitary	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF REPLIES	139

One can divide the negative affects of 'betterment' into social and economic categories.

(1) Economic effects.

Sansom (1974) argues that the Nguni settlement pattern is a rational adaptation to the environment. 'Betterment' will destroy this pattern of scattered homesteads which will probably mean that some areas in the environment will be over exploited leading to increasing incidents of soil erosion, lower crop yields, over grazing, and over exploitation of water and forest resources.

In Shixini a range of soil types are exploited. Certain soil is suited to building and other soil is suited to farming. People choose where to place their huts and gardens in terms of the soil types. The 'betterment' scheme will not give people this option and one will find gardens established on inappropriate soil. Consequently yields will decrease.

Secondly, and related to these points, the economic impact of the scheme on the people will be negative leading to increased rates of migrancy which in turn will create labour shortages, the consequence of which will be declining agricultural yields. This will in turn necessitate increased migration with a further decline in agriculture brought about through increased labour shortages.

Access to viable arable land will be decreased. Shixini people are increasingly relying on the use of gardens as opposed to fields because access to gardens is easier and manuring, weeding, and fencing is easier. Gardens are situated at the front of homesteads and they are easily protected from marauding stock, people and monkeys. Fields are showing very low yields and some fields have been abandoned.

At the moment some people have well established gardens and these gardens have had large quantities of manure dug into the soil. The yields from the gardens have been better than would have been the case if the gardens had not been manured. McAllister (1989b: 362) gives an example where a garden was established in 1974 and yielded 5 bags of maize, in 1975 7 bags were obtained and in 1976 12 bags. Establishing new gardens is thus problematic in that it takes time and an enormous investment of labour. The 'betterment' scheme will move people away from their established gardens and into a situation where they might not have the resources (both human and animal) to re-establish equivalent gardens.

The size of people's gardens will be reduced because the 'betterment' scheme has specifically measured out the space within which a homestead must be situated (2116m^2). Within this area a person has to build a garden, huts, and cattle byres. This is nonsensical if we note that the viable size of an arable allotment in the Transkei should be 4 hectares (Bembridge 1987: 74) and the 'betterment' scheme will specify that the people have

0.2 hectares for a garden as well as for huts and all the other necessities which go into building a homestead.

About 50% of all people in Shixini will have to move from areas which are not included in the areas demarcated as residential. One whole sub-ward has to move to one of the new residential areas. People will have to start building new homesteads. The cost of building a hut is about R500.00. The government has said that people will be compensated for moving but so far none of the people who have moved have been compensated. The move will require a very large capital outlay, something that most people cannot afford.

(2) Socio-political effects.

With 'betterment' existing sub-wards and their sections will disappear. The sub-ward and its sections perform a number of important functions. They control who will move where and who will live where thus asserting their autonomy while at the same time having the ability to cut out trouble makers. They will lose this function completely with the 'betterment' scheme because all residential allocations will be centralised in the Tribal Authority.

Cross (1988) argued the formation of a 'moral community' results from this communal system of land allocation. The fact that the community, through its senior representatives, are able to reject or accept applications for homestead sites means that

they have the power to exclude people who are seen to be undesirable. The act of giving land is thus a moral transaction as it admits people to the community on moral grounds and thus

... the act of giving land creates permanent bonds. The community then builds itself up as an interlocking structure through land. (Ibid: 17).

The section also performs the vital function of opening and closing land for grazing. In times of drought grazing is strictly controlled by the sub-ward and its sections. When there is a drought the largest (Komkhulu) section and the smallest (Tembu) section combine and the other section (Ngwevu) is left on its own. Each section then opens and closes grazing and this is discussed by the men of that section. If people's cattle go into a restricted area they are fined and the money is held by the oldest member of the section and is used to make beer.

The sub-ward and its sections have relative autonomy in a range of areas. With villagisation this will disappear. The centralisation of control over resources will mean that these resources will be over-exploited.

Neighbours are very important, and neighbourhood relationships are developed over a period of time. With villagisation relative strangers will be living close to each other and the value of neighbours in economic and social life will decrease. Networks of support will be broken and people will find it difficult to manage in adverse circumstances.

Conclusion.

In order to understand social and economic processes in Nompha it has been necessary to place Nompha in the wider South African context; to emphasise that 'betterment' is taking place in Shixini and therefore the picture that I will draw of the organisation of cooperative labour and production is relevant at this time only. To understand 'betterment' it has also been necessary to delineate the wider Transkeian political context as it is within these constraints that 'betterment' was allowed to take place.

The likely effects of 'betterment' have been described in some depth because this shows how tenuous people's control over their lives really is. Social change arises from the interaction of both internal and external factors. Two such factors were identified. Firstly the fact that many companies are investing in capital intensive technology, and secondly the imposition of 'betterment' on the people of Shixini.

This chapter has primarily been a setting of the scene. Precisely where one draws the line in describing the context in which Shixini exists and in which people make decisions about their lives is a matter of choice. However the fact remains that

... the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it, falsify reality. (Wolf 1982: 3).

In looking at the organisation of cooperative labour I have attempted to show that in order to understand economic processes in Shixini one needs to grasp and describe the interaction between both micro factors (e.g. kinship, local government) and macro factors (e.g. migrant labour, ecology).

CHAPTER 2: PEASANTS, THE HOUSEHOLD AND PRODUCTION.

This chapter describes the mode of production as it exists in Shixini and Nompha in particular. Like Spiegel, I argue that the peripheral areas of South Africa should be regarded as part of the wider capitalist mode of production (Spiegel 1979: 202). One therefore has to define the Shixini economy in terms of the wider economy. I have shown that the impact of the wider economy is most directly seen through the migrant labour system (see Chapter 1).

In defining the Shixini mode of production I firstly investigate the idea of Shixini people being rural proletarians displaying peasant characteristics. This is important because, although the conventional idea of a peasant as a rural cultivator producing a surplus for market does not apply to the people of Nompha, they still display certain peasant characteristics.

Secondly, I investigate Sahlins' (1972) notion of the domestic mode of production. Although Sahlins is explicitly referring to 'primitive' economies, his use of the concept still gives us an important insight into the factors that one should consider when attempting to define and describe a specific mode of production.

Having defined the Shixini mode of production I look at the factors influencing agricultural production in Nompha. Here I use Chayanov (1966) where he looks at factors influencing peasant production in Russia. Although not strictly pertinent to the

South African case Chayanov identifies the size of the family farm and the domestic cycle as especially important for understanding production. The size of the household in Nompha and the associated dependency ratio have an important bearing on production in Nompha. These factors firstly delineate the productive resources attributable to the household, and secondly, the **need** and **ability** of the household to involve itself in cooperative arrangements.

It is necessary at this, the early stage of the chapter, to define what I mean by 'household'. I define the household in terms of the concentration of flows of income and expenditure (Murray 1981; Spiegel 1980). I use 'household' in the socio-economic sense as an aggregation of people (usually kin) who combine their resources (capital, labour, implements, and food) and act as an economic and social unit. I use 'homestead' as a geographic aggregation of physical infrastructure. A polygamous man might, using these definitions, have two homesteads (one for each of his wives) and one household.

Finally, I calculate a number of correlations associated with productive yields. I investigate the relationship between crop yield and (i) stock units; (ii) consumer units; (iii) work units; and (iv) area of arable holdings. Having analysed the factors which influence yield I look at the relationship between the area of arable land cultivated by households and (i) stock units; (ii) consumer units; and (iii) work units.

Shixini people as 'peasants'.

The people of Shixini can be defined as rural proletarians displaying certain peasant characteristics. The classification of people as 'peasants' is not unproblematic. Bundy (1988: 4-13) outlines a number of definitions of 'peasant' and comes to the conclusion, drawing on a wide range of sources, that the African peasant was:

...a rural cultivator, enjoying access to a portion of land, the fruits of which he could dispose of as if he owned the land; he used his own labour and that of members of his family in agricultural or pastoral pursuits and sought through this to satisfy directly the consumption needs of his family; in addition he looked to the sale of a portion of what he raised to meet the demands (taxes, rents and other fees) that arose from his involvement in an economic and political system beyond the bounds of his immediate community. Like peasants elsewhere, he had recourse to a specific traditional culture; and under colonialism, with the sudden introduction of the religious, educational and ideological aspects of the colonists' culture, the peasant could not but have a different cultural identity from his forebears. Like peasants elsewhere, he was dominated economically, politically and culturally by outsiders in a wider society - involved in relations of coercion and obedience - but under colonialism the extent to which the state or its representatives could enforce these relations differed sharply from time to time and place to place. (Bundy 1988: 9).

This definition highlights a number of important points. The first is that of land tenure. The land tenure system in Shixini can be defined as a communal land tenure system. In such a system every household head is entitled to a homestead site on which to establish a homestead and a garden and has the right to a field some distance from the homestead. In addition to these

rights a man has access to communal resources such as grazing, forests, thatching grass and water (Cokwana 1988: 305).

Secondly, Bundy's peasant could dispose of his produce in any way that he wished. Produce could be sold, given away, swapped for something else, etc. The produce of the peasant was indirectly appropriated through taxation and other levies but was not forced to give a portion to the chief but rather had the option of transferring it into cash through selling it or the option of using migrant remittances to pay the taxes.

There have been a number of calculations which estimate the maize requirements of a household for a year. Segar (1984: 14) cites figures from the Tomlinson commission which estimated that the average number of bags required for a household of 6 was 15 or 188kg per person. Murray (1981: 200) cites the following examples: (1) A household of 5 persons requires 20 bags of grain/annum (300kg per person); (2) A household of 4.4 persons requires 14 bags of grain/annum (239kg per person); (3) A household of 4.4 persons requires 7 bags of grain/annum (119kg per person).

In Nompha the average household only stores 59.4kg per person per annum and therefore the number of bags stored in Nompha is below even the minimum requirements of 119kg per person cited by Murray¹. If we take Lipton's (1977: 73) argument that a third of

¹ Estimates of maize stored are notoriously inaccurate. The Nompha figures do not take into consideration the amount of maize which is eaten before the harvest. Lipton (1977: 73) estimates that a third of all maize produced is eaten as green maize and two thirds stored. She also argues that people underestimate the

all maize is eaten before harvest the average amount of maize produced is 79kg. This is still below the minimum requirements estimated by Murray.

It is important to note that the average number of bags stored is not uniform. The number of bags stored ranges from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 13 so there are some homesteads which cannot meet their maize consumption requirements and are forced to rely on cash from pensions, remittances, and informal sector² activity. Homesteads in Shixini are heavily dependant on cash inputs arising from pensions and members' participation in the migrant labour system.

The third part of Bundy's definition identifies the primary unit of production as the household. All production activities are geared towards meeting the consumption needs of the household. In the production enterprise the household is the major supplier of labour with the community labour resource only being called upon in situations where the household cannot meet its specific labour and other resource requirements.

amount of maize harvested by about 10%. Whatever the status of these assumptions and estimates are, it is undoubtedly true that maize stored is less than maize produced or eaten.

² The informal sector is negligible. There are two households that sell bottled, commercial, beer, one household which has a tractor, one man who owns a light delivery vehicle and which he operates as a Taxi. These are the people who do make money out of the informal sector. The other activities are basket making, mat making, herbalism, and selling cabbages, but the returns on these activities are extremely low. This applies particularly to the crafts where there are a lot of people who make these baskets and the market is therefore split amongst a large number of suppliers.

Bundy implies that the notion of peasant culture is important in understanding peasants. Shixini people can be classified as Red people (amaqaba). Mayer and Mayer (1961: Ch 2) show how Red people are more traditional and conservative while School people are western in outlook. There are a number of areas (fields) where the difference between Red and School people are particularly noticeable. One can classify the various reactions to these fields into a set of oppositions (while not denying the fact that there is a continuum between these oppositions) (Mayer & Mayer 1961: 23).

Table 2: 'Red' and 'School' oppositions.		
FIELD	RED	SCHOOL
Dress	Traditional	Western
Formal school education	Uneducated	Educated
Religion	Ancestor cult	Christian
Architecture	Round	Square

Nompha people say that they are Red people although some say that they are Red but "noti kakhulu" (not very much). It has been argued that the Red ideology was an ideology of resistance and the Mayers mention this when they say

In their eyes the Red way of life, handed down from the ancestors, is proper for the tribe, the whole tribe and none but the tribe. The tribe has had (they might say) the misfortune of being conquered and politically dominated by foreigners (i.e. White people), **but as long as it preserves its distinctive way of life it preserves its own soul** (ibid: 40 emphasis mine, parenthesis the authors).

How relevant is this Red/School distinction today? Red and School people do mix in economic activities. In the organisation

of work one finds ploughing companies which have both Red and School members.

Besides not being noticeable in practice, one finds many households where the wife is noticeably School, in terms of her dress and membership of the Methodist church, her mother-in-law is noticeably Red and the husband is between the two. The Mayers' (1961) argument that "In the eyes of the Xhosa themselves Red and School are essential and mutually exclusive reference groups. Everyone has to be assigned to one or the other" (p.23) and "...that it is wrong to mix too much remains a moral principle throughout adult life" (p.22). This does not seem to apply to the same extent nowadays as was the case in the 1960's.

In 1980 Philip Mayer wrote:

The new 'sophisticated, aware, demanding men' from the homelands have shed the total ideologies of their parents that provided them with a common property of collective representations and values ... They experience processes of individualisation, secularisation and rationalisation - manifestations of their also being absorbed culturally and ideologically, by the capitalist society to which economically they have been subservient for a century, though they partially continued to practise pre-capitalist modes of production at home. When these modes of production had little scope left to operate successfully, because of worsening poverty, landlessness, unemployment, new class differentiations and other factors, the ideologies associated with the pre-capitalist modes of production carried less and less conviction as recipes for community living. (Mayer 1980: 68).

Today the people of Shixini still hold onto their Red identity and one can argue that the rural relations of production are, to a large extent, still pre-capitalist in form. Differentiation

plays a large part in the organisation of cooperative labour but the ideology of mutual help is still strong. Cooperative labour, although necessary in a deprived society, is only possible in the context of Red pre-capitalist ideology where the notion of self gain at the expense of others is foreign. People in Shixini see themselves as being intimately tied into networks of mutual cooperation where helping others is an expressed value.

The Red ideology is the same as what Prattis' (1987: 34) labelled as 'peasantness', the characteristics of which are "subsistence production, conservatism, particularism, pluralist economic activities, reciprocity, and mutual aid networks". Prattis goes on to say that

... peasantness [is] an adaptive response made by populations as a protection or hedge against the disadvantages that accrue to them as a consequence of the way they are structurally integrated with the wider economic system. (Ibid: 34).

The domestic mode of production.

Sahlins (1972: 79-95) uses six factors to define the domestic mode of production in primitive economies. These are: the division of labour by sex; technology (where the tool is an extension of the person using it); production for domestic use and not for exchange; the household although not owning the means of production has usufruct; products are pooled by the domestic unit; and finally households are dispersed over a wide area.

I will use the same six factors as a tool for describing the mode of production as it is realised in Nompha.

(1) Division of labour.

The division of labour in Shixini is by sex and this division of labour is dominant in the society as a whole. The division of labour is further refined by generation with the very young and old not contributing significantly to productive activities. The following division of labour was delineated by the people.

Table 3: The division of labour in Shixini.	
Male tasks:	Female tasks:
Ploughing; chopping wood for building and fencing; looking after stock; buying cattle; milking; preparing ground for brick making; planting; hiring people to build huts; supporting the family.	Cooking; smearing floor and walls with dung; fetching wood; fetching water; collecting thatch; making mats; making bricks; brewing <u>umqombothi</u> ³ ; making the fire; washing clothes and dishes; washing and looking after children; feeding pigs and chickens; harvesting; hoeing; storing mealies; decobbing the maize.

Hoeing is the only task that is done by both men and women and this is a result of the adoption of plough technology⁴. The

³ Umqombothi is a beer brewed from maize.

⁴ I have observed women ploughing but this is a rare occurrence. An informant said women only plough when there are no men to help them. One can see the action of women ploughing as resulting from the migrant labour system which draws men out of agriculture

adoption of the plough meant that male labour, because the plough was drawn by draught cattle which are handled by men, was drawn into the formerly, almost exclusively, female domain of agriculture. Plough technology also meant that a greater area of land could be ploughed than was formerly the case and men were forced to involve themselves in hoeing to meet the increased labour demand. (see Chapter 4).

(2) Technology.

The technology used in all productive activities is very simple and tools are usually an extension of the human arm (e.g. hoes, axes, grinding stones). Animal power is used in ploughing and planting. Oxen are harnessed to a plough for ploughing and similarly with mechanical planters. Although the planter is not simple technology it is an extension of the human in that it is the person who controls the pace of the activity. The oxen can be seen as extensions of the tools (ploughs and planters) because without them the tools have no utility. Even though animals are used in production they are still governed by people. This contrasts with the situation on a production line where the pace of the machine governs the work rate of the people.

at the crucial ploughing time (see Graph 1, chapter 1). When asked why women do not plough my informant said that because ploughing is such hard work the action of ploughing can damage a woman's womb.

(3) Production for use.

All production is geared towards meeting the consumption needs of the household. In Nomphe there are very few households which produce a surplus and when they do this is not marketed in the cash economy. They might be swapped for other products but there are very few instances where surplus products are sold. Maize as well as being eaten is turned into beer and distributed to the community through beer drinks. These beer drinks can be for work parties (a reinvestment of the product in production) or brewing for a number of other reasons (see Chapter 5). The aim of production is not to produce for exchange.

It is only in agriculture that one can speak of Shixini people as producing for use. Economically people's participation in the migrant labour system is much more important. The typical Transkei household earns about 90% of its income from non-farm activities (Bembridge 1987: 73). Agriculture does not, therefore, contribute very much to meeting basic subsistence needs.

The question as to why there has been such a dramatic decline in agricultural production in the Transkei is exceedingly complex but relates mostly to the position of the Transkei relative to the white South African economy. One of the factors which contributed to the decrease in agricultural production was the support given to white agriculture at the expense of black agriculture.

Compared to the abundant support offered by the government to white farming from the 1920's and 1930's black agriculture received virtually no subsidies, disaster support or credit facilities, and little technical backup...(Cross 1988: 11)

White farmers were offered drought and other capital relief while black farmers were forced to look for capital through participating in migrant labour. Black agriculture ultimately depended on the availability of the human resource given its low technological base and, therefore, labour-intensive nature. 'Homeland' agriculture never really, therefore, recovered from any natural disasters as the necessity of participating in the migrant labour system represented a decrease in human resources.

(4) Property.

There is communal land tenure in Shixini. The people have rights to land and the land which is distributed to them through the chief and his tribal authority. The chief is the symbolic owner of the means of production but once land has been distributed the people control it. The household therefore "retains the primary relation to productive [agricultural] resources" (Sahlins 1972: 93, parenthesis mine).

(5) Pooling.

Ideally the household is the primary production unit and all production (cooperative or otherwise) is geared towards meeting its own consumption needs. In Nompha it is necessary for households to pool resources in order to produce as there are shortages of oxen, agricultural implements and labour.

(6) Dispersion.

The settlement pattern in Nompha is characteristic of the Nguni dispersed settlement pattern as described by Sansom (1974). Homesteads are dispersed over a wide area and each household concentrates its economic activities near the household site. Sansom (1974: 140) argues that this settlement pattern was an adaptation to the environment where all the necessary resources were confined to small areas and therefore it was not necessary for people to disperse their investments. The Cape Nguni area was "...a country of small scale repetitive configurations that contained a variety of natural resources" (Ibid: 140). Sahlins (1972: 95) argues that this is a consequence and condition of the domestic mode of production because the division of labour predicates autonomous domestic groups which disperse naturally.

There are significant differences between the domestic mode of production as outlined by Sahlins (1972) and the Shixini mode of production as described above. Sahlins delineates a 'primitive' economy which is untouched by capitalist relations of production. The mode of production as it is realised in Shixini, although not strictly capitalist, is part of the wider capitalist system which explains the shifts and distortions between Sahlins' mode of production and the Shixini mode.

The household in Nompha.

The productive forces (labour, tools, and cattle) are owned by the household and if there is a shortage of these forces it is

the household as a unit which enters into complex cooperative arrangements with other household units. One can therefore argue, as Chayanov (1966) did, that local production capacities lie in the structure and constitution of the household. It is in terms of its structure and constitution that the household's role in cooperative arrangements is determined.

The average size household (total population of 387 divided by the total, 67, households) in Nompha is 5.7 people (de facto, or actual number of people living in the household which means that migrants are excluded from the calculation, is 4.79). The average number of children per household (total number of children, 202) is 3.0 and the average number of adults (total number of adults, 185) is 2.7 (de facto 1.86). The average number of women per household (total number of women, 106) is 1.58 (de facto 1.52) and the average number of men per household (total number of men, 86) is 1.28 (de facto 0.34). There are 67 migrants in Nompha (4 female and 63 male) and 73.25% of all adult males in Nompha are work as migrants in South Africa.

I have identified five household forms in Nompha. These are (i) the nuclear household; (ii) the extended nuclear household; (iii) the polygynous household (three and four generational); (iv) the extended agnatic household (two and three generational); and (v) the complex extended household (two and three generational).

The nuclear household consists of a man his wife, children, and, in the case of the extended nuclear household, his mother or his married sons and their children. The polygynous household consists of a man, his wives (each living in a separate homestead), children, grandchildren, and, in the case of four generational depth, his mother. The extended agnatic household consists of a man, his wife, his children and his brothers or sisters. If one parent is still attached to the household I have classified this as an extended agnatic three generational household. Another form of this household is a man, his wife, married sons and daughters-in-law, other children and grandchildren. The complex extended household refers to a man, his wife, children, other children from deceased relatives and affinal kin linked to him through his wife.

Table 4: Types of Nompha household forms.

FORM	TEMBU	NGWEVU	KOMKHULU	TOTAL
Nuclear (2 gen)	5	10	19	34
Extended nuclear (3 gen)	2	1	8	11
Extended agnatic (2 gen)	0	2	7	9
Extended agnatic (3 gen)	2	3	2	7
Complex extended (2 gen)	0	2	0	2
Complex extended (3 gen)	0	1	1	2
Polygynous (3 gen)	0	0	1	1
Polygynous (4 gen)	0	0	1	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	9	19	39	67

'Household' is a relative cultural category and the way in which the household is defined by people differs from culture to culture. In Nompha the household is a social grouping of people who affiliate themselves to a household head (usually the

husband, father, or son depending on where one is placed in the family structure). One finds two or even three homesteads being affiliated to one household. This situation is prevalent in the three generational extended nuclear family where a man's sons might be married and living close-by in a separate homestead.

People say that the son's homestead is of their household when the son's homestead and the father's homestead do everything together and the son's family even eat with the father's homestead. This situation is not the norm as son's usually move away from their father's homestead shortly after marriage to establish their own independent household. This does not mean that there is no economic cooperation between the respective households but rather that they each produce for their own use. The son is now independent and is using his migrant wages to build up his own household and his capital does not go directly to his father.

The situation is more complex in the polygynous households. Each wife of a polygynist has her own homestead and garden yet they are still taken to be members of the same household. The reason for this is both biological and economic. The children of a man's respective homesteads are members of his household. The household is defined in terms of the father/husband and when he dies each of the separate homesteads which constitute one household will split into separate households headed by widows. Economically each homestead is dependant on the household head for ploughing, cattle, and money. The husband is the economic

planner for each of his wives' homesteads and is able to call on their labour to work at another of his homesteads. The respective homesteads can therefore be seen as an economic unit.

The household and production.

With reference to the Russian peasantry in the early part of this century, Chayanov (1966) argued that the household's demographic structure and constitution affects its ability to engage in productive activities. The **need** for work is determined by the number of consumers in the household while the **ability** to do the necessary work to meet these requirements is determined by the number of workers.

Chayanov's thesis needs to be qualified in the light of the South African situation. In both situations the production process is characterised by labour intensity. However, whereas the Russian peasant household displayed certain autonomy and self sufficiency, agriculture in the Transkei is characterised by its dependance on migrant labour remittances. Fifteen (68 per cent) of the 22 households sampled in Nomphe had access to remittances. Of these, eleven households had access to the remittances of one wage earner, three to two wage earners, and one household to four. The absence of male migrants from Nomphe has a dual impact on agricultural production. On the one hand remittances are used to purchase agricultural implements, fertiliser and seed. On the other hand migrant labour pulls men out of agricultural

production, creating labour shortages at crucial times in the agricultural cycle.

The amount of agricultural work that the household is able to do is a function of the household's labour supply. This supply changes through time and therefore

...every family, depending on its age, is in its different phases of development a completely distinct labour machine as regards labor force, intensity of demand, consumer-worker ratio, and the possibility of applying the principles of complex cooperation. (Chayanov 1966: 60, his emphasis).

Such demographic changes in the composition of households can be conceptualised in terms of the domestic development cycle as developed by Fortes (1958) and Chayanov (1966) and applied to the Southern African situation by Spiegel (1979).

The initial phase of the domestic developmental cycle is one of expansion where a young married couple leave the natal home of the husband to establish their own independent household. At this stage the domestic group is building up the household and resources are geared towards establishing homestead infrastructure. As they procreate, the dependency ratio (the ratio between the total number of consumers and the number of workers) increases. Towards the end of the first phase the household's economic position improves as children are now old enough to engage in agricultural production or work as migrants. More labour and capital becomes available.

The second phase is one of dispersion and is characterised by a decline in the economic position of the household. Cattle holdings diminish through the payment of bridewealth (but this depends on the number of sons as opposed to daughters in the household). Labour and capital resources decline as children move away, the result being that the household cannot expect to receive ex-members' remittances as they are being used to build up other homesteads.

The final phase is one of replacement. The dependency ratio increases as work units move out of the household. The founders of the household grow old and are not able to work to the same extent as in the past yet they are still consuming as much as before. Finally a man and his wife die and the household and its resources, are inherited by one of the children.

The graph below plots the dependency ratio (calculated by dividing the number of consumption units by the number of work units) against the age of the homestead head.

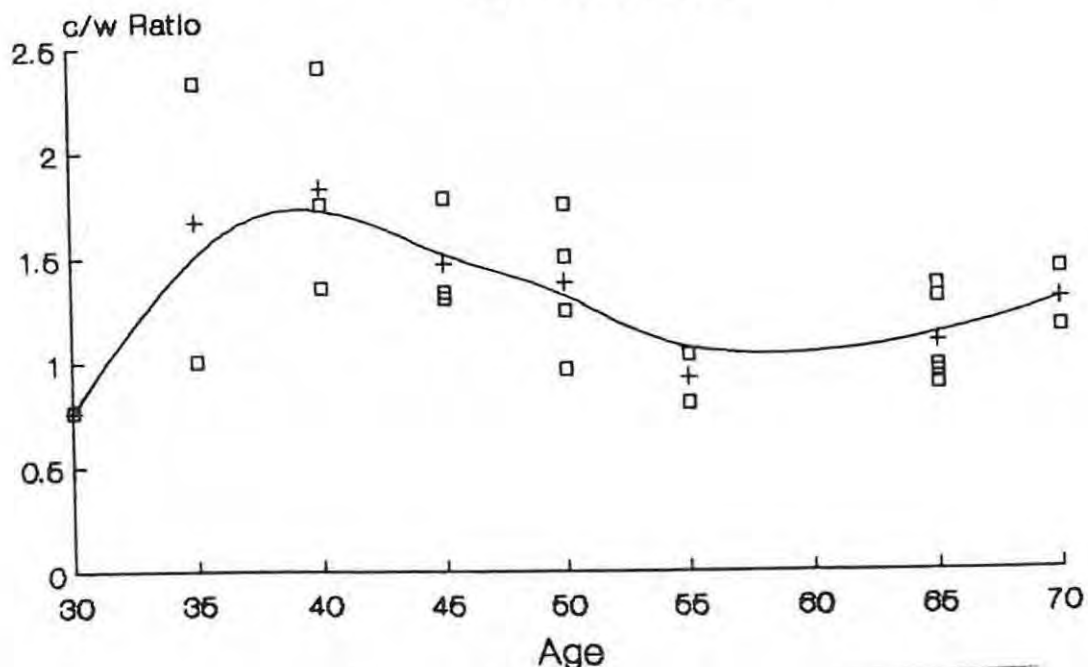
The calculations for the graph are based on Donham (1981) where people of 14 years and over are calculated as a full consumption unit, persons between 7 and 13 years as three quarters of a consumption unit (0.75) and persons below the age of seven as one half (0.5) (p.523). Migrants are taken to be 1/12th of a consumption unit as the average migrant is only at home for one month of the year. When it comes to the calculation of work units the situation is more complex. I have adapted his figures

calculating all people between the age of 18 and 68 as representing one work unit, people between the ages of 10 and 18 as representing one half of a work unit (0.5), and people below the age of ten and above the age of 68 as representing no work units (0.0). These figures are adapted for the Nompha case where most people below the age of 18 attend school on a regular basis and therefore only work on the weekends, the early morning, the early evening, and in their vacations. The figures have also been adapted to take account of specific cases. There is one woman who is mentally retarded, and two women who are crippled. Further, people who will fit the age and should be calculated as a work unit but never work as much as they should to merit such a score have been calculated as representing 0.5 of a work unit.

We see that there is a fit with the hypothetical development cycle when a best fit curve is plotted through the points.

Graph 2: The Nompha domestic development cycle.

(As measured through the plotting the number of consumers divided by the number of workers (the dependency ratio or c/w ratio) against the age of the head (a rough measure of the age of the household).



The curve demonstrates that there is a cycle which arises from plotting the age of the household head against the consumer/worker ratio. The labour resources of a household therefore change through time.

The idea of the developmental cycle is, however, not unproblematic. A problem arises with its "organic deterministic" focus indicated by Fortes (1958: 2) arguing that "The domestic group goes through a cycle of development analogous to the growth cycle of a living organism". This implies a mere cyclical conceptualisation of change which excludes variations between households brought about by individual decision making and conflict within the household. It also ignores structural changes brought about by events in the wider South African economy⁵.

Spiegel (1982: 43) argues that the developmental cycle is inadequate unless it is used in combination with a class analysis. This is where the notion of economic differentiation becomes important. Through looking at the resources which indicate degrees of differentiation one is able to look at both internally generated resources (such as labour units) and externally generated resources (such as pensions and migrant remittances).

5 An example of the possibility of such structural changes occurred on the 24 May 1989. The fall in the gold price threatened the viability of a number of gold mines. The listings of two gold mines (ERPM and Durban Deep) were suspended on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange while the board of Rand Mines considered their closure. If a number of gold mines were to close drastic unemployment would result. This would effect the number of people able to find work in South Africa as migrants and therefore the dependency ratios.

Factors affecting maize yields.

Maize yields are influenced by the way in which land and stock are distributed through the community as well as the household's constitution (size, dependency ratio, etc).

Table 5: Correlation between the independent variables (stock units, consumer units, work units and area) with the dependant variable (yield).		
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	CORRELATION WITH YIELD	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE ⁶
STOCK UNITS	r= 0.48 t= 2.45	p= 0.025
CONSUMERS	r= 0.41 t= 2.01	p= 0.05
WORKERS	r= 0.31 t= 1.46	p= 0.10
AREA OF ARABLE HOLDINGS	r= 0.48 t= 2.45	p= 0.025

Factors which influence the size of land holdings are the number of stock units (a measure of the households ability to fertilise and status in ploughing companies), the number of

⁶ A perfect correlation is indicated by $r=1$ or $r=-1$. No correlation is indicated by $r=0$. p is a measure of the significance of the relationship between the independent variable (e.g. stock units) and the dependant variable (e.g. yield) through measuring the probability of the relationship existing by chance. Statisticians usually recognise a probability of $p=0.05$ as significant. If $p=0.05$ there is a 5% probability that the correlation between the two variables exists by chance. p therefore indicates the significance of the correlation in terms of the t statistic for a one tailed test as the direction of the correlation has been specified. The smaller the probability (p) the stronger is the relationship between the variables. If $p=1.00$ there is no relationship between two variables, but if $p=0.00$ there is no possibility that the relationship between the two variables exists by chance. Thus 'r' specifies the degree of correlation between two variables while 'p' specifies the strength of that correlation.

consumers, workers and the relative degree of political influence of households.

Table 6: Correlation between the independent variables (stock units, consumer units and work units) and the dependant variable (area of arable land).		
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	CORRELATION WITH AREA OF ARABLE LAND	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
STOCK UNITS	r= 0.37 t= 1.77	p= 0.05
CONSUMERS	r= 0.30 t= 1.41	p= 0.10
WORKERS	r= 0.40 t= 1.95	p= 0.05

1) Production and economic differentiation.

Spiegel (1979) identifies three resources as indices of economic differentiation. These are (i) migrant remittances, (ii) arable land, and (iii) live-stock. To these indices I would add the index of pensions - virtually the only predictable source of income within Shixini. I will concentrate on access to land and stock because, (i) capital such as pensions and remittances are used to fulfill subsistence requirements⁷, and (ii) it was impossible to obtain expenditure and income figures as most women

⁷ Production figures were taken for the 1987 harvest. In 1988 the SDRP brought seed, fertiliser and fencing wire to the area. This was bought by a number of people in Shixini. In 1988 capital resources were invested in agricultural production. In the 1987 season the investment of capital in agricultural production was insignificant.

Table 7: Data table for correlation calculations.

HOUSEHOLD NUMBER	DEMOGRAPHIC/HOUSEHOLD VARIABLES						ECONOMIC VARIABLES				YIELD (KG's)
	HOUSEHOLD SIZE	NUMBER MIGRANTS	WORKER UNITS	CONSUMER UNITS	C/W RATIO	AGE OF HEAD	STOCK UNITS	AREA OF GARDEN	AREA OF FIELD	TOTAL AREA	
1	15	2	7.00	9.50	1.36	65	32.00	0.74	4.36	5.10	600.00
2	10	0	4.50	8.00	1.78	45	23.40	0.75	0.82	1.57	525.00
3	11	0	6.50	8.08	1.24	50	22.00	0.87	3.31	4.18	600.00
4	8	1	5.00	6.75	1.35	40	19.00	0.88	0.00	0.88	750.00
5	7	1	5.50	5.33	0.97	65	14.20	0.56	1.59	2.15	975.00
6	8	0	2.50	6.00	2.40	40	12.00	1.14	0.00	1.14	675.00
7	7	1	4.00	6.00	1.50	50	12.00	0.68	1.87	2.55	900.00
8	9	2	7.50	6.67	0.89	65	9.60	1.30	4.47	5.77	900.00
9	9	1	4.50	5.83	1.30	65	8.60	1.43	0.67	2.09	0.00
10	9	0	4.00	7.00	1.75	40	6.00	0.65	2.09	2.73	525.00
11	9	1	4.00	5.33	1.33	45	6.00	0.56	0.00	0.56	37.50
12	5	0	2.00	3.50	1.75	50	6.00	2.13	2.50	4.63	450.00
13	5	1	4.00	3.83	0.96	50	5.20	1.23	1.02	2.25	300.00
14	6	1	4.00	4.58	1.15	70	4.00	0.16	1.01	1.16	37.50
15	2	0	2.00	2.00	1.00	35	4.00	0.14	0.58	0.72	150.00
16	4	1	3.00	3.08	1.03	55	3.80	0.99	3.06	4.05	600.00
17	11	4	7.00	5.58	0.80	55	3.00	0.81	1.46	2.27	300.00
18	5	1	2.50	3.58	1.43	70	3.00	0.63	0.67	1.29	150.00
19	5	0	1.50	3.50	2.33	35	3.00	0.28	0.00	0.28	262.50
20	5	2	3.50	2.67	0.76	30	1.20	0.74	4.36	5.10	300.00
21	8	1	4.50	5.83	1.30	45	0.40	0.96	0.80	1.75	600.00
22	8	1	7.00	6.58	0.94	65	0.00	0.74	0.00	0.74	225.00
TOTAL	166	21	96.00	119.25	29.31	1130	198.40	18.35	31.77	50.12	862.50
MEAN	7.55	0.96	4.36	5.42	1.33	51.36	9.02	0.83	1.44	2.28	448.30

did not know how much money their husbands' earned or even what they brought back on their annual leave.

(a) Stock units and yield.

The relationship between a household's stock holdings and yield is fairly clear (significant at $p = 0.025$). Stock has important implications for production. The first benefit that derives from stock is that the household is able to manure its land with greater ease than if it did not have stock. The manuring of gardens significantly increases yields especially when gardens are used on a yearly basis and sometimes on a biannual basis. Fields are also manured but the process of manuring fields is more difficult as, unlike gardens, fields are some distance away from the homestead and its cattle byres.

The second reason for the strong positive correlation between stock and yield is that through the possession of stock households have easier access to ploughing companies. Further, the possession of draught oxen means that a household's bargaining position in a ploughing company is significantly increased. If a household possesses a greater number of draught oxen than other members in a company this household's land is ploughed timeously and, sometimes, the household is able to choose the time of ploughing. It is also usually the case that the biggest contributor to a company is also the head of that company.

(b) Yield and area of arable holdings.

The area of land planted, in the first instance, creates limits on possible maize production - it is only possible to produce so much maize from so much land. In the second instance, yield is influenced by the application of fertiliser, the timing of planting, the type of maize seed used, and the labour resources available for weeding. Given that area creates limits on possible yield it is therefore obvious why there should be a significant correlation between area and yield. In a perfect system, all things being equal with people producing the possible maximum amount of maize, the correlation between yield and area would be perfect ($r= 1$).

The fact that the correlation between yield and size of arable holdings is high (significant at $p= 0.025$) should not detract from the view that agricultural production, in areas where production is highly labour-intensive, is not simply a matter of ploughing, hoeing and harvesting. Production is influenced by timing (a variable that I have not considered here), and access to resources (stock, capital, labour).

Further, in the absence of established markets, production is geared towards meeting the household's consumption requirements and this is why the number of consumers in the household is also significant (at the $p= 0.05$ level). Agricultural production in these areas cannot be seen simply as a factor of access to land and stock. Access to stock and land make production possible but

production is geared towards satisfying household consumption needs.

The two indices of differentiation are intimately related in that the area of land that the household is able to cultivate is influenced by the number of stock units. The correlation between the number of stock units and area of arable holdings is significant at $p = 0.05$ (i.e. the relationship between stock and land only exists by chance in 5% of cases).

The significant relationship between stock and area of arable holdings is understandable as much the same reasoning which applies to the relationship between stock and yield applies to this relationship. The possession of stock gives a household access to ploughing companies and manure. These two resources are both essential for production.

The way in which the resources of stock and land are distributed through the community have an important bearing on agricultural production. There is a significant correlation between yield and access to stock and area of arable land (both at $p = 0.025$). The area of arable holdings is itself influenced by the possession of stock in that the greater number of stock units a household possesses the larger will be the area of its land holdings. We can therefore conclude that the most significant index of differentiation influencing agricultural production is the household's access to stock.

2) Household factors in production.

Household factors such as the number of consumers and workers in the household are essential to our understanding of production. These two variables are important because they form the labour component in agricultural production. It is these two variables which determine the amount of work needed and the ability of the household to do the work.

a) Consumption and work units.

The correlations from these two variables are most interesting especially when we note that the number of consumers in a household has a higher correlation (significant at $p = 0.05$) with yield than the number of workers (only significant at $p = 0.10$). Thus, maize production increases in parallel with the household's consumption requirements as measured by the number of consumer units.

The answer to this apparent contradiction was identified by Chayanov (1966) when he argued that a peasant family will only work to the extent that it satisfies its consumption requirements. There is a balance between the satisfaction of the families needs and the drudgery of the work which must be undertaken to satisfy those needs. The amount of work that a household is forced to do depends on its consumption requirements. This is especially true in the absence of market requirements.

The presence of markets for agricultural produce encourages surplus production. Lewis (1984) argues that the presence of an exceptional market for maize at the turn of the century was one of the factors which led to the rise of 'homeland' agriculture. Where this market does not exist households are pushed into agricultural production through the need to satisfy the subsistence needs of its members and thus we find a significant correlation (at $p = 0.05$ level) between the number of consumers and the yield obtained.

The correlation between the number of work units and yield is only significant at $p = 0.10$. This slight correlation relates to the **ability** of the household to engage in production. The volume of activity that the household is **forced** to do depends on the number of consumers but the **ability** of the household to do this work depends on the number of workers. One would expect that the workers in a household where the dependency ratio is high would work longer hours than the household with a low dependency ratio and we thus find a lower correlation between workers and yield than consumers and yield.

b) Consumer, worker units and area of arable land.

The number of workers is more influential in determining the area of arable holdings ($p = 0.05$ at $t = 1.95$) than the number of consumers ($p = 0.10$ at $t = 1.41$). The household's arable holdings reflect the ability, and not the need, to produce. Arable holdings are not fixed and there is constant fluctuation in terms

of the area which a household actually cultivates. The area of gardens fluctuate according to the household's resource holdings (cattle, labour and capital). People, who have reduced the size of their gardens, say that they have done this because they do not have the capital, cattle and human resources to cultivate.

Households with a large number of workers are better positioned to cultivate than those with a low number of workers. So we find that area of arable land increases as the number of workers increase. But, the number of workers does not have a high correlation with yield. This is because individual household members from households with a large number of consumers will work much harder in other spheres of production (for example weeding) than if there were fewer consumers. Households with a large number of workers will plant larger areas of land but will not engage in intensive weeding so as to glean the greatest possible number of bags. One will therefore find that smaller gardens which are owned by households with a high number of consumer units will produce the same amount of maize as households with larger areas of arable land, more workers but fewer consumers.

3) Migrant labour and rural production.

Unlike Spiegel's (1979) findings, there is no correlation in my data between the number of migrants per household and agricultural yield. The issue of migrant labour and agricultural production in South Africa's peripheral areas is complex. There

are a number of ways in which, hypothetically, migrant labour should affect subsistence production .

Migrant labour, firstly, pulls productive men out of agriculture. Secondly, it creates the opportunity for obtaining capital and thus the context for capital investment in agriculture.

May (1985) did not find, in the Transkei, a positive correlation between the number of migrants and productivity and therefore concluded that "there is little justification in arguments that migratory labour, per se, positively or negatively affects subsistence production, agricultural investment, educational investment, or modernity" (Ibid: 32). He concludes that access to remittances only affects the fulfillment of consumption requirements (Ibid: 32).

Given the lack of capital investment in agriculture it is thus important to look at other factors which affect rural production. I have argued that the way in which resources are distributed in the community is the most significant factor influencing agricultural production. I conclude that the most significant resource influencing maize production is the household's possession of stock. Migrant labour, because it influences economic differentiation, only indirectly affects agricultural production especially in areas like Shixini where no facilities exist for the purchase of agricultural inputs to invest in production.

Conclusion.

This chapter has been an overview of agricultural production in Shixini. I have broadly defined Shixini people as rural proletarians displaying peasant characteristics and I argued that the peasant, or red, ideology is a reaction to the context in which Shixini people live. The red ideology displayed by Shixini people must be seen as an adaptive response to the disadvantaged situation in which they live.

Throughout this chapter I have emphasised that the context in which agricultural production takes place is exceedingly complex and there are a myriad of variables which influence production. As production in this area is highly labour intensive, as reasoned in the section on the domestic mode of production, I have looked at labour intensive variables which influence production. The most significant element in this type of production is the household and I have looked at how household variables influence production.

The significant finding in this analysis is that Shixini people, because they are producing for household use, are pushed into intensive activity through the need to satisfy the needs of consumers. This finding backs up Chayanov's (1966) argument that peasant households only produce to satisfy consumption requirements and therefore there is a payoff between the need to produce and the drudgery of the work. In the absence of high returns from agriculture Shixini people will not work harder than is necessary.

Although household variables affect yield the most significant influence on a household's production is its access to stock. The number of stock units has a significant correlation both with yield and with area of arable holdings. As access to stock is highly differentiated the most significant determining variable on agricultural production is the way in which resources are distributed through the community. This point will be picked up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: XHOSA WORK-PARTIES.

Cooperative labour arrangements in Africa.

Cooperative work arrangements, or work parties, are widespread phenomena in Africa. In Southern Africa they have been observed amongst the Mpondo (Hunter 1979; Kuckertz 1985), the Mpondomise (Hammond-Tooke 1963); the Xhosa (McAllister 1979, Heron 1988), the Lovedu (Krige and Krige 1980), the Tswana (Schapera 1953; J.Comaroff 1985), the Bemba (Richards 1961) and the Sotho (Spiegel 1979; Murray 1981) amongst others. The earlier accounts of cooperative labour arrangements emphasise reciprocity as the underlying organisational principle (e.g Hunter 1979; Krige and Krige 1980).

The problem in co-operative situations is to harmonise with them the individualism of the peasant; the problem of exchange situations is to eliminate the idea of a commercial transaction; and in both types of situation **this is done by the stress upon reciprocity.** (Krige and Krige 1980: 52, my emphasis).

Later works, while not rejecting principles of reciprocity, emphasise differential access to the means of production as an important factor in understanding these arrangements (Spiegel 1979).

Many of those who attended work-parties had **neither reason nor means** to call for the reciprocal assistance of those on whose fields they had worked. (Spiegel 1979: 65, my emphasis).

Some authors emphasise kinship as the basis on which cooperative arrangements are organised (Gulliver 1971). Others emphasise economic individualism (e.g. Kuckertz 1985) but then do not really explain why people will work for another person when neither kinship nor reciprocity underlies the relationship.

The way in which resources, specifically land and cattle, are distributed through the community, underlies the organisation of work parties. Spiegel (1979: 58) argued that a household's access to resources, specifically migrant remittances, affected the ability of the household to recruit labour. Related to differentiation is the household's position in the domestic development cycle. A household's resources change through its development and Donham (1981: 533; 1985: 269) showed how a household's position in the domestic development cycle influenced participation in cooperative labour groupings. In Nompha labour flows from households with little or no arable land to those with large areas of arable land. In Chapter two I showed that there was a high correlation between stock units and yield, and stock units and area of arable land. I argued that the way in which stock was distributed through the community was the most significant determinant of yield.

Although differentiation significantly affects the organisation of cooperative labour, work parties take place in a wider social, economic and environmental context. The seasonal context places constraints on what work must be done and specifies the time period in which that work must be done. Each task places

different demands on the human resource and consequently different tasks, or similar tasks in different seasonal contexts, are organised differently.

Different tasks, because they require different labour arrangements, are associated with different forms of reciprocity. In the first section of the chapter I describe the different forms of reciprocity and argue that, what I call, "long-term" reciprocity is associated with ploughing and is predicated upon kinship. "Medium-term" reciprocity is associated with work parties, the arrangement of which is predicated upon neighbourhood relationships.

Social values play a large part in the organisation of work parties. In Shixini there is an explicit norm of mutual help which is expressed in the speeches which are made at beer drinks and other social occasions. The values of ubuntu (humanity or humanness) and ubumelwane (neighbourliness) are important because they are part of the context in which cooperation takes place. I argue that it is these values which, in the first instance, create the possibility of cooperation - without these values incidences of cooperation would be few. It is often, in the short-term, detrimental for some people to participate in cooperative work arrangements as they are expending resources, usually time and labour, to help someone who is not able to reciprocate.

The next section of the paper is concerned with an analysis and description of work parties as they were observed in Nompha. There are two basic forms of work party in Shixini - the isicelo and the amandwandwa. These two work parties are described in detail and the different contexts in which they are organised are analysed.

The final section is a description of the way in which resources are distributed in Nompha. I show how land, capital and stock are distributed, arguing that they all affect the household's ability to recruit cooperative labour groupings.

Reciprocity in the organisation of work.

A determining factor in the organisation of work parties is seasonality. The season determines what work must be done and also the urgency, or time period, in which the work must be done. Different tasks have different resource demands and therefore one can argue that the form that work parties take is determined by seasonality. Labour supply fluctuates through the seasons and work parties are held to offset labour shortages which arise at specific times in the seasonal cycle. Sansom (1974: 154) argues that the greater the urgency with which a task must be completed the greater the emphasis on reciprocity.

Sahlins (1972) identifies three forms of reciprocity. (1) "Generalised" reciprocity where the time specified for a reciprocal act to follow is unspecified and implicit. "The expectation of reciprocity is indefinite" (Ibid: 194). I will

call this long-term reciprocity in that no time is specified and it is quite possible that reciprocation will only be given in the long-term or not at all. Long-term reciprocity is underlined by obligation and is usually found in kinship relations.

(2) "Balanced" reciprocity where a reciprocal act is expected without delay or within a specified time period (Ibid: 194). Sahlins argues that this form of reciprocity is "more economic" (Ibid: 195) than generalised reciprocity because "the material side of the transaction is at least as critical as the social" (Ibid: 195). This form of reciprocity, which I will label mid-term reciprocity, is usually found amongst equals who both return what they receive.

Mutual assistance in which obligation plays a relatively minor role and reciprocity among social equals prevails is found in non-kin based cooperation...(Painter 1986: 208).

(3) "Negative reciprocity" which "is the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity" (Ibid: 195). I will call this immediate reciprocity and an example of this would be when one buys something from a shop. Here the exchange is purely economic as there is no social or nonmaterial dimension to the exchange - money is exchanged for goods - and the relationship only exists as long as the exchange.

Sahlins goes on to argue that the form of reciprocity in an exchange relationship correlates with kinship. He equates generalised reciprocity with kinship. As the kinship links become weaker it changes to balanced reciprocity and, finally,

when there is no kin link at all he talks about negative reciprocity (Ibid: 199).

<u>Table 8: Reciprocal types and relationship forms.</u>	
FORM OF RECIPROCITY	RELATIONSHIP
Long-term reciprocity	Close kin
Mid-term reciprocity	Neighbours and kin
Immediate reciprocity	Strangers

Different tasks have different resource demands (e.g. for hoeing parties the demand is for human resources while in ploughing there is a demand for human, material and animal resources). In Shixini different forms of reciprocity are associated with different tasks with different labour arrangements. Relationships in most ploughing companies are clearly unbalanced in that the various contributions to the company are widely differentiated (see Chapter 4). Ploughing companies therefore emphasise long-term reciprocity and are kinship based. The organisation of work parties differs. People who participate in work parties all contribute the same resource - labour. Work parties, although not excluding kinship, are neighbourhood-based and emphasise mid-term reciprocity.

<u>Table 9: Reciprocal types and task groupings.</u>	
FORM OF RECIPROCITY	TASK GROUPING
Long-term reciprocity	Ploughing companies
Mid-term reciprocity	Work parties e.g. hoeing
Immediate reciprocity	Hired labour groups

Kuckertz (1985: 116) argues that reciprocity does not underlie the organisation of Mpondo work parties because work parties only come together after an explicit invitation from the organising head. This argument is fallacious in that it is logical and necessary for a work party to be announced beforehand - how else do people know where to go or even if their help is needed? Kuckertz goes on to argue that the organisation of work parties rests on the "basic tenant of Nthwa social life, namely that a person who is in need and **asks for** assistance should be helped." (Ibid: 122 his emphasis).

It could be argued that it is rational for people to conform to the norm of mutual help but this does not give us an understanding of the norm and its origin. The only conclusion that can be reached for people conforming to the norm of mutual help is that **their work will be reciprocated**. In Shixini there is an explicit recognition of the importance of reciprocity. People say that they attend work parties so that they can get help when they ask for it. There are also negative sanctions which can be applied to people who do not help others. According to informants, a person who does not help others will, in turn, not be helped. These sentiments were expressed by a variety of informants in Nompha and elsewhere in Shixini. It must be concluded that reciprocity does underlie people's willingness to attend other people's work parties because it is to their benefit. However, Kuckertz's identification of that "the organisation of such parties is part of social contexts where

relationships between people exist independently of purely economic calculations." (Kuckertz 1985: 234) should not be discarded. Cooperative work takes place within a specific social climate and therefore social values are important.

Social values.

Individual decisions and the way that work is organised are influenced by the dominant values of the society. In Nomphe there is an ethic of helpfulness which is formalised and made explicit in speeches made at the end of the work parties.

Now here we brew umqombothi for the people who hoed with an ox at Shixini (river) last year. We had nothing to give them at that time but we still asked them to help us. As they are people who help each other they accepted our request.

I don't want to talk a lot of things. I only did as our father Xhosa did. We must say thank you. We are here to help each other and to build for each other. Tomorrow we have to help somebody else. We thank you because these days we have no money. It is only water [amanzi] that is left and water is alright. I can even say other things. I say thank you to the people of this household.

How do we understand the value of mutual help? Firstly, in order to survive it is important to participate in cooperative work arrangements without which people would not be able to produce. Secondly, the value of mutual help is reinforced by reciprocity in that people help each other because they know that they will be helped in turn. Thirdly, there is no doubt that every person in Nomphe can find some distant **affinal** link with every other person thus increasing the size of the individuals **real** and **possible** network. Gulliver (1971) showed that, among

the Ndendeuli, kinship links became explicitly formalised when people worked together over a period of time.

Changes in the acknowledgement of kinship resulted from changes in the practical possibilities of mutual assistance and in the configuration of the network of neighbourly relations. (Ibid: 221).

As a resource kinship can be manipulated. Precisely how it is used varies from person to person, and according to the type of work being organised. An example of this are the amandwandwa work parties. Amandwandwa work parties are organised by a person from outside of the organising household. The organiser's representative announces the work party at a formal occasion such as a beer drink. One man (of the Tshawe clan) said that he would ask a relative on his mother's side to organise the work party because he is closely related but does not think that he is a chief like his other relatives, who are members of the royal Tshawe clan.

The relationship between close kin, being governed by rank, status and obligation is problematic and there is vast potential for conflict. The further away the kinship link the less problematic it becomes. Distant kin, although recognising a link and certain obligations, are more friends than relatives. In the close kin situation there is a vast amount of jealousy with both men and women saying that this is caused by the wives not wanting others to have more than their husbands.

Like other resources, kinship is a resource which changes over time. In this way it does not determine the structure of work

parties but rather specifies a pool of helpers who can be called upon if needed. It is also important in that the obligations which exist between kin are extended into the community and, to a certain extent, explain the value of mutual help expressed in speeches.

FORMS OF WORK PARTIES IN SHIXINI.

Although there are some tasks which are not organised according to the season, e.g. fetching firewood, the agricultural cycle creates a framework in which other work parties for non-agricultural work are organised. It is only in the months of June to September, when no agricultural work is done, that other work parties are organised. In this period, the winter months, building activities take place. Only nine percent of the total year's rainfall falls within this period. The thatching grass, Cympopogon validus, has reached its maximum height, is dry and easily cut; mud bricks are left to dry in the sun; and newly built house structures are not damaged by rain.

Table 10: The yearly work cycle and the division of labour.

MONTH	WORK PARTIES	WORKERS SEX
January - March	Weeding	Male and female
April - May	Harvesting	Mostly female
June - September	Cutting poles	Male
	Fetching thatch	Female
	Brick making	Female
	Building	Male
	Thatching	Male
	Plastering	Female
	October - December	Ploughing and planting

There are five basic agricultural processes in Shixini. The first is turning the soil in preparation for ploughing (October and November) the next is ploughing (November and December), hoeing or weeding (January to March), harvesting (April and May). Most cooperative labour is organised in the period from November to December when ploughing companies come to the fore, and the period from January to March when people weed their gardens. Work parties are also organised for harvesting, but relative to the weeding season these are small affairs.

Within the January to March period the organisation of work parties takes different forms depending on the weather. At the beginning of the 1989 season very few work parties were organised with most weeding being done by household members. It was an extremely dry period and the growth of weeds (and maize) was retarded giving households more time to weed their gardens using their own labour.

There are two basic forms of work parties in Shixini. These are the isicelo (defined by McLaren (1963: 22) as "a request, petition") type work parties and the amandwandwa work parties. Isicelo work parties are organised for a variety of tasks such as weeding, fetching thatching grass, cutting fire wood and harvesting. Amandwandwa are only associated with hoeing during the weeding season¹.

¹ A third form of work party is isitshongo and is associated with cattle. It will be dealt with in the next chapter.

1) Isicelo.

These are small work parties and the numbers range from five to fifteen people. The amount of beer brewed varies with the amount of people that one wants to invite to the work party. For isicelo the organiser² goes from household to household asking people to work. There is thus an explicit invitation to specific people to come and work. People who were not invited are welcome to attend and usually do.

Isicelo are organised exclusively on a neighbourhood basis for the smaller ones and on a sectional basis for larger ones (see Chapter 1 for a description of the constitution, structure and importance of sections). The variation on this pattern is where tea, bread and samp are served. These isicelo are usually limited to people who do not drink beer, and are attended by young women. At work parties organised by members of the Zionist church, beer is not served and participation is based on church membership.

There are isicelo where a pig is given to the workers as payment. These are not church based. Generally these are organised for young boys or women. In the case of young boys working, the isicelo is not organised according to section. In the case of young women being paid with a pig, the isicelo is organised according to section.

2 In the organisation of isicelo the organiser is usually the household head or a member of the household. For indwandwa the organiser is appointed by the household head to organise the work party and is not usually a member of the household.

Case: Nowani organised an isicelo where people would be paid with a pig. She invited eight people, all of them women, of whom five arrived to work on the demarcated day. Four of these people were related to her through her husband and Nomenijala was related to her through being a fellow clan member. All of these people were from the same section (Komkhulu).

Table 11: Participants in Nowani's work party.

Name	Clan	Husband's clan	Section	Relationship
NOWANI	MPONDO	TSHAWE	KOMKHULU	ORGANISER
Noweyitala	Dlamini	izoto	Komkhulu	Neighbour
Nodompasi	Cete	(unmarried)	Komkhulu	Neighbour
Novongane	Cete	Tshezi	Komkhulu	Neighbour
Nofayini	Dlamini	Tshawe	Komkhulu	HFBSW
Nonelisi	Tshezi	Tshawe	Komkhulu	HFBSW
Nomenijala	Mpondo	Mpinga	Komkhulu	Same clan
Zaziwe	Tshawe	(unmarried)	Komkhulu	HFBD
Nomtselele	Tshawe	Dlamini	Komkhulu	HFFBSD

Another form of isicelo is when young girls are the workers. At these work parties tea, bread and samp is served. The organising head's daughter organises the work party which is set aside for the weekend so as not to conflict with schooling. The young girl goes from household to household and speaks to the mother. The mother then gives permission for a daughter to attend the work party.

Case: Dilikile asked his daughter to organise a work party. She went from door to door in the sub-ward asking girl's mothers if a daughter could work. She said that she asked all the young girls of the sub-ward but only eight arrived. Of these eight, five were from the same section, two were from Ngwevu section, and one was from Folokwe sub-ward. All the girls who were from her section were related to her and the one girl from Folokwe sub-ward was also distantly related to her.

Table 12: Participants in Dilikile's work party.

Name	Clan	Section	Relationship
Nolili	Tshawe	Komkhulu	FBSSSD
No-eliza	Tshawe	Komkhulu	FBSSD
Nomputhumo	Tshawe	Komkhulu	FBSSD
Yoliswa	Tshawe	Komkhulu	FBSSD
Akhona	Tshezi	Folokwe s/w	FZDD
Nomponjose	Tshawe	Komkhulu	FBSSD
Nopinki	Ngwevu	Ngwevu	Neighbour
Nopukwehlahla	Ngwevu	Ngwevu	Neighbour

There are two reasons for the different organisational basis on which work parties are organised for children and young women. The first relates to their position in the community and the way in which beer and meat are allocated at feasts. Young married women are affiliated to a section through their husbands and therefore organise work parties according to section affiliation. This is not the case with children. Children do not attend rituals as participants (unless, of course, the ritual is explicitly held for them). When they are given meat at a ritual the meat is given to them as children and not as members of any territorial group.

The second reason relates to labour supply and demand. The supply of children's labour is reduced through schooling. Young women, on the other hand, are always available and therefore there is a greater supply of their labour. Children cannot do as much work as adults and therefore to weed a garden more children are required. More children, therefore, must be asked to a work

party and this is why one does not only invite children from the same section.

At most work parties people are given beer during and after the work and food when they return to the homestead of the organiser. At isicelo the people who are invited are told how much beer is going to be provided. In all of these work parties people start working at about 7.30am and end work in the early afternoon. The amount of work done depends upon the amount of beer brewed.

Isicelo are less formal work parties than amandwandwa (see below). There is no injoli who shares the beer and leads the work. The injoli is a person who shares the beer at beer drinks. McLaren (1968: 65) defines injoli as "a butler, carver, taster of food". There is also an injoli at work parties who shares the beer and organises the rhythm of the work. It is he who tells the people when they can break for liquid refreshment and when the break is over. The injoli is a person who is informally appointed to the position. He is respected and trusted by the people of his area (each section has its own injoli) and is apprenticed by a senior injoli from whom he learns the trade. The position is of considerable importance because the way in which beer is shared reflects relations between groups, sections, sub-wards, men and women, and old and young (see Chapter 5). While doing research I came across two occasions where the beer was not shared properly and great dissatisfaction and anger were expressed.

At isicelo breaks are taken when the workers feel tired and there is always a gradual return to work. The following is a description of a typical isicelo which was held in mid-February 1988.

Novotile Mbilana's (clan Tshawe, husband's clan Mpondo) work party was attended by ten people (five women and five men). Novotile had brewed about five amanxithi³ of jabulani (also called mangumba) the instant beer mix which people buy from the local trading store⁴. The work started at 7.15am and finished at 2.00pm. The rhythm of the work was as follows.

7.15 - start work.

9.35 - first break. One beaker of jabulani served. There was no separation between the sexes in the drinking of this beer.

9.50 - return to work.

11.30 - second break. One beaker of jabulani served. Speech by injoli:

To you workers here. As they asked us to help them they brewed amanxithi. We have already drunk three amanxithi [two beakers had been drunk before I arrived] so I don't want you to punish yourselves [a statement to the effect that as there is not a lot of beer people must not concern themselves with working too hard]. If you want to drink you can say that anytime. Of this jabulani there is only one beaker so everyone can drink from it.

12.15 - sporadic return to work.

1.40 - 3rd break.

2.05 - return to work.

3 An inxithi, (plural amanxithi) is a beaker (ibhekile) which has a capacity of five litres.

4 The name 'trading' store' is no longer applicable. Beinart (1982) described how at the beginning of this century traders used to buy skins and grain from members of the community as well as selling them manufactured goods. This is no longer the case as all the shop owners in Shixini just sell to the people and do not buy anything from them.

3.00 - end of work. Workers return to hut to drink the last of the jabulani (five beakers drunk in total).

The work party was not highly regimented and people were not pushed to work. The reference to not "punishing yourself" illustrates the relaxed nature of the isicelo.

2) Amandwandwa.

An indwandwa is a much larger work party. People say that there are two types of amandwandwa. These are indwandwa yekhaya and indwandwa yelali. Indwandwa yekhaya is when a general invitation is extended to members of the organiser's section. A barrel called nophakathi omncinci (nophakathi omncinci refers to the middle child in a family. Thus in the context of beer drinks it refers to a middle sized barrel) which contains about 12 amanxithi or sixty litres of beer (always umqombothi and not an instant brew) must be brewed. Indwandwa yelali is a much larger affair and a general invitation to the whole sub-ward (ilali) is made. For this indwandwa a barrel called igxibha (a very tall man), which contains about 50 amanxithi of beer, is brewed.

For amandwandwa a general invitation is extended to people at some formal occasion such as a beer drink. This invitation is always done by a person who is not a member of the household. I was not able to obtain an explanation for this.

There are thus a number of contrasts with the isicelo. For amandwandwa one makes a general invitation saying "on this day so

and so will have a hoeing party at this place", for isicelo one goes out and invites people personally.

The most important contrast is the limitation on size. For an indwandwa one can make a general invitation and people will come. The question is why, for amandwandwa, is there always enough beer to go around? Hunter (1961: 89) says:

It is known and discussed in the community beforehand how many barrels have been prepared, and so the number of people is in some ways commensurate with the amount of beer provided, but other considerations such as the scarcity of beer at the time, the number of festivities on, the occupation of people with their own lands, and the reputation of the owner of the ilima [work party] for generosity, or stinginess affect the number attending. (My parentheses).

The third major contrast is that, for an indwandwa, umqombothi is always brewed. For an isicelo one can serve umqombothi or mangumba.

Case: Nothathile (clan Tshawe, husband's clan Vundle) held an indwandwa to hoe her field. The field is about 0.75 hectares in area and the whole field was weeded in the morning (from 8.00am to 1.30pm). The work party was attended by 29 people (21 women and eight men). Of these people nine people were from the same section of Nompha (Tembu) as Nothathile, sixteen people were from Komkhulu section, two people were from Ngwevu section and there was one person from Ngwevu sub-ward. The work party was attended by all Tembu section households, 24% of Komkhulu households and 10% of Ngwevu section households.

Table 13: Participants in Nothathile's work party.

Name	Clan	Husband's clan	Section
NOTHATHILE	TSHAWE	VUNDLE	TEMBU
Tord	Mpinga	(male)	Komkhulu
Sponono	Mbamba	(male)	Komkhulu
Stofile	Mpinga	(male)	Komkhulu
Grebe	Tshawe	(male)	Tembu
Kokoko	Mpinga	(male)	Komkhulu
Mopulani	Mqadi	Mpondo	Tembu
Moqondile	Ngwevu	Mpinga	Komkhulu
Nopasile	Mbamba	Ngwevu	Ngwevu
Nowanisi	Chunube	Tshawe	Tembu
Nowambles	Gatyeni	Tshawe	Komkhulu
Nophathile	Kwayi	Khomazi	Tembu
Dosheni	Ngwevu	(male)	NGWEVU s/w
Nothawuzeni	Ngwevu	Tshawe	Tembu
Nowhebile	Mbamba	Tshawe	Tembu
Novotile	Tshawe	Mpondo	Tembu
Manguyana	Tshawe	(male)	Komkhulu
Moncedile	Ngwevu	Tshawe	Tembu
Dikazintombi	Kwemnte	(unmarried)	Komkhulu
Nosithile	Mpinga	Tshawe	Komkhulu
Nogwevile	Vundle	Tshawe	Komkhulu
Nonagaboni	Ngwevu	(unmarried)	Ngwevu
Nomasili	Mpinga	(unmarried)	Ngwevu
Nomthombothi	Mpondomise	(unmarried)	Komkhulu
Nobantwana	Ngwevu	(unmarried)	Komkhulu
No-awala	Khomazi	Tshawe	Komkhulu
Mlose	Ngwevu	(male)	Komkhulu
Notiyo	Dlamini	(unmarried)	Komkhulu
Whase	Kwemnte	Ngwevu	Komkhulu

Strips of the field were hoed and when the strip was finished the workers started on another strip. Old people (both men and women, although mostly women) were given their own area to hoe. The young people hoed together, the women on the right of the men at the beginning of the work.

The problem with the structure of the young people's work group was that the men worked faster than the women. When they had finished their section of the strip they waited for the women to catch up. As soon as the women had caught up the men started working again. Men were thus able to rest between strips while women had no opportunity to rest. At a certain stage of the day the injoli told the women that they should be mixed up among the men as they were talking more than they were working.

At the breaks umqombothi was served. In the drinking of the beer the men and the women were separated. Two beakers were given to the men and two beakers to the women. Another

beaker called ingcanda⁵ was given to the people who had just come to watch and drink. At the second break only two beakers were served. One each for the men and the women and no beaker for the observers, who were called for sips by the workers.

The workers finished at 1.30pm leaving a small section for the owner to hoe for herself. This is a symbolic gesture and relates to the notion of payment. If people were paid for their work the owner would be able to demand that the whole garden/field be hoed. The beer which is served at work parties is not payment for work but rather is a gift thanking the people for working. People assert the fact that they are not hired labourers through leaving a small section of the garden/field for the owner to work and walk away saying that they were "just helping" the person who organised the work party.

After the workers had finished they returned to Nothathile's homestead where beer and food was served. Two beakers of beer were served to the workers after they had eaten boiled maize and beans (isophi). The workers remained in the inside of the hut while the people who had not worked were called to come inside for sips (rabulisa).

The first beakers were called inkobe (boiled maize) and a speech was made.

The first word to you people of Mkhapheni [an ancestor of the Tshawes in Nompha⁶]. My sister Futhwana [Nothathile's other name] says thank you. Each and every year you always help at that field where you were working. She cooked these beakers that are now in front of you. She says "Do this

5 An ingcanda is a porcupine. People say that the porcupine is a lazy animal which eats maize without working. The beaker is called ingcanda because the people to whom it is given come to drink and not to work.

6 We can understand the reason for the "people of Mkhapheni" being specifically addressed if we note the history of Nompha (see Chapter 1). The area called Nompha was given to the person, Nompha, and thus all people who live in Nompha can be seen as subjects of his descendants. Nompha's son's name, Mkhapheni, is invoked by one of the Nompha Tshawe agnatic clusters on ritual and other occasions. The specific reference to "the people of Mkhapheni" thus refers to the people who live in the sub-ward Nompha.

7 When a woman marries her husband's kin change her name. At a lobola negotiation following the capture of the bride, the groom's representative, nzakuzaku, announced that the girl's name had changed from Nosithile to Nopasile.

again tomorrow. Don't get tired". She thanks you all. She won't go and work because you finished all the work as you have worked from the morning to the afternoon. Here are your beakers of inkobe. When you have finished there is also ingcwele (a type of barrel that contains fifteen beakers of beer which in this case was not full). It is about six amanxithi. Thank you.

After the ingcwele had been emptied the people from outside were called into the hut. They sat on the women's side of the hut thus expressing their junior status (see Chapter 5). When they arrived inside the hut another speech was made by the injoli who had distributed the beer at the field where the hoeing was done.

We went to hoe in the field of this household. They gave us some umqombothi. From that beer we left this beer that you see now. We thought that when we got back from the field we would be thirsty. We did not take it all down to the field because we knew we would be hungry after eating this inkobe. Now we want you to see that when we eat we eat with you. This thing (a cast iron cooking pot) that we put right here in front of us is about six amanxithi. That is all I have to say.

In this ingwandwa the work routine was strictly regimented. People were divided according to gender and age and when the breaks were finished the injoli hastened everyone to go back to work. The time regimentation was the following.

- 8.20am - First men start work.
- 10.30am - First break (five beakers of umqombothi shared)
- 10.45am - End of break.
- 11.15am - Young women interspersed with the men.
- 12.10pm - Second break (two beakers of umqombothi shared).
- 12.40pm - End of break.
- 1.25pm - Finish work and people return to household.

The field was 150m x 50m in area (0.75 hectares). A total of 29 people worked. If Nothathile had weeded the field herself she would have had to work for approximately 29 days (taking each person as working a day). In the circumstances this is not possible. The weather is an important variable. In February it rained for a total of 14 days (25% of 1988's total rainfall, 323.9mm, fell in this month). It would have

taken Nothathile over a month to weed her whole garden by herself.

Given February's rainfall, Nothathile would not have been able to weed her whole garden. Most of maize would have been choked by the weeds and the yield would have been minimal. We can thus see that work parties are a rational means through which seasonal stress, brought about by rainfall in the case of the weeding season, can be ameliorated.

I have been arguing that work parties are a means of offsetting seasonal labour shortages. It is still necessary to ask the question: If there are 29 workers with 29 gardens, how does it help to have work parties? Land is not equally distributed in Shixini and therefore not all gardens/fields are the same size. The size of gardens in Nompha ranges between 0.14 hectares and 2.13 hectares. Households with large gardens would not be able to weed their gardens using only household labour. The holding of work parties is therefore necessary for these households. An additional question must still be asked: Why do people who have small gardens and who could quite easily weed their gardens using their own labour, work for households with large gardens. In the first instance a person who, at the moment, has a small garden might not have a small garden in the future. It will be necessary, in the future, to ask people for help. Secondly, there is an explicit value of mutual help and people therefore help other people as a matter of course.

The holding of work parties enables a specific job to be done quickly. If we go back to Nothathile's work party I calculated that it would take her over a month to do the work herself. I also argued that this would be an impossible task taking the weather and other variables into consideration. With a work party, 29 days of work (in the case of Nothathile's work party) can be done in one day. Given the urgency with which weeding must be done in the wet month of February it is essential that work parties are held. Work parties are a means of concentrating labour for a specific task within a limited time period. The organisation of work parties gives flexibility to households enabling them to complete urgent tasks in limited periods of time.

As garden size is widely differentiated, wealthier households with large gardens are able to recruit labour from poorer households with smaller gardens. Labour moves from households with smaller gardens to households with larger gardens.

The rationality of work parties therefore arises out of the interaction of a number of mutually interacting variables. Firstly, the ethic of mutual help. Secondly, the expectation of reciprocity. Thirdly, the fluctuations and unpredictability of the weather. Finally, the fact that resources, both labour and land, are widely distributed within the community. It can be argued that ultimately it is the way in which resources are distributed which creates the **need for** and the **possibility of** work parties in conjunction with the other factors mentioned.

Economic differentiation.

Work parties are an expensive depletion of a household's resources and therefore the decision to hold a work party is not an easy one. At Nothathile's work party a total of twenty five beakers of beer were served to the workers and the people. In addition to these beakers some beer is usually hidden and distributed when most of the people have gone home. I would conservatively estimate that about five beakers were hidden. The night before a beer drink neighbours are called to taste the beer. At occasions of this type, that I have attended, about five beakers are drunk. I would therefore, conservatively, estimate that a total of 35 beakers of beer were brewed for the indwandwa. It is difficult to estimate the cost of this brewing but at a beer drink where beer was being sold the holders of the beer drink said that it had cost them R20.00 to purchase the maize for the beer. They had brewed 42 litres and I would thus say that the cost for Nothathile was about R16.66.

This might not seem like a lot of money but we must consider that Nothathile is a widow whose income comes from her pension and her migrant son. The pension in 1988 was R60.00 per month paid bi-monthly. Nothathile therefore invested 28% of her one month's income in the work party. Nothathile's son works as a migrant and returns home for one month every year. Her daughter-in-law and two grandchildren live with her. Investing 28% of her predictable monthly income is thus expensive considering that she has to support four people with her income and is not able to

predict the amount of money that her son sends her. Further, the period in which hoeing takes place is usually the lean period of the year as the previous seasons harvest has usually been consumed and households are reliant on cash to purchase food from the store.

This is the dilemma in holding a work party. One invests resources in the short term hoping that the investment will be returned when it comes to the harvest. There is no way that one can be certain of the return because, as Bloch (1973) says "... agriculture ... is a notoriously unpredictable activity ...". The rain might not come and one's maize, which was weeded by a work party, might wither and die, or too much rain might fall and the maize will rot on the cob. In deciding to hold a work party people have to weigh up the benefits which will accrue through holding such an event against the costs of holding the event. The decision usually goes with holding a work party because if one does or does not weed the same risks apply, but if one holds a work party and the conditions are favourable one will return a greater yield from one's garden/field.

Given that people would prefer, if possible, not to have work parties the issue of a household's labour resources becomes important. If a household has enough labour it will not hold a work party.

Case: The area of Matikiti's garden is just over a hectare ($10086\text{m}^2 = 1.10$ hectares). He is one of the wealthiest people in Nompha as he owns 18 oxen, 1 sheep and 15 goats. There is no doubt that Matikiti could afford to hold a work party, yet in the 1988 weeding season he did not do so. When I asked him if he had held a work party for hoeing he replied

that he had not done so because the household had helped itself. There are six adults living in Matikiti's household and the household was able to manage on its own. Matikiti, instead of investing resources in work parties, invested resources in ritual trying to gain the favour of the ancestors. In 1988 he killed an ox for ukukhapha, two goats for ukusindela, and another goat, which was accompanied by umgombothi, for intambo.

People make decisions to hold, or to attend, work parties in terms of the position they occupy in their life cycle, their available resources and the position they occupy in the community. Decisions are, therefore, made in terms of the household's specific situational framework.

...the intersection of life history with one's location in the social structure, is simply the framework for choice and therefore action that is given by the actor's position within any given social structure in terms of his access to, and control over, resources. This involves a consideration of the actor's social location, his motivations and prior experiences, and the available means by which defined ends could be attained. (Prattis 1987: 19-20).

In looking at the way in which resources are distributed one has to consider stock units, number of labour units, the dependency ratio, access to arable land, the number of migrants remitting, the number of pensioners, and the position of the household in its domestic cycle (see Chapter 2 for an analysis of

8 Ukukhapha is when an ox is ritually slaughtered to accompany a deceased relative. Khapha means to accompany. This is the first ritual in the series of rituals which are held for ancestors. The second ritual in the series is ukubuyisa which is to bring back the ancestor. Ukusindela is also a ritual slaughter and its aim is to protect a child from illness. Intambo is a ritual held to make medicine and a necklace for a person who is seen to be conventionally or socially 'sick'. In the one I observed a young woman had not remitted money to her household and had left her husband and thus was seen to be 'sick'.

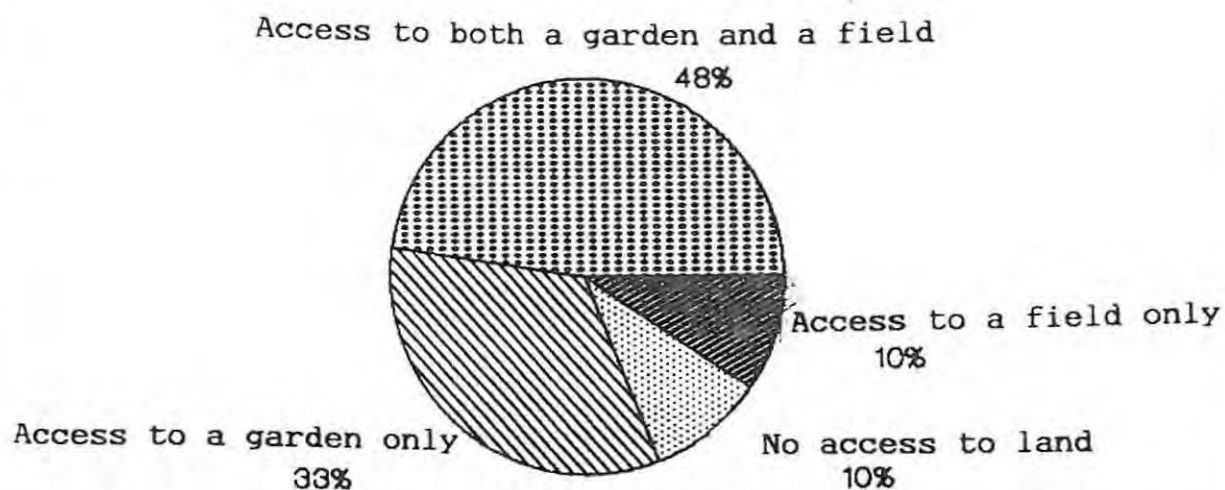
how the structure and constitution of the household affects agricultural production). Households manipulate their resources to achieve desired objectives. Maize can be eaten, given away or turned into beer and used to 'pay' workers.

Spiegel (1979: 30) argues that differentiation is based on a household's access to remittances, arable land and stock holdings. To gain an idea of the degree of differentiation that exists in Nompha a random sample of 22 households was taken (33% of the total number of households in Nompha). The indices of differentiation were the following: access to land; access to capital; and access to stock.

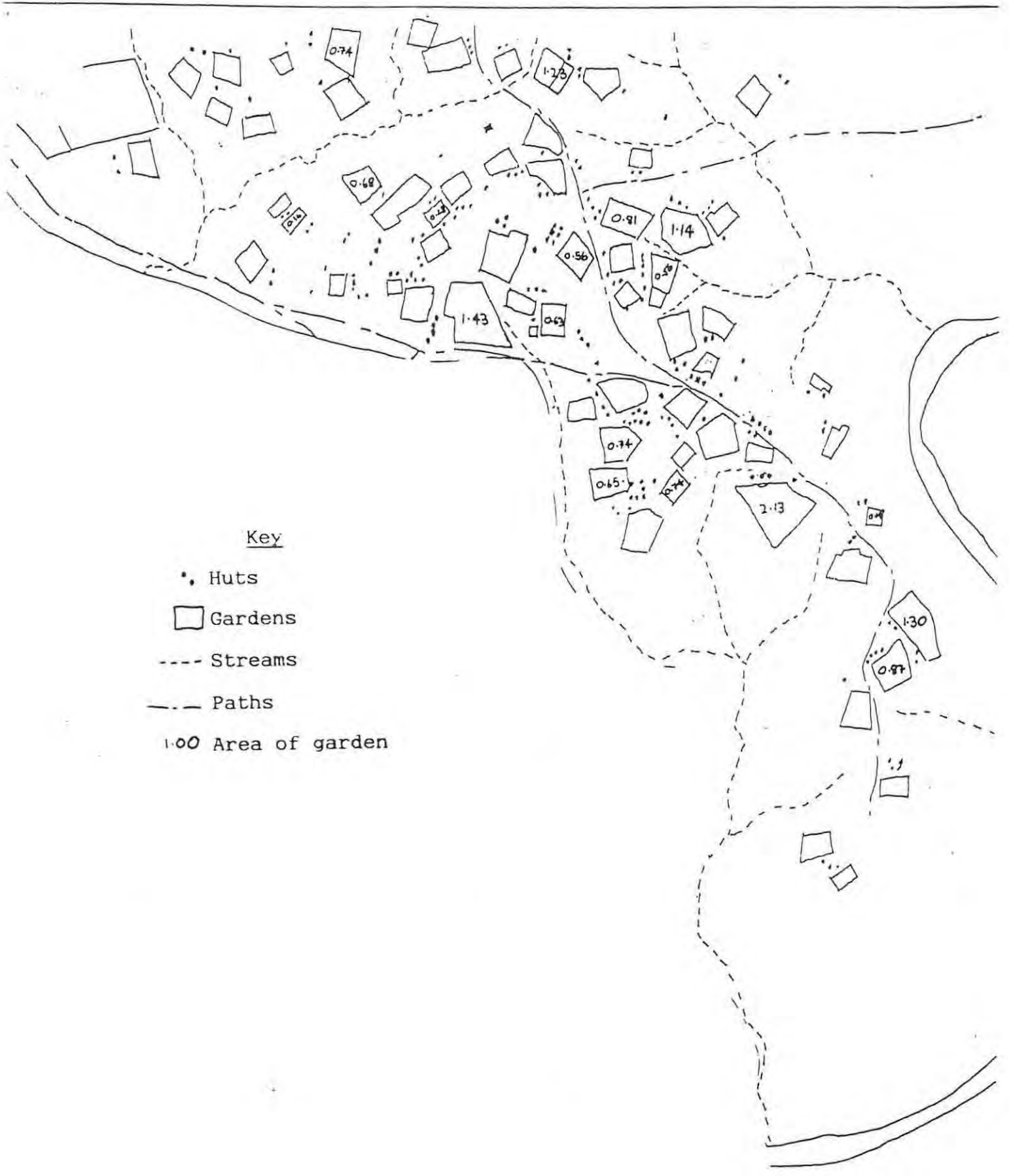
1) Access to land.

Of the sample, 47.6% had access to both a garden and a field; 33.3% had access to only a garden; 9.5% had access to a field only; and 9.5% did not have access to either. There is a large variation with regard to the size of gardens (see Map 5, overleaf, which shows variation in garden size). In Nompha arable holdings are thus widely differentiated both in terms of size and access.

Graph 3: Distribution of land holdings in Nompha.



Map 5: Variation in Garden size (Hectares).
(Based on aerial photographs taken in 1988)-116



Key

- *. Huts
- Gardens
- Streams
- Paths
- Area of garden

Fields have become less and less important in Shixini as a whole (see Talbot 1988: 20-22). She argues, through the analysis of aerial photographs, that gardens have steadily increased in importance at the expense of fields. In 1942, 25% of the total number of huts were associated with gardens and in 1982 this figure had risen to 87% of the total (Ibid: 20). This has been born out through observation on the ground. The utility of fields has decreased for a number of reasons. The most important reason is that they are difficult to fertilise and their fertility has declined over time. There are a large number of people who have abandoned their fields.

2) Access to Capital.

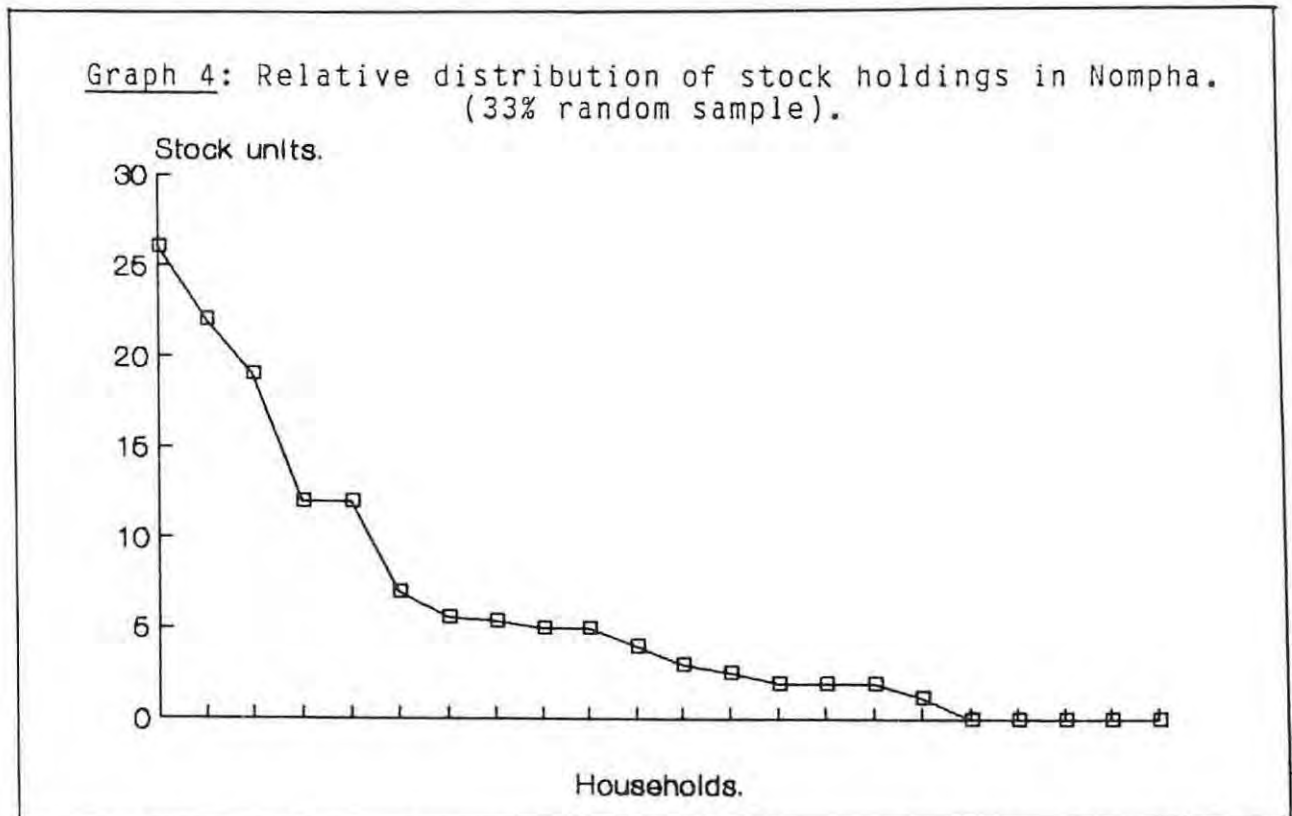
The second index of differentiation is the household's potential access to capital. The household's access to capital is an important index of differentiation in Shixini. Most households do not produce enough maize to meet their subsistence requirements for a year and therefore rely on money to buy basic necessities from the local shop. A household's capital resources affect its ability to brew beer for work parties. Without brewing beer, be it umqombothi or mangumba, a household would not be able to organise a work party (indicating the stress on medium-term reciprocity). Households have to decide whether they will convert their capital resources into beer and organise a work party thus hoping that this investment will be returned at the harvest or to purchase basic necessities with the money that they have.

In the sample 33.3% had access to both pensions and remittances; 33.3% had access to remittances only; 9.6% had access to pensions only; and 23.8% did not have access to pensions or remittances. Further, there was variation with regard to how much access to these resources the respective households had. It must also be noted that remittances are an unreliable source of income. Webster (1988: 11) found that, in Kosi bay, only 11% of total migrant earnings were remitted home. In most cases migrants return to Shixini with the money they have saved in the past year. Some of this money is spent on alcohol, collectively known as hambidlani (people translate this as "that which is eaten on the way"), which is drunk at a party on the migrants return. Pensions are therefore the only reliable and predictable source of capital.

3) Access to Stock.

The third and final differentiation indice is access to stock. This is a vital indice for a number of reasons. Through stock people gain access to ploughing companies and the amount of cattle contributed to a ploughing company determines the order of ploughing (see Chapter 4). People with a greater number of stock units will return greater yields from their gardens than people with less stock because they are better able to plough at the optimum time (see Chapter 2 for the correlation between stock holdings and yield).

We can see from the graph below that there is considerable variation in different households access to stock. The average stock units per household are 9.02 while the median is 6. The number of stock units range from a high of 32 to a low of zero.



Differentiation as expressed through people's access to the means of production (land, stock, and labour) is thus vital for an understanding of work parties. In Ethiopia, Donham (1981: 535) observed that there was a transfer of labour from the poorer to the wealthier households in the organisation of work parties. This is also true in Nompha, where it is the wealthier households which are able to organise work parties and the poorer people who attend them. People attend work parties because of the value of mutual help and the expectation of reciprocity. Their help can

be reciprocated in a number of ways - maize when the household is short, borrowing money, lending of cattle (ukunqoma), etc.

Conclusion.

I have argued that the way in which land is distributed, in terms of size and availability, is what makes the organisation of work parties economically rational. Households with large land holdings need to recruit labour from outside to weed their maize while households with no, or small, land holdings are able to transfer their labour to the wealthier households.

The possibility of work parties arises out of the value of mutual help and the expectation of reciprocity. The need to organise work parties, on the other hand, reflects Shixini's relationship to the wider South African socio-economic system in the context of its specific ecological niche.

Work parties are organised to offset seasonal labour shortfalls at crucial stages in the agricultural cycle. The migrant labour system has taken male labour out of agriculture and this drain on a household's labour resources is met through the organisation of work parties. Work parties are only organised when absolutely necessary and the necessity of holding work parties is determined by ecological factors such as rainfall. In periods of high rainfall work parties occur with greater frequency than in periods of low rainfall.

Work parties therefore reflect seasonal processes because:

Any agricultural production process is seasonal in that it depends on a climatic sequence which activates the biological-chemical processes of plant (or livestock) growth and generates particular patterns of labour requirement. (Raikes 1981: 67).

The participation in cooperative labour groupings are both moral and political actions. It is through the organisation of work parties that households "publicly establish and continually re-establish their local and political identities" (Donham 1985: 270). Thus

... labor cooperation seems to fuse a variety of economic, political, and even religious concerns into one social form, one social image. (Donham 1985: 262).

An analysis of work parties gives us an understanding of Shixini society. The patterns of recruitment reflect political organisation in terms of section and neighbourhood affiliation. The possibility of cooperative labour leads us to an understanding of social principles such as reciprocity. The need for cooperation reflects the relationship between core capitalist areas and rural peripheral area. Finally, the logic and rationality of work parties reflects economic differentiation and inequality.

CHAPTER 4: XHOSA PLOUGHING COMPANIES.

Xhosa ploughing companies¹ are a relatively stable form of cooperative labour compared to the work parties discussed in the last chapter. They persist over time in that they bring people together in a working arrangement where it is explicit that they should remain together.

The people sometimes refer to ploughing companies as umfelandawonye which means to "die in the same place". In the context of the company, this means that company members will live for each other and die for each other². This is an ideal because, as I will show below, companies split and the term umfelandawonye thus only expresses the desire that companies will not split and that the people will work hard for each other while they are together.

To understand present social formations it is imperative to understand how they evolved, and what effect their evolution has had on society. To understand Xhosa ploughing companies today

¹ Throughout this chapter I call the arrangement which brings people together in a cooperative ploughing arrangement a ploughing company because the term 'company' implies a long term commitment to the cooperative group. It is also useful to distinguish between a cooperative ploughing arrangement such as isitshongo (described below) and a ploughing company. They are both cooperative arrangements but isitshongo only lasts for the duration of the specific task while a ploughing company stays together from season to season and is also involved in the performance of other tasks. Ploughing companies are therefore not task specific.

² I am grateful to Mr Dumisani Deliwe for his help with this translation.

one must place them in an historical context. Social institutions do not exist independently of their past, and neither can one see them as not having a bearing on the future.

This chapter will be divided into a number of sections. The first section will be a description of the pre-contact and pre-plough economy (even after contact with colonists the plough was not incorporated). This will highlight the sexual division of labour and the organisation of labour resources at that time. This is important because with the introduction of the plough this division of labour was considerably altered. The new technology and its implications for production will be highlighted, as well as the land use practices at that time, including transhumance and its political implications.

The second section will attempt to trace the origins of the plough in the Transkei. This is a difficult task because there is a dearth of literature on the subject. I will also outline why the plough was generally accepted so late after it was first seen in use. There were a number of Xhosa travelling to and from the colony before annexation in the early 1800's and they must have had knowledge of the plough and its potential for increasing agricultural production yet did not incorporate this technology.

The third section will look at the changes brought about by the plough. This is again a difficult exercise as there has been no systematic analysis of the impact of the plough on Southern, or any other, African people. This is remarkable considering the

importance of this technology for production and changing relations of production which invariably followed its introduction.

The final section will describe the ploughing companies in Wompha: how they are constituted and the importance of kinship; the reasons for splitting which I relate to work demand and available resources; and the strategies which people can use to gain access to a ploughing company.

The pre-plough economy.

Alberti gives a brief account of the "Domestic life and activities connected with it" in 1807. He describes a people where cattle were the principal means of livelihood and where agriculture was a subsidiary activity resting on the shoulders of women (1810: 54,56). The indications were that dwellings were semi-permanent being built of bent saplings covered with clay and straw (ibid: 53; Wilson 1982: 112; Peires 1981: 3). The style of abode indicated that people were transhumant. "The Cape Nguni framework, especially that of the Xhosa and Thembu, was very simple and easily constructed" (Shaw 1974: 85) and this can be related to the system of production.

The Nguni people practiced a form of slash and burn agriculture, burning down bush and trees on the edges of forests and planting their crops in the ash (Wilson 1982: 110). Sections of the forest were cleared and when the yields decreased the

people abandoned that garden for another. One can therefore look at transhumance as a reaction to the decreased fertility of gardens as well as a means of moving cattle to better pastures. The indications were that the Nguni were semi-nomadic in the sense that they stayed in one place for a number of years and when the grazing was denuded moved on.

Agricultural technology was simple. People used digging sticks and wooden spades made out of sneeze wood (Alberti 1810: 57; Wilson 1982: 83; Beinart 1980: 140; Beinart 1982: 25).

[The spade] is made from one piece in such a way that at both ends of a common handle, which is two inches thick and rounded, a spade of about four inches in width and ten inches in length, is formed; so that if one end has become blunted, one can use the other. (Alberti 1810: 57)

The total length of the implement was about two feet and cultivation was done from a squatting position (Hammond-Tooke 1956: 74). With this form of technology only small areas of ground could be cultivated thus reducing the importance of cultivation relative to pastoralism in the pre-plough economy.

There was a strict division of labour where women cultivated and gathered and men looked after cattle and hunted.

Whatever the local or temporary conditions...herding and hunting were regarded as honourable occupations, worthy of a man, whereas cultivation was women's work in which men participated only from necessity... (Wilson 1982: 111).

1) The History of the Plough in Kaffraria.

The earliest mention of a plough being used by a black person in Southern Africa is in the missionary journals of the Rev James Laing who mentions that "Old Soga" (the grandfather of J.H. Soga) was using a plough and that he believed that "Old Soga" was the first person to introduce the plough into that part of the country (Laing 1835: Vol 2). Beinart (1982: 25) mentions that ploughs were not generally adopted until the late 1870's (in Pondoland). The first full scale use of the plough in the Transkei can be traced back to 1865 when the Colonial Government brought the Mfengu back into the Transkei, bringing with them "the improved agricultural knowledge they had obtained in the Colony, also ploughs, wagons, &c (CBB³ c8-1881: 21), and in 1883 there were 2730 ploughs in Fingoland and 932 in Idutywa (CBB 1883: App D 266).

The plough took thirty years to come into general use, but even in 1883 it was mentioned that in certain districts the plough was not in general use "owing to the inability of the people to purchase them" (CBB 1883: App D 274).

Why did it take so long? I would argue that the main reason for this was the political instability of the period. This was a time of war with the colonists, inter-tribal warfare brought about through shortages of land through the colonists advance, and refugees from Natal (the Mfengu) moving into the Transkei.

3 CBB refers to Cape Blue Books.

This instability contributed to people not being able to settle down and invest vast amounts of labour and time in agriculture. Men were away at the Frontier wars and they were unable to cultivate. The seven frontier wars took place in the years between, and including, 1779 (the beginning of the First Frontier War) to 1846, the time of the Seventh Frontier War (Peires 1981: 50, 150). Peires also mentions that during the war of 1847 the Xhosa, although in a superior position, asked for peace. After four months of war the people were starving. Their cattle had been driven away, and the Colonial forces had deliberately destroyed their stores of corn (Ibid: 152). The inability of people to invest their labour in agricultural activity is graphically illustrated by the Colonial Secretary saying:

Their crops are absolutely in our power. We have captured some of their cattle and more have perished through the fugitive life which they have been compelled to lead, in a time too of severe drought. Their hordes of corn ... have been taken by our coloured patrols; and the sowing season has been passing by unemployed owing to the scouring of the country by the troops. Great scarcity among them has been the result; many of them are much wasted, and the women have extremely suffered the horrors of famine. (Ibid: 152).

Austen and Hendrik (1983: 164) argue that the adaptation of a technological system is linked both to the social composition and cultural values of a society as well as to the nature of the technology itself. To these I would add economic variables. There are a number of economic factors which contributed to the acceptance of the plough in the Transkei.

Firstly, with the introduction of guns the forests were denuded of wildlife (Beinart 1982: 26) forcing people to look for alternatives to fill this gap in consumption. Secondly, the Colonial government fixed boundaries (Ibid: 27) reducing the flexibility of people to move and exploit the environment. People were not able to cultivate as extensively as before and therefore had to look for alternative, intensive, production methods.

Another argument is that proposed by Lewis (1984) who identified two economic variables which induced people to adopt the plough in agriculture. The first factor was the need to look for alternative subsistence options after the cattle killings of 1856.

To survive, the households had to increase the output from cultivation and this led those that could afford it to purchase ploughs and other equipment and to participate wherever possible in agricultural markets to gain cash for their produce. (Lewis 1984: 3).

The second factor was that people were forced to involve themselves in the market economy to obtain capital to pay for taxes. There existed an exceptional market for maize at this time which attracted peasant producers to market maize from the Transkei. The final argument is that old slash and burn production methods, because of land scarcity and their negative effects on the environment, were no longer tenable.

Boserup (1965: 15-16) delineates five systems of land use. Forest-Fallow cultivation, where a garden is used for a period of

about one year and then is abandoned and another garden is cultivated; bush-fallow, where the garden is used for a period of two to three years and then is abandoned; short-fallow, where a garden is allowed to be fallow for one to two years; annual cropping, where the garden is in a fallow state between seasons, as in the case where only summer crops are cultivated; and multi-cropping where both winter and summer crops are cultivated.

Boserup argues that the link between these different cultivation systems is population. As population increases societies are forced to innovate so as to produce more to satisfy consumption needs. With population growth one finds an evolutionary shift in agricultural systems from forest-fallow cultivation to the most modern form, multi-cropping.

The population of the Transkei increased naturally and through the influx of other people from present day Natal and from the Eastern Cape. Emigration occurred from two directions. Firstly the Rharhabe were pushed back into the Transkei through the emigration of white colonists to the Eastern Cape. Secondly, refugees from Chaka's wars, collectively known as the Ifengu, emigrated into present day Transkei from Natal. The increase in population through emigration created land shortages. With the shortage of land, intensive agricultural production and associated technical innovation were necessary to satisfy consumption needs.

The post-plough economy.

[The] role of technology [is] a vital issue for understanding all aspects of the African economy, but one given little attention by other theoretically oriented economic anthropologists or historians. (Austen 1987: 3).

Goody (1971: 25) highlights three major changes brought about by the introduction of the plough in pre-industrial societies. These were, firstly, an increase in cultivated land with a corresponding rise in productivity which, secondly, stimulated a move to fixed holdings. Thirdly, due to the increase of land being used for cultivation, land became more valuable and less available.

The logic of this argument becomes apparent if we note what the plough is, what it does, and how it is used. This will also give us insights into other changes brought about by its introduction.

The ox drawn plough, which is extensively used in the Transkei, consists of a cutting edge which cuts into the soil, and a flange, or wing, which pushes the soil up and over. The rich humus is brought to the surface, increasing crop yields.

The plough, because of its utilisation of non-human labour, meant that "human resources [were] substantially increased thereby, since for the first time men tapped a source of mechanical energy greater than that which their own muscles could supply" (McNeil quoted in Goody 1971: 25). If we assume people invested the same amount of energy into agriculture as before,

the adoption of the plough greatly increased the amount of land under cultivation.

[The] use of ox-drawn ploughs and cultivators can transfer a large proportion of the work-load to the animals, allowing the human labour force to cultivate up to three times as much land with the same effort. (Allauddin Chowdhury et al 1981: 63).

The plough brought cattle into agricultural activity and men became involved in agriculture for the first time, because only men could handle cattle (Beinart 1982: 30). The introduction of the plough in the Transkei therefore led to a radical shift in the sexual division of labour with men ploughing over broadcast seed and women weeding and harvesting.

The perception that the labour of women is reduced by the use of plough technology is erroneous. Although women were not involved in tilling, and to a lesser extent, planting, they were still actively involved in the weeding of the gardens and fields. With greater areas being cultivated there was an increase in the amount of weeding that was necessary.

Ploughs are becoming common now, but doubt whether it has lessened the labour of the women, as more land is being turned over, and the women have a larger area to keep clean and reap. (Tembuland missionary testifying to the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs, CBB: App D 285).

Weeding is hard work and with greater areas being cultivated the work of women could be seen to increase in the weeding season, but as one magistrate mentions, "it is becoming common now for men to assist the women to hoe and harvest the crop" (Ibid: 297).

Bundy (1988) quotes two missionaries as saying:

When I came to this country, 34 years ago, the wooden spade was used in agriculture; now the hoe and the plough are used, and the wooden spade has disappeared. Then the chief agriculturalists were the women, now a great part of the agricultural labour is performed by the men. (Burnshill missionary evidence to the Commission on Native Affairs in 1865. Bundy 1988: 55).

I am not a very old man, yet I remember the time when the gardens of the natives were much smaller than they now are. I can well recollect the time, when among the Kaffirs, all field labour except fencing, was performed by the women. Now, however, the male part of the Kaffir population, either universally or very generally, take a great share in such works. (Pirie missionary testifying to the same commission. Quoted in Bundy 1988: 55).

With the introduction of the plough, the position of women in agriculture changed. Where previously women were involved in every aspect of the agricultural process they were now not involved in the first stage of the process, planting, and to a lesser extent in the harvesting of produce. With this there was a change in the relations of power and subordination. Previously women controlled the domestic sphere of production, and thus had a modicum of economic status. This changed with the plough, with men controlling the first and even the final, harvesting, stage of production.

[The] majority of the women prefer, I think, to labour in their own gardens, to which they consider they have certain prescriptive rights derived from ancient usage and custom, involving certain cherished privileges and claims, of which they would otherwise be deprived, if the whole of the garden lands were cultivated by the plough solely, and over which as women they would have neither the interest or be allowed to exercise any control. (Kentani missionary testifying to the Government commission on Native Laws and Customs in 1883, CBB App D: 274).

It is here, with the use of cattle in agricultural activity, that we see the origins of the utywala beenkabi (beer of the oxen) ritual. This ritual is held at the end of the harvesting season to thank the oxen for their work in the previous season as well as to thank the ancestors for the harvest. A vast amount of beer is brewed and in the 1988 beer brewing season the average amount of beer brewed by households which did this was 135 litres. As this beer is brewed by women, the labour of women was further increased. The plough thus increased the labour of women, while at the same time drawing men into agriculture.

The impact of the plough on 'traditional' Xhosa society was vast. It created new wealth differentials while at the same time reinforcing old ones; altered the division of labour; increased men's power over women; changed the ecology of the area because of greater areas under cultivation; pushed people towards a more sedentary way of life; and brought cattle into agriculture. This also meant that the economic importance of cattle increased. They were now essential for use as draught and they were also a source of manure - a replacement for ash in the old slash and burn system.

XHOSA PLOUGHING COMPANIES TODAY.

Given the historical context how do we understand the form of cooperative labour associated with ploughing in Shixini? Firstly, not all people could afford to purchase a plough. Individuals were forced to combine their resources to purchase

these implements. Similarly, in Europe the adoption of plough technology also created a need, and opportunities, for cooperation (White 1972: 107).

We can also understand the need for cooperation in agriculture arising out of the decline in household size. McAllister (1985) argues that in the last century households were comprised of ten to forty huts and "each household had enough stock and had access to enough land and labour to make it a relatively self-sufficient productive unit and to enable it to reproduce itself"(Ibid: 127). The size of the household decreased for a number of reasons (see Ibid: pp128-129) which resulted in a diffusion of resources with a consequent necessity for cooperation. "Both the general decline in umzi size and the reduction in cattle holdings meant that each individual umzi depended on the labour power and oxen of others" (Ibid: 129). When the households started splitting it would have been the case that cooperation took place on a kinship basis as kin had cooperated when they were members of the same umzi.

1) Constitution of Ploughing Companies.

Most members of Nompha ploughing companies are related, either agnatically or cognatically, to the head of the company. In terms of geographic location most members come from the same sub-ward with a significant number from the same sub-ward section.

Table 14 gives a breakdown of membership in Nompha ploughing companies. Ploughing companies are male-centered. Therefore

women whose husbands are now deceased have been calculated as agnates because it is through their husbands, when they were alive, that the household gained access to a ploughing company. In the calculations the head of the company has been included in the calculation of the categories.

Table 14: Breakdown of membership of Nomphe ploughing companies

NAME OF HEAD	SIZE	AGNATES	COGNATES	AFFINES	NOT	SECT	S/W	OS/W
Matikiti	6	5	0	0	1	6	6	0
Hloniphile	6	5	0	0	1	5	5	1
Sihonono	4	2	1	1	0	3	4	0
Dilikile	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
Nokoloni	8	6	2	0	0	4	4	4
Qhoji	5	5	0	0	0	5	5	0
Bholani	4	1	3	0	0	3	4	0
Ngothoza	4	2	0	0	2	3	4	0
Madlangathi	4	1	2	1	0	0	4	0
Grebe	5	4	0	1	0	2	5	0
Nokholisile	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
TOTAL	50	35	8	3	4	35	45	5
% of TOTAL	--	70%	16%	6%	8%	70%	90%	10%

SIZE = number of households who are members of the company;
 NOT = Not related; SECT = From same sub-ward section; S/W = from the same sub-ward; OS/W = from an adjoining sub-ward

Given that most people in ploughing companies are related to each other (92%) with 70% of these being agnatically related, it is necessary to look at kinship. Kinship does not determine who will plough with whom, but rather it specifies a range of potential partners. This is related to the moral nature of the kinship relationship (Bloch 1973). Relationships between kin are more 'moral' than those between non-kin, or even distant kin (Ibid: 77). There is an obligation for kin to help each other

and "...because of mutual obligation kinsmen are the ideal people with whom to cooperate" (Ibid: 78). Why should this be so?

In agricultural production, because of its unpredictable nature, it is necessary to control as many variables as possible. The weather variable is unpredictable, but one can control membership of the company. Kinship, because it is governed by morality, is the one way through which the human variable, to a certain extent, can be controlled.

... agriculture itself is a notoriously unpredictable activity requiring different size labour teams from year to year as a result of the ecological variations which affect the crops. Secondly, people, too, are a very uncertain asset, they die, grow old, fall ill, quarrel and so on...For long term planning only social relationships which are reliable in the long term can be used and this reliability comes from morality (Bloch 1973: 79).

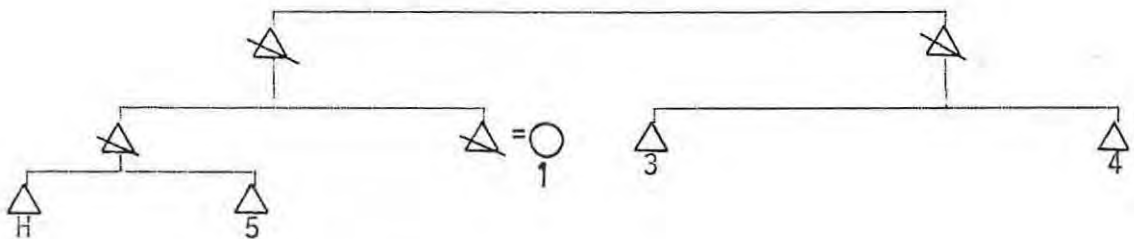
The morality of kinship is closely tied up with principles of reciprocity. Contribution of resources such as oxen, labour and implements, are not balanced. In some companies there is only one primary contributor of oxen and implements. This implies that there must be a principle of long-term reciprocity in action to allow the relationship to tolerate imbalances over time. The only relationship which tolerates such imbalances is one governed by morality and, as Bloch argues, morality is predicated upon kinship.

Matikiti's company is a good example of this system in operation.

Case: Morality and kinship obligations.

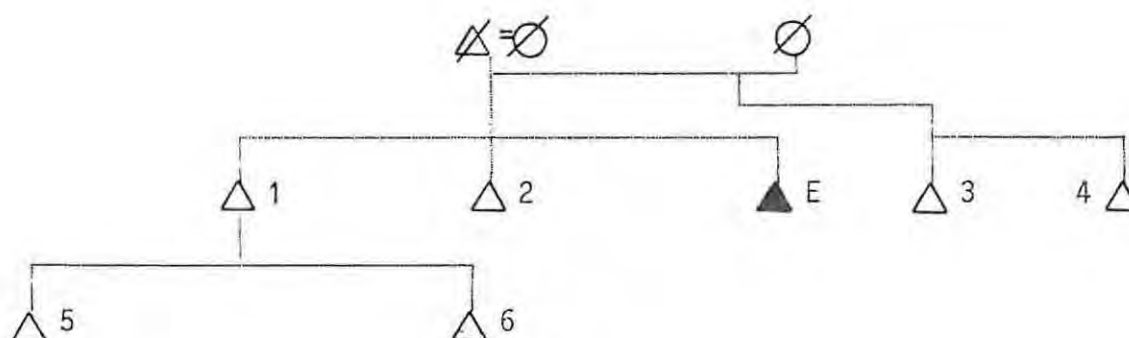
NAME	CLAN	HUSBAND'S CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
MATIKITI	KWEMNTE	(male)	(H) HEAD	KOMKHULU
Nowanele	Ngwevu	Kwemnte	(1) HBW	Komkhulu
Mnyeliswa	Tshawe	(male)	(2) Not related	Komkhulu
Zentsula	Kwemnte	(male)	(3) FFBS	Komkhulu
Mgunyaza	Kwemnte	(male)	(4) FFBS	Komkhulu
Masebenza	Kwemnte	(male)	(5) Brother	Komkhulu

Diagram illustrating kinship links in Table 15.



Matikiti's company represents the perfect case to justify the argument that people help kin because they are obligated to help them. Matikiti [H] is the sole contributor of implements and oxen in the company. He also helps Mnyeliswa (not represented in diagram No' [2] in table) who is unrelated to him, although they are related in the sense that members of the local Kwemnte clan are the amaphakathi of one of the local Tshawe agnatic clusters. Matikiti is seen by these people as a family member and is present at family meetings, whether they are held to solve a family quarrel, or to decide upon a day for a ritual. His main function is as the ritual slaughterer for the family. This could explain why he works with Mnyeliswa. The interesting question is: Why doesn't Mnyeliswa plough with his own relatives? The answer to this question lies in Mnyeliswa's relationships with his brothers and older brother's sons.

Mnyeliswa's genealogy, showing principle protagonists.



Mnyeliswa [E] is Hloniphile's father's [1] younger brother and is referred to as tata omncinci (small father) by Hloniphile [5]. The company that he would most likely be a member of is Hloniphile's (if one could predict these things) because the people in Hloniphile's company (see 'splitting precipitated by conflict' case below) are the closest blood relatives that he has. Further, it is usually the case that full brothers plough together. Gotyombane [2], his older brother from the same mother, is in Hloniphile's company.

However Mnyeliswa is seen by most Nomphe people, including his family, as a lazy "nosy parker". His nicknames are Umbonakhute ("binoculars"), because of his ability to see far and know everything that is going on, and Matanzima after the ex-president of the Transkei, because he always likes to tell people what to do. He is also seen as very lazy and relies almost totally on remittances that his sons send him and on his pension (danke). This may be one of the reasons why his family do not work for him. Another reason for Mnyeliswa not working with Hloniphile's company is that his wife has a reputation as a particularly argumentative person and was also associated, together with Sihonono's [4] wife, with Nonjenane's [6] (Hloniphile's younger brother from the same mother) wife's death.

Matikiti says that he helps Mnyeliswa because Mnyeliswa asked him for help. Matikiti owns eighteen cattle (of which eight are draught oxen), fifteen goats and a horse. He is able to field two teams of oxen, and to draw on a large labour pool from within his family. Matikiti is able to help Mnyeliswa without too much of a problem, and he is obligated to do so because of the amaphakathi relationship.

Most people say that they would prefer to plough with unrelated people. The reason for this is that it is often the case that

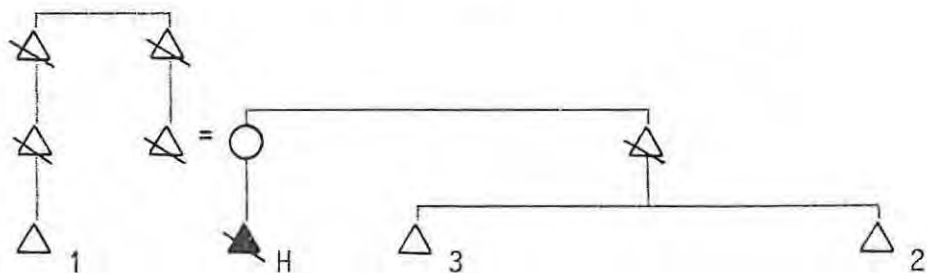
some members of companies do not contribute any resource to the company. These people are only members of the company because of the obligation to help kin arising out of the morality of kinship. Where resource contributions are widely differentiated the company is inefficient as non-contributing members drain a company's resources. Non-contributors receive the benefit of a company's resources without contributing to these resources. When members of a company all contribute equally to the company ploughing activities are organised differently.

The following case demonstrates how companies operate when there are equal contributions from members. It also demonstrates how relations of obligation still apply.

Case: Equal economic relations in a ploughing company, Bholani's company.

Table 16: Constitution of Bholani's ploughing company.			
NAME	CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
BHOLANI	KHOMAZI	(H) HEAD	NGWEVU
Mpembe	Khomazi	(1) FFBS	Tembu
Zikhethile	Ngwevu	(2) MBS	Ngwevu
Skhonkwane	Ngwevu	(3) MBS	Ngwevu

Diagram illustrating kinship links in Table 16.



This company has two teams of oxen and two ploughs. Skhonkwane [3] and Mpempe [1] both contribute equal amounts to the company. Bholani is dead and when I asked who the head of the company was the reply was that there was no head, they just work together. The order of ploughing is organised around this principle of equality. Skhonkwane and Mpempe both take it in turns to plough first. Both Skhonkwane and Mpempe have a field and a garden. In the last ploughing season Mpempe's field was ploughed first, then Skhonkwane's garden, then Bholani's widow's garden, then Mpempe's garden, and finally Skhonkwane's field. In the next ploughing season the order will change. Bholani's widow still retains some seniority in the company as it was her husband who started the company. She does not contribute anything to the company yet her garden was ploughed at a time which did not reflect her lack of contributions. Zikethile [2], the most junior member, had his garden ploughed last and this will be the case at the next ploughing time.

Bholani's company is a good example of the head as mediator. Mpempe and the other two members of the company are only linked to each other through Bholani. In this case the head mediates between respective kin groups and this again demonstrates that kinship determines a range of potential partners and not actual partners.

This company has an interesting history. Bholani was an illegitimate son of a man of the Khomazi clan. He grew up in the household of his mother who was of the Ngwevu clan. Skhonkwane and Zikethile grew up in the same household and when their father died Bholani looked after them.

He was like our father as our father had died when I was still a young boy. It was he who was looking after us. He had grown up in my father's home, even the cattle of my father were looked after by him. When my father died he looked after my father's homestead. We stayed like that until today. We have not split since then. We still work together as before, we have not changed it and the company is still the same as it was when my father was alive.

Ploughing companies have a specific long-term focus. In the short-term it might be easier to find an economic equal and form a company for that season. This would mean that you would be able to plough at a optimum time as there would not be other people to consider. Planning would be easier. In the next

season you could do the same. This is not a good long-term strategy for the following reasons.

In the first instance one would not have anyone to plough one's land while one was away on migrant labour because the working arrangement would end when one could not reciprocate. Ploughing companies represent security of tillage. Even if a man is away at work, being a member of a company, because it has a long-term focus, ensures that one's land will be ploughed and planted.

Further, ploughing companies are specifically constituted to minimise risk. The constitution of ploughing companies are posited on moral criteria arising out of the kinship relationship. If ploughing companies were based on resource contributions one would find membership changing at the same rate at which member's resource holdings change. It is quite possible that company membership would change every year. As one cannot plan in terms of cattle, which might die, or ploughs, which are easily broken, basing a company on resource contributions increases risk. On the other hand, through basing membership on other, non-material, criteria, such as the morality of kinship, risk is decreased. Kinship provides, as Gulliver (1971: 218) argues

... an established, recognised, and acceptable system within which a man could operate with **reasonable confidence**, with reliable expectations, and in which his rights and claims, and his obligations and involvements, comprised a fairly coherent whole. (Ibid: 218, my emphasis).

The existence of ploughing companies posits an ideology of mutual helpfulness in that people are helped because if they were not they would not be able to plough and this is expressed as 'you must look after (bonisela) your relatives who do not have anything. People will say "He is rich but his family members are poor' ".

Although I argue that kinship is the essential factor in understanding ploughing companies, factors such as neighbourhood are also important, and neighbourhood ties do contribute to the formation of ploughing companies. Of the total number of members of ploughing companies 70% of households come from the same section and 90% come from the same sub-ward.

Neighbourhood ties are being displaced by the 'betterment' scheme in that people are moving from old neighbourhood areas and are forced to create new ties. Ngothoza's company demonstrates this process.

Case: Neighbourhood ties and 'betterment'.

NAME	CLAN	HUSBAND'S CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
NGOTHOZA	MPONDO	(Male)	HEAD	KOMKHULU
Thobile	Ngwevu	(Male)	Not related	Ngwevu
Nogungqile	Tshawe	Mpondo	FBSW	Komkhulu
Gulayo	Tshawe	(Male)	Not related	Komkhulu

Ngothoza established his household in the present position because of the 'betterment' scheme. He was forced to move from his old area in Tembu section of Nompha and established

his household in Komkhulu section. Even though he says that he is from Komkhulu section he still sits with the Tembu section at beer drinks and rituals. He is also recognised as the njoli (the person who shares the beer and meat at rituals, beer drinks, feasts, etc) of Tembu section.

His old household was very close to that of Thobile and they were originally in a company together. Their respective fathers worked together, and this arrangement has continued with the children. When Ngothoza is away it is Thobile and Gulayo who act as 'caretakers' (osipatheleni⁴) for the household. When one of Ngothoza's cows had been gored it was Thobile who came and ministered to it.

The fact that Gulayo joined the company demonstrates an attempt to form new links in the new neighbourhood. Gulayo only joined the company in 1988 after leaving Hloniphile's company in 1987. Gulayo was forced to hold an isitshongo in the 1987 ploughing season. Since Ngothoza moved to Komkhulu his family have increasingly relied on Gulayo for advice and on occasion have borrowed money from him. Now that he is a member of the ploughing company the osipatheleni role is more formalised because he now shares resources with Ngothoza.

Ngothoza is related to members of Madlangathi's company. Vukemini and Rhwayiman are Ngothoza's father's brother's sons yet they do not plough together. They both work and take advice from each other, and when Vukemini held a ritual it was imperative that Ngothoza attend because he is of the same agnatic cluster (on this issue see Hammond-Tooke 1984).

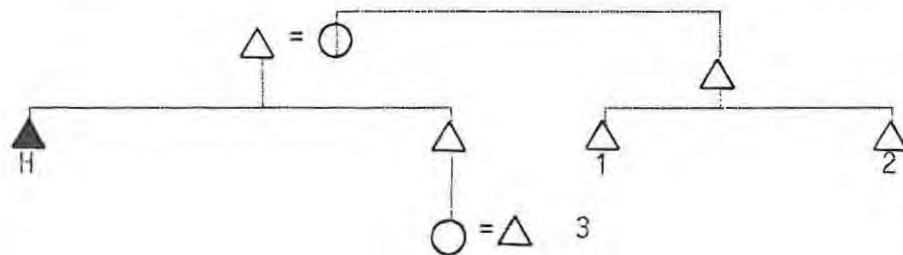
Case: Both Vukemini [1] and Rhwayiman [2] are cognates of Madlangathi. This shows that cognatic and affinal links, if we note Mantiyini [3], can be usefully manipulated to the same extent as agnatic links, and sometimes at the expense of agnatic links.

Madlangathi said that he helped Mantiyini because when Mantiyini married his daughter he had no cattle with which to plough as he had used his cattle for lobola.

4 Households whose heads are working as migrants have a 'caretaker' (usipatheleni) to act for them and look after their interests while they are away at work (de Wet & McAllister 1983: 41).

NAME	CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
MADLANGATHI	IPINGA	(H) HEAD	KOMKHULU
Vukemini	Iipondo	(1) MBS	Tembu
Rhwayiman	Iipondo	(2) MBS	Tembu
Mantiyini	Ngwevu	(3) BDH	Ngwevu

Diagram illustrating kinship links in Table 18.



When Madlangathi went away to work he gave his oxen to Vukemini and Rhwayiman's father to look after. When their father died Madlangathi took over the leadership of the company. The arrangement that Madlangathi had with Rhwayiman's and Vukemini's father persists today.

Madlangathi's company also shows that company membership is not exclusive to section membership. In this company Madlangathi is the only person from Komkhulu section.

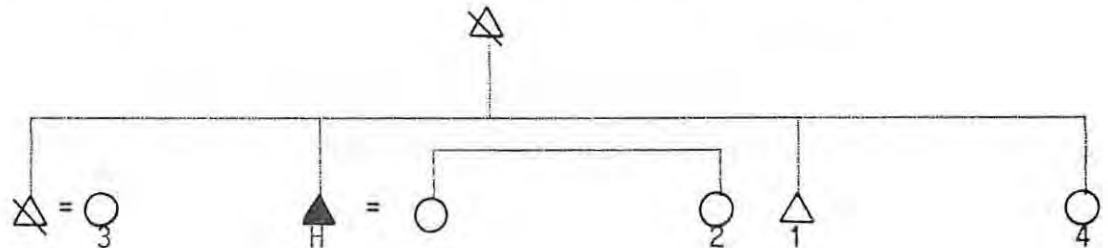
2) Other Nompha companies.

There are two companies in Nompha which have not been mentioned in the text but have been used in the calculations for Table 14. These are Grebe's and Nokholisile's companies both of which are described below.

Grebe's company.

Table 19: Constitution of Grebe's ploughing company.				
NAME	CLAN	HUSBAND'S CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
GREBE	TSHAWE	(Male)	(H) HEAD	TEMBU
Siculwana	Tshawe	(Male)	(1) Brother	Komkhulu
Nosebenzile	Dlamini	Cete	(2) WZ	Komkhulu
Nothanuzeni	Ngwevu	Tshawe	(3) BW	Komkhulu
Nothathile	Tshawe	Vundle	(4) Sister	Tembu

Diagram illustrating kinship links in Table 19.



Grebe's company is the only company where all local agnates plough together.⁵ There are no local agnates with whom Grebe does not plough. Although Nosebenzile is not Grebe's agnate the obvious company for her to join was that of her sister, Grebe's wife, her closest relative in Nompha. Her husband was the only person of the Cete clan in Nompha and there was no family company which she could join. Without the affinal link to Grebe she would have found it difficult to find another company to join. In this case Nosebenzile is exploiting the affinal link that she has to Grebe. There is a common ideal that people must help their affines because they are linked by cattle.

The last company that we need to deal with is Nokholisile's company. Nokholisile is recognised as the person who has the best garden in Nompha. Her garden is quite large (1.83 hectares). She has her own span of oxen, her own plough and her own planter, and is seen to be the head of the company.

⁵ The smallness of the company and the dearth of other agnates relates to the fact that these people (the people in Nompha call them the Tembu Tshawes) are recent immigrants to Nompha. See the story of how Tembu section came to be in Chapter 1.

Mokholisile ploughs with Qhakalakhe, her husband's brother's son. The only other close relative is her husband's brother's wife, Mokhelekile, who does not have a garden or a field.

3) Fission in companies.

Although company members express the wish that they should remain together "until they die", as expressed through calling ploughing companies umfelandawonye, companies do split. There are a number of reasons for this but the major reason for splitting is related to the work load of a company and its available resources. A company's resources are already under pressure if it has five members, in terms of the calculation below, and it cannot hope to cope with more than this number if all the members have a garden and a field. If a company has adequate resources it is logical for the company to split under two leaders.

In Shixini a team consisting of four oxen and two people (one ploughing and the other leading the oxen) ploughs at a rate of $900 \text{ m}^2/\text{hour}$. The average size field in Nompha is 14400 sq.m or 1.44 hectares. The average size garden is 8300 sq.m or 0.83 hectares. If a ploughing company has five members and each member has a field and a garden this will mean that 113500^2 , or 11.35 hectares will have to be ploughed. Most fields and gardens are ploughed (turned over) twice so a total area of 22.7 hectares needs to be ploughed. Because draught oxen are easily overworked, companies only work a 6 hour day, from 5.00am to 11.00am. A company, working this amount of time, will have to work for a total of 42 days to plough all the members' land.

Some ploughing companies use a span of six oxen. With six oxen a company will plough at a rate of $1350\text{m}^2/\text{hour}$. In this case, keeping all the other variables constant, the company will have to work a total of 23 days.

There are a number of factors which reduce the time available for ploughing. No work is done when it is raining and one day or more of sun is necessary for the soil to dry. Oxen and the workers tend to slip in the mud and the soil sticks to the plough, making ploughing exceptionally heavy work for the oxen, if the soil is too wet. If the soil is even mildly wet large pieces of soil are turned over and when it comes to planting they are not broken up and the seed, therefore, is not buried by the wheels of the mechanical planter. The only way to solve this problem is to plough over the exposed seed. Ploughing starts in October and continues into December. Most people will have planted by the end of November. In 1988 it rained on twenty of the sixty one days in October and November, and on fourteen of the thirty one days in December. This leaves us with a total of forty one days in October, November and December. The amount of time is further reduced if we note that one doesn't plough after heavy rain (over 15mm) or if it rains consecutively for a number of days. There were five days like this so the amount of time was reduced to thirty six days.

Table 20: Rainfall figures (in mm) for October, November and December. (Figures in **bold face** indicate Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.)

DATE	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER.
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	11.0	0
4	0	0	0
5	9.0	0	49.8
6	0	0	1.5
7	0	15.0	0
8	3.0	0	0
9	0	18.5	0
10	6.0	0	10.4
11	12.5	0	6.7
12	3.0	0	0
13	0	0	0
14	1.5	0	16.0
15	0	0	2.5
16	0	6.0	52.7
17	0	0	15.0
18	0	0	0
19	0	0	0
20	15.0	0	7.5
21	0	0	0
22	0	2.0	0
23	0	4.0	0
24	0	5.0	9.5
25	0	12.0	32.5
26	0	5.0	0
27	0	6.0	0
28	0	13.6	0
29	0	6.9	4.0
30	0	0	2.0
31	4.0	-	13.0
TOTAL	62.0mm	105.0mm	223.1mm
NO' WORK DAYS	Eleven	Seven	Seven

Source: Willowvale measuring station.

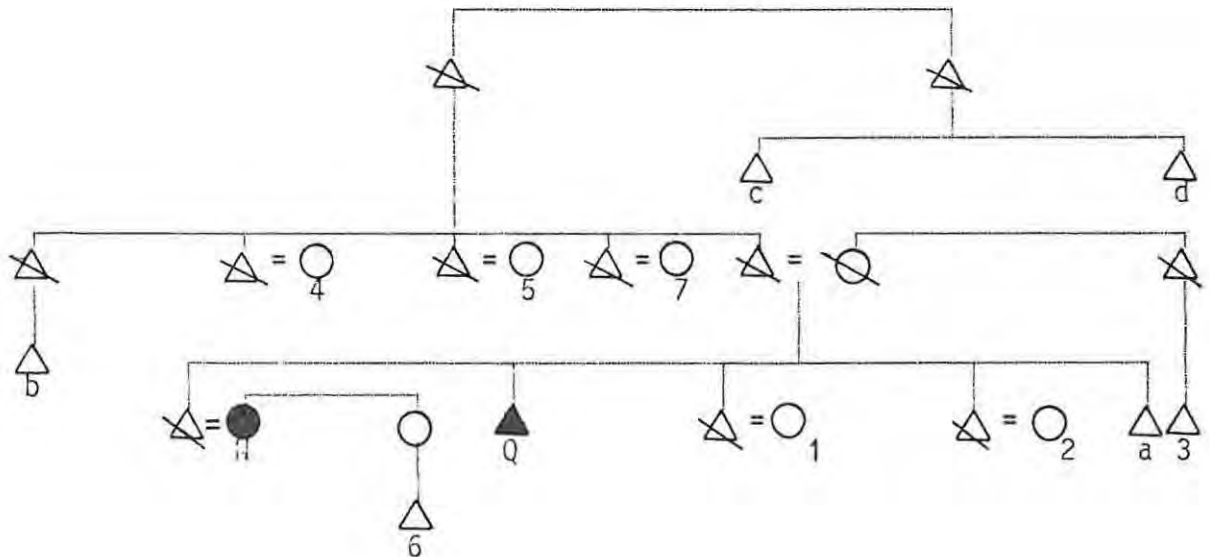
The time available for ploughing is further reduced because people do not work when there is a ritual or on a Thursday (dipping day), Saturday or a Sunday. If it is pension day people do not work. If the oxen are young one cannot work them too hard, they need frequent breaks. With a total of 42 or 28 days, depending on the size of the ox span, it is extremely difficult for companies to plough all their members' land timeously.

A company's ability to plough all of its members' land timeously is thus extremely difficult when we note that ploughing time is limited. The splitting of companies is therefore related to a company's ability to plough its members' land, given the available resources, within a limited time period.

Case: Amicable splitting.

NAME	CLAN	HUSBAND'S CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
NOKOLONI	TSHEZI	NGWEVU	(N) HEAD	NGWEVU
Nofundile	Ngqosini	Ngwevu	(1) HBW	Ngwevu
Nopasile	Mbamba	Ngwevu	(2) HBW	Ngwevu
Mntubawu	Mpondo	(Male)	(3) HMBS	Ndlelebanzi
Nongxamile	Mpondo	Ngwevu	(4) HFBW	Ndlelebanzi
Nopulamisi	Jola	Ngwevu	(5) HFBW	Ndlelebanzi
Khamanga	Mpondomise	(Male)	(6) ZS	Ngwevu
Nozolile	Khumbeni	Ngwevu	(7) HFBW	Ndlelebanzi
QHOJI	NGWEVU	(Male)	(Q) HEAD	NGWEVU
Zongezile	Ngwevu	(Male)	(a) Brother	Ngwevu
Maxolo	Ngwevu	(Male)	(b) FBS	Ngwevu
Bhabhazela	Ngwevu	(Male)	(c) FFBS	Ngwevu
Nowatyuza	Ngwevu	(Male)	(d) FFBS	Ngwevu

Diagram illustrating kinship links in Table 21.



Nokoloni's [N] and Qhoji's [Q] companies started off together. Stanford, Nokoloni's husband, and Qhoji, his brother, previously ploughed with their father. When their father died they were both left with a span of oxen. They started off ploughing together, using two spans of oxen in one garden. As they accumulated members there was too much work for the company to do and they, according to Qhoji, amicably separated. Both companies still help one another when one company is in trouble.

Some people say that they are members of Nokoloni's company, while others say that they are members of Stanford's company. Even though Stanford is deceased the company is still identified as his. Nokoloni is more the caretaker of the company, and is the head because she contributes the most to the company (six oxen and implements). It is always her field which is ploughed first. The second person to plough is Mntubawu [3] who contributes one ox to the company. There is a yearly rotation between the other non-contributing members of the company. The person who is third this year will be fourth next year, while the person whose land was ploughed last the previous year will be third this year.

There is thus a clear hierarchy in ploughing and this hierarchy is based on resource contributions. This way of organising ploughing varies from company to company. Some companies say that they all take it in turns to be first and last, other companies say that the people who do the actual work are the people who will have their gardens ploughed first, and another company head said that he could choose the time for ploughing. In this last instance it is the head who can plough at the optimum time. First is not always best, but last is usually worst. The head of the company is usually the person who contributes the most, and is thus in a more flexible position to choose when she/he wants to plough.

This can be a cause of conflict because the head of the company this year might not have the most resources in five years time. Even though his/her economic position might deteriorate that person might still like to retain the old position of dominance. This may cause conflict because old relations in the company might carry over even though the relative resource contributions have changed.

The split in Nokoloni's and Qhoji's company resembles the split in the Indian joint family outlined by Jithoo (1983). Jithoo relates the split in the joint family to the dependency ratio, by which she means the ratio between the size of the family and its number of labour units. The dependency ratio in the ploughing company is the ratio between the number of members and the resources (oxen, ploughs, and labour). The splitting of

ploughing companies can therefore be related to the natural development of the company through time. Ploughing companies go through a development cycle where the company is started, accumulates members and, in the last phase, splits.

The fission can be amicable as in the case of Nokoloni's and Qhoji's company or can be precipitated by conflict. Hloniphile, Sihonono and Dilikile were at one time members of the same company. Today they all have their own companies and plough alone.

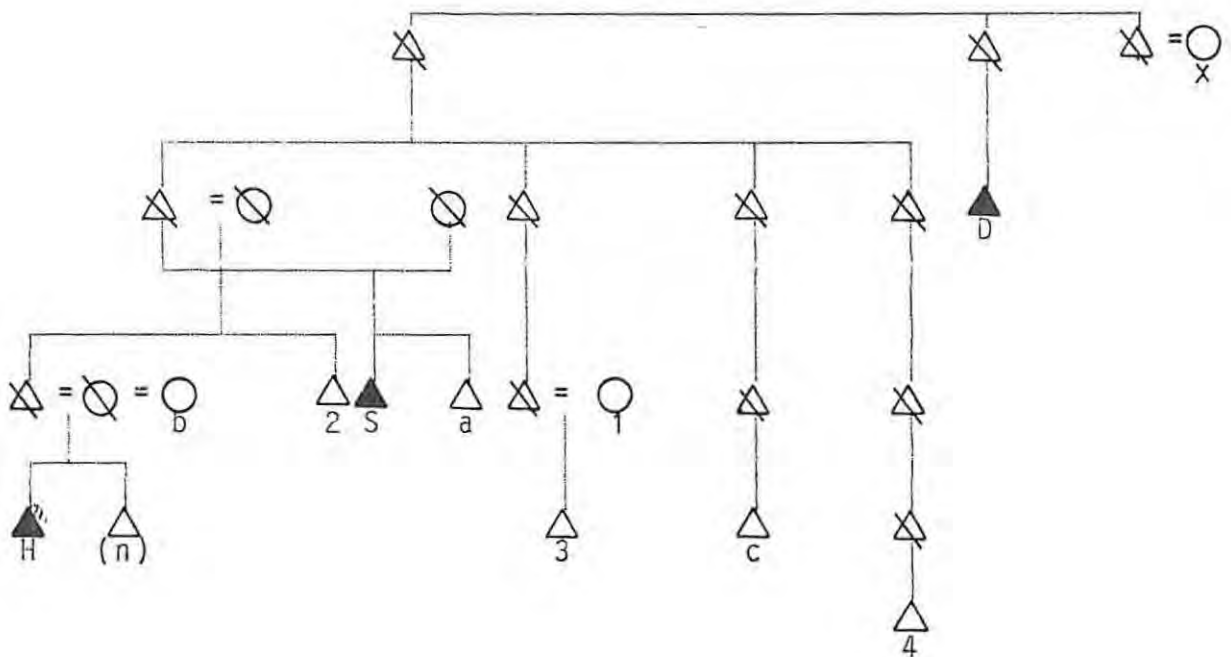
Case: Splitting precipitated through conflict.

Table 22: Hloniphile's, Sihonono's and Dilikile's ploughing companies.				
NAME	CLAN	HUSBAND'S CLAN	RELATIONSHIP	SECTION
HLONIPHILE	TSHAWE	(Male)	(H) HEAD	KOMKHULU
Nojoyni	Kwayi	Tshawe	(1) FFBSW	Komkhulu
Gotyombane	Tshawe	(Male)	(2) FB	Komkhulu
Msheyeni	Tshawe	(Male)	(3) FFBS	Komkhulu
Myuntsu ⁶	Tshawe	(Male)	(4) FFBS	Komkhulu
Ntongoza	Ngwevu	(Male)	(5) None	NDLELEBANZI
SIHONONO	TSHAWE	(Male)	(S) HEAD	KOMKHULU
Manguyana	Tshawe	(Male)	(a) Brother	Komkhulu
No-Awala	Khomazi	Tshawe	(b) B2ndW	Komkhulu
Mnkomeva	Bhayi	Ngwevu	(c) FBDD	Ngwevu
DILIKILE	TSHAWE	(Male)	(D) HEAD	KOMKHULU
Nogwevile	Vundle	Tshawe	(x) FBW	Komkhulu

⁶ Ntongoza was reluctantly seen as a member of the company by Hloniphile. Ntongoza gained access to the company through looking after Msheyeni's cattle when Msheyeni was away at work. Unfortunately Ntongoza died in January this year. He was found with his head in a stream the morning after a beer drink. Some people said that he had been murdered by witches.

These three companies should be dealt with together as the heads are all related to each other (Dilikile [D] is Hloniphile's [H] FFFBS and Sihonono [S] is Hloniphile's FF2ndWS). The company went through two splits both caused by arguments and there is still bad feeling between Hloniphile's and Sihonono's companies.

Diagram illustrating kinship links in Table 22.



The first split was when Dilikile split from the company. The split occurred when Dilikile was working as a migrant in South Africa. His wife related the story to me:

The other Tshawe's are the people who caused this problem because they went and harvested the field of Manguyana [a] and they did not tell me. When they were harvesting the load became too heavy. They came and told me that I must bring the oxen. I said that I was not going to bring the oxen because they did not tell me when they were going to harvest. Usually when we were going to plough or harvest, we discussed that we were going to plough or harvest at that place tomorrow so that we could all go there. I said to my son that he must not go and help them. That is when we separated.

Sihonono says that he left the company because Hloniphile's father, who was the head of the company at this time, was not ploughing properly for him and therefore Hloniphile's father had caused the company to split. Sihonono left the company and the people with whom he ploughs today followed him.

The split between Sihonono and Hloniphile's father took place in 1955. The two companies ploughed alone until 1973. In 1973 Hloniphile asked Sihonono to come and join him because Sihonono did not have enough oxen to make a span. In 1980 Hloniphile's father died and the company split again and they remain separate today. There could be three reasons for this split.

Firstly, the fact that Sihonono had to plough four people's land and the two companies with one ox span could not hope to do this amount of work. Secondly Sihonono's wife was incriminated with Mnyeliswa's wife in the death of Monjenane's (Hloniphile's younger brother [n]) wife (see case "Morality and kinship obligations" above).

Thirdly, Sihonono is generationally senior to Hloniphile. This might have been a problem because Hloniphile was the head of the company when he asked Sihonono to come back and join his company. Thus, although Sihonono is senior in terms of generation, in ploughing he was junior. The two status positions, the first ascribed and the second achieved, were contradictory and thus Hloniphile and Sihonono were incompatible in the same company.

The interesting thing about this split is that fission occurred between the people of the second wife, or right hand wife, of Hloniphile's grandfather, and descendants from Hloniphile's grandfather's Great wife. The relationship between people from the Great wife, and the right hand wife is historically one of adversity. The classic case of this conflict ridden relationship lies in the chieftainship. There was always conflict between the son, and heir, of the Great wife and the children of the right hand wife. The son of the Great house would be the person to succeed his father as chief at the expense of the children of the right hand wife. The rivalry and subsequent rift between Gcaleka and his brother, Rharhabe was over this issue (see Peires 1981: 45-63). The relationship was not only antagonistic between sons of the respective houses, but also between the mothers of the one house and the sons of the other and it is in this sense that we can understand No-Awala [b] ploughing with Sihonono and not Hloniphile.

Dilikile formed his own company and until quite recently was ploughing with his sister who lived in Folokwe. He said that he was helping her in ploughing, but now it is too far away to go and plough. He now ploughs with his father's brother's wife. Geographically Nogweville [x] is the relative who lives

closest to him. He prefers to work alone because then there are no quarrels.

There is no problem if one ploughs alone or helps someone (i.e. if one is not in a company with them). In the old days everybody was having his own span. If one was not finished then the family would go and help him. Last week I helped Sihonono to plough the field of his son. Sihonono has enough oxen but they are still young. There are only two old oxen.

Even though companies split this does not stop people from helping each other. Dilikile helps Sihonono even though they are not in the same company anymore.

4) Strategies for gaining access to ploughing companies.

Having described the companies, the way they operate and the reasons for companies splitting, it remains to describe the strategies through which people gain access to a company.

The first strategy which an individual can pursue is to brew beer. A household can brew beer and call individuals with oxen to come and plough his/her garden/field or an individual can call a number of companies to come and plough his/her garden/field. This work group is called isitshongo or umgqibelo (Saturday) and people say that the ploughing is done on a Saturday.

In Nompha 'isitshongo' and 'umgqibelo' are used in the same manner. McAllister (personal communication) said that he found that these two terms referred to different forms of cooperative labour in Shixini. Umgqibelo is when a number of ploughing companies plough each other's land on a reciprocal basis and no beer is brewed. Isitshongo is when a person asks **individuals** to come and plough with their oxen. In Nompha these two terms were both used to refer to the cooperative arrangement where an

individual brews beer and calls individuals or companies to come and plough.

A problem with holding an isitshongo is that the household is not always able to choose the day on which it wants its land ploughed. Company members have first option to a company's resources. Only when the company's obligations to its members have been fulfilled will these resources be utilised in ploughing for a person who is not a member. The person who wants to hold an isitshongo is, therefore, not able to utilise the company's resources at the ideal time. The isitshongo is set aside for a Saturday when, theoretically, ploughing companies will have the day off. Ploughing companies are not always able to do this because if it rains through the whole week and is clear and sunny on Saturday the company will work on that day. This will mean that the isitshongo which has been planned for that day will not take place.

Organising an isitshongo requires long term planning and in the ploughing time it is not always possible to do this. There are optimum days for ploughing. The season can be contracted because of rain, or expanded because of a lack of rain in the ploughing months. Thus, the holding of an isitshongo might be incompatible with the demands placed on the companies because of the unpredictability of the season.

Given the compressed nature of the ploughing season (see calculation above) we see that it is difficult to gain access to

a ploughing company's resources through holding an isitshongo or umgqibelo. The only real alternative is to gain access through being asked to help the company when it has a shortage of labour.

Before being asked to help a company a person must first show that he is a hard and reliable worker. Young men demonstrate their reliability through attending work parties on a consistent basis.

Case: Tord is 32 years old and has three young children. He has been working as a migrant for a number of years, but has yet to obtain any livestock. Tord is one of the young men in Nomphe who always attends work parties. He does not have a field of his own but borrows an unused field from a relative. In the last ploughing season his mother's brother's son, Mpempe, asked him to work for his company because they were short of labour. Tord only contributed labour to the company and was not recognised as a member of the company by its head. Mpempe said that they had asked Tord for help in the last ploughing season and the company had ploughed for him in return.

At this stage of working for a company people are not recognised as members. They work with the company but the head of the company does not reckon them as being members of the company. This is particularly evident when the person who is working with the company is not related to the head of that company. People who are not closely related are only regarded as members of a company if they contribute resources or have contributed in the past. These resources can be labour, and a woman can join a company if she has sons that can work.

Another alternative is to start one's own company but this depends on whether one has the available resources. As most companies are centered around local agnatic clusters, household's

gain membership of a company in terms of the agnatic link. Most of the companies in Nompha have been in existence since before the present oldest member was born. People's fathers were members of a company and they were naturally drawn into the company over time.

CONCLUSION.

This chapter has described the factors underlying the organisation of Nompha ploughing companies. Ploughing companies have been placed in an historical context, without which it is impossible to understand them. The historical context helps us to understand the current division of labour, the roots of cooperation in ploughing, and the constitution of the ploughing companies, especially their emphasis on kinship.

Some people could argue that kinship is not a principle on which ploughing companies are organised, but rather that kinship serves a legitimising function in companies. In other words if one had to ask a person why he ploughs with kin the answer would be "because I am obligated to help my relatives". I have argued that kinship is an organisational principle for the following reasons. Firstly, how can we understand that 86% of company members are either agnatically (70%) or cognatically (16%) related to the head when it would, in many cases, make more sense to plough with unrelated people? There are two reasons for this. Firstly, one could then form a company with people who all contribute the same amount and thus not have to carry non-

contributors. Secondly, one could only plough for a limited number of people thus reducing the work pressure on the company. This is recognised by the people themselves when they say that they would prefer to plough with unrelated people because there would be less trouble as kin tend to be jealous of each other and their wives fight (See "Splitting precipitated through conflict", case above). The only conclusion that one can reach is that there are very real moral obligations which exist between kin. The moral value of helping kin, as expressed by the people, is seen to operate in practice. In this case there is a correspondence between what people say and what they actually do.

Secondly, I have argued that basing ploughing company membership on moral criteria, such as kinship, is rational. My argument is that morality creates reliability and this has been backed up by both Gulliver (1971) and Bloch (1973). The risk of agriculture brought about through the unpredictability of natural factors, such as the weather, is partly ameliorated though controlling the human factor. Kinship, because it establishes well recognised norms and predictable behaviour, is a means through which the human variable is controlled.

Although the moral foundation of ploughing companies rests on the morality of kinship the morality is subject to real practical material constraints. I have shown that kin fight and that most informants say that conflict in ploughing companies is caused by the wives of members. I have also shown that the splitting of companies is rooted in the development of the company over time.

A company's resources, in terms of cattle, implements and labour, are limited and thus the work that a company is able to do, within a specific time period, is limited. When the company has too many members it becomes impossible to plough all of its members' land timeously and the company splits. The splitting of a company can be amicable, as in the case of Qhoji's and Hlokoloni's companies, or riven with conflict, as in Hloniphile's, Sihonono's and Dilikile's companies.

The splitting of companies does not mean that ex-members no longer cooperate with one another. When one of the companies needs help it is able to call on an ex-member's company. In both cases where companies split, cooperation between companies has occurred. I would argue that even when company members cannot work amicably together and the company splits, the morality of kinship still applies. Even though people are not fellow company members they are still kin.

The morality of kinship explains why some people, with nothing to offer other than more work for the company, are members of ploughing companies. Without some moral principle underlying the organisation of ploughing companies, in other words if membership of a company was based on the individual's ability to contribute resources and not on some moral obligation, most people in Nompha would not be able to plough. It must be stressed that kinship is not the only basis for the constitution of ploughing companies. I have illustrated that there are a number of other factors such as friendship and pre-existing obligations, which in certain

situations become important. Kinship provides a framework within which people gain access to a company and through which membership is mediated. People say that they will let a non-kin member join the company but stress that the prospective member will be questioned as to why he/she left his last company and if the applicant is not seen to be reliable the application will be refused.

CHAPTER 5: THE ORGANISATION OF WORK AS REFLECTED IN RITUAL.

This chapter illustrates how ritual reflects working arrangements. Although work is primarily an economic activity it is also fundamentally social in that it is done by individuals and groups of people. In Shixini relationships between people are reflected in ritual, both sacred (as in ritual slaughtering for the ancestors) and secular (as in the beer drinks which are held for a large number of reasons). All secular ritual has a sacred element as the ancestors are always present in secular ritual. I still refer to these rituals as secular because the ancestors, being always present in everyday life, are not explicitly recognised while in sacred ritual the names of the ancestors are explicitly invoked by the participants.

The way in which the relationships between different groups of people are played out is different in each case. In secular ritual the importance of neighbourhood and community are the fundamental issues which are highlighted through the performance of the ritual. In sacred ritual, kinship relationships are highlighted at the expense of neighbourhood and community.

I will argue that both rituals highlight working relationships (they reveal relations of production) albeit in different ways. This is contrary to Bloch's (1974, 1977) assertion that sacred ritual 'hides the world' and secular ritual 'reveals the world' (Bloch 1977). I will argue that both rituals dramatise relations of production. Although these rituals dramatise existing

productive relationships they also create and set patterns of behaviour which provide an interpretive framework for future action. In this sense these rituals are both "models of" and "models for" reality (Geertz 1973).

Secular ritual.

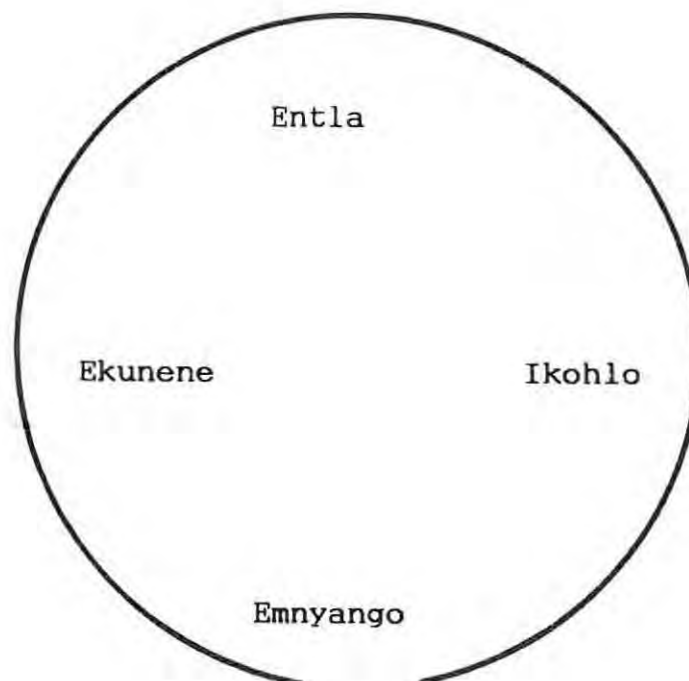
It is in secular ritual that the relationship between neighbours and the value of community¹ are highlighted. These rituals take the form of beer drinks. All beer drinks have a similar structure but the reasons for brewing vary. In looking at these rituals I will focus on how relationships between groups (age groups, neighbourhood groups, and men and women) are reflected in seating arrangements and in the distribution of beer.

Beer drinks take place in a hut and to understand the way seating arrangements reveal the relationships between people we first have to understand how the hut is spatially separated and the status (high/low) which is associated with each part of the hut. An analysis of the spatial organisation of the hut is important because as J.Comaroff (1980: 54) says:

... the symbolically ordered environment, particularly "inhabited space" such as the house, objectifies the classifications and organizing principles underpinning the wider socio-cultural system.

1 I use the term "community" in the loosest possible manner in the sense that it refers to people who live in a specific geographic area and recognise themselves as belonging to the same area.

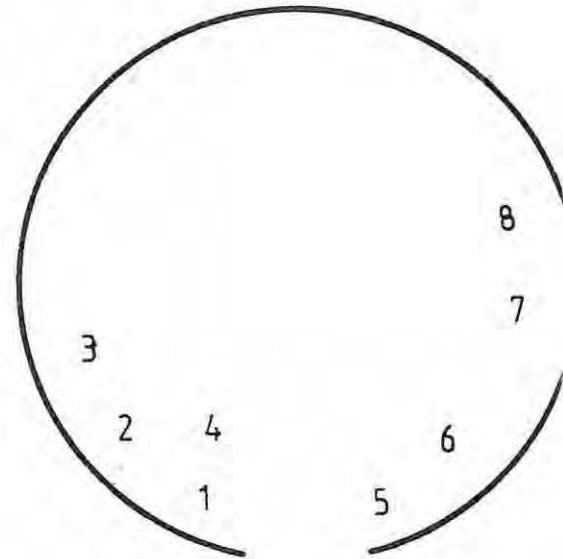
The first division is in terms of left and right (as one stands at the back of the hut facing the door). The right hand side is associated with men (called ekunene) and the left hand side is associated with women (called ikohlo). The right hand (male) side is positive and the left hand (female) side is negative (McAllister 1989: 2). Thus people who sit on the left hand side are of a junior status to those who sit on the right hand side. The hut is further divided up into front and back, and outside (against the walls) and inside (near the hearth). The front of the hut (called emnyango) is a superior position to the back of the hut (entla).



The following beer drink was held by Tord (Komkhulu section) to mark the fact that he was now establishing his own household.

The seating arrangements of the men in the hut were the following:

- 1) Komkhulu section.
- 2) Tembu section.
- 3) Ndlelebanzi sub-ward.
- 4) Senior members of the Mpinga clan.
- 5) Komkhulu section.
- 6) Young men of Komkhulu with other young men of Nompha.
- 7) Folokwe sub-ward.
- 8) Ngwevu sub-ward.



There are a couple of points that need explanation here. The Komkhulu people sitting in position (1) were all old (all above 55 years old) senior men. Next to them sat Tembu section (position (2)), the smallest section in Nompha having only nine households, which is the closest section to Komkhulu and also dominated by members of the Tshawe clan. In position (3) sat members of the Mpinga clan, the clan of the man who was holding the beer drink. In position (5) were two old men from Komkhulu section. The one old man, Dilikile, says that he does not sit on that side of the hut (position (1)) because the people who sit there are all his children. Dilikile is their grandfather's brother's son and thus, although being of similar age, is of their father's generation. At all Nompha beer drinks he sits on the left side closest to the door. Sitting with him was another old man who said that he was not yet old enough to sit with the

old men, but that he was senior to the young men and therefore sat closer to the door. In position (6) sat the young men of Komkhulu with other young men from Ngwevu section. This was not a large beer drink and Ngwevu section was incorporated into Komkhulu section.

At this ritual the section was only emphasised in the distribution of the iimvuko beakers. The rest of the distribution emphasised the sub-ward. One beaker was given to each of the three Nomphe groups represented at the beer drink (positions (1), (2), (5) together with (6)) and a beaker was also given to people of the Mpinga clan (the clan of the man who was holding the beer drink) (position (4)).

McAllister (1989: 15) says that these beakers symbolise the value of good neighbourliness.

This beer then symbolises the section as a local, co-operating group and the context in which it is drunk reinforces this. It is the very first of the formal distributions, announced to and given out in front of everyone else at a time when attention is focused very sharply on the proceedings, and it goes to men and women before even the men of the other sections and sub-wards have been given a share. The effect is a powerful public display of the corporateness and exclusiveness of the sub-ward section.

After the iimvuko beakers had been consumed another two beakers were distributed. One beaker went to the women who were sitting outside and one beaker to Ndlelebanzi sub-ward. The second beaker is of importance as it symbolises the close relationship between the people of Nomphe and Ndlelebanzi.

At a another beer drink (beer for the harvest: utywala bomvuno) held in Ndlelebanzi sub-ward (Komkhulu section) there was an argument because the Ndlelebanzi injoli had given the people of Folokwe a larger share than the people of Nompha. Tatana (a Ndlelebanzi man from Komkhulu section) stood up and asked why the people of Folokwe received a larger share than the people of Nompha, saying: "The people of Folokwe are far away, when there are robbers we will chase them away with the people of Nompha", meaning that Komkhulu section has a closer relationship with the people of Nompha than with the people of Folokwe.

The problem was that the injoli who was sharing the beer comes from Meshe section, the Ndlelebanzi section which borders on Folokwe sub-ward. These men have a closer relationship with the people of Folokwe than with the people of Nompha. The injoli was therefore expressing this mutual dependence through giving Folokwe a larger share. However the beer drink was held in Komkhulu section of Ndlelebanzi, the Ndlelebanzi section which borders on Nompha. This recognition of Folokwe was thus, in this context, inappropriate because the people of Komkhulu section have a closer relationship with the people of Nompha.

We can see how the distribution of beer expresses relationships of co-operation. The degree of co-operation is relative to geographic distance and this is recognised in the distribution of beer at beer drinks.

After the iimvuko beer had been drunk the rest of the beer was shared.

Two beakers to the old men of Komkhulu (position (1)) [9 people].

One beaker to Ndlelebanzi (3) [6 people].

One beaker to Komkhulu section (5) [5 people]².

One beaker to the young men (6) [5 people].

One beaker to Folokwe (7) [6 people].

One beaker to Ngwevu sub-ward (8) [3 people].

After these beakers were consumed ivanya (watery beer from a second straining) was distributed to the young men. This is not very popular beer and people say that it is water (amanzi) and only suitable for women. This is why it is distributed to the young men. McAllister (1987: 266) says that "the fact that there is one beaker (of ivanya) which starts with juniors rather than elders emphasises the fact that most beakers start with elders". The distribution of second rate beer to juniors rather than seniors symbolically highlights the relationship between the two groups.

In terms of seating arrangements the young men sit in an inferior position on the left hand side of the hut away from the wall. They are given less beer than the old men and in the distribution of beer it is they who do the work of fetching and carrying beakers and barrels of beer.

² This includes the anthropologist and his field assistant.

This beer drink, like many others in Shixini, symbolically represents relationships between groups and between the sexes through the arrangement of space. Women sit outside while men sit inside, juniors sit on the left while seniors sit on the right, sub-wards with whom the host section has a special relationship sit in a superior position to a sub-ward with whom the host section has no special relationship.

The argument is that the organisation of space at beer drinks symbolically reflects the relationship between groups of people and that this relationship is based on the way in which co-operation is organised. We can see the arrangement of space at beer drinks as being a symbolic map of economic cooperation.

The first division is that between men and women. Men sit inside the hut and women sit outside. This reflects working relationships in the following manner.

At hoeing parties the people who do the work are women (old and young) and young men. The senior men who attend these work parties do so as abasarhi³ and do not do any work. They sit away from the workers and during work breaks are given a beaker of beer called ingcanda (porcupine). At work parties there are always abasarhi and they are always given a beaker of beer. People say that this is customary and that there would be trouble if they were not given this beaker.

3 The term abasarhi comes from the word ukusarha 'to go about seeking beer or brandy' (McAllister 1987: 242).

Spatially the beer drink reflects the superior status of men over women. This is also true at work parties where the old men do not have to work but still receive beer (although not in the same quantity as the workers) while the women must work. Men are allowed not to work while women, especially younger women, must work.

The second spatial symbol is the division between old and young. The old men sit on the superior side of the hut (ekunene) and the young men sit on the inferior side of the hut (ikohlo). This is again reflected in the organisation of work in that it is generally the young men who do all the work. In ploughing it is the young men who plough and it is the old men who watch and supervise. In hoeing it is the young men who do the physical labour (in combination with women) and the old men, and some older women, who sit and drink.

Old men are in a position (in terms of their age) where they do not have to work but are still able to reap the benefits of other peoples work. Meillasoux (1978: 161) argues that the hierarchy derives from the fact that the aged are the suppliers of seed derived from the previous productive cycle. The aged are the people who control the means of subsistence (seed and land) and are therefore in a powerful position.

Work party beer drinks.

The way in which work party beer drinks are spatially organised and the way in which the beer is controlled and distributed

differs from other types of beer drinks. At these beer drinks the major division is that between workers and non-workers. It is the senior men who have worked who control the beer but it is the workers, as a group, who decide on how it is to be distributed. Men and women both receive the same amount of beer and thus there is no discrimination in terms of beer allocations with regard to sex.

After the work party the workers return to the house of the host where more beer is distributed. Here the workers sit inside the hut (according to the male and female sides) while the abasarhi sit outside. Only when the workers have drunk their fill do they call the people from outside to come into the hut. In the hut the beer is not distributed according to sections and sub-wards, but according to numbers where equally sized groups are given similar beakers.

At work parties the sub-ward sections are not emphasised and beer is given to workers and non-workers. When people are recruited for ploughing and oxen are used, beer is served amongst the people who have actually done the work and the rest is shared to people of the area according to sections and sub-wards. To organise such a work party a man/woman calls people to come and plough his/her land. To do this he/she must brew about two ingwele (about 30 amanxithi). It sometimes happens that this is delayed. The one beer drink of this type that I attended took place a couple of months after the work had been done.

Now, workers, these beakers that we have been given are from Gulayo who had nothing at that time. He was nearly too late to plant because he did not have a field. We started immediately as we thought of his children. We didn't even worry him about anything as he had not cooked [brewed] something for us. We have waited until today. We didn't even say "today we want that food you have promised us". It is he who called us to give us our food. All I can say is "Thank you". We want him to eat from our food that Thixo [God] gave us today.

The first beakers that were shared out were to the men who had worked. There were two senior men, one young man and a young boy. The young boy, not yet being allowed to attend beer drinks, had to drink in a separate hut.

Sorry before anyone says anything I want to say that there is a young man who was working with us. He cannot stay with us. We have to give him one beaker of umqombothi outside. Thank you.

Other than these beakers for the workers the rest of the beer was shared by section and sub-ward in much the same pattern as outlined above.

There are thus two types of work party beer drinks which depend on the work done. When the work is done by people there is a division between workers and non-workers and the beer is shared by numbers. When the work is done by people and oxen the people who did the work are recognised through being given their own beakers and the rest of the beer is shared by section and sub-ward.

How can we understand this difference? To answer the question we have to look at the role of cattle in Shixini. Cattle are both ritually and economically important. Economically they are

used for ploughing, their manure is used for fertilising gardens and fields, and they are also a store of wealth.

In rituals they are the beings which mediate between the dead and the living. When cattle are slaughtered for the ancestors the bellowing of the ox, when it is stabbed, is a sign that the ancestors have accepted the gift. Cattle are used by men (the living) to communicate with the dead (the ancestors). It is in this role that we can understand why, when cattle are used in work, the beer is distributed to the community.

In all beer drinks there is a religious element. Only in some is it expressed explicitly but people say that the ancestors like the smell of beer in a homestead. Ancestors are drawn to the homestead by commensality and this commensality is explicitly evident at work parties where cattle are used in work.

The reason that beer drinks for work in which cattle are used are different to beer drinks where they are not used is because the role of the ancestors in the life of people is more explicit. Cattle are ritual animals and when they are used in work they must be thanked in a ritual manner. Rituals need people and this is why a lot of beer is brewed at work parties where cattle are used for work.

This is where the beer drink called utywala beenkabi (beer of the oxen) is important. This beer drink takes place after the harvest and before the next ploughing time. The beer drink is explicitly related to the role of cattle in work. The cattle are

thanked for their work and people say that this beer drink is also to sooth the weals of the oxen as they were beaten while they were working. In these beer drinks a beaker of beer is drawn and is explicitly said to be for a specific ox. People draw the beaker and say "This beaker is for so and so, the ox that brought the mealies from the field" or a variation of this. This ritual through the thanking of the oxen ensures a good harvest because it gives the oxen strength and at the same time thanks the ancestors. "To get a good harvest the only thing that you can do is to brew beer for thanking the oxen".

This beer drink has a specific religious component in that people do this to ensure a better harvest. It is much the same as another beer drink held at around about the same time in the agricultural cycle called utywala bomvuno (beer of the harvest).

At the latter beer drink beer is shared by areas and the people who actually did the work are recognised through the seating arrangements and the distribution of beer. People say that this beer drink is held to "taste the mealies" and it is also to thank the ancestors for the harvest as well as to ask for their help in the next season.

The only other explicit reference to the role of the ancestors in agriculture is in the ritual where a goat is slaughtered for a new plough.

Before you use a plough that you have bought you must first slaughter a goat for it. You take the digested grass from the goat that you have slaughtered and smear the plough with it. You also cut a small part

of the skin and tie it on the handles of the plough. By doing this you are protecting the plough and you say "I am protecting you so that you cannot break easily and when I have ploughed with you I will get a good harvest".

We see that secular beer drinks symbolically recognise working relationships between groups of people, the sexes, and individuals, through the manipulation of space. At these beer drinks it is neighbourhood and community which is emphasised. The relationship that is emphasised is that of neighbourhood. This makes sense because it is neighbours who most often combine for work. In sacred ritual the stress shifts from community to kinship.

Sacred ritual.

There is a definite ritual cycle with regard to rituals associated with the ancestors. After the burial the first ritual in the cycle is when an ox is slaughtered to accompany the man as he leaves the world of the living and joins the world of the dead. The ritual is called ukukhapha (to accompany). Hunter (1979: 230) describes how among the Mpondo a beast is killed on the day of the death of the head of a homestead. This beast is called inkomo yokuhlamba (the beast of washing) but is also seen to ukukhapha the dead person. The second ritual is when the ancestor is brought back to the land of the living. This ritual brings back the dead person as an ancestor. Before the ritual he was not yet an ancestor being just a dead person. This ritual is called ukubuyisa (to come back). This ritual, also called ukubona umzi, is held so that the deceased "may return nicely to

his umzi" (Hunter 1979: 23). A similar ritual, called ukuguqula ubawo ('turning back' or 'converting' the father) is also described by Pauw (1976: 53) in East London. All these rituals are of the ukubuyisa type and they function to convert, or bring back the dead person as an ancestor. The third ritual in the cycle is when the dead person (now an ancestor) is given a gift (isipho). It is the last of these rituals that I am going to outline below.

The ritual described below took place in September 1988 and the officiating clan was Ngwevu. Zanelanga Mbovane had decided in 1981 that he wanted to do isipho for his father. Zanelanga had saved enough money for the isipho. He had decided to hold the ritual at this time as he did not know if he would have money in the future to hold such a ritual if it was delayed. He had spent about R400.00 on beer, brandy, flour etc but the ox was something of which he had not calculated the value. The main aim of the ritual was to give a gift to his father, Mpunga, who would then look favourably upon him and protect him from harm.

This thing is a help to me because when old people are sleeping underground [in the grave] they are your helpers. They protect you from evil things that can be a serious problem for you. If you can't do this thing it happens that after a long time you could get sick, be stabbed by a person or something else that can endanger your life, or a car accident. That is what makes me do this thing before any of those things can happen to me. At the moment there is no important reason that forced me to do this thing.

Day one:

- 1) Agnatic kin, their wives, abatshana and close neighbours go into a hut.

There (with the exception of close neighbours) they dance in a circle around a fire which is lit in the middle of the hut (the ritual dance is called intlombe). The dancing and singing is periodically halted so that speeches may be made.

2) Men leave followed by women. The people stop in the courtyard (inkundla) and sing songs and speeches are made. The refrain (ukuvumisa), camagu ("be appeased" or "pardon" (McLaren 1963: 20)), is shown in brackets.

Camagu.

Camagu (Camagu Zulu) [Zulu is the praise name for members of the Ngwevu clan]

Say Camagu Ngwevu (Camagu).

To be here (Camagu).

That was my announcement (Camagu).

I had remembered my father (Camagu).

I wanted to cook something for him (Camagu).

A gift of the red ox called Dyambothi (Camagu).

I was not told by the diviner (Camagu).

Only that I have remembered him (Camagu).

Because I always knew that I have to do something for him (Camagu).

I have decided that this must happen (Camagu).

I did not get sick, I have not dreamed about this (Camagu).

The idea came into my heart (Camagu).

3) The cattle are brought into the kraal while the men wait in the inkundla. After the cattle have entered the kraal the men enter.

Camagu, Camagu (Camagu)

Here is the announcement from Zanelanga (Camagu).

We are here for the announcement of Zanelanga (Camagu).

He is giving a gift to his father Mpunga (Camagu).

He is giving this red ox called Dyambothi (Camagu) with its water [beer] (Camagu).

There was no sickness, he did not have pain in his body (Camagu).

He was not sick (Camagu).

He has not come from the diviners (Camagu).

It is only that he remembered his father (Camagu).

4) The selected ox is caught, placed on the ground and then stabbed by the inkulu "the senior representative of a group of men who can all trace their relationship to an apical ancestor" (Hammond-Tooke 1984: 85).

5) While waiting for the ox to die speeches are made by senior members of the officiating clan.

We met here before and discussed this day. Yesterday we also met and thought about this day. Here he [Zanelanga] did not tell us what he wanted to do. It is the custom not to tell people at the time. People should be told only on the day that it happens. Everyone is like that. Zanelanga [name of man holding the ritual] is giving a gift to his father Mpunga. Mpunga is the son of Mbovane the younger brother of Wose. He is giving this red ox. He has not gone to the diviners. There was nothing wrong. Now he has thought and seen that as he has these few days he must come here to do this thing. Everybody who is here in the kraal must listen to what I say. People must know about it. It has its beaker in the hut. He did not say "No it will be brewed later". The beaker is in the hut. They said I have to stop. That is all that was in my throat.

6) The ox is butchered and a piece of meat from above the right foreleg (intsonyama) is ritually eaten (ukushwama) with a beaker of beer by members of the clan in the kraal.

7) Raw meat is then distributed to members of the clan and the area. At this time the meat was roasted over an open fire.

8) Beer is then distributed in the same way as the meat.

9) At night there is singing and dancing inside one of the huts of the host's homestead,

This is a brief overview of the first day of the ritual. The relations which are stressed are those of the clan. Only at the end of the last day are members of the sub-ward and other areas recognised in the distribution of meat and beer. Even at this stage the clan members of the host group were segregated from the rest of the people. They sit on the right hand side of the kraal from the perspective of looking in⁴.

4 This is the inverse of the situation inside the hut. In the hut the left hand side is negative while the right hand side is positive. In the kraal the opposite is true. This could be because in the land of the sacred, the land of the ancestors, the reverse situation is true. This is reminiscent of Soyinka's book The Palm Wine Drinkard where in the land of the dead the dead do the inverse of what the people do in the real world. In the land

Day two:

- 1) People return to the homestead where they are given meat.
- 2) Member of the host clan go into the hut for the ritual dance (intlombe). The dancing and singing is again interspersed with speeches.

Stop. Stop mama. Hold on my sisters.
 Hold on my father's sister. Say Camagu Ngwevu! (Camagu).
 Say Camagu Ngwevu (Camagu).
 Say Camagu because Camagu is accepted (Camagu).
 Here is an announcement for you (Camagu).
 Zanelanga (Camagu) asked you to meet here today (Camagu)
 To be witnesses (Camagu) and also to come and wash [drink]
 from this beaker that I wash [drink] from today (Camagu).
 In the name of my father (Camagu) Mpunga who has been given a
 gift of the red ox, Dyambothi, from his son (Camagu).
 It has its water [beer] (Camagu).
 We have got everything (Camagu).
 There is nothing that we need (Camagu).
 Say Camagu Ngwevu (Camagu).
 I was not told by the diviners about him (Camagu) my father
 (Camagu).
 I knew that I have to do this for him today (Camagu).
 After he gave birth to me, his son, and died he left me as a
 man who is circumcised (Camagu).
 This is what came to mind, I have not dreamt about it. I was
 not sick (Camagu).
 I was aware that I must give him this thing [the gift] today
 (Camagu).
 I have tried to do all that I can so that he can hold my
 right hand (Camagu) so that I can do better work.
 So that I can manage to buy my own cattle (Camagu).
 I thank you.

- 3) After the intlombe the people leave the hut (men first) and stop in the inkundla where speeches are made.

Camagu. Say Camagu Ngwevu. (Camagu).
 Here is an announcement from Zanelanga (Camagu) who is giving
 a gift to his father Mpunga. (Camagu).
 He is giving the gift of this red ox, Dyambothi (Camagu) with
 its water [beer] (Camagu).
 Everything was as it is supposed to be (Camagu).
 We cannot say that anything is short (Camagu).
 There is nothing more that he should do. Everything is here
 today (Camagu).
 It was not a diviner who told him to do this thing (Camagu).

of the dead people walk backwards to go forward (that is if forward is not backward).

He did not dream of his father asking for meat (Camagu).
 It was only Zanelanga's heart that said "Your father is dead,
 you must do this for him" (Camagu).
 I stop Ngwevu (Camagu, camagu Zulu, camagu).

- 4) Meat shared to the host clan and by area in the kraal.
- 5) Men leave the kraal and sit by area next to the kraal.
- 6) Beer is shared. The first beakers go to the people of the host's sub-ward. These beakers are called umcakulo and people say that these beakers are the first beakers consumed by the host area to show that there is no poison.
- 7) The rest of the beer is shared to the people by area.
- 8) After the beer is consumed representatives from each area stand up and make speeches.

Here is something Zanelanga. I talk for the people of Nompha [sub-ward]. I have known Zanelanga from when he was born. He must remember his father who died. His father died when he was still a young baby. His tata omncinci [father's younger brother] looked after him. You are now the head of this homestead. You are now the one who looks after this homestead. Zanelanga my son, we want you to build this homestead. Bring maize. We want cows at this homestead. Look after your father. Look after him with great care. Thank you my son. Darkness can go and the light appear.

- 9) Singing and dancing in the hut at night.

On this the second day the local community is drawn into the ritual to a greater extent than on the first day. They are given a share of beer before all the other areas and there are not so many exclusively clan activities, other than the intlombe, as there were on the first day. There is also a specific share of meat which is given to the people of the host's sub-ward. This is the right hind leg of the ox (called umlenze) and is something which has to be given to the men of the area. At another ritual which I attended the people of the area demanded this share, and

after some argument about if it was the right time for its distribution, were given it.

This is important because it is only on the second day of the ritual that the people who are not related can demand their rights. On the first day they are just necessary observers of the ritual. On the second day they become participants and can make demands on the host clan.

Day three:

- 1) Eating of meat in the kraal. Shares by area.
- 2) After eating the meat in the kraal beer was shared by area outside the kraal.
- 3) The next step was the burning of the bones inside the kraal. This is something that is common to all rituals where animals are slaughtered for the ancestors.
- 4) The end of the ritual concludes with the eating of the remaining meat inside the hut by the kin group.

The third day of the ritual seems to be the least significant of the days. Most of the beer and meat has already been consumed and the beer that is left is usually sour. People still attend the ritual but on this day the number of people who attend is much lower than on the previous two days.

In this ritual, and others like it, there is a shift in emphasis from day to day and within the day. On the first day the emphasis is on the clan and other cognatic kin (e.g. abatshana). At the end of this day the neighbourhood and other areas are recognised. On the second day neighbourhood is emphasised and this shifts back to the kin group in the early afternoon. The

emphasis then shifts back to neighbourhood and community until the end of the day. On the third day neighbourhood and community are again emphasised and at the culmination of the ritual it is again the local agnatic cluster and other clan members.

<u>Table 23:</u> Shifts in the relationships stressed by the ritual.	
DAY	DOMINANT EMPHASIS.
One	Cognatic kin
Two	Neighbourhood and community
Three	Neighbourhood and community and then the local agnatic cluster and other clan members.

What does this ritual, and other rituals of a similar type, tell us about the world of social practice. It has been argued that ritual 'hides' the reality of social practice (Bloch 1974, 1977; McAllister 1989).

Bloch (1974) argues that the language used in ritual is characterised by formality. The formality of ritual language changes the ordinary forms of linguistic communication and therefore ritual language is "impoverished" because "the choice of form, of style, of words and of syntax is less than in ordinary language" (Bloch 1974: 56, 59). Language, in ritual, because of its restricted nature cannot be used to comment on, or explain reality. Ritual, because of the communication mode, is thus disconnected from reality and therefore

An attempt to link the context of ritual to the world of society does not work because in secular terms

religious rituals are mis-statements of reality.
(Ibid: 77).

In a later article Bloch (1977), drawing on Geertz's (1973) work on the Balinese, finds that conceptions of non-linear, or cyclical, time are evidenced in formal occasions such as ritual. On the other hand the concept of linear, durational time is used in everyday practice such as agricultural production. He concludes from this that the world of ritual, through its use of non-linear time, 'hides' the world of everyday practice. Time, as used and conceptualised, in ritual is a cultural specific convention while time, as it is used in everyday practice, is universal. In ritual communication society is the source of cognition - the concept of non-durational time - while in everyday practice the world beyond society, as a subject of human activity, is the source of cognition - the concept of linear durational time (Ibid: 285).

The second part of his argument relates to the notion of social structure as conceptualised by structural functionalists such as Radcliffe-Brown (1979). Bloch argues that Radcliffe-Brown's descriptions of social structure suffer from a serious methodological inadequacy in that "Social structure is only extracted from ritual communication" (1977: 286). As ritual communication 'hides' reality through its use of non-durational time, the social structure as revealed by ritual has no bearing on the world of everyday practice.

Social structure, far from being society, turns out to be a system of classification of human beings linked to other ritual cognitive systems, such as the

ritual notion of time. Like ritual time it has phenomenological expression only at certain moments of the long conversation [of social life], and interestingly it too [sic] also seems to be different from the cognitive social system of other moments of discourse. (Ibid: 286).

In light of the Shixini data how does Bloch's statement that "we continually find that such groupings as agricultural cooperative groups ... have no place in the classification system expressed in ritual" (1977: 287) stand. Does the holding of isipho 'hide' or 'reveal' the world of social practice?

McAllister (1989) describes how at beer drinks the distribution of beer and the allocation of seating places are always negotiated and decisions are reached through consensus. In sacred ritual, on the other hand, there is no negotiation. In the first instance we see a lack of formal language and the presence of negotiation. In the second instance we see the presence of formal language and the absence of negotiation.

McAllister then argues that because neighbours are essential to economic life in Shixini and because the importance of neighbours are explicitly recognised at beer drinks, beer drinks 'reveal' the world of everyday practice. Sacred rituals through emphasising kin 'hide' the world because kin do not do anything together as a group other than the holding of rituals.

In the isipho described above agnatic, cognatic and, to a lesser extent, affinal links are emphasised. Neighbours, although having an important role to play, are in a sense devalued. This does not reflect the reality of the importance of

neighbours in everyday life. I would thus agree with McAllister that these rituals 'hide' the world of social practice. But it is still important to note what is 'revealed' by these rituals. Kin, especially agnatic and cognatic, play an important role in agricultural production.

Cooperative labour groupings in the ploughing time are organised around kinship. In ploughing companies 70% of people are agnatically related to the head of the company, 16% cognatically and 6% affinally. Only 8% of people in ploughing companies are not related to the head of the company. I would argue that the reason for this revolves around the use of cattle in ploughing activities.

We can thus argue that these rituals 'reveal' the importance of kinship in the organisation of work. At the same time one has to acknowledge that at certain times kinship is emphasised at the expense of neighbourhood and community and as such these rituals only 'reveal' the role of kin in economic cooperation when that cooperation is centered around cattle. These rituals do not 'reveal' the importance of neighbours in other types of economic cooperation.

The secular and sacred rituals that I have described in this chapter are of a fundamentally different sort. I have argued that they are both, in different senses, models of reality. Geertz (1973: 93) says that a "model" has a model of and a model for component. When one speaks of a "model of" reality one is

speaking of a symbolic system, event, etc, which patterns itself on external reality. On the other hand a "model for" reality brings the outside world in line with the model as expressed by the symbolic system, event, etc. It is in terms of the model of and for concepts that we can understand the different ways in which secular and sacred ritual 'reveal' the world of everyday practice.

All rituals have both a "model of" and a "model for" component. Secular rituals through their manipulation of space and time replicate the world of social practice which exists outside of the ritual and thus emphasise real working arrangements and the importance of neighbours. Sacred ritual, on the other hand, through its manipulation of space, time and kinship relations (the evocation of the clan name) emphasise the importance of kin.

The argument that secular ritual can be linked to the world of social practice is not highly contentious and does not need explanation as it self evident. The link between sacred ritual and social practice needs argument as the relationship between the ritual and everyday reality is not self evident.

There are two arguments as to why sacred ritual can be linked to social practice. The first lies in the nature of the mode of communication and the second lies in the role of cattle. Bloch (1974) argues that ritual communication has no propositional force - it cannot "corner reality by adapting communication to past perception and connecting this with future perception"

(p.67) - but that it does have illocutionary or performative force - the ability to influence people and not to report facts (p. 67). Sacred ritual can be linked to social practice as it, like secular ritual, dramatises relationships between people thus creating a cognitive model which provides an interpretive framework for future action. Thus sacred ritual is linked to the world of social practice because it influences people to act within a specific organisational framework which has been prescribed or indicated through the symbolic unification of cattle and kin.

Cattle, through ritual, are associated with the clan, and more specifically with the agnatic cluster. The beast is ritually slaughtered by the senior agnatic cluster member and not the senior umzi member⁵. These rituals create and maintain agnatic cluster and clan identity, and it is through the sacrifice of cattle for the ancestors that this is carried out. Thus cattle can be seen to be agnatic cluster and clan 'property' (in the symbolic sense of the term) because they are the means through which the good fortune of the cluster and clan is maintained. The sacrificing of an ox means that the ancestors will look favourably on the household that has sacrificed the beast as well as on the cluster and, to a lesser extent, the clan. It is therefore understandable that kin, and more specifically, members

⁵ In rituals it is not the senior member of the household who slaughters the oxen but rather the senior member of the agnatic cluster. This person might be a member of the household but all that is necessary is that the person who actually does the stabbing is the senior agnate in the cluster (see Hammond-Tooke 1984).

of the agnatic cluster plough together. The ritual utility of cattle overlaps with economic cooperation.

Cattle can be seen as multivocal symbols as they symbolise different things in different contexts. In the ritual context they are symbolic of the relationship between the living and the dead, and of the kin bond; in marriage they are symbolic of the relationship between wife givers and wife takers; they are also symbolic of status and economic wealth. I would argue that, given the multivocality of cattle as a symbol, one cannot separate their ritual from their economic utility.

One can therefore see sacred ritual as being linked to social practice. As the ritual utility of cattle, and all the associations of kin solidarity and the ancestors, cannot be cognitively separated from their economic utility it is logical and necessary that kin plough together. The illocutionary power of sacred ritual is dramatically indicated by the fact that most people said that they would prefer to plough with people who were unrelated ("from a different clan"), but yet, they do plough with local kin.

Ritual, through its manipulation of symbols, both reflects and reinforces organisational principles underlying cooperative work in Shixini. Principles of neighbourhood and community and their importance in the organisation of work parties are reflected and reinforced in secular ritual while the principle of kinship and its role in ploughing companies are seen in sacred ritual.

CONCLUSION.

We may say that work is 'about' the physical and psychic energy a worker puts into producing, maintaining or converting economic resources; but **the choices, decisions and rewards of the worker are constrained by the logic of the system in which he works.** (Wallman 1979: 2, my emphasis).

The logic of agricultural production in Shixini is only accessible to the researcher if cognisance is taken of (i) the wider South African economy; (ii) the effect of seasonality of the agricultural cycle; (iii) the values of the society; (iv) social 'rules' such as reciprocity and kinship; (v) the productive resources of the household; and (vi) the way in which resources, specifically stock and land, are distributed within the community.

The logic of cooperative labour groupings can therefore only be extracted through an analysis of these factors. Cooperative labour arrangements are, in the first instance, **necessary** given (i) a shortage of labour arising from the migrant labour system; (ii) the seasonal cycle which creates labour bottle-necks at particular times in the agricultural cycle; and (v) the number of consumers and workers in the household which effect the need to participate in cooperative work. In the second instance cooperative labour is only **possible** given (i) the value of mutual help which exists in Shixini; (ii) the morality of kinship and its links with different reciprocal forms; and (iii) the fact

that some households have more resources and are thus able to help other, less well off, households.

The two forms of cooperative labour described are work parties (amalima) (Chapter 3) and ploughing companies (umfeladawonye) (Chapter 4). Work parties are organised through recruiting section members and neighbours (the organisational principle depending on the size of the work party) and are used for a wide range of activities. Ploughing companies are formed through the recruitment of kin (mostly agnates) and involve the use of cattle.

I argued (Chapter 4) that there are a number of reasons for kinship being the organisational principle on which ploughing companies are based. Kinship is the principle underlying the structure of ploughing companies because relations between kin are based on long-term principles of reciprocity, morality (see Chapter 3).

The second reason for kinship operating as the organisational principle is that ploughing involves the use of cattle. Cattle are both economic and ritual animals. In ritual they are used to communicate with the ancestors and thus are important to all members of the agnatic cluster. Rituals which involve the sacrifice of cattle to the ancestors bring together the agnatic cluster as well as members of the clan from far afield. Although these rituals are explicitly held for a specific ancestor the clan as a whole is recognised and strengthened. As such one can

see a sacrifice to a specific ancestor as celebrating the unity of the clan and therefore cattle are, symbolically, the property of the agnatic cluster and the clan. It is through these sacrifices that the clan is strengthened through bringing members together and by giving a gift to the ancestors and thus creating good will or removing bad luck.

If cattle are, in this sense, the property of the clan and the agnatic cluster it makes sense that when they are used, in the economic context, they are used by kin. The economic utility of cattle, cattle being multivocal symbols, cannot be separated from their ritual utility.

Work parties do not involve the use of cattle and therefore kin are not essential to their constitution. Work parties are organised on an ad hoc basis and when the specific task is completed members of the work party disperse. The organisational principle underlying the organisation of work parties is neighbourhood and section membership.

Other analysts have argued that reciprocity is not important to the organisation of work parties and Kuckertz (1983) said that:

It should be noted that this cooperation is generated by economic necessity, not any philosophy of cooperativeness and togetherness based on kinship or other forms of social arrangement [i.e. reciprocity]. (Kuckertz 1983: 199, parentheses mine).

I am in fundamental disagreement with Kuckertz's denial that reciprocity is not a factor of any importance in work parties. Reciprocity, in the context of work parties, has a long-term

focus in that people expect that their help will be returned to them at a later date. Kuckertz (1985) argues that work parties are only to the economic benefit of the organising homestead and this is true if one takes an atemporal view of these activities. In the long-term, participating in work parties also benefits the recruited and not only the recruiter.

If we take the view that reciprocity does not underlie people's reasons for participating in work parties then it is impossible to understand why people will participate in an activity which is to their detriment (seeing as they could have engaged their time more productively elsewhere).

The reciprocity which underlies the organisation of work parties is different to that which underlies ploughing companies. I have classified the reciprocity in work parties as 'mid-term' for two reasons. Firstly, it is not expected that the 'gift' of labour be returned immediately and, secondly, because people are recruited in terms of section membership and are rewarded with beer for their help the relationship between the recruiter and the recruited is one of equality¹. On the other hand long-term reciprocity, which underlies ploughing companies, is characteristic of unequal relationships between people (in ploughing companies the contributions to the company are widely

¹ This equality is asserted through the fact that when a garden is hoed a part of the garden is left for the owner to weed herself. (see Chapter 3).

differentiated) and where there is a strong element of obligation (as in kinship relations).

How does seasonality determine the structure of these two work groups? In the first instance both cooperative arrangements arise out of the fact that a shortage of resources exists at a particular moment in time which preclude some households from undertaking agricultural production on their own. In the case of work parties the major constraint to economic independence is a shortage of labour, while in ploughing companies there are a number of resource constraints - labour, draught cattle, and implements which can be translated as capital as implements are bought with money.

The demands for resources are seasonal in that all processes in the agricultural cycle have different resource demands. In the weeding season (from about January to March) there is a demand for the human resource. This demand is compounded by the fact that this is the period with the highest rainfall of the year. People find it impossible to hoe after heavy falls of rain because the soil tends to stick to the blade of the hoe making hoeing exceptionally heavy work.

Rain increases the speed with which weeds grow and one finds that when it has not rained families weed their own gardens. After rain there is a sudden surge in the number of work parties. Within the dry period households are able to weed their own

gardens and thus the demand for work parties is intermittent depending on rainfall.

Most households would find it impossible to weed all their cultivated land alone. Thus the necessity for work parties develops. In Shixini labour is in short supply with 73% of all adult men working away as migrants. In the weeding season people need to recruit large numbers of workers to weed their gardens and the demand for labour cannot be met by recourse to kin. In the weeding season the problem of labour supply and demand is solved through holding work parties.

The November and December ploughing season is shorter than the weeding season and because it is constricted by time and rainfall there is a great demand for the utilisation of ploughing resources within a very short time period. Fortunately, for the Shixini farmer, the use of draught oxen greatly increases the ability of the farmer to plough timeously. The problem is that most households do not own enough **draught** cattle to plough their land and ploughing companies solve this problem.

Ploughing is a precondition for weeding. If land was not ploughed and planted there would be no need for weeding. This might seem to be tautologous but it is necessary to emphasise the importance of ploughing relative to weeding. As ploughing is so important it has to be controlled and companies are a means of controlling the uncertainty of agricultural activity. I argued that although people cannot control uncertainty brought about by

seasonality it is possible to control the uncertainty of the human resource. The human resource in ploughing companies is controlled, firstly, because he/she is a member of a group which has persisted over time and therefore the obligations which a person has to a company are compounded. Secondly, the obligation which a person has to a company are reinforced by the fact that without a company people would not be able to plough. The third way in which the human resource is controlled is through the fact that the relationship between members of a company is moral - they are kin. People work together because they are kin and they stay together because they are kin.

In Shixini different cooperative arrangements are realised in different ways. Each task has to be seen in terms of the demands it places on resources and in terms of the time when the task is done. We thus find different organisational principles operating for different tasks - work parties have a neighbourhood focus while ploughing companies have a kin focus. The two different foci are reflected in the cognitive maps which are revealed in ritual (see Chapter 5).

In chapter five I argued that both secular and sacred ritual reveal cooperative arrangements. Secular ritual dramatises the work party while the organising principles underlying ploughing companies are dramatised in sacred ritual.

These are the two broad patterns which I have identified in Shixini but within these patterns there is considerable

variation. The organisation of work is affected by economic differentiation. Resources are widely differentiated in Shixini (see Chapter 3) and differentiation influences the way in which cooperative arrangements stack up against each other.

In Shixini poorer households are primarily labour givers while richer households are labour receivers. Richer households because they can afford to brew beer are able to hold a greater number, or larger, work parties. For poorer households work parties are a serious depletion of consumption resources. The analogy is the that of a person who has R100.00 spending R10.00 and a poor person who has R20.00 spending R10.00. In the first case the spending of R10.00 represents 10% of the households resources while, for the second person, spending R10.00 represents 50% of the households resources.

In chapter three I argued that differentiation also establishes the necessity for economic cooperation while at the same time creating the possibility of cooperation. Households with large gardens find it necessary to recruit labour while those with small gardens are able to spend time weeding these large gardens. This relates to principles of reciprocity because as resources holdings are not constant a household which donates labour at the present time might need to recruit labour in the future.

Other than differentiation another major factor influencing household production is the constitution of the household. I have shown that the number of consumers in a household

significantly effects yields (see Chapter 2). Households with a large number of consumers produce a significantly greater amount of maize than households with fewer consumers. The main reason for this is that the greater number of consumers in a household the greater is the **need** to produce to satisfy its consumption requirements.

Households depending on their economic position and their structure involve themselves in cooperative arrangements differently. The final question that needs to be answered is: What conditions in Shixini make cooperative arrangements possible? It is undoubtedly true that, in order to produce, it is essential that households involve themselves in cooperative arrangements. It is also true that given the present position of certain households (specifically the wealthier, larger households) it is to their detriment to be involved in cooperative arrangements - it is not necessary for these households to participate in these arrangements as they are materially self sufficient. Why then do they participate in cooperative labour?

There are two basic reasons for their participation. Firstly, and most simply, a households resources are not constant. People leave to build their own homesteads, cattle die, ploughs are broken etc and thus participating in cooperative arrangements today is an investment in the future. At some time in the future a household will have to ask for help from other people.

Secondly, and more importantly, people in Nompha (the sub-ward where this research took place) form a moral community. The morality of the community results from a number of factors. There is no doubt that people in Nompha would be able to find an affinal link, no matter how distant, with every other person. Relationships between people are thus dominated by a kinship idiom and this, to a certain extent, explains the obligations which people have to each other. The morality of mutual help is expressed at most public meetings and during beer drinks where a large number of speeches are made which explicitly recognise the mutual inter-dependance of the community.

The second factor is the material context in which Shixini people work and live. Cross (1988: 1-31) in her chapter 'Land reform and the black rural economy in South Africa' argues that the system of communal land tenure creates a moral community. In Shixini people gain access to land through making an application to the isibonda of the area in which he wants to live. The isibonda, after discussion with senior members of the sub-ward section, having approved the application takes the applicant to the Tribal Authority which, if the person's taxes are paid up, approves the allocation.

In the first instance the community, through its representatives, approves the application according to whether they would like to have that person living in the community. The community is thus, theoretically, able to reject or accept people which gives it a moral character. The transfer of land is thus a

moral transaction as it admits people to the moral community and because of this;

The indigenous land systems ... central focus is on establishing and maintaining the social exchange and support networks that underpin survival in a poverty economy. (Ibid: 20)

The communal land tenure system, given that land is allocated by the community, contributes to strong local organisation. This local organisation has a number of important results and Cross goes on to argue that:

The important point about local organisation is that it forms a reservoir of established interpersonal relationships out of which spontaneous interest groups can emerge and organise themselves. (Ibid: 21).

These spontaneous interest groups are the cooperative labour groupings which I have described and analysed in this dissertation.

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APPENDIX 1: NOTES ON SHIXINI SURVEYS.

Four surveys were carried out in Nompha.

Survey 1.

This was a general household survey. The survey schedule was designed for the Shixini Development Research Project (SDRP) by Dr Pat McAllister of the anthropology department, Rhodes University. The survey included the following questions.

- 1) Sub-ward and section affiliation.
- 2) Name and clan of head of household; marital status (widowed, divorced, single, married).
- 3) Names, age, and relationship to head of all adults living in the household.
- 4) Names, age, and relationship to head of all children living in the household.
- 5) Names, age, place of work and last time at home of all employed persons in the household.
- 6) Access to stock in terms of cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and other (e.g. pigs, poultry) of the household.
- 7) Ploughing means. Through what means did the household plough its land? If it was a member of a ploughing company who was the head of the company?
- 8) Frequency of garden/field use (is the garden/field used yearly, often, seldom, never?).
- 9) Attitudes to 'betterment'. Had the household applied for a site? What was the reason for the application or no application? If the household had moved because of 'betterment' when had it moved? If the household had not moved did it expect to move? General feelings about 'betterment'.

A sketch map of the area was drawn. Household section and clan affiliations were drawn onto the map.

Survey 2.

This survey asked the following questions and was applied to a random sample of 33% of the households in Nompha.

- 1) Household number and name of head of household.
- 2) Church affiliation and whether people worked/did not work only with fellow church members and the reason for this.
- 3) Number of migrants in the household (approximate income¹) number of pensioners.
- 4) Number of cattle, horses, sheep and goats. Number of cattle lent out for nqoma² and where kept.
- 5) Ploughing company membership, contribution to company, why the respondent joined this company and not another one. Membership of previous company and reason for leaving the company.
- 6) Field and garden ownership and respective sizes (area).
- 7) Field and garden use. Were they planted in the last year, who planted them, and if they were lent to someone else what was the arrangement?
- 8) Number of work parties held by the household and number of work parties attended by members of the household.
- 9) Informal sector activity. If the household was selling anything what was being sold? Did the household make any money from these activities and what problems were encountered?
- 10) Labour employment in the community. Did any members of the household work for any other household and what was the payment?
- 11) Did the household hold any rituals for the ancestors? What were these rituals called?

1 The attempt to measure household income was unsuccessful as all the people interviewed had absolutely no idea of how much their husbands/sons earned or brought back.

2 McLaren defines nqoma as "a cow lent out for milking" (1963: 109).

Survey 3.

This survey was also administered to a random sample of households (33%) and related to field and garden use. The following questions were asked with reference to gardens and fields

- 1) Did you turn the soil in winter?
- 2) How many times did you turn the soil before you planted?
- 3) Did you plant anything in winter?
- 4) How many times did you weed/hoe?
- 5) Did you use a skoffel?
- 6) How many amalima did you have?
- 7) Did you fertilise your garden/field?
- 8) If yes did you use fertiliser, manure or a mixture of both? How many bags?
- 9) If you used fertiliser what type of fertiliser did you use?
- 10) Did you use improved seed?
- 11) If yes how much did you use and what type was it?
- 12) How many bags of maize did you get from your garden/field?

Survey 4.

This was a network survey and the data was not used in the dissertation in any substantial sense. The object of this survey was to ascertain if the size of a household's network correlated with its position in the domestic cycle. In addition, I wanted to find out if different people were called upon for different needs. Respondents were asked (i) who they worked with; (ii) who they borrowed consumable items (e.g. sugar) from; (iii) who they borrowed money from; and (iv) to whom did they go for advice. For each name that a respondent gave to me I asked how

this person was related to the respondent, if at all. Respondents were asked to list the section, clan and, if female, husband's clan, and how they were related to each participant, for each person listed in their network.