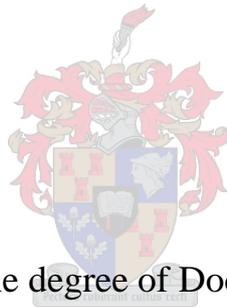


“A Superstitious Respect for the Soil”?:
Environmental history, social identity and land
ownership – a case study of forced removals from
Lady Selborne and their ramifications, c.1905 to
1977.

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Promoter: Dr Sandra Swart

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature

Date:

Abstract

This thesis presents, from the perspective of socio-environmental history, a case study in forced removals and their ramifications from 1905 to 1977. The focus area is a township called Lady Selborne in South Africa, near Pretoria, and Ga-Rankuwa, where some of those displaced were relocated. The thesis demonstrates that forced removals did not only result in people losing their historical land, properties and material possessions but also their sense of being and connectedness. The focus is thus on the changing perceptions of people in the midst of their land loss, an area of study that is generally under-examined in academia. The research provides a complex picture of the ramifications of forced removals on the former inhabitants of Lady Selborne. Lady Selborne was a “home”, a place for being human where the residents managed to engage in food production and owned properties in a multiracial area. Forced removals emanated from the National Party government’s desire to control African land ownership, and the manner in which land dispossession took place resulted in environmental injustice. This thesis applies theories of environment, power and injustice to explore how the people related to their environment and how that relationship was defined by class, gender and race. In Lady Selborne, black Africans were displaced from an area that was fertile, close to the city centre of Pretoria and relocated to infertile Ga-Rankuwa on the outskirts of the city. This resettlement resulted in many of those relocated being prevented from engaging in food production which was in turn an affront to Sotho-Tswana culture and religion with its emphasis on land as *lefa*: a bequest that has to feed its inhabitants. This thesis thus argues that successive governments (and many scholars) have downplayed black African environmental ethics, dismissing them as ‘superstition’. This mindset once resulted in forced removals and they in turn led blacks to disregard environmental issues. Ga-Rankuwa became degraded with litter, soil erosion and dongas, especially in the 1970’s, as people realised that there was no hope of returning to Lady Selborne. Environmental apathy emerged unconsciously as a response to forced removals. The thesis concludes by considering the idea of a ‘usable past’ and proposes that socio-environmental history can play a role in realising environmental justice.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie bied, vanuit die perspektief van sosio-omgewingsgeskiedenis, 'n gevallestudie oor gedwonge verskuiwings en hulle gevolge vanaf 1905 to 1977. Die fokusarea is 'n "township" genaamde Lady Selborne in Suid-Afrika, naby Pretoria, en Ga-Rankuwa, waar sommige van die verplaastes hervestig was. Die tesis toon oor dat gedwonge verskuiwings nie slegs daartoe aanleiding gegee het dat mense hulle historiese grondgebied, eiendom en materiële besittings verloor het nie, maar ook hulle sin van bestaan en verbondenheid. Die fokus is dus op die veranderende persepsies van mense te midde hulle grondverlies, 'n studieterrein wat oor die algemeen gebrekkig bestudeer is in die akademie. Lady Selborne was 'n "tuiste", 'n plek van menswees waar inwoners dit reggekry het om kos te produseer en waar hulle eiendom besit het in 'n veelrassige area. Gedwonge verskuiwings het voortgespruit uit die Nasionale Party regering se begeerte om grondbesit deur Afrikane te beheer, en die manier waarop grondonteiening plaasgevind het, het gelei tot omgewingsongeregtigheid. Hierdie tesis pas teorieë van die omgewing, mag en ongeregtigheid toe om oor te dui hoe die betrokkenes in verhouding met hulle omgewing was en hoe daardie verhouding gedefinieer is deur klas, ras en geslag. In Lady Selborne is swart mense verplaas van 'n gebied wat vrugbaar was en naby die stadsentrum van Pretoria, na 'n onvrugbare area, Ga-Rankuwa, op die buitewyke van die stad. Hierdie hervestiging het tot gevolg gehad dat baie mense verhoed is om kos te produseer, iets wat weer 'n affrontasie was vir die Sotho-Tswana kultuur en godsdiens se beklemtoning van grond as *lefa*: 'n bemaking wat sy inwoners moet voed. Die tesis argumenteer dus dat opeenvolgende Nasionale Party-regerings en vele akademici probeer het om swart Afrikanese omgewingsetiek te onderbeklemtoon, deur dit te verwerp as "bygeloof". Hierdie ingesteldheid het gedwonge verskuiwings tot gevolg gehad en ook gelei tot die verontagsaming van omgewingskwessies deur swart mense self. Toe mense, veral in die 1970's, besef het daar was geen hoop vir 'n terugkeer na Lady Selborne nie, het Ga-Rankuwa agteruit gegaan as gevolg van rommel, gronderosie en dongas. Omgewingsapatie het onbewustelik te voorskyn gekom as 'n manier om gedwonge verskuiwings te beveg. Die tesis oorweeg die idee van 'n "bruikbare verlede" en stel voor dat sosio-omgewingsgeskiedenis 'n rol kan speel in die realisering van omgewingsgeregtigheid.

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Motho ga iphetse ese naga is a Setswana proverb that means ‘in life, people need each other to succeed in anything’. There are few things we can do without the help of others. In the completion of this dissertation many individuals and institutions aided my work to be a success.

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Without the community of Ga-Rankuwa, this research would not be a reality. To them I say “*ke a leboga*”.

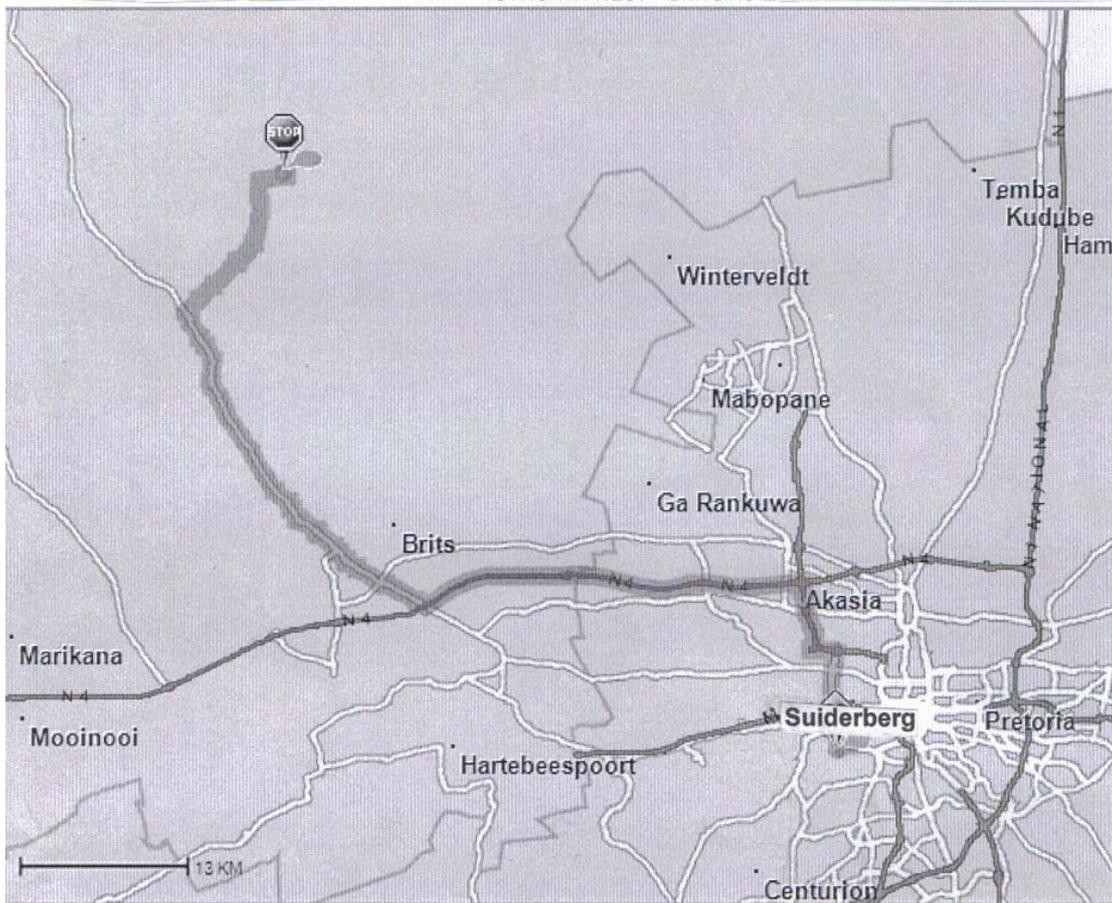
The National Research Foundation and Mellon Foundation gave me generous financial aid and helped me complete my thesis without the stress of financial problems. Humble thanks to the librarians at the universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, and the Cape Town and Pretoria Archives, who were always willing to offer assistance.

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To my children, Sibusisiwe and Babusisiwe, thank you for understanding when mom was busy “making knowledge” – as you would always say.

To everyone: *Pula*, my sincere thanks.



A map illustrating Ga-Rankuwa and Lady Selborne (Suiderberg).*

* Yellow Pages Maps and Directions. Available at:
http://www.saexplorer.co.za/maps/nwest/eastern_municipality.asp

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Chapter One

Introduction

1. Problem statement and focus

The obstinate resistance which the Amakosa, the Tembukis, and the Basotho's made to the encroachments of the colonists, proves how strong is the attachment of these tribes to the countries they inhabit. In speaking of them, they use expressions, which touch the heart and waken enthusiasm: "Home", "our land", "the land of our fathers". Something like a superstitious respect for the soil has even been observed among them.¹

Fundamental processes in South Africa's past have pivoted on issues surrounding land. There have been active attempts to dispossess the conquered from their land, to reshape it and to describe or "imagine" the land in the mental paradigm of the white settlers.² The powerful drew strength from relating to the environment in ways that entrenched their hegemony and retained their positions by manipulating beneficial uses of the land against the powerless (either in terms of class or race, or even gender).³ The issue of land ownership has been disputed by black groups in intra- and inter-ethnic clashes, by different groups of white settlers against each other and, particularly, by white society against blacks. Land appropriation took place during the early colonial period, for example the Mfecane in the early 1800s, that resulted in *ad hoc* forced removals. Likewise, the first indigenous black settlers, including ethnic groups like the Batswana and the Basotho, forcibly removed the Khoi-San from their

¹ E. Casalis, *The Basutos, Twenty-Three Years in South Africa*, (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1965), 156-7.

² Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological expansion of Europe 900 – 1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 94.

³ Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.

land.⁴ White groups used land appropriation as a weapon of control and as a means to improve their society at the expense of the dispossessed. The colonial state and its successors continued to entrench systems that drastically restricted African access to land. Thus a stark social dichotomy predicated on land-ownership and landlessness existed on issues pertaining to the most valuable asset: land. In the twentieth century, the laws that guided forced removals accumulated from the 1913 and 1936 Native Land Acts, the influx control Act of 1945, the 1950 Group Areas Act and the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act of 1959. By 1994 these laws have been responsible for the forced removals of almost 4 million people to so called black designated areas. The violence with which people have been removed has been both direct and indirect. This thesis addresses the land question through a case-study of forced removals. This chapter offers an exploration of the central historical problems discussed, provides a brief background to these problems and presents a discussion of the historiographic approach and methodology adopted by this thesis.

2. Relevance of Topic

The government of the post-apartheid period has placed the issue of land restitution and redistribution high on its agenda. In terms of the Land restitution Act number 22 of 1994, persons or communities that were dispossessed of their land rights through racially discriminatory laws and practices after June 1913, the deceased estates, direct descendents and entire displaced communities have a right to restitution.⁵ The cut-off date is vital as it indicates the year in which the notorious 1913 Land Act was passed where by many black people lost their land, but it does not imply that the date was the

⁴ Cited in Emile Bonzaier, et al, *The Cape herders: A history of the Khoi Khoi in South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996), 13-14.

⁵ *Statutes of South Africa 2002*, volume 6, (Cape Town: Juta Law, 2002), 360.

commencement of forced removals. There were other Acts of dispossession that were passed prior the chosen date. For example, in 1849 the government issued notices requiring “Fingoes” and other “Coloured Natives” to live in locations; and in the Orange Free State and Transvaal land was set aside in locations for Malays and Africans.⁶ It is in this historical context that the former residents of Lady Selborne, who were relocated to Ga-Rankuwa, could lay their claim to their former lands.

South Africa has, since 1994, focused on land redress even though the process has not been speedy enough for the displaced. The post-1994 democratic government established a system whereby land reform had to be realised and through this system people’s rights to land had to be secured, while land redistribution implies that “the government could give financial assistance to landless people so that they could buy land in the open market”.⁷ Scholarship in recent years points to the fact that land reforms still suffer delays.⁸ The slow delivery rate could be attributed to a diversity of factors like: “lack of capacity in and conflicting interests among government departments, the new government’s lack of commitment to land reform”, shifting and contradictory policy guidelines and the overall effects of neo-liberalism.⁹ The delays in land restitution and redistribution is a cause for concern, as argued by Ramutsindela, who argues that “there has been a shift in the transformation agenda which is explicitly visible in land reform, where the current thinking of the state is in

⁶ Cited in Paul Maylam, “Explaining the apartheid city: 20 years of South African urban historiography”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 1, (1995), 22-23.

⁷ M.F. Ramutsindela, “The perfect way to ending a painful past? Makuleke land deal in South Africa”, *Geoforum* 33. (2002), 15.

⁸ See Ramutsindela, “The perfect way to ending a painful past?”.

⁹ See Ramutsindela, “The perfect way to ending a painful past?”, 16.

creating a small group of commercial farmers rather than addressing the loss of land by the Black community as a whole”.¹⁰

A factor that has been ignored is the impact that forced removals have had on people’s perception of themselves, their land and their environment. Identity is a complex phenomenon with psychological, sociological, political and historical dimensions. In this thesis, identity refers to how an individual views him/herself and how others view that individual. Identity is a basic component of human social relations – to each other and the environment. No previous study focused on the impact that forced removals had on the changing perception of the environment and land held by the Africans from the land they owned to the land on which they were resettled. The historically changing and socially constructed African perception of land; (which is itself fissured by age, gender, class, ethnicity and personal history) is not taken into consideration as it is little researched. From the modern state’s perspective, land is simply real estate. But, as this thesis seeks to demonstrate, it has other values in different African communities that require explication and historical analysis. Identity can be constructed from below in search for the self, for honor, for the idea of sameness or for material reasons such as increase of power, career opportunities and other privileges.¹¹ But identity construction can also be from above, mainly by people in power in order to stay in power or to secure and conserve their privilege.¹² The combination of the construction of identity from below and above was used by the people of Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa to construct their

¹⁰ Ramutsindela, “The perfect way to ending a painful past?”, 15.

¹¹ S. Horstmeier and S. Cornelissen, “The Social and Political Construction of Identities in the New South Africa: An Analysis of Western Cape Province”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40, 1, (2002), 62.

¹² Horstmeier and Cornelissen, “The Social and Political Construction of Identities”, 63.

perception of themselves and their environment before their removals and after, as it is discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

This study seeks to investigate, through a particular case study, the changing constructed meaning of land within the local community and its relationship to social identity. Preliminary investigation suggests that forced removals meant more than the loss of inheritance and historical identity, illustrated by the Sotho-Tswana saying “*Lefatshe ke la borra rona mogolo le tsotlhe tse dileng mogolona*” (land belongs to our ancestors and everything in it). This is demonstrated in the changing vocabulary of land alienation, in which a dispossessed person came to be referred to as “*Ga semotho*” (He/she is not human). This suggests that when people are threatened in any way in many instances they tend to change their perceptions of reality to adapt to the new situation. This reflects a constructionist approach, which shows that identities are not static but fluctuating, influenced by and reacting to changing social environments, processes and interactions.

The focus of the research is on Lady Selborne, founded in 1905 and destroyed by Group Areas legislation in the 1960s. The area was chosen due to the fact that it was formed through a Coloured syndicate using white agents. Another reason was that my family lived in Lady Selborne. As Carruthers has shown, the township was unusual in the history of South African urbanisation in being an area in which Africans could hold title to land.¹³ Acts like the Urban Areas Act of 1923 and the Native Areas Amendment Act of 1937 accepted landownership by blacks in Lady Selborne. This entrenched the legal rights of blacks in such areas and made forced removals from

¹³ Jane Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng”, *Kleio* XXX11, (2000), 2.

these areas difficult and destructive to those displaced. Lady Selborne was 292.78 hectares in size and was situated against the southern slope of the Magaliesberg, some ten kilometres northwest of Pretoria's city centre. The Sotho-Tswana of Lady Selborne who were resettled in Ga-Rankuwa, like all other victims of forced removals, have a painful history that ripped apart their community spirit, attachment to the environment and self esteem.¹⁴

3. Brief Context

Proclamations 150 and 151 of 6 June 1958, *Government Gazette* 6067, finalised the group areas position in urban Pretoria by decreeing that, while some suburbs were gazetted for immediate white occupation, Lady Selborne was included in the list but without a given time-frame. Also in 1959 came the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act 46, which decreed that black South Africans were not a homogeneous group of people but belonged to eight separate national units on the basis of language and "culture". Some informants complained that they were angry with the State. Because they were not informed about the date of their displacement they were caught by surprise. Some former landlords and tenants state that they were not given any notice about their date of removals but the police came while they were not ready and took out their belongings and destroyed their houses.¹⁵ But some former tenants and landlords claimed that they received some correspondence from the government informing them of removals and resettlement.¹⁶ It appears that the government sent agents to explain to the tenants about their displacement and the fact that landlords did not want to move.¹⁷ From the archival research it is clear that the

¹⁴ See Interviews, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 3, 5, 6, 10, 15.

¹⁵ Informant 5, See also other Informants 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

¹⁶ Informant 1, 2, See also Informant 3 daughter of a former landlord.

¹⁷ Informant 2.

State sent a letter informing residents about displacement and requested them to fill in a form and indicate areas they wanted for relocation.¹⁸ But, owing to anger against removals, some community members ignored that and had to face surprise displacement. The residents of Lady Selborne were surveyed so that they could be separated from each other and compelled to live in various “homelands”. From 1961, forced removals from Lady Selborne became a reality and the community’s various designated components were relocated to different areas in accordance to their designations. The majority of such areas had small plots and the soil was infertile compared to that of Lady Selborne and this illustrates environmental injustice that emerged due to forced removals. Africans were resettled in Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Mabopane and Ga-Rankuwa; Indians in Laudium and Coloureds in Eersterus and Derdepoort.

4. Environment and History

This thesis demonstrates that the environment has been more than a backdrop to power struggles. This is because, through capitalism, colonisation, Christianity, segregation and apartheid, the Sotho-Tswana changed their relationship with the environment to adapt in the resettlement area.¹⁹ They had to use new mechanised instruments, especially in the beginning of the twentieth century, to cultivate food and through the influence of Christianity rain making rituals were replaced by prayer groups.²⁰ The environment was pivotal to the residents of Lady Selborne from its inception in 1905: rain, crops, the costs and yields of production, stock, access to land

¹⁸ Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) NTS 928/313 Letter from the Secretary of Bantu Affairs and Administration (Sekretaris van Bantoe Administrasie en Ontwikkeling) to the Town Clerk (Stadsklerk), (12 June 1959).

¹⁹ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 4.

²⁰ William F. Lye and Collin Murray, C, *Transformations on the Highveld: The Tswana and Southern Sotho*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1980), 122.

and title over land ranked high among their concerns.²¹ This preoccupation did not fade after their displacement to Ga-Rankuwa. Field-work undertaken for this research in June 2004, April 2006 and September 2006, indicates that the former residents of Lady Selborne, who were resettled in Ga-Rankuwa, continued with their environmental concern and they complained about the quality of the soil in their new area and named it Ga-Rankuwa, meaning “we are not welcome”. Peoples differentiated by race, ethnicity, class, gender and generation have different access to power and therefore different relations with the environment. As Cronon notes, environmental history should seek to “probe the level of the group to explore the implication of social division”.²² Moreover people act with creativity and deliberation in their relations with the environment, even when they appear quiescent, passive or powerless. For example, in Ga-Rankuwa, though the soil was infertile, the residents continued to try means of fertilizing it in order to produce food though some ultimately became discouraged. This implies that, though the whites appropriated the best ways of using the environment, dispossessed blacks found some way of mitigating their circumstances through their relationship with it.²³ The residents of Ga-Rankuwa experienced environmental injustice as they had to vacate their well resourced area in Lady Selborne from 1960 and resettle in an inhospitable place that had poor quality soil and lacked infrastructure like electricity, hospitals, clinics and schools until the late 1970s.

²¹ Informant 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 15.

²² William Cronon, “Modes of Prophecy and Production: Placing Nature in History”, *The Journal of American History* 76, (1990), 1129.

²³ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 4.

5. The Case Study

Case study methodology requires an exhaustive, longitudinal investigation of a specific example or event. Yin suggests that case study should be defined as a research strategy, an empirical inquiry that investigates a particular phenomenon within its real-life framework. Case studies may include quantitative evidence, relies on several sources of evidence and may be enriched by theoretical propositions.²⁴ The use of case studies to build theories and test ideas in the social sciences has escalated to balance a too profound dependence on quantitative research and formal models. Case studies and synoptic overviews are, of course, complementary rather than competitive. Certainly, historical studies investigating human relationships with nature can be written at any level, from the macro to the micro. At the global level, the unequal division of power has provided a key motif in imperial environmental history. The expansive arc of macro-scale environmental history, while helpful in conveying a big picture, inescapably curtails its capability to consider local distinctiveness. Reducing the scale facilitates more nuanced research on the complexity of human-nature relations, embedding particular communities within a specific environment. Furthermore, localised inquiries can also focus on issues of intersecting interest for social and environmental historians, like: How did social divisions influence communities' everyday environmental experiences and concomitantly their relations with nature?

While much has been written on forced removals and its negative impact on Africans, no examination, however, has been attempted of the changing ideological and

²⁴ Anne Beaulieu, Andrea Scharnhorst and Paul Wouters, "Not Another Case Study", *Science, Technology & Human Values*, vol 32, number. 6, (2007), pp. 672-692; Robert K. Yin. *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. Applied social research method series Volume 5, (Sage: California, 2002).

material relationship between specific black communities and “nature” or the environment within the context of shifting social identities.²⁵ This needs to be done within the context of forced removals that led to environmental degradation in the resettlement areas. As far as could be ascertained through initial literature searches, little research has been undertaken of forced removals from an environmental history perspective. Equally, as Carruthers suggests, historiographically “issues relating to indigenous knowledge [are neglected], [simply] are touched upon rather than explored in any detail” and this poses a problem that this thesis wrestles with.²⁶ This study will suggest that the ideology of land for Basotho and Batswana has deep meaning as it is wrapped up in religious rites and beliefs. The environment and our anthropogenic engagement therewith play a major and changing role in this ideology and require delineation. Changing ideas about respect for land, environment and nature in specific African communities warrant closer examination and delineation, focusing in particular on how the ideology has changed over time in reaction to socio-political changes.²⁷

²⁵ See Cosmas Desmond, *The Discarded people: An Account of Africa Resettlement in South Africa*, (London: Penguin African Library, 1971), Alan Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation: The study of 3million evictions in South Africa*, (London: Africa Publications Trust, 1974), Laurine Platzky and Cherryl Walker, *The surplus people: forced removals in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985); Elaine Unterhalter, *Forced removal: the division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1987) Sean Field, “Oral Histories of Forced Removals”, ed, S. Field, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering Forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001) and Sean Field, “Windermere: Squatters, Slumyards and Removals, 1920’s to 1960’s”, ed, S. Field, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001).

²⁶ Jane Carruthers, “Environmental history in Southern Africa: An overview”, ed, S. Dovers, et al, *South Africa’s Environmental History Cases & Comparisons*, (Athens, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, David Philip, 2002), 7.

²⁷ Chukwudum B. Okolo, “Self as a problem in African philosophy”, ed, P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux, *Philosophy from Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 212.

Ranger has argued that “African religion has been much misunderstood in ways which have made it very difficult to treat it historically”.²⁸ This implies that initiating a socio-environmental historical study from an African perspective poses a difficult challenge because of the many misconceptions regarding the beliefs of Africans.²⁹ African culture and tradition held from pre-colonial times, while not homogenous, has often been dismissed by colonialists as superstitious, and the African perception of land was regarded by white settlers as primitive and irrational.³⁰ In this manner Africans experienced what is possibly the worst form of discrimination, which Bar-Tal calls “delegitimation: the denial of categorised groups’ humanity”, which implies that, since race was a determinant of class in South Africa, Africans were put at the lowest stratum of society and regarded as an inferior ethnic group.³¹ This discrimination is explained by Allport as “any behaviour, which denies individuals or groups of people equality of treatment which they may wish”.³²

The Sotho-Tswana ascribed the land with sacred character: it had the potential to build the people or destroy them; hence the Sotho-Tswana believed that they had to

²⁸ T. Ranger, “African Traditional Religion”, eds, P. Clarke and S. Sutherland, *The World’s Religions: The study of Religion, Traditional and New Religions*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 107.

²⁹ The word African in this thesis refers to all indigenous black groups like the Sotho-Tswana, Nguni, Tsonga, Venda and Khoi-San.

³⁰ The term African culture and tradition focuses on the similarities that are found in the culture of Africans. The term as used in this thesis does not in any way imply that there are no differences in the groups. As theologian Chirevo Kwenda notes “the similarities among the religious traditions of the various ethnic or language groups in South Africa outweigh the differences sufficiently to allow us to post a traditional religion of South Africa”. See Chirevo Kwenda, “African Traditional Religion”, ed, David Chidester, et al, *African Traditional Religion in South Africa: An Annotated Bibliography*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1997), 6 and Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, (London: Sheldon Press, 1974), 11. Kwenda takes this further by stating that African traditional Religion is about change and it does not in any way imply that that culture is static. See Kwenda “African Traditional Religion”. In this research it is important thus to be noted that African traditional Religion belief systems is historical and more so dynamic in its nature.

³¹ Daniel Bar-Tal, “Delegitimization: The extreme case of Stereotyping and Prejudice”, eds, D. Bar-Tal, C. Graumann, *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1989), 171.

³² Cited in Peter Berger, *Social Construction of Reality*, (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 10.

care for it (see Chapter Three, particularly, and also Chapters Five, Six and Seven). Land was perceived as a home for the living, the dead, animals and plants. These components had to live co-operatively to ensure a sustainable life for all. So if one component failed to co-exist with the others, it would mean disturbance of the entire ecosystem and would lead to disaster, natural or otherwise.³³ This meant that land and the environment had to be respected, an idea expressed as *gotlhompwa* in Setswana or *ukuhlonishwa* in isiZulu. The latter term refers to “avoidance rules between persons and between persons and certain places and objects”, implying that in African culture and tradition certain people, places, animals are avoided as a sign of respect.³⁴ Colonial officials largely misconstrued the African understanding of nature and the environment as it was the perception of the ‘other’: totally different from the way they related to and understood the environment. Hence some referred to Africans as “animals with no rights to life or land, or as children out of touch with the real world because they could not evaluate objects and lacked industry”.³⁵

6. Research questions and Methodology

The goal of the proposed research was to analyse the changing relationship between a specific African community and its environment from an ideological and material perspective, using the case study of land dispossession and resettlement in the reserves during the apartheid era of the 1960s-1970s. The research focuses on the changing historically-rooted notions of land and land-ownership within a specific community. The group of people chosen will be chiefly the Sotho-Tswana because

³³ Mazisi Kunene, *Anthem of the decades: a Zulu epic dedicated to the women of Africa*, (London: Heinemann, 1981), xxiv.

³⁴ H. Kuckertz, “Ukuhlonipha as idiom of moral reasoning in Mpondo”, ed. P. McAllister, *Culture and the common place*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), 312.

³⁵ David Chidester, *Savage Systems*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 15.

they formed the majority during the period under study (in 1950 there were roughly 1000 who self-identified as Northern Sotho, Tswana, and Southern Sotho, 321 as Ngunis, 167 as Shangaans, 125 as Coloureds, 97 as Whites, 6 as Indians and 5 as Vendas in Lady Selborne).³⁶

This thesis asks questions about how gender, class and power affected experiences of historical environmental processes. In this it draws on the model provided by Jacobs in her exploration of links between environmental history, social history and the formulation of public policy which lay behind her socio-environmental history of the Tlhaping and Tlharo communities of the Kalahari thornveld. Jacobs has shown how late nineteenth century colonialism shaped a revolution in environmental and social relations at Kuruman, which precipitated the subsequent twentieth century troubles. The settler state's appropriation of the bulk of the land meant that African risk controlling extensive land use systems became inoperable. Responses to a multiplicity of problems (from rinderpest to agricultural collapse to internecine war) were varied and Jacobs shows how Kuruman residents found ways to preserve at least the cultural forms of extensive production. Jacobs argues, importantly, that, since land alienation was central to the official segregationist vision, government policy was basically environmental. Emphasis moved from applying "scientific principles" meant to sustain Africans on their inadequate land base to forcibly removing Africans from areas claimed by white settlers. Jacobs details the ongoing appropriation of land by the state on behalf of white settlers, and the ecological consequences of concentrating relocated people in an arid reserve. An exploding population and inadequate access to land led to agricultural intensification, not out of preference but rather out of need.

³⁶ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 12.

From the 1940s, the Native Affairs Department, followed by the Mangope-regime in Bophuthatswana, enforced conservationist methods to improve production. Nonetheless, there remained an ember of resistance and community adaptation to land scarcity.

Drawing on this model, the goals of this thesis agenda can be summed up as:

- To see environment, production processes and social interactions through the eyes of people who lived in Lady Selborne 1905-1960s and Ga-Rankuwa 1961-1977.
- To ascertain to what extent historical changes of the 1950s and 1960s impacted on the environment of Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa.
- To gauge the extent to which blacks either adapted to their environment in Ga-Rankuwa after their resettlement or transformed it.
- To examine the question of whether land restitution from 1994 onwards catered for African perceptions of land and see how history could be used to further an understanding of how to improve the environmental conditions in the resettlement areas.

In constructing an approach towards the environmental history of Lady Selborne, the levels of enquiry by Worster and Merchant will be utilised. According to Worster, environmental history must function on three levels: “first, the reconstruction of past environmental conditions, second, ecological implications of production, including technological and social considerations, third, the human perception of the environment”. Merchant, on the other hand, provides the fourth approach: “the reproduction between production and consciousness”.³⁷ This study seeks to explore how environmental oppression accompanied segregation.

Thus the approach will be the socio-environmental genre drawing from the Africanist paradigm, focusing on the Sotho-Tswana understanding of environment and nature and on a specific group of people and their relations with the non-human world, and will explain how a community related to the environment as they interacted with each

³⁷ Cited in Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 21.

other, emphasising issues of social power and identity.³⁸ The Africanist approach is useful because it emphasises the importance of land and environment as the cornerstone for Africans.³⁹ While much academic writing on environmental history tries to decolonise African themes, it often uses the same Eurocentric tools in analysing African tradition and culture. As Ama Mazana has argued: “Although most Africans, on the Continent as well as in the Diaspora, have, at least in theory, put an end to colonial rule to which we were subjected for many years, we nonetheless still find ourselves in a state of mental subjugation The reason for this is that colonisation was not simply an enterprise of economic exploitation and political control ... but also an on-going enterprise of conceptual distortion and invasion leading to widespread confusion, and ultimately, “mental incarceration”.⁴⁰ Therefore it is important to “decolonise” African environmental history and study it from the perspectives of the cultures and traditions of various African peoples.

This sense of (African) agency is picked up on in the two other historiographic paradigms that inform this thesis. Social history has long insisted on the agency of ordinary people to shape some parts of their lives, although not in wider circumstances of their own making. The Africanist approach, which has also provided an intellectual foundation for this study, also insists on the agency of Africans. The interviews and discussion of Sotho-Tswana views on environmental change and modification seek to address the paucity of African accounts about the land and its

³⁸ The Africanist approach attempts to assert the importance of Africans in the making of history. In this thesis the genre is relevant as it demystifies the socio-environmental history of the Africans from their own perspectives and show that they also played an important part in the making of their own history.

³⁹ Essy M. Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987), and Solomon Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa before and since the European war and the Boer war*, (London: King, 1916).

⁴⁰ Ama Mazama (ed.), *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, Africa, (Trenton: World Press, 2003), 3-4.

resources. Oral testimony, nothing new in African and social history, proves to be a useful tool in the pursuit of environmental histories. An effective model is provided by essays in Bonyhady and Griffiths' *Words for Country: Landscape and Language in Australia*, which have used oral history to comprehend popular relationships with places. In interpreting narratives that "take root" in specific environmental locales they demonstrate that identity is entangled with a sense of belonging, a vernacular politics in the process of constructing human identities. For example, several chapters in Beinart and McGregor's *Social History and African Environments* reveal the importance of place-situated designations ("river people", or "mountain people") in forging distinctive ethnic identities, especially within nation states from which they feel marginalised. This is not restricted to Africa: for example, Schama's *Landscape and Memory*, showed how landscape traditions were "the primary bedrock" of European and American nationalisms, with woodland, waterways, and mountains as agents in the configuration of Western identities (which were often shaped in opposition to severe environmental conditions).⁴¹

The thesis also draws on the trajectories of American environmental historiography developed by Alfred Crosby, William Cronon, Carolyn Merchant, and Donald Worster, whose ideas serve as models for interpreting the socio-environmental history of the case-study. This has been undertaken, following Jacobs' example, in order to draw South Africa into broader international debates about the relationship between power and the environment, questions of local modes of land use and rural knowledge, as well as the notion of environmental justice. In drawing on the work of

⁴¹ Schama demonstrates, for example, how German nationalism was indissoluble from its "wild" forest areas, from the sixteenth-century landscape paintings by Altdorfer to the mythology of the Nazis. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

Worster, Cronon, Jacobs and others, this thesis moves from the understanding that the environment does not just represent an historical backdrop, but is an agent in its own right, providing a “material base for the power to dominate others” as well as the “power to endure domination”.⁴² While this thesis does not wish to neglect the weight of political, economic, social factors in the history of this case-study, we rather seek to address the idea that historians of South Africa have tended to neglect the environment’s usefulness as a prism through which to explore changing political and social relationships. The thesis accepts the premise that the biophysical environment is real, and acts independently of human beings. Yet this thesis has tried to show that, although analysis of the biophysical environment is important in evaluating many forces shaping human relations (including gender, class and power), consideration of environmental constraints need not lead either to environmental determinism or to declensionist Malthusian narratives. Although the people of Lady Selborne and subsequently Ga-Rankuwa were politically persecuted and lived in difficult environmental conditions, they were neither entirely passive nor powerless, and their responses were heterogeneous. The challenges presented by forced removals and changing environmental contexts resulted in varied responses. Cultures are never static and that of the Sotho-Tswana (and specifically the community under study) was no exception. Social roles and status changed in the shift, for example, from the pre-colonial subsistence pattern of foraging to agro-pastoralism and in subsequent shifts in societal structures that are explored in the thesis.

⁴² Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice*, 219.

7. Methodology and approach

The study draws on Merchant's idea of ecological theory, which is applicable to Sotho-Tswana environmental ideals, maintains that "the relationship between human beings and the non-human world is reciprocal, when humans alter their surroundings, "nature" responds to those changes through laws".⁴³ This idea of mutual dependency between the human and natural world is reflected in the Sotho-Tswana culture and tradition, as this thesis seeks to show. But it requires the "re-languaging" of the concept environment and nature in order to unlock the socio-environmental history of the Sotho-Tswana in an urban area such as Lady Selborne. Nature is *tlhago*, that "which is created". The term also include *lefatshe* the land and everything in it which is environment. For Africans 'nature' is an inclusive term that goes beyond merely what is seen and touched. Nature is biography of the imagination of being – being that is deeply embedded in the collective unconscious of those who lost their original space through colonisation. To the urban Africans, who lost their sense of identifying nature with trees and grazing cattle, townships are full of nature as every stone, soil and every human person, represents what is natural. It is the spirit of imagination that defines 'nature'. This spirit is not confined to rural space that is unknown to some urban Africans. Thus *tlhago* and *lefatshe* goes beyond eurocentric understanding of nature. *Tlhago* is revelation of creation in any space we call 'home'. This is because:

Traditionally, among Batswana, there is no clear distinction between the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the material, the celestial and the purely mundane, that which is above and that which is below, for all things are summed up in *Modimo*, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. In this regard, it appears, the environment is ...[both] profane and sacred at the same time... By and large, the environmental processes are essentially a result of the activities of the spiritual forces especially the ancestors, which impinge on the physical world in an intermittent way.⁴⁴

⁴³ Carolyn Merchant, "The Theoretical Structure of Ecological Revolutions", in *Environmental Review* 11, 4, (1987), 269.

⁴⁴ James N. Amanze, *African Traditional Religions and culture in Botswana*, (Gaborone-Botswana: Pula Press, 2002), 302.

The research method used involved observation through archival and oral sources and analysing interviews via close reading techniques. The research used a phenomenological approach, which was qualitative, because it allows the researcher to produce rich information and to understand community beliefs from within and not judge their beliefs or practices – which Ryba argues, is not possible with scientific endeavours.⁴⁵ The interviews are semi-structured and qualitative, with due consideration given to the constraints of this method. The strengths of the method include its ability to classify and group widely divergent data in such a way that an overall view can be obtained of the group's beliefs and historical experiences.⁴⁶ Hence an attempt is made to depict both the social and individual experiences of those forcibly removed and their relationship with their environment. This method takes the voices of ordinary people seriously, and illuminates much of their day-to-day life experience. Tosh mentions a major limitation of oral history when he states that, “it is naive to suppose that the testimony represents a pure distillation of past experience, for in an interview each party is affected by the other”.⁴⁷ So this methodology is used in conjunction with archival and other secondary sources in order to fill the gaps created by informants' forgetting and the myths created by their nostalgia.

The research employs open-ended interviews because, in this researcher's experience, many informants prefer open discussions to a prescribed format and thus much information is attained via this process. A tape recorder was eschewed because, though useful, it tends to intimidate informants. Questionnaires were not used because

⁴⁵ Thomas Ryba, *The Essence of Phenomenology and its Meaning for Scientific Study of Religion*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1991), 34.

⁴⁶ Ryba, *The Essence of Phenomenology*, 240.

⁴⁷ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods & New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, (London: Longman, 1991), 213.

this researcher believes that face-to-face contact is useful in developing a good rapport with informants to help them communicate what they believed and experienced before their removals and after. But, as Philip Abrams and others observe, such close encounters have some limitations because:

[t]he close encounter may make the voices louder; it does not ... make their meaning clearer. To that end we must turn back from 'their' meanings to our own and to the things we know about them, which they did not know, or say, about themselves.⁴⁸

Various sources were consulted in order to address the limitations of this method. Interviews were conducted in Ga-Rankuwa from June 2004, then in March and April 2006 and lastly in September 2006, mainly among the Sotho-Tswana community who were forcibly removed from Lady Selborne between 1960 and 1969. Sixteen people were interviewed, all men and women over the age of 45. The number chosen was determined by the availability of informants. The criteria used in choosing informants was that it had to be people who were actively involved in forced removals and had knowledge about Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa. The above criteria limited numbers as most people who were involved had died. In this thesis the informants are referred to as "Mr", "Mrs" or "Ms" as a sign of respect because the researcher is younger than them and in the Sotho-Tswana culture older people cannot be called by their names. Informants chose interview locations, normally their homes where they felt most relaxed. Questions were used to stimulate discussion. Data was collected and weighed in terms of the archival research, which proved vital in contextualising and bridging logical gaps. Unpublished commissions, reports, familial data and the like were utilised in conjunction with official government reports and newspapers.

⁴⁸ Cited in Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 214.

Questions used:

1. From where and to where were you moved during forced removals of the 1950s and 1960s?
2. Why were you moved?
3. What process was followed to move you from your home?
4. How did you feel about removals?
5. Describe life in Lady Selborne before the forced removals.
6. Describe the environment of Lady Selborne from 1905 to the 1960's.
7. How did people relate with their environment in Lady Selborne during the same period?
8. Describe the uses of livestock in Lady Selborne.
9. How were the conditions in Ga-Rankuwa between 1960 and 1977?
10. Describe the environment in Ga-Rankuwa after you were resettled there?
11. Since 1960, how did you and your community in Ga-Rankuwa relate to the environment?
12. How did forced removals affect you and the community?
13. Explain the concept of *botho*. How does it relate to land loss?
14. What are your feelings about land restitution? Do you think it is effective? Give reasons for your answer.

Understanding, patience and a good sense of humour proved to be very effective tools in relaxing the informants and encouraging them to give information that they would otherwise withhold. This is the strength of oral history, which Tosh refers to as “the vividness of personal recall”, and is vital in reconstructing people’s everyday life.⁴⁹ In some instances, it was necessary to use probing questions in order to get clear information. Since the traditional requirements of methodology specify that data should be reproducible, the absence of a tape recorder and questionnaires became a liability. But they were not used as some of my informants could not write and felt uncomfortable with the tape recorder so open-ended, unrecorded questions were used.

⁴⁹ Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 214.

This problem emerged because the researcher was writing information down during interviews and some of the examples and experiences of the informants cannot thus be repeated with the same meaning and vigour – though the information may appear dramatic, personal and clear. Since the goal of the research was to get information on people's perception of their environment before and after land dispossession and their experiences of forced removals, it is clear that its methods were helpful but they were read against the grain of primary and secondary documents.

8. Terminological Considerations

A few concepts that are of particular importance are explained here.

Black: A classification referring to all those who were racially excluded from political power by the policies of the National Party these include Africans, Coloureds, Indians, Chinese as they were sometimes referred to as non-white or non-Europeans.

African: refers to all indigenous blacks of South Africa i.e, Sotho-Tswana, Nguni, Tsonga, Venda and the Khoi-San. While all inhabitants of South Africa who have South African citizenship status are referred to as **South Africans**.

Ethnicity: is used in this thesis to refer to any race of a particular cultural group.

Forced removals: Refers to displacement of people whereby force was used in ensuring that a group was dispossessed of its land due. Under discussion are removals sponsored by the state, which left black people disempowered in terms of environmental issues.

Relocation and Resettlement: These terms describe the system used by the state during the apartheid period in accommodating black people in different areas after land dispossession.

Reserves, Bantustans, Homeland: These are terms applied to areas reserved for blacks but they were used for different periods. Reserves were used during the pre-apartheid era and Bantustans and Homelands were used during the apartheid period, referring to African areas in accordance to different ethnic groups. These included Bophuthatswana for the Batswana, Transkei and Ciskei for the AmaXhosa, QwaQwa for the Basotho, Kwa-Ndebele for the AmaNdebele, KwaNgwane for the Ngwane group, Gazankulu for the Shangaans, KwaZulu for the Zulus and Venda for the AmaVenda.

Tribe: A racial or ethnic group united by language and customs (a slightly archaic term).

Ubuntu / Botho: A concept explaining the essence of being human and what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfilment.⁵⁰ It maintains that a person “becomes human” through participation in a community and other important components like environment, religion, culture and tradition. A complete human being is thus determined by the way the individual interacts with others and the environment.

⁵⁰ Augustine Shutte, *Ubuntu: an Ethic for a New South Africa*. South Africa, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2001), 2.

9. Chapter Outlines

This study concentrates on the socio-environmental history of Lady Selborne from 1905 to the 1960s and the resettlement area Ga-Rankuwa from the 1960s to 1977. The only issue that is touched upon after 1977 will be the Land Reforms of the period after 1994 but this is not be dealt with in detail.

After the introduction provided by this chapter, **Chapter Two** firstly offers a literature review and historiographic analysis of the historical writing on forced removals. The historiography is discussed in order to explain the fissure that exists in and how this thesis hopes to complement existing writing on the topic and secondly outlines the history of forced removals (particularly from a socio-environmental perspective)

Chapter Three focuses on environmental history from an African and, indeed, Africanist perspective, drawing mainly from Sotho-Tswana culture and traditions. The focus of the chapter is on illustrating the ideological perspectives of the Sotho-Tswana in relation with environmental issues. This chapter is intended to provide a background to the whole thesis, and particularly Chapters Five, Six and Seven, as it outlines and shows that from pre-colonial history to-date the Sotho-Tswana have been a community that has an adapting environmental consciousness.

Chapters Four and **Five** focus specifically on Lady Selborne. **Chapter Four** focuses on the political history of the area and the concomitant socio-environmental themes that emerge in the process. The political history of the area and people's resistance to removals and the destruction of the township in the 1960s through forced removals is

discussed. **Chapter Five** deals with the case study of Lady Selborne using the socio-environmental historical approach to explain how people engaged with each other and their environment from 1905 to the 1960s. This chapter also show the use of infrastructure in the area and analyse its history as are changing local perceptions of the environment and how these perceptions in turn impacted on the environment. **Chapter Five** also expressly looks at issues of the environment and how people perceived it in Lady Selborne.

Chapter Six deals with the resettlement process of the people of Lady Selborne in Ga-Rankuwa from 1961 to 1977. It gives the historical background of the area and how people engaged with their environment there. It highlights the changing environmental perceptions of people and their impact on their landscape.

Chapter Seven explains the concept of a ‘home’ as people of Lady Selborne understood it from 1905 to 1960 and how they defined it in Ga-Rankuwa during their resettlement there. This chapter brings to the fore the changing perceptions of the Sotho-Tswana towards themselves and their environment, with particular reference to the ideology of “humanness” and its link to understandings of “nature”.

Finally, **Chapter 8** includes the conclusion where the major findings are summarised and we further question the use of this casestudy as offering a “useable past”. In order to do so, we link the findings to the idea of “environmental justice”, and address the question of “Restoration” through land reform, land redistribution and land restitution. This chapter also offers possible research areas that can be explored using this thesis

as a foundation especially since the area of forced removals from an environmental genre is little researched.

10. Conclusion

In sum, the central aim of this thesis is to investigate forced removals as a lens into historically constructed perceptions surrounding land and its use in a particular community. This thesis explores the historically contingent concept of land-ownership by black communities and perceptions surrounding the environment. This thesis seeks to show that the dispossession of blacks deprived them of more than pieces of ground, but also an important facet of social identity that affected various sectors within the community differently according to age, class, gender, ethnicity and so on. The research shows that, although forced removals and land alienation have received historiographical attention, they have received little analysis through the socio-environmental lens. The environmental dimension has been lacking in such investigations and this thesis will hopefully contribute to filling that academic lacuna. Equally, a historiographical fissure exists in the understanding of historically rooted and contingent perceptions of land, land-ownership and the “natural world” in this context. This is part of the socio-environmental history initiative that is growing in historiographical weight in South Africa and to which this study seeks to contribute by its investigation of changing perceptions of social identity in relation to the environment within the specific context of forced removal and land alienation within the Sotho-Tswana community of Lady Selborne. Throughout the research, environmental injustice that blacks suffered through forced removals is highlighted, which prompts the recommendation of the thesis that land restoration will assist blacks in their pilgrimage towards environmental conservation and preservation

Chapter Two

The Policy of Forced Removals in South Africa from 1900 to 1977: Historiography and Overview.

1. Introduction

This chapter is an examination of forced removals and considers the effects of the policy of forced removals during the segregationist periods of the last century, especially during the Apartheid era from 1948 onwards, on the environment and on perceptions of land and land ownership that left ‘untenable’ ramifications on the landscape and black people of South Africa. This chapter will discuss the background history of forced removals, discussing primarily the secondary literature and then offer a brief chronological outline of forced removals from 1900 to 1977. Then the chapter will discuss the environmental dimension, which is an area that is not widely covered in the historical study of forced removals and will thus form a useful framework for the analysis thereof. This will help in understanding how the community related to each other and the environment, and how the state interfered with these relationships, and will in turn serve to supplement the history of forced removals. The chapter will begin by discussing the historiography and available secondary literature.

2. Historiography, Literature review and forced removals

From the 1970s to the present, the historical research pertaining to forced removals has been wide and varied in quality, drawing from rich, analytical and critical approaches. These theories do not form a monolithic product of a single revisionist school and the work is diverse in terms of methodology, scope, approach and areas of

focus – and there are deep disagreements. According to Shula Marks, such a historiography at its best “does not only challenge the stranglehold of ruling class ideologies, but also shapes people’s understanding of themselves and the society”.¹ The secondary literature stems mainly from the 1970s, a period in which the government dispossessed black people on a large scale. Revisionist historians like Cosmas Desmond, Laurine Platzky, Elaine Unterhalter and Timothy Keegan wrote on the issue with the intention of critiquing the apartheid system. Some Afrikaner, Africanist and Liberal historians touched on the theme of forced removals before 1970. To generalise briefly, most Afrikaner nationalist historians pre-1970 supported the displacement of black people, while the Africanists and those of the Liberal school denounced the practice as immoral and detrimental to race relations in South Africa. These schools started to review and develop a more theoretical and creative analysis of forced removals.

The revisionist historians were influenced by Marxist ideologies of Materialism or Structuralism, which state that the “ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas and such a class controls the material force of the society”.² Class, in the Marxist sense, is defined on the basis of people’s position in society or whether one is of the ruling component or not. In terms of Materialism, Capitalism is seen by Marxists as exploitation of the under-class, thus revisionist scholars use such philosophies to employ different angles and approaches. Historians in the 1970s drew from Social history but in the 1980s divided into Structuralists, who placed little emphasis on human agency but focused rather on structures that informed the reality of forced

¹ Shula Marks, “The historiography of South Africa”, eds, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury, *African historiographies*, (Beverly Hills, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1986), 166.

² Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels, “The German Ideology 1845-1846”, ed, J. Donald, *Politics and Ideology*, (Philadelphia: Milton Keynes, 1986), 13.

removals, and Social historians, who emphasised the history of the previously disadvantaged community.³ By focusing on this group, Social Historians analysed the day-to-day experiences of the oppressed by drawing from oral history. The majority of scholars of forced removals in the post 1990 period drew from Social History, while others fell under the Revisionist school.

The Socio-Environmental approach has seldom been utilised and only recently has Nancy Jacobs, for example, discussed forced removals in Kuruman in terms of this approach. She dedicated only few pages to this theme, which illustrates the historical lacuna that needs to be filled.

2.1. Afrikaner Historiography

Literature on forced removals from a conservative⁴ Afrikaner perspective is rare because the majority of such scholars focused on Afrikaner experiences and Afrikaner nationalism and neglected themes relating to other groups. Twyman states that such a historiography supported apartheid and ignored the economic, social and cultural dimensions of history.⁵ Hence their writings on African land use were based on colonial narratives depicting such land use as destructive. But, as Fairhead and Leach and others have shown, such colonial narratives were biased and too extreme in many cases and demonstrating that much Afrikaner literature on land use and removals had some overt biases and extremes.⁶ Most 'Transformation' in Afrikaner literature

³ Christopher Saunders and Nicholas Southey, *Historical Dictionary of South Africa*, (Lanham, Maryland and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2000), 126.

⁴ It is important to mention here that, conservative in this sense relates to Afrikaner scholars who supported apartheid.

⁵ L J. Twyman, "Afrikaner historians", eds, T. Pridmore, N. D. Southey, J. L. Twyman, *Trends in Historiography*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1997), 70

⁶ James Fairhead and Mellisa Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and Ecology in a Forest-Savanna Mosaic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996).

occurred from the 1970s when a few scholars started breaking away from the genre and challenged the history they had inherited.⁷ It seems that the only literature written on forced removals just touches upon the theme in passing. Barend Liebenberg, who dealt fleetingly with forced removals and homelands, depicts the ideas held by the majority of Afrikaner historians until the seventies.⁸ His views on forced removals were that they were acceptable and were done as an act that needed to exist to achieve the development of blacks because they were inferior and could not reside alongside ‘civilised’ whites in one state, as will be discussed.

Afrikaner nationalist writing of history revolved around race and ethnicity, with little emphasis on class. Racism in this milieu was taken as ‘natural’ and was condoned by the historical argument that it emerged the very first time that whites and blacks met. Discrimination was also a means of ensuring security for the Afrikaner group. This implies that such a genre of writing supported segregation and made forced removals and separate development policy acceptable. As a result, Afrikaner historiography tended to misinterpret history at the expense of defending apartheid and forced removals. As Grundlingh has contended “Afrikaner historical works, though often reflecting a great deal of archival research, were conceptually and interpretively limited.”⁹

⁷ Twyman, “Afrikaner historians”, 65.

⁸ See Barend Liebenberg, “Botha and Smuts in Power 1910-1924”, ed, C. F. J, Muller, *Five Hundred Years A history of South Africa* 3rd revised version, , (Pretoria, Cape Town: Academica, 1981), Liebenberg, “Hertzog in Power 1924-1939”, Liebenberg, “Smuts in Power 1939-1948”, Liebenberg, “The National Party in Power, 1948-1961” and Liebenberg, “The Republic of South Africa, 1961-1978”.

⁹ Albert Grundlingh, “Some trends in South African academic history: Changing context and challenges”, ed, S. Jeppie, *Towards New histories for South Africa: On the place of the Past in our Present*, (Cape Town: Juta, 2004), 210.

Liebenberg's work poses some clear examples that illustrate traits of misrepresentation and racism in Afrikaner historical literature. He mentions that in 1950 the newly-elected Nationalist government (under the guidance of the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr H. F. Verwoerd) wanted to improve the Homelands by establishing the Tomlinson Commission and that this commission recommended changes in agriculture like alleviating soil erosion, culling animals, building walls, erecting fences, building dams, sinking boreholes and planting grass. The majority of black people, however, were unhappy with some of these development measures because of the unilateral nature of their implementation. Likewise, some of the changes that were employed in agriculture (like stock culling) were in conflict with their belief systems because cows and other livestock indicated wealth and also formed part of their religious rituals. Liebenberg thus misrepresented blacks' resistance against such developments by claiming that they were disputing these changes because "some blacks were primitive, illiterate and conservative and did not like the new measures".¹⁰ Another misrepresentation, based on the Group Areas Act, is represented by his claim that the government gave people sufficient time to move out of their areas. He wrote "if there were already members of another group in that area, they could, in time, be compelled to move".¹¹ His claims are false because the majority of black people were not given notice of removals before they were forcibly moved. For example, the Bantu Prohibition of Interdicts no 64 of 1956 refused Natives the right to request court interdicts against removals.

The same case of misrepresentation is also detected with regard to the Native Resettlement Act of 1954, promulgated by Verwoerd, which was established to

¹⁰ Liebenberg, "The National Party in power", 490.

¹¹ Liebenberg, "The National Party in power", 482.

remove 'Black Spots' from western areas of Johannesburg like Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare. Liebenberg stated that the blacks who lived in the above-mentioned areas numbered "approximately 100 000 and lived in overcrowded, unhygienic and demoralising conditions and were moved in 1950 willingly in exchange of their hovels in their former areas for better housing in Meadowlands".¹² His view depicts the areas as constituting an uninhabitable health menace but fails to explain why they were later used to accommodate whites. Furthermore, why did some blacks resist the removal if the areas were uninhabitable? This passage clearly shows that residential segregation was natural and acceptable to Liebenberg. This is why he states that, "through the 1913 Land Act blacks fought against first, the provision which prohibited them from purchasing more land and secondly, against the provision which gave white farmers the right to eject them from land on which they had been living for generations". He says blacks "did not object to the principle of territorial segregation which was the cornerstone of the bill".¹³ This implies that all blacks accepted territorial segregation, which was obviously not the case. On the same note, the Homelands project was also condoned as a positive venture that came out of the government's altruistic policy and were autonomous African states, where blacks were to develop independently from whites. He emphasises the fact that the Homelands were independent, but does not show explicitly the line of demarcation of that self-determination or that, though they were regarded as self-determinant, the Homelands were answerable to the state. In addition, the fact that Homelands had poor facilities and were neglected by the Nationalist Government is mentioned nowhere in the articles.

¹² Liebenberg, "The National Party in power", 483 - 484.

¹³ Liebenberg, "Botha and Smuts in power", 396.

Apart from the misrepresentation of facts relating to forced removals of blacks, conservative Afrikaner historiography tended to support territorial segregation and Afrikaner nationalism. Whites were depicted as civilised and blacks as uncivilised and therefore in need of subjugation. Liebenberg shows that residential segregation occurred because “Hertzog wanted to draw a dividing line between the two races”.¹⁴ This illustrates that racial segregation was depicted as natural and acceptable. Hence Maylam argues that, for such scholars, “racial groups were deemed to be natural components of human society as natural components as the family. And this resulted in South African historical foundations of racial order to be taken for granted”.¹⁵ History was used to support segregation in this manner. This might explain Liebenberg’s view that racism developed ‘naturally’ out of historical relations between colonial and indigenous communities and was acceptable. He argued that:

The apartheid policy, which Dr D. F. Malan’s government started to implement in May 1948, was not a new one. It was an old policy which can be traced back to the time when Jan van Riebeeck, as commander of the refreshment station at the Cape, planted a lane of wild almond trees to indicate the boundary between the Hottentots area and the White area.¹⁶

Afrikaner nationalist historians also represented racial separation as a natural phenomenon as a “survival quest for security which could only be achieved through military subjugation of blacks as well as their political exclusion and territorial subjugation”.¹⁷ Hence Liebenberg stated that non-whites (through Native Representative Council¹⁸, African National Congress and South African Indian Congress) began increasingly from 1948 to press for a greater share in government

¹⁴ Liebenberg, “Hertzog in power”, 429.

¹⁵ Paul Maylam, *South Africa’s racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation and Apartheid*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 210.

¹⁶ Liebenberg, “The National Party in power”, 481.

¹⁷ Maylam, *South Africa’s racial Past*, 211.

¹⁸ Hertzog created the Native Representative Council in 1936. It had 16 blacks and 6 whites. Their duties were to advise the government on matters affecting the black population. See Liebenberg, “Hertzog in power”, 449.

and for the abolition of discriminatory laws. He argued that their demands disturbed whites and made them feel that their privileged position was threatened. As a result, the National Party used such insecurity to win the 1948 election.¹⁹ In this instance, Afrikaner historiography supports Afrikaner nationalism and racism by depicting the security and survival of Afrikaners as linked to the question of race. This suggests that white fears meant that blacks 'had' to be displaced in order to ensure the security of white people.

Liebenberg attempts a general survey of South African history, including its social and economic aspects, but fails to demonstrate objectivity when analysing the Land Acts and removals of 'Black spots'. Little attention was paid to the uneven impact of capitalism and colonisation on Afrikaners and blacks, or on differential class formation and conflict. Capitalism is seen as a positive force in both white and black people's lives, and as the best mode of development for black communities. Hence Liebenberg states that "since 1948, the racial problem has dominated South African scene to such an extent that other equally important matters tend to escape the notice of the historian. One of these is South Africa's enormous economic progress".²⁰ This clearly illustrates that the drawbacks of capitalism were not seen as a problem in history, but that race relations were a major source of dissatisfaction which obscured vital achievements like economic growth.

The conservative Afrikaner historiography on forced removals reflects Afrikaners' desire to preserve their identity within a greater South Africa and the perceived cloud of black threat and "they had to fall back on their history as a means of resistance to

¹⁹ Liebenberg, "The National Party in power", 463.

²⁰ Liebenberg, "The National Party in power", 504.

liberal and anglicising influences”.²¹ Through their history, they had to promote Afrikaner nationalism and support discrimination at all costs. In the process, they emphasised white supremacy over ‘Native’ inferiority, which justified their land policies of dispossession and appropriation. Afrikaner historical academic treatment of forced removals had weaknesses relating to lack of critical analysis and misinterpretations of some themes in South African black history but offers important information. The history of the Afrikaner’s struggle for independence is emphasised in Afrikaner mythology of the pre-1970 period, though such history tended to promote segregation and support apartheid and exacerbated discrimination in South Africa. The Africanist and Liberal schools emerged in opposition to this paradigm, with the sole purpose of exposing such discrimination by regarding racism and separate residential settlements as a social ill that had to be eradicated.

2.2. Africanist Scholarship

The Africanist (or at least proto-Africanist) school of thought pertaining to forced removals emerged in the early twentieth century with the aim of correcting what had been written about African history by colonial and Afrikaner writers and exploring black experiences of land dispossession through oral tradition. Africanist historians have argued that blacks and whites should engage on equal terms and treated the former as important in their own right. In this sense, their approach is different from the Afrikaner school that saw blacks as important but not equal to whites. Their writing contributed to the struggle for justice and equity in South Africa. Examples of such writers include the (arguably) proto-Africanist Sol Plaatje whose 1916 “*The Native Life in South Africa Before and since the European War and Boer Republics*”

²¹ Floris A. Van Jaarsveld, *The Afrikaners’ Interpretation of South African history*, (Cape Town: Simondium, 1964), 128.

dealt with the effects of the Land Act of 1913 on black people and Bloke Modisane whose 1965 “*Blame me on History: An Angry, provocative insight into the Torment of a Man caught between two worlds*” focused on the forced removal of the people of Sophiatown through the Group Areas and related Acts.²² The two books were written as novels and are at times polemic, but they capture elements of the history of forced removals. The two books are significant writing that represent Africanist historiography in the sense that both are primary sources of land dispossession. Similarly recent Africanist historians is Mohlamme in his book of 1989 “*Forced removals in the People’s memory: The Bakubung ba Ledig*” discussed the forced removals of the people from Molote situated in the South West of Magaliesberg and relocated to Ledig.²³

The writers laid emphasis on African nationalism and pan-Africanist ideals, which are in contradistinction to colonial and Afrikaner historiography.²⁴ Africanist writers wanted to “Africanise” South African history by writing a history that would be looked back on with pride.²⁵ The writers regarded the forced removals of black people from their land as a system that contributed to the regression rather than progression of blacks. The Africanist literature on African land use described colonial annexation as destructive of pre-colonial land use practices. They, like the Afrikaner and colonial literature, had biases and extremes and have been widely criticised for

²² Solomon Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa before and since the European war and the Boer war*, (London: King, 1916) and Bloke Modisane, *Blame me on History: An angry, provocative insight into the torment of a man caught between two worlds*, (Great Britain: Panther, 1965).

²³ J. S. Mohlamme, *Forced removals in the people’s memory: The Bakubung ba Ledig*, (Cape Town: Skotaville, 1989)

²⁴ H. Ochwada, “Historians, Nationalism, and Pan-Africanism: Myths and Realities” (Draft Paper: Codesria’s 30th Anniversary Conference), (2003), 2-3. (Available at: hochwada@indiana.edu or hochwada@hotmail.com).

²⁵ Christopher Saunders, *The making of the South African Past: Major historians on race and class*, (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1988), 144.

romanticising pre-colonial relationships with the environment.²⁶ As Nancy Jacobs puts it, “Africans in the pre-colonial period neither lived in harmony with nor had control over their environment. What they did was work it with particular methods that were affected by colonial annexation”.²⁷ The danger is to over-romanticise and nostalgically misremember pre-colonial relations both within their own society and with the environment.

In explaining the reasons for removals, the Africanist scholars under study raised market economic factors like slavery and labour mobilisation as reasons for forced removals of blacks.²⁸ But Mohlamme mentions other reasons for displacement like removals due to infrastructural motives.²⁹ While Modisane cited the reasons for displacement from Sophiatown as its role as “the scapegoat of the area being a slum but the township was a political corn inside the apartheid boot”.³⁰ He also mentioned that there were people who were forcibly removed from their land because they were not working. He argued that this was because “no work no permit and no permit no house, if an African had no secured or approved employment within 3 weeks such a person was endorsed out of the municipal area”.³¹ His analysis shows that politics and economics were interlinked but failed to illustrate that the policy of removals was not consistent as it was used at different times for different purposes and with different effects.

²⁶ See Leroy Vail, “Ecology and History: The example of Eastern Zambia”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 3, 2, (1977), 129-155.

²⁷ Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18 and Mohlamme, *Forced removals in the people’s memory*, 7 and 9.

²⁸ Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 50 - 56.

²⁹ Mohlamme, *Forced removals in the people’s memory*, 10.

³⁰ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 16.

³¹ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 107.

'Blame' is a powerful theme in the Africanist writing. Christianity and the Afrikaners were seen as the worst perpetrators of displacement instigated against blacks.³² That is residential racial discrimination from both Christianity and Afrikaners were taken as a natural process in keeping with Gods will because whites were a superior race and blacks inferior. Similarly, the state was perceived as "an obstacle and main source of developmental failures in the postcolonial era".³³ Africanists also based their blame on what went wrong on "cultural spheres" and this is clearly illustrated in the work of both writers.³⁴ Plaatje stated that:

The gods are cruel, and one of their cruellest acts of omission was that of giving us no hint that in very much less than quarter of a century all those hundreds of heads of cattle, and sheep and horses belonging to the family would vanish like a morning mist, and that we ourselves would live to pay 30s. per month for a daily supply of this same precious fluid, and in very limited quantities. They might have warned us that Englishmen would agree with Dutchmen or make it unlawful for blacks to keep milch cows of their own on the banks of that river, and gradually have prepared us for the shock.³⁵

Modisane echoed these sentiments (but suggests he carries blame too), "I have failed my forefathers, my forefathers and the ancestral gods of my fathers had failed me, they had lost a country a continent, but I have failed to secure a patch of weeds for my children".³⁶ This shows the Africanist view of blacks as victims of removals but they also perceived them as active agents in the making of their own history. On the other hand, Mohlamme solely blamed the Nationalist state for the removals.³⁷

³² Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 125 and 128 and Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 53 and 129.

³³ Nziem E. Ndaywel, "African historiography and Africanist historians", eds, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury, *African historiographies*, (London: Sage Publications, 1986), 209.

³⁴ Wolfgang Gebhard, *Shades of Reality*, (Germany: Die Blaue Eurlle, 1991), 69.

³⁵ Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 62.

³⁶ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 12.

³⁷ Mohlamme, *Forced removals in the people's memory*, 9.

Resistance politics is another focus of Africanist literature as writers like Plaatje wanted to demonstrate that blacks were not merely the passive objects of colonial, segregationist and apartheid rule – unable to influence their fate or to respond rationally to displacement. Mohlamme also argues that Africans were active participants in fighting their displacement from Molote he mentioned that about one hundred and ninety nine people resisted against displacement in 1966 and were jailed together with their chief.³⁸ Hence Temu and Swai argue that “there appears to be no explicit criterion to help determine the content of colonial protest hence some Africanist turned to study economic history”.³⁹ This is why the post-1930 writers had to analyse the historical perception of black reactions to forced removals in order to see how they themselves had contributed to their current position, and hence some resistance strategies of fighting removals were criticised. Modisane mentions the strategy adopted by the African National Congress of resisting displacement from Sophiatown to Meadowlands and their failure to effect this plan or even arrive when the day of removals arrived.⁴⁰ He also mentions a member of a community who threatened the police and warned them that “they will see if they remove them from Sophia Town [sic]”. Modisane explains how he remained in his house until the police arrived to fetch him. In his explanation of the resistance plan, he was criticising the African National Congress’s strategy and asserted that blacks had to establish to what extent they themselves had contributed to their current position by misreading the past and adopting the wrong ideological responses as a consequence.⁴¹

³⁸ Mohlamme, *Forced removals in the people’s memory*, 6-7

³⁹ Arnold Temu and Bonaventure Swai, *Historians and Africanist History: A critique*. (London: Zed Press, 1981), 26

⁴⁰ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 109.

⁴¹ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 107 – 116.

Plaatje's book illustrates his hope that the situation in terms of removals of blacks was to change. He mentions Parliamentarians who were against the Land Act of 1913. He mentions his wish that their "speeches and observations be sifted out of the big Parliamentary Reports and published in a concise little pamphlet".⁴² He also stated his wish that "those gifted Parliamentarians could have been mustered here to witness the wretched results of one of their fine days' work for a fine day's pay".⁴³ To illustrate further his dependence on whites' morality for stopping further removals, he relayed stories of white women who sympathised with 'Native' tenants and forced their husbands not to evict them.⁴⁴ This shows that the period before 1930 was a clear era of supplication, as Gebhard has argued.⁴⁵ But from the 1930s onwards, Africanist writing became more radical and was influenced by Pan-Africanist ideology and Black Consciousness. They realised that they could not rely on the mercy of whites for their liberation.⁴⁶ Modisane dismissed resettlement areas like Meadowlands as places of restriction because there were controls and prohibitions that did not exist in Sophiatown. In essence, resettlement areas were used as economic, political and social control mechanisms of blacks in order to satisfy the demands and allay the fears of white people. Adhering to the spirit of African nationalism, the Africanist writers called for unity among blacks. Hence Modisane raised objections to ethnic classifications among blacks because these distinctions sewed division.⁴⁷ This was part of the Africanists' attempt to ascertain why their struggle against removals failed, and to use unity as a means to destroy apartheid.

⁴² Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 55.

⁴³ Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 77.

⁴⁴ Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 81.

⁴⁵ Gebhard, *Shades of Reality*.

⁴⁶ Gebhard, *Shades of Reality*, 120.

⁴⁷ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 108

Africanist ideologies often portray blacks as a homogeneous group with little differentiation regarding distinctions like class and gender, hence Saunders argues that they wrote “as if there was one African voice”.⁴⁸ Though Modisane tried to show other black voices through the ANC and PAC, one dominant voice (ANC) is heard in discussions of the Sophiatown forced removals.

Another feature of Africanist writing is its attempt to celebrate and glorify past black achievements to make blacks find pride in the history.⁴⁹ For example, Plaatje and Modisane used historical black heroes and warriors as a means of motivating blacks who were experiencing displacements and oppression. Plaatje wrote about the Matebele’s battles during the 1830s, in particular their success against the Afrikaner Voortrekkers under Potgieter in the northern Free State near Vecht-Kop.⁵⁰ Similarly, Modisane used illustrations of warriors like Tshaka, Dingane, Hintsa, Moshoeshoe and Sekhukhuni as role models.⁵¹ But Arnold Temu and Bonaventure Swai argue that the glorification of black African history is one of the weaknesses of the Africanists because “they glorified the African past in the endeavour to assert the African factor in history”.⁵² This implies that such glorification often degenerated into romanticism that made their writing obscure the reality of the South African past.

Africanist literature raises important perspectives of the experiences of blacks during and after land dispossession. They depict black resistance versus white oppression but fail to employ important Materialist and Structuralist theories in constructing their histories of removals. This is supported by Josiah Mlahagwa and Ochwada who argue

⁴⁸ Saunders, *The making of the South African Past*, 143 and 183.

⁴⁹ Ochwada, “Historians, Nationalism, and Pan-Africanism”, 1.

⁵⁰ Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 108.

⁵¹ Modisane, *Blame me on History*, 20.

⁵² Temu and Swai, *Historians and Africanist History*, 7.

that “Africanists did not engage in serious theoretical analyses that placed them at the service of the masses in the effort to understand their past against the forces of exploitation”.⁵³ Ochwada then goes on to assert that “African historians should delve deep into the African past in order to bring to fore the knowledge that could be used to rejuvenate socio-political and economic institutions of the continent,” and that they should “conceptualise and theorise on the institutions of governance by promoting concepts of human rights as seen by Africans themselves – the ideal that would enhance African citizenship”.⁵⁴ But it is important to note that recent Africanists, like Mohlamme, tried to raise important human rights issues, like the rights of Africans to practice their religion by worshipping their ancestors as a reason against forced removals.⁵⁵ He also discussed the issue of difficult ploughing in infertile Ledig.⁵⁶ For him these factors led to frustration of people and as retaliation, people resisted displacements. These are vital transformations that are occurring in Africanist literature. Despite Mohlamme’s contributions in the genre, Africanists have neglected to treat segregationist policies as dynamic forces that were used differently at different times and had different ramifications. It also means that other factors like class and capitalism needed more emphasis in their analysis. These Africanist failures encouraged the emergence of the new Revisionist school that tried to analyse removals using a theoretical basis of Karl Marx and other philosophers. The Liberal writers were similar to the Africanists in the struggle against Apartheid, in that they also relied heavily on the prism of race.

⁵³ Cited in Ochwada, “Historians, Nationalism, and Pan-Africanism”, 9

⁵⁴ Ochwada, “Historians, Nationalism and Pan-Africanism”, 9-10.

⁵⁵ Mohlamme, *Forced removals in people’s memory*, 15.

⁵⁶ Mohlamme, *Forced removals in people’s memory*, 12-13.

2.3. The Liberal School

Liberal historians realised the drawbacks of the older historiography and developed a new history that focused on the relations between whites and blacks in South Africa.⁵⁷ In this manner they were interested in attempting to understand both black and white history by condoning co-operation across racial lines and rejecting the Apartheid ideal of racial segregation. According to Saunders, race is prominent in the Liberal historiography as almost every historical venture is explained in racial terms.⁵⁸ Muriel Horrell, for example, wrote a liberal polemic book entitled *The Group Areas Act and Its Effects on Human Beings*.⁵⁹ Forced removals, according to Liberals like Horrell, occurred because of racism whereby whites wanted to oppress blacks. Other reasons (like class domination and capitalism – which was seen as a possible solution rather than a problem) are not used in their explanations. Saunders notes that their main aim is to look at what had gone wrong and he argues that they sometimes place blame on individuals.⁶⁰ Liberal historians of the 1950s and 1960s were against racism but their obsession with race in the politics of the day arguably led them to exaggerate the importance of race and they ultimately separated the economy from politics.⁶¹ To cite an example, Horrell explains race prejudice in purely psychological terms.⁶² This is because liberalism emphasises the basic unity of humanity and innate dignity of people irregardless of race, gender or religion and does not allow separate living spaces between races as it condones the fundamental rights and freedom of

⁵⁷ Saunders and Southey, *Historical Dictionary*, 125.

⁵⁸ Christopher Saunders, *Writing history: South Africa's Urban Past and other Essays*, (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), 32 and L J. Twyman, "Liberal and Liberal Africanist historians", eds, J. T. Pridmore, N. D. Southey, L J. Twyman, *Trends in Historiography*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1997), 74.

⁵⁹ Muriel Horrell, *The Group Areas Act- Its effects on Human Beings*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1956).

⁶⁰ Saunders, *The making of the South African Past*, 95.

⁶¹ Saunders, *The making of the South African Past*, 177.

⁶² Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 154.

individuals. Liberalism emphasises cooperation, collaboration and acculturation between races rather than separation as instilled in Apartheid policy.

Blame for the forced removals of blacks, according to Horrell, belongs to the white citizens of South Africa and she states that “they bear responsibility of the nature of some effects of the Act”.⁶³ The problem with her analysis is her failure to include structures like the state and the capitalist system that supported the policy. She went further and asserts that the “Group Areas Act was passed entirely at the wish of white people. There is, thus a clear obligation on members of the white group to take cognisance of and full responsibility for the effects of this act”.⁶⁴ She goes on to posit that “white people in some towns were trying to use Group Areas Act to further their own interests” and ends by stating that “I hope most sincerely that the Government will refuse to endorse these plans”.⁶⁵ The Liberal view, in this instance, is based on moralising the end of the displacement of blacks, which comes with it the serious drawback of ignoring the state and capitalist structures that enforced land dispossession. In addition, Horrell does not acknowledge the impact of removals in enforcing class divisions and only considers racial differences. She views black people as classless and undifferentiated. For instance, she claims that “African residents lacked money to provide services in Ermelo”,⁶⁶ thus suggesting that all residents of Ermelo were poor, which was not the case.

⁶³ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 25.

⁶⁴ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 28.

⁶⁵ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 42.

⁶⁶ Horrell, *The Group areas Act*, 42.

Some Liberal historians also supported capitalism and argued that it would alleviate injustices in society if allowed to flourish.⁶⁷ In this paradigm, capitalism is viewed as positive. Hence Horrell warned the state that forced removals would impact negatively on capitalism – resulting in unemployment. This illustrates clearly her (widespread liberal) perception that industrialisation and capitalism were beneficial and would bring progress and justice to all. In her closing remarks, she said, “prosperity and peace in South Africa will only be achieved through good will and unity among races”.⁶⁸ This implies that “economic growth could not be sustained in an immoral and retrogressive political situation”.⁶⁹ The unfortunate contradiction of such an argument is the fact that the economy flourished when Apartheid was at its peak and black people were displaced on a massive scale.

The Liberals’ weaknesses (failing to understand politics and economics as interlinked and emphasising race as the driving force behind forced removals) led their critics, like the Revisionist School, to focus on such lacunae in their own explanations of forced removals. Despite their limitations, the Liberals managed to depict racism as a social ill in contrast to their Afrikaner predecessors. Liberal writers like Horrell achieved a break-through in the field of forced removals by the 1950s by emphasising that Apartheid was wrong and should be eradicated. The Liberal School illuminated aspects of race as a dividing tool in space allocation for settlement and so the historians who wrote after them managed to take their arguments further by including other concepts like class, capitalism and structural agents in affecting forced removals – and started to be more analytical and critical. These were the Revisionist historians.

⁶⁷ Twyman, “Liberal and Liberal Africanists historians”, 75

⁶⁸ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 156.

⁶⁹ Nicholas Southey, “Revisionist historical writing during 1970’s”, eds, J. T. Pridmore, N D. Southey, and L. J. Twyman, *Trends in Historiography*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1997), 83.

2.4. The Revisionist School

The Revisionist School went beyond race in its explanation for the displacement of blacks and cited reasons like class, capitalism and other structural agents. Revisionist scholars were informed by the economic boom of the 1960s that denied the Liberal historians' philosophy that economic growth could not be sustained in an immoral and retrogressive political situation, which they considered Apartheid South Africa to be. Southey argues that after this period "opponents of apartheid began to seek new categories of analysis to explain the evolution of South African society".⁷⁰ The Revisionist School emerged in the 1970s with analysis that interrogated their predecessors. In outlining the Revisionist historiography of forced removals, we will focus on Cosmas Desmond and Alan Baldwin whose analysis are based on a Materialistic criticism of the policy of forced removals.⁷¹ They both argue that the policy was implemented primarily to make whites wealthy by employing blacks as cheap labour to fuel economic growth. They maintain that racial oppression and capitalist exploitation worked together to ensure that black people lost their land, and describe how Apartheid policies of forced removals worked in practice. The policy of forced removals was perceived by Desmond and Baldwin as static and consistent in relation to those dispossessed and based only on the issue of racial discrimination. Other reasons and ramifications for displacements are not covered like the environment, identity and how displacement impacted on black people and their relations with their environment. Though this analysis lacks insight into the history of resistance by black people, it exposes the hardships experienced during removals and

⁷⁰ Southey, "Revisionist historical writing", 83.

⁷¹ See Cosmas Desmond, *The Discarded people: An Account of Africa Resettlement in South Africa*, (London: Penguin African Library, 1971) and Alan Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation: The study of 3 million evictions in South Africa*, (London: Africa Publications Trust, 1974).

emphasises the realities of power and domination and the history of the dominated. Though Baldwin tries to explore in passing the case of the community of Makolope under chief Makolope near Groblersdal in the Eastern Transvaal (who were in 1973 displaced to Lebowa homeland and whose resistance resulted in a chief and four others being arrested), the emphasis on resistance is not widely addressed in the work of the 1970s scholars because they focused more on exposing the negative effects of displacement on black people.

The period after 1980 brought with it the emergence of historians who focused more on the role of structures that drove the Apartheid policy of forced removals. Though they emphasised human agency, these historians placed more emphasis on structures and economic exploitation. There are, however, exceptions like Laurine Platzky and Cherryl Walker, who did an extensive work on social history.⁷² Unlike their predecessors, they were concerned with both structures of oppression and the struggles of the oppressed, with more emphasis on the former. Some scholars in this school, like Elaine Unterhalter and Timothy Keegan, portray apartheid policies of segregation as a State response to the changing demands of accumulation.⁷³ Others, like Margaret Nash, emulated Platzky and Walker and argued that Apartheid was consistent and unchanging. A crucial aspect of the 1980s scholars was their portrayal of forced removals as a self-explanatory element of Apartheid,⁷⁴ while other scholars perceive the policy of apartheid as dynamic in accordance with competition between

⁷² Laurine Platzky, and Cherryl Walker, *The surplus people: forced removals in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985)

⁷³ Elaine Unterhalter, *Forced removal: the division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1987) and Timothy J. Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa*, (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988).

⁷⁴ Margaret Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, (Braamfontein: South African Council of Churches, 1980) and Platzky and Walker, *The surplus people*.

blacks, whites, the state and capitalist demands. The former analysis of the reasons and results of removals is not holistic and sometimes ignores spheres of life like the environment, legality, morality and psychology while the Structuralist emphasis posed by scholars emphasised collective rather than individual human agency because, as Shula Marks argues, Structuralist historians often “ignore the complexities of human consciousness and individual variation in the interests of overarching theory”.⁷⁵

Another area of contention among Structuralists is the extent to which blacks were either victims or played a role in shaping their history. Structural historians (like Nash, Platzky, Walker and Unterhalter) agree with each other in their assessment of blacks as victims rather than active shapers of their own history, while Keegan disagreed and argued that blacks played a major role in determining their fates as “it was by exploiting the contradictions between the ideal and the reality of racial domination that some blacks survived and even occasionally thrived, despite the tightening coils of white domination”.⁷⁶ He posits that “it was also their relative exploitability and vulnerability to dispossession that made them so profitable to whites and enabled many of them to survive more or less independently in the economic and social life”.⁷⁷ The former historians depict blacks as passive, vulnerable and hopeless against a backdrop of forced removals, while the latter portrays them as active participants who gained and lost through the policy of apartheid and capitalism. This implies that blacks, as a group, shaped their displacement by being vulnerable and exploitable and that the State and the capitalist system used this to dispossess them of their land.

⁷⁵ Marks, “The historiography of South Africa”, 175.

⁷⁶ Keegan, *Facing the Storm*, 144.

⁷⁷ Keegan, *Facing the Storm*, 144 - 145.

The majority of post-1990 scholars drew on the 1970s representation of history (which is based on social history) but their analysis is in many cases more critical and detailed, while other scholars of the same period focus on Revisionist historiography with limited signs of social scholarship. Both groups of historians argue that the reasons for forced removals cannot be explained by single causal theories but need to draw from all areas of Apartheid South Africa, including its psychological, moral, physical, social, legal and economic aspects. Both groups could also be seen as concerned with social historiography because of their emphasis on the day-to-day history of ordinary members of communities, as exemplified by the work of A. Thomas, Michele Paulse, F. Swanson and J. Harries.⁷⁸ They examined the experience and consciousness of individual black people during and after forced removals. On the other hand, Revisionist historians emphasising Materialism theory depicting that through capitalism whites were able to extract wealth including land and labour from South Africa and blacks and left the local residents impoverished as appears in the work of Colin Bundy, Keegan, Maylam and Vivian Bickford-Smith.⁷⁹ They argue that racial oppression and capitalist exploitation worked together in displacing black people. The drawback of some Revisionist work lies in its reductionist tendency in

⁷⁸ A. Thomas, "It changed everybody's lives: The Simon's Town Group Areas Removals", ed, S. Field, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2001), Michele Paulse, "Everyone had their differences but there was always comradeship: Tramway Road, Seapoint 1920's to 1961", ed, S. Field, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001) and F. Swanson and J. Harries, "Ja! So was District Six! But it was a beautiful place: Oral histories, Memory and Identity", ed, S. Field, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001).

⁷⁹ Colin Bundy, "Land Law and Power: Forced Removals in Historical Context", ed, C. Murray, and C. O'Regan, *No place to Rest: Forced Removals and the Law*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990), Timothy J. Keegan, "Introduction" in R. W. Msimang, *Natives Land Act 1913 Specific Cases of Evictions and Hardships*, (Cape Town: Friends of South African Library, 1996), Paul Maylam, "Explaining the apartheid city: 20 years of South African urban historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, (1995), 19-38, and Vivian Bickford-Smith, "Mapping Cape Town: From Slavery to Apartheid", ed, Field, S, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001).

ascribing all motive to economic exploitation and the pursuit of cheap labour – to the exclusion of factors like racism. Though Maylam and Bickford-Smith, for example, tried to cite other reasons like the perceived health menace, they both argue that the underlying reasons for forced removals went beyond health to capitalist interests. Nevertheless, the underlying factor underpinning both the Revisionist and Social historical models of post-1990 who perceived forced removals as social engineering, which they define as a “social economic restructuring by pushing the black people around, forcing them to do things they did not want to do”.⁸⁰

The Social and Revisionist historians of the nineties largely perceived Apartheid as a dynamic process that used forced removals in different periods for different reasons. For example, Maylam mentions the 1850s Native Strangers Locations Act, which stipulated that visiting non-white strangers had to reside in a specific area. Regulations were passed in 1857 and 1872 to extend this control to other towns and Maylam sees this as a means of restricting the movement of blacks in urban areas. He goes further to examine the 1900s canard which portrayed blacks as a health menace, which was used to forcefully remove them from their land. For example, many black people in Cape Town between 1901 and 1904 were housed in Ndabeni and in a barracks at the docks because they were seen as carriers of bubonic plague. They were in turn resettled in Langa in 1918.⁸¹ Another category of removals identified by Maylam was based on competition between whites and Indians. He mentions the example of a so-called ‘Malay Location’ which was uprooted early in the 20th century in Johannesburg because its residents were competing for jobs with whites.⁸² Bickford-Smith also refers to the use of the ‘health hazard’ stereotype to displace

⁸⁰ Bundy, “Land Law and Power”, 8.

⁸¹ Maylam, “Explaining the apartheid city, 24-25.

⁸² Maylam, “Explaining the apartheid city”, 26.

blacks.⁸³ He argues that the government's aim was to remove blacks from white areas in the Cape and used devices like the Public Health Amendment Act of 1897 to force them into locations, which resulted in people being moved from Cape Town to Ndabeni near modern day Pinelands. Bickford-Smith deems this area as constituting a health hazard itself because it was muddy, windy and easily flooded, which resulted in the prevalence of diseases like cholera, typhoid, bronchitis and pneumonia.⁸⁴

Keegan also supports the theory of forced removals' different purposes and periods. He argues that they occurred primarily during periods of optimal climatic and market conditions and rapid productive expansion. He gives an example of the years 1913 to 1914 and maintains that during this period blacks were successful in terms of land cultivation and thus there was competition between blacks and whites.⁸⁵ As a result, white landowners sought to extend their control over black land and labour and to increase rentals and surpluses from black families on newly-acquired land.⁸⁶ He ascribes the relatively low rate of removals during this period to the inability of the white farming population to meet new domestic market demands for food. He claims that the advanced capitalistic and developed nature of white farming methods did ensure the removal of some black people from their farms, especially in highly competitive areas like the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State. Bundy extends this logic to account for the massive removals of blacks from the 1960s to the mid 1970s and argues that during this period economic growth was at its apex and the Nationalists were stronger than their United Party predecessors. These Revisionist

⁸³ Bickford-Smith, "Mapping Cape Town", 18.

⁸⁴ Bickford-Smith, "Mapping Cape Town", 23.

⁸⁵ Keegan, "Introduction", vi-vii.

⁸⁶ Keegan, "Introduction", vii-viii.

scholars believed that political, economic and social power lay in the hands of the minority, who exploited its power to displace blacks from their former lands.

In the last decade, historians of forced removals have tried to draw from different spheres of Revisionist genre, which may be thought of as an integrated revisionist historiography. For an example, Jane Carruthers has drawn from structuralism and social history, providing detailed information about the removals of Lady Selborne and is thereby able to deal with the drawback of structuralism of ignoring the involvedness of human consciousness and individual discrepancy in the interest of over-arching theory.⁸⁷ She mentions the issues of structures that contributed and assisted in fighting apartheid. In her view apartheid led to displacement and different races (including whites) assisted in fighting forced removals in Lady Selborne. Like Keegan, she argues that blacks played a major role in determining their fates. Her argument starts with the fact that the area was started through a syndicate of Coloureds and formed their own working group that dealt with the affairs of their township - the Village and Health Committees.⁸⁸ These factors illustrates that blacks were not victims but active participants in the making of their history even though they lost through land dispossession. The drawback of Carruthers' article is that, like other Structuralists (Nash, Platzky and Walker), she argues as if the manner in which apartheid was implemented in Lady Selborne was consistent and not changing. For an example, she did not show that the issue of labour demands also contributed to the displacement of blacks from the township. In the 1950s the economy was booming and the State did not need blacks as labourers as it did before and that contributed to their forced removal from Lady Selborne. According to archival sources it is clear that

⁸⁷ Marks, "The historiography of South Africa, 68.

⁸⁸ Jane Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng", *Kleio* XXX11, (2000), 26.

the State wanted to reduce the number of black residents from the township to match to the labour requirements of Pretoria:

On incorporation the Pretoria City Council will take urgent steps to reduce the population of Lady Selborne to a figure which will conform with the labour requirements of that area; this being in accordance with the Council's policy that natives shall be housed as near as possible to their place of employment.⁸⁹

She also did not show that the stereotype of health menace was used also to strengthen the displacement in order to illustrate that apartheid policy was not consistent. The other downside of the article is its lack of focus on the issue of environment in her analysis of Lady Selborne forced removals. But she focused on the legality, morality, economics and psychological side of removals. The article draws from scant social history by mentioning how the forgotten people of Lady Selborne felt by displacement. Voices of ordinary people are heard, though very seldom.⁹⁰

On the same note, Social historians, like Thomas, Paulse, Swanson and Harries, take the Revisionist School further by employing empirical evidence through to substantiate these theories of removals.⁹¹ Thomas focuses on the residents of Simons Town who were displaced due to Group Areas Act in the 1960s; Paulse analyses the fate of residents in Sea Point and Tramway Road while Swanson and Harries use the example of the District Six community that was forcefully moved in the 1960s. They explore a wide range of reasons for removals and examine their impact on the black former residents, including matters legal, health, political, social, physical and (as an after-thought) environmental. They cite the expected social, emotional, psychological and economic costs of forced removals but also emphasise their negative impact on

⁸⁹ See Central archives, Pretoria (CA) TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, "Statement embodying particulars and Survey of the Affairs of Lady Selborne", (1949), 65.

⁹⁰ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 32, 39, 40,

⁹¹ Thomas, "It changed everybody's lives", Paulse, "Everyone had their differences but there was always comradeship", Swanson and Harries, "Ja! So was District Six!".

the self-esteem and dignity of black people. The purely Social historians of this period did not place much emphasis on theorising the reasons for removals but focused mainly on ordinary people's experience. This is because Social historians who "adopted empirical approach distrusted theoretical abstractions, stressed the importance of human agency and believed in bringing history to life by dealing with activities of ordinary people in the past"⁹² and because "social historians reacted against some of the abstract theoretical work of the revisionist like strong emphasis on structural forces of class and capital, stress on collective rather than individual experience and consciousness".⁹³ By focusing on the individual experience and consciousness of ordinary people, Social historians of forced removals tried to illustrate that ordinary people played a dynamic role in shaping their own history. This illustrates that Social historians of the nineties analysed the policies that led to forced removals in a critical and profound manner and did not just debunk removals as a State response to the demands of wealth accumulation or perceive Apartheid as a static policy, as some of the 1970s and some 1980s scholars did.⁹⁴ These scholars built a holistic model explaining the reasons and results of removals and their analysis covered the economic, political, social, physical, psychological and moral aspects of forced removals.

The other area of agreement shared by the Revisionist and Social historians of the post-1990 period is their emphasis on resistance politics of the era of forced removals. They mention explicitly the political consciousness of black people who fought against forced removals (albeit unsuccessfully). They depict blacks as active agents in the construction of their own history and this shows that (unlike their predecessors

⁹² Saunders, *The making of the South African Past*, 184.

⁹³ Southey, "Revisionist historical writing", 91.

⁹⁴ Unterhalter, *Forced removal*, 1 - 2.

who adhered to Structural history) they were concerned with more than the structures of oppression but prioritised the struggle for survival and modes of resistance of the oppressed. The thrust of their writing sought to demonstrate that forced removals were not just about the imposition of policies on society by the powerful forces of the government or capitalists but that ordinary people managed to shape their own lives.

Through this analysis of several decades of varying historical research models and research pertaining to forced removals, it is clear that the environmental angle has been largely ignored. This gap can be filled through focusing on forced removals from a socio-environmental perspective, which this chapter tries to do by discussing the history of forced removals from the 1900 to 1977 and by demonstrating that this policy not only alienated people from their environment and land but was anti-environmental in that, by resettling residents in uninhabitable areas, it impacted negatively on their perception of themselves and their environment. This approach will provide a useful framework for analysis while assisting in bringing together structure, meaning, process, and consciousness to engage in a constant dialogue with empirical data and theory and to use social historiography in refining structural history.⁹⁵ Since the Afrikaner historians of the pre-1970s, the Liberal historians of the 1950s, the Africanist scholars of post-1910, the Social historians of the 1970s and the post-1990s, the Structuralist scholars of the 1980s and the Revisionist scholars of post-1990s, structural inequalities have been exposed and the impact of land dispossession on black people has been examined by these studies of forced removals, but there has been a failure on most parts to focus on their environmental dimension.

⁹⁵ Marks, "The historiography of South Africa", 175.

It is arguably pivotal to use the socio-environmental framework in looking at the history of forced removals. This will assist in understanding how people related to their environment before and after the removals and will explain the extent to which they transformed or adapted to their environment. The socio-environmental approach can criticise Marx for by “ignoring the environment he was not enough of a Materialist”⁹⁶, and is thus a combination of both social and environmental history in that it analyses the role of biophysical forces in historical processes. The methodology will assist in delving into the environmental injustice whereby black people were alienated from their environment and enjoyed reduced access to natural resources.⁹⁷ Blacks were restricted through Acts of parliament in terms of where they could live and what they could do on their land via conservation schemes like ‘Betterment’ that enforced environmental strategies. This illustrates how State interference in people’s relations with the environment engendered environmental apathy. Through the socio-environmental approach to forced removals, gender, ethnicity, race, class, social structures, consciousness, human relationships and culture will be explored, and by applying what Crosby calls “a new social mind” which is a demystified analysis of African socio environmental history from the perspective of Africans and through that we can use environmental history to effect a holistic pilgrimage in the study of forced removals.⁹⁸

3. Segregationist Forced removals 1900-1948

The period 1900 to 1948 was characterised by unsystematic and fairly limited forms of segregation, which could not clearly implement residential segregation. But these

⁹⁶ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 7.

⁹⁷ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 147.

⁹⁸ Alfred W. Crosby, “The Past and Present of Environmental History”, In *American Historical Review*. 100, number. 4, (1995), 1180.

measures went further than the laws passed before 1900.⁹⁹ These acts were passed to restrict the amount of land that blacks could own, but the authorities could not implement them systematically and often such laws failed. The laws passed after 1900 addressed such details and thus sharpened segregation to ensure domination of blacks. Segregationist ideology and its policies resulted from their inception in the disruption of local land ideology. New economic systems and forms of land administration that emerged from colonisation, industrialisation and capitalism led to the destruction of traditional land tenure systems. This led to the introduction of ‘western’ systems of land ownership, which were entrenched in various Acts aimed at displacing blacks.¹⁰⁰ Traditional land tenure that was institutionalised by social groupings and entailed communal land ownership, was destroyed by the laws of title deed. Local traditional land tenure ideology would never have recognised any sale of land by an individual to an individual as land was not for sale but for residency and subsistence.¹⁰¹ As Danquah observes an absolute sale of land was “therefore not simply a question of alienating reality; notoriously it was a case of selling a spiritual heritage for a mess of portage, a veritable betrayal of an ancestral trust, an undoing of hope of posterity”.¹⁰²

As will be discussed in Chapter Three, for the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni, land did not belong to chiefs but to all the people who held it in trust for future generations. Their laws on land use and ownership were not codified logocentrically but were summarised in the *Diane*, or aphorisms, and contrasted with the white emphasis of

⁹⁹ The Glen Grey Act of 1894 limited the amount of land African farming community could own in the Glen Grey area in the Eastern Cape and later in the Cape Colony. The Act wanted to “limit African commercial farming and encourage wage labour”. Through the Act, non-wage earners were taxed – thus pushing them into the labour market. See Nigel Worden, *A Concise Dictionary of South African History*, (Cape Town: Francolin, 1998), 66.

¹⁰⁰ Keegan, *Facing the Storm*, 138.

¹⁰¹ E. H. Brookes cited in Leonard Ngcongco, *Imvo Zabantu and Cape Native Policy 1884-1902*, Masters Thesis: University of South Africa, (1974), 101.

¹⁰² Cited in Mbaob, “Undoing the Injustices of the Past”, 90.

title deeds. The settlers used this absence of title deeds to exploit black land resources and expropriate black land. The issue of credit worthiness associated with land ownership is crucial in exploring land dispossession as effected by ‘western’ land tenure systems.¹⁰³ Black people earned lower wages than whites and therefore some of them had to surrender their land. Dispossession was thus based on class and race. Black wealth was destroyed with the traditional land tenure system and Africans had to buy land under the new system of colonial administration. Similarly, such land had to be situated in a place prescribed by the law.¹⁰⁴ Such Africans were then reduced to the status of squatters or tenants. Black homes from 1923 were thus reduced to places to sleep (*boroko*), hence the saying, “*ntlw ya gorobatsa tlhogo*” (a house to sleep), because there was insufficient land for agriculture.

The discovery in South Africa of diamonds and gold in the mid 19th century led to the mineral revolution, with concomitant ‘forced’ labour where blacks were virtually forced to work for wages in the newly-established industries and mines. Taxation on many essentials was introduced, for example the hut tax that encouraged many blacks to sell their land to meet its demands.¹⁰⁵ This forced many blacks to become tenants and servants of white capitalist agriculture and mining as their need for cash that drew them deeper into capitalism and made some of them sell their land to whites. But capitalism also enabled some blacks to buy land, though most of them lost it in the 19th century. Baldwin states that the defeat of Afrikaners in 1902 at the end of the South African War made many Afrikaners leave the Transvaal and Orange Free State and some blacks used money accumulated in the mining of the late nineteenth century

¹⁰³ Essy M. Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987).

¹⁰⁴ The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts prescribed where blacks could live. The 1913 Land Act established scheduled areas; and the 1936 Native Trust Land Act introduced ‘released areas’.

¹⁰⁵ Bundy, “Land Law and Power”, 5.

to buy their land.¹⁰⁶ The land bought by blacks between 1909 and 1912 amounted to 190 000 hectares¹⁰⁷, and this troubled elements of the white population because land ownership on a large scale meant that blacks would be self-sufficient and could thus resist engaging in wage labour. The Land Act of 1913 was passed in order to curtail land ownership for blacks, which resulted in the displacement of many blacks.

Scholars of forced removals have also identified the migrant labour system as a vehicle used to displace black people. From 1870 onwards, various authorities used compulsory labour measures to retain their labour force. Ellis argues that “the industrial revolution of the 1870s was the turning point in environmental history of South Africa because of the opening of diamonds mines in Kimberly”.¹⁰⁸ Elize Van Eeden deems this ‘forced’ removals, as it caused a crisis in 1903 whereby extensive agricultural production could no longer provide for the population because the majority of males were involved in the migrant labour system.¹⁰⁹ Their absence affected subsistence farming but the impact of migrant labour was not identified as a major cause for upheavals in agriculture. Poor land management was instead detected as the sole reason for poor production, a myth which further laid the foundation for land appropriation by white settlers from the 1930s through to the Betterment Scheme.¹¹⁰ This is clearly indicated in the government’s views at that time when it argued that:

¹⁰⁶ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ B. Ellis, “White settler impact on the environment of Durban 1845-1870”, ed, S. Dovers, et al, *South Africa’s Environmental History Cases & Comparisons*, (Athens, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, David Philip Publishers, 2002), 34.

¹⁰⁹ Elize Van Eeden, “Forced Removals in its many colours: A comparative study of selected examples worldwide”, The South African historical Society Conference, (1997), 10 and 15.

¹¹⁰ *Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within Union of South Africa, 61/1955*, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1955), 72-73.

If we provide them with areas to live in, but not with a sufficient quantity of land to maintain their stock and grow crops upon; ground enough for them and for their families to live on, but not enough for them either to produce sufficient food for themselves or to run cattle; simply places from which they might go out to work and to which they might return.¹¹¹

Land was then appropriated from blacks to ensure their placement in the reserves, representing control, subjugation and a source of more land and labour for whites.¹¹²

As a result, poverty became grounded in the historical patterns of South Africa's economic development because of the loss of land for agriculture, the lack of employment and a surge in population growth amongst blacks. Jacobs termed the process "environmental segregation" because the State forced blacks to move from desirable land on river valley parcels to inhospitable environmental zones.¹¹³ This constituted the 'untenable' vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation whereby black agriculture and entrepreneurial talent was curbed and black wage labour channelled into the white-owned economy.¹¹⁴

3.1. Role of Law in 1900 to 1948 in Land Dispossession

Law in South Africa was used to forcibly move blacks off their land. Through Land Act of 1913 and the Native Trust Act 1936, black access to land was restricted. Many black people lost land through the use of stereotypes and strategic and infrastructural reasons. Some laws were direct laws promulgated to displace people like the 1913 Land Act and the Native Trust Act of 1936. While some laws represented a subtle indirect strategy that led to land dispossession like the Public Health Act of 1919 and

¹¹¹ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 34.

¹¹² Hermann Giliomee, "The Changing Political Functions of the homelands", eds, H. Giliomee and L. Schemmer, *Up against the Fences: Poverty, Passes and Privilege in South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1985), 39.

¹¹³ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 164.

¹¹⁴ Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, 41.

Black Administration Act of 1927. These laws were implemented to protect the interest of whites to the cost of blacks and led to the displacement of blacks.

The Land Act of 1913 went beyond their legal predecessors in effecting racial segregation, pushing blacks to work for whites and driving forced removals – with the resultant environmental alienation of Africans, and environmental destruction in the reserves. The 1913 Land Act brought with it territorial and environmental segregation. The Act set aside scheduled land for occupation and ownership of Africans. The scheduled land constituted of African reserves and locations and amounted to about 8, 98 million hectares.¹¹⁵ The Land Act of 1913 section 2 did not allow blacks to purchase or rent any land outside the areas allocated to them.¹¹⁶ Blacks were forbidden from living on white farms as sharecroppers, labour tenants or cash-paying tenants, and were stripped of all legal rights overnight. This averted black competition with whites by pushing them from agriculture to the service industry.¹¹⁷ Bundy, for example, describes affluent peasants in the Orange Free State who were evicted because white farmers wanted labourers instead of blacks who were bosses.¹¹⁸ Keegan takes this further, arguing that removals in 1913 took place where black and white farmers competed vigorously and where capitalist development of white farming had advanced, like in the arable highveld districts of the Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal.¹¹⁹ Keegan argues that whites depended on black labour on the farms for production because they were ill equipped to meet new internal market demands for foodstuffs and thus needed blacks, despite their constituting threats -

¹¹⁵ Platzky and Walker, *The surplus people*, x.

¹¹⁶ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1913), 438.

¹¹⁷ Bundy, "Land Law and Power", 6.

¹¹⁸ Bundy, "Land, Law and Power", 6.

¹¹⁹ Keegan, *Facing the Storm*, 140.

hence they did not evict them in large numbers but used the Act to forcefully remove those occupying fertile land.

3.1.1. Public Health Act of 1919, Black Administration Act 1927 and the Native Trust Act of 1936

The Public Health Act of 1919 was subtle as it focused on land dispossession in an indirect manner. The Act ensured that black people lost their land using the stereotype that they were health hazards in some urban areas. Since the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, racial stereotypes emerged that led to land appropriation and the transformation of the landscape to enhance the lives of whites. Lee defines stereotypes as “a collection of simple beliefs about a particular racial or ethnic group in which all individuals are characterised collectively.”¹²⁰ Wolfgang Stroebe takes this further and explains stereotype “as a biased perception or conception of an aspect of reality, especially of persons or social groups and as beliefs or opinions about the attributes of a social group or its member”.¹²¹ The South African negative stereotypes used in forcefully removing black people from their land included portraying them as unhealthy, dishonest and uncivilised and thus undeserving of residency in areas nearer or within white settlements. This is clearly put by Mengara when he argues that, in justifying colonisation, whites declared that “the inhabitants of Africa had to be expropriated of their own identity and constructed in the western mind as objects of devastation, ignorance and primitivism that needed to be saved by the West”.¹²² Such stereotypes continued in the twentieth century in that health, for example, became a

¹²⁰ A T. Lee, *Imperial Imaginings: British Stereotypes of the Afrikaner Enemy During the South African War, 1899-1902*, The South African Historical Society Conference (6-9 July 1997), 1.

¹²¹ Wolfgang Stroebe, “Stereotype, Prejudice and Discrimination: Changing Conceptions in Theory and research”, eds, D. Bar-Tal and C. Graumann, *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*, (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1989), 5-8.

¹²² Daniel M. Mengara, “White Eyes, Dark Reflections”, ed, D. M. Mengara, *Images of South Africa Stereotypes and Realities*, (Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001), 3.

vehicle of forced removal and was viewed on racial terms. According to Maylam, black people in 1901 were already regarded as health hazards throughout South Africa and therefore had to be moved to areas that were far away from white settlements in most of the country's major cities. The Public Health Act of 1919 viewed health in racial terms¹²³ and was rooted in the white perception that urban health problems stemmed from overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions in urban black areas, thus justifying the removals of blacks. Underpinning this useful stereotype was segregation, competition and land dispossession. Maylam supports this by arguing that Malays constituted a source of commercial competition to whites and that this drove their removal.¹²⁴ Using health and the association of poverty with disease was a vehicle utilised by the segregationist government, who knew that it was a sensitive and serious weapon that resulted in forced removals.

Another law was Act number 38 of 1927, the Black Administration Act, which was aimed at providing better control and management of blacks, which led to many forced removals after 1927. Section 5 numbers 1 (a-b) stipulates that:

The Governor-General may-

- (a) define the boundaries of the area of any tribe or of a location, and from time to time alter the same, and may divide existing tribes into one or more parts or amalgamate tribes or parts of tribes into one tribe, or constitute a new tribe, as necessity or the good government of the Natives may in his opinion require;
- (b) whenever he deems it expedient in the general public interest, order the removal of any tribe or portion thereof or any Native from any place to any other.¹²⁵

¹²³ Maylam, "Explaining the apartheid city", 27.

¹²⁴ Maylam, "Explaining the apartheid city", 25-26.

¹²⁵ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1927), 316.

This Act is embedded in all subsequent forced removals, for example the Group Areas Act of 1950, as it gives the Governor General power to move any black to any place that the government chose for the benefit of the administration of black people by the State.

Like the Public Health Act of 1919, the Slums Act of 1934 implemented residential segregation under the guise of Public Health. According to Maylam, the Slums Act of 1934 provided for the removal of black slums to create space for white communities. Parnel in Maylam cites the example of the community of Bertrams, which was cleared in the 1930s to allow for the erection of a whites-only housing scheme and in the same period a slum in Johannesburg was cleared for business development.¹²⁶ The government also passed the Native Trust Land Act of 1936, which extended land owned by blacks from 8% to 13% by establishing Released areas for blacks. Released Areas means:

an area which was released from the restrictive provisions of the Native Land Act 1913; in other words these additional areas contained in the Schedule to the Native Trust and Land Act, 1936, were “released” for acquisition and occupation (subject to reservations) by Natives and the South African Native Trust.¹²⁷

The total amount of land to be released in South Africa in 1936 amounted to about 6,2 million hectares.¹²⁸ Some of the land was already occupied by Africans and the balance was still to be acquired by the South African Native Trust. The Trust acted as the corporate body and had to do all acts and things as corporate bodies may lawfully do like administer funds, settlement, support, benefit and material and moral welfare

¹²⁶ Cited in Maylam, “Explaining the apartheid city”, 27.

¹²⁷ *Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development*, (1955), 44.

¹²⁸ Platzky and Walker, *The surplus people*, x.

of the Natives of the Union.¹²⁹ In section 2 number 1, it strengthens territorial segregation by forbidding other races from acquiring land in these released areas.¹³⁰

Forced removals were supported by section 13 (2) of the act, which states:

The Governor-General may expropriate any land outside a scheduled native area and a released area of which a native is the registered owner whenever he considers that for reasons of public health or for any other reason it would promote the public welfare or be in the public interest so to do.¹³¹

Blacks had little rights to the land they occupied after 1936 and their removal could easily be effected any time the state desired. The act did not allow blacks that were labour tenants to be registered as such, and also restricted the use of natural resources like minerals. The Act put land under the administration of the Department of Native Affairs, which acted in consultation with the Department of Mining to further alienate black people from natural resources. In terms of section 23 number 3, the trust was placed in the same position as any private holder of mineral rights and thus held control over the use of such resources.¹³² The case of the Batlounge community, documented by Mbao, exemplifies such evictions. The Batlounge lived under chief Labane Shole and owned a piece of mineral-rich land near Putfontein, which led to their forced removal in 1978¹³³ under the auspice of section 13 (2) of Act 18 of 1936.

3.1.2. Influx control Acts

The Influx control Acts relates to excess blacks in urban areas between 1900 and 1948 with the aim of displacing them. In 1923 the Urban Areas Act was passed, which provided accommodation for Africans in locations in the urban areas in order to ensure that African peasantry develop in such areas whereby black labourers had to

¹²⁹ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1936), 92.

¹³⁰ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (1936), 100.

¹³¹ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (1936), 100.

¹³² *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (1936), 111.

¹³³ Mbao, "Undoing the Injustices of the Past", 106.

engage in rural-urban migration.¹³⁴ But such an act held the “principle that such Africans could not be regarded as permanent urban dwellers”¹³⁵, and meant that Africans had to establish two settlements for themselves: one in locations for *boroko* (itinerant sleeping) and the other in the rural areas as their *legae* (home). This Act clearly illustrates the *ad hoc* approach to influx control of the 1900-1948 period¹³⁶ during which the application of segregationist Acts were left to municipalities.

The government forced Africans to carry passes in order to control their movement and the ownership of livestock.¹³⁷ The control of the numbers of Africans in urban areas depended on the economic state of the country at the time.¹³⁸ During the period 1900-1948, the economy was on the whole relatively unstable. The period 1924-1929 was promising because of the discovery of new diamonds fields in Lichtenburg and Alexander Bay on the Orange River, which resulted in measures being taken to protect agriculture and encourage local industries - and the establishment of the Iron and Steel Corporation (Iskor) in 1928.¹³⁹ Such developments in the economic sector led to the Pact government encouraging industrial development, which meant blacks were needed for the labour market on a large scale. Between 1929 and 1932, South Africa was faced with the Great Depression, which was felt mainly in the “fall of wool price from 14d per pound in 1928 to 1929 to 4d in 1931 to 1932 and maize also fell from 15s 4d per bag of yellow mealies in 1929 to 9s 4d in 1932 resulting in the increase of a number of employees on relief works from 4 123 in 1929 to more than

¹³⁴ Dovers, et al, *South Africa's Environmental History*, 52.

¹³⁵ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 9.

¹³⁶ Maylam, “Explaining the apartheid city”, 34.

¹³⁷ Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, 65.

¹³⁸ Keegan, “Introduction”, vii-viii.

¹³⁹ Liebenberg, “The National Party in Power”, 471.

30 613 for 1930, 1931 and 1932".¹⁴⁰ Matters became worse when South Africa did not leave the gold standard with Britain in 1931, which resulted in some South Africans siphoning money out the country with the hope of making large profits in the future. The drought of 1933 exacerbated the situation and crippled agriculture. Many of these situations led to the relaxation of influx control in urban areas.

After the Great Depression and the period of economic recovery from 1936 onwards, money was plentiful but commodities and foodstuffs were scarce and the government reverted to tighter control of blacks in urban areas. These included the Natives Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1937, which prohibited the acquisition of land by blacks in urban areas except with the consent of the Governor General¹⁴¹ and controlled the movement of blacks. Unemployed Africans, and those seeking jobs, were considered "idle, dissolute or with disorderly life" and were prosecuted and made liable for fines. Anyone who employed a black person had to register his or her employee or pay a fee, which was an explicit strategy aimed at curtailing the employment of blacks in urban areas and was part of a period of tighter control of black rural-urban migration.¹⁴² Men who moved to cities after 1937 needed official permission to look for work and if unsuccessful within a short period of time were obliged to leave.

The Second World War posed another national economic challenge and contributed to the relaxation of the influx control and put pressure on supplies of commodities like petrol, rubber, paper, motor-vehicles, building materials, textiles, agricultural

¹⁴⁰ Liebenberg, "Hertzog in Power, 423.

¹⁴¹ Muriel Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1951-1952*, (Johannesburg: Institute of Race Relations, 1953), 26.

¹⁴² Bickford-Smith, "Mapping Cape Town", 19.

implements and wood, and foodstuffs like maize, sugar, wheat and meat.¹⁴³ This scaled down removals, as the economy needed more black labourers in the farms, mines and manufacturing industries to meet the economic pressures of this period. In similar vein, the government was focused on political complications that emerged during this era.

Most of these influx control acts were not aimed at women because they provided cheap labourer and were primarily not employed as wage labour, and the lax influx control of the period before 1948 let many black people build shacks – though the government continued to displace urban Africans without permits. After 1948 the new State came to power, the Nationalist Party government with more rigorous Acts that needed controlled labour which led to the displacement of blacks at a larger scale.

4. Forced removals between 1948 and 1977

This period saw the transition from unsystematic, fairly limited government intervention to rigid and profound segregation characterised by centrally-orchestrated forced removals. Government policy integrated racial segregation into town planning and forced all South Africans to live only in their racially classified areas, which led to the destruction of African freehold settlements in urban areas. After 1948 the State sought to reverse its predecessor's *ad hoc* approach of negotiation and lax implementation of Acts in order to apply discrimination in all legal areas. Removals after 1948 are considered rigorous because so many people were displaced due to the policy of separate development whereby ethnicity, race and class were used to dispossess blacks. South Africa was economically sound though its discriminatory

¹⁴³ Liebenberg, "Smuts in Power", 448.

policies did not generally support long-term sustainable growth or stability.¹⁴⁴ According to Bundy, the economy of South Africa was at its apex in terms of growth between 1960 and the 1970s more than ever before and in return the South African government strengthened their policies of discrimination by making sure that wealth remained in white hands.¹⁴⁵ The nett national income increased from less than R2000 million in 1948 to more than R4000 million in 1961, though there was a deficit in 1960 and 1961 triggered by political issues like the Sharpeville Massacre and the withdrawal of South Africa from the British Commonwealth – both of which created uncertainty among investors who withdrew about R160 million from the market.¹⁴⁶ The economy recovered by 1962 to the extent that gold and foreign currency reserves were stronger than in the period before 1960. All economic sectors were doing exceptionally well, especially mining, manufacturing and agriculture. This supports Keegan and Unterhalter’s argument that forced removals occurred mainly when the national economy was strong and there was competition for land, as was the case during the 1948-1970 period. But from 1970 to 1978 the gross domestic product dropped by 3, 2% per annum, though the economy was declining, the situation was better than the world standard.¹⁴⁷ What follows is a chronological outline of the land dispossession Acts passed during the period 1948 to 1977.

4.1. Removals due to the Betterment Scheme

The Betterment Scheme, which came into being due to the Tomlinson Report, was a land reform system. It was promulgated in Proclamation 31 of 1939, which

¹⁴⁴ J. Stuart and T. Hartzenberg, “*South Africa’s Growth Performance since 1960: A Legacy of Inequality and Exclusion*”, AERC Growth Project, (2002), 2. [Available at thartzen@commerce.uct.ac.za.atwww.gdnet.org/pdf/draft_country_studies/south%20Africa].

¹⁴⁵ Colin Bundy *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 8-10.

¹⁴⁶ Liebenberg, “The Republic of South Africa”, 504.

¹⁴⁷ Liebenberg, “The Republic of South Africa”, 505.

superseded Proclamation 116 of 1949. It was in place from the 1930s but was enforced vigorously by the Nationalist government after 1948 with the aim of improving farming and soil quality in black areas. Only 9, 4% of reserves were stabilised through the Scheme by 1952.¹⁴⁸ The major function of the Scheme was to recommend division of rural land into residential arable and grazing land¹⁴⁹, but it was used as a tool to dispossess blacks of their land and alienated people further from their environment despite its altruistic government-stated appearance.¹⁵⁰ The Scheme wanted to “plan African areas according to modern way of agriculture production and conservation science”, illustrating the government’s increased interference with black environments.¹⁵¹

The procedure and process followed in changing such areas were sometimes destructive to the self-esteem of black people. The land of black families regarded by the Scheme as unproductive in terms of agriculture was given to other families. This is stated in the *Union Government Gazette* of 1949 under section 24. (1) a-c that, “land could be appropriated to prevent soil erosion reclamation thereof, to prevent sand drift, protection of catchments areas or conservation of water”. Under section 27, it states that “such people whose land was appropriated would be resettled in the Scheduled Native Areas” which were areas reserved for Natives.¹⁵² Black people were given certificates of occupation instead of title deeds, which formed part of a strategy of eroding secure black land ownership and may have contributed to poor

¹⁴⁸ Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1972*, 78.

¹⁴⁹ Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, 27.

¹⁵⁰ *Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within Union of South Africa*, (1955), 74.

¹⁵¹ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 173.

¹⁵² *Union Government Gazette*, volume 156, (May 1949), 407-8.

black agricultural productivity.¹⁵³ The Betterment Scheme moved blacks from familiar to alien areas, which further affected agriculture and exacerbated land degradation because access to land was apportioned unfairly whereby whites were settled at a low population density in large areas while blacks lived in high population density in communal small areas.¹⁵⁴ High population density places great strain on supplies of resources like food, shelter and land, and such requirements were not catered for in the reserves. Some black farmers were moved from their land because of low agricultural production and some were resettled on small plots, which hindered subsistence production further – all of which meant escalating poverty.

The Betterment Scheme also sought to redress issues of overstocking. Africans had more livestock than could be supported on the limited land available.¹⁵⁵ Since the Scheme prohibited overstocking and overgrazing, Proclamation 116 of 1949 section 6-7 announced that a count of livestock was to be established periodically to ensure controlled number of animals. If excess of such animals was detected, the Act stated that they were to be slaughtered or removed from the Betterment area.¹⁵⁶ Another measure established to prevent overstocking was the auction system whereby people were allowed to sell their livestock to make profit. These systems aimed at slowing overstocking were pivotal in combating land degradation as overgrazing resulted in sheet and gully erosion.¹⁵⁷ But over-population of the reserves was not dealt with as vigorously. Maré gives an example of resistance that occurred in the Transkei in 1964 where many African people resisted the measure of culling livestock as they saw it as

¹⁵³ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 60.

¹⁵⁴ T. Hoffman and A. Ashwell, *Nature Divided: Land degradation in South Africa*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2001), 134.

¹⁵⁵ *Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within Union of South Africa*, 48.

¹⁵⁶ *Union Government Gazette*, volume 156, (1949), 403-4.

¹⁵⁷ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 140.

a strategy of impoverishing Africans.¹⁵⁸ An example of such resistance to Scheme-induced cattle culling occurred also in Pondoland at Flagstaff in 1969.¹⁵⁹ It was reported in *The Star* that local residents had threatened the chief and many were detained.¹⁶⁰ Residents of Lebowa in the 1950s actually killed a local chief.¹⁶¹ This illustrates the contemporary hostility to Tribal Authorities who were seen as complicit with the Betterment Scheme. Non-compliant Africans risked removal from their land or detention under section 22 number 2 of Proclamation number 116 of 1949.¹⁶² In similar vein, rotational grazing was controlled by introducing summer and winter seasons. This angered Africans as their conservation system was ignored and they had to comply with alien measures, and thus resisted Betterment Conservation methods.¹⁶³

4.2. Group Areas Act of 1950 and 1956

These Acts categorised people according to their race and ethnicity, and each group had to live in areas allocated to them by the Act. No residential integration was permitted by the policy and areas for different races to occupy were carefully chosen. The Act sought to enforce political control and tighten racial control of ownership and occupation of land¹⁶⁴, and resulted in Human Rights violations whereby the map of South Africa was redrawn on racial and environmental lines. McCarthy and Smith argue that the environmentally advantaged areas were reserved for whites.¹⁶⁵ While

¹⁵⁸ Gerhard Maré, *African Population Relocation in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race relations, 1980), 30.

¹⁵⁹ Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations*, (1969) 134.

¹⁶⁰ Cited in Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations*, (1969), 134.

¹⁶¹ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 55.

¹⁶² *Union Government Gazette*, (1949), 407.

¹⁶³ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Platzky and Walker, *The surplus people*, 101.

¹⁶⁵ Cited in Farieda Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response: An Historical and Socio-Political Evaluations with particular Reference to Blacks*, Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1990), 56.

segregation was advanced by 1950, the Act brought with it further discriminatory measure of dividing black people into different ethnicities and language groups.

The Act sought to appropriate areas that were near white settlements. White people, as a 'superior' race, were settled in strategically based areas and thus black areas that were close to the sites of scenic beauty and had physical and natural resources were targeted, particularly mixed-race urban areas.¹⁶⁶ Such areas were called 'Black Spots' or 'badly situated,' and were destroyed to make way for white people, even though some land in such areas was left fallow or empty. The case of Lady Selborne in Pretoria, illustrates this well. Lady Selborne was located near the city centre of Pretoria and was a racially integrated township, housing whites, Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Chinese. This township was destroyed in the 1960s but includes areas that to date lie vacant. During the land claims process, claimants agreed with the Regional Land Claims Commissioner, the Department of Land Affairs and the City Council of Pretoria, that people who want restoration to the vacant land would be allowed to settle there, and the City Council of Pretoria would formulate a development plan for the purposes of restoration.¹⁶⁷ A similar case is that of land adjacent to the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa) in Pretoria, which belonged to the Bakgattha-Ba-Mmakau community. Part of the land is vacant and the rest is mined by Eckraal Quarries (PTY) LTD. As with the Lady Selborne claimants, the Bakgattha-Ba-Mmakau asked to be resettled in the vacant land. Land being left empty after forced removals illustrates the Nationalist government's lack of interest in settling blacks in secure environments.

¹⁶⁶ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa, 1.

¹⁶⁷ Mbao, "Undoing the Injustices of the Past", 108.

The areas that fell under the Group Areas Act included mission-owned land, which fell under the Homeland category. The community of Boschhoek at Maria Ratschitz mission were displaced from and resettled in Limehill in Natal in 1969. Desmond asserts that farmers generally regarded Maria Ratschitz as home to some of the region's best farms, but that some of them were degraded through the former residents' overgrazing and poor farming methods. The new land at Limehill was inferior and people were allocated small plots without houses, waste disposal infrastructure, a foundation for a school, adequate roads or water supply, which in turn led to outbreaks of diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, pneumonia, tuberculosis, eye infections, cystitis, scabies or worm infestation, deficiency diseases and kwashiorkor.¹⁶⁸ This case study is a clear illustration of the anti-environmental traits employed by the State during forced removals. Blacks had plots to farm in Boschhoek but could not in their new area, which indicates that environmental concerns were not prioritised when the government resettled blacks¹⁶⁹ and that the removal of the community of Boschhoek was done to 'tidy up the map' and to separate blacks from whites. Not all resettlement areas were backward, situations differed according to areas, but most were inhospitable and easily environmentally degraded. These forced removals indicate the government's strengthening of its implementation of discrimination and separate development and sacrifice of black interests in order to satisfy those of whites.¹⁷⁰ Black Spot eradication indicates the anti-black and anti-environmental stance of the government as blacks subsistence farming suffered because most land given to blacks housed small infertile plots while their white counterparts were accommodated in well-developed areas. Forced removals destroyed Blacks' means of self-reliance and perpetuated black poverty.

¹⁶⁸ Desmond, *The Discarded people*, 3.

¹⁶⁹ Desmond, *The Discarded people*, 3 and 9.

¹⁷⁰ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 154.

4.3. Removals due to Infrastructural and Strategic Reasons

These removals were aimed almost exclusively at blacks. The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) indicated that many poor people are forcibly moved in different countries during mega-events (such as World Cups) with the aim of beautifying the area. COHRE takes this further and argues that “it is unofficial or official policy to remove the poor and their homes from the sight of international visitors”.¹⁷¹ Such removals occurred in South Africa not only for tourism but also for other reasons, like the protection of dams, forests, strategic roads, military bases, borders and other conservation areas.¹⁷²

The State removed people from areas where it wanted to develop strategic and Infrastructural resources. Maré gives examples of such removals.¹⁷³ The Baphalane-Ba-Sesobe and Barokologadi-Ba-Maotwe who were displaced from Madikwe in the North-West Province in the 1950s to make way for the Madikwe game reserve. The Agricultural Union in Natal in 1963 removed black people from the Upper Tugela region because it wanted to preserve the area. A strategic road was built to St Lucia Lake in Natal and black people were forcibly moved. Another example is the displaced coloured community of Protea Village that was displaced between 1966 and 1968 to clear the way for Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens¹⁷⁴, though they are to be reinstated.¹⁷⁵ Different acts like the Land Act of 1913, the Native Trust and Land Act number 16 of 1936 and the Expropriation Act of 1975 supported such removals by

¹⁷¹ Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), *Forced Evictions: Violations of Human Rights*, (Geneva: COHRE, 2003), 7.

¹⁷² Platzky and Walker, *The surplus people*, 6 and Maré, *African Population*, 31-33.

¹⁷³ Maré, *African Population*, 31-33.

¹⁷⁴ I. Fredericks, “Evicted families to get a slice of Kirstenbosch”, *Sunday Times*, (13 June 2004), 7

¹⁷⁵ Fredericks, “Evicted families”, 7.

stipulating that the Governor General (and his post-Republic successors) could expropriate land for conservation whenever he or she deemed it expedient in the general public interest.¹⁷⁶ Such removals can be appropriate but are disruptive if used in a segregationist manner to target a particular race, as was the case in South Africa. It is difficult to handle such land restitution requests in the post-1994 South Africa in cases where forests, dams and roads have been built. Many owners of such land accept money instead of getting their original land back. This does not necessarily help reconciliation and redress because such people are sometimes unsatisfied and this results in 'untenable' land redress.

4.4. Surplus people and related Acts

The operation of the law in terms of excess blacks in urban areas was tightened further after 1948. Acts relating to influx control of excess people previously defined them as the unemployed and unproductive workers but after 1948 also included the disabled, the sick, the elderly, women and children. According to Platzky and Walker, they were those that were not needed by industry or agriculture and were economically redundant. Definitions of excess people kept on changing according to the needs of the labour market. The pre-1948 excess people included only unemployed and job-seeking males and those males looking for jobs, indicative of a struggling economy. Influx Control and Pass Laws were aimed to keep Africans out of white areas in order to ensure 'order' in the urban industrial centres and to avoid undesirable acts by Africans.

¹⁷⁶ In terms of Act number 16 of 1913, land needed by the Governor General for forest conservation and plantation land would be expropriated and the owner compensated. See *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (1913), 166. The Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 under section 13 (2) states that, "the Governor General may expropriate any Native land for any other reason". See *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (1936), 100. Act number 63 of 1975 the Expropriation Act gives the Governor General power to expropriate land and other property for public use and other purposes. See *Statutes of the Republic of South Africa 1975*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1975), section 2.

Influx and Pass Laws strictly controlled the inflow of black workers and work seekers into prescribed white areas. Africans who were ‘undesirable’ or found idle were to be taken to the homelands or reserves. In terms of the Bantu Laws Amendment Act no 42 of 1964, ‘idle’ included those engaged in unlawful employment and those who did not have passes or permits to work in the urban areas.¹⁷⁷ According to section 8 of the Act, powers relating to influx control were transferred from municipal officials to the Labour Bureau.¹⁷⁸ Passes had to be carried at all times to avoid a fine or imprisonment. The Pass system was stopped and Act number 67 of 1952, the Native Abolition of Passes, introduced reference books.¹⁷⁹ In terms of section 2 (1) of the Act, Africans over sixteen had to carry reference books and any found without it was regarded as an offender, thus slowing their migration to urban areas.

Women were hit hard by the Act because it prevented them visiting their husbands. African women were seen as expanding the African population and hence their movement to urban areas was restricted and this was also enforced through the pass law of 1952. F.S Steyn, a member of the Nationalist government, stated that “we do not want the Bantu women here simply as an adjunct to the procreation capacity of Bantu population”.¹⁸⁰ The Urban Areas Act of 1945 allowed women to enter urban areas if their husbands had legal residents’ rights, but after 1948 period they were prevented from doing so. Such restrictions occurred under certain economic conditions and the economy was growing in the 1960s.¹⁸¹ Industries were more developed, the service sector was much more efficient and all economic sectors were

¹⁷⁷ Maré, *African Population*, 16.

¹⁷⁸ *Statutes of the Republic of South Africa Part 1 no's 1-61 no 42*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1964), 335.

¹⁷⁹ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1952), 1013.

¹⁸⁰ Cited in Unterhalter, *Forced removal*, 18.

¹⁸¹ Stuart and Hartzenberg, “South Africa’s Growth Performance since 1960”, 1.

highly mechanised. The control of Africans in urban areas depended on the needs and interests of white employers and the Pass Laws were a means of regulating demand and supply of labour for white employers. This inspired the Native Trust Amendment Act of 1954, which limited the registration of black labour tenants who had to be re-registered annually in decreasing numbers.¹⁸²

The 1970s saw much stricter control of blacks in the urban areas. The Bantu Affairs Administrative Act was passed in 1971, which restricted the movement of Africans to all prescribed areas within the Bantu Administrative Board's jurisdiction.¹⁸³ In 1978 the Bantu Amendment Act was passed, which amended section 29 of the Urban Areas Act 25 of 1945 by tightening the definition of an 'idle' black person further to include even those blacks who were lawfully employed. If any one of such employee was found in the area that they were not permitted to be they were punished with a fine or sent to the Homelands and such removals resulted in many Africans living in poverty with little or no land for subsistence agriculture.

4.5. Homeland Consolidation Act 1975

The Homeland Consolidation Act of 1975, which led to large-scale removals of black people, was introduced to ensure that the Homelands were not scattered and concentrated on 'Black Spot' areas to achieve this goal. The Bantu Laws Amendment Act was passed in 1973, and stipulated that "the African tribe, or community, or an individual could be removed from where they lived even if there was an objection".¹⁸⁴ Consolidation was proposed in the 1950s by the Tomlinson Commission, but was

¹⁸² Desmond, *The Discarded people*, 24.

¹⁸³ *Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, no 45 Government Gazette 3127*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1971), 34.

¹⁸⁴ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 73.

only implemented in the 1970s. The government accepted the recommendation in the 1960s as a long-term process to be pursued gradually because some white peoples' farms fell inside the borders of the Homelands and the government had to seek strategies to convince and satisfy them. Blacks who owned land outside the Homelands were threatened and the ensuing removals meant that metropolitan townships were consolidated in Homelands.

According to Desmond, the consolidation of Homelands from 1973 "completed whites' take over and settlement in South Africa".¹⁸⁵ This was achieved by organising blacks into their tribal groups and languages in Homelands that were regarded as independent 'states' under a President who had to ensure self-governance of such units. White interests were thus served because the government focused on their needs instead of trying to deal with any crisis that emerged in the Homelands. According to the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1973, the Minister of Bantu Administrative Affairs had to consult a Homeland's president before any removals but this did not mean that a Homeland leader would have to approve or reject the removals as they could not veto removals.¹⁸⁶ About 1 575 000 people were forcefully removed from their areas between 1973 and 1975 to ensure ethnically pure homelands all over South Africa.¹⁸⁷

The case of a location in Pretoria called Winterveld, which was occupied by many ethnicities (the amaNdebele, maPedi, amaZulu, and Batswana), illustrates the consolidation strategy of the state at the time. The National Party had convinced the president of Bophuthatswana, Lucas Mangope, to take over Winterveld because it

¹⁸⁵ Desmond, *The Discarded people*, 21.

¹⁸⁶ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 48.

¹⁸⁷ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 49.

housed many Africans and was adjacent to traditional Tswana areas.¹⁸⁸ The National Party claimed that Winterveld would be valuable, socially and economically, and promised to supply funds to uplift the area. Mangope accepted the offer and forced its residents to accept Bophuthatswanan citizenship. In the 1960s the area contained about 100 000 informal settlers and 270 000 of its residents, roughly 80% of the total community, were not Tswanan.¹⁸⁹ Many of them refused their new citizenship and about 30 000 migrated to kwaNdebele. The rest were then arrested.

Forced removals by the State, prompted by both direct and indirect laws, led to much poverty and hardship for black people. It also created stereotypes that South Africa is faced with. That contributed in land dispossession and resulted in ‘untenable’ social, economic, emotional and environmental problems that are engraved into the landscape and people’s memories. Such problems are difficult to resolve under the present dispensation because of their deep-rooted history.

5. Conclusions

The history of forced removals in South Africa from 1900 to 1977 depicts a historiography that is not based on a single genre but focuses on diverse methodology, scope and approach and the areas of focus are deep in disagreement. Literature on forced removals developed mainly from the 1970s with the Revisionist scholars who were critiquing the *status quo*. There were scholars who wrote prior 1970 from the Afrikaner perspective accepting land dispossession as a norm and the Africanist and Liberal approach critiquing the policy of displacing blacks. As a result scholars who

¹⁸⁸ De Clercq, “Transforming Mangope’s Bophuthatswana: Towards Democracy in the North West Province. *Daily Mail and Guardian*”, (4/July and 13/August 1990). Available at www.chico.mweb.co.za/mg/projects/bop/ch_one.html-91k.

¹⁸⁹ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 16.

wrote from 1970s; the Revisionist ensured that they revised the approaches of the former genres and developed more profound theoretical, critical and creative analysis of forced removals drawing from different approaches like social history and structuralism. The Socio-Environmental approach has been an aspect seldom utilised. This demonstrates the need to deal with removals from a socio-environmental angle and to focus this new understanding on the communities that were displaced between 1900 and 1977, which has been the aim of this chapter. The chapter has illustrated through literature review on land dispossession and also discussed the chronological history of forced removals to show how the State used environment as a tool to displace blacks from the land they owned.

Colonisation and segregation dispossessed many blacks of their land and led to much environmental destruction in South Africa. The laws on land dispossession violated black people's basic human rights. The 1900-1947 period saw lax implementation of laws that led to forced removals of fewer blacks than the period after 1948 as the economy at the time needed them. Such Acts were entangled in racial stereotypes and used perceptions of health, class and ethnicity to displace blacks. The State became stricter between 1948 and 1977 as it implemented apartheid policy and moved blacks from their land in far larger numbers, using laws like the Group Areas Acts of 1950 and 1956. The plentiful removals of this period were driven by a strong economy and the concomitant need to control the movements of Africans in urban areas. These laws pushed Africans out off their land and impacted negatively on their perception of themselves and their environment. Their love of the soil and traditional closeness with their environment was disrupted through segregationist policies as most were resettled

on inhospitable and infertile land, which resulted in environmental injustice for blacks.

That is the significance of the Socio-Environmental perspective on forced removals as it does not only challenge the stranglehold of the ruling class ideologies, but also shapes people's understanding of themselves, the society and their relations with the environment. The genre exposes the environmental injustice that emanated due to the States materialistic hunger and discriminatory traits. It illustrates clearly that the history of forced removals in South Africa was not only driven by economic, social and political power but it was also moulded by environmental ambitions that led blacks being displaced from well established and fertile environments and relocated in areas that were inhospitable and infertile, which was a sign of control and subjugation leading blacks to poverty as the majority could not engage in food production. This fuelled people's anger as they realised that they could not go back to their previous 'homes' where they were displaced while the situation in the resettlement areas was becoming more unbearable day-by-day. Some of the relocated had hope that they would be reinstated in their former areas. This hope became an unending history of vicious circle of disappointments with which this thesis grapples.

Chapter Three

Relationship between Community, Land and Environment, c.1900 – 1977: an Afrocentric Perspective

1. Introduction

This chapter examines Sotho-Tswana perceptions of environmental issues from pre-colonial times until 1977, particularly in the area of Pretoria (Tshwane). This is to provide an historical context of the worldview and ideologies of the community under study. This will provide a context for Chapters Five, Six and Seven, which focus more specifically on Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa. The approach of this chapter is Afrocentric because it establishes:

[a] frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person ... it centers on placing people of African origin in control of their lives and attitudes about the world. This means that we examine every aspect of dislocation of African people, culture, economics, psychology, health religion ... As an intellectual theory, Afrocentricity is the study of the ideas and events from the standpoint of Africans as the key players rather than victims. This theory becomes, by virtue of an authentic relationship to the centrality of our own reality, a fundamentally empirical project ... it is Africa asserting itself intellectually and psychologically, breaking the bonds of Western domination in the mind as an analogue for breaking those bonds in every other field.¹

In terms of Socio-Environmental History, an Afrocentric analysis would look at aspects of environmentalism in this context from the perspective of the Sotho-Tswana. This chapter eschews comparative study with other ethnicities but focuses rather on the Sotho-Tswana's relationship with the environment, which is the basis of their environmental ideologies. It is understood that perceptions of the environment vary across the selected study group – based on fissures of generation, gender, class, geographic distribution and idiosyncratic life experiences – but we will focus on

¹ Molefi Asante (1991) cited in, Ama. Mazama, "The Afrocentric Paradigm", ed, Ama Mazama, *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 5.

similarities while acknowledging areas of difference, particularly those of gender. Cultures are not static and change over time in response to internal and external stimuli, which this chapter seeks to reflect. Sotho-Tswana patterns of change will be discussed to illustrate that both pre- and post-colonial black history was dynamic. For example, the relationship that existed between the communities and their environment was based on mutual interdependence in terms of sustenance through food production. This relationship has changed over time under political, economic, environmental, philosophical and social pressures. The initial Sotho-Tswana interaction with the environment is termed “an ecological approach” by Merchant because it purports the idea of nature as a historical actor and suggests that nature is a whole of which we are but one part, hence we interact with plants, animals and soils.² When Merchant talks about the “ecological approach to nature”, she uses a certain historiographic approach, but her analysis can also be applied to the lifestyle of communities in relation to nature and, as Worster has pointed out, “Merchant herself admitted that any theory of nature or society is rooted in its historical conditions”.³

Sotho-Tswana ideology towards the environment, as many academics like Khan and Mphahlele have asserted, “was a positive one which embraced and connected the individual to the environment via interwoven physical spiritual and cultural links”.⁴ For the Sotho-Tswana, “*Motho* is part of Nature and Nature is *Motho’s* companion from the beginning. Nature is not therefore an object for human exploitation, for like

² Carolyn Merchant, “The Theoretical Structure of Ecological Revolutions”, in *Environmental Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, (1987), 267.

³ Donald Worster, “Theories of Environmental History”, ed, Robbins, W. G. *Environmental Review*, vol, 11 number 4, (1987), 252.

⁴ E. Mphahlele, “Foreword” in E. Letsoalo, *Land reform in South Africa: A black Perspective*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987) and Farieda Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response: An Historical and Socio-Political Evaluations with particular Reference to Blacks*, Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1990).

the human it came out of the same Source”.⁵ It is worth mentioning that the Sotho-Tswana did not always adhere to an ecological approach. Through contact with the West they had to adhere to scientific authority and a new set of social practices and policies, especially in the twentieth century and, with any norm, some Sotho-Tswana were non-conformists and did not follow nature conservation and preservation. Harrison describes the intervention of science in the environmental approach of black Africans and argues that a series of policies regulated black African’s relationship with their environment. He mentions as illustration that wildlife that was once a source of protein became the targets of ‘big white hunters’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which resulted in black Africans losing control of their own environment.⁶ This illustrates that the Sotho-Tswana perceived nature as an active agent in human ecology but there were instances where some deviated from the norms and values of environmental conservation and preservation. The Sotho-Tswana perception and relationship with their environment was a process that kept on changing depending on how the environment treated them. For example, if the environment was unkind to them they would appease it through rituals like rain-making.⁷ Through rain-making, the Sotho-Tswana environmental rubric was evident as it was a process that involved the whole community and was led by women, normally “queens”.⁸

This chapter disputes Krech’s theory that cites a case study of North Americans Indians and attacks the associated stereotype that portrayed them and other indigenous

⁵ Gabriel M. Setiloane, *African Theology: An Introduction*, (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1985), 40.

⁶ Paul Harrison, *The Greening of Africa - Breaking through in the Battle for Land and Food*, (London: Paladin Grafton, 1987), 50.

⁷ Thomas L. Manyeli, *Religious Symbols of the Basotho*, (Lesotho: Mazenod Printing Works, 1992), 53.

⁸ Terence Ranger, “Women and the Environment in African Religion: The case of Zimbabwe”, eds, W. Beinart, and J. McGregor, *Social History and African Environments* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 78.

peoples as especially ecologically-minded.⁹ This chapter argues that, though Krech maintains that “traditions are often fashioned creatively, it seems unwise to assume uncritically that the image of the Ecological Indian faithfully reflects North American Indian behaviour at any time in the past”, environmental constructions in African cultural and religious codes are socially constructed.¹⁰ They are social ideals that people aspire to and thus there is a gap between reality and those aspirations. Given that there are no absolutes, these ideals were sometimes subverted and changed as ideas and perceptions are complex and dynamic.

Pre-colonial Sotho-Tswana perceptions of nature transformed dramatically after the industrial revolution of the 1860s and forced removals of 1913 onward. Many black Africans came to feel animosity towards their post-resettlement surroundings. But some of the rituals, idioms and myths were kept intact and ensured that they did not lose touch entirely with their environment.

Gender roles played an important role in defining the Sotho-Tswana’s relationship with the land and environment. Women often performed traditional roles as food-producing agriculturalists and some were ecologists who performed rain-making rituals but they were continually oppressed.¹¹ According to Guy, the history of women in South Africa is one of oppression, and the nature of that oppression is dynamic and has undergone qualitative change over time.¹² Women in the pre-colonial era had to contribute to agricultural labour directly through their own labour and indirectly through fertility, and got married through the *lobola* or *magadi* (bride

⁹ Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian myth and history*, (New York: W. W Norton, 1999).

¹⁰ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 266.

¹¹ Interviews, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 2, 4 and 14.

¹² Jeff Guy, “Gender oppression in Southern Africa’s pre capitalist societies”, ed, C. Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

wealth) system. Men had authority over women through *magadi* and control of land and livestock and thus made some contribution to environmental issues and ensured that women became ‘pillars’ of their communities. Both men and women thus played different environmental roles, but both genders were traditionally and culturally intimately related to the environment. Bryant, when focusing on the AmaZulu, argues that “human beings are servants of their environment and the environment servant of people because they eat, built, grow food according to what the environment around them determined or allowed”.¹³ Though Bryant’s work was among the AmaZulu, the same observation can be made about the Sotho-Tswana, who regarded the environment as *lefa* (inheritance) from the ancestors left for them to utilise and preserve for future generations.¹⁴ This is articulated in the saying, “*lefatshe kela borona letshotlhe tse dileng mogolona re le abetswe ke modimo lebadimo*” (land and everything in it was given to us by God and ancestors).¹⁵

The traditional roles of both men and women were maintained in the post-colonial period but there were changes made to meet the needs of particular families.¹⁶ For instance, if husbands were involved in wage labour wives had to perform their duties. The role of females thus became tightened and they started holding title of their properties after 1900, which had not previously often been the case as married women were forced to remarry in the same family of dead husbands for them to own property.¹⁷ Forced removals, especially those of the 1950s, ensured that many women

¹³ Alfred T. Bryant, *The Zulu People*, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949), 73.

¹⁴ See Interview, Informant 5.

¹⁵ Informant 5 and (Anon.), *Republic of Bophuthatswana*, (South Africa, Johannesburg: Van Rensburg Publications, 1977), 3.

¹⁶ See Bryant, *The Zulu People*, 178-201 and Irene Dankelman and Joan Davidson, *Women and environment in the third world: Alliance for the future*, (London: Earthscan, 1988), 3–6.

¹⁷ Laurine Platzky, and Cheryl Walker, *The surplus people: forced removals in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), 117.

lost title over their own or prospective properties and most of them could not get compensation and thus had to rent in the resettlement areas.¹⁸ Hofmeyr argues that forced removals caused the black day-to-day physical world to disappear because displacement rearranged residential patterns and made people move from cluster style traditional settlements into grid plan villages.¹⁹ The new settlements could thus not accommodate the previous sexual division of space and labour. The Sotho-Tswana struggled, via myth, to maintain unity in order to preserve their history and culture.

2. Myth, community and environment

Myths among the Sotho-Tswana are entrenched in stories, poems, parables, songs and idioms. They illuminate what is “truly human and can also propagate an apparently naïve view of human aspiration and human destiny”.²⁰ This means that people’s identity (often seen as useless by some academics) is constructed in a dynamic and meaningful manner through myth. Myths constitute education in terms of morality, ethics, environment and creation. Waardenburg argues that through myths “world and life can be seen in their real nature. Profound truth is communicated in the form of a story”, and that “in myths what is authentic is not the details of the story itself but the deeper meanings which become present to both teller and listener only in the act of telling”.²¹ It implies that people are able to express their understanding of reality not only through stories but also through rituals, actions and gestures. Hence Mason, a theologian, argues that:

¹⁸ Interview, Informant 5.

¹⁹ Isabel Hofmeyr, “Gender Patterns of Story Telling and Forced Removals: A Transvaal Perspective”, *The Societies of South Africa in the 19th century and the 20th Century*, vol, 18 (1992), 46-47.

²⁰ B. Lornergan, “Reality, Myth, Symbol”, ed, A Olson, *Myth, symbol and Reality*, (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 3.

²¹ J. Waardenburg, “Symbolic Aspects of Myth”, ed, A. M. Olson, *Myth, Symbol and Reality*, (University of Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 53.

[one]...[m]ight perceive myth to be not a mere untruth but a story rooted in a place where one has been in the past and that one has to reach urgently in the present and that someone at a crucial point on the way says does not exist. It is a story, like most, of facts familiar to oneself but to which, until something happens to make returning to them impossible in the familiar way one gives almost no thought. Furthermore it is in a foreign world beyond them that one discovers the possibility of an entirely gratuitous and perplexing challenge to one's assumption about their reality.²²

There has been much disagreement over the authenticity of myth in terms of historicity, with historians and anthropologists like Raglan arguing that myths are simply untrue historically.²³ Arguments like these obscure what is perhaps the central aim of myth in all cultures and religions: being a teaching tool for past, present and future generations. This means that myth has history in itself and gives people a sense of identity and direction.²⁴ Mason takes this further by arguing that the history in myths is illustrated in the way it “brings us across such artificial distances as time and space, and translating us from ourselves to them”.²⁵ Myths tend to die if they do not play a role in supplying people with answers pertaining to questions like those pertaining to the meaning of life. Waardenburg argues that myths take time to disappear if they have religious dimensions because religion is a powerful tool used by people to understand the meaning of life.²⁶ This is also the case among the Sotho-Tswana as some of their myths have religious aspects, especially those relating to the origin of the universe, the environment and the community. Such myths deal primarily with the origin of people and certain social and ritual institutions that account for real-life situations and explain the basic conditions of human life as perceived by their authors. Ray supports this by contending that:

²² Harriet Mason, “Myth as an ‘Ambush of Reality’”, ed, Olson, *Myth, Symbol and Reality*, 15-16.

²³ Cited in Gregory Schrempp, “Introduction”, eds, G. Schrempp and W. Hansen, *Myth: A New Symposium*, (Bloomington, and Indiana Polis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 3.

²⁴ Wiesel (1990) cited in Schrempp, “Introduction”.

²⁵ Mason, “Myth as an ‘Ambush of Reality’”, 16.

²⁶ Waardenburg, “Symbolic Aspects of Myth”, 41.

African mythology contains a good deal of what we would call history. Indeed, in African oral tradition “myth” and “history” generally overlap and shade into one another. Myth blends into history as cosmic and archetypal events bear upon local situations, and history blends into myth as local and human events become ritualized and infused with cosmic and archetypal meaning.²⁷

Communities are able to share knowledge through myth, and this unites them. They grapple co-operatively with questions of their origins and life after death, life on earth, definitions of humanity (or “humanness”) and notions of how to interact with nature and the environment. The Sotho-Tswana mythologies were weakened by westernization and racial oppression. Indigenous cultures, traditions and religions were disregarded by the white State and many South African black Africans internalised belief systems.²⁸ Some myths, like the ones pertaining to humanity’s origin, still persist and such myths impact on how the Sotho-Tswana relate to their environment, their land and their community.

These myths vary, for instance the southern Sotho group believe that the first people emerged from the ‘bed of reeds’.²⁹ They declared that the site of humanity’s origin was Ntsoana Tsatsi, a hill in the eastern Orange Free State. According to Ellenberger, a missionary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Thomas. Abbouset of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society visited this place in 1836 and confirmed that the Basotho legend identifies a cave surrounded by marshes and reeds from which

²⁷ Benjamin Ray, *African Religions, Symbol, Ritual and Community*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976), 24.

²⁸ David Chidester, *Savage Systems*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 258.

²⁹ The myth of origin from the ‘reeds’ as held by the Sotho-Tswana is similar to the Nguni group but most could not locate the actual place as the southern Sotho’s did. Members of the amaZulu still celebrate the myth by organizing *uhlanga* (reeds) dance once a year where women and men will carry reeds parading and dancing. Such a celebration is a symbol of commemorating their Zulu culture and origin. Cited in Setiloane, *African Theology*, 6 and Bryant, *The Zulu People*, 27.

they believe themselves to have emerged.³⁰ Other Sotho-Tswana groups consequently adhered to the myth by performing rituals to mark the coming of every new life into the world; like the birth of a child, which was celebrated by cloistering both mother and child for ten days or more in an isolated room where only old women and pre-pubescent girls were permitted. The reed is placed next to the room or hut to symbolise the emergence of the first people on earth. The myth is evident among the northern Sotho and Batswana who treat the new mother as taboo until the child's hair is cut after some months. The myth has environmental significance because it illustrates to the community that plants are important and special and are related to humanity, and thus have to be treated with respect. The myths of origin are extremely powerful and have been handed down from pre-colonial times to today. Many Sotho-Tswana believe them to be historically true and will bury the dead facing east, because they believe that the dead are returning to Ntsoana Tsatsi. Setiloane cites examples of Batswanan households as late as the 1970s practicing the rituals of celebration when a new baby is born. It was the pre-colonial duty of old people to communicate the myth to the youth and this role persists today, despite the last century's forced removals.

Another myth of origin held by the Sotho-Tswana maintains that they emerged from 'the hole in the ground'.³¹ It states that men, women, children and their livestock emerged together from the hole. The Batswana locate the hole at Ga-Ditshweni (the Place of the Baboons) in Bophuthatswana, at Ga-Loowe in Botswana and near Orangeville in the eastern Orange Free State.³² Some claim that there is evidence of

³⁰ Frederic D. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto Ancient and Modern*, (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 18.

³¹ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 7.

³² Setiloane, *African Theology*, 7 – 8.

humanity's origin in such places because there are footprints of people, animals and a one-legged person in the rocks. The large one-legged footprint, according to the Sotho-Tswana, was that of Loowe, the agent of God (*Modimo*). They still believe that Loowe took the animals and people out of the hole to the surface before returning underground to live with *Modimo* and the ancestors. Setiloane places great importance in the mythical 'hole' location in the east and argues that the Sotho-Tswana are of one nation, hence the saying "*bana bathari entsho*."³³ The dead are equipped for their journey with food, seeds, utensils, clothes and blankets and eulogies would include greetings and requests to the ancestors and *Modimo*. The Sotho-Tswana would normally say "remember us where you are going! Ask them to bring blessings and protection". Such sayings indicate a belief that in some way the dead have control and power over living beings.³⁴

The myth of the 'hole in the ground' was widely held even into the 1970s by the older generation³⁵ and is still prevalent today, especially among those practicing "African traditional religion"³⁶ who believe that the dead return back to the 'hole in the ground'. The importance of the myth is that it teaches people the significance of communal unity because it states that people and animals emerged from the ground simultaneously. Animals are accorded great respect and the Sotho-Tswana use some as totems or cultural emblems, which is an environmental didactic device that teaches people to look after animals and to avoid abusing or depleting them. The site of origin in the 'ground' is also important environmentally as it indicates the importance of the earth as 'mother' because it gives birth to people and accommodates the dead.

³³ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 8.

³⁴ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 7.

³⁵ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 6-7.

³⁶ There is one religion "African Traditional Religion" but different cultural and traditions are embedded therein. Like Christianity, it is one religion but contains different practices and doctrines.

All of this fuels the respect and concomitant rituals done on the ground like libations. These origin myths state explicitly that people emerged as a unit, a community of women, men, children and animals. The connectedness among the Sotho-Tswana communities is expressed in various sayings and idioms, like '*bana ba thari entsho*' (people of the same group), '*motho gaiphetse ese naga*' (a person cannot survive without the help of others) and '*motho ke motho ka batho babang*' (a person is who they are because of others). The message behind these idioms is that one needs to grow through participating harmoniously with the community and following the values and norms of the group to be a holistic person. Sotho-Tswanan togetherness is demonstrated by funerals, weddings and rituals wherein clans come together to celebrate or share pain. Hence pre-colonial environmental education could be easily spread because people managed to teach each other about life as a community through such rituals and myths. A Sotho-Tswana family extends from immediate family to clan to tribe and this cohesion was disrupted by forced removals via the relocation of clans, families and communities.³⁷ Though blacks were resettled on a larger scale from the 1950s onwards, they tried to keep their communal spirit alive.

3. Land tenure system and land as Religion and History

Land tenure is defined as a condition or form of right or title under which property is held, permanently or temporarily.³⁸ Traditional indigenous land tenure systems were institutions defined by social groups or tribes, and were communal in that land

³⁷ Margaret Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, (Braamfontein: South African Council of Churches, 1980), 76.

³⁸ *Oxford advanced learner Dictionary of Current English*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 891.

belonged to everybody and therefore to nobody.³⁹ Some argue that chiefs were landlords and their subjects tenants⁴⁰ but, according to Letsoalo, this is a fallacy which stems from “people not looking at structural organisation of land tenure system but the rights and obligation which it defines, that is man to man relationships instead of man to land” of which chiefs were merely leaders who had to ensure good administration and management of the land.⁴¹ For the Sotho-Tswana, land belonged to the community and people held individually on behalf of future generations, and chiefs in return had to rule over people and ensure that they cared for the land. The chief owned his own land and ruled the people and their land to maintain law and order.⁴² There was tribal land where people worked as a community (*letsweta*), and its yield was used to feed the poor and those visiting the chief’s court.⁴³

Those eligible for land tenure included every male that was old enough and was married. Land was not acquired through a capitalist market system. A married man normally received land through his father who would ask the chief (*kgosi*) for it. The chief and his council would then allocate enough land to feed and house people. Women were also allocated land but that decision was based on factors like marital status and age. People were allocated land even if they did not belong to the tribe, but on the condition that they accepted the chief’s and the tribe’s rules. Their allegiance warranted them land. The community saw humans (*batho*) as having been created by God to look after His creation and thus land had both religious and historical

³⁹ Leonard Ngcongco, *Imvo Zabantu and Cape Native Policy 1884-1902*, Masters Thesis: University of South Africa, (1974), 100.

⁴⁰ See Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern*, 265.

⁴¹ Okoth-Ogendo cited in Essy M. Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 3, Harriet Ngubane, *Original Peoples of Zululand of South Africa*. (England: Wayland, 1986), 20, Temgoua, (1994) cited in John Lambert, “African Attitudes to land purchases and ownership in Natal in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century”, (The South African Society Conference, 6-7 July 1997), 3).

⁴² Isaac Schapera, “Introduction”, ed. Schapera, I. *Apprenticeship at Kuruman: Being the letters of Robert and Mary Moffat*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), xviii.

⁴³ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 19.

significance because it was the place where the community originated, lived, made history and communicated with their ancestors through the soil. Graves augmented security over land and hence many black Africans buried the dead in their yards. This practice was diminished with the establishment of locations after 1850, but persists in some rural areas where a family has enough land and title over that particular property.⁴⁴ The Sotho-Tswana refer to rural areas as “*magaeng*” (at home) and some did not regard locations as anything but places of work. Some who died in resettlement areas like Ga-Rankuwa in the 1960 and 1970s were sent to be buried in rural areas, while other families buried their dead in the allocated space. Many black Africans regarded the rural areas as their home because there was security of ownership to land there and it could be passed from generation to generation. Homestead men or landlords controlled production on their land and ensured that the environment around their homes and was protected. Landlords could transfer their right of use if there was anyone in need, but the chief’s role was to ensure that land was looked after.

Land became part of the community or individual’s history since it was kept in trust for future generations. People were born on a particular site, grew up, socialised and

⁴⁴ The history of the establishment of locations as places to house blacks can be traced back to the 1850s when the Port Elizabeth municipality established the Native Strangers Locations where Hottentots, Fingoes, Africans could reside. This was a strategy of removing blacks from urban areas. Likewise in the 1890s land in the Boer Republic in the Transvaal and Orange Free State was set aside for the settlement of Malays and Africans. In 1902 the Native Reserve Locations Act was passed by the Cape government and stipulated that the State had the power to force urban blacks to live in locations. Locations thus became places where blacks had to be accommodated for employment while their permanent homes remained in the rural areas. Blacks therefore saw locations as temporary residences and rural areas as their permanent homes and thus most blacks chose to perform rituals, celebrations and funerals in the rural areas. Many blacks were not allowed to hold title to land in the locations unless they had residency certificates. See Paul Maylam, “Explaining the apartheid city: 20 years of South African urban historiography”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, (1995), 28. With the establishment of the Bantustans in the 1950s and the Homeland system in the 1970s, some blacks started to perform their rituals in the locations but most hated their new surroundings as they saw them as segregationist and discriminatory and the cause of their poverty. See Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, 4 and 54.

buried their relatives there. Land became history and told a story, and hence peoples' umbilical cords were buried in the land as a mark of connection thereto. This practice still continues but is mainly followed only by those who still adhere to "African Traditional Religion". The Sotho-Tswana traditionally identified themselves with a particular area. People asking for identity would be answered, "Ntate Phiri wa kwa dithabeng tsa Mafikeng" (Mr Phiri from the mountains of Mafikeng).⁴⁵ After removals, many people lost that attachment to their homes and started to use surnames to identify themselves but surprisingly they often maintained their previous attachments, for example the community of Ga-Rankuwa always referred to themselves as the 'Lady Selborners'. Another group of people who were displaced from Lady Selborne and relocated in Atteridgeville called their resettlement area 'Selborne site'. Places were integrated into people's identity and thus they believed that the community and its land had to be kept morally and physically clean. If an area was believed to house witches, its community would also be given the same identification.

Land was appropriated from black Africans through colonisation, capitalism and segregation and thus became scarce. According to Bundy, such a history of land dispossession became a "punitive untenable allocation of land and land rights to land" because black Africans had to settle on unviable lands with small plots which to date are not supporting food production but are meant for housing.⁴⁶ Areas that were found suitable for white settlers were appropriated and the Sotho-Tswana system of land

⁴⁵ See also Interview, Informant 12, who mentions that a 'place' defines a person's identity.

⁴⁶ Colin Bundy, "Land, Law and Power: Forced Removals in Historical Context", ed, Murray, C. and O'Regan, C. *No place to Rest: Forced Removals and the Law*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.

tenure slowly but surely destroyed.⁴⁷ Black Africans became squatters on their former lands and agriculture was crippled. Men were compelled to pursue wage labour in the late nineteenth century and cash became the means for buying land. This transition of most blacks in rural areas from their pre-colonial existence as pastoralist-cultivators to their contemporary status of sub-subsistence rural dwellers, unable to support themselves by agriculture and thus depending on wages earned in white industrial areas or on white farms, is emphasised by Colin Bundy.⁴⁸ As the South African economy became more capitalist during the late nineteenth century, credit worthiness became a yardstick for land tenure and title deeds were introduced.⁴⁹ Many black landlords in the locations or reserves became tenants and subservient to white capitalist agriculture after the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁰

Though most black Africans did not have title to land except in some rural areas, there were fortunate black communities in 'Black Spots' like Sophia Town, District Six and Lady Selborne that included landlords.⁵¹ Lady Selborne was occupied by people from different races from its inception in 1905, including blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Asians.⁵² The tenure in such areas was based on the western tenure system but at least blacks were allowed to own their land. Since the area was close to the city centre, many blacks that needed jobs migrated there from rural areas and became tenants. As

⁴⁷ Bundy, "Land Law and Power", 5 – 7, Cosmas Desmond, *The Discarded people: An Account of Africa Resettlement in South Africa*, (London: Penguin African Library, 1971), 13, Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 4–5 and 25-27.

⁴⁸ Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988), 1.

⁴⁹ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 10.

⁵⁰ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 32.

⁵¹ Alan Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation: The study of 3million evictions in South Africa*, (London: Africa Publications Trust, 1974), 25; Platzky, and Walker, *The surplus people*, 100; Maylam, "Explaining the apartheid city", 28; Jane Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng", *Kleio XXX11*, (2000).

⁵² Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) TES 4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, "Statement embodying particulars and Survey of the Affairs of Lady Selborne", (1949), 61, Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 47, Informant 2, 4 and 5.

a result, Lady Selborne became overcrowded by 1949, housing an estimated 30 000 instead of 6000 people, which encouraged their white neighbours to fight for their displacement using the machinery of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Group Areas Amendment Act of 1956.⁵³ Lady Selborne was designated a white area, based on the Group Areas Amendment Act of 1956, and this led to the forced removal of all blacks whether they were tenants or had title over land.

Blacks were not given title deeds in Betterment areas from the 1940s onwards, but instead received certificates of occupation that stipulated that failure to comply with the farming rules prescribed by the Betterment Scheme would lead to speedy displacement.⁵⁴ This was problematic as, in contrast to blacks in 'Black Spots', those in Betterment areas had no title to land and were mere tenants whose certificates limited cattle ownership and divided land-usage into grazing, cultivation and residence.⁵⁵ The State also bought Trust land and blacks administered such land under the Native Affairs department. The land was bought through taxes and fines paid by 'Natives'. The tenure system in Trust areas was different to traditional systems and there were restrictions that prevented the Sotho-Tswana from pursuing subsistence farming in accordance with their own principles. For example, there was a restriction that did not permit ploughing of more than five morgen of land and this was insufficient for subsistence farming.⁵⁶ Squatters were also not allowed in such areas because the main aim of the Betterment Scheme was to establish commercial farming communities of black Africans, not just areas for their settlement. Some observers

⁵³ Horrell, *Group Areas Act*, 47 and Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 4.

⁵⁴ Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, 41.

⁵⁵ *Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within Union of South Africa. 61/1955*, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1955), 114. T. Hoffman and A. Ashwell, *Nature Divided: Land degradation in South Africa*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2001), 30 and *Union Government Gazette*, volume 156, (May 1949), 401 – 406.

⁵⁶ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 30, Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 41.

dispute this aim and maintain that the government's plan was to provide landless peasants by allotting land to a few wealthy farmers.⁵⁷

The Sotho-Tswana land tenure system suffered under apartheid as land became scarce because the Nationalist government wanted to consolidate black areas into single units for economic viability. Instead black economy worsened and the right of security of tenure over land was denied more and more, and black Africans were thus forced to move from their long-established homes to remote, small, unviable plots. Some blacks were deceived into accepting land designated only for dwelling and not for grazing.⁵⁸ Some people could have security of tenure over the land they were resettled on, but without compensation for their lost homes they could not buy land in the relocation areas. This obliged them to realise that Apartheid land tenure was a system that was destroying their religious, moral, environmental, economic and historical patterns of existence. An informant who was displaced from Lady Selborne and resettled in Ga-Rankuwa states that:

By losing our houses in Lady Selborne during forced removals, our humanness was impacted negatively because we lost the places where we performed rituals. And we lost our homes, our inheritance from our parents.⁵⁹

The implication is that the land tenure system that existed under successive white governments incorporated tribal-bought farms, private land, trust farms and locations – and such systems were alien to Sotho-Tswana land tenure systems. But as Mphahlele has argued, land continued to play a historical and spiritual role in the memories of the Sotho-Tswana even though the “spiritual and mystical bond between

⁵⁷ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 51.

⁵⁸ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 47, Hoffman, and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 8 and Desmond, *The Discarded people*, 3, 4 and 9.

⁵⁹ Informant 5.

the soil and its users around which so much of their folklore, poetry, religion and language were constructed was miscued” by interference by the white government in the way the Sotho-Tswana related with their land and environment.⁶⁰ The ideology of land that the Sotho-Tswana held was mentally intact, but empirically they did not want to continue living their history in Lady Selborne in Ga-Rankuwa, and had to flee from history by applying environmental resistance in the resettlement area.

4. Gender, identity and social engagement with the environment

Participation is the element of connection, which unites different beings as beings, as substances, without confusing them. It is the pivot of relationships between members of the same community, the link which binds together individuals and groups, the ultimate meaning not only of the unity which is personal to each man (person) but of that unity in multiplicity, that totality, that concentric and harmonic unity of the visible and the invisible worlds.⁶¹

The most important essence of being which was widespread among the Sotho-Tswana from pre-colonial times to today is participation, because they believe they are interlocked with other humans, the environment and the non-living world. The fact that some Sotho-Tswana, after their forced removal from Lady Selborne, did not participate in environmentalism because they were uprooted from their homes without their consent is evidence of their questioning of their identity. Hence Setiloane argues that “a human being is not only vital force, but vital in participation”. This implies that the holistic person’s participation in life’s agents and components is vital.⁶² This explains that the gender roles that each society has are socially constructed to ensure the smooth running of each community. There were distinct gender roles from pre-

⁶⁰ Mphahlele, “Foreword”.

⁶¹ Mulago cited in Setiloane, *African Theology*, 15.

⁶² Julian Kunnie, “The Future of Our World: Indigenous People’s, Indigenous Philosophies, and the Preservation of Mother Earth”, ed, Jennifer M. Reid, *Religion and Global Culture: New Terrain in the Study of Religion and the work of Charles H. Long*, (USA: Lexington Books, 2003), 137.

colonial to today.⁶³ Such roles have changed over time due to contact with other cultures and the effects of capitalism and racism.⁶⁴ Changes occurred even in pre-colonial era with regard to gender roles – gender roles were not static.⁶⁵ Some of the roles that women and men played differed from household to household, for example, in the absence of men in the home women had to perform men’s duties until a male relative arrived if the absence was due to death (*kenelo*).⁶⁶

The history of women in South Africa has been one of oppression, but they have played a central role in environmental history via agriculture. Jacobs argues that the role of cultivator was a less propitious form of production, but that role was important because it provided subsistence.⁶⁷ The Sotho-Tswana call such women *basadi* as they remain at home doing vital duties. Since the black economy deteriorated after 1866 because of the need for men to earn money, gender roles changed again. Scarcity of land undermined traditional means of subsistence and the common name for women was *bomme* (mothers). Terminology changes in reference to women emerged through the influences of missionaries and the establishment of women manyano’s - especially in the early twentieth century.⁶⁸ The amaZulu use a powerful word to refer to women as queens (*amakhosikazi*) to illustrate that they occupy significant roles. According to Ngubane, women among the amaZulu played a pivotal role during the reign of king

⁶³ Isabel Hofmeyr, “Gender Patterns of Story Telling and Forced Removals: A Transvaal Perspective”, *The Societies of South Africa in the 19th century and the 20th Century*, vol 18, (1992), Guy, “Gender oppression”; Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*; Nancy Jacobs, “The colonial ecological Revolution in South Africa: The case of Kuruman”, ed, S. Dovers et al, In *South Africa’s Environmental History Cases & Comparisons*, (Athens, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, David Philip, 2002).

⁶⁴ William F. Lye, and Collin Murray, C, *Transformations on the Highveld: The Tswana and Southern Sotho*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1980), 107 – 108.

⁶⁵ Guy, “Gender oppression”, 35.

⁶⁶ Lye, and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 112.

⁶⁷ Jacobs, “The colonial ecological Revolution in South Africa”, 22.

⁶⁸ Women fellowships started in black townships in churches as organizations that prayed for the safety of men in mines and later became unions of women promoting spiritual development.

Shaka and were organised into regiments. They administered the nation's affairs and assisted in maintaining law and order when the men were in the field.⁶⁹ The role of women in the pre-colonial period in the homesteads was generally to control and direct household affairs and to take decisions pertaining to the disposal of homes.⁷⁰ Sotho-Tswanan women, in addition to their procreative functions, built homes and made utensils, pottery, baskets, food and clothes. This illustrates that, though men occupied the superior position of being livestock owners and oppressed women, female roles were important.

Sotho-Tswana women, until the early twentieth century, prepared the ground for sowing by breaking it up to the depth of about four inches with a hoe or mattock.⁷¹ Corn was planted in August or September, according to early or late rains. They also cultivated *dinawa* (kidney beans), and searched forests for wild roots (*morogo*). They used clay soil and mixed it with chopped grass and ashes to make earthen pots, and wood for spoons, called *lushua*.⁷² This shows that Sotho-Tswanan women were core domestic figures and had power to access food - the basis of their social power and influence. Men had authority over women and distributed land to females who in turn had to work it. As a result, women among the amaZulu and Sotho-Tswana were obliged to provide children so that labour could be accumulated.⁷³ Barren women were sent back home because they could not fulfil their core duty in the homestead. Pre-colonial Sotho-Tswanan society believed in the accumulation of fertile and

⁶⁹ Jordan K. Ngubane, *Conflict of Minds: Changing Power Dispositions in South Africa*. (USA: Books in Focus Incorporated, 1979), 87.

⁷⁰ Martin H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806*, (Cape Town: The van Riebeeck Society, 1930), 321.

⁷¹ William J. Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, (London: Batchworth Press, 1953), 413.

⁷² Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 418.

⁷³ Guy, "Gender oppression", 34.

productive women. Capitalism in the 1860s changed the AmaZulu and Sotho-Tswanan culture and placed more emphasis on the accumulation of commodities.⁷⁴

Women were perceived to play a vital ecological role in rain-making. Chiefs and Queens were seen as vital in procuring rain and their popularity depended thereon.⁷⁵ Rain-making provided an explanation of local climatic conditions and was also seen as a means of communicating with the ancestors, God and natural forces. It was an activity grounded in the material necessity to succeed in agriculture. Since most Sotho-Tswana settled near perennial rivers where rainfall was scarce, rain-making ceremonies were seen to be crucial.⁷⁶ To illustrate the importance of rain, the Sotho-Tswana greeting is '*pula*', which refers to water, success and peace.

The rain-making ritual is different from many other rituals because it addresses communal and ecological concerns.⁷⁷ Rain-making ceremonies were performed under the supervision of the chief or queen and were repeated in elaborated form if the rain failed to fall.⁷⁸ Women as rain-makers played the role of environmental nurturers.⁷⁹ Female ecological authority within the patriarchal system was placed in the hands of queens and princesses, like Queen Mojaji of the Lovedu tribe. Such rain-makers worked with chiefs in making ecological laws and decisions on behalf of their community. Ranger states that in Zimbabwe the princesses report to chiefs on environmental matters and that they sit with the chiefs to hear domestic cases and

⁷⁴ Guy, "Gender oppression", 43, Informant 5, 8 and 9.

⁷⁵ Isaac Schapera, "Introduction", xviii.

⁷⁶ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 108.

⁷⁷ J.M. Schoffeleers, *Guardians of the Land*, (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1978), 2.

⁷⁸ Schapera, "Introduction", xxi.

⁷⁹ Isabel Phiri cited in Ranger, "Women and the Environment", 76.

enforce traditional ecological laws.⁸⁰ Though Ranger focuses on Zimbabwe, the same practice is found among the Sotho-Tswana, with rain-making queens like Mojaji working together with the king in managing ecological issues. Men were also involved in rain-making but the majority of prominent rain specialists were women because they were seen to be as closer to nature through the act of childbearing. Men, as diviners, would also perform rituals of rain-making and worked with queens⁸¹ and sometimes chiefs.⁸²

Rain-makers have been held in high esteem in Sotho-Tswanan society.⁸³ The letters of Robert Moffat to Alexander Moffat from 1822 to 1823 indicate that the area that the Sotho-Tswana inhabited in Kuruman faced drought, famine and crop-failure.⁸⁴ Many people died of hunger due to lack of rain in 1821⁸⁵ and this made the Sotho-Tswana place more emphasis on rain-makers. The missionaries as a result of their Christian convictions, held serious reservations about the rain-making rituals. According to the journal entry written by Moffat dated the 22nd of September 1821, there was no rain - and the rain-maker commanded all Tswanas to wash their feet in the river to bring rain that night.⁸⁶ The Tswanas obeyed and a few drops of rain fell but the sky soon cleared. The rain-maker explained that this was because an old woman died in the town just as rain commenced.⁸⁷ This illustrates that rain-making for the Sotho-Tswana was pivotal and they did not get entirely discouraged if the specialist failed to procure rain but a reason for that failure could be found. For

⁸⁰ Ranger, "Women and the Environment", 82.

⁸¹ Eileen J. Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen: A study of the pattern of Lovedu society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943), 271.

⁸² John D. Omer-Cooper, *History of South Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1994), 13.

⁸³ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 255.

⁸⁴ Robert Moffat, Alexander Moffat. "February 1822 – April 1823", ed. I. Schapera, *Apprenticeship at Kuruman: Being the letters of Robert and Mary Moffat*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), 55.

⁸⁵ Moffat, "February 1822 – April 1823", 55.

⁸⁶ Robert Moffat, "(Journal) May 1821 – July 1822", 24.

⁸⁷ Moffat, "(Journal) May 1821 – July 1822", 25.

example, missionaries were also blamed for drought because the Sotho-Tswana claimed the missionaries scared the clouds by looking at them. Moffat felt that they were blaming his beads that were nine inches long.⁸⁸ Other reasons for failure to make rain included sexual contact on the rain-maker's part, hence abstinence from sex during the ritual was enforced.⁸⁹

The interviews conducted in Ga-Rankuwa in 2004 illustrate that rain is still pivotal in the rural areas, but since the emergence of modernity and capitalism people's emphasis in the twentieth century was mainly on the job market in urban areas.⁹⁰ For example, only one informant, Mrs Ruth Kgari, mentioned rain in her interview.⁹¹ The absence of rain meant that there was environmental chaos whereby crops would fail, cattle would die and game would go elsewhere in search of water. Ellenberger argues that there were many rain-makers who failed to make rain and this led to disappointment among the people who failed to budget for inevitable droughts.⁹² The Sotho-Tswana nevertheless did not lose faith entirely in rain-makers though they did resort to different measures if the rain-maker failed to alleviate drought. Krige mentions that reasons for failure to secure rain were based sometimes on "anger of the queen, wrong burials (burying a person facing west), anger of ancestors".⁹³ Another problem raised by Ellenberger was the fact that the Sotho-Tswana could not produce sufficient food for storage because their hoes were rare, very costly and not very serviceable - and the only grain they knew before 1900 was millet, which takes nine

⁸⁸ Moffat, Alexander Moffat. "February 1822 – April 1823", 56.

⁸⁹ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 122.

⁹⁰ Informant 1–16.

⁹¹ Informant 2.

⁹² Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 255.

⁹³ Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen*, 279.

months to mature.⁹⁴ It is nevertheless important to note that, though there were rain-making disappointments, the ritual was a vital social system that aided the Sotho-Tswana in understanding issues relating to climatic conditions.

Christianity, improved equipment and modern cultivation strategies in the 1950s changed the way the Sotho-Tswana dealt with issues relating to rain-making and enabled some to produce enough food for storage. For example, in many areas in the twentieth century prayers for rain were offered collectively by churches.⁹⁵ The Tomlinson Commission aided people who could earn a living from the land through the Betterment Scheme.⁹⁶ Rain-making remained important but was not as revered as before. Mechanisation, literacy and capitalism caused more people to be employed in wage labour and they stopped relying on rain to secure food for their families. But rain-making was and is important because it is one of the measures that the Sotho-Tswana believe enables them to communicate with the natural world, and the practice persists today.⁹⁷ Lye and Murray explain that even in 1973 and 1974 in Leribe district in Lesotho the ritual of rain-making was still practiced by using a communal ritual whereby girls from one village would raid another village to capture a wooden spoon from the chief's palace and carry it back to their own village. The Sotho-Tswana believed that success would bring rain.⁹⁸

Chiefs also played a vital role in rain-making among the Batswana (like the baKgatla) and their instruments included traditional medicines and fat from the python,

⁹⁴ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 255.

⁹⁵ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 122.

⁹⁶ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 53.

⁹⁷ John Mbiti, "Flowers in the Garden", ed, Jacob K. Olupona, *African Traditional Religions: In Contemporary Society*, (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 68–69.

⁹⁸ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 122.

Kgwanyape (Setswana) or *Khanyapa* (Sesotho). The snake was deemed sacred as it was considered to be an ancestor agent that would appear in dreams and in the initiation of young women.⁹⁹ In early 1900 King Lentswe allegedly transmitted the art of rain-making to his heir, Kgafela, who died in 1914 and thus Lentswe passed it on to Kgafela's sister, Kgabyana, because he did not want Isang, who was supposed to be the successor of Kgafela, to know the art. In 1924 Isang assumed power and as there was drought in 1926 his 'tribe' was unhappy with him. Therefore he was succeeded by Molefi in 1929. Molefi was also unpopular and had to abdicate his throne in 1936, though this was due to misconduct. Rain-making rituals (or the absence thereof) thus presented a crisis to the Batswana in the 1900s. Schapera claims that Kgabyana disposed of the rain-making instruments as a result of the political quarrels that ravaged Mochudi in 1934. Schapera said he asked Kgabyana to deposit the instrument in the ethnological museum of the University of Cape Town. This, according to Lye and Murray, was the end of rain-making rituals among the Batswana.¹⁰⁰

The Lovedu tribe is relevant in this context because they also fall under the Sotho-Tswana group. The queen of the Lovedu tribe was Mojaji, and from 1800 her community preferred to be ruled by women, because of the previous kings' failings, and thus Mojaji's daughters assumed leadership positions.¹⁰¹ She made her tribe famous because of her perceived rain-making skills. Her sons died before reaching maturity and as a result she was obliged to take on the role of leader.¹⁰² Her position as a queen inspired other tribes to crown women. Krige states that the Lovedu tribe

⁹⁹ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 123.

¹⁰⁰ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 123.

¹⁰¹ Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen*, 4.

¹⁰² Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen*, 2.

“was in much closer harmony with nature than western European people”.¹⁰³ They saw nature as more than a physical fact: it was a living reality and an integral part of culture.

Like most communities, the Lovedu believed that success in agriculture required knowledge of their environment, not only through magic but also through cultural rituals and systems. To make the soil yield, they shifted cultivation and did not practice crop rotation because they felt that it drained the soil. According to western science, rotation of crops is pivotal as it revitalises the soil because different crops produce different nutrients that return moisture to the soil. Female tasks varied from home to home. Some women looked after livestock during male circumcision rituals. The Sotho-Tswana believe that neglected ancestors would bring drought. Rain queens were regarded as transformers of clouds and changers of seasons and the guarantors of cyclic regularity. The Lovedu believed that drought was inevitable when queens died. Queens were also believed to affect the climate through their emotions. Krige gives an example of Mojaji being angry with her daughters in 1934-1935 because they had affairs with commoners, and reports that there was no rain during that period.¹⁰⁴ The Lovedu also performed rituals of thanksgiving for good harvests to their ancestors by digging a hole in the centre of the threshing floor and placing grains of the harvest therein.¹⁰⁵ The entire tribe relied on queens for environmental and military security as they were believed to be capable of withholding rain from its enemies. Rain-makers also included (mainly female) diviners.¹⁰⁶ The rain-makers

¹⁰³ Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen*, 30.

¹⁰⁴ Krige, *The realm of the Rain queen*, 271.

¹⁰⁵ Manyeli, *Religious Symbols of the Basotho*, 51.

¹⁰⁶ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (USA: Heinemann, 1997), 68.

contributed to the spiritual welfare of their societies, but were themselves oppressed and alienated by some religious, social and economic roles.

Female roles as environmental custodians are still upheld among the Sotho-Tswana as women try to improve the poor soil of their resettlement areas.¹⁰⁷ This emphasis on improving soil quality was maintained by most of the female informants, which suggests that women are still the primary ecologists among the Sotho-Tswana. This makes them vulnerable to environmental degradation and contamination and hence they are involved in rain-making because they experience environmental problems directly.¹⁰⁸ In environmental history, according to Dankelman and Davidson, it is only from the 1980s that scholars recognised that poverty is linked to environmental problems and this implies an inherent sexism.¹⁰⁹

The Sotho-Tswana refer to men as *monna, ntate* (“a strong person who is a figure of authority”) who thus are bound to look after the welfare of their families. Married men act as ‘priests’ by performing rituals to ancestors and this gives them considerable authority over women and other dependants.¹¹⁰ Their pre-colonial roles included hunting, preparing animal skins to make clothes, sewing blankets and attending to livestock.¹¹¹ Blankets and clothes were made from animal skins like kudu and gemsbok, which also indicates that men contributed towards the depletion of wildlife. These goods would be traded for cosmetics, medicines and ornaments.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Interview, Informant 14.

¹⁰⁸ Dankelman and Davidson, *Women and environment*.

¹⁰⁹ The work of women in pre-colonial times was to grow crops, provide water, make food, gather fuel, built houses, sow, maintain and harvest crops, make mats and sell agricultural and other products like mats.

¹¹⁰ Schapera, “Introduction”, xxi.

¹¹¹ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 392.

¹¹² M. Wilson, “The Nguni people”, ed. M. Wilson and L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa to 1870*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982), 115

Men shared their roles with women, especially the sewing of blankets, after the nineteenth century industrial revolution as most of them worked as migrant labourers. This illustrates the role of modernity and capitalism in altering gender roles. Some men used metal to make axes and weapons.¹¹³ Literacy empowered Sotho-Tswana women with skills beyond the household and agriculture.

Men performed religious rituals and before colonisation were considered vital in communicating with the ancestors and slaughtering livestock for rituals.¹¹⁴ They also upheld morality in the homestead to avert the ancestors' wrath and would slaughter animals to appease the ancestors and to offer thanks. Women in some families started performing rituals themselves after 1900 as men flocked to the mines (about 18 105 in 1909 in the Transvaal¹¹⁵, about 22 539 in 1916¹¹⁶ and 10 251 labourers in certain coal Transvaal mines¹¹⁷), and this earned them respect from younger male family members.¹¹⁸ There was a decline in migrant mine workers in the Transvaal in the 1970s as some men were being employed in local industries. For example, 56 industries in Pretoria and Rosslyn in 1972 employed approximately 11 700 blacks and 87% of this labour force was male.¹¹⁹ Other traditionally male tasks like milking and herding were appropriated by females after the industrial revolution. Males were involved in agriculture but not to the same extent as women.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 294.

¹¹⁴ Wilson, "The Sotho, Venda and Tsonga", 142

¹¹⁵ Union of South Africa Department of Native Affairs, *Blue Book on Native Affairs 1910*, (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1911), 395.

¹¹⁶ Union of South Africa Union Office of Census and statistics, *Official year Book of the Union for 1910-16*, (Pretoria: The Government Printing and Stationery Office, 1918), 283.

¹¹⁷ Muriel Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1972*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1973), 291.

¹¹⁸ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 109.

¹¹⁹ Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations*, (1973), 281.

¹²⁰ Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen*, 42.

Pre-colonial northern-Sotho men divided arable land among their wives and children after consultation with the chief and his co-workers.¹²¹ Sexual division of labour lay in the hands of males who determined the number of cattle to be used for bride wealth, called *bohadi* (Sesotho) and *bogadi* (Setswana). Cattle, like land, were pivotal to the Sotho-Tswana as they both gave people identity. Campbell explained the value of cattle among the Batswana in 1822 as constituting “life and death”.¹²² Cattle were owned through *boswa* (inheritance), bride wealth and natural increase, and thus the ‘poor’ were prevented from rising above their position. Cattle had both economic and symbolic value and those bereft thereof could not hold political power.¹²³ Hence, according to Burchell, rich people were regarded as chiefs (*kgosi*) in 1922-1924.¹²⁴ This illustrates the class differentiation based on stock ownership that existed among the Sotho-Tswana.¹²⁵ Pre-colonial Batswana used a system of ‘assistance’ to the poor that resembled serfdom. They were excluded from politico-jural processes and were forced to live outside settlements.¹²⁶ Other groups of the poor class were made up of the captives from wars (*batlhanka*), sarwa (‘Bushman’) and those citizens who lost their herds entirely through being ‘eaten’¹²⁷ – and all of these groups looked after the livestock and fields of the rich Sotho-Tswana. The *mafisa* system allowed relatives, friends or neighbours of the rich to care for and milk cattle but they had no ownership rights over that livestock.¹²⁸ The obligation of the herdsman to the cattle owner is

¹²¹ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 19.

¹²² Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 123.

¹²³ Jean and John Comaroff, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods: cattle and commodities in South African context”, ed. D. Brenneis, *American Ethnologist*, vol 17, (1990), 196.

¹²⁴ Cited in Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts” 196.

¹²⁵ Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40.

¹²⁶ Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, 206.

¹²⁷ A person is ‘eaten’ (*go jewa*) when they have done something wrong and are fined a herd of cattle. Today people are charged anything from cattle, goat, chicken, liquor and money. Information on the *batlhanka* and *masarwa* is taken from Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, 206.

¹²⁸ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 47.

articulated in the Setswana proverb *kgomo ya mafisa o e gama o lebeletse tsela* (the cow that you have borrowed, you milk it facing the road), which means that the *mafisa* cow could be commandeered by its owner at any time. *Mafisa* gave men control over other men and, according to the Comaroffs, “that control was only open to those with substantial and more important growing herds – supported by food producing wives”.¹²⁹ The identity of men who had no cattle was transformed and relegated to females. The Comaroffs describe the *balala* men being called to assist their master’s wives in agricultural work.¹³⁰

Bride wealth in the nineteenth century was estimated at ten to thirty head of cattle.¹³¹ Cattle were required for marriage and determined wealth and marital capacity. In 1896 there was an Anthrax outbreak that killed cattle, and in response the Kgatla chief Lentswe abolished *bogadi* but many Tswanas continued with the practice in secret, using stones as mortgage for future *bogadi*. The chief, after fifteen years when cattle were plentiful, reinstated the practice and explained to the Dutch Reformed Church that *bogadi* constituted registration of marriage, not a form of wife purchase, and his successor reinforced it as an indispensable condition for lawful marriage.¹³² *Bogadi* in the 1930s was three head of cattle and forty years later about two head of cattle, which amounted to roughly R40.¹³³ *Bogadi* continued to signify marriage and the right to women’s labour. Guy argues that *lobola* among the amaZulu supported oppression, and this was also the case among the Sotho-Tswana. Kuper argues that “exchange of women for cattle is the central social transaction among southern Bantu

¹²⁹ Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, 205.

¹³⁰ Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, 206.

¹³¹ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 112.

¹³² Lye and Murray, “*Transformations on the Highveld*”, 113.

¹³³ Lye and Murray, “*Transformations on the Highveld*”, 113.

people and it placed women in agriculture and men as pastoralists”.¹³⁴ Women produced labour and girls brought cattle to the homestead via marriage. Cattle were in turn used to acquire labour, mediated the link between production and exchange and forged political ties.¹³⁵ A journalist in Theal’s records commented that women were men’s slaves.¹³⁶

Capitalism transformed gender roles by preventing men from working the land. Interviews suggest that women were primarily involved in cultivating food and tending the soil.¹³⁷ Male labour was controlled in mines and markets and no longer controlled female labour.¹³⁸ Women deepened their environmental roles and this affected rural agriculture and resulted in social and economic crisis. Women, despite the crisis in food production, became more important in society because “through their fertility they became not objects of exploitation but as bearers of value in the technical, wider, non technical sense”.¹³⁹ Women often became more important than males in a practical sense because they provided food and related more to the soil and nature, hence from the 1930s onward many unmarried or divorced women started establishing independent households while most men established independent homes through marriage.¹⁴⁰ Women realised that they could survive without men because they had to fulfil the role of ‘food makers’.

5. Community and interaction with Flora and Fauna

¹³⁴ Cited in Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, 197.

¹³⁵ Comaroffs, “Goodly beasts, beastly goods”, 200.

¹³⁶ Cited in Wilson, “The Nguni people”, 82 – 83.

¹³⁷ Informant 2, 4, and 14.

¹³⁸ Guy, “Gender oppression”, 43,

¹³⁹ Guy, “Gender oppression”, 45.

¹⁴⁰ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 107 – 108.

The Sotho-Tswana believed that *Modimo* (God) gave them natural resources and heritage to preserve for the benefit of their own and future generations. Hence Kunnie argues that “indigenous peoples are the original biodiversity teachers of our world” because of their traditional conservation ethics that precluded killing certain animals or plants.¹⁴¹ The Sotho-Tswana used flora in many ways. Plants like green mealies, sorghum, sweet reeds, sweet melons, pumpkins and kidney beans (*dinawa*) were eaten in the early nineteenth century. Maize was introduced in 1822 through trade with neighbours like the Nguni, who had used it since 1635.¹⁴² The Sotho-Tswana acquired seed through trade with the United States of America and Australia in 1898.¹⁴³ The amaPedi rejected it after a year because they preferred sorghum.¹⁴⁴ Maize became widely used after 1930 because it requires less labour and has great adaptive capacity.¹⁴⁵ Sugar cane was planted and vegetables and fruits were introduced by European settlers in the 1940s.¹⁴⁶ Some herbs were medicinal, and tobacco oil was believed to kill snakes.¹⁴⁷ Herbs are still used medicinally by many Sotho-Tswana, especially those who adhere to African Traditional Religion. For example, a plant known as *kgoma* is used to heal sore and swollen feet, *lengana* is used to cool a fever. Another plant, *sehoere*, is used as a painkiller during male circumcision.¹⁴⁸ *Amarula* was used against kwashiorkor.¹⁴⁹ Grass was used to make mats, and the stems of wild dates to make brooms. Trees provided weapons and building materials, and their bark was considered medicinal. Pre-colonial Sotho-

¹⁴¹ Kunnie, “The Future of Our World”, 138.

¹⁴² Wilson, “The Nguni people”, 109.

¹⁴³ Lye and Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld*, 73.

¹⁴⁴ Wilson, “The Sotho, Venda and Tsonga”, 142.

¹⁴⁵ James C. McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa 1800-1990*, (Oxford: Heinemann Portsmouth, 1999), 126 and 165.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Moffat, *Missionary labour and Scenes in Southern Africa*, (London: John Snow, Paternoster Row, 1846), 152.

¹⁴⁷ J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa: A second journey*. (Glasgow: Francis Westley, 1822), 31.

¹⁴⁸ Manyeli, *Religious Symbols of the Basotho*, 70.

¹⁴⁹ J. Mpinga, “Learning from History”, ed. M. P. Johnson, *State of the Environment in South Africa*, (Zimbabwe: Southern African Developing Communities, 1994), 23.

Tswana built houses with poles and thatch, and stone after 1812 because timber became rare.¹⁵⁰ Mimosa was used for houses.¹⁵¹ Trees are revered as religious shrines where people attempted to communicate with their ancestors.¹⁵²

Animals were also very important to the Sotho-Tswana and provided food, material and herbs.¹⁵³ Leopards were specifically killed to clothe kings and chiefs, and ostriches were used for umbrellas.¹⁵⁴ Blankets were made from kudu, gemsbok and domestic goats, and cloaks were made from birds.¹⁵⁵ Some animals were used medicinally, for example jackals' bladders and snakeskin were combined with herbs to combat bewitchment and snake's poison was used to heal someone bitten by a snake.¹⁵⁶

The Sotho-Tswana attached great economic and symbolic value to their livestock. There has been debate over the ownership of cattle before the arrival of European settlers. Huffman disputes their presence but Wilmsen maintains that the Khoi-San owned cattle before any Bantu-speaking peoples arrived in South Africa.¹⁵⁷ The Sotho-Tswana used cattle as currency, for example only cattle were used for bride

¹⁵⁰ Timothy M. Maggs, "Stone walled Agricultural communities of South Africa and Botswana", Vogel, J. O. *Encyclopedia of Pre-colonial Africa, Archaeology, History, Languages, Cultures and Environment*, (London, New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1997), 231 – 232.

¹⁵¹ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 377.

¹⁵² Krige, *The realm of a Rain queen*, 234.

¹⁵³ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 392.

¹⁵⁴ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 403.

¹⁵⁵ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 416.

¹⁵⁶ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto Ancient and Modern*, 249.

¹⁵⁷ Cited in A. B. Smith, "Southern African Pastoralists", in. Vogel, *Encyclopaedia of Pre-colonial Africa*, 210.

wealth¹⁵⁸, and transport. Horses were also used as transport¹⁵⁹, because “they were cheap to maintain and they did not require petrol like cars”.¹⁶⁰

Many animals were regarded as tribal totems. The Bakwena would not ill-treat or kill a crocodile, the Bataung revered the lion, the *Bahurutse* the baboon, the *Bakgatla* the monkey, the *Barolong* the kudu, the *Basiea* the cat, the *Batlhaping* the fish and the *Bafokeng* the *mafoka* plant. According to Hean and Mokhehle, the Sotho-Tswana would only kill their totem animal when it was small and would hang part thereof as a charm for babies. The frog *letlametlo* allegedly tastes like chicken¹⁶¹, and grasshoppers were considered a delicacy. The tiger beetle (*kokonyana ea mahlabaneng*) was believed to lead people to edible roots, like *periglossum*, *schizoglossum*, *krebsia* and *corniculata*.¹⁶²

Western influence diluted the importance of flora and fauna in Sotho-Tswana culture but they continue to be seen as heritage.¹⁶³ The Sotho-Tswana regard land and everything in it as ‘*lefa*’, and hence have established taboos, laws and norms that prohibit large scale eradication of flora and fauna. Timberlake describes wildlife as part of Africa’s heritage.¹⁶⁴ There were still instances where people hurt the environment, for example Ellenberger reports that Chief Moshweshwe told Dr A. Smith in 1836 that some of the Basotho people migrated from Ntsuanatsatsi because

¹⁵⁸ Informant 1.

¹⁵⁹ Informant, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 14.

¹⁶⁰ Informant 8.

¹⁶¹ Informant 2.

¹⁶² A. F Hean, and N. C Mokhehle, “Some Basuto Beliefs about Wild life”. *African Wild Life*. vol 1-4 1946-1950, (1947), 69.

¹⁶³ See Hean, “Some Basuto Beliefs”, and (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*.

¹⁶⁴ Lloyd Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Curses of Environmental Bankruptcy*, (London: Earthscan, 1985), 140.

there was poverty caused by a scarcity of game.¹⁶⁵ Colonisation disturbed the finely-balanced relationship with the environment as land appropriation through measures like the Glen Grey Act of 1894, the Land Act of 1913, and the Group Areas Acts 1950 and 1956 led to the alienation of black Africans from the land and the environment. This had devastating effects on the Sotho-Tswana perceptions and attitudes towards environmental conservation

6. Environmental conservation and environmental problems

The Sotho-Tswana have many traditions of environmental conservation¹⁶⁶ that are not based on modern conservation principles.¹⁶⁷ Timberlake considers the challenge of conservation “the saving of the vast amount of human knowledge of African wild life possessed by people of Africa”.¹⁶⁸ The concept of environmental conservation is called *Goboloka tlhago*, which means to preserve, care, sustain, respect nature. *Tlhago* (to emerge / come out) implies “everything that has been created by God like the soil, mountain, trees, stones and people”. This means whether a person is in the urban, slums or rural areas, *tlhago* is still in their midst. Many African societies have knowledge of environmental conservation through oral tradition but western civilisation has threatened such knowledge and regarded it as ‘alien’, ‘superstition’ and ‘irrational’. The United Nations Environmental Programme report on apartheid and the environment in 1982 maintains that:

Apartheid is a killer and by far the most dangerous on the South African veld. It kills not only people but their land and environment as well.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Cited in Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 18.

¹⁶⁶ Hean and Mokhehle, “Some Basuto Beliefs about Wild life”; (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183.

¹⁶⁷ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183.

¹⁶⁸ Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis*, 135.

¹⁶⁹ Cited in Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis*, 152

Forced removals led to environmental crises as “whites seized the best land by force while local Blacks became landless labourers or forced to move into marginal areas which were much more easily degraded”.¹⁷⁰ The environmental crisis emerged because most resettlement areas were infertile and “land, particularly healthy soil, is the foundation on which life depends. If the land is healthy, then agriculture and pasturage will yield food in plenty. If not, the ecosystem will show signs of strain and food production will become more difficult”.¹⁷¹ Our case study is a good example, as the community could not plant food in Ga-Rankuwa unless they fertilized the soil intensely.¹⁷² This presented an almost insurmountable problem as most resettled people were poor and could not afford manure.¹⁷³ Some tried measures like using vegetable pills to create their own manure.¹⁷⁴

Forced removals dispossessed black people and this resulted in anger and a history of poverty that proved difficult to mend. Many black Africans became environmentally apathetic as they found themselves in a hopeless situation and this represented an important resistance strategy.¹⁷⁵ Mr Andrew claims that environmental apathy was a strategy utilised by the community to fight against the effects of land dispossession. He states that “losing land indeed makes people to feel less human hence they do not care about the environment”.¹⁷⁶ It is clear that environmental apathy was not planned but occurred spontaneously. Gibson, a psychologist, argues that “perception occurs as a response to a specific stimulus”.¹⁷⁷ This was the case in Ga-Rankuwa as those

¹⁷⁰ Harrison, *The Greening of Africa*, 49.

¹⁷¹ Dankelman and Davidson, *Women and environment*, 7.

¹⁷² Informant 1-16.

¹⁷³ Informant 5, 8 and 9.

¹⁷⁴ Informant 11.

¹⁷⁵ See Informant 1-16.

¹⁷⁶ Informant 10.

¹⁷⁷ Cited in R. B. Bechtet, *Environment & Behaviour: An Introduction*, (London: Sage, 1997), 129.

resettled developed negative perceptions of their new environment.¹⁷⁸ Gibson's theory also implies that perception is dynamic. This explains why the Sotho-Tswana group responded to stimuli like discrimination, low self-esteem, anger and hatred and became negative about conservation.

Capitalism also altered environmental perceptions by privatising some forests and converting them into resorts.¹⁷⁹ Timberlake argues that "Africa can not afford to conserve untouched all its vast areas of forests but Africa can afford even less to squander the economic and social benefits which proper forest and woodland management can bring".¹⁸⁰ Apartheid perpetrated environmental injustice and undermined traditional conservation values that had been sustained by religion, ethics, myths and idioms.¹⁸¹ The Sotho-Tswana relationship with the environment was embedded in their way of life, *mokgwa wa go etsa dilo* ('the way we do things'), as

The Tswana people have a long tradition of nature conservation. The customs and taboos, which promoted the preservation of indigenous fauna and flora, were not based on modern conservation principles but they certainly contributed very much to the fact that in many tribal areas several species of wild game and magnificent specimens of indigenous trees are still to be found.¹⁸²

Pre-colonial traditional values and cultural taboos placed restrictions on the use of certain plants, animals and areas.¹⁸³ This policy was often successful and several species of wildlife and indigenous trees are still to be found 'in many tribal areas'.¹⁸⁴ Chiefs performed the role of environmental overseers.¹⁸⁵ They sanctioned the killing

¹⁷⁸ Informant 3, 6, 10.

¹⁷⁹ Hoffman, and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis*, 87.

¹⁸¹ M.O.M. Seboni, *Diane le Maele a Setswana*, (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1980); Hean, and Mokhehle, "Some Basuto Beliefs about Wild life"; (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183.

¹⁸² (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183.

¹⁸³ Mpinga, "Learning from History", 23.

¹⁸⁴ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183.

¹⁸⁵ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 265.

of game, cutting of trees and allocation of land.¹⁸⁶ This role was also transferred to husbands in the home. The Sotho-Tswana adhered to a well-developed land ethic that was founded on the belief that an individual was an integral part of nature until the period of drastic land dispossession in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century.¹⁸⁷ Traditional environmental perceptions were positive because they connected the individual to the environment through interwoven physical, spiritual and cultural links.¹⁸⁸ The Sotho-Tswana embraced conservationism in the sense that “they used resources wisely with the goal of maintaining its future availability or productivity or as a saving natural resource for later consumption”.¹⁸⁹ The Sotho-Tswana were preservationists because they “protected an ecosystem or a species to an extent possible from the disruptions attendant upon it from human use”.¹⁹⁰ Chiefs punished anti-conservationists and anti-preservationists and traditional courts (*kgotla*) enforced cultural norms and beliefs.¹⁹¹

The Sotho-Tswana enforced environmental conservation through the ethic of respect: *go hlompa*. The ethic of *go hlompa* refers to “avoidance rules” but also includes positive actions and means “respect, avoidance rules between people and between persons and certain places and objects”.¹⁹² To illustrate the importance of respect of nature, Manyeli mentions the story that was told by the Basotho to initiates: “the sun was compared to a man, the moon to a woman the earth to an animal whose bones

¹⁸⁶ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183 – 184.

¹⁸⁷ Mabuza (1982) cited in Farieda Khan, *Black environmental experience as a facet of current South Africa environmental perceptions*, Department of Environmental and Geographic Science, UCT, (1992), 5.

¹⁸⁸ E. Mphahlele, “Foreword” in Letsoalo, *Land reform in South Africa*.

¹⁸⁹ Bryan Norton and John Passmore cited in Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 25.

¹⁹⁰ Norton cited in Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 25.

¹⁹¹ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183 – 184.

¹⁹² H. Kuckertz, “Ukuhlonipha as Idiom of moral reasoning in Mpondo”, ed, P. McAllister, *Culture and the Common place* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), 312.

were stones and its blood was water and on it little beasts fought".¹⁹³ The story implies that people and the environment had to depend on each other. The Sotho-Tswana believe that *Modimo* created everything on earth for people to enjoy and preserve, hence they showed respect to certain hills, caves, graves, certain trees and animals by avoiding them.¹⁹⁴ Some places like caves were used as graves for kings and their wives, and people had to avoid them.¹⁹⁵ Certain traditional rules prohibited tree-felling which aided conservation. No trees and bushes were to be cut in the vicinity of the village without the chief's permission, and it was taboo to fell a tree while young crops were maturing from January to April.¹⁹⁶ This prohibition gave trees time to grow and controlled their usage.

Unauthorised large-scale hunting rendered the offender liable to cattle confiscation.¹⁹⁷ Depletion of fur animals was prevented by prohibiting their hunting during summer when they were breeding.¹⁹⁸ Respect for adults was another strategy used to curb large-scale killing of animals, as boys were not allowed to eat their prey unless they offered portions to elderly people. Grazing land was reserved for winter pasturage, and the tracts thus chosen were those surrounding growing crops and reed beds so that, in protecting winter grass, fields were protected from over-grazing.¹⁹⁹ Certain reptiles and insects were also conserved through taboos and traditional rules. For

¹⁹³ Manyeli, *Religious Symbols of the Basotho*, 72.

¹⁹⁴ Hills and caves were places where kings were buried and had to be respected and avoided unless certain rituals were performed. Certain trees were used in the homestead as religious shrines where people used to commune with their ancestors, and they were also respected and avoided at all times. Graves were also respected.

¹⁹⁵ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 321.

¹⁹⁶ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 184.

¹⁹⁷ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto Ancient and Modern*, 271.

¹⁹⁸ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183.

¹⁹⁹ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 270.

instance, a grasshopper with bright red under-wings was believed to bear messages from the ancestors, often of imminent fire.²⁰⁰

These conservationist and preservationist tendencies do not preclude pragmatic decisions but do mean that the Sotho-Tswana did not (on the whole) wilfully waste, despoil or exhaust their environment. Of course some negative impact on the environment was inevitable, and we cannot romanticise pre-colonial South Africa as an untouched utopia because the environment was a scene of daily conflict as people struggled for survival against nature. Pre-colonial populations were small which minimised environmental damage. For example, there were 10 000 to 15 000 people at Dithakong in 1801 while there were 13 000 to 16 000 people at Kaditshweni in 1820.²⁰¹ Written descriptions of the flora and the fauna life found by early callers at the Cape and accounts left by travellers to the interior attest to light pre-colonial environmental impact.²⁰²

These environmental preservation ethics were beginning to fade by the early twentieth century as black Africans were displaced on a large scale. The white government “was insensitive to prevailing social, economic conditions and cultural practices of black people and this antagonized communities and heightened resistance to soil conservation efforts encouraged through governments Schemes like Betterment in the 1940s”.²⁰³ Forced removals caused many environmental problems as resources like water and wood became scarce and were degraded, and there was overgrazing near

²⁰⁰ Hean and Mokhehle, “Some Basuto Beliefs about Wild life”, 69.

²⁰¹ Wilson, “The Sotho, Venda and Tsonga”, 153.

²⁰² R. Hart, *Before van Riebeeck: Callers at South Africa from 1488 to 1652*, (Cape Town: Struik, 1967).

²⁰³ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 32.

villages.²⁰⁴ According to Showers, environmental problems were exacerbated by the fact that “conservation measures introduced by Europeans were of a coercive measure no negotiation with Africans, they were told what to do”.²⁰⁵ Such measures disturbed traditional land use systems and black Africans were allocated 13% of land in 1913, which crippled subsistence farming. This resulted in increased unavoidable and unsustainable pressures on the landscape, pressures that led to cultivation in marginal lands and thus degradation of pastures, deforestation and soil erosion.²⁰⁶

Traditional land use systems required large plots. Showers argues that soil erosion did occur in pre-colonial South Africa via overgrazing but it was not as intense as it would become. Black Africans conserved soil by dispersing herding of cattle; maintaining grass fields, boundaries and soil cover; mixing crops and employing minimal cultivation – and in some locations using terraces on slopes.²⁰⁷

Black Africans adopted European land use systems and soil erosion worsened because of small plots overcrowding. European settlers exposed large areas of ploughed land to intense rainfall and their livestock management involved overstocked pastures and concentrations of animals around corrals and water holes.²⁰⁸ Black Africans were obliged to adopt similar land use, which was not conducive to soil conservation.

Khan argues that post-colonial conservation ideologies in South Africa have been dominated by racist paradigms and Euro-centric environmental perceptions. Black

²⁰⁴ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 32.

²⁰⁵ K. Showers, “Early experience of soil conservation in South Africa: Segregated programmes and rural resistance”, (1994), 1, (working paper in African studies no 184, Boston University)

²⁰⁶ Showers, “Early experience of soil conservation”, 2.

²⁰⁷ Showers, “Early experience of soil conservation”, 3.

²⁰⁸ Showers, “Early experience of soil conservation”, 4.

Africans were seen as environmentally destructive and thus the white government saw its role as paternalistically didactic. Blacks tried to establish conservation organisations but most of these were elitist and Euro-centric, and failed financially. For example, the African National Soil Conservation Association (ANSCA) was formed in 1953. It was initially a white organisation under T. C Robertson, before black Africans established their own under Sam Motswenyane, and aimed to spread environmental awareness and expose soil erosion and the degradation of the Homelands – and went bankrupt.²⁰⁹ The African Wildlife Society was established in Natal with the aim of raising black conservation awareness. It too drew on elites like teachers and principals and went under. The National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC) was established in Soweto in 1970, together with other organisations like the African Conservation Education (ACE) and Native Farmers Association.²¹⁰

These organisations were hampered by their elitism and exclusion of traditional conservation laws and ideas. Such Conservation Associations thus became alien to most blacks who were illiterate and couldn't afford the luxury of conservation. It is worth noting that though the nature conservation associations had their drawbacks they achieved some environmental improvement in black areas.

The Nature Conservation Division, which trained young Tswanas as conservation officers, was established in Bophuthatswana in 1973 in consultation with the Department of Agriculture. Its aims were commendable and illustrate Sotho-Tswanan

²⁰⁹ Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, 33.

²¹⁰ Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, Richard F. Fuggle, "Environmental Management: An Introduction", eds, Richard F. Fuggle and Marinus A. Rabie, *Environmental Management in South Africa* Cape Town, (Johannesburg: Juta, 1992), Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995).

environmental awareness. The functions the Nature Conservation division were based on the 1972 Nature Conservation Laws and were:

- Law enforcements in terms of Nature Conservation Act of 1973
- To control, conserve and protect the indigenous flora and fauna of the country
- To establish and develop nature reserves
- To promote tourism
- To cultivate and re-establish indigenous plants
- To breed and redistribute wild game and fish
- To control hunting activities
- To aid and advise farmers in the control of vermin
- To create open-air recreational facilities and
- To educate the local population in all aspects of Nature Conservation.²¹¹

Young Tswanas were recruited in 1974 at Gwaka Agricultural College in Kwa-Zulu Natal for 30 months. Nature conservation camps were then established at Klipvoordam in Odi with the aim of conserving local flora and fauna.²¹² Most parks were found in white areas like Pretoria, for example Florarium was erected to display exotic plants like ferns, orchids and fuchsias. A rose park was also established in Arcadia. Springbok Park was erected in Hatfield, and conserved indigenous plants and trees like stinkwood and namaqua daisies.²¹³ A Nature reserve was established in Wonderboom that displayed wild fig trees and wonderboom. These parks and reserves illustrate the white government's prioritisation of environmental conservation in white areas only and this could have heightened black African apathy towards the environment.

7. Conclusion

²¹¹ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 184.

²¹² Harvey Champion, *Bophuthatswana - Where the Tswanas Meet*, (Sandton: Valiant, 1977), 85.

²¹³ Heinie. Heydenrych, and Abrie Swiegers, *Discover Pretoria*, (Pretoria: JL van Shaik, 1999) 28 – 30.

Sotho-Tswana conservation and preservation ideals hold that “nature has to be preserved for future generations through following taboos, traditional laws and customs”.²¹⁴ Myths were used to promote environmentalism. Respect for nature was enforced through rituals and the ethic of *hlompo* (respect) of graves, shrines, laws, values, ethics and totems. According to Khan and Fuggle, capitalism, colonisation and segregation alienated blacks from their land and this promoted environmental apathy.

Hardoy, Mitlin and Satterthwaite argue that a successful city must inculcate a sense among its inhabitants that their culture and history are valued as part of the city and are reflected in its form and layout – which was not the case in South Africa as black Africans lacked a sense of ownership of their environment.²¹⁵ A western environment ideology was privileged and this undermined black African environmentalism. Though some religious and cultural norms and environmental values survived, Sotho-Tswanan ideas of humanity (or “humanness”) were partly eroded because they lacked interconnectedness with each other and their landscape because of forced removals. Williams states that “what is often being argued in the idea of nature is the idea of man or vice versa.”²¹⁶

Sotho-Tswanan cosmology links humanity and nature.²¹⁷ Disenfranchisement added to this as they had no say and the ability to speak confers humanity.²¹⁸ The Comaroffs argue that the Sotho-Tswana saw a person as a constant work-in-progress, not a state of being but a state of becoming.²¹⁹ This means that the Sotho-Tswana definition of a person was disrupted and arrested through loss of land. This explains the environmental apathy in the resettlement areas like Ga-Rankuwa as “not only are ideas of humanness

²¹⁴ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 183 and Khan, *Black environment experience as a facet of current South Africa*, 5.

²¹⁵ Jorge E. Hardoy, et al, *Environmental Problems in an Urbanizing world: Finding Solutions for Cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*, (United Kingdom, USA: Earth Scan Publications, 2001).

²¹⁶ Cited in Annai Peterson, *Being Human: Ethics, Environment and our place in the world*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1.

²¹⁷ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 40.

²¹⁸ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, xxi.

²¹⁹ Jean and John Comaroff, “On Personhood: an Anthropological Perspective from Africa”, *Social Identities*, vol. 7 number 2, (2001), 269 and 271.

and of nature wrapped up with each other, but they also shape ethical systems and practices”.²²⁰

²²⁰ Peterson, *Being Human*, 1.

Chapter Four

Political history of Lady Selborne, c.1905 to 1961.

1. Introduction

In considering the political history of forced removals in Lady Selborne, this chapter focuses on the socio-environmental perspective in order to understand how the Nationalist government used the environment as an instrument to displace people and manipulated legal avenues to alienate those people from their environment. Historians who have discussed Lady Selborne, like Horrell, Carruthers and Sonjica, have largely focused on issues other than the environmental history of the area.¹ They subscribe either to the liberal² or revisionist perspectives, and have drawn on social history.³ However, as environmental historian Crosby maintains, one requires “a new social mind” in dealing with environmental issues,⁴ that society must recognise through the study of environmental history that people are part of their environment, and not its centre. This represents a new social paradigm that integrates the environment in an effective and constructive manner into analyses of other facets of society.

This chapter provides a brief political outline of life in Lady Selborne before and during the forced removals of the 1960s. The social, economic, political and, for the first time, environmental factors that moulded the community of Lady Selborne are

¹ Muriel Horrell, *The Group Areas Act – Its effects on Human Beings*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1956), Jane Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng”, *Kleio* XXX11, (2000), T. K. Sonjica, “Group Areas Act, Ethnic Cleansing”, (2002), at Land.pwv.gov.za/journal/fourland.html.

² See Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*.

³ Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa”, Sonjica, “Group Areas Act.

⁴ Alfred W. Crosby, “The Past and Present of Environmental History”, *American Historical Review*, 100, number 4, (1995), 1180.

examined through interviews with its former Sotho-Tswana residents. The township's general history is explored to define its political context, explain how the segregationist government related to the residents of the area and to establish to what extent it interfered in their socio-environmental life. The community's history of resistance is also discussed in terms of its socio-environmental and political context.

2. Historical Background of Lady Selborne from 1905 to the 1960s

Lady Selborne was situated where the suburb now called Suiderberg is found, against the south slope of the Magaliesberg some sixteen kilometres northwest of Pretoria's city centre. Lady Selborne was established in 1905 as a township where black Africans could own land, which was unusual at the time.⁵ Land was available to different racial groups in the township, including black Africans seeking work and land of their own. The area was surrounded by some white settlements,⁶ and was established through a 'coloured' syndicate that purchased a portion of a farm (Zandfontein) through their agents, T. Le Fleur and C. M. de Vries. Ownership of the farm was transferred to De Vries on the 26 September 1906, with 440 plots available for purchase to the public.⁷ A concession was made by the Secretary for Justice, Mr J. D. Rainier, on the 23 November 1914 to transfer a lot in the area from De Vries to the Berliner Missionsgesellschaft, which led to the establishment of missionary-aided projects in the township.⁸

⁵ Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, "Statement embodying particulars and Survey of the Affairs of Lady Selborne", (1949), 61.

⁶ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 61.

⁷ See Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 26.

⁸ CA JUS202 3/1104/4 Office of the Registrar of Deeds, Dept. of Justice 3/1104/14/764, C. M. de Vries to the Berliner Missionsgesellschaft, (23 November 1914).

The Minister of Native Affairs approved Lady Selborne as a place for the residence of black Africans in 1936. Inter-racial land-ownership occurred because the sellers did not discriminate between buyers and this resulted in *de facto* integration. The target market, small plots and low prices prompted the Transvaal Surveyor-General to refer to Lady Selborne as “practically a location”.⁹ It was named after Lady Beatrix Maud Cecil Selborne, whose husband was High Commissioner of South Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River colonies until Union in 1910.¹⁰ Lord Selborne was one of few whites at the time that promoted non-racialism and thus the choice of the name for the township indicates its political inclination. Carruthers has pointed out that “from the outset, the residents of Lady Selborne were politically sophisticated and resisted the ever-enveloping tentacles of state control over their daily lives”.¹¹ The community of Lady Selborne’s civic-mindedness resulted in the formation of a management team from 1905 to 1914,¹² a Health Committee and a Village Committee, which focused on public works.¹³ These committees motivated and unified the residents through their focus on self-determination. The Health Committee was disbanded in 1914 as the area grew and the Innesdale Village Council assumed its duties – for the first time Lady Selborne fell within a municipal area.¹⁴ By 1925, the boundaries of Innesdale excluded Lady Selborne and Daspoort Health committee inherited the duties of sanitation and other health services.¹⁵ In 1928 the Daspoort Committee became the Hercules Village Council and in 1931 a town council.¹⁶ The Hercules Council needed the support of Lady Selborne to attain town

⁹ Transvaal Archives, Pretoria, (TA) GOV 828/PS17/65/05, (21 November 1905)

¹⁰ TA GOV 828/PS17/65/05, (22 November 1905).

¹¹ Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa”, 2.

¹² CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 61.

¹³ Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa”, 3.

¹⁴ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 61.

¹⁵ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 61.

¹⁶ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 61.

council status and thus promised the township reduced costs for its sanitation service,¹⁷ which were later raised and this raised constant problems and acrimony. The residents of Lady Selborne complained that their rates (R40 per annum) were subsidising the neighbouring white areas, which had better facilities.¹⁸

Their complaints alerted the State to the potential for black resistance and prompted the government to initiate the process of dispossession from 1948 onwards. The residents of Lady Selborne became an irritant and their presence in the area violated segregationist policy. The Hercules Municipality altered the boundaries of Pretoria on the 1 May 1949, which meant that Lady Selborne was to be administered by the Pretoria City Council.¹⁹ This step paved the way for forced removals as the Council decided to remove the township.²⁰ It also agreed that "...the conditions presently existing in the Native freehold township of Lady Selborne are highly unsatisfactory", and that steps be taken to improve:

- (a) Overcrowding and slums
- (b) Inadequate provision for sanitation and water supply
- (c) Lack of facilities for the prevention of disease and promotion of Health
- (d) Lack of amenities for the recreation and the promotion of social welfare
- (e) Lack of adequate supervision, whereby public property is lost, stolen or destroyed, and criminal elements of the population encouraged in anti-social activities
- (f) Excessive land values, resulting in undesirable economic conditions and exploitation.²¹

¹⁷ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 3.

¹⁸ See CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 64.

¹⁹ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 64.

²⁰ CA TES4134, Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 65

²¹ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 64.

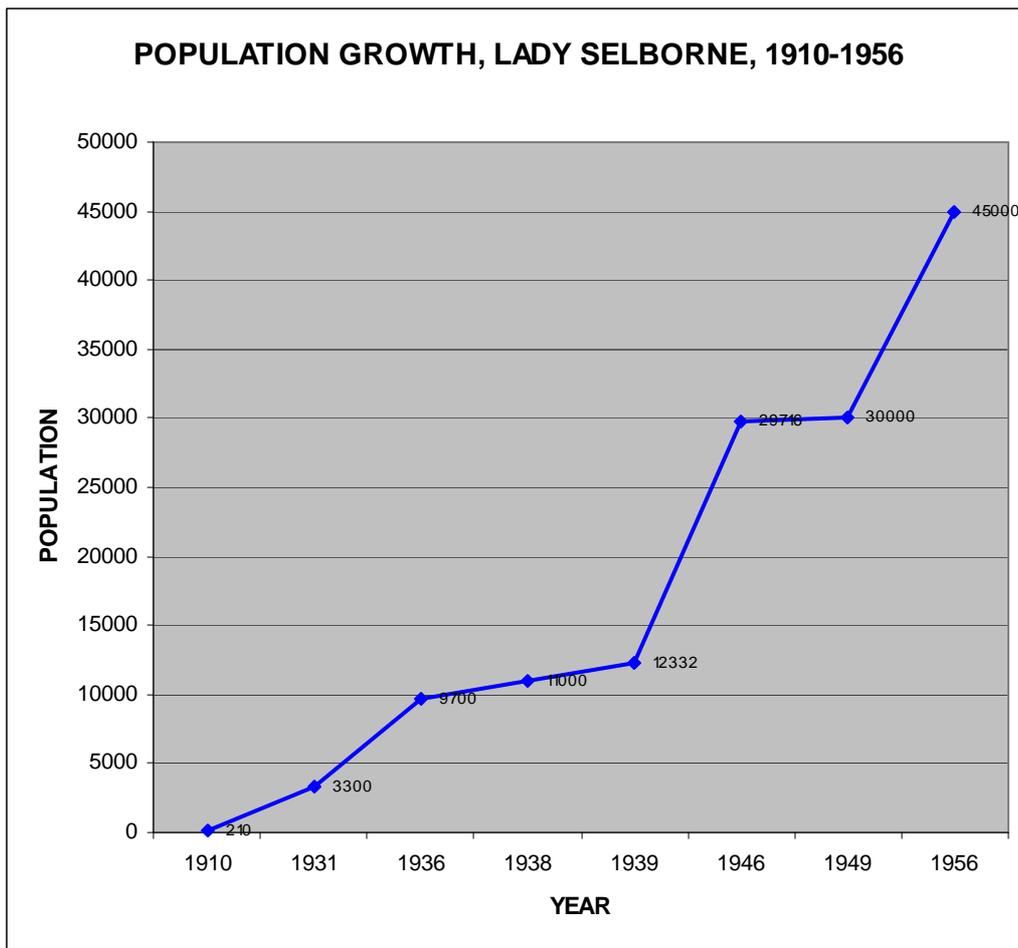


Figure: 1. Population Growth Lady Selborne 1910 –1956.²²

The Council’s concern was heightened by the township’s rapidly increasing population in the 1940s.²³ Overcrowding was exacerbated by the removal of Marabastad Location in the Pretoria Municipality in 1939²⁴, during which blacks that could not be absorbed into Atteridgeville Location migrated to Lady Selborne.²⁵ Sonjica states that there were 440 stands in 1906 and in 1910 there were 210 residents.²⁶ This had risen to 3300 in 1931, 9700 in 1936 and 11000 in 1938. In 1946

²² See Sonjica, “Group Areas Act”, CA NTS 2884/303 Letter from the Chief Native Commissioner, The Secretary for Native Affairs, (30 July 1938), CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62; Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa”, 5; and Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*.

²³ See figure 1: Population Growth, Lady Selborne 1910 – 1956.

²⁴ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 45–47.

²⁵ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62.

²⁶ Sonjica, “Group Areas Act, Ethnic Cleansing”.

the inhabitants increased to 29 716. In 1948 the inhabitants increased to 30 000.²⁷ By 1956 the number of residents rocketed to 40 000 and later that year to 50 000, with roughly 1600 plots.²⁸ The area was overcrowded by the 1960s, with more than 30 people per stand.²⁹ This population surge was driven by a shortage of jobs in rural areas, which led to large-scale rural-urban migration. The right to hold title to land and proximity to Pretoria's city centre made Lady Selborne an attractive destination for migrant workers, which led to two thirds of the residents being tenants.³⁰ One cannot ignore the township's scenic beauty and harmonious civic culture, though the government did not assist in its development, demonstrated by the use of a bucket system to remove sewerage and the absence of taps – which were only installed in the 1960s when the State was preparing for the accommodation of whites.³¹ This failure to develop the area suggests that the State was reluctant to allow blacks to settle permanently in the area.

Unemployed black Africans were not allowed to own land in urban areas. Non-European settlement was curtailed, with black land-ownership limited to 8% by the 1913 Land Act. Though blacks were only allowed to own land in certain areas, Lady Selborne remained an urban area that accepted black freehold title to land through the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923, the Natives Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1937, and the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945. This provided development opportunities in a scenic area with a beautiful environment, which was to be

²⁷ See CA NTS2884/303, (30 July 1938) and CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62.

²⁸ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 5, Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 47.

²⁹ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 5.

³⁰ See CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62.

³¹ Interviews, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 2, 4, 5, 7, and 15.

protected. Khan argues that many diverse societies have sought to protect and preserve their crucial natural resources.³²

Though segregation was rife from 1900 to 1948, the State never disbanded the area because it supplied white capitalists with labour, mainly as domestic workers or for ISCOR, which was considered more reliable than migrant labour as permanently settled residents seldom left the area. Overcrowding only became a concern during the 1940s and after 1949 decreased labour demand paved the way for displacement. This is supported by the Report of the Departmental Committee in 1949:

On incorporation the Pretoria City Council will take urgent steps to reduce the population of Lady Selborne to a figure which will conform with the labour requirements of that area; this being in accordance with the Council's policy that natives shall be housed as near as possible to their place of employment.³³

The Nationalist government ended active negotiations with the community of Lady Selborne in 1948 and started implementing rigorous eviction policies that enforced separate residential spaces for different races. A letter dated 12 November 1949 from the Provincial Secretary to the Secretary for Finance clearly illustrates this desire to destroy Lady Selborne with an eye on "controlling the area".³⁴ Lady Selborne was later that year incorporated into the City of Pretoria with 1952 registered properties.³⁵ The residents' continued complaints about high rates and underdevelopment were ignored. Property prices were inflated: about £500 per stand as compared to the neighbouring white areas, which cost roughly £90 to £250.³⁶

³² Khan, Farieda, "Black environmental experience as a facet of current environmental Perceptions", Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1992), 1.

³³ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 65.

³⁴ CA TES3900 F19/269 Letter from the Provincial Secretary to The Secretary for Finance, (12 November 1949).

³⁵ Sonjica, "Group Areas Act".

³⁶ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62.

High property values encouraged landowners to rent out their homes or build rooms for lease, which in turn led to more overcrowding. The Nationalist government promised to destroy Lady Selborne, portraying the township as an overpopulated health hazard, and delegated the task to the Pretoria City Council, which had already made such a proposal³⁷. Its argument was essentially that the area was a “Black Spot”, unwanted close to whites.³⁸

3. The Community of Lady Selborne

Lady Selborne was full of people who loved each other and were united. We lived harmoniously with Coloureds, Indians and Chinese. We were like one race.³⁹

A common thread running through the interviews conducted among the former residents of Lady Selborne is the sense of neighbourliness and community spirit that prevailed there, though conflict over cleanliness and food production existed between tenants and landlords. One detects a sense of nostalgia in the interviews, pervaded by a sense of community coherence. Many people managed to work together through poverty and shared experience. Not one informant mentioned any racial discrimination in the area. Discrimination was, however, felt sharply outside the area and one informant mentions daytime police pass raids – those without passes were jailed for 10 days or were liable for a R10 fine.⁴⁰ This represented a State strategy to control black African influx. Margaret Nash states that such influx control was strengthened in the 1950s and 1960s, manifesting in increased frequency and intensity

³⁷ CA TES4134, Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 64.

³⁸ Horrell, *The Group Areas Acts*, 48.

³⁹ Informant 11.

⁴⁰ Informant 10.

of raids and penalties.⁴¹ Most informants portray a community where crime was minimal.

Most landowners made extra money by renting out their homes. Many residents owned businesses, like Mr Mmotla who ran a bus line to and from the city centre of Pretoria, while other businesses were primarily small-scale retail.⁴² There were also professionals (mainly nurses, doctors and teachers) who were instrumental in fighting forced removals. Most residents were poor subsistence farmers, domestic workers and migrant labourers, and their children had to leave school early to work. Families survived economically via home cultivation, selling wood, coal and clothes and letting their homes, as exemplified by Mr William Kgari's mother.⁴³ Many community members, mostly Indian, became hawkers; while blacks focused more on the selling of wood and coal from horse carts. These hawkers knew their customers by name and trusted them to an extent that they offered credit.⁴⁴

Though most residents earned low wages, most did not live beyond their means and they used the environment to subsidise their wages. They supported each other in their struggle for survival, despite racial differences. Mrs Ruth Kgari remembers how residents aided each other in times of crisis:

Lady Selborne was a multiracial place where blacks, Coloureds and Indians lived together harmoniously like real brothers and sisters. Indians used to go house to house and sell vegetables, fruits and clothes to us (sic). If one had no money they would sell in credit (sic). This only happens if people live harmoniously together. Some of us were better than landlords because we knew how to use our money, some landlords were jealous about that (sic). I used to be

⁴¹ Margaret Nash *Black Uprooting from White*, (Braamfontein: South African Council of Churches, 1980), 27.

⁴² Informant, 2, 3 and 4

⁴³ Informant 4.

⁴⁴ Informant 2.

good with working on the small plot that was allocated to my family and me (sic). I planted pumpkins, spinach, carrots, chillies, tomatoes and onions and I would give to those who needed food if I had enough. Such food used to supplement our wages very well (sic).⁴⁵

Many residents were tenants, as they could not afford to buy houses in such an expensive area.⁴⁶ On average the value of the property in Lady Selborne was £500 in 1947 while in 1949 the subdivided stands were valued at around £235.⁴⁷ The value of the property exceeded the monthly earnings of the average Lady Selborne family (roughly £9). Rent for accommodation in Pretoria was on average just under £2 per month while rent was over £2 in Lady Selborne – despite which many people were renting houses instead of buying them as the latter option was normally impossible.⁴⁸ Many landowners survived on tenancy, charging what was considered to be an exorbitant fee, and tenants were forced to occupy small spaces with many occupants.⁴⁹ Though no informants mentioned the issue of poverty in Lady Selborne, it is clear that many residents were, as demonstrated by the experience of the Kgari family who filled two rooms with twelve people, and the Matlaila family of seven who could not buy furniture because of lack of space.⁵⁰ This led to a lack of privacy, despite which Mrs Kgari and Mr and Mrs Matlaila reminisce about their harmonious lives together as families.⁵¹ Despite the community's cohesion, there were class divisions between landlords and tenants. Andrew Hurley maintains that class is more prominent than race in environmental history, as was the case in Lady Selborne where class alienated people from their

⁴⁵ Informant 2.

⁴⁶ Informant 2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

⁴⁷ See CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62 and Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 4.

⁴⁸ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 5.

⁴⁹ Informant 2, 12 and 13.

⁵⁰ Informant 2, 12 and 13.

⁵¹ Informant 2 and 13.

environment. Nancy Jacobs argues that race and power were also State means of restricting black Africans in terms of land use and ownership.⁵² Landlords were regarded as superior to their tenants, who were often exploited. Many tenants had to call their landlords Mmastand/Rrastand (Mr and Mrs landlord) and had to supply labour. For example, tenants were obliged to clean up if the sewerage bucket collectors spilled in the yards. All tenants interviewed felt aggrieved by this, as expressed by Mrs Madumo who says that:

As a tenant Lady Selborne was not enjoyable because one had to clean up the sewerage spilled on the floors by the collectors of the buckets. This was the most painful experience of my life. It was humiliating.⁵³

The relationship between landowners and tenants of Lady Selborne indicate class divisions, though Mrs Tshidi Tshweni (a former landlord) claims that “there was equality and no one saw himself or herself as superior” but other informants argued that class divisions existed.⁵⁴ Not one of the sixteen informants interviewed mentions racism among the residents.

4. Political History: The ‘Black Spot’ Community of Lady Selborne

Lady Selborne was deemed too close to white areas as early as 1940 and 1941 by the Hercules Council in a series of meetings held with the residents.⁵⁵ Residents complained about high rates and insufficient services,⁵⁶ and did not accept the imposition of an Advisory Board for their township. In terms of the Natives Urban

⁵² Nancy Jacobs, *Environment Power and Injustice: A South African History*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 31.

⁵³ Informant 14.

⁵⁴ See Informant 5 and Informant 2, 12, 13 and 14.

⁵⁵ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 63.

⁵⁶ Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa”, 4.

Areas Act of 1923, the municipal franchise and representation on Municipal Councils was restricted to whites.⁵⁷ The ratepayers and residents of Lady Selborne wanted direct representation on the City Council.⁵⁸ The Hercules Council proposed that the area should be run like other black urban areas, which would mean that landowners would lose their freehold rights to land which they had held since 1905.⁵⁹ The residents of Lady Selborne rejected this proposal and their concerns were not resolved. Matters worsened in 1948 when the Nationalist government involved itself. It incorporated Lady Selborne into the city of Pretoria and complained that the area was overcrowded and promised the City Council of Pretoria that it would eliminate overcrowding by reducing the area's population from over 30 000 to about 6000 to 7000. The Council also promised to curtail the population in the township while meeting the needs of Pretoria's labour market and satisfying the Council's policy that "Africans were to be accommodated as near as possible to their place of employment".⁶⁰ It seems that the government was preparing for the area's destruction.

Maylam's hypothesis that "urban segregation and forced removals often at different times served capitalist interests" can be applied to Lady Selborne because the area was once deemed acceptable as of the need for labour in the city centre,⁶¹ which had encouraged overcrowding. By the 1960s the demand for labour had lessened and overcrowding was seen as a threat to white areas. The State therefore tightened influx

⁵⁷ See CA TES4134, Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 63.

⁵⁸ See CA TES4551 928/313, vol 1.

⁵⁹ See CA NTS4551 928/313 vol 1. According to the Regulation stipulated in the document it is clear that even in 1954 the residents were still fighting for representation in the Municipal Council.

⁶⁰ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62 and 65.

⁶¹ Paul Maylam, "Explaining the apartheid city: 20 years of South African urban historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, (1995).

control due to the recovery of the economy between 1948 to 1970 and consequently many black Africans had to be displaced from areas close to city centres.⁶²

Lady Selborne fell among these areas and was under severe pressure. The township no longer conformed to the State's urban residential needs for employment and thus had to be removed.⁶³ This perceived need was intensified when neighbouring white residents started complaining about overcrowding and sanitary problems in the area.⁶⁴ Health was used as a tool to dispossess blacks of their land. Maylam argues that Government Health Commissions revealed the link between urban segregation and sanitation.⁶⁵ The State and the Pretoria City Council heeded the demands of the people they were representing – the white community – and started pursuing the removal of the black African community of Lady Selborne, who in turn made matters worse by involving themselves in active politics - supporting organisations like the African National and Pan Africanist Congress. Active involvement in campaigns like the Defiance Campaign against Pass laws of 1952 and the Bus boycott of 1957 drove the State's desire to displace local residents.

The Group Areas Act in 1950 enforced residential segregation based on colour.⁶⁶ Lady Selborne constituted a 'Black Spot' situated close to white settlement and the city centre so the Act concerned its residents. Closer examination revealed that the Act was not relevant as the township was a designated Native area while the Act

⁶² See Colin Bundy, "Land Law and Power: Forced Removals in Historical Context", ed, Murray, C. and O'Regan, C. *No place to Rest: Forced Removals and the Law*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990). Elaine Unterhalter, *Forced removal: the division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1987).

⁶³ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 65.

⁶⁴ South Africa Land News on Line, (9 April 1997).

⁶⁵ Maylam, "Explaining the apartheid city", 25.

⁶⁶ *Statutes of the Republic of South Africa*, (Cape Town Parrow: Authority, 1950), 407.

specifically referred to non-Native areas as defined by the Native Trust and Land Act 18 of 1936 and the Native Urban Consolidation Act 25 of 1945.⁶⁷ The Act intended not to dispose of areas where blacks were allowed to settle, like ‘locations’, ‘African villages’, ‘hostels’, or any urban area approved for the residence of blacks.⁶⁸ The State had to amend the Act to specifically target Black spots areas which were racially integrated and located nearer to white areas like Lady Selborne, which was difficult since the township was entrenched in law as a black African residential area.

The State sought new strategies to effect the area’s displacement. The Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, outlined a schedule in 1953 to eliminate “undesirable African settlements” – the ‘Black Spots’ near white areas – and once more Lady Selborne was threatened. The danger was deepened by the passing of another Act in 1954, the Native Resettlement Act no 19, which “provided for the removal of Natives from any area in the magisterial district of Johannesburg or any adjoining magisterial district and their settlement elsewhere”.⁶⁹ The crisis worsened the following year when the State passed the Natives Urban Areas Amendment Act no 16, which in section 3 stated that:

- (a). For the removal, curtailment or abolition of any location, Native village or Native hostel situated outside the area of jurisdiction of that urban local authority
- (b). Removal because conditions under which Natives are living in any location, Native village or Native hostel are such that unless such location, Native village or Native hostel is removed, curtailed or abolished, the health or safety of the public generally or of any class or classes of persons (including the said Native) may be endangered.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ CA BEP 137/7 Letter from C D, Jordaan to R. R. Botha, (1954) indicates clearly that, the Group Areas Act of 1950 was not applicable to Lady Selborne it states that “proposals for the proclamation of Group Areas in Pretoria will be advertised in due course in the press”.

⁶⁸ *Statutes of the Republic of South Africa*, (1950), 407.

⁶⁹ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Authority, 1954), 139.

⁷⁰ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, Part 1 no 1-55, (Cape Town: Authority, 1955), 62.

The Act was then used by the State's and the Pretoria City Council's to qualify their view that Lady Selborne was an immobile health menace and blacks had to be displaced and their properties transferred to whites.⁷¹ But Lady Selborne escaped once more as it qualified as a 'Native residence'. This concerned the State and the Pretoria City Council who met in 1955 to discuss the forced removal of the area's residents.⁷² It was decided that the Pretoria City Council had to ensure that Lady Selborne was declared a Group Area but could use the State's legal power to achieve its goals even though the area and its landlords were deeply entrenched in the legal system as the establishment of the area was supported by Acts like the Native and Land Trust Act no 18 of 1936. The residents responded by holding their own meeting on the 10th and 28 October 1955 to resist removals, and wrote a letter requesting the reasons for their removal and compensation for landlords.⁷³ The archival documents make it clear that the State did not respond to the residents' concerns but continued to pursue displacement, which indicates the government's segregationist intent and its contempt for the rights of local residents.

By 1956 the Pretoria City Council finally decided to destroy Lady Selborne but needed a firm Act to support this aim.⁷⁴ Its frustrations stemmed from the fact that no rezoning of Pretoria could be implemented without recognising Lady Selborne as a 'Black Spot' within white settlements. This hurdle was overcome in 1956 through the passing of the Group Areas Amendment Act, which gave power to the Group Areas

⁷¹ CA BEP 137/7 Letter from the Head of Administration Section of Land Tenure to the City Engineer Pretoria, entitled "Group Areas Act, 1950, as amended", (1954).

⁷² See CA NTS 4552 928/313 vol 4 and CA BEP 137/7. The City Council of Pretoria were in a hurry to displace blacks from Lady Selborne and they constructed building plans (the Head of Land Tenure explains in the letter that this was illegal because the go-ahead had to be attained from the Minister.)

⁷³ CA NTS 4552 928/313 vol 4.

⁷⁴ Horrell, *The Group Areas Acts*, 48

Board to deal with areas approved for the residence of blacks.⁷⁵ The Council moved quickly and surveyed all properties by March 1956, thus preparing for forced removals.⁷⁶

Other legal steps were then taken to effect land dispossession, including Proclamations 150 and 151 of June 1958. The Proclamations included Lady Selborne under Schedule 11 section (n) and (m) respectively without specifying removals or the date thereof.⁷⁷ This caused much confusion and dissatisfaction and many residents interviewed claim that their homes were bulldozed at the last minute.⁷⁸ Mrs Tshweni, former landlord, states that they were not given any notice about their date of removals but the police came while they were not ready and took out their belongings and destroyed their houses.⁷⁹ But some former tenants claimed that they received some correspondence from the government informing them of removals and resettlement.⁸⁰ In the words of Mrs Kgari, former tenant, the government sent agents to explain to the tenants about their displacement and the fact that landlords did not want to move.⁸¹ According to Act no 64 of 1956 (the Bantu Prohibition of Interdicts) people were prohibited from seeking interdicts to dispute or suspend removals.⁸²

The Nationalist government and the Pretoria City Council were satisfied with the progress of their plan to remove Lady Selborne and in 1959 passed Government Notice 889 in Government Gazette 6235, which repealed Government Notice 946 of

⁷⁵ Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 48.

⁷⁶ CA NTS 4552 928/313 vol2

⁷⁷ *South African Government Gazette no 6067*, (Pretoria: Authority, 6 June 1958), 14.

⁷⁸ See Informant 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14 15 and 16.

⁷⁹ Informant 5, See also other Informants 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

⁸⁰ Informant 1, 2, See also Informant 3 daughter of a former landlord.

⁸¹ Informant 2.

⁸² *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, Part 2 no's 48-73, (Cape Town: Authority, 1956), 1697.

1936 and destroyed non-white freehold and tenancy rights in the township. Black landlords were obliged to obtain approval from the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development to sell their properties to whites.⁸³ The City Council of Pretoria also decided as early as 1956 that “owners in difficulty may therefore offer their properties to the Council with a view of acquisition by the Council”.⁸⁴ The Equity Building Society (Permanent) that administered property bonds for some residents were anxious about bond settlement. Permanent made it clear in its letter dated 25th September 1956 to the Town Clerk that irrespective of matters pertaining to property sales in Lady Selborne, they would appreciate it if black Africans could sell their properties to the City Council and pay their mortgage bonds in full. Permanent’s concern about unsold black properties stemmed from their reluctance to acquire properties in Lady Selborne.⁸⁵ This decision convinced residents that forced removals were imminent. The Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act no 46 of 1959 declared that “Bantu people of South Africa are not a homogenous people but separate units on basis of language and culture and had to settle in different areas”.⁸⁶ This meant that forced removals were done on ethnic and racial grounds as residents were allocated different settlement areas according to language. This destroyed civic cohesion in pursuit of separate development and the Nationalist government’s ‘divide and rule’ policy. The *coup de grace* was delivered by Proclamation no 104 of 20 October 1961, which declared Lady Selborne a white area, thus amending Proclamation no 150 of 1958.⁸⁷ This meant that local residents had to vacate their homes and live elsewhere. Removals started in November 1961.

⁸³ See CA NTS 928/313, (25 September 1956) and CA NTS 928/313, (8 August 1956).

⁸⁴ CA NTS 928/313, (25 September 1956).

⁸⁵ CA NTS 928/313, (25th September 1956).

⁸⁶ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, Part 1 no 1-60, (Cape Town: Authority, 1959), 512 – 514.

⁸⁷ *South African Government Gazette*, no. 92 vol 2, (Pretoria: Authority, 6 October 1961), 3.

4.1. Resistance to Forced Removal

Lady Selborne was thought to be politically sophisticated and tried several strategies to resist removals. Effective resistance was based on local experience in organised resistance gained since the inception of the township in the struggle against high rates. The residents gained useful support from political organisations like the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the Progressive Party. Though many felt helpless and scared, most residents and their organisations tried to resist removals. This explains the delayed implementation of removals in 1961. Meetings, petitions and legal actions were used to slow the government's plans.⁸⁸ Politically-active professionals like Dr W.F. Nkomo were supported by their peers.

A 'Resist Apartheid Campaign' was launched in 1954 that encouraged the residents to actively protest against the threat of displacement. The meeting held on the 31st of May 1955 concluded that forced removals would destroy community spirit and worker productivity since the proposed resettlement areas were far from Pretoria's city centre.⁸⁹ The 1955 meeting between the Pretoria City Council and representatives of the government prompted residents to hold meetings on 10 and 28 October 1955 where they formulated a letter to the City Clerk asking for detailed reasons why they were moved.⁹⁰ With no response, a demonstration was organised in August 1960 by the Lady Selborne Village Committee which protested against the loss of freehold title, the financial hardships which would follow removals and the absence of

⁸⁸ Sonjica, T K, "Group Areas Act".

⁸⁹ CA NTS 6485 87/313 (S), 5, Horrell, *The Group Areas Act*, 48.

⁹⁰ CA NTS 4552 928/313.

allocated resettlement areas.⁹¹ That same month the Black Sash fought against resettlement to different areas based on ethnicity and declared it unjust. These sentiments were echoed by organisations like the Pretoria Action Group, Council for Human Rights, the Methodist Church, the Progressive Party and the Pretoria and District Coloured Vigilance Association. These organisations supported the residents of Lady Selborne by declaring removals discriminatory and violations of fundamental human rights, and warned that they would make people despise the State and whites.⁹² The government ignored such complaints. Residents took their case to the Supreme Court in Pretoria and won, but lost when the case was taken to the Court of Appeals in Bloemfontein.⁹³

Domestic resistance strategies were exhausted by late 1960, and local residents elected to approach the United Nations. They drew up a petition in April 1961 with 5000 signatures arguing that Lady Selborne should not become a white settlement.⁹⁴ This sped up the government and forced removals began in November of that year. Removals were not physically contested as people could not fight the machinery of State.⁹⁵ Former landlord Mrs Manamela states:

Everything was decided without us. Tenants were moved first and resettled. While we were waiting to be moved other tenants were moved to our yards without our permission. These tenants were not paying a cent. Later landlords were thus moved. I felt bad about removals but I could not do a thing. Lorries were sent to fetch us. It was one truck for a landlord and one truck for two tenants. People lost a lot of things.⁹⁶

⁹¹ CA BEP 138 G7/137/12.

⁹² CA BEP 138 G7/137/12.

⁹³ Sonjica, "Group Areas Act".

⁹⁴ M. Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1961), 164.

⁹⁵ See Informant 1-16.

⁹⁶ Informant 15.

The fact that most landlords waited for their turn to be forcibly removed shows that the spirit of resistance was still alive. Such resistance was coupled with economic fear since tenancy was not going to exist in the resettlement areas. Most residents faced higher transport costs. Rail fare amounted to R2.20 a month, which was expensive given that Lady Selborne was sixteen kilometres from the city centre.⁹⁷ Many tenants were successfully enticed to the resettlement area by the promise of owning their own land and some left before they were moved, as demonstrated by the case of Mr and Mrs Matlaila.⁹⁸

Community resistance of Lady Selborne illustrates black African assertiveness, politicisation and the articulation of dissatisfaction with the inequalities of Nationalist rule. It shows the cohesion that prevailed in the community in fighting segregation, though many tenants ultimately prioritised land ownership over civic solidarity. Highly politicised and sophisticated resistance (however unsuccessful) indicated the community's rejection of environmental discrimination.

4.2. Forced Removals in the 1960s

The State passed proclamation 104, Government Gazette 98, on the 20th of October 1961, which declared Lady Selborne a 'Group Area'.⁹⁹ This made it illegal for blacks to reside in the township, and removals began in November of that same year. The

⁹⁷ Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations*, (1961), 164.

⁹⁸ Informant 12 and 13.

⁹⁹ *South African Government Gazette*, no 98 vol 2, (Pretoria: Authority, 20 October 1961).

Act undermined local perceptions of self and history. Coloureds were accommodated in Derdepoort and Eersterus, Indians in Laudium, blacks in Ga-Rankuwa, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Mabopane. The Nationalist government enticed tenants with houses and land in chosen resettlement areas.¹⁰⁰ This excited many tenants (like Mrs Kgari, Mrs Matlaila and Mrs Madumo) because the prospect of becoming landowners resembled some kind of a liberation.¹⁰¹ Land ownership in the resettlement areas was based on personal wealth but many former tenants were relieved to occupy their own space.¹⁰² Despite this, many former tenants still regretted parting with familiar places and friends. This is clearly put by Mrs Matlaila, who states that:

I felt bad about removals because we were well established in the area [Lady Selborne] and we developed friends, now we had to leave them. But I felt happy because in Ga-Rankuwa I was renting a freestanding house not in any one's yard and this was liberating because we lived in our own yards.¹⁰³

Removals came with humiliating and destructive results for some former landlords who because of financial reasons could not buy plots in Ga-Rankuwa. Those without money to purchase homes were relegated to the class of tenants. Some were shamed by the mere fact that they were of the same class as their former tenants. Many landlords, like Mr Andrew's parents, could not make enough money from selling their homes in Lady Selborne to buy houses in Ga-Rankuwa.¹⁰⁴ Other landlords, like Mrs Tshweni, claim that the absence of compensation precluded buying new houses in Ga-Rankuwa.

¹⁰⁰ See Informant 2, 13 and 14.

¹⁰¹ Informant 2, 13 and 14.

¹⁰² See CA BAO 61/2/A228/1547/1.

¹⁰³ Informant 13.

¹⁰⁴ Informant 10.

Some informants interviewed in Ga-Rankuwa in 2004 claim that there was a housing crisis in the location because construction only started in 1961.¹⁰⁵ Resettled residents complain that most houses were not finished when they arrived,¹⁰⁶ and some maintain that their new houses were smaller than those of Lady Selborne.¹⁰⁷ Facilities like electricity, transport and sufficient shops (among others) were lacking. Ga-Rankuwa was about thirty-two kilometres from Pretoria's city centre and this was devastating to a community used to walking to town. All residents were removed and houses demolished by 1973, and the Pretoria City Council surveyed the township and altered its layout in the mid 1970s.¹⁰⁸ Street names like Mokone, Mabathla, Bulawayo, Maraba and Liberty were replaced by Belmont, Bergendal and Sannapos – names of Boer victories in the Second Anglo-Boer War.¹⁰⁹ The area was renamed Suiderberg. Many former residents want restitution and the undeveloped areas used to resettle such claimants.

5. Conclusion

The residents of Lady Selborne were attached to each other and their environment. They took pride in their area as it gave them identity and was a locus of their history. The local sense of identity and community spirit cut across religious, cultural, racial and class divides, as demonstrated by resistance campaigns against displacement. The area was located scenically on fertile soil near Pretoria's city centre, and this added to the residents' attachment to their area. The segregationist State interfered in

¹⁰⁵ Informant 3 and 5.

¹⁰⁶ Informant 3 and 5.

¹⁰⁷ Informant 5 and 7.

¹⁰⁸ Parliament, Republic of South Africa, Announcements, "Tablings and Committee Reports" no. 78, (15 June 2001), 681.

¹⁰⁹ See CA NTS4551 928/313 vol 1 and vols 3 and 4 they contain a list of every property, street name, owner, valuation and bond in the mid 1950's and also Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 11.

their daily life through control of water usage and rates. The State alienated the community of Lady Selborne from their environment by reducing access to land and water, and used conservation policies to limit both. Residents were forced to pay high rates from 1931, which contributed to their environmental alienation.¹¹⁰ This alienation did not cause them to disengage with the land in terms of subsistence farming, and Keegan argues that urban blacks remained committed to cultivation because most entrepreneurship was denied them.¹¹¹ Residents tried to retain environmental control by actively involving themselves in the running of their area through the Health and Village Committees. Politicisation thus emerged that motivated the community of Lady Selborne to resist its displacement.

Success in this struggle in the 1940s motivated the residents to fight against the forced removals of the 1960s, albeit with less success. Forced removals destroyed the community spirit and environmental attachment that the residents had enjoyed since 1905. This meant a withdrawal from history for many residents because their land had given them a sense of their own history. They were now forced to construct a new history of ‘comparisons of places’ where they would always have a nostalgic attachment to Lady Selborne and the new area would always be the ‘other place’ and not ‘home’. Those moved to Ga-Rankuwa had no sense of historical continuity and a feeling of historical rupture emerged from the forced removal.

¹¹⁰ Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa, 2.

¹¹¹ Timothy Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 150.

Chapter Five

Perception of the land and the transformation of the environment in Lady Selborne, c.1905 – 1960.*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the uses of infrastructure and environmental resources that were in Lady Selborne from 1905 to the 1960s.¹ Another aim is to discuss contemporary local perceptions of the land, and to trace the extent to which residents transformed their surroundings physically and imaginatively. This will assist in tracing how and why land dispossession of the 1960s affected the relationship between the community and its environment. It will be shown how the Sotho-Tswana through subsistence in an urban settlement like Lady Selborne struggled to maintain themselves in the face of hardship.

The Nationalist government strategy of displacing the former residents of Lady Selborne brought pain to the lives of the majority of the former residents which is engraved in their minds. The State used bulldozers, police dogs and (worst of all) the destruction of local vegetation – which left people to grieve the malicious destruction of their inheritance, with all its concomitant embedded values.² This seemed to indicate to many of those displaced that the government did not take into consideration their ideologies on land which could constitute the ‘environmental

* This chapter was presented at the biennial South African Historical Society Conference, University of Johannesburg, 24 June to 27 June 2007. My thanks particularly to Phia Steyn and Jane Carruthers for helpful critique offered.

¹ For the purposes of this chapter, ‘infrastructure’ refers to resources like schools, hospitals and transport, while ‘environmental resources’ include climate, soil, water, bush and others.

² See Interviews, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 3 and 5.

injustice' to which Jacobs refers.³ Focusing on the case study of Kuruman, she argued that:

The process of removals was manifestly an environmental one. Blacks lost possession of desirable river valley parcels in exchange for particular inhospitable environmental zones. The environmental differences between the land taken from or relegated to blacks contributed to the ongoing weakening of supplementary subsistence cultivation. Yet forced removals have a significance that goes beyond their effect on food production. By disrupting people's lives, sense of home, and relations with particular environments, the racial state both exerted and gained power over black people.⁴

In order to understand the socio-environmental history of forced removals in Lady Selborne, it is important to consider human environmental interactions at several different levels. According to Worster, the first level is the reconstruction of past environmental conditions; the second enquiry should be into the impact of ecological variables on the technological and social considerations of food production; while the third tier of analysis should be on human perception of the environment.⁵ Of similar import is McCann's idea that environmental factors influence historical changes⁶ and that historical transformation impacts on the environment while citing Merchant who argues that "nature is a whole of which humans are only one part" will assist in the analysis of the socio-environmental history of Lady Selborne.⁷ This study deviates from Croll and Parkin, who argue that, "the study of nature can be studied separate from human society".⁸ This view has been interpreted as a basic 'western' philosophy on Nature, perceiving Nature from a mechanical perspective whereby humanity and

³ Informant 1, 5, 9, 12 and 13.

⁴ Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 164.

⁵ Donald Worster, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History", *Journal of American History*, no 76, (1990), 1090 – 1091.

⁶ James C. McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa 1800-1990*, (Oxford: Heinemann Portsmouth, 1999), 48.

⁷ Carolyn Merchant, "The Theoretical Structure of Ecological Revolutions", in *Environmental Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, (1987), 267.

⁸ Elizabeth Croll and David Parkin, *Bush Base: Forest Farm: Culture, environment and Development*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

its environment are compartmentalised. This is not the normative Sotho-Tswana world-view that perceives nature and humanity interacting in a holistic way. The latter view calls upon negotiation and interaction with nature while the former emphasises its manipulation and domination. This chapter argues that humanity and nature share a dynamic collaborative relationship and that both require each other for survival. Historians have often neglected the environmental perspective and relegated it to the writings of geographers and the like, but increasingly historians of Southern Africa are integrating the environmental dimension into their social and even economic and political history which is one of the aims of this chapter.⁹

In discussing both the uses of infrastructure and environment and peoples' perception of the landscape and thus how the community of Lady Selborne transformed it, we will start first with the a brief description of the landscape of Lady Selborne from 1905 to 1960 and then outline the type of resources and the contemporary usage thereof. This examination will include the role of climatic conditions in assisting some of the environmental resources to flourish. Secondly, the state of the environment in the 1960s will be analysed to understand how the community of Lady Selborne related to their environment: whether they adapted to it, changed it or were in an interactive engagement. Worster's third theme, people's perception on land, will give some answers to his second because it will explain how the residents of Lady

⁹ See Beinart, William, "Environmental degradation in South Africa", 15th Biennial Conference of the South African historical society at Rhodes University Grahamstown, (2-5 July 1995), Farieda Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response: An Historical and Socio-Political Evaluations with particular Reference to Blacks*, Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1990); Sandra Swart, "The Ant of the White Soul: Popular Natural History, the Politics of Afrikaner Identity, and the Entomological Writings of Eugene Marais", eds, W. Beinart and J. McGregor, *Social History and African Environments*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), Lance van Sittert, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it": comparing fisheries reforms in South Africa", University of Cape Town, Department of Historical Studies, (2002) and Lance van Sittert, "Making the Cape floral Kingdom: the discovery and defence of indigenous flora at the Cape ca. 1890-1939", *Landscape Research*, vol 28, no.1, (2003).

Selborne engaged with their environment. This will provide an understanding of their repercussions of the forced removals on environmental perceptions as demonstrated in the resettlement area Ga-Rankuwa, as is explained in Chapter six.

2. Landscape of Lady Selborne 1905-1960's

Lady Selborne was sited in a beautiful area and was established as a farm surrounded by a mountain, river and bush (bush means “woodlands”; in Setswana it is referred to as *sekgwa* from the word *gokwa* to spit out or vomit. It literally means the bush is an area that has been separated from the human settlement). In 1906 the human settlement of Lady Selborne comprised of 440 plots.¹⁰ In 1910 there were 210 residents¹¹, a number which by 1956 had increased to 40 000 and later that year to 50 000 with roughly 1600 stands.¹² The 1960's were Lady Selborne's most densely populated years as most stands housed about 30 people in one stand which implies that the entire township was overcrowded with more than 50 000 people as the area was planned to accommodate approximately 7000 residents.¹³

The area became densely populated because of its strategic positioning near the city centre, allowing people to easily reach places of employment by foot. Since landlords in the area survived on renting out their stands, they sought to attract more tenants to maximise profits and enable them to pay their rates and bonds. In Lady Selborne the environment became a commodity to be exchanged for cash which transformed the landscape further. The high population density had negative ramifications for the

¹⁰ Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, “Statement embodying particulars and Survey of the Affairs of Lady Selborne, (1949), 62.

¹¹ T.K. Sonjica, “Group Areas Act, Ethnic Cleansing”, 2002, Land.pwv.gov.za/journal/fourland.html.

¹² Jane Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng”, *Kleio* XXX11, (2000), 5.

¹³ CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 62.

landscape at a later stage. McCann's argument, that "human abuse under rapid population growth and search for profit creates degraded land and make permanent changes in landscapes", holds water when one looks at the environmental history of Lady Selborne. Its populace utilised the landscapes from the 1940s in increasing density and it thus ended up degraded, albeit not catastrophically.¹⁴ Examples include the residents' use of firewood from the bush and its resultant depletion – which caused them to resort to the use of animal dung. Soil erosion was largely avoided by the community's protection of that aspect of their environment by planting fruits, vegetables and trees, and by climatic conditions at that time. Thus the human settlement landscape, though over-populated from the 1940s onwards, did not destroy the environment on a larger scale. Nevertheless, some negative impact on the landscape was unavoidable, which can be analysed with reference to what Merchant called an "ecological revolution" to describe changes in the human-environmental relationship which she related to colonialism and capitalism.¹⁵

Houses in the human settlement were initially built with space left for cultivation of food but from the 1950s many homes were full of tenants and rooms covered some of the plots thus allocated. Vegetable production was mostly subsistence food supply as opposed to economic enterprise, but there were some residents who sold their production to make money. Water was also found in the human settlement: there were no municipality-supplied taps but members of the community would dig wells by using willow trees to detect water.¹⁶ Parts of individual lots were often allocated to

¹⁴ McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land*, 56.

¹⁵ Cited in Nancy Jacobs, "The colonial ecological Revolution in South Africa: The case of Kuruman", eds, S. Dovers, et al, *South Africa's Environmental History Cases & Comparisons*, (Athens, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, David Philip, 2002), 32.

¹⁶ Informant 15.

religious purposes where residents would slaughter livestock and attempt to communicate with their ancestors.¹⁷ Such spiritual spaces were normally under a tree or the corner of the house or strategically placed. The high degree spiritual reverence of the settlement helps to explain why the majority of the community of Lady Selborne was so attached to their land. Mrs Tshweni supports this when she argued that:

By losing our houses during forced removals our humanness was impacted against negatively because we lost the places where we performed rituals. And we lost our homes, our inheritance from our parents.¹⁸

In the midst of the human settlement there was a river that was used as a scenic view and as a source of food. Though the municipal record indicates that in 1949 the area was a slum¹⁹ the informants maintained that the river was pivotal to them²⁰. The Shangaans and the Sotho-Tswana would extract frogs called *matlametlo* from the river and eat them. An interviewee, former landlord Mrs Manamela, described frog-meat as delicious and reminiscent of chicken. The river was thus vital as it provided protein for many members of the population. As a scenic place, members of the community would go and relax and refresh themselves by the river by watching the water flow. An interviewee, son of a former landlord Mr Tshweni, described childhood visits to the river to play during which he and his friends were fascinated by the sight of the water.²¹ The river could thus be said to have contributed to the community's sense of calmness and peace as a natural place which made them appreciate their environment more.

¹⁷ Informant 3 and 5.

¹⁸ Informant 5.

¹⁹ See CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949), 64.

²⁰ See Informant 1, 5, 6 and 15.

²¹ Informant 6.

Another part of the landscape of Lady Selborne was the bush which was dense in 1905 but was diminished by human settlement, especially from the 1940s onwards. The *sekgwa* is part of the wild and untamed space. The bush included trees like cane, ‘bloukombos’ (eucalyptus), jacaranda, and willow trees.²² It is important to mention here that though some of such trees are regarded as invading species classed as weeds in the new legislation in Lady Selborne these trees were important natural resources for the local population as the residents utilised willow trees for decoration in funerals and weddings, for lumber and for firewood.²³ The bush also included a camp where animals like cows, goats, cattle and horses were kept in exchange for money.²⁴ This helped to avoid Lady Selborne’s overcrowding and concomitant overgrazing resulting in more soil erosion than it did. The bush was also used for spiritual reasons traditional healers would collect herbs and use them in their medical activities. Hence there was an organisation of traditional healers, called African Dingaka Organisation, which registered Traditional healers and allowed them to use the Magaliesberg Mountains.²⁵ This regulation helped to protect the landscape being depleted. The bush was also used for cultural activities, for example the intestines and head of the *letlametlo* would be buried in the bush because it was believed that they attracted lightning.²⁶

The landscape of Lady Selborne was beautiful with different features like the mountain, river, bush, flora and fauna. The natural resources could be construed to

²² Informant 12 and 15.

²³ See Informant 15.

²⁴ Informant 8 and 9.

²⁵ Informant 15.

²⁶ Informant 15.

represent the ‘furniture’ of the township as they adorned the area and were the living part of the landscape that made it beautiful. This illustrates that, “landscapes are the symbolic environment created by a human act of conferring meaning on nature and the environment and this landscape reflects self-definition of people within a particular context”.²⁷

3. The Relationship between the community and the environment

Environmental history focuses on people’s interaction with their environment and with each other and hence this section examines the ways in which the members of the community of Lady Selborne related to one another and their ecological world. According to Worster, “environmental history has to focus among other aspects on the human perception of the environment” because it assists in understanding how people overtime understood their environment and interacted with it.²⁸ This will illustrate how the environmental history of Lady Selborne was based on local, survival strategies and will explain why people frequently changed their relations with their environment in the face of pragmatic concerns. In addition, Worster’s principle will also show that, though infrastructure was lacking in terms of conventional notions of development, the environment was important for the community because it provided them with food, shelter, spiritual space and other necessities. In Lady Selborne from 1905 to 1960, the environment formed an important activity of life, and thus it was believed by the residents that they had to care for it because it took care of them. This ties into the Sotho-Tswana belief that the natural landscape is an inheritance from the Ultimate Being (*Modimo*) who gave it to them to be stewards over, hence the name *lefatshe* referring to land and environment which implies that all

²⁷ Greider and Garkovich cited in Swart, “The Ant of the White Soul”, 230.

²⁸ Worster, “Transformations of the Earth”, 1090 - 1091.

that is in the land has to be looked after. This was the case in Lady Selborne since 1905, though the local community ultimately had some negative impact on the environment due to industrialisation and the afore-mentioned surge in human population.

The community of Lady Selborne was close-knit socially and (broadly speaking) committed to the care of its environment since 1905. As Carruthers asserts “the area was established under immense physical effort from being a water-logged marsh, to becoming the best Native Township in South Africa containing the most beautiful houses in Pretoria”.²⁹ This claim is taken further by a former resident who contended that:

Life in Lady Selborne was good despite the fact that we were using a bucket sewerage system. We had no taps at the beginning but later towards our removals they were installed. Thus water became expensive and the rates too. People thought they were paying high amounts. The rates were called six-month rates. People were united there. We built our own houses, I had a 7-roomed house. The quality of the soil was good, it was red in colour and full of food and it was fertile. Hence I planted vegetables and fruits for my family to eat.³⁰

The sentiments raised by the interviewee above suggest that life in Lady Selborne was based on survival, and that people felt fulfilled through a process of engagement with their environment. The fact that very few areas like Lady Selborne were allowed to exist in an urban area or, near white settlement or close to the city centre with mixed races meant that the residents felt privileged to live where they did. Despite the policy of segregation that existed in South Africa since colonisation that did not allow blacks to live in urban areas unless they were employed there, the residents of Lady Selborne

²⁹ Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa”, 7.

³⁰ Informant 7.

felt honoured to reside in the area. By 1937, blacks were forbidden to buy land outside the reserves except from other blacks. It was unfortunate for the segregation-minded State that it allowed areas like Lady Selborne to exist before 1910 which were already flourishing.³¹ The black people of Lady Selborne knew the political setting of South Africa in terms of residential racial discrimination and were thus motivated to appreciate their area and to stay attached to their soil.

To date, the importance of the soil to South Africa's indigenous black people has not been paid sufficient attention in examining the Republic's forced removals. Soil obviously constitutes a major factor of the home in ensuring that the individual, family and community survive, as the former community of Lady Selborne when interviewed emphasised.³² Hyams argues that human beings form part of the 'soil community' because their activities are held in balance with the components of the soil as was the case with the Hunter-gatherers. He takes this further by arguing that the Hunter gatherers saw people like the colonial white settlers as the soil's exploiters and subjugators because they engaged in agrarian cultivation and were thus accused of 'breaking the soil'.³³ In using Hyams' analysis, the Sotho-Tswana would also fall under this category but this chapter argues that they formed part of the soil community in that they engaged with their environment differently. The soil was also perceived to be pivotal as the (re)source that gave birth to humanity as evidenced by the Sotho-Tswana creation origin that human beings came from the 'hole in the

³¹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, "Mapping Cape Town: From Slavery to Apartheid", ed, Field, S, *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 20.

³² Informant 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 14.

³³ Cited in David van Wyk, "Land Identity and Violence in the nineteenth century South Africa as reflected in selected South African texts: The Case of Hunter Gatherer Communities", *South African Historical Society*, (6-9July 1997), 3.

ground'.³⁴ In reciprocation or as an act of reverence towards the earth that was seen as accommodating the ancestors, the Basotho would perform rituals on the soil to attempt to communicate with the dead. Thus it can be suggested that the Sotho-Tswana residents of Lady Selborne 'loved' their soil in addition to depending on it for water, food and shelter. Soil formed part of their source of life.

The importance of soil among the Sotho-Tswana is illustrated in a Setswana proverb that says: "*go nna mmu le matlakala*" (to be soil and dirt), which simply refers to the person who is excessively rich.³⁵ The fact that soil and dirt cannot be quantified says the same about great wealth; and the comparison between soil and wealth indicates the extent to which the Sotho-Tswana believed that one contributes to the other. The analogy illustrates the importance of soil among the Basotho and hence the need for soil to be protected from exploitation and pollution. As part of this philosophy, it was believed that if a rich person became 'dirty' or merciless (*go nna ditshila / go tlhoka molemo*) and ignored the poor people, misfortune would befall that person hence the proverb "*go itewa ke lefatshe*" (to be beaten by the land). This proverb alleges that the benighted are often in their predicament because of their failure to care for the soil and the less fortunate.³⁶ This 'caring for the soil' did not only refer to looking after the environment, but included the performance of various rituals to the ancestors which contributed to the idea that land and soil was regarded as alive and playing a role in peoples' lives. These factors explain the Sotho-Tswana community's attachment to the land in Lady Selborne and their determination to survive and get fulfilment on it.

³⁴ Gabriel M. Setiloane, *African Theology: An Introduction*, (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1985), 5–7.

³⁵ M. O. M. Seboni, *Diane le Maele a Setswana*, (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1980), 70.

³⁶ Seboni, *Diane le Maele a Setswana*, 54.

Food production played a major role in the history of the community of Lady Selborne (as it was their major interaction with the environment); and, as argued by Merchant, Worster and Jacobs, is an important element of environmental history.³⁷ While there were residents engaged in capitalist farming, it was not on a large scale. For example, some informants mentioned community members who were selling vegetables and it is clear that missionary influences played a major role in encouraging such ventures.³⁸ The informants interviewed praised the quality of the soil in terms of its fertility³⁹, which was complimented by the area's climate.⁴⁰ The residents could cultivate fruit and vegetables in their yards, including pumpkins, spinach, carrots, tomatoes and onions.⁴¹ They were able to manage their relations with the environment according to what was possible and the climatic changes of the time, which involved heavy and consistent rains. Mrs Kgari, explained that in the early 1900s the locals used straight lined furrows to conserve water.⁴² Jacobs backs this up by arguing that "straight lines indicate an attempt to make efficient use of land and water by planting close rows through thoroughly cleared fields and delivering water by shortest route".⁴³ Mrs Kgari went on to describe the use of curved lines around trees, arcing round trunks to preserve water and ensure high yields.⁴⁴

The use of the land was determined by social divisions by class, gender and race. The advantaged class was made up of landlords with big plots, who could produce food at

³⁷ Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender and Science in New England*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 5-26, Worster, "Transformations of the Earth", 1090 – 1091 and Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 21.

³⁸ Informant 2.

³⁹ Informant 1 - 16.

⁴⁰ *Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within Union of South Africa, 61/1955*, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1955).

⁴¹ Informant 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

⁴² Informant 2.

⁴³ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 69.

⁴⁴ Informant 2.

a large scale; and the lower class included primarily the tenants for whom prescriptions were laid defining what they could plant and where they could plant.⁴⁵ The disadvantaged group chose a particular form of production to promote their interests in a competitive and constrictive environment. Mrs Kgari claims that members of the landlords' class were prone to feelings of jealousy towards some tenants (like her) who were good in cultivating food.⁴⁶ It seems that, while many tenants were allocated plots to plant food, other tenants like Mrs Madumo were hindered in developing productive activities because their landlords wanted to build more shacks to accommodate tenants in pursuit of maximised profits.⁴⁷ This underlines land ownership's role in determining food production and goes to explain how class relations between tenants and freehold farmers fractured the community. Some residents sold cultivated food from their gardens to other community members as a primary source of income while others did so in order to supplement their wages.⁴⁸ Since Lady Selborne was a semi rural area, food production was not pursued on a large scale because the majority of its people did not have the many acres of land of their white competitors in other areas. In essence, throughout the environmental history of Lady Selborne, food production was the area's major economic activity and it thus deepened the link between the community and its environment.

The mode of land tenure practiced in Lady Selborne during the period under discussion was unlike the pre-colonial tenure system of communal land ownership in that land was now owned individually. This represented a (counter) revolution in the ideology of land ownership as it became industrialised. But the spirit of community

⁴⁵ See Informant 2 and 14.

⁴⁶ Informant 2.

⁴⁷ Informant 14.

⁴⁸ Informant 2 and 3.

did not wholly disappear, as demonstrated by communal unity in the struggle against lack of food or the raising of rates by the Hercules council in the 1930s and the forced removals of the 1950s and 1960s. Though there were sometimes feuds between landlords and tenants, the concept of '*botho*' or communal assistance survived, and thus those who were privileged to have enough food had to assist others who weren't, as described by Mrs Elsie Maphalare who said "in Lady Selborne they followed the philosophy of *botho*, helping one another"⁴⁹, or Mrs Kgari who "if she had food from her cultivation she would give to the needy members of the community in the spirit of '*botho*'".⁵⁰

Jacobs has argued that gender is another important feature in environmental history and this was the case in Lady Selborne.⁵¹ Women were the main food producers in that they worked the land while most men were involved in wage labour employed in Pretoria and adjacent towns but others as migrants in Johannesburg and other places, though some women were domestic workers for whites.⁵² In terms of wage labour opportunities, it was enjoyed mainly by men because women had to take care of the children, though some households would enlist the help of extended families. The majority of women would thus work their land to produce food and also do general household work. Women who chose to work for wage labour would utilise their spare time after work to care for their crops because they saw agriculture as vital in ensuring their families' survival in the face of the low wages for domestic workers of that time. Men had to leave their women and children to work the land which resulted in the decline of Sotho-Tswana subsistence agriculture. Worst of all was the fact that

⁴⁹ Informant 9.

⁵⁰ Informant 2.

⁵¹ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 53 – 56.

⁵² See Alan Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation: The study of 3million evictions in South Africa*, (London: Africa Publications Trust, 1974), 26.

migrant labourers were almost forced to leave their homes to work in mines without any satisfactory positions and working conditions in those mines. Urban black men were only employed as semi-skilled and unskilled labourers while many whites occupied skilled labour positions. Some men, due to the removals from fertile lands, were thus forced to work in the cities and become migrant labourers, and as such they occupied the low ranking jobs that did not pay satisfactory wages. The removals in the 1960s made these men lose their sense of striving for communal survival and interest in their environment.⁵³ This also resulted in a decline of family values and interpersonal connections, as posited by the Churches Report on Forced removals in South Africa which asserted that the system of migrant labour had no respect of the delicacy of family structures.⁵⁴

Hoffman and Ashwell argue that forcing men to leave their wives and work in the mines undermined masculine self-sufficiency, political power and environmental sustainability.⁵⁵ In many instances, women managed to find sustenance and independence in their environment despite the absence of men. This is illustrated by the Sotho-Tswana term for ‘woman’ being *mosadi*, which translate as ‘the one who has to remain at home to look after the household and make food’. Women were ultimately burdened with many new responsibilities and in the process some families disintegrated because of the absence of husbands and fathers. Many men were humiliated as they were often referred to and treated as ‘boys’ in the job market. For instance, men who worked as gardeners were often called ‘garden boys’. The humiliation these men suffered impacted on their self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

⁵³ Informant 8 and 10.

⁵⁴ *Relocations: The Churches’ Report on Forced Removals in South Africa*, (Randburg: South African Council of Churches and the South African Catholic Bishops Conference, 1984), 31.

⁵⁵ T. Hoffman and A. Ashwell, *Nature Divided: Land degradation in South Africa*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2001), 1- 8.

Moller argues that such men, regardless of actual marital status, were still typically treated as single men.⁵⁶ The absence of such males could have contributed to the community's failure to effectively fight the State's interference in the residents' relations with the environment – which culminated in the displacement of 1961.

Throughout the history of Lady Selborne the government interfered with peoples' relationships with their environment. High rates were instituted during the 1940s regulation of the use of water, which in turn disturbed cultivation. Likewise, control of the bush throughout the early twentieth century also meant control of necessary natural resources like wood and medical herbs. This State-led attack on the relationship between the local community and their environment could be construed as environmental injustice as local access to natural heritage was limited. The inhabitants of Lady Selborne continued to fight against such interference in their relations with the environment but, as Hofmeyr argued when he stated that “forced removals resulted in the disappearance of an everyday physical world” of the people, their connection with each other and their environment was destroyed.⁵⁷

4. Uses of Resources

In Lady Selborne there was a diversity of resources that assisted the community in many ways. ‘Resources’ in this context implies both environmental elements (soil, bush, land, trees, water and climate) and non-environmental features like infrastructure (hospitals, churches, schools, transport). Climate in this instance falls under natural resources because it aids vegetation by providing light, darkness and

⁵⁶ Valerie Moller, “Change in South African Labour”, ed. H. Giliomee and L. Schlemmer, *Up Against the Fences: Poverty, Passes and Privilege in South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1985), 28.

⁵⁷ Isabel Hofmeyr, “Gender Patterns of Story Telling and Forced Removals: A Transvaal Perspective”, *The Societies of South Africa in the 19th century and the 20th Century*, vol 18, (1992), 47.

water. Though Lady Selborne was lacking in efficient infrastructure initially, the area had been developed more by the 1950s. In terms of environmental resources like the soil, the area was rich in terms of fertility which assisted the community with food production. Climatic conditions were also favourable because rains in the area were consistent and helped in agriculture.⁵⁸

4.1. Infrastructure

By 1960 Lady Selborne was densely populated and had infrastructure that was well established. There was electricity, running water and efficient means of transport. There were clinics and a hospital. The township had two high schools and ten primary schools.⁵⁹ Such schools were of such a high quality that many learners travelled from other areas like Mamelodi and Atteridgeville to be taught there. Though racially segregated, these schools offered a high standard, as borne out by an informant who argued that:

Lady Selborne was an excellent place. I was at school when we lived there. Schools there were very good. We had students from Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. Our curriculum was good; we had tennis, dance and football. Schools were divided on racial terms.⁶⁰

The hospital and clinics were mainly managed, administered and funded by the churches. For example, there was the Little Flower Mission clinic that was managed by the Roman-Catholic Church and the Holy Cross Nursing Home that was run by the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross.⁶¹ The Nursing Home was to provide

⁵⁸ Informant 2 and 11.

⁵⁹ Informant 3.

⁶⁰ Informant 10.

⁶¹ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from Dr. Declan, (Secretary Holy Cross Nursing Home) to the Secretary for Native Affairs. (28 June 1949).

both health services for Africans, and training for “Native Nurses”.⁶² The Nursing Home was important in Lady Selborne from the 1940s onward because it assisted the community in terms of health issues without forcing them to go to Pretoria’s city centre about seven miles away as they did before 1938. The population of Lady Selborne in 1938 was approximately 11 000, and the nearest public hospital was at Pretoria, about seven miles away.⁶³ There were no medical officers resident at or near the township, and before 1938 Lady Selborne was operating without a hospital.⁶⁴ There was an uncertified nurse, of the Roman Catholic Mission, who performed first aid and midwifery at the Little Flower Mission Clinic.⁶⁵ In 1938, a fully qualified midwife was employed which helped the residents of Lady Selborne tremendously.⁶⁶ There was tangible improvement in the 1940s with the opening of the Health Centre in July 1946 by the Health Department⁶⁷ and by 1948 the Health service had been further improved as there were doctors, a qualified matron, nurses and several pupil-midwives.⁶⁸

By 1948, Lady Selborne had the Little Flower Clinic and the Holy Cross Nursing Home functioning well and improving the health of the community. But these facilities were receiving grants based on their needs and requests from sponsors and the government. A survey of the finances of these two facilities makes it clear that the

⁶² CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from Dr. Declan, (1949).

⁶³ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from Native Commissioner, The Chief Native Commissioner, (25 June 1938).

⁶⁴ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from the Native Commissioner, (1938).

⁶⁵ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from the Native Commissioner, (1938)

⁶⁶ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from Alberts, H. A, (Town Clerk) to the Native Commissioner, (20 June 1938) and CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from the Native Commissioner, to the Chief Native Commissioner, (18 July 1938).

⁶⁷ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from M. Preus the medical officer in charge to the Secretary for Native Affairs, (13 November 1947).

⁶⁸ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from the Native Commissioner to the Chief Native Commissioner, (3 November 1948).

government supported them on request to a degree but that it failed to provide them with sufficient funds.⁶⁹ For example, the grants for the Little Flower Mission in 1938 was £75⁷⁰ with a further £50 for the first quarter coming from the Native Commissioner⁷¹, while in 1948 an amount of £500 was paid to the Holy Cross Nursing Home and Little Flower Mission to aid them in facility maintenance.⁷² Since the Mission had no fixed income, it had to rely solely on contributions for maintenance which was difficult against a backdrop of over-crowding. Increased community demands needed a good health care system which the government had to provide with lucrative financial support, which was not forthcoming, especially after 1948 when the National Party gained power.

Despite the increasing demands on the hospital, the Native Department refused to assist it after 1948 as apartheid was tightened and the state wanted to have control. As a result funding responsibility was transferred to the Provincial Administration. The healthcare system in Lady Selborne had realistic needs but the State was reluctant to assist from 1948. The letter from Sister Benedicta to the Commissioner in 1948 explains the situation in the Holy Cross Nursing Home when it states that “they needed to erect a laundry, garages, servants’ quarters in connection with the Maternity Home for black mothers because their number was increasing and there was

⁶⁹ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Native Commissioner, (31st August 1938), CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12, Pretoria, (25 April 1938) and CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from Sister Benedicta to the Commissioner, Native Affairs Department, (27 September 1948).

⁷⁰ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Native Commissioner, (31 August 1938).

⁷¹ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Clinic Little Flower Mission, Lady Selborne, Financial Statement for 1st Quarter 1938, (1938).

⁷² CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12. A letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to The Superintendent, (24 March 1948).

insufficient accommodation for them and their babies”.⁷³ The refusal to provide funds to clinics and hospitals by the Native Commissioner’s Department in the late 1940s is articulated in a letter dated 8th November 1948 from the Chief Native Commissioner D G. Hartman to the Holy Cross Nursing Home responds to the hospital’s application for further funding with:

With reference to your minute No. 2/26/2/3 of the 3rd instant, no good purpose would be served by referring the application to the Secretary for Native Affairs.

Several applications have been put up as special cases but the Secretary for Native Affairs’ reply is invariable – this Department no longer assists hospitals and clinics financially.⁷⁴

The implication of this letter was that the Nationalist government of 1948 was indeed not interested in improving services in the black areas as compared to the United Party which had assisted such hospitals and clinics with financial support. In the letter sent to the Secretary for Native Affairs by the Chief Native Commissioner dated 15th March 1948, it is made clear that hospitals and clinics were given low funding priority and that one department would put the responsibility on the other, which led to many disruptions in the healthcare systems⁷⁵ as illustrated in the following except:

With reference to your undated minute No. A. / 303 I do not understand how a grant comes to be made to this Nursing Home [Holy Cross] when you have informed me in several other cases that hospitals are now the responsibility of the Provincial Administration not of this Department.⁷⁶

Despite various state departments’ seeming reluctance to take responsibility for assisting hospitals and clinics financially, the Holy Cross Nursing Home and the Little

⁷³ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from Sister Benedicta, (1948).

⁷⁴ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from D G. Hartmann, (Chief Native Commissioner), to The Native Commissioner, (8 November 1948).

⁷⁵ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from D G. Hartmann, (Chief Native Commissioner), to The Secretary for Native Affairs, (15 March 1948).

⁷⁶ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 Letter from D G. Hartmann, (15 March 1948)

Flower Mission Clinic managed to operate with the backing of different sponsors.⁷⁷ The two facilities were a source of pride to the community of Lady Selborne who, through the assistance of mission churches, was provided with a good health care system, despite the financial setbacks. There were also several churches that served the community: the Wesleyan, Lutheran, Anglican, Roman-Catholic and the Order of Ethiopia.⁷⁸ Such churches were instrumental in the social and infrastructural development of the area. The *Tumelong* mission (The Place of Faith) was established in 1939 by the British nun Clare Lawrence at the request of an Anglican Bishop Wilfred Parker, who saw the need for care, education, and spiritual support in Lady Selborne. The organisation supported the community with nutrition programs and providing a clinic, hospice, orphanage, sewing-shop, pre-school and primary school.⁷⁹ The facilities existed to alleviate poverty and missionaries and churches played a major role in developing the area.

There were shops, which sold goods cheaply positioned at almost every street corner.⁸⁰ There was also a big shopping centre on Marina Street that served as a metropolitan department store. This assisted the local residents immensely as the entrance to white urban areas required a 'doppass,' and the township shop circumvented this obstacle.⁸¹ Transport was well-developed and efficient and the use

⁷⁷ CA HKN1/1/27 N10/11/12 The Financial Report of 1937.

⁷⁸ See CA BAO 7900T59/1547/1/1 Letter from Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development to the Bantu Commissioner, (20 March 1962), CA BAO 7900T57/1547/1/1 Letter from S. S. Mohlomane (Administrator Pro-Tem The African Orthodox Church), to The Bantu Affairs Commissioner, (23rd June 1962), CA BAO 7900N2/13/3 G.96 Letter from O Papke (Missionary in charge) to The Bantu Affairs Commissioner, (16th July 1962) and CA BAO 7900T61/6/1547/1 Letter from John C. Garner (Arch Bishop of Pretoria), to The Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, (7 June 1962).

⁷⁹ About Tumelong, (Available at: <http://www.tumelong.org.za/about.html>)

⁸⁰ Informant 15.

⁸¹ Informant 10.

of local taxis was free.⁸² There were buses that were owned by Mr Mmotla, a local black businessman,⁸³ which might have assisted the optimisation of bus transport which helped the community, though the area was relatively close to the city centre.

The area also had recreational facilities like soccer grounds and a tennis court where people from different races went to relax.⁸⁴ Such sports were organised under the Black Sports Association. During the weekend it would organise Soccer, which was a major source of entertainment and possibly helped to reduce crime. The township had two halls owned by black people which were used for different social activities. Gambling was also pursued, with some people betting on the horses and the gambling game “Chinaman” which, since the majority of the people were poor, served as a means to acquire wealth.⁸⁵ Horse racing over the weekends served as a form of recreation but its primary purpose was to make money.

Despite the infrastructure that existed in the township, the area also lacked facilities like electricity in some houses and running water which was only installed when the community of Lady Selborne was about to be moved. In similar vein, the sewerage system was based on a bucket system. This was highlighted by most of the informants as a major downside to living in the area. Part of this problem was the fact that the bucket collectors would spill their contents and befoul the area - and the residents were supposed to clean it up. This sewerage system thus motivated them to keep their area clean. Despite these drawbacks, the community prided themselves on being

⁸² Informant, 2, 3 and 15.

⁸³ Informant 2, 3, 4.

⁸⁴ See Informant 10 and 15.

⁸⁵ Informant 3 and 15.

residents of Lady Selborne because it was the township where many of them were born and where they had established strategies of survival and fulfilment within the context of poverty. To illustrate the pride that the former community had about their area, the residents that were resettled in Atteridgeville named their section ‘Selborne Side,’ which clearly shows how close they were to their former township.

4. 2. The Uses of Soil and the Land

McCann stated that soil varies in structure, chemistry and colour; ranging from light, sandy, black, dark brown, light brown, red soil and poorly drained.⁸⁶ In Lady Selborne the type of the soil was of a good quality.⁸⁷ Informants claimed that it was fertile and that they could farm virtually anything.⁸⁸ This contributed towards their love of their land. Like many other areas, Lady Selborne was appropriated by whites due to its quality of soil. This is because “South African whites seized the best land by force while local tribes became landless labourers or forced to move into marginal areas which were much more easily degraded,”⁸⁹ though when whites settled no commercial farming was instituted. Nevertheless, the area was appropriated largely because of its fertility. This is borne out by an informant, the former tenant Mr Matlaila, who complained that:

In Lady Selborne the environment was clean. The soil was good. There were trees like Jacaranda, Cane and Bloukombos. I think that is the reason why Lady Selborne was taken from black people because it had fertile land.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land*, 6 – 14.

⁸⁷ Informant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

⁸⁸ See Informant 2, 7, 8 and 10.

⁸⁹ Paul Harrison, *The Greening of: Africa Breaking through in the Battle for Land and Food*, (London: Paladin Grafton, 1987), 49.

⁹⁰ Informant 12.

In Lady Selborne, the soil played a major role in ensuring the community's survival in the face of poverty by providing real estate and natural resources for sustenance and capital. This implies that the environment played a pivotal and dynamic role between 1905 to the 1960s in the history of the population of the area. Thus John Iliffes' hypothesis that "the natural world offers a context in history not as a discrete historical actor" is dismissible in this context because the environment provided for the community of Lady Selborne in a dynamic way and they in turn preserved and loved it.⁹¹ This implies that the environment actively rendered the history of the community of Lady Selborne 'alive'. The destruction of local cultivation during forced removals was devastating because it meant poverty to many families, which is clearly illustrated by an informant who explained that:

My family was given an unfamiliar place where we had to start new relationships and cultivate vegetables and fruits from afresh. Whereas while we were at Lady Selborne we cultivated a lot of vegetables and fruits and they were destroyed. This was painful to my family.⁹²

The land and the soil was mainly the work of women who cultivated food and thus staved off poverty. Though the plots were small, about "138 square roods and 128 square feet",⁹³ with designs that failed to take into cognisance the need for cultivation, women in Lady Selborne continued to ensure that they re-arranged their land to make space for planting food. Hoffman and Ashwell argue that house designs and plots sizes in urban areas fail to cater for women's' needs, which include child-minding, cultivation of food and earning extra income.⁹⁴ This explains how women in Lady

⁹¹ Cited in McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land*, 47.

⁹² Informant 3.

⁹³ CA NTS4644/928/313(10) Letter from MacRobert, Devilliers & Hitge (Solicitors, Notaries and Conveyancers), to Mr. A. J. Turton (Native Affairs Department), 'Mortgage Bond of Shadrack E. Modiselle', (10 July 1944).

⁹⁴ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 8 – 9.

Selborne struggled to maintain their families while playing an important creative ecological role through cultivation and protecting their environment.

4.3. Climate

Climate is critical in determining the success of agriculture, as vegetation requires sufficient rain and sun to thrive, and the insufficiency (or superfluity) of these components results in problems relating to non-vegetation, like soil erosion. Rain also determines whether sufficient pasturage for livestock exists. The climate of the Pretoria region from 1905 to the 1960s was relatively good. Pretoria is situated about 1370 metres above sea level, resulting in the area's climate being moderate even in winter, which is one of the reasons that cause Elliot to argue that Pretoria has a good climate.⁹⁵ The area's weather has an ideal summer temperature range from an average minimum of 15 degrees Celsius to an average maximum of 28 degrees Celsius, while in winter temperature averages between 6 and 23 degrees Celsius.⁹⁶ Pretoria's summer is wet, while its winter is dry and mild.⁹⁷ Pretoria's climatic condition ensures good vegetation and helps to account for the fine quality soil found in most of the area, like that of Lady Selborne.

While the climatic history of Pretoria from 1905 to 1960 indicates overall a temperate climate, the South Africa's Weather Bureau mentioned that there were also reports of

⁹⁵ A. Elliot, *Pride of South Africa Pretoria*, (South Africa: Purnell, 1975), 13.

⁹⁶ Tourism Blueprint, *South Africa's Gauteng: A Tourism Blueprint Travel Guide, 1997/8*, (Milnerton: Tourism Blueprint, 1998), 22.

⁹⁷ Tourism Blue print, *South Africa's Gauteng*, 22.

extreme weather conditions in the area.⁹⁸ The 1950s and 60s continued with a pattern of occasional severe weather conditions like floods and even tornados. Yet throughout this period Lady Selborne was spared climatic trauma by being in the lee of the mountain, and even benefited from the extreme weather as the heavy rains helped the area to flourish, particularly by improving the soil. Mrs Kgari claims that “in Lady Selborne the environment was very good, rain came timeously – not like today where it is inconsistent and comes with wind”.⁹⁹

5. The State of the Environment in the 1960s

The survey of the soil texture and its uses indicate clearly that the environment was still very good and was well cared for. But the same survey depicts an unstable environmental context because of peoples’ interaction with the environment and the concomitant transformation of the landscape and its natural resources. The increase of the population by the 1940s was clearly written on the bush landscape by wood depletion and peoples’ use of animal dung for fuel, which McCann argues is normally a sign of some form of deforestation.¹⁰⁰ By the 1960s, as the population reached about 50 000, the environment was at the brink of destruction as overcrowding stretched its capacity to accommodate its populace and their agricultural needs, which Eberhard and Van Horen argue is common when population is high and hence soil fertility concomitantly low.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ South Africa Weather Bureau, *Caelum: A History of notable weather events in South Africa: 1500-1990*, (Pretoria: Weather Bureau, 1991), 21–71.

⁹⁹ Informant 2.

¹⁰⁰ McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land*, 91.

¹⁰¹ A. Eberhard and C. van Horen, *Poverty and Power*, (London and Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press and Pluto Press, 1995), 80.

Despite this, all the informants affirmed that the environment was clean as tenants maintained the surroundings of the homes they were renting. A common rule established by landlords stipulated that tenants had to share cleaning duties and this led to a healthy and clean environment in terms of litter. This led on former tenant, Mr Matlaila, to complain that “In Lady Selborne we lived like farm people. People worked hard to clean up the surroundings, polish floors and had to take turns”.¹⁰² In similar vein, Mrs Matlaila asserted that “they lived a harsh life because they had to clean up like slaves”.¹⁰³ Where there were no tenants, landlords and their children cleaned. The culture of an unpolluted environment was insisted on in the area, and this may have informed the Apartheid government’s decision to use Lady Selborne for white settlement. This is supported by McCann’s statement that “the political and military conflicts that settled the political boundaries of South Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century did more than lay the foundations for the apartheid state of 1948 because the struggles that it posed over borders were really struggles over nature (natural resources) and over visions of land”.¹⁰⁴ This suggests that environmental racism was a pre-condition for the criteria used in directing land dispossession in the 1960s. Lady Selborne, situated scenically next to white areas, was designated for urban renewal to accommodate its new white inhabitants. The Apartheid policy that removed the residents of Lady Selborne disregarded the attachment that its Sotho-Tswana residents had to their environment. The community’s forced exodus in the 1960s had a severe impact on its relationship with its new environment in Ga-Rankuwa, as is illustrated in chapter six.

¹⁰² Informant 12.

¹⁰³ Informant 13.

¹⁰⁴ McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land*, 152.

6. Identity, Land and the environment: Land Perceptions in Lady Selborne

The implementation of Group Areas Act in the 1960s was a traumatic turning point for the people of Lady Selborne. The physical destruction of homes, vegetation and businesses brought with it enormous social, economic and political hardship, and thus philosophical dismay and widespread insecurity. Many residents, despite the fact that they were tenants, felt a very strong sense of belonging and identity as *batho ba Selborne* (the people of Lady Selborne). People experienced a loss of communal heritage when they were forcibly removed to a resettlement area at Ga-Rankuwa as their close ties to the city centre of Pretoria were broken. This is illustrated in the words of Mr Matlaila, who stated that:

Where one lives and where one comes from gives a definition to a human being. For an example, since Lady Selborne was a beautiful area and today people ask me 'Where did you stay before removals?' And I tell them 'At Lady Selborne.' They show respect to me and this affirms my humanness (*enketsa motho*).¹⁰⁵

The majority former landlords interviewed indicated that Lady Selborne affirmed their humanity because they had freehold status to their properties and good relationships with each other and their environment. Hence they were angry when they were disconnected from their urban roots and resettled in an unfamiliar area which lacked basic facilities like reliable running water, medical care and transport routes.

A powerful emotional and psychological cost was related to the loss of sacred space and home and inheritance, which combined with the loss of the environment that used

¹⁰⁵ Informant 12.

to provide them with fertile soil to plant food. This is reflected in the personal memories of many informants who portray Lady Selborne as a “home and a familiar world where there was no poverty or hunger”.¹⁰⁶ Perceptions and memoirs depict a lost Golden Age free from poverty, in sharp contrast to the present realities of Ga-Rankuwa. Their romanticised images are contradicted by some tenants’ and landowners’ depiction of a harsh life of thuggish criminality and a bucket sewerage system that dehumanised them, and of a level of poverty that existed due to a scarcity of jobs and housing which caused families to live in one room while paying four or five rand rent per month.

There is no doubt that poverty, overcrowding, competition over scarce resources, crime and violence existed alongside neighbourliness and community solidarity. Most informants depict a positive side of Lady Selborne and very few expose the hardships that they had to endure. This makes sense, given that the destruction of Lady Selborne was a painful and difficult event in the lives and memories of its people, and indicates the extent to which they are trying to cope with past injustices and the hardships they endured through memory and that forced removals reconstructed peoples’ identities and perceptions of their old and new environments. This in turn affected the transformation of the Sotho-Tswana perceptions of land and their relationship with it in Ga-Rankuwa.

¹⁰⁶ Informant 5, 8 and 9.

7. Conclusions

Throughout the chapter, it has been shown how the community of Lady Selborne related to the environment and the attachment that developed from the relationship. Even though the physical infrastructure was inadequate, people saw Lady Selborne as a home. The attachment to the environment was under girded by traditional African religio-cultural concepts, like *botho*. The environment was a source of some of the food the residents' needed, most of it cultivated by women. The traditional healers harvested various plants for their remedies. There were also sites set aside for traditional rituals. The resourcefulness of the township as a home drew many blacks to the township from the 1930s and this influx unfortunately had negative ramifications to the environment as it transformed and resulted in some form of deforestation which configured the landscape of the township. Human settlement had to be increased and the bush curtailed. High population rate eventually led to the displacement of the residents in 1960 as the neighbouring white residents and the State complained that the township was becoming a health menace.¹⁰⁷ The fact that Lady Selborne was a health hazard might have been authentic but the real reason for the decision to displace the black residents was based on the renewals of the apartheid policy of reconfigurations and transformation of the South African settlement patterns whereby races ethnicities had to live in different areas. The state never cared about the ideologies of land that the black residents had but it was motivated to enforce environmental alienation of the community of Lady Selborne. This was also affirmed by the fact that the National Party from 1948 did not improve some facilities in the area like the sewerage system which made the area to be unbearable.

¹⁰⁷ See CA TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, (1949).

Prior to 1950 non- environmental infrastructure was lacking and that never influenced the community of Lady Selborne to lose their love for their township. The area had a lack of infrastructure like taps, sewerage system, hospitals and transport. But from 1940 the resources were improved except the sewerage system and they continued to use bucket system. In spite of the fact that some of the non environmental resources continually became poor, the residents felt at home in the township because the area provided them with the natural resources that gave them food, shelter and entertainment. The good quality of soil in the township afforded men and women to engage in subsistent farming and at the same time have freehold status to their properties. The land tenure practiced in the township was based on western standards of title deeds and individual ownership. But this made the Sotho-Tswana community to thrive more. They continued the social bond inherited from pre-colonial culture while living under industrialisation and capitalism.

There were hindrances that the residents experienced that interfered with their use of the biophysical world. Indicating that, some people in the township both gained power from and used the biophysical world as an instrument of power over others. Though the residents felt environmental injustice by the interference of the State in their daily lives and by being displaced from their township in 1960, memories of the former residents indicate that they revered Lady Selborne as the area that made them human and such memories are engraved in their minds and hearts.¹⁰⁸ Jacobs views that “the specific character of the environment influenced the process and the outcome of segregation”¹⁰⁹ is relevant in this case because Lady Selborne’s land was fertile and they had secure environment and that consequently led to severe environmental segregation instituted mainly by the State. The State became a buffer in the residents

¹⁰⁸ Informant 3, 5, 6, 7, 15 and 16.

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 172.

of Lady Selborne's relations with their environment by controlling bush where people could get wood and herbs, and instituting high rates on water. But continually the residents fought against such interferences.

Forced removals in the 1960s meant that the community's history in their place was ended as they had to leave the area and start another history with different neighbours in a different place. This meant the end of the 'love of the soil' that they enjoyed in Lady Selborne since 1905 as they had to undertake a pilgrimage to humanise themselves in a new area. This resulted in their realising that forced removals not only displaced them and cut them off from their friends and relatives, but also took away their developed infrastructure and natural heritage. Therefore it is suggested that land loss went beyond losing land as property but represented the loss of an economic and spiritual tool that contributed to their sustenance. In the process of land loss, some of the dispossessed lost their dignity and freedom of equality while others lost the will to live. This is echoed in Platzky's assertion that forced removals comprised "exclusion and dispossession which leaves those who have been moved, materially and psychologically, poorer than before".¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Laurine Platzky and Cheryl Walker, *The surplus people: Forced Removals in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), 4.

Chapter Six

A socio-environmental analysis of land alienation and resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa, c.1961 to 1977.

1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain the socio-environmental history of Ga-Rankuwa as a resettlement area from 1961, the year of resettlement, to 1977, the year that Ga-Rankuwa became part of Bophuthatswana, an independent Homeland. It will focus on the ramifications of forced removals on people in the context of their environment. Ga-Rankuwa has been examined by Carruthers and Baldwin, who do not discuss environmental issues and resettlement experiences.¹ The link between environmental history and forced removals has been researched by Khan and Jacobs, which offer us a comparative theoretical perspective.² Little research has been done into the effects of displacement on environmental perceptions among black Africans. There are few written primary sources pertaining to Ga-Rankuwa, except some archival documents describing infrastructure in the area. This chapter thus attempts to fill this historiographical lacuna by using oral history to relay the voices of the people of Ga-Rankuwa and to explore their personal resettlement experiences and relationship with the environment.

Interviews will be combined with primary documents and secondary readings to read the oral interviews against the grain, and to produce a balanced socio-environmental

¹ See Jane Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng", *Kleio* XXX11, (2000), Alan Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation: The study of 3million evictions in South Africa*, (London: Africa Publications Trust, 1974).

² Farieda Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response: An Historical and Socio-Political Evaluations with particular Reference to Blacks*, Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1990), Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

history of the area.³ This chapter attempts to analyse resettlement from the Sotho-Tswana of Ga-Rankuwa's perspective and to eschew Eurocentric analytical models because they may obscure indigenous beliefs. For example, the early missionaries in the late 19th century like Mackenzie lament that "the Tswana gardens and arable land were laid out in a manner which offends the eye of a European."⁴ 'European culture' saw beauty as vital in planning gardens but the Sotho-Tswana saw beauty as important but defined it from their own social setting.⁵ The stereotypical view driven by the perception of indigenous black Africans as the 'other', savage and uncivilised,⁶ led missionaries to reject Sotho-Tswanan culture and attempt to impose European systems of cultivation characterised by geometric symmetry.⁷ The drawback of analysing indigenous African themes from a Eurocentric perspective can also be detected in studies of forced removals. Such stereotypical analyses are embedded in the western milieu⁸ and the Nationalist government's ideals that fail to understand that many sub-Saharan black people revered their land, environment and ancestors.⁹

³ See Interviews, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 1- 16, Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) BAO T61/2/A228/1547/1, CA BAO 7818G60/2/1547/1 Memo: Factual Memorandum with regards to the relationship of Captain Motsepe of the Ba Mankanstam to Ga-Rankuwa (Feitlike Memorandum ten opsigte van verhouding van Kaptein Motsepe van die Mankanstam tot Ga-Rankuwa), CA BAO 5077G57/4/1547/1 Letter from H. Martens to S. Liebenberg, (27 March 1969), CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memo: Non Tswana's in Bantutowns Ga-Rankuwa, Mabopane and Temba (Nie Tswana's in Bantoe Dorpe Ga-Rankuwa, Mabopane en Temba), CA BAO 7900T59/1547/1/1 Letter from Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, (20 March 1962), CA BAO 7900T57/1547/1/1 Letter from S. S. Mohlomane (Administrator Pro-Tem The African Orthodox Church) to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, (23 June 1962), CA BAO 7900T61/6/1547/1 Letter from John C. Garner (Arch Bishop of Pretoria) to The Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development, (7th June 1962), CA BAO 7900N2/13/3 G.96 Letter from O. Papke (Missionary in charge) to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner and Development (16th July 1962), and (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, (Johannesburg: Van Rensburg, 1977).

⁴ Cited in John and Jean Comaroff, "Cultivation, Christianity and Colonialism: Towards a new African Genesis", ed, John De Gruchy, *The London missionary society in Southern Africa: Historical essays in celebration of the bicentenary of the LMS in South Africa 1799-1999*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 59.

⁵ Cited in Comaroffs, "Cultivation, Christianity and Colonialism", 59.

⁶ David Chidester, *Savage Systems*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 2.

⁷ Comaroffs, "Cultivation, Christianity and Colonialism", 59.

⁸ According to Thomas Kuhn cited in Donald Worster, "Theories of Environmental History". Ed. Robbins, W. G. *Environmental Review*, vol 11 number 4, (1987), 267, "nature according to the west is passive and manipulable" and this implies that to some scholars who adhere to such a theory to nature they tend not to understand the fact that the traditional African approach to nature is that of "oneness

Jacobs skilfully describes the forced removals of black Africans from Kuruman but in some instances fails to do so from their perspective. She claims that she “found little evidence of spiritual significance to the landscape in Kuruman”,¹⁰ but there is sufficient evidence that illustrates the landscape’s spiritual significance to them.¹¹ According to John Philip of the London Missionary Society, “the Batswana revered their ancestors and did not want any deviation from their culture and religion and saw any innovation as an insult to the memories of their ancestors”.¹² Changes occurred among the Batswana in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as after the mineral revolution, distinct classes emerged: the upper peasantry, the middle peasants and the poor. If anyone noted modernist ideals they “did not adopt them but adapted to them” and made it a point to not disown or contradict the culture and religion of the Batswana.¹³ The Batswana of Kuruman performed collective rites to maintain annual agricultural cycles, including rain-making rituals.¹⁴

This chapter focuses on the environmental history of Ga-Rankuwa from the Sotho-Tswana perspective, teasing out their cultural, religious and ethical beliefs. The emphasis is on the significance of land, because – as this chapter seeks to show – for them “no life is possible without land, everything is from land”.¹⁵ As will be demonstrated, forced removals from the fertile land of Lady Selborne to the infertile

with nature”. That is, such academics thus fall in to a trap of ignoring the significance of land as a religion, a haven for the ancestors and the living who, according to the Sotho-Tswana, are active actors with environmental issues.

⁹ Jacob S. Mohlamme, *Forced removals in the Peoples Memory*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1989), 15.

¹⁰ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 20.

¹¹ Chidester, *Savage Systems*, 183 – 192.

¹² Cited in Comaroffs, “Cultivation, Christianity and Colonization”, 60.

¹³ Comaroffs, “Cultivation, Christianity and Colonization”, 72-75.

¹⁴ Comaroffs, “Cultivation, Christianity and Colonization”, 59.

¹⁵ Informant in Richard Levin, I. Solomon and Daniel Weiner, “Forced removals and Land Claims”, eds, Richard Levin and Daniel Weiner, *No More Tears: Struggles for Land in Mpumalanga, South Africa*, (Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1997), 99.

soils of Ga-Rankuwa meant alienation from their environment. The name ‘Ga-Rankuwa’ itself testifies to the dissatisfaction of the residents as it means ‘we are not accepted’. Forced removals disregarded the Sotho-Tswana’s close attachment to their land, environment and ancestors and relocated them in an alien environment that was not conducive for food cultivation and lacked infrastructure. Hence most of those relocated in Ga-Rankuwa succumbed to environmental apathy and implemented environmental degradation.¹⁶ Much literature exists that maintains that black areas were degraded environmentally.¹⁷ Blame for such degradation varies: some people argue that it was due to black Africans themselves and refer to them as “destructive” to the environment,¹⁸ while others say that the space was just too small and degradation was inevitable,¹⁹ and others claim that it was a cultural development as blacks became passive or even destructive towards the environment as either passive resistance and defiance or hopelessness.²⁰ From the fieldwork undertaken for the purpose of this thesis, it appears that the last reason is arguably the strongest. This chapter discusses the process of resettlement and the area’s infrastructure and environment. This will then explain why the residents, especially former landlords of lady Selborne, changed their perception of themselves from a positive identity as *batho* (human) to a negative perception as *ga re batho* (not human) as discussed in

¹⁶ See Informant 2, 4, 5, 10, and 11. Land degradation and forced removals were also detected by Mohlamme, who did his research among the people of Ledig (the Bakubung) who were displaced from their area Molote in the 1960s. They resisted their resettlement area because they were frustrated by the fact that the State disregarded their traditional religious beliefs. Hence the author quoted one of his Informants who said, “We lost confidence in farming mainly because we did not want to come here”. From the respondent views the author concludes that “it seems that even after having lived here at Ledig for almost 20 years this respondent still rejects this place as his permanent home”. See Mohlamme, *Forced removals*, 13 and 15.

¹⁷ See Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, (1990), Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, Lloyd Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Curses of Environmental Bankruptcy*, (London: Earthscan Publications, 1985), James C. McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa 1800-1990*, (Oxford: Heinemann Portsmouth, 1999).

¹⁸ Pole Evans cited in Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns, “Environmental Change & Policy: Challenging Received Wisdom in Africa”, ed, Melissa Leach, and Robin Mearns, *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*, (United States: Heinemann, 1996), 36.

¹⁹ Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis*.

²⁰ See Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*.

Chapters 5 and 7. It will also explore the joy that many former tenants felt in private land-ownership that was unavailable to them in their former township. Former tenants rented rooms in landlords' yards and they were overcrowded with no privacy. They lived in the mercy of their tenants. But Ga-Rankuwa provided them freestanding homes. This chapter will focus first on the resettlement process before examining the landscape of Ga-Rankuwa. The focus will then shift to the area's infrastructure. Recreational activities and health services will be discussed and contrasted with those of Lady Selborne.²¹ Lastly, and most importantly, attention will be paid to the environmental history of the area with emphasis on people's changing relationship to the environment.

2. The Resettlement Process in Ga-Rankuwa from 1961

Ga-Rankuwa was established in late 1961 to accommodate people from Lady Selborne, Bantule, Newclare, Marabastad, Rama, Eastwood and other neighbouring farms. The area was named after the Bakgatla headman, Rankuwa Boikhutso. 'Rankuwa' means we are accepted. Then the word 'Ga' was inserted by the community to imply 'we are not accepted'. There were about 435 people in 1962 with 1948 sites cleared for settlement.²² The area was proclaimed a township by Proclamation 448 of 1965 and was initially established to accommodate people from all ethnic groups²³ who were displaced mainly from Lady Selborne.²⁴ The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development officially opened the township on the 12

²¹ See Chapter 4 and 5 for a discussion of Lady Selborne's infrastructure.

²² CA BAO 7818G60/2/1547/1 Memo: Factual Memorandum with regards to the relationship of Captain Motsepe.

²³ See CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memorandum drawn by the Tswana Vigilance Committee Representing Tswana Interest, Opinions and Aspirations, Presented to the Commissioner General, Tswana Territorial Authority for sympathetic consideration/Information (No date). The memo mentions that there were AmaZulu and amaTsonga in Ga-Rankuwa.

²⁴ CA BAO 7818G60/2/1547/1 Factual Memorandum with regards to the relationship of Captain Motsepe.

March 1966 and stated that Ga-Rankuwa was regarded as a Tswana settlement.²⁵ This affected the community that had lived as an inter-ethnic and mixed race group in their former township. The proposed division of ethnic groups and their further displacement led to more grief and dissatisfaction.

Some informants claim that they were informed of the date of removals and whence they had to relocate.²⁶ Ms Motshetshane and Mr Kgari state respectively:

The government handed out papers to the community; stipulating that we are to move to Ga-Rankuwa, Uitvalgrond. On the day of our removal the police came and relocated us to a house without a roof.²⁷

Prior to removals the government sent its representatives to inform both tenants and landlords about the impending move to Ga-Rankuwa. They said, “they are taking the land”. They complained that landlords did not want to move so they had to come and explain that to tenants. The people who were sent by the government wrote the names of tenants and told them that they were going to own their houses they should choose from areas like Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and Ga-Rankuwa. My parents chose Ga-Rankuwa and they were given a date to move.²⁸

This is also supported by the letter dated 12 June 1959 from The Secretary of Bantu Affairs and Administration to the Town Clerk of Pretoria, which states that the government must take steps in informing people by asking them to fill in the form to facilitate their removals from Lady Selborne.²⁹ The letter explains that these forms had to be completed by residents to place them in their respective areas.³⁰ The questionnaire presents a problem in that the original was in Afrikaans, which would have presented an obstacle to illiterate residents or to those ignorant of Afrikaans.

²⁵ CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memorandum drawn by the Tswana Vigilance Committee.

²⁶ Informant 1, 2, 3 and 4

²⁷ Informant 3.

²⁸ Informant 4.

²⁹ CA NTS 928/313. Letter from the Secretary of Bantu Affairs and Administration to the Town Clerk (Sekretaris van Bantoe Administrasie en Ontwikkeling, na Die Stadsklerk, (12 June 1959). According to Informant 3 the government handed out letters to people telling them that they should move.

³⁰ CA NTS 928/313.

Fieldwork analysis suggests that the State used different strategies to encourage people to move. The State enticed tenants to move by promising them freestanding houses for renting with the possibility of buying if they had money which was unavailable for some in Lady Selborne since they only rented rooms in landlords' yards with lack of privacy for families.³¹ Former landlords faced direct and indirect intimidation.³² Some informants, like Mrs Manamela, claimed the threat of force was used to quell resistance.³³ Both secondary analysis offered by Carruthers and primary data offered by informants describe that the government sent trucks to move them.³⁴ Some informants claim that many people lost their belongings in the move.³⁵

The difficult process of resettlement affected different people differently, and the theoretical model offered by Cernea is relevant.³⁶ Cernea maintains that displacement leads to poverty underpinned by eight processes: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation and loss of economic power, increased mobility and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disintegration.³⁷ Many people in Ga-Rankuwa underwent these processes but experienced them differently. For example, those residents who were landlords in Lady Selborne, especially those who were working class, had no money to purchase properties in Ga-Rankuwa.³⁸ They felt marginalised because they were reduced to the 'class of tenants' and were equal to their former tenants, resulting in perceived humiliation.³⁹ Many former tenants found resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa beneficial since it provided them with secure accommodation,⁴⁰ but they also felt marginalised when they experienced poverty. Most families were unemployed and unable to use

³¹ Informant 2, 12, 13.

³² Informant 7 and 15.

³³ Informant 15

³⁴ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa, 10 and Informant 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15 and 16.

³⁵ Informant 11 and 15.

³⁶ Cited in De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei Region of South Africa*, Rhodes University Institute of Social and Economic Research: Working papers no 67, (1996), 63.

³⁷ De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei Region*, 63.

³⁸ Jane Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 10.

³⁹ The term marginalization is defined by Simkins as a "process of reducing a groups' life chances to a level significantly below those in another comparable group" in C. E. W. Simkins, "The Economic Implications of African Resettlement", ed. D. Thomas, *Resettlement: Papers given at the 51st annual council meeting 24-26 June 1981*, (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1981), 38.

⁴⁰ Informant 2, 11, 12 and 13.

their land for cultivation.⁴¹ Wealthy professionals like Dr Nkomo were able to purchase houses and tried to make a life for themselves in the relocation area.⁴² All classes felt marginalised because of their displacement from Lady Selborne, a fertile and habitable area with developed infrastructure. Dankelman and Davidson argue that:

Land, particularly healthy soil, is the foundation on which life depends. If the land is healthy, then agriculture and pasturage will yield food in plenty. If it is not, the ecosystem will show signs of strain and food production will become more difficult.⁴³

Some of those relocated tried to improve the soil by purchasing manures and topsoil, but those without wealth could not do so.⁴⁴ This illustrates that food insecurity, homelessness and unemployment was a major problem since many residents became working-class tenants as they could not buy houses. Only Mrs Sekhu and Mr Andrew's father among the informants could buy houses, which illustrates the poverty that existed in the area.⁴⁵ Such poverty caused many to feel less human and they blamed forced removals,⁴⁶ while others (mainly former tenants) felt their humanness affirmed by having their own homes in Ga-Rankuwa.⁴⁷

The idealised theory of resettlement is provided by Scudder and Colson, which contrasts with the Cernea model and the informants' experiences.⁴⁸ Their model of relocation focuses on successful resettlement, which has four stages whereby the resettled people re-achieve economic viability, social readjustment and administrative

⁴¹ Informant 2 and 11.

⁴² Informant 3.

⁴³ Irene Dankelman and Joan Davidson, *Women and environment in the third world: Alliance for the future*, (London: Earthscan, 1988), 7.

⁴⁴ Informant 1, 2, 4 and 11.

⁴⁵ Informant 7 and 10.

⁴⁶ Informant 5 and 15.

⁴⁷ Informant 2, 11, 12 and 13.

⁴⁸ Cited in De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei*, 63 – 64.

autonomy.⁴⁹ The first stage is that of planning and recruitment whereby people are informed of their removals. The second stage involves the transition whereby people try to acclimatise to their situation. During this period “people tend to cling to the familiar in terms of subsistence production, and kinship relationships and leadership both at households and community is compromised”.⁵⁰ The third stage is about economic and social community development. People during this stage have re-established themselves and are able to be innovative. The last stage involves handing over and incorporation: people are given responsibility of managing their affairs and household production activities are handed over to the next generation. This stage implies that the resettled have accepted their removal and are organised in a viable community. This model addresses the impact of resettlement in that kinship relationships and leadership both at households and community level is compromised. Community leaders were virtually non-existent in Ga-Rankuwa in the early 1960s due to the fracturing of social cohesion. But, as demonstrated by the memorandum drawn by the Tswana Vigilance Committee, some community leaders emerged in the 1970s.⁵¹ This model focuses on aspects of success in the resettled community⁵² and ignores most of the failures of resettlement. But this model, though not neatly applicable to Ga-Rankuwa, raises the difficulty of social adjustment to the new area.

⁴⁹ Cited in De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei*, 63 – 64.

⁵⁰ De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei*, 63.

⁵¹ CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memorandum drawn by the Tswana Vigilance Committee.

⁵² The drawback of Scudder and Colson’s model is that their theory of resettlement does not cater much for unsuccessful resettlement and in most people in Ga-Rankuwa did not attain economic development, but managed to achieve community formation because they forged new relationships with other residents drawn from their resettlement experiences and participated in voluntary associations like burial societies, savings clubs, church clubs and some in the political organizations. These were working structures that assisted the community in times of crisis. The stages and ramifications that Cernea and Scudder and Colson mention were relevant in Ga-Rankuwa but the stages were in some instances developing more or less at the same level or sometimes independently.

The fact that the resettled community was scattered all over Pretoria in places like Ga-Rankuwa, Attrigdeville, Mabopane, Eersterus and Laudium made leadership scarce. Unfamiliarity and fractured families affected civic and family leadership. The Sotho-Tswana normally use older male family-heads for rituals and such people tend to perform clerical roles in conducting sacrificial rituals - and relocation meant disturbance of this homestead organisation.⁵³ Community leadership was similarly compromised. Though forced removals ruptured community coherence, the residents managed to re-establish some degree of unity.⁵⁴ Mrs Tshweni says:

Forced removals affected us a lot because in Lady Selborne we knew each other. If one had no children we helped each other and in Ga-Rankuwa we did not know each other very well and as a result children disrespect us and it was not easy to send them anywhere. Even though I knew some of the people from Lady Selborne those I did not know it took time for us to get used to them. But we are close neighbours, now we even have gates that gets through to each other's yards. As a community we developed burial societies and we also assist each other when there are celebrations like weddings.⁵⁵

Economic development was limited in 1961, but some managed to rise above poverty and opened shops – though most were not from Lady Selborne. They settled in the area because they saw economic opportunities.⁵⁶ There was a shop in Zone 1 on Motsatsi Street called Ko-Cecilia. The owner, Mrs Cecilia, was not from Lady Selborne but opened the shop because Pretoria was far from Ga-Rankuwa and residents would buy groceries from her shop.⁵⁷ Some other professional residents, like

⁵³ W D. Hammond-Tooke, "Kinship Authority and political authority in pre-colonial South Africa", Workshop on pre-colonial History, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, (14 – 15 July 1986), 11. The article deals with the Zulu kinship but it is also applicable among the Sotho-Tswana. They call the head of the family "*tlhogo*" similarly the amaZulu refer to him as *intloko* and the roles are similar in terms of conduction rituals in the homestead.

⁵⁴ See CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547 Memorandum drawn by the Tswana Vigilance Committee.

⁵⁵ Informant 5.

⁵⁶ Informant 3.

⁵⁷ Informant 3.

Doctor D. C. Marevathe, were not from Lady Selborne but became crucial to an area that had no hospital or clinic⁵⁸ by providing otherwise-unavailable services.⁵⁹

The last stage, that of “handing over and incorporation”, was difficult because Bophuthatswana became a self-governing Homeland in 1972, with complete independence being granted in 1977. This caused problems for the residence of Ga-Rankuwa because the consolidation process of the Homeland involved ethnic segregation and meant the removal of non-Tswanas from the area.⁶⁰ The embryonic kinship relationships and neighbourliness were thus severed once more. The handover was not satisfactory as it failed to alleviate poverty.

Some of the ideas posed by these resettlement models are relevant because resettlement brought changes in the spatial, environmental, economic and social aspects of the community which impacted on the eight processes of impoverishment mentioned by Cernea. The eight stages impact on the process whereby the four resettlement stages identified by Scudder and Colson unfolded. De Wet argues that “the particular stage at which a resettlement is will also affect the types of impoverishment which are applicable”.⁶¹ Environmental aspects of resettlement must be inserted to refine the two models. Because most people in Ga-Rankuwa were given small plots (about 600 square metres as compared to roughly 900 square metres⁶² in

⁵⁸ CA BAO 7449P122/1547/2. Letter from Mr Potgieter (The Secretary of Bantu Administration) to The Director of the Hospital services, (13 May 1968). It shows that by 1968 there was no hospital or clinic and that the government was planning to install them.

⁵⁹ Informant 4.

⁶⁰ CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memo: Minutes of Discussions on nonTswana people on Tswana land, (Notule Saamsprekings oor Nie-Tswana in Tswanaland), (10 March 1971).

⁶¹ De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei*, 64.

⁶² Informant 3.

Lady Selborne) and the soil was infertile⁶³, cultivation was inhibited. Some, like Mr E. Poo, were lucky enough to occupy about 910 square metres of land.⁶⁴

To illustrate that the resettlement process was a failure, the minutes of the meeting held on the 10 March 1971 between government representatives, Homeland Administrators and Homeland leaders reveal widespread complaints about displacement.⁶⁵ The minutes indicate that, even after nine years in Ga-Rankuwa, there were people who were still angry about their removal and wanted to return to their former homes. The anger that people felt affected their behaviour, social attitudes and their perceptions of their environment, as can be seen from the degradation of Ga-Rankuwa by 1977.⁶⁶

3. Landscaping in Ga-Rankuwa from 1961 to 1977

In 1961, Ga-Rankuwa consisted of a settlement in a bush landscape. In Setswana 'bush' is called '*sekgwa*' literary meaning to "spit out or vomit". The spitting out refers to the distinction between human settlement and the non-human settlement, referring to the bush as an area that has been "vomited out" of the human settlement to be a "non-human area". An informant, Mr Andrew, described the area as veld.⁶⁷ Another informant describes how the houses were hidden in the veld and mentions that the plots were not fenced.⁶⁸ She says that "the place was full of trees and it was difficult to know one's house, we used to put drums and paint them in order to mark our homes".⁶⁹ As the area was being developed and its population growing,

⁶³ Informant 1-16.

⁶⁴ CA BAO 12257T61/G139/1547/1 Department of Bantu Administration and Development, Deed of Grant Puni E. Poo, (9 June 1977).

⁶⁵ CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Minutes of Mutual Discussions on Non-Tswana people on Tswanaland.

⁶⁶ See Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*.

⁶⁷ See Informant 10 and source CA BAO 7818G60/2/1547/1 Memo: Factual Memorandum with regards to the relationship of Captain Motsepe.

⁶⁸ Informant 5.

⁶⁹ Informant 15.

deforestation occurred. By 1970 the population amounted to 45 631,⁷⁰ while by 1975 it had increased to 73 926 and to 83 922 by 1976. Overcrowding resulted in the further reduction of the bush.⁷¹ The surging population⁷² created a need for housing.⁷³

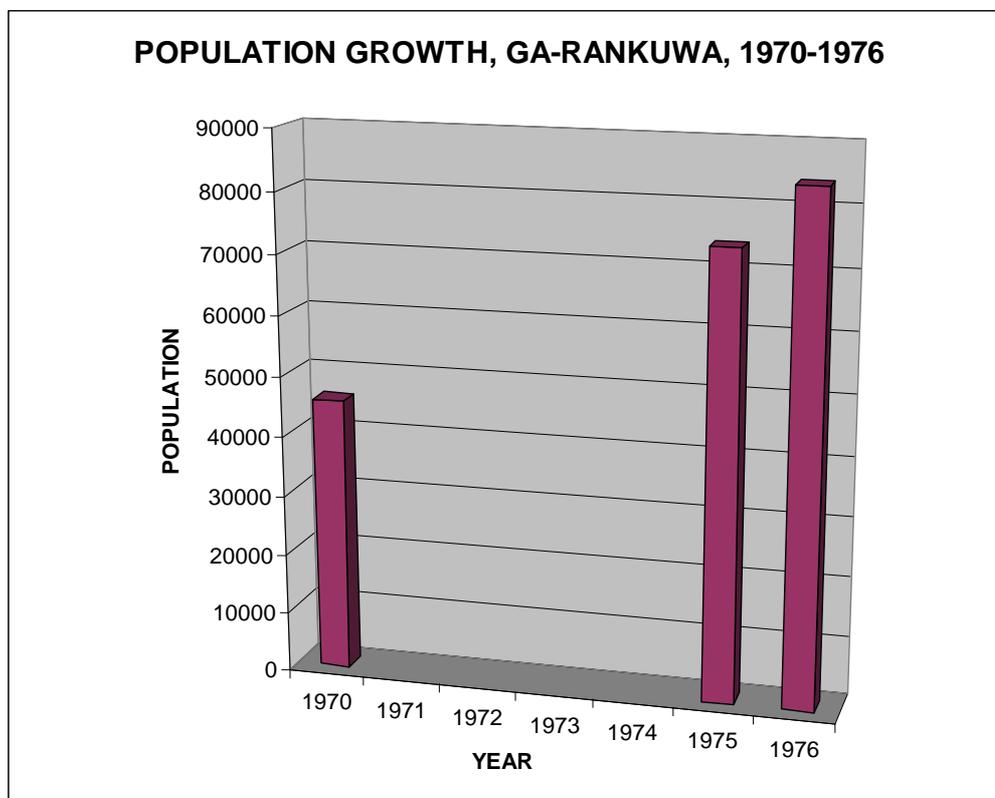


Figure 1. Population Growth in Ga-Rankuwa, 1970 – 1976.⁷⁴

Obstacles to accurate recording of population, like migrancy, mean that the population of Ga-Rankuwa was probably larger than that shown in Figure 1. Either way, such population density damaged the landscape. According to BENBO (The Economic Development re Bantu Development), new job seekers increased the population in Bophuthatswana, as did a declining mortality rate and a climbing birth

⁷⁰ Republic of South Africa Department of Statistics, *Population Census 1970*. (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1976), 50.

⁷¹ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 133.

⁷² The Population Growth is illustrated in figure 1.

⁷³ CA BAO T60/8/1547/1 Letter from P. J. Redelingshuys City Director (Dorpbestuuder) to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (Bantusakekommissaris, (25 May 1970).

⁷⁴ See Republic of South Africa Department of Statistics, *Population Census 1970*, 50 and (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 133.

rate.⁷⁵ The declining mortality rate implies that living standards were improving, and that State-provided health services like clinics and a hospital introduced in the 1970s were having some effect.⁷⁶ Employment companies aided in uplifting people's living standards by providing jobs, albeit low-paying ones. The employment companies were mainly based in Rosslyn, which had 56 factory plants. They offered about 12000 jobs to the community of Ga-Rankuwa and its surrounding areas since 1960. These plants offered manufacturing jobs.⁷⁷ A company located in Rosslyn, for example, was Giflo Engineering, which specialised in the manufacture of tubular-type components for the automotive industry and employed 149 people.⁷⁸ Brits was another employment area for over 2700 black workers, many from Ga-Rankuwa.

The area's population increased rapidly in 1976 and this led to changes in the landscape and the distinction between the settlement and the bush. The bush was thinned by the need for fuel against a backdrop of poverty and the concomitant absence of electricity. There were mixed woodlands: thorny on clay and sandy soil, and tall granite-based grasslands.⁷⁹ The bushes were also sources of traditional herbs for *dingaka* (traditional healers). By 1976 the settlement had many houses and few people planted trees.⁸⁰ Most plots were small while some were bigger and could support cultivation. Many residents erected shacks in their yards for accommodation of large families and had too little land for cultivation. The settlement was by now

⁷⁵ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 134.

⁷⁶ See Document CA BAO 2/1977T60/15/1547/1, (1977) has information about facilities in Ga-Rankuwa in 1976.

⁷⁷ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 26.

⁷⁸ D. Poggiolini, "Gauteng Car-Part maker secures export orders", (2001). (Available at <http://www.argent.co.za/Giflo-News/giflo-web.htm>).

⁷⁹ Pretoria Metro, "State of environment Report Pretoria, (2001). (Available at org/reports/Pretoria/issues/qual-env/state/htm-14k).

⁸⁰ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 203.

mostly fenced and accommodated many domestic animals.⁸¹ Some people kept livestock like goats and sheep, though the state restricted such possession of animals. Mrs Maphalare's parents, for example, had to relocate to rural areas after their displacement from Lady Selborne as they owned goats and horses.⁸² Over-crowding had by 1976 left definite traces of damage on the landscape, including soil erosion and waste-pollution.⁸³ The State of Environmental Report Overview of the North West Province argues that "the larger the settlement the greater the variety of pressures that are associated with it. Human settlement impact on boundaries far beyond settlement" – and this was the case in Ga-Rankuwa.⁸⁴

The bush and settlement showed significant evidence of human abuse by 1977. The bush was depleted⁸⁵ and monkeys were slaughtered as pests.⁸⁶ Negative human impact on biodiversity was evident in both settlement and bush landscapes. Few residents planted grass, food and trees - and this resulted in soil erosion and decreased soil fertility. The weather of the area also degraded soil fertility as rainfall was erratic and scarce.⁸⁷ The landscape was degraded by 1977 due to human abuse and environmental apathy caused by forced removals. Climate and overpopulation contributed to this landscape degradation, as did the lack of infrastructure. Despite environmental degradation, the settlement retained spiritual significance for the residents of the area.⁸⁸ People still used the land as a sacred place. They would allocate a portion of the area in the home, whether under a tree or the corner of the

⁸¹ Informant 9 and 15.

⁸² Informant 9.

⁸³ Informant 3.

⁸⁴ State of Environment Report Overview North West Province, South Africa, (2002). (Available at www.environment.gov.za/soer/reports/northwest/10%20pressure). The impact of human settlement on the environment is illustrated in the Interviews, Informant 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 15.

⁸⁵ Informant 3.

⁸⁶ Informant 15.

⁸⁷ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 108.

⁸⁸ Informant 2, 3 and 5.

house, to perform rituals to the ancestors.⁸⁹ This made the home sacrosanct, and immoral acts performed therein would prompt the Sotho-Tswana to say *ontsha ntlo seriti* (impacting negatively on the dignity of the house). The spiritual significance of the home gives it dignity as people attempt to communicate with their ancestors there.

4. Infrastructure in Ga-Rankuwa from 1961 to 1977

The infrastructure in Ga-Rankuwa was slightly improved by 1977. There was only one Zone in 1961 and more than 7 by 1977.⁹⁰ The area was lacking in basic facilities like clinics, a reliable water supply⁹¹, transport⁹² and hospitals.⁹³ Incomplete and inadequate housing contributed to this situation.⁹⁴ The sewerage system, at least, was better in Ga-Rankuwa than in Lady Selborne, though they used running water instead of a flush system. This development is described in the letter from Mr J. A Botha, the provincial auditor, to the Chief Bantu Commissioner dated 18 June 1968, which stipulates clearly that the area was to receive a sewerage system, water, tarred roads and drains to avoid storm damage.⁹⁵ The only facilities that were speedily provided were schools, and they were insufficient to meet the demand for education.⁹⁶ An

⁸⁹ Informant 2.

⁹⁰ Informant 15.

⁹¹ CA BAO 5077G57/4/1547/1 Letter from Martens and CA BAO 5168G58/41547/1, (1971) Ga-Rankuwa Complex: Water provision (Ga-Rankuwa Kompleks: Water Voorsiening).

⁹² According to source CA TPD O 1039/196 Supreme court of South Africa (Transvaal Provision, Lessan Engineering (Proprietary) Limited versus Ga-Rankuwa Bus service, (1969) states that there was a bus company in 1969 called Ga-Rankuwa Bus Service

⁹³ Informant 3, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 16.

⁹⁴ Informant 3 and 5.

⁹⁵ CA BAO O A6/1547/3/22 and CA BAO 8637A6/1547/3 (1968) Has information about projects for the installation of water supply, sewerage system, tarred roads and drains in Ga-Rankuwa.

⁹⁶ Informant 3 and CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memo: Non Tswana's in Bantu towns has information that gives evidence that there were schools in the 1960s to an extent that different ethnic groups had to be allocated their specific schools for their language. See also CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 The Memorandum Drawn up by the Tswana Vigilance Committee states that different ethnic groups had their own schools in Ga-Rankuwa, like the north Sotho, Tswana, Zulu and Tsonga.

informant claimed that there were a few shops, but that they sold expired food and constituted a health hazard.⁹⁷

Transport was also a problem in the resettlement area and informants claim that they had one train to use to get to work to Pretoria in the 1960s.⁹⁸ There were also no platforms and informants complain that it was dangerous to jump onto the train. Local residents called their rail transport *masula* (bad taste) because it was unpleasant to use it. Harvey Campion states that by 1974 there were three mainrails, which indicates the State's attempts to improve rail transport in the area.⁹⁹ The buses were unreliable and suffered from mechanical problems and the absence of lights. The streets were not electrified and people had to carry candles to see, a situation made worse by the widespread lack of tarred roads.¹⁰⁰

The State, in a letter dated 23 April 1963 from Mr Breytenbach (a Town Clerk) to the Chief Bantu Commissioner, indicated that planned to establish a road connecting Ga-Rankuwa to Pretoria.¹⁰¹ This indicates that the State realised the need to improve the area's roads.¹⁰² Ga-Rankuwa was linked to the larger urban centres by tarred roads by 1974.¹⁰³ But the roads within Ga-Rankuwa did not improve and were eaten away by

⁹⁷ Informant 5 states that other services like garbage collection and maintenance of roads was bad, and some roads were not tarred. The situation of roads was bad to an extent that an informant, Mrs Tshweni, explained the way she was injured by falling into a hole while she was on her way to visit a friend in the same area.

⁹⁸ Informant, 3, 5 and 15.

⁹⁹ Harvey Campion, *Bophuthatswana-Where the Tswanas Meet*, (Sandton: Valiant, 1977).

¹⁰⁰ Informant 5.

¹⁰¹ CA BAO A6/1548/3/2 letter from W H J. Breytenbach to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (Die Hoof bantoesakekommissaries), (23 April 1963).

¹⁰² CA BAO A6/1548/3/2 Letter from Breytenbach.

¹⁰³ Campion, *Bophuthatswana*, 21.

soil erosion.¹⁰⁴ The State did little to improve such roads.¹⁰⁵ No effective refuse removal system was established and this presented a health hazard.

Health services were also lacking in 1961. From 1961 to early 1973 Ga-Rankuwa operated without a clinic or hospital¹⁰⁶ and local residents went to H.F. Verwoerd hospital in Pretoria.¹⁰⁷ This posed a major problem to the community because it was expensive to travel to town. Ga-Rankuwa hospital took four years to build and opened on the 9 April 1973.¹⁰⁸ It had modern facilities and equipment for diagnostic and treatment purposes. It also provided clinical facilities for all stages of medical care.¹⁰⁹ The hospital also provided local job opportunities. It became a source of pride in the area as Medunsa (Medical University of South Africa) was established there in 1976 and became one of the Republic's best medical schools.¹¹⁰ Archival evidence suggest that the situation in Ga-Rankuwa improved by 1976 and that the area's infrastructure was developed, though there were still missing facilities like a library, social welfare offices, a police station, an old age home, parks, sports and grounds.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ Informant 5, 10 and 15.

¹⁰⁵ I observed that some roads are still not tarred when I was doing fieldwork in 2004.

¹⁰⁶ See CA BAO 7449P122/1547/2, Memo: Bantoehospital vir Ga-Rankuwa en Atteridgeville (Bantu hospitals for Ga-Rankuwa and Atteridgeville), (6 August 1968), CA BAO 7449P122/1547/2 Letter from Potgieter to the Director of Hospital services (Direkteur van Hospitaldiense), (13 May 1968), CA BAO 7449P122/1547/2 Addendum to Building contract No R.T.587P, (11 August 1969) and CA BAO 7449P122/1547/2 Letter from I. Van Onselen to the Secretary of Health, (25 July 1973).

¹⁰⁷ Informant 3.

¹⁰⁸ Medunsa, "Ga-Rankuwa Academic health complex", (Available: atnsph.medunsa.ac.za/nsph_about_medunsa/htm_15k).

¹⁰⁹ Medunsa, "Ga-Rankuwa Academic health complex".

¹¹⁰ "Dr. George Mukhari hospital", available at, <http://www.dgmh.co.za/Index.htm>.

¹¹¹ See CA BAO 2/1977T60/15/1547/1. It states that in Ga-Rankuwa in 1976 there were facilities like: 3 crèches, 1 community hall, 1 hospital, 1 maintenance depot, 1 institution for the blind, 4 clinics, 4 surgeries, 1 place of safety and security, 1 post office and a magistrate court which was under construction at the time.

5. Recreation in Ga-Rankuwa 1961 to 1977

There was a lack of recreational facilities between 1961 and 1969 while the new community was trying to settle itself. The area had no parks or developed playgrounds, but sports like football continued to be as important as it had been in Lady Selborne.¹¹² In the 1970s the community became creative and established recreational associations. Churches and political organisations played an important role. The area housed a Methodist church¹¹³, an African Orthodox church¹¹⁴, a Lutheran Berlin Mission church¹¹⁵, a Roman Catholic church¹¹⁶, a Dutch Reformed church and others. Such churches provided recreational activities. Social clubs were established to assist people with savings, funerals, weddings and other celebrations.¹¹⁷ Unemployment and a lack of recreational facilities prompted many people to frequent taverns and drunkenness represented a major social problem.

Lack of facilities and rampant poverty in Ga-Rankuwa shows that the government did not take the resettlement process of the people and the development of the Homeland areas seriously.¹¹⁸ Cernea states that “urban poverty is likely to increase when displacement occurs unless such dispossession is guided by correct policies for population resettlement”.¹¹⁹ Since the resettlement policy in Ga-Rankuwa was disorganised and implemented haphazardly, poverty thus had to prevail according to Cernea’s model. The independence of Bophuthatswana, instead of alleviating poverty,

¹¹² Informant 10.

¹¹³ CA BAO 7900T59/1547/1/1 Letter from Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development to the Bantu Commissioner, (20 March 1962).

¹¹⁴ CA BAO 7900T57/1547/1/1 Letter from Mohlomane

¹¹⁵ CA BAO 7900N2/13/3 G.96 Letter from Papke.

¹¹⁶ CA BAO 7900T61/6/1547/1 Letter from Garner.

¹¹⁷ Informant 11.

¹¹⁸ PPT Pilots Project in South Africa, “Poverty in the North West Province” (2004), Available at www.pptpilot.org.za/poverty_North West Province, 5.

¹¹⁹ Michael M. Cernea, *The Urban Environment and population Relocation*, (Washington: The World Bank, 1993), iii.

made the situation worse by implementing the consolidation process and under-developing to the area. Despite the Nationalist government's attempts to make the Homeland policy and forced removals politically acceptable, Ga-Rankuwa became a tragic and costly failure that wasted humans.¹²⁰

6. Community and Family relationships

Many community and family relationships formed in Lady Selborne had to be rekindled in Ga-Rankuwa. Most former residents were scattered all over Pretoria and had to restart relationships. New friendships constituted some degree of continuity between their old and new lives as kinship relationships were important to them.¹²¹ Families, like that of Mrs Kgari, would sometimes only see their relatives and former neighbours at funerals, weddings or other celebrations.¹²² Distance presented a social obstacle and while some managed to maintain their old inter-personal relations, albeit changed by their new context,¹²³ most felt alienated and alone.¹²⁴

The situation was made worse by the 1972 Homeland Consolidation process and the removal of non-Tswana's.¹²⁵ Ga-Rankuwa was full of mainly non-Tswanan informal settlers by 1974, attracted to the area because of its proximity to employment areas like Pretoria, Rustenburg, Johannesburg, Vereeniging and Potchestroom. It was decided in a meeting held on the 10 of March 1971 between government representatives, Homeland Administrators and Homeland leaders that such informal

¹²⁰ Essy M. Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987), Laurine Platzky and Cheryl Walker, *The surplus people: forced removals in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985).

¹²¹ Informant 3, 5, 6 and 7 states clearly that informants' concerns about forced removals from Lady Selborne were mainly about losing their land, but they were also in pain from losing their families who were scattered all over Pretoria. See also Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa".

¹²² Informant 2.

¹²³ Informant 2 and 5.

¹²⁴ Informant 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

¹²⁵ Cited in CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Minutes of the Mutual discussions on non-Tswana people.

settlers who were non-Tswana were to be repatriated to their respective Homelands, or if employed in Pretoria had to accept local citizenship and be accommodated in Mabopane.¹²⁶ About 30 000 non-Tswana's who had lived in Winterveld near Ga-Rankuwa, mainly Ndebele, were displaced to Kwa-Ndebele and those who resisted such displacement were denied pensions. Lucas Mangope the president of Bophuthatswana, vowed to take their land, which occurred in Ga-Rankuwa.¹²⁷ Many people tried to avoid the trauma of another displacement by faking their ethnicity and declaring themselves Tswana's.¹²⁸ Many Tswana's supported consolidation and wanted non-Tswana removed or assimilated. This xenophobia stemmed from the fact that the Batswana felt that other ethnic groups had their homelands and by living in Ga-Rankuwa they were going to take their jobs and their children overcrowd the Batswana schools.¹²⁹ Some formed the Tswana Vigilance Committee that dealt with the social problems faced by the Batswana and they had a representation from the Batswana Chiefs in the surrounding areas.¹³⁰

The community and family cohesion of Lady Selborne was destroyed by forced removals. People had to establish new systems of communal co-operation in Ga-Rankuwa. Mare argues that "relocation leads to disorganisation and fragmentation of the oppressed people and their organisations or potential organised strength".¹³¹

Community disintegration was traumatic as a community helps an individual to be

¹²⁶ CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Minutes of Mutual Discussions on Non-Tswana people.

¹²⁷ De Clercq, "Transforming Mangope's Bophuthatswana: Towards Democracy in the North West Province. *Daily Mail and Guardian*", (4/July and 13/August 1990). Available at www.chico.mweb.co.za/mg/projects/bop/ch_one.html-91k.

¹²⁸ CA BAO 12261T61/2/A228/1547/1 Department of Bantu Administration and Development, Deed of Grant, (3 December 1970) has information about Mr S. G. Mgomezulu, a Zulu man who said he was Tswana for the purpose of acquiring a permanent residential permit in Ga-Rankuwa.

¹²⁹ See source CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Non-Tswana in Bantu towns and CA BAO7818T60/2/1547/1 Memorandum drawn by the Tswana Vigilance Committee.

¹³⁰ CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547/1 Memorandum drawn up by the Tswana Vigilance Committee.

¹³¹ Gerhard Maré, *African Population Relocation in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of race Relations, 1980), 4.

able to identify him or herself as a complete human being, and the successes of a person depends on the community.¹³² This fragmentation impacted negatively on the environment of the relocation area. Since identity for the Sotho-Tswana is constructed through communion with other people resettlement resulted in the negative impact of people because people who knew each other from Lady Selborne were resettled far apart from each other. People could not easily assist each other economically, socially and emotionally.¹³³ This led to frustration and difficulty to adapt in the relocation area and that contributed a lot to environmental apathy.

7. Ga-Rankuwa's Environment and changing perceptions thereof

In looking at the environmental history of Ga-Rankuwa, it is vital to consider Jacobs' theory about the importance of people's relationship with their environment in terms of food production and land-use.¹³⁴ Due to land alienation through the process of forced removals, the new residents of Ga-Rankuwa experienced problems in their relationship with their environment. This is highlighted by Khan, who states that:

The question of land is a crucial factor and its bitter, divisive legacy has to be considered when examining South Africa's environmental history, particularly since it is within the context of the land that most blacks take stance on environmental issues.¹³⁵

Thus, in order to understand the history of human and environmental relations in Ga-Rankuwa between 1961 and 1977, it is vital to understand that land and the environment were crucial to residents of Lady Selborne, as is illustrated in chapters four and five. Many people (landlords) in Lady Selborne felt fulfilled as they owned

¹³² Informant 1-16.

¹³³ See Informant 5 and 11.

¹³⁴ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*.

¹³⁵ Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, 15.

their property and were able to engage in cultivation. Land was given sacred status as it fed people and was where ancestors were believed to reside. It had to be revered and looked after, as it was considered ‘an inheritance’.¹³⁶ Landlords in Lady Selborne behaved like masters and enjoyed all rights linked to private property: rights of use, of reaping fruits and transformation. Some rights were extended to tenants like Mrs Kgari.¹³⁷ These rights brought environmental responsibilities and tenants had to clean the yards regularly.¹³⁸ They averted soil erosion by cultivating food and planting trees in their yards. They used their bush for fuel, herbs and grazing. Low population prevented much environmental degradation until the early 1940s, where-after damage accrued quickly as described in chapter five. The community’s relationship with the environment and the land was mostly positive of private ownership, and tenants shared these sentiments because they had chosen to lease in the area and were not displaced to Lady Selborne.

Many of the displaced people¹³⁹ arrived in Ga-Rankuwa with anger and frustration replacing their lost possessions. Forced removals led to their being alienated from their sacred places and ancestral graves. Many informants changed their attitude towards the environment and thus their positive self-concept.¹⁴⁰ This is explained by an informant, Mr Andrew, who states that “forced removals and environmental degradation are related”. In addition, he says, “losing land indeed makes people to feel less human, hence they do not care about the environment”.¹⁴¹ The resettled were absorbed by western modernisation, were reduced to dependency and eventually lost

¹³⁶ Informant 3.

¹³⁷ Informant 2.

¹³⁸ Informant 2, 12, 13 and 14.

¹³⁹ This refers mainly to those who were landlords in Lady Selborne.

¹⁴⁰ According to the Interviews conducted in Ga-Rankuwa in 2004 for this research, the informants referred to themselves as less human. (Available in Appendix 1).

¹⁴¹ Informant 10.

almost all sense of self-determination. This state of feeling less human is called *sefifi*, which is “the state of non-being like zombies”.¹⁴² The Sotho-Tswana became ‘zombies’ as they were passive in the political running of their country and felt polluted by being detached from their environment through land dispossession. Thus, as ‘zombies’, they distanced themselves from environmental issues. This illustrates the importance of land ownership to the Sotho-Tswana. Land alienation forced people to seek survival strategies beyond cultivation – a source of further alienation. Poverty complicated involvement in environmental issues as most family’s income allowed them to buy food but not the means to improve their soil or environment. For example, the wage scale of an average black African in Ga-Rankuwa was 5 pounds per week, while those workers employed in the Republic of South Africa earned roughly R56.4 a month in 1974/75, meaning that most families lived in poverty as their wages could not sustain their families and from the same salary they also had to pay rent for their homes.¹⁴³ But from the figures it seems as if those employed outside the homelands were better off. Mrs Sekhu explains that many families in Ga-Rankuwa relied on *motente* (pension funds) because of the paucity of employment.¹⁴⁴ Pension funds are called *motente* because they are like a ‘shelter’ or ‘haven’ and provide financial security. Pensions were the most reliable source of income for many families and some depended thereon as their only source of income. Some families, like the Kgari’s, Maphalare’s and Mohlahledi’s, also depended on the ‘Chinaman’ gambling.¹⁴⁵ Other gambling, like *madice* (dice), was used to supplement salaries.¹⁴⁶ Income was also gained by the sale of liquor, knitted goods and food. Horrell explains

¹⁴² Comaroff, Jean and John, “On Personhood: an Anthropological Perspective from Africa”, *Social Identities*, Vol. 7 number 2, (2001), 273.

¹⁴³ Benbo, *Bophuthatswana at Independence*, (Pretoria: Benbo publications, 1977), 9.

¹⁴⁴ Informant 7.

¹⁴⁵ Informant 2, 9 and 11.

¹⁴⁶ Informant 2.

that local authorities were unsympathetic to such informal traders and they were forced to seek hard-to-acquire licenses.¹⁴⁷ Many people borrowed money in order to survive and this added to a vicious cycle of poverty as they went deeper into debt as the land they were resettled in could not assist them in supplementing the lower wages they earned. This made the residents degrade the landscape further as their focus became day-to-day survival instead of ensuring that the environment was conserved and preserved.

Subsistence farming in Ga-Rankuwa was hampered by poor soil quality, lack of land and funds to purchase fertilisers.¹⁴⁸ The overall social setting indicates that there was very little scope for any kind of agriculture-based self-support and most residents abandoned cultivation.¹⁴⁹ Relocation in infertile Ga-Rankuwa was a betrayal of the history, tradition, humanity and culture of the Sotho-Tswana, who had been committed to agriculture in Lady Selborne. The Sotho-Tswana had traditionally chosen their settlement areas according to soil fertility, and favoured *mokata* (red loam) and *seloko* (heavy black clay).¹⁵⁰ Ga-Rankuwa did not provide such soil. Poor quality soil was worsened by the local climate, with summer rainfall and unreliable precipitation.¹⁵¹ Mid-summer average temperature was 22,5 –25 degrees Celsius and in winter 10-12, 5 degrees Celsius. Availability of water was another challenge. The memorandum from Mr Martens to Mr Liebenberg states that State wanted to provide more water by constructing pipes which suggests that there was a shortage of

¹⁴⁷ Muriel Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1971), 361.

¹⁴⁸ Informant 2 and 11.

¹⁴⁹ See Informant 2, 5, 7 and 11

¹⁵⁰ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 109.

¹⁵¹ Benbo, *Bophuthatswana at Independence*, 8.

water.¹⁵² Reasons for water shortages include low rainfall, high evaporation and flat topography,¹⁵³ all of which affected Ga-Rankuwa.¹⁵⁴ Informants complain that the erratic water supply affected their relationships with the environment as they had to use what little water they had for cooking instead of watering their gardens.¹⁵⁵ The situation did not improve by the 1970s and the Homeland government introduced water restrictions that precluded the watering of gardens,¹⁵⁶ which alienated people further from their environment. Resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa hit women particularly hard because they had involved themselves in subsistence agriculture, though some were creative in this regard and used food spills to make fertiliser.¹⁵⁷ Male migrancy meant that male labour was largely unavailable to those seeking to improve the soil. Other major problems facing women were linked to house design and plot size.¹⁵⁸ Long walks and competition and scarce resources like firewood and water tired them further. Their previous self-reliance continued but now in a hostile environment. Davidson maintains that “in many areas women are at the centre of environmental improvements by using traditional methods of planting and modern styles of agro forestry to provide for alternative approach to a much more sustainable agriculture”.¹⁵⁹ This was the case in Ga-Rankuwa where some women, like Mrs Maphalare and Mrs Madumo,¹⁶⁰ tried to improve the soil though some, like Mrs Kgari and Mrs Mohlahledi, gave up.¹⁶¹ The soil was seen to provide a spiritual connection with the ancestors. This link was celebrated by the slaughter of goats or

¹⁵² CA BAO 5077G57/4/1547/1 Letter from Martens.

¹⁵³ Benbo, *Bophuthatswana at Independence*, 15

¹⁵⁴ Informant 5.

¹⁵⁵ Informant 5.

¹⁵⁶ Informant 5.

¹⁵⁷ Informant 11.

¹⁵⁸ Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 8.

¹⁵⁹ Joan Davidson, “Women’s Relationship with the Environment”, ed, Reardon, G. *Women and the Environment*. (United Kingdom and Ireland: Oxfam, 1993), 6.

¹⁶⁰ See Informant 9 and 14.

¹⁶¹ Informant 2 and 11. Other women used fertilisers made from food spills, See Informant 11 and 14.

chickens or the brewing of beer for libations. By spilling beer or scattering snuff on the ground, the Sotho-Tswana indicate that, however infertile, the soil remains an important element in their cosmology.

7.1. Environmental Conservation and the state of the environment in Ga-Rankuwa from 1970 to 1977

Bophuthatswana's national anthem is highly suggestive of the way in which the Homeland government prioritised nature conservation in the 1970s:

Lefatshe leno laborrarona	The land of our forefathers
Rele abetswe ke Modimo	It is given to us by God
Kwantle ga tshololo ya madi	Without shedding of blood
Are lebogeng are ipeleng	Let us give thanks and rejoice
Lefatshe leno laborrarona	This land of our forefathers
Rele abela matshelo arona	We pledge our lives to it
Retla le fufulelelwa	We shall labour for it
Go fitlha sethitho se fetoga madi	Until sweat turns to blood
Lefatshe leno la Kgomo lemabele	This land of cattle and corn
Boswa jwa rona ka bosakhutleng	Our lasting heritage
Ramasedi ale dibebe, gotswanele	May God safeguard it fittingly
Re tshela mogolone ka pabaselego	That we may live in it safely
Modimo tshegofatsa lefatshe larona	God bless our land
Gorene Kagiso le khutlwano	That peace and harmony may
Fela	reign
Morena tshegofatsa Puso lesetshaba	God bless our government and
Sarona	nation
Ka boitekanelo go ntsha maungo a	That in good health we may
Tshedisang.	produce life-giving fruits. ¹⁶²

¹⁶² (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, 3.

The anthem's objective was to instil the concept of hard work and encourage people to look after the land that was their heritage. The term 'land' in this context included animals, plants, minerals, soil and other natural elements. The anthem also explains that good governance, peace and good health assist in maintaining a good and fruitful environment. Hence the first President, Mr Lucas Mangope, pledged in 1977 that "the development of the land and its natural resources will be of primary importance for the future development of Bophuthatswana".¹⁶³ The Homeland government passed Nature Conservation Act no 3 in 1977, which led to the establishment of the Nature Conservation Division within the Department of Agriculture. Its major purpose was to conserve the Homeland's flora and fauna.¹⁶⁴ The Division had thirty rangers, one Tswana Nature Conservation Officer and five white Nature Conservation Officers. Before 1973, the South African Conservation Acts were also applicable in Bophuthatswana. To ensure that conservation remained a priority, the Homeland government made it a law from 1974 that young men were recruited and trained as Nature Conservation Officers at Cwaka Agricultural College in Kwa-Zulu Natal.¹⁶⁵ The Nature Conservation officers were assisted by the corps of locally-trained field rangers. The government of Ga-Rankuwa tried to curb environmental degradation through the employment of officers. But it was difficult as the problem with the community was deeper than just being apathetic to environmental issues but issues of poverty, anger about displacement and frustration about the soil that they could not use effectively for food production ensured that for many of the relocated environment could not be the priority.

¹⁶³ Lucas Mangope, "Foreword", in *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, , 5.

¹⁶⁴ Campion, *Bophuthatswana*, 84 – 85.

¹⁶⁵ (Anon.), *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, , 184.

The population of Ga-Rankuwa increased from about 70 000 to 350 000 people in the 1970s.¹⁶⁶ The overcrowding situation in the Bantustans was worsened by the consolidation process,¹⁶⁷ and Timberlake argues that government policies degraded already-scarce resources, especially in the rural areas.¹⁶⁸ Segregationist policies institutionalised destructive land use practices like overgrazing, over-cultivation and deforestation.¹⁶⁹

The environment of Ga-Rankuwa was degraded by the late 1970s. Bushes were depleted, soil eroded and its nutrients consumed.¹⁷⁰ Dongas became common¹⁷¹ and, as McCann has argued, such dongas develop because of geological phenomena combined with social and economic history.¹⁷² The high level of clay in the soil exacerbated the situation because clay becomes marshy when exposed to water, which results in erosion and cracks.¹⁷³ Climatic conditions, particularly erratic rainfall and strong winds, worsened matters further.¹⁷⁴ Some informants complain that high water prices discouraged cultivation, which degraded the soil.¹⁷⁵ Rates¹⁷⁶ and water were expensive under South African Bantustan policy because Ga-Rankuwa was developed, and had permanent (as opposed to weekend) accommodation built with bricks (as opposed to wood).¹⁷⁷ All residents thus paid the same rates. Leonard argues that “poverty and land degradation are becoming inseparable twins because the

¹⁶⁶ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 25.

¹⁶⁷ Baldwin, *Uprooting a Nation*, 29.

¹⁶⁸ Lloyd Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Curses of Environmental Bankruptcy*, (London: Earthscan Publications, 1985).

¹⁶⁹ Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis*, 152.

¹⁷⁰ Personal observation made during fieldwork in 2004 in the area.

¹⁷¹ Observation made during fieldwork in 2004 and personal discussion with informants.

¹⁷² James C. McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa 1800-1990*, (Oxford: Heinemann Portsmouth, 1999), 145.

¹⁷³ McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land Black Land*, 147 – 148.

¹⁷⁴ Informant 2.

¹⁷⁵ Informant 1, 2 and 7.

¹⁷⁶ According to Horrell, the monthly charges for services and administration was R2. See Horrell, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, (1961), 164.

¹⁷⁷ CA T60/8/1547/1 Letter from Redelinghuys.

poorest people who have least access to investment capital and technology occupy the lands that need the most infrastructure management and external inputs if their utilisation is not to result in land degradation and environmental destruction”.¹⁷⁸

Hardships in the resettlement area caused a damaging nostalgia for “home”: Lady Selborne. This made many revert to the second stage of Scudders and Colsons resettlement process (the “transition stage”). They romanticised the past but did not implement its lessons. This can be termed ‘resettlement memory reverses’ because the resettled tend to restart their historical journey using their memories, often causing misery and rejection of the present. Zwingman argues that:

When life is threatened the reaction is physical but where total loss of love is involved the reaction is mental. People suffering from ‘uprootal’ and reacting negatively are in a ‘borderline state’ and their behaviour cannot be measured and judged by the norms of ordered intact society.¹⁷⁹

8. Conclusion

Resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa for the former residents of Lady Selborne impacted diverse people differently. Relocation led to the erosion of many positive conservation measures and reverence for the landscape that was practiced in Lady Selborne, which resulted in environment degradation. Some informants blame forced removals, the Mangope government’s interference and also poor soil quality for their new environmental apathy.¹⁸⁰ Forced to focus on survival strategies, many residents of Ga-Rankuwa saw environmental issues as trivial. Jacobs has argued that “environmental historians should give explicit considerations to how tensions between the environment, production, reproduction and consciousness give rise to revolutionary

¹⁷⁸ Cited in Hoffman and Ashwell, *Nature Divided*, 137.

¹⁷⁹ Margaret Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, (Braamfontein: South African Council of Churches, 1980), 78.

¹⁸⁰ Informant 5, 12, and 13.

changes in human relation with the non-human world”.¹⁸¹ Many of the relocated changed their relationship with their environment as a means of protesting against their loss of ‘home’. The cycle of poverty in Ga-Rankuwa meant that, even though many former tenants felt humanised by landownership, few could afford to improve their new property.

Underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of recreational facilities in Ga-Rankuwa heightened nostalgia for Lady Selborne, which crippled many residents’ ability to complete the stages of a successful resettlement that Scudder and Colson propose.¹⁸² Cernea’s eight sub-processes of impoverishment¹⁸³ indicate the unsuccessful nature of the resettlement as those displaced were faced with poverty and environmental problems. Some felt that a new community was formed but most felt that the community spirit that prevailed in Lady Selborne was non-existent in Ga-Rankuwa. This represents a major failure of resettlement as the Sotho-Tswana see community as a vital means of defining the self. Nash terms the resettled an ‘uprooted’ person who is in a state of individualism that is more malignant than that found among white elitist capitalist society, and argues that community feeling will only exist when an individual is returned to a community.¹⁸⁴ Some of the problems in the resettlement areas like Ga-Rankuwa occurred because communities dislocated from their families, neighbours and friends lead them to adopt individualism instead of communality.

¹⁸¹ Nancy Jacobs, “The colonial ecological Revolution in South Africa: The case of Kuruman”, ed, S Dovers, et al, *South Africa’s Environmental History Cases & Comparisons*, (Athens, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, David Philip, 2002), 32.

¹⁸² Cited in De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei*, 63-64.

¹⁸³ Cited in De Wet, *Resettlement in the Border Ciskei*, 63.

¹⁸⁴ Nash, *Black Uprooting*, 54.

The close relationship with the environment enjoyed in Lady Selborne, which affirmed people's humanity, withered in Ga-Rankuwa. Many informants claim that their connectedness with humanity and the environment was severed. Their only connection was with the dead. Shutte states that in traditional African culture and religion "self and world are united and intermingle in a web of reciprocal relations", which shows that disunity had a destructive effect on the identity of the person or that person's relationships with the environment, humanity and the dead.¹⁸⁵ This shows that forced removals are linked with the environmental problems of Ga-Rankuwa and explains why those resettled romanticised Lady Selborne and had difficulty acclimatising in Ga-Rankuwa.

¹⁸⁵ Augustine Shutte, *Philosophy for Africa*, (University of Cape Town Press, 1993), 4.

Chapter Seven

“A home makes one Motho” – the idea of ‘Humanness’, ‘Home’ and History in Lady Selborne’s forced removals, c. 1905 to 1977.¹

1. Introduction

Lady Selborne was more than a geographic or residential space. The area was a *legae* (home): a place where families and neighbours lived collectively. The concept of ‘home’ underwent a dramatic transformation among the Sotho-Tswana between 1905 and 1977, when Ga-Rankuwa became part of Bophuthatswana. Displaced informants have affirmed the community in Lady Selborne lived as ‘a family’ and that this created a sense of ‘belonging’. This grounded sense of identity established positive self-esteem among local residents, evinced in what they called ‘being human’. This chapter argues that land dispossession transformed this sense of identity, causing those displaced to describe themselves as ‘less human’. This chapter seeks to show that the residents’ understanding of what their homes meant was reflected in their lived reality and in the way they engaged closely with their environment and with each other. The chapter will demonstrate that the community’s management of the natural world in Lady Selborne was effected through specialised local agriculture, which served as protection against poverty, and that land was integral to religious rituals.² The chapter then argues that many of those resettled in Ga-Rankuwa became alienated from their new environment.³ The social engineering of the Group Areas Act of 1956 both physically destroyed Lady Selborne and changed the ideological relationship of the Sotho-Tswana with their environment.

¹ Interview, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 8.

² Informant 1-16.

³ Informant 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14 and 15

The process of forced removal did not eradicate the concept of *legae* from popular memory and this chapter is thus able to gather evidence through oral history. Emotions and symbolism about the relationship between the ideology of ‘humanness’ and ‘home’ are not documented in archival works, but are preserved in the language of the Basotho and Batswana. Thus this chapter relies on discourse analysis of oral interviews, which are contextualised with recourse to archival sources pertaining to Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa and secondary literature on the theological and philosophical notions upheld by the community under study.

This chapter tackles a controversial historiographical issue that has perhaps been approached merely tangentially in most historical analyses of forced removals: the almost taboo detail that some of those forcibly removed were actively pleased at this development. This chapter attempts to offer a class-based explanation of this phenomenon. The former landlords of Lady Selborne certainly suffered under the changes brought about by forced removals, while there is evidence to suggest that some of the former tenants actually felt that their “humanness” had been affirmed by their relocation to Ga-Rankuwa and subsequent leasing of houses in independent plots.

2. ‘Home’ and ‘Humanness’, c. 1905 to 1977

The interest of this chapter is less on defining ‘home’ than in tracing and illustrating the ways that the sense thereof contributed to a perception of what it means to be a human being before forced removals in Lady Selborne, and how losing such ‘homes’ due to displacement transformed the former landlords’ positive perceptions of

themselves. Conversely, former tenants who continued to rent houses in Ga-Rankuwa were initially excited at the move but became unhappy when they realised they could not engage in food production. This chapter uses Ross's model of 'home' as "affective and imaginative clusters of relationships, often but not always coded in terms of kinship and affinity, and frequently made tangible in material form such as through material investment and ritual action", as this seems close to the discourse used by the informants.⁴ Ross maintains that cultural meanings must be emphasised when dealing with the 'home'.⁵ Certainly, informants in this study described 'home' as a cluster of traits – an inheritance, a site for agricultural production, a sacred space for religious rituals and a place for constructing relationships.⁶

The concept of 'home' has long interested academics. For example, Rapport and Overing, in a standard general text, offer insights in their analysis, but fail to explain the concept in a holistic manner.⁷ They tend to separate the physical structure from the social relationship it houses, the actual physical building from the people it accommodates. Their definition of what comprises of 'home' does not include the mountains, stones, graves, flora, fauna and the perceived spiritual world surrounding it. They correlate 'home' and 'house' more than this thesis does. The standard Oxford English Dictionary definition of 'home' is "a place where one lives, fixed residence of family or household, native land, institution for persons needing care or rest",⁸ and a 'house' as a "building for human habitation, building for special purpose or for

⁴ Fiona C. Ross, 'Making home in the new South Africa', 2003, 2. (Unpublished paper).

⁵ Ross, "Making home in the new South Africa", 3.

⁶ Informant 3 and 5.

⁷ Rapport, N and Overing, J, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of current English*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 350.

keeping animals or goods”.⁹ Yet in understanding the community under study’s conception of home, it is pivotal to understand ‘*legae*,’ which assists in understanding the Basotho and Batswana way of life. The Sotho-Tswana, like the amaXhosa and AmaZulu, sharpen their differentiation between the two by using homes for ancestral rituals. For the amaXhosa, a house (*indlu*) does not carry either the same emotive appeal or social obligation as a ‘home’ (*umuzi*).¹⁰ *Indlu* (Xhosa) or *Ntlu* (Sotho-Tswana) is a place for staying temporarily while *umuzi* or *ikhaya* (Zulu and Xhosa), *motse* or *legae* (Sotho-Tswana) is a permanent ‘home’ where one can perform important rituals and bury the dead. A house, for the Sotho-Tswana of Ga-Rankuwa, was just a dwelling place – a place for *boroko* (sleeping), as it became for most residents who were once landlords and had no money to purchase plots after resettlement.¹¹ Some residents who had ‘homes’ in rural areas and houses in Ga-Rankuwa performed weddings and funerals *ko magaeng* (at ‘home’ in the rural areas), which indicates that the resettlement area was seen as a place for temporary accommodation.¹² Displacement forced such ‘houses’ to become ‘homes’ subtly via the performance of ancestral rituals in the resettlement area.¹³ Conversely, relocation actually brought some sense of ‘home’ to many former tenants of Lady Selborne that were able to lease free-standing plots with the option to purchase.¹⁴ Yose encountered the same attitude among the amaXhosa in a shantytown in the Western Cape where Xhosa-speaking migrants and new residents view shacks in the light of *imizi* ‘homes’

⁹ *Oxford Dictionary*, 355.

¹⁰ E. Ngxabi, “Houses or Homes?” (M.Soc.Sci. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2004).

¹¹ Personal discussion with informants Ms Motshetshane (27 June 2004) and Mrs Tshweni (28 June 2004) in Ga-Rankuwa..

¹² Personal discussion with informant Mrs Kgari (25 June 2004) and Mr Kgari (27 June 2004) in Ga-Rankuwa.

¹³ Personal discussion with Informant Mrs Kgari (25 June 2004) and Mrs Tshweni (26 June 2004).

¹⁴ Informant 2, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14. Loans for purchasing sites and erecting houses were available at R3 a month payable for 40 years, according to Muriel Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1961), 164.

– which entails social relationships associated with strong links to the countryside (*emaXhoseni*).¹⁵

As will become clear throughout this chapter, the difference between a ‘home’ and a house was profoundly important to the former Sotho-Tswana residents of Lady Selborne and those resettled in Ga-Rankuwa. Forced removals and resettlement caused many people to accept the idea of mobile ‘homes’ whereby they altered their traditional ideology of a ‘home’ that was tied down to a fixed physical location. Former tenants who continued to lease houses in Ga-Rankuwa also transformed their perceptions of what a ‘home’ is and privacy became a major defining factor in the resettlement area. The allotment of independent plots made many former tenants consider the houses that they were leasing as their ‘homes’, though (as this chapter will show) poor soil quality and limited environmental resources eroded this perception.

According to informants, feelings of ‘home’ ownership were linked to the purchase thereof and the possession of title deeds. This ideology is not traditionally “African” and reflects the impact of modern capitalism. Many former tenants who lost no property felt ownership of ‘homes’ in Ga-Rankuwa because of secure private living spaces and the possibility of buying such plots. By contrast former landlords found it very difficult to adjust to the reality of Ga-Rankuwa, as they regarded Lady Selborne as their inheritance. Furthermore, they were devastated by the move as they had invested their houses/properties with cultural and religious meaning. There was thus a sense of alienation. This suggests that the cultural meaning of a ‘home’ was more

¹⁵ C. Yose, “From Shacks to Houses: Space Usage and Social Change in a Western Cape Shantytown”, (MSocSci, University of Cape Town, 1999).

important in Lady Selborne than Ga-Rankuwa to former landlords, as the Sotho-Tswana “perceive the universe and everything in it as an inter-connected engine of life”,¹⁶ implying a holistic perception of life and that the natural and non-natural world are both part of *legae* (home). For example, it is significant that landlords like the Motshetshanes performed rituals in their plots, while tenants had to do them in their homes, which were based mainly in distantly located rural areas as many of them had simply rented rooms to be nearer their places of employment.

This suggests that a ‘home’ can be made because it consists of persons and emotions and can be transformed into a habitable space. This implies that any place can be constructed into a ‘home’ as long as it is able to sustain routines of daily life that affirm an individual holistically. A ‘home’ had different meanings in Ga-Rankuwa for former tenants and former landlords. . To former landlords who became tenants Ga-Rankuwa was difficult to accept the location as a ‘home’ because they could not own the houses they leased unless if they had money to purchase the plots. But it was much easier for the former tenants and former landlords who purchased plots in the resettlement area to see Ga-Rankuwa as ‘home’, though they all missed Lady Selborne. Rapport explains:

One dwells in a mobile habitat and not in a singular or fixed physical structure. Moreover, as home becomes seen as more mobile so it also becomes more individuated and privatised everyone chooses their own, and one’s choice might remain invisible and irrelevant to others.¹⁷

This implies that a ‘home’ can be made anywhere at anytime, it cannot be fixed to a particular space but is a mobile habitat. This is illustrated by traditional African practices whereby an ancestor is symbolically moved from the grave to the home after

¹⁶ Gabriel M. Setiloane, *African Theology: An Introduction*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1985), 37-42. See Informant 2 and 3.

¹⁷ Cited in Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 158.

a year to protect it, or a branch or piece of soil from a grave or a previous 'home' is transported to a new 'home' as a sign of *go buyisa badimo* (bringing back the ancestor),¹⁸ a ritual that persists today that emphasises the mobile nature of 'home'.¹⁹ This explains many resettled people's ability to acclimatise quickly, as demonstrated by the purchasing of new homes in Ga-Rankuwa, where many continued to attempt to communicate with their ancestors.²⁰ Chidester argues that:

A homestead was a symbol of the world, a central arena in which the symbolic relations of persons and place were negotiated. The home was the nexus of symbolic and social relations among the living and between the living and deceased relatives of the household who continued to live as ancestors or ancestor spirits. It was a place for being human.²¹

Though Chidester's definition excludes the environmental context of 'home' in the Sotho-Tswana culture, his explanation addresses the importance of 'home' as a place where history and relationships are made and the self defined. Consequently the lack of 'home' means a struggle to attain the status of a 'complete human being'. The Comaroffs define a 'home' as it was understood in 1820 by the Batswana as "a zone sanctified in matrimony, possessed of property, recognised in law, and structured by a gendered, generational division of labour and a fixed physical space (the residence) set off from the world outside".²² The drawbacks of Chidester's, the Comaroff's, Rapport's and Overing's analyses are their failure to include the environmental aspect of their definition of 'home'.²³ Their analyses compartmentalise the dwelling space while the Sotho-Tswana include the world outside the physical structure in theirs: the

¹⁸ See James L. Cox, "Ancestors and God: Reflections on the Meaning of the Sacred in Zimbabwean Death Rituals", *An International Journal of Religion*, vol 25, no 1, Academic Press, (1995), 345 – 346.

¹⁹ Personal discussions with Dr Welile Mazamisa, Senior Lecturer Department of Religious Studies University of Cape Town, November 2006.

²⁰ See Informant 3.

²¹ David Chidester, *Religions of South Africa*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 5.

²² Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness on the South African Frontier*, vol 1, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 275.

²³ See Chidester, *Religions of South Africa*, 5, Comaroffs, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 275 and Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*.

community and the environment around the homestead. This explains why the former residents of Lady Selborne describe their displacement as a loss of ‘home’, referring to the area as a whole.²⁴ The case study of Lady Selborne, which was almost unique in South Africa in that it allowed blacks to own property near whites in an inter-racial township close to a metropolitan centre, casts light on local residents’ distinctive definition of *batho* (humans).²⁵ Most residents felt at ‘home’ in Lady Selborne because of its cohesive community, fertile soil, its scenic beauty and the right to hold title there.²⁶ The township’s role was as a sacred place to perform religious rites and a repository for relics and some of the community’s umbilical cords. The umbilical cord was seen by many of the Sotho-Tswana as a thread that links a human being to the place of birth; the earth, hence when the cord falls from a new born baby it is buried in the yard and that will always bond a person with that particular place.

Lady Selborne’s retained its historical, spiritual, communal, psychological and economical significance to its former residents. Mrs Sekhu, a former landlord in Lady Selborne, explains that “if a person does not have a home he or she is not fully human. To be human one must have a home”.²⁷ Many informants emphasised the importance of property and wealth ownership in providing a sense of security and positive identity.²⁸ Many Sotho-Tswana in Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa saw title over a ‘home’ as significant because they believed that such ‘homes’ were an inheritance from their ancestors.²⁹ Mrs Tshweni says:

²⁴ See Informant 5.

²⁵ Jane Carruthers, “Urban land claims in South Africa: the case of Lady Selborne township, Pretoria, Gauteng”, *Kleio* XXX11, (2000), 2; Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) TES 4134 19/269 Report of the Departmental Committee, 1949, 61.

²⁶ Informant 3, 5, 7 and 15.

²⁷ Informant 7.

²⁸ Informant 1-16.

²⁹ Informant 5.

By losing our houses in Lady Selborne during forced removals our humanness was impacted negatively because we lost the places where we performed rituals. And we lost our homes – our inheritance from our parents.³⁰

Mr Maphalare, who was the child of a former landlord but had to rent a house when he got married, gives more evidence of the relationship between the ownership of a ‘home’ and humanness, and the ramifications of the loss of such properties.

A Home makes a person complete even if one is poor it does not matter because one suffers under his /her own roof. A home makes one *motho* (human). Though other people have a lot of material things at least one has something, a house. Forced removals from Lady Selborne deprived people of that ownership, though it assisted those who were tenants but to landowners it was a tragedy.³¹

This raises the question: “When does a person separate from animals become *motho* (a person), *batho* (people) (human) or less human?” Most informants subscribe to the notion that a person becomes ‘less human’ when he or she is barely aware of his/her humanness, or when others in the community regard him or her as not fully human.³²

Lack of material possessions like a ‘home’ can contribute to a person being perceived as less human.³³ According to former tenant Mrs Maphalare, “If one does not have land and is old enough to own it such a person is not respected in the community. I suppose she or he is seen as incomplete. Shelter under one’s head is important”.³⁴

This illustrates the effects of capitalism in the way people express themselves. Former tenant Mrs Mohlahledi raises another point:

Botho is when a person is well mannered and has concern for humanity. It is lost through not caring for others and also if one is poverty stricken and loses her possessions the community sometimes does not see that person as fully human and that is painful. This implies that through forced removals many people like us tenants were happy because we got houses and those who lost

³⁰ Informant 5.

³¹ Informant 8.

³² See, Setiloane, *African Theology*, 40 and Informant 9.

³³ Informant 1-16.

³⁴ Informant 9.

their land in Lady Selborne like the former landlords their humanness was affected because we are now equal.³⁵

These sentiments about loss of 'home' are articulated by former tenant Mr Matlaila:

Forced removals indeed affected people's humanness because without a house one is not human, especially to the landlords who had to come to Ga-Rankuwa and rent property this was degrading to them. As the northern Sotho, the lazy people are always regarded as '*selo*' (not human) because one has not provided for himself or herself and as a result end up without material possession.³⁶

Ms Motshetshane, a child of a former landlord, explains how loss of land impacts on loss of *botho*:

In Lady Selborne people built houses and had good relationships with the community and there was unity, and through land loss people lost such relationships and property and found themselves in solitude. This means land loss led to loss of humanness.³⁷

Several former tenants reiterated these sentiments and maintained that "without a home a person is not fully human because one lacks a sense of ownership and positive self-esteem".³⁸ It is interesting that such tenants never mentioned feeling less human about the fact that they did not own plots in Lady Selborne, their only dehumanising factor there was having to clean up sewerage spilled by bucket collectors.³⁹ This can perhaps be ascribed to the romantic nostalgia felt for Lady Selborne by those living in Ga-Rankuwa, and the voluntary nature of their former tenancy. Moving to Ga-Rankuwa transformed their construction of 'home'. Some people found 'homes' in Ga-Rankuwa, like former tenants.

³⁵ Informant 11.

³⁶ Informant 12.

³⁷ Informant 3.

³⁸ Informant 2, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13.

³⁹ Informant 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

As Bachelard observes, “the human imagination always builds walls of impalpable shadows, comforting itself with the illusion of protection, and so carries the ‘notion of home’ into any really inhabited space, whether cognitive or physical”.⁴⁰ Certainly, some former tenants and former landlords (who were able to buy plots) were able to inculcate the notion of a ‘home’ when they arrived in the resettlement area. But most former landlords could not because the resettlement did not afford them with the same rights of property ownership.⁴¹ Such former landlords felt a sense of insecurity and a loss of dignity.⁴² This shift in property relations and the concomitant shift in power relations have been remembered as a degrading experience for former landlords.

This suggests that ownership of land and identity went hand in hand, and gave people a sense of dignity (*seriti*). *Seriti* may be described as an “aura or a force behind every human being that depicts people’s perception about his or her identity or personality”.⁴³ *Seriti* affects everything that a person comes in contact with. This is why the Sotho-Tswana believe that a ‘home’ has *seriti* because of the ancestors who look after it and the people who live in it. Immoral acts in the ‘home’ degrade its *seriti*.⁴⁴ Mary Douglas argues that such acts “pollutes” the ‘home’, which requires rituals to cleanse and reinstate the *seriti*.⁴⁵ A person gets power through *seriti* and everything he/she gets into contact with gets affected. This accounts for the perceived interconnectedness between humans and the land, animals, plants and environment as

⁴⁰ Gaston Bachelard cited in Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 159.

⁴¹ See Informant 5.

⁴² See Informant 15.

⁴³ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 13.

⁴⁴ See Comaroffs, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 158. They explain how the Sotho-Tswana went about establishing settlements by redrawing boundaries around the homestead, fields and village. This is termed “*go thaya motse*” which also refers to how they protect such a settlement with herbs to avoid misfortune. If a homestead is *thailwe*, the Sotho-Tswana believe that home has *seriti* and has to be respected by humanity.

⁴⁵ Mary Douglas, *An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 3.

a whole; because, like humans, plants, animals and the land also have *seriti*.⁴⁶ A person becomes more dignified because of the way he/she participates with others and the environment. Forced removals thus engendered a loss of *seriti*. The Comaroffs argue that:

Personhood was everywhere seen to be an intrinsically social construction. This in two senses: first, nobody existed or could be known except in relation with reference to, even as part of, a wide array of significant others, and, second, the identity of each and every one was forged, cumulatively, by an infinite, ongoing series of practical activities.⁴⁷

It is important to note here that the Sotho-Tswana of Lady Selborne cherished the spirit of inclusion before the 1960s. For example, residents explained how they lived without racial discrimination.⁴⁸ The spirit of inclusion was encouraged by Sotho-Tswana aphorisms like *motho gaiphetse ese naga* (a person cannot be complete like land), which means people need others to survive and identify themselves as holistic people.⁴⁹ This further means that the land is self contained but a person can not survive without interaction with others, they need other people for validation. Destruction of social unity through disharmony, according to Ngubane, means that “it was a criticism of primordial consciousness, it was to try to invert the perpetual evolution of the cosmic, order it was a ploy for running away from facing the challenge of being human. In short it was the ultimate insanity”.⁵⁰ Informants saw communal unity as vital in ensuring the progress of history and life in the community because through a community an individual gets empowerment.⁵¹ Unity between the

⁴⁶ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 15.

⁴⁷ Jean and John Comaroff, “On Personhood: an Anthropological Perspective from Africa”, *Social Identities*, 7, 2, 2001, 268.

⁴⁸ Informant 1-16.

⁴⁹ Informant 3, 5 and 11.

⁵⁰ Jordan K. Ngubane, *Conflict of Minds: Changing Power Dispositions in South Africa*. (USA: Books in Focus, 1979), 81.

⁵¹ Informant 1 argues that due to forced removals they lost community spirit which resulted in individualism. See also Interview, Informant 3, 5 and 16.

community and the individual allows that individual to share life with others.⁵² The fieldwork undertaken among the Sotho-Tswana of Ga-Rankuwa in 2004 reveals their nostalgia for the social cohesion of Lady Selborne, their ‘home’.⁵³ This romantic vision is contradicted by informants who mention gangsters, violent bucket collectors⁵⁴ and conflicts between landlords and tenants.⁵⁵ Some contradicted the prevailing notion that the only time they felt ‘less human’ was during displacement, but former tenants in the interviews vehemently mention that they felt humiliated by the fact that landlords forced them to clean sewerage spills and the yards.⁵⁶

Informants claim that tenants were incorporated into the community as ‘residents of Lady Selborne’ (*batho ba Selborne*). This implies discrimination in terms of land ownership was not profound. This makes the Comaroffs’ argument about the concept of self during colonisation in 1820 relevant to Lady Selborne from 1905 to 1960. They argue that the concept of self was “a constant work – in- progress, indeed a highly complex fabrication, whose complexity was further shaded by gender, generation, class, race, ethnicity, and religious ideology among other things”.⁵⁷ This implies that *botho* was not a static concept but had to transform under different historical and social influences. For example, modernity, colonisation, capitalism, and segregation changed Sotho-Tswana perceptions of what constitutes a human being. All residents before dispossession saw themselves as human in spite of the fact that some had no title over the houses they rented; but after 1960 they started developing

⁵² Augustine Shutte, *Ubuntu: an Ethic for a New South Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2001), 8.

⁵³ I term Lady Selborne their ‘home’ as a community because they called themselves the Selborners. (Personal discussion with Informant 3, Ms Motshetshane, (18 March 2006).

⁵⁴ Informant 3, 15 and 16.

⁵⁵ Informant 3, 15 and 16.

⁵⁶ Informants 2, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

⁵⁷ Comaroffs, “On Personhood”, 268.

negative perceptions of themselves, especially those who were once landlords and could not buy plots in Ga-Rankuwa. This negativity also affected the way the Sotho-Tswana related with each other as they tended to foster the spirit of exclusion and division as they were scattered by force all over South Africa, which resulted in the loss of relatives, neighbours and friends.⁵⁸ Many Sotho-Tswana were thus obliged to live without the familiar communities that had assisted them to become *batho* (human). One can then argue that forced removals degraded people's *diriti* because it made them lose contact with the people, animals, plants and sacred spaces that they interacted with in Lady Selborne and undermined the spirit of connectedness and community encoded in myths of origin.

Some informants felt that the initial disunity and alienation felt in Ga-Rankuwa was diluted by the 1970s, as community formation and unity prevailed in the resettlement area.⁵⁹ Informants argue that they managed to develop into a co-operative and united group.⁶⁰ Ms Motshetshane, a child of a former landlord, states that:

Many of our friends were spread to Eastwood, Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. This destroyed the community because we had to restart new relationship. But it became easier because Africans believe that a person is who he/she is because of others thus we cultivated new relationships.⁶¹

Forced removals also made many of those resettled resilient and forged a new community, and this led to the transformation of their ethics and belief system. Some informants attest that moral degeneration occurred due to resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa as children started disrespecting adults and residents stopped loving each other as they

⁵⁸ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 12.

⁵⁹ Informants 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 16.

⁶⁰ Informants 3, 5, 11, 15 and 16

⁶¹ Informant 3

had in Lady Selborne.⁶² The changes in Sotho-Tswana beliefs are also highlighted in terms of environmental apathy.⁶³ Informants like Mrs Kgari and Ms Motshetshane explained that people in Lady Selborne believed in caring for their environment but some resident members abandoned this ideal after displacement.⁶⁴ This led to altered perceptions of themselves and their land and environment after removals in the 1960s. The process of consolidation of the Homelands in the 1970s further fragmented ethnic groups and this crippled more the Sotho-Tswana culture and religion as they internalised discrimination as a norm in their daily routines and that increased negative effects on community relations in Ga-Rankuwa.⁶⁵

This complicates the discussion of the effect of land ownership on affirmation of ‘humanness’. Controversially, and somewhat paradoxically, forced removals appear to have positively affirmed some former tenants’ identity at least initially. All the former tenant informants claimed that forced removals made them feel both happy and “fully human” because they occupied their own plots, though many had no money to buy them.⁶⁶ It seems that occupying independent plots in Ga-Rankuwa was favoured by tenants as compared to renting small rooms in cramped conditions with little privacy as it occurred in Lady Selborne. Former tenants in Ga-Rankuwa prioritised ‘having roofs’ over their heads in private plots over holding free title to such plots. This raises the significance of land ownership in Lady Selborne as opposed to Ga-Rankuwa, and the importance of environmental security. Unlike in

⁶² Informant 1, 2, and 5.

⁶³ Informant 1-16.

⁶⁴ Informant 2 and 3.

⁶⁵ Evidence stated in the CA BAO 7818T60/2/1547 Memorandum drawn up by the Tswana Vigilance Committee Representing Tswana Interests, Opinions and Aspirations, which was presented to the Commissioner General, Tswana Territorial Authority, (No date). The memorandum indicate that the Tswana in Ga-Rankuwa had discrimination. They did not want other ethnic groups like the Zulus, Tsongas and Shangaans in their township because they argued that the Government policy stipulated that the township was to be populated and ruled by the Tswana.

⁶⁶ Informants 2, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Lady Selborne, tenants in Ga-Rankuwa could not be arbitrarily evicted or exploited and their “humanness” was affirmed by their enjoyment of occupying private houses with no extra labour demands made by landlords. Tenants became bosses of their own ‘homes’ in Ga-Rankuwa,⁶⁷ and saw themselves as *batho*. Some former tenants referred to Ga-Rankuwa as their ‘home’, not just as a residential place.⁶⁸ This is confirmed by Mrs Kgari:

I was very happy about removals because I was a tenant, so by moving to Ga-Rankuwa I was going to be a landlord myself. To me it was liberating. Landlords in Lady Selborne used to control us like children. They would ask whether we have cleaned or collected papers. Is worse with me, my landlord was not living with us. He employed someone to look after us. Now in Ga-Rankuwa I was going to be my own boss in my own house.⁶⁹

These same sentiments are echoed by other tenants:

My humanness was affirmed through getting land in Ga-Rankuwa. I have *motse* a ‘home’ for my children, their inheritance.⁷⁰

I was excited about forced removals in Lady Selborne because in Ga-Rankuwa I became a landlord. This was liberating, as we owned our own homes.⁷¹

I felt happy about removals from Lady Selborne because in Ga-Rankuwa my husband and I became landlords.⁷²

I felt bad about being removed from Lady Selborne because I had to lose many friends, but I was happy because I was going to live in my own house in Ga-Rankuwa and not forced to clean sewerage spills.⁷³

Former tenants were allowed to feel at ‘home’ in these plots and felt more in control of their lives than they had in Lady Selborne.⁷⁴ Resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa also instilled positive self-esteem in former tenants because they were given an equal

⁶⁷ Informant 14.

⁶⁸ Informant 2 and 12

⁶⁹ Informant 2.

⁷⁰ Informant 2.

⁷¹ Informant 12.

⁷² Informant 13.

⁷³ Informant 14.

⁷⁴ Informant 2, 12, 13, and 14.

opportunity with former landlords to buy or lease plots. Most former landlords could not purchase plots and rented houses next to their former tenants. The sense of homelessness among former landlords is explained by Auge:

A sense of homelessness perhaps derives, paradoxically, from a reaction against movement, a refusing of fluid boundaries, hence the clamouring by the homeless for reascent “particularism” primordial places for which they are willing to kill or die.⁷⁵

The changes in perception of ‘home’ in affirming humanness deteriorated as people adapted to the situation in Ga-Rankuwa. Some informants argued the Presidency of Lucas Mangope worsened the situation in Ga-Rankuwa in the 1970s when he instituted water restrictions that crippled subsistence agriculture – so important economically and spiritually.⁷⁶ The State failed to improve infrastructure like water supply, electricity, hospitals, clinics, schools and housing.⁷⁷ Former landlords who became tenants in the resettlement area perceived themselves as less human: “*dilo*”.⁷⁸ This corroborates the Comaroffs’ argument that “contemporary Tswana personhood is not referred to a state of being but to a state of becoming. No living self is static”.⁷⁹ Changing Sotho-Tswana perceptions after resettlement had historical implications of illustrating continuity and change. Mrs Manamela, a former landlord, supports this:

...Through losing our land in Lady Selborne our *botho* got affected because we were hurt. Other people were landlords in Lady Selborne and in Ga-Rankuwa they were like the tenants. They used to rent out houses to tenants in Lady Selborne but in Ga-Rankuwa everyone is the same. Even though those who were tenants in Lady Selborne are happy and their humanness is affirmed those who were landlords are hit hard by the removals their humanness is hampered tremendously.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Cited in Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 158-9.

⁷⁶ Informant 1 and 5

⁷⁷ See chapter 6 and Interviews, Appendix 1.

⁷⁸ See Informant 3 and 5.

⁷⁹ Comaroffs, “On Personhood”, 271.

⁸⁰ Informant 15.

Many Sotho-Tswana believe that *motho* refers to a speaking being that has the ability to negotiate the terms of his or her living conditions on earth, and thus that disputing a person that right means denying that individual human status. Former landlords and their children attested in interviews to their sense of losing the status of *batho* and being relegated to *dilo*.⁸¹ The classification of people in Sesotho and Setswana falls under *Mo – Ba*, (*motho – batho*), while they are classified as *le – ma* if deemed less than human. For example, a white person might fall under this category with objects *lekgoa – makgoa* because they were regarded as oppressors and oppression is contrary to the spirit of humanness. But such a *lekgoa* was classified as *mo – ba* if he/she demonstrated traits associated with humanness and the Basotho would say *lekhoha le, ke motho* (this white person is human). Ellenberger argues the Sotho-Tswana word *motho* indicates “the power of speech, a speaking being distinct from monkeys or baboons, which have something like human shape, but can not speak”.⁸² For example, a pre-vocal baby is called *ngoana* but is termed *mothoano* after speech is learned.⁸³ The belief is embedded in contemporary Sotho-Tswana culture via language. Thus denial of ‘speech’ via disenfranchisement implies a loss of humanness. This Apartheid-induced devaluing of a human being is explained by Ngubane as “a sense of translation into experience the pessimistic and devaluative view of being human” because it led to widespread degradation of black self-esteem.⁸⁴ Ngubane also emphasizes the dynamic nature of self-perception and its reliance on social context.⁸⁵ This supports the notion of a loss of humanness caused by resettlement to Ga-Rankuwa and the failure to adapt thereto.

⁸¹ Informant 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15 and 16.

⁸² Frederic D. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto Ancient and Modern*, (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), xxi.

⁸³ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, xxi.

⁸⁴ Ngubane, *Conflict of Mind*, 81.

⁸⁵ Ngubane, *Conflict of Minds*, 92.

Thus many Sotho-Tswana of Ga-Rankuwa, especially former landlords, fostered negative self-perceptions and saw those without title to land as *dilo*, including themselves. Such negative perception led to serious environmental degradation in the resettlement space that was supposed to be *legae* ('home') but was instead often referred to as *ntlu* (house).⁸⁶ It is worth mentioning again that both former landlords and former tenants had difficulty adapting to the resettlement area and embracing it entirely as 'home' because they could not use the infertile soil for food production,⁸⁷ as suggested by the area's name. Mrs Sekhu, a former landlord, argues that:

Ga-Rankuwa was not habitable especially because of the quality of land that could not allow us to cultivate food. In order to plant one had to fertilize the soil and this was expensive.⁸⁸

3. Land as a 'Home'

The pre-1830 Sotho-Tswana land ownership system generally prohibited the alienation of rights to land, especially for capitalist gain. Land was considered an inheritance (*lefa*) to be held in trust for future generations.⁸⁹ Their pre-colonial concept of land was grounded in the concept of *Ubuntu/Botho* because the landless often helped to acquire land if capable of protecting it. Though other groups attached religious importance to land, the Sotho-Tswanan is based on the land's perceived function as a vehicle for communication with the spirits of ancestors. Land continued to be a 'home', an 'inheritance' (*lefa*) from the ancestors and part of Sotho-Tswana 'religion' and culture. The ethic of land ownership changed in Lady Selborne as people had to purchase or rent land through the market system. *Botho* still encouraged

⁸⁶ Informant 5.

⁸⁷ Informant 1-16.

⁸⁸ Informant 7.

⁸⁹ Leonard Ngcongco, *Imvo Zabantu and Cape Native Policy 1884-1902*, Masters Thesis: University of South Africa, (1974), 100.

civic-mindedness but could not assist people to acquire land as credit worthiness became the key to doing so.

This is why forced removals transformed indigenous people's perception of land and established the notion that those without land are less human (*dilo*). This is because traditionally and to date land is pivotal as it is indicated in the research undertaken by Letsoalo among the Northern Sotho which indicates that land is crucial as a source of livelihood.⁹⁰ The association between landlessness and the loss of humanness was fuelled by pre-colonial Sotho-Tswana religious and cultural precepts that held that no one who is old enough to acquire land had to be landless because the ancestors left inheritance for every person qualified to have land – thus by implication censuring those who do not.⁹¹

Qualifications to own land were traditionally based on age, marital status, gender and generally eligibility.⁹² The father of the groom would often request land from the chief, who together with his co-workers would distribute land. This did not exclude widows or old unmarried women.⁹³ But people in Lady Selborne had to apply for land from the City Council of Pretoria and did so with money. The notion of land as an inheritance continued in Lady Selborne as landlords bought land for their children and the loss of such plots through forced removals meant the loss thereof.

The case of Mrs Tshweni, a former landlord, gives a good perspective because she was given a house in Lady Selborne by her mother and held title thereto, and planned

⁹⁰ Essy M. Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987), 20.

⁹¹ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 20.

⁹² Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 19 – 20.

⁹³ Letsoalo, *Land Reform in South Africa*, 20.

to keep it for her descendants.⁹⁴ This is why she says, “when I was forcibly moved from my home I cried like a bride taken to a groom’s house”.⁹⁵ This simile is driven by the custom whereby a new bride cannot have ownership over her new residence at any time because she is an outsider. This loss of ‘inheritance’ and ‘home’ and spiritual belonging is also applicable to other former landlords like Mrs Sekhu and Mrs Manamela, who compared the pain of losing their homes to that of a child being cut from its mother’s umbilical cord.⁹⁶

But, as discussed, Lady Selborne continued to be a ‘home’ that had spiritual connotations for former landlords. Some of the displaced left umbilical cords buried there, denoting their spiritual connection to the township.⁹⁷ Setiloane argues that “to remove and separate people from their ancestral land is to rupture their soul, to cut off their instrument of life support”.⁹⁸ The pre-colonial Sotho-Tswana used chiefs and places to identify themselves and this practice continued in Lady Selborne, with its former residents calling themselves as the Selborners. Those displaced to Atteridgeville still call their section Selborne, indicating the link between their former home and their construction of their identity.

Many were forced by forced removals to “use their identity as a means of communal protection of resources and as a weapon of communal resistance to dispossession”.⁹⁹

The Sotho-Tswana had to mobilise themselves, however covertly, and reduce in

⁹⁴ Informant 5.

⁹⁵ Informant 5.

⁹⁶ Informant 7 and 15.

⁹⁷ David Chidester, *Religions of South Africa*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 5.

⁹⁸ Gabriel M. Setiloane, “Land in the negotiations Chamber-an Afro-centric approach”. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*. 5, 2, (1991), 33.

⁹⁹ Timothy J. Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa*, (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988), 147.

importance the identity of those without title to land as 'less human' in order to passively resist the system of land dispossession. Former landlords could be seen to be protecting their former position of privilege with their outcry for their 'home'. Community formation took a long time to occur in Ga-Rankuwa, largely because former landlords could not adapt to the fact that they had lost their properties. The use of censorious nomenclature like 'not human' was arguably a weapon of solidarity and a means of both heightening and mobilising anger amongst all residents to mobilise resistance against displacement which also manifested in apathy towards environmental issues, as discussed in chapter 6.

Many Sotho-Tswana believe that for a human being to be complete he/she has to participate with the dead by performing all requested rituals by the ancestors. An individual must be in cordial co-operation with the spiritual, social, economic, political and environmental world. This implying that people must look after their environment, their community and themselves, failure to do so causes a loss of humanness. An example of the disintegration of components and the impacts thereof is explained by Temgoua, who did research among the Bamileke people of Cameroon and explains that "exclusion of peasants from land means to condemn them to death".¹⁰⁰ This emphasises the role of land as a source of life, as pre-colonial people lived, farmed, herded and performed religious rituals thereon – in much the same way that a child remains connected to its mother even after the umbilical cord is cut. The Sotho-Tswana myth of origin in which humanity is said to have originated with animals from the hole in the ground and the perception that the dead return thereto

¹⁰⁰ Albert P. Temgoua, "Human rights in Pre-colonial Africa: The case of the Bamileke district in the Western Cameroon", University of Witwatersrand History Workshop, (13-15 July 1994), 6.

reinforces this connection.¹⁰¹ There has been a perceived spiritual and mystical bond between the soil and its users, around which much of their folklore, poetry, religion and language were constructed.¹⁰² Thus alienation from land impacted on the different aspects of an individual. The loss of land in Lady Selborne meant that its residents had to migrate without the spatial, emotional, psychological and physical setting and experiences of 'home'.

4. A Pursuit for Home in Ga-Rankuwa

Ga-Rankuwa was initially an alien environment to many of the displaced, and did not resemble their 'home'.¹⁰³ Consequently, some of the residents' attitude towards their environment changed there. Khan states that "fundamental to the question of African environmental perception, particularly of environmental attitudes, is relationship with land".¹⁰⁴ Some former landlords perceived themselves as '*dintho fela*', and relegated themselves to objects as opposed to subjects.¹⁰⁵ Forced removals were a betrayal of the concept of *botho*, "an ethical concept that expresses a vision of what is valuable and worthwhile in life".¹⁰⁶ Informants argue that *botho* is about humanness¹⁰⁷, about being a real person with love, care¹⁰⁸ and material possessions¹⁰⁹. Mr Kgari, the son of a former tenant, explains that "I think *botho* and land loss are related because by losing land one loses his or her sense of ownership and feel useless".¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 5.

¹⁰² E. Mphahlele, "Foreword" in Letsoalo, *Land reform in South Africa*, (1987).

¹⁰³ The situation in Ga-Rankuwa after resettlement, especially problems posed by poor housing and soil quality, is discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁰⁴ Farieda Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response: An Historical and Socio-Political Evaluations with particular Reference to Blacks*, Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1990), 15.

¹⁰⁵ See Informant 3, 5, 7 and 15.

¹⁰⁶ Shutte, *Ubuntu*, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Informant 1.

¹⁰⁸ Informant 11.

¹⁰⁹ Informant 6.

¹¹⁰ Informant 4.

The loss of *botho*, according to Shutte, occurred because “the morality of *botho* is intrinsically related to human happiness and fulfilment”.¹¹¹ Unhappiness results in anger, aggression and passive resistance, as “*ubuntu/botho* can take more aggressive forms such as anger and defiance in face of injustice”.¹¹² Some informants thus ceased caring for the environment in Ga-Rankuwa and degraded the land. Informants cite many reasons for environmental degradation in the resettlement area. Mrs Mvula, a former tenant, claims that “the quality of the soil which is red and sandy, made them not to plant anything in the soil”,¹¹³ a claim echoed by Mrs Kgari and Mrs Sekhu.¹¹⁴ Others blame the absence of coercion in Ga-Rankuwa in contrast to the role of landlords in Lady Selborne.¹¹⁵ Ellis, who did her research in Durban of the period 1845-1870 indicates that the absence of effective conservation enforcers leads to environmental disaster.¹¹⁶ She also maintains that “the government promulgated laws to protect timber, fish and game, but neglected to appoint officials to enforce the laws. And this led to the alteration of the environment of Durban by 1870”.¹¹⁷ This was the case in Ga-Rankuwa, as attested by Mr Andrew, a son of a former landlord:

I suppose if there could be officials allocated to ensure cleanliness and people given materials to clean the locations things will change. Forced removals affected people’s attitude towards their environment, they became apathetic towards it.¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ Shutte, *Ubuntu*, 132.

¹¹² Shutte, *Ubuntu*, 132.

¹¹³ Informant 1.

¹¹⁴ Informant 2 and 7.

¹¹⁵ Informant 1, 3 and 10.

¹¹⁶ See Beverly Ellis, “White settler impact on the environment of Durban 1845-1870”, ed, Dovers, S, et al, In *South Africa’s Environmental History Cases & Comparisons*, (Athens, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, David Philip, 2002).

¹¹⁷ Ellis, “White settler impact on the environment of Durban 1845-1870”, 47.

¹¹⁸ Informant 10.

Another informant blames environmental degradation in Ga-Rankuwa on the fact that water in the resettlement area was expensive, which prevented some people from even attempting cultivation.¹¹⁹ Mr Andrew argues that “losing land indeed makes people to feel less human hence they do not care about the environment”.¹²⁰ This thesis argues that environmental apathy stemmed from the sense of ‘homelessness’ after resettlement. Silverstone explains:

Being at home and being homeless, in short, are not as such matters of movement of physical space, or of the fluidity of social-cultural times and spaces. One is at home when one inhabits a cognitive environment in which one can undertake the routines of daily life and through which one finds one’s identity best mediated and homeless when such cognitive environment is eschewed.¹²¹

Fieldwork indicates that Ga-Rankuwa ended up being dirty with litter. People did not plant trees or grass and this resulted in soil erosion.¹²² Some residents felt the loss of *seriti* (dignity) as humans and unable to adapt to the new settlement, resulting in contempt for it and themselves.¹²³ The area’s dirt can be deemed a trait of lack of *seriti*. Ngubane argues that “a philosophy of a definition of a human person succeeded or failed in proportion to the degree that it harmonized the personality”.¹²⁴ Ngubane takes this further by arguing that African culture supports the idea that a person defines him or herself in everything he or she does.¹²⁵ This explains why resettlement fed into ideas of *dilo* (things) and environmental apathy. Their strategy could be construed as a cry for help in terms of getting title for their houses, employment and funds to improve the soil. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat, “past policies, development trends and traditional beliefs may be partly responsible for the problems

¹¹⁹ Informant 1.

¹²⁰ Informant 10.

¹²¹ Silverstone cited in Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 161.

¹²² Informant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 16.

¹²³ Informant 1 and 10.

¹²⁴ Ngubane, *Conflict of Minds*, 92.

¹²⁵ Ngubane, *Conflict of Minds*, 79.

in the environment” which was why the residents of Ga-Rankuwa subconsciously felt that environmental chaos might attract State attention and assistance.¹²⁶

Hopes of returning to Lady Selborne died when Ga-Rankuwa became part of Bophuthatswana in 1977, and some people aggressively adopted a system of dominating nature instead of negotiating with it. Informants make it clear that most of the resettled people did not plant trees, vegetables or fruits in their yards - which resulted in increased soil erosion.¹²⁷

Environmental apathy in Ga-Rankuwa was a reaction to forced removals. It also suggests that such apathy was part of a strategy of passive resistance and a means of informing the government that they were unhappy with their new area, as Mr Andrew argues.¹²⁸ This demonstrates the erosion of the values implied by the Sotho-Tswana myth of origin. Traditional environmental values persist as informants are conscious that their apathy is new and acquired – and destructive.¹²⁹ Hence some residents tried corrective measures but found themselves frustrated by poor soil quality.¹³⁰

Most residents desired a ‘home’ in Ga-Rankuwa, which became *boroko* instead of ‘home’. Mrs Tshweni emphasises the difference between her residence as *lefa* in Lady Selborne and her abode as ‘a house’ in Ga-Rankuwa, as she had no title to it.¹³¹ The Sotho-Tswana connection between land and identity meant that the loss of land caused alienation from the environment,¹³² exacerbated by the paucity of enforcers of

¹²⁶ Commonwealth Secretariat, *Women and Natural Resource Management*, (London: Marlborough house, 1996), 8.

¹²⁷ Informant 1, 2 and 3.

¹²⁸ Informant 10

¹²⁹ Informant 1-16.

¹³⁰ Informant 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11.

¹³¹ Informant 5.

¹³² Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, 18.

ecological laws¹³³ and the fragmentation of community connectedness. Ga-Rankuwa lacked Lady Selborne's Health Committee that dealt with matters pertaining to public health and sanitation.¹³⁴

Fieldwork indicates that Lady Selborne was kept clean and people's identities were affirmed but land dispossession undermined self-esteem and engendered apathy or even hostility towards the environment. Despite this 'uprootal' some residents tried to employ strategies to ensure that Ga-Rankuwa becomes a 'home' for them from 1962 to 1977, including soil improvement¹³⁵ and the forging of new social bonds.¹³⁶ Some former tenants saw resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa as partly affirming their humanness, even though they did not have title deeds, as they had their own plots and more status than before.¹³⁷ Even their optimism was dampened by poor soil quality,¹³⁸ but the partial participation of some residents in environmental issues manifested by the buying of manure and the planting of fruits, trees, grass and vegetables indicates a journey towards 'making a home' in the resettlement area.¹³⁹

6. Conclusion

Fieldwork suggests that the ramifications of forced removals include the degradation of the environment in Ga-Rankuwa.¹⁴⁰ Widespread environmental apathy represents a form of passive resistance against forced removals and resettlement. As a result the relocation area could not become a 'home' for many of its residents, particularly

¹³³ Informant 1 and 10

¹³⁴ Carruthers, "Urban land claims in South Africa", 3.

¹³⁵ Informant 8, 9, 11 and 14

¹³⁶ Informant 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15 and 16.

¹³⁷ Informant 2, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

¹³⁸ Informant 2, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

¹³⁹ Informant 3, 8, 9, 14 and 15

¹⁴⁰ Informant 1 - 16.

former landlords and especially those who could not purchase plots. Thus there should be different steps that the State, residents, non-governmental institutions and educational institutions should undertake to ensure that the residents of Ga-Rankuwa find fulfilment in the area and establish it as a 'home'.

This chapter has argued that Lady Selborne was a 'home' for its community and was characterised by social harmony and successful subsistence farming.¹⁴¹ Its environment ensured 'fulfilment' and the establishment of 'viable homes' that affirmed its residents' humanness. Developed infrastructure and free title over properties allowed residents to enjoy their *botho* in an area that was situated close to Pretoria's centre.¹⁴² Its interconnected community "simply allowed each individual to become a unique centre of shared life".¹⁴³ This also affirmed people's humanness, as suggested by Ross's argument that a "home is an ideal toward which people strive, over which they struggle, and in relation to which they construct aspects of identity without necessarily achieving 'domestic consolidation'".¹⁴⁴

This explains the spiritual importance of land and 'home'. Casalis argues that in pre-colonial period "the Basotho's had a strong attachment to the land like superstitious respect for the soil and it was not natural for the land to be cut because their soul revolted in it. Instead of cutting the land the Basotho's would better lose it altogether".¹⁴⁵ This explains why displacement aggrieved the Sotho-Tswana of Ga-Rankuwa because they saw land as more than a shelter: it was place for making

¹⁴¹ Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

¹⁴² Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, 164.

¹⁴³ Shutte, *Ubuntu*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Fiona Ross, "Model communities and Respectable residents? Home and housing in low-income residential Estate in the Western Cape South Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 31, Number 3, 2005, 648.

¹⁴⁵ E. Casalis, *The Basutos, Twenty-Three Years in South Africa*, (Cape Town: Struik, 1965), 156.

history where family and neighbours socialised. It was also a sacred space for rituals and an environment that provided food. Losing it meant the loss of *lefa* and *botho*.

Resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa meant that the former residents of Lady Selborne had to start a new history, interpersonal relationships and engagement with the environment - a frustrating process as people were unfamiliar with each other and the soil was infertile. Thus Ga-Rankuwa was difficult to make a 'home' as people hankered after their 'lost home' in Lady Selborne. Many residents became apathetic towards environmental issues.

Some informants, mainly former tenants, described 'a quest for a home in Ga-Rankuwa'. For such former tenants, forced removals came with some positive results and actually affirmed their humanness. This optimism proved short-lived as the area deteriorated further under Homeland rule in the 1970s and the environment resisted improvement. Former landlords found it even harder to adjust to the loss of privilege and the absence of title to their 'homes'. Despite these frustrations, the 'pursuit' continued in the face of crippling environmental degradation, and this 'quest' requires drastic steps (discussed in the following chapter, Chapter Eight) that would assist in ensuring that the resettlement area becomes a 'home' for the resettled.

Chapter Eight

From Lady Selborne to Ga-Rankuwa: Conclusions and the issue of Socio- Environmental Justice.

1. Introduction

This thesis has moved from the premise that the issue of land rights in South Africa is a highly controversial matter, deeply entangled in the vagaries of history. South Africa has inherited problems in land distribution, land ownership and environmental degradation, at least in part, because of the history of forced removals. As Mbao has argued, it has “left a complex and difficult legacy of insecurity on land tenure, landlessness, poverty among black people and [been a cause of] inefficient land administration”.¹ This thesis has illustrated such environmental injustice precipitated by forced removals, using Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa as a case study. In concluding this thesis, we will first summarise the major findings of this thesis and secondly, discuss the practical application of this “useable past”.² In dealing with the second theme, we will discuss means of inculcating environmental awareness among the residents of Ga-Rankuwa.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the history of forced removals has been studied from different genres (Afrikaner, Africanist, Liberal and Revisionist perspectives) but there

¹ M. L. M. Mbao, “Undoing the Injustices of the Past: Restitution of Rights in Land in Post apartheid South Africa, with Special reference to North West Province”, *Journal for Judicial Science*, 27, 2, 2002, 91.

² The idea of a “usable past”, as articulated in a 1918 essay by American critic, Van Wyck Brooks, argues that the past can be used to interpret and understand the present. Cited in L. P. Zamora, *The Usable Past – the imagination of history in recent fiction of the Americas*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

is a lacuna, which the thesis found important to expose and that is the socio-environmental aspect of land dispossession. Chapter Three reveals the socio-environmental history from an ‘Africanist’ perspective which provides the context for Chapters Five, Six and Seven. It gave vital explanations of the existence of environmental history of the Sotho-Tswana and affirmed the proposal in Chapter One about re-languaging ‘environment’ to unlock the environmental history of Africans. Sotho-Tswana conservation ideals which is termed *go boloka tlhago* held that nature has to be preserved for future generations through rituals and the ethic of *hlompo* (respect) of physical sites (graves, shrines) and mental constructs (laws, values, ethics and totems). Tracing African epistemology of the environment critiques Cassalis’s notion, quoted in Chapter One, that “[s]omething like a superstitious respect for the soil has even been observed among them”.³ Additionally, the Chapter highlights that where colonialists saw environmental destruction and degradation in many instances Africans saw conservation such as in the adaptation to bushes, animals and the soil. This is not to say that residents did not in some instances degrade the environment but the point is that they worked creatively and persevered under difficult circumstances to conserve the biophysical world.⁴ Chapter Four revealed that the residents of Lady Selborne were attached to each other and their environment. They took pride in their area as it gave them identity and was a locus of their history. The local sense of identity was able to cut across religious, cultural, racial and class divides, as demonstrated by resistance campaigns against displacement. Forced removals have been highly politicised and other aspects have been neglected. Chapter Five revealed

³ E. Casalis, *The Basutos Twenty-Three Years in South Africa*. (Cape Town: C Struik, 1965), 156-7.

³ W. Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological expansion of Europe 900 – 1900*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 94.

⁴ According to the archival document from the Central Archives, Pretoria (CA) TES4134 Report of the Departmental Committee, “Statement embodying particulars and Survey of the Affairs of Lady Selborne, (1949), 64: Lady Selborne was reported to be a slum in 1949.

that other facets like environment are important in the study of forced removals and uses Lady Selborne as a case study illustrating that through the environment people get engaged in struggle for survival and power. The State alienated the community of Lady Selborne from their environment by reducing access to land and water, and used “scientific” conservation policies to limit both. This alienation did not cause them to disengage with the land in terms of subsistence farming, and they remained committed to cultivation because most entrepreneurship was denied them. Residents tried to retain environmental control by actively involving themselves in the running of their area through the Health and Village Committees. People were made more politically aware and active, which motivated the community to resist its displacement. Success in this struggle in the 1940s motivated the residents to fight against the forced removals of the 1960s, albeit with little success. Forced removals destroyed the community spirit and environmental attachment that the residents had enjoyed since 1905. In Chapter Six we established that forced removals from Lady Selborne meant a withdrawal from history for many residents because their land had given them a sense of their own history. They were now forced to construct a new history where they would always have a nostalgic attachment to Lady Selborne. Those moved to Ga-Rankuwa had no sense of historical continuity and a feeling of historical rupture emerged from the forced removal. The Sotho-Tswana saw a person as a constant work-in-progress, not a state of being but a state of becoming. This means that the Sotho-Tswana definition of a person was disrupted and arrested through loss of land. Those resettled became apathetic towards the environment, were reduced to dependency, in a state of feeling “less human” called *sefifi*.

Forced to focus on survival strategies, many residents of Ga-Rankuwa saw environmental issues as inconsequential. Chapter Seven argued that many former residents of Lady Selborne changed their relationship with their environment as a means of protesting against their loss of 'home'. The cycle of poverty in Ga-Rankuwa meant that, even though many former tenants may have felt "humanised" by their new position as land owners, few could manage to pay to develop their new property. Underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of recreational facilities in Ga-Rankuwa heightened nostalgia for Lady Selborne. Some felt that the new community had potential but most deemed that the community spirit that prevailed in Lady Selborne was non-existent in Ga-Rankuwa. This represented a key failure of resettlement as the Sotho-Tswana saw community as a vital means of defining the self. This exposed that for some of the informants the new area would always be the 'other place' and not 'home'. But, as discussed, the concept of a 'home' was dynamic from immovable to movable 'home' hence some residents started engaging with the environment through food production, which illustrates that "hard times, however do not dictate that history be about decline, degradation, or victimisation".⁵ Land restitution also is an illustration of this. When asked about whether the former landlords want to be reinstated to Lady Selborne, they answered unanimously in the negative. The narrative also highlights the resilience of community ideas and practices towards the land, which were increasingly challenged by the agenda of outsiders.

This thesis has shown that the move from Lady Selborne to Ga-Rankuwa caused massive shifts in people's perceptions of themselves, others and the environment. Removals represented more than social injustice, it meant environmental injustice. It

⁵ Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 208.

has been argued that the community of Lady Selborne cared for the environment and interacted with it (and each other) relatively harmoniously. Though there were problems like the absence of running water and a proper sewerage system, the residents were largely content and did not pay high rates at first.

High rates in Lady Selborne were later instituted after the installation of taps. For many informants, like former landlord Mrs Sekhu, the introduction of rates for water actually interfered with traditional subsistence patterns.⁶ There were also environmental power issues that undermined unity in the township. Many former tenant informants displayed dissatisfaction towards this class-stratification.⁷ The informants did not consciously experience land ownership in terms of class distinction in Lady Selborne, but critical analysis reveals such divisions, albeit subtle. Powerful landlords arrogated the most advantageous environmental resources to themselves and could engage in cultivation while denying their tenants access to food production.⁸ According to Jacobs, the issue of power is a significant consideration in environmental history “and in order to understand the historical dynamic between people and the biophysical environment, it is necessary to identify influence, authority, and material advantages in society”.⁹ However, while capitalist production certainly existed, there is evidence to suggest that people in Lady Selborne collaborated with each other and shared food like vegetables and fruits with those that needed assistance.¹⁰

⁶ Interview, Ga-Rankuwa, (2004), Appendix 1, Informant 7.

⁷ Informant 1, 2, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

⁸ Informant 14.

⁹ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 211.

¹⁰ Informant 2.

Much of this changed in Ga-Rankuwa, as landownership became a benchmark for class and the construction of identity. As Cohnert, *et al*, have argued, “apartheid era spatial configurations continue to shape group identities”.¹¹ Yet, as explored in Chapter Five, the former tenants of Lady Selborne had been relegated to the lower strata of the community in Lady Selborne and actually saw their humanness being affirmed by resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa, even though they leased their plots. In contrast, former landlords persisted in using their previous status as the upper class to pursue their struggle to return to Lady Selborne. They also manipulated their new-found status of ‘have nots’ as a symbol of solidarity with their former tenants in order to fight displacement.

However, this was unsuccessful and there was no active fight against resettlement in Ga-Rankuwa because there was little common ground between tenants and landlords as the former were initially happy in the relocation area while the latter were enraged by the absence of free plots. Those who managed to buy plots constituted the upper class, which carried with them the status of *batho*.¹²

2. Ramifications of forced removals from Lady Selborne to Ga-Rankuwa

The roots of our present system of exploitation and oppression have had to be sought and exposed through re-examination of the past.¹³

This quote reflects the idea that the environmental problems that plague Ga-Rankuwa can be traced back to its history. Harris states “to be open to the past is, simply, to be

¹¹ Cited in S. Horstmeier, and S. Cornelissen, “The Social and Political Construction of Identities in the New South Africa: An Analysis of Western Cape Province”, ed, C. Clapman, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40, 1, 2002, 57

¹² Informant 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16.

¹³ Belinda Bozzoli, “History, Experience and Culture”, ed, B. Bozzoli, *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1983), 1.

open to the roots of what we are, the past is the contrast and perspective for present”.¹⁴ Implicit to Harris’s hypothesis is the idea that environmental problems – particularly those of land scarcity, land degradation and dispossession – have to be researched from the perspective of the past. This thesis has used both an historical socio-environmental perspective and an Afrocentric approach, which has facilitated the exploration of black perceptions of the environment. Many scholars who deal with forced removals have explored the ramifications of the process in ruining the lives of black people¹⁵ while some scholars have gone beyond the social sphere and focused on the environmental impact.¹⁶ Such analyses, however, have not included the changing and historically-constructed meaning of land within the forcibly removed communities and its relationship with social identity. This thesis has tried to reveal the dichotomy that exists between the dominant environmental ideology pertaining to land issues and the marginalised black land ideology, a dichotomy which has resulted in human rights violations. As the thesis has shown, such consequences of land dispossession include a loss of self-worth, the entrenchment of a cycle of poverty and massive environmental degradation.

The rights denied the residents of Ga-Rankuwa include access to sufficient food and water, infrastructure, employment, quality education, shelter, a healthcare system and a healthy environment. The South African Human Rights Commission on Economic and Social Rights the Sangoco’s Report on Poverty and Human Rights argues that

¹⁴ Cited in Farieda Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response: A Historical and Socio-Political Evaluations with particular Reference to Blacks*, Masters Thesis: University of Cape Town, (1990) 13.

¹⁵ See Margaret Nash, *Black Uprooting from White*, (Braamfontein: South African Council of Churches, 1980); L. Platzky and C. Walker, *The surplus people: forced removals in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985) and D. Cosmas, *The Discarded people: An Account of Africa Resettlement in South Africa* (London: Penguin African Library, 1971).

¹⁶ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*.

poverty is a legacy of Apartheid policies that violated black people's rights to enjoy a better life.¹⁷ Land alienation was used as an instrument in ensuring that the community of Ga-Rankuwa lacked political rights and environmental freedom. In terms of environmental freedom, the relocated were not allowed to achieve their human potential in relation to their environment. The consequences of displacement suffered by the Sotho-Tswana of Lady Selborne were far reaching because their land ownership system generally prohibited alienation of right to land.¹⁸ Land has been pivotal to the Sotho-Tswana and was regarded as *lefa*. Interviews conducted in Ga-Rankuwa reflect this powerfully entrenched notion in which the land and the Sotho-Tswana are inextricably interlinked and in which human identity rests on the notion that without land a Mosotho/Motswana is not a "real person".¹⁹ This explains why ideologically "nature" for the Sotho-Tswana is not an object for human exploitation but exists in a dialogue with humans.²⁰ This implies that the environment was perceived as part of humanity's source of existence and sustenance, and that environmental degradation is criminal. Despite the testimony of informants, historical analysis of the period from 1940 to 1960 indicates some level of environmental degradation in Lady Selborne. Overcrowding certainly contributed to the exhaustion of natural resources. For example, resorting to dung as fuel source indicates some depletion of firewood. This is due romanticism of the past by informants, which ignores the coexistence of capitalism along with traditional ideology. Hence Jacobs proposes that:

Environmental historians must account for the social dynamics that feed it, and they should consider social divisions in relations with the biophysical, but

¹⁷ South African Human Rights Commission, *Economic & Social Rights SANGOCO's Report on Poverty and Human Rights*, volume V. (Johannesburg: South African Human Rights Commission, 1999).

¹⁸ Mbao, "Undoing the Injustices of the Past, 90.

¹⁹ Informant 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16.

²⁰ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 40.

populism requires the same critical examination as given the official received wisdom, and we must maintain a critical distance from its values and proposals.²¹

Lady Selborne's scenic beauty heightened its residents' sense of loss, as if the loss of property, identity, means of sustenance, neighbours, friends, family, soil and continuous history was not enough.²² It meant the end of the area's socio-environmental history for residents and the end of the semblance of environmental justice that the upper strata of landlords had enjoyed through ownership of private property. They had to start new lives, histories and friendships in Ga-Rankuwa, where environmental resources were poor.

3. Environmental Justice and History

In recent years, South Africa's environmental justice movement has gained momentum.²³ Jacobs' theory of environmental justice was instrumental in my early thought as she explored Tswana theories of environmental justice. In her conclusions she suggested a more evenhanded distribution of land and water resource, as well as the encouragement of small scale sustainable production. To contribute to environmental justice this thesis argues that Sotho-Tswana theories of environmental conservation and their cultural matter need to be taken into consideration. As McDonald observes, "At its core, environmental justice is about incorporating environmental issues into the broader intellectual and institutional framework of human rights and democratic accountability".²⁴ Khan and others have argued that,

²¹ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Justice*, 217.

²² See Informant 1-16.

²³ See, for example, the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF), which defines itself as a service to network the South African non-governmental and community-based organizations on matters concerning environmental justice.

²⁴ David McDonald (ed), *Geography, the environment, and demography. Environmental justice in South Africa*, (Athens: Ohio University Press/Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2002) 3.

until recently, environmentalism in South Africa has been tantamount to “a wildlife-centered, preservationist approach”, which appealed chiefly to the financially comfortable and largely white minority, while alienating the majority of the country’s blacks. In the last decade, however, environmentalists have accepted that appealing to all South Africans demands the redefinition of the environmental agenda to embrace fundamental needs, such as the right to a healthy environment.²⁵

It is important to note in defining human rights that it is a complex and subjective concept that is difficult to translate into law, hence this thesis focuses on “Human Rights as human needs”.²⁶ Craston defines such rights “as positive rights because they are recognised by positive law, the actual law of actual states”.²⁷ Unfortunately black positive needs for secure settlement, freedom of movement, right to life, freedom of religion, belief and opinion and freedom of security were not regarded as rights by the law in South Africa before 1994, but remained positive needs. The South African Human Rights Commission posits that “the apartheid Human Rights violation is currently manifested in the lack of access to productive land, homelessness and high levels of insecure tenure”.²⁸ Laws like the Land Act of 1913 and 1936, the Native Trust Act and the Group Areas Act of 1950 and 1956 restricted residence and movement of races. Black and white freedoms were curtailed, however, unevenly.

It is vital for restoration and resettlement to occur for environmental justice to exist for those who were displaced. According to the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), forced removals effected without negotiations with the residents

²⁵ Cited in McDonald (ed), *Geography, the environment, and demography*. 28.

²⁶ Mandla Seleokane, *Socio-Economic Rights In the South African Constitution: Theory and Practice*, (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 2001) 20.

²⁷ Cited in Seleokane, *Socio-Economic Rights in the South African Constitution*, 8.

²⁸ South African Human Rights Commission, *3rd Economic & Social Rights Report 1999/2000*, 278.

on resettlement or removal constitute a violation of human rights.²⁹ On the same note, using the stipulations of COHRE, this case study of Lady Selborne rarely encountered international standards required by human rights law or even basic notions of human dignity.³⁰

According to Glazewski, “environmental justice broadly exhorts that nature’s environmental gift, should be distributed equally and certain groups of society should not bear an unequal brunt of negative environmental impacts”.³¹ The case study of Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa has shown that various black groups were burdened with environmentally poor areas while their white counterparts were able to take over Lady Selborne, which was superior environmentally. For socio-environmental justice to be realised there must be equilibrium between environmental rights and economic improvement.³² The former residents of Lady Selborne suffered environmental injustice when the area was appropriated by the State. Levin, Solomon and Weiner assert that “apartheid alienation of the soil and water resources was central” during the pre-1994 period³³ because blacks found that “land was vital, no life was possible without the land, everything was from land”.³⁴ This thesis has largely agreed with the conventional understanding of forced removals, captured in Oosthuizen and Molokoe’s definition:

Forced removals can be defined as a process of control, division and segregation of people. It is achieved by forcing people to move from one place of residence to another without their opinion and/or approval. In South Africa forced

²⁹ Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, *Forced Evictions: Violations of Human Rights*, (Geneva, Switzerland: COHRE, 2003).

³⁰ COHRE, *Forced Evictions*, 13.

³¹ Cited in South African Human Rights Commission, *4th Economic & Social Rights Report 2000/2002*, (2003), 321.

³² South African Human Rights Commission, *4th Economic & Social Rights Report*, 323.

³³ Richard Levin, et al, “Forced removals and Land Claims”, eds, Levin, R. and Weiner, D. *No More Tears: Struggles for Land in Mpumalanga, South Africa*, (Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1997) 100.

³⁴ Levin et al, “Forced removals and Land Claims”, 9.

removals were carried out to implement the apartheid policy, which was aimed at segregated development in separated geographical, political and economic terms.³⁵

This definition, however, neglects the psychological changes caused by forced removals. Van Eeden argues “the ‘removal’ or ‘transference’ of the psyche or mind to think about change, no matter if it is economical or political must be considered in the process of identifying aspects relating to removal”.³⁶ She takes this further by stating that the underlying motives of forced removals like “language, race, class, gender, labour, social destruction, disease, poverty and war” have to be considered when analysing them.³⁷ They divided families, tampered with gender roles, exacerbated poverty and interfered with the environment and people’s relationship therewith.

Most of Lady Selborne’s former landlords became tenants in Ga-Rankuwa because they did not receive compensation for their former homes. Most informants who were tenants in Lady Selborne maintained that they were happy to move to Ga-Rankuwa and felt that their humanness was actually affirmed by the resettlement.³⁸ Having a roof over their heads, even though they had to pay rent, meant that they were *batho*. Most former landlords, however, felt that “through removals their humanness was destroyed”.³⁹ This indicates that class stratification re-emerged in Ga-Rankuwa. The informants, especially former landlords of Lady Selborne who could not purchase

³⁵ Gerhard Oosthuizen, and Ben Molokoe, “The Bakwena ba Mogopa: Victims of Forced Removals, 1983-1984, *Historia*, 45, 1, 2000, 345.

³⁶ Elize Van Eeden, “Forced Removals in its many colours: A comparative study of selected examples worldwide”, The South African historical Society Conference, (1997), 4.

³⁷ Van Eeden, “Forced Removals in its many colours”, 5-7.

³⁸ Informant 1, 2, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

³⁹ Informant 3, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 15.

plots in the relocation area, describe the ‘loss of will to live’, which explains the loss of interest in environmental issues.⁴⁰ This led to people like Musi saying:

Here’s the country’s economy in a mess and all that can be done is to collect *maphepha* to preserve an animal that to me is as useless as the dinosaur.⁴¹

Despite this, both former tenants and former landlords had some sense of loss of identity due to removals, whether it is of land, friends, family or material possessions. Worst was the loss of fertile soil and therefore the chance to engage in food production, which combined with the loss of infrastructure.⁴²

There was not only a class fissure running through the different experience of forced removals, but also a gendered dimension. Poor soil quality and water shortages was the norm, which hit women particularly hard as they were the food producers and improving the soil was difficult due to poverty.⁴³ Even creative measures normally ended in failure.⁴⁴ Food production plummeted and poverty skyrocketed, and its inhabitants thus named it Ga-Rankuwa: ‘we are not welcomed by the soil’.

Socio-environmental injustice is also evident in the fact that black people depended highly on the white-controlled economy, which is an indicator of a collective subordination to another race.⁴⁵ Some men in Ga-Rankuwa, as in other resettlement areas, were forced to engage in the migrant labour system since poverty was rife – and thus many children grew up without a father, which caused much domestic damage.⁴⁶

The Churches Report on Forced removals in South Africa asserts that forced removals

⁴⁰ See Informant 5 and 6.

⁴¹ O. Musi, “Black View point”, *Cape Argus*, 14 November 1989, 6.

⁴² Informant 5.

⁴³ Informant 2 and 7.

⁴⁴ Informant 2 and 9.

⁴⁵ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 220.

⁴⁶ Kevin Shillington, *History of Southern Africa*, (London: Longman, 1990) 161.

had no respect for the delicacy of family structures.⁴⁷ Women were burdened with many responsibilities and some families disintegrated. Male dignity was degraded as men were treated as boys by whites in the job market. The humiliation they suffered harmed their self-esteem further. Moller argues that such men, regardless of actual marital status, were typically treated as single,⁴⁸ hence Shillington calls their wages “bachelor wages” which could not assist families in developing their immediate environment.⁴⁹

Thus land loss and its concomitant effect on self-esteem led the Sotho-Tswana of Ga-Rankuwa to become apathetic towards environmental issues.⁵⁰ Evidence of environmental degradation is written in the landscape of the area: litter, soil erosion and little greenery.⁵¹ This reveals the history, politics and philosophy of its inhabitants and the State. It also shows that “Man’s power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument”.⁵² It shows that, though Ga-Rankuwa was termed an independent area under Bophuthatswana in 1977, the Nationalist government had already ruined the resident’s psychologically by displacing them to an infertile area and by failing to develop it after 1961.

Many black people adhere to such environmental beliefs but that does not mean they oppose environmental conservation. While pre-colonial blacks “lived in close contact

⁴⁷ *Relocations: The Churches’ Report on Forced Removals in South Africa*, (Randburg: South African Council of Churches and the South African Catholic Bishops Conference, 1984), 31.

⁴⁸ Valerie Moller, “Change in South African Labour”, eds, H. Giliomee, and L. Schemmer, *Up Against the Fences: Poverty, Passes and Privilege in South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1985), 28.

⁴⁹ Shillington, *History of Southern Africa*, 161.

⁵⁰ Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, 1.

⁵¹ Observed during fieldwork in Ga-Rankuwa, 2004.

⁵² C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on education with special reference to the teaching of English in the Upper forms of Schools*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), 40.

with the environment and regarded themselves as part of the environment, not separate from it”, the Nationalist government prioritised conservation over black needs.⁵³ This study has suggested that black poverty could be seen to have led to a black withdrawal from environmental issues in the face of pragmatic need. Hoffman and Ashwell support this when they argue that black environmental antagonism stems from the “insensitivity to the prevailing socio-economic conditions and cultural practices by the apartheid government”.⁵⁴ For environmental justice to be realised policy makers should not ignore the ‘useable past’ from the previously disadvantaged cultures.

4. A useable past? Steps towards environmental Activism in Ga-Rankuwa

Can an understanding of history be deployed to encourage environmental activism among blacks in resettlement areas like Ga-Rankuwa? Mamdani has observed that the colonial institutions of Indirect Rule in the countryside have not been democratised in much of independent Africa, and customary African structures have not been opened to community participation.⁵⁵ The State still has to ensure that African leadership structures are recognised and involve participation of the community and not ignore their cultural historical facet, as it is a crucial ‘useable past’ in attaining socio-environmental justice for Africans. Jacobs proposes that there must be open participation in democratic decisions in South Africa or communities will be faced with unfair state intervention again, however progressive the national constitution.⁵⁶ Black Africans in South Africa were not involved in formulating the policies that

⁵³ Ngubane cited in Khan, *Contemporary South African Environmental Response*, 15.

⁵⁴ T. Hoffman, and A. Ashwell, *Nature Divided: Land degradation in South Africa*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2001), 32.

⁵⁵ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 24–5, 288–9.

⁵⁶ Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*, 221.

governed them but were forced to obey such laws, hence the environmental problems in the formerly-black areas. This implies that South Africans need to build not only new societal relationships but also new relationships with their environment.⁵⁷ The issue of forced removals remains controversial in South Africa and raises questions that require profound resolutions to ensure that the communities affected are left satisfied and participate in the development of their areas.⁵⁸ As this thesis has shown, the pernicious legacy of forced removals still resonates in those displaced from Lady Selborne and these perceptions resulted in the degradation of the resettlement area's environment.⁵⁹ Some residents adopted passive resistance, characterised by non-participation in environmental issues, because they felt aggrieved by displacement. Thus there should be different steps that the state, residents, educational institutions, businesses and non-governmental institutions undertake to ensure that residents of Ga-Rankuwa find fulfilment in the area and establish it as a 'home'. I propose that the displaced of Ga-Rankuwa need to 'participate' in the political, social, economical and environmental making of their location to achieve this.

I have argued that environmental scholars have dealt with the issue of environmental activism but not within an historical context.⁶⁰ The key to inculcating environmental activism has been through education and the eradication of the legacy of Apartheid.⁶¹ The drawback of such a proposal is that it fails to consider that for blacks to participate in environmental issues, their perception of themselves must be transformed through land redistribution, and environmental policies, which should balance traditional and Western Science via a new paradigm that allows discussion

⁵⁷ Horstmeier, and Cornelissen, "The Social and Political Construction of Identities", 56.

⁵⁸ Mbao, "Undoing the Injustices of the Past", 91.

⁵⁹ Informant 1-16.

⁶⁰ Khan, "Contemporary South African Environmental Response".

⁶¹ Khan, "Contemporary South African Environmental Response".

between these two discourses. Practical views relevant to the South African context should be adopted, and should accommodate traditional laws on land and land use. Although this thesis has tried to fill the lacuna, still more research on changing black perceptions of the environment or the causes thereof is necessary. It is important to deal with education from within indigenous cultures and using indigenous environmental beliefs and laws within the frame-work of the modern democratic constitution, in order to rehabilitate black environmental activism.

The different meanings people attach to land and the relationship of land rights to power and wealth are helpfully delineated by case-studies such as this. Case-studies such as this could be incorporated into secondary school history syllabi. Students would analyse community and government responses to environmental injustices, and critically assess strategies to promote more ecologically sound and socially just practices. Students should be offered education that includes a “useable past” that makes them able to confront the propagandistic messages of power elites and to continue the project of progressive social transformation and liberation.

All informants expressed concern for their area, which is a vital step towards environmental activism.⁶² One informant, for example, proposed a practical measure that was used by Lady Selborne’s Sotho-Tswana: local government should oblige people to look after their environment, as was also done by pre-colonial chiefs and their helpers (*dikgosana*).⁶³ Local residents should work with the State, education institutions and Non Governmental Organisations to rebuild their environments. According to Setiloane, the idiom *motho ke motho ka batho babang* explains that a

⁶² Informant 1-16.

⁶³ Informant 10.

person becomes a real human being through participation, and thus residents would affirm their humanness through environmental activism.⁶⁴ A strategy of combating environmental apathy could be initiated through allowing residents to have ownership of land in their former township as suggested by the land redistribution and land restitution policy. Many of those interviewed did not want their former lands restored but opted to re-establish themselves in the resettlement area, while other members of the community of Ga-Rankuwa felt that they want to be restored to Suiderberg, the new name for Lady Selborne.⁶⁵ This is clearly stipulated in a Setswana proverb, “*Maroping goa boelwa go saboelweng ke maleng*”, which means people should not be afraid to return back to the places where life was enjoyable if they are not fulfilled in their new areas.⁶⁶ Hence Seremane argues that “it is in these terms that we should understand land reform, as a return to the land and, to people’s beginnings”.⁶⁷ This does not only imply a physical return to the former land but it also encourages those who applied for compensation and former tenants to use psychological restoration for healing. This implies that, through land redistribution and restitution, people’s self worth could be restored and in the process social betterment programmes like environmental awareness could be spread among communities. Restoration requires the collaboration of local communities, State, schools and con-governmental organisations. Seremane argues that:

These women and men clearly show us that when the poor begin to help themselves, they deserve a helping hand. When the homeless and landless begin to help themselves they deserve support from law and government. As a matter of honor, this is our responsibility to the homeless and landless.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Setiloane, *African Theology*, 14.

⁶⁵ Mbao, “Undoing the injustices of the Past”, 108.

⁶⁶ M.O.M. Seboni, *Diane le Maele a Setswana*, (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1980), 119.

⁶⁷ W. Seremane, “Land – The Cradle of the People”, ed, M. Winberg, *Voices from the land: Experiences of land Reform in South Africa*, (South Africa, Western Cape: Juta, 1998), 6.

⁶⁸ Seremane, “Land”, 6.

From the outset, the residents of Lady Selborne resisted state control over their environment. As segregation increased, they attempted to retain their long-held status as “landowners”. However, having established an “African” and communal identity in an urban environment, the inhabitants of Lady Selborne were scattered in the early 1960s – sub-divided into various ‘ethnicities’ and forcibly removed to a variety of distant “homelands”, “Bantustans” and semi-rural townships – as a consequence of the Group Areas Act and related legislation. In the atmosphere of insecurity over land tenure, there was mounting opposition to state control. In 1955, The Group Areas Board began the process of transferring Lady Selborne to whites. Unanimous opposition came from Lady Selborne residents and a group of white liberal allies. The immense physical effort in transforming the land in establishing Lady Selborne was mentioned. From being a water-logged marsh, it became “one of the best native townships in South Africa. This had been done through hard labour, toil, sweat and almost blood”.⁶⁹

Traditional ethics need to be considered in environmental policy considerations, as delineated in chapter 3. The involvement and co-operation of the community and the government is crucial in ensuring environmental rehabilitation in the resettlement areas. The end of apartheid and its concomitant negative stereotypes will assist in the improvement in the quality of life in the former black areas and can assist in them prioritising about the issues of the environment.⁷⁰ This relates clearly to current trends in formerly-black areas, but the hastening of the process of land restitution and the engagement of indigenous land use and land rights laws with western laws must be prioritised in order to restore a sense of humanness among black people.

⁶⁹ Carruthers, *Urban land claims in South Africa*, 7.

⁷⁰ Khan, “Contemporary South African Environmental Response”, 11.

The State should assist the residents of Ga-Rankuwa with the process of land restitution and provide compensation for the loss of their former homes in order for them to make a 'home' there. Though land restitution implies that "they should be restored to their land and provided with other remedies as people who were dispossessed by racially discriminatory laws and practices",⁷¹ this is complicated as it is not easy or necessarily germane to expropriate land from the current landowners in Suiderberg. It is also difficult as street names, buildings and general environment in former Lady Selborne has been changed. A renewal of the Ga-Rankuwa residents' 'pursuit for a home' in Ga-Rankuwa is thus necessary, and requires that they contribute economically to their new area by buying fertilizers to improve their soil and planting trees to decrease soil erosion. It also requires the State to support the resettlement area financially in achieving environmental development.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, the concept of *ubuntu* or *botho* suggests that participation is key in creating a 'home' in Ga-Rankuwa, which implies that the residents must take the lead and ensure development of their immediate surroundings by seeking employment, caring for and cleaning their immediate environments. Commerce should be encouraged to create businesses in the area. Cernea maintains that the major problem arises due to unemployment in the relocation area as it makes the unemployed develop a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, which gets translated into a many activities they engage in.⁷² Maré argues that South Africa's history of displacement entailed economic, political and ideological processes that

⁷¹ Mbao, "Undoing the Injustices of the Past", 94.

⁷² Michael M. Cernea, *The Urban Environment and population Relocation*, (Washington: The World Bank, 1993), 28.

have lead to social (and, as this thesis has shown, environmental) ennui.⁷³ The findings of this thesis lead me to concur with Khan that removals made blacks apathetic to environmental issues, and that discrimination must be eradicated for them to become actively involved in rehabilitating their environment.⁷⁴ According to Tulleken, the State is trying to improve the environment by awarding Townships awards like the “cleanest town” – a good step in encouraging activism but it has to be combined with community awareness through paid officials.⁷⁵ Adding tangible benefits to these awards would stimulate this process. Facilities need to be speedily improved, as does service delivery, to achieve environmental upliftment in formerly-black areas. Returning to Lady Selborne could thus assist those who opt for restitution as they would win a measure of consolation and in the process they will have ownership of the area.

However, it is important to note that all the former landlords interviewed maintained that they do not want to go back to their former township. This is an important consideration as this shows that they are indeed trying to make the resettlement area a ‘home’. They have invested in Ga-Rankuwa and part of their history is embedded in the township. They do not want the rupture of their history they had in the former township to occur once more. These residents have accepted the theory of a “movable home” as compared to a set idea of a ‘home’ that they had when they arrived in the relocation area.⁷⁶

⁷³ G. Maré, “Processes, Policies and African Population Relocation”, ed, D. Thomas, *“Resettlement”*: Papers given at the 51st annual council meeting, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1981), 1.

⁷⁴ Khan, “Contemporary South African Environmental Response”, 1.

⁷⁵ L. Tulleken, “Environment and tourism: Cleanest Town”, *Cape Argus*, 24 November 2005, 24.

⁷⁶ N. Rapport and J. Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, (London: Routledge: 2000), 158.

Research, participation, land redistribution and restitution are thus integral parts of a democratic resolution of the land question and crucial to restoring environmental justice. Further participatory research on socio-environmental history of forced removals would, however, need to move beyond identification of removals and their impacts. It should begin to focus more specifically on the role of organisations in reversing environmental degradation and, where appropriate, formulate alternative policies to be followed, which include both traditional cultural and religious perceptions of the land and western scientific environmental ideals. This thesis has demonstrated that policies established during the segregationist period failed dismally in inculcating environmental conservation and preservation – and instead led to environmental injustice and apathy. Future research could use other case-studies like Alexandria and Everton to compare micro-environments, establishing a comparative base to explore ideas delineated in this thesis.

In conclusion, segregationist policies and forced removals led to widespread environmental damage in addition to ruining the lives of many black people. Land-related Acts led directly and indirectly to displacements and exposed blacks to a vicious cycle of poverty and destruction of cultural and economic systems. These Acts also undermined black self-esteem and concern for the environment. Environmental degradation thus became prevalent in resettlement areas like Ga-Rankuwa. Some residents subsequently became apathetic or even antagonistic towards the environment, in stark contrast to the reverence they had previously felt. The slow rate of service delivery in formerly-black areas has not helped reverse this anti-environmental stance, and the government must develop such areas faster while providing environmental education, involving business and the community. It is

important that the community of Ga-Rankuwa try to involve itself in its rehabilitation, despite the long-term ramifications of forced removals. As Timberlake has argued that “it is the African peasant who best understands how and why he she has been forced to damage the environment on which they depend and it is he or she who is the key to rebuilding their continent”.⁷⁷ The residents of Ga-Rankuwa should thus remember the saying: “*Shuping goa boelwa gosa boelweng ke maleng*”.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis*, 195.

⁷⁸ “Where life was enjoyable, one can return”.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS (2004) Lady Selborne and Ga-Rankuwa

QUESTIONS FOR FIELDWORK

1. From where and to where were you moved during forced removals of the 1950, 60s?
2. Why were you moved?
3. What process was followed to move you from your home?
4. How did you feel about removals?
5. Describe life in Lady Selborne before forced of the 1950s and 1960s.
6. Describe the environment of Lady Selborne from 1905 to the 1960s.
7. How did people relate with their environment in Lady Selborne during the same period?
8. Describe the uses of animals like goats, cows etc. in Lady Selborne.
9. How were the conditions in Ga-Rankuwa since 1960 to 1979?
10. Describe the environment in Ga-Rankuwa after you were resettled since 1960s.
11. Since 1960 how have you and the community in Ga-Rankuwa been relating with the environment?
12. How did forced removals affect you and the community?
13. Explain the concept of *botho*. How does it relate to land loss?
14. What are your feelings about land restitution? Do you think it is effective in land distribution? Give reasons

Interviews

Informant 1: Mrs I. Mvula

Age: 68

Date of interview: 24/06/04

1. From Lady Selborne at Kroom Street in 1965
2. I was a tenant staying with my elder sister, her husband and 9 children in 2 rooms, the land lord was moved so I had to move
3. I had to move first before the police came. The government of the time sent people around to inform us that we had to move, so I decided on my own to vacate my room before things became worse.
4. I felt bad because I was enjoying myself living with people of different races side by side in harmony, now I had to leave and settle in a place where I had to stay with Blacks only. My life was indeed disrupted, I lost friends who meant everything to me and I had to start a new life in Ga-Rankuwa staying temporarily with my elder sister Ruth.
5. Lady Selborne was a very interesting place we lived together with Coloureds and Indians who used to be friendly. They would sell food to us, like *achaar*

and if we had no money they would give us and we would pay latter. Unity used to prevail there. Even though I was a tenant but I used to enjoy myself. The quality of the soil was good to plant vegetables and fruits. If other people were poor we used to share our produce with them. Many men used to work at steel work in Atteridgeville and it was not far from Lady Selborne. Some men used to work in mines at Kimberly or in Johannesburg. They were migrant workers and they used to leave their wives at home. As a community we would assist each other with problems that were encountered. Many of us women were mainly domestic workers in white homes and it was easier to travel there, one could even walk to work. But passes were important because without a pass one was not allowed in town. To me Lady Selborne was a home that was strategically placed, nearer to work and with people of different races who loved one another.

6. The environment was very clean. As tenants we were forced to clean the surroundings of our rooms and we took turns to do that. Landlords would inspect the surroundings, and if they were found dirty she/he will be upset and try to reprimand us. They wanted their homes and the entire environment spick and span. People used to clean up around and outside their areas. We cared immensely for the environment. Because the land was good, many Indians would plant veggies or buy them from the market and sell to us. This used to help us a lot.
7. We took care of the environment by making a point that we clean and also by planting food that would help us supplement our poor wages. There was a river there and many Shangaans, Sothos used to eat big frogs called *matlametlo*. The meat of this frog is like chicken. The area had a lot of willow trees and we used to use them for decoration in funerals and weddings.
8. Animals are important especially cows; traditionally they were used for *lobola* that is why we love them so much. In Lady Selborne there were people who owned cows and goats. They used to sell them to the community, especially blacks who use them for rituals.
9. In Ga-Rankuwa the soil is red and its quality is very bad. With such a soil it is not easy to plant vegetables the way we used to do in Lady Selborne. The soil really makes Ga-Rankuwa unbearable. Since many of us are poor we really cannot survive well without planting vegetables. Worst thing was the fact that we lost some of our friends who decided to resettle in other places like Mamelodi or Atteridgeville. The community spirit was disturbed but now things are better because we have revamped that.
10. To me the quality of the soil was the major draw back that made the land not to be usable the way we used to do in Lady Selborne. Those who had cows were not allowed to bring them and this made some people poor. Because cows are like money, they are wealth many who had to sell them lost a lot because they had to sell them for less money. This angered many people I suppose they then lost interest in many things like trying to improve the quality of soil and plant veggies so that they can survive. Hence land became degraded with soil erosion, dongas and pollution everywhere in the area.
11. I think the relationship has died especially the cleaning of the environment. People do not care about the environment even the area where they live. May be is because some take advantage that since in Lady Selborne they were tenants and landlords used to force them to clean here in Ga-Rankuwa no one tells anybody what to do. Worst part of it I think the fact that water is

ss I think loosing land especially for landlords was painful and meant that they also lost their humanness.

14. I think the government is doing very well. Many people are getting money but those who were tenants are not getting anything.

Informant 2: Mrs R. Kgari

Age: 81

Date of interview: 25/06/04

1. Lady Selborne at Cartwright section in about 1965. I was a tenant renting 2 rooms and 1 room was R5. I lived with my sister, 9 children and my husband. There was peace among my family even though there was no space. My landlord was Mr. Makentsi, he had two houses he was not living with us but employed someone to look after us.
2. The government sent people who came to talk to us; they said they are taking the land. They complained that landlords did not want to move so they had to come and explain that to us.
3. The people who were sent by the government wrote the names of tenants down and told us that we were going to own our own land we should choose from areas like Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and Ga-Rankuwa. I chose Ga-Rankuwa and I was given a date and I moved with my sister and family.
4. I was very happy about removals because I was a tenant in Lady Selborne so by moving to Ga-Rankuwa I was going to be a landlord myself to me it was liberating. Landlords in Lady Selborne used to control us like children they would ask whether we have cleaned or collected papers. Is worse with me my landlord was not living with us he employed someone to look after us. Now in Ga-Rankuwa I was going to be my own boss in my own house.
5. Lady Selborne was multiracial place Africans, Coloreds, Indians lived together harmoniously like real brothers. Indians used to go house to house and sell vegetables, fruits and clothes to us. If one had no money they would sell in credit. This only happens if people live in harmony. Some of us were better than landlords because we knew how to use our money, some landlords were jealous about that. I used to be good with working on the small plot that was allocated to my family and me. I planted pumpkins, spinach, carrots, chillies, tomatoes and onions and I would give to those who needed food if I had enough. Such food used to supplement our wages very well. In planting such vegetables we used to make straight lines furrows to conserve water because we got it from pets and later in the 1940s water was expensive and we had to save it. For the trees we made round curved furrows with the same reason of saving water. What was pain staking at Lady Selborne was the bucket sewerage system. Tenants had turns to clean up the surroundings of the

ed buses. There were churches like Wesleyan, Lutheran and Catholic I belonged to the Order of Ethiopia Church. Some plots were not that big like the ones in Lady Selborne. But where I am living in Zone 1 land is big as compared to other areas in Ga-Rankuwa. People liked to gamble they used horses like lotto.

6. The environment was very good; rain came timorously not like today where it is inconsistent and it comes with wind. The soil was very good it was *seloko* (clay) fertile it could accept any kind of vegetable or fruits. We had no taps; they arrived while we were about to be moved. We used wells where we drew water and we could water our gardens anytime. With the taps water became expensive and we used to fight with the municipality about that.
7. Very well we cleaned the land. People planted vegetables and fruits
8. Few people owned livestock but when we needed goats or cows to do our rituals we bought them from them. Such people looked very well after their animals. Their animals grazed on the farm and they were healthy. Unlike today's animals are given chemical food and they are not that healthy.
9. When we arrived the area had no facilities like hospitals. Likewise we had few shops owned by people who were not from Lady Selborne I suppose they came to open shops in Ga-Rankuwa because they saw the opportunity of making money since many of us were poor. But I was happy since I am a person who believes in ancestors I was now going to do rituals in my own house. I chose a tree and a corner of my house to sacrifice for *badimo*. Conditions have improved when we arrived there was no electricity and transport was lacking. Today there is efficient transport, many schools and electricity. But poverty still prevails. Many of our children are not working and it is difficult because one cannot even rely on the soil, which is not fertile in cultivating food. Due to lack of jobs many of us started to gamble through the China man and we managed to make life out of that. Others especially men play *madaese* (dice gambling)
10. Land is very bad it is red soil one cannot plant like in Lady Selborne. But I am happy that I am a landlord. The community littered everywhere but others were considerate they used their waste as manure. Other people planted trees, vegetables and grass but others did not care about their environment.
11. Land of a poor quality. My plot is bigger than the one that I had in Lady Selborne but it is useless to own such land because it is not useful in terms of agricultural produce. At least it was not degraded like today there is soil erosion because of the rains that come with wind. People also do not care for the environment; they dump litter any-where. The quality of the soil makes many people not to care about looking after their soil. They are discouraged because it is expensive to buy manure and topsoil to improve such a soil. But other people are trying and they are doing very well.
12. Bad because we are no longer united like before. The community spirit of togetherness is not like in Lady Selborne today in Ga-Rankuwa we are not united like in Lady Selborne. The people whom I was resettled with here some of them were not living around my area in Lady Selborne so we had to re-

establish new friendships. But at least I knew some of the people that I was relocated with. Worst of all forced removals affected my relationship with my brothers they now live far from Ga-Rankuwa. They were relocated in Atterigdeville if I want to see them I have to pay a lot of money. As a result we only see each other when there are funerals, weddings, ancestral rituals and other celebrations.

13. I think *botho* and land loss are related because by loosing land one loose his/her sense of ownership and feel useless. Like myself my humanness was affirmed through getting land in Ga-Rankuwa. I have *motse* a home for my children their inheritance.
14. As a former tenant I really cannot complain because those who owned land in Lady Selborne have to get rewards for their property. They have to be reimbursed for what they worked for. I think the policy is working very well.

Informant 3: Ms J. Motshetshane

Age: 62

Date of interview: 27/06/04

1. From Lady Selborne at number 1037 Magalie Street. We were moved in 1963. My parents were landlords.
2. We were informed that the area was declared a Group area and it was for white people.
3. The government handed out papers to the community; they stipulated that we must move to Ga-Rankuwa; Uitvalgrond. The police came to take my family out of my home. We were resettled in Ga-Rankuwa in an unroofed house.
4. I was not happy about removals because my family was given an unfamiliar place where we had to start new relationships and cultivate vegetables and fruits from afresh. Whereas while we were at Lady Selborne we cultivated a lot of vegetables and fruits and they were destroyed this was painful to my family. Likewise it was painful because we had to leave our sacred place where my father who was a *Ngaka* (African herbalist) and my family used to communicate with our ancestors normally under a tree or at the corner of a house.
5. Lady Selborne had lots of hooligans and thugs. Some people liked gambling like horses and Chinaman. We had shops every corner. We also had a hospital Holy cross, and there were many schools like St Peters, Lutheran, Wesleyan, and Holy cross. There were about 2 high schools and +10 primary schools. The area was clean it was because tenants and land owners cleaned and also it was under the management of the Gija (people who cleaned the streets). Some Black people were wealthy and had successful businesses like Mr Mmotla.
6. There were lots of trees. People planted vegetables and fruits. The soil was a bit sandy and was fertile. The area was clean; either tenants or landlords cleaned in every house.
7. People ensured that they clean their environment at all times.
8. Many people who lived around the Magaliesburg Mountain were the ones who owned livestock and other animals like horses. They used horses to sell wood and coal. Cows, goats were sold mainly to Black people because they used to slaughter them when there were weddings, funerals and traditional rituals.
9. Ga-Rankuwa was like a veld, the soil was infertile where we were resettled in Zone 1 the soil is clay and it is infertile. This contributed to many houses cracking and falling like my home it had to be rebuilt. Likewise there were many dongas that

emerged over time due to the quality of land. The plots were small about 600square meters as compared to Lady Selborne which had about 900square meters of land. There was no hospital it was only established in 1973 people used to go to Hendrick Verwoerd hospital in town. But as time went on we got clinics in the 1970s and a hospital. There was a shop located in Motsatsi Street called “Ko-Cecelia” the owner was not from Ga-Rankuwa she opened the shop because she saw opportunities in the area. There were 2 schools; Kgaogelo high school and Lekgalong lower primary. Transport was very poor only one train from Rustenberg and few buses. Another problem was ancestral rituals since we had to vacate our home in Lady Selborne we had to live our sacred ritual space in our home. But we continued the ritual in Ga-Rankuwa as my father was a traditional healer.

10. Ga-Rankuwa was degraded especially by the year 1975 and in 1976 it was worse as many people were living in the area. This was because of the quality of soil, which was infertile there is soil erosion the environment is filthy. Some people tried to preserve the soil by throwing in topsoil and planting trees but the streets are appalling.

11. People tried to put fertilizers on the soil to improve it in order to plant trees and vegetables. They also used the veld a lot to get wood. But many people did not care about the environment.

12. Many of our friends were spread to Eastwood, Mamelodi and Atteridgeville and this destroyed the community because we had to restart new relationship. But it became easier because as Africans we believe that a person is who he/she is because of others, thus we cultivated new relationships.

13. It relates because in Lady Selborne people built houses and had good relationships with the community and there was unity, and through land loss people lost such relationships and property and found themselves in solitude. This means land loss led to loss of humanness.

14. I am neutral because the system requires a lot of procedure that has to be followed like witnesses. My brother is irresponsible he lives far away from Ga-Rankuwa he does not want to help in reclaiming the land that my parents lost. He said there is no point. Hence I could not do anything because the commission requested that he must avail himself. We did absolutely nothing. But I think money is a better compensation even if is not enough, going back to live in Suiderberg will not help because the area is no longer the same. I do not think it will be exciting to stay there as it was before the 1960s.

Informant 4: Mr W. Kgari

Age: 62

Date of interview: 27/06/04

1. Lady Selborne at Cartwright section in about 1965. My parents were tenants renting 2 rooms.
2. The government sent people who came to talk to tenants and landlords they said; they are taking the land. They complained that landlords did not want to move so they had to come and explain that to tenants.
3. The people who were sent by the government wrote the names of tenants and told them that, they were going to own their houses they should choose from areas like Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and Ga-Rankuwa. My parents chose Ga-Rankuwa and they were given a date to move.
4. I felt very bad because I lost many of my friends but I was happy that we were going to live in our own home. And my parents will not be treated like slaves

forced to clean up. Since we had bucket sewerage system for our toilets sometimes the workers who collected the buckets would spill the sewerage and the tenants were forced to clean up. This to me was upsetting especially if it was my family's turn.

5. Lady Selborne was integrated Africans, Coloreds and Indians lived together harmoniously like real brothers and sisters. Indians had businesses like selling food and clothes. If one had no money they would sell in credit. We had Coloreds and Indian friends. Many houses had vegetables and planted fruit trees. As tenants we were also allocated a small plot. My parents planted pumpkins, spinach, carrots, chillies, tomatoes and onions. Such food used to supplement my parents wages very well. Some people had good businesses like Mr Mmotla who owned buses. There were churches like Lutheran, Catholic, and Wesleyan we belonged to the Order of Ethiopia Church.
6. The environment was good and the area was leafy with trees, vegetables and fruit trees. The soil was very good it was *seloko* (fertile clay) it could accept any kind of vegetable or fruits. We had no taps; we used wells. Taps arrived while we were about to move. We used wells where we drew water and we could water our gardens anytime. The taps came with a lot of charges for water and this made life unbearable.
7. The environment was very clean because we cleaned the land everyday. The tenancy system ensured that Lady Selborne became a clean area because landlords forced tenants to clean their homes and the surroundings. People planted vegetables and fruits
8. Few people owned livestock but when we needed goats or cows to do our rituals we bought them from them. Such people looked very well after their animals. Their animals grazed on allocated surrounding land and they were healthy.
9. When we arrived in Ga-Rankuwa there was no electricity, fewer transport only one shop. There was no clinic and a hospital. Dr. D.C. Marevathe opened the first surgery in Ga-Rankuwa and I think he was not from Lady Selborne because I never heard about his name when we were there. He helped us a lot since the hospital was located in Pretoria. There was one train from Rustenburg a day and one had to make sure that he/she catches it or else went go to work. There were few buses and it was not easy to travel in them especially at night because the streets were not electrified one could get lost easily. The quality of soil is bad it is reddish and infertile. The soil requires a lot of manure in order for one to plant vegetables and fruits.
10. Land is very bad it is red soil one cannot plant like in Lady Selborne. In Lady Selborne my family cultivated vegetables in Ga-Rankuwa my mother tried to plant fruit trees like peaches, mulberry, apricots, chillies, pumpkins, cabbages they could not sustain in the soil today we have nothing. My mother has no money to keep on buying topsoil for cultivation at Ga-Rankuwa. This situation is applicable to other community members of Ga-Rankuwa but others who can afford managed to improve the soil and plant food.
11. Land of a poor quality but people plant fruit trees and vegetables. Some use the veld a lot in order to collect wood. Many plots are big than the ones in Lady Selborne but the problem lies in the quality of land that has to be worked with lots of manure. At least it was not degraded like today there is soil erosion because of the rains that come with wind. People also do not care for the environment they dump and litter any-where.

12. It affected the community badly because we are no longer united like in Lady Selborne.
13. I think *botho* and land loss are related because by loosing land one loose his/her sense of ownership and feel useless.
14. As a former tenant I really cannot complain because those who own land have to get rewards for their property. I think the policy is working very well because people are not complaining.

Informant 5: Mrs T. Tshweni

Age: 66

Date of interview: 28/06/04

1. Lady Selborne Spruit Street next to Roman Catholic Church. My Mother was a landlord. We were forcibly moved in 1965.
2. The governmental officials said; the area was declared a white settlement and all blacks had to vacate their houses.
3. We were not given any notice, the government agents said those with lawyers can talk to them. We were then taken out of our houses and they destroyed them. My mother had tenants and they asked the unmarried ones to go to Mabopane (Bokonoud), while landlords were sent to Ga-Rankuwa.
4. I felt very bad because no compensation was given to us and we had to loose a lot of friends and had to leave our vegetables and fruit trees behind. I cried like a bride being taken to the groom's home because I was loosing my *lefa* (inheritance) from my parents that I had to keep for my children, grand children and their children. I did not know where they were taking us.
5. Lady Selborne was *legae laka* (my home). A place where I performed my ancestral rituals. The soil was fertile there hence I planted fruits and vegetables. The area was beautiful with a mountain Magaliesberg, a small river and a forest. I was used to life there. The area was integrated with different races like Africans, Coloreds, Indians and Chinese. The community was humble no one saw himself/herself as superior we were all equal. Some Coloreds were our tenants and we were friends and neighbors with them. My home had 6 rooms with a veranda it was a full erf. We used bucket system for sewerage and it was collected every second day. There were houses with electricity and those without. Those without electricity used to buy wood from horse trailers or collect it from the veld.
6. Soil was fertile it was black. The climate then was good it used to rain on time. We had a river and it used to overflow with water. People had fruit trees and vegetables. The area was clean.
7. People used the veld to get firewood. There were no taps people used wells; taps were installed while we were about to move this drew us closer to our environment because it gave us water our source of existence. They also planted vegetables and fruits in their yards. The landlord or the tenants cleaned the surroundings of the houses. Even though the sewerage system was buckets, tenants gave each other turns to clean up the mess.
8. Some people owned goats, cattle, cows and horses. These animals never bothered us; their owners looked well after them. Animals were allowed to graze around the area in the veld. Goats, cows and cattle were sold to the

public; Africans were the best customers because they liked to slaughter animals for feasts.

9. When I arrived at Ga-Rankuwa my entire house was not finished, I had to stay next door. When I looked back at my home in Lady Selborne I cried. Worst of all was the fact that the area looked like a veld the roads were bad everything was not finished I ended up falling in to a hole next to the road my leg got injured since that day to date I have a leg problem. In terms of the facilities we had one shop, which sold food that have expired, and full of spider webs. There was no hospital or a clinic. There was only one Zone that is Zone 1. The houses had one tap in the yard and it was unreliable sometimes water could not come out. Women and children were responsible to fetch such water. And when we got it we had to spare it for cooking and drinking and we could not water the gardens. We had one office. All members of the community had to pay R5 a house rent. There was one train from Rustenburg and there were no platforms we had to jump to get into trains and it was dangerous. We also had buses called *Masula* (bad taste) because there were no lights we had to carry candles. Numbers of houses were the same one could get lost easily. When Ga-Rankuwa became independent under President Lucas Mangope he came with restrictions over the use of water and if one was found watering the garden during the day he/she was fined.
10. The environment was bad, land degraded and dirty. People littered everywhere and there is soil erosion. Some people do not clean their yards and do not cultivate their land and plant trees hence there is a lot of soil erosion.
11. The community is careless about their relationship with the environment, few plant grass, trees and vegetables. They argue that the soil is bad and they do not have money to buy topsoil. Some members of the community buy topsoil and plant fruit trees, vegetables, flowers and grass. Because of the poor soil I did not plant food in my yard.
12. It affected us a lot because in Lady Selborne we knew each other if one had no children we helped each other and in Ga-Rankuwa we did not know each other very well and as a result children disrespect us and it was not easy to send them anywhere. Even though I knew some of the people from Lady Selborne those I did not know it took time for us to get used to each other but we are close neighbors now, we even have gates that gets through to each other's yards. As a community we developed burial societies and we also assist each other when there are celebrations like weddings.
13. By loosing our homes in Lady Selborne during forced removals our humanness was impacted negatively because we lost the places where we performed rituals. And we lost our homes our inheritance from our parents.
14. Bad because we were given only R40000 whether the land was big or small, but because the government said they were wiping out tears we accept it but it is no a good system they must consider the length of the erf not give money blanketly. But I would not want to go back and live in the area that the government wants to give us in Suiderberg because for me that will not be the Lady Selborne I used to live at. The trees that were in the area some of them have been removed and the names of the streets are also different. That is the reason I decided to accept money instead of going back to Suiderberg.

Informant 6: Mr L. Tshweni

Age: 51

Date of interview: 28/06/04

1. Lady Selborne Spruit Street. My grand mother was a landlord and when she died she left the house to my mother. We were forcibly moved in 1965.
2. The government officials said; the Group Areas Act declared Lady Selborne a white settlement and all blacks had to vacate their houses.
3. My mother told me that they were not given any notice, the government agents told them they had to move. Houses were thus destroyed. My mother had tenants and they were moved first.
4. I felt bad because I had to loose a lot of friends who were good to me. Likewise schools there were good; we had a lot of extra mural activities while in Ga-Rankuwa the quality of schooling was poor. I felt bad for my mother who inherited a big 6 rooms and had to loose it.
5. Lady Selborne was a developed area it was my 'home'. My mother had a big house she planted vegetables and fruits. She got money from tenants. We lacked no food. I was used to life there. The area was integrated with different races Coloreds, Indians, Chinese. The community was good to each other. We had friends of different races and we played very well with them, they did not discriminate us.
6. Soil fertile, it was black hence at home we managed to cultivate vegetables and fruits. The climate then was good it used to rain on time. We had a river and it used to overflow with water. We would go with my friends to look at the river it was fascinating to us. The area was clean as young boys we knew that we had to help clean up the surroundings of our homes.
7. People used the veld to get firewood. There were no taps people used wells; this made the young people to understand the importance of the land that it provides water and food. Many people also planted vegetables and fruits in their yards. The landlord or the tenants cleaned the surrounding of the houses.
8. Some people owned goats, sheep, cattle, cows and horses. The animals used to graze in the veld. Horses were used to sell coal and wood. And goats, cattle and sheep were sold to the public to slaughter for their celebrations.
9. Ga-Rankuwa was inhabitable in the 1960s and 1970s it was bad because there was no electricity streets were dark and it was easy to get lost. There was one shop for the whole Zone. There was no hospital or a clinic. One had to establish new friendship.
10. Bad, land degraded and dirty. There was a lot of soil erosion. Most roads were not tarred and this is bad for the cars. People litter everywhere they do not care about the environment like they used to do in Lady Selborne.
11. The majority of the community does not care about their relationship with the environment, few plant grass, trees, and vegetables. They argue that the soil is bad and they do not have money to buy topsoil. Some members of the community buy topsoil and plant fruit trees, vegetables, flowers and grass. I believe that if we had environmental clubs our area would look beautiful.
12. It affected the community a lot because in Lady Selborne we knew each other and we played very well with people from different races. In Ga-Rankuwa we had to develop new relationships and this took time. But now we are close with our neighbours
13. By loosing our homes through forced removals we lost part of our *botho* because without a home one is not fully human. A human being must have

important valuables like shelter and material valuables that affirm ones humanness.

14. Bad because for a 6 rooms house my mother received R40000 this is a high way robbery but it does not matter at least we got some compensation. It is priceless to have been moved, compensation that was given to my mother does not begin to replace a sense of house and belonging.

Informant 7: Mrs Sekhu

Age: 81

Date of interview: 28/06/04

1. From Lady Selborne at Atchila and Park road this place is situated towards the end of Lady Selborne next to the mountain. My family was moved from Lady Selborne in 1964. I was a landowner.
2. We were told that Lady Selborne was declared a white area and non-whites had to vacate the area.
3. We were not given a notice we were told that we had to vacate the area and if we do not want to move voluntarily the state will move us by force. When a person was ready to move before the set date a truck was allocate to us to move our belongings.
4. I felt very bad about removals because I had to leave my well established home with electricity and had to occupy a house without electricity in Ga-Rankuwa. Most of all was loosing friends who meant a lot to me.
5. Life in Lady Selborne was good despite the fact that we were using bucket sewerage system. We had no taps at the beginning but later towards our removals they were installed. Thus water became expensive and the rates too. People fought for rates they thought they were paying high amounts. The rates were called six-month rates. People were united there. We built our own houses, I had 7-roomed house. The quality of the soil was very good it was red in colour and full of food it was fertile hence I planted fruits and vegetables in my yard.
6. Good environment, rain came on time. This made soil fertile. People planted vegetables and fruits.
7. They related with it very well by planting vegetables, fruits and some used the veld to get their wood to make fire.
8. Few people owned cattle, goats and cows. They sold them to the public. Black people especially bought such animals and slaughtered them when they have feasts.
9. Rates became higher one thought it was expensive in Lady Selborne. Water and electricity is killing us. The other problem is that there are no jobs for our children we rely on *Motente* (pension fund).
10. Ga-Rankuwa was not habitable especially because of the quality of land that could not allow us to cultivate food. In order to plant one had to fertilize the soil and this is expensive. The area was dirty.
11. Our relationship with the environment has not been good because the community does not care about the environment they litter everywhere they do not plant in their yards and this worsens soil erosion.
12. It led to disunity because people became scattered all over we had to re-establish new relationships.

13. If a person does not have a home he/she is not fully human. To be human one must have a home.
14. Not satisfactory because we were given money not worth the 7 rooms I owned.

Informant 8: Mr J. Maphalare

Age: 78

Date of interview: 28/06/04

1. I was a tenant in Lady Selborne at Claremont my parents owned land at corner of Brug and Malherbe Street. We were moved in 1968.
2. Lady Selborne was declared a white area through the Group Areas Act and blacks were not allowed to live there anymore.
3. No notice was given to us we were told to move. They moved us by force they came in and destroyed our houses.
4. I felt very bad I lost my friends and was moved far away from town. In Lady Selborne one could walk to town. My parents had cows, horses they had business and had to sell them because they were not allowed in Ga-Rankuwa. They were then forced to buy land in the rural areas for the livestock.
5. Life in Lady Selborne was enjoyable everyone was equal. I used to work on the land planting food in my parents' home. The soil there allowed us to plant everything hence we could not hunger.
6. The environment was excellent the soil was fertile hence I planted vegetables and fruits.
7. They planted vegetables, fruits and looked very well after their surroundings.
8. My parents had cows, horses. They sold wood with horses. Horses are very cheap one does not have to put fuel in them like cars they were just fed. We had a good wood business using horses as a means of transport. Animals were left in camps to graze there and we had to pay money for that.
9. In Ga-Rankuwa there was a lot of poverty and hunger. We could not use the soil the way we used to in Lady Selborne because the soil is red and sandy and is infertile. But I worked hard by buying manure put fruits and vegetables pills in the soil to make it fertile. Today I have lemon trees and other fruits in my house.
10. Soil infertile, there is soil erosion. The community made matters worse by not planting trees, grass and vegetables. The area was dirty with litter everywhere.
11. We have tried to improve our soil and plant vegetables and fruits but many people complain that it is expensive to keep on buying manure to improve the soil. They end up not planting or cultivating the soil. But some people encroached in the forests and collected wood for making fire since there was no electricity.
12. We had to start new friendships it was not easy at the beginning. Today we relate very well.
13. A home makes a person complete even if one is poor it does not matter because one suffers under his/her own roof. A home makes one motho [human]. Though other people have a lot of material things at least one has something, a house. Forced removals from Lady Selborne deprived people of that ownership, though it assisted those who were tenants but to landowners it was a tragedy.
14. Slow processes and my family were robbed because lost a lot. They were forced by circumstances to sell their livestock that assisted them in their business. The commission offered only R40000 this does not cover a lot of losses.

Informant 9: Mrs Maphalare

Age: 72

Date of interview: 28/06/04

1. I was a tenant in Lady Selborne at Claremont my in laws owned land at corner of Brug and Malherbe street. We were moved in 1968.
2. Lady Selborne was declared a white area; blacks were not allowed to live there anymore.
3. No notice was given to us we were told to move. They moved us by force they came in and destroyed our houses.
4. I felt very bad and lost in the resettlement area in Ga-Rankuwa. I lost a lot of things I had to carry what could be covered in the truck. My in-laws had cows, horses and had to sell them because they were not allowed in Ga-Rankuwa. They were then forced to buy land in the rural areas for the livestock.
5. Life in Lady Selborne was enjoyable everyone was equal. We followed the philosophy of *botho*, helping one another.
6. The environment was excellent the soil was fertile hence I planted vegetables and fruits.
7. They planted vegetables, fruits and looked very well after their surroundings.
8. My in laws had cows, horses. They sold wood with horses. Animals were left in camps to graze there and they had to pay money for that.
9. In Ga-Rankuwa there was a lot of poverty and hunger. We ended up relying on moChina and started burial societies so that we could invest our money. The frustrating thing is that we could not use the soil the way we used to in Lady Selborne because the soil is infertile. But I worked hard by buying manure and today I have lemon trees and other fruits in my house. My in-laws had livestock like goats and had to leave Ga-Rankuwa and stay in the rural areas since the government did not want such animals in Ga-Rankuwa.
10. Soil infertile, no trees this resulted in soil erosion. The community made matters worse by not planting trees, grass and vegetables. The area became dirty with papers and other waste material thrown all over.
11. We have tried to improve our soil and plant vegetables and fruits but many people complain that it is expensive to keep on buying manure to improve the soil. They end up not doing any thing with the soil.
12. Togetherness that existed in Lady Selborne at the beginning it could not prevail because we did not know each other while we were all from Lady Selborne. But as time went on we ended up relating very well.
13. If one does not have land and is old enough to own it such a person is not respected in the community I suppose she/he is seen as incomplete. Shelter under ones head is important.
- 14 Slow process and my in laws were robbed because could not get the real money that they lost. They were given only R40000, which is not enough especially to people who lost their livestock like them.

Informant 10: Mr Andrew

Age: 62

Date of interview: 28/06/04

1. My parents were landlords at Lady Selborne residing at Bulawayo and Carol Street. We were moved in 1965.

2. We were moved because the Group Areas Act declared Lady Selborne a white area and all non whites were not allowed to live there.
3. My parents claimed that they were not given notice but they were allowed to consult their lawyers.
4. I felt bad because my parents worked hard in building our home in Lady Selborne and were forced to move while they were not ready. But they managed to sell their house even though they did not get enough money.
5. Lady Selborne was an excellent place. I was at school while we lived there. Schools there were good. We had students from Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. Our curriculum was good we had tennis, dance and football. While in Ga-Rankuwa there were no parks and it was difficult for us to entertain ourselves but people continued to play soccer. Schools in Lady Selborne were divided on racial terms. There was a shopping complex, which was a central city at Marina Street. We were forced to buy in that shopping centre because if one goes to town a pass was needed. Due to a lot of students coming out of Lady Selborne the government in 1954 gave schools exemption in order to pass through the town. This ensured that students carry school passes when entering the town. Schools were important if one was found roaming around not at work or school was jailed for 10 days or R10 fine. People were permitted to look for a job for 3 days.
6. Soil fertile could plant anything. The environment was clean.
7. People planted vegetables and fruits. They also cleaned up hence Lady Selborne was neat.
8. Few people owned cows, cattle, and horses and they sold them to the public. Many black people bought cows, goats and cattle to slaughter them when they had traditional feasts.
9. Because I was not married I struggled to get a house in Ga-Rankuwa but my father bought for me. The area was not electrified there was poor transport.
10. The area was like a veld. Land deteriorated because people did not care for environment hence the soil erosion. The area is dirty because no one is pushing people to clean up. And the roads were not tarred even today many roads are not improved. I suppose if there could be officials allocated to ensure cleanliness and people given materials to clean the locations things will change. Forced removals affected people's attitude towards their environment they became apathetic towards it.
11. Some people plant in their homes others do not they live it fallow and this makes soil erosion worse.
12. The community was not that close when we resettled in Ga-Rankuwa because we did not know each other very well but today we are very close.
13. Loosing land indeed makes people to feel less human hence they do not care about the environment.
14. Not good, they robbed us but since land was our parents that is good because they are not alive to witness this. But in the process of the claim I lost a lot because I had to travel, photocopy documents.

Informant 11: Mrs E. Mohlahledi

Age: 81

Date of interview: 29/06/04

1. From Lady Selborne at Coolie Street on the 9th of August 1965 I was a tenant

2. We were told we had to move because whites were to live there
3. No notice was given to us the trucks came to pick us up and we lost a lot of valuables.
4. I felt bad because in Lady Selborne people were united and we loved each other.
5. Lady Selborne was full of people who loved each other and were united. We lived harmoniously with Coloureds, Indians and Chinese we were like one race.
6. Good environment rain came on time and the soil was good.
7. Those who were landlords planted food, and tenants cleaned the surroundings of the houses. If landowners did not have a tenant they cleaned themselves.
8. Few people owned cattle, goats and sheep. Such animals could not be found roaming around in the streets. These animals were bought and slaughtered when there were feasts.
9. Ga-Rankuwa did not have facilities like electricity, enough transport, clinic and hospital; they were only established later in the 1970s. This made the place unbearable. Poverty became rife we played the China game to get money and invested our money in the burial societies.
10. The soil is not fertile one had to buy manure or make it through pouring food pills and water to make it rot in order to make the soil fertile. But I tried everything possible to improve the soil and I failed hence I did not plant vegetables in my yard.
11. Many people are trying to plant food but the soil fails them hence some adopt the system of creating their own manure through food pills. But it is difficult for me I have not planted any thing because do not have money to improve the soil.
12. It destroyed well-established relationships whereby some people had to move from Lady Selborne to other areas like Atteridgeville and Mamelodi. Even though I knew some people from Lady Selborne it was not easy to associate with those that I did not know it took time. But at least through social clubs where we save money and also through burial societies we were able to socialize and we now know each other.
13. *Botho* is when a person is well mannered and has concern for humanity. It is lost through not caring for others and also if one is poverty stricken and loses her possessions the community sometimes does not see that person as fully human and that is painful. This implies that through forced removals many people like us tenants were happy because we got houses those who lost like landlords their humanness was affected because we are now all equal.
14. Cannot comment because I was a tenant so I do not know any thing about it.

Informant 12: Mr Matlaila

Age: 76

Date of interview: 29/06/04

1. I was a tenant at Lady Selborne at Atchila and Alexander and had to move in 1964.
2. We were told the area was for whites only.
3. No notice was given we heard peoples houses being destroyed and we decided to leave on our own accord to live in Ga-Rankuwa.
4. I felt bad because we were well established in the area and we developed friends now we had to leave them. But I felt happy because in Ga-Rankuwa I became a landlord this was liberating, as we owned our own homes.
5. In Lady Selborne we lived like farm people. People worked hard to clean up the surroundings, polish floors and had to take turns. I slept in one room with my entire family and I could not buy furniture. The house that we were renting

- was full of tenants and we had to pay R4 a room. Landowners were interested in collecting money. Stands were usually full of rooms and tenants. Coloreds, Indians lived in a separate area to Africans there were no whites in the area.
6. In Lady Selborne the environment was very clean. The soil; was good. There were trees like Jacaranda, Cane, and Bloukom tree. I think that is the reason why Lady Selborne was taken from black people because it had fertile soil.
 7. They cleaned up, planted fruits and vegetables
 8. People had cows, cattle, goats and horses. They used horses to sell coal and wood and cattle and goats were sold to people who wanted to slaughter them.
 9. Conditions were bad because there was no electricity, poor transport, no hospital and clinic but in the 1970s the government built the hospital and the area improved.
 10. Soil poor, people do not care for the environment is very dirty.
 11. Some people planted fruit trees and vegetables others do not plant anything. But the problem was made worse by litter that was thrown all over the corners of the streets.
 12. It destroyed a lot of relationships that we established in Lady Selborne. While we were busy developing relationships in the 1970s through the coming of Mangope's Bophuthatswana many non-Tswana had to leave Ga-Rankuwa to other areas of their ethnicity this destroyed relationship worse. For an example we had a family in our street who were AmaZulu; the Magagula family they had to move to Soshanguve. The Northern Sothos like us were not allowed to stay in Ga-Rankuwa only the Batswana were permitted to settle in the township. This affected my family hence we did not want to change our identity document (dompas) to the Bophuthatswana identity document, the *lekwalo labosipidi*.
 13. Forced removals indeed affected people's humanness because without a house one is not human especially to the landlords who had to come to Ga-Rankuwa and rent property this was degrading to them. As the northern Sotho the lazy people are always regarded as '*selo*' (not human) because one has not provided for himself or herself and as a result end up without material possessions. Where one lives and where one comes from gives a definition to a human being. For an example since Lady Selborne was a beautiful area and today people ask me where did you stay before removals? And I tell them at Lady Selborne and they instantly show respect to me and this affirms my humanness (*enketsa motho*).
 14. Those who are involved know I cannot comment because I have never attended their meeting since I was a tenant. But I hear from the former landowners of Lady Selborne is that they are happy to get the R40 000 compensation because it is indeed wiping their tear since they lost their land.

Informant 13: Mrs Matlaila

Age: 69

Date of interview: 29/06/04

1. My family and I were tenants in Lady Selborne at Atchila and Alexander Street and had to move in 1964. We were staying in one room with 5 children in total we used to be 7 but we lived very nicely there were no fighting's among my family.
2. We were told the area was for whites only.

3. No notice was given we heard peoples houses being destroyed and we decided to leave on our own accord to live Ga-Rankuwa.
4. I felt bad because we were well established in the area and we developed friends now we had to leave them. But I felt happy because in Ga-Rankuwa my husband and I became landlords.
5. We lived a harsh life because we had to clean up like slaves. People worked hard to clean up the surroundings, polish floors and had to take turns. I slept in one room with my entire family and I could not buy furniture because of space. The house that we were renting was full of tenants and we had to pay R4 a room.
6. The environment was very clean. The soil; was good. There were trees like Jacaranda and cane.
7. They cleaned up, planted fruits and vegetables
8. People had cows, cattle, goats and horses. Horses were used to sell wood and coal. Cows, goats, cattle were sold to the public and slaughtered when there were feasts.
9. Conditions were bad because there was no electricity, poor transport, no hospital and clinic but in the 1970s the government built the hospital called Ga-Rankuwa hospital and the area improved. When we arrived there was only one train from Rustenburg and one had to make it a point that he/she gets it or else will struggle to go to town.
10. Soil poor, people do not care for the environment it is very dirty. There is soil erosion
11. Some people planted fruit trees and vegetables others leave the land fallow.
12. It destroyed a lot of relationships and unity that existed in Lady Selborne that we established. In the 1970s through the coming of Mangope's Bophuthatswana many non-Tswana had to leave Ga-Rankuwa to other areas of their ethnicity this destroyed relationship worse. For an example we had a family in our street who were Zulus; the Magagula family they had to move.
13. Forced removals made a lot of landlords angry because they were reduced to rent payers whereas in Lady Selborne they were landlords this I can say affected their *botho*. I also felt less human because when we arrived in Ga-Rankuwa we did not have ownership of the land
14. Since I was a tenant I did not attend their meetings so I do not know those who are involved know whether the process is fair or unfair.

Informant 14: Mrs Madumo

Age: 67

Date of interview: 30/06/04

1. I was a tenant in Lady Selborne at Swart and Gallard Street and was moved in 1964.
2. We were told the area was reserved for whites only.
3. We were just told we have to move to Ga-Rankuwa and the truck came our houses were destroyed.
4. I felt bad because I had to loose many friends, but happy because I was going to live in my own house and not forced to clean sewerage spills.
5. As a tenant Lady Selborne was not enjoyable because one had to clean up the sewerage spilled on the floors by the collectors of the buckets. This was the most painful experience of my life and it was humiliating.

6. The environment was clean and the soil was good.
7. People planted vegetables and fruits. Since I was a tenant I did not cultivate food because my landlords did not allow me to. I had no plot to plant food.
8. Some people owned cows, goats, sheep and cattle they helped us especially when we had funerals, weddings and traditional rituals at home. We bought the animals nearer our homes.
9. There was no electricity in the 1960s and 1970s transport was very poor. Facilities like hospitals and clinic were non-existent. Life was tough; we had to go to town which is far away if we needed a hospital.
10. The soil poor had to use manure to doctor it.
11. People plant flowers, trees, fruits and vegetables. I planted sugar cane it is growing very well. This is only achieved if one improves the soil.
12. It destroyed the unity among the community of Lady Selborne. People of Lady Selborne were scattered all over Ga-Rankuwa, Mamelodi and Atteridgville.
13. Yes *botho* is related with land loss but everything in life has its own time. Everyone has his or her own social position in life.
14. I think it is working because people are getting compensation.

Informant 15: Mrs M. Manamela

Age: 77

Date of interview: 30/06/04

1. I was moved from Lady Selborne at Bulawayo street number 1120 and 1124 we had double plot. We were moved in 1968.
2. We were told we had to leave the area because it was declared a white area.
3. Everything was decided without us. They started with tenants they resettled them and brought others from other streets and placed them in our yards. These tenants were not paying a cent. And later landlords were thus moved. If a person did not want to move voluntarily the state sent their representatives to tell us that they will move us by force. Some of us were afraid and decided to move.
4. I felt extremely angry but I could not do a thing. Lorries were sent to fetch us. It was one truck for a landlord and 1 truck for 2 tenants. People lost a lot of things.
5. Wonderful bread was a tiki (5 cents) and meat was 20 cent (4 tikis). Transport was also cheap, local transport was free. There was a tennis court. At home we had a business of hiring rooms out. We had 3 bedroom house with outside rooms and rooms in another plot. People could walk to work for an example many men worked at ISCOR [Iron and Steel Corporation] in Pretoria west, though there were buses they walked to work because it was nearer. Many of thugs in Lady Selborne were the bucket sewerage collectors. They did not want people to watch or see them collecting the buckets. They used to give a sign to warn us that they were coming, they would ring a bell or a fluit. If they found people on the road they would hit them. And they see you piping they would throw the sewerage bucket in the yard and that means tenants or if they are not there the landowner will have to clean up. Sometimes if the bucket was full they would half it that also meant that the inhabitants of that house would have to clean up. But we had good relationship with them, we would put African beer for them on the gate and they would take it. These bucket collectors were receiving food ration from the municipality. Many of them

were Shangaans and Xhosas they were not members of the community maybe it is because this type of a job was humiliating.

6. Was clean and soil was fertile hence people planted food. We had flowers, eucalyptus trees and jacaranda trees.
7. We used the willow trees for decoration when there were funerals and weddings. Tenants used to clean the area spic and span. We used to go to the forest to collect cows and horses dung to make fire with. Some people who were traditional healers belonged to the African Dingaka Association they registered with them for licenses to practice and could use Magaliesburg Mountain to dig herbs. Many Basotho and Shangaans eat a big frog called *letlametlo*. The meat of *letlametlo* is like chicken it is very tasty. They would take the intestines and the head and bury them under the willow tree in the forest because if left in the open it was believed will attract lightning. In Lady Selborne there were no taps they were installed late people used to get water from wells. They would dig a hole and insert a willow tree stick and if it swelled they knew they had to dig close to 8 feet to get water.
8. Some people owned cattle, goats, sheep and fowls they sold them to us. These animals dung's helped us to make fire and we also slaughtered them when we had feasts.
9. Ga-Rankuwa was horrible with only one train and there were no platforms, the train was from Rustenburg. Place was full of trees and it was difficult to know ones house; we used to put drums and paint them in order to mark our homes. There was no electricity, the buses had to drive slowly and we had to carry a candle in order to see where we were going. Worst of all was the roads that were bad and not tarred. President Mangope improved the area a lot. Through his governance our streets were electrified. He came with control of water to avoid wastage. If one was found watering the garden during the day he/she was fined. The area had monkeys and they used to destroy people's gardens especially in Zone 3 and 5 because they are located near mountains and some members of the community ended up killing some of them. Some people were relocated with their livestock like chickens and goats. But the state did not allow people to farm in Ga-Rankuwa but people did it any way and they ended up being asked to sell their goats or vacate the area. When we arrived we had 1 Zone and in 1977 about 14 zones.
10. Ga-Rankuwa's soil was infertile but the place was like a veld full of trees. There were no fences and in the forests there were monkeys and eat peoples food and plantations. The soil over time became degraded and the result was soil erosion. People made matters worse by throwing litter everywhere.
11. We planted flowers, grass, trees and vegetables. But some people did not care about the environment they plant nothing in their houses hence the erosion of the soil in Ga-Rankuwa.
12. Though many people were from Lady Selborne we did not know each other but we established a good relationship over time and we became united.
13. *Botho* is when a person is full of love and cares about other people. Such a person is a real human being. Through loosing our land in Lady Selborne our *botho* got affected because we were hurt. Other people were landlords in Lady Selborne and in Ga-Rankuwa they are like the tenants. They used to rent out houses to tenants in Lady Selborne but in Ga-Rankuwa every one is the same. Even though those who were tenants are happy and their humanness is

affirmed those who were landlords are hit hard by the removals their humanness is hampered tremendously.

14. The system is working at least we got money for our homes.

Informant 16: Mr K.

Age 58

Date of interview: 1/07/04

1. From Lady Selborne at Claremont number 26 Mostert Street we were moved in 1968.
2. We were told the area was declared a white settlement and blacks were not allowed to live there any more.
3. My parents said the government decided without negotiating with the residents. Thus no notice was given to them, the officials and police removed tenants first and later the landlords. The trucks were used to carry resident's belongings and were dumped in Ga-Rankuwa.
4. I felt hurt because my parents worked hard to build their home. Thus the apartheid government destroyed it without any negotiation with them.
5. It was a wonderful place Coloureds, Indians, Chinese and Blacks lived harmoniously together. Though there were hooligans they were not wild like the ones that we have today. Many of thugs we regarded as being those who were carrying the sewerage buckets they did not want people to see them collecting the sewerage buckets or else they would hit anyone who identified them.
6. The soil was fertile and people planted food. Rain was perfect as compared to today it comes occasionally and comes with wind, which erode the soil.
7. People planted trees and food.
8. Some people owned livestock and used to sell to people. Black people were the biggest clients because they like traditional rituals.
9. Ga-Rankuwa in the 1960s was horrible, there was no electricity, hospital, clinic and transport was poor.
10. The area was like a veld full of trees. The soil was infertile. With resettlement of many people soil erosion resulted and people dumped waste all over.
11. Many people do not care about the environment they litter anywhere. But some people clean their yards and plant food.
12. It destroyed the unity that the community had in Lady Selborne but today in Ga-Rankuwa we have united into a close community that helps each other especially as neighbours.
13. Through forced removals landlords lost their land and I think this made them to feel less human because they spent a lot of money to build their homes in Lady Selborne and their homes were destroyed. I think it is working at least landlords are getting something from their loss of land in Lady Selborne.
14. I think it is working at least landlords are getting something from their loss of land in Lady Selborne.