Stories from forest, river and mountain:

Exploring children's cultural environmental narratives and their role in the transmission of cultural connection to and protection of biodiversity

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Jamie Alexander
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Abstract

Preservationist conservation created a legacy of national parks and protected areas that were surrounded by local people dispossessed of their land and denied the rights to use the resources they had previously relied upon. Although conservation is now shifting towards a more participatory approach, research gaps still exist in determining the meaning of 'the environment' and the role of local means of conservation in rural communities in South Africa. This study focused on children's cultural environmental narratives from two rural villages in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Children from grades 4, 7 and 10 were involved in the study, and adult family members, local experts and village elders were included in the study to allow for comparison between children's and adult's narratives and to realise what Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) was being passed on. This thesis considers children's use of the environment for play and their sense of place as key methods in ascertaining children's environmental narratives and perceptions. At both field sites, local experts and community elders possessed a wealth of cultural environmental narratives, but these narratives were not necessarily being passed on. Changing household structures and other socio-economic factors influence cultural environmental practices, which in turn have an impact on the cultural environmental narratives being passed down. In many cases, parents' safety fears strongly impacted upon children's access to the environment, resulting in gendered environmental knowledge. The study compared differing vegetation types and degrees of environmental access. The differing environments produced similar cultural environmental narratives, leading to new understandings in community-environment relationships. Children living near the state administered forest had significantly less environmental knowledge, bringing about questions of sustainable bio-cultural diversity in the future. The recognition of cultural environmental values is especially important in the rural areas of South Africa, where unemployment and increased poverty levels have led to greater dependence on natural resources for social, economic and cultural purposes. It is proposed that local cultural environmental narratives and landscape perceptions be included into community conservation and environmental education policies and programmes to provide local solutions to the problem of biodiversity conservation in local contexts.

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Chapter 1:   Introduction

"Since its earliest formalized uses, story has been a preferred method of transferring society's beliefs and values from one generation to the next" (Hoogland 1998: 81).

1.1   Preface

This chapter describes the concepts that have come together in this interdisciplinary study: namely the place of local ecological knowledge (LEK) in conservation, and oral narrative as the means to convey this knowledge. The changes in conservation policy are charted as well as the importance of including LEK in biodiversity conservation. The functions of oral narrative and the use of traditional narrative in passing down LEK are delineated. The consideration of children's use of the environment for play, and their perceptions of place are considered as methods to unlock children's environmental knowledge and values. The chapter then outlines the research aims and the structure of the thesis.

1.2   Conservation

1.2.1   From fortress conservation to community based conservation

The language of conservation arose from and has largely remained within the confines of an orthodox Cartesian epistemology, with the dominant conservation narrative being informed, created and enforced by white, western voices (Jacoby 1997, DeLuca and Demo 2001). This initiated a preservationist approach to conservation categorised by a 'fines and fences' attitude which considered local people a hindrance to the essential preservation of important ecological areas. After some time, national parks and reserves began to be seen as important 'sanctuaries' for conserving endangered flora and fauna. Conservationists and biologists were heavily influenced by ecological warnings such as Carson's (1962) "Silent Spring" and Hardin's (1968) "Tragedy of the commons". The growing human population was seen as a threat to earth's natural resources, which would eventually be exhausted; in line with Malthusian economics (Moran 2006).

In the colonised world, colonial governments installed laws that regulated access to land as well as resources that were seen as belonging to the empire (Beinart and Hughes 2007). In South Africa, reserves were demarcated to ensure there were adequate wild animals to hunt, and crown forests were proclaimed to protect indigenous hardwoods from sawers and local people whom government considered to be illegally extracting their resources. What colonial laws did not take

into account was the fact that indigenous people depended upon these resources, not only for wild meat and timber but for nearly every aspect of their daily livelihoods. This meant that local people risked prosecution by conservation officials merely by performing everyday livelihood activities which inevitably breached "some or other conservation law" (Summers 1999).

From the 1980s researchers began to question the efficacy of this 'fortress conservation', and the negative effects it has had on local communities who were often removed from their land to make way for protected areas (Marks 1984, Fairhead and Leach 1994a and 1994b, Ghimire and Pimbert 1997, Hulme and Murphree 2001, Brockington 2002). While the rest of the world venerated nature reserves and their conservation aims, those who had been displaced by conservation associated it with "injustice, suffering and...forced relocation from traditional land" (Fabricius *et al.* 2001: 834). Local people would often challenge or ignore national parks' laws and boundaries (Brockington 2002), leading to hostile and often violent situations between locals and conservation officials (Palmer *et al.* 2000, Fabricius *et al.* 2001). Locals who were removed from parks also lost rights to the grazing and water that their animals required, especially in times of drought, when forests, flood plains and grasslands often acted as key resource areas of reserve grazing. For some the only course left was violent protest, through the purposeful destruction of the wildlife and resources that conservation officials were seen to value over and above the welfare of local people (Palmer *et al.* 2000, Beinart and Hughes 2007). Robson's (2004) novel *Savannah 2116* allows a glimpse into this preservationist model of conservation envisaged to its extreme as 'environmental racism'. Robson describes a world where the majority of the human population is fenced away from nature in crowded encampments, while the privileged few live in luxurious 'wilderness areas' along with the animals they have 'saved'. According to Cloete (2009: 58), Robson's novel considers:

> "the often unquestioned adoption of 'greening' agendas in school curricula which persist in re-colonising geo-political spaces by ignoring the fact that erecting fences between perceived conservators and destroyers, between spaces for wild animals and humans, merely condemns Africa's animal riches to eventual death".

After the many failures of fortress conservation, conservation planners realised that the only way protected areas could successfully be managed was with local support and approval. The disappointments of the environmental movement both at a practice and policy level went so far as to lead Shellenberger and Nordhaus (2004) to proclaim "The Death of Environmentalism". At the same time, there was a need for conservation efforts to be extended beyond protected areas into private and communally owned lands. This led to community-based conservation (CBC), (Ghimire and Pimbert 1997), pioneered in part by the Communal Areas Programme for Indigenous

Resource Extraction (CAMPFIRE) programme in Zimbabwe (Murphree 1996, Child 1996, Murombedzi 1999, Hasler 1999, Duffy 2000, Murphree 2001). This programme aimed to devolve power to local communities. Economic incentives and rights to resource extraction went some way towards community buy-in to conservation plans, increasing chances that wildlife would be conserved both within protected areas and in the areas surrounding them. Communal conservation plans also enabled conservation areas to increase in size through the means of contractual parks such as the Richtersveld National Park and the Makuleke section of Kruger National Park (Fabricius *et al.* 2001). These new plans aimed to enable conservation to bring economic benefits at both local and national levels (Jacobsohn 1993).

It is a sign of some progress that fortress conservation was replaced by community based conservation, and that it is now seen as a more "fashionable conservation narrative" (Reid 2001: 135), but this does not mean that community conservation is the panacea it was once envisaged as (Fabricius *et al.* 2004, Carruthers 2006). Recent critiques call for serious revisions to uncover the complexities that are entailed in community conservation plans and practice (Roe *et al.* 2000, Fabricus *et al.* 2004). Although CBC helps to distribute some conservation benefits, local communities remain relatively silent in terms of conservation planning and policy, which is left to the realm of 'educated' conservation officials and researchers. This model also assumes a homogeneous community that will divide benefits equally, rather than the complexity of class, power and gender struggles (Klein *et al.* 2007, King and Peralvo 2010) that make up rural 'communities'. There is now a global understanding that conservation needs to be more participatory than ever before (IUCN 2004), and that local communities need to be included in both conservation planning and monitoring activities. However, there is still considerable debate over how exactly conservation should be done, particularly in South Africa (Fabricius *et al.* 2004, Shackleton 2009). In the third world biodiversity conservation has to negotiate the tricky terrain of poverty reduction and community development, which some see to be diametrically opposed (Duffy 2000). The growing urgency for the need for biodiversity conservation (Kiss 1990, Wynberg 2002) means that governments and conservation scientists remain reluctant to give communities complete ownership of protected areas (Brockington 2007). The land question, so central to Southern Africa's environmental history, is thus revealed to be at the heart of the conservation debate.

1.2.2   The erosion of traditional environmental regulatory structures and practices

Although conservation policy has finally recognised that local people were essential to the management of natural resources, the many years of fortress conservation have left behind a legacy of 'fines and fences'. Local people often fear and distrust conservation officials, who, in turn, distrust local people's ability to manage their own environments sustainably. Colonial systems of governance and conservation planning, through replacing local laws and systems of governance, had effectively contributed to the erosion of traditional institutions (Fabricius *et al.* 2001). Instead of playing a potential role as "negotiating forums where conservationists and communities could agree on locally relevant rules" the collapse of traditional institutions acted to further widen "the communication gap between conservationists and local communities" (Fabricius *et al.* 2001: 834). The removal of communities from their ancestral lands, be it for the creation of protected areas, or the acquisition of prime agricultural land, separated people from the places and species which made such vital contributions to social, cultural and economic life. In many cases, the move contributed to a breakdown of social and cultural legacies (Ntsebeza 1999).

It has been concluded that historical African societies, like most indigenous societies, developed a close relationship with their natural environments, specifically because they depended upon them to survive. In pre-colonial times, traditional means of conservation functioned via a system of local rules and traditional institutions, enforced by tribal authorities such as "kings, chiefs, headmen and healers" who regulated natural resource use (Fabricius 2004: 3). Local knowledge and practices incorporating 'adaptive management' enabled communities to mould ecosystems and biodiversity (Fabricius 2004). New understandings of Africa's, and South Africa's particular environmental history (Beinart 2003, Beinart and McGregor 2003, Antrop 2005, Carruthers 2006) allow a more precise view of the vast schism between indigenous and western-ecology-inspired conservation models. Traditional systems of resource management in pre-colonial times involved the passing down of traditional land rights, religious and cultural belief systems and the resource taboos, cultural ethics and laws that together governed the community's use of natural resources (Spinage 1991, Bernard and Kumalo 2004a, Madzwamuse and Fabricius 2004). African societies, like most indigenous peoples, had restrictions relating to sacred or totemic species and regulations pertaining to the harvesting of wild foods. Elsewhere in Africa many of these traditional regulations have survived. For example, traditional rules governing hunting by the Basarwa in Botswana that existed historically (Spinage 1991) still exist today (Madzwamuse and Fabricius 2004).

Environmental history reveals that ultimately, "every environmental story is a story about power" (Weiner 2005: 409). It is possible to see that South Africa's environmental history has been continually influenced by politics and political activism (Carruthers 2006) to satisfy the "claims about who best understands African environments, and who should have the right to control them -- whether scientists, national governments, or local people" (Beinart and McGregor 2003: 2). The debate between environmentalists and Africanists sees the contrast of biodiversity conservation versus the rights of local people to use land and resources; both of which imply historical judgement and issues of power relating to resource access (Beinart and McGregor 2003, Carruthers 2006).

Similarly, political ecologists criticize conservation paradigms and the creation of protected areas as an infringement on local people's rights to land and resources (Clapp 2004). As such, they call for the development of new "paradigms of production" that incorporate "cultural, ecological and technoeconomic factors into a strategy that is ecologically and culturally sustainable" (Escobar 1998: 62). There is thus a need for conservation that takes into account "African conservation frameworks and histories in more detail" (Carruthers 2006: 812), to both oppose the current Green Imperialism (Grove 1995) and bring about the means for African agency and empowerment (Curruthers 2006). Conservation planning, particularly in contested areas, needs to both consider and include local people's knowledge and their past experiences (Heasley 2005) of these areas which inform their current environmental perceptions.

1.3 Indigenous Knowledge and Local Ecological Knowledge

1.3.1 The realisation of bio-cultural diversity

At the same time that conservation practitioners realised the urgent need to include local communities in conservation planning, changes were taking place in the field of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) research. More recent understanding of the relationship between indigenous peoples and their environment revealed that many of the presumably 'pristine' wilderness areas have been in a constant state of dynamic interchange with the local people who inhabit them (Posey 1999, Cocks 2006). The presumed dichotomy between wilderness and inhabited areas has therefore blurred, with wild and domestic spaces co-existing in a more complex and complimentary manner than previously thought (Shackleton 2000, Braun 2002, Cocks et al. 2004, Fabricius et al. 2004, Cocks 2006, Cocks et al., in press).

Traditional[1] knowledge has many names that are often used interchangeably: Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is officially defined as "local knowledge held by indigenous peoples, or local knowledge unique to a given culture or society (Warren *et al.* 1995 in Berkes *et al.* 1998: 4). The more specific Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is referred to as "a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment" (Berkes *et al.* 1995 in Berkes *et al.* 1998: 5). Both of these terms can be used to represent knowledge which has been developed by local communities over time through experience and experimentation in response to local environmental conditions. However, for the purpose of this thesis I will use IK to refer to IK in general (as this is how it is mainly recognised in worldwide literature and policy), and local knowledge or LEK to refer to knowledge known by participants in the field sites (which came about from the research). I make this distinction mainly in order to avoid the pitfalls of the word 'indigenous' and the connotations it has in the search for authentic knowledge. This is especially important in rural South African communities, which, through a history of colonialisation, apartheid and modernisation, have become diverse, highly mobile groups. The value of IK is now recognised by world bodies such as UNESCO, and the concept has been expanded to include aspects such as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), which includes "oral traditions and expressions", and "knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe" (Smeets 2005: 184). Far from being static, these cultural aspects are "traditional, living and evolving", and as such are "transmitted from generation to generation and constantly recreated by communities and groups, in response to their environment, their interactions with nature, and their history" (Smeets 2005: 184).

While Indigenous Knowledge (IK) was in the past exoticised as a primitive response to differing environments, (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), the past and present diversity of social and cultural systems is now seen to signify "different solutions to the problems of surviving in particular environments", while helping these societies "to adapt to changing conditions" (Zweifel 1997: 115). Ethno-botanical research reveals a close understanding and interdependence between culture and nature (Posey 1999). It is now recognised that biodiversity "could not exist without the practices and knowledge developed by the societies that create it, and maintain or reduce it" (Bérard and Marchenay 2006: 111). In 1988, the Declaration of Belém emphasised that indigenous peoples have been or currently are stewards of 99 % of the world's genetic resources, revealing

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[1] The term 'traditional' refers to a "historical and cultural continuity" (Berkes *et al.* 1998), which acknowledges that the concepts of tradition and culture are not static, bounded entities, but are continuously being negotiated in response to internal and external stimuli (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997).

the 'inextricable link' between biodiversity and cultural diversity (Posey and Overal 1990). While biodiversity is recognised as "the variability among living organisms from all sources" (CBD 1992: 146), cultural diversity is realised as "humankind's accumulated reserve of learned responses to the environment that make co-existence and self-recognition possible" (Declaration of Belem 1992: 2). The term bio-cultural diversity is now used to denote the 'crucial complementarity' between the two (Slikkerveer 1992, 1999, Posey 1999, Maffi 2001, 2005, Loh and Harmon 2005).

Researchers have urged that conservation policies and practices should take this 'inextricable link' into account to achieve a "less exploitative philosophy of nature and the environment for improved sustainable natural resource management" (Slikkerveer 1999). Thus, local environmental use and perceptions have become a vital component in the conservation of biodiversity (Pretty *et al.* 2009). These changes have been reflected in international legislation, with the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity calling on all parties to

> "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles...relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity" (United Nations 1993: 149).

1.3.2   New roles for traditional knowledge

Environmental research reveals how LEK and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) have benefitted local environments. For example, enabling the improvement and conservation of soil fertility (Blackmore *et al.* 1990, Kolawole and Lagoun 2005), the regeneration of forests (Cairns 2007), soil and water management, conservation of crops and trees and communally recognised sacred forests or groves (Berkes 1999, UNESCO 2006), livestock management (Millar 1990, Haverkort and Millar 1992, 1994), sustainable development (Warren 1992a, 199b, Warren *et al.* 1995, Ramakrishnan 2007) and improved biodiversity conservation (Michon et al. 2000, Fraser *et al.* 2006, Xu *et al.* 2006). Some researchers now recognise that "the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity is embedded in societal and cultural systems" (Zweifel 1997: 113).

It is now recognised that "local and traditional knowledge often play a significant role in the management of everyday natural resource use" (Fabricius 2004: 24) and there has been increasing recognition that ecological folk knowledge and practices should be conserved and protected (Gadgil *et al.* 2000). LEK and local communities' environmental experience is of particular importance considering the unpredictability of South Africa's climate (Fabricius 2004). Innovative CBNRM programmes have realised that local people "will only participate in the management of natural resources effectively when their own values, knowledge and traditional

practices are recognised and incorporated within the new strategy" (Sibanda 2004: 252). While some researchers recognise that strengthening indigenous people's cultural knowledge and practices can lead to improved ecological conservation (Garibaldi and Turner 2004: 4), others argue that conservation which is encouraged through the "context of local culture" gives protected areas a greater connotation than the ecological "emphasis on biological diversity, landscape, or economies" ever could (Infield 2001: 801).

These findings indicate the need to both recognise and involve local people in conservation efforts as well as co-management and environmental monitoring (Moller *et al.* 2004). The role local communities have to play in conserving protected areas should be acknowledged through the means of common property management systems, community focused conservation programmes and participatory research and monitoring. Rather than prescribing conservation upon local communities, conservation should include collaborative research that can result in "adaptive management and locally made rules that are enforced in a responsible manner" (Fabricius *et al.* 2001: 842).

1.3.3 The lure of the 'noble savage'

At the same time, researchers should be careful not to romanticise IK that upholds the view of 'ecologically noble savages' whose superior modes of knowledge will always promote the sustainable conservation of environments (Redford 1990, Alvard 1993). There is a tendency in some circles to view IK as 'pure', as almost a continuation of the 'unspoilt' wilderness which preservationist conservation strived to save (Cronon 1996). While it has been shown that the majority of indigenous people historically have conserved their environments, there are some exceptions to this rule (e.g. Easter Island) as well as various inconsistencies and inequalities that exist. Millar (2004: 4) considers the following:

> "taboos against planting trees, gross inequalities between men and women, land use practices that have detrimental ecological effects, and misuse of their position and knowledge by local leaders, are aspects which need to be observed and brought into the intercultural dialogue".

Rather than the need for an "internationalisation of conservation" to resurgent protectionist standards (Oates 1999), complete with 'voluntary relocation' and armed conservation officials (Terborgh 1999), these exceptions illustrate the fact that one size does not fit all, as indeed one (Western) conservation model has failed to solve current biodiversity problems. Indeed now, more than ever, there is a need for ecological solutions that use humans-in-nature models (Clapp 2004). These should first of all consider how the environment is used and valued by local people

before ascertaining how LEK and scientific knowledge can work together to create effective participatory conservation. Current proponents arguing for the urgent conservation of bio-cultural diversity (Sutherland 2003, Loh and Harmon 2005, Maffi 2005) are at present also working through perceptions that limit IK to small, previously marginalised communities that are considered to live primordially in harmony with nature (Appadurai 1996). This view completely disregards local indigenous knowledge existing outside of these 'idyllic' situations (Cocks 2006) as well as the "dynamic, creative possibilities that can emerge from human agency and processes of hybridity" amongst communities considered to be 'more modernised' (Brosius and Hitchner 2010).

While many African communities have gone through rapid socio-ecological change since contact with westernisation, research has shown that they still retain their socio-cultural ties to natural resources. For example, many urbanised South Africans continue to use medicinal plants, and in some cases increased wealth due to urbanisation has led to an increased ability to perform cultural activities such as maintaining kraals and performing ancestral rituals (Cocks 2006, Cocks and Dold 2008). While communities may no longer depend upon forests and wild resources for subsistence, studies have shown that many expect to continue harvesting wild resources for cultural reasons (Van Lieshout 2002, Cocks 2006, Cocks *et al.* in pres).

Research needs to recognise the reality in which communities are placed. Contact with western powers has often brought about numerous cultural and societal changes, ranging from an increase in population size due to increased healthcare to a change in land use practices resulting from resettlement and dislocation. It seems that to qualify as indigenous a community has to live unchanged, or to be a 'non-dominant sector of society' (Posey 1999). This does not take into account majority groups or modernised rural communities who also value biodiversity (Cocks 2006) or the dynamic responses communities can have in changing rural conditions (Wiersum and Shackleton 2005).

Millar (2004: 6) considers research on IK to be focused more on technologies; validated from a western perspective, than on systems, structures and processes. In response to this, any conservation, health or agricultural programmes in Africa need to be planned around "African religious concepts, institutions and practices" (Millar 2004: 6). This is because indigenous knowledge and values

> "still form the main driving force for rural people's decisions on land use, food production, community management, health practices, religious practices, teaching, learning and

experimenting, these should be seen as the main point of articulation for development activities and development workers" (Millar 2004: 6).

Rather than either idealising or dismissing IK in favour of scientific knowledge, community research programmes need to be initiated with respect for the community and their local knowledge; where participatory programmes can lead to an integration of local knowledge with scientific knowledge for more effective environmental research, development and monitoring (Oviedo *et al.* 2000, Millar 2004, Maffi and Woodley 2010). This combination of local people's expert knowledge of their environment, with scientists' more global environmental knowledge (Caillon and Degeorges 2007), can create a formidable force for successful participatory conservation. Indeed, as Derman states (2003: 68) there is more and more realisations that IK is "not separate from the broader constructions of knowledge", but should rather be seen as one of many 'ways of knowing' (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005).

1.3.4 The role of LEK in biodiversity conservation

More recently, there has been a call for conservation programmes and campaigns that "illustrate the link between cultural and biodiversity conservation as well as the diversity and dynamics of cultural values regarding biodiversity" (Cocks 2006: 30). Programmes that market biodiversity as being directly linked to cultural diversity are anticipated to "have far greater success then species-focused conservation approaches, which are perceived only to be of benefit to the elite" (Cocks 2006: 30–31). Despite these realisations of the rhetoric of environmentalism and the irreplaceable part local people and their LEK have to play in biodiversity conservation, very little work has been done within the realm of conservation and environmental management to research the meaning of 'the environment' and the role of local means of conservation, especially in rural communities in South Africa. Regardless of the global recognition given to IK and the call for the inclusion of local people and their LEK into successful conservation strategies, these ideas have not transferred into mainstream South African conservation policies. Cocks (2006) states that in South Africa, the concept of including LEK in biodiversity conservation planning and the use of cultural values as a conservation tool has yet to be applied (c.f. Cocks *et al.* in prep). Environmental research with rural communities has primarily focused on trying to evaluate non-timber forest products (NTFP's) through the use of forests and wild resources as safety nets (Shackleton and Shackleton 2003, 2004a, Frison *et al.* 2005 and Paumgarten 2005) or the 'poor man's overcoat' (Wunder 2001) and the economic values that might be subscribed to such use of biodiversity (Shackleton and Shackleton 2000, Shackleton *et al.* 2002, Shackleton and Shackleton 2004b). At the same time, it is important to realise that this inclusion of IK into conservation

systems, while offering an alternative to the paternalistic scientific mode of environmental management (Kaschula *et al.* 2005), cannot solve conservation complexities overnight. Many rural communities have the added pressure of increased populations, a legacy of exclusion, limited agricultural land and economic opportunities and politics and power struggles. In some cases wild resources are the only 'free' resource available to poor people with no employment opportunities (Dovie *et al.* 2002, 2006, 2007)

It is now recognised that successful conservation projects need to include the cultural knowledge and participation of the communities that live in the environments to be conserved (Agrawal 1995, 1999, 2001, Etkin 2002, Potvin 2003, Fabricius *et al.* 2004). South Africa, and the Eastern Cape in particular, with its rich bio-cultural diversity seems a prime location for such work, especially since unemployment and poverty levels have led to great dependence on wild resources (Shackleton *et al.* 2007). These resources contribute in many ways: from supplementing basic nutrition and economic livelihood strategies (Shackleton and Scholes 2000, Shackleton *et al.* 2001, Wiersum and Shackleton 2005), to the social-cultural maintenance of identity and belonging (Fox 2005, Cocks 2006, Cocks and Dold 2008). Although there has been much exploration into Xhosa cultural uses and perceptions of plants (Cocks *et al.* 2004, Cocks 2006) there is still a lack of understanding regarding Xhosa cultural environmental perceptions in relation to socio-cultural attachment to landscapes and species and how this relates to biodiversity conservation.

These gaps in conservation research, practice and policy need to be rectified to realise local solutions to the problem of biodiversity conservation in local contexts. There is a great need to understand local conservation schema and practices, especially in areas where people are heavily dependent on local resources for subsistence and cultural use. Local ecological knowledge is of prime importance, not only for the preservation of the species, but also for the contribution of this cultural knowledge to local community's health and well-being. LEK has been recognised to contribute to wildlife management in remote areas and to engage stakeholders in participatory conservation concerns (Berkes *et al.* 2001, Gilchrist *et al.* 2005). It has also been proven to be an effective tool in more resilient agriculture (Warren *et al.* 1995, Critchley 1999, Shiva 2001), sustainable harvesting (Turner *et al.* 2000) as well as co-management and monitoring of natural resources by local people (Mathius-Mundy *et al.* 1992, Gilchrist *et al.* 2005).

Regardless of the immense importance of the part played by indigenous communities in biodiversity conservation, their part has yet to be effectively applied in practice. In South Africa, legislation such as the White Paper on conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity

(DEAT 1997) effectively recognises the "irreplaceable value of...traditional knowledge, practices and cultures" (Stafford 2004). The Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Policy (DST 2004) calls for the integration of IKS into the mainstream, with the hopeful anticipation of both protecting IKS from 'bio piracy' (Plotkin 2001) and commercialising IKS for community wealth (DST 2004). However, although this part may be currently outlined on paper, it has yet to be effectively realised on the ground (Infield 2001, Cocks 2006, Green 2008, Cocks and Dold 2008).

1.3.5   The language of conservation

One of the main obstacles to realising effective community conservation is the fact that the language of conservation largely remains within the western context. This is despite lengthy scholarly criticism. Cronon's (1996) groundbreaking work reveals that even the very premise of environmentalism, with its bedrock concepts of 'nature' and an 'unspoilt wilderness' in need of protection, is itself a product of western civilisation and thus is "entirely a cultural construction" (Cronon 1996: 8). This constructed environmentalism has been responsible for removing people from their ancestral land to make way for 'pristine' national parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite (Darnovsky 1991, Spence 1996, Cronon 1996) and Kruger (Koch *et al.* 1990, Carruthers 2006). Local people have constantly been on the receiving end of western ideals of wilderness. Slater (2001) uncovers these exact biases in her exposure of western visions of Amazonia as a 'mighty and threatened jungle wilderness' peopled by 'fearsome jungle tribes' and exotic flora and fauna species. These views do not take into account the 23 million people that are living and working in the Amazon every day, most of them persons of mixed blood who "constitute the great bulk of the Amazonian population" (Slater 2001: 141). Western narrative of the Amazon as a 'pristine rainforest'

> "reflects a long tradition of environmental gigantification that allows outsiders to continue to focus on the region's identity as quintessential Nature, despite the ample evidence of alteration of both land and water by many different human groups over the centuries" (Slater 2001: 137).

Environmental gigantification is defined as "The "giant-making" process whereby a selected fragment comes not just to represent, but to erase the larger whole" (Slater 2001: 220). Like the Amazon, Africa has not escaped environmental gigantification, with the concrete ideas of conservation being created around an invented "mythical Africa, which soon claimed a place of privilege in the Western imagination" (Adams and McShane 1996: xii). Faced with the industrialisation of the west, and new appreciation of 'unspoilt wildernesses' to be both conquered and protected, Europeans saw Africa

> "as a glorious Eden for wildlife...[which] fits into a dream of a refuge from the technological age.... European explorers wanted to believe in a virgin land, unsullied by human hands. Yet, this Africa never was. Indeed nowhere does the vision of Africa depart

further from reality. Man has been an integral part of the African landscape for 2 million years" (Adams and McShane 1996: xii–xiii).

This Eurocentric preoccupation with 'unspoilt, 'wild' Africa neither allowed nor recognised a place for the indigenous people that had shaped these landscapes and existed as a working part of the African 'wilderness' (Adams and McShane 1996: 58, Beinart and McGregor 2003). Fairhead and Leach's work in West Africa (1994b, 1996, and Leach *et al.* 1997) revealed that the African landscape has, in fact, been 'misread' by outsiders, and that past and present local environmental use and perspectives urgently need to be taken into account, as, in fact: "landscape history is also social history" (1996: 14). Maddox (2005: 721) states that it is imperative to realise that "the landscapes we see and the changes in them we describe are fundamentally the product of human agency" and it is therefore essential to consider both present and historical environmental use. Environmental gigantification continues to have an effect in South Africa, with its preoccupation with 'the bush' and its use of the unspoilt wilderness in promoting tourism (Slater 2002). Accordingly, it is essential to find ways to understand local ideas of conservation that can talk past this myth-making and uncover discrepancies between perceived and actual uses and valuation of the environment by local people. This thesis proposes that cultural environmental narratives could be one inroad towards this goal. As Cronon (1992: 1350) states, narrative is "essential to our understanding of history and the human place in nature".

1.4 Narrative

1.4.1 The importance of narrative

"...storytelling is at once magic, sorcery and religion. It enchants. It animates, sets into motion, and rouses the forces that lie dormant in things, in beings" (Minh – ha 1989: 129).

It was a family narrative that inspired African American Alex Haley to find his roots in Africa two centuries after his forefathers had been taken from there as slaves. Haley describes the way the women in his family would tell stories on the front porch that he realised were part of "a long narrative history of the family which had been passed down literally across generations" (Haley 1973: 1). It was through his eventual matching of this family narrative with the historical narratives of Keba Kanga Fofana, griot or 'historical storyteller' of the Kinte clan in Gambia, that Haley ascertained the village from which his forefather had been taken.

Despite any debate about Haley's personal work (Gerber 1977, Wright 1981) his use of stories reveals both the importance of narrative and the long-lasting ability of narrative to carry information over centuries using only the means of human tongue and human memory. Narrative

is particularly important because it is one of the main methods by which humans make sense of their world:

> "...narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives ... narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: It is simply there, like life itself..." (Barthes 1977: 79).

The term 'story' here refers to narrative in its simplest form. For the purpose of this study, both story and narrative are seen as means to bring about 'narrative understanding' (see Entrikin 1991), which is described as a way of "seeing things together" (Mink 1970, 1987). Narrative provides a means of conveying a group's norms and values, and plays an important part in identity and belonging. It is through narrative in its various forms that people make sense of the world and through narrative that they transmit cultural knowledge and the 'story of themselves' to the next generation. For these reasons, stories themselves form "a pervasive and central part of childhood and development" (Engel 1995: x). It could be said that humans construct themselves (Engel 1995), and thus their worldviews, primarily through stories.

Narrative can thus be seen as an intangible web, stretching from one generation to the next, providing "human lives with a sense of order and meaning within and across time" (Rapport and Overing 2000: 283-284). In this way, narrative assists in both creating and reinforcing a society's world view, leading to shared ways of thinking and a collective memory (Rapport and Overing 2000). Story is, in fact, part of a society's world-forming processes (Mclean 2009). Stories and storytelling thus exist as research tools towards understanding societies' moral reasoning (Rapport and Overing 2000) and individual's cultural learning (Eisenhart 1995, Gabriel 1999). Narrative has therefore become an important 'revealing' tool to some anthropologists, especially those interested in the anthropology of learning (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, Cain 1991, Eisenhart 1995, Rapport 1999). Stories, even if 'corrupted' through time and retelling, contain 'archetypal patterns' and cultural instructions, they:

> 'engender the excitement, sadness, questions, longings and understandings that spontaneously bring the archetype...back to the surface. Stories are embedded with instructions which guide us about the complexities of life' (Pinkola-Estes 1992: 14).

Any examination of the means of learning traditional narratives should take into account that learning does not only take place in the classroom. In a similar way that research now acknowledges the importance of 'everyday narrative' (Jickling 2001) as opposed to traditional stories such as ancestral myths of origin, many aspects of daily life can be considered a learning experience. Children learn from elders, as well as siblings, peers, teachers, visitors and media. Similarly, a community will not have a homogenous view towards the environment, and any

examination of narrative must consider the "different perceptions, meanings and interpretations of the environment that are held by different people both locally and externally" (Kepe 2002, iii). In this way 'everyday' narratives offer representations of a daily reality. As such they are considered an important tool for understanding different environmental perceptions or the 'multiple narratives' (Ranger 1999, Gunner 2005) that can relate to a single place.

The use of personal or group narrative as a research or management tool is a relatively new concept in environmental perception studies. Brehm's (2007) study used narrative as a means to uncover the complexity of community attachment to landscape. It was concluded that this type of research tool enables participants to "frame their emotional and sentimental attachment to elements of the natural environment within their own words and context", making narrative understanding "essential to facilitate effective planning and land use into the future and to diminish the potential for conflict" (2007: 478).

1.4.2 African oral literature – the 'Cinderella' discipline

In order to consider oral narrative as a tool to cultural understanding it is important to realise the uses that narrative has been put to in the past as well as the circumstances under which African narratives were initially recorded. Many of the first collections of 'folklore' were compiled by explorers and missionaries, who reported back to their western counterparts on the curious customs and beliefs they came across in their travels. Missionaries in particular were responsible for extensive studies into local languages and customs, albeit that the main motive behind many of these studies was to assist "the evangelisation of Africa" (Finnegan 1970: 28). Aided in part by anthropological explorations, by the early 1900's there were "Collections of folk-tales pouring in from every quarter" of Africa, to feed the European fascination held by "the Dark Continent" (Werner 1933: 5). This scholarly scramble for the folklore of Africa led to it becoming a specialised field in its own right (i.e. Theal's (1882) work on Xhosa oral narratives, Callaway's (1868) work on Zulu tales, and Bleek (1864, 1873, 1875, 1923), and Bleek and Lloyd's (1911) extensive work with the /Xam). While earlier studies in folklore served to 'exoticise' Africans, a select few (Koelle 1854, Bleek 1864) contributed to greater western understanding and appreciation of African intellectualism in an environment where it was common to separate Europeans from the 'uncivilised heathens' whose countries they had colonised. It was only later that African tales began to be compared to 'civilised' western tales. In 1894 Chatelain's comparative research proved African folklore to be a "branch of one universal tree" rather than the primitive tales of magic and sorcery it had been prescribed (in Finnegan 1970: 29). Since this time there have been innumerable studies in African oral folklore, some particularly intended for children (e.g. Schmidt 1971). However, many of these earlier studies failed to acknowledge authorship, and almost none

retained the original cadences and songs that form part of African oral literature (an exception to this is Tracey 1967). Even collections of narratives by African scholars were not immune from the inherent racism and conservatism of the times they were written in (Rubusana 1906, Soga 1931). More recent studies uncover historical and present socio-cultural and political comments which can be revealed through various oral literatures such as songs and praise poetry (Vail and White 1991). This revelation has led to a call for renewed study in this 'Cinderella' discipline (Vail and White 1991: 322).

It is important to note that narrative collections have been, and to some degree continue to be, decisively influenced by power and gender inequalities. For example, missionaries would document the language and narratives of those tribes who proved willing to cooperate with them. Usually these were people who decided to ally themselves with missions to gain protection from stronger political groups (Vail 1989). Similarly, histories and narratives relating to masculine rituals and activities, such as the praise songs for kings and chiefs, have been a much stronger voice than narratives relating to women's rituals and activities, some of which remain solely in the domain of women (Furniss and Gunner 1995). More gender specific approaches, such as Gengenbach (2000), reveal that women can 'tell the past' in their own way, having 'unofficial' narratives that can recall, for example, the line of women who were married to and descended from the officially known 'clan' founding fathers (Gengenbach 2000: 543).

1.4.3   The relationship between oral narrative and conservation

Narrative becomes particularly important in the study of IK. This is because it is one of the main means of conveying IK, which is primarily "transferred through stories and legends over countless generations" and due to its oral nature often remains undocumented (Fabricius 2004: 34). In this way stories and narrative can be seen as a 'vessel' or 'tool' for containing or teaching traditional environmental use and conservation strategies. Although this teachings may occur in formalised situations, such as rituals, stories are "remarkably flexible discourse units" that occur in all manner of forms "from the most formal social occasion to the most casual conversation" (Holmes 2003: 114). Accordingly, they can perform a wide variety of functions, from socio-cultural instruction and entertainment to establishing connections and marking social boundaries (Holmes 2003: 114).

While there has been some exploration into oral narrative in Africa, this has been primarily in the realm of language, 'customs' and practices, 'folklore' and oral history and poetry. To date, there

has been very little work done relating to environmental narratives. The fact that there is this knowledge gap serves to reinforce our understanding of the pervasiveness of western ideas of conservation being left to the realm of scientists and 'educated westerners'. One strong illustration of this is Wangari Maathai's recollection that Kenyan forest officials were initially reluctant to allow local women to plant trees, because they were 'not qualified'. Maathai's (2007) autobiography reveals how local cultural knowledge was ignored and replaced by 'conservation' and afforestation plans that led to the demise of indigenous forests. She describes a traditional narrative told to her by her mother relating to the sacred fig tree. These trees were deeply respected by Kikuyu communities, and both the trees and the land shaded by their branches were to be left undisturbed. Maathai succinctly explains how this relationship worked to benefit the environment and the people:

> "The reverence the community had for the fig tree helped preserve the stream and tadpoles that so captivated me. The trees also held the soil together, reducing erosion and landslides. In such ways, without conscious or deliberate effort, these cultural and spiritual practices contributed to the conservation of biodiversity" (Maathai 2007: 46).

Although these taboos were observed by the community during her childhood, they began to fall away with the increased land use and 'modernisation', which saw land as something to be developed rather than protected. As soon as people started to cut down the fig trees, the streams near them began to dry up.

Along with these 'teaching' narratives which offered key environmental lessons, the stories told to children in the evenings were also significant. According to Maathai (2007: 50), these stories played a very important role in children's upbringing, serving to: "entertain, educate, and encourage creativity in children", thereby acting as "an effective informal education". Due to the oral nature of Kikuyu culture:

> "refined methods had been developed of passing knowledge to, and shaping values of, future generations through, among other activities, stories. Many of the stories had become very elaborate and subtle, like myths, because they had been told in various forms over many generations" (Maathai 2007: 50).

Similarly, the San practice of *kukummi* (the telling of the stories) was particularly important as it played a vital role in teaching and reinforcing the group's religious and social beliefs (Bleek and Lloyd 1911, Bennun 2004). It thus becomes possible to consider local narratives as a means to understanding local perceptions and values of nature. Slater (2001) considers local people's narratives to be a key tool to unlocking local ideas about the Amazon and the affect it has on people's lives. The use of narratives to both explain and teach environmental relationships and regulations has also been documented among indigenous people in other parts of the world. For

example, Jay's (1986) description of the salmon stories that are told by Pacific/Northwest Coast Native Americans reveals "a moral understanding of self, community, earth and the interrelationships among them" (Gough 1993: 5).

For the purpose of this study, it was decided that it would be most beneficial to focus on narrative that could be related to traditional conservation measures. In terms of LEK, these narratives could potentially be found in such social concepts as sacred or tabooed places, species or activities that function as local conservation teachings. Colding and Folke (2001) call these "'invisible' systems of local resource management and biological conservation", stating that many traditional societies have social taboos which dictate local people's interactions with the environment (2001: 584). These "resource and habitat taboos", have "functions similar to those of formal institutions for nature conservation in contemporary society", however, they "have not been sufficiently recognized in this capacity" (Colding and Folke 2001: 584). This is why conservation in developing countries in particular should:

> 'focus more on informal institutions, like social taboos, because they may offer several advantages compared to conventional measures. These include non-costly, voluntary compliance features implicit in the taboo system' (Colding and Folke 2001: 584).

It is important to understand the impact that the surrounding environment has had on local cultural narratives if we are to understand the relationship that these narratives imply. Fabricius (2004: 3) states that

> "Traditionally, people relied heavily on the abundant wild natural resources that surrounded them. As a result, people in Africa generally appreciated the value of nature, and incorporated nature into their worldviews, metaphors, folklore and belief systems".

These views and beliefs have in turn "been carried over from generation to generation through oral testimony" (Folke *et al.* 1998 in Fabricius 2004: 3). Like most indigenous first nations, Xhosa society has a strong oral tradition, through the means of stories, songs, rituals, etc that can be seen as parts of this 'oral testimony'. While part of the testimony is purely culturally related, for example narrative relating to customary dress, there are other parts of the testimony in the form of environmental narratives. These oral narratives can be seen as the building blocks of "traditional regulatory mechanisms", such that "certain traditional religious practices, beliefs and taboos" have led to the protection of important cultural sites and the regulation of natural resource use (Telly 2005: 194 -195).

Alongside their formal clan narratives, which are mostly recited during rituals and important socio-cultural events, most indigenous peoples also have narratives that relate to their ways of

interacting with the natural environment. Besides telling what societies use and value the most, these narratives offer insight into the relationship between people and the environment they use. An examination of available narrative can reveal how much the landscape plays a part in the community's activities, perceptions, value system and sense of belonging or identity. By studying the nature and content of ecological narratives it is possible to begin to understand the importance of traditional institutions and spiritual ecology for ecological management, as well as the role of traditional leaders in respecting and conserving the environment, and the impact of outside influences (such as forest rangers, extension officers and western-based education) on local communities. This is imperative, as

> scientifically informed and Western notions of landscape are more concerned with its ecological, functional or aesthetic use values, rather than its more complex relational (spiritual, political, and social) representations within a historical framework that are of major concern to many of the indigenous inhabitants (Bernard and Kumalo 2004a: 124).

While oral histories such as clan narratives are more fixed, with official rituals requiring the telling of these histories, environmental narratives are more intangible, and have not been well documented historically. The limited research available states that pre-colonial Xhosa society was ruled by chiefs and clan leaders, and that access to land and resources was controlled through chiefs and clan headmen, with some mention of chiefs proclaiming certain forest reserves for their own use, as well as regulating traditional activities such as hunting (Eeley *et al.* 2004, Giliomee and Mbenga 2007, Peires. Pers. comm. 28 April 2009). More recently there has been more detailed analysis of protected forests or cultural environmental regulations (Tropp 2003), but this is site specific and historically based, serving mainly to introduce the concept of cultural restrictions towards the environment.

Perhaps the research that relates most closely to Xhosa environmental restrictions is that which considers diviners and the rules and obligations they have to their ancestors: mainly through the medium of rituals, ceremonies and daily practice (Broster 1967, 1981, Hirst 1990, 1997, 2000, 2005, Bernard 2003, Mabona 2004, Bernard and Khumalo 2004a, Bernard 2010). The power of the diviner is said to rest on a peaceful and powerful relationship with the ancestors who reside mainly in the river, forest and kraal, who are represented through messenger and ancestral animals. The diviners need to maintain this relationship if they are to maintain their power as diviners and have to observe certain cultural restrictions when accessing these environments. This relationship between diviners and animals, forests and rivers will be discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.

Cultural environmental narrative cannot be divorced from the cultural environment in which it exists, because this relationship "between environmental activities and the rules and meanings which accompany them is strongly conditioned by culture" (Rappaport 1967). In this way, narratives consider "what is acceptable or unacceptable, who is allowed or not allowed, when permission should be granted or not granted and who is admitted or not admitted" (Mathews 1995: 286). What we need to uncover are the ideas about the environment that these narratives convey, besides their reflection of current and past socio-political powers. What can these narratives tell us about the way Xhosa people see their environment and their role in conserving natural resources; what conservation narratives are inherent in traditional stories?

1.5 Children and their environment

It was decided to focus this study around narratives told to and by children due to several gaps visible in past and current research. Most environmental perception studies have been done in the West; particularly in urban settings (Skelton and Valentine 1998, Matthews and Limb 1999, Holloway and Valentine 2000), leading Philo (1992) to consider the sphere of 'neglected rural geographies'. Only recently have these studies been extended to consider children in rural areas, where, according to Matthews *et al.* (1999), children are still 'invisible' actors in the majority of rural environmental research. The "lived worlds of rural young people" therefore remain mostly unexplored (in Matthews *et al.* 2001: 161), particularly in Africa. There is thus a "compelling need for further investigation in order to unravel the diversity of the rural experience" (Tucker and Matthews 2001: 167).

As we are trying to examine how people pass on ideas of 'indigenous' conservation and environmental perceptions, it will be advantageous to focus on children and adolescents who, at 'school going age', will (in theory) be learning about their environment from their parents and elders as well as through their school curriculum. According to Kamp (2001: 2), "childhood is the training ground, the time when skills and belief systems are formed" and children should not be ignored in social research, as their presence, activities and cultural organisation often have social, economic, livelihood and political importance (Kamp 2001: 2). Children, although often disregarded from the research field, are the main utilisers of natural open spaces (Bradley and Millward 1986, Millward 1987, Millward and Mostyn 1988). The types of narratives intended for children are usually more pronounced, and these narratives are subject to less manipulation, being primarily focused on cultural mores, rather than, for example, political messages. Previous studies with children (James and Prout 1990, James *et al.* 1998, Skinner and Holland 1996) reveal

them to be "dynamic agents" who both learn and create "culture and society in interaction with other children and with adults" (Rapport and Overing 2000: 32). Tapsell *et al.* (2001) state that despite their increased use of natural open spaces, children continue to be viewed as:

> "a marginal or 'outsider' group within society (Sibley 1995, Matthews 1995, Matthews and Limb 1999). Young people are seemingly invisible on the landscape, provided only with token spaces such as formal playgrounds, often inappropriate to their needs (Cunningham and Jones 1997). Children's views and opinions on these open spaces are rarely sought" (Tapsell *et al.* 2001: 177).

For ease of reference in this study I shall use the term 'children' to broadly indicate anyone of school-going age, or those not seen as 'adult'. While I recognise that older participants are technically classified as 'youths' or adolescents, it would be too cumbersome to make these separations each time throughout the thesis. Thus, we can take the term 'children' to mean any person under the age of 18 or still attending school, unless otherwise specified. I recognise that there are large differences in environmental use and perceptions between the ages of 'child' and 'adolescent'; these differences will be revealed during the course of the thesis.

While there has been some research exploring environmental perceptions in rural areas in South Africa (Fox 2005, Bernard 2010), there has been virtually no work done on rural South African children's environmental perceptions. Burman and Reynolds (1990) deduce that children are 'largely socially invisible' in social research in South Africa. In their understanding, it is studies involving children which 'hold up an enlarging mirror' to society as a whole (Burman and Reynolds 1990). Reynold's (1996) work with traditional healers in Zimbabwe reveals the importance of considering both the role of children in healing rituals, and the far-reaching impact childhood experiences have on healers' identities. Recent research involving children and their environments recognises that "children have been underestimated as active agents of their own well-being, and as major users of natural resources" (McGarry and Shackleton 2009: 34). These authors call for research that allows "rural children the opportunity to guide and lead researchers in their research and practices" stating that

> 'this information could be invaluable in developing locally appropriate research questions that strategically investigate the hidden complexities of rural livelihoods...' (McGarry and Shackleton 2009: 34)

At the same time, a research field is emerging focused on children and nature, recognising the importance of nature and natural spaces to human development. Theorists such as Louv (2005) and Hart (1997) argue that children need free access to natural areas to explore and experience what Carson calls a 'sense of wonder' (in Hart 1997: 18) that is fundamental to their growth as

individuals and their understanding of how the world works. Louv (2005) even goes so far as to postulate that many of the emotional problems that affect children in modernised western societies, such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) arise out of a dislocation and lack of connection to the natural environment, and that these disorders can be calmed when children are provided with free access to natural spaces. Obviously, these studies into children's environmental perceptions have taken place in modernised, industrialised societies, and thus involve aspects of urban children's access to nature that does not necessarily translate into rural children's environmental access. We could argue that children in rural areas have a much greater access to natural spaces as well as having daily chores that regularly take them into these natural areas (gathering firewood, herding animals). Their parents could have less reason to fear the dangers that occur in a more urbanised environment, potentially leading to increased environmental access, which could result in increased environmental knowledge.

The involvement of children in the research project is also intended to have a positive impact on their understanding and appreciation of their own culture. Odochao (2006) talks about the western-styled education of indigenous peoples being 'rooted in two worlds', which leads to marginalised youths who are unsure of their own identity. He states that the

> "revitalisation of culture requires collaboration with the school system. By convincing youngsters of the interest of their own culture, we can give them back their pride and stop the despair of those to whom school has given only the desire to be someone else" (Odochao 2006: 12).

1.6   Play as a window into environmental knowledge and understanding

To understand differences and similarities in children's environmental use and perceptions at the two field sites it was decided to focus on children's knowledge as well as their utilisation of the environment. The results chapters were thus designed around children's cultural environmental narratives and what they reveal about their cultural relationship with wild animals and species (chapter 3), and their use of their environment for play and their perceptions of place (chapter 4). Play has long been a subject of interest to psychoanalysts and educators for its cathartic value as well as its assistance in physical, social and mental skills development (Kamp 2001). Anthropologists consider games to have many functions: they allow "enculturation" by offering rehearsal for adult roles and activities; they offer a way of learning "basic cultural values and social skills", and they act as "social unifiers" by dissolving "conflicts and psychological tensions" (Kamp 2001: 18-19). Studying play can reveal "a wealth of information about the scope of

children's cognitive, cultural, and social skills (Hirshfield 2002: 614). According to Lancy (1996: 94) games and play exist as

> "enduring artefacts, a permanent part of a society's repertoire, reused with each generation...[In play] children could risk "getting it wrong" without serious consequences. At the same time, from society's vantage point, games are clever devices-they are fun to play ... and, thereby seduce the child into learning things society thinks are important (In Hirshfield 2002: 614).

Despite what play can reveal about socialisation and enculturation, it has not been adequately explored as a way to access environmental perceptions, especially in the developing world. Those studies that link play and environmental use have been conducted mostly in urban (usually first world) environments, and focus mainly on the influence of safety concerns and environmental problems such as pollution. Some researchers have considered the great importance that natural areas have for children's play (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989, Moore 1986, Cunningham and Jones 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, Tapsel et al. 2001), but it is only recently that researchers have begun to examine the link between children's use of the environment for play and what this can reveal about their society's environmental values (Louv 2005).

Hughes (1991) explains that the urge to play is biologically implanted in humans, and children therefore have an innate need to play; often incorporating it into work and chores. While the desire to play may be instilled, exactly what constitutes play is strongly influenced by "cultural mores and definitions as well as the immediate cultural context, the physical environment, and the available materials at hand" (Harkness 1996, Roopnarine and Johnson 1994 in Kamp 2001: 18). In many ways children act as "the recipients of culture" (Kamp 2001: 27), with their play being defined by "cultural rules" that can limit mobility, "either directly via ideas about appropriate spheres of movement or indirectly through the assignment of duties whose demands put restraints on movement" (Kamp 2001: 19). However, play, by its very nature is creative, and can change over time, whether through the innovations of children or adults, which results in a "complex circular relationship between culture and play" (Kamp 2001: 19). Through this "freedom for innovation", play provides a "model for society" by readying children for new circumstances and roles through permitting them "to practice a wide variety of behaviours and to devise solutions to potential problems" (Kamp 2001: 19). Research into the use of environments for play can also reveal specific socio-cultural perceptions that may not be apparent when studying adult society, this is because children, through play, create "cultural forms that often have neither clear parallel in adult activities nor involve the direct participation of adults" (Hirshfield 2002: 614).

1.7   Children's use and perceptions of place

While the environment provides local people with many utilitarian resources, it also provides numerous recreational, psychological, spiritual and socio-cultural services. Through an examination of narratives, both historical and current, we can begin to understand what these culturally related environmental services and perceptions are. By ascertaining which places are most important for children and their families, and what restrictions govern activities at certain places, we can realise what these perceptions reveal in terms of people's connections with, and cultural responsibility towards, their environment.

Numerous studies consider the factors that influence people's use of place and the environment. According to Matthews (1995: 287), this experience is "conditioned by a broad interplay of cultural factors", including the availability of resources as well as aspects of class, ethnicity and gender. These all combine to ensure that children's environmental use and perceptions are fashioned by an "array of cultural opportunity and expectations" (Gauvain 1992: 33), which structures how children will experience place (Matthews 1995: 287). For several decades now, researchers in western environments have considered children's utilisation and experience of place and spaces (Hart 1979, Moore 1986, Gauvain 1992). While the majority of studies have been conducted in urban areas, more recently research has emerged which aims to deconstruct the experience of rural childhood (Aitken 1994, Jones 1997, Valentine 1997, Tucker and Matthews 2001). It was thought that rural areas offered "the optimal setting for the innocence that is childhood" (Jones 1999). In opposition to the spatially limited, often dangerous and polluted environments offered by cities, 'country childhoods' were generally perceived as

> "a synthesis of innocence, wildness, play, adventure, the companionship of other children, contact with nature, agricultural spaces and practices, healthiness, spatial freedom, and freedom from adult surveillance" (Jones 1997: 162).

The relative space and natural materials offered by the 'rural idyll' were envisaged to provide children with opportunities to carve out their own spaces away from adults and other (potentially conflicting) groups of children (Maxey 1999). Children living in rural areas were thus presumed to have the freedom to "develop a close association with the 'natural' environment in which they live" (Jones 1997, Valentine 1997). By examining how children actually use these spaces and the challenges they face, Tucker and Matthews (2001: 167) found that

> "in contrast to common myths, rural places are not necessarily settings in which children, whether girls or boys, can grow up in innocence, free from conflict and disharmony. Nor are rural places universal 'idylls' where children can wander and roam freely."

It remains to be seen how applicable these studies are to the African context, as most African models of childhood allow children to develop independent relationships with their immediate environments from a relatively young age. Similarly, it should be noted that the term and concept of 'landscape' is realised to be a western construction, dating back to the renaissance. It is not a word that is recognised in Xhosa language and schema. However, by defining landscape as "an imaginative construction of the environment" (Beinart and McGregor 2003: 4), it is possible to consider it as a concept allowing the realisation of local attachment to place.

As this thesis will reveal, place and stories are themselves intricately connected, as it is through stories that communities and individuals can lay claim to spaces and resources. Stories can reveal histories as well as cultural explanations and connections to landscapes, which are strongly linked to identity and belonging. For example, Sikkink and Choque (1999: 167) explain that in the Andes, residents of San Pedro de Condo use a geographically related 'origin' story to "position themselves and their community socially and politically and to negotiate relationships by focusing on their local geography". An examination of cultural narrative allows us to see that the community's

> "experiences of place are bound up in special folk tales that encode complex cultural information and are presented variously by the story-tellers, depending on their backgrounds and their goals in telling the story" (Sikkink and Choque 1999: 168).

1.8   Research Motivation and Research Aims

1.8.1   Research motivation

This research answers recent calls for the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge and cultural values into conservation plans and policy (Carruthers 2006, Cocks 2006). The failure of preservationist conservation to take into account the local communities that had contributed to biodiversity conservation (Shackleton 2000, Colchester 2003) and the need to revise and modify Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes (Campbell and Shackleton 2001, Fabricius *et al.* 2004) brings about the need for new understandings in community conservation requirements. Cocks' (2006) study concluded that "African spiritual perceptions of the landscape need to be explored and investigated", stating that "communities' narratives and myths" provide a key to uncovering these perceptions (Cocks 2006: 179) (See also Bernard 2003, Maffi 2005 and Maffi and Woodley 2010).

This thesis will focus on capturing facets of environmentally related LEK through an examination of traditional and local stories or narratives that relate to environmental perceptions and conservation strategies. It would be most beneficial to focus on narrative that can be related to traditional conservation measures because these have the most potential for inclusion in community conservation. In terms of LEK, these narratives can be found in such social concepts as sacred or tabooed places, species or activities that function as local conservation teachings. The research findings would have significance to Community Conservation plans and policy and Environmental Education programmes.

1.8.2 Research aims

The research aimed to achieve the following:

A. To ascertain if differing biophysical environments produced differing environmental narratives

B. To ascertain if different means of access produced differing environmental narratives

C. To realise where and when cultural environmental narratives are told

D. To understand the factors promoting and restricting the passing on of traditional environmental narrative

E. To consider if these traditional oral narratives have a role to play in transmitting traditional environmental knowledge and regulations, and if so, which narratives are most successful in terms of transmitting environmental knowledge or restrictions

1.8.3 Research design

As the study deals with environmental use and perceptions, it required careful consideration regarding the choice of field sites. Recent environmental perception research has shown that "natural environment aspects are indeed components of community attachment" (Brehm 2007: 487). For this reason, it was decided to locate the project in a rural area where people would have more access to and interaction with nature than in a built-up urban area. If the research is to have any application at all, it needed to be conducted in 'everyday' reality, considering how people actually relate to tradition and environmental conservation and the language and narrative they use with all the complexities of 'modernised' rural life. The possibility of an urban-rural comparison was considered, but it was rejected on the grounds that these differing environments would produce results that were influenced by too many mitigating factors to produce adequately comparable environmental perceptions. For all of the above reasons; two rural villages of comparatively equal socio-economic environments and similar histories of establishment within the former Ciskei were selected.

The project was designed to have several comparative aspects: the first being to examine if differing biological environments supported differing environmentally related narratives, perceptions and values for local communities, and if these further influence the utilisation and conservation of wild resources in the area. The study therefore compares sites situated in different vegetation types: Pirie being adjacent to (Afromontane) Southern Mist-belt Forest (Mucina and Rutherford 2006), and Ndlambe being adjacent to Albany Thicket (Hoare *et al.* 2006). The second comparison was between tenure: a state-owned forest (Pirie) and a community-owned forest (Ndlambe).

It was important that the research design acknowledged the difficulty of locating field sites that can be compared scientifically. The impossibility of locating hermetically self-contained human settlements to compare necessitates that the study takes into account the historical and cultural influences in each village, as well as the social and political institutions and practices within the villages. Therefore, the scope of available narratives was considered to be broadened rather than focused on a specific environmental comparison.

1.9   Structure of thesis

This thesis will follow the outline below:

Chapter 1 provides the context of the study, setting theoretical perspectives and explaining the research design and aims.

Chapter 2 provides a description of the field sites, providing historical as well as current background information to the study before moving on to describe the methodology employed and the fieldwork experience during the research.

Chapter 3 will examine the different kinds of narrative that children are exposed to in the field sites, and describe how these can be related to cultural understandings of the environment.

Chapter 4 examines children's environmental use and perceptions through the medium of play and place.

Chapter 5 considers the factors promoting/restricting the passing down of narrative, and

Chapter 6 concludes the study and offers a way forward in relation to applications for the research and its findings.

Chapter 2:   Field Sites

"I don't know why things are wrong....we have offended God" (Woman, 57 years, Pirie, 18 September 2009)

2.1   Preface

This chapter sets out the background to the study and provides a description of the two field sites; describing the demographics, biodiversity, relevant historical information and current socio-cultural activities. The chapter then describes the methodology employed during the study and reflects on the fieldwork experience.

2.2   General background to the study

2.2.1   Demographics

The two field sites, Pirie Mission village, (hereafter referred to as Pirie) and Ndlambe village, (Also known as KwaNdlambe, hereafter referred to as Ndlambe) are located in the Amathole District Municipality, which forms part of the former Ciskei homeland in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa (Figure 2.1). The Eastern Cape is the second biggest province in South Africa, covering 169 580 km² (BCM IDP 2009: 12) and inhabited by 13.5 % of the population of South Africa (Stats SA 2010). It is also one of the poorest provinces in the country. The province is home to the amaXhosa and amaMfengu Nguni groups; with the majority of the population being Xhosa speaking (83.4 % in 2001, Stats SA 2001). The former homeland of the Ciskei was declared by the National Party regime in 1972 (Ainslie *et al.* 1994). The area now suffers the Apartheid moulded legacy of all former homelands; being characterised by high levels of poverty, lack of infrastructure, high population densities, inferior education opportunities and families that have been divided though migrant labour and the continuing rural-urban migration (De Wet and Whisson 1997, Palmer 1997, Bank 2002, Fay 2009). Poverty and a lack of infrastructure in the Eastern Cape has further exacerbated the affects of HIV/AIDS; Dorrington *et al.* (2006) place the Eastern Cape as the third most affected province in the country. Other linked social concerns that affect families are alcoholism, poor education facilities, and violence against women and children (ADM 2009). The district's economy is primarily focused around the urban centres of East London (Buffalo City), Bhisho, King William's Town and Butterworth, with formal employment concentrated in the public service sector, manufacturing, trade and agricultural sectors (ADM 2009, 2010). By comparison, very few employment opportunities exist in surrounding rural areas,

particularly in former homeland regions, which record around 55 % unemployment, with 77 % of the population categorised as living in poverty (BCM 2009).

Aided in part by historical colonial processes and the exclusionary resettlement acts of the Apartheid regime, the bulk of the population of South Africa lived in rural areas up until around 2003 (STATS SA 2001, 2009, 2010). Rapid rural-urban migration has drastically impacted on these demographics. It is now estimated that 61.7 % of South Africans live in urban areas, with this figure expected to rise to 71.3 % by 2030 (UN Habitat 2009). In the Eastern Cape over half of the population (63.4 %) lived in rural areas in 2000, with as many classified as living in poverty (STATS SA 2001). This figure is expected to be much reduced by the next full census in 2011. The rise in urban populations in the Eastern Cape can be attributed to the heavy out-migration in search of work. As Table 2.1 shows, unemployment in the Amathole region of the Eastern Cape currently stands at 53.5 %, (ADM 2007), compared to the national average of 25.3 % (Stats SA 2010b). It is estimated that 211 600 people will have left the Eastern Cape between the years 2006 – 2011, which puts the Eastern Cape at the forefront of out-migration (Stats SA 2010). This has resulted in a relatively young population: in 2001 more than three-fifths of the province (64.4 %) were 29 years or younger (Stats SA 2001). Life expectancy in the Eastern Cape is also lower than the national average; at 50.3 years for males and 55.5 years for females (Stats SA 2009).

Table 2.1: Unemployment and household (HH) income for the Amathole District

AREA	UNEMPLOYMENT (%)	HH INCOME <R1500/month
Eastern Cape	53.5	65.2
Amathole DM	52.7	67.0
Mbashe LM	75.8	71.6
Mnquma LM	65.4	76.0
Great Kei LM	38.2	76.0
Amahlathi LM	59.4	73.5
Buffalo City LM	44.8	55.0
Ngqushwa LM	76.5	66.8
Nkonkobe LM	65.9	77.8
Nxuba LM	57.4	61.8

(Source: Amathole Growth and Development Summit Socio-Economic Profile 2007)

The former homelands of the Ciskei were particularly affected by Nationalist initiated betterment strategies, implemented in the 1930's after the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act. From the beginning, it faced increasing resistance from local people who disagreed with state restrictions that called for culling of excess cattle, and a reduction in grazing and agricultural land; in many cases farmers were forced to abandon their fields for smaller, less productive areas of land

(Beinart 1984, McAllister 1989, De Wet 1985, De Wet and Whisson 1997). By the 1950s "resistance to betterment became interwoven with resistance to the implementation of the Bantu Authorities Act" (McAllister 1989: 346). Rather than 'bettering' indigenous farming practices these acts resulted in overcrowding; exhausting the environment as well as breaking clan and family ties of land custodianship (Vazi 1988). The dislocation of local African people from their land though the racialised legislation of colonialism and Apartheid served to alienate local people from their land and dissolve their cultural and spiritual connections to their environments (Khan 1994, Fabricius et al. 2004). According to Khan (1994: 499-500), these "Historical and political factors such as the impact of the colonising process, the dispossession of blacks, the effect of racial attitudes, discriminatory legislation and the imposition of the apartheid system in 1948" have all in turn impacted upon local peoples attitude towards their environment, and their feelings towards conservation in general.

In rural South Africa, local inhabitants are reliant on natural resources for a wide variety of livelihood needs, from building materials to wild foods to supplement dietary needs (Shackleton et al. 2001, 2002, 2003, Lawes et al. 2004, Hebinck and Lent 2007). These resources are increasingly becoming commercialised as one of the only means of obtaining much needed cash income (Cocks and Dold 2000, 2002, Cocks and Wiersum 2003, Cocks 2006). Poverty indicators are on the increase. By 2004, 68.5 % of the population were living beneath the poverty line, as opposed to 52.6 % in 1996 (Global Insight 2005 in ADM 2009). Although classified as areas of pastoral and subsistence agriculture, it is now recognised that the main means of cash income for modernised rural households (especially in the former homelands) is government grants, with occasional support from family members living in urban areas (Leibbrant et al. 2000). This cash is supplemented by subsistence agriculture and collection of wild resources (Shackleton et al. 2001). Recent research states that it is now "not uncommon to see a whole family surviving on a single government pension" as its only source of cash (McGarry and Shackleton 2009: 21). While providing what is often the only means of cash income, government grants seem to have also created a culture of dependency (Thornton 2006).

All of these factors contribute to an increased dependence on natural resources (particularly in rural areas), for such uses as fuel wood, construction poles, thatching, food supplements and medicines both for home and commercial market (Cocks and Dold 2000, in prep.). This accordingly means that "large areas of the local vegetation are currently under threat" (Cocks 2006: 41) and that improved participatory natural resource management is urgently required (Shackleton 2009). The Amathole region has also been stricken with periodic drought; this

remains a constant concern for local municipalities, which often have to ferry drinking water to drought stricken rural villages (ADM 2008). It is anticipated that the looming threat of climate change will only exacerbate drought and other extreme weather conditions (Wilson and Perreira 2009).

2.2.2 Biodiversity

Low and Rebelo (1996) determine that "10% of all the plant species in the world" are located in Southern Africa, making South Africa extremely rich in biodiversity, and highlighting the immense importance of biodiversity conservation, especially of those vegetation types that do not occur elsewhere. For example, South Africa boasts the unique Cape Floral Kingdom; of the six Floral Kingdoms in the world, the Cape Floral Kingdom is the only one located entirely within one country (Low and Rebelo 1996). South Africa also contains numerous endemic species of flora and fauna (Low and Rebelo 1996). The Eastern Cape contains the most biomes and vegetation types of all South Africa's provinces: as shown in Table 2.2 below, it contains seven biomes and 29 different veldt types (Acocks 1988). Furthermore, the Eastern Cape contains 156 species of mammal, 385 types of bird, 57 species of reptile and the second highest number of amphibian species in the country (Low and Rebelo 1996).

Table 2.2:   Biodiversity values for the different provinces in South Africa

Province	Biomes	Acocks Veld Types	Number of species				
			Plant	Mammal	Bird	Amphibian	Reptile
Eastern Cape	7	29	6 164	156	384	51	57
Free State	3	17	2 984	93	334	29	47
Gauteng	2	8	3 303	125	326	25	53
KwaZulu-Natal	4	19	6 141	177	462	68	86
Mpumalanga	3	15	4 782	160	464	48	82
North-West	2	11	3 025	138	384	27	59
Northern Cape	6	18	5 067	139	302	29	53
Northern Province	3	14	4 236	239	479	44	89
Western Cape	6	18	8 925	153	305	39	52

(Source: Low and Rebelo 1996)

Alongside this rich biodiversity, the Eastern Cape has an increased dependency on wild foods and forest products due to its socio-economic circumstances. Two uses worth highlighting are the collection of medicinal plants for sale in commercial markets, and the use of wild foods to subsidise poor nutrition. It is estimated that about 75 % of South Africans make use of traditional plant-based medicines (Shackleton 2009). In the Eastern Cape, about 525 tonnes of harvested plant material (at an estimated cost of US$4 million) are sold annually (Cocks and Dold 2006). Many rural households exist on sub-standard nutrition; it is concluded that Eastern Cape children's domestic diets were "on average, 60 % lower than the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) guidelines" (McGarry and Shackleton 2009: 19). This leads to a greater dependence on wild foods, with the most vulnerable people (usually women and children) consuming "more wild mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, wild spinaches, wild mushrooms, and wild fruit" than other, less vulnerable children (McGarry and Shackleton 2009: 25). This high dependency on wild foods reveals the importance of initiating conservation programmes that consider these needs, whilst at the same time limiting over harvesting that may have potential negative impacts on biodiversity.

While many rural South African households may practice multiple livelihoods (Shackleton et al. 2001; Hebinck and Lent 2008), some researchers consider the majority of households in the former Ciskei region of the Eastern Cape to be completely "reliant on cash income from outside the rural sphere" (Ainslie 1999: 379). This dependence, along with the social betterment policies which negatively impacted on agricultural production, have led to a decrease in rural households' ability to practice agriculture and diverse livelihood strategies for self sufficiency (Andrew and Fox 2004, De Klerk 2007, Fay 2009).
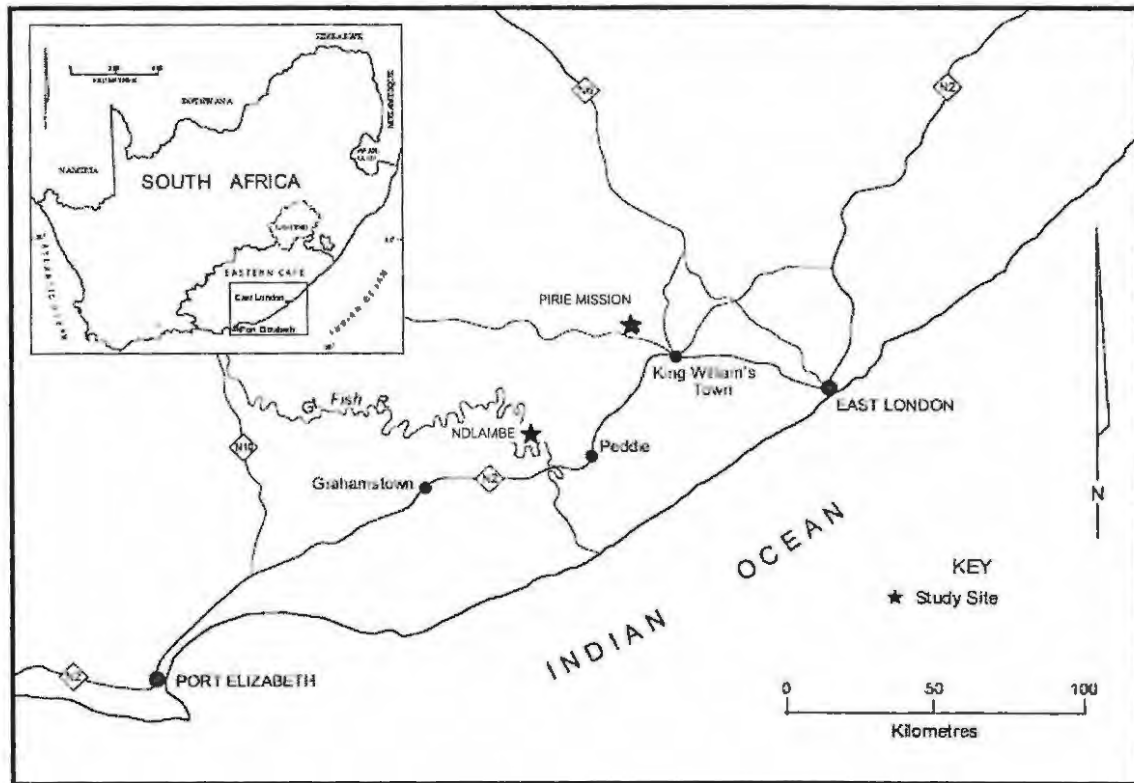
Figure 2.1   Location of field sites

2.3   Pirie Mission

2.3.1   Introduction

Pirie Mission (32° 46′ 59″ S, 27° 12′ 50″ E) is located within Buffalo City local Municipality. This municipality is home to 11.1 % of the Eastern Cape population (724 312 people: Stats SA 2009). Pirie is a rural village nested at the foot of Pirie Forest, which is known locally as Hoho Forest. It is located about 25 km away from the bustling town of King William's Town and 50 km from the university town of Alice. The nearby urban node of Dimbaza used to be a "thriving factory town" under the former Ciskei government, where business incentives once enabled 30 000 people to be employed (BCM 2009: 17). However, the majority of these businesses left the area after independence and only five factories remain functioning (BCM 2009: 17). Buffalo City Municipality is currently looking into ways to revive these industries as part of its Spatial Development Initiatives (BCM 2009).

Plate 2.1   Pirie Mission showing grazing fields in the foreground, the village mid-way and Hoho forest in the distance

2.3.2   Biodiversity

Pirie is situated 580 – 1 200 m above sea level, and records a relatively high rainfall of 890 mm per year (Cocks and Dold 2002: 52). Soils in the area are "deep, loamy and with high nutrient status" on the Great Escarpment, while those "supporting forests of low-lying scarps" tend to be shallower (Mucina and Rutherford 2006: 600). The Pirie Forest was previously classified as Afromontane (Low and Rebelo 1996, see also Moll 1972, White 1983, Lubke *et al.* 1988) or Amatole Mist-belt Forest (A.M.B.F., von Maltitz *et al.* 2003). It is most recently classified as Southern Mist-belt Forest (Mucina and Rutherford 2006). At 3173 ha, it is one of the largest intact forest blocks in the Amathole district (Castley in Scholes 2004: 33). The forest biome is extremely vulnerable, being the "smallest biome of the subcontinent", occurring in less than 0.25 % of Southern Africa (Cocks 2006: 85). Currently 8 % of the Southern Mist-belt forests are conserved, with the majority of these falling under DAFF and state jurisdiction, with some small private reserves. These forests have suffered under previous forestry programmes, which removed at least 5 % of Southern Mist-belt forests, harvesting of these pine and eucalyptus plantations continues on a commercial scale, with selected indigenous tree species (such as *Podocarpus sp.*) being harvested on a small scale. Current threats to these forests include invasive aliens, fires, "uncontrolled harvesting of timber,

poles and firewood" and other non-timber forest products (Maltitz et al. 2003 In Mucina and Rutherford 2006: 600). The forest is classified as 'critically endangered' according to STEP (Knight et al. 2003).

Vegetation within the forest forms distinct layers of trees, shrubs and herbs, being "characterised by tall closed-canopy evergreen tree species" that can reach heights of 30 or 40 m (Cocks et al. 2002). Indigenous tree species include umkhoba (Podocarpus falcatus) and umcheya (Podocarpus latifolius), umsintsi (Erythrina caffra), umsenge (Cussonia spicata), umqongci (Trichocladus ellipticus), intlokotshane enkulu (Rhus chirendensis), umlahleni (Curtisia dentata), umsitshana (Calodendrum capense), umdakane (Apodytes dimidiata), Iliminza (Halleria lucida), isidumo (Ilex mitis), ingcondo (Kiggelaria africana), isikali (Nuxia floribunda), umnonono (Xymalos monospora) and umnukane (Ocotea bullata) (Lubke and Mackenzie in DEAT 2009). Examples of common shrubs and climbers include: umqaqoba (Gymnosporia heterophylla), umqaphula (Scutia myrtina), ibethamtunzi (Carissa bispinosa), lyeza lentloko (Secamone alpinii), ubuchopho (Canthium ciliatum), uchithibhunga (Rhoicissus tridentata), umnikandiba (Zanthoxylum capense) and umsombutyu (Burchellia bubalina) (Lubke and Mackenzie in DEAT 2009). Examples of undergrowth strata commonly include grasses, herbs and ferns such as Basketgrass (Oplismenus hirtellus), Bushman Grass (Stipa dregeana), Pigs-ears (Centella asiatica), umfazi (Streptocarpus rexii) and ucakuse (Plectranthus spp). Ferns, shrubs and small trees such as umaphipha (Rapanea melanophloeos) are often abundant along the forest edges" (Lubke and Mackenzie in DEAT 2009, with Dold and Cocks 1998 for vernacular names). The foot of the Amathole Mountains gives way to Bisho Thornveld vegetation, which is "open savannah characterised by small trees of umga (Acacia natalitia), with and understory of iqunde (Themeda trinadra), and various wood species, depending on grazing conditions (Mucina and Rutherford 2006: 513).

This large, dense forest was historically a rich hunting ground and home to leopard (Panthera pardus), eland (Taurotragus oryx) and various large and small antelope species (Skead 1987). Early records from the 1600-1700's recall "great herds of elephant" which "swarmed through the bush", while "lions and buffalo roamed the countryside and hippopotami wallowed in every river" (Crampton 2004: 61). These animals were depleted by colonial hunters and ivory traders. Where once elephant (Loxodonta africana) populations had been spread across the Cape, elephant eventually remained only in the Addo and Knysna regions. Historical connotations with wild animals can be seen in the many Xhosa clan names that are linked to wild animals, many of which are absent from the area today. The dense vegetation has protected some of the smaller species, and it is now more common to see signs of porcupines (Hystrix africaeaustralis), vervet

monkeys (*Cercopithecus aethiops*), black-backed jackals (*Canis mesomelas*), bushpigs (*Potamachoerus porcus*) and bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*). However, many residents in Pirie report that they have seen leopard on rare occasions (in some cases in the last five years). These animals serve as important cultural-historical symbols and will be discussed further in chapter 3. There are also many birds present in the forest, and it is home to the endangered cape parrot (*Poecephalus robustus*), which have been proven to require vast areas of forest for viable populations to flourish (Lawes et al. 2000).

The forest has been state-owned since the 1800's when it was proclaimed a crown forest mainly in an attempt to halt the destructive harvesting of indigenous trees by woodcutters (Board 1962). It is generally agreed that the flourishing timber industry made a lasting and significant impact upon South Africa's indigenous forests from the late 1700's to the early 1900's, reducing forest size and often permanently altering species composition (McCracken 2004, Seydack and Vermeulen 2004). Pirie Forest is currently administered by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), and has been policed by DAFF since the 1950's (with a brief period of inactivity during the former Ciskei government). DAFF's attitude towards local villagers in the forest still carries taints of preservationist conservation. The fact that the forest has been perceived to be under constant threat (from people extracting timber or other natural resources since the 1800's), and represents an extremely important indigenous biome (Mucina and Rutherford 2006) only serves to heighten the urgent need for conservation interventions. Historically the forest has been policed both on horseback and on foot by regular patrols. However, local people state that since the killing of a forest ranger (allegedly by an off-duty policeman who was illegally harvesting wood) the current rangers are apprehensive about policing the forest and as such no longer patrol to such an extent (Man, 61 years, Pirie 8 March 2009). They prefer to arrest harvesters at their homes once in possession of medicinal plants or other restricted forest products. Certain parts of the forest are more accessible to local villagers through participatory forest management (PFM), which has been DAFF's chosen "vehicle for radical change in indigenous forest management" since 2001 (DWAF 2001). Although DAFF adopted the Participatory Forest Management Policy in 1998, by 2002 there were still "no concrete steps...taken towards its implementation" in Pirie (Cocks and Dold 2002: 63). By 2010 there has been some authority devolved to local authorities, with the allocation of the 'little forest' (*dadeni*) under control of the community, and part of the state forest open to community access with permits. However, there is still confusion over forest use and ownership (Gugushe et al. 2008), which has contributed to the "alarming" levels of medicinal plant harvesting, particularly by outsiders (Gugushe et al. 2008: 250). DAFF controls access to and places heavy

restrictions on what can be harvested from the Pirie Forest. Although permission has been devolved to local village chairpersons, this is only for certain categories of forest products in limited quantities. Officially villagers can only take dead wood for firewood or from alien species such as eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus spp.*) and *plantaish* (*Acacia mearnsii*) for building materials. As a result, most kraals are made with black wattle, and only a few with *intsindi* (*Coddia rudis*) or other traditionally used kraal material. Villagers are allowed a small amount of medicinal plant products (*amayeza*) for ritual use but officially require a permit from the chairperson before gathering. The thriving medicinal plant markets in King William's Town offer *amayeza*[2] from Pirie and its surrounding areas, with some medicines from as far afield as KwaZulu Natal (KZN). The proximity of the forest to the markets in King William's Town has led to a strong *amayeza* harvesting tradition in Pirie forest, with villagers and outsiders harvesting on a regular basis.

Plate 2.2   Pirie's Southern Mist-belt Forest
The collection and sale of medicinal plants in South Africa is now known to represent a "multi-million Rand 'hidden economy'" (Lawes *et al.* 2004: 228). Cocks and Dold (2000: 55) estimate that about four tonnes of plant material are harvested from Pirie State Forest annually, with a market

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[2]The term *amayeza* is now understood to include not just medicinal plants for treatment of physical ailments, but rather the cultural use of plants for "well-being and healing practices in the broadest sense of the word, including non-physical spiritual, ritual, and religious functions" (Cocks and Dold 2006: 126).

value of about US$ 9 000. Over 50 % of this is harvested from just 11 species of tree, making this both a lucrative and potentially environmentally detrimental activity. For example, ecological surveys in Pirie forest determined that overharvesting of ummemezi (*Cassipourea flanaganii*) in Pirie forest for sale to medicinal plant markets had resulted in so many deaths of adult trees that there was the possibility of local extinction should overharvesting of the species continue (Cocks and Dold 2002: 56). Besides the collection of *amayeza*, many villagers regularly visit the forest to acquire other natural materials they depend upon (such as building poles or thatching grass), and their narratives and their practices tell of forever 'avoiding the forest police'. The policing of the forest and the arrest and detention of harvesters has led to feelings of disempowerment and has directly affected the villagers' use and perceptions of the forest. These aspects will be considered further in the following chapters.

Plate 2.3   Collecting wood in the community regulated part of Pirie forest

2.3.3   Historical background

Pirie forest and the Amathole Mountains were historically part of the empire of the Khoi chieftainess Hoho, who was forced to sell her territory to Rharhabe for numerous cattle after a violent battle during which her husband was killed (Collins 1809, Soga 1931, Peires 1981). Hoho is still the local name of the forest, and local narrative acknowledges this connection by stating that the name comes "from the coloured people who used to live here". The Pirie area is known as the traditional homeland of the Hleke chieftaincy, which was allocated to the Hleke after the defeat of the Khoi (Vazi 1988). Pirie has also been associated with the missionaries, settlers, farmers, and loggers of colonial times. In 1800 the legendary Coenraad de Buys and Rev. J.T. van der Kemp had homes at the foot of the Pirie forest, both were reluctantly forced to leave however, due to fears for their safety during the Third frontier War; when Ndlambe's rebellion against Ngqika created a "climate of uncertainty" (Enklaar 1988: 99).

Pirie Mission was earlier named Mgqakhwebe after the local river (Enklaar 1988). In 1830 Rev. John Ross of the Glasgow Missionary Society founded Pirie Mission with the permission of Chief Ngqika. Ross brought a printing press 1 300 km from Cape Town to Tyhume Mission and was a pioneer of Xhosa (religious) publication which began with the Lovedale Press (Peires et al. 2009). The Pirie Mission church was built in memorial of Ross's 50th Jubilee in 1873 and is still well used by the community; its stone walls and red roof being visible for many kilometres. The mission, along with all Xhosa owned land, was taken under British colonial rule in December 1847 (Vazi 1988: 31). Resistance to these laws resulted in the War of Mlanjeni (1850-1853), during which the village was "destroyed by fire and burned to the ground" (Vazi 1988: 32), although Ross and his family were personally led to safety by Chief Jwarha (Vazi 1988). As a result of this war, the British decided to expel all Ngqika Xhosa from the Amathole Mountains, which had played such a central role in Xhosa warfare strategy. The entire Amathole mountain area was proclaimed a Royal Reserve, from which all Xhosa, except those living in missions, were expelled (Vazi 1988). Ross accordingly pleaded for all of the amaHleke people to be included into the reserve; not only those living at the mission (Vazi 1988). This request was granted, but the act resulted in Pirie becoming "an isolated station of amaXhosa" among the whites and loyalist amaMfengu (Vazi 1988: 34).

During the latter part of the 19th century local settlement was severely disrupted by government's implementation of the tenure system. This was requested in part by missionaries who desired a departure from the 'heathen system' of traditional communal land ownership, and centralisation

of settlements to ease in conversion (Vazi 1988: 62). The 1896 survey in Pirie officially divided the village into "building lots, garden lots and commonage" (Vazi 1988: 60), drastically affecting agricultural production by relocating gardens and homes far apart. The appropriation and division of traditionally owned and ruled Xhosa land had a detrimental effect on the power of local people to live their lives freely, eroding the official legitimacy of the local chiefs and clan systems that had held power of the land and its people. Chief Jwarha objected to the cutting up of his land so strongly that he left Pirie in disgust when it was implemented (Vazi 1988). In a horrid twist of irony, Jwarha, who had administered all land in his region; on returning to his village to find it already surveyed, was forced to beg for "a small grant in freehold, in consideration of his long and fruitful service" (Vazi 1988: 67).

In later years, Pirie Mission and the rest of the Ciskei were included in the infamous Betterment schemes. Oral narratives from elders in Pirie state that Betterment was rejected by the villagers, and only implemented though threats that the village would lose access "to the Qongwe stream if they objected" (Mehlo Kunce in Vazi 1988: 87). Vazi's consideration of oral evidence provides these "misgivings about Betterment" (1988: 88), revealing villager's feelings towards the scheme despite their official and reluctant acceptance of it.

2.3.4   Socio-economic situation

Table 2.1 reveals, Buffalo City local municipality shows the lowest unemployment rate in the Amathole district (44.8 %) and the lowest number of households in poverty (at less than R1500 a month). This data is however, strongly influenced by employment in Buffalo City and surrounding urban centres. While villagers living closer to urban centres may have increased chances of employment when compared to more isolated villages, they still have to travel to these urban centres to gain access to the services and facilities offered to urban residents. This may be difficult for those who are not employed and do not have the means to travel regularly. The average household size is 3.6 people per household, with 24.5 % living in informal housing (STATS SA 2009) although this figure is likely to be influenced by the increased numbers of shack dwellers living around urban centres. Currently 43.3 % of residents own their own houses, while 21 % live rent free (STATS SA 2009). Use of electricity has increased in recent years, with 74.3 % of households using electricity for lighting, and 59.6 % using it for cooking (STATS SA 2009). The majority of the population (98 %) have access to piped water (STATS SA 2009). Due to the rural nature of the village, there is no access to municipal sewage systems or refuse removal, and houses use a pit latrine or bucket system and usually burn refuse. Nearly two-thirds of the

population has access to a cellphone and a radio (69.7 % and 71.9 % respectively), while 66.2 % own a television (STATS SA 2009).

Pirie is a relatively small village of 1 400 people (van Lieshout 2002). Due to the historical demarcation of land during missionary administration, many villagers have legal title to 'building lots' and 'garden lots' (BCM 2007: 19). Farmers in Pirie have access to fertile agricultural lands, although they are unfenced and vulnerable to crop damage by wild animals, particularly wild pigs and monkeys. There is a dipping tank in the neighbouring village of New Rest, and farmers wishing to sell livestock through public avenues can do so at Dikidikana (BCM 2007: 36), although most livestock sales are conducted privately within the village. Many households keep cattle, with a few also having sheep, pigs and fowls. The area has a strong horse racing tradition, and at least two households in the village currently compete in local horse races. The racing of horses originated with the racing of oxen, particularly during weddings (Wilson 1937). The keeping and racing of horses is usually passed on from father to son and has important cultural connotations.

The long establishment of the village, the abundant natural forest, the easy access to urban centres and the good agricultural climate has allowed Pirie residents to be seen as 'relatively well off', especially in comparison to Ndlambe. However, the area has also been impacted upon by betterment as well as the exclusionary policies of the apartheid government as well as more recent political policies and socio-economic changes (Manona *et al.* 1992, De Wet *et al.* 1992). The village is seen as 'a good place to retire', with many elderly people enjoying village life after working in big cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town. This 'bringing back' of wealth may also contribute to the number of moderately wealthy households in the village.

The Mgquakhwebe River, running between the forest and the village, gives the village access to water, although there are now communal taps provided by the government. Many people still depend on the river, especially for washing clothes and water collection during times when there is no water in the taps. Similarly, the forest provides firewood for cooking, although now many households do not collect fuel wood at all, stating that this was something that was done in the past, and would only be done 'when there is no electricity'. These changes in practice and attitude will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Pirie residents have access to Pirie Mission Primary School, and Imitshiza Secondary School. Both schools have computer centres sponsored by The Telkom Foundation since 2006. Imitshiza records a Matric pass rate of around 23.5 % (Dept. of Education 2000). There is currently no

community hall as it has been vandalised, and meetings are conducted in school buildings or at the church. Those villagers with access to employment generally work in neighbouring urban areas. Some residents have jobs as far away as Peddie, requiring several hours of daily travel by taxi both to and from work. Official employment opportunities at the local schools and clinic are generally occupied by skilled outsiders, although there is a local caretaker at each school and at the clinic. A few residents are self employed, operating stores, shebeens, or selling select goods such as airtime, sweets and cold drinks. Some men are self-employed builders, offering their services to residents within Pirie and into neighbouring villagers. Besides these options, there is a current lack of local employment opportunities, and many households surviving on government grants. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2005 to ascertain aquaculture and tourism potential in the area (Envirofish Africa 2005), it focused primarily around Maden and Rooikraantz dam. As yet, Pirie residents have received little benefit, although roads have been upgraded (to provide improved access to the King's Great Place) and a sports field was created as per the BCM's Spatial Development Initiative (BCM 2007).

2.4   Ndlambe village

2.4.1   Introduction

Ndlambe village (33°16'32" S, 26°9'17" E) is located in Ngqushwa Local Municipality in the Peddie district of the Eastern Cape. Ngqushwa is sparsely populated in comparison to other municipalities, containing only 1.3 % of the population of the Eastern Cape (83 086 people: STATS SA 2009). The village is situated in semi-arid region bracketed between the Keiskamma and the Great Fish River. Ndlambe is in the Tyefu area, accessed via a gravel road that links the R67 (Grahamstown to Fort Beaufort) to the R345 (Grahamstown to Peddie) via Committee's Drift. Most of the village is spread out along the northern banks of the Great Fish River (iNxuba). Ndlambe is located between the Great Fish River and a chain of hills. Neighbouring villages include Ndoyana and Pikoli, with the nearest urban centre being Peddie, about 40 km away and the largest settlement being Glenmore, which was located during the apartheid era as a resettlement camp, acting as a "dumping ground" for those removed from other areas (Ainslie 1999: 382).

Plate 2.4   Homestead in Ndlambe Village

Plate 2.5   Albany Thicket, Ndlambe

Plate 2.6   Woman collecting wood in Ndlambe's communally regulated Thicket

2.4.2   Biodiversity

Ndlambe village receives annual rainfall varying between 'less than 400 mm' – '550 mm in more elevated areas' (Ainslie 1999: 381). Soils in the area "form a thin layer over the highly erodible shale and sandstone", resulting in "very low potential for dry land agricultural production" (Ainslie 1999: 381). The village is bordered by the Albany Thicket biome (Hoare *et al.* 2006), previously known as Valley Bushveld (Everard 1987). This biome covers 22 616 km², with an alarming 51 % of the biome already transformed and only 2 % conserved (Lubke in DEAT 2009). As such, Albany Thicket falls into the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany 'hotspot' (Steenkamp et al. 2004), and is part of the STEP project (Knight *et al.* 2003). The biome is classified as "very dense thicket of woody shrubs and trees which occurs in the river valleys of the eastern parts of the Western Cape, extending through Eastern Cape to KwaZulu-Natal" (Lubke: REF), and is characterised by a closed canopy, up to 6 m in height, dominated by woody evergreen species rather than succulent trees or shrubs. Thickets show great species diversity with many locally endemic species. Common thicket species include "Kooboo-berry (*Mystroxylon aethiopicum*), *itali* (*Asparagus spp.*), umatshinintshina (*Plumbago auriculata*), incagolo (*Dovyalis spp.*), umbongisa Diospyros dichrophylla, and umhlontlo (*Euphorbia triangularis and Euphorbia Tetragona*) (Lubke in

DEAT 2009, with Dold and Cocks 1998 for vernacular names). *Umthathi (Ptaeroxylon obliquum)*, *umqaqoba (Gymnosporia buxifolia)*, *umnquma (Olea europaea* subsp. *africana)*, and *umnga (Acacia karroo)* are also present (Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 249), as well as *ingxalaba (Aloe ferox)*, *igwanishe (Portulacaria afra)*, valued for livestock feed, and the introduced invasive *itolofiya (Opuntia ficus-indica)* which is a valued food source. Albany Thicket "is often confined to river valleys stretching from the coast inland", where drier areas benefit from the valley mists (Lubke in DEAT 2009). The specific Albany Thicket types surrounding Ndlambe are Great Fish Thicket, and Great Fish Noorsveld, with Albany Alluvial vegetation found along the Great Fish River (Mucina and Rutherford 2006). Currenlty 6 % of Great Fish Thicket and 34 % of Great Fish Noorsveld is preserved, mostly in the state reserves and private game reserves (Mucina and Rutherford 2006).

Historically Albany Thicket was home to large browsers such as black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*), but decline in these species has allowed thicket to expand into other areas, particularly savannah and grassland (Lubke in DEAT 2009). In the Tyefu area Albany Thickets are communally owned and villagers have equal and relatively open access to Thicket resources (Ainslie *et al.* 1994, Ainslie 1999). Albany Thicket is advised to be most suited to well-managed Boer and Angora goat or game farming, however, it is currently under threat "where there is intensive, poorly managed farming with goats or ostriches" (Lubke in DEAT 2009). The Albany Thicket has proven to be particularly vulnerable to grazing by goats, whose intensive grazing habits disallow the recovery which would be possible through grazing by wildlife (Mucina and Rutherford 2006).

2.4.3   Historical background

Ndlambe village was named after the popular and powerful chief Ndlambe, who ruled as regent in place of his nephew Ngqika until he came of age, and fought against the British until his defeat and surrender at the Battle of Egazini in Grahamstown. Some local oral histories describe that Ndlambe had a homestead on the site where the town of Grahamstown is now located (Wells 2003). Ndlambe village has recently become a central part of the Mbodla Eco-Heritage Route, sponsored by the non-governmental organisation Open Africa, who advertises "the rich cultural history of the valley" as well as the region's "beautiful natural attributes, including important indigenous thicket forests" (Open Africa 2009). Chief Mhala, whom the tribal authority was renamed after, was one of Ndlambe's sons, he was a warrior who played a part in the numerous wars of the 1800's (Crampton 2006: 217), and was also known as 'The Wild Cat' (Soga 1931). Mhala's people were historically settled in the area between the Buffalo and Kei rivers (Crampton 2006: 237). During the 'Cattle Killings' (April 1856-May 1857), in which the majority of the Xhosa

nation destroyed their crops and livestock as prescribed by Nongqawuse's prophecy (Peires 1987), Mhala was unfortunately "one of the most committed of all chiefs" (Crompton 2006: 236), accordingly, his people were reduced to poverty and forced to beg and steal for food. Mhala was eventually arrested and imprisoned on Robben Island until 1863/4, he died in 1875, his 'power broken' (Crompton 2006: 237).

The Mbodla Heritage Initiative (Open Africa 2009, NLM 2009, Wells pers. comm. 8 June 2009) uncovered various historical environmental narratives. These narratives recall that the local Xhosa people learnt to listen to monkeys living along the river, which would begin chattering when they saw the British soldiers coming, Xhosa women and children then used the caves to hide in (Wells, pers. comm. 8 June 2009). Xhosa warriors also used the thorny Thicket to their advantage: wearing their clothing of animal skins and having local knowledge of pathways; they could easily escape into or travel through the Thicket. The British, by comparison, in their heavy red woollen uniforms, were splendidly unsuited to this environment (Wells, pers. comm. 8 June). Eventually Mfengu informers led the British to the caves, and the hundreds of innocent women and children found there were massacred to comply with the 'Scorched Earth' policy employed by Britain at the time (Wells, pers. comm. 8 June, Salmon 2008). Accordingly, the caves still have local significance to descendants today, and several of these historical narratives have been incorporated into the Mbodla Eco-Heritage Route (Open Africa 2009, Salmon 2008).

The Tyefu region has historically been prey to ethnic tensions between the long resident amaXhosa and the more recently arrived amaMfengu (Peires 1981). Added to this has been local contestation about government policies such as betterment. These tensions were played out politically during the Ciskei government's reign through discordant 'divide-and-rule' tactics (Holbrook 1992, De Wet *et al.* 1997, Ainslie 1999), culminating in the creation of the Lower Tyefu tribal authority (Ainslie 1999). According to Ainslie (1999: 389), this was planned primarily "to sideline the troublesome Tyefu tribal authority" in order to implement the "multimillion rand, showcase, Tyefu Irrigation Scheme". The Lower Tyefu tribal authority officially became the Mhala tribal authority[3] in 1983, only once a suitable chief had been located and brought to the area from Centane (Holbrook 1992: 198).

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[3] Officially the Mhala authority comprises Ndlambe, Pikoli, Woodlands and Runletts (Holbrook 1992: 198).

2.4.4 Socio-economic situation

Ngqushwa Local Municipality currently records the highest level of unemployment in the Amathole district (75.5 %), see Table 2.1. However, it does not record the highest percentage of households living in poor conditions (on R1500 or less per month). Households could potentially be accessing additional income from informal employment, remittances, or family support. The average household is 3.9 people, and 56.2 % of the population live in formal housing, with 56.8 % owning their own homes and 35 % living rent free (STATS SA 2009). Electricity use has also increased since 2001, with 90.5 % using electricity for lighting, and 51.4 % using it for cooking (STATS SA 2009). The majority of households (93 %) have access to piped water (STATS SA 2009). Due to the rural nature of the village, there is no access to municipal sewage systems or refuse removal, and houses use a pit latrine or bucket system and usually burn refuse. Over half (51.6 %) the households have access to a cell phone, while 69 % own a radio, and 63.8 % of households own a television (STATS SA 2009).

Due to its semi-arid environment, agriculture in the Tyefu region needs to be supplemented with irrigation; an expense beyond the means of most rural farmers. Accordingly, the only viable agricultural option is "livestock production from natural grazing" (Ainslie 1999: 379). In recent years some small-scale farmers have also benefitted from ostrich production programmes, but in general the district has sometimes been called a 'post-agrarian' rural area (Ainslie 1999) due to the lack of agricultural options. Land tenure conforms to "modified communal tenure, with all the resources found on the rangelands nominally used as common property resources" (Ainslie 1999: 382). The village is much larger than Pirie, with 2161 inhabitants recorded in the last census (STATS SA 2001), and is divided into several different localities. The Training Centre, initially constructed as part of the Tyefu Irrigation Scheme infrastructure, is an important resource, providing a place for village meetings as well as cultural activities. While the Irrigation Scheme has been in a state of disrepair for several decades, there is now a move to restart the scheme and suitable preparations are underway, although it is unclear when exactly local residents will be able to benefit from this infrastructure or the anticipated employment opportunities it will provide. Many inhabitants are employed on neighbouring commercial farms performing agricultural work, with some operate shops, or sell beer or foodstuffs informally to make ends meet. Ndlambe residents have access to Ndlambe Primary school, Kanana Senior Secondary School, and Jangamo Day-care Centre. Kanana currently records a pass rate of around 36.96 % (Dept. Education 2000). The primary school is currently in a state of disrepair, and is being slowly rebuilt when outside funding allows.

In the past Albany Thicket located in communal areas has been subject to some restrictions, being administered by forest rangers during the 'homeland' regime. However, at the present moment there is no policing and access is considered to be "completely open" (Gugushe et al. 2008: 249). One of the main economic activities in the village is the collection of fuel wood to sell. This is done by groups of boys or men with the assistance of donkey carts, and during the afternoons these groups are a regular sight around the village. The 'woman's woodpile' or igoqo is used mainly to show a woman's status and respectability in the village, providing a cultural function to women that is comparable to the kraal's function for men and their rituals (Cocks 2006). The amagoqos (plural) in Ndlambe are impressive affairs, with many reaching heights of 1.5 - 4 metres (depending on stacking methods[4]). Older Ndlambe women stated that 'respectable amagoqos' should be at least stomach height. In Ndlambe many women paid younger men to collect the heavy wood for their igoqos, particularly before rituals. Kraals in Ndlambe are beautifully constructed, often from instindi (Coddia rudis). Some households do not construct kraals themselves, preferring to hire men renowned for their skills at kraal construction.

Ainslie (1999: 391) argues that the management of natural resources in the Tyefu area has been negatively impacted upon due to numerous institutional issues that can be widely set in the "political context of apartheid policies" ranging from "contestations over identity" and "claims of prior occupation" to the intervention of outside parties, the question of "legitimate leadership" and employment opportunities that political manipulation has brought to the area, as well as "questions of control" over natural and other resource access. What becomes apparent is that the laissez-faire resource management of natural resources, especially during the former homeland rule, when local traditional administration was disregarded or ignored (Bank 1993), has benefitted both impoverished and elite individuals. During these times, any natural resource legislation, "such as the prohibition on the use of axes to collect firewood, were identified with the oppression of the Bantustan and its headman system, and were brushed aside" (Ainslie 1999: 391). Researchers consider that many of the former homelands are characterised by "significant socio-economic differentiation", whereby livelihoods are "not tied exclusively or even primarily to the land and its natural resources" (Ainslie 1999: 395). Furthermore any "local institutions that are deemed essential for local-level resource management systems are often in disarray" and most residents would not support "the introduction of more formalised codes for resource management" as it would negatively affect upon their livelihood activities (Ainslie 1999: 396).

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[4] It is proposed that Xhosa households prefer to stack amagoqo horizontally and Mfengu households prefer to stack amagoqo vertically (Cocks et al. 2004: 527), although this seems more an ideal than a strict cultural rule.

2.5 Similarities and differences between field sites

The climate and opportunities for subsistence agriculture are completely different between the two field sites. Pirie's high rainfall and good soils mean that families can grow vegetables and that agricultural ventures are more able to succeed than in other areas with poorer soil and less rainfall (such as Ndlambe). The physical demarcation of plots during missionary times has provided some stability to those households that have been established since these times, allowing access to larger amounts of land when compared to other villages. Many households are seen to use these plots for planting vegetables as the high rainfall and relatively easy access to communal tap water meant that agriculture could be practiced by virtually anyone. Many houses had established fruit trees (these were initially planted during missionary times), and some families supplement their living costs through growing vegetables. However, although most households have access to individual lands, only a few maintained large vegetable gardens. There are a number of agricultural schemes running on the larger lands surrounding the village that offer some employment opportunities. Those whose private fields are utilised by the scheme benefit from an annual fee. Many participants reported being involved in the agricultural schemes, with children often going to work in the fields with their families during the school holidays.

Ndlambe's differing climate and circumstances means that many households are seen to have less access to the economic resources available in Pirie. One has to take into account the specific socio-economic aspects of each site, but dramatic differences in livelihood options are immediately apparent to the observer. In Ndlambe only a few households keep cattle, with the majority of them keeping goats or donkeys, or not having livestock at all. Local narratives recall that Ndlambe used to have more cattle, but they were all killed or stolen, and now cattle owning is the exception. The few households who keep cattle usually graze them around Mankazana dam on the side of the village known locally as Rain; this is the only site that has regular access to grass for grazing. Vazi (1988) emphasises that goats are recognised as 'the poor man's cattle', having no praise songs or rituals devoted to them (See also Ainslie 2002 and Bennet *et al.* 2010). However, one could argue that for Ndlambe residents, goats play an adequate substitute to cattle, with the greater number of goats being available meaning that there is an abundance of rituals such as *imbeleko*. It is only when more important rituals are conducted, such as *umgidi*, that a cow is required. The ability of goats to survive in the more arid environment has meant that households still have access to a 'bank' or ritual tool, despite living in a poor agricultural area.

After some time in the villages, the biggest differences between Pirie and Ndlambe come to light. At Ndlambe, government has imposed few restrictions on the Albany Thicket and thus households are free to access any resources they wish from the Thicket. Many villagers were observed visiting the Albany Thicket freely, with no fears of repercussion for their harvesting. Pirie inhabitants, by comparison, are not freely allowed to harvest natural resources such as building poles or medicinal plants. Accordingly, the cultural activities associated with these activities suffer. In Pirie the banning of wood cutting in the forest, except for special occasions has resulted in the decline of this important cultural activity. Reducing the amount of wood allowed to woman's head loads increased women's daily burdens, as it did not allow them to receive help from men in their tasks. Often men would assist women by collecting larger piles of wood though the use of cattle-drawn sleighs (Tropp 2006). In Pirie the collection of wood for rituals now takes the form of a once-off work party with clanswomen providing food and drink for the group of men who cut the required wood during a single day (presumably to comply with the permit system). Women in Pirie do not regularly collect firewood themselves, and it has come to be seen as something only older people would do, or those without money for electricity, although a few families regularly collect fuel wood. In Ndlambe women regularly collect piles of smaller wood on their heads (*ukutheza*) for daily use. Households reported collecting wood from 2-3 times a week to daily, whereas households in Pirie collected about once a week, once a month or not at all. In Pirie wood collection is more commonly seen as an occasional activity; something one does 'when there is no electricity'.

In contrast to Pirie, Ndlambe's medicinal plant harvesting was observed to be mostly for personal consumption, with neighbours and relatives often collecting for each other 'as a favour'. The lack of access to a medicinal plant market has meant that there is less impetus for economically based medicinal plant harvesting. Although medicinal plants were freely available in the Albany Thicket and in other areas surrounding the village, no commercial collection of these plants was observed. Several herbalists and traditional vets stated that they assisted neighbours free of charge, equating potential monetary value with these services and emphasising that 'these plants are there for anyone to use'. The area is abundant in *umthathi* trees (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*), which means there are no shortages of ritual plant 'platters' during ceremonies (Cocks and Dold 2000). The most viable means of making money from the forest is by the cutting of wood, the collection of *ikhala* (*Aloe ferox*) sap for sale to middlemen, and the harvesting of *itolofiya* (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) or wild honey during season. The possible reasons and consequences of these similarities and differences will unfold further in the following chapters.

2.6   Methodology

Research relating to the environment is described as one of the "main problematiques that are defining the new Century" (Max-Neef 2005: 5). Max-Neef (2005: 5) describes problematiques as "problems with global and long term impact" as per the Club of Rome, which "represent transdiciplinary challenges" that require innovative thinking to solve. This research thus aimed to be multi-methodological, being informed by theory from several disciplines, and utilising a methodology that followed both ethnographic and participatory techniques. It was hypothesised that this would bring about a more holistic understanding of the complexities of environmental narrative. Because the required subject matter is not readily available, many tools were needed to bring about occasions for narrative to occur, for example; drawing sessions that allowed discussion periods afterwards, or forest walks with local experts, everyday resource users and children. All these methods provided a means to record differing (and similar) biodiversity knowledge, natural resource use, cultural knowledge and the environmental narratives that detailed them.

The study was focused on children and the stories they are told by their parents, grandparents, 'local leaders', elders, relatives, teachers and peers. Children's interaction with, and understanding of the environment was also considered. The study was designed around children between the ages of 8 – 10 years and 15 – 18 years. These groups were chosen in order to take into account young children, pre-teens and teenagers' environmental narratives and compare differences and similarities between these age groups, as well as gender differences in environmental use and knowledge. The study therefore aimed to include male and female children in school grades 4, 7 and 10. In the field sites it was found that ages within and between classes varied considerably as many children repeat grades or start school late. Classes, rather than ages thus became the qualifying criteria, and these provided an adequate means by which to assess differences and similarities between ages.

To gain a deeper understanding of children's narrative knowledge it was necessary to include key role players who impact on the children's lives, such as mothers, fathers, traditional elders, 'local experts' (Berkes 1999, Chalmers and Fabricius 2007), and traditional healers, etc. Forest walks with these role players represented an opportunity to observe 'situated' narrative (O'Donoghue 2006) and individual or group memories as they related to places or landscapes. These walks also allowed participation in the passing on of knowledge (i.e. I was told stories about places and animals as they were observed). Adult participants' inclusion in the study also provided

reflections on childhood interactions with the environment. For example many healers have been called to their profession after supernatural experiences with nature; often during their childhood. These experiences form a major part of their identity as healers, and the places where events occurred remain important throughout their lives (Bernard Pers. Comm. 1 September 2008). Adult knowledge and perceptions supplied a cultural or historical background that enhanced understandings of the children's narratives. For example, adult participants described how the landscape has changed and what this has meant for them (See Gunner 2005).

Because "growing up is a varied experience comprising multiple realities of difference and diversity" (Tucker and Matthews 2001: 162), working with participant's individual narratives allowed them to convey their 'lived experiences' in their own words (Tucker and Matthews 2001: 162). Analysing similarities and differences in these narratives allowed for the realisation of communal narratives that could begin to illustrate general cultural environmental perceptions. At the same time, it was essential to recognise "the multiple realities of rural children and of the disparity of rural childhoods" (Tucker and Matthews 2001: 167). To this end, a combination of participatory and anthropological methodology were combined to create a deeper understanding of children's everyday worlds (Matthews 1995) or daily 'lifeworlds' (Van Koppen 2000, Shutz 2003, Olufemi and Reeves 2004, Schneider et al. 2010).

Anthropological field work methods such as participant observation and qualitative interviews were utilised for their ability to "identify the conservation-oriented cultural beliefs, values, norms, and rules that are often suited to serve as the foundation for the formal laws and regulations that govern protected areas" (Mascia et al. 2003: 649). Participatory tools such as cultural mapping (Lynam et al. 2007, Crawhall 2007, Albuquerque et al. 2008) and drawing (see the Dweba Project 2001), were partnered with participatory booklets (McGarry and Shackleton 2009) and the recording of various narratives such as songs, stories and riddles. Cultural mapping (Lynam et al. 2007) was an important participatory tool for uncovering intangible or invisible cultural aspects, by bringing "tacit knowledge to the surface that may not have been taught or even verbally expressed before" (Crawhall 2007: 14). The process and products of cultural mapping are seen to provide "opportunities for cultural revitalisation and intergenerational transmission of knowledge" (Crawhall 2007: 14).

The project was introduced at a community meeting and through further meetings held at schools with teachers and the representatives from the school governing bodies. The project was introduced to children in class with the help of their teachers. The children then participated in

voluntary afternoon focus group activities as well as participatory holiday workbooks and forest walks. Fieldwork was carried out from September 2008 to October 2009 and took the form of home stays in each respective village. All fieldwork, including interviews, class work and participatory research took place with the assistance of a home-language Xhosa speaking translator. Our policy was to communicate primarily in Xhosa, and for our participants to feel comfortable communicating in Xhosa at all times, this included speaking and writing in Xhosa. Fieldwork involved the following methodologies:

- participant observation
- recording oral histories and traditional narrative (in the form of stories, oral histories, songs, games, dances and other cultural activities)
- quantitative and qualitative interviews
- cultural mapping (See Plate 2.7)
- drawing and writing exercises
- natural resource mapping
- story-telling sessions
- focus group discussions and activities (See Plate 2.8)
- participatory workbooks
- participatory walks with children and adult participants (See Plate 2.9 and 2.10)
- participation in cultural activities such as gathering fuel wood, herding cattle and attending rituals. This allowed further opportunities for participant observation, impromptu focus group discussions and informal interviews.

Research with the child participants progressed through the following stages:

a) Background work took place in classes amongst the selected age groups, involving cultural resource mapping.

b) After school sessions were held with smaller focus groups of children, these included drawing exercises, story-telling sessions as well as forest walks.

c) Participant observation took place outside of school times, with children who were conducting chores, games, sports or social discussions with friends.

d) Children in Grade 4 and Grade 7 completed holiday workbooks (Pirie: December 2008, Ndlambe: June 2009) which contained details of their resource use and environmental activities and cultural environmental perceptions (See Appendix 2A for an extract of this booklet). This workbook was intended to be a self-study record, as the child was expected to complete it with assistance from their family. The booklet was introduced to the child

in their home in the presence of an adult or older sibling. The booklet contained stickers to record activities that brought the child into contact with his/her environment (as per McGarry 2008) as well as a cultural section which children were told to fill in with the help of an adult or older sibling. The children were left with the booklets for a month, after which they were collected by the researcher. The number of children who participated was limited by the number of children in the specified classes who remained behind during the holidays; in Pirie this was 24, in Ndlambe 17 children.

e) The holiday workbooks were then analysed to ascertain common trends and perceptions. This analysis, combined with knowledge gained from participant observation, allowed five children to be chosen from each field site to be key participants. The key participants were chosen specifically to represent children from families that showed varying degrees of environmental use and attachment. Households' gender composition, economic background and religious backgrounds were taken into account to provide a balanced sample of households with varying cultural environmental uses.

Key participants were chosen from the following categories:

1. Families who utilise natural resources to a high degree:

   Such as families which contained local experts (such as healers or herbalists), families who utilised natural resources as part of their livelihood strategy (e.g. collecting fuel wood or *amayeza* on a regular basis), and families which utilise natural areas for religious practices (e.g. Shembe and Zionist churches)

2. Families which utilised natural resources sometimes:

   Such as families which used natural resources for specific reasons (such as building materials or firewood for ritual events), or families which seemed to have utilised natural resources in the past but no longer did so (for example no longer collecting fuel wood)

3. Families which were explicitly against natural resource use for religious or other reasons:

   Families which belonged to religions which forbid traditional practices such as ancestral worship and the use of *amayeza* (e.g. Jehovah Witnesses).

The researcher participated in certain aspects of the key participants' daily lives (such as resource gathering and play), and conducted transect walks, family discussions and qualitative interviews with them, their family members, and other important figures in their lives. These participants and their families were visited regularly, interviews were had with their parents, and the researchers accompanied children or adults on trips to the forest. Where possible, interviews were held with two to three generations of the same family.

Please see Appendix 2B for an outline of the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research period.

One issue of importance was the question of naming and ownership of indigenous knowledge within the research project. As it was considered most ethical to disguise the identity of younger participants and children their names are not given in the study. However, upon discussion with many of the elders it was decided that they would like their names to be acknowledged in the research. This answers calls for increased recognition and ownership of local indigenous knowledge, particularly the appropriation of local knowledge by institutional research which adds to the silencing of local voices (Shava 2008: i). Accordingly, the study recognises elders, local experts and adult participants by retaining their names where they have requested. Each person interviewed was asked if they would like their names included or removed from the research. Those who did not want their names shown could provide pseudonyms. We made it very clear that we had no connection with the government or with DAFF and had no desire to include personal information should the respondents not wish so. Where information given was deemed of a sensitive nature it was decided to remove names from the quotes. For example, information related to illegal harvesting or hunting is given anonymously. To further protect young informant's identities their names and locations are not stated in connection to photographs. In light of the bid for more recognition of local knowledge, I have provided Xhosa and scientific names for plants (where the vernacular name is known), and Xhosa, English and scientific names for animals. This is in the understanding that the English names for animals are more generally well known in the public domain than English plant names.
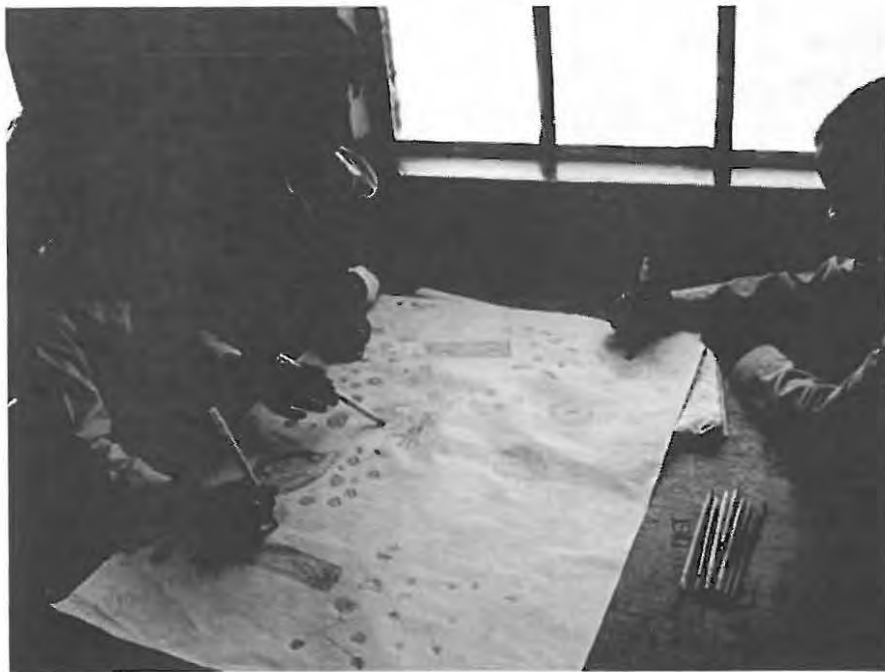
Plate 2.7   Cultural mapping exercises in class

Plate 2.8   Afternoon activities with children

Plate 2.9   Children performing *iinstomi* during a participatory walk

Plate 2.10   Children play at putting clay on their faces on a visit to the river

2.7 Fieldwork experience

Although a wealth of information was gathered during school workshops and afternoon activities, the poor quality of schooling in the area meant that some children were unable to express themselves effectively, especially in the written exercises. Some children in grade 4 and 7 were still unable to write and in these cases I wrote down or recorded their answers instead. Many of the children had to be coaxed into drawing their own pictures rather than copying pictures from books as they felt they could not draw. Girls especially considered drawing to be more a boy's activity and something they could 'not do'. The sample of drawings and maps included here reveals that all of the children could, in fact draw, with many of them showing great talent.

In a similar light, the holiday workbooks were not as successful as was hoped. It was initially envisaged that the older grades would also complete holiday workbooks, and several Grade 7s were given booklets, but only two children completed theirs. The children in Grade 10 were not receptive to doing any 'holiday' work and it was decided to use increased participant observation and interviews to work around this fact. After discussions with the teachers it was decided to offer a small prize for the successful completion of workbooks. Teachers stated that children were very reluctant to carry out holiday work and they needed an incentive to do so. While the booklets were successfully implemented at Pirie, there were some problems with the data gathered from Ndlambe. Follow up visits to observe booklets being used revealed several inconsistencies in the children's use of the sticker system, with some children confusing dates (e.g. remembering past activities) and others becoming 'sticker happy' and placing stickers with joyous abandon. These observations led to the decision that the entire quantitative part of the booklet could not be included in the study, as it was felt that the information from Ndlambe was too unreliable. The separation of quantitative and qualitative information in the booklets allowed us to utilise the latter, which was unaffected by any confusion over dates as it referred mainly to traditions and activities which the family conducted in general. Although the booklets were designed to a be a family exercise and explained to families carefully as an informal participatory exercise it was still considered 'school work' which some adults felt they couldn't contribute to. In Ndlambe especially, many children had to be coaxed into finishing their booklets with the assistance of the translator, perhaps because some of the families were too shy to contribute until questioned directly. Although disappointing, the contrast between field sites revealed glaring differences in local levels of education.

By far the most effective participatory methodologies were the forest walks and the cultural mapping and storytelling and singing sessions. Children proved knowledgeable and willing participants to these activities, and actively enjoyed contributing in the sessions. Children who had been labelled as 'troublesome' due to their potential learning problems in class[5] could escape these confines and readily displayed their knowledge of narrative and TEK in informal settings. This led to the realisation that oral narratives and activities have an even greater part to play in instilling confidence and learning in children than anticipated.

Participant observation provided background details, as well as allowing chances to realise the differences between narrated traditions and actual practices. Participant observation at rituals was particularly beneficial as in many cases they provided formal occasions for narrative transmission. Adult and child participants were able to demonstrate their wealth of LEK during forest walks. These walks were very successful and revealed historical, cultural and ecological knowledge. Qualitative interviews provided deep insight into different participants' knowledge and environmental use. Regular household visits with key participants and their families helped to establish an air of trust as well as allowing feedback and verification on certain themes and understandings.

One tool which proved very popular with participants was a digital camera, which was used to take pictures during fieldwork. Children were often very happy to see themselves instantly on the screen. Shy children could be enticed out of their shells by including them in activities as the photographer. Once word got out that I had a camera there was no shortage of invitations to rituals; where inevitably everyone wanted a picture. I also offered to take pictures of people whom I interviewed, especially children who participated in the holiday workbooks. Bringing back printed pictures for participants and their families was one of the small ways to contribute to the research process not being purely extractive. The use of a digital voice recorder provided a similar inroad with children. Working with one class in particular proved extremely difficult, as the boys misbehaved and seemed to have no interest in writing, perhaps because they were not completely literate. I used the voice recorder to turn writing exercises into interactive singing or story telling sessions. In this way I was able to obtain a wealth of data that would have remained unspoken. During the entire period of class activities it was the most excited I had ever seen the boys.

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[5] It was observed that children who potentially suffered from learning disabilities were often misunderstood by some teachers, which cultivated an air of resentment and hopelessness in the children. At both field sites there were an alarming number of illiterate children.

It was decided to utilise a translator who had grown up in a similar rural environment to the two field sites but who was not personally known by the research participants, as this would allow them greater privacy and comfort in relaying their stories. In many cases our existence as outsiders allowed us to be privy to information that would not necessarily have been revealed to other villagers. For example, many key participants were able to convey sensitive personal information that they may have been reluctant to divulge to neighbours, or those who would potentially be on one or another side of a particular divide. A female translator was specifically chosen to enable the children to feel more at ease, especially during participatory exercises. This worked very well. In many cases children took us into confidence in a way that they would not have with a male figure. Younger children could play and sing and mess around in our presence without feeling that they had to behave. Our work with key child participants led to a degree of intimacy and trust that was both rewarding and humbling. We had to be constantly aware of the ethical position this placed us in.

It was particularly important to consider the affect that our gender and background may have had on the research data. On several occasions we were accompanied in the field by male students from Fort Cox agricultural college. The students joined us during several formal activities, such as class work or historical trips, whilst also conducting their own complementary research projects. It was most beneficial to discuss our research together and to ascertain villagers' differing reactions to our similar questions. In this way it was possible to ascertain which realms of knowledge were culturally restricted to men only. We had to accept these limitations and work around them. For example, we could not ask directly about specific cultural knowledge which was passed down to men during initiation. On the other hand, as women we were taken into confidence in the realm of women's concerns and knowledge. This allowed us access to sensitive information that may have not been available to male researchers.

Feedback sessions will take place in the two field sites during January 2011 via community meetings, focus group meetings, and exhibitions to display children's cultural mapping activities. During these sessions the main research findings will be discussed with the community, and they will consider which avenues they would potentially like to negotiate in terms of recognising their LEK.

Chapter 3:   Xhosa environmental narratives

"I didn't know there were ancestors in the forest until one day we went to the forest to collect wood. We liked to take our scarves off our heads there. Another old woman going with us said: "You mustn't do this, because there are ancestors in the forest; they are not only in the river and the kraal". That's when I knew there are ancestors in the forest" (Nokhona Mkrolonqa, 59 years, Ndlambe, Ndlambe, 9 May 2009).

3.1   Preface

Children everywhere are surrounded by countless narratives that reach them daily from many different sources. This chapter will provide an overview of the main types of narratives that children are exposed to at the two study sites, explaining how and where they have access to these stories and how they relate to indigenous ideas of biodiversity conservation. It should be understood that the various categories of narrative have been grouped together for ease of comparison, and as such are artificial constructions rather than concrete realities. For example, some environmental narratives incorporate elements of story, song and dance, whilst fulfilling ritual, cultural and social obligations. This intertextuality informs of the holistic nature of of what could be considered Xhosa culture[6] and worldview.

3.2   Traditional narratives

One of the most powerful qualities of narrative is its ability to travel. From the rhythm and cadences which make it easier to remember stories, to the enjoyment and sense of belonging that oral narratives create between teller and audience; story is one of the hardest parts of identity to erode. A strong example of the endurance of narrative is the character Brer Rabbit (c.f. Harris 1880, 1883, 1955). Similar rabbit stories throughout Africa (Finnegan 1970, Bascom 1982, Edward Phillips 2005) reveal that Brer Rabbit is strongly influenced by the African trickster Hare[7] and that Hare narratives have travelled across the Atlantic with those Africans who were taken to North America as slaves. Today Hare is dressed in new clothes and talks a different language, the 'mud doll' (Finnegan 1970) may have become the 'tar baby' (Harris 1955), but millions of children in Africa, America and now other parts of the world remain delighted with his sly wit and charm and his ability to get both in and out of trouble. These Hare narratives in turn have had further

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[6] This term is used in the understanding the culture is a dynamic, unbounded process that is constantly renegotiating itself.

[7] A few critics argue that Brer Rabbit is also influenced by Native American rabbit tales (Brennan 2003). While this is not always agreed with, in all likelihood both cultures may have similar trickster rabbit characters and thus both have potentially contributed to these narratives.

influence in western literature and media. For example, Fishkin considers Bugs Bunny a commercialised, "white" version of Brer Rabbit (in Walker 2001: 17).

Traditional oral narrative is more of an interactive performance than the oratorical occasion presumed by many westerners (Scheub 1970, 2005). Oral literature is fashioned by the performer, social circumstances and audience participation, which combine to create a unique and multi-dimensional narrative. Unlike written narrative, which has a concrete existence and can still be found and enjoyed long after the first rendition, oral narratives cannot exist independently or continuously without being directly realised though speech or song (Finnegan 1970: 2). In addition to this, words are only one part of the story, and tone, gesture, emotion, facial expression, dramatic pausing, as well as the reaction of the audience all form an important part of the oral performance (Finnegan 1970: 3).

Studies in Xhosa oral narrative have been related to narratives such as *iinstomi* (Scheub 1970, 1972, Jordan 1973, 1987, 1996, 2005), oral histories, oral poetry and praise poetry (Opland 1983, Kaschula 1991, 1997, 1999, Opland 1998). The Xhosa equivalent of the *griot* is the *imbongi* or praise poet (Kaschula 1999); the role as historical and socio-political commentator has endured, and is still publically recognised today in both West Africa and South Africa (Kaschula 1999). While politicians may use these cultural figures to propagandise, they can also serve to publically comment on "present-day happenings and recent history, whilst at the same time weaving a literary tapestry for future generations" (Kaschula 1999: 74).

Children in the study sites have access to a variety of traditional oral narratives, from riddles to praise songs and poetry (Opland 1998). I have chosen four traditional narratives that consider aspects of environmental teachings. These are *iintsomi* (bed time stories or fairy tales), *ingoma zakwantu* (traditional songs), *rayi rayi* (riddles), and *Izaci* or *imizekeliso* (proverbs and sayings). While these could be considered as "traditional" in the fact that they are thought of as examples of culture which are passed down orally across generations, we can also find cultural narratives in language, daily activities, common artefacts (such as beadwork) and in numerous "everyday narratives" (Jickling 2001). Some of these include and reveal Xhosa environmental narratives, as the chapter will show.

3.2.1 *Iinstomi (traditional stories)*

Besides oral histories and praise poetry, *iintsomi*[8] are perhaps the most well documented of Xhosa oral narratives. They have been officially recorded since the 1800's by missionaries and scholars (Theal 1882), and have been the subject of extensive research by Scheub (c.f. 1970, 1972, Jordan 1973, Scheub 1975, 1977, 1987, 1996, 2005), who considers *iintsomi* to be "the storehouse of Xhosa cultural knowledge" (1970: 119). The world *iintsomi* is taken to mean a Xhosa "imaginative narrative performance" (Scheub 1977: x), which finds its equivalent in western fairy tales; both being peopled by fantastic beasts and occurrences. *Iinstomi* are traditionally told at bedtime, and formed part of the oral narratives told around the household's *iziko* (fireplace). This was historically used as a sacred domestic space where families gathered together in the evenings, or danced during rituals (Soga 1931, Hunter 1979, Mabona 2004). *Iinstomi* come with the warning that one will "grow horns" if they are told out of time. This adage could perhaps reveal how popular they were in earlier times, that grand/mothers who were pestered for stories would delay the telling until bedtime. Like most fairy tales, *iintsomi* mainly focus on teaching life lessons, morals and social lore, particularly through the uncovering of the expected and the forbidden (Pinkola Estés 1992). By Scheub's analysis, the way of telling the story is the most important part of *iintsomi*. Performers work with a series of expandable images that are usually well known to the audience (Scheub 1970). The actual story is then in the way the performer uses these images and themes, fitting them together in ways that best delight and entertain listeners. This performance of 'known' stories links strongly to feelings of belonging and identity. As Roy (1997: 57), describing the Kathakali storyteller of India, explains:

> "...the secret of the Great Stories is that they *have* no secrets. The Great Stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again. The ones you can enter anywhere and inhabit comfortably. They don't deceive you with thrills and trick endings. They don't surprise you with the unforeseen...They are as familiar as the house you live in".

In a similar vein to western fairy tales, many *iinstomi* tell of cruel relatives or evil step mothers, of children who endure hardships and become heroes, and of the triumph of good over evil. However, there is no guarantee of a happy ending, and some *iinstomi* are inexplicably sad. For example, in the story of <u>Gele and Mfanelo</u>, Gele's mother kills him for the simple mistake of cooking *samp* (crushed maize) instead of *mealies* (maize) (Girl, 14 years, Pirie, 6 November 2008). In fact many western fairy tales originally exposed similar cruelties and forbidden aspects before they were "purified" and overwritten by religious or social standards (Pinkola Estés 1992: 14). One of the most commonly known *iintsomi* is <u>Grandmother and the Jackal</u> (*Canis mesomelas*), a tale of trickery which ends in Grandmother being mistakenly eaten by her own grandchildren (Plate 3.1). This theme of cannibalism is a common one in older *iintsomi*. In the story of <u>Nozibali and</u>

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[8] *Intsomi* = singular, *iistsomi* = plural.

Ndlandluli, Ndlandluli tricks Nozibali into eating her own child (Girl, 15 years, Pirie, 5 Nov 2008). It is possible that the origins of these stories go back to the times when cannibalism was a real threat, for example during the period of the Mfecane. Although there is considerable debate around the Mfecane itself (Cobbing 1988, Eldredge 1992, Hamilton 1992, Omer-Cooper 1993, Hamilton 1995, Peires 1995), there were definitely desperate occasions of cannibalism witnessed in the early 1800's (e.g. Hodgeson 1977), when it is thought that the effects of slavery, drought and raiding war parties combined to create a "cataclysmic social upheaval" (Mclennan 2003: 138).

Plate 3.1   An illustrated *intsomi* of Grandmother and the Jackal

On the other hand, more recent adaptation or inclusion *iintsomi* also occur, such as The Three Little Pigs and *Ingcuka* (the hyena: *Crocuta crocuta*), or Cinderella-type stories where the heroine "goes under the water" in the manner of a Xhosa healer, or is showered with gifts by the *abantu bamlambo* (river people) who play the role of fairy godmother; as in the story of Nomadlavana (Appendix 3a). There are even stories which could be adaptations of Brer Rabbit stories. For example, the story of The Jackal and the Rabbit (Girl, 16 years, 5 November 2008), is remarkably similar to the story of Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox (Harris 1955). In both stories, the Rabbit escapes trouble by asking to be thrown into the thorns. These shared tropes could reveal an interesting return of African narratives to Africa through the means of western education.

The following *intsomi* illustrates the importance of protecting the "sign animals" (Section 3.6.2) that can be used to send messages from the ancestors. It also contains elements of "disappearance by the river" that relate to healer initiation (Bernard 2003, 2010).

"The story of Nomvula

Nomvula and her mother went to the river to do washing. There were other women at the river when they got there but they finished their washing and left, leaving only Nomvula and her mother at the river. When they finished washing it was dark so the mother picked up the big basin to take it home and called to Nomvula that it was time to go. She shouted and looked everywhere but she couldn't find her. She went home alone and cried for Nomvula. One day she was sweeping in front of her house. The boys who were playing near her saw a frog and hit it. The frog sang: "I'm not the type of frog that you can hit, I came here with Nomvula". The boys had a big shock. Then the frog jumped into Nomvula's house and continued singing that song. Nomvula's mother also had a big shock. Then Nomvula appeared. Her mother was happy and hugged and kissed her" (Girl, 12 years, 8 November 2009, Pirie).

One narrative theme relating to children's perceptions of play and place are "Danger in the Forest" stories. These stories traditionally deal with *izim zim*, the cannibal giant who devours children and livestock who are lost in the forest, or similar figures such as the *tokoloshe*[9]. The stories could be seen to serve the social function of preventing children from wandering too far into the forest, where many real and perceived dangers are considered to lurk. Although some *iinstomi* have elements of the "dark forest" envisioned in western fairy tales intended to scare children (Hoogland 1998), the fear that is usually evoked is mostly a fear of strangers. These are symbolised through various characters, from *izim zim* to 'escaped prisoners'. It is interesting to note that rather than the "wolf in the forest" of Western narratives, the dangerous figure in the Xhosa forest of *iinstomi* is more distinctly humanoid. The animals described in *iinstomi* are rarely portrayed as harmful to humans, and in many cases actually assist humans in their quests.

While *iintsomi* are ostensibly teaching morals and social codes, there are some environmentally related teachings that emerge through deeper analysis. For example, *iintsomi* provide a strong characterisation of animals. Animals such as Jackal, Wolf, Rabbit, Frog and Tortoise all have recognisable strengths and fallibilities. These stories portray animals on a par with their human counterparts. Thus, when a child who knows *iinstomi* meets a jackal they have knowledge of him as a fully formed character. While this does not automatically act as an incentive to protect these animals it does reveal a socio-cultural environment of respect and appreciation for wild animals.

I was told the instomi about the Jackal and the Wolf and the other animals [when I was small]. So I recognised that the Jackal was the most clever animal...When I see a jackal I think about what I was told, that it is clever. I'll tell you how clever it is. (She tells the Instomi of the Jackal and the Goat, in which the Jackal falls into a hole and tricks the goat into helping him out)... I learnt that instomi from a book; with pictures of the jackal and the goat...I told my children those iinstomi... until they were 7 years old" (Nomfezeko Mila, 49 years, Pirie, 11 March 2009).

Another common theme is explanation and origin stories about animals, such as <u>Why Imbila has no tail</u>, the *imbila* being a rock rabbit (*Procaria capensis*). These types of stories are common

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[9] The *Tokoloshe* is described as a very short, hairy man or spirit that has an almost 'puckish' nature; said to be fond of seducing wives and playing with children, whom he reputedly asks to steal food for him. However, he is also accorded darker powers, and can be used as a familiar by witches (Hunter 1936).

throughout Africa. For example, Ila tales from Zambia such as How Ringdove came by its ring or Why Zebra has no horns (Finnegan 1970: 347). These stories provide local answers to species diversity that reveals an intimate relationship with and understanding of wild animals and their characteristics. The *intsomi* of The Two Men and the Little Rat describes how men first came to know which *imifino* (wild vegetables) to eat. *Imifino* is a culturally important food that forms a staple part of many rural Xhosa menus; contributing significantly to local livelihoods (Jansen van Rensberg *et al.* 2004, Husselman and Sizane 2006, Jolly 2006, Dovie *et al.* 2007). In the Eastern Cape it is traditionally eaten by women and children and is particularly beneficial in that it provides a free source of essential vitamin A to poor and vulnerable households (McGarry and Shackleton 2009). Note the modern twist in the ending of the story.

"The Two Men and the Little Rat

There were two men who were starving; they could only eat wild vegetables such as iluxu, ihlaba (Sonchus asper) and imbikicane (Bidens pilosa). They had no wives. One day as they were looking for these wild vegetables they met a little rat. It asked them what they were looking for. They answered that they were looking for vegetables. The rat collected the right vegetables and asked them to leave the ones they had already picked (they were the wrong kind). At their homes they cooked and ate the vegetables that the rat had collected. After eating these vegetables they had wives and children. They were very happy and went back to the rat to say thank you. At their homes they planted vegetables and harvested them. Their kids went to expensive schools where they became police officers, lawyers and magistrates" (Girl, 14 years, 5 November 2009, Pirie Mission).

Stories about humans learning from animals reveal another aspect to origin stories and provide a closer look into a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship between humans and nature. These ancestral-animal stories are a common narrative theme (McLean 2009) which can be found amongst many First Nation peoples, from the San to Native Americans. The theme of 'guiding animals' is present even in ancient Greek mythology and medieval fairy tales (Krappe 1942). Amongst the Xhosa the theme of learning from animals is still present today. For example, some elders and local experts told narratives of how the Xhosa first learnt about *amayeza* from 'the bushmen', these being the Khoisan who were initially settled in Amathola region (Peires 1981), who had "learnt from watching the animals" (Man, 61 years, 28 November 2008). Accordingly, the warthog is known by some participants as "a healer", because it is said to feed on medicinal plants. Herbalists say that "it leads people to which plants they should use: Whatever the warthog eats: you know will be good for medicine" (Elder, herbalist, 61 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

Traditional narratives such as *iinstomi* and ancestral animal narratives show an understanding of animals that affords them equal status with the people whom they share their environment with.

Some stories consider animals as respected teachers or ancestors (see section 3.6.3). These animal centred narratives can be seen to symbolise an alternative to the western Cartesian separation between people and nature. Many indigenous animist centred cultures and beliefs reveal a respect and understanding towards nature, illustrating the interdependency between people and their environment (Posey 1999, Maffi 2001, Bernard 2003, Maffi and Woodley 2010).

3.2.2 Ingoma zakwantu (traditional songs)

Traditional songs have historically been put to many uses in Africa: to criticise those who were seen to be transgressing social mores, as political propaganda for those in power, as historical commentary (Furniss and Gunner 1995), or to protest socio-political injustices in a way that the rulers or colonisers could not detect (Vail and White 1983, 1991). Many traditional songs are associated with rituals and ceremonies. For example, the well known song Oonomathotholo (ancestors) are coming tomorrow/ in the morning (Girl, 10 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009), is sung at various types of rituals. For example: during rituals to send or welcome family ancestors, or before the ceremony of intlombe, when healers gather together (Girl, 10 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009).

Ritually related songs about plants and animals are most commonly associated with diviners and their initiation and healing rituals. However, these diviner's songs are known by many other members of the community, especially those that have diviners in the family or who have access to rituals that include these songs. One informant reported that her friend's aunt, who was a diviner in Cape Town, came to stay every holiday and they learnt these songs when she sung them, usually at parties because "every time she's drunk she likes to sing":

> "they had intolombe, the dancing and singing of the healers. [It was] at my friend's house. They made rituals for the bees and sang songs for the bees... They made beer for the bees (Girl, 13 years, Ndlambe, 10 May 2009).

The song Igqirha Lendlela NguQongqothwane (the diviner of the road is the knock knock beetle) made famous by Miriam Makeba, was sung traditionally at weddings, and the beetle itself is said to be a sign of good fortune that heralds the coming of rain. Other examples of ritual songs include: The Crab is brewing sorghum beer next to the river, The Crow is sick, The Baboon in the cave is saying he wants a wife, I saw a rabbit going to the river to drink and There's a Hyena crossing along the ocean, Oh my Lord there's trouble coming. Some rituals can serve multiple purposes, for example the popular ritual of imbeleko, can be performed as a child's baptism into the clan, as a fertility ritual for an older woman, or as a healing ritual for a sick person. During these rituals songs may be sung that relate to ancestors and clan animals. Songs that deal with

animal ancestors directly reveal the strong association between people, ancestors, animals and rituals. At both field sites, the rituals with the most well-known songs associated with them were those associated with the sending or welcoming of ancestors, the initiation of diviners or the initiation of boys.

The ritual of *Umguyo*, performed when the boy is about to go to the bush for his period of seclusion for the purpose of initiation into man-hood, provides one of the most conducive environments for children to learn traditional songs. The evening before the seclusion period older family men and teenage boys from the village will gather to drink and sing songs for the prospective initiates in an all-night long ceremony (See Plate 3.2).

> *"Old boys, are you overpowered by the young ones? (x2)*
> *Said Seyimani.*
> *Yho! Go, we drank and got drunk"* (Boy, 17 years, Ndlambe, 23 July 2009).

Songs sung during *umguyo* range from the origins of circumcision amongst the Xhosa to bawdy tales about girls. For example, the song We want the million girls or the ten girls in the village (Girl, 11 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009). Another song: No! the hunters killed the warthog (Boy, 11 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009) discusses hunting, an activity which is strongly linked to Xhosa masculine identity, which will play a big role for those boys who will be secluded in the forest. The narrative of Somagwaza, the first man who practiced circumcision (See appendix 3B) is a well known story that is often told to young boys. The song *Ndizakugwaza ngolomkhonto* (I will stab you with this spear) forms part of this narrative, and is sung during initiation times, most prominently by the men who fetch the boys from the bush (Boy, Ndlambe, 23 July 2009).

> *Hey Matsiritsi, give me that thing (x 3)*
> *I've got a white blanket, with a black line*[10]*, my baby*
> *It is ingcawe"* (Girl, 17 years, Ndlambe, 23 July 2009)

> *"You gave birth to the young men*
> *Why don't you get married (x2)*
> *I came from marriage, my feet are full of mud"* (Girl, 16 years, Ndlambe, 23 July 2009).

Many songs from the *umguyo* celebration reflect socio-economic conditions, noticeably the gap between rural and urban means of income and the drive to commercialisation. In some cases illegal activities seem to be the only way to access this income:

> *"There comes a police vehicle (x3)*
> *I will sleep in jail today.*
> *Can you borrow me some money. I want to buy a car: a Monza.*
> *Can you borrow me some money, I've used the stokvel's (savings club) money. I'll sleep in jail.*

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[10] This blanket signifies that the boy is *"amarhwala"* (a new man).

There comes a police vehicle (x3)
I'll sleep in jail.
I don't want to leave my kids alone" (Girl, 16 years, Ndlambe, 23 July 2009).

One of the most popular initiation songs reveals the current situation regarding circumcision. For many parents the initiation of boys is an expensive process, but one that is necessary if their sons are to be seen as men in their communities:

"Mom and Dad want me to go for initiation, but they don't have money.
They say 'It's hard' (x4)
Up there[11]*! Oh it's hard"* (Boy, 16 years, Ndlambe, 23 November 2009)

Plate 3.2   Boys rest after singing traditional songs the whole night before their friends go to the bush for initiation and seclusion (umguyo)

In some cases there is a further celebration to end the seclusion period the evening before the boy is set to return to the village. On this evening girls are invited to eat a meal cooked by the boys at their seclusion huts. The celebration takes the form of a party, and particular songs are sung. Once the boy has completed his seclusion period the ritual of *umgidi* will take place. Songs are also sung during this ritual, which is more of a public celebration that involves most of the village than a time of concentrated ritualised singing. *Umgidi* ceremonies also include a public

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[11] Up there on the mountain: Mountains are seen as the traditional place associated with circumcision

passing on of knowledge, as the 'new men' will be seated before their elders immediately after their return from the bush. At this time each of the elders will have an opportunity to give a public speech to the initiates. Often these speeches include rules and instructions on 'how to be a good Xhosa man'.

3.2.3   Rayi-rayi (Traditional riddles)

The art of *rayi-rayi* or *amaQashisho* has one opponent give a descriptive clue, to which the other has to guess the answer. It is akin to the telling of riddles, which has been documented in many different parts of Africa (Finnegan 1970) and all over the world as "an age-related form of innovative language play" (Elkind 2007: 157) which is primarily passed down over generations, with further riddles being "invented by children themselves" (Elkind 2007: 157). Most of the riddles that children knew at the two field sites were related to parts of the body or domestic items or activities:

> Q. Rayi-rayi: I have something that says "I am the first one" and the other says "I am the first one". What is that?
> A. The legs. (Girl, 9 years old, Pirie 21 September 2009)
>
> Q. Rayi-rayi: I have a horse that runs until the hills are closed
> A. A needle (Girl, 17 years, Pirie, 12 November 2009)

One explanation for these types of everyday riddles, especially those related to the body, being more prevalent is the fact that they have been included in national schoolbooks, perhaps because they are seen as the most suitable for teaching. This fact seems to have led to their endurance and popularity. However, there are a few riddles that relate to the environment or cultural use of environmental resources. For example:

> "Q. Rayi-rayi: I have a person dying, but wearing a scarf?[12]
> A. Umtshayelo (a traditional hand broom): "The scarf is the red string that ties the broom together. So you will be using it every day, then it would be finished, but the string will still be there" (Ntombekhaya Matya, 60 years, Pirie, 29 September 2009).
>
> "Q. Rayi-rayi: I am beautiful on this side and ugly on this side?
> A. Ngu Bhobhoyi" (Hammerkop: Scopus umbretta) (Girl, 19 years, 12 November 2008, Pirie)
>
> "Q. Rayi-rayi: I have something that jumps on the thorns"
> A. A locust" (Boy, 20 years, 12 November 2008, Pirie)
> "Q. Rayi-rayi: I have a big field with one pumpkin.
> A. The sky" (Boy, 20 years, 12 November 2008, Pirie)

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[12] Also told as: "A woman who has died wearing a belt" (Girl, 17 years, Pirie, 12 November 2008) or "A wife who died wearing a belt" (Boy, 19 years, 12 November 2008, Pirie)

Children from the two field sites also told riddles about frogs, birds, cattle, horses, and dividing stones, all of which can be seen to illustrate an intimate knowledge of and relationship with nature.

3.2.4   Izaci/Imizekeliso/Iqhalo (Proverbs and sayings)

An analysis of proverbs and sayings can reveal a lot about social, cultural and political undercurrents. For example, Ntshinga (1996) argues that many older Xhosa proverbs relating to women expose a patriarchal and often misogynistic viewpoint, while newer proverbs can reveal women's criticism to these regimes. In general, most proverbs and sayings relate to the telling of social morals or observances. However, these are sometimes told through the means of environmental observations, for example, through the use of animal characterisations:

> "Inkawu ityiwa ilila eMdantsane, imfene isinda ngogolosa" (It's better to be a baboon than a monkey in East London): "In big towns thieves can rob you without leaving even a cent to make your way back home in the taxi, so in these situations it's better to be a baboon, someone who is strong" (Woman, 25 years, Pirie, 28 September 2009).

> "Inyoka nesele" (Like a snake and a frog): People who don't get along, i.e. they are natural enemies.

> "Yimbabala yolwantunge" (He is a buck of an endless forest): Someone who doesn't have the staying power to finish anything.

> "Lunyawo lwemfene" (It is the foot of a baboon): Someone who is deceitful.

> "Inkala ixingetyeni" (The crab has stuck fast between the stones at the entrance of its hole): Someone who becomes trapped in something of their own making.

The use of animals and nature imagery reflects how nature is intricately incorporated into the Xhosa cultural worldview.

3.3   Historical narratives

Historical narratives or 'fireside tales' can form part of cultural environmental narratives, particularly when it comes to narratives relating to places through the means of place names or origin myths. While some place names refer to founding ancestors, other names recall particular natural resources that can be obtained there, such as the forest Isikumba (animal skins) at Ndlambe, or recall particular features in the vicinity, such as kwaVetinari (the vet's place), also at Ndlambe. The naming of landscape features is often mentioned in origin stories, and is deeply connected to communal identity. Soga (1917) describes the Xhosa people moving down into South Africa, naming places and rivers and planting medicinal trees and plants as they went. Tuan (1977, 1990, 1991) considers the role of language, specifically naming, in the "making of place",

emphasising how "naming is power" (Tuan 1991: 688). The replacing of old names with new names allows new groups to appropriate places for their own. The telling or forgetting of place narratives directly correlates to social feelings of belonging and ownership to land.

In Pirie Mission the historical figures of King Sandile, Chiefteness Hoho, Chief Ndoda (known by some as Hoho's husband), and Chief Jwarha are seen as ancestor figures and guardians of sacred spaces, who are sewn into the landscape and history through narratives and the naming of places. For example Sandile's cave, Hoho forest, Ntaba kaNdoda and Ndlasidudu forest (associated with Chief Jwarha) are all seen as important, and in some cases sacred, cultural spaces. Besides these commonly recognised sites, the landscape at Pirie also reveals a more intimate view into the nature of ancestors, place and the continuation of communion with places of importance. A single area, comprising of caves and steep cliffs, is seen as sacred to certain Pirie residents; the reason being that they all share a common ancestor, known as Mpiyenyawo. This man was a healer who disappeared in Hoho forest (presumably in the cave or at the cliffs) and whose body was never found, as he had famously predicted:

> "Do you see that part of the mountain with cliffs, our great grandfather who was a healer, who used to be away from home for some weeks, maybe two, three weeks [at a time]. I think I must say that he prophesised that he would never be buried; he would just disappear in those cliffs. His name was Mpiyenyawo, I mean what he had prophesised was fulfilled" (Nontembiso Mgucwa, 87 years, 24 September 2009).

Many place names recall particular histories. During the 1800's the Great Fish River became the boundary drawn between British and Xhosa forces and the Ndlambe region has many place names that originate from this time. Places like the valley of Mhala and the Cliffs of Grahamstown refer to battles during this period (Wells pers. comm. 8 June 2009).

These place names and the narratives associated with them have thus been passed down through the generations. It is through narrative, and multiple narratives, that places become layered with histories. The same forest at Pirie is associated with San, Khoi, Xhosa, British, Scottish, English, Dutch, and German histories. While Chiefteness Hoho gives her name to the forest in general, there is a particular part of it that is known as kwaFree. The narrative relating to this place was one of the most well known in the village, as it is one of the most recent. While children may not have been alive in the time when the Free (originally named Fourie) family stayed in the forest, many of them could explain that the name "comes from the coloureds who used to stay there". The name, for older participants, is further associated with the generous nature of the Free family, who are still remembered fondly. Thus, new inhabitants attach and sometimes overwrite the place histories they find by their own experiences there, which in turn become new histories.

More intimate family narratives relate to occurrences in the forest or at the river, talking of encounters with animals, ghosts or ancestors, or rituals held in these areas. Research also revealed inherited stories; narratives that could have been passed down from the people who were there before. Some elders told narratives which explained that when the Xhosa came to the Eastern Cape, they met with 'bushmen' (locally used term to describe Khoisan) already there who traded with them, and taught them many things. This contact is confirmed by historical, archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence (Peires 1981, Hall 1986, Hammond-Tooke 1998). It is proposed that several aspects of Xhosa culture and worldview, in particular the mediumistic divinatory system employed by healers, are heavily influenced by San influences (Thackeray 1988a, 1988b, Prins and Lewis 1992, Hammond-Tooke 1998, 1999, 2002,). The San[13] are still regarded highly today for their knowledge of *amayeza* and for their role in passing on this knowledge. Some healers specifically seek out San teachers to train them to be powerful diviners (Prins and Lewis 1992). In Ndlambe, several healers are said to be taught by San dream entities who perform the same role as clan animals, instructing the healer through dreams about the uses and location of *amayeza* (Section 3.9). At Pirie, the nearby town of Kieskammahoek is known by its local name, *Qoboqobo*, which is said to have been given 'because of the clicks', as 'there were lots of 'bushmen' living there'. It is possible to find traces of the contact between Xhosa and San in language and narratives today. For example, to the Xhosa, the praying mantis is known as *umntana wezulu* (Heaven's child):

> "If you see it first you must call out because it is very lucky and the first person to see it receives that luck. You can't kill it or play with it; you must just watch it and be happy. It is a holy insect" (Pakama Mkulungu, 25years, Pirie, 8 March 2009).

To the San the mantis is a physical representation of /Kaggan (Bleek and Lloyd 1911, Bennun 2004), the powerful trickster deity who made both /Xam and eland (*Taurotragus oryx*): the most beloved and holy of animals to the /Xam (Bleek 1924, Bennun 2004).

3.4   Clan narratives

The most common clan narratives relate to clan ancestors. Many praise songs recall a person's attributes as well as their family and clan lineage (Kaschula 1997, Opland 1998). Narratives of clan lineage and clan origins are seen as one of the most important things to pass on to children:

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[13] Although the term San was initially used by the Khoi as a derogatory term meaning 'cattle less' (Bennun 2004), it is now accepted and is seen as more suitable than 'Bushman'. As there is no word recorded for the overall grouping of San, the correct term would be to use the name for that specific group, such as /Xam-ka !ei for those who lived in the Cape Thirstland (Bennun 2004). As yet the collective name for the San who were in the Eastern Cape area is still unknown (Peires, pers. comm. 28 April 2009).

"The first thing [my father] told me about was my clan history. Why we are called Mkwayi: we don't have an ancestor called Mkwayi, it is a punishment name. We were punished:
Phalo was the king, and a son of Phalo's slept with Tshiwo's daughter. You can't point to a king and say your son has done wrong. They couldn't punish the son, so they punished the daughter. It was meant to be the man's punishment, but she was punished. So we were ruled out of the Tshawe house...so we can't become kings" (Man, 20 years, Pirie, 20th Jan 2009).

This clan origin story, with its history of royal lineages, is one of the more well-known clan narratives. Other clan origin stories are less well known, such as the Sithatu clan, thought by some to originate from three San men that were incorporated into the local Xhosa community (Peires 1981). While these stories deal with ancestry, clan narratives become particularly important for healers and those who wish to be initiated as healers. Healers are thought to be initiated under the water by an old woman who is a clan elder (Bernard 2010) and they are taught and guided in their healing by clan animals and ancestors that appear to them in dreams (Section 3:5).

Hirst (1990, 2005) explains that clans are traditionally associated with different places, such as forests, rivers and grasslands. These places are in turn strongly affiliated with certain clan animals (Section 3.5.3). Clans will sometimes perform certain 'rituals of landscape' *intlwayelelo* (ritual offerings to ancestors at the river, forest or sea), whereby they give offerings to their ancestors in their clan areas (Bernard pers. comm. 24 April 2009). These places in turn can signify or represent certain types of clans. For example, anthills are linked with the earth, and the forests and rivers are linked with the chiefs (Bernard pers. comm. 1 July 2009). Rituals are often related to and include clan narratives. Each ritual has a specific set of requirements, including the specific order of events that the ritual should follow. While there are many commonalities between rituals overall, there are prescriptive clan narratives dealing with the way clan rituals should be conducted, for example, where rituals should take place: in some cases at sacred places, and what should be worn: in some cases clan members will wear clan insignia, such as animal fur signifying their clan animal. The following two examples of rituals show how a family communicates with their ancestors in four separate places: the kraal, the river, the forest and the caves:

"When a little baby is born, there could be a ritual made for him or her. Slaughtering of a goat, and taking his or her blanket to the kraal to introduce him or her to the ancestors or taking that blanket to the river/forest.
[in a separate ritual:] You build a hut in the forest where the family member would stay there for some few days, slaughtering a goat or going to talk in the caves with ancestors" (Girl, 14 yrs, Ndlambe, 9 July 2009).

It is important to realise the diversity both between and within clans. Narrative analysis of different families who share the same clan reveals both commonalities and differences between important places and species:

"[The clan's animal] depends on the place you grew up in. Because there are people with the same clan names, but they do different things. A Chawe who grew up in the Transkei is different from a Chawe from Seymour" (Ruben Ndindwa, 61 years, Pirie, 10 March 2009).

3.5   Dream narratives

Dreams are central to the Xhosa worldview and have particular importance for well-being and ritual events (Bernard 2010). Reynolds (1996) considers the use of dreams in the "construction of the self"; being part of the "techniques of the self" (Foucault 1984). Her work reveals that even the dreams of children are "taken seriously, leading to divination and ritual care and attention", it is through these means that children are incorporated into cultural "ritual means of curing, explaining and comforting" (Reynolds 1996: 67-68). Healers in Southern Africa and beyond see dreams as the means by which they can obtain technical and diagnostic knowledge for healing purposes (Reynolds 1996, Bernard 2010). Certain family rituals are strongly related to dreams, and these rituals accordingly have their own dream narratives that relate to what a dream portrays. For example:

"Slaughtering a cow for an old woman who had passed away is called "Umpha inkobe" (to give mealies). Mealies are given when you have a dream about an old woman asking for mealies, which means you have to make a ritual" (Girl, 15 years, Ndlambe Village, 09th July 2009).

If someone in the family has a certain dream (e.g. including a deceased family member), they will narrate this dream to their elders. The dream signifies that it is time for a certain ritual to be performed. Most commonly these rituals are related to 'welcoming' or 'sending away' rituals, the main purpose of which is to appease family members so they can be 'at peace' to perform their proper role as intermediary ancestors. The following narrative portrays the importance of dreams in both divining the clan animal and the prescriptive rituals to take once it has been sighted (either in real life of in a dream):

"My father had a dream that he told us about. He was in the forest and he was sitting under a tree. He went to sleep and dreamt about a snake, that snake was also a person, an ancestor. It was very unusual to have this dream and to have a dream in the middle of the day. He went to the healer and was told that he had met his izilo and that he must do certain rituals. I was 16 then, I didn't understand what was happening. But we are still doing the rituals now and I understand now, because I also had a dream of my grandmother last year and because of it we are doing a ritual this year" (Woman, 25 years, Grahamstown, 12 August 2009).

Rituals and dreams are thus intimately connected and are seen as an important means of communication with the ancestors. Dreams are of particular relevance to healers, and can provide the means by which healers are able to ascertain a cure, by dreaming of a particular plant and where it may be obtained.

"You sleep and dream about a medicine and then you go and get it

Q. How come Xhosa people know about these medicines?
They have trained about them and dreamt about them" (Healer in training, 40 years, Pirie, 22 October 2008)

"The other day I went to stay in the forest for my ritual. [I chose the place to stay] because I saw it in dreams. I had the same dream many times. In that dream I saw the cliffs that were V-shaped, so that's where I performed my ritual...It's not the healers' decision [about where to do the ritual], it is your ancestors, through a dream, who tell you to do it here [in a particular place]" (Healer, 45 years, Ndlambe, 12 June 2009).

3.6   Animal narratives

While animals may be valued for their social, economic and nutritional contribution, in many cases animals also occupy important cultural roles, particularly certain wild animals which are seen as representatives of the ancestors. Participatory exercises with children revealed a total of 34 species which were associated with the ancestors (Figure 3.1). The animals children most commonly associated with the ancestors were dogs, bees, monitor lizards, cows and crabs (Figure 3.1). Although this breakdown showed a prominence of domestic animals, of the total animals stated 76 % (26) were wild species (Figure 3.1). The term 'animal' was used by participants to indicate any wild (and domestic) creature, including reptiles, insects, crustaceans, birds and mammals and this categorisation is therefore followed by the thesis. Analysis of both children and adults' animal narratives revealed several different cultural categories that animals could occupy. Rather than the western separation of domestic versus wild animals, cultural narratives allowed the categorisation of home animals, messenger animals, clan animals (*izilo*), protected animals (animals that you can't kill), and dangerous animals (which are generally feared). Note that sometimes the same animal fell into several categories and that in some cases the different categorical terms were used interchangeably, particularly by non-experts. Some clans also consider domestic animals as their *isilo*.

The chart shows bars with values:
Dog 13, Bees 13, Monitor lizard 12, Cow 8, Crab 8, Goat 4, Snake 4, Frog 4, Elephant 4, Leopard 3, Baboon 3, Rabbit 3, Cat 2, Lon 2, Owl 2, Sheep 1, Pig 1, Mole 1, Ants 1, Crocodile 1, Dove 1, Antelope 1, Giraffe 1, Zebra 1, Wild cat 1, Ground hornbill 1, Turtle 1, Tortoise 1, Itshakfel 1, Jackal 1, Chicken 1, Duck 1, Monkey 1, Umcela 1

Y-axis: Number of children who recognise this animal

Figure 3.1   **Animals that children saw as being associated with the ancestors**

3.6.1   Home animals

Home animals can be either domestic animals or wild animals that are associated with the home. Birds such as *"umcelu, isomi, itshafele,* and *mossie"* (Nkosinathi Thonisi, born 1941, Ndlambe, 22 July 2009), (Swallow: *Hirundo* sp., Red-winged starling: *Onychognathus mori,* unknown and sparrow: *Passer* sp.) are all seen as "home birds", their presence around the home is seen as a blessing and a symbol that "all is well in the home". They also have other functions, for example some participants think that starlings actively chase away eagles, perhaps informed by seeing starlings bombing eagles in flight:

> An eagle eats the little chickens. So when that eagle sees isomi, it will run away; it won't come. So, they are guardians to the chickens. (S.W. Mkunkuma, 65 year old man, Ndlambe, 14 June 2009).

> "These birds are the home birds and the birds that protect us from evil things. So when you kill them you won't feel free and you will have bad luck" (Nobunthu Nkothobi, 60 years, 24 May 2009, Ndlambe).

While cattle are seen as vital symbols of social and economic wealth to the Xhosa (Ainslie 2002, 2005, Poland *et al.* 2003), they also perform various cultural functions. Many historians have described the role of favoured cows or oxen, which were intimately associated with their owner's wealth, identity and well-being and who often acted as a medium between the ancestors and the living (Broster 1981, Poland *et al.* 2003). Chiefs traditionally kept a sacred ox which acted as confidant and spiritual guardian. It was said that the chief's spirit resided in this animal, which

could sometimes act as a sacrificial substitute if ever the chief was threatened by illness (Macdonald 1891). This role is well described in the intsomi The bountiful horn (Theal 1882), wherein a favourite ox takes on the spirit of the child's mother and thus becomes her confidant, guide and protector. Personal domestic reindeer (kujjai) currently occupy a similar role in Eveny culture in Siberia; most Eveny who continue to practice or retain links with their reindeer herding culture have a kujjai, a "reindeer that was specially consecrated to protect its owner from harm" (Vitebsky 2005: 278). Today cattle play an irreplaceable role in many rituals, particularly in sending off and welcoming back the spirits of deceased family members as ancestors.

> "[with cows] We tell the clans of "Rhadebe's, Gatyeni's, oonkomo zibomvu; these are family clan trees for those Gatyeni's" (Girl, 10 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008)

> "[cattle are] considered as cultural animals for great grandfathers who passed away" (Boy, 9 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

The keeping of horses and the tradition of horse racing is one that has great socio-cultural importance attached to it. Although initially introduced to the region by Europeans, horses were readily adopted by the Xhosa and came to be seen as extremely valuable livestock. They occupied an important role in warfare (Mostert 1992) and often played a role in marriage negotiations, most especially amongst royal families (Morrow and Vokwana 2001: 157). Oxen were traditionally raced during marriage ceremonies, and many of the traditions and practices of ox racing have passed into horse racing. For example, horses are culturally prepared for races using medicinal herbs and charms.

In Pirie, cultural narratives link horses to the forest, with horse riding taking place near the forest, and a particular forest tree being linked to horses: umgqonci, (Thrichocladus ellipticus), as it is said to give them strength when they eat it. One jockey had a walking stick made from this wood. This stick, which he carried with him often, symbolised both his manhood (having been initiated) and his prowess as a horse rider. Various narratives abound relating to a particular path in the forest called indela ne mahachi (the way of the horses) which is associated with King Sandile's Army as well as the forest rangers that once patrolled the forest on horses. Many racing horses have their own praise names and praise songs (Men, 37 years and 50 years, Nakhane, 21 February 2009). Horse racing is popular in the Amathole region, but not in the Ndlambe region, where a differing climate and socio-economic conditions could affect the keeping of horses. While horse racing was publically seen as an important sport in Pirie, only two households in the village kept horses. Some participants stated that horse racing is now something of a gentleman's past-time, as it requires a lot of money to both buy and keep horses.

Dogs are an extremely important cultural animal and they have a particularly close relationship with the ancestors. Dogs not only protect a household against enemies and warn when people are approaching, but they are also thought to "tell luck" (fortunes) and to be able to sense supernatural dangers, being able to "drive away the *tokoloshe*" (Hunter 1936: 297). It is said that a dog will bark in a particular way "when it sees/feels the evil spirit around the house" (Girl, 13 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009). Participants stated that dogs can be a clan animal, an ancestor, and a dream animal as well as occupying a central role in traditional hunting. They play an important role in communicating on behalf of the ancestors and they can even tell the household "to bring back the spirits of the deceased" (Girl, 13 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008). Dogs are seen to represent the ancestors, and accordingly "if you are a dreamer you do see them in your dreams surrounding you and that shows you are protected" (Boy, 10 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008) and that "your ancestors are with you" (Boy, 11 years, 8 July 2009). Many participants spoke about the need to look after dogs when they are old because, especially in old age when "you must know it's your ancestor" (Girl, 14 years, 9 July 2009). Other less common home animals are goats, sheep, chicken, ducks and cats.

3.6.2 Messenger animals

The forest is seen as the home of forest animals while the river is seen as the home of the river animals. When these animals leave these places to enter the human sphere it is seen as a sign of great importance. The animals are then seen as messengers from the ancestors who have travelled to the human domain to inform the family about something; usually a forthcoming event.

> "These animals I have named here are sent by the ancestors. And the baboon comes to your home during the night and climbs on top of the roof and says what it is sent for and leaves the same night after passing [on] the message" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 Dec 2008).

'The story of Nomvula' (Section 3.1.1) reveals the close relationship between people and messenger animals. The line between messenger animals and clan animals is often indistinct, as some animals are seen as both. In general, messenger animals are clan animals that are recognised as important by many people, even those whose clan they are not related to. One of the most commonly recognised ancestral messengers are bees. When a swarm of bees is seen around the homestead they are known as "visitors". It is believed that bees come to a homestead "When there is something that should be done and [it] is ritual related" (Boy, 10 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008). Bees should not be harmed on these visits and it is believed that they will only leave once traditional beer has been brewed for them. In those cases where the ritual cannot take place immediately families report that they have lived in harmony with the swarm of bees until

the ritual (which involves smoke or herb incense) led to the bee's peaceful departure from the homestead. In Ndlambe one family reported that they had lived with a swarm which took up residence in a cabinet in their living room for over a year.

Another well recognised animal is the *uxam* (the river monitor lizard -*Varanus albigularis*[14]) also known as the "House aunt". When the *uxam* is observed around the house it is seen as "a messenger from the river when there could be something that must be done by the family". It is also seen as "a messenger from the ancestors when doing a river ceremony". Some narratives stated that the *uxam* is sent to homes to fetch eggs or cow dung for the ancestors in the river (Boy, 14 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009), it is told in stories that the *uxam* uses cow dung to beautify the floor of its home in a similar way to its human counterparts. Other messenger animals include crabs, frogs and certain types of ants.

> "[Frogs] are also messengers, when seeing them the family take the sticks[15] to ask from the healers what's wrong" (Boy, 14 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

Visits by these important ancestrally related animals are reported to elders and the family will discuss what the messenger has come to say. In some cases a diviner is consulted. Usually these visits result in a ritual, the most common being the brewing of traditional beer. It is thought that messenger animals appear to inform about very important events, whether this be a sign of "what is going to happen", or that "the ancestors are cross or angry because of being ignored". Failure to respect these messenger animals can have severe consequences. A healer in training told a story of hitting a crab that she found on her wall (Healer in training, 40 years, Pirie, 8 March 2009). Her home is very far from the river and the existence of a crab in her home was, in itself, unusual. Once she hit the crab she became paralysed on the right half of her body. She was told that she "had to make *inkombhoti* and apologise to the ancestors in the kraal". Once she had done this she recovered the use of that side of her body. The whole experience helped her to realise that she should become a healer.

3.6.3 Clan animals

Some of the most important clan narratives describe clan animals that are related to the ancestors. Narratives can relate to what the animal is and which places it is associated with, what restrictions the clan has towards this animal, how to greet clan animals, and what a meeting might foretell:

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[14] The rock monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) is also recognised as *uxam*.
[15] To "take the sticks" is an expression meaning to go and see the healers.

"I can't kill frogs, monkeys, tigers[16] (leopards), or the snakes near the river because they are related to my ancestors...When I meet these animals they will greet me first with a cry, I must then greet them with Camugu![17] Even when I cross the river, if I see a crab, I say Camugu! ...Seeing one means I will have luck; there is nothing bad that I will meet on my way" (Mrs Sito, 47 years, 4 March 2009, Field Book 5).

Clan animals have been categorised by anthropologists as totems, and were initially accorded mention as part of animist religious beliefs (Frazer 1899, 1905, Goldenweiser 1910, Hill-Tout 1901, Frazer 1993). It should be remembered that these early discussions of totems, and the indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) they were part of, were often heavily influenced by the academic desire to categorise the 'primitive' mind (Levi-Bruhl 1975, 1979). As such, it is important to consider how this research was influenced by the racial and cultural biases of its time (Anderson 1999). However, despite these biases, this extensive anthropological research does allow the realisation that clan or totemic animals seem to serve similar purposes worldwide, and to have done so since time immemorial. Most commonly, these animals are seen as representations of the ancestors and should not be harmed. They strengthen the clan, often assisting them by giving them power and wisdom, while at the same time they are protected by the clan, and it is usually forbidden to kill them unless in times of emergency. Some argue that totemic animals are seen as guardians of the external soul, known in Niger as the "bush soul" (Kingsley in Frazer 1993: 686), any injury to these animals thus corresponds with an injury to the person who is affiliated with that animal (Frazer 1993). This belief in an animal parallel or soul keeper is widespread, and specific totem animals can be associated with individuals, families, secret societies, men or women of the social group, or entire communities (Frazer 1993: 679-687). Renewed understanding in the intricacies of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and their place in environmental management (Posey 1989, 1999, Berkes et al. 1999, 2000) have brought about new interest in IK previously dismissed as 'primitive'. This has lead to 'new animism' research (Bird-David 1999, Willerslev 2004, 2007), whereby animism is seen as 'relational epistemology' of critical importance to cultural and environmental perceptions (Bird-David 1999).

At both field sites clan animals (*izilo*) were seen as animals which are not supposed to be killed or harmed. Their appearance, particularly around the home, or during rituals is of immense importance to the family. While the majority of children know their clan name, many did not know their clan animal. There are some schools of thought that consider only those clans of Sotho or Tswana origin to have clan animals (Peires, pers. comm. 28 April 2009). Others consider the

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[16] It is thought that the use of the word 'tiger' to describe a leopard is influenced by the Dutch word for leopard (tyger), as this was also used in early 'explorer' literature of the 1700's (c.f. Kay 1833) (Dold, pers. comm. 21 April 2009).
[17] An ancestor related greeting meaning: "Be propitiated! Blessing!" (Hunter 1936: 330).

relationship with wild animals, especially those animal associates which guide healers through *ukuthwasa*, to be San concepts that were incorporated into the Xhosa belief system (Hammond-Tooke 2002: 279, 285). Fieldwork revealed that many participants, especially older participants and diviners, were emphatic that "Every house has its own izilo" (Elder, 85 years and her son, 61 years, Pirie, 23 September 2009), stating that "Each family will have a particular 'sign' from the ancestors, "such as a frog or a cat" (Healer in training, 40 years, Pirie, 8 March 2009). While some *izilo* are domestic animals, such as cows, sheep or dogs, the majority of them (25 out of 34 or 74 %) were wild species (Figure 3.2). It is therefore presumed that all families (potentially) have an *izilo*, but family members who have not been told about their *izilo* may only realise what it is when it is encountered, either in dreams, or in real life, or when informed of such by a healer.
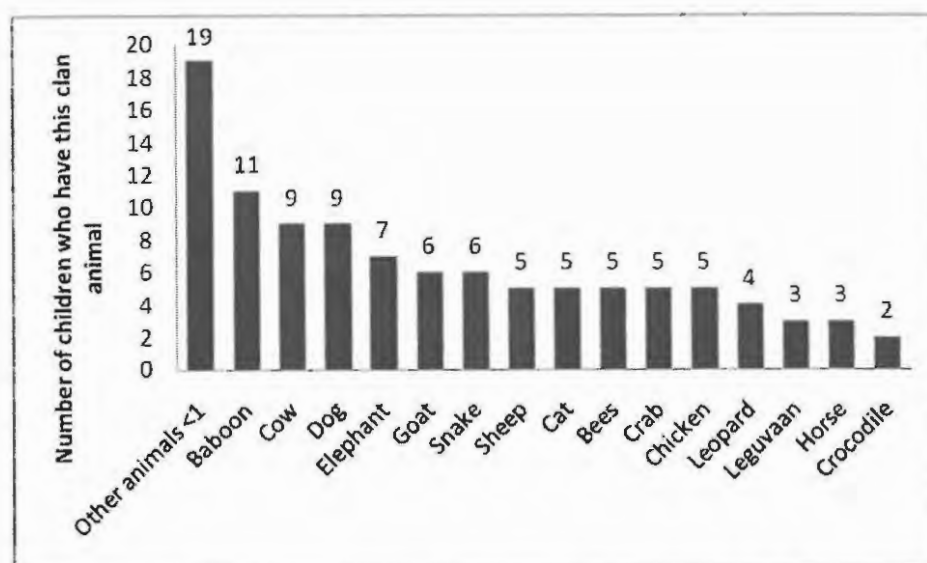
Figure 3.2   Clan animals recognised by child participants

In the figure above (Figure 3.2) the category of other animals mentioned once only included: *Ukhetshe*, Crow, *Obhodlinja*, Pig, Rabbit, Monkey, Buffalo, Frog, Tortoise, Eagle, *Idomsi*, *Udabane*, *Usigadi*, *Ufulashe*, *Umega*, *Ingcuka*, *Inala*, *Umcelu*, *Igxiya*.

One of the most commonly known clan animals is the *Majola* snake (Mole snake), also known as *inkwahkwa* or 'the snake of goodwill' (Boys, 15 years and 13 years, Ndlambe, 12 May 2009). This snake has historically been associated with the amaMpondomise royal clan (Brownlee 1896). A visit from the snake can signify "when you should do traditional beer or slaughtering" (Boy, 10 years, 22 December 2010), it also "sends you back home" and "cures you when you are sick" (Girl, 14 years, Pirie, 20 January 2009). Many participants stated that the snake will come to visit a newborn child of the clan, 'going round it, but not harming it'. The association of a clan with a

certain snake and the concept that this snake will not harm children is found elsewhere in Africa throughout history:

> "In Senegambia a python is expected to visit every child of the Python clan within eight days after birth; and the Psylli, a Snake clan of ancient Africa, used to expose their infants to snakes in the belief that the snakes would not harm true-born children of the clan" (Frazer 1993: 502).

Clan members are sometimes said to possess the characteristics of their *izilo* (clan animal). Thus, those whose clan is related to the rabbit are "tame and lovely", while those related to the lion may be "aggressive and not care about other people" (Healer, 45 years, Ndlambe, 12 June 2009). Sometimes clan animals and messenger animals can be accumulated, for example one girl considers the lion, buck, giraffe, zebra, elephant, crab, wild cat, snake and bee to all "tell about the ancestors" (Girl, 12 years, Pirie, 21 January 2009). This recognition of many tabooed animals can even extend to commonly recognised *izilo* that have no relation to the household:

> Q. Are there any animals you can't kill?
> The snake and the tortoise.
> Q. Why can't you kill the tortoise?
> If you kill it one of the family members could get sick or die. My mom told me this.
> Q. What happens if you kill snakes?
> Not all of the snakes are ones you can't kill. There are some snakes that belong to some people's clans (these ones you can't kill).
> Q. Which snakes?
> Like Majola.
> Q. Does that mean you can't kill it even if it's not your clan animal?
> Yes.
> (Boys, 12-14 years, Pirie 19th September 2009)

There has been some academic consideration of *izilo*, beginning with early (sometimes misunderstood) cultural documentation (MacDonald 1891, Brownlee 1896), and leading to more recent studies of the importance of *izilo* to diviners (Hirst 1990, Hammond-Took 1999, 2002, Bernard 2010). Hirst (1990, 2005) explains that Xhosa diviners will dream of their *izilo* who tutor them in the art of healing. Hirst records '43 different kinds of animals' which diviners reported as izilo appearing in dreams (in Hammond-Tooke 1999: 129). The ancestral *izilo* often play a significant role in the healer's training. Ancestral spirits will appear in the trainee's dreams as one of the animals associated with their clan and guide them through *ukuthwasa*, revealing the special kinds of *ubulawu* that are historically linked with the trainee's clan (Hirst 1990, Tropp 2002, Bernard and Khumalo 2003, Bernard 2010). It is particularly beneficial for healers to possess some part of their *izilo*, usually the skin or fur. It is thought that these skins strengthen the healer because "when you wear that [skin hat or blanket] you feel everything and see everything: even the evil that you might meet, you can see it easily" (Woman, 47 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

"Lions, baboons, rabbits and warthogs" (Healer in training, 40 years, Pirie, 8 March 2009) are generally important for healers.

In Xhosa culture the sighting of clan animals is particularly important to those who are related to healers or who may have a calling to be a healer. For example, sighting a crab can signify the ritual of *imfukamo*, (Girl, 9 years, 20 December) which is synonymous with healers. It is thought that healers have the strongest connection to *izilo*:

> "No, I don't know about [izilo], only the healers know about that. Only when you go to a healer, maybe for being healed s/he may tell you your izilo" (Man, 91 years, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009).

> "Yes, I had a dream about my izilo (I can't tell you what they are). I started to dream about them before going to my training [to be a healer]...they are very important to the healers, more than to other people" (Healer, 89 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009).

However, many 'non-specialist' families also recognise their *izilo*, who often play a role similar to the ancestors whereby they are afforded the same respect during rituals and daily life. Clan animals and ancestors are intricately connected. In many cases they are seen as ancestors.

> "My izilo are my ancestors, (like grandfathers and grandmothers), but I can't mention their names...The ancestors and the izilo are our guardians, for us and our children...There's no difference [between izilo and ancestors], because they are the same people to us...[izilo and the ancestors are]the same thing, with different names" (Nowikisi Yedwa, born 1913, 12 June 2009, Ndlambe).

There are particular rules related to behaviour towards *izilo* and particular rituals related to sighting or honouring one's *izilo*, "the cow killed for a clan ancestor 'like frogs or crabs' is called *yinkomo yezilo* (Woman, 35 years, Gambushe, 19 December 2009). The sighting of an *izilo* is always an issue of importance, as "It means that maybe the ancestors remember you" (Nyakonzima Makasi, 77 years old, Ndlambe, 24 May 2009).

> "Q. What is your responsibility to your izilo?
> We make rituals for them, like making sorghum beer, slaughtering cows and goats. ..whenever we do rituals, we do them for izilo and ancestors....When I meet them, maybe in the forest or on my way to somewhere, when I come home I have to discuss with my wife that we must do sorghum beer...I come home and go inside the kraal and say thanks to my ancestors and izilo for seeing them...[When you see them] it means your ancestors and izilo loves you and they can be your guardians wherever you go" (S.W. Mkunkuma, 65 years, Ndlambe, 14 June 2009).

These rituals can take place even if the family's *izilo* is never seen, for example if it is an animal that is no longer observed in the area (such as a lion or elephant):

> "There are rituals that you make traditional beer and slaughtering a cow for izilo, even though you didn't see them...the rituals made for izilo are called inkomo yezilo. You make it when remembering them, and also when you ask them to guard your home or you wherever you go" (Nosolidi Gwetchela, 73 year old woman, 15 June 2009, Ndlambe).

"I haven't seen my izilo, I've just heard about them from older people. So whenever I pray or talk (during rituals) I talk about them and praise them...when there's a ritual I praise them with my family" (Nowikisi Yedwa, 96 years, Ndlambe, 12 June 2009).

Sometimes family narratives describe how this animal came to be a clan animal. In many cases this realisation of which is a clan animal happens after a significant event in which the person has an unusual experience with an animal. This animal is then seen to represent the ancestors, and often a healer will prescribe rituals to appease them (Bernard 2010).

"One day there was an animal from the forest who came here and got inside the house and then went out and disappeared. So I was told that animal I mustn't kill. The name of the animal is unomatse. It is dark in colour and his tip of his tail is white. He is very little, about ankle height, he is like a little cat...because I was born by the healers, I know that every time an animal from the forest or river comes, you must know it is a messenger, or an animal which is associated with your clan.

Q. Does that mean that every animal that visits you becomes a clan animal? Or did you find out later that it is one?

Not all of the animals are my clan animals, but some of them maybe come to tell you that there would be something bad that would happen. For example, before I became sick – there was a bird that came here. Then it went. I was told by the healer that I would become sick. ...There are good healers that know about [clan animals]. Even if she/he doesn't know you... they know your clan animal" (Man, 77 years, Ndlambe, 24 May 2009).

The spirit animals of Native Americans also appear in extraordinary circumstances. Warriors will stay in the forest for several days during a vision quest. Whatever animal they see in a vision or encounter during this time becomes their spirit animal (Caduto and Bruchac 1991).

While the majority of participants stated that it was forbidden to kill or harm one's *izilo*, there were some who consider the *izilo* to be an ideal that does not always have to be followed, for example, some male participants stated that they paid no heed to the rules of *izilo* during hunting:

"All the animals that I have hunted, there was no-one who said it was wrong to kill one (because it was an izilo). When we were hunting a long time ago we used to kill baboons and monkeys, and no-one ever said "that is my izilo"" (Man, 91 years, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009)

Certainly many boys who practiced hunting did not seem to know their *izilo*, nor did they consider any *izilo* to be off limits. Several stated that they had killed wild cats and baboons, commonly seen as *izilo* by older participants. On the other hand several participants considered their *izilo* to be a very private matter, which would retain power only though remaining secret:

"I must explain to you that as a Xhosa you are not allowed to tell someone your clan animal, because it is secretive, even if you had a dream about your clan animal, you mustn't tell. If you had a dream about your clan animal, you must only talk about it in the kraal, to your ancestors" (Man, 88 years, Ndlambe, 8 May 2009)

Many *izilo* are known by a different name to signify respect. It is also thought that in some cases particular *izilo* may be affiliated with other *izilo*, such that clan members of one *izilo* have been seen wearing fur from another (Dold, pers. comm. 21 January 2010). These aspects of secrecy and sacredness may have influenced the data available around *izilo*, and may have contributed to the uncertainty around the topic in academic study. In all this is a topic that requires further study, especially considering the relationship between *izilo*, ancestors, sacred spaces and environmental restrictions.

3.6.4   Protected animals

Several birds and animals are seen to have important cultural roles which privilege them with a protected position. Examples of these are the heron, ant bear, leopard and ground hornbill. Narratives tell what will happen if you harm these animals: for example, if you kill a ground hornbill "it will rain until its body rots". In times of extreme drought this bird acted as a sacrificial symbol that brought rain. This is one of the most commonly recorded narratives in earlier sources:

> "But there is one method of rain-making which any one might use without reference to the chief. An *intsikizi* (*Bucorvus cafer*...) was run down, killed, and tied in a river, and it was said that it would rain, and the rain would not stop until the *intsikizi* was swept away. This was a magic known to all..." (Hunter 1936: 83).

Many children, especially from Pirie, where these birds still reside, told of similar narratives when asked what animals they had been told not to kill: "*Insikizi*, because old people say that when you kill it, it will rain until it rots" (Girls, 14 years and 12 years, Pirie, 7 March 2009).

Some culturally significant animals are linked through narrative to certain places or trees. In this way, they act as guardians to culturally important spaces or species. For example, in Hoho forest at Pirie, numerous narratives link *ihlosi* (leopards) to *ingwenya* trees (*Harpephyllum caffrum*). Children are warned that leopards may be present in such trees and that they should be on the lookout for them:

> "This (fruit) is ingwenya. The 'tiger' likes to stay here, it likes to eat the ingwenyas...It's a tree for tigers...We can find [leopards] at the big forest. Not every time. I didn't see it. I don't want to see it. I just heard the people say (they saw it)" (Woman, 43 years, Pirie, 24 September 2009).

> "We were warned that we mustn't go to that certain part of the forest, because there were 'tigers', because they [the tigers] liked to go collect the wild fruit. That place was called Ezingwenyene. This place is near the river. There are 'tigers' that used to climb on those trees. They like to climb those ingwenya trees. They used to stay there because they like the fruit. We want our kids to not go there. Even last year, [my nephew] can tell you, they went there and they were chased by one" (Glayds Sito, 47 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

"[The leopards] were here when I was small. They used to even wander about making their cries. They can kill you, they can take off your skin...[Now] they are scarce. They went to another forest, or maybe they come out sometimes" (Winnie Goodwin, 71 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009).

"We saw it [the leopard] in 2007, in the forest on the side towards Nakhane. We went to pick ingwenya, then we saw it in the tree. It chased us but we managed to run. ..we told our parents about it, then our parents said we mustn't go there because it will eat us...we heard of another tiger who is next to Mr Mtshikwe's, by the river which is next to him. It also eats the chickens" (Boys, 9 years and 11 years, Pirie, 6 March 2009).

Several participants in Pirie reported encounters with leopards. Those whose clan animal is the leopard report that they have nothing to fear from these encounters as their clan animal will not harm them. It could perhaps be argued that these narratives signify the importance of the *ingwenya* tree, as well as the connection of certain clans to the forest through the symbol of both leopard and *ingwenya* tree. Similarly one informant remembered being warned against going near waterfalls, which are seen by some as sacred. Everard and Hardy (1993) state that waterfalls play a significant role in the Amathole region as sacred ritual sites.

"Q. Did you ever hear about places in the forest that you mustn't go?
Waterfalls, we were told that it's dangerous to go there. We were told we can be in danger of wild animals like lions, snakes, etc. near the waterfall.
Q. Why do lions like to stay near the waterfall?
It's a very dense place that they can hide" (Ntombekhaya Matya, 60 years, Pirie, 29 September 2009).

On the other hand, the narrative of Qolomba[18], the fearsome snakelike guardian of Sandile's cave, tells of a creature so fearsome that it is best to avoid this area completely:

"The father of the chiefs, it (the cave) does not have sympathy No!no!...On my [behalf I] will stand on the door, [I] will not go inside... There [lives] Qolomba that cries only in June at midnight: only at 12'o clock. And we will hear it in Pirie while we are sleeping. It cries like a cow. I used to ask my father: 'What is that?' and he will answer me "Its Qolombo over [by] Pirie dam". It will cry only in June, after June you will not hear it again up until it is next year June again..." (Man, 61 years, Pirie, 5 March 2009).

These narratives exemplify how the leopard, the lion and the snake *Qolomba* act as guardian animals to protect particular areas of the forest and sacred caves. These narratives therefore serve a similar role to the narratives relating to the snake guardian at Nocu (Tropp 2003: 531), which "serve[d] as a conduit between the realms of the living and the ancestral spirits and to ensure social and environmental order". Tropp (2003) argues that these historically recorded wild animal narratives:

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[18] The Qolombo is also associated with the river, where it is thought to reside in sacred pools and in some cases to instruct those healers who disappear under the water (Bernard 2010). In appearance it is strangely similar to the Scottish furies, which are also described as mythical horse-headed water creatures.

"...not only served to restrict popular access to forest areas and species "reserved" for ritual specialists, but further reflected Africans' complex perspectives on the meaning of local environmental control in the region and the impact of colonial efforts to undermine it" (Tropp 2003: 512).

3.6.5 Feared animals

In direct opposition to the helping messenger or clan animals are animals that are directly associated with evil and danger. Examples are certain birds (such as owls), rodents (such as *impaka*), snakes (such as the *ichanti* or *mamlambo*) (Hunter 1936) and even insects such as butterflies.

> "Some of the butterflies are killing. It can bite you, you are feeling cold, then die" (Boy, 15 years, Pirie, 4 Nov 2008).

> "When it enters your nose you can die" (Boy, 15 years old, Pirie, 4 Nov 2008).

While traditional beliefs about evil animals have been cited as a factor leading to killing of these animals (McCallam 2005), it can be argued that in many cases well established categories of "dangerous" animals actually receive some protection, with many participants seeing them as somehow beyond harm (being protected by their powerful nature), or capable of great harm, whereby any attempt to harm them results in punishing afflictions:

> There is another bird called impundulo. That bird is an evil bird, like an owl. One day I went to the dam to wash, and I heard the crying of that bird: Ku ku ku ku. But I ignored it. Then it cried again behind my back. When I looked at it, it was at the back of my head. I took some stones and chased it. Then it ran to a big tree and cried again. And then that was when my sickness started. It was like I was crazy, but the other man took me to the healer, so the healer warned me about those birds. It can be the same as a dove, dark in colour...[when you see this bird] you can try to kill it, but you can't, because it's like a magic. It is evil; that it can make you have pimples or sicknesses, so if you see it, you must go to the healer" (Man, 77 years, Ndlambe, 24 May 2009).

Many children stated that they were afraid of snakes. It can be argued that the prevalent attitude towards snakes reveals the influence of westernisation, particularly western religious thought and the association of the serpent with man's downfall. Historical records state that each Xhosa clan had a particular snake related to it (Hunter 1936). Many participants, particularly children, reported that they were scared of all snakes. Some people were seen to kill and burn any snake they came across in their yard as it is believed by some that even the bones of dead snakes can inflict evil. However, some older participants recall their parents teaching them cultural narratives related to snakes that distinguished between helpful, harmless and dangerous snakes. The following extracts are from three different generations of the same key participants' family:

> "What did you tell your kids to do when they saw a snake?
> You mustn't shout at it and you mustn't hit it, because if you hit it or shout at it, it can bite you. A snake is a very respectful animal. So if you don't hit it, it won't bite you" (Elder, 85 years, Pirie, 23 September 2009).

"[when we were younger] our parents warned us about snakes. There are snakes in the forest and the snakes in the river. Like puff adders, and ibhululu, inambezulu (this one is not dangerous, it doesn't have poison). The reason why other snakes in that forest were not dangerous is because of those pine trees. The pine smell kills the poison in the snake. Also snakes like inyushu (the snake that can whistle), it is dangerous. Also intlwathi, it is also dangerous. Also cobras (the one that can stand), it is also dangerous. These snakes you can find in the forest. The snakes from the river are ilhamba lomlambo, and izilenzi (you can also find the other kind of izilenzi in the forest, this one doesn't bite). Then there are snakes that are connected to ancestors, like umajola [mole snake]. It doesn't bite, even if you are not related to it, it can't bite you. There is also another one called izilenzi, it is related to the Dlamini clan" (Man, 61 years, Pirie, 23 September 2009).

"I saw [an izilenzi snake] once, and I was scared, then someone told me that I mustn't hurt it because it is related to them. This was at another village called uBalembu" (Woman, 43 years, 23 September 2009, Pirie).

In some cases animals can also play the part of familiars for those who are thought to practice dark magic. For example, baboons are seen as animals susceptible to being turned into familiars:

"Some people take those animals from the forest to their homes. The baboon likes to visit at night" (Girls aged 7, 8, 9, 9 and 15 years, Ndlambe, 6 May 2009).

"There is someone in the village who has a baboon. It chased us at night, but during the day you won't see it. It only comes out at night...It is a witchcraft... He feeds it at night; then in the morning it goes back to the forest. It mustn't be seen by people. It fights for him: if you hit him it will arrive at night and hit you" (Boys, 9 years and 11 years, 6 March 2009, Pirie).

Enchanted creatures such as the *inchanti* and *mamlambo* snakes are thought to act as jealous familiars who bring great wealth to their owners, albeit with a high price; as they are said to kill their owners' family members. It is thought that sometimes these familiars are discarded by their owners, and in this case they live in the river where they are an evil and dangerous presence. Similar beliefs about enchanted river dwelling familiars exist in other parts of Africa and beyond (Frazer 1993, Bernard 2003, 2010).

3.7   River narratives

As a culturally important landscape, there are many cultural rules that dictate people's behaviour and activities at the river. Some adults are scared of the river due to the ancestors that live within it. Adults seem to be more wary of the taboo surrounding the deep river pools which are seen as a sacred part of the river (*Isiziba*). Children reported that their parents had told them certain restrictions about the river: for example, you "Mustn't throw rocks in the river, because you will disturb the *abantu bamlambo*" (forest walk with key child participants, Pirie, 9 March 2009). While children may not be aware of the exact religious and spiritual connotations of these places, they are very aware of the restrictions placed upon rivers.

"[you can't go to the river] in the evening and the morning, maybe you can get pimples, because the night and the morning is the abantu bamlambo's time.
[Q. Are there places you mustn't go?]
Yes, Isiziba, the place that has lots of water, because there's lots of water so you can sink" (Boys, 12 and 15 years, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009).

"Q. Did you ever hear of isiziba?
No.
Q. Have you ever heard of abantu bamlambo?
Yes.
Q. What kind of places would they be?
All around the water...at one o'clock they come out of the water, so if you went there then maybe something horrible would happen to you. Maybe you can collapse, or you mouth would look at your back. ..we go [to the river] maybe at two or three, we always wait until after one" (Boy, 17 years, Ndlambe, 14 June 2009).

Cultural beliefs such as these have worked effectively to protect certain areas, in particular the deep river pools. Fox (2005) found that amongst Kat River communities, rivers and riparian zones were left alone because of the cultural restrictions that respect *abantu bamlambo*. Recent research (Bernard 2010) reveals that these beliefs were in place historically and continue to exist in many parts of the world. In some cases these restrictions extend into moral and ethical grounds. This brings about a completely new dimension to the consideration of environments structuring human behaviour:

"You are not allowed to go to the river in the morning and in the evening and you are also not allowed to cross the river carrying red meat. For example, my father-in-law, he used to steal meat from the other farm next to the river. One day he crossed the river with that meat and he heard a voice from the abantu bamlambo. They warned him that he must never cross with the red meat again, otherwise they will kill him. On that day he threw that meat away and ran!" (Woman, 60 years, Ndlambe, 24 May 2009).

There is a great fear of drowning which is reported even by early explorers and missionaries (MacDonald 1891). This fear is related to people being 'called by the river people', and rivers accordingly are areas of great cultural importance for many amaXhosa (Bernard 2010). In Xhosa belief the fear of drowning in the river is linked to the concept of being "taken or called by the river". Historical records state that often those witnessing victims drowning in shallow water, in plain sight of other people, thought it "improper and dangerous to interfere when one is called by the river" (Bell in MacDonald 1891: 125). Many diviners have been called by the river people, disappearing metaphysically 'under the water'. They report that during their time under the water they are taught many things by the *abantu bamlambo*, and it is this education by the ancestors that allows them to become powerful diviners (Bernard 2010). With these connotations, parents would understandably not want their children to swim in deep areas of the river.

Those creatures encountered during visits to the river are highly respected, being associated with the river ancestors. Some children were observed to sing a 'warning' song before they swum, this had been taught to them by their mother, presumably "to chase away any frogs and snakes" which may be lurking in the water. Closer examination of this narrative reveals an intricate relationship of respect for these animals that symbolise, and through this become, the ancestors. In this case the goat mentioned represents the animal used in rituals held to honour the river animals who are also *izilo* to specific clans:

> "Go away frogs
> Go away snakes
> The day is for us
> The night is for you
> The white goat is for us
> The black goat is for you"

> "We asked our mom if we could come and swim, so our mom taught us this song.
> Q. What is the reason for singing it?
> To prevent the snakes and crabs from eating us" (Girl, 12 years and her brother, 10 years, Pirie, 20 September 2009).

There are also various river animals like *uxam* (*Varanus albigularis*) and *inthini* (Otter: *Aonyx capensis*) who represent the ancestors and should be respected. There are restrictions on the times to visit the river or any place where ancestors/ancestor animals may be. Participants informed us that one should not go to the river in the early morning, midday or in the evening "because that's when the *abantu bamlambo* come out of the water" (Woman, 49 years, Pirie, 11 March). Similarly, river rituals cannot happen at midday or ill luck will befall those involved (Elder, Pirie, 5 March 2009). Those animals associated with the river and the river people are seen as sacred and are thus protected:

> "[you can't kill] Inthini: the river dog, those water fowls, and ox and cattle that come from the river. You should not kill or chase them. When they see people, they go down" (Winnie Goodwin, 71 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009).

There should be certain plants surrounding an *isiziba* to indicate the presence of the ancestors, for example *imizi* (*Cyperus textilis*), *umngcunube* (*Salix capensis*) or *umkhanzi* (*Typha capensis*). Fox (2005) goes into more detail about these requirements and the differences between a healthy *isiziba* (which will attract ancestors) and a 'spoilt' *isiziba* (from which they will have been chased away). Another important plant is the *Umsolo omkulu* (*Samolus porosus*). These plants are seen as an indicator species as they only grow near the *isiziba*, "you cannot find it in other places" (Gladys Sito, 47 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009). Water plants were historically respected, with water lilies being known to the San as *!kweiten*: "the water's wives", it was both impossible and forbidden to touch them (Bennun 2003: 5).

3.8   Forest narratives

There are many narratives related to forests and especially to the use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Narrative about trees and plants describes their properties and uses. One important area of environmental knowledge is medicinal plants, known as *amayeza*. The use of *amayeza* has been extensively documented in the Eastern Cape in the last decade (Hirst 1990, Dold and Cocks 1999, 2002, Cocks and Møller 2002, Cocks and Wiersum 2003, Cocks *et al.* 2004, Cocks and Dold 2008), and as such *amayeza* is only included in this study as an indicator of the passing on of traditional knowledge rather than any attempt to repeat this documentation and categorisation. Class exercises with children revealed that most children know at least six types of medicinal plants (note that these lists often included gum trees and black wattle which are not indigenous). For example, children in Grade 9 knew an average of 7.4 medicinal plants. However, all of their knowledge together produced 61 known species of plants, which together had 98 medicinal uses. *Amayeza* has cures for physical as well as socio-cultural ailments. For example, a healer in training described a 'medicine chest' of various *amayeza* that was used for the treatment of washing away scandal; for purging; for luck; for protection against thunderstorms and for physical pains such as headaches (Healer in training, 40 years, Pirie, 22 October 2008). Many types of *amayeza* have specific narratives attached to them. For example:

> "The *umkiwane* tree [*Drypetes natalensis*] is known as "The tree of the twins": they use if for unity between the twins. When they are still young, in order that they don't fight with each other, you place a piece of its bark between them when they are sleeping. The *umlahleni* tree (*Curtisia dentata*) is used when you want a girl that is someone else's girlfriend. When you use it you must talk to the tree, saying: "leave him"" (Herbalist, 61 years, Hoho Forest, 4 March 2009).

These narratives are most commonly taught and learnt by healers and herbalists, but certain families have 'home doctors', who know about *amayeza* and treat their family members. These people are regarded as one who "knows the plants" (Girl, 15 years, Pirie, 4 November 2009). Children from these families often had increased knowledge of *amayeza*, and were recognised for this knowledge by their peers.

Although outsiders may see forests as one distinct vegetation type, fieldwork revealed that one main forest can be divided into several different forests, each with its own name. The naming of forests and places in the forest often has a historical background or delineates different landscape features or resource areas. For example, one mountain near Ndlambe is named Phungela; an older informant gave the following explanation:

> "There was a woman who went to pick *itolofia* [*Opuntia ficus-indica*]. She was pregnant. She gave birth to a son who was called Phungela, at that place. So that's why they called it Phungela; because he was born there" (Mswaphi Nkothobe, 67 years, Ndlambe, 8 May 2009).

Some naming narratives may also work as warnings, describing 'places you can't go', for example, one participant told of being warned not to go to Bila Bila as a child, because "there were *tokoloshe* there", she added that there was also "sinking sand in this area", therefore illustrating that their parents kept them away from a potentially dangerous area with this warning narrative (Winnie Goodwin, 71 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009).

Narratives relating to the forest could be grouped into the five categories.

The forest as shop

Many older participants consider the forest to be a place that provides everything. There are many 'teaching narratives' that consider the resources that can be obtained from the forest. Accordingly, children learnt to appreciate certain places for the cultural resources they provide. For example building materials, wild animals for food, cosmetic clay or *amayeza*:

> "In the forest I see different types of things that are not available in our village" (Boy, 10 years, Pirie, 20 December 2008).

> "Once a week the family collects wood in the forest" (Boys, 12 years, 14 years, Pirie, 19 Sept 2009).

> "[we used to go to the forest when we were younger] to herd cattle, shoot birds, hunt, and to eat wild fruit like umqokolo (Dovyalis sp.), umlitye, umsenge (Cussonia paniculata), incumncum (Carissa bispinosa)and umncabasa" (Nkosinathi Thonisi, 68 years, Ndlambe, 22 July 2009).

The forest as school

For children, their time in the forest provides an important space for learning cultural knowledge, either from an adult, or from other children. Many children reported that they had learnt about wild fruits and medicinal plants from older siblings or friends. For example, during a forest walk it was revealed that many of the children had learnt about *amayeza* from one of the children, who had learnt the names and uses of *amayeza* when he and his cousin went to collect them with an uncle (Forest walk with key child participants, Pirie, 20 September 2009).

> "[In the forest] we collect medicines and I learn about medicine" (Boy, 12 years, Pirie, 21 January 2009).

This is consistent with other studies (Setalaphruk and Leimar Price 2007) which state that ecological knowledge comes about through children's own experience together with practice and consultation with elders and peers.

The forest as church

Interviews with older participants and local 'experts' reveal that the forest was historically used as a place to pray; both privately and collectively. This practice continues to this day. Many people

believe their ancestors are present in the forest and they can communicate with them there. While some may actively tell their problems to ancestors in the forest, others profess that just spending time in the forest allows them to feel closer to their ancestors, and acts to purify their thoughts. These feelings are fairly widespread amongst older Xhosa participants in several locations: forests, in particular indigenous forests, provide a place and connection with the ancestors that allows people in rural areas the space and time to communicate properly with the ancestors, something which is not afforded in towns (Cocks and Dold 2008). The process of visiting the forest is linked to clan animals and dreams, and is particularly important to diviners and those training to become diviners:

> *"..it always happens when someone has a dream about his or her ancestors. After the dream she would go and talk in the kraal first, then go to the forest where she would meet her izilo, greet them and talk to her izilo and ancestors.*
> *Even when a person starts her healing training (ukuthwasa) she stays in the forest in a hut or lodge for some few days to communicate [there you will have a good contact with the ancestors]. The ancestors would reveal themselves though visions and dreams, so her trainer would ask her every morning what did she see, or what has she dreamt about?*
> *Q. What kinds of places in the forest do you have to go to talk to your ancestors? Is it just anywhere in the forest?*
> *There are no specific places in the forest, you just talk anywhere you wish"*
> *(Nontembiso Mgucwa, 87 years, Pirie, 24 September 2009).*

Culturally the forest is perceived as a place of purity, as opposed to the village which can sometimes be seen as polluting of one's thoughts and health. The connection with the ancestors and the purity of the forest is celebrated by several religions in South Africa today, the most prominent being the Zion Christian church. Zionist members from Dimbaza township regularly visit Pirie forest to obtain water from a spring. The location of this spring is kept a secret. Although church members are not allowed to use *amayeza*, they are allowed to use this water to sanctify food and drink:

> *"Q. Why do you come to take this water?*
> *Because the water comes from underneath the earth. Because that water is pure and clean. The water from the tap has chemicals, so we do not use that water with chemicals"* (Mr October, 44 years and Mr Ndleleni, 28 years, 4 March 2009).

The forest as place of rejuvenation

The forest is imbued with particular health giving properties. In particular, the forest air is seen to have physical and psychological benefits. Older participants, both men and women, who were frequent visitors to the forest reported similar feelings of being relaxed, refreshed and revitalised by their visits to the forest. It is said that anyone feeling frustrated or sad can return from the forest feeling calmed and uplifted. Some participants stated that they used visits to the forest to avoid arguments:

"If someone has told you something you don't like, maybe you become cross, so you have to take your axe and go to the forest to cool off your nerves. [doing this] by cutting poles, or wood" (Elder, 65 years, Ndlambe, 14 June 2009).

The centre of the forest is seen as a place with very powerful properties. While some people avoid these places, others actively seek them out.

"This is imbambo yehlathi, (the ribs/the centre of a forest), we can rest here, the breezes are very cool. This breeze is very healthy, you can breathe [in] the trees and leaves. You know if I could live in the forest I would not catch any disease, like [the forest] animals [have no diseases], because the reason why we catch disease is because we live in one place and there is no breeze that can help our lungs" (Elder, 61 years, Hoho Forest, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

Several participants said that they feel so relaxed in the forest that they often lie down to rest or sleep during their visits. These views show a strong recognition of the psychological benefits offered by the forest and they also allow consideration of the personification of the forest. Through narratives that consider such aspects as the breath and the ribs of the forest, and the forest as a kind of psychologist, we begin to realise that rather than a collection of natural resources, the forest is viewed as an entity; thus providing a worldview where nature is personal and intimately known rather than distanced from people. Similarly, it is believed that the ancestors and God are the ones who look after the forest, and that it is a powerful, inexhaustible creation. These views need to be considered in any programme that hopes to support indigenous ideas of conservation.

The forest as a liminal space

For many, the forest offers an escape from the village; be it from the physical heat or the gossip and prying eyes of neighbours. While the village operates under strict social and cultural restrictions and expectations, the forest offers a liminal space where these social norms can be transgressed and ignored. In this sense, a liminal place is one where normality is suspended, offering a space that is 'betwixt and between', and thus apart from everyday life, in which the ordinary rules of society are suspended (Turner 1967, 1969, 1977). The forest therefore exists not only as a collection of resources, but as a place of freedom and secrecy. For many older women the forest was one of the only places where they could escape from the demands of their household when they were newly married women (*amaMakhoti*). For these women, their time spent in the forest collecting wood (*ukutheza*) allowed respite from a restrictive and difficult daily life. The forest continues to offer women a place where they can be alone or with friends, and wood collecting is for many an enjoyed activity. Depending on one's needs the forest can become a woman's place, where friends can gossip and complain together, or a private space where women can think and pray.

Older participants reveal that during their youth the forest was one of the only places where girls could breach the strict social codes that bound them in the village. The practice of *ukutheza* allowed girls both the time and space to transgress boundaries of several kinds. Several women disclosed that girls would sometimes settle disputes by going to stick fight in the forest, while telling elders that they were going to *theza*. It also became apparent that in the past the forest played a vital role during courting. While girls were not allowed to be seen with boys in the village, they would often meet boyfriends in the forest, with some even spending the night there. These times are fondly remembered by participants. It was perceived as safer for girls to meet boys in the forest as they could run away should they wish to refuse sex (Healer, 89 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009). It seems that the forest continues to provide this space for some couples today:

> "Some [couples] meet each other in the forest. At the places that have water in the forest. They like to go to the nice places with cool air. They want to be alone, not to be seen" (Boys, 12 years and 15 years, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009).

It could be argued that men and women traverse the liminal space of the forest through the assistance of cultural activities such as herding, hunting or wood collection. The transcendence of this liminal space though these activities further enforces the psychologically beneficial effects of forest visits. Some researchers (Magona 2010) have found that stories are deliberately told to boys to make them scared of the forest, which is a fear they then need to overcome during their seclusion period in the forest. Thereby narratives are employed to create and maintain a psychological barrier which is then overcome through the passage to manhood. However, this method would only work with boys who are relatively unfamiliar with the forest who do not spend countless hours hunting and enjoying the forest.

3.9 Mountain Narratives

Elder participants stated that historically Xhosa communities worshipped on mountains, especially in times of drought. This practice still continues today and was reported at both field sites. One informant told us that one should bow (in reverence, in greeting) to a mountain before shouting at it (to obtain an echo). Zionist churches continue to worship in an open air church on a hill, with the area often demarcated by whitewashed stones. However, in both villages participants reported that the practice of going to pray for rain was not church specific, but an open community event.

> "Long ago, when there is drought, they used to go to the mountain to pray. After they left there they rain comes down...we also heard that they were praying in the mountains because there were no churches built then. ...we heard that our great grandparents were writing on the rocks, praying in the mountains..." (Men, 44 years and 28 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009).

"[the place to go and pray on the mountain] is called induli...it is an open grassland, which is surrounded by fence...[this happens]every year when there's no rain...all of the people in the village know that it is a very important place for the village to pray for rain, so they can't just go and play or do other things there" (S.W. Mkunkuma, 65 years, Ndlambe village, 14 June 2009).

Visits to the mountains are also seen to have a psychological benefit, allowing one perspective in terms of personal problems (Magona 2010). Mountains are thus appreciated for the physical vantage point and the emotional distance they provide from the village.

"the most important part of the forest to me is the mountain, because if you want to see the village nicely you have to go up to that mountain and look down...[there you feel] cool, happy and relaxed" (S.W. Mkunkuma, 65 years, Ndlambe village, 14 June 2009).

At both field sites, caves played an important role in warfare historically, providing shelter to both warriors and villagers escaping the enemy. In the Pirie area, there are several caves located on Hoho mountain. One of these caves is connected with the historical healer Mpiyenyawo (section 3.3). This cave is still important for his descendants today, who visit it to conduct rituals (Gladys Sito, 47 years, Pirie, 4 March, and Winnie Goodwin, 71 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009). In the Ndlambe area caves are associated with Khoisan who historically occupied the area before the influx of the Xhosa (Peires 1981, Hall 1986, Hammond-Tooke 1998). As discussed in section 3.3, some healers are instructed by San entities, (known locally as 'bushmen'), through dreams and they therefore regard these caves as sacred ritual sites:

"[The cliffs and caves] are very important to healers, because a long time ago there were 'bushmen' who used to stay in the caves and near the cliffs. So sometimes maybe you have a dream about those caves or the cliffs. So it is very important to follow those dreams, because the bushmen are some of the people who teach some of the healers about medicine...The people from a long time ago were very curious to learn about medicines. So whenever they saw the bushmen they wanted to learn, so they went to them and asked about the medicines...There are some people who still dream about the bushmen. So that's why some of the people used to perform their rituals in the caves...[the kind of rituals for them are] imfukamo: like making a hut near the caves, making traditional beer staying there for a few days...[in your dreams] sometimes you are dreaming that they singing and dancing with you..sometimes you dream that they are showing you medicines..."(Healer, 45 years, Ndlambe, 12 June 2009).

Near the Evelyn Valley area is Sandile's cave, which is of great historical and cultural importance to many in the area. The cave is included in the Sandile Heritage Trail as the cave where king Sandile retreated to during the 9th Frontier War in 1878 (Peires et al. 2009, EC Tourism 2010). In the Ndlambe area the caves in the Valley of Mhala were used by the Xhosa to escape the British during the frontier wars (Wells, pers. comm. 8 June 2009). The caves still have local significance to descendants today, and now form part of the Mbodla Eco-Heritage Route (Salmon 2008, Open Africa 2009).

3.10 Prescriptive narratives

Many communal narratives contain prescriptions on how to live daily life, teaching how to avoid danger and keep in favour with one's ancestors as per Xhosa worldview (Hunter 1936, Hammond-Tooke 1974, Peires 1981, Cocks 2006). Often these restrictions take the form of warning narratives, which state what will go wrong if one acts inappropriately. For example, many people will warn against fording new rivers without crossing one's forehead with river water or mud. This is to alert the ancestors living in the river (section 3.7) that you are new to the area and to signify respect for them; by crossing the forehead you prevent evil and incur blessings as the ancestors are seen to assist in daily life and intercede to protect against harm.

There are many narratives and practices relating to lightning and thunderstorms. In the forest there are certain trees that "call lightning" such as *imbomvana* (*Pleurostylia capensis*), as well as trees that protect against lightning such as *umthathi* (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*) or *umsintsi* (*Erythrina caffra*). Accordingly, one should not harvest any tree or plant that "calls lightning". During a thunderstorm, one can protect the home against lightning by placing an *umthathi* branch across the threshold, or planting *intelezi* (*Haworthia attenuata* and *Gasteria bicolour*) near the home. When there is a thunderstorm, one is advised to stop all activities and sit quietly till it passes:

> *"[Lightning] comes when it wants. You mustn't cook, mustn't touch shining things. Don't even touch water. And you mustn't wear bright colours like red or orange...Some people put a piece of umthathi or a tyre in front of the door [to repel lightning]"* (Winnie Goodwin, 71 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009).

Early writers (MacDonald 1981), talk about the Xhosa belief that thunder and lightning are caused by a fearsome mythical bird. One could argue that these have an equivalent in the 'thunderbirds' of Native American mythology. Today many consider lightning and thunder to represent the ancestors, and therefore demanding of respect. Storms are seen as a means of communication between mortals and God and the ancestors:

> *"When these things come, it is because something has happened and you must listen to them; that thunder is the ancestors talking"* (Woman, 25 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

This means of communicating through nature and natural phenomena is shared with other First Nation cultures, representing an intimate relationship whereby nature has the power to affect people's daily lives and activities.

3.11 Narrative related to carrying out activities

There are many narratives related to cultural activities, for example narratives about hunting, herding or collecting firewood. There are even narratives about the correct way to tie up the piles of wood that are bought home from the forest as well as names for each tool that assists in the process. For example, the rope used to tie up the piles of wood is symbolically called *umxeba*, being named after the creepers that were originally used to tie up wood (Woman, 43 years, Pirie commonage, 24 September 2009). In some areas (parts of KZN) there are strong community rules such as traditional seasons for collecting wood, or rules about the types of wood that can be collected (Luvozn Pers. Comm. 11 Nov 2008). In Pirie, participants spoke about the traditional time of year for restocking the *igoqo* (Woman, 47 years, Pirie, 4 March). By far the most important cultural activities are rituals and ceremonies. Many participants agreed that "how to do rituals is the one thing most parents teach their children, even if they tell them no other stories" (Woman, 73 years, Pirie, 3 March).

> *"[Our clan rituals] are the same as other people's rituals, but there are different things that you make when performing. For example, when slaughtering a cow, there are different kinds of directions that a cow must look at, or the trees that are used when performing a ritual (are different). [Our trees] are umquma and umthathi, [other clans] may have umga"* (Nobunthu Nkothobi, 60 years, Ndlambe, 24 May 2009).

Children also describe various activity narratives related to play and place, these will be discussed in chapter 4.

3.12   School narratives

Cultural knowledge that is included in the curriculum is more often 'traditional' Xhosa oral traditions like *iintsomi* and *rayi rayi*, which are included in the curriculum as part of the first language course. There is also evidence that these narrative tools are used by early childhood practitioners, for example, pre-school teachers in Pirie use *iintsomi* at the crèche. Culture and traditions are included in the following curriculum subjects: Arts and Culture (Heritage sites, music, drama), Life Orientation (Traditional food) and Social Science. There are some mentions of local areas such as Pirie Forest or the Great King's place near Pirie, or the Inxuba (Great Fish River) at Ndlambe. These are sometimes used as local examples to illustrate points in social science. There is minimalistic environmental narrative which consists of adages such as "protect our wild and cultural heritage", or "don't pollute". Teachers confirm that children "don't learn a lot about their immediate environment, but about other people's [environments]" (Teachers, Pirie Primary School, 22 October 2008). Much of the cultural content included in the curriculum has a strong patriarchal bent, following current socio-cultural trends. For example, praise poetry for kings, chiefs and battles are included, the initiation of boys considered and celebrated, but there is very little cultural information relating to traditions or activities that empower women. Despite this

official lack of inclusion and recognition of the local environment and the oral traditions and narratives that relate to it, formal education is only one of the many narratives that children are exposed to. As Hansen (1982: 189) states, "Knowledge is itself a cultural artefact and knowledge construction a sociocultural event". Thus children's learning is not restricted to school lessons, as it can occur merely through interaction with their cultural environment or various social groups.

3.13 Western media narratives

Modernisation has bought with it access to various forms of western media. Children have a great attraction to this, especially to television, which has become the household soundtrack in most South African homes in both urban and rural areas. Rather than living in isolated 'rural pockets' children live modernised rural lives. Western media allows them to learn about similar information and technology as their counterparts in urban areas, although they may have a more limited access to this. For example, young girls and boys are familiar with modern technology to such an extent that young girls in Grade 4 were observed discussing the attributes of the latest models of Nokia phones. Television's attention-grabbing content is non-interactive, breeding an addiction to instant 'bite-size' entertainment. There is now strong evidence that sustained amounts of television watching have a negative impact on educational performance (Razel 2001), and television has been linked to increases in violence, sexual permissiveness and stereotyping (Fabes et al. 1989). Television's demand for a passive consumer audience is in direct contrast to the participatory socio-cultural interaction through traditional means of teaching such as oral narrative and experience though cultural activities.

3.14 Children's knowledge of cultural narratives

In analysing children's overall knowledge of cultural narratives, it became apparent that certain cultural narratives were far better known than others. Children were familiar with the most popular iinstomi and rayi-rayi, and this familiarity is most likely through the inclusion of these stories in school text books. Those children who had knowledge of less common iinstomi had learnt them from home, or from peers who had learnt them at their homes. One of the most enduring forms of narrative is traditional songs associated with rituals. This is one area of knowledge which requires further research, especially considering that some of the rituals are becoming less prevalent, and thus the songs associated with them are still known, but no longer sung popularly.

It became apparent that the passing on of cultural narratives has been particularly affected by the introduction of western narratives. Participatory class exercises revealed that many younger

children were familiar with *iinstomi*, and could write at least one, usually one of the more popular *iinstomi* such as Grandmother and the Jackal. Older children, such as the participants in Grade 10, recalled being told *iinstomi* when they were younger, and some could write or tell these, but several could not recall them. Further research with both children and adult participants revealed that it is not common for *iinstomi* to be told regularly to children today unless it is in pre-school or included in school textbooks. Of all the children who participated in the study, only a few reported that their parents or grandparents still told them *iinstomi*. Those children who were still told *iinstomi* were generally those who did not have a television in the house:

> "Yes, [We were told iinstomi when we were younger], our father and step-mother used to tell us...when we were in our beds...they stopped telling them last year. We didn't ask why, but we think that it is tv that kept us busy. [Before] we [only] used to watch TV at our grandparent's home. we [do] miss those stories a little bit...but we prefer TV" (Girl, 17 years and her sister, 13 years, Ndlambe, 10 May 2009).

In comparing the profiles of those perceived to be the 'transmitters' of traditional narratives (such as parents and elders) it becomes apparent that age or gender have little impact on the transmission of narrative. For example, if the transmitters of *iinstomi* have been officially cast as women, particularly older women (c.f. Scheub 1970, 1977, 2005), this was not reflected in the field site. Children growing up in perceived optimal conditions for the transmission of *iinstomi*; such as those living with their mothers or grandmothers, were not always told *iinstomi*. One informant stated that he was only told *iintsomi* by his father. Several children stated in class exercises that they had been told *iinstomi* by older siblings. This emphasises the importance of understanding the multiple sites from which narrative can originate (Figure 3.3), and the various factors which can promote or restrict the passing on of cultural narrative (Chapter 5). However, a lack of told *iinstomi* did not automatically equate into a lack of transmitted cultural environmental narratives. For example, adult siblings whom had grown up with parents who possessed a wealth of LEK stated that they were not officially told *iinstomi* by their parents. Instead, in the evenings they told each other stories that they had learnt in school. It becomes apparent that children live their lives surrounded by multiple narrative conduits which emerge from differing narrative sites. It is proposed that the factors which influence a child's access and accumulation of cultural narrative are strongly influenced by the continuance of cultural activities and traditions which the family consider essential to well-being and Xhosa identity. The factors restricting or promoting the passing on of narrative are discussed further in Chapter 5.
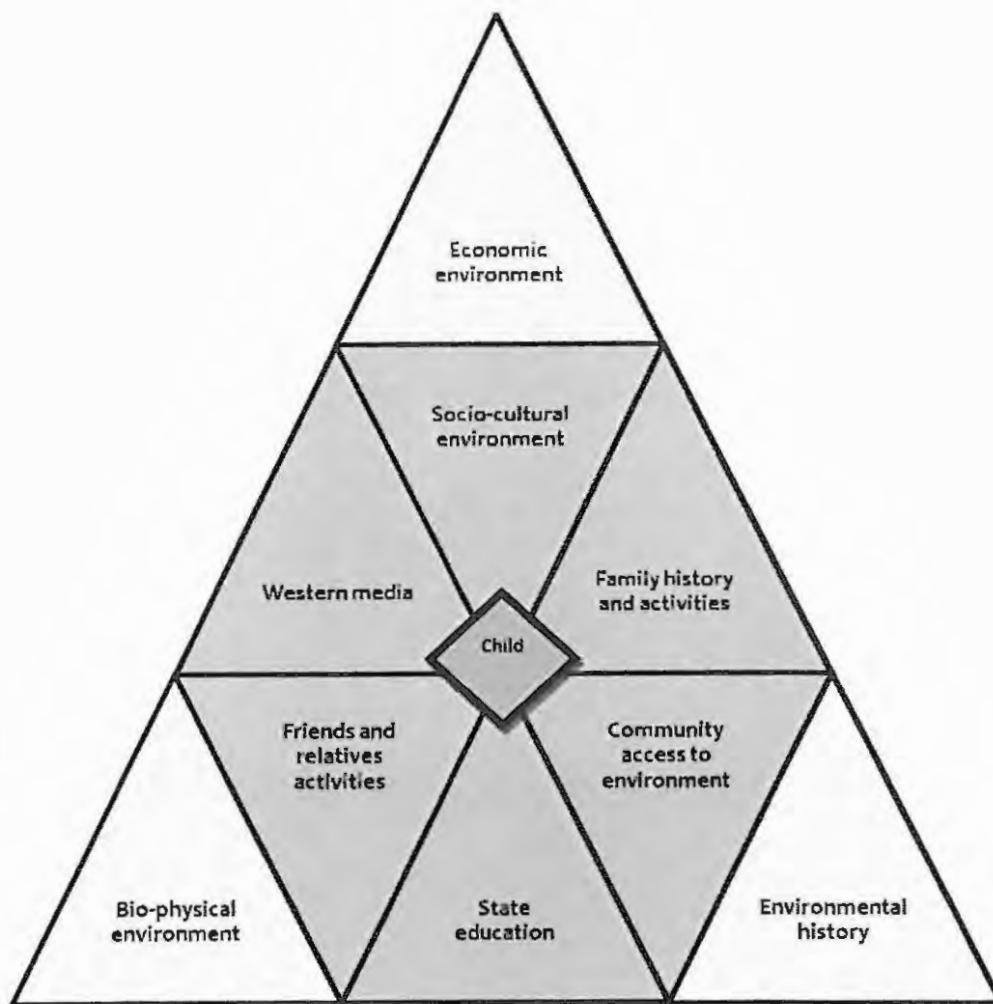
Figure 3.3   The different sites of narrative transmission

Chapter 4:   Play and place as key tools to understanding children's environmental use and perceptions

"We used to play with the wild fruits and play with our dolls. Our parents would tell us what to eat, and what not to eat. Kids don't get the chance to do that these days" (Pakama Mkulungu, Pirie, 26 years, 28 May 2009).

4.1   Preface

This chapter examines children's environmental use and perceptions through analysing aspects of play and place. As discussed in chapter 1 (Sections 1.4 and 1.5), combining children's use of their environment with their narratives about play and place provides a powerful insight into both functional and socio-cultural environmental values. By comparing children's current use and perceptions of the environment for play, with adult participants', it is also possible to realise how cultural environmental perceptions may be changing. As will become apparent during the chapter, children's play is intimately connected to a sense of place.

Participatory exercises with children uncovered eight important places that children identified as being relevant to their daily lifeworlds (Matthews 1995, Shutz 2003, Olufemi and Reeves 2004, Schneider *et al.* 2010). These were: the village, forest, river, grazing camps, crop fields, mountain, caves and plantation. Some children also indicated that they liked to spend time at schools and neighbouring towns, with brief mention of dams. As the thesis aims to understand children's attachment and use of natural areas, neighbouring towns and schools were not included and the brief mention of dams was incorporated into the data for rivers as they serve similar socio-cultural functions. Of these eight places identified, the village, forest, river and mountain were seen as having the most socio-cultural importance, and accordingly, the thesis focuses primarily on these four environments or landscapes. This chapter will first outline the overall findings for play and place before going on to consider each of the four main environments as they relate to play and place and what this reveals about the children's environmental use and perceptions.

4.2   Games played at Pirie and Ndlambe villages

Participatory exercises (Holiday workbooks, class activities, afternoon activities, discussion groups – Section 2.6) recorded a wide variety of children's games, ranging from traditional games to popular sports, with both differences and similarities between villages. Traditional games

related specifically to activities were herding, initiation games, horse racing, clapping and skipping games and traditional dancing. One of the main differences between field sites was the greater number of games recorded for Pirie: which showed a total of 25 games, while Ndlambe recorded only 18 games (Table 4.1 and figure 4.1), nearly 40 % less than Pirie. Overall, girls played a far greater number of games, recording 77 games being played (Figure 4.3) compared to 50 games for boys (Figure 4.2). Girls in Pirie recorded more games than those in Ndlambe (45 versus 30 instances). They also included domestic work and chores as games. Boys in Pirie recorded nearly twice as many games as those in Ndlambe.

These figures represent what children were doing at these particular times, and it is important to consider what other factors could impact upon these results. Follow up visits during children's participatory exercises revealed that many children, particularly boys in Ndlambe, had a particular dislike of writing and school work, with many of them being unable to write lucidly. While it was carefully explained that the exercises had no correct answers and that their parents or older siblings could write for them, many children did not ask for this assistance and completed their booklets with the help of the translator instead. It is proposed that this may be indicative of the general level of adult education, as well as the present valuing of western education over IK. These factors may have influenced the discrepancy between field sites to some degree but it does not adequately explain such a large gap. It is possible that other differences between field sites, such as income level, may have also influenced the data. Ndlambe's geographical position means there are fewer opportunities for employment, which contributes to higher rates of poverty in the area (Table 2.1) which in turn affects schooling opportunities. By comparison, Pirie's stronger economic position is further enhanced by its historical background. The village has been considered 'a strong learning environment' since missionary times when the mission firmly advocated local education (albeit with a strong religious content). Participants proudly spoke of the 'history of learning' in Pirie, and historical narratives describe Pirie in this light. For example, local people desired a secondary school so much that they themselves motivated for the school, offering recycled building materials (Rev Jonas in Vazi 1988: 119). This emphasis on education continues into the present. For example, the current village crèche was initiated by local women.

Table 4.1   Overall total for games played and places where they take place

Game	Playing Field Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Open Field Boys P	N	Girls P	N	School Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Streets Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Village Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Home Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Friend's House Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Forest Boys P	N	Girls P	N	River Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Grazing field Boys P	N	Girls P	N	Total
Soccer	8	5	4	1	2		1		1	1	1		2						1																		1				28
Cricket	4	1	4						1						1																						1				12
Other <1 *				1																								3	1		2		2				1		1		11
iDuva												1	1		1	1								2				1								3					10
Hide and Seek															1							2	2				1	1		2	1										10
Netball			6	1												1			1					1																	10
Skipping											1	1			2	2			1				2																		9
iPuca											1				1								2	2				1													7
Rugby	1	2	1						1	1																															6
Skotch														1										3				2													6
Stickfighting																														3											3
Swimming																																	2			1					3
Handball			1																					2																	3
Umxhinxi															1													1													2
Home chores																							2																		2
Rubheka																1												1													2
Black Tin															1												1														2
Total	13	8	16	3	2	0	1	0	3	3	3	2	3	1	7	4	0	1	3	0	0	2	8	10	0	0	2	10	1	5	3	0	3	1	0	4	3	0	1	0	126

*Other games <1 include: Fishing (boy, Pirie: River), Mnonono (boy, Pirie: Forest), Donkey riding (boy, Pirie: Grazing fields), Lesi (boy, Ndlambe: River), Climbing trees (girl, Pirie: Forest), Nosisa (girl, Ndlambe: Playing field), collecting wood (girl, Prie: Forest), Dolls (girl, Ndlambe: Friend's house), Chiefs (girl, Ndlambe: Friend's house), Qonqi (girl, Pirie: grazing field) and donkey (girl, Ndlambe: Friend's house). Two children also mentioned games taking place in nearby villages, this was stick fighting (boy, Pirie) and netball (girl, Ndlambe).
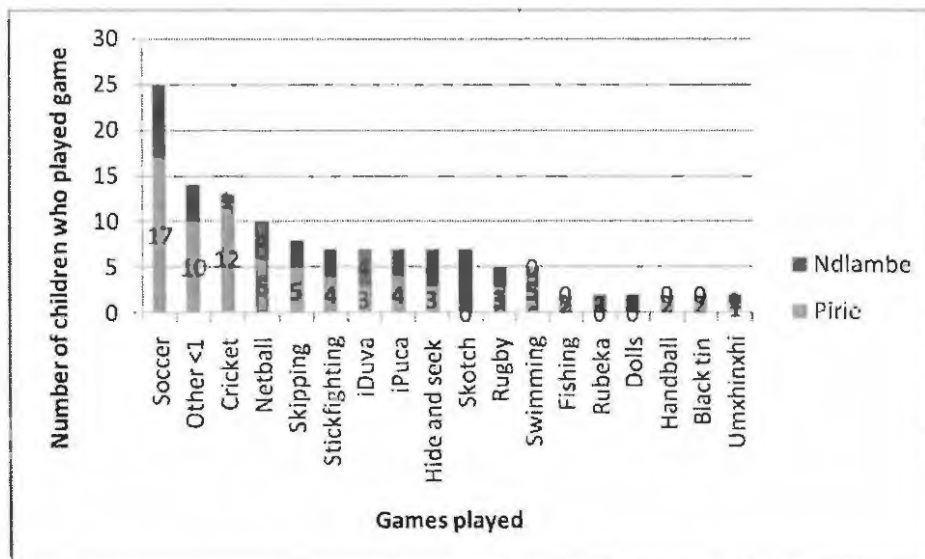
Figure 4.1   Games played by children in Pirie and Ndlambe villages

Other games mentioned <1 include: *Mnonono, Ukancamilisa, Ceya,* donkey riding, *Uchekwa,* climbing trees, irrigating, collecting wood, *Qonqi* and domestic chores (Pirie), and *Lesi, Nosisa,* Chiefs, and Donkey (Ndlambe).
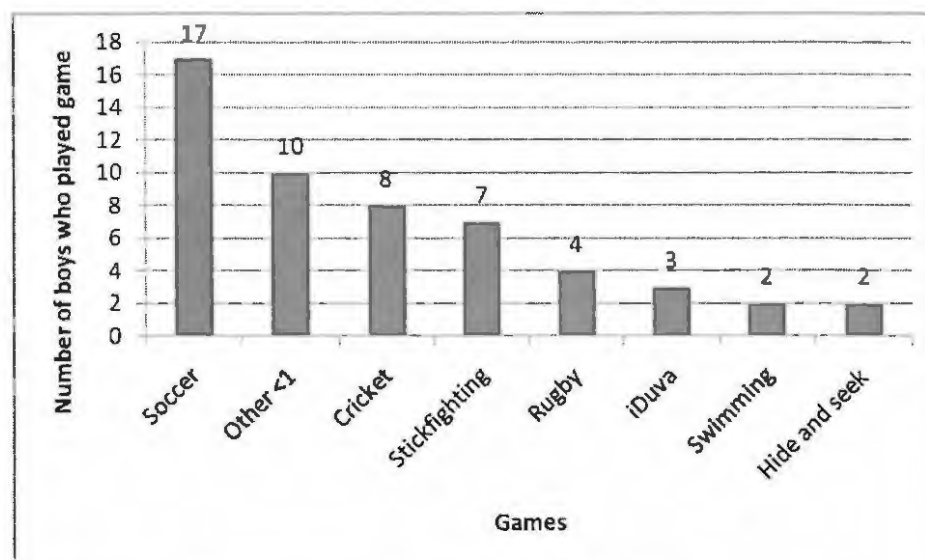
Figure 4.2   Games played by boys in both villages

Other games <1 included iduva, mnonono, fishing, riding donkeys, skotch, ukancamilisa, ceya, lesi, skipping and netball.
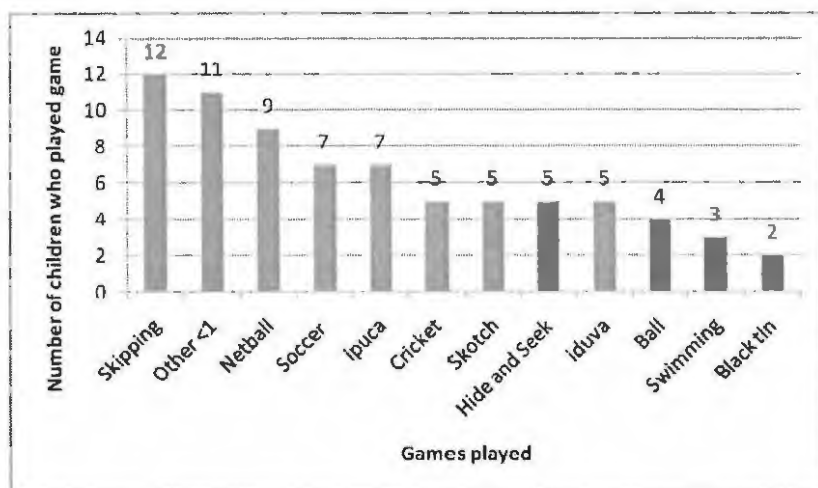
Figure 4.3   Games played by girls in both villages

Other games <1 include donkey, chiefs, nosisa, iqonqi, domestic work, collecting wood, irrigating, climbing trees, ucheckwa, fishing and rugby.
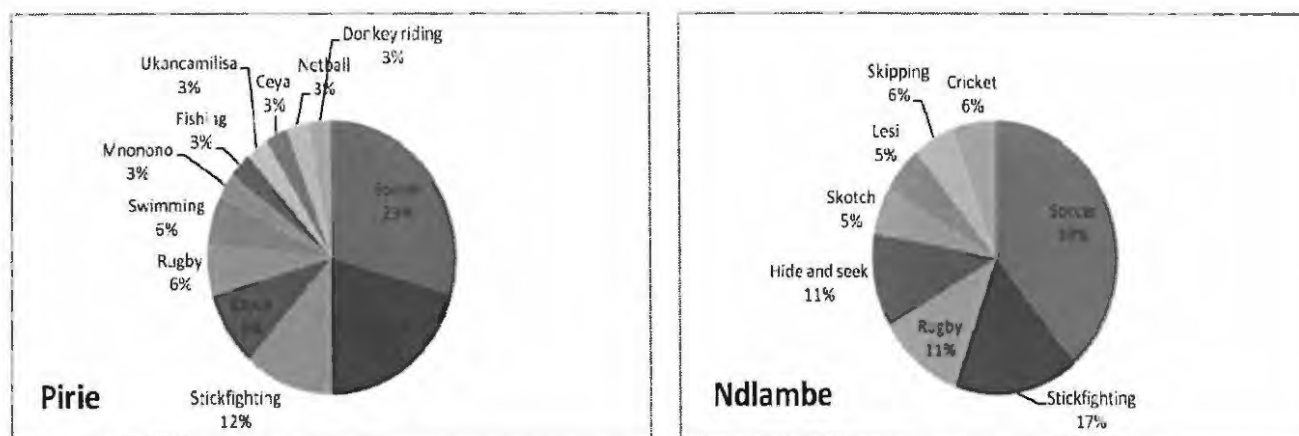
Figure 4.4   Detailed breakdown of games played by boys in Pirie and Ndlambe
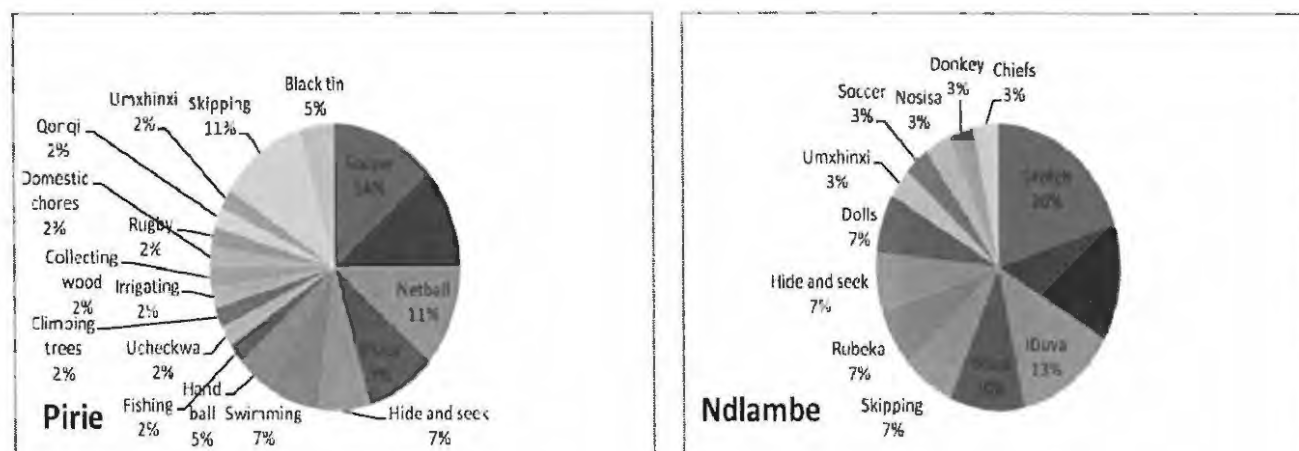
Figure 4.5   Detailed breakdown of games played by girls in Pirie and Ndlambe

At both field sites, the most commonly played game is soccer, and the most common place to play it is at the playing fields (Table 4.1). This could reflect both the influence of the media, which mostly shows soccer being played on a specified pitch, as well as parents' safety concerns. The majority of boys use the playing fields, with some playing games in the street, forest, and at the river. In general, boys played more team sports and played games further from home. Those boys whose families have livestock had increased chances to play in a wider environment, as their herding and collection responsibilities took them to several different places and allowed them freedom away from home. Girls played a wider variety of games and utilised a wider variety of environments for play, although the majority of their games occurred closer to home and around the village. Girls often played in smaller groups and, unlike boys, often recorded going to play at a friend's house (Table 4.1). While children at both villages played similar popular 'stock games', (such as soccer, cricket, netball, skipping and iduva), there were also games which seem particular to each field site, such as the game qonqi which was recorded only in Pirie. What was striking were the similarities between villages, particularly in relation to 'traditional' games such as ipuca. This game, which is played with stones, was played by girls in both villages. A variation of this game is played throughout Africa and is even seen in the Western world (called jacks). Within the confines placed upon children by cultural expectations, to a large extent games were influenced by the material at hand, and in this way they remain strongly influenced by the natural environment. For example, children's play centred around natural features such as rivers, climbable trees, flat areas, or marginal spaces (such as unused areas of land near the road).

All games could be categorised into home games (played in or around the home), street games (played in the gravel streets of the village), neighbourhood games (involving several groups of children playing in areas around their neighbourhood), playing field games (played at designated sports fields), forest games (played away from the village, either in the forest or plantation) and river games (played at dams and rivers). While some children mentioned games which are played at school I have not included this as a category as these games pertain to formalised recreation, such as afternoon sports, or play during break times. The games played during these times also correspond to those already covered by the former categories of home, neighbourhood or street games. The limitations of timing and place while at school also restricted children's use of their environment. Street, Home and Neighbourhood games are by far the most common form of play for children in both villages. With the exception of boys who regularly herd or collect wood in the forest, many children play most often within the village. This analysis of children's games was linked to their valuation of places to ascertain differences and similarities in children's use of the environment and their perceptions of landscape and place.

4.3   Places considered important to participants

Most ethnologists consider Xhosa cosmology to function through the "tripartite spatial categories" of forest (*ihlati*), grassland (*ithafa*) and homestead (*umzi*); with the opposition between wild (nature) and civilised (culture) being represented by the forest and the village respectively, and interceded by the grasslands and rivers (Prins and Lewis 1992: 135). While this may be so, particularly for diviners and the places where they conduct rituals (Bernard 2010), in this study the grasslands were found to occupy a marginal role in children's and "non-expert" adults' cultural environmental values, with other environments being seen as more important. Interviews and mapping exercises revealed that in general both children and adults considered the forest, river and village to be the most important places for village inhabitants. Participatory exercises revealed that the forest, village and river were most favoured by boys, and the village, forest and mountains were the places most favoured by girls (Figures 4.6). However, overall there were a wide variety of favourite places. While these quantitative methodologies do provide some idea of common trends, it is also understood that they cannot account for all variations in children's use and appreciation. They should thus be seen as a snapshot view that can serve to illustrate general attachments. Likewise, these separations are theoretically structured for the purpose of discussion and such separations are not so clearly defined in actuality, as both spaces and uses are intricately interconnected. For example, some children consider the river and the mountain as attractions of the forest. Similarly, activities are not restricted to certain places, for example, boys will play at stick fighting in the forest, grazing camp and village.
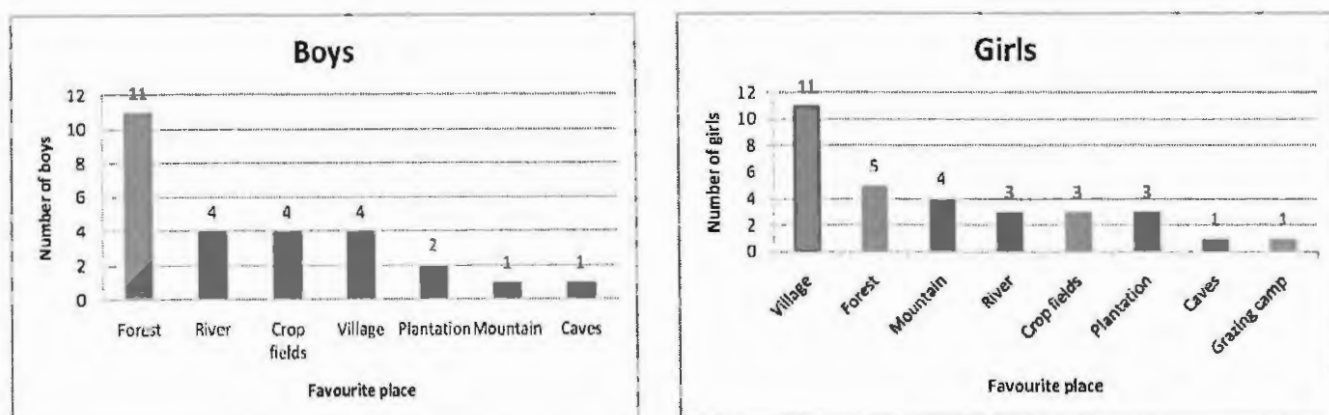
Figure 4.6   Boys and girls' favourite places
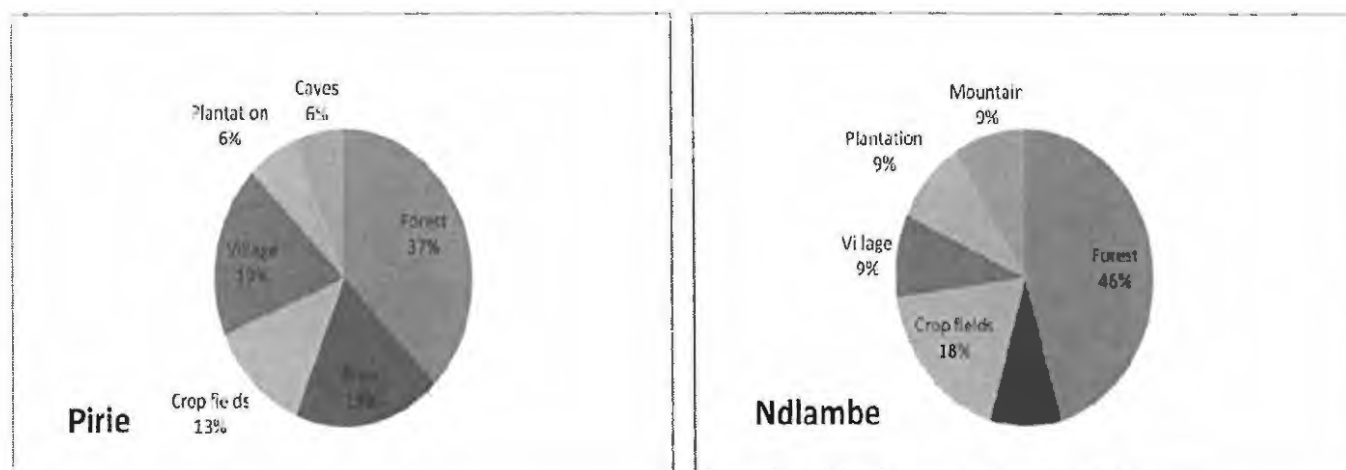
Pirie

Ndlambe

Figure 4.7   Boys' Favourite Places:

Pirie and Ndlambe
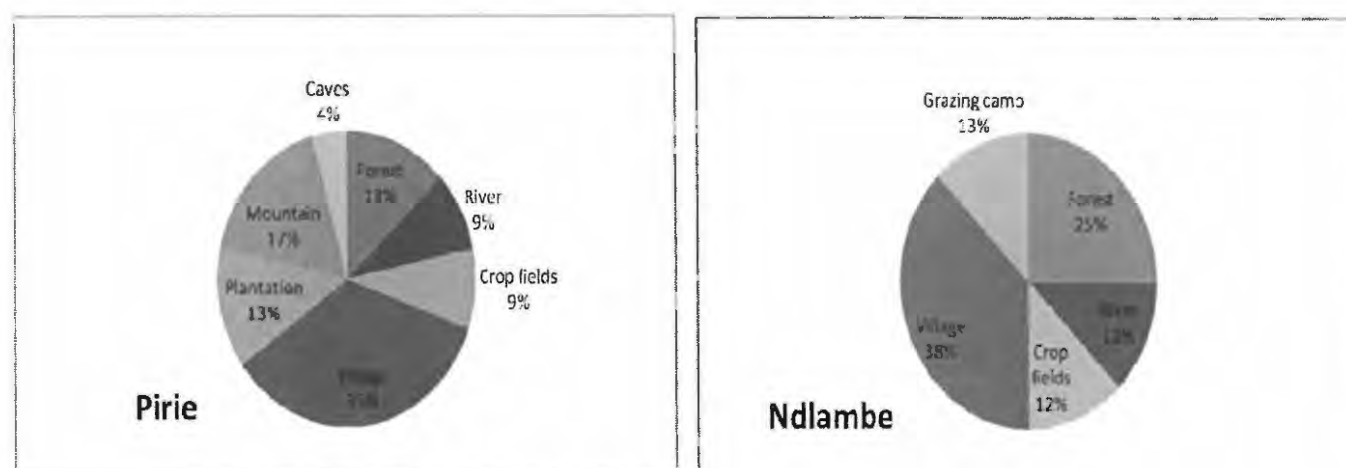
Pirie

Ndlambe

Figure 4.8   Girls' Favourite Places: Pirie and Ndlambe

4.4   Village

"I like the village because it is important to people" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008)

The village was chosen as a favourite place by 37 % of girls and 14 % of boys (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). During mapping exercises girls, particularly older girls, drew the village in greater detail, and the forests and surrounding environments in far less detail. Younger boys, by comparison, drew specific areas such as dams, forests and rivers in greater detail, drew a far wider variety of vegetation types, and often incorporated wild animals, birds or reptiles (Plate 4.1 and 4.2). Many children stated that they liked the village best for the perceived safety it provided. Others appreciated the amenities and opportunities it offered for play, while some enjoyed the domestic chores they carried out at their homes. The number of children who mentioned safety, protection and rules governing social behaviour revealed the universal fears influencing children's use, access and attachment to landscape. Worldwide, the global fear of "stranger danger" causes

parents and guardians to increasingly restrict and police children's environmental use and access (Valentine 1997, Smith and Barker 2001). Added to these fears is South Africa's high record of violent crime, particularly against women and children (Outwater *et al.* 2005). These factors combine to create the perception that the village is a safe place in comparison to the forest or river where strangers are perceived to possibly be encountered. In a close knit community parents would prefer their children to be where they can be seen by someone, arguing that it is better for them to be where someone can help if assistance is required. This is comparative with studies which consider women (and children) in rural areas to be more vulnerable to rape "during the processes of collecting resource for daily living" (Jewkes *et al.* 2002: 1239 – 1240). However, statistics reveal that the majority of violent crime and sexual abuse of women and children is committed by persons known to the victim (CSVR 2007: 91). Of those who had experienced rape in childhood, 33 % of cases were perpetrated by school teachers, 21 % by relatives (Jewkes *et al.* 2002: 1237). Thus women and children are theoretically not safe anywhere (See section 4.11).

Analysis of community narratives reveals that both parents and children are very aware of personal safety issues:

> "*[Life for the children in this village] is not nice, because you can't leave them alone. Because there are naughty people that can come and do bad things to them...It's not nice [living here] when you are alone and when you are a woman, because sometimes a naughty person can come and rape you and do something bad*" (Woman, 46 years, Pirie, 11 March 2009).

> "*[I like the village because] is a very quiet place with no thieves; there are rules that control the village. So if you did something wrong you will be taken to the chief and from the chief to the magistrates court*" (Boy, 14 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

> "*[I like the village] because I'm around people and houses and I feel safe because our times now are wrong and I play around not far from home*" (Girl, 9 years, Pirie, 20 December 2008).

While older participants spoke about the forest as a place which "provides everything", several children see the village as a place which "provides everything".

> "*This is where even other [kids] come to play and we are protected and everything is available*" (Boy, 12 years, Pirie, 21 December 2009).

This view could illustrate the shrinking worlds of children whose environmental activities are restricted, who are at the same time living in an increasingly commoditised world (c.f. Louv 2005). However, villages are, by their very nature, social entities, and as such the activities of their inhabitants are overlain with deeply embedded social and cultural histories. Some children appreciate this domestic environment as well as the socio-cultural activities that take place in the village, particularly rituals:

It's nice in the village... I also enjoy the rituals that are being done in the village. I like planting in the garden, and enjoy staying here" (Boy, 15 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

Plate 4.1   **Insert from girls' map of Ndlambe Village, grade 10.**

Plate 4.2   **Insert from boys' map of Ndlambe village, grade 4.**

The village also exists in contrast to the town. Many children and adults appreciate the rural nature of the village, and the amenities that are accessible to villagers:

"[I like the village] because schools are closer to our homes, and because there is a big forest here in which we go and hunt animals from" (Girl, 10 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

Village shops in particular become a nexus of ever revolving narratives. The act of visiting the shop is usually a social experience. For some children the experience of walking through the village to the shop with friends is an exciting adventure. Some groups of children were observed visiting the shop several times a day on the weekends, each time to purchase a small number of sweets or a packet of chips. For children who are more restricted in their movements the act of visiting the shop can provide one legitimate avenue of recreation.

"I stay in the village, study, and do my home work. I am pleased to be with my friend, to go around the village, to the shop to buy snacks, biscuits and sweets. Then go back home in the evening" (Girl, 13 year old girl, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

In this way some shops act as a refuge for children who wish to congregate with friends in an area away from home. In Ndlambe two village shops provided a local hangout for teenage boys.

The following games are played in the village:

4.4.1   Home games

Games played at home are often played either alone or with a small group of siblings or friends. Common home games include *ipuca* (a throwing stones game), 'Black tin' (hitting a tin with stones/ball), *rubeka* (a skipping string game), *ucheckwa* (catches), playing with cards, '*skotch*' (hopscotch) and *undiza* (hide and seek). Many young girls play '*amapoppi*', (translated as dolls), sometimes dolls are involved (either home-made with sticks and cloth or bought), but more commonly the game involves playing house, pretending to cook and clean, often using discarded items to recreate a home in an outside area which the child can claim for their own (Plate 4.3). While very young boys often play this game with their sisters, once they are older they play more 'boyish' games and sports. Girls' allocated chores (such as cleaning and cooking) as well as their parent's social expectations of them mean that female children are more likely to play closer to home. Visits to key participant's houses found female children at home far more often than male children, who were often away 'playing soccer' or 'herding', during which their greater distance from home allowed them more freedom to play and for longer periods of time. Those female children that were away from home had often been sent on a specific task (e.g. to fetch something at the store) or allowed to go to a specific place (a friend's house) rather than the more general allowance that boys were permitted.

Many children described household chores as a game, often including domestic work such as watering the garden or fetching wood. This observation that children excel in turning work into

play is shared by recent research conducted amongst children in the former Transkei (McGarry and Shackleton 2009). Children at both field sites usually had a number of regular domestic chores to carry out, for example many boys and girls wash their own uniform when they return home from school each afternoon. Others collect water for their household from the village tap, and in times when this water is not available they are often responsible for fetching water from the river. In some areas households supplemented their electricity with wood from the forest, and in these cases children often assist their parents or grandparents in fetching wood, and in some cases, particularly in Ndlambe, groups of young boys collect wood to sell using donkey carts. While not all of these tasks automatically qualify as play, children do profess to enjoy them to a large extent. Those tasks that allowed more time away from home, such as fetching water or wood, allowed more time for socialising and free play.

Plate 4.3   A girl playing house with her younger brother

4.4.2   Street games

The untarred streets of both Pirie and Ndlambe village are one of the most important play areas for children, providing bare, level areas of ground on which to play a number of games. As unclaimed no man's land, children can play unrestricted games in or next to the streets (Plate 4.4), while still being relatively close to home. Many children appreciate the rural nature of the village, stating that they like playing in the streets because there is "not too much traffic" (Girl, 12

years, Pirie, 20 January 2009). Besides playing soccer and cricket on these streets children were also observed playing *iduva* (home-made ball), string/skipping games (such as *umxhinxi* and *rubeka*) as well as clapping games, train games and circle games. Although these games are sometimes played in the yard, children generally prefer to play them some distance from home, presumably because they have more space and freedom to play there. The streets are extremely important during times of initiation, when boys will parade around the village, singing and playing at stick fighting. They also provide one of the most common places for horse riding and horse racing.

Plate 4.4   Children playing in a newly constructed storm drain under the road

During the traditional times of boys' initiation groups of boys wander the streets playing at stick fighting (Plate 4.5); when boys are about to 'go to the bush' for initiation it is customary for them to go through the village in groups, singing and dancing, with their clothes cut into rags to symbolise the end of their youth (Plate 4.6). Younger boys will often imitate these boys, carrying their own sticks and playing at stick fighting in preparation of their time to come. For those boys about to be initiated, this is a period of socially tolerated allowance, it is viewed as their last chance to do 'boyish' things such as 'playing the fool' and 'pretending' to fight. Once the boys return from the forest after their seclusion period they will be seen as men and will be expected to behave accordingly. Stick fighting is also traditionally played in the forest during initiation, along with *ceya* (See Appendix 4A). Boys who have seen these games played by initiates may play them themselves in the forest or in the grazing fields while herding. Many boys who act as

helpers to the initiates find these times to be very exciting, and they benefit from the knowledge and games passed onto to initiates by their traditional teacher.

The strong support for this practice of initiation has meant that a number of traditional songs relating to initiation continue to be sung. There are certain traditional songs that are sung before the boys go 'to the bush' by groups of boys, as well as songs that are sung by boys and girls at the initiates huts on the festive evening before they return to the village. The public celebration of umguyo: held upon their return 'from the bush', lends itself to the transmission of further cultural narratives, from the traditional songs related to rituals to the speeches made for the new men by the village elders.

Plate 4.5   Boys playing at stick fighting

Plate 4.6 Boys going through the streets of the village before initiation, carrying traditional sticks and wearing the skins of animals they have hunted

4.4.3 Neighbourhood games

Besides games in the streets, many games take place in neighbourhood areas that have attractive features to children, such as an open field, a tree that is good for climbing, or a stream or pond. Many group neighbourhood games consist of train or circle games, with songs and actions that accompany a game that has a traditional beginning, middle and end. This is consistent with early work on children's games in Africa, where Tucker (1933) considers that the bulk of African children's "singing games" to be underlain by either "the ring, the arch and the line", which are also seen in children's games in the west (in Finnegan, 1970: 313). While entertaining, many childhood games deal with cultural and social mores as well as team building and personal development. For example, during train games children have to choose sides and join teams for tug-of-wars or catches. Children in Pirie were observed playing a game called 'Mother and the Devil' which works directly through the symbols of good versus evil, and, it could be argued, illustrates the safety of family versus the danger of strangers. In this game children were given a secret name by the child acting as the 'Mother', if the child acting as the 'Devil' guessed this name, the child named had to go over to the Devil's side.

In considering the environment in which these games are played, the study came to realise the importance of small natural spaces within the village. This confirms findings from western studies (Hart 1997, Louv 2005, Malone 2007) which describe how important unstructured natural areas are for children's play and development. While forests and rivers provide an experience of wilderness, it became apparent during the research that children utilised several unclaimed natural areas around the village in a similar way as areas of play. In Pirie neighbourhood children often made use of the same open grassy spaces to play games and sports. One area in particular (a grassy hillside) was used for informal ball games (boys) as well as for neighbourhood train and circle games (boys and girls). Though the area appeared to offer little visual or physical attributes (being a sloping area of scrubby grassland) it seemed to attract children by virtue of being a long-term play area (they had observed others playing at this site) as well as occupying a marginal space (it was on the edge of the village and was an area that did not belong to anyone or hold any other function). In Ndlambe children were observed utilising eroded gullies to play house (Plate 4.7). These areas offer children both the time and the out-of-the way sheltered space to play games undisturbed. This is especially important to games where children recreate their own worlds, either through make-believe games, or the construction of semi-permanent play props such as when playing house or forts. As Moore (1989: 230) states, children require places that provide them with "both security and serendipity to stimulate both predictable and unpredictable consequences". Cunningham and Jones (1996: 358) prove that these areas of "happenstance land", often viewed as being worthless by adults, afforded "rich play spaces for children" (in Tapsell *et al.* 2001: 182). Sometimes this claimed space can be as small as a single tree. At both field sites, children were observed to utilise 'favourite trees' located around the village, often in their own or their friend's yards. These trees offered children an exciting alternative; both as a structure and as a vantage point. They also provided a space that was not likely to be accessed by adults.

Plate 4.7 An eroded gully provides a favourite place to play house, Ndlambe

4.4.4 Playing field games

Children in both villages have access to demarcated playing fields, of the kind that can be found in most rural villages in the Eastern Cape. These are reasonably large level areas of bare ground containing soccer goal posts, often with a netball post in the same vicinity. In Ndlambe these playing fields are named after various soccer clubs that play there (e.g. Rovers). The large playing field in Pirie is nicknamed Ellis Park (after the national stadium in Johannesburg). These areas are well utilised and are particularly important to boys. A large number of boys only recorded playing sports such as soccer or cricket in comparison to girls who reported a range of games (Table 4.1). While boys play these sports unofficially in various other areas such as the street or neighbourhood play area, many boys from both villages also belong to a soccer club that practises at least four times a week after school. This is known locally as gyming. While girls may join in during informal soccer games, only one girl was seen to regularly attend soccer practice, and it is definitely seen as a boys' arena. While netball facilities existed at both field sites, girls were not seen to practice as often as boys. This may be because of the increased demands placed on them at home, but is more likely to be the result of the gendered promotion and support of male sports.

During soccer and netball practise, younger children were seen to play near the field, imitating the older ones (Plate 4.8). For example, in Ndlambe, boys seen as too young to be playing with the soccer club would often play with a broken ball on the side lines. The village soccer clubs often play games against neighbouring teams on the weekends (Plate 4.9). These games are social times and are seen as an important event in the village, with girls and older men coming to watch the game. The boys also travel to other villages, and larger soccer tournaments can boast lucrative prizes. For example, a tournament held at the Great Place near Pirie Mission had seven neighbouring teams competing in a weekend long competition: first prize was a sponsored team strip and second prize was R4 000. On occasion girls travelled to play netball against neighbouring teams but this did not happen as often. This bias in the promotion and support of boys' sports over girls' sports is recorded worldwide. Patriarchal cultures promote passive female roles in sporting activities which are in direct opposition to the encouragement of active participation for male athletes (Kane and Parks 1992, Nelson 1994, Buysee and Embser-Herbert 2004).

Plate 4.8   Girls practising netball

Plate 4.9   Boys watching a weekend soccer match

4.5   Forest

4.5.1   *What the forest provides*

During mapping exercises boys drew far more detailed maps of the forest, with those from Ndlambe drawing very detailed maps of the different forests that were associated with different resources. While 19 % of girls and 42 % of boys chose the forest as their favourite place (Figures 4.7 and 4.8), boys and girls liked the forests for different reasons. Both boys and girls spoke about the utilitarian aspects of the forest, which children list as: wood, feed for livestock, wild fruit, *amayeza*, play areas, ritual space and cultural resources.

> "In the forest I like to hunt or cut poles and collect medicines: like chithibunga, mmemezi, umnonono, (Strychnos henningsii), zintlwa, mratewu and mkhwenkwe" (Boy, 11 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008)

However, boys were more commonly concerned with hunting, while girls were more commonly concerned with collecting fuel wood:

> "When I feel like eating meat, I go to the forest to hunt. [There they are] building the huts for abakhwethu: where the boys go for initiation. [I] shoot birds, cut the branches when I want to make the kraal. When feeling hungry, while walking around the forest, I pick up the wild fruit to eat" (Boy, 13 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

> "I like to hunt, collect wood and herd goats" (Boy, 15 years, Ndlambe, 9 July 2009)

> "From the forest I like collecting fuel woods" (Girl, 12 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008)

These are seen as gender divided activities, and they are echoed in the different values that the forest has to men and women regarding space and landscape attachment. However, children

also transgress gender boundaries, some boys' narratives revealed that they enjoyed performing activities traditionally seen as feminine (fetching wood and washing clothes), while girls spoke about hunting or herding (traditionally seen as masculine activities):

"I like the forest because I collect the wood..." (Boy, 12 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

"I like to swim in the river and wash my clothes" (Boy, 11 years, Ndlambe, 7 July 2009).

"I like to go and collect wood, fetch sand, collect amayeza, building materials and herd goats..." (Girl, 15 years, Ndlambe, 9 July 2009).

Although hunting and the collection of wild fruits and vegetables has been proven to be vitally important to supplementing rural children's diets, particularly those of vulnerable households (McGarry and Shackleton 2009), children also enjoy these activities for the recreational entertainment they provide. In a study involving 850 children in the former Transkei 35 % stated that they hunt "because they find it fun" (McGarry 2008: 64).The forest not only assists in providing subsistence but can also generate household income, notably through the sale of wild resources, but also through the provision of good grazing for livestock:

"I like it because there's food, green grass, [and the] igwanishe (Portulacaria afra) tree for goats. I like my goats, animals, because they get fat from those trees. We sell it and get lots of money. I also like to collect woods in the forest, [and to] collect wild fruit like incumncum (Carissa bispinosa), umqokolo (Dovyalis sp.), and ingwenye (Harpephyllum caffrum)" (Girl, 14 years, Ndlambe, 9 July 2009).

Both hunting and the collection of wood are viewed as activities crucial to Xhosa identity and belonging (Cocks and Dold 2008). At the same time, these activities are subject to restriction in many areas under the state laws governing forests. One of the most common narratives told by plant harvesters was that the forest rangers and DAFF officials "Tell us: if you take one bulb you are destroying the forest" (Harvester, 70 years, Pirie, 7 November 2008).

While the forest is visited by younger children or those accompanying adults, it is seen by boys, especially as a very important area. It provides them with a space to relax, to collect wood which they can sell, and to hunt, thus continuing to practice important cultural activities. In contrast, it seems that many girls, especially older girls, do not visit the forest as often, and that they did not see the forest as providing similar services. To them it was a dangerous rather than a relaxing place. This attitude was more prevalent in Pirie, which has the added danger of forest rangers possibly being present in the forest. A forest walk taken with a group of teenage girls from Pirie proved very revealing. While some of the girls had visited the forest and river in their youth, the walk was the first time that all of them had been to the forest in many years. They were overwhelmingly scared of snakes, and, at the sight of a snake the trip had to be terminated as

they all desired to return home. In contrast, older women, who use the forest often to *theza* have learnt to know and appreciate the forest intimately, often knowing exactly where to find particular resources. Some know it so well that they can record histories of the forest several years old. One informant's narratives described historical and environmental observations such as "this tree is where squirrels used to stay", or "at this tree, sometimes you can see a snake here". On coming across a rusted tin beaker she stated that it must be from a ritual, remembering one that was held in the area many years ago (Woman, 43 years, Pirie commonage, 24 September 2009).

4.5.2 Forest games

The following games were recorded as being played in the forest: climbing trees, hide and seek, swimming, stick fighting, as well as activities such as collecting fuel wood and *amayeza*, which many children consider more as recreation than a chore.

> *"It is very nice to play in the forest especially the games like hide and seek or stick fighting. [We go] collecting amayeza, wild fruit like umqokolo and prickly pear and [making] fighting sticks"* *(Boy, 14 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).*

> *"[I like the forest] because you harvest medicines, wild fruits and you can play there as well"* *(Girl, 14 years, Pirie, 20 January 2009).*

> *"It is very nice to play in the forest, especially the games like hide and seek or stick fighting, collecting amayeza and wild fruit like umqokolo, prickly pear and fighting sticks"* *(Boy, 14 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).*

If children are visiting the forest without an adult, they are free to play for longer periods. Games such as hide and seek and tree climbing are played by both boys and girls. Many boys play at stick fighting or *ceya* in the forest (Appendix 4A). Traditional games such as *Mnononono* and *ukancamilisa* are also played. Children reported playing make-believe games in the forest (one child said she 'plays netball with the monkeys') as well as riding horses and donkeys on these forest trips. Boys tend to have more freedom to play in the forest, as they are allowed to be there for longer periods of time and can therefore perform a variety of activities:

> *We go swimming, climbing trees, riding the donkeys, cutting the branches: to make scoring poles for football. Sometimes we play stick fighting"* *(Boy, 12 years, Pirie, 19 Sept 2009).*

Older participants placed great emphasis on their visits to the forest as children, with many explaining that they would spend long periods in the forest playing. While they might have been sent to the forest to perform such chores as collecting wood or herding stock, it was seen as the most exciting place to play. One of the most enjoyable past-times was to swing on the *imimnwxeba* (lianas, *Rhoicissus sp.*) that could be found in the forest:

"We used to play on these [lianas] in the forests. You can tie a rope here and here and someone is going to push you. That's why children like playing in the forest (because of these creepers). We used to search for a place that has lots of imimnwxeba (Rhoicissus sp.). Nowadays the kids don't (play like this). Because they have money to buy toys. Long ago there were no toys" (Pakama Mkulungu, 25 years, Pirie, 24 September 2009).

"These creepers are very strong, even an adult can swing on one. This one [that has been cut] is very beautiful, maybe someone cut it for tying woods. We used to play on these creepers (umxeba, Rhoicissus sp.)... We used to eat this tree sap (Inlaka)" (Woman, 43 years, Pirie commonage, 24 September 2009).

4.5.3 Plantation

The plantation was chosen as a favourite place by 8 % of boys, and by 13 % of Pirie girls (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). Although the plantation theoretically offers a similar environment to the forest: being a 'natural' space of dense trees, it is appreciated for the utilitarian aspects it provides rather than the cultural connection local people felt to the indigenous forest.

"[at the plantation] I like trapping birds" (Boy, 9 years, Pirie, 21 December).

"From the [plantation] trees I like the shade" (Girl, 12 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

In Pirie local people are allowed to harvest only plantation species freely, with restrictions being placed upon harvesting indigenous trees. This has had a severe impact upon cultural activities. As mentioned in section 2.3.2, these restrictions directly result in the majority of kraals being constructed from the alien invasive *plantaish* rather than traditionally used, longer lasting kraal building species, (such as *insindi*), which are freely utilised in Ndlambe. What is interesting is that while the plantation offers a theoretically safe forest (being open-accessed and closer to the village), it is far less popular with children, particularly boys, than the actual indigenous forest. This is echoed in adult participants' views towards the plantations and commonages. While adults appreciate the uses to which they can put the plantation species, there is no cultural connection to these trees, and in many cases they are viewed as inferior to the indigenous trees. Participants explained that *plantaish* poles rot and have to be replaced often, while indigenous hardwoods last for several years. This appreciation of indigenous over exotic tree species allows us to realise the deep connection local people have with indigenous forests.

Forests are divided by local people into several different forests, as discussed in Chapter Three. However, at both field sites, the main characteristic of forests, when it came to appreciation and connection to landscape, was the difference between indigenous forests and those made up of exotic tree species. According to many participants, it is the indigenous trees which make up the "proper forest", known as the Xhosa forest (*Ihlathi wesiXhosa*). This is the forest where the

ancestors reside and this is the forest that is appreciated and respected the most. While comparative research links the *ihlathi wesiXhosa* with Albany Thicket, (Cocks and Dold 2008, Cocks *et al.* in prep.), participants in Pirie used the same term to refer to the Southern Mist-belt Forest which makes up Hoho forest. On forest walks with participants, nearly all of them stated when we had entered "the proper Xhosa forest", appearing immediately relaxed in these surroundings and actively enjoying being there. In Pirie, the plantation and the open access commonage are demarcated by large amounts of alien invasive trees. This tainted the community's view towards these forests and provided a concrete opposition between the official state view and the local perceptions of the two types of forest access:

> *"[The part of the forest] I like [is] the one that is ruled by the policemen. It is where you can find wild fruits like ingwenya, and herbs. I don't go there, I'm afraid of the policemen, and it's too far: to go to collect ingwenya. The police don't want you to cut umkhoba. It is used to make furniture in the government factories. They use it even now. The state forest is different to the commonage: it has very long trees, and important trees, you can build houses with those trees, and kraals, that's why people like that side. On this side there are a few trees, and they are not [the ones that are] used. It's just a little forest here; you can't see much"* (Woman, 43 years, Pirie commonage, 24 Sept 2009).

The statement above reveals how the state restricts local people's use of indigenous hardwoods, while at the same time allowing them to be harvested commercially. Local people are thus denied access to an important resource and told they are 'harming the forest', and then have to stand by to watch outsiders making money out of harvesting the very trees they are not allowed to use. One can begin to imagine the feelings of resentment that many local people have towards state restricted natural resources. Elsewhere in the country the state has attempted to evict local people from indigenous forests and have faced similar feelings of opposition. Local inhabitants of Dukuduku forest in Kwazulu-Natal state: "the forest is like a blanket, giving us comfort and solace. Why would we want to leave such a home behind?" (Mrs Mkhize in Munnik and Mhlope 2000: 42).

> "If anyone at all has to go from here, it is these horrible trees – the pines, jacarandas and gum trees. They are not good for our soil; we don't want them here; even their leaves look like the hair of white people. The local trees are like us, the leaves resemble my curly hair. These trees have belonged to this place from the beginning of time; we identify with them, we call them *Velekhona*, which means "always here"" (Baba Msweli in Munnik and Mhlope 2000: 44).

On the other hand the long held restrictions placed on communal forest use, especially in Pirie, have resulted in exotic tree species being the ones that children are most familiar with. In many class exercises, children in Pirie drew gum trees or black wattle as their favourite trees. As the plantation is not a restricted area (such as the state forest), children and adults can access it freely. It is thus one of the only forests where they can play and harvest materials without fear of

repercussion. This translates into children seeing it as a safe environment, as opposed to the forbidden state forest. The cordoning off of indigenous forest can thus be seen to have had an impact on local cultural environmental values:

> "I like the plantations because they help us and are important" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

> "I like to hide [there] when we're playing hide and seek. I collect firewood there. I like it so much, because there are some kinds of trees that I like" (Boy, 11 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

The incorporation of exotic plant species for indigenous cultural use has been long documented (Brutsch and Zimmerman 1993, Beinart 2003). For example, the introduced *itolofia* (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) accounted for 90 % of the mass of wild fruits reported to be consumed by households in three villages in the Eastern Cape (Shackleton et al. 2002). This incorporation represents a dynamic, flexible culture. What is alarming is when these exotic species are the only ones that children become familiar with.

4.6   River

4.6.1   *What the river provides*

The river was chosen as a favourite place by 14 % of boys and 11 % of girls (Figures 4.7 and 4.8) and was stated to be an important place by both children and adults. The river provided children with many resources, such as fish to eat and water for washing clothes. It was also an interactive play environment. Children like to swim in the river during summer and they like the river in general. Those who visited the river regularly drew more detailed cultural river maps (Plate 4.10). Children's exploration of the river revealed itself in drawing exercises and discussions. They were very aware of 'things you can find in the river', such as fish, tadpoles and crabs, as well as rocks and leaves on the water. The environment surrounding the river was especially important, with both girls and boys appreciating the particular trees, *amayeza*, reptiles and birds that can be found near the river.

> "It's because it's a very cool place. And it helps us in so many things, like for example: cooking, drinking, and watering. It also helps reptiles like frogs, snakes, leguvaans and crabs" (Girl, 13 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

These natural elements are all seen as important means of communication with the ancestors. They play a particularly important role in river related rituals, such as those that are performed at the *iziziba* (sacred pools) (Bernard 2010).

> "I like the different kinds of birds that like to fly around the water. I like the umnga tree (Acacia karroo) and the umuncwane plant (Oxalis sp.)" (Girl, 12 years, Ndlambe, 7 July 2009).

"I like watching birds and fishing fish" (Boy, 12 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

"From the river I like fetching water" (Girl, 12 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

Plate 4.10   Insert from boys' map of Inxuba River, Grade 7, Ndlambe

At both field sites adults often warned children against swimming, especially in the deep river pools which are believed to harbour ancestors. Children at both villages reported being warned by adults against swimming in *isiziba*. However, an examination of children's activities reveals that children often disregard these rules. While some children mentioned that they avoid the *isiziba* (sacred pools), there were others that reported swimming in these areas, and some who had even reported seeing *abantu bomlambo* (the river people) with their own eyes. It is generally perceived that the innocence of children makes them pure in the eyes of the *abantu bamlambo*, thus absolving them from harm, this is why visitors to sacred pools can be guided there by children (Bernard Pers. Comm. 1 September 2008). Accordingly, children therefore have much less to fear from visiting these places, and they may therefore provide access to a sacred area that adults can only access in emergencies. In general, boys seemed to be braver about swimming in these areas, with some girls reporting that they felt scared even to be near the water with an adult. One girl explained that while she had often gone to collect cow dung at the dam with her aunt, she was still scared to there alone: "because I may sink" (9 years old, Ndlambe, 22 May 2009). Presumably girls are more guided in their activities by adults. Boys are seen as more

robust, more able to look after themselves. Boys may also become braver from their increased time spent on their own in these environments. However, children continue to swim in the river despite all of these restrictions. Children are aware that they are not meant to be there, but they say that this just means they should not be caught by adults, who will "shout and hit them if they find them there". In many ways the thrill of being in a forbidden place adds to the liminal experience.

> "Once we were swimming, then the old man came and chased us, he said we are too young to swim. And whenever we go to the river we have to go with older kids" (Forest walk with key child participants, Pirie, 20 September 2009).

The river, along with the forest, provides people with a place to escape the village and their social and psychological problems. Studies in western countries reveal a similar service provided by rivers. Tapsell *et al.* (2001: 183) consider rivers to be "a place to escape and relax"; providing an experience of nature. Rivers also provide children with the "physical and mental" space to be alone (Tapsell *et al.* 2001: 183) something which is vitally important in establishing independence, particularly for adolescents. At Ndlambe several children mentioned the river, as well as the high cliffs above the river, as one of the places they went to be alone, or to play with friends.

> "Q. Where do you go when you want to be alone?
> Just to walk, near the cliffs, by the river, walking along the top" (Boys, 12 years and 15 years, 15 June 2009).

> "Q. Where do teenagers go when they want to relax?
> Near the river. To swim. Sometimes I go with friends, sometimes by myself. It feels very nice at the river. We like to play rugby and netball by the river. When I'm sitting there I like to see the big trees of umnga" (Boy, 17 years, 14 June 2009).

4.6.2   River games

A great number of children reported swimming and fishing as a game, with rivers, and to a lesser extent dams, being important areas for these activities. Traditional games such as *lesi* are also played at the dam or river, and some children model clay on the banks. Swimming has long been an important childhood activity, and was seen by many older participants as a central part of their childhood visits to the forest:

> "We used to swim first and then go through the forest and play. Climbing trees and swinging. I was scared of swimming (because of the frogs and snakes). I had to wait for the other kids, and I would make clay animals, waiting for the other kids (to be finished)" (Pakama Mkulungu, 25 years, Pirie, 24 September 2009).

> "I like the river because you can play there" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

A visit to the river can cover a variety of culturally related activities. One child stated that he enjoyed herding livestock, harvesting (wild resources), digging for medicine, swimming with

friends and hunting birds at the river (Boy, 10 years, Pirie, 20 December 2008). One group of children who visited the river sung a warning song before swimming (Section 3.6), sang various songs while they were swimming, told each other about amayeza and practiced putting clay on their faces. As is apparent in the statements above, rivers and their surrounding vegetation are important areas for children, even if they do not swim. These areas have been proven to be "potentially important features for children's play and development" (Tapsell *et al.* 2001: 182) offering a challenging and liminal environment which makes them a satisfying place for children to play and spend time in. Tapsel *et al.* (2001: 183-184) state that children who have unrestricted access to rivers

> "have opportunities to take risks, to test the boundaries of behaviour, to do mildly dangerous things, and to learn what they can and cannot manage. Opportunities present themselves for imaginative play and interesting adventures and to encounter both themselves and the world".

4.7 Mountains

4.7.1 *What mountains provide*

Although mountains have important cultural connotations, they were chosen by only a few children as a favourite place: by 9 % of Ndlambe boys, and interestingly, 17 % of Pirie girls (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). This percentage does not take into account those few children who made mention of mountains when discussing other places, such as the forest. For children the mountains are associated with hunting, collecting *amayeza*, and certain cultural rituals such as initiation.

> "*I like to hunt, herding goats because there are some special trees that are helpful to them when they are sick, also collecting wild fruits, like Umlitye (Xhosa)*" (Boy, 11 years, Ndlambe, 8 July 2009).

While it could be presumed that the mountains are traditionally a masculine environment; being associated with hunting and initiation, several girls stated that they went hunting at the mountains. This finding contradicts comparative studies (McGarry and Shackleton 2009) which state that girls do not take an active part in hunting. The matter therefore warrants further study to determine if girls physically participate in hunting, if they accompany boys or older relatives, or if they participate once the animal is bought home by the hunters.

> "*In the mountain I like to hunt*" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

> "*I like to go to the mountain because you even get the meat of animals: because they are being hunted from the lower forest and they run up to the mountain, and when they get there they are tired. You even get the broom to sweep the open field in the yard. When you are there you get to know everything about the forest*" (Girl, 13 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

The small percentage of children who choose mountains could relate to their significance as sacred or ritual places which are not meant for everyday use. Mountains are traditionally associated with initiation, and some narratives still describe this association. During cultural mapping exercises several children stated that initiation happens "at the mountain" even though the actual site was near the river or closer to the village. This reference is thought to refer back to the time when boys were perhaps circumcised on the mountain, perhaps because these functioned as sacred places for communities (see section 5.11). In Pirie the mountain is still intimately connected to initiation, as village boys have to climb to the cliffs near the top of the mountain to obtain the white clay they will use to cover their bodies during their seclusion period. This practise forms part of a celebration held by the family and the ceremony holds a strong attraction to young boys:

> "You can find the clay for abakwetha [near those cliffs on top of the mountain] and also the red clay for the new men and medicines for initiates" (Boys, 9 years and 11 years, Pirie, 6 March 2009).

4.7.2 Caves

Caves and mountains are often considered together by participants, but have been separated here because they can serve different socio-cultural purposes. Caves were chosen as a favourite place only by 6 % of Pirie boys, and 4 % of Pirie girls (Figures 4.7 and 4.8), which is perhaps symbolic of the fact that caves are culturally important to a select group of people. The research revealed that healers and those whose izilo or ancestors are associated with the caves found them particularly important. Although caves played an important historical role at both field sites, this information was not well known in the villages, and it was mainly local experts and elders who had access to this information. The result that only Pirie children chose the caves as a favourite place can perhaps be directly related to the fact that the caves are more utilised and valued by Pirie families who share the common ancestor Mpiyenyawo, who is associated with the caves (Section 3.3).

> "I like the way they look and the way they beautify the village" (Boy, 14 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

> "I like the caves because we digging the white clay there" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

No games were observed or recorded to take place at the mountains or caves. At both field sites these two places were seen as environments that one accesses for particular activities, such as hunting, visiting a cave for ritual purposes or for occasional shelter during thunderstorms. These places have very particular narratives associated with them, which reveal them to be culturally important areas that, for many, are sacred spaces to be visited only on special occasions. Their increased distance from the village probably enhances this perception; caves and mountains are

less accessible to children when compared to other environments, such as the river. These cultural uses and perceptions of mountains and caves will be discussed further in section 5.11.

4.8   Crop Fields and Grazing Fields

Additional areas for play are the crop fields and grazing fields, where children might play while harvesting or planting. However, while games did occur in these areas, they were not seen as important places to go and play in comparison to the others.

4.8.1 Crop Fields

The crop fields were chosen as a favourite place by 16 % of boys and 11 % of girls (Figures 4.7 and 4.8), showing fairly even recognition of their value across genders in each field site. The majority of children who liked the crop fields, (both girls and boys), enjoyed working in them, with some children specifically appreciating their role in providing food for the family. As stated in chapter 2, many households in rural South Africa subsist with inadequate household income which leads to poor nutrition. Those whose families work on agricultural schemes guarantee either cash income or a share in the produce harvested.

> "Crop production and planting is the thing I like most in crop fields. I [also] like [that] it's cool and close to the river" (Boy, 10 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

> "I like to harvest or collect imifino and to plough in the fields. We harvest mealies, melons, etc." (Boy, 16 years, Ndlambe, 7 July 2009).

> "I like crop fields because they help us and are important" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

The crop fields are recognised as an important place to collect wild vegetables (imifino), which provide households with a free source of nutrition. The collection of imifino is the responsibility of girls and boys. Time spent in the crop fields also affords children with time to play, especially younger children who may occupy themselves in play while their parents are working in the fields.

> "I like to plant different kind of vegetables. [Because] there are crop fields [there is] no more starving, we eat everything we like, fruit and vegetables. I also like to play and harvest" (Girl, 10 years, Ndlambe, 9 July 2009).

4.8.2 Grazing field

Although the grazing field or camp was listed as an important place by children in class exercises, it was only chosen by 13 % of the girls in Ndlambe as a favourite place. The reason for this could be that children do not see it as exciting a place as the other sites, such as the forest, river and village. The choice could also signify the changes in herding. Boys used to spend extensive amounts of time herding, participating in the many activities and games that were associated

with this time and space, such as modelling clay animals, racing oxen or stick fighting. However, it seems that the advent of compulsory education and the various socio-economic changes have resulted in changes in herding practices, which have, in turn, reduced the chance to practice these associated activities. As a result, those activities that are still practiced can become separated from the activity of herding and in some cases exist purely as a means of income: for example the modelling of clay animals to sell to tourists at Hogsback is completely disassociated with herding (Morrow and Vokwana 2001). Today boys may take cattle or goats to grazing areas and collect them from there, occasionally spending longer amounts of time with cattle if they have to be moved to further pastures or taken for dipping. The advent of compulsory education has meant that boys are not free to spend such extensive time herding and this has heavily impacted upon herding methods (Morrow and Vokwana 2001). The majority of cattle and goats are either allowed to roam freely or alternatively taken to a place in the morning and collected in the evening. Those children who do not attend school spend longer amounts of time herding, but as they are now a small minority it is arguable that they enjoy the culture of games and companionship that herding was previously associated with.

However, these changes in herding cannot be solely attributed to compulsory education. Older participants spoke about spending their school holidays virtually camping out in the forest with their herds, as this was the one place where grazing was guaranteed. While boys often mentioned the importance of the forest (Pirie) and areas surrounding the dam (Ndlambe) for cattle and goat grazing, none of them spoke of spending long periods away from home herding. Presumably boys have less freedom to be away from home for such extended periods of time. While they may enjoy their time herding animals to and from grazing areas they also have alternative activities that occupy their time, such as playing soccer or hunting. On the other hand, a number of young girls mentioned herding livestock:

"I go to the grazing camp when I'm herding cattle" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

This, together with the only mention of grazing fields as a favoured place being by girls (Figure 4.8), may indicate a certain relaxing of gender restrictions which relate to herding. This perception is also reflected in other studies, which add that in the past these girls had access to the associated recreational activities of herding, such as making clay animals (Morrow and Vokwana 2001). Despite this, households without young boys living in them commonly utilised reciprocal kinship ties whereby younger men would often herd the animals of their older relatives should they be asked to. It could therefore be assumed the girls herd livestock only when there are no male kin available to perform the activity and that despite the changes in herding it

remains "quintessentially a male task" (Morrow and Vokwana 2001: 148), although it has been impacted upon by modernisation. However, there may also be occasions where girls are entrusted with smaller livestock, such as goats, while cattle remain the responsibility of boys and men. The gendered aspects of herding and hunting are areas that call for further research. In some cases girls and women may be taking up activities that were traditionally considered masculine due to the changing demographics and socio-economic situation of rural life. These changes would have further implications for the passing on of LEK.

4.9 Narratives and belonging to place

Place and stories are themselves intricately connected, as it is through stories that communities and individuals can lay claim to spaces and resources. Stories can reveal histories as well as cultural explanations and connections to landscapes, which are strongly linked to identity and belonging. For example, Sikkink and Choque (1999: 167) explain that in the Andes, residents of San Pedro de Condo use a geographically related 'origin' story to "position themselves and their community socially and politically and to negotiate relationships by focusing on their local geography". An examination of cultural narrative therefore allows one to realise that the community's understanding of their environment is displayed through the means of these unique "folk tales that encode complex cultural information"; furthermore, these tales are told in different ways by different story-tellers who flavour the tales according to "their backgrounds and their goals in telling the story" (Sikkink and Choque 1999: 168).

Narrative can correspond closely towards creating a sense of place, which arises through a combination of place meanings and personal attachments (Stedman 2002, 2003). Histories of a place intricately anchor people to their landscape. Those who are well versed in the histories of their landscape possess a deep sense of place, because they can call upon myriads of narratives that link to their identity with and belonging to that landscape. Those children who were familiar with the forest had a wealth of experiences and histories to draw upon. Their activities, their knowledge and their stories about the forest all combined to make them feel deeply connected and safe in a place that other children perceived as dangerous and out of bounds. Blizard (2007) proves that when children were told cultural history and natural history stories about an environment, they benefitted through enhanced "historical recognition of the place", "functional engagement with place", "awareness of ecological change" and "the development of a sense of place that was static, anthropocentric, and localized" (2007: 193-194). According to the study

these kinds of stories could therefore promote environmental protection for biodiverse or culturally important spaces though the creation of "new place meanings" (Blizard 2007: 195).

In contrast to this, narrative can also be employed to delineate unsafe spaces. Asking children which were their *least* favourite places provided a variety of different answers, such as the dam, the forest, and certain fields. What the majority of answers had in common was a danger, real or perceived, that was connected to that place through a narrative that had been told to them. Children who mentioned the dam told about the deep water that their mothers had warned them about. Children who disliked the forest considered the dangers they had been told were lurking there, such as forest rangers, or dangerous animals. Two girls reported that they disliked a particular field because it was reportedly the haunt of snakes. These findings were reinforced by the narratives that had been told to older participants by their parents, the purpose of which was to keep them away from places that were perceived as dangerous (section 3.7 and 3.8). By contrast, it was only a small minority of children who had an answer that was not inspired by adult safety fears. A few children mentioned that they did not like the crop fields, admitting that they disliked having to assist their families with agricultural work. Some boys stated that their least favourite place was the village, which they disliked because it was boring, in comparison to the attractions offered by the forest and the river.

4.10 Changes in children's use of space

While over a third of all girls stated that the village was their favourite place, just under half of all boys stated that the forest was their favourite place. While this could reflect commonalities in how children spend their time; with girls presumably performing domestic chores and playing nearer home, and boys presumably performing wider ranging chores such as herding animals, hunting or playing in the forest, it does not describe a complete gendered experience of place. Closer examination of the data reveals that there are some girls who prefer grazing camps (traditionally seen as a boy's domain), while boys themselves made no mention of these camps in the participatory exercises. In the same instance there are many boys who prefer the village to surrounding natural environments, as, for them, it has a perceived safety compared to the dangerous and unknown elements of the natural environment.

Only a small minority of children mentioned their aesthetic appreciation of their natural environment, which form a major component of western communities' attachment in environmental perceptions studies (Brehm 2007).

> *"I like the mountain because it is sleepy. And it looks high"* (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

"I like hunting animals and birds. I also like watching trees" (Boy, 9 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008).

However, adult respondents did appreciate the purity of places like the forest and the mountains, as well as the psychological benefits they would feel in these environments (Chapter 3). It remains to be seen whether those children who participated in the study will grow to have the same environmental attachments as their parents.

The main factors influencing children's use and perceptions of their environment are safety fears, gender prescribed roles, the perceived inaccessibility of the forest (in Pirie) and children's increasing recreation through western means of entertainment, such as soccer and television. This compares to studies in western communities, which ascertain that even children in rural areas spend increased amounts of time watching television (Pyle 2002). However, in considering children's perceptions of place and their use of place, one is presented with several dichotomies. Although the majority of boys state that their favourite place is the forest, the same majority report that they spend most of their recreational time playing soccer in the village. Thus, there is a need to differentiate between functional space and preferred space. Although the majority of girls stated that their favourite place is the village, with the location of most of their games confirming this, they professed a deep knowledge and appreciation of surrounding natural environments such as the forest and river. Many younger girls even reported participating in 'masculine' activities such as hunting or herding cattle. Thus, even children who do not have regular access to surrounding natural environments show a deep cultural appreciation for these landscapes.

While play is intimately linked to cultural activities and to place, it is also linked to the social interactions that are afforded through play. Some argue that these interactions may be one of the main attractions to particular environments (Tapsell *et al.* 2001: 182). While children may appreciate natural environments, their daily experiences are "overwhelmingly social", being "most often framed with reference to friends, parents, siblings and other relations" (Tapsell *et al.* 2001: 182). This desire for social outdoor recreation is fulfilled by younger children at the two field sites. However, as older children turn from games to sports, and the socio-cultural situation confines them increasingly closer to home, it readily becomes apparent that there is a decided absence of outdoor recreational facilities for teenagers, particularly for girls. While the playing fields provided an area for sporting activities, this was often dominated by boys, and, in the case of Pirie, was too far for many of the girls to access regularly or safely. In fact there is an absence

of any formal social meeting place for teenagers besides school, church or the shops. The community hall in Pirie was vandalised many years ago, in Ndlambe the community centre is utilised solely for official meetings and ceremonies. As a result, the only places where teenagers can 'escape' to are each others' houses, the veranda of the village shop, the playing fields, or the shebeens. Even official recreational activities organised by the schools were affected by the socio-economic situation. Schools lacked much of the necessary sporting equipment and teachers were often reluctant to remain at school in the afternoons to take these extra mural activities. These factors, together with the location of the playing fields, meant that children performed sports activities on their own initiative. As a result, children's sporting activities are strongly gendered, with boys having the time and freedom to practise their soccer at least four times a week, in comparison to the girls, who were seen to practise far less regularly.

By comparing children and adults (previous) play activities and perceptions of place it is possible to see that more and more children, especially girls, are losing actual contact with important cultural environments, in particular the forest and river. Although many girls like these areas a lot, they do not get to spend time there, as these places are often perceived as unsafe by their parents. While younger children seemed excited to explore their natural environment, teenagers seemed more concerned with village based activities. The exception being those boys who hunted, collected wood to sell, or rode horses. However, corresponding research reveals that this 'dip' in interest in nature could also be related to the intensely social world that teenagers and young adults inhabit (Cornell 1979, 1988, Kaplan and Kaplan 2002, Verboom 2004). During this time the environment becomes merely a background to social activities. This could explain why younger children and adults enjoyed their time in the natural environment, but teenagers rarely ventured into the surrounding environment, besides those boys who hunted or collected wood or girls who gathered wood or water. However, this theory does not adequately explain those teenagers who use particular environments, such as rivers and forests, to allow them time and space to be alone. It could further be argued that the current socio-economic environment has created services which replace those that these environments provide, such as western media, but these were frequently seen as inadequate by teenagers, especially teenage girls. They commonly expressed a desire to leave the villages to live in urban areas. Further study is therefore required to see if this is, in fact a dip in interest, and how adults who have migrated to urban areas feel about their former rural environments. Long term studies into children who had access to environmental access during their youth prove that this generally has a long term impact upon environmental perceptions and values (Van Koppen, in press).

In spite of the apparent generalisations in gender roles today, there are always exceptions to the rule, and in this regard childhood may actually provide a time to transgress gender domains. Many chores depend upon household composition, and as such, some girls herd livestock, and some boys carry out girl-defined activities, such as collecting water. The increase in elder–headed or single-parent households often means that children carry out activities that would traditionally have been the domain of adults. Many boys reported assisting their mothers with washing at the river, one teenage boy was observed constructing an *igoqo* (traditionally the woman's domain) under the direction of his grandmother. As Morrow and Vokwana (2001: 148) state: it is social, cultural and economic circumstances which determine children's activities.

Another aspect to realise in the consideration of gender and environmental perceptions is that children may be very aware of activities and games conducted by their fellows, despite the fact that they are considered outside their gender domain. For example, while girls are supposed to be ignorant of the events that occur during male initiation, many of them can describe the series of events, including what boys will learn 'in the bush', and what activities they will conduct. Thus, even if children are not participating in gendered activities, they will often learn about them, often through stories or perhaps through indirect participation. Despite the gendered social dimensions surrounding them, many girls report a deep cultural knowledge of masculine activities and spaces and vice versa. Thus, while girls may have spent less time in the forest, and be scared of spending time there once they are older, this does not mean that it is not a valued environment. To some girls the times spent in the forest during childhood have made an indelible impression, and the forest remains an important place in their environmental awareness. However the perceived dangers in the forest and the socio-cultural boundaries around teenage girls' access to places means that for many the forest takes on a dual nature, it is useful to others, while at the same time being inaccessible to them:

Q. Which place do you like the most?
The forest, because people hunt and collect wood and medicines.
Q. Which place makes you happy?
The village (because there are no snakes).
Q. What is the thing you are most scared of?
The forest: because there are dangerous animals in the forest, and also the prisoners. When they escape from prison they used to go the forest to hide.
Q. Have you seen any?
No, because we don't go to the forest.
(Girls, 17 years, 15 years, 19 years, Pirie, December 2008).

These findings confirm other research which describes similarly gendered environmental access. Socio-cultural myths and stereotypes can work to identify certain spaces as dangerous for girls

(Matthews *et al.* 2000) which means that rural spaces are engendered "to the disadvantage of girls" (Tucker and Matthews 2001: 166). For example, teenage girls performing similar activities to teenage boys are often seen as "the "wrong" gender... in the "wrong" place" (Skelton 2000: 80). The discourse of rural childhood does not allow for the formation of "female identities", and instead, girls who wish to participate in activities such as 'climbing trees and getting dirty' can only do so by becoming 'tomboys' (Jones 1999 in Tucker and Matthews 2001: 166). This discourse gives boys more allowance to utilise natural spaces such as forests, while girls are increasingly confined to the home area. It is apparent that these restrictions eventually have an impact on the cultural knowledge that is known by girls and boys. Boys, being more able to freely utilise their environment, had an overall greater knowledge of cultural environmental narrative. In the field boys knew more forest names than did girls, and on forest walks displayed greater knowledge of *amayeza*. In some cases, younger boys, as the most active users of these spaces, accrue vast stores of environmental knowledge. Their active use of these environments and the accumulation of knowledge amongst peers, means that sometimes this knowledge surpasses that of 'non-expert' adults'. This increased cultural environmental knowledge is confirmed by other researchers. For example, during the Mbodla Heritage Initiative in Ndlambe, Wells (Pers. comm. 8 June 2009) found that those boys who hunted regularly had the most thorough working knowledge of the Albany Thicket. In many cases they possessed environmental knowledge that 'non-expert' adults did not, for example, knowing exactly where historically relevant caves were located (Wells Pers. comm. 8 June 2009).

4.11 The affect of gender violence on environmental use

South Africa's current high levels of violence against women and children can be seen to relate directly to parents' safety fears. These in turn become one of the major factors influencing children's recreational activities. Safety fears generally translate into more restricted and inflexible outdoor activities for girls (Matthews 1995: 287). Early studies revealed that cultural values relating to children's supervision and outdoor exposure strongly influenced childhood environmental experiences (Landy 1965). Mothers who were culturally expected to be attentive and protective over their children limited the time and location of play. While young children may initially conduct similar play, after a certain age "the spatial range of boys grew rapidly and considerably exceeded that of girls" (Matthews 1987 in Matthews 1995: 287) (See also Hart 1979 and Bjorklid 1982). Thus, parents in rural South Africa are behaving similarly to parents in western countries by expecting and therefore allowing boys to be "natural adventurers" and girls to be "more home-loving". In Sudan young children were shown to initially have equal, unrestricted

access to outdoor play spaces, but once girls reached puberty their access to the world outside the home began to narrow, until, once married, they no longer retained the right to public spaces (Katz 1993). While children in Kenya travelled equal distances during chores, boys wandered "further afield than girls" and "were free for a greater proportion of their time" than girls whose actions were restricted through household tasks (Munroe and Munroe 1971, Nerlove *et al.* 1971 in Matthews 1995: 287).

Smith and Barker (2001: 169) found that rural children's environmental use was mainly restricted by "adult concerns over children's use of private space" along with the increasing privatisation and cordoning off of rural space. While the privatisation of land is not something that is happening in the majority of rural areas in South Africa, children's worlds are increasingly limited by adults' restrictions upon their activities. However, children do have varying degrees of agency. They are also "able to call upon multiple frames of reference when navigating their way through space" even though these may be informed by their "upbringing and socialization" (Matthews 1995: 288). Narrative is often employed to illustrate reasons why certain areas are restricted. In this way it acts to embroider social and cultural ideas about the environment. It is one of the main "cultural artefacts" which "provide children with particular 'ways of seeing' local places" (Matthews 1995: 288).

In both rural and urban areas of South Africa, "inter-personal violence continues to affect daily life" (Wood 2005: 303). It is thought that South Africa's "complex political history of colonialism and industrialization has produced the conditions for violence of multiple kinds to flourish" (Beinart 1992, Stadler 1987 in Wood 2005: 303). Gender centred research increasingly reveals ways in which women's bodies are considered to be under the control of men, who may use or 'punish' them as they see fit. Whether it is the rape of girl children, rape within sexual relationships (Jewkes and Abrahams 2002), or group rape (Mokwena 1991, Wood 2005), "much of it is committed within established sexual partnerships or by men known to the survivors (Wood *et al.* 1998 in Wood 2005: 303). Wood (2005: 304) blames "patriarchal gender ideologies" as well as the current "crisis of masculinity"(Mokwena 1991, Vogelman and Lewis 1993), which sees women's bodies as the one battleground through which marginalised young men can affirm and enforce their masculinity.

Socially and culturally, girls can make fewer claims to environmental space. Even the journey to adulthood and the places associated with it are gendered. Boys come of age in the forest. Their location during this time in a "dangerous" space allows them to transcend the barrier between

boy and man. Their mastery of this liminal space gives them greater licence to utilise the forest. During their seclusion period they are traditionally taught how to survive 'in the bush' through hunting and gathering resources. Girls in the former Ciskei have no equivalent rite of passage. What should be considered is how this gendering of space affects environmental behaviour, and what role social perceptions have in regulating environmental access now and in the future. It is apparent that teenage girls do not access the forest very much, due to socio-cultural mores and their own personal social lives that keep them closer to the home. The question is then: what role will the environment play for these girls once they become older? While natural environments play an important socio-cultural, psychological and utilitarian role for adults, it remains to be seen if they will continue to be perceived and valued as such by the children of today. Indeed there are some studies which suggest that children who miss out on childhood experiences of nature may develop negative preconceptions about nature (Bixler and Floyd 1999). Pyle (1993) calls this "the extinction of experience", which can lead to generations of children who do not have nature experiences growing up without concern for their natural environment (Nabhan and St. Antoine 1993, Blizard 2007). The lack of these experiences and the loss of place based narratives can negatively affect children's sense of place, identity and belonging.

Chapter 5: Factors restricting and promoting the passing on of cultural environmental narrative

'The youth don't care for these things. They don't listen. You tell them something and tomorrow they will forget. We are the last ones now who know these things" (Elder, 88 years, Pirie, 19 Sept 2009).

"Ayikho lendela: there is no way (forward) here....I wake up every day and see the mountains, the trees, the cows. I want to wake up and see new people, new things. I want to live in town, to have a lifestyle. I want my own place, not someone telling me what to do or how to be. I want my own life" (Girl, 17 years, Pirie, 26 September 2009).

5.1   Preface

This chapter considers the factors restricting and promoting the passing on of cultural environmental narratives. It is important to consider what has gone into shaping and contributing to these narratives, as well as the times and places where narrative transmission occurs. It becomes increasingly apparent that the passing on of cultural environmental narrative is most strongly aligned with the context that produced these narratives. Many cultural environmental narratives are only aired when members are carrying out the appropriate activities. Although these are not the only arenas where narrative is passed down, they provide the most conducive environment for the passing on of cultural knowledge. At the same time, there are various external and internal influences which alternatively restrict or promote the passing on of narrative.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part considers the results of participatory exercises which focused on cultural activities and traditions. The second part considers how these promote or restrict narrative. The third part considers factors which have a significant impact upon the transmission of cultural narratives.

5.2   Traditions and activities related to Xhosa culture and identity

Participatory exercises uncovered several main cultural traditions and activities that were considered by participants to be essential practices that need to be conducted for one to remain a 'true Xhosa person'. These traditions and activities included: rituals, the initiation of the youth into adulthood, Xhosa cultural practices and beliefs, traditional food, clothing and dance, making

traditional beer, herding and milking cattle or goats, collecting wood, hunting, stick fighting, beautifying the home (through the application of mud and cow dung), making *kraals* and *amagoqos*, religion and traditional marriages. The performance of rituals, particularly the sending away and welcoming of ancestors, the initiation of boys and the performance of *imbeleko*, were seen as the most important cultural activities for the majority of participants. Of all the rituals conducted, perhaps the initiation of healers and the initiation of boys have the most direct relation to cultural environmental perceptions. This is because they require a seclusion period in specific 'wild' environments, whose liminal qualities offer the opportunity for transition (Turner 1967, 1969). Healers spend time in certain natural areas prescribed by dreams and usually associated with their ancestors and clan animals. Boys spend an extensive period staying in traditional seclusion areas of the forest, open fields, or near the river. During these times boys practice culturally important environmental activities such as hunting, and are taught how to survive 'in the bush'. In general, many rituals were observed to contain elements of environmental use and perceptions. For example, rituals often include the use of clan specific tree branches upon which to serve meat, or make mention of clan animals, which are often included in songs or clan praises.

Overall, the results showed a wide variety of cultural traditions and activities whose continued cultural value allows them to remain an enduring part of rural people's everyday life. What these traditions and activities also reveal is the use and value of the environment to maintain both livelihoods and well-being. While many studies have focused on rural households' use of natural resources to assist in livelihoods (Shackleton *et al.* 2001, Shackleton *et al.* 2002, Lawes *et al.* 2004, Hebinck and Lent 2007), there have been few studies which consider the cultural role of the environment in promoting well-being. If rituals are the most enduring of Xhosa cultural activities, the main reason for many rituals is to act as cultural assistance in well-being. This can be for an individual who is experiencing hardship, to banish evil forces, to celebrate a rite of passage, or to enlist the assistance of ancestors. All rituals contain some element of cultural environmental use and perception that has been passed down among clans and families (sections 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 reveal quite clearly the differences in environmental perceptions between field sites. Children from Pirie focused primarily on transition rituals and rituals for well-being, there were only two environment related rituals (*imfukamo*, river ritual). No children considered cultural environmental activities important. Children from Ndlambe also focused primarily on transition and well-being rituals, but they also made mention of river, cave and forest rituals. They considered a very varied list of activities that are related to environmental use and perceptions.

For example, they described collecting wood, hunting, herding, making *kraals* and *amagoqos*, collecting water from the river, beautifying the house with mud or cow dung, collecting wild fruit and vegetables and even washing and drying clothes by the river to all be activities that were essential for the maintenance of Xhosa cultural identity and belonging. This stark difference in cultural activities between field sites can be directly related to state restrictions on environmental use (section 5.12).

What is immediately apparent in Figures 5.1–5.4 is the prominence given to the ritual of *imbeleko*. This prevalent ritual can be performed for a variety of purposes for both adults and children. The main reason for the ritual is to protect the person it is performed for from harmful influences. A necklace is made during the ritual which is worn as a talisman through times of hardship or vulnerability. It could be argued that the ritual remains popular because it is relatively inexpensive, requiring a goat rather than a cow for its performance. Besides the consistency of *imbeleko*, responses were extremely varied between field sites. While Pirie children considered sending and welcoming ancestral rituals to be important, Ndlambe children were more concerned with traditional food, clothing and dance. One notable result is the mention of *intonjane* by Pirie children. Pirie girls, in particular, considered it to be as important as the initiation of boys. Pirie boys also mentioned it, both as an important tradition and an important activity. This is despite the fact that the majority of participants stated that *intonjane* does not happen regularly, with some going so far as to say that it is no longer practiced (see section 5.3.4).

Plate 5.1   Boys going to the bush for initiation and seclusion
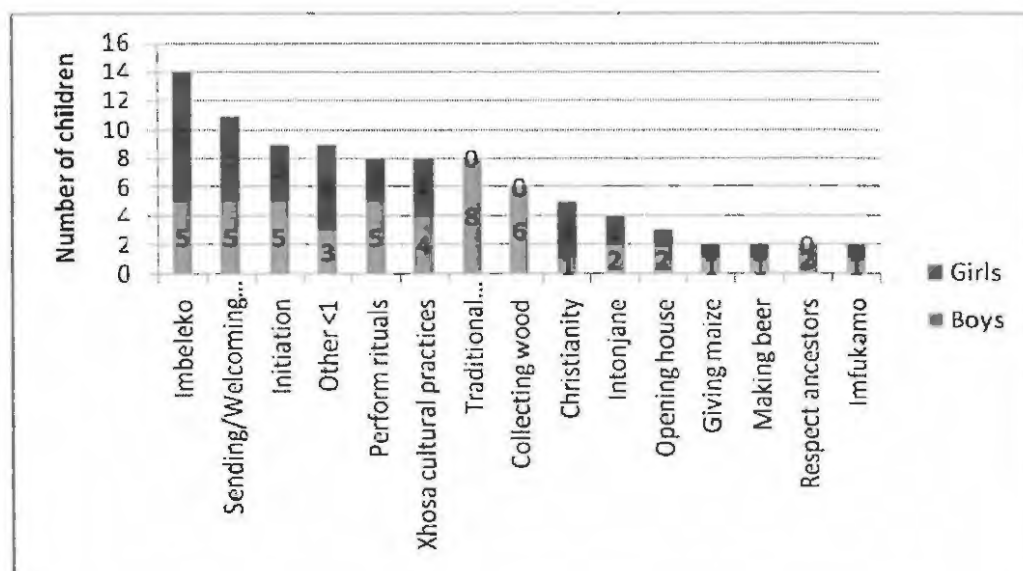
Figure 5.1   Traditions and practices Pirie children consider essential

Other <1 include river ritual, traditional marriage and being a good neighbour (boys) and ukusindela, women's new name, marriage, cow thanking ancestors, school and clan animals (girls).
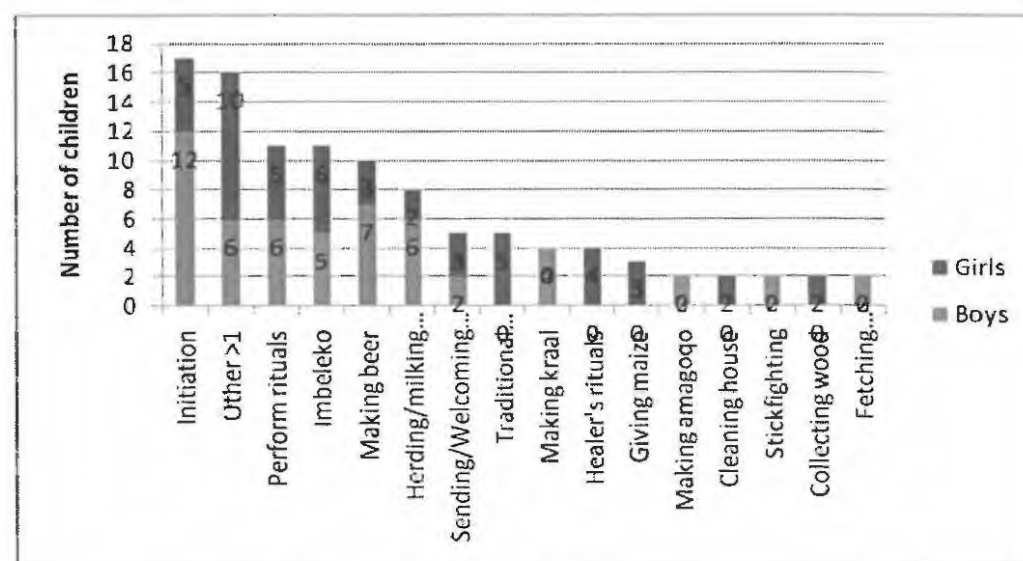
Figure 5.2   Traditions and practices Ndlambe children consider essential

Other <1 include: Xhosa cultural practices, drying clothes near the river, beautifying the house with mud or cow dung, respecting elders, collecting wild fruit or vegetables, hunting, (boys), and intonjane, opening house, school, respecting the ancestors, clan branches, ploughing, marriage, ritual for a new baby, forest ritual and cave ritual (girls).
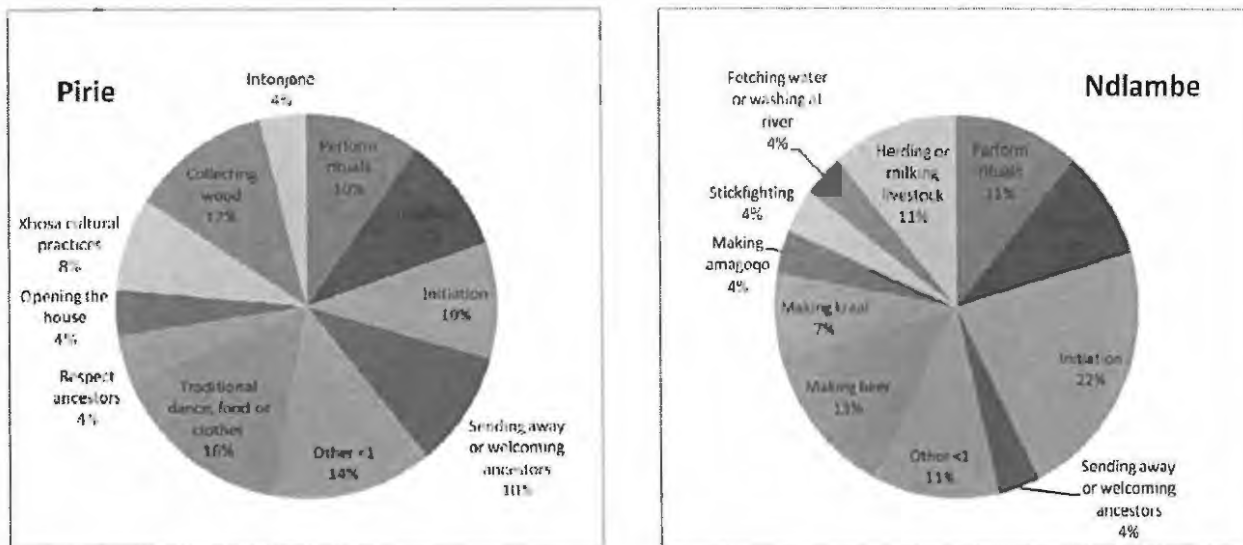
Figure 5.3   Traditions Pirie and Ndlambe boys considered important

Pirie: Other <1 include: giving maize (the ritual honouring a grandmother), Christianity, making traditional beer, infukamo, river ritual, traditional marriage, and being a good neighbour.
Ndlambe; Other <1 include: Xhosa cultural practices, drying clothes near the river, using mud and cow dung to beautify the floor and walls of the house, respect for elders, collecting wild fruit and vegetables, and hunting.
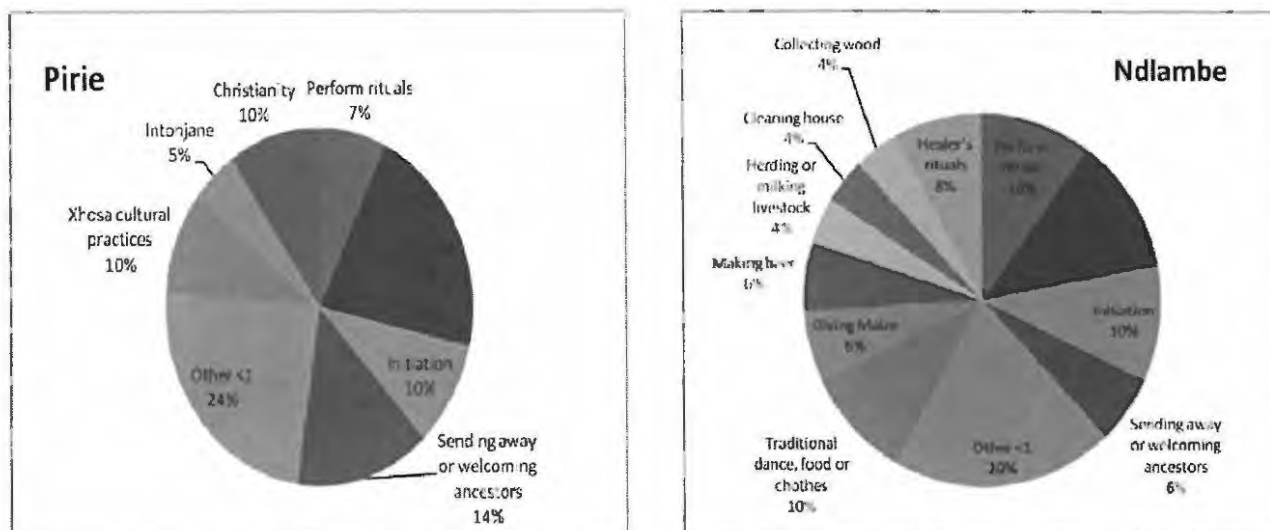
Figure 5.4   Traditions and activities Pirie and Ndlambe girls considered important

Pirie: Other < 1 include: giving maize (the ritual to honour a grandmother), opening the house (ritual for a new house to be blessed), making traditional beer, School, clan animals, imfukamo, ukusindela, the cow thanking the ancestors, marriage, and the woman's new name (given upon marriage). Ndlambe: Other <1 Include: Intonjane, opening the house (), school, respecting ancestors, using clan branches (for rituals), ploughing, marriage, the ritual for a new baby, forest rituals, and cave rituals.

What the figures reveal overall is the relevance of cultural traditions and activities in the maintenance of well-being as well as livelihoods. I will now go on to consider how these various traditions and activities affect the continuity of traditional environmental narrative.

5.3   Cultural assistance in personal well-being

5.3.1   The collection and utilisation of amayeza for cultural well-being

It is currently estimated that around 75 % of South Africans make use of wild plant products for medicinal and cultural purposes (Shackleton 2009). Traditional Xhosa medicines (*amayeza yesiXhosa*) are used holistically for both physical health and general well-being (Cocks and Dold 2002, Cocks and Moller 2002: 388) as well as for the promotion of good luck and protection against evil forces (Cocks 2006: 128). The widespread use of *amayeza* by rich and poor households in both rural and urban areas emphasises the continuance of cultural biodiversity values (Cocks 2006). This use theoretically involves the transfer of narratives relating to indigenous medicines. As previously mentioned (section 3.8), children showed an overall awareness of *amayeza*, proving that narratives relating to *amayeza* continue to be passed down. However, those children who had access to plant collectors, healers, herbalists or 'home doctors' showed increased awareness of *amayeza*, being exposed to increased opportunities to benefit from the passing on of *amayeza* narratives. Children who had the most direct access to *amayeza*, for example those who went collecting plants with relatives, had much higher knowledge of *amayeza* narratives. These were frequently passed on amongst peers, most particularly in conducive environments, for example when children visit the forest together for specific activities such as wood collection or hunting. Those children who "know *amayeza*" are recognised by their peers.

Even children belonging to families whose religion specifically forbade the use of *amayeza* were seen to have some knowledge of *amayeza*. Key participants from one such family were observed to utilise *amayeza* on a regular basis. Although they usually restricted their use to medicines which treated physical ailments, such as colds, they also used and possessed knowledge about less common medicines, for example *amayeza* which provided assistance to mothers and children after childbirth. The family therefore negotiated the boundaries instilled on them by their religion though utilising flexible conceptions of what *amayeza* was. Because of this flexibility, cultural environmental narratives continued to be passed down.

In many cases the household situation influences the passing down of narrative and has a lasting effect on household members. In one family, *amayeza* narratives had been passed down across

three generations, as well as being passed down to extended family members. These narratives were utilised in different ways: the grandmother utilised knowledge she had learnt from her husband to treat herself and her grandchildren when they felt sick; the son utilised knowledge his father had passed down to make his living as a herbalist; and a daughter-in-law and her children utilised knowledge she had learnt from her husband's family to collect medicinal plants for sale.

In Pirie there existed a strange dichotomy between the narratives non-expert participants told about *amayeza*, and what they are observed to do with *amayeza*. Participant observation revealed that although several participants adamantly denied use of *amayeza* initially, many were later observed to utilise some kind of traditional medicine. One household which firmly promoted itself as one which had no ties to ancestral traditions, even refusing to hold rituals, was observed to be growing *amayeza* and culturally significant plants. A plant collector who insisted that she "did not use *amayeza*" was observed to be utilising *isibindi* (*Ganoderma* sp.) several months later. Other participants who stated that they "did not believe in *amayeza*" would still use traditional medicines to heal certain ailments. This reluctance to admit to the use of *amayeza* may relate to the social desire not to be seen as 'traditional' in a society which strives to be 'modern'. However, in Pirie it is particularly related to the state restrictions in harvesting, and the continued prosecution of local harvesters by DAFF officials. What the observations reveal is that *amayeza* continues to be utilised by many rural households, despite their religious affiliations. However, further study is required to ascertain which narratives are being passed down among families and relatives, and which narratives remain in the domain of specialists, or perhaps are increasingly the property of commercial *amayeza* gatherers, or *amayeza* businessmen such as traditional chemists.

5.3.2   *The recognition of protected animals and animal assistance*

The connections which clans and families maintain with certain animals illustrate intimate human: nature relationships, whereby the protection and respect for these animals has a direct impact on the clan, family or individuals' well-being (sections 3.4 – 3.6.). The use of natural spaces and species to maintain cultural identity affords an intricate interdependence that speaks of generations of living in close contact with nature. The concept of a 'clan' or 'totem' animal that is closely associated with an individual or family; and thus afforded their protection, is of particular importance. Firstly, because it is found in many different regions of the world, both geographically and historically, and secondly, because of the close relationship it implies between humans and nature. This relationship is of particular importance if we are considering research into alternatives to 'protectionist' conservation. The recognition of clan animals as well as the community's use of and respect for sacred spaces could also be said to emphasise universal

human beliefs that reveal a closer and more intricate relationship with nature than has been afforded in mainstream conservation literature. Clan narratives and restrictions are one of the most powerful tool for realising cultural environmental perceptions and restrictions. Narratives relating to protected animals and clan obligations are usually passed down during times of ritual activity. In this way they are strongly related to context, as children will not usually have opportunities to hear these narratives unless the appropriate activities are being carried out, for example rituals may only occur after the sighting of clan or messenger animals.

5.3.3   Rituals that will end darkness and help fulfil ones dreams

The high importance placed on rituals as essential cultural activities, the constant performance of rituals, which take place almost weekly during holiday periods, and the prevalent use of rituals to solve personal and family crises all point to their significance in Xhosa cosmology and worldview. Rituals remain essential tools that enable Xhosa people to "end darkness and help you fulfil your dreams" (Girl, 13 years, Pirie, 21 December 2008). However, the performance of rituals and the following of Xhosa traditional practices and activities goes beyond assistance in physical health or luck. Essentially these practices are seen as the only way "for us to be honestly and fully humans" (Girl, 14 years, Pirie, 20 January 2009). This is why failure to conduct rituals can result in physical and mental ailments.

> 'If you don't do rituals according to our culture, you are going to be sick, maybe sometimes you are going to be crazy' (Woman, 70 years, Pirie, 7 November 2008).

The high prevalence of rituals in the two field sites, and the ritualised use of culturally important plants, animals and spaces during rituals, allows one to realise the existence of a ritualised landscape. Cultural mapping revealed areas of high cultural importance. If one were to focus purely on ritually important landscapes, it would be possible to map a series of expanding ritual sites, from households' *kraals* and *amagoqos* to initiation sites, as well as sacred pools, caves and forest spaces. One could even map the areas where ritually important resources are located, such as clan related trees or *amayeza*. The continual performance of rituals, especially rite-of-passage rituals such as initiation, mean that ritual is one way in which landscape perceptions are built and sustained over generations. Particular rituals of landscape, such as *ukuNgxengxeza*, a ritual in the forest to apologise to the ancestors, (where the family members camp in the forest), directly relates to environmental assistance in well-being.

Some participants described an ancestral connection or assistance as "the brightness". While these narratives were not commonly spoken, their existence illustrates a cultural view whereby

rituals and appropriate cultural actions can bring about "the brightness" which enables one to lead an almost charmed life.

"When you are going to collect amayeza, you have to buy white beads, so that every time you dig/cut that medicine, you must leave white beads....To know/see a medicine is a gift from your ancestors. So by leaving [white beads in the forest], it is to say thank you, or is to call the brightness from your ancestors, which means that you are asking them to make you to see more and more medicines.
The other way [to call the brightness] is to make a ritual and talk to your ancestors: like the ritual I am going to do. I am going to ask for brightness and ask my ancestors to become better [to be healed]...I am asking for brightness around me. And after you have asked that, you will see that everything is going to go well around you and on you" (Man, 77 years, Ndlambe, 24 May 2009).

"My oldest brother was training to be a healer, he was bright because he was believing in that isiziba" (Woman, 71 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

While these rituals and practices were discouraged during colonial times and sometimes forbidden by missionaries, it seems that particular rituals such as initiation, *imbeleko* and sending and welcoming rituals are incredibly popular amongst both rural and urban Xhosa. In fact there seems to be almost a revival of rituals. Many older participants stated that culture had been severely impacted upon by modernisation:

"People do not care about their culture and rituals; they are just following the white people's things. We grew up at the time where people left behind those [cultural] things" (Man, 91 years, and his wife, 73 years, elders, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009).

However, despite these explanations by elders, rituals were seen to be a common occurrence at both field sites, for many children the attendance of rituals was almost a weekly activity. One boy explained the prevalence of rituals by stating: "on weekends, I eat meat" referring to the meat of animals which are ritually slaughtered. One middle aged informant explained that his parent's generation "never used to do these rituals here, because these are church people. It is their children doing them. They come back and do these rituals" (Man, 35 years, Pirie, 25 September 2009). Just as modernity brings with it a continuance of evil forces and witchcraft accusations, even in big urban centres (Bähre 2002), so rituals remain an important tool to dispel these forces and to bring one closer to being fully human and attracting the brightness of ancestral favour. Plates 5.2–5.4 show the various circumstances by which children attend rituals, showing that ritual attendance is open to children regardless of age or gender. In many cases, even children living in townships are exposed to ritual events (Plate 5.3), as urban Xhosa families continue ritual observances, and often maintain close links with their rural homes (Cocks and Dold 2008). As with all rituals, the process of conducting the ritual, including the preparations for the ritual, and the household's responsibilities during the ritual, are all as important as the ritual itself. For example, dreams of ancestors often result in the process of brewing traditional beer. This takes

place over several days, and it is important for family members to be part of the process. This emphasis on ritual as a process rather than a product provides a very receptive environment for the passing on of traditional narratives.

Plate 5.2   Children watching the ritual slaughter of a goat in their neighbour's kraal during *ukubuyisa* (the ritual to bring back an ancestor)

Plate 5.3   Young cousins who live in an urban township visited their family's village home to attend the same ritual

Plate 5.4   This teenager requested a picture of her in the kraal taking a sip of *umqombothi* (traditional beer) during a ritual

5.3.4   *Rituals for transitions*

Although they may be linked to a desired increase in wellness and ancestral protection, transitional rituals are more linked to various rites-of-passage. Many, if not most, urban families retain ties to rural areas where they spend holidays or return to perform rituals. However, the rituals that are currently conducted are hugely influenced by current socio-economic conditions. While some rituals remain central to Xhosa identity, such as the *umguyo* and *umgidi* rituals associated with male circumcision, other rituals, more specifically those which are female orientated, have waned in popularity and in some areas are no longer performed. Academic research into African women's traditional rituals, especially coming-of-age practices, has been primarily focused on negative or exotic aspects of sexuality (such as female genital cutting), leading Mama (1996, 47) to ask:

> "... where is the research on traditions which empower women, which give them more, rather than less, control of their sexual and reproductive lives. Given the claims to this effect, why is there not more research on aspects of indigenous cultures which empower women's sexuality?"

While there has been much scholarship in South Africa relating to the ceremonies and ritual spaces relating to diviners (Hunter 1936, Bernard 2003, Bernard and Khumalo 2004a) and male circumcision rituals (Soga 1931, Mager 1998), there is currently a lack of research relating to female-centred transitional ceremonies and spaces. Men enjoy increased status and respect after initiation, and female healers are empowered by their change in status as diviners, but ordinary

women at the two field sites seem to have no equivalent coming-of-age rituals and many continue to exist as marginalised persons. As a result, many women continue to see childbirth or marriage as the 'only way' to improve status. This was not always so. Earlier writings (MacDonald 1891, Soga 1931, Hunter 1936), mention practices such as the female-centred ritual of *intonjane* existing in equivalence to the boys' circumcision ceremony. While some of these descriptions are tainted by the lens of exoticism (MacDonald 1891), it can be concluded that *intonjane* was previously a widespread practice, ideally taking place at the onset of menses, and involving both private seclusion and public celebration. The ritual was historically linked to celebrations of sexuality, virginity and the choosing of brides. In some cases the ritual is linked to sacred clan spaces and *izilo*, while in others it is linked to certain fertility related ceremonies like a visit to the mountain or the making of a sacred fire. While *intonjane* still occurs in isolated instances at the two field sites, sometimes under the name *ijaka*, mention of the ritual was rare and those who had attended one were few and far between. Research revealed not only a definite lack of female-centred rituals, but a large gap in girls' and younger women's knowledge about these rituals. Thus transmission of cultural narratives can therefore be seen to be strongly linked to relevant practices. In cases where these practices happen occasionally some narratives remain. Where the practice no longer occurs there is limited occasion for narrative transmission.

There are potentially two main correlating reasons for this decrease and potential disappearance of women's coming-of-age rituals and the narratives associated with them. The first being the impact of colonial systems that promoted patriarchal practices whilst disregarding other practices that could have empowered women. In many cases colonial systems, particularly missionaries, actively discouraged "heathen practices" such as initiation, traditional marriage, ox racing and beer drinking parties (Vazi 1988: 49–50). One can imagine that missionaries were particularly eager to discourage Xhosa rituals related to such unimaginable topics as women's fertility and teenager's sexuality. Indeed, John Ross was vehemently against *intonjane*, which he considered to be "a sinful indulgence to which the women of Pirie were attached" (Vazi 1988: 51). While there is less state imposition on cultural practices today, the current socio-economic climate in South Africa leaves many families with less physical and economic resources with which to perform rituals. The absence of *intonjane* could here be seen as a result of gender biases in increasingly impoverished rural areas. In short, "because people don't have money and cows" (Healer, 89 years, Ndlambe, 24 July 2009). It could also be seen more directly to indicate the decreasing amounts of livestock and agricultural processes maintained by households in the former Ciskei. In a society with increasingly limited resources, it is usually the requirements of

men that are prioritised (Assie-Lumumba 1997, 2001). This has significant gender related environmental implications.

However, as mentioned earlier (Section 5.2), some narratives relating to *intonjane* do continue to be passed down. While these narratives are not part of everyday schema, they are kept alive within certain families. In some cases, these narratives express the need and desire for a ritual that is not currently supported by the current socio-cultural environment. The fact that these narratives exist in Pirie despite missionaries attempts to forbid the practice, speak about the endurance of cultural narrative:

> *"Intonjane is the ritual that turns a young girl to womanhood and [after it she] may have the right to marry"* (Boy, 9 years, Pirie, 21 December 2009).

> *"I and my parents we like ijaka. The one [I] hope is to do ijaka. It's the most Xhosa one, and [a good] example of a Xhosa ritual. If you are a girl before you get married you should do intonjane as a Xhosa girl. You should go in the kraal because it is an important ritual and should be done"* (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2009).

The one time when resources are allocated to female centred rituals such as *intonjane* is during the process of *ukuthwasa*, (becoming a healer). Female healers undergoing this process often report that they initially felt "as if there is a missing link" (Mlisa 2009: 167). The rituals of *intonjane* and *infukamo* act directly to heal this "missing link or part of her that was lost" (Mlisa 2009 : 167). It could be therefore be argued that some women may be able to regain access to social and spiritual agency through becoming healers. However, this access remains denied to their counterparts.

5.4   Local factors influencing the transmission of cultural narrative

5.4.1   *Livelihood contribution of cultural environmental activities and practices*

Rural access means that households potentially have access to numerous natural resources that are culturally used to assist in subsistence, livelihoods or well-being. Along with these practices are increased chances for environmental narrative transmission. In many cases households also form part of specific resource using groups, which they can utilise to ease labour. For example, agricultural work parties or wood collection groups that practice firewood collection (women) or cut wood before a ritual or a funeral (men). In Pirie participants stated that they "go to the forest to cut wood, maybe every week" to cater for funerals. At both field sites, the enduring view of the forest and the river as "a reserve" when necessary, ensures that they continue to have cultural importance and value. However, those households who utilised these resources more regularly offered increasing opportunities for environmental narrative to be passed down,

especially when children were included in regular trips to the forest and the river. For example, some children in Pirie regularly assisted in washing clothes at the stream, many young girls in Ndlambe accompanied their mothers and grandmothers on their weekly wood collection trips.

It is important to recognise that those children who accompany adults to culturally valued environments do not automatically learn similar amounts of environmental narratives. Family background and adult's personal relationships with cultural spaces strongly affect children's reception to narrative. Two young boys who regularly assisted a relative (one of the boys' father) in the collection of *amayeza* were seen to have absorbed differing amounts of environmental narratives relating to *amayeza*. When the cousins visited the forest with a group of children, the herbalist's nephew was seen to know and explain much more about *amayeza* than the man's son. In this case, the boy was seen to have a personal interest and excitement in *amayeza* narratives that had enabled him to absorb far more than his cousin. The fact that his mother (a single parent) made her only income from selling *amayeza* may have helped to make these narratives more valuable to him. Thus, it becomes apparent that it is not only household use of the environment, but also the attitude that adults have towards the environment that influences the passing on of environmental narrative and perceptions.

Plate 5.5   **Young children with their cousins in the kraal during the ritual of *umguyo*, before the young men go to the bush for initiation**

Plate 5.6   Nowikisi Yedwa, 96 years, displays the skirt she made and wore when she was a girl for the ritual of *intonjane*, this ritual (as related to female initiation) is no longer common in the two field sites

5.4.2   *Cultural environmental activities and practices*

Rural households are able to perform various cultural practices that are seen to be essential to the maintenance of Xhosa identity, and which have environmental dimensions. Surprisingly, these activities are not limited to obvious identity markers such as the maintenance of *kraals* and *amagoqos* (Cocks 2006). Cultural activities such as herding, beautifying the home through the application of mud and cattle dung, washing clothes in the river and drying them on the bushes and eating traditional food were all seen as important cultural activities. The role of wood collection in Xhosa female identity has been considered (Section 3.8). One of the most resilient and misunderstood cultural activities is hunting.

Research into subsistence hunting of wildlife in Africa has been more concentrated in equatorial countries, where hunting supplies an increasingly unsustainable bush meat trade, particularly where logging has opened up new roads into indigenous forests (Fa *et al.* 1995, Bennet and Robinson 2000, Davies 2002, Fa *et al.* 2002, 2005). Hunting has primarily been considered in terms of its contribution to household nutrition and food security (Shackleton *et al.* 1999, Manika and Trivedi 2002, Rao and McGowen 2002, Paumgarten 2005, McGarry and Shackleton 2009). Although there has been some research which touches on historical and present cultural aspects of hunting in coastal Transkei forests (Cooper and Swart 1992, Devilliers and White 2000, and White 2001, 2004), overall there has been very little work done to consider the role of hunting as a traditional Xhosa activity and the narratives of masculinity that accompany the sport. At both field sites, it was apparent that hunting continues unchecked in both the state and community forest. The difference being that villagers hunting in the state forest restricted their activities to times and places when there would be less chance of being caught by forest guards. The narratives of adult forest users still recall the fierce prosecution of community members who were caught hunting or harvesting forest resources during the 1970's. Although older men acknowledge the central role of hunting as a cultural activity, there was no evidence of this knowledge being passed down to younger men, particularly because there were no allowed occasions for hunting to occur. It remains a secretive activity. As a result, young men and boys hunt without having learnt the cultural restrictions relating to hunting. The only common hunting narratives resulting from this are ways to hunt while avoiding prosecution:

> "We go to the forest on Sundays, when there is no forest police. We go to hunt. We walk with dogs, carrying sticks and axes. We hunt baboons and bucks. We like to shoot the birds near our homes or near the river" (Boys, 9 and 11 years, Pirie, 6 March 2009).

In Ndlambe older men's narratives recalled that hunting of jackals (*Canis mesomelas*) was actively encouraged by the state in the past; with a bounty offered for each skin. Beinart (2003: 195-234) considers the far reaching effects of the severely misguided state sponsored bounty-system and poisoning campaigns against vermin animals. At one stage the termite eating *aardwolf* (*Proteles cristatus*) was "placed on the vermin list" despite general consensus that it was not a predator (Beinart 2003: 217). In both field sites, jackals continue to be hunted. Boys stated that they eat the meat and sell the skins to diviners, or give the skins to their parents to sell to *amayeza* shops.

When forests or Thickets fell under traditional law, hunting was a well practiced activity, with older men passing on the socio-cultural laws governing hunting to younger men and boys (Soga 1931). Communities practiced several different types of hunting, including group hunts which took the form of day hunts (*ingqina*), or hunting expeditions lasting several days (*polo*) (Soga 1931).

Particular forests were seen as the reserve of the chief or king, and these forests were avoided by commoners (Eely et al. 2004). Cultural restrictions relating to protected, clan and sacred animals as well as sacred spaces had opportunity to be passed down. State environmental restrictions and changing household structures mean that hunting continues, albeit in a more secretive and defiant or haphazard manner. The cultural laws relating to hunting are not necessarily passed down as there is little opportunity for young boys to hear about, or to go hunting with older men. This is either because it is not seen as a sanctioned activity, or because the older men are not available: often being away in urban areas working. Those participants who had been taught hunting by older men knew some cultural hunting laws and restrictions, but many young participants hunted without having access to these. These differences are readily apparent in the narratives below:

> "We were told whenever you go hunting, you mustn't bring money or a necklace, because to a hunter they mean bad luck. Maybe you are walking with someone who is carrying money, then you won't find the animals, or maybe you find them but they kill your dogs and run away. The other man we used to go with told us this. He always liked to walk with us, even when he goes to collect cattle. He is our cousin. He told us which forests have more animals and which forests have less. uMang'ephakathi is a good forest. We were told we mustn't go to the cliffs because we may get hurt. They are called Ilima lerhini (the cliffs of Grahamstown). On rainy days the hunters are always in the forest. Because at those times, the animals come out of the trees, so it's the time you find more animals... We were never told any animals that we can't kill, only at the [game] reserves. You were not allowed to hunt female animals" (Boys, 12 years and 15 years, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009).

> "There are no animals that I was told not to kill. I don't know what my izilo is... Our older brothers taught us how to hunt, their fathers taught them. The main reason to go hunting is to get meat. We sell the skin to healers, like monkey and jackal skins, for R150. We have sold two this year. The families don't like what we are doing, and when we ask why, they don't give answers. There are no rules about hunting, you can [even] kill mothers with young. In terms of places you can't go: my parents told me not to go to the cliffs because I may get hurt" (Boy, 17 years, Ndlambe, 14 June 2009).

One of the cultural environmental restrictions that seems to be more recognised are the restrictions related to the gathering of honey:

> "We learnt about collecting honey from our big brothers, the time to collect honey is in winter. The bees are making honey in winter. When collecting honey you have to leave a little piece for the bees. This is so that they have to make more" (Boys, 12 years and 15 years, Ndlambe, 15 June 2009).

The loss of cultural restrictions relating to harvesting and hunting wild resources has huge implications for conservation. Without being socially sanctioned and supported, cultural narratives that define cultural practices can fall away. While this change is expected in a country that is becoming increasingly westernised, there is a difference between practices that have fallen away, such as the gathering of traditional broom material, and practices that continue

unabated without cultural restrictions, such as hunting. While many adult participants may agree that there are certain clan animals and protected animals, children were observed to be unaware of many of these restrictions. In addition, many boys hunt indiscriminately, being satisfied with whatever they can kill. This finding is confirmed in a recent study of wild food consumption by children in the former Transkei (McGarry and Shackleton 2009, Kaschula and Shackleton 2009), where children were observed to kill culturally significant animals such as monitor lizards (*Varanus albigularis*) fairly regularly, along with vulnerable and endangered species such as the southern giant petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*) and the giant golden mole (*Chrysospalax trevelyani*) (McGarry 2008: 82). In some cases these animals are especially sought out by boys for their cultural assistance, for example the livers of snakes and monitor lizards are supposed to be strengthening and empowering when consumed (Boys, 9 years and 11 years, Pirie, 6 March 2009). Hunting narratives are strongly linked to place narratives: children in Pirie recorded eighteen different places where hunting was practiced, along with fourteen different places where boys went to shoot birds. Hunting therefore covered a greater range and became more prevalent than cattle herding, which recorded only sixteen places (17 February 2009, Pirie).

What emerged very strongly at both field sites was the endurance of traditional hunting, despite state restrictions and the huge importance that hunting is accorded by men and boys. At the same time there are currently only limited hunting narratives being passed down to younger boys, particularly those who do not have access to hunt with older men, such as the young boys who hunt illegally in Pirie forest. This has worrying consequences for biodiversity conservation. At both field sites, young female participants also reported that they went hunting, something which is unheard of in the research so far.

> "I went hunting with my brother and friends, last week on Saturday. We got a rabbit, we slaughtered it and ate it. We threw the skin away" (Girl, 12 years, Pirie, 26 November 2008).

Further research is therefore required to ascertain the role of hunting in Xhosa masculine identity, and the transmission or lack thereof of hunting narratives. The dismissal and 'illegalisation' of central cultural activities such as hunting and wood collection in current conservation areas speaks volumes of the schism between local and state environmental views. Such schisms call for a revision of conservation to include cultural values and cultural landscapes (Munjeri 2003, 2004) into participatory conservation. Support for local practices such as recreational hunting (White 2004) may provide a key to strengthening local environmental values and promoting local support for participatory environmental land use management and planning. Increased community stewardship may further assist in policing unsustainable hunting by outsiders (White 2004).

The chapter will now consider the external factors that have contributed to the passing on of cultural narratives.

5.5. Changing household composition

One of the strongest factors influencing the passing on of cultural narrative is the dramatic change in rural household's composition. Many children live with grandparents or other relatives in rural areas across South Africa. Some children maintain a close connection with their parents in urban areas. In this way many children are becoming increasingly mobile, fluent in both rural and urban life. During the holiday periods many children left the village to stay with parents or relatives in urban areas. At the same time, urban children came to visit rural relatives, and urban boys in particular came to conduct their initiation rites in their parent's villages. While the majority of South Africans now live in urban areas, many of them retain links to their original rural homes, coming back to conduct rituals, and sometimes, to retire (de Wet 1995, Hebinck and Van Averbeke 2007, Hebinck and Lent 2007).

Children who spend time in rural areas where cultural environmental activities continue to take place have substantially more chance at learning the cultural environmental narratives that accompany these activities. Children who live with grandparents or parents who regularly utilise rivers and forests benefit from this increased exposure, which in turn influences their own environmental use and perceptions. In some ways children may benefit from living with grandparents who have both the time and the desire to practice cultural activities and to pass on cultural narratives. For example, children whose grandmothers took them to collect wood had learnt about *amayeza* because of these trips (Focus group, grade 7, 4 November 2008).

> "We used to call our granny Mom, and she always told us iinstomi before we went to bed. And even me, I told my children. [Our granny told us] stories about the trees in this forest, the animals that they used to hunt, the grass that they used to make brooms..."(Glayds Sito, 47 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009).

However, those children who live with single parents or parents whose work takes them away from home for the majority of the day have less opportunities to observe and experience cultural environmental narratives, merely because their caregivers do not have time to practice cultural activities like wood collection.

> "Children here face a lot of problems. They are living with grandparents, their parents are not here. So they do as they wish. Those parents, some are not working so they don't provide anything. Grannies provide with their social grants...Grandparents are not that old. They don't have stories to tell. E.g. if you go to grade R, the mothers of those kids are in high school, the parents are still kids themselves" (Teachers, Pirie Primary School, 22 October 2008).

The increase in single or elder-headed households (Bank 2002) has also influenced children's recreational activities. With fewer adults to supervise them, children often have less chance to learn cultural activities, but more freedom for recreation. Although some elders may be strict with their grandchildren, many were seen to be indulgent, or to have less knowledge about what their grandchildren were actually doing. For example, one grandmother explained that she took such care of her grandson because he was "all I have left" after her only child had died of an HIV/AIDS related illness. In other cases, children whose parents worked away from home, or those whose parents suffered from alcoholism, had more freedom than their peers. Children who had no need to go home, for example those who do not have parents waiting for them, were seen to form bonds with neighbours and sympathetic adults. For example, in Pirie a group of small boys would regularly play at the house of the crèche's teacher in the afternoons. In all of these cases, children had limited opportunities to learn environmental narratives from their families. However, narrative transmission did occur amongst those children that continued to practice environmental activities with other adults or peers, revealing that direct family is not the only means of narrative transmission or acquisition.

5.6 New media and technologies

Western media is one of the strongest factors influencing the passing on of cultural narrative. In some cases it works to promote this, by exposing children to cultural and environmental narratives they may be unaware of. For example, there are television programmes that discuss animals and environmental problems like pollution and climate change. Other programmes may include Xhosa history, culture and traditions, discussing healers or initiation. All of these increase children's knowledge, which is particularly important in a time when families have less time or opportunity to impart cultural knowledge.

The biggest impact of western media however, is its all pervasive role in family entertainment and recreation. While older participants spoke about being told *iinstomi* by their parents and grandparents in the evenings before bed, today's children are entertained by television. In particular, international and local soap operas, such as *"Days of our Lives"* and *"Generations"* are followed religiously by the whole family. Even those parents who may have wished to tell *iintsomi* stated that their children would "not be interested in these things".

> These children don't care; when we talk they say those things are old fashioned" (Woman, 73 years, Pirie, 20 Sept 2009).

[Parents don't tell iinstomi now] because [the children] get bored...maybe it's the changing of the times" (Woman, 49 years, Pirie, 11 March 2009).

The removal of a traditional time of narrative transmission means that now, more than ever, children have to rely on events and activities for the passing on of narrative.

5.7   Changes in recreation

In many ways new media and technologies allow for the inclusion of Xhosa culture into mainstream commerce, which in turn has an impact on recreational patterns. For example, new technologies allow children can gain access to traditional songs recorded by local artists. However, the rise in western recreational media may to some degree replace traditional means of recreation. Chapter four discussed the changes in children's recreational activities and their use of space. Narratives from older participants describe an extensive list of environmental recreational activities, from playing in the forest to making dolls and cattle from natural materials such as river mud. Several older participants also spoke of weekly parties held for and by adolescents. These traditional parties (imitshotsho) allowed youths to get together for singing and dancing without adult interference:

"We grew up making imitshotsho (traditional parties), and at the time we left school we attended those parties, that was where we used to meet the boys...you had to ask to use someone's house..we used to stand in a line and sing and the boys had to dance [there were no older people there] only boys and girls" (Nkosinathi Thonisi, 68 years, and Nomilile Thonisi, 66 years, Ndlambe, 22 July 2009).

Today there is a marked absence of recreational activities for the youth. Besides the playing of sport, there are only church and study groups. There is a traditional dancing group for girls in Ndlambe, but this seems to be arranged around dancing competitions, rather than a regular occurrence.

The forest does not occupy the same recreational space for today's youth. It does have significance for boys, particularly those who hunt or herd livestock. However, safety concerns and cultural restrictions mean that very few adolescent girls see the forest as a recreational space. Today's youth have more village centred recreational needs.

Maybe the older people have a strong relationship with the forest. Not the young generation. They like to stay in town. There are shebeens now and jukeboxes. They like that, they don't like the bush (Teachers, Pirie Primary School, 22 October 2008).

"Our children don't care for horses or cattle, or even nature. It's the change of times" (Chief, 73 years, Pirie, 19 February 2009).

Comparisons between children's and adult's recollections of childhood reveal that recreational activities have been strongly influenced by all of these factors. The following extract describes the change that has taken place in the way herding is conducted, and the changes in children's environmental use and perceptions:

"Long ago the boys used to go herding the whole day, taking umpoqogo (scrambled maize meal) and an empty bottle. Lots of people have told me about it. My uncle, my father told me. Even [your host father], he told me he did it, saying I mustn't remind him of those old days. [because] they are gone now. Now the boys take the cattle and leave them, or take them to the river and leave them. They don't like to herd. I think because in the old days there was no TV, no cell phones or computers. So you know that in the forest you could play all kinds of games, in the villages you could only play soccer and a few other games. In the forest you could play the whole day. But that doesn't happen anymore. These kids don't want to go to the forest, they are scared of snakes. In the old days kids weren't scared of snakes; they just ran away from them and carried on playing. I think it's this modern life. There are too many distractions in the village. The forest used to be a place of entertainment and enjoyment. (Woman, 25 years, Pirie, 28 Sept 2009).

While Xhosa society has always been patriarchal, gender divisions, especially during recreational activities, seem more sharply defined than ever. During games and activities boys are often ready to assert their superiority, with gendered ideals, such as 'girls can't play soccer' or 'girls can't draw'. However, when one consults historical and oral sources which discuss traditional 'gendered' activities as stick fighting, it becomes apparent that these roles were not always as strictly defined. Mostert (1992) describes women playing an active role in warfare during the 1800's, often supporting their men on the battlefield, with many women being well versed in stick fighting. Oral sources today confirm this, saying that although it was not officially sanctioned, in the past girls would often use fighting sticks as a way to settle disputes:

"The girls a long time ago, if they wanted to fight, they would take ropes and inkatha (the headrest for carrying inyanda – piles of wood) and go to the forest. They were also fighting with fighting sticks. There was also a time that older girls/women had to teach them how to fight with fighting sticks), girls used to use fighting sticks, but they could only do it in the forest, because they were scared of older people" (Woman, 25 years, Pirie, 28 Sept 2009).

While society's expectations required older girls to remain at home, being free only to visit friends or officially sanctioned places, such as church, many girls were observed to 'bend' these rules. However, their recreational activities are increasingly village or urban based. One teenage girl, who had a strict family, was able to visit the nearest urban centre on the weekends by telling her parents she had extra lessons at her school (which was located in this area). Similarly, many teenage boys and girls who wish to socialise inform their parents that they are going to a friend's house for studying purposes. While teenagers, especially girl's recreational activities are morally sanctioned, many are able to avoid these rules due to the disintegration of close-knit families that has left many households run by single or elderly parents. Even the strict morals of grandparents

have little relation to the real dangers that many teenagers face, such as violence against women and children, alcohol and drug abuse and unplanned pregnancies. The customary reluctance to discuss such matters and the lack of control women feel over their bodies (Kim and Motsei 2002) has potentially contributed to the high prevalence of these issues.

5.8   Gendered environmental access

What was apparent at both field sites was the fact that boys have increased knowledge of environmental narratives because of their greater freedom of mobility; brought about in part by their socio-cultural activities, which allow greater access to culturally important environments. This was especially true for activities such as hunting, herding and collecting and cutting wood in the forest. Initiation also offers boys a formal opportunity to learn cultural and environmental practices and beliefs. Besides living in a natural area for the seclusion period (forest, grazing camp, near the river), boys have the time and space to practice cultural activities such as hunting, and they also receive cultural instruction from elders during these times.

One of the main conclusions of the study is the gendering of space. Ritual activities actively portray this, with homesteads traditionally divided into male (kraal) and female (igoqo) sacred spaces. Natural environments are used by men and women in different ways. While women collect firewood by head load, alone or with friends, men collect firewood in groups using carts, sleds, tractors or donkey carts. While younger children may access the environment in similar ways – with both boys and girls using the forest and river for swimming and playing, once these children grow up they are expected to conform to the socially gendered world of their parents. Teenage girls are expected to remain around the home. Teenage boys, by comparison, are free to spend their time playing soccer or socialising around the village. Boys at both field sites practice hunting, even though their parents may view it as a dangerous and illegal activity. Teenage girls seldom venture into the forest unless they are accompanying older women collecting wood. In Pirie especially, the imposition of state control of the forest has combined with a fear of strangers to make the forest an inaccessible place for many, especially for older girls.

Teenage girls in grade 10 drew cultural maps that described the village in detail, naming playing fields and friends' houses. However, they only filled in vague details for forests. Boys, younger boys in particular (grade 4 and grade 7), drew very detailed forests, describing the different forest, river and dam names, and drawing animals that one could find there. These mapping exercises revealed that for teenage girls, their environment shrunk to their social scene and the

permitted areas they felt they could safely traverse. Younger girls, by comparison, drew more detailed forests, as well as women washing clothes at rivers and collecting wood, activities that they accompanied their parents on.

> "Last time I went [to the forest] was when I was in grade 7, fetching wood. I don't go now. because I'm not interested in going there and I'm too busy to go there. My Mom still uses firewood. She fetches it with neighbours, when the wood is finished she goes. [I last went to the river] I'm not sure, maybe when I was 13, I used to swim, and fetch water, I don't go there now...I don't know trees, I don't know the names of amayeza. [If someone got sick] I would go to the clinic...I don't believe in those things... Growing up here is boring because here there are few activities. ..here we are suffering and the rate of crime is very high..." (Girl, 18 years, Pirie, 20 February 2009).

The pervasive violence against women and children means that girls who practice environmental activities such as wood collection are placing themselves in vulnerable positions. Incidences of rape of girls who had been herding livestock or collecting wood served as stark reminders of this.

It seems that the cultural activities that are encouraged today as strongly gender biased. For example, the initiation of boys is something that is accepted at all levels of society, even down to the fact that boys are legally allowed to attend school in their 'new men's' clothes after initiation. While government may be eager to include IK and practices in the mainstream, the official concretisation of IK often contributes to a rigidity that echoes current patriarchal trends and disallows the space and depth that this knowledge may have in practice. For example, the initiation of boys is publically promoted as a secretive, empowering event which only males are privy to. In 2007, the television programme umtunzi weNtaba (lit: In the shadow of the mountain), was pulled from National broadcaster SABC1 after just two episodes. The show, which hoped to discuss male initiation openly, (particularly the risks initiates can incur from improperly trained circumcisers), was vilified by outraged 'official' bearers of Xhosa culture as revealing secrets which 'should remain in the realm of men' (TV SA, 30 March 2007). Historical and oral evidence provides a different picture to the engendered present. In the past women played an important role in initiation, often constructing the initiation huts, something which only men are allowed to do today:

> "Women used to make the hut [for initiation]. They used to make iboma with grass and iminxiba (creepers)...The day before the boy goes for initiation, the men would give the women the plan to make the hut. Then the women would put grass and iminxiba" (Ntombekhaya Matya, 60 years, Pirie, 29 September 2009).

These differences in gender access to the environment translated directly into environmental attachments. Narrative analysis revealed that often girls and boys have very different desires when it comes to their futures. For many girls, leaving the rural areas represents an escape from

what they see to be a restrictive patriarchal society. They feel there is literally "no way forward" for them in the villages (Girl, 17 years, Pirie, 26 September 2009). In this case they saw the environment as something that did not adequately support their desired lifestyle:

> "We can't learn here and be married here. We don't like to stay here. When we are older we want to have another life" (Girls, 17 years, 15 years, 19 years, Pirie, December 2008)

> "[My favourite place] is Durban. I go there for holidays. My sisters live there. It's like fun, we're having fun there. Here we have our mothers and they talk too much, here it's strict (in Durban you can do what you want)...Here, in villages, girls are expected to cook, to clean, to do everything. If I want to go to my friend's place, If you want to go outside here you have to explain yourself. And the boys don't have to explain, no-one asks them" (Girl, 18 years, Pirie, 20 February 2009).

In this way girls are fighting patriarchal stereotypes. By leaving the village and finding work in urban centres. They feel restricted and unsafe, and they don't want to stay behind in the village and marry local boys. They want to find what they regard to as a better life with a western lifestyle. Boys, on the other hand, appreciated their environment more, and could often see a future for themselves in the village. The relative freedom they enjoyed to perform cultural activities such as hunting allowed them to form deeper environmental attachments:

> "I want to stay here. Because there's no noise on the weekends like in the city. We were born and grew up here, so we know everything from here. Then at the location or the city we will start to learn new things" (Boys, 12 years, 15 years, 18 years, 15 June 2009, Ndlambe).

> "[In the future] I want to live here [with my family], because I know lots of people in the village. I want my children to grow up here. I want them to learn the things that I have already learnt like Xhosa culture and rituals. [There is some belief that sickness is brought about by lifestyle changes, we need to get back to culture to get well and to be well] (Boy, 17 years, Ndlambe, 14 June 2009).

This proves that prescribed gender roles and safety concerns for girls have some of the most significant impacts on the passing on of cultural environmental narratives. This also radically impacts upon environmental use and attachment. Further study is required to ascertain if these perceptions change over time, and if women have similar views towards the environment once they reach urban areas. Further research is also necessary to consider differences in environmental perceptions between boys who utilise the forest for hunting and herding and those whose activities are restricted around the village.

5.9   Education system

The national education system acts to both promote and discourage the passing on of traditional narratives. Unlike earlier colonial and apartheid education systems, with their emphasis on "civilising" Africans and preparing them for the labour market, the national curriculum includes

and celebrates local cultural traditions and practices, and children are exposed to learning about traditional songs, *rayi rayi*, dances, foods and cultural rituals as part of their school syllabus. However, very few examples relate to specific cultural environmental use, management and perceptions. The examples included are also influenced by the current patriarchal environment in South Africa, for example, there is a strong recognition of male initiation, but no mention of female initiation ceremonies. While colonial-era educational policies served to disempower indigenous peoples, specifically through the exploitation of social and cultural gender divisions (Mama 1996, 1997), pre-colonial education "served a conceptual and practical purpose designed to fit the needs of the social and physical environment" (Adomako Ampofo *et al.* 2004: 696). Such systems allowed women some degree of agency, both in their personal lives and though social-cultural structures such as matriarchal systems of inheritance or secret societies (Assie-Lumumba 1997, 2001).

While South Africa's Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum has a strong environmental component, and teachers are encouraged to utilise local examples to illustrate lessons, this was rarely observed in practice. The need for a curriculum that deals with general environmental problems leaves little space for local problems. In many cases teachers do not take the initiative to provide local examples, often because they do not know the area well enough, or have little interest in the rural areas. Teaching in the rural areas seems to be viewed as inferior, with most teachers indicating that they would prefer to be teaching in urban areas. This leads to a strong environment of teacher apathy, with one teacher even going so far as to state that she was "only here waiting for retirement", even though this event was more than ten years away. Many teachers viewed their rural counterparts as 'backward', an attitude that permeated their teaching. In some instances their view reinforced teaching practices that were potentially damaging and unhelpful to children's learning.

The gap between rural and urban, between traditional and western, is perpetuated in attitudes towards learning and teaching of children. Whereas adults have access to a multitude of cultural knowledge and narratives, they often feel that the teaching of their children should be left up to teachers and schools. The western based curriculum leaves little space or agency for the learning of local knowledge within families. While the participatory holiday exercises were designed around families' cultural knowledge, adults with low levels of schooling felt they could not help their children with "school work". We had to reiterate again and again that the exercise was not a test or anything school related, but a record of what the child did and what the family felt was important.

Ironically the Xhosa centred syllabus taught in rural areas during Apartheid times is remembered for its firm emphasis on Xhosa cultural traditions, history and narratives. Although influenced by Apartheid ideologies, the strong focus on indigenous cultural identity which Apartheid assuaged its formation of the Bantustans with, enabled children to learn historical, environmental, and cultural knowledge in abundance. Adults who grew up during this time in the former Ciskei recall the syllabus' emphasis on traditional narratives such as *iinstomi*, *rayi rayi*, and *izaci*. Lessons included homework such as finding out "the meaning of old words" or "stories about the old times from the grandparents". The current OBE system which has replaced this does not contain the same strong emphasis on Xhosa culture, primarily because it has to have relevance on a national level. Some participants who were educated under the former regime feel that "the government is stealing our children's culture".

According to Kaschula *et al.* (2005: 406) formal schooling, particularly in rural areas of South Africa, is promoted and supported "at the expense of local knowledge and experience". Because formal schooling is seen as the gateway to employment and development, it has become synonymous with "empowerment and superior knowledge", which leaves little recognition for local indigenous knowledge (Kaschula *et al.* 2005: 406). Some parents cannot help feeling that

> "democracy has ruined the relationship between parents and their children. All that matters now is education, and parents have no education so their knowledge is no longer respected" (Informant in Kaschula *et al.* 2005: 406).

5.10   Religious narratives

To ascertain culturally and spiritually relevant landscapes participants were asked where ancestors were located. The majority of younger people stated that the ancestors could only be found in the kraal, as this is where one would go to speak to them, during rituals and privately. The pole in the centre of the kraal can be seen as a direct line to the ancestors, and through them, to God. In contrast to this, a large number of older people perceive that the ancestors can also be found in the forest and the river. Some people consider ancestors to be omnipotent. For example, we asked some trainee healers where the ancestors where and they were emphatic: "The ancestors are like MTN[19] – everywhere you go!" (Men, 18-35 years, Nakhane, 22 Sept 2009). On the one hand the separation between kraal and forest or river could signify a move towards a more village centred means of worship, possibly initiated by Christianity and westernisation. However, the large number of rituals that continue to take place in alternate environments such

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[19] One of the leading cellular telephone networks in South Africa.

as forests, rivers, caves and grasslands signify that this has more to do with the relationship between families or clans and clan animals and their associated landscapes. Rituals are the means by which one can layer landscapes with ancestral favour. They act as a means by which one sets up direct portals of communication.

> "Where you make a ritual: they come, you calling the ancestors (Ntombekhaya Matya, 60 years, Pirie, 29 September 2009).

However, the actual sites where rituals take place are usually determined through dreams and clan affiliations. Local experts well versed in ritual narrative convey how rituals are intricately connected with local landscape values:

> "There will be a sign of which area you can camp in for your ritual. You have to keep [throwing snuff into the river at different parts] until there is a sign. Before you camp, you have to collect some materials to make your own yard, to show the ancestors this is where we are. It goes with stages. When you are about to perform a ritual in the forest, you start on the open range lands, then move onto the river. You choose a site in the forest by giving gifts to the river. You will feel by the response that the river will give to you to know where the ancestors are. You move up, towards the mountain, straight from that point; usually the rivers are downstream from the forest..." (Man, 61 years, Pirie, as told to Litye and Luvozn, 8 March 2009).

In this way the landscape has individual resonance with different families and individuals, revealing a very personal view of nature and sacred spaces. The environment thus becomes a means by which individuals can attain physical, mental, psychological and religious assistance. Religion does not imply the same mastery over nature that western environmental narratives describe. Rather, as Peires (pers. comm. 21 January 2010) states, in the Xhosa worldview, "beliefs about nature are interwoven with beliefs about spirituality, morality and ethics". Culturally recognised natural features such as rivers and mountains act to unite people with their ancestors, and also to purify them from the corruption of modern day living and to allow them to be renewed as "proper Xhosa". For example, vigilantes who had transgressed social norms asked for forgiveness from the community, emphasising that they needed to go "to the mountain to perform ceremonies", that would purify them and allow them to recover themselves (Peires pers. comm. 21 January 2010). There is a general feeling that "the times are wrong now" that "we have offended God" (Woman, 57 years, Pirie, 18 September 2009), and that one can regain the connection to God and the ancestors by being connected to nature and culturally important places such as forests, rivers and mountains. In this regard Xhosa worldview shows a remarkable alignment between religion, culture and nature:

> "I and my parent we think the most important belief is religion and believing in culture. We also do Xhosa rituals to show that we are full Xhosas and we respect clan animals like crocodiles and crabs" (Girl, 11 years, Pirie, 22 December 2008).

Examining environmentally related narrative is one way to observe changes in environmental perceptions and use. For example, while older participants spoke about the "true Xhosa forest" and the centre of the forest as a sacred space, some younger participants are beginning to associate the ancestors with exotic tree species such as black wattle:

> "Yes [there are ancestors in the forest]...I heard some older people talking, saying you can find some ancestors in the forest, some in the kraal, and some in the river.[I think my ancestors are]In the forest and in the kraal. Near the plantaish..because the plantaish is the big tree, they can hide there" (Boy, 8 years old, 26 November 2008).

A strong narrative theme amongst adult participants was the sacred nature of mountains and certain areas of the forest and river. Mountains are seen as sacred places by many cultures around the world, particularly those that are associated with ancestors or founding figures (Sikkink and Choque 1999). The praying for rain and for strength in battle in the forest and the mountains reveals an intimate relationship between environment, religion and culture. This is an area which requires further research to ascertain exactly what these ceremonies represented and how they were conducted historically. The fact remains that the narratives pertaining to these times are still being told, although they are not common. One revealing narrative thread to consider is stories relating to Qamata (the God of the ancestors)[20]:

> "It is here, this is the centre of the mountain... where we worshipped...It was a circle that was surrounded by trees... the soldiers [Sandile's army] used to meet here and worship before they went to the war. They worshipped uQamata, there were no bibles then. [Qamata is] The lord of our ancestors, there was no one who knew about Jesus by then... The way we worshipped they said:
>
> > Aa! Qamata, Lord of our ancestors,
> > Father of our great grand fathers
> > Give us power and protect us
> > Aa! Qamata.
>
> The last Qamata means Amen, they used to worship like that in the olden days, you see now we worship Jesus Christ and there are changes now" (Elder,61 years, Ntaba kaNdoda, 5 March 2009).

> "In the forests, people would collect firewood and pray to their God there" (Mr Mabona, chief, 73 years, Pirie, 19 February 2009).

Closer analysis of these narratives reveals the continuance of indigenous religious beliefs despite western religion and the acceptance of Christianity:

> "Before [the missionaries] came, we had Qamata. We had rituals, the piece of cow: ukushwana, each person had a piece, piece. Then umkombhoti, each person had a sip. Then, the missionaries had the bread and wine, it's the same thing! And they told us to abandon our God" (Elder, 73 years, Pirie, 18 September 2009).

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[20] There is some debate about the original Xhosa word and concept of a supreme being, and how this has been influenced by contact with other cultures, even in pre-colonial times (Hodgson 1982, Khabela 1996) I use the word Qamata as it is still in use, and was most widely accepted amongst elders at both field sites.

"The people who don't believe in Qamata are in jail because they don't respect each other.
Q. How does Qamata help you?
The people who believe in Qamata know that if you don't have dreams you are nothing"
(Man, 67 years, Ndlambe, 8 May 2009).

We do our rituals and a man talks to Qamata and the cow will cry and we are not talking to Jesus
Christ when we do our rituals we talk to the God of our ancestors. ... When you doing a ritual and
the cow cries we say Qamata usivile, Qamata heard us. Camagu! (Elder, 61 years, Ntaba kaNdoda,
5 March 2009).

The relationship between Xhosa religion and nature, particularly the relationship between the ancestors and sacred cultural sites, is one that offers new insights into Xhosa environmental perceptions. These environmental narratives have huge implications for community conservation and environmental education programmes. While some religions expressively forbid this relationship with ancestral worship, there are other religions, such as the Zionist and the Shembe Churches, which promote both ancestral worship as well as religious ceremonies that celebrate sacred natural spaces such as rivers and mountains.

5.11   State restrictions to resources use

The research has revealed marked differences in cultural environmental activities between field sites (section 5.2). Participant observation confirmed that, unlike Ndlambe, many households in Pirie no longer maintain *igoqos* or regularly collect wood, both of which are cultural activities which are as seen as vital components of Xhosa female identity and social standing. In addition to this, children and their families in Pirie made no mention of cultural activities such as collecting wild fruit, herding, or beautifying the home using traditional materials. Although these practices do take place occasionally, it is extremely revealing that they were not included by participants as examples of essential cultural practices. These differences in environmental use and perceptions between the two villages, which have been established for similar amounts of time, can probably be directly related to state restrictions governing resource use.

Differences were readily apparent in the results of the participatory work with children. One very interesting result was the higher percentage of Ndlambe participants who preferred the forest, with 46 % of boys and 25 % of girls from Ndlambe preferring the forest, in comparison to 37% of boys and 13 % of girls in Pirie (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). These results can potentially be seen as a direct result of the access and restrictions governing Pirie forest. Children from Ndlambe Primary and Secondary School knew up to twenty-three names for different forests surrounding their village. These forests each had specific primary and secondary resources that could be obtained there. By

comparison, children from Pirie only knew a maximum of six names for forests, with many of them, girls especially, not even knowing the local name of the main forest next to the village. This huge disparity can perhaps best be explained in terms of ownership. In Ndlambe the forest is open to the community to use and explore as they see fit. The forest therefore remains well known and well utilised. In Pirie, although the community is allowed to extract resources from the smaller community forest and are allowed access and limited extraction at the state forest, many villagers regard the entire forest to be off limits. While some residents visit the forest to collect wood or medicines, many of the villagers do not visit the forest regularly, stating that they are "too old" or that they are afraid of the "forest police" or dangerous elements such as "prisoners". The fact that the majority of children in Pirie do not know many of the forest names is illustrative that many of the cultural narratives relating to the forest are probably not being passed down.

While taking into account the different bio-physical aspects of the two field sites, it is possible to see how the long-term control of Pirie forest by the state has led to a lack of ownership towards the forest which has affected forest use resulted in a loss in the passing on of environmental narratives. Many older participants environmental activities are still influenced by the restrictive government policies of the 1970's – 1990's. Elderly women in Pirie state that households no longer maintain *amagoqo*, because villagers have not been able to harvest firewood from the forest since these government restrictions, because they state that "if you are seen with an axe you will be arrested" (Litye, Pers. comm. 8 March 2009).

Comparative studies revealed that overharvesting was taking place in both state and open access forests resulting in local scarcity of valued species (Cocks and Dold 2002, Gugushe *et al.* 2008). This was due to high human population density, livelihood contribution and sale of forest resources to supplement household income (Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 251). The seemingly heavy extraction of *amayeza* at Pirie (Cocks and Dold 2000, Gugushe *et al.* 2008), firewood at Ndlambe, and indiscriminate hunting at both field sites reveal that neither state owned/DAFF administered nor communally owned forest is managed sustainably. The loss of environmental narratives can only contribute to this overexploitation, and vice versa.

While allowing the continuation of cultural environmental activities, this unlimited harvesting has a consequence. For many, the open access of community forests has had a detrimental effect on these environments, resulting in

'almost no medium to large trees left, except unwanted species such as *Euphorbia*. Almost all of the rest, apart from the inaccessible trees on steep slopes or in gullies, had been harvested (Gugushe 2006 in Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 249).

When comparing Albany Thicket that has been fenced off in private game reserves to that which is open to communal access, differences in vegetation are readily apparent. Many of the more valued species, such as *igwanishe* (*Portulacaria afra*), have been overgrazed by goats leading to increased erosion and invasion by exotic species. Villagers wishing to obtain larger poles for building purposes often need to buy or fetch these by cart, as they are now too far away to carry home by foot.

This situation reveals the negative effects of the colonial removal of traditional regulatory powers, revealing a situation where demarcated community forests had some harvesting regulations put into place on paper (Grundy and Michel 2004) and some policing in the past, but now seem to function with no harvesting restrictions at all. Gugushe *et al.* (2008: 251) reveal that there has been confusion over natural resource management institutions in both study sites since independence from Apartheid rule. In the Peddie district forest rangers were not reinstated after 1994, fences were removed and the forest considered open access. At Pirie State forest, policing was eased, although forest guards are still present and continue to arrest individuals found in possession of contraband forest products. It is apparent that "democracy, after so many years of repression" has meant that rural dwellers who have access to open access forests are free to do "what they liked" (Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 251), as has been noted for other former homeland areas (Lawes *et al.* 2004, Shackleton 2009). Although the present government has devolved responsibilities to community levels, many people are still unsure of

> "the role of chiefs and tribal authorities in the management and utilisation of woodlands because of the top-down planning and management approach that was used in the past." (Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 252)

Research reveals the implications that the social, cultural and economic uses of forest and Albany Thicket products have for biodiversity conservation (Cocks and Wiersum 2003, Cocks 2006). This research concludes that rural communities are going to continue to use these resources into the future for "fuel wood, fencing, medicine and traditional ceremonies" (Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 247). The socio-cultural uses for these products are shown to continue even in urban areas (Cocks 2006). As population levels increase, there will be a subsequent increase in their use, which in some areas is already at unsustainable levels (Nomtshongwana 1999, Cocks and Wiersum 2003, Cocks *et al.* 2004). The commercial use of forest and Albany Thicket resources is increasingly seen as "a major factor in the degradation" of these biomes (Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 252). On the other

hand, some argue that this commercialisation can be an important vehicle for poverty alleviation (Shackleton *et al.* 2008) and in situations with a strong system for natural resource governance may promote conservation (Shackleton 2001). It is more imperative than ever that communal conservation plans take into account this dependency, while considering means for restricting the over-harvesting of forest and Albany Thicket resources. The uncovering of traditional narrative relating to cultural environmental use and perceptions of these biomes is one way in which we can build a more solid base upon which to implement conservation policies.

5.12   Individualism over community narratives

As described in Chapter three, cultural narrative has to compete with other narratives. In many arenas, western media has taken over centre stage as the current narrative. The narrative that is being portrayed through western media, that of an increasingly commercialised, individual lifestyle, comes into conflict with the cultural narratives which may be related through the family or social structure, which in turn affects narrative transmission. Thus, it could be proposed that this conflict of narratives comes to represent communal versus individual needs. Far from living in isolation, rural youth are, like the majority of South African youth, a hybrid identity. While they may recognise and value much of the cultural knowledge that has been passed down to them, at the same time they also aspire to a western lifestyle. Their identity shows a mixing of cultures that blends Xhosa and western identities to create a creolised South African identity that has a foot in both worlds. In many ways children and adolescents are caught between the worlds of community requirements and western individualism, often they feel they can only achieve an appropriate lifestyle by living in the cities:

> "I want to live a happy life in the cities. Because of the jobs. Saving money, transport [here] is very awkward. Everything in the city is very easy. Even if you don't [have one] you could find a job more easily in the city than here" (Girl, 19 years, Pirie, 20 February 2009).

In many cases calls for individual agency are highly influenced by gender relations. Girls' desires to live in urban areas for the increased freedom they will be afforded there is not unfounded. In some cases women in urban areas have utilised development opportunities to obtain increased agency and power, while men, particularly those who remain in rural areas "whose identities were much more strongly shaped by apartheid ideology" remain more "trapped in the older identity politics of Red and School" (Bank 2002: 649). Youth who move to urban areas in order to escape "the poverty of village life" gain access to hybridized collective identities influenced by rural and urban social, cultural and political forces (Bank 2001: 135).

Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations

"Children, only animals live entirely in the Here and Now. Only nature knows neither memory nor history. But man - let me offer you a definition – is the story-telling animal. Wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker-buoys and trail-signs of stories" (Swift 1984, in Cronon 1992: 1347).

6.1 Preface

The previous chapters have revealed that environmental narratives and cultural practices are still widespread in rural areas. Both internal and external influences have impacted on narrative transmission, most especially by affecting activities whereby narrative transmission can occur. This chapter relates to the research aims and considers the conclusions and applications that can be surmised from the research.

6.2 Are oral narratives still being told?

The study revealed that participants in the two field sites live their lives surrounded by narratives of various kinds (Chapter 3). By examining the various environment-related narratives it becomes possible to understand culturally valued species, practices, spaces, values and perceptions, particularly through place narratives or the restrictions that narratives consider. Types of oral narrative ranged from traditional stories and riddles to ritual songs. Work with key participants and their families uncovered various everyday narratives (Jickling 2001) which are transmitted through the family and associated supportive networks, such as relatives and friends. Examples of these narratives include family specific narratives, clan narratives or historical narratives. Children in households which regularly utilise surrounding natural environments have increased chances to learn related narratives such as river and forest narratives. All of these narratives relate to the transmission of cultural knowledge and environmental use and perceptions.

The most conducive environment for the passing on of cultural narrative is the continuance of cultural activities and the presence of local experts during these activities. Socio-economic factors in the rural areas have contributed to changing household compositions which often mean that cultural activities, such as hunting, take place without these local experts. The increase in elder-headed households allows more children to have direct contact with grandparents. Qualitative interviews revealed that often these elders can access a myriad of cultural narratives. However, several elders considered the youth to have no interest in these narratives, and many internal and

external factors combine to interfere with narrative transmission between generations (Chapter 5). The general feeling was that there was "no time for stories", because "things are different now" (Woman, 71 years, Nakhane, 4 March 2009). In many respects western media and education have impacted upon the passing on of narrative to such an extent that it could be said that *Generations* (South Africa's popular soap opera) has replaced the *intsomi*. The rural-urban migration has contributed drastically to changing household demographics, which ultimately affect narrative transmission. As one participant bluntly stated:

> "our parents were not here, they were away working. Our mothers were looking after [white kids] and when they came home they were too tired for us....but it's ok, it made us strong" (Man, 35 years, 20 Sept, Pirie).

Despite these views, to differing degrees children in the two field sites did possess knowledge of cultural narratives. For example, participatory exercises revealed that all children were aware of their clan name, although some were unaware of their clan animals, and many were unaware of their clan restrictions. In particular, rituals were seen to provide a conducive environment for the transmission of environmental narratives. In the ritual arena, local experts, particularly healers, and the cultural actions conducted at rituals all combine to bring about richly textured cultural narratives.

6.3 Comparison of environmental perceptions between field sites

The study was designed to have several comparative aspects. The research aimed to determine if vegetation type or current conservation policies inspired different cultural narratives, and what these could reveal about environmental use and perceptions. The research further aimed to consider the impact of age and gender on known environmental narratives, use and perceptions. The two field sites were thus specifically chosen to represent communities living adjacent to contrasting biomes (Southern Mist-belt Forest versus Albany Thicket) and contrasting degrees of resource access (DAFF controlled versus community administered forest). It became apparent that the degree of access has been directly influenced by long held state perceptions of what exactly constitutes a forest and what is considered biologically important. The Southern Mist-belt Forest (Mucina and Rutherford 2006), with its tall (commercially valuable) trees and lush vegetation, was seen historically as something to be protected. The Albany Thicket biome has only recently been recognised botanically (Hoare *et al.* 2006). Previous perceptions of the Thicket as a 'degraded' land type which was beyond conservation aims resulted in it being seen as a resource which was thus expendable from state protection. Ironically, the communally administered Albany Thicket has allowed greater, unrestricted opportunities for the continuance

of environmentally related socio-cultural practices. It thus affords children increased opportunities to interact with the forest and they accordingly have more chances to learn LEK and cultural narratives. These differences emerge through narrative (Ndlambe children knew considerably more forest names and forest resources) and in observations regarding cultural practices. One illustrative example is the abundance of well-stocked *amagoqo* in Ndlambe, in comparison to households in Pirie which often lacked *amagoqo*. Similarly, kraals in Ndlambe were constructed from traditionally used kraal material, as opposed to Pirie, where this was legally disallowed.

The differences in environmental use and perceptions between field sites can thus be directly related to the state restrictions governing resource use. However, both field sites are subject to similar internal and external pressures which further impact on children's environmental use; such as increased safety concerns. Older participants' narratives and activities in Ndlambe contrasted with those in Pirie when it came to regular environmental use. For example, Ndlambe residents felt free to utilise wood and were observed to either collect it themselves or to purchase it. Many Pirie residents stated that they were "too old to go to the forest" although it was apparent that several villagers did visit the forest on a regular basis. This difference in livelihood narratives between field sites revealed that for many Pirie villagers the forest has become "off limits", despite the apparent loosening of state restrictions and the relegation of certain permissions to village authorities over the last decade or two.

By comparison, in Ndlambe the community's open access to the Thicket means that it is becoming increasingly commercialised. In Ndlambe the majority of large *amagoqo* were constructed of thick logs cut by men and boys who collect it from the Thicket via donkey cart to sell. Young women stated that while they saw the benefits of having an *igoqo*, they would much rather buy this wood than collect it themselves. In this way the woman's woodpile, integral to women's identity and status in the village (Cocks 2006), and the trips made to the forest or thicket to *theza*, which provided women with much needed time and space away from the home, have become commercialised transactions. The *igoqo* thus becomes a cultural accessory which can be purchased rather than one which is individually constructed. While this could symbolise a general commercialisation of culture, it could also perhaps illustrate the inclusion of cultural activities into the vibrant, multi-dimensional rural-urban environment in which many rural inhabitants live. As there is very little opportunity for employment offered in Ndlambe, much of the money to pay for this wood must theoretically initiate from external sources. The performance of cultural rituals further illustrates these linkages; with many urban based

inhabitants returning to their rural homes to perform or assist in rituals. It therefore becomes possible to see that the translation of cultural practices into commercial transactions assists to some degree in the continuance of these practices. However, at the same time, it can dislocate people from the cultural practices that produce these products. For example, younger women who have never collected wood would have decreased opportunities to learn the knowledge relating to this unique "woman's domain" (Cocks 2006). Another potential area of concern is that the commercialisation of culturally related natural resources can lead to unsustainable harvesting, as has been indicated both at Pirie (regarding medicinal plant collection) and in the community controlled forests neighbouring Ndlambe (regarding wood harvesting) (Nomtshongwana 1999, Cocks et al. 2004). In a comparative study (Gugushe et al. 2008), villagers in both of these areas were seemingly unaware of current forest management strategies.

6.4. Environmental perceptions relating to place and cultural identity

6.4.1 Narratives and cultural spaces

At both field sites, households could use the river and forest as resources to ease water and electricity consumption respectively. Even if these areas were not visited on a regular basis, cultural narratives revealed the enduring view of the forest and river as "a reserve" when necessary and as culturally important spaces where livelihood activities as well as cultural and ritual activities occur. Overall, the study revealed the importance of including narratives and perceptions of place into environmental considerations, as these perceptions allow insight into culturally important spaces. They also allow understanding into culturally sanctioned environmental access. For example, there were narratives describing both well utilised and culturally protected spaces. Children and adult participants agreed that the most important places for the community are the forest and the river. Alongside these spaces, mountains also emerged as culturally important spaces, particularly for their role in religious and cultural ceremonies. Place narratives also related to historical events and perceptions. In this way the environment functions as a cultural and historical receptacle which is unlocked through cultural narratives and practices. These in turn provide inhabitants with a resonance with their environment which strengthens identity and belonging.

6.4.2 The role of place in children's play and learning

Although places like the forest and river provide important unstructured areas of play, and they are seen as exciting places by children, they are used less frequently than other domestic areas such as the playground or village streets. They are utilised by a smaller number of children, the

majority of them being boys (Chapter 4). This is due to access problems, safety fears, and competition with louder (western) games and narratives such as soccer. The study revealed the importance of considering the small patches of natural vegetation around the village. These unclaimed spaces were used more often by a greater number of participants. While adults may view these as wastelands, and they are often strewn with refuse, children see in them an area which they can claim for their own. The study revealed the importance of including these marginal spaces as both an important part of the village and a potential refuge where biodiversity could be encouraged. At the same time, it is necessary to consider the dangers which children, especially girls, may be exposed to, particularly while alone.

One of the main revelations of the study is the gendering of space. The various environments are used by men and women in different ways. While women collect firewood by head load, alone or with friends, men collect firewood in groups using carts, sleds, tractors or donkey carts. While younger children may access the environment in similar ways, with both boys and girls using the forest and river for swimming and playing, once these children grow up they are expected to conform to the socially gendered world of their parents. Teenage girls are expected to remain around the home. Teenage boys, by comparison, are free to spend their time playing soccer or socialising around the village. Increasing safety concerns make the forest an inaccessible place for many, especially for girls. Play and daily activities are increasingly carried out in the village and closer to home. However, further research is required to ascertain whether these perceptions change once people become older. Comparative studies emphasise the continuing importance of the environment for Xhosa adults' personal well-being and cultural identity, finding that often participants appreciate their rural homes more once they have lived for some time in crowded urban areas (Cocks and Dold 2002, 2008).

6.5 What is the influence of cultural practices and environmental narrative on children's resource use and environmental perceptions?

Participants' use of cultural landscapes was determined by a complex set of factors, ranging from economic situation to family preferences and clan obligations. Children whose families utilised rivers and forests more had access to increased chances of learning related environmental narratives. However, the study also emphasised the role that lateral learning had to play, as these narratives were also passed on amongst friends and peer groups. Children also learnt environmental narratives from relatives, neighbours and adults they might encounter by chance in different natural environments. On one hand the study determined that environmental

perceptions were most strongly influenced by use or function. Children often identified species and spaces by what they could do for them, e.g. they liked the river 'because we swim in it when it is hot 'or 'we can get water there when there is none in the taps'. It would thus be tempting to conclude that these cultural values conform most strongly to a utilitarian or functionalist worldview. However, a more comprehensive look into adults' environmental narratives reveal that these views are far wider and deeper than previously envisaged. There was a big difference between children and adults' narratives relating to the forest, river and mountain. Adults utilise these areas for various cultural and livelihood activities, but their narratives revealed that these areas are also valued for their role in ritual and everyday life. For example, the mountain tops were seen historically as sacred areas, a view which appears to endure in the present. Adult narratives also revealed the importance of plants, animals and places which had a strong influence on personal health and well-being. In fact, these environments are valued to such a great extent that even the very air of the forest is seen to have refreshing and purifying properties.

These values cannot be extrapolated to be inclusive of the entire village, which includes a multitude of inhabitants, some of whom may be recent immigrants or live in families whose lives are focused around employment in urban areas. However, similar cultural environmental narratives were fairly widespread amongst local experts, such as healers, and those who had a long history of cultural environmental use, such as participants who visited the forest regularly for cultural and livelihood reasons. In this regard, healers and local experts can act as the repository of cultural environmental knowledge and related narratives. These narratives usually only emerge in the public sphere in specific circumstances, such as rituals. For example, a number of participants stated that while they were unaware of their clan animals, a "good" healer would possess this knowledge. Steele and Shackleton (2010) used locally identified experts as a benchmark against which to assess community-wide levels of LEK pertaining to fuel wood and fruit species. Typical scores were 0.5 – 0.7, which indicates the important role of local experts in holding environmental knowledge.

There is increasing evidence that individuals mainly learn these cultural narratives when they are required. Families or individuals may only learn about cultural restrictions by transgressing them and being then brought to task by elders or being informed by healers that this transgression is the reason for the problems in their lives. For example, the trainee healer who hit the messenger animal that visited her home only learnt of its cultural importance after her transgression (Section 3.6.2). Current research considers the case of a healer in training who only learnt about his clan

animal, and the narrative relating to a forefather's transgression against this animal, once he had begun his training (Bernard pers. comm. 29 April 2009). This indicates the vital role of context in the transmission of knowledge. Often individuals will only learn "deep culture" (Shaules 2007) when the situation requires it. This point is emphasised by Snowden (2002: 6), who states that humans "*only know what we know when we need to know it. Human knowledge is deeply contextual, it is triggered by circumstance*".

6.6   Narrative as a research tool

Although this study was focused on children and the various adults that surround them, through the course of the study it became apparent that cultural environmental narrative could be considered as a tool in unlocking local people's environmental use and perceptions for more general environmental research. When cultural environmental narrative was used in combination with participatory methodologies and participant observation, it was possible to observe the differences between narrative and practice. In some ways narrative provides an ideal. Many participants could recall narratives that spoke of a "correct way" to do something. Narrative is thus strongly related to cultural standards. However, it needs to be coupled with other participatory tools to provide a more detailed picture of the complexities of rural life. It is important to specify that the narratives and perceptions resulting from the study are closely tied to the participants involved in these sites at this particular time of their lives. The study cannot make assumptions and generalisations of heterogeneity or attempt to concretise Xhosa environmental views. However, considering the similarities of narratives between field sites, and comparing the results of this study with emerging research in other areas of the Eastern Cape (Fox 2005, Cocks and Dold 2008, Cocks *et al.* in prep.), it is possible to see similar general themes emerging from local narratives. These themes consider the importance of forests, rivers, mountains and grasslands for Xhosa people's health, well-being, and identity. Narratives from the two field sites relating to the purity and sacredness of certain areas (such as river pools and mountain tops) can also be found amongst urban inhabitants. For example, Peires (pers. comm. 21 January 2010) describes young Xhosa urban-dwelling men who had transgressed the law speaking about the need to "go to the mountain" to repent and absolve themselves: "because the mountain air is pure, you can recover who you are there". In many cases the forest (along with the river and mountain) exists in cultural parallel to the village (Prins and Lewis 1992) and thus provides a foil to the complications of daily village life as well as a liminal space where cultural transitions can take place. What is most revealing is that none of these narratives and perceptions are reflected in current conservation planning and policies.

What one should realise about stories related to places, and indeed stories themselves, is the multiplicity of narrative. Just as a culture contains a myriad of social experiences and expectations, cultural narratives contain an exciting display of variety and variations, signifying different environmental experiences and different environmental histories which have been passed down. Different place narratives can provide the means to unlocking variations in environmental perceptions between community members. These stories function "as a reflection of immediate experience, but also as a way of shaping that lived experience", being "capable of revealing multiple levels of communal and individual experience" (Sikkink and Choque 1999: 167). Cultural environmental narratives thus have great potential in exposing and discussing the "multiple land uses" that are currently being considered as a spatial planning strategy, particularly for intensively utilised land (Habiforum 2004).

6.7   Environmental narratives and the conservation of biodiversity

Although there have been significant changes in conservation over the last two decades, in most areas local people still have no say in the management of their land, and they are still seen as a threat to conservation by those in charge of implementing it. Token recognition is given for socio-cultural practices, but this does not cover the complexity of local natural resource use. For example, hunting is still seen as poaching, despite the important role it plays in Xhosa masculine identity.   Areas of socio-cultural importance, such as sacred ancestral sites, are not formally recognised. Conservation is still seen to value wildlife and natural resources over local people (Beinart and Hughes 2007) despite the changes to government policy (Grundy and Michel 2004).

Participatory Forest Management has been the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' (DAFF) "key vehicle for radical change in indigenous forest management in South Africa" since 2001 (DWAF 2001 in Grundy and Michell 2004: 689), aiming for the promotion of "equitable access to natural forest resources to improve quality of life, culture and traditional values" (Grundy and Michell 2004: 688), as specified in the government's White Paper on Sustainable Forest Management (DWAF 1996). However, it has been a difficult road, because the small size of forests makes forest protection essential for biodiversity conservation, while at the same time Participatory Forest Management in South Africa suffers from "the history of conflict, largely over alienation of communities from their land and access to forest resources when forest reserves were designated" (Gundy and Michelle 2004: 691). It is anticipated that participatory management will be unsuccessful "until ownership of the land on which the forest stand is clarified" (Grundy and Michell 2004: 691). Shackleton et al. (2007) illustrate a similar conclusion

regarding local harvesting of forest restios (*umtshayelo*: *Ischyrolepis eleocharis*) at Tharfield, Eastern Cape.

The study revealed obvious discrepancies between the narratives told about the forest by government and the narratives told about the forest by local people. The state's participatory management policy may have dislocated itself from their colonial heritage which saw the environment as a resource for the benefit of the empire. However, in many cases those who are responsible for forest management still view villagers as a threat to biodiversity conservation. At Pirie, local people are told "you are destroying the forest", yet the state does not accept blame for removing vast swathes of indigenous forest to plant exotic pine and gum trees. Similarly, local people are told that they are not allowed to harvest indigenous hardwoods, while at the same time, a commercial sawmill is allowed to do so. Government narratives describing the forest to be under threat from local practices contrast directly with local narratives which consider the forest to be an inexhaustible resource that "belongs to God". In the case of DAFF versus the community's narrative of the forest we can see institutional narrative conflicting with local narrative; conservation speaks a language that does not relate into local thought schema. While DAFF's narrative, by law, controls the actions of the community who do not have the power to argue against it, villagers regulate their actions to avoid prosecution. They cut poles and hide them in the forest, collect *amayeza* and fetch it under cover of darkness. They visit the forest early, or hunt on Sundays when they know the rangers have gone home. They know the 'official' narrative of the forest and can all parrot this. However, it is their own narratives about the forest that dictate their desire for these products or practices, and this, together with local restrictions, is what determines their actions.

6.8   Do traditional oral narratives have a role to play in transmitting traditional environmental knowledge and regulations?

What stands out from current and past literature is the fact that there has been relatively little mention of Xhosa narratives relating to conservation, especially in relation to pre-colonial environmental regulations. There are various reasons for this. It is thought by several historians that the low human population levels in pre-colonial times meant that environmental regulations were unnecessary. Compounding this, the social networks that supported any cultural environmental regulations were so affected by colonial and post-colonial forces that they have, in many cases, ceased to exist (Peires, pers. comm. 28 April 2009). However, Roche (2005: 1) states that this absence of information may be due to inadequate use of alternative types of historical

records, for example, ethnologies and oral histories. Carruthers (2006), Beinart and McGregor (2003) and Tropp (2003, 2006) come to a similar conclusion. It is also important to realise that western chroniclers and researchers have been looking for environmental regulations that fit into western ideas about environmental conservation. For example, the few 'traditional' narratives mentioned include such obvious examples as hunting restrictions such as not hunting during the breeding season (Anderson and Grove 1987). What we need to realise about Xhosa environmental narrative is that it comes from a Xhosa cultural framework, and thus we should try to understand Xhosa ideas about environmental appreciation before we move on to realise how conservation strategies would be implemented. In other words, before we know what conservation measures exist we need to know what social and cultural understandings of environmental protection and 'conservation' are.

This study reveals the far reaching effects of the imposition of state control and regulations over natural resources. On a national scale, the taking over of communal land and the division of land into individual tender (such as in Pirie) diminished the power of chiefs and also resulted in the disintegration of the system of clanship which had previously acted as the local administration responsible for the allocation of land (Wilson 1937, Vazi 1988). Colonial systems of governance and conservation planning thus went a long way towards eroding traditional institutions of resource management (Fabricius et al. 2001). The creation of protected areas meant people have also lost access to important sacred and ritual sites (Tropp 2003). The language of conservation remains the realm of the western 'educated' elite and local communities remain relatively silent in terms of conservation practices, planning and policy. Plans and policy do not take into account what local conservation measures already take place (or took place historically). Conservation based on benefit sharing or scientific evaluation of nature does not take into account local people's cultural perceptions and attachment to landscape or the complexities of assumed homogeneous communities (Klein et al. 2007).

While local experts such as healers are seen to possess environmental consciousness and environmental narratives with the most relevance to sustainable harvesting, these narratives are not adequately promoted. DAFF's admonishment to Pirie villagers: "if you take one bulb, you are destroying the forest" means that all harvesting of amayeza is viewed as deviant. What this has resulted in is an abundance of amayeza gatherers, who collect amayeza in bulk at the risk of fines and imprisonment. In several cases healers, who could legitimately access the necessary permits to harvest amayeza, were seen to utilise these gatherers rather than risk collecting amayeza themselves. Obviously these gatherers are collecting commercially, and will thus have no need to

abide by the cultural laws that restrict healers. Government rules, while providing token inclusions of cultural harvesting, have largely resulted in an environment where cultural rules and the cultural value of the environment is superseded by the overarching politics that is permit regulation and the local desire to "avoid the forest police".

Kaschula *et al.* (2005: 406) consider the "sense of cultural fragmentation" that "has characterised apartheid and post-apartheid rural life". According to these researchers, it is this fragmentation, along with the promotion of state regulations and western schooling "at the expense of local knowledge and experience" which brings about the "disregarding of harvesting taboos" (Kaschula *et al.* 2005: 406). This lack of communally recognised environmental knowledge and restrictions brings us to the importance of cultural narrative. Narrative does not have to be rooted in the present and confined to current day-to-day activities. Although cultural activities provide a more fertile environment for the transmission of narratives, these narratives also exist in people's memories and thus form part of the selective subconscious. We realise that despite this "sense of fragmentation" in rural areas, there still appears to be an abundance of cultural environmental narratives, particularly amongst those who have, or continue to utilise these environments.

6.9 Which narratives are the most successful in terms of transmitting environmental knowledge on environmental restrictions?

Comparison between adult's and children's narratives reveals that these narratives are being passed down to some, but not all children. The narratives are sometimes in altered forms, but usually retain the same intent. For example, the research uncovered a culturally sanctioned forest that formed part of Hoho forest near Pirie. While everyday narrative regarded this as one of several culturally important areas, local experts (in this case the village chief) revealed this forest to have historically been the chief's reserve:

> "Ndlasidudu is a tributary from the forest, Chief Jwara used to stay there, it used to be his domain. From the river upwards, and the grazing field on either side, used to be the chief's domain. His cattle and his sheep used to graze there and people were not allowed (to go there). People were allowed to hunt, etc, but not in the chief's domain. The whole forest was controlled by the chief and his board of directors, his henchmen...[who were] the clansmen nearer the chief" (Chief Mabona, 73 years, Pirie, 29 September 2009).

Although the current chief, like a large number of older participants in both field sites, possessed a multitude of cultural and environmental narratives, he did not see an avenue for these to be transmitted, stating that children in the village were only interesting in modern things "like technology: By the time we go to the grave they'll still be blank" (Chief Mabona, 73 years, Pirie, 29

September 2009). However, the research revealed that children who utilised these environments for cultural practices possessed similar cultural narratives, even if these were in a slightly different form to local expert's narratives. Although many children were unaware of the existence of Ndlasidudu, one boy who regularly hunted and collected *amayeza* with his mother was:

> "Ndlasidudu, [is named because] there were lots of wild animals, people called it Ndlasidudu... I heard that it is a place for the forefathers, a place of the people's ancestors ...You are not allowed to go there after five. Maybe you could see ancestors there or mamlambo. So it is very dangerous to meet [mamlambo]. My granny told me that" (Boy, 15 years, Pirie, 30 September 2009).

Narrative research thus revealed the existence of cultural environmental restrictions, even while these were not formally recognised by current legislation or even by the majority of villagers. According to Tropp (2003, 2006), these types of narratives can serve as cultural ways of protecting and conserving sacred sites. Research elsewhere in Africa reveals that the beliefs pertaining to sacred forests, totems and taboos have proven to be a "valuable tool" for both "species and habitat conservation" (Ntiamoa-Baidu 2008: 309). In many cases these forests act as a biodiversity bank, which can both protect rare species, as well as repopulate areas once environmental protection is increased (Nyamweru and Kimaru 2008).The existence of a chief's forest, or a forest reserve as it was historically recognised, can function as a habitat taboo (Colding and Folke 2001). Narratives related to culturally protected animals (section 3.6) can function as species taboos (Colding and Folke 2001). The chief also described the following historical restriction, which would have functioned as a temporal taboo (Colding and Folke 2001):

> "There was a tradition that once someone had died no-one was allowed to work their mealie fields till that person was buried. No one was allowed to hunt, or collect wood, or do anything till that person was buried" (Chief Mabona, 29 September 2009).

These cultural restrictions and taboos seem to exist, or have existed, all over the world amongst indigenous peoples who have formed a long term relationship with their environments (Hughes and Chandran 1998). All around the world indigenous and local populations are connected to the concept of personal and societal responsibility towards the environment (Berkes and Folke 1998, Berkes 1999, Berkes *et al.* 2000, 2003). Barnes (2000: 8) considers all societies to function through these "systems of responsibilities", which create particular cultural responsibilities, freedoms, taboos and atonements towards the environment in which the society finds itself (Walsh 2002).

While current and past research in South Africa (Tropp 2003, 2006, Bernard 2003, Bernard and Khumalo 2004a and 2004b) uncovers some aspects of cultural protection of certain species and specific environments (such as sacred pools and sacred plants), the more inclusive narratives relating to culturally important landscapes are not yet formally recognised. Amongst rural people themselves there seems to be an appreciation of the environment, but, perhaps due to the long

history of state intervention and control, it seems there is currently a lack of stewardship towards the environment. The study revealed that oral cultural narratives do have a role to play in transmitting traditional environmental knowledge and regulations, although to different degrees and effectiveness. However, these narratives need to be considered and recognised by both local people and the state instruments that are responsible for environmental regulation.

Cultural narratives collected in the field revealed an intimate relationship with nature which is vastly different to ecological science's concepts of the environment and environmental conservation. For Xhosa people at the two field sites, the environment could be related to personal well-being and identity. Cultural practices allowed access to important cultural spaces. In many cases these practices contain spiritual elements. For example, the forest is viewed as a place where one can connect with ancestors. Cultural restrictions are 'a family affair', as in "Every family has their izilo". However, common species of cultural importance are also recognised (e.g. Medicinal plants or 'helping animals'). Current conservation planning does not take into account LEK and cultural environmental perceptions and restrictions. As a result, both controlled and open-access forests are vulnerable. In order to achieve more effective participatory conservation it is necessary to look at people's cultural relationship with their environment. Of particular importance are cultural knowledge and practices which link ancestors to the environment, thus bringing about concepts such as sacred spaces and species.

The research revealed several unexplored areas in the field of environmental narrative restrictions that have great implications for community conservation. In particular, narratives relating to the rules around natural sacred spaces and tabooed species could provide the key to unlocking local community conservation perceptions, leading to more effective conservation overall (c.f. Schaaf 1996, 1998, Ramakrishnan *et al.* 1998, Berkes 1999, Sheridan and Nyamweru 2008). This follows international calls for the incorporation of sacred sites and culturally important landscapes into conservation planning and policy (UNESCO 2005). These cultural beliefs are therefore part of the wealth of LEK that urgently needs to be incorporated into localised conservation plans. The conservation of wild animals is of particular importance as the high levels of poverty and unemployment in rural areas mean that wild food sources are strongly relied upon (Shackleton and Shackleton 2004b).

Conservation planning also needs to consider both past and present cultural narratives (c.f. Tropp 2003, 2006) which are connected to the surrounding environment. These narratives provide insights into the community's sense of place, and can provide insight into current environmental

perceptions. Any loss of environmental narratives has in turn an impact on environmental perceptions as well as identity and belonging. Narratives provide an anchor to landscape, and landscape anchors stories (Basso 1988, 1996). In this way we can appreciate the long heritage that narratives offer to peoples who have remained in the same place for many decades. The stories told and the landscape surrounding villagers echo each other in providing a rich stitching between people, landscape and culture.

6.10   Applications for the research findings

Overall, there is a need to understand more about the psychological, spiritual and religious benefits nature has and continues to provide to local South Africans. This research has implications for conservation policy, community conservation projects, participatory planning and environmental education programmes. As Fairhead and Leach's (1994, 1996) work with local environmental practices and perspectives uncovered a 'misreading of the African landscape', so similar work in South Africa can reveal the urgent need to include written and oral historical accounts (c.f. Tropp 2003, 2006, and Carruthers 2006) with local perceptions and uses to bring about new understandings of African conservation.

In comparing South Africa with other African countries, it is becomes apparent that cultural environmental restrictions are currently more publically known and recognised in other African countries. It has therefore been easier to implement conservation programmes around these more visible taboos. For example, there are numerous projects elsewhere in Africa that have been designed around local recognition of sacred forests. To mention a few: in Kenya (Wilson 1993, Nyamweru 1996, Nyamweru and Kimaru 2008, Sheridan and Nyamweru 2008), Ghana (Dorm-Adzobu et al. 1991, Schaaf 1996, 1998), Tanzania (Sheriden, 2000) and Zimbabwe (Chidakwa 1999, Byers et al. 2001).

Despite the abundance and emerging successes of these types of projects (Bhagwat and Rutte 2006, Sheridan and Nyamweru 2008), the recognition of their importance by world bodies such as the WWF, IUCN and UNESCO (Beltran 2000, IUCN 2004, Rössler and Mitchell 2005, UNESCO 2005, Wild and McLeod 2008), and incorporation into the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (Alcamo et al. 2003); the concept has yet to be fully recognised and incorporated into South African conservation practice, particularly at the level of community run conservation projects. This is despite the very stable platform provided by constitutional acts such as The National Forests Act (1998), The White Paper on Sustainable Forest Use and Management (1997) and the Communal

Lands Act (2004), which technically allows increased community participation in land use, land management and land ownership. While events such as the 5th World Parks Congress, (held in 2003 in Durban, South Africa) called for "the need to give full recognition to cultural and spiritual values in order to promote a truly integral policy of nature conservation" (Pappayanis and Mallarach 2005: 242), it could be argued that in South Africa this recognition is still largely relegated to paper, as it does not yet relate into widespread recognition and practice. For example, Ghokale (2003) reports 14 436 sacred groves across India. Nyamweru (1996) and Nyamweru and Kimaru (2008) document at least 60 sacred Kaya groves in three districts of southern Kenya, and consider the practicalities and complexities this has for improved conservation. To date, comparative studies in South Africa remain relatively limited. Although there have been isolated instances where sacred forests have been incorporated into conservation plans, this has been largely incidental in the prioritised aim of conserving scientifically valued biodiversity, or attempting to address social or political demands. Such examples are the Modjadji rain queen's cycad reserve, the Thathe forest (Lawes *et al.* 2004: 257), and Lake Fundudzi: sacred to the vhaVenda in the Limpopo province, (Kirkaldy 2005), and Silahlankosi forest, Gwaliweni forest, Ongoye forest and Nkandla forest, Ngome forest and Dukuduku forest in KwaZulu-Natal (Eeley *et al.* in Lawes *et al.* 2004: 250-253). So far there has been little recognition of sacred or community protected sites in the Eastern Cape, besides mention of historically proclaimed chief's forests, such as Dwesa forest and Manubi forest (Cooper and Swart 1992, von Maltitz and Shackleton 2004), sacred pools (Bernard 2003, Bernard and Khumalo 2004a) and waterfalls (Everard and Hardy 1993). This research uncovered a wide variety of sacred places, from river pools to mountain tops, caves, historically relevant sites and a sacred forest (Ndlasidudu at Pirie). Formal acknowledgement of sacred areas such as these will lead to improved cultural landscape protection, which will result in improved biodiversity conservation (c.f. Byers *et al.* 2001, Munjeri 2003, 2004, UNESCO 2005).

The cultural environmental narratives uncovered by the study have revealed how integral the natural environment is integral to Xhosa people's cultural identity and belonging. Besides accessing natural resources for livelihood purposes, local people also utilise their environment for cultural, recreational, emotional and spiritual needs. These perceptions can also be found amongst other indigenous peoples, (Maffi and Woodley 2010) and even extends to western industrialised nations (Brehm 2007). However, in South Africa it appears that historical processes, most especially the colonial and apartheid regimes, coupled with the current socio-economic conditions, have resulted in a rural population that utilises and values its environment, while the cultural means of environmental regulation are not formally recognised by either the state or the

inhabitants themselves. This is despite the existence of narratives which reveal the deeply complex relationship Xhosa people (and other indigenous groups) have with their environment and its role in their social, cultural and personal well-being and state policies which recognise local participant's role in sustainable resource management (Grundy and Michell 2004). The dislocation of people from their land throughout South Africa's history, from the imposition of hut tax to state orchestrated betterment programmes and the continuing rural-urban migration, has resulted in a schism between local environmental use and perceptions. As this research has revealed, Xhosa environmental narratives and perceptions are not missing; but at the same time they remain largely unrecognised in either conservation or environmental education policies and practices.

The 'Indigenous' culture of South Africa's majority groups (such as Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho), is not usually thought of as 'threatened', primarily because these people form the majority population groups. However, they, like all South Africans, live in a country that is moving increasingly towards industrialised capitalism. As such, western education and thought schema currently employed by the government do not allow much space for local autonomy and indigenous ideas of conservation. There is little recognition for the role local cultural practices have played and can play in conservation and landscape planning. This is in direct contrast to research examining other 'indigenous' cultural relationships with land, for example, the extensive research in the Andes that has demonstrated how the 'intricate relationship between nature and culture' has created the 'landscape mosaic' seen in the Andes today (Gade 1999, Sarmiento 2000, 2002). Furthermore, while there has been some consideration of western education negatively impacting upon the Indigenous Knowledge, beliefs and practices of First Peoples, creating a sense of dislocation and un-belonging (Roué 2006), this does not seem to have been considered in the South African context.

The findings of this study are supported by various researchers working with indigenous communities around the world. Berkes and Folke (1993, 1998) and Berkes et al. (1998, 2000) consider the importance of including cultural ecological knowledge in conservation plans to promote biodiversity and sustainability. Folke et al. (1998) consider cultural ecological practices to function as social mechanisms which promote environmental resilience and sustainability, calling for the recognition and promotion of "social and culturally evolved management practices based on ecological knowledge and understanding, and the social mechanisms behind them" (Berkes and Folke 1998: 414). While environmental management revisions may be taking place amongst many indigenous communities elsewhere in the world, Infield (2001) states that this is not yet the

case in Africa, where cultural values remain "a forgotten strategy for building community support for protected areas". In South Africa, emerging research (Cocks 2006, Cocks and Dold 2008, cocks et al., in prep) calls for conservation and educational programmes and campaigns which focus on the links between cultural and biodiversity conservation.

It is important to realise that this inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into conservation systems, while offering an alternative to the science focused model of environmental management, (Kaschula *et al.* 2005: 387) cannot solve conservation complexities overnight. Many rural communities have the added pressure of increased populations, a legacy of exclusion, limited agricultural land and economic opportunities and politics and power struggles. In some cases wild resources are the only 'free' resource available to poor people with no employment opportunities (Shackleton and Shackleton 2003, 2004a). Chambers (1997, 2005) recommends that participatory conservation programmes include both state and traditional authorities to empower local institutions. These programmes should be built around current socio-economic issues. While environmental management may theoretically be devolved to the role of tribal authorities such as chiefs and headmen, this is only on paper. Most villagers are still unaware of "the roles the chiefs, tribal authorities or local people had in the running or use of the woodlands and forests in the Eastern Cape in general" (Grundy *et al.* 2004 in Gugushe *et al.* 2008: 252). To be most effective, any conservation or environmental education programme should acknowledge the multi-faceted relationship between biodiversity conservation and other affecting dynamics such as socio-economic situations, historical experiences (Tropp 2006), land ownership (Ntsebeza 1999, Kepe 2004), contested livelihoods (Slater 2002) and the need to involve social institutions as well as ecological knowledge (Kepe and Scoones 1999). It is therefore:

> 'recommended that environmental managers incorporate indigenous knowledge as a component of a systems-level approach to natural resource management, where biological, cultural, economic, and symbolic aspects of natural resource use are nested within a broader ecosocial system' (Kaschula *et al.* 2005: 387).

It becomes obvious that conservation cannot work in Africa as long as the ideas informing conservation relate to western conceptions of nature and biodiversity conservation. While many of the scientific facts informing conservation are essential components to conservation planning, such as the recognition of rare and endangered species, some kind of middle ground is required. Barnhardt and Kawagly (2005) call attention to the potential that exists in the common ground between traditional native knowledge systems and western scientific discourse. These convergences can provide inroads to local support for conservation or environmental education programmes, as well as providing a means by which each party can understand 'the other'. It is possible to consider lessons learnt both within and outside of Africa to find possible solutions to

the complexity that is participatory conservation. The Lax'skiik (Eagle clan) of the Gitskan Amerindian group in British Columbia created a sustainable "wholistic [sic] forestry management plan" that combined their traditional ecological knowledge with western landscape ecology, using participatory processes such as cultural and environmental mapping (Pinkerton 1998: 363). Although the state had recognised their rights to access traditional hunting and fishing sites, the Lax'skiik explained that these "rights of access are meaningless without rights to protect ecosystem function" (Pinkerton 1998: 382). Similar realisations need to occur in South Africa, especially as the question of land ownership remains "inextricable from conservation history" (Khan 1990, 1994).

Another conclusion reached through the research is that local experts with great indigenous knowledge are not recognised formally, particularly by younger people in the village. Accordingly, any programme needs to consider the recognition and incorporation of these people into environmental education lessons by providing the space and time for the transmission of cultural narratives. One way to do this would be a greater inclusion of local experts either to enhance school lessons or for a separate after-hours community learning programme. A worthwhile project would somehow compensate local experts for their time while allowing children access to local narratives that will have a direct impact on their environmental and cultural understandings. There are several examples of these types of projects around Africa. For example, the Learning from the Elders Project (in Limpopo), and Learning from Indigenous Cultures and Sacred sites (Southern Africa), have been set up by the African Biodiversity network, both are funded by Artists Project Earth (APE 2010). The Christensen Fund works with honey gatherers in Northern Kenya in a programme that recognises the links between IK and land rights and access, such that the foundation "takes elders into the classroom to teach, and children into the forest to learn" (Wilson in Resurgence, September/October 2008: 39). There are potential complexities involved in any project working with LEK, one being the nepotistic hijacking of the programme for social or political ends (King and Peralvo 2010). Any potential project therefore needs to consider ways to engage multiplicities of local knowledge while providing platforms for discussion that allow all actors, no matter what age, gender or perceived social standing. One way to do this is to engage with already established groups such as women's groups. The gathering of local narratives into media for public consumption would provide both ownership and recognition for local experts. The possibility of more local narratives emerging from these programmes should be both anticipated and encouraged as local people begin to realise the value of traditional knowledge.

There is also potential for historical narratives to be incorporated into heritage initiatives, as has been done in Ndlambe with the Mbodla Eco-Heritage Route (Open Africa 2009). The Amathole district currently has four new heritage routes incorporating Xhosa kings and struggle heroes, the Makana, Maqoma, Sandile and Phalo routes (ADM 2010). These routes provide a supportive framework that could potentially link to more local historical cultural initiatives that incorporate local environmental values. It could be argued that cultural heritage initiatives which are more firmly marketed amongst domestic tourists can go a long way towards instilling cultural pride and belonging. As western media and education have proven to be some of the strongest narratives, incorporating cultural environmental narrative into these arenas would make a significant impact.

6.11   Potential areas for further research

Rituals that honour ancestors at various natural places in the forest, river or grasslands provide an intimate link between people and their environment and require the recognition and consideration of a ritualised landscape. These transitional spaces offer temporary or longer-lasting connections to the environment which can be seen as symbolic sacred spaces which require certain behaviours and certain natural materials, buildings or offerings. There is therefore a need for further research focused around sacred ritual spaces and species. It appears that much of this knowledge is transmitted through systems of clanship, and thus research should explore the differing clan related environmental aspects such as clan animals, plants and landscape rituals.

Research also revealed the importance of including environmental histories to inform local environmental use and access. There is a significant lack of historical knowledge on indigenous practices relating to cultural environmental use and perceptions. Researchers such as Beinart and McGregor (2003) and Carruthers (2006) consider the vital role of historical indigenous knowledge of African environmental practices and perceptions in social history. Carruthers (2006: 822) calls for "greater indigenous knowledge to be incorporated into the mainstream, for this is an enormous absence in Southern African environmental history" and is vital to African agency and empowerment. This is confirmed by Bank (2003), who considers African indigenous knowledge to be "the silence" in environmental history. African knowledge and African histories remain an essential component of any environmental understanding (McCann 1999, Maddox 2003, 2005, Carruthers 2006). This is especially so in contested areas, where 'ordinary people's' local knowledge and past environmental experiences need to be taken into account (Heasley 2005).

At the same time, there is a recognition that there is still a great deal of work required to ascertain "what indigenous or authentic regional natural resource strategies might have been" and "how they might be revived or integrated into modern conservation biology and management as "indigenous knowledge" (Carruthers 2006: 812). Most importantly, conservation needs to be created around cultural attachment to landscapes. These cultural beliefs are part of the wealth of Traditional Ecological Knowledge that urgently needs to be incorporated into localised conservation plans. The conservation of wild animals is of particular importance as the high levels of poverty and unemployment in rural areas mean that wild food sources are strongly relied upon. One area that requires additional research is the role of hunting in the maintenance of Xhosa masculine identity and the way hunting is learnt and practiced by boys and men. What this thesis reveals is that participatory conservation needs to move beyond the validation of IK or LEK through scientific scrutiny (Millar 2004). This research reveals that environments will be utilised by local communities despite state restrictions. Accordingly, conservation needs to begin with local environmental uses to work towards cultural stewardship.

Research into Xhosa narratives also has applications for other social studies as these narratives reveal insight into socio-cultural responses to change. Examples of ritual songs reveal current socio-economic pressures. Narrative analysis of traditional stories revealed a creolisation of narratives, for example stories such as 'The hyena and the three little pigs', or 'Nomadlavana/Cinderella'. The role of dreaming and the responses indicated to dreams is also of importance, particularly the dreaming of one's *izilo* during healer initiation. The role of local experts such as elders and healers as promoters of cultural knowledge needs to be recognised both by participatory environmental programmes and within rural villagers.

The research findings have particular importance for participatory environmental education programmes. Both education and conservation programme need to realise the importance of including the knowledge and practices of children. Simplistically, programmes and policies approach to local knowledge and participation should be "use it or lose it". According to Moore (1986: 240):

> "Decision makers need to be convinced that a rich foundation of childhood experience is more likely to produce environmentally sensitive adults, who, in turn, are more likely to support conservation in the future".

Furthermore, Roué (2006: 16) explains that when children are separated from their parent's culture, most usually through the means of western education, it produces a situation of "social anomie". Many indigenous peoples are now forming programmes which integrate elders into schools or use LEK and practices in programmes which reconcile alienated youth with their rich

and vibrant cultural heritage (Roué 2006, Odachao 2006). It has been proven that the inclusion of IK into mainstream curriculums can promote conservation as well as cultural revitalisation for indigenous peoples (Saenmi and Tillman 2006). In this way it has been used effectively to instil self-confidence and engender healing among troubled youth (Roué 2006).

What has come through in the research has been Xhosa children's love for oral narratives, especially in the form of song, dance and other theatrical forms. Alongside this has been the disconnection many of them feel with western methods of education and their inability to express themselves effectively through writing especially. Therefore, if one were planning an effective environmental education programme that incorporated local indigenous knowledge, it would make sense to have this programme as oral and participatory as possible. Children would benefit from participatory programmes modelled along the lines of either drama or puppet workshops or participatory video. For example, Dagmar van Weeghel's Nature For Kids charity creates conservation films for African children using local actors talking in indigenous languages (Nature for Kids 2009). Community created participatory video has been used by organisations such as Insight for transmitting and disseminating information to communities, for example, sharing agricultural knowledge between local farmers in Turkmenistan (Lunch 2004).

Despite the differences in vegetation type and environmental access, similar types of cultural environmental narratives were found at both field sites. This points towards the role of cultural environmental narrative for improved understanding into Xhosa cultural environmental values and perceptions. As such, the results can potentially be utilised to inform an expanded research project incorporating more field sites into a participatory social learning project with applications for improved community management programmes. The concept of social learning and participatory education has proven to be one of the most effective and successful means of transmitting information within and between local communities (Sabatier 1989, Lotz-Sisitka 2005, Wals 2007, van Koppen 2007). The most effective community conservation should relate to 'multiple loop' social learning to solve competing claims (Gunderson and Holling 2002, Berkes *et al.* 2003); visioning future scenarios with communities and conservation managers to create collectively realised land management models and local environmental education programmes (Cundil *et al.* 2005, Fabricius *et al.* 2006, Lynam *et al.* 2007). By 'breaking' paradigms (Sarmiento 2000) and sharing environmental management it becomes possible to realise that "Conservation is not a state of being, but a social process inextricably linked to social and political institutions influencing resource management" (Lu Holt 2005: 1999).

6.12 Conclusion

While there has been much research into calculating the economic and livelihood values that forests and rivers provide, we are only now beginning to realise the importance of understanding the social and cultural values these areas have for the communities that live near them and the implications that these relationships should have on conservation policies. One area that remains unexplored in South African research is the cultural environmental narratives that communities tell about their landscapes. These narratives are an extremely valuable resource that has great potential for community conservation projects as well as the incorporation of TEK into environmental education programmes.

This project revealed that local experts and elders possess a multitude of cultural environmental narratives, despite the upheavals that have historically disassociated local people from their land and its traditional administration. However, these narratives are currently at risk of being severely impacted upon by schooling, modernisation, and government laws restricting environmental use and access. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge, practices and perceptions thus needs to be formally recognised. Where IK is incorporated into conservation plans it needs to be partnered with a system of community administration, monitoring and evaluation. There is a need to move beyond the point of romanticising indigenous peoples as 'conservationists' (Hardison 2005) or evaluating IK through a scientific lens (Millar 2004). Rather, it is about thinking about conservation and environmental education in a way that begins with, and works within community's cultural environmental values; because these are what ultimately inform their daily resource use. Cultural environmental narrative provides one, but not the only way, of accessing these values and perceptions. Shepard (2002) calls for conservation policies and practices which find improved ways for local communities to become involved in managing and benefitting from conservation, through which ever means are appropriate. In many cases this can be done through processes which seek to find common ground (Maffi and Woodley 2010).

Elders worldwide bemoan the loss of tradition, but culture is by its very nature a selective force that adapts to change. In this way culture can be seen to possess the same characteristics as narrative, the same bendable tenacity; it can change whilst staying the same. Many Xhosa boys in the Eastern Cape spend their initiation period in huts of plastic in open areas adjacent to townships. They are circumcised by a traditional healer medically trained in circumcision using a Jewish circumcision knife. They still refer to this time as "going to the bush", where they will learn "how to be men" as their forefathers learnt before them. Environmental programmes need to

have the same flexibility that many rural Xhosa youth possess, living with a foot in both worlds; carrying the past, acknowledging the present and anticipating the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 2A: Extract from the participatory booklets

yemidlalo

bolo yendlu)
cingo/ Imfonomfon
a)

My activity book

Name:	
Age:	
Class:	
Gender:	
Address (house number):	
Contact phone number (if available):	
Date:	

Xhosa	English translation

Intshayelelo

Wamkelekile kulencwadi yakho yemidlalwana.
Lencwadi yeyakho yokushicilela imidlalo nemisetyenzana oyenzayo engqamelene nendalo noko kuyingqongileyo. Ndinomdla wokuva ukuba uyisebenzisa njani indalo kwaye ithetha ntoni kuwe. Kwakhona ndinqwenela ukuva ngamasiko nezithethe zakho, kwaye kukho imibuzo ekupheleni kwalencwadi ezakwenza dibenokuyazi lencukacha

ndiyifunayo. Lencwadi yeyakho kufuneka iphendulwe nguwe, kodwa unako ukufuna uncedo kubantu bakowenu. Lemibuzo isekupheleni yeyo kwazi banzi ngamasiko nezithethe. Kumaxesha amaninzi abantu abadala abafana nabazali kunye nootata omkhulu noomakhulu bazi kakhulu nangcono ngamasiko nezithethe, kuloko ndisithi ungacela bakuncedise ukuphendula lemibuzo.
Ezincwadi zemidlalo nemisetyenzana ziyancedisa ukuba ndazi banzi ngonxibelelwano lwakho nendalo, kwanezinye izinto ezingqamelene namasiko nezithethe ezikhoyo kulelali yakho.

Yonke into oyibhala kulencwadi ibalulekile kwaye iyimfihlo, yilonto kufuneka ungaxhali ngokhuseleko lwayo kwaye akukho nto izakusetyenziswa ngendlela ongayithandiyo.
Ndiyakubulela ngokuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kule ncwadana. Wonke umntu othe wayigqiba ukuyiphendula lencwadi uzakufumana ispho ekugqibeni kwakhe.

Introduction

Welcome to your activity book.
This is a book to record your activities and interactions with the environment. I am interested in hearing about how you use your environment and what it means to you. I also want to hear about your culture and traditions and so there are some questions at the end of the book for this.

This book is for you to complete yourself, but you can also ask for help to complete it from people in your family. This is especially for the questions at the end about traditions and culture. Sometimes older people like parents or grandparents know a lot about traditions so you can ask them to help you with answering these questions.
These activity books will help me to understand more about your relationship with the environment and what traditions and cultural activities there are in your village.

All the things you write down here are confidential, which means that you don't have to worry about this information being used against you. Thank you for participating in the project. Everyone who completes their booklet successfully will get a prize at the end.

Xhosa	English translation

Icandelo lemisebenzi nemidlalwana

Kwelicandelo ndifuna ukwazi ngemisetyenzana yakho ngelithuba leholide. Elicandelo lemisebenzi leleveki ezimbini, uyaqaphela ukuba umbuzo ngamnye unebhokisi ukuqala kusuku lokuqala ukuya kusuku lweshumi elinesine (14). Ukuba wenze umsebenzi okhoyo kule mibuzo ngosuku oluthile, uyakuthi ubeke isitika kolosuku ukubonakalisa ukuba uwenzile .

Umzekelo: ukuba uvune imifino kusuku lwesine nelesibhozo kwelixesha leziveki zimbini, uyakuthi ubeke isitika kwibhokisi yosuku lwesine ubeke esinye kwibhokisi yosuku lwesibhozo. Kufuneka ubeke isitika kolosuku wenze ngalo lomsetyenzana. (Akuthiwa beka isitika kuba umntu omaziyo ethe wenza lomsetyenzana). Icandelo lesibini lombuzo lizakubuza ukuba uwenze phina lomsetyenzana, kwaye uncediswe okanye uwenze nabani. Ukuba unempendulo ezahlukeneyo ngentsuku ezahlukeneyo ungabeka iimpendulo ezo ndawonye,kwindawo oyinikiweyo yokuphendula lombuzo. **Umzekelo:** ukuba uvune imifino ehlathini okanye edlelweni, kwimpendulo yakho uchaza zombini ezindawo uvene kuzo.

Activity Section

In this section I want to know about your activities during this holiday period. This activity section is for two weeks, so you will see that each question has a box from day 1 up until day 14. If you have done the activity in the question on a certain day, then you will put a sticker on that day.

So, to show you an example, if you collected imifino on the fourth and the eight day during the two weeks, you would put a sticker in the box for Day 4 and one in the box for Day 8. You only need to put a sticker on the day that you did this activity, (this is not for if someone you know did it, only if you did it). The second part of the question will be asking where you did this activity, and who you did it with. If there are different answers for different days you can just put all the answers together in the space for the answer to that question. For example, if you collected imifino in the forest and in the grazing fields, then you will write both of these places down.

Umbuzo 1:

Uvune Imifino							
Kweziphi iintsuku	Usuku 1 ◯	Usuku 2 ◯	Usuku 3 ◯	Usuku 4 ◯	Usuku 5 ◯	Usuku 6 ◯	Usuku 7 ◯
	Usuku 8 ◯	Usuku 9 ◯	Usuku1 0 ◯	Usuku1 1 ◯	Usuku 12 ◯	Usuku1 3 ◯	Usuku1 4 ◯
Phi (Nika igama lendawo okanye uyicacise)							
Ubunabani							

Question 1:

Collected wild vegetables							
On what days?	Usuku 1 ◯	Usuku 2 ◯	Usuku 3 ◯	Usuku 4 ◯	Usuku 5 ◯	Usuku 6 ◯	Usuku 7 ◯
	Usuku 8 ◯	Usuku 9 ◯	Usuku1 0 ◯	Usuku1 1 ◯	Usuku 12 ◯	Usuku1 3 ◯	Usuku1 4 ◯
From where? (name or describe the place)							
With who?							

Icandelo Iemibuzo

Kwelicandel yimibuzo malunga nemidlalo oyidlalayo, amayeza, kunye namasiko. Elicandelo lenzelwe mna ndifumane ulwazi ngezinto ozenzayo nezinto ozithandayo. Ukuba uyafuna ungaxoxa nabantu bakowenu ngalemibuzo, nabo bangakunceda ngezinye izinto – umzekelo bangakuncedisa ubhale ngamayeza abawaziyo, bangakunceda ubhale ngezityalo ngezilwanyane ezibalulekileyo kwisintu okanye kumasiko nemveli.

Umbuzo 18:

Ngeyiphi imidlalo othanda ukuyidlala kwaye uyidlala phi Iemidlalo?

Igama lomdlalo	Uthanda ukuyidlalela phi Iemidlalo? (Unganika igama lalendawo okanye undicacisele ngalendawo?)

Question Section

In this section are some questions about games that you play, amayeza, and rituals. This section is for me to find out what you do, and what you like. If you want you can discuss these questions with your family, and they can also help you with some things – for example they can help you to write down the amayeza that they know about, and they can help you to write down the important cultural plants and animals.

Question 18:

What games do you like to play and where do you play these games?

Name of the Game	Where do you like to play these games? (Can you give me the name of a place, or describe the place?)

Umbuzo 29:

Ungandixelela ngesiko okanye umsebenzi wesintu osekhe waya kuwo owathi wawuthanda ngentliziyo yakho yonke, ingangowakoweni okanye ebumelwaneni (kungangoku kulonyaka okanye ngexesha ubusemncinci).

Usuku owenziwa ngalo lomsebenzi [isiko]	
Indawo owenzelwa kuyo umsebenzi [isiko]	
Umntu owawusenzelwa yena lomsebenzi [isiko]	
Isizathu sonkweza lomsebenzi	

Question 29:

Can you tell me about the most important ritual that you have attended from your family or people around that really touched your heart (it could be this year, or even when you were younger).

Date of Ritual	
Place where ritual took place	
Person/people who the ritual was for	
Reason for the ritual to take place	

Umbuzo 30:

Ungandixelela okunye ngelisiko okanye lomsebenzi kwanesizathu sokuwuthanda, ndifuna ukwazi kwenzeka ntoni, kwaye ngowuphi umzuzu owawuthandayo welisiko okanye lomsebenzi kwakutheni.

Question 30:

Can you tell me more about this ritual and why you liked it?
I want to know what happened, and what was your favourite part of the ritual and why.

Appendix 2B: Ethical considerations followed during research

It is acknowledged that any research involving children should seriously examine the ethical implications of the intended research as children are considered vulnerable and innocent research participants which can and have been manipulated or used in the past under the guise of research. There is therefore an obligation to ensure that any survey, interview or workshop prioritizes the children's emotional well-being, and dignity above research demands. The research therefore followed the Rhodes University Ethical Standards guidelines (Hendricks, 2005)[21]. The research proposal was submitted to Rhodes University's ethics committee, and was successfully approved. The research was also run by the Rhodes Psychology department and the Rhodes Legal Aid clinic. Suggestions from these meetings were adhered to.

Before research took place, meetings were held to discuss the project and to obtain permission from local village authorities and from parents or teachers as well as from children themselves. These permissions were done with informed consent: that is, within the context of people being informed about the project, what it entails, what is its purpose, what will happen with the results, and who is funding it. There has been confidentiality of responses, i.e. no child is identified by name in the write up, and no sensitive information will be passed on to 3rd parties. All participants had right of withdrawal at any time. All work was done with the best interests of the children in mind, taking care that research would not negatively affect the children's well-being or their family life. A female translator was chosen as it was felt that this would enable the children to feel 'more at ease'. In Pirie we also had to consider that participants may have been illegally harvesting medicinal plants or hunting in the state administered forest. Our connection to other respected researchers who had conducted research in the area in the past allowed the community to realise that we were not attached to DAFF. We explained our neutral position upon arrival in the village and to each informant who participated in the study, particularly adults whom we conducted interviews with. Any information which may in anyway incriminate participants is published anonymously in the thesis. With regard to visiting the forest with participants, we followed the village's administrative channels and obtained written permission from the chairperson which we carried with us during each forest trip.

In November/December 2010 there will be feedback of general results to both adults and children through the means of focus group meetings, community meetings, and exhibitions to showcase some of the children's maps.

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[21] These ethical considerations have been adapted from McGarry, D. 2007. *Utilisation of biodiversity by children affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa.* Unpublished Thesis. Rhodes University – Department of Environmental Science.

Appendix 3A: The story of Nomadlavana

"Beginning
There was a girl who was called Nomadlavana. She lived with her parents, but later her mother died. Her father remarried another woman. That woman had two kids, and those children didn't like Nomadlavana. Nomadlavana stayed with the pigs in a pigsty.

As time went by there was a competition in the village. In that competition the king wanted a beautiful girl who would be his wife. On that day of the competition, Nomadlavana wanted to take part, but they refused to go with her because they said they couldn't go with a dirty person. The two girls were wearing beautiful new clothes.

Nomadlavana went to the river and cried and said "There cries a mother's daughter"
The answer from the river said "What do you want me to do? You must go to your grandfather..."
There was a hand that came from the river who called her, then she got into the water and came out of the river with new clothes. She was very beautiful and she went to the dance competition.

When the king saw her, he dumped those he was dancing with. The king asked to dance with her. When she was tired she asked to rest and the king let her rest. But she ran away and left her shoe. The king decided to go door to door, fitting that shoe – the one who fitted the shoe would be his wife. The king did what he planned to do. When they arrived at Nomadlavana's home, the girls locked Nomadlavana in a room. But the shoe didn't fit them. Then the king heard the nice voice of Nomadlavana singing in the room. He asked them to open it. They opened the door and Nomadlavana came out of the room. He asked her to fit the shoe, the shoe fit her.

The king was very happy. He kissed her, hugged her and said "I've found my wife". She went with the king and stayed with him.
The end"

Girl, 15 years, Pirie, 5 November 2008.

Appendix 3B: The story of Somagwaza

"I will make an example of Somagwaza: he was the first person to introduce *ulwaluko* (circumcision). It started with him. There was no one who could make him a man [circumcise him] by that time of worshipping Qamata [in the old days]. A voice come up in his dream telling him that he will be the one who will make boys become men by using *umkhonto* (the spear). He come out of his dream and went to tell someone about his dream and when he was talking the *umkhonto* fell down and [cut] him and Somagwaza was the first one to say "*ndiyindoda*" (I am a man). He became *ingcibi* (the man who circumcises the boys)"

Elder, 61 years, Pirie, 4 March 2009

Appendix 4A: The game of *iceya*

Theal (1820) describes this game as follows:

"The players sit in a circle, and each has a little piece of wood, a grain of corn, or something of the kind. It must be, so small that it can easily be concealed in a folded hand, and no player must have more than one. If there are many players they form themselves into sides or parties, but when they are few in number one plays against the rest. This one conceals the toy in either of his hands, and throwing both arms out against an opponent he announces himself either as an *Inhlangano* (one who meets), or an *Ipambo* (one who evades). His opponent throws his arms out in the same manner, so that his right hand shall be opposite the first player's left, and his left opposite the first player's right. The clenched hands are then opened, and if the toys are found to meet, the first player wins if he has called himself an *inhlangano*, or loses if an *ipambo*. If the toys do not meet, the case is reversed. When there are many players, one after another is beaten until two only are left. This part of the game is called the *Umnyadala* (the winding up). Those two then play against each other, and the one who is beaten is said to be left with the *umnyadala*, and is laughed at. The winner is greeted as the wearer of the tiger skin mantle. In playing, the arms are thrown out very quickly, and the words are rapidly uttered, so that a stranger might fancy there was neither order nor rule observed. Young men and boys often spend whole nights playing the *Iceya*, which has the same hold upon them as dice upon some Europeans".