

Connections to rural “home” landscapes of the former Transkei homeland, South Africa



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Approach to studying bio-cultural connections

- **Conceptual framework : Sense of place and identity** (Stedman, Masterson, et al. submitted to E&S)
 - Attachments and meanings (Tuan 1977)
 - Include identity
 - SOP as integrated connection: emerge from interactions with biophysical environment and socially produced (Stedman 2003)
- **Participatory methods: including photovoice**
 - Participatory photo methods in SOP research and SES research (see Stedman et al 2014; Masterson and Mahajan, in prep)



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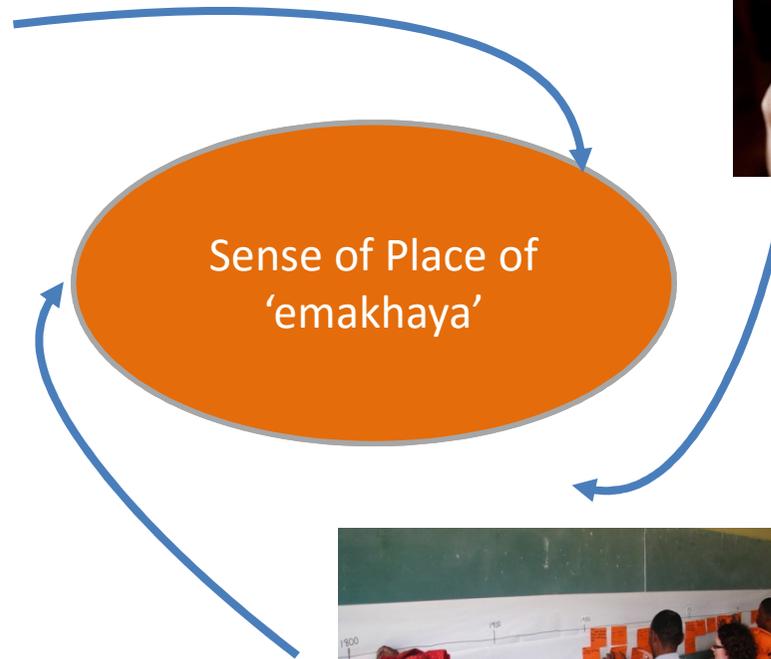
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH



Semi-structured interviews – rural and urban



Photovoice



Timeline construction

Case Study:

Mnquma Municipality, South Africa

- Undeveloped, few job opportunities, migrant (Cox et al. 2004; Todes et al. 2010).
- Migrant labour and remittances
- Field abandonment and decline of subsistence agriculture: deagrarianization (Bryceson, 2002)
- Diversification and reliance on social grants (De Klerk 2007)



Emakhaya: what kind of place is this?

“Staying in the suburbs in the city, that is not your home. You are just there, to work. Here, in the rural village, you are free, you possess this place.”

Vuyisa Hermans, on ‘Emakhaya’

- Emakhaya as ‘home’ and ‘village landscape’
- Place character – rural way of life, agricultural lifestyle
- Includes specific elements – kraal, wood pile, field, cattle
- Place utility multidimensional - strong identity component

“This is the work of umama. There I am coming out of my garden where I have ploughed and planted crops that will help me and the family have something to eat.”



Mlungiseleli Bili



Nobongile Tomose

Biocultural links made visible: practice-knowledge-belief



That is the kraal, where you keep your cattle or livestock safe. It's also where you perform your rituals, when the time comes for that. This is important to me. If one of my family members is sick or has a problem, you can take that person to the kraal and plea on his behalf to the ancestors, and the problem will be solved.
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SES dynamics

SOP and photovoice reveal decline in direct dependence on landscape:

- Electricity
- More urban migration but unemployment in cities - decline in remittances, social grants
- Fewer livestock, field abandonment
- Less draft power, expensive agricultural inputs
- Bush encroachment

In the other one, those used to be fields that are amafusi and are no longer planted. Now cattle are scarce and you need to hire tractors in order to plough. The tractors are scarce. You book for a tractor in September and only get it in November.

M. Bili 2013



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Social-ecological changes intertwined with identity

- Importance of farming and finding work in the city as part of identity
- Inertia and traps? (Boonstra, Haider, Björkvik, Masterson, submitted)



He's not married because he is not working. To have a wife, the first thing you have to do is to work and have some money, and some cattle to pay lobola for that. He has long been striving to get some work in the city, to no avail. He feels bad to depend on his mother's pension grant because he is the son, who is supposed to look after his mother”.

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Seeds of innovation?



Against expectations:
entrepreneurial small-scale
farmer.

Diversified livelihood

Care and SOP: experiment with
planting times and bee farming.

Experimenting with
blossom times for
honey production
© M. Bili



Despite decline, practices and identity facilitate ecological literacy



© M. Bili

“You can see the inside, there's no manure - they have no livestock there at that home. But it's still important to have a kraal at home, because that is a place needed when you perform your rituals. People have different perspectives. Some are in the cities and have jobs and earn much money. For those they see having livestock as something unimportant. “



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“I also go out and fetch poles. The atmosphere there is pleasurable. I enjoy doing that task, it gives me a good chance to smell the scent that is lovely, and listen to the birds singing while doing the job.”

Discussion

- Interventions risk disrupting biocultural connections if focus on 1 aspect
 - National focus on large scale commercial agriculture
 - Wild Coast: conservation of forests and wildlife
 - Need to understand landscapes, more than multifunctional - - holistically
 - Decline of direct dependence on landscape but practices remain important for identity and holistic well-being
 - These biocultural connections are seeds of innovation
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Thank you!
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Other evidence

- Lansing recent paper
- Michelle – Aboriginal fire management
- Do we understand 'connecting' – not about fixing problems