The Proposed Use of PGIS to Map Municipal Boundaries in Rural South Africa
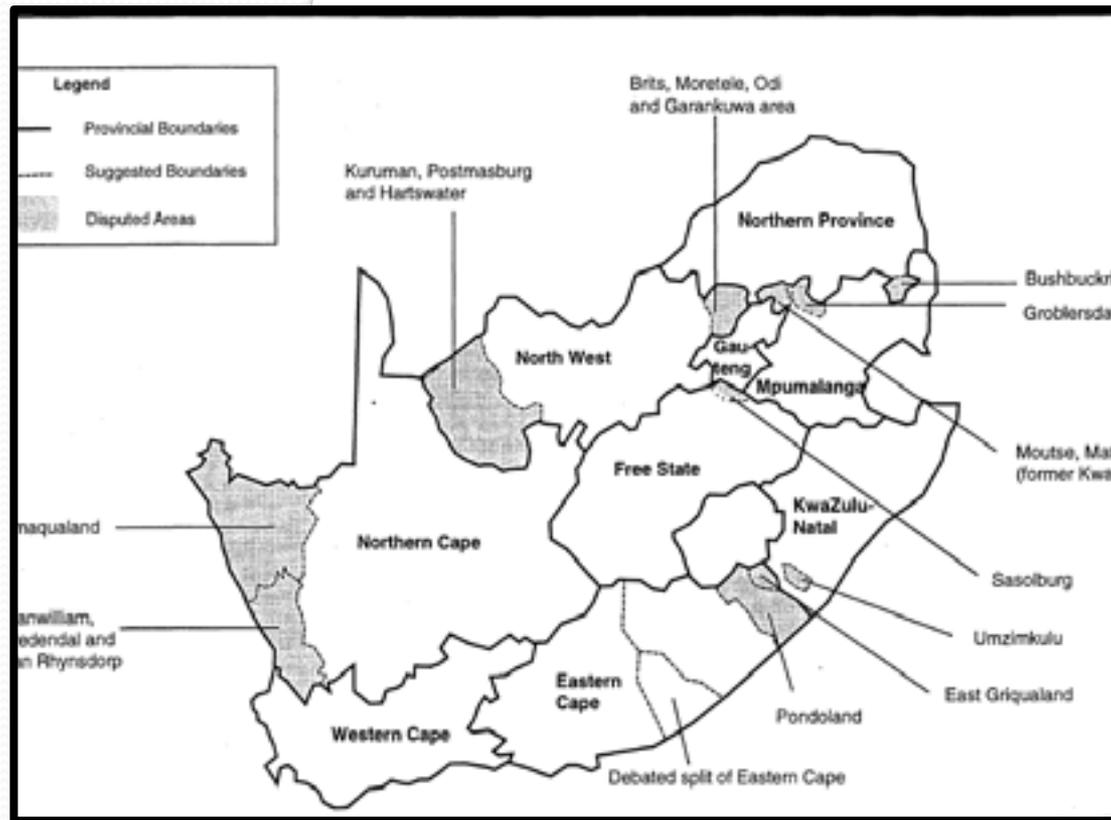
Cleotilda Nxumalo

Challenges of Municipal Boundary Demarcation

- The Municipal Demarcation
  - Purpose is to provide:
    - a democratic govt for local communities
    - sustainable basic services
    - social and economic development

  - Main objective is to redress past imbalances by redefining boundaries and municipal categories and so stimulate social and economic development

Disputes between rural communities and the local government

¨ Public hearings regarding municipal demarcation were poorly broadcasted

¨ Traditional leaders and rural communities were not allowed sufficient time to evaluate the probable impact on

- ¡ service delivery,
- ¡ land distribution, and
- ¡ authority structures in rural areas.

¨ Demarcation of municipal boundaries was based on inaccurate spatial information

¨ the demarcations were externally imposed and presented in a way that was inaccessible to the affected communities.

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Areas of dispute and unrest against municipal boundaries

Result of Municipal Demarcation

- Rural communities became split over two municipalities
- Resulting in varied standards of service delivery between the different traditional rural areas.
- In some traditional rural areas it even deprived some communities of basic necessities such as water and other infrastructure
- The role played by the traditional authority also became uncertain

Background into rural South African history

Native Land Act No. 27 of 1913 & Native Trust &Land Act No. 18 of 1936

– Legislations used large scale, racially based demarcation to segregate, divide, and dispossess black South African citizens of land

– 75% of the country's population (blacks), were only allowed to occupy 13% percent of the countries land

– Held in the South African Development Trust

Further Segregation

– **The Black Administration Act No. 38 of 1927 authorised the establishment of new tribes and division of existing tribes and to demarcate communal settlements for members of a specified tribe.**

– **Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950 under Apartheid black people were further subdivided among different tribes and cultural backgrounds**
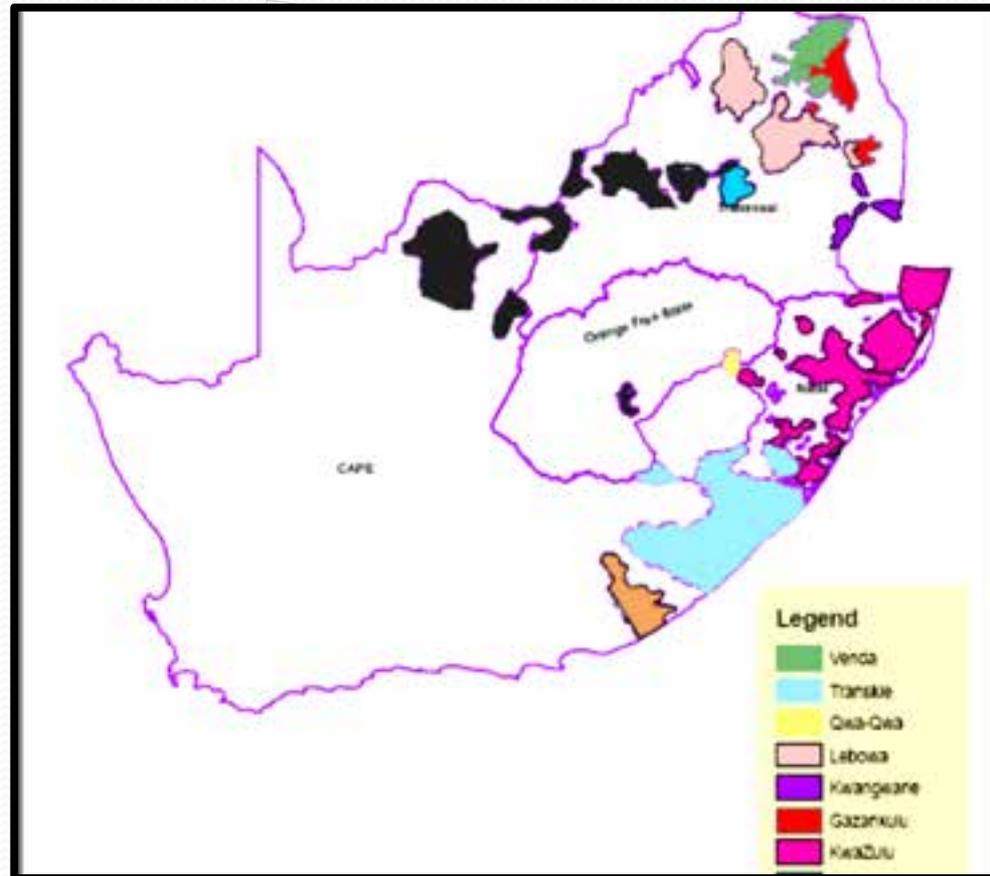
Fig 2 depicts how Xhosas could only live in Transkei; Zulus in Natal, Tswanas in Bophuthatswana, Sotho's in QwaQwa, etc.

Traditional Leaders (TL)

– Government allowed TLs a controlled amount of authority.

– Land distribution, land boundaries and titles were largely un-documented and traditional authority decisions were based on the word of traditional leaders. However, communal areas is owned by the state

Post-Aparthied

- Creation of the Municipal Demarcation Board in 1998
- Establishment of new municipalities to address the imbalances of the past apartheid era
- To accelerate basic services, such as water, to the poor

Post Municipal Demarcation in Rural South Africa

- Large scale criticism against the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB):
  - Municipal services not accessible to far reaching communities
  - Farms now governed by multiple municipalities
  - Rural communities split over two municipalities
  - Having multiple traditional leaders in a single municipality
  - Duality of power between local government and TL
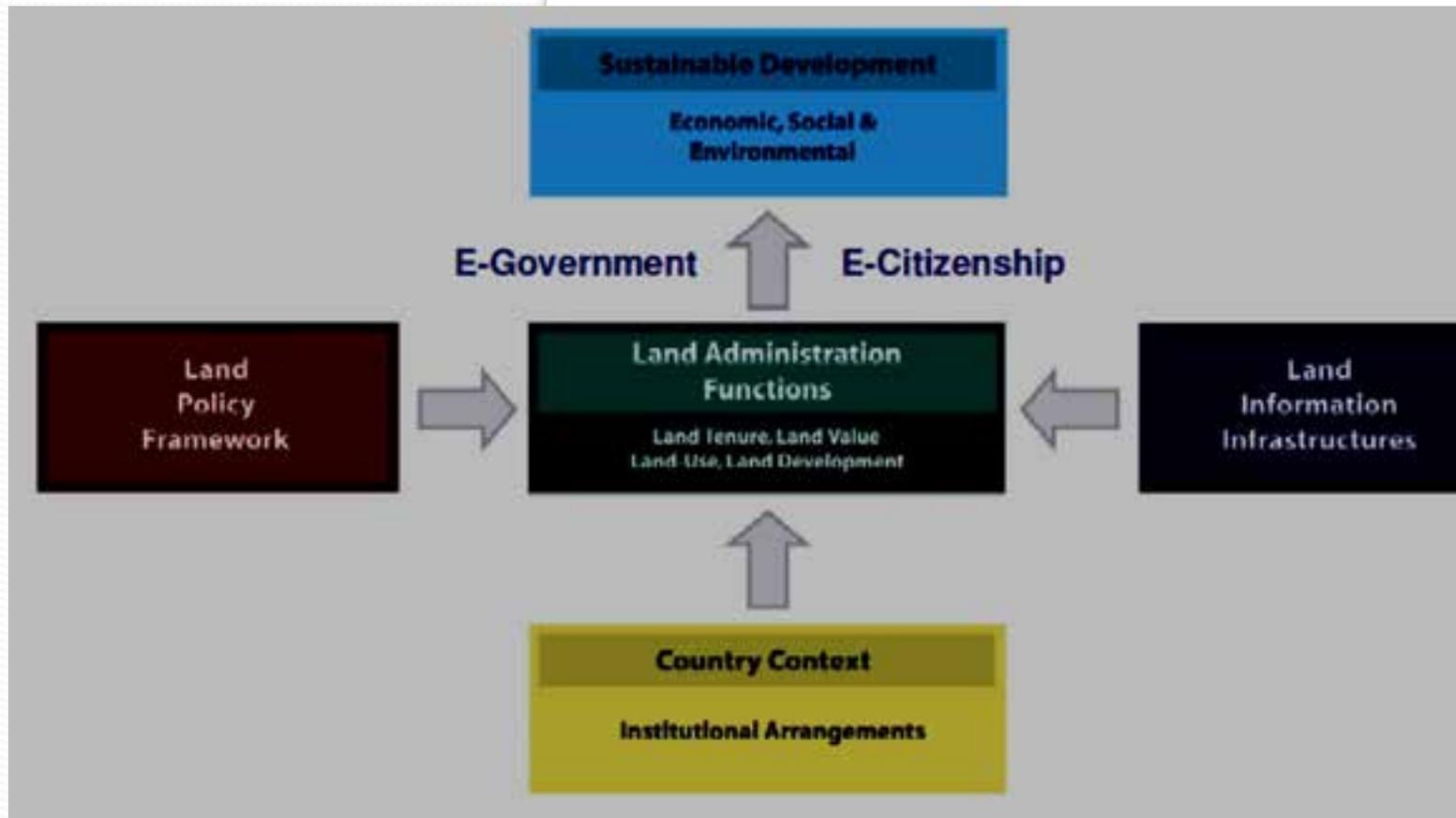
Protests

Protest action by rural communities

Violence

Protest turn into violent outbreaks

Government attempt to mitigate violence

– **Government allows communities to lodge grievances against municipal boundaries**

– **Re-opens the demarcation of municipal boundaries**

– **Instructs municipalities to assist in municipal boundary re-demarcation**

Possible solutions

The Land Management Paradigm

Difficulties

– Most land parcels are not recorded as compared to urban areas

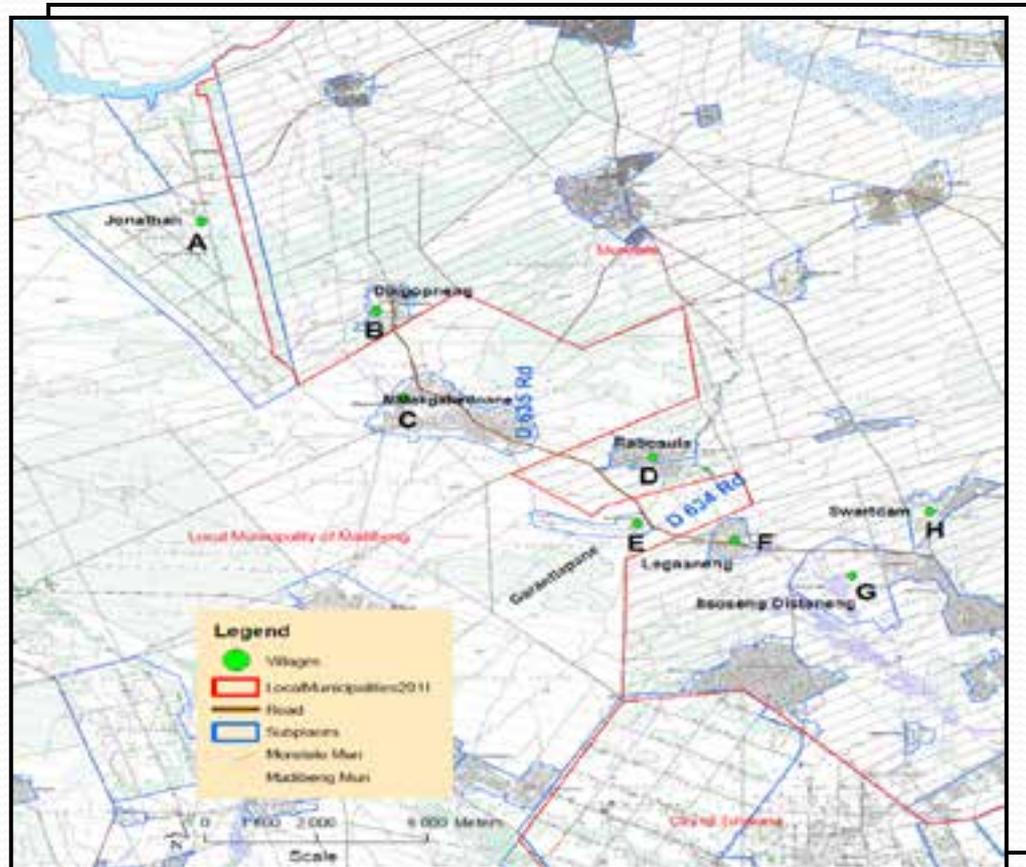– Rural communities follow social boundaries

– Misinterpretation of grievances lodged

PGIS

– Community participation along with the globally accepted good governance framework can play an integral part in conflict resolution

– If participation may become divisive and reinforces inequality, chaos is likely to occur

– The use of GIS promotes research with factual information that could lead to conflict resolution

Example of Mis-Interpretation of a Grievience

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After PGIS

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Benefits of PGIS

– Use of GIS to broaden public involvement

    – In policy making

    – Attain and sustain the interests of co*mm*unities

    – Promote the goals of nongovernment organisations

    – Guarantees empowerment consequence to decision making process

    – Adaptation to GIS to suite the layman

    – Safeguard the attainment of goals