Chiefs

in South Africa

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Law, Power & Culture
in the Post-Apartheid Era

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List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
Contralesa	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
CP	Constitutional Principle (as in Act 200/1993)
CP	Conservative Party
CPA	Communal Property Association
DC	District Council
DFA	Development Facilitation Act (67/1995)
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DNA	Department of Native Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GNMT	Greater Ngwaritsi Makhudu/Thamaga
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPACC	Indigenous Peoples of South Africa Co-ordinating Committee
LGTA	Local Government Transition Act (209/1993)
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MINMEC	Minister and Members of the Executive Committee
MP	Member of Parliament
MPNP	Multi-Party Negotiation Process
NG	Nederlands Gereformeerd (church)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NLC	National Land Committee
NP	National Party
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADEC	Southern African Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TUSAA	Trade Union of South African Authorities
TMC	Transitional Metropolitan Council
TRC	Transitional Representative Council
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UN	United Nations
WGIA	Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa

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'A chief is like the moon; if it shines it is because of the sun and stars that surround it,' a Sotho saying goes. If there is any merit in this work, which deals with the reappraisal of chiefs and custom in contemporary South Africa, it is because of all the people who have enlightened me on the subject over the past years. Without the wonderful literature already published, the protracted e-mail conversations with colleagues, the brief chats and the long interviews in South African offices and homesteads, in conference hallways or in the Van Vollenhoven Institute over coffee, this book would simply not exist. And even if there is no way of illuminating the whole constellation that facilitated the research, I would like to start by expressing my deepest gratitude to at least part of it – without, of course, placing responsibility on anyone but myself for possible errors in this final product.

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result of my first infatuation with his country, and the book is dedicated to him. There are many others close to me to thank, for a variety of reasons, but I would like to single out my parents Janus and Tonny Oomen, and my friends Margreet Korsten and Roeland Ris for their interest, not only in the author of this research, but also in the work itself. Finally, for all the small and large stars that guided me in conducting this research, there can only be one sun: Herman Lelieveldt's support went far beyond what is usual for even the best of partners. After having played an important role in the research design, he specialised in (and published on) 'how to write your PhD'. And when it was time to wrap the whole thing up, he helped by creating the best of natural deadlines and remedies against post-dissertation depression: our radiant son Tom. For all this, I am immensely grateful.

1. The coronation of Chief Ramabulana in Venda, at which President Nelson Mandela was also present (all photographs © Barbara Oomen)

2. The Kgôrô; the re-instated customary court in Mamone (see p.141)

3. Kgosi Billy Sekwati Mampuru in leopard skin purchased by migrants upon his coronation, during a 'heritage day' for schoolchildren

4. Retraditionalisation in Mamone: Kgosi Billy Sekwati Mampuru III and his wife during his coronation (see p.123)

5 & 6. Kgosi Billy Sekwati Mampuru in front of a villa built in his honour, during a meeting with schoolchildren (see p.195)

7. One of the many people present during president Mandela's visit to Sekhukhuneland (see p.142)

8. Member of the vigilante organisation Mapogo a Mathamaga ('If you are a leopard, I'll be a tiger', see p.149)