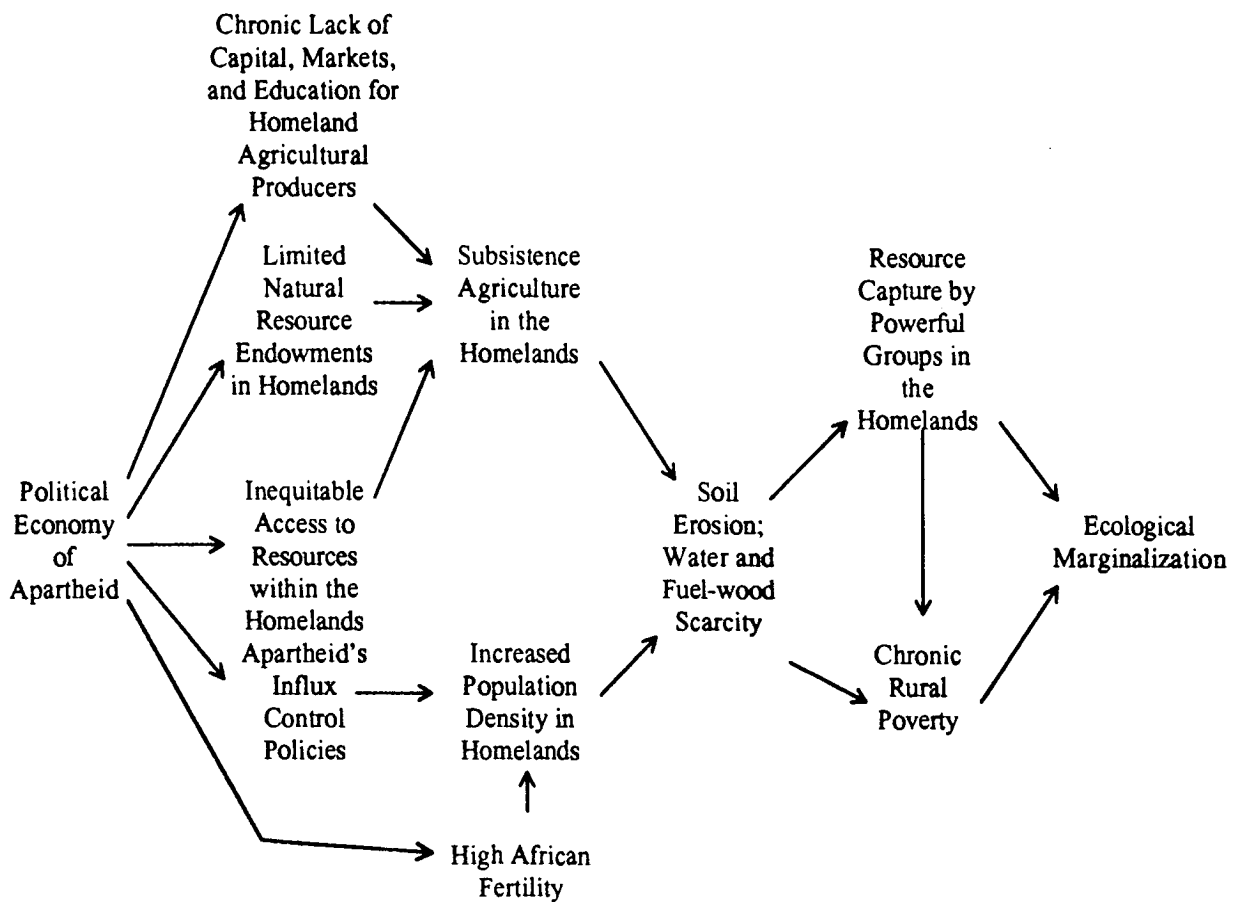the early 1980s, people started moving to ecologically and infrastructurally marginal urban areas.

Figure 1: Environmental Scarcity within South African Homelands

As presented in figure two, chronic poverty, ecological marginalization, and high fertility rates in the former homelands caused rural-urban migration. These migrations along with high urban fertility rates boosted urban population densities. High urban densities, in turn, combined with the impoverishment produced by Apartheid to force people to rely on the urban environment to provide for their daily needs. Too many people relying on a limited resource base produced urban environmental scarcity.

The huge movement of people to and within urban areas increased demands on local institutions. Rising environmental scarcity, meanwhile, caused evermore social segmentation. These two processes together produced a sharp weakening of the institutions needed to meet the needs of the local population. Warlords were able to seize control of key environmental resources, which further weakened local institutions. A cycle began: institutions could not provide for the population which forced people to rely on, and subsequently degrade, the local environment; weak institutions provided warlords with increased opportunities for predatory behaviour.