DECOLONIZING CONSERVATION? CO-MANAGEMENT OF NATURALRESOURCES IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE NATURE RESERVE (BBR NR), SOUTH AFRICA

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the [thesis or dissertation] entitled

DECOLONIZING CONSERVATION? CO-MANAGEMENT OF

NATURALRESOURCES IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE NATURE RESERVE (BBR NR),

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate my thesis to…

…the Cunningmore-A community, land claimants, and all those who stand to benefit from the Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve.

…the Segano family of Logaganeng, for without your love and kindness I never would have known South Africa.

…my mother, Barbara Goldberg, for whose spirit, smile, and ceaseless words of encouragement live on.

…my wife and best friend, Jaime LaVelle, for your love, support, and patience when I was glued to the laptop and talked endlessly about knowledge, power, and the “C” word (colonialism).

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South African Acronyms

BBBEE - Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

BBR NR – Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve

BLM – Bushbuckridge Local Municipality

CMC – Communal Management Committee

CPA – Communal Property Association

DoA – Department of Agriculture

DWA – Department of Water Affairs

DEA – Department of Environmental Affairs

DLA – Department of Land Affairs

DRDLR – Department of Rural Development and Land Reform

GEF – Global Environmental Facility

JMB – Joint Management Board

K2C BR – Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve

KNP – Kruger National Park

LED – Local Economic Development Plan

MTPA – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency

PCV – Peace Corps Volunteer

PRO – Public Relations Officer

RLCC – Restitution of Land Claims Commission

SANParks – South African National Parks

SANBI – South African National Biodiversity Institute

SDF – Spatial Development Framework

SDI – Spatial Development Initiative

SMME – Small Medium and Micro Enterprises

UNESCO – United Nations Education Science Council

UN MDG – United Nations Millennium Development Goals

UNDP – United Nations Development Plan

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

WfW – Work for Water

WRF – Wits Rural Facility

Additional Key Policies, Plans, and Agreements
Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve

Bantu Authorities Act (1951)

Bushbuckridge Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan (BLM IDP)

Bushbuckridge Local Municipality Local Economic Development (BLM LED)

Communal Property Association Act (1996)

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1994)

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Rio Earth Summit (1992)

MTPA Act (2005)

White Paper on Biodiversity (1997)

Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) (2007)

Mpumalanga Biodiversity Conservation Plan (MBCP 2006)

Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy (MTGS) (2006)

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (DEA, 2005)

National Environmental Management Act (2003)

National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)

National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES) (2010)

Protected Areas Act (2003)

Native Lands Act (1913)

Native Service Contract Act (1932)

Restitution of Lands Act (1994)

Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999)

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Article 4(b) (1994)

I. Introduction

Purpose Statement

The current land reform trend in South Africa seeks empowerment and poverty alleviation through co-management of protected areas that simultaneously advance international biodiversity goals. Protected-area coverage in particular has undergone extensive enlargements that are being coordinated, financed, implemented and monitored through global organizations, including the World Bank, World Wide Fund for Nature, The World Conservation Union, USAID and UNESCO (Brechin et al., 2003; Zimmerer et al., 2004; Zimmerer, 2006). There has been a growing recognition in conservation circles that national parks and protected areas cannot be managed successfully without consideration for the subsistence and socioeconomic requirements of their adjacent communities (Pelser et al., 2011; Hulme and Murphree, 2001; Kothari et al., 1998; Naughton-Treves, 2005; World Parks Congress, 2003). Though South Africa has ostensibly adopted a community-based conservation ethic addressing livelihoods at the local scale, integrating goals of sustainability and community development within established municipal frameworks has proven difficult due to land-use disputes, lack of capacity, poor and ambiguous governance, infrastructure and coordination, and high levels of local distrust. A review of constitutionally-supported national policies suggests that conservation goals are integrating social justice objectives into new environmental regimes yet co-management strategies have offered limited socioeconomic benefits (Kepe, 2008). With the proliferation of protected areas – since 1990 protected areas have increased 58% and in their extent by 48% (Bertzky et al., 2012) - it's essential to assess the viability of natural resource co-management as it relates to South African land

reform, rural development, and socioeconomic equality. Livelihoods are of paramount concern, especially in impoverished rural areas where local populations were dispossessed of land during apartheid.

Research Questions

This case study seeks to assess the efficacy of co-management regimes in land reform initiatives through a qualitative, exploratory analysis of local perceptions of the co-management of natural resources in the newly protected area of Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve (BBR NR). Models for land reform through co-management have yet to be adequately or sufficiently molded to decentralizing development projects in Africa. Such development in Africa is rarely initiated by local communities, and in those rare cases, their voices fail to be incorporated into the decision-making processes of managing natural resources and wildlife. Local and/or Indigenous voices bring much needed richness and nuance to complex conservation management regimes yet they have been deemed incompatible or untranslatable with Western approaches that prize efficiency, quantifiable data, time, schedules, and international Science and funding. Bridging binaries, or rather hybridizing ways of interpreting the world, come with a tangle of ambiguities regarding land use access and property rights.

Situated within the historical and political contexts of conservation and "global status of protected areas" (Zimmerer, 2006), land reform, the spatial and economic legacy of apartheid, and within local, national, and global power structures, how do local communities of Bushbuckridge, South Africa (1) negotiate, interpret, understand, and assess new environmental management regimes, (2) perceive the degree to which these

regimes are equitable or empowering, and (3) assess their role in the participatory management of resources? Lastly, (4) combining local perceptions about co-management in BBR NR with document analysis and field observations, to what degree has conservation been *decolonized*?

Goals and Objectives

Currently, the South African government earnestly challenges its colonial history, as constitutional changes have allowed for freedom of speech and the creation of unions, embraced multiple official languages (there are eleven), and ceded jobs and representation of the black majority into Parliament and other high government positions. Four million houses have been constructed since 1994, social grants are received by more than 15m people and will rise to R120 billion (US$13 billion) annually by 2015, and the economy remains the largest in Africa (Africa Research Institute, 2013). A process has begun to compensate those dispossessed of land as a result of the Native Lands Act (1913) to address economic and social inequalities in the form of land restitution, distribution, and reform. Following the *Land of Restitution Act* (1994), dispossessed individuals had until 1998 to file a claim which would transfer land back to its original owners. The land claim in question, Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve (BBR NR), reflects this aim of ameliorating the racially unjust past.

Rooting out the colonial legacy of apartheid is top priority, but what has this meant in terms of decolonizing conservation? Has colonialism been entirely extirpated from the spatial configurations and overarching goals of biodiversity conservation in post-apartheid South Africa? To that extent, what are these goals and can they be reconciled within the framework of rural development and land reform at the local scale?

Is it realistic to assume that a top-down co-management prescription involving a wide range of divergent priorities and expectations (Buscher, 2008) can be combined productively? To continue, as land reform is used in conjunction with the globally supported *People and Parks Programme* of South African National Parks (SANParks), which champions co-management of natural resources between local communities and provincial conservation agencies, what physical and conceptual reproductions of colonialism still exist in South African conservation today? How might these colonial reproductions impede or affect processes of equitability in relation to the Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve co-management regime?

I seek to uncover colonial reproductions, and how they might infringe on the very rights the State purports to redress. In this sense, I wish to explore scale as it relates to power and capital affecting the local landscape. Moreover, I challenge notions of co-management as decolonizing conservation's infamous past. Through assessing local perceptions, I aim to elucidate the tangle of ambiguities and livelihood issues present in the BBR NR land claim. Ultimately, understanding local perceptions can better inform future conservation policy and lead to more sustainable, equitable co-management outcomes.

Why South Africa?

My interest in South Africa began in 2002 when I was first invited to serve as a United State Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in the Kalahari region and former "independent" bantustan of Bophuthatswana. Until this time, my knowledge and grasp of the country, so often confused with simply a region in Africa, was limited at best, and perhaps comprised of many of the usual and unfortunate associations with Africa:

hunger, disease, corruption, uncivilized, poor, with a dependency on foreign aid. Such Western perceptions of Africa and the global South in general, are shaped and perpetuated by a historically-based hegemonic narrative. Stories that garner the greatest attention still cling to binary colonial constructions that present the West as intellectually and scientifically superior to a less advanced 'Other'. Representations of the global South, however simplistic or erroneous, continue to capture Western attention, entrench wild imaginings of the exotic, and serve to justify neoliberal international intervention. More succinctly, colonial reproductions of knowledge and power continue to pervade the mental landscape and govern Western modes of interpreting and constructing the world. I'm getting ahead of myself here though, for ten years ago I hadn't thought too extensively about dominant epistemologies, discursive contestations for power, or how Foucault insisted that "ideas are not powerful because they are true…they are true because of power" (Robbins, 2004). Thoughts pertaining to how knowledge constitutes power and vice versa in its capacity to transform the landscape had not quite been developed either. I did notice, however, that many of the black South Africans I met while living in the small village of Logaganeng, lacked confidence in attending to basic problems and often sought me out for "expert" advice (to which I am not!). A detectable deep and disturbing dependency surfaced. After so many years of being regarded worthless and inferior to white people, there comes a time when one begins to believe it. Even to this day, when visiting Cunningmore A, the village where I conducted a majority of my interviews, I heard people refer to themselves as a "dirty" people, which signified a certain colonization of the mind, or rather an inferiority complex reflective of a colonial internalization which stripped people of their humanity (Fanon, 1963). This isn't to say

that a majority of black South Africans do not believe they are capable and smart enough to match wits with their Western counterparts. My observation simply stands to represent some of the mental residue left in the wake of apartheid, some of the residue that is unknowingly harnessed and taken advantage of to impose and reproduce colonial policies today.

A careful interrogation of the landscape, as well as colonial and postcolonial discourse ensures that the human dimensions of land use are made visible while working to reduce the reproduction of historical socio-spatial inequities (McCusker and Weiner, 2003). I broadly use the term landscape to address physical and mental spaces of simultaneity. South African landscapes carry remnants of colonial systems, institutions, hierarchies, boundaries, and spatial and physical representations of socioeconomic inequality. Spatial configurations continue to reflect a receding economic gap between the rich and the poor (South Africa has one of the highest Gini ratios in the world with a score near 7). At the same time, these landscapes are non-static and intersecting spatial and temporal realities and contestations, and are neither colonial nor postcolonial; they defy binary categorization.

Today's South African government readily acknowledges that the results of such contestations have historically favored those with greater political and economic power, hence the legislative space to redress of grievances and land reform, constitutionally mandated in the *Restitution of Land Rights Act* (1994, 1996). However, certain land reform and environmental policies, many of which are directly influenced by international conservation agendas, promote investment in management practices which potentially undermine the diverse livelihoods of the poor. Common conservation

discourse leads many to believe that Indigenous communal land ownership (or land owned by the rural poor) results in unsustainable environmental practices. Such assumptions born of colonial narratives, or "received wisdoms" (Mearns & Leach, 1996) linking land degradation (soil erosion, bush invasion, desertification, and deforestation) with traditional land use warrant skepticism and interrogation. We should be mindful of preceding narratives characterizing the 'Other,' for the "essence of pastoral innocence was corrupted in the European conception once the African was brought within the expanding white cultural and economic ambit, that is, once 'he' was dispossessed" (Lester, 1998). With dispossession came a loss of dignity which further exacerbated and justified dehumanization, and hence the Indigenous people were excluded from the materiality of Africa (Lester, 1998). Stripped of their humanity, the "image of the harmless, pristine native was easily replaced by that of a dangerous and uncivilized local" (Chatty and Colchester, 2002) who destroyed his environs and who was in need of modernization and development, even if that meant the unleashing of physical violence.

In the fall of 2011 I enrolled in a seminar entitled *Indigenous Geographies* with Dr. Mark Palmer in the Department of Geography, and thus began my introduction to ideas of Orientalism and its material effects on the landscape. I was particularly drawn to decentering Western knowledge systems because I had seen their actual effects while living in the Kalahari (Kgalagadi) district of the Northwest Province. The seminar served as an intellectual awakening and triggered a process of deep reflection. I recalled my partnership with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) and the Africa National Congress (ANC) in Kuruman and their commitment to socioeconomic equality through land restitution. DRDLR supported my work as a PCV

with materials and social contacts, as I lived in a rural area with high rates of poverty, illiteracy, and HIV/AIDS. The rural South African landscape begged decolonization, as today's spatialization *is* a direct result of apartheid's legacy. My reflections led to a desire to explore ideas of colonialism, knowledge, space, poverty, power, and landscape. I applied to the Geography program and began my intellectual pursuits in the Fall of 2012.

Coming in to the program I also had a strong interest in conservation. I wanted to study colonial dispossession of land and conservation but lacked contacts and a research site. Fortunately, in November of 2012 I met Dr. Wayne Twine, Senior Lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, who introduced me to a protected area called Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve (BBR NR) which was under land claim. The land claim process represents a legal opportunity, under the *Restitution of Lands Act* (1994, 1996), for formerly marginalized communities, namely Shangaan, Pedi, Sotho, and Swazi, to redress the dispossession of their land. I quickly learned of the conditions set forth under the claim which required the co-management of natural resources between the land claimants and the provincial conservation agency, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA). The re-establishment of this protected area was converted from a white-owned farm to a protected area in 1974 but failed miserably as a protected area. South African National Parks (SANParks) and MTPA aimed to establish BBR NR regardless of a co-management agreement. The land claimants were given the option of entering into co-management and receiving potential benefits through a sustained economic and environmental framework, or a quick one-time monetary compensation. Dr. Twine revealed some of the complex human dimensions to the protected area, in

particular how local communities were highly dependent on the natural resources located within the soon-to-be resuscitated reserve.

Moreover, I struggled with the idea of empowerment, or rather how a lack of options regarding land use could be construed as empowering local communities. I began to think about the roots of community-based conservation and why the land claimants chose a co-management agreement. Why was the integration into a wildlife economy seemingly accepted by the land claimants? Didn't they want their land back? Did they believe that co-management would empower them and their respective communities? Was this new co-management regime redolent of apartheid? The background to the BBR NR land claim was provocative, deeply alluring; the gravitational pull towards South Africa strengthened. At the end of our second meeting, Dr. Twine put me in contact with key stakeholders in Bushbuckridge and thus began my exploration of the land reform and co-management literature.

Reflexivity Statement

My opinions are colored by my experience in South Africa and I make no argument to refute my bias. It would be disingenuous to declare otherwise, as my research was inspired by subjective interpretations of the effects of spatially constructed social and environmental injustice. Seeking just and rightful amelioration perhaps comes at my own peril. As will soon be revealed in the following chapters, my aim is to decolonize conservation and provide space for voices of dispossession, yet paradoxically, the act of critical inquiry in research can arguably be construed *as* colonial. It is born out of a historical, social, and racial privilege. Academia is itself an institutional legacy of

colonialism. To continue, the use of development terminology in research and international policy - terms such as advocacy, voice, and sustainability, derive from the colonial paradigm. The idea that people need someone to speak for them or that they are in need of rescue, again, is colonial discourse. My research does not portend to do such a thing; this would be ignominious. Ironically, however, critical engagement necessitates and thrives on the use of an esoteric language system that becomes inaccessible to the voices intended to be represented. To be clear, researchers are inextricably linked to this privileged system, and sometimes unwittingly reproduce unequal relations. Reflexivity is thus paramount. An understanding of how one projects power and race in the community, and how this may influence interactions and interviews, is essential to any quality research, especially one situated within a post-apartheid landscape.

The words of one research participant still linger saliently in my mind: “You mustn’t just go back and take our culture. The poverty we are having has been driven by someone else. They just blackmail us. Africans started civilization. Europeans and Americans stole civilization from Africa, try to take credit for starting civilization.” The power and privilege I projected in Cunningmore A and the surrounding communities was real, threatening, the distrust simply reflecting years of scientific, cultural, and economic exploitation.

II. Literature Review

Postcolonial Geographies, Political Ecology, and Conservation

Postcolonial geography challenges Western assumptions, stereotypes and ways of knowing through examining the relevance of postcolonialism, asking questions about poverty and inequality, analyzing colonial texts, and offering its own alternatives (Sharp, 2009). The "post" in postcolonialism might seem to suggest that the brutal history of colonialism has reached an end whereby unjust systems of dominance and control have been ameliorated. Postcolonial theorists and political ecologists contend that colonialism, now masked in carefully crafted or sanitized international discourses of development and conservation, continue to cast its shadow and thrive in different but no less severe, paternalistic, and hegemonic ways. Institutions of economic, ideological, and political power, backed by command and control over ideas, expertise, money, and connections, resemble an 'elite community of experts' controlling an area of knowledge and expertise which form the base for policy regime (Peet, 2007). Such power is conveyed spatially across scales, and threatens subaltern livelihoods through a variety of unchallenged international development conservation initiatives supported by Western science, technology, value systems, and by capitalizing on socially constructed ideals of wilderness (Robbins, 2004).

The 'wilderness' and 'pristine' of Africa was seen as a special kind of Eden which needed to be protected from desertification and the ravages of human misuse (Anderson & Grove, 1987; Reid, 2001). Colonial constructions of "nature" have in effect displaced Indigenous populations from their homelands, as humans and nature are typically viewed as separate and incongruent entities. Against assumptions that

anthropogenic landscape modifications are inherently destructive, researchers have demonstrated that human modification of landscapes can actually enhance soil and water quality and maintain or increase levels of biodiversity (Fairhead and Leach 1996; Gadgil and Guha 1992; Guyer and Richards 1996). Despite this knowledge, much of conservation today clings to the socially constructed idea of "pristine wilderness," necessitating the exclusion of natural resource access rights while excluding people from landscapes in which they cultivate cultural identity and social livelihood.

Over time, the "wild" was represented as "vacant" land to be appropriated by the State. In the African version of wildlife conservation history, the experience has been that game reserves are European inventions which elevate wildlife above humanity and have served as instruments of dispossession and subjugation (Carruthers,1995: 101). Conservation in Africa was an increasingly exclusive pursuit where the only legitimate human roles were those of ranger, scientist and camera-clicking tourist (Beinert & Coates, 1995). In essence, conservation initiatives have compromised human dignity and livelihoods in exchange for values of biodiversity and international monetary exchange, both historically and in today's conservation and control system of closed-access regimes.

Some of today's conservation and global interest groups believe that "market driven approaches to conservation will encourage [Indigenous] people to 'value their surroundings'" (Igoe, 2008). Indigenous people have been viewed as incapable of understanding the intrinsic value, both aesthetic and financial, of "nature" and have become prey to neoliberal solutions which reproduce and entrench inherently racist binaries.

Orientalism

Much like Said's *Orientalism,* whereby the world is made up of two unequal halves, the Occident and the Orient (Sharp, 2009), the "natives" of the Orient are still today considered inferior to the Occidental, whose subjectivities are able to conquer illness, collapse time and space, extract resources from nature, and control their bodily desires (Sharp, 2009). The Other, on the other hand, are "backward, superstitious, immoral heathens" (Sharp, 2009), too ignorant to appreciate the aesthetics of nature because they are considered not altogether too far removed from the wild. The epistemological underpinnings of Orientalist discourse, transmitted through supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, and colonial bureaucracies and styles, are durable, forever unchanging (Said, 1978).

Said underscored three qualifications of Orientalism which contextualize the conservation narrative. First, the Orient was essentially a constellation of ideas, or a creation with no corresponding reality other than the social relations of power that produced and sustained it (Said, 1978). This does not signify the absence of real environmental issues of sustainability or delegitimize efforts to thwart climate change, but rather elucidates how conceptualizations of nature meet at the intersection of colonialism, power, and socially constructed realities. Ideas are not powerful because they are true, Foucault insists, they are true because of power (Robbins, 2004). With the emergence of power comes the ability to construct "categories of reality" (Robbins, 2004; Foucault; 1980) which extend to realities of imagined landscapes. These categories control and constrain social life; the promulgation of ideas of the Other was made easier

through various media that intensified the capturing capacity of popular psyche which quickly manifested onto the physical landscape.

Said's second qualification is that the relationship between the Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, or varying degrees of hegemony (Said, 1978). The Oriental was *made*, through submission, into the Orient, for representations of the Orient were strengthened by positions of power which codified what's "typically Oriental" or "Other" (Said, 1978). The Occident literally spoke for the Orient, made a definitive and unquestionable claim to what it means to be Oriental. This ultimately revealed the dispossessing nature of marginalization, as the Other's voice was stripped, as was their material right to self-determination. Without voice there is no power; only the powerful can speak. Voicelessness characterizes the marginalized, as their cultural, social, political, and ecological processes are explained by the more dominant (Western) regime (Spivak, 1994).

These apolitical, chainless explanations of various processes are manipulated to benefit economic machinations, or capitalistic motivations. As such, the Other, though not without any agency, has been forced to adapt to imposing processes of marginalization. Marginalization, Blaikie and Brookfield argued, is a process whereby politically and socially marginal (disempowered) people are pushed into ecologically (vulnerable and unstable) marginal spaces and economically marginal (dependent and narrowly adaptable) social positions, resulting in the increasing demands on the marginal productivity of ecosystems (Robbins, 2004). The process hinges heavily upon colonial discourses and currently extends to ideas of conservation which support and justify dispossession of land. Voices of the marginalized Other, Nakashima and de Guchteneire

(1999) argue, are unable to critique dominant world views, determine or challenge terms of debate, propose alternative agendas, and are simply being added in to an existing way of doing things (Briggs and Sharp, 2004). This, again, does not entirely take away from the Others' agency, but supports the idea that resistance, and the acceptance of such resistance, occurs on the *terms* of the dominant (though there are exceptions), technologically equipped, and scientifically-backed privileged culture.

Taking the idea of voicelessness a step further, the system in which to redress grievances operates within a colonial paradigm that necessitates (mis)-translation or (mis)-interpretation. There is one prevailing *way of knowing*; the subaltern's struggle to be listened to and taken seriously (Sharp, 2009) derives of a violence aimed at eradicating ways of knowing and understanding of non-western, Indigenous peoples (Spivak, 1994). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak called this *epistemic violence*. The subaltern cannot speak (Spivak, 1994) on account that their words, phrases and cadences are imbued with Western thought (Sharp, 2009). In this sense, the subaltern's voice becomes irrevocably trapped in a dominant system of knowing, thus struggling for adequate representation. For Indigenous groups with very limited contact with European colonialism, it's not necessarily their voice that has been captured by their collective colonial thinking, but that their ways of knowing can only be interpreted by Westerners through Western epistemologies.

In a critique of current development-conservation narratives, we can observe the Occident speak for non-Europeans who are 'less scientifically and technologically advanced'. Backed by Science, Westerners believe they "know best," impose their values, and invest large quantities of money in conservation projects which exacerbate

social and ecological vulnerability. In the Western mindset, the Other, or subaltern, is in need of *our* help, they need *our* epistemologies, they need *our* ecosystem market principles. And because the Other, after years of colonialism and imperialism have been underdeveloped for so long, they appear as children who do not understand the way of the world. A paternalistic view has been born, one that has gone unquestioned. The Other does not value the productive capacity of the landscape nor understand how to capitalize on the commodification of its resources. In other words, if the Other did not understand how to properly make use of the land, then it was (and is) the European's right to impose its superior conceptualizations of space. One need not look further than the system of apartheid and its legacy to begin an examination of this theory.

Orientalism remains part of a powerful (post)colonial discourse today. The complicity between power and knowledge is central to postcolonial theory, an approach which seeks to examine how Western knowledge systems have become bound up with the construction of both colonial and postcolonial ways of knowing and acting in the West, but more significantly, around the world (Berghoefer et al., 2010; Said, 1978). It is perhaps better explained through what Gramsci identified as hegemony, found at the intersection of both civil and political society. More specifically, culture is to be found operating within civil society (which is made up of voluntary affiliations like schools, families, and unions), where the influence of ideas, or institutions, and other persons works not through domination but through consent (Said, 1978). Consent, manufactured and taken-for-granted, is a by-product of cultural domination, as it is common that some cultures project greater influential dominance over others. When one culture, such as "us", is opposed to "them", it becomes clear how those who've been indoctrinated from a

young age will lean. Whom they will side with is unquestionable. *A Peoples History of the United States,* written by Howard Zinn, is an excellent example of a narrative countering Western hegemony that glorifies heroes of American leaders fighting for and protecting democracy. Hegemonic discourse and unquestioned taken-for-granteds do not necessarily take place in a totalitarian system (Said, 1978); rather, it takes foothold in democratic countries which are perceived to be most just or morally superior.

An imperial outlook premised on the right to intervene, in order to shape the wider world, partly defined self-conception within these countries (Lester, 1998). It is impossible to conceive of colonialism or imperialism 'without important philosophical and imaginative processes at work in the production as well as the acquisition, subordination and settlement of space' (Gregory, 1994: 218, quoting Said, 1989: 218). Exploiting the social construction of binaries through colonial discourse has been instrumental to the expansionary success of Western hegemony. Taken for granted binaries or "buried epistemologies" (Braun, 1997) continue to go unquestioned while informing and strengthening dominant power structures today.

Postcolonial theory would suggest that "there is indeed no *singular* time and space of colonialism/postcolonialism—but only the transient moment of many intersecting temporalities and spatialities drawn into relation" (Braun, 1997). Each landscape is therefore not ahistorical but rather a conglomeration of colonial reproductions and representations. (Post-) colonial spaces are complex, fractured and foliated, and can rarely be reduced to any simple binary (Low, 1996; Mills, 1996; Gregory, et al, 2000). By attending to nature's construction through the analysis of representational practices, the cultural politics that accompany each and every staging of

‘nature’ can be made explicit (Braun, 1997). “It may be necessary then—amid declarations of the postcolonial—to decolonize commonsense notions of ‘nature’” (Braun, 1997) and actively “call into question the binary form in which the colonial encounter has conventionally been represented” (Gregory et al., 2000).

Hybridity

Decolonization thus begs a different approach to interpreting space which can dissolve or blur conceptual boundaries between dichotomous, socially constructed binaries. Bhabha argues that hybridity, or our hybrid selves, refute binary understandings, typical of the West, that construct the Western self only in relation to stereotyped notions of non-Western peoples (Bhaba, 1996). A ‘hybrid embrace’, if you will, can lead to what Bhaba referred to as the “third space”, or rather a “position from which it may be possible to elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of ourselves,” (Bhaba, 1996) thus “displacing Western processes of Othering” (Gregory et al, 2000). This third space is “simultaneously real and imagined and more” (Soja, 1996) and can disrupt old and dominant ways of thinking and doing. Reconceptualizing boundaries (imaginary and material) thus aims to remake understandings of the world by creating an alternative space that can either disempower or emancipate Indigenous populations.

Postcolonial theory provides the framework for interrogating and deconstructing conservation’s historically misguided simplifications of landscape change. A deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms surrounding these changes is needed in order to refine simplifications and debunk certain myths that persist in much of the current understandings of causes of land-cover change in the developing world (Giannecchini et

al, 2007). There has been a “pattern wherein park advocates deny or fail to recognize the historic human occupation of an area and the role of human use and management on the ecology and landscape that is targeted for preservation” (Neumann, 2001). We now understand and can no longer ignore historical Indigenous interactions with the environment. Many Indigenous people have developed ingenious social and cultural mechanisms that regulate land use to sustainable levels such as local resource management systems that regulate the use of such communal properties resources as forests, pastures, irrigation water, and fishing grounds (Stevens, 1997).

> These systems are based on considerable local knowledge and may include defined and demarcated zones; the protection of sacred places; limitations on amounts, purposes, sites, and seasons of resource use; customs concerning gathering, hunting, swidden (shifting) cultivation, the use of fire for managing ecosystems, and may involve taboos on hunting and gathering, protection of individuals of particular age or gender, and protection of breeding and nesting sites (Stevens, 1997).

Steven’s assertion does not intend to over-romanticize Indigenous or traditional ways of being, as it would be naïve to assume that all Indigenous populations have been model stewards (“stewards” also a product of colonial-conservation construction) of their environs. His assertion, however, challenges colonial binaries and opens a more nuanced approach to understanding the historical nature of cultural landscapes. There are indeed very few landscapes that have escaped human use and not all landscapes are sullied by human inhabitants; “to ignore this dynamic history of beliefs, values, and the institutions

and practices they sanction is to willingly delimit the idea of conservation, not to what has gone before, but to what must happen from here-on-in" (MacDonald, 2003).

Rejecting felonious colonial discourses begins with analyzing and deconstructing egregious accusations that have created environmental villains out of Indigenous populations. By using analytical scaffolding along with a number of key concepts such as "marginalization, proletarianization and incorporation , soil conservation schemes revealed how power of classes affected by soil erosion in relation to state power, the class-specific perception of soil problems and solutions, and the class basis of soil erosion was a political issue" (Blaikie, 1985). Environmental degradation does not occur in a vacuum, for it is dialectical and networked, interpreted as unsustainable, misconstrued as poor land use management by the Other, and thus invokes international intrusion. There is indeed a 'received wisdom' (Leach and Mearns, 1996) about environmental change which obscures a plurality of other possible views, and often leads to misguided or even fundamentally flawed development policy in Africa (Leach and Mearns, 1996).

Political ecology challenges apolitical and ahistorical social constructions while arguing for regional or "spatial chains of explanation", where "locality can be examined properly in relation to being subsumed within multilayered regional", national, and global scales (Johnston, 2004). Land management is then framed not only by the local, but by "external structures that reflect the powerful role of the state and the core-periphery model" (Blaikie, 1985) that underpins environmental conservation initiatives and outcomes. Political ecology examines the outcomes and relations between land management, conservation, ecological degradation, poverty, land access, control, and power set within the framework of political economy and ecological process. The

interrogation of conservation requires a political approach, for "conservation is inherently political in all the ways in which it involves institutions, local communities, livelihoods, legal codes, knowledge-making practices and more – establishing and enforcing boundaries, curtailing subsistence activities, negotiating benefits, making ecoregional maps, applying reserve selection algorithms (Brosius and Hitchner, 2010). In addition, political ecology can be instrumental in addressing political questions, "focusing especially on patterns of resistance and struggles over access to and control over the environment, and how politics as policy is discursively constructed (Leach and Mearns, 1996). The relationship between colonially constructed discourses and power asymmetries deserves critical "focus for research on 'scalar practices of social actors'" (Neumann, 2009; Moore, 2008).

Paul Robbin's conservation and control thesis addresses scalar functions, namely how global agendas are imposed upon local livelihoods. Specifically, control of resources and landscapes are wrested from local producers (by class, gender, or ethnicity) through the implementation of efforts to preserve "sustainability," "community," or "nature" (Robbins, 2004). In "preserving" the environment, global interests can negatively affect "local systems of livelihood, production, and socio-political organization" (Robbins, 2004). Validation of global interests occur through a systematic narrative which entrenches power and Western knowledge.

Using an array of conceptual frameworks and terms, political ecology draws from postcolonial theory to reveal how erroneous colonial discourses extend and intensify government power over rural areas. This occurs on the physical landscape but in many ways reflects how even Indigenous ways of thinking are integrated into the dominant

knowledge system and can be transformed to benefit state power. National and state governments are striving to make rural populations accomplices in their own environmental control (Agrawal, 2005). Transforming Indigenous or traditional populations "depends on the simultaneous implementation of three strategies: the creation of governmentalized localities that can undertake regulation in specified domains, the opening of territorial and administrative spaces in which new regulatory communities can function, and the production of environmental subjects whose thoughts and actions bear some reference to the environment" (Agrawal, 2005). The three strategies result in what Agrawal describes as "environmentalism" (2005) of the poor. Dependent upon specific resources in their home environs, Indigenous populations become actors of conservation. Self-regulating councils fulfill the capitalist commodified approach to conservation, as Indigenous people redefine themselves, their identity, and state-locality relations. "A whole range of social, economic, and structural relationships between newly powerful decision makers and those affected by decisions" has thus been created (Agrawal, 2005). Indigenous populations "consent" to neoliberal conservation values that aren't their own. As a result, communities are limited to or completely disallowed access to local natural resources. When this happens, however, it displaces unsustainable practices elsewhere, which then comes with a whole new set of contention, conflict, and land use rights issues.

Dominant conservation narratives which greatly ignored the plight of local, traditional, or Indigenous communities have changed in the past twenty years. It has become increasingly difficult or counter-productive to ignore interests of local or Indigenous communities- this would be unsustainable. The Communal Areas

Management Plan for Indigenous Resources in Zimbabwe (CAMPFIRE) initiative has been construed in many environmental circles as a Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) success, for it "fits in with the fashion for participatory development and devolution" (Brockington et al., 2008). The new sanitized brand of conservation management is thought to bring more local knowledge to bear on management decisions, and "means decision-makers are more aware of the needs of local people; reduces the transaction costs of administering the resource, improves co-ordination and facilitates growing environmental consciousness in the local electorate whose decisions now help govern the resources" (Ribot, 2004). CBRNM will also occur more from the bottom-up, as communities can ultimately decide how to use their land. There are examples in Namibia where communities have elected to manage local wildlife in exchange for government support, though with unexpected cultural consequences. CAMPFIRE's model relies on its committee members to meet with the Parks Department to determine the 'sustainable offtake' level for local elephant populations and then sell rights to hunt the animals to private safari/trophy hunting companies (Brockington, et. al, 2008). This is a major justification for Zimbabwe's stance on reopening a limited ivory trade in order to capture the full economic value of elephants through ivory sales produced by natural death, culls and Problem Elephant Control (PEC) programs (Duffy, 2000). The cause for protecting biodiversity appears dubious here, and altogether serves to compromise the conservation mission.

Conservation is about controlling people and their environment (Brockington, 2002). Physical boundaries are used to control how local populations interact with their former home environment, and such "conservation enclosures" have been linked with

other colonial and post-colonial state policies of social control and spatial segregation (Beinert, 2000). In essence, colonial and postcolonial evacuations of protected areas, like the 3,000 Basarwa that were evicted from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in 1998, have been characterized as part of an overall policy to "civilize" and "develop" the citizens of the state (Neumann, 2001). Indigenous peoples are "developed" by being forced to integrate into the global free market, whereby their newly inherited mode of production is weighed in terms of market value. Conversely, their cultures and livelihoods become "undeveloped" in a "fundamental reordering of society in space" (Neumann, 2001), permitting the exertion of greater state control.

The overall effects of enclosures have been far-reaching, restructuring not only human-environment relations and livelihood strategies, but also even basic social relations within communities (Neumann, 2002; Giles-Vernick, 2001; Gordon, 1992). Drawing clear boundaries around those peoples who remain fixed within the political, economical and cultural constructions of internal colonization, the "vagaries of identification for tribal groups within multiethnic post-colonial states" (Johnson, 2007) and the "questions of hybridity raised within the global realities of transculturation creates a tangle of ambiguities" (Johnson, 2007). Indigenous scholars have "revealed the extent to which such definitions were always assertions of power, political impositions" (Johnson et al., 2007) that serve to ignore or deny local or Indigenous livelihoods.

While 'Big' conservation and its hundreds of accompanying Big International Non-Governmental Organizations (BINGOs) have arguably spared the extirpation of certain non-human, keynote species or the habitats in which they are dependent, they have justified the systematic removal of Indigenous communities from their traditional

geographic homelands in what has now become a crisis whereby “conservation refugees” (Dowie, 2009) grapple with the small and large scale “development” interests and political apparatus for self-determination.

There is a Catch-22, where the conditions under which people are seen as ecologically friendly under the protectionist viewpoint are the same conditions under which we would not expect conservation to develop, for under the protectionist view, people in prospective protected areas are perceived as obstacles to conservation (Holt, 2005). This Catch-22 has significantly contributed to greater conflict between Indigenous people and non-human species, disrupted Indigenous sociocultural articulation (traditional practices become difficult because they have been separated from places where they find cultural identity and meaning), and altogether threatened Indigenous livelihoods. In essence, conservation advocates are abandoning local communities when they could have the most positive impact by sharing scientific understanding about ecological monitoring and stewardship (Holt, 2005). Though there are claims to a change in the conservation paradigm which touch on hybridizing colonially constructed binaries, it still views Western science as superior, one which should be followed blindly because it is Science. Ecological modernization holds that, because human understandings of ecological problems are increasingly “science led", then solutions equally depend upon the mobilization of scientific expertise and corporate technological skills embedded within a rational (state-led) process of political-economic decision-making (Robbins, 2000; Harvey, 1996).

As James Fairhead and Melissa Leach (1998) suggest in their extensive exploration of data from colonial policy, contemporary development narratives, official

statistics, oral histories, and air photography, the case for regional deforestation is indeed remarkably thin (Robbins, 2004). Interpretations of land degradation are products of social construction, and "occur within a politicized environment" and therefore "does not provide itself an absolute and neutral position from which to adjudicate disputes over environmental control and management" (Robbins, 2004). Scientists are also not immune to society and the winds of political change, as conservation and environmental scientists might interpret data based on a socially-constructed bias. Western Science, however, remains the authority, a powerful, taken for granted dominant knowledge system (supported by big capital) that is used in international conservation narratives to justify spatial configurations which have led to the proliferation of protected areas, thus introducing artificial boundaries, zones, and corridors.

This conservation paradigm "clearly reflects elements of statecraft, as territorializing conservation space and controlling surrounding communities are a central and primary goal in the history of environmental conservation" (Robbins, 2004). Though we have entered the era of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), co-management (implying equality between participants), and NGOs, which seek to redress struggling livelihoods born of colonial dispossession of land and "which are usually celebrated as counter-movements to state control over local communities, state conservation goals have actually served at the *expense* of local, traditional, or Indigenous communities" (Igoe, 2004).

III. Research Methods, Methodology, Data, and Study Area

Methods

I selected the case study approach to explore and gain a holistic understanding of the historical, political, social, cultural, and environmental issues surrounding BBR NR. Any other qualitative approach would have failed to capture the dynamics of the land claim. Addressing complex human dimensions at the interface of land reform, conservation, and development requires the consideration of multifarious angles which constitute the space in which BBR NR finds itself. To address the human-environment complexity, I combined a series of interviews, document and discourse analysis, and participatory field observations which provided rich texts for deepening holistic understanding. The latter included Awareness Campaigns, workshops, informal parties, and traditional ceremonies and dances. This case study is situated within the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial theory and political ecology, and focuses primarily on the colonial reproductions of the "Other" through conservation narratives which justify command and control conservation in the global expansion of protected areas.

In interview, I used stratified purposive and opportunistic sampling methods (Hay, 2005) which provided both focused and impromptu participation of community members directly or indirectly involved in the land claim process. I also used snowballing techniques that directed me to other thoughtful and effected people in the community who elected to participate in the research process. I individually met with 17 interviewees (9 males, 8 females) in Cunningmore A. Consciously aware of how internal power relations and hierarchies play a significant role in interpretations and perceptions of the co-management agreement, I interviewed people directly involved in the land claims

process, those on the current Communal Property Association (CPA), and other historically marginalized community members whom expect to benefit from the co-management regime. I met with cattle owners, harvesters of wild fruits and timber, furniture craftsmen, the Tribal Council, community development representatives, a teacher, a high school principal, and community elders. In regards to state actors, I interviewed social ecologists from Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), and officials from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM), and Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (K2C BR). Interviewing SANParks did not occur due to timing, funerals, and illness (head official of land claim negotiations fell ill). The same can be said for interviewing Mpumalanga RDLR, in addition to key stakeholders being out of town.

I conducted interviews in Cunningmore A, as well as communities neighboring BBR NR, over the course of two and half weeks (July 2013); the five weeks that I initially allotted were sadly cut short due to my mother's death. On this account, the two and a half weeks were actually split up into two separate visits. After only eight days of research I had to fly back to the United States for a funeral. I spent approximately one week back home with family in New Jersey before summoning up the mental, emotional, and physical strength to return to South Africa and resume my research in Cunningmore A. Even with such resolve, my trip back home disjointed the research project, for just as I had been establishing strong relations in Cunningmore-A, I had to leave. In addition, trying to overcome the recent tragedy perhaps affected my judgment or concentration at times. Upon reflection, I wonder to what extent was the quality of my research compromised.

Before my initial trip to South Africa I arranged a homestay in Cunningmore A through my contacts with Wits Rural Facility in Acornhoek, specifically Dr. Twine and Dr. David Bunn, who is Director of the Knowledge Hub at the facility. Living in the community provided great access to relevant actors in the land claims process, not to mention offered great insight into the everyday lives of people living in the rural areas surrounding BBR NR. My brief immersion into the community was enhanced by my interpreter and now lifelong friend, Phangani Shabangu (he generally goes by the name 'George' but refers to his Christian name as his slave name), who accompanied me on trips outside the village to workshops and awareness campaigns, recommended people to interview, translated interviews, and helped me navigate my new environs. Any exercise in capturing local voice would have been lost without his assistance, for as Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Communal Property Association (CPA) he is a primary gatekeeper of very valuable information regarding the land claim, in addition to being a well-respected man in the community. Phangani Shabangu took time to provide documents for my perusal and put me in contact with relevant stakeholders that inform my research findings today. He shared two documents of particular significance: the *People and Parks Programme* toolkit and *A History of Joubert Farm, BBR NR*. The former provides the legal framework and guidelines informing the land claims process involving the coupling of land reform and co-management. Furthermore, it defines key terms and concepts such as "owner," "manager," and "partner." The latter document gives an historical account of the Joubert Farm, now otherwise known as BBR NR. I'm currently in frequent contact with Phangani Shabangu via Skype to fact check issues and events pertaining to the claim.

Data Collection

In addition to interviews, participatory observations, and literature analysis, I collected government documents, NGO reports, local histories, conservation histories, maps, photos, and cartoon-esque visual representations of communities in co-management. My analysis hinged on identifying key themes that informed the current literature on the coupling of co-management and land reform in South Africa. Scouring through policy documents, in addition to coding repeated words, phrases, and sentiments found in field observation notes and interview transcriptions, I identified issues and concerns such as trust, dichotomous value systems, land use, sustainability, marginalization, social justice, and empowerment. Analyzing transcriptions and field notes not only supplemented document materials and co-management literature, but served to confirm the deeper issues affecting land use in sub-Saharan Africa.

It should be noted that documents pertaining to the land claim, documents which are held by Mpumalanga DRDLR, have been requested on numerous occasions via phone and email but have not been forthcoming. The DRDLR requested that I provide documents detailing my research and academic advisory support. Even after supplying the proper documents, supplanted by declarations of confidentiality outlined in IRB, I have yet to receive land claim documents. I specifically requested historical documentation that shows the forced removal of those on the farm (Joubert) in the late 1950s to mid 1970s, documentation describing the intended use of the land (conservation/protected area/game reserve), and documentation of the most recent process whereby people filed the land claim. At this point I remain patiently waiting.

In addition, the co-management plan for BBR NR, or rather a timeline addressing the implementation process and management of BBR NR is currently not available, as decisions up until this point are simply announced. Most importantly, the title deed to BBR NR has yet to be handed over to the CPA, as the Commissioner has yet to officially sign.

Currently, the documents found below have been assessed and will be referenced in the proceeding chapters:

1. Bushbuckridge Master Plan: Situational Analysis and maps
2. Bushbuckridge Local Municipality Local Economic Development Strategy (BLM LED)
3. Consolidated Technical Report, Kruger to Canyons Biosphere, Sharing the Benefits of Biodiversity
4. *People and Parks Programme Toolkit for protected areas* Handbook- includes co-management structures, diagrams, photos, and cartoon dialogues
5. Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve historical document- written by Communal Property Association and used to help settle land claim
6. *Resource Africa* website
7. Photos of Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve, biodiversity, land use, cattle, local fruit, Cunningmore-A (quality of life, local environment), Muchongolo (cultural dance), workshops
8. Report on Corporate Social Investment Programmes, South African National Parks
9. South African National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

10. Kruger 2 Canyons Biosphere Region Non Profit Company (NPC)
11. Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency Revised Annual Performance Plan, 2012-2013
12. Kruger National Parks Annual Report, 2013

It should also be noted that I elected not to use certain documents because I have to get permission from the proper authorities. Sensitive documents were given to me but with the request of confidentiality. Moreover, there are also highly sensitive interviews where research participants specifically requested that I do not include certain opinions. In respect to those who helped, I do not wish to include any information that could appear insensitive or tarnish my relationships.

Methodology

As researcher, I seek to describe the co-management process as it evolves. As one that subscribes to postcolonial methodologies, I do not speak for local communities, nor do I advocate on their behalf (unless permission has been granted). I use postcolonial methodologies in an attempt to reclaim space through decolonizing the research process. This requires 1) cultural sensitivity; 2) language acquisition; 3) familiarity with local concerns; and 4) a long-term commitment abridged by Western conceptions of time (Kovach, 2009).

Cultural immersion necessitates cultural sensitivity, or rather an openness and commitment to observing and experiencing the world through a non-Western perspective. Removing my Western lens borders on the impossible, but I can surely commit to being open to and respectful of different ways of navigating and engaging the world. To this

degree, as a research this past summer, I ate local foods, attended ceremonies and dances, and shared informal meals in the community of my homestay. Upon exposure to new sights and smells, I remained open and non-judgmental. Moreover, in observing sociocultural interactions, I would follow local protocol rather than impose my own set of values and solutions.

In my short time in Cunningmore-A, I attempted to learn and speak Shangaan. It should be noted that I had never heard nor spoken Shangaan, that is, until the day before I actually headed for the village. My linguistic experiences in South Africa were limited primarily to Setswana, and a pitiful smattering of Afrikaans. The day before I traveled from Wits Rural Facility to Cunningmore-A, I met with a local polyglot who helped me translate my Waiver of Non-written Consent for interviews from English to Shangaan. The pronunciation differed slightly from Setswana but I could identify its grammatical similarities. My translator also taught me basic greetings which served me well once meeting the research community. Two days later I attended a meeting hosted by a local health NGO providing feedback to the village regarding a report highlighting community health concerns and population demographics. As per South African custom, the person chairing the meeting asked me to address the approximately sixty people and explain my reasons for visiting the community. Shaking nervously, barely able to steady myself, I began to read passages from the waiver outlining my research intentions. After my first sentence facial expressions changed. Smiles emerged. Heads nodded. Clucks were audible. Establishing trust requires at least an attempt at learning the local language, and it was this first attempt that opened up community doors.

The first couple of days in the village I thought it important to get the lay of the land. Walking around the village with my translator and friend Phangani, I observed how people live and engaged informal discussions to understand local livelihood concerns. This confirmed the significance of placing a fence around BBR NR and gave me a deeper appreciation of the issues. Reading about an issue is entirely different than being in the *place* where the issues actually occur. Gaining a deeper sense of place lessens the risk of researcher misinterpretation and ultimately serves to decolonize to the research process.

Decolonizing the research process also involves a long-term commitment unabridged by Western conceptualizations of time. Historically, researchers enter a community to only extract and use data for personal or political gain. The community waits to be contacted again, but they wait interminably. Research ought to not simply be a snapshot, a moment misrepresenting spatial-temporal realities as static. A postcolonial researcher remains open to long-term cultural immersion, as well as long term advocacy committed to issues concerning the community. Lastly, research findings ought to be continuously accessible for community-use (Kovach, 2009).

My methodological argument is informed by a gap in the coupling of land reform and co-management literature. First, this case study is unique in that it describes an on-going land claim and co-management process rather than one which is described in either its later stages or aftermath. The growing literature on coupling co-management with land reform in South Africa describes scenarios of unequal power (top-down scalar approaches- national, regional, local) which result in resentment and conflict, ambiguous land rights which lead to unsustainable land use, poor infrastructure and governance, transformation of local social dynamics (loss of tribal authority power with respect to

democracy in black majority-led South Africa), loss of cultural livelihoods and socioeconomic safety nets, and promises of socioeconomic benefits which actually translate to uneven distributions of wealth that favor the elite. Overall, the literature critically questions the viability and long-term sustainability of co-management regimes which claim but fail to address the roots of poverty. Conclusions such as these describe the social and political interactions and dynamics that went awry, and serve as models of warning that testify to co-management gone wrong.

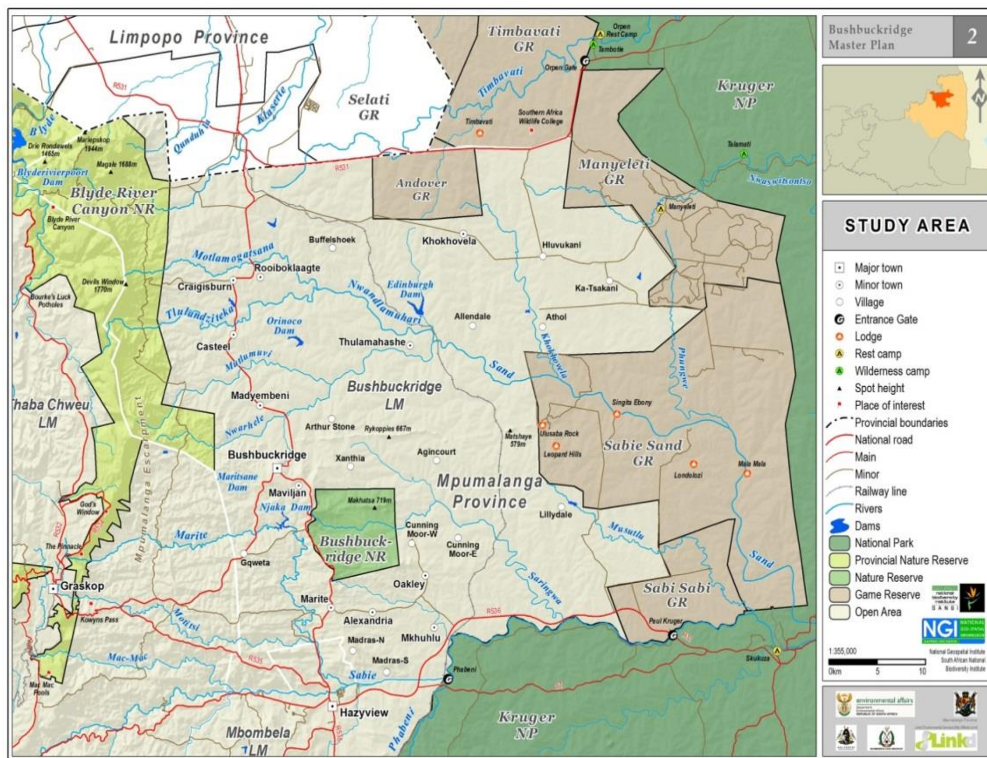
Case studies serve to create theories that can inform future research and policy. However, a longitudinal case study can fill the gap and serve to provide the predictive capacity necessary to inform improved environmental outcomes relevant to that specific case. Adaptive co-management (Berkes, 1999) schemes rely upon continuous reflection during the implementation process. A case such as Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve (BBR NR), which is not only situated in a political land claim, but one which is a part of a multi-scalar local municipal development "Master" plan within a larger national (National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, (NBSAP)) and international conservation context (Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992), deserves continuous attention and adaptation from conception to implementation.

A longitudinal analysis can assess the socioeconomic, political, and environmental transformations of co-management over time. Few studies follow cases over the course of five or more years. Many engage shorter periods of time, and even these tend to be post-management, conflict oriented. Oftentimes these case studies become history, a lesson learned, and risk becoming static. Case studies require greater follow-up in postcolonial methodologies, for the researcher should become personally

invested in how livelihoods are affected. At this point, my goal is to glean an initial understanding of perceptions, processes, power, and management dynamics within the initial stages of the co-management regime. Over the next eight years, which is the time afforded for the implementation of BBR NR in conjunction with the Bushbuckridge Master Plan, I intend to measure changes in attitudes, wealth, and the transformative effects of land cover adjacent to and within BBR NR as a PhD student.

In this process, I aim to return to BBR to work with the community to create a hybridized research project with the community that decolonizes the research process in its entirety and which ultimately allows the subaltern to speak (Spivak, 1994).

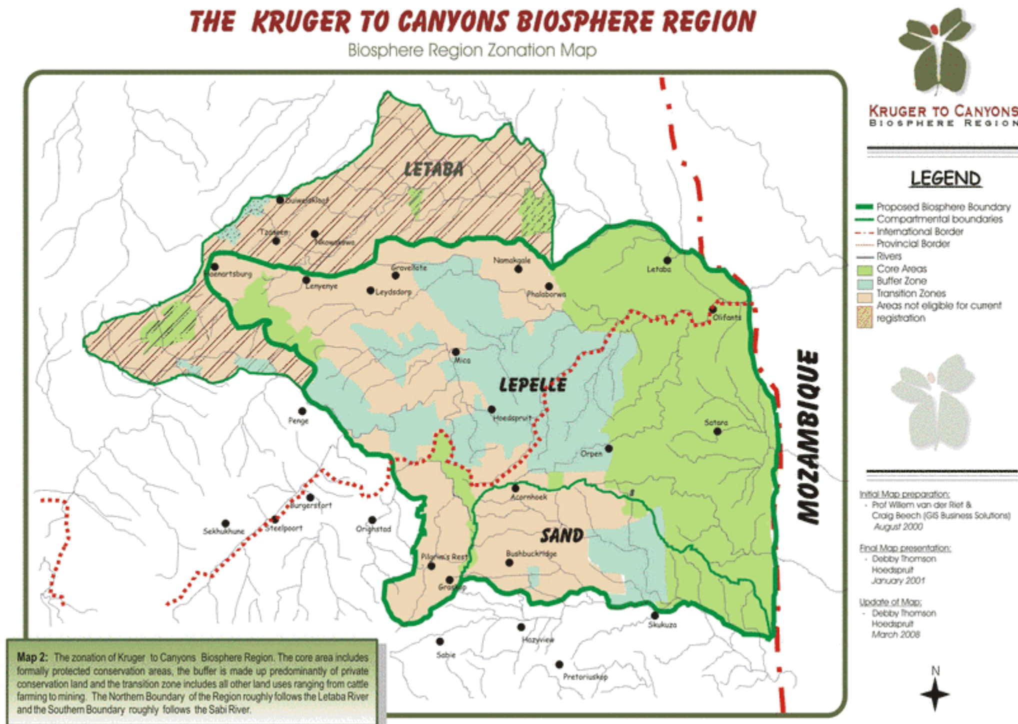
Study Area: Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve Geography, History, and Significance



Map 1: (Bushbuckridge Master Plan, 2013)

BBR NR is comprised of a combination of savannah, grassland, and woodland vegetation, and is located in the Central Lowveld of Bushbuckridge Municipality, on the eastern slope of an escarpment which then drops in elevation from 1900 to 1100 meters above sea level. Bushbuckridge has a tropical climate, with an average rainfall of 860 mm, most of which falls during the summer (8Linked, 2012). It is an area noted for its biodiversity (eleven types of vegetation types according to Mucina and Rutherford classification, 2010) and consequently a buffer zone in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MaB) Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (K2C BR), notably situated between Kruger National Park to the east and Blyde River Canyon to the northwest. The K2C BR (2,474,700 hectares made up of three South African biomes: grassland, Afro-montane, savanna of the lowveld) was designated under UNESCO in 2001 to preserve the integrity of conservation areas, coordinate conservation with local development initiatives, and improve and diversify the livelihoods of the people living within its borders (Davis et al., 2011). According to Coetzee et al. (2012), the purpose of K2C BR is to "expand and enhance the benefits of the protected areas system, restore ecological processes, corridor development and enable economic opportunities derived from better managed natural resources within the larger landscape of the Blyde, Sand, Sabie and Olifants catchments, with Bushbuckridge and Maruleng Local Municipalities being central to the initiative." It should be noted that Biosphere Reserves are not mandated by an international convention but are supported by an international network of governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Conservation Union (IUCN),

Conservation International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (UNESCO, 2008).



Map 2: (Bushbuckridge Master Plan, 2013)

Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM) was a part of two former homelands, Gazankulu and Lebowa, the former being primarily a 'bantustan' spatially constructed for the ethnic Shangaan, the latter for Sotho and Pedi speakers. Disputes regarding the integration of the municipality into Mpumalanga over Limpopo Province occurred in the early 1990s but are no longer a political issue. The primary language spoken in the area is Tsonga, but Sotho, Pedi, and Swazi are also common. Cunningmore-A is comprised of Tsonga speakers who refer to themselves as Shangaan. There are nine traditional authorities in the area; Jongilanga is the authority in Cunningmore-A. Tribal authorities tend to own a majority (80%) of the land in BLM, with the exception of nature reserves under land claim. BBR NR, hence, is not subject to tribal authority.

BBR NR is approximately 6,871 square hectares and surrounded by diverse and high population densities dependent on fuelwood, wood for furniture, wild fruits, plants, herbs, and land for grazing cows, sheep, and goats. Approximately half a million people live in the BLM region which saw its greatest increase in population due to apartheid policies in the 1950s and 1960s, whereby large populations were forcefully displaced from white owned farms and conservations areas (Hunter and Twine, 2007), as is the BBR NR land claim. The 1980's Mozambique conflict also saw large populations of Shangaan speakers migrate to the area. Although apartheid has been abolished, resource shortages persist in the former homeland areas where biomass represents a fundamental energy source and where political freedom has not substantially altered dire economic circumstances (Griffin et al. 1993; Levin and Weiner 1997; Hunter & Twine, 2007).

This particular region is densely populated, accounting for 14% of the Mpumalanga population, 60% of which live in informal housing (8Linked, 2012). It has high rates of unemployment (66%), poor education (25% complete secondary school), inaccessibility of potable water (21% lack access to piped water), poor toilet facilities (65% outhouses with poor ventilation), and nearly half the population is living off of less than one dollar per day (48%) (8Linked, 2012). Nearly half the adult population work more than half the year away from home.

Land claim outcomes vary, but recently Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI) in South Africa favor the transformation of open access and communal lands into protected areas for the purposes of tourism-based conservation. Co-management models are currently applied to these newly protected areas, whereby local communities manage the enclosed nature reserves with municipal, provincial, national, and international

knowledge and capital. Through a memorandum of understanding (Memorandum of Agreement, MoA) between the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs and the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, signed on 2 May 2007, the two relevant government departments (not relevant land claimants) came to a formal, legally binding agreement to use co-management as the only strategy to guide land reform in protected areas (Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs, 2007; Kepe, 2008). This binding agreement means that protected areas under land claim will remain under conservation in perpetuity as a non-negotiable element of the settlement of claims (Cundill et al., 2013). According to the MoA, and located in the *People and Parks Programme* toolkit, title in land shall be transferred to claimants *without* settlement rights. New environmental co-management regimes warrant skepticism, as despite South Africa's recent success in "designing useful legislation and creating relevant institutional frameworks" (Kepe, 2008), poverty is still deeply entrenched, most particularly in rural areas. In fact, seventy percent of South Africa's poor live in rural areas, and seventy percent of those in the rural areas find themselves living in poverty as well (Shackleton et al., 2007).

The Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM) was recently declared a poverty node by South African president Jacob Zuma (8Linked, 2012). As a consequence, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), in combination with BLM, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), South African National Parks (SANParks), and the Communal Property Association (CPA) representing the land claimants of BBR NR, has been given the task to address the roots of poverty in this culturally diverse region by virtue of strengthening a wildlife economy. The DEA has identified 12% of protected areas located within BLM as a means of socioeconomic empowerment and poverty

alleviation. The challenge rests in capacitating local communities and in developing the necessary infrastructure to facilitate a wildlife economy. The first step to capacitating local communities resides in strengthened governance and land tenure reform.

Many poor households carve out their livelihoods through accessing, collecting, using, and trading available local resources. Poverty is deeply associated with informal trading, which can be found in the sale of marula ((*Sclerocarya birrea*) beer, brooms, local food stuffs like msala (a local fruit dried, pounded, turned into powder, and used for medicinal purposes) and fuelwood. Almost a decade after the introduction of electricity, over 90% of households still used fuelwood for cooking and the mean household consumption rates has not reduced (Madubansi and Shackleton, 2007; Wessels et al., 2013).

Many households depend on remittances, as work is “scarce” in rural areas. Many elders rely on pensions that barely cover the cost of food for a month (personal conversation with pension recipient, Cunningmore-A, South Africa, 2013). As for the latter, due to the dwindling recognition of tribal authorities, and lack of environmental enforcement, communal areas are more vulnerable to uncontrolled resource harvesting. Overall, rural sprawl and dispersed settlement patterns complicates the provision of basic infrastructure and services such as waste, water, sanitation and electricity, and represents a significant risk to the natural ecological systems of the area (8Linked, 2012).

Cunningmore-A’s issues are not dissimilar from BLM, as employment is widespread, elders are reliant on pensions, youth work intermittently in urban areas to send remittances, and communities extract nearby available natural resources. Evidence of such extraction is found in the form of large bundles of firewood on family

compounds, and as previously mentioned, wild fruits drying out in the sun of front yards to be used for medicinal purposes, and carpenters working purposively on walking staffs, brooms, and the like. Though electricity is available to over 90% of households in BLM (8Linked, 2012), many prefer to cook over large cast-iron pots in the yard due to cost, efficiency, and space. For many, electricity is cost-prohibitive, and for those who cook for large groups, it is easier to do this over a large fire. Cultural heritage dictates firewood use as well, for large ceremonies, festivities, and celebrations such as weddings, funerals, unveilings, Lobola (bride-price), and Muchongolo (traditional Shangaan dance), require large quantities of food and therefore, fuel. For example, culture would dictate that when someone dies in the village, everyone must come to the burial and the home of the deceased for food. A funeral is an invitation to all; everyone must eat. Cooking will generally include 'pap', chakalaka, boervoers, chicken, pumpkin, samp, spinach, and a cabbage mix not unlike American coleslaw.

Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve was formerly a white-owned agro-forestry farm established in the late 1800s known locally as Ka-Jobera, which was the nickname of one of the many white managers who ran the farm. The Saringwa River juts through the east central portion of the park. Not too far from the river is a central dirt road which divides the park into two areas running from Cunningmore A in the west to an old hotel/shop called Kahle Hotel. The area in the north is referred to as Excelsior, while the area in the south is called Lothian. Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve is surrounded by a great number of currently expanding villages and informal housing. In the south it is surrounded by Marongwana and Marite along the "Lehukwe" mountain and in the north by areas called Xanthia and Agincourt/Matsavane. In the west is the Inyaka area adjacent to Inyaka Dam

(an area proposed for tourism development, namely hotel accommodations and water sports), and to the east is the village where research was conducted, Cunningmore A. To the northwest of Inyaka lies the administrative center to Bushbuckridge Municipality, Bushbuckridge, which sits within the larger Ehlanzeni District Municipality in Mpumalanga Province.

The following historical account of Ka-Jobera has been taken from a document written by the land claimants, written at the request of Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA). The Ka-Jobera farm was initially inhabited by Afrikaans speaking males in the late 19th century. The farm had no traditional leaders such as chiefs or indunas, as it was directly controlled by whites. This bode well in terms of the Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve land claim. On account of no historical tribal authority presence on the farm, the usual ambiguity that complicates the land claims process through contentions between land claimants and the tribal authorities does not exist. This isn't to say that such a claim was not put forward, as the attempt of one such person to claim ancestral chieftaincy was put forward. The cabbash, however, was quickly applied by a number of land claimants in agreement with the State's dictate on land ownership in protected areas, which states that TAs do not have jurisdiction over protected areas. Though these 'understandings' eased recent claims' negotiations, work conditions and benefits for black farmers on Joubert, most of whom belonging to the ethnic Shangaan group, were questionable.

Each year men were contracted to work three months without pay from January thru March. Workers received half a bag of mealie meal per month, while at work they were served a bowl of 'pap' (dry porridge) at lunch time. For the other nine months of the

year, workers received four pounds of mealie meal per month. If workers chose to work elsewhere, it was their responsibility to find someone to work on their behalf. If they could not identify someone to work in their stead, then they ran the risk of being removed from their land. This was considered non-compliance and in fact, according to the *Native Service Contract Act of 1932*, a family could be evicted from white farming land if one member of the family failed to render services (S.T. van der Horst, 1942; Muller, 2011). Such a scenario would have been catastrophic, for workers and their families were allowed to plough fields and keep as many livestock as they wished. Boys, once they were of age, were also expected to work for three months. The risk of not availing oneself, again, could result in expulsion from the land. Expulsion, as well as the process of forced removal, precluded any compensation or assistance from the white farm owner vis a vis relocation.

Planting and harvesting gum, pine, and other tree species for commercial purposes took precedence. To facilitate the trade, roads were constructed using shovels, picks, hoes, and a large herd of cattle which were used to draw cut down poles that were then later collected by a span of oxen. The poles were transported to Graskop, a town on the railway south to Nelspruit approximately 60 kilometers west of Bushbuckridge, to presumably supply timber to the gold mining industry which flourished in Pilgrim's Rest until 1972.

Today the BBR NR, as observed in Awareness campaigns and described by the CPA and additional interview participants, is characterized by intense harvesting, cattle theft, and even murder. In the historical document written by the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the CPA, lack of safety and uncontrolled harvesting warrants state intervention.

The degree to which the state should intervene and what this represents for all surrounding communities will be examined further.

IV. Apartheid and Land Reform

The emergence of potentially new development discourses directly impacts, and is consequently shaped by, the geographies of the apartheid system (King, 2007). The apartheid system was historically buttressed by laws such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 (implementation spearheaded by Cecil Rhodes, Prime Minister of Cape Colony) which enforced a labor tax to encourage industrial employment, and the Native Lands Act of 1913, which decreed that Africans could own only certain pieces of land, or what actually quantified as only 13% of the land. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 during the apartheid era (1947-1991) further entrenched these laws of separate development by legalizing a hostile dispossession of land which displaced African populations onto designated homelands, or Bantustans (pejorative). Large scale evictions of Indigenous farmers characterized the apartheid regime. Black South Africans could not be citizens or fully participate in the political process.

The Bantu Authorities Act set off a domino effect of policies which served to "develop" and educate black South Africans to be nothing more than low wage earning laborers for whites (Bantu Education Act 47, 1953). Lacking the ability to fully participate in the political process, black south Africans petitioned for laws of equality. This became particularly problematic with the Suppression of Communism Act (1950), as the police were allowed to arrest anyone suspected of creating hostility between Europeans and non-Europeans. Bans of political organizations characterized the regime. The apartheid regime continued to radically transform the political and social landscape

of rural South Africa, establishing tribal, regional, and territorial authorities which empowered hand-selected chiefs that served at the interest of the colonial power.

The transformative powers of apartheid extended beyond the sociopolitical, affecting the cultural, environmental, and economic landscape as well. The homeland system achieved its design of divide and conquer by shifting populations and boundaries according to different language groups and colonial conceptualizations of culture and ethnicity. Through highly concentrated processes of marginalization, local ecology endured greater human activity and environmental degradation due to forced overcrowding. Livelihoods, the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living, (McCusker and Carr, 2006; Chambers and Conway, 1992, p. 7; see also Carney, 1998; Scoones, 1998; Ellis, 2000; Bryceson, 1999; Carney et al., 1999; Shackleton et al., 2001; Hulme and Shepherd, 2003), were jeopardized as local communities were restricted from using the natural resources to which they had been accustomed. The state of landlessness increased insecurity, poverty, and poor governance administering over equitable land use and access. The reification of ethnicity, color, and community unfolded, and continue to haunt the postcolonial landscape. Current land ownership and land development patterns strongly reflect the political and economic conditions of the apartheid era (Department of Land Affairs (DLA), 1997).

Addressing the "racially-skewed distribution of land resources" (DLA, 1997) has proven especially challenging to South Africa's post-apartheid government. The ability of local residents to construct livelihoods remains heavily mediated by historical and contemporary governance systems that shape access to various resources (Ntsebeza 2000;

Rangan and Gilmartin 2002; King 2004 2005 2007). In response to the highly politicized "land" question, whereby the majority of black South Africans were excluded from their ancestral lands, the South African Bill of Rights guarantees existing property rights but simultaneously places the state under a constitutional duty to take reasonable steps to enable citizens to gain equitable access to land, to promote security of tenure, and to provide redress to those who were dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past discriminatory laws or practices (Moebelo, 2007; Department of Land Affairs, 1997).

According to the South Africa's Constitution (1994), 'A person of community dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to restitution of that property or to equitable redress. Further, no one may be deprived of a property except in terms of law of general application, and no law may permit arbitrary deprivation of property.' A number of Land Reform Acts followed to address three key constitutional requirements- land restitution, land redistribution and tenure reform:

- The *Restitution of Land Rights Act* (Act No. 22 of 1994), which provides for the restitution of rights to land to those dispossessed of land in terms of racially based policies of the past; the nature of restitution could be in the form of alternative land, payment of compensation, priority access to government housing and land development programmes, or alternative relief comprising a combination of measures (Ramutsindela, 2003);
- The *Land Reform (Labor Tenants) Act* (Act No. 3 of 1996), which provides for the security of tenure of labor tenants and those persons

occupying or using land as a result of their association with labor tenants; to provide for the acquisition of and land rights in land and by labor tenants; and to provide for matters connected therewith;

- *The Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act* (Act No. 31 of 1996), is a mechanism to protect people with insecure tenure from losing their rights to and interest in land pending long-term reform measures
- *The Communal Property Associations Act* (Act No. 28 of 1996) enables communities or group to acquire, hold and manage property under a written constitution; and
- *Communal Land Rights Act* (Act No. 11 of 2004), which aims to provide for legal security by transferring communal land, including KwaZulu Natal Ingoyama land, to communities, or by awarding comparable redress.

To address past discriminatory laws and facilitate development initiatives that contribute towards equitable redistribution of land (Moabelo, 2007), the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) and a Restitution of Land Claims Court (RLCC) were established. Presiding over the land claim and restitution process is the Chief Land Claims Commissioner (CLCC) and the Regional Land Claims Commissioners. Despite a constitutional mandate, thousands of land claims are still back-logged in an ambitious yet overwhelmed bureaucracy. The *White Paper on South African Land Policy* (1997) shifted its deadlines for the restitution process, now providing for a three-year period for the lodgment of claims, a five-year period for the commission and the court to finalize all claims and a ten-year period for the implementation of all court orders (Zenker, 2012; Department of Land Affairs, 1997).

V. South African Environmental History: A Conservation Ethic

Settler colonies transformed the physical and cultural landscape and are central to describing a conservation ethic which evolved over the past three and half centuries. Like other settler colonies, such as the United States, (for a comparison, read *Environment and History: The taming of nature in the USA and South Africa*), the story of South African conservation can be interpreted through the following social, environmental, political, and economic lens: Social Darwinism and its accompanying racist assumptions, masculine categorizations and binaries; scientific inquiry and collection; the rise of popular environmentalism; myths of environmental degradation; indigenous dispossession; hunting controls to preserve imperial domain; a transition between agricultural and industrial production; urbanization; and capitalism and the commodification of nature. The result of the conservation ethic is inarguably a fragmented, hyper-controlled, artificial boundary-laden landscape, and essentially reflects how conventional Western perspectives on spatial organization are powerfully shaped by concepts of property, in which pieces of territory are viewed as "commodities" capable of being bought, sold, or exchanged at the market place (Soja, 1971).

The South African national park system is a product of this colonial concept. Before white settlers arrived on the Cape in 1652, Indigenous conceptualizations of space more broadly reflected social and spiritual value systems, livelihood, and survival, as opposed to systems more concerned with financial gain. Binaries separating nature and society did not appear before the European encounter, as "relations existed among the individual, society, and the physical world" (Berghoefer, 2010). Nature was not a separate entity from which humans could extricate themselves. Indigenous African

communities understood this very well, as they simultaneously lived as *a part* and *within* their environment, not outside of it. The Western 'distinction' between the two worldviews is a major conceptual hurdle to overcome but requires bridging, or hybridization. Though rarely recognized in Western conservation circles, Indigenous conceptualizations of nature, or *ways of knowing* the world, have historically lent to more sustainable environmental practices.

The San are an excellent example of this ethos, as they utilized various natural resources for subsistence purposes through a combination of collecting ostrich shells for water and hide for penis sheaths, hunting local game using quivers from the quiver tree, and 'outdoor housekeeping' (Beinert & Coates, 1995). The latter refers to regular burning (swidden) which was used to "increase the nutritional quality of browse for grazers and improve visibility and access for hunters" (Beinert & Coates, 1995). Burning, however, also comes with negative consequences, and if framed within a time of drought when farmers and cattle are at their most vulnerable, as it was in the mid 19th century, it would appear unsustainable, unforgiveable, and require cessation and colonial imposition.

The primary impulse for conservation and game reserves, however, did not come from fear of Indigenous land use practices. It actually derived from late nineteenth-century concerns about predatory hunting and the disappearance of game species (hunting laws were ineffectually enforced) with which the region was so prolifically blessed (Beinert & Coates, 1995). White trophy hunters, in the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt, were given great freedom to hunt at will. Hunting was essentially an elitist sport celebrated by the men who conquered the wild. We know that in some Indigenous cultures that for boys to become men, they would have to kill a lion (Masaai). This

cultural practice by no means mirrors the horrors perpetrated by the ivory-trade, which contributed significantly to reducing a large elephant population. The hunting of animals was not limited to sport or commercial exploits, but was also directly related to agriculture. Many species, such as jackal, caracal, and wild dog, were also killed to protect livestock and were considered vermin. Even lions were killed by Indigenous communities such as the Tswana to protect cattle. In any case, game reserves attempted to curb the overexploitation of specific wildlife species, but were met with great resistance from mining companies, land speculators, and veterinarians and entomologists concerned with the spread of the tsetse fly. The idea of conservation would not gain momentum until after the second Boer War, which saw the continued destructive consequences of over-hunting.

James Stevenson-Hamilton, first warden of Sabi reserve, pushed for legislation which would ensure that wildlife would be protected in its entirety and not solely as isolated game species (Beinert & Coates, 1995), all of which was represented in the Report of the Game Reserves Commission in 1918. The authors, under the guidance of European elitist notions, imagined reserves to be used as training grounds for zoologists and botanists, and where animal behavior could be studied in an area less affected by hunting which in other parts of the country tends completely to alter their habits (Carruthers, 1989). At this time, colonial collections of various specimens reflected a preoccupation with classifying animals which was exhibited in gardens and museums in Pretoria and Cape Town. Game reserves, however, were also largely inaccessible at this time, as lack of infrastructure did not make research easy. It was not until the creation of

the iconic Kruger National Park that we see a centralized protected area accessible to not only scientists, but tourists as well.

The establishment of Kruger National Park (KNP) (1926) firmly embedded the institutionalization of conservation and eco-tourism. It is with the creation of this park in particular that the final conservation thrust occurred. KNP came to fruition on account of environmentalists playing to a burgeoning sense of Afrikaner pride. According to Carruthers (1989), the creation of Kruger depended less on public support for conservation than on the surge of white nationalism. The Kruger name was invoked by English-speaking propagandists of the national parks to lend the campaign legitimacy in the eyes of Afrikaners, who had recently won a national election (1924) (Beinert & Coates, 1995). Paul Kruger was former President of the Transvaal and a leader of resistance against the British. No doubt his name brought Afrikaners much pride. From the national park's name evolved a new national pride in its game animals, which became a recurrent motif in white South Africa's conception and projection of itself (Beinert & Coates, 1995). If you look at South African money today, you will notice the face of Nelson Mandela on one side of each bill, but also one of the Big Five (lion, elephant, leopard, rhino, and African buffalo) on the other. The name of their national rugby team is the Springboks. The name of their cricket team, though not an animal, symbolizes a pride in their national environment: the Proteas.

Not unlike the United States, South Africa began to tap into the wildlife economy by attracting tourists to the majestic grandeur of the wild. Though this new found identity, emboldened by burgeoning conservation conscientiousness and righteousness, may have helped to bolster the state's revenue (South African national parks were public

land and were not open to privatization), it had terrible consequences for Indigenous populations. Forced removals without compensation ensued (as in the case of BBR NR). Police forces and Indigenous communities clashed. Definitions over 'poaching' differed, as many Africans claimed a right to hunt animals for livelihood purposes. Hand-to-hand battles and gunfights occurred in Natal between rangers and "poachers", as many Africans would not recognize the new spatial boundaries (Beinert and Coates, 1995). Black South Africans were forcefully removed from parks and reserves, barred from them, did not benefit from them, and were cut off from all the resources located within these areas. These historical truths, to this day, haunt and continue to capture the imagination of local communities as they negotiate protected areas with national and provincial conservation agencies.

New spatial boundaries carved out by conservation policies were predicated upon the belief that black South Africans did not know how to be "stewards" of their land. Such notions we owe to racist imaginings of the Other which were ignorant ahistoric and apolitical simplifications of land degradation. On account of the Native Lands Act of 1913, over 80% of the black population was forced onto 13% of the land. Marginalization led to increased environmental degradation. However, the living condition of the black majority didn't weigh into government assessment and policy, as it was assumed that environmental degradation in the form of soil erosion occurred due to destructive Indigenous land practices. The government then introduced a Betterment Scheme (1939) to combat perceived soil erosion by reducing grazing land and the number of cattle that black pastoralists could own. More "artificial partitions" (Robbins, 2004) were erected to

protect agricultural production (as is the case with BBR NR). Compensation, as goes the conservation theme of dispossession and marginalization, was quite minimal.

From the perspective of Indigenous communities, conservation ostensibly worked hand in glove with the racist regime's premeditated spatial engineering plan, or what we can refer to as statecraft. From the conservationist perspective, the national park and game reserve system proved successful, serving to repopulate the landscape with elephants and other game to attract tourists, stimulate economic growth, and bring the nation pride. However, the vulnerability of wildlife ebbs and flows according to political stability and market demand. In the 1970s South African rangers and armed poachers waged war to protect and sell ivory. In the 1980s, civil warfare in Angola and Mozambique decimated game stocks; troops from the latter peddled ivory for arms (Beinert & Coates, 1995). The market demand for ivory, even to this day, functions as a catalyst for greater and more prolific numbers of protected areas in the war to save biodiversity and charismatic keynote species from poaching.

South Africa not only has a large system of public protected areas, but they have increasingly come to depend on a mosaic of private reserves to protect the nation's biodiversity, thus extending the colonial legacy of "fusing notions of nature and nation" (Beinert and Coates, 1995). The identity of South Africa remains one inexorably linked with wildlife; it is the primary drawing card that attracts tourists from all over the world to visit. Eden, indeed, awaits your arrival. Well… not exactly. In Eden's place is not the "epic grandeur" (Beinert and Coates, 1995) promised in the brochures or the 'African wild', which the courageous Voortrekkers braved in a show of unrivaled masculinity. Instead, we find an intricate web of highly commercialized and modernized national

parks, game reserves, and nature reserves that reflect historically racist and discriminatory laws and an intractable socioeconomic divide.

Co-Management

South Africa currently addresses the socioeconomic gaps born of conservation through *co-management* between local, provincial, and State authorities. This brand of management necessitates the reconciliation of both Western and Indigenous conceptualizations of the world to ultimately create a third space of biodiversity protection. Moreover, co-management can be understood within Ostrom's framework of common-property regimes which define the rights and responsibilities of specific resource actors. Regimes inherently carry hierarchical structures of authority and this "property-rights schema ranges from authorized user, to claimant, to proprietor, and to owner" (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992). There are bundles of rights associated with each actor, as owners typically have the power to exclude, alienate, and manage, while authorized users, with the least responsibilities yet incentive enough to support sustainable management efforts and comply with rules, have the right to access and withdraw natural resources. However, land ownership can be misleading, as though it implies rights and a steady stream of resource access and potential revenue, this is not always the case in South African co-management scenarios.

Resource access and withdraw are generally selective and are strictly monitored according to the acting managers, notably the provincial conservation agency in conjunction with SANParks who devise a system of ecosystem management that is shared with the local community on a need to know basis. Though title transfer may occur, as in the case of BBR NR, whereby the state gives ownership rights to the

community, the State in essence still operates the protected area as it retains courses of managerial action and the right of alienation. Creating the space to engage in collective-choice agreements lies at the foundation of co-management regimes. The rules of engagement within said space are generally rules prescribed by the State. In the case of natural resource management, collective action might include rules on using (or refraining from using) a resource, as well as processes for monitoring, sanctioning, and dispute resolution (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992).

A lack of broad access, on the other hand, to property rights formalization and collective action processes in high-pressure areas may play into the hands of those with power, information, and resources (Benjaminsen et al., 2009) Creating such a space of engagement should allow actors at each political scale to be able to express their needs and interests while paying special attention to formalizing customary rules of access and *de facto* land use that appropriately recognizes and serves to protect Indigenous, traditional or local livelihoods. Strategies that embrace vertical and horizontal integration across scales are more resilient in the face of conflict and land use disputes, as well as economic or technological change. More resilient institutions that make up the co-management regime have the power to hybridize and adapt to inevitable "social and biophysical disturbances" (Dietz et al, 2003). To this end, institutional arrangement must be complex, redundant, and nested in many layers (Dietz et al, 2003).

Hybridizing the management process requires the integration of de facto customary rules within formal property rights as they can operate to legitimatize previously marginalized communities. At the same time, however, assuming that all communities are egalitarian or democratic carries colonial connotations. Formalization of

property rights runs the risk of further entrenching discriminatory practices and community or State power structures that embolden both the intellectual elite and traditional chief authorities. These authorities, though emboldened, do not necessarily translate into improved sustainable ecosystem management.

According to Berkes (1997), co-management is possible if at least four conditions are met, those which include 1) the presence of appropriate institutions; 2) trust between partners; 3) legal protection of local rights; and 4) economic incentives for local people (Kepe, 2008). What's missing is a participatory, devolution component which includes self-determination and equal voice in decision-making, management, and implementation, which portends greater community ownership. Moreover, co-management should be determined by the community or set of communities, especially in cases attempting to reconcile biodiversity conservation and land reform. In other words, Indigenous, traditional, or local communities should ultimately determine how their land is used. Moving forward, the Berkes + 1 interpretation of co-management will be used to engage BBR NR and additional co-management cases. The following cases, Makuleke and Mkambati, serve to highlight both anticipated and unpredictable conflicts, struggles, and success found in co-management arrangements. Even further, they underscore the complexity of land claims situated in ideas of development through co-management, and will provide the necessary context to understand and assess the BBR NR co-management scheme.

VI. Community Based Natural Resource Management Literature: Hybridization in two South African cases

The Makuleke: Kruger National Park (KNP)

The Makuleke case has been lauded as 'one of the most advanced programmes of community involvement in conservation and wildlife anywhere in the world' (Steenkamp and Uhr, 2000; Robins & van der Waal, 2008). The Makuleke were forcibly removed from the Pafuri region of KNP in 1969 by the Board, as they were considered "autonomous and ungovernable agents rather than the disciplined tribal subjects the authorities desired" (Robins & van derWaal, 2008). Neat cultural categorization of the Makuleke proved exasperatingly difficult for the apartheid authorities; Makuleke married women from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The northeastern region of South Africa is particularly culturally rich (Sotho, Pedi, Shangaan, Pulana, Makuleke, Venda, Madebele) and was less likely to succumb to the divide-and-conquer tactics of the apartheid regime. In 1998 the Makuleke negotiated a land claim with South African National Parks (SANParks) and the Department of Land Affairs "whereby the community would co-manage the land with SANParks and thereby derive substantial benefits from ecotourism (Robins & van der Waal, 2008). This case study illuminates the complexity at the interface of conservation, land reform, and neoliberal development schemes and perhaps exemplifies the type of adaptation that is necessary for public-private partnerships.

The Makuleke region is located in the northern most part of KNP and is considered to be a biodiversity hotspot, containing 75% of the biological diversity in the park. Having been forcibly displaced 60 kilometers to the south, the Makuleke took advantage of the land reform initiative and filed a land claim in 1995. By1996 the Land

Claims Court restored land to the community under the following conditions: no mining, prospecting, residence, or agriculture. Instead the land must be used for conservation purposes for 99 years, no development may take place on the land without positive results from an environmental impact assessment, and SANParks retains the right of first refusal should the land ever be put up for tender (Reid, 2001).

The Communal Property Associations Act No 28 of 1996 was specifically developed to enable communities to form juristic persons for holding and managing properties on a basis agreed to by members of a community (Watts & Watts, 2008; Government of South Africa, 1996). The Communal Property Association (CPA) technically owns the land and is comprised of people who were dispossessed of the land and their direct descendants. The CPA is represented by an Executive Committee comprised of a Chairperson, Vice Deputy, Public Relations Officer (PRO), Secretary, Treasurer, etc. In the case of the Makuleke, the traditional leader of the community was the Chair which raised some concerns over extending and entrenching traditional authority and power relations in the community, as well as the CPA's institutional democratic legitimacy. SANParks and the CPA established a Joint Management Board (JMB), comprised of three SANParks and three community representatives, which was set up to act as the governing body for day-to-day management of the Makuleke region.

The current co-management system reflects a division of responsibilities between the Makuleke community and SANParks. The Makuleke community is responsible for commercial activities in the region while SANP is responsible for conservation management on the land, and conflict may arise when these two mandates are in opposition (de Villiers, 1999; Reid, 2001), for example, if tourism revenue is lower

than expected when environmental impact assessments suggest tourism levels are detrimental to conservation practices (Reid, 2001). Yet overall, the two entities have been working together and agreed upon the terms of CPA sharing 50% of the operating costs after five years. A dependency on international capital exists, as funds as well as expertise, training, education, and skills transfer are received by NGOs like Friends of the Makuleke (FoM), Ford Foundation, Endangered Wildlife Trust, and the German aid agency GtZ. Skill transfer, however, is not guaranteed nor prioritized in the contractual agreement between SANParks and the Makuleke and could lead to resentment on the part of the Makuleke. Commercial activities, such as attracting foreign investment and the privatization of lodges, do not necessarily result in higher skilled or wage jobs and run the risk of replicating old conservation systems where locals lack the necessary knowledge to make management decisions. Tapela and Omara-Ojungu (1999) reported that though 52% of Makuleke household heads were employed by SANParks, they were generally employed in unskilled and low-wage labor and were left out of decision-making processes. Moreover, Robins and van der Waal (2008) reported that there is little direct evidence of the benefits of the 'grandiose plans' outlined in the original co-management agreement. Without a true transfer of skills ostensibly there is no devolution. Can a contractual park, which supposedly espouses decentralization and greater community participation and decision-making capacity, work within a globally funded transfrontier Peace Park initiative (Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP)) that relies on centralized neoliberal conservation approaches? Can the state, as landowner at the time of a land claim by a surrounding community, be expected to represent the best interests of its citizens (the land claimants), while simultaneously seeking to meet

national and international obligations for protected area coverage (Cundill et al. 2013)? If the pro-ecotourism ventures fail, then what does this mean for the community?

Mkambati Nature Reserve

The Mkambati Nature Reserve (MNR) is considered by many ecologists and environmental activists as 'pristine' and a key biodiversity hotspot which necessitates "strict conservation" (Kepe, 2008), as it supports over 2000 wild herbivores and numerous endemic plant species. It is situated between two rivers, Msikaba River to the south, the Mtentu River to the north, and borders the Indian Ocean on the east. Infrastructure is quite poor and is hard to reach because of poor road conditions-conditions which might act as a deterrent for tourists. In 1899 the paramount chief of the Mpondo kingdom agreed to a government proposal to allocate land in Eastern Pondoland, for use as a leper colony (Kepe, 2004). Twenty years later the area known as MNR was identified and the people living there, the Khanyayo of the Bumbantaba clan, were forcibly removed and by 1922 the area became known as the Mkambati Leper Reserve (Interview with Mlityalwa Phiwayo, 1996: Kepe, 2004). Once relocated they were subject to a new authority, known currently as the Thaweni Tribal Authority, following the annexation of Pondoland in 1894 (Kepe, 2004).This was met with great resistance, as grazing, hunting, and other forms of natural resource extraction were forbidden. Clashes ensued between the Khanyayo and the Mkambati Nature Reserve, for the Khanyayo cut fences and stole thatched grass, brushwood, and timber (Kepe, 2004). By 1977 the institution had closed and one-third of it was reintroduced as a nature reserve, while the remaining two-thirds was managed by the Transkei Agricultural Corporation for first sugar cane and then eucalyptus. The Khanyayo were still excluded from using the land,

though they tried grazing their cattle. Their cattle, however, were “impounded” (Kepe, 2004). Conflict intensified in the 1990s, as the Khanyayo filed a land claim that was countered by that of the Transkei Agricultural Corporation. Both sides occupied portions of the area to the point of destroying the vegetation.

There are seven villages surrounding MNR that make up the Thaweni Tribal Authority (Blore et al., 2013: 446; Kepe, 2008). The villages are inhabited by Xhosa speaking people whose livelihoods are based on a mixture of crop and livestock farming, off-farm sources (such as pensions and remittances), and the collection of a range of natural resources (Blore et al., 2013: 446; Kepe and Scoones, 1999). Despite the local dependency on natural resources, the Mkambati Land Trust (MLT) forfeited these benefits for that of ecotourism. The awarded land claim, after a great deal of coercion (see the Discussion section below) in 2004 came with the condition that the reserve could not be used for residential purposes and was proclaimed in perpetuity as a provincial protected area in which the MNR cannot alienate (Sisitka et al., 2012; Blore et al., 2013: 447).

Discussion of both cases

Applying the Berkes model to both the Makuleke in the Pafuri Triangle of KNP and the Xhosa-speaking people of the Mkambati Nature Reserve and its surrounds we can better analyze the efficacy of co-management as it pertains to empowerment, socioeconomic gains, and social justice.

The presence of appropriate and accessible institutions refers to institutions at all scales, and those which have the capacity to support equitable environmental and social

outcomes. Kepe (2008) argues that there was a general absence of government departments that dealt with land rights in the implementation of co-management following the handing over of the certificate of ownership to the Mkambati Land Trust, as local people complained that the Department of Land Affairs had practically handed things over to the Eastern Cape Parks Board (ECPB). Berkes' first condition also refers to appropriate 'representation' of communities, as land claims processes "require coherent and consistent narratives of cultural continuity" (Robins, 2001; Cundill et al. 2013), and "social cohesion in a bounded community" (Robins and van der Waal, 2008; Cundill et al. 2013).

The notion of "community" as one of homogeneity whereby all members share similar beliefs, values, language, ethnicity, and motivations is problematic. Questions to be considered are who defines the community, how is the "community" approached, what are the reasons behind applying such parameters, and how will ideas of the community be applied and affect the so-called community? The simple act of defining a group of people as a community runs the risk of further colonial reification, especially in post-apartheid South Africa, where local populations were split up according to perceived cultural and ethnic differences. Assuming that everyone in a single community shares equal power or similar interests is foolhardy, as it ignores the intricate spatial-temporal histories and contestations embedded within each place. Ultimately it fails to consider any long-term sustainability outcomes.

Community formation as it relates to joint management, especially in cases like Mkambati that involve seven different communities that have egregiously been co-opted by the head of the tribal authority claiming the voice of the 'community', comes with

hazards of entrenching power or, as Berkes outlined as the second of four conditions for successful co-management, fomenting distrust between partners.

Inappropriate institutions can lead to harmful decision-making which thus causes greater internal conflict and less sustainable outcomes. Kepe (2008) reported that the disagreements between the Mkambati Land Trust and the ECPB were not ahistorical. The initial phase of the Makuleke land claim was fraught with distrust, as conservationists were uneasy about giving the Makuleke greater decision-making power, believing their livelihood practices to be environmentally destructive (colonial discourse revisited). The Makuleke, especially at the beginning, but even now, refer to Kruger National Park as "Skukuza", which translated from Shangaan means "The Sweeper", and refers to the way KNP's first game warden forced the Indigenous inhabitants out of the park in the early 1900s (Maluleke, 2004). In addition, at the inception of the Transfrontier Peace Park process, the Makuleke experienced what they refer to as "disrespect", for they were not consulted as the official landowners of a central piece of land essential to the creation of GLTP (Maluleke, 2004). Fortunately, the Makuleke had received great international support and notoriety in their land claim (thanks in part to Nelson Mandela), and were equipped with lawyers who could write to the Minister for the recognition they deserved (Maluleke, 2004). Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Though land tenure reform is part of the Communal Land Rights Act, it is not always clear what the nature of local rights is, as well as what legal recourse local people can take should they feel their rights are infringed (Kepe, 2008). Here Berkes' third condition is challenged. Though land claimants might 'own' the land, it does not mean that they can access or extract natural resources (medicinal plants, thatch grass, wild

fruits, firewood), nor does it reserve them the right of alienation unless to that of the State. In terms of access to natural resources, out of eighteen species considered of particular value by the landowners, only two were considered by resource scientists to be in sufficient quantity to be harvested in MNR (Shackleton et al., 2010; Cundill et al., 2013). Moreover, rights to land within MNR remain fuzzy, particularly given that a government conservation agency remains in charge (Kepe, 2012). Admittedly, however, Indigenous power to petition has improved, for as briefly alluded to earlier, appropriate, accessible, and capable institutions are key to sustainable co-management regimes. To a large degree, this is occurring in respect to the Makuleke who have been given the assurance that the JMB, comprising land claimants from the CPA and provincial conservation stakeholders, holds a high status and can appeal to the Head Office of SANParks if there is a problem (Maluleke, 2004). The ability to access legal knowledge streams is not guaranteed and should not be taken for granted, though. Not all land claimants, especially those at the smaller scale that don't involve a world famous national or Transfrontier park, have the luxury of an informed international NGO community backing them. In this light, a correlation between greater media publicity in the initial phases of a land claim and greater legal rights for Indigenous communities might exist. The fact that the Makuleke land claim was a landmark, high profile case ultimately increased its chances for success.

Meeting the conditions for successful co-management also includes economic incentives for local people (Berkes, 1997). This is particularly important, as there appears to be little knowledge about the cost implications of co-management against a backdrop of declining state subsidies for conservation agencies and the increasing expectation that

protected areas must finance themselves while simultaneously stimulating local economic opportunities (Blore et al. 2013). Within the context of Mkambati Nature Reserve, which is only 7000 hectares, this is extremely difficult, for many protected areas run at a loss; especially provincial nature reserves which are smaller and less charismatic than some of the profitable national parks, such as Kruger National Park (De Villiers, 2008; Blore et al. 2013: 446). In 2004, the 326 Mkambati claimant households of who are descendents to those who had lost homes in 1920 were compensated with R38,000 per household (Blore et al. 2013: 446). The Mkambati Land Trust, however, represents 6,000 households in the land claims process (Kepe, 2008). The rewards for some were substantial, while others received nothing. Despite the intentions of the government, the unequal distribution of money fuels contempt by some for the nature reserve, works adversely to protecting the reserve, and in general questions the social justice element to land tenure reform.

Of particular interest is the fact that the initial group to file the land claim, the Khanyayo, who are one of the 7 communities involved in the Thaweni Tribal Authority that won the MNR claim. They were coerced into dropping their initial land claim for the "sake of planned development" as several government departments felt pressure to fall quickly in line with a national mandate called the Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) which targets areas of extreme poverty. Nine years later respondents to a survey of local people in the surrounding area of MNR unanimously agreed that many of the benefits of development have not reached their full potential (Blore et al. 2013).

Initial perceptions of the distribution of benefits in MNR were hopeful and future-oriented, as local people had expectations that their children would manage the reserve, and that there would be an increase in job creation, skills development, and the pooling of

resources (Blore et al. 2013). Despite the discourse championing co-management, the direct socioeconomic benefits for the surrounding local communities have not come to fruition. And though clear incentives exist for local people to act as conservationists of an ecotourism-based nature reserve, it remains unclear how the large number of MNR (30,000) claimants will benefit.

The fact is that they need to benefit, now. MNR falls under the Ingquza Hill Local Municipality (IHLM), and has a population of 280,000 , unemployment at 78%, more than 97% of households are living on less than R800 (~$80) per month, only 2.4% of the population have finished 12th grade, and 1.4% have tertiary qualifications (Ingquza Hill Local Municipality, 2011; Blore et al., 2013). The Mkambati Land Trust voiced their legitimate social justice concern when presented with an optimistic prediction of a potential for landowner earnings of approximately R2 million a year (from a private sector investment of R85 million), considering the numbers of people that needed to benefit (~30,000) (Cundill et al. 2013).

In the case of the Makuleke, benefits from tourism revenues include skills development and tertiary education opportunities for members of the community (including full student bursaries), electrification of villages, construction of four school classrooms, feeding schemes for the poorest families, a village tourism heritage center and a 4-wheel drive vehicle for the chief (Wiedeman, 2011; Cundill et al. 2013). The revenue they've generated comes from the framework designed in the Management and Development Plan which specifically seeks to develop the area as a prime tourist destination (Maluleke, 2004). They reached an agreement with two private sector operators to Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) two up-market lodges in the Pafuri area

until the Makuleke decide to operate the facilities themselves.

One additional integral element to successful co-management is participation, as its maximization has the potential for increasing awarenes, democratic processes, and a sense of ownership. On the other hand, increased participation can ultimately complicate matters, as we've seen in the Mkambati case where the number of land claimants far exceeds any realistic expectation of benefits. Any sustainable co-management regime will require a long-term commitment to participating in meetings, workshops, decision-making, and problem solving. There have been reports in both cases where community participation lessened due to a lack of tangible benefits. For example, the main road out to MNR that was promised to be paved is still only navigable by 4X4. In addition, once a land claim has been awarded, state departments have a tendency to disappear and leave an institutional vacuum whereby local institutions in their early stages lose power in negotiations. Loss of power in negotiations leads to policies that favor the state or private company. The most important part of participation is voice, but the literature suggests that the involvement of Indigenous communities in co-management is in reality a token gesture (Cundill et al., 2013). Finding evidence that Indigenous voice and knowledge is integrated into management policy in South African land reform cases has been difficult to locate.

It is within this historical, theoretical co-management framework that we investigate BBR NR.

VII. Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve: Case Study

In an effort to redress a legacy of racially discriminatory laws justifying the dispossession of land, South African land reform initiatives have created space for black South Africans to file land claims which could potentially reverse years of institutionalized disenfranchisement. The BBR NR land claim has recently been awarded to a Shangaan community in Cunningmore A and additionally diverse (Pedi, Sotho, Swazi) communities located in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, which is situated in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

In an area characterized by a high dependency on natural resources located within BBR NR, land claimants have agreed to conditions in the land claim requiring the resurrection of a fence. This fence was built for the purposes of a game reserve in 1974 but was destroyed soon after by surrounding community members (informal conversation with Dr. Twine, 2012). The fence now serves to cordon off wildlife from the sprawling, densely populated communities surrounding the reserve. Similar conservation fences were implemented during the apartheid regime and like the Yellowstone model have long symbolized Indigenous displacement, dispossession of land, and cultural disintegration (Stevens, 1997). The land claimants, numbering approximately 200 households, have however subscribed to a State- determined (DEA and DoA in Memorandum of Agreement, 2007) co-management scheme with consideration to rural development and land reform.

BBR NR typifies the slow and bureaucratic land claims' process. In fact, the provincial commissioner at RLCC has yet to sign the title deed which gives the CPA ownership of BBR NR. This has been a major source of frustration for many involved in

the process and can be noticed in terms of poor attendance at Awareness Campaigns. Land claimants had two years to file the claim before the 1998 deadline, but it wasn't until 2008 that the negotiation process with DRDLR, RLCC, DEA, SANParks, and the MTPA began. The preliminary phase of the land claim began upon hearing of the ANC's intention to create a forum to settle land claims and disputes, and return land to the dispossessed. Announcements were made over the radio that the Restitution for Land Claims Commission (RLCC) would be conducting a meeting at a local high school adjacent to BBR NR to begin the land claim and land tenure process, whereby people could fill out applications claiming previous land ownership. Two-hundred descendents of Excelsior/Lothian, unifying what's been formerly known as *Joubert* and now BBR NR, lacked legal documentation to support this claim, but as part of the land claims' process, set out into the "bush" to identify specific places where they lived, raised cattle, held initiation schools, and most importantly, where their ancestors were buried. Sufficient evidence was provided for negotiations between the municipality, provincial and state conservation agencies, and the claimants to proceed.

In accordance with the Communal Property Association (CPA) law, a CPA committee was elected. Upon the first meeting following the radio announcement, an interim CPA committee was elected. The committee, however, may have been elected undemocratically, as rumor has it that some people voted more than once. Votes were tallied by a show of hands rather than a ballot box. An elder described being "dissatisfied in the manner in which the elections were run. It was done here at the high school. The guy that was responsible was an attorney from RLCC in Nelspruit. It should not have been him to run the votes and even announce the results. It should have been done by the

community. The community should have nominated the committee, deputy, secretary." An overall lack of anonymity essentially characterized the interim CPA. Many people also complained that they didn't know about the land claim meeting which prompted an outcry for continued opportunities to file.

The initial election process had been challenged by some as undemocratic; some even say a power grab by an elite member of the community had taken place. In the early stages of the land claim one prominent businessman made bold claims to ancestral chieftainship of BBR NR. As previously mentioned, these claims were quickly squashed by various land claimants who testified that no such chieftainship ever existed within the boundaries of BBR NR. The idea that no chieftainship ever existed remains murky, for the *People and Parks Programme* specifically states that protected areas under land claim are not subject to Traditional Authority (TA). In the past, South Africa empowered local TAs to control spatial development, but the new regime strips the TA or any historical TAs of exerting any special power. In the end, the individual claim to chieftaincy had no bearing on his ascension to Chairperson of the CPA committee, but the legitimacy of his claims still remain.

Engendering Western democratic processes in the BBR NR co-management scheme guaranteeing the inclusion of women have yet to emerge, at least in relation to the major CPA involved in the land claim. In attending Awareness campaigns and meetings in Marite and Alexander and other communities, women's representation and participation appeared low. I was informed that there was at least one woman on the CPA, but I never met her. The only women that participated in large group discussions were either from the provincial conservation agency or the municipality. I did observe

women taking part in an exercise of identifying stakeholders and environmental problems characterizing the local environment. I attended a TA meeting comprised of all men sitting on benches under the shade of a marula tree. Sitting in the sun was a woman who wished to contribute to the meeting who eventually spoke, but from her place in the grass about fifteen feet away. My observations do not ignore the progress of women's rights in South Africa, as this would be misleading, but rather emphasize that although co-management regimes will testify to equal rights and representation, there remains room for improvement.

Over the last 10-15 years, South African land reform-to-protected area co-management initiatives have been characterized by more active participation, seeking to devolve power and responsibility for resource management to the community, and involve local people in the generation and distribution of benefits (IIED, 1994; Reid, 2001). The discourse substantiating participatory, rights-based initiatives first began with the World Conservation Strategy (1980) and the Bruntland Commission (1987) which highlighted the link between poverty and conservation and called for a synergy between conservation and development (Cundill et al 2013). Later, the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 crystallized the notion of community involvement in natural resource management at a global policy level (Cundill et al. 2013). The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is used as the international instrument that binds and encourages nation states to have detailed biodiversity conservation strategies with three key objectives: 1) conservation of biodiversity; 2) sustainable use of its components; and 3) the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources (SANParks, 2012).

Co-management is predicated on a multi-scalar approach which acts to create 'partnership(s) in which government agencies, local communities and resource users, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders share, as appropriate to each context, the authority and responsibility for the management of a specific territory or a set of resources'(IUCN [The World Conservation Union] 1997, p. 71). As part of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Article 4(b) emphasized active participation of local populations and communities through greater decentralization and security of resource tenure rights in Africa (United Nations, 1992; Watts, 2002; Watts & Watts, 2008). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement informs parties to facilitate community-based natural resource management practices that are democratic and which enable local people and communities to benefit (SADC, 1999; Watts & Watts, 2008).

Coinciding with these international mandates is the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act No 53 of South Africa, which was designed to increase the number of black people that manage, own and control enterprises and productive assets (Watts & Watts, 2008), as well as decrease income inequality and poverty (Patel and Graham, 2012; Department of Trade and Industry, 2004). This act also covers the control, management and ownership of natural resources which are productive assets (Watts & Watts, 2008; Government of South Africa, 2003). Nestled within local, national, and global mandates, an exchange of formal land ownership into the hands of Indigenous people is taking place. The guiding hope is that formalized, or rather *de jure* communal land ownership, will socioeconomically transform apartheid's discriminate system of spatial engineering.

As the rural poor cannot rely upon efficient allocation of money by the government for local development projects, a dependency on neoliberal schemes that prize privatization have emerged. Harvey summarized neoliberalism as ‘a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade’ (Harvey, 2005; Ramutsindela & Shabangu, 2013). In South Africa, the ‘alliance between capitalism and nature conservation’ (Ramutsindela & Shabangu, 2013; Igoe, Neves, and Brockington, 2010; MacDonald, 2010) unfolds within the context of policies that support social inclusion, transformation, and justice through land reform, as communities long dispossessed of their land can now stake claim and ownership through co-management arrangements mandated by the national government. In the context of South Africa it is vital to attend to how neoliberal land reform processes, by commodifying and disembedding land from these deeply political histories of dispossession, obscure social histories and suppress the ‘exactions, suppressions, and complicities that colonialism forced upon the peoples it subjugated’ (Kepe et al., 2011, Gregory, 2004).

Land reform in co-management of natural resources comes with aforementioned neoliberal promises of empowerment (devolution of centralized power) but oftentimes lends to an unequal distribution of environmental and economic benefits which negatively impact Indigenous livelihoods. National and global institutions of power have consistently failed to appreciate the intrinsic heterogeneity of local communities, and by their actions are complicit in polarizing political contentions, widening economic gaps, and exploiting multifaceted local-hierarchal social structures. The future integration of

the Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve into the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (K2C BR), which is part of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere program and supported by *AfricaResource* (member of the IUCN and funded by GEF UNDP and UNEP), is problematic in its attempts of devolving power through global top-down objectives. Receiving money from the international community requires that South African environmental and development management plans mesh with Western scientific expertise. Any development that occurs should reflect Western ideals and conceptualizations of nature and spatial imaginings. To continue, money is dispensed only when developing nations agree to carry out global objectives such as the CBD or Convention to Combat Desertification. Essentially, the rules and laws of the "game" have been predetermined. Currently, GEF agencies, including UNDP and UNEP, have allocated South Africa over $100 million towards national projects in addition to nearly $300 million in small grants between 2010 and 2014 (GEF, 2014). The ability of local residents to construct livelihoods remains heavily mediated by historical and contemporary governance systems that shape access to various resources (Ntsebeza 2000; Rangan and Gilmartin 2002; King 2004 2005 2007). Here we see that BBR NR and local livelihoods are shaped by global institutions.

South Africa genuinely strives to improve livelihoods through CBNRM but acknowledges its imperfections. In a 2012 report, *Sharing the benefits of biodiversity*, data were compiled from interviews, workshops, and questionnaires of various Kruger to Canyons/Anyway stakeholders (tourism, veterinarians, water, forestry, natural resource management). The purpose of this research was to open lines of communication and align policies and plans aimed at the unified goal of a wildlife economy (Coetzee, 2012).

Noticeably missing, however, were the local people whose livelihoods are at greatest risk. Common sense would lead to us to believe that "those who stand to benefit directly from the sustainable management of environmental components like forest resources ought to have greater voice and can best manage the environment" (Matose & Watts 2010, Nelson & Agrawal 2008). Recommendations have been made to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) into co-management regimes, but how this will be accomplished in the co-management of Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve and how this translates into the empowerment and improvement of livelihoods remains to be seen and remains central to the viability of decolonizing conservation.

Over the past year an Awareness campaign to educate people in the surrounding BBR NR communities has taken place. These campaigns are workshops funded by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), an executive extension of the government that works in conjunction with SANParks. DEA uses the *People and Parks Programme* toolkit, sponsored by ResourceAfrica, member of the IUCN, to address all issues relevant to co-management. SANParks receives money from DEA for conservation projects in Mpumalanga Province and is responsible for overseeing project implementation. The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), due to past fiscal indiscretions, manage project implementation through SANParks and depend on SANParks approval and dispersal of funds. At the end of the chain of command, the MTPA co-manages BBR NR with the CPA, the latter which splits jobs and profit 70/30 with the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM), which would include any individual in a surrounding community. However, complications arise with the addition of the 5% share agreement with the smaller Inyaka CPA. Factoring in their share of the 70% of the jobs adds a layer

of complexity and resentment amongst the larger CPA of 200 land claimants.

Awareness campaigns play a significant role in the *People to Parks Programme* initiative which prizes democratic processes whereby everyone from the community has a voice. The intention of these campaigns is to alleviate local fears, promote conservation and environmental understanding, and foster a sense of ownership in the protected area implementation process. The idea is that community involvement and knowledge will lead to more sustainable outcomes, and in consideration to past vandalism and violence in the area regarding conservation and dispossession of land, this is an especially prudent exercise. The forum simply allows people to express their concerns about their livelihoods and land use, from cattle grazing and natural resource and gravesite access to future economic benefits and decision-making power. Ideally, local voices can be heard and concerns are put to rest.

The Awareness Campaign phase, however, does not involve negotiation of the implementation process with local communities. It is merely informative. One CPA member stated this emphatically at one such Awareness Campaign:

> It has been there long before. This time we are being decent. Whether they are against it or not, we are going ahead. They should know what to expect.

It's important to emphasize that the negotiation of the protected area has already reached a conclusion, as the CPA and MTPA have reached a co-management agreement that necessitates a fence to house a reserve for wild fauna. The MTPA is the management authority. As previously stated, these meetings address community concerns and cultivate

environmental understanding, but they also "help" local communities to identify relevant institutional stakeholders or actors. The relevant actors identified in these workshops include the CPA, MTPA, BLM, SANParks, DEA, RLCC, DRDLR, DoA, DWA, Wits Rural Facility, and a host of non-governmental organizations such as AWARD, K2C BR, and *ResourceAfrica*. Actors are institutions acting on behalf of individuals, but addressing the divergent needs and concerns of individuals remains a challenge.

VIII. Discussion and Results

The following discussion will include identified themes found in interview transcriptions, field observations, and document analyses.

Trust

Interviews and informal discussions revealed distrust in both local governance and the volatility of the market. While some believed in the power of new local institutions, i.e., CPA, others doubted any dispensary of benefits. This idea surfaced more especially with the older generation, who believe that they will never see compensation after being removed from Joubert. Those who represent the land claimants as members of the CPA believe more strongly in the potential of ecotourism and the wildlife economy. It should be noted that familiarity with the nuances outlined in the *People and Parks Programme* or *Bushbuckridge Master Plan* is relatively average (when asked, some CPA members were not aware of the indicated timeline for the title deed transfer nor had they heard of *Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve*), which signifies an unwavering trust in SANParks and the Integrated Management Plan (IMP). They trust that what they're being told to do will result in "partnerships," defined by the *People and Parks Programme*

toolkit as partnering with public or private investors who will provide jobs for the land claimants and other beneficiaries. The only distrust occurring on the part of the CPA revealed itself internally, as internal alliances have been made to keep perceived power-hungry, “position-mongering” individuals contained. This kind of distrust should be worrisome and might mean a reshuffling of power dynamics in the upcoming years.

Some interview participants expressed that the co-management regime does not have the community’s interests at heart. Or rather, they question whether the new regime can be trusted. One youth commented:

> Jobs will be created, youth will be empowered…I am hearing the same thing. Politicians promise. The same promises. That was when I was 14. Now I’m 32. Politicians have been preaching to us, but no action.

One male tuck-shop owner, when asked about trusting the process and benefits to come from the new protected area, said “All that is happening now is false promises.” Some voiced that they do not believe that they will be able to access plants and fuelwood, challenging the overall practicality of monitoring, and how rangers will escort claimants to harvest resources. One elder responded:

> All the years of suffering, no money, no guarantees about anything, jobs, money…money can fall thru. (Interview August 3, female elder)

This point is particularly poignant. Elders in the community fear their mortality and desire something concrete, an interim monetary arrangement or compensation before the BBR NR fails (just as many other projects in the area have failed including BBR NR in the past). Compensation, however, does not always occur equitably and does not always meet desired outcomes. Research participants have spoken of other communities that were supposed to have benefitted but didn't. Again, the CPA trusts the process, whereas as many non-land claimants do not. I noticed that the non-land claimant youth in particular did not trust the co-management agreement. Community buy-in will be exceedingly difficult without the youth.

Time and Compensation

One project manager from K2C BR mentioned that there is a "fatigue amongst the communities…and that they are losing trust, as something begins and then stops." Here are some additional quotes echoing a similar sentiment:

> He is under the impression that he will die with getting nothing. The same with me (interpreter), some of the claimants are dying right now. (Interview July 15, male elder)

> I wish they can do better and get a better compensation from the government. Those elected should go and discuss a better solution. The committee is okay, but I pray that they get better compensation. I do not believe that people will get work with the reserve. The park will not change my life. (Interview July 30, female elder)

> We started this land claim in 2007 or 2008. Up until now we have nothing. The process is too long. (Interview July 15, male elder)

Projects such as the BBR NR can take up to ten years before profits emerge (People and Parks, 2013), begging the question how will communities adapt to new resource access limitations? As resources are more tightly controlled, what equitable short term "quick wins" (Coetzee et al., 2012) will be accessible? The CMC, with the support of SANParks, attempts to take advantage of the *WfW* program which focuses primarily on the removal of invasive species. It's meant to increase water supply and offer employment opportunities for local communities. In August of 2013, 8 contractors were selected through an interview process to supervise 10 local community members, or "laborers" to remove the invasive plants from the reserve. Each manager receives appropriate funds to hire a truck and provide lunch for his/her laborers. This is an example of what Bushbuckridge planning documents such as the *Bushbuckridge Master Plan* refer to as either "quick wins" or "low hanging fruit," as the idea is that quick jobs will reflect quick benefits, thus garnering local ownership and support for the protected area. I met one woman who was hired for this program who described the ambitions of BBR NR as a "step towards development and education."

Quick wins do provide much needed income for local families, but is this enough? Can the government provide a sustainable amount of "quick wins" over the next five to ten years, which is the realistic amount of time to develop such a project? How much money in the short term will be distributed and will this serve to alleviate poverty? When speaking to the social ecologist from MTPA, she stated that *when* there is infrastructure they will hire local contractors in what's been referred to as Small Medium and Micro

Enterprises (SMMEs). Through the funding of DEA, SANParks will distribute funds and offer support strategies for small business groups to sustain themselves beyond temporary contracts in or associated with BBR NR. Contracts will include *WfW* projects, as well as road and infrastructure projects, and the construction of lodges and recreational centers, to name but a few. Personally examining the BLM IDP 2010-2014, attempts at reducing poverty and unemployment through the integration of SMMEs have thus far shed limited results.

The fact that jobs are promised through integrated networks does not acknowledge the marketplace:

> …perverse cycle of job creation,…for it is not sustainable, does not look beyond the initial project phase and how people are really being equipped to access funding or understand the value of the ecosystem resources. (Interview July 10, K2C BR)

This again comes from a project manager from the non-governmental organization K2C BR who acknowledges that there are indeed reasons to distrust promised benefits from co-management regimes. Here the participant observes that conservation projects lay at the mercy of an unpredictable and volatile free market. Livelihoods, in this case, reveal themselves vulnerable, less resilient, and more problematic, as said individual livelihoods are no longer diversified.

The fact remains, however, that many people depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Many do not believe that they will continue to have access to the resources

once the *drat*, or fence, has been erected. A female cattle owner, in response to the question of continued access to natural resources located in the reserve said:

> I can promise you things, but when time comes…you have to bluff to get what you want or need. (Interview August 2)

The practicality of accessing natural resources, whether it be traditional healers seeking herbs or local carpenters utilizing kiat (local wood), is a serious concern, especially if the Big 5 were to be placed in the reserve. The fear of lions and elephants is real, and much deserved, but the case now is that after a recent veterinary assessment, fears of foot and mouth disease have dissuaded the MTPA to move forward with the Big 5. Rather than lions, elephants, African buffalo, leopard, and rhinos, the protected area will now be home to a variety of *bok* (antelope), zebras, giraffes, vervet monkeys, baboons, and other less dangerous wildlife. This is especially significant on account that many cattle herders were fearful of close proximity to predatory wildlife. Easing legitimate fears of wildlife attacking their grazing livestock has lessened resistance to BBR NR on the part of cattle owners.

According to the BLM IDP, the goal of the revitalization of BBR NR project is to create jobs and alleviate poverty. For the budget period of 2013/13, DEA has allocated R13,700,000 in funding. The social ecologist from MTPA revealed that MTPA has lost its financial distribution powers:

> Because of MTPA's bad record of finances, the money is directed directly to SANParks to manage the funds for us. (Interview July 13, MTPA)

MTPA cannot move forward with management decisions without SANParks approval and the success of BBR NR depends on the continued involvement of the State.

Land Use

Land claimant aspirations are represented by the CPA, which would imply that the protected area would be led by a group that represents everyone in the community. This is unwise, as no community is homogenous. Individuals that make up a so-called community are motivated by their own set of economic, political, or social interests. Keeping this in mind, BBR NR is surrounded by a host of diverse and densely populated communities comprised of individuals who vary in dependence upon the natural resources located within the reserve. Livelihoods are at the mercy of the co-management agreement between the 200 land claimants, represented by the CPA and MTPA. The CPA represents the interests of the land claimants and by default, everyone else within the boundaries of BLM. Some interviewees expressed the concern of potentially being cut off from their livelihoods, especially local pastoralists. One particular land claimant who owns 30 head of cattle opined "there will not be enough grass for grazing for domestic animals."

In the early morning of Cunningmore A, herds of 20-30 jingling cattle (large bells dangle from their necks) are led out to pasture in the reserve and in the evening are coaxed back to the kraals in the village. It's believed that there are close to 2,000 head of cattle in Cunningmore-A. Surveys verifying this guestimation cannot be found (nor did I count them myself), though walking around the village I noticed significant numbers of

kraals on individual household compounds. Hiking into the nature reserve I observed small numbers of cattle at the Saringwa River's edge, but deep into the forest I did not see any. My experience traversing the village and adjacent BBR NR leaves me curious concerning the total number of cattle and associated land degradation.

Cattle owners, threatened by the fence, formed what's referred to as the Group 10. This group represents cattle owners not only in Cunningmore-A, but other neighboring villages such as Xanthia, Oakley, and Marite, who stand to lose access to grazing land. Through an open forum sponsored by DEA, cattle owners expressed their discontent over changes to their livelihoods, and communicated concerns involving livestock theft. In interviews, participants addressed the theft of cattle and other safety concerns. Here a couple of quotes:

> It will stop theft. People steal them and slaughter them and sell them. There will be security. There will be a fence. There will be game rangers. If you happen to go in, they will question you. You have to explain why you are there. If they suspect that you are there for stock theft, they will arrest you. (Interview July 14, CPA)

> I don't feel safe. Because even now they are stealing. They can go and steal the grazing animals. (Interview August 3, female elder, cattle owner)

To address this issue, DEA and the DWA and DoA have agreed to create additional fenced enclosures alongside BBR NR to keep the cattle safe. Negotiations also gave consideration to providing better animal security and water access. Historically,

State claimed space gave no consideration to Indigenous livelihoods or benefits. Respect for the cattle grazing culture, in this case, stands to represent an acknowledgement of local livelihoods. If promises are kept, power within the institution of the Group 10 will now manifest itself onto the landscape. The State, however, in its attempts at cultural and livelihood sensitivity, may be displacing perceived environmental degradation elsewhere. Though many pastoralists have agreed to a new grazing area to keep the livestock safe and accounted for, how realistic will this new system be and what conflict might we expect? As population increases and resources within BBR NR become less accessible on account of increased monitoring systems and artificial boundaries, conflict should be a concern. Competition for resources can rise and pit new institutions against divergent community interests. Perceptions of land degradation support the need for a protected area, but limiting access to those who harvest wood and other resources in the reserve will create only greater degradation elsewhere. Exclusion techniques work far better in more developed countries as there are greater economic outlets and lesser dependency on natural resources. Western spatializations might not be the solution to the land degradation problem.

On the surface, there appears to be a lack of control or regulation regarding the harvesting of natural resources. One CPA member noted:

> People still have access into the nature reserve. What is worse is that people are chopping down the live wood, the green ones, and bring them this side (to Cunningmore-A) to dry for firewood. It is destroying the nature reserve. (Interview July 13, CPA)

I witnessed tractors hauling off large carts of dead trees but did not notice the "live wood." Bundles of wood were found placed alongside walking paths and tractor tracks, ready for pick-up. I encountered a group of unemployed young men chopping and sawing in the thicket of trees. As per request, I took photos of them standing beside the bundles of firewood deep in the reserve. I returned to the village with a new appreciation for natural resource extraction, and noted that almost every house utilized timber from the surrounding environment in some way, either through the construction of kraals (as discussed earlier), outdoor kitchens, furniture, informal housing, or was used for cooking and ablution purposes.

Governance, Capacity, and Investment

> Here, we want investment for the future of ourselves, kids, and grandchildren. Are you with me? This is what we are guarding for. (Informal discussion July 14, CPA and non-land claimant)

> There are business opportunities, because if there's money, you can invest in guesthouse, and our children will then get jobs. It will benefit our community. It's a form of investment. (Interview August 3, female contractor, WfW)

The wildlife economy relies on the type of hyper, spatial-control that neoliberal reform brings. The first funders meeting between primary stakeholders and private investors in April 2013 was to "solicit buy-in from potential funders regarding programmes proposed in the Bushbuckridge Master Plan" (8Linkd, 2012). The BBR

Master Plan must be incorporated into the Mpumalanga Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), in addition to the Mpumalanga Biodiversity Conservation Plan (MBCP) which is part of the bioregional plan under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2005) and the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (Bushbuckridge Master Plan, 2013). Classifying land use and identifying protection of sensitive biodiversity areas are essential to creating sustainable land use practices that will attract investment and bring money into the region.

One major concern of the BLM is the 95/5 split between CPAs:

> If we don't sort out the 95%, there will be a problem. The CPA owns the land. The sticking point, is the 5% and 95%. I'm not saying that it should be changed. The other group should be workshopped. It's about management. It becomes political and emotional. Now from 100% of ten jobs, six (now 7) must go to claimants, five must go to the 95%, and one goes to the 5%. I've indicated to the parks board, that we need to sort this out. What will happen, is that, you know, for each project to be sustainable and receive government support funding and all that, issues of governance and institutional arrangement issues, are very much critical. If on issues of governance, there is no stability, it's a challenge. Even when you want to attract investors, they will ask you who is the owner of the land. Who can we talk to? Is our investment safe here? (Interview July 13, BLM)

Investors avoid projects where they detect ambiguous land ownership. They also avoid projects where they perceive conflict, for settling disputes is considered time consuming and a waste of money. Perceived instability results in a lack of investment, but without the private sector, how will communities be capacitated to attract tourists to the reserve?

> Our people know that that was a reserve before. It collapsed because of lack of government support. It's not like starting a new thing altogether. So, in terms of the co management, I believe the CPAs, because at the end of the day, they are the land owners, they must be participating in the co-management. They must have the foresight and interest of their own communities at heart. The spirit is there. We just need to make sure that there are capacity building programs to capacitate them. The willingness is there, but the capacity to drive is something else. (Interview July 13, BLM)

Government structures such as DEA, MTPA, and DoA provide space for capacitation but cannot guarantee that communities will actually be capacitated. Nor can they guarantee jobs or benefits, or that local communities will subscribe to and honor new systems of security and monitoring. Will new conservation institutions be capacitated to enforce the new set of environmental rules?

> If we start with BBR NR, number one what is the government structure, what are the principles beneficiation, how do we access the resources? It's what they perceive to be benefits. There are processes for the entire system, but it's not tested. If we say

> resource use, how are communities capacitated to self monitor the natural resources, how do they value, how do you ensure equitability, how do you identify gaps? How do you put the value to the resources? (Interview July 11, K2C BR)

Convincing surrounding communities of the importance of natural resource sustainability remains challenging due to different cultural values and interpretations.

Value Systems

> We come with monetary values. The other issue is a cost-benefit analysis without communities understanding and that not correlating with their values. That is popular. Communities don't understand and values do not correlate. If we go to Andover, they wanted to have a shopping mall and casino. We would like to have capacity development in training and they will say no, we would like to have professional hunting. So there is an entire facilitation process, but then, the next step is how are they capacitated in order to implement their specific values. And that's not being put through. (Interview July 11, K2C BR)

A strikingly familiar tone emerges here, one founded in the belief that poor rural communities do not understand the "value" of their resources. Interpreted through a postcolonial lens, colonial thinking continues to exist; only certain people "understand the ecosystem value" of natural resources. Language can sometimes contradict intentions of colonial disentanglement, for I perceived my research participants to care more about

the local communities than the environment. The fact that "they" don't value their ecosystem resources coincides with an assumption, however, that communities are either not using natural resources sustainably or do not understand how resources should be used. Here we can interpret Western values of ecosystem services differ from Indigenous and local conceptualizations of their surrounding environs. Though we might perceive the creation of a 3rd space on account of the State's consideration to cultural and socioeconomic survival in that cattle owners have been granted negotiating power, there remains a dominant way to think about and interpret the value of the landscape.

Rural communities "value" their resources in terms of basic needs like fuelwood, as well as the socioeconomic benefits that come from the informal market. Local craftsmen, for example, will have to contend with limited access to the protected area and in looking elsewhere for needed materials, place greater pressure and demand on areas adjacent. Moreover, what does this portend for cultural livelihoods? What does this mean in terms of social capital? Relationships of trust and expectation between community members built through the investment of time and face-to-face interaction become disrupted, shattered, and can displace traditional management restraints (Robbins, 2004). Placing 'value' and worth on social and cultural capital is far more complicated and has not been seriously addressed in the BBR NR co-management regime. True, the *People and Parks Programme* (PPP) toolkit addresses access to cultural heritage sites such as ancestral burial grounds, but this doesn't critically engage the reverberating sociocultural effects an artificial boundary will have on the adjoining communities.

Let us again turn to the last quote. Assuming that local communities want only a quick fix which precludes ecosystem services is foolhardy, as I encountered beneficiaries

that see beyond simple short term sustainability solutions. However, ideas of valuing the environment, if we are to generalize, do differ. From the perspective of livelihoods dependent upon their surrounding resources, the value of local harvesting is worth more in cultural and socioeconomic capital than the abstract market capacity of non-extractive commodities, i.e., conservation tourism. Central to the 'value' question is community buy-in, or what translates to community ownership. Communities must buy into the environmental value of space. A non-commitment to the respatialization of the commons will doom the sustainability of BBR NR.

When livelihoods are indeed put under greater pressure, what kind of conflict might a "community" such as Cunningmore-A expect? What kind of conflict might we expect between employees of BBR NR and the government? Or what type of conflict will occur between people in the surrounding villages? With the emergence of new institutions such as the CPA and Co-management committee (CMC), what type of hierarchical developments will materialize? Historically, the TA and local Induna have the greatest power, yet now that the protected area has been declared off juridical limits, new powers have seemingly emerged. The CPA's *de jure* ownership cannot be questioned as it has the support of the State. It is thus stronger than the former *de facto* communal ownership whereby the TA could historically exert its power.

Empowered to a degree by the State, the CPA is now responsible for calling meetings to inform community members of land use decisions. The agreement with SANParks, DEA, DRDLR, and MTPA ultimately decides how people will use the land. Based on South Africa's hostile conservation past, beneficiaries (non-claimants) and land claimants have cause for concern. Memory is strong. The CPA is aware that they are now

putting their “heads on the chopping block” (interview with PRO of CPA), as beneficiaries recognize that the CPA is an active extension of the government, as they’ve been “governmentalized” (Foucault), or by special interest, “environmentalized”. With consideration to high levels of dissatisfaction with the State, the CPA, now conflated with the State, could be in possible physical danger should BBR NR fail to bring promised benefits.

Scale and Decision Making

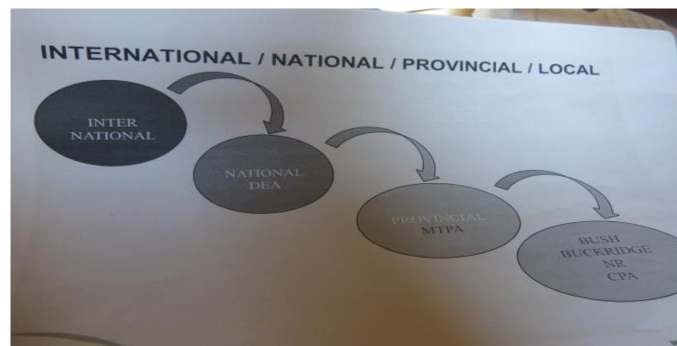


Figure 1: Document presented by MTPA during Awareness Campaign, Marite, July 13 2013 which represents top-down conservation mainstreaming initiative.

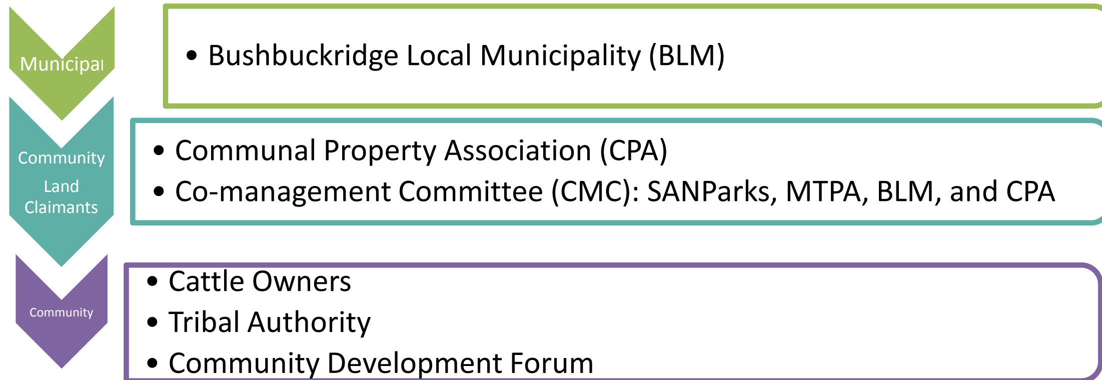


Table 1: BBR NR is affected by international and State funds which influence policies and decisions made at the municipal and local levels.

> The instruction came from above, not from below, or within. It's confusing. (Interview July 13, male elder)

> At the moment, it is top-down. Over some time we develop an understanding that the claimants can make the decisions. (Interview July 13, BLM)

The major goal of the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES, 2010) is ecological sustainability and climate change adaptability. The target for protected areas in South Africa is 12% terrestrial, 20% marine aquatic. Climate change is indeed a threat, a reality whereby the Global South finds itself in many ways less prepared and more vulnerable than the North. The crisis thusly manufactured and necessitating mobilization, the State, supported by Big Science, can therefore push an agenda of increasing the percentage of protected areas to preserve biodiversity for the sake of ecosystem resilience and services. Remember Robbin's conservation and control

thesis. This is the stated goal, emerging initially from the global scale in the UN's Millennium Development Goals (un.org/millenniumgoals, 2014) to national policies that affect the local level. Goal 7 of MDG calls for ensuring environmental stability and seeks to integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources" (UN MDG, 2014). In the case of BBR NR, the goals between biodiversity protection and development are blurry, as it's difficult to distinguish what is more important: land reform, development, or protecting biodiversity.

The purpose of land reform is to "increase access to land by previously disadvantaged people" (BLM IDP, 2013-2016). The co-management-land reform marriage, however, might actually contradict this edict, as the simple placement of a fence seems altogether counter-intuitive of any such proclamation. Beneficiaries and land claimants alike will need permits to access the protected area to extract natural resources. The "bundle of rights" covered in the *People and Parks Programme* toolkit points to agreed access but does not specify how it will be monitored. Furthermore, any such assessment governing how and to what extent wood and other natural resources can be extracted has not been put into writing.

Borrowing from Robbin's control and conservation thesis, the sheer act of compartmentalizing space not only reasserts state power but constitutes greater control over land use. Currently the spatialization of K2C BR and the integration of BBR NR into its wildlife economy reflect a globally imposed, top-down conservation agenda. We cannot call it anything but colonial, for this agenda has been thrust upon poor communities surrounding BBR NR despite high rates of poverty. They've been

temporarily left without a safety net. According to the People and Parks Program (2013) toolkit provided by DEA and funded by *ResourceAfrica* (member of IUCN), it takes a lot of time and money to establish profitable tourism operations in the nature reserve and to financially break even. Even further, as one stakeholder previously mentioned, tourism-based conservation is not impervious to the "perverse cycle" of the free market. The market today will not be the same market five years from now, as no such system remains static.

Benefits Sharing

Given the 70/30 agreement, the equitable nature of the negotiations outcome remains in question. If this land was considered to be communally owned prior to acquisition by the apartheid regime, then wouldn't this mean that those people living there would be entitled to 100% of the land? Interviews with multiple members of the CPA revealed their feelings regarding the initial arrangement of 60/40. One member remarked that "we should not so be greedy, that we should be open to sharing the benefits of the reserve with the surrounding communities." The original agreement reflects an attempt to strike the right balance between what the rest of the community might consider fair as a show of loyalty, perhaps to the adjoining communities and the Tribal Authorites. However, the same land claimants expressed that the nature of the arrangement was unfair on account that the land was legally theirs and that they had "given up too much" in the negotiations. In fact, one CPA member said that "the municipality is bullshitting us," and that the municipality should be prepared to "help us." This same CPA member, however, commented that the land claim has been empowering. In any case, it was brought to my attention that they had intentions of renegotiating the 60/40 agreement

once they received the title deed. This actually occurred recently. Though the land claimants still wait for the title deed, one CPA member recently disclosed via Skype that they had indeed renegotiated a 70/30 arrangement with BLM. This recent negotiation process unfortunately eludes explanation for the time being.

Though the land is legally “theirs,” they share the benefits with communities adjacent to BBR NR. This raises some important questions surrounding the importance of land rights versus conservation biodiversity (Kepe, 2010), and brings us back to a state of ambiguity. Is the South African government more interested in conservation, land reform, or development? Amalgamating the three muddies agendas, bureaucracies, adversely affects governance. Even though the land is “theirs” (the local/Indigenous “community”) and they were dispossessed of it years before, they will receive the land according to the State’s ideas of proper land use. Where a community’s tenure rights are subordinated to the State, as has been the case in most sub-Saharan Africa, Indigenous land and resource rights of rural people are diminished and democratic processes and institutions undermined (Ipara et al., 2005). The decision to make all former protected area remain so in perpetuity (MoA, 2007) was not democratic, as it would have included the people most affected, meaning the rural poor communities that land reform supposedly empowers.

Historically, the State controlled BBR NR, first as a white-owned farm that exploited cheap labor, and then as a failed protected area. Now we see the State again, extending, strengthening, and exerting its control over the natural resources, but through the creation of new institutions and land-use planning. These new institutions, such as the CPA, are now responsible for governing the new wildlife economy with the Management Authority, MTPA. The *Parks and People Programme* toolkit specifically states that the

MTPA is the "authority," meaning that management decisions are ultimately made by the State. The MTPA, however, answers to SANParks, who answers to DEA. The community then finds itself at the bottom of a chain-of-command-and-control nature reserve. At the bottom of this chain we may soon find increased policing to enforce regulations that secure the access of private operators to the 'communal' wildlife resources (Murombedzi, 2003). The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, sponsored in part by the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP), DEA, and SANBI, outlined a strategy for conservation entitled *Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale* calls for what Agrawal (2005) would construe as "environmentalizing" the poor. For example, one of its designed action outputs reads as follows: "Improved capacity across institutions to work collaboratively to identify crimes and apprehend and prosecute offenders, through the creation and strengthening of cross institutional coordination mechanisms that enable the sharing of information between institutions, systems to support tracking of crimes, and an improved science policy interface" (GEF, 2012). The creation and empowerment of local institutions to police each other hardly camouflages State coercion and what resembles command and control conservation.

Colonial reifications

During the Awareness campaign, DEA, MTPA, and CPA shared information, made speeches, and answered questions and concerns. In addition, the campaign involved environmental education. This was accomplished via sharing large posters depicting "pristine" conservation areas alongside environmentally degraded rural communities. The

poster highlighted the interconnectedness of nature and society but at the same time emphasized a fence separating the two. This poster is present in the *People and Parks Programme.* On the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency website the language of the pristine is used:

> Our province boasts a high level of biological diversity, with three recognized centers of endemism in the province…the level of protection of these centers is, however, very low and conservation efforts are in place to address this. Despite this though, many areas of the province are still in *pristine* condition. (NPAES, accessed April 22, 2014)

This quote, in conjunction with the poster used in the Awareness Campaign to teach local communities about the environment, reproduces a colonial idea or belief in the pristine, an imagined place where the environment remains aesthetically pleasing, unchanging, a natural ideal. Here's another supporting quote:

> We have the responsibility to ensure that our country becomes and remains a living ark. Our communities must stand as the custodians of conservation and the guarantors of biological diversity," said Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, Minister of Department of Environmental Affairs (South African National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2005). (accessed November, 2013)

This quote is emblematic of the conservation ethic, as it typifies both the reification of nature and the State constructed, entangled notion of nation and nature. In addition, it is predicated on the assumption that communities should think country before community. This might be easy for some, but remains difficult for the poor. Lastly, this quote appeals religion, as the majority of South Africans are Christian. Alluding to South Africa as a “living ark” is intentional.

Market saturation

Co-management only works if such a top-down approach is united with the private-sector, meaning the State lacks the means to adequately finance a protected area over the long-term. Initially, the state spends millions of rand on such projects but depends on the private sector to build lodges, run safaris, or hunting enterprises. These companies pay concession fees which allow unlimited access to the natural resources. As we explore the market value of BBR NR, we should consider the size of the reserve and its proximity to Kruger National Park (KNP). BBR NR, only 6700 hectares, will be home to “exotic” wildlife resembling nothing more than a zoo, or rather an inauthentic wildlife safari experienced by the privileged. In consideration to its size and foot and mouth disease, BBR NR will preclude the Big Five. Placing the Big Five in the reserve would have been a mistake due to its limited space, but not including them in the co-managed protected area will bring its own set of problems as well. Without the megafauna, which appear on the rand (South African currency), why would tourists want to visit BBR NR? To be more exact, what will be the draw?

The size of New Jersey, KNP is located only 40 km from BBR NR. It's home to some of the world's greatest biodiversity, provides world class luxury safaris, bush walks, and endless opportunities to photograph the Big Five. KNP also hosts safaris in Sabie Sands Game Reserve, an unfenced reserve home to the Big Five. BBR NR's neighbor to the east is Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, a unique geologic canyon featuring "Bourke's luck pot holes", "Three Rondavels", "God's Window", and a host of other competing natural sights and activities in the area. Some of these activities include elephant-back riding safaris, bushwalking, helicopter rides, cultural tours, resorts and spas, to name a few. Set against these activities, the natural sights afforded on the Panoramic Route zigzagging through parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga Province includes many waterfalls such as Mac Mac Falls, Berlin Falls, and Sabie Falls.

Even further, large numbers of nature reserves populate the Mpumalanga landscape. According to BLM:

> BBR NR was placed in the top ten reserves in the province for commercialization. That was the mobilization of the municipality. The Manyeleti Nature Reserve was one, and BBR NR another.

This raises concerns regarding how BBR NR will contend with an ostensibly saturated market. South African economic constraints which limit domestic disposable income for holidays contrasts greatly with the purchasing power of European, Asian, and North American tourists. In fact, international tourist arrivals in South Africa grew by 10.2% year-on-year to almost 9.2-million in 2012, more than double the global average of around 4% (South Africa Tourism, 2011). This represents that national tourism strategies

have been successful in attracting foreign visitors. In 2011, Mpumalanga province received R4.7 billion in foreign direct spending (South African Tourism, 2011). Nearly 60% of foreign tourists visit for purposes of leisure and natural attractions, whereas only 25% of domestic tourists travel on ‘holiday’. The revenue generated by international tourism sector dwarfs that of domestic spending. South Africans fortunate enough to travel on holiday are in many ways comparable to the Western tourist. Though there has been a recent increase in national park visitation by black South Africans, much of the revenue generation is owed to affluent white South Africans on safaris. KNP, as well as other nature reserves, have partnerships with local communities that allow free educational visits, such as Kids in Parks (KiP), but these relationships fail to generate revenue. Regardless, KNP remains the wildlife hub of Mpumalanga (and Limpopo), attracting tourists in search of Eden. Whether or not tourists perceive Eden or authentic cultural encounters in BBR NR remains to be seen.

The BLM acknowledges how KNP dominates the market, remarking that the MTPA has a “tendency to market only KNP.” Heretofore, the process for marketing BBR NR has yet to begin. Strategies for marketing are at best vague, calling on greater communication and infrastructure but devoid of concrete steps in attracting tourists.

Decentralization and Autonomy

The co-management of BBR NR calls for the devolution of all property rights, not only ones of proprietorship. The process of devolution of resource management involves programs that shift responsibility and authority from the state to nongovernmental bodies—a "rolling back the boundaries of the state” (Vedeld, 1996; Meinzen-Dick,

1999). Inherently a part of the devolution process are the concepts of democratization and decentralization, both of which are integral to the co-management process as they "seek the involvement of citizens affected by programs, for social goals of empowering local people as well as goals of improving program performance…and they transfer decision-making from government 'outsiders' to users who are directly affected" (Meizen-Dick, 1999). The critical form of participation of user groups in devolution is in decision making. Devolution programs that fail to tap into the knowledge of local users are less likely to abide by or enforce rules. Thus, if devolution is to give users a role in governance of the resource, they must be able to set rules, determine sanctions, and make critical decisions about their organizations as well as the management of resources (Meizen-Dick, 1999).

Let's explore this as it relates to BBR NR. What decisions are being made by the "community"? One of the key goals of democratic decentralization is to promote and institutionalize local participation, and hence to operate from a clear understanding of local needs and desires (Ribot, 2001; Cousins & Kepe, 2004). Though the conservation trend now leans towards socioeconomic empowerment and decentralization, the "locus of decision-making powers, and mechanisms to ensure accountability of decision-makers are much less clearly articulated" (Cousins & Kepe, 2004), especially BBR NR in relation to South Africa's local Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). South African co-management regimes are components of Spatial Development Initiatives, which are "targeted interventions by central government for helping unlock economic potential to facilitate new investment and job creation in a localized area or region" (Jourdan, 1998;

Cousins and Kepe, 2004). The State decides the appropriate type of employment for its people.

Participation and Democratic Processes

Local municipalities must "provide for extensive public participation in the planning process" (Cousins & Kepe, 2004), and in the case of BBR NR, the municipality has actually negotiated claims that compete with that of the claimants. Though the CPA will eventually receive their land title, they share employment opportunities 70/30 with the municipality, meaning that 7 out of every 10 jobs (one for Inyaka CPA) will go to the claimants and the other 3 will be selected in a process of the municipality's choosing. These three jobs will be posted and available to any member within the municipality. This becomes quite contentious when considering that some community actors that have been harvesting resources or grazing cattle will in general be excluded from accessing or withdrawing the resources. They will be in need of work. Competition for limited jobs will increase. This doesn't account for the corruption or nepotism which can occur if authorities are not held accountable.

Let us look more closely at the local level as it pertains to co-management. Formalized institutions play a more direct role in how the development of the protected area will contribute to the development of the surrounding communities. Land that was once seemingly communal (a colonial assumption) is now suddenly exclusionary and strictly enforced by the State. Land that was once used for grazing or harvesting of

fuelwood, herbs, medicines, and wild fruits, are now protected areas set aside behind fences for international and private investment, development, and enjoyment.

This transforms certain actors that once had access-power to that of poacher status when they “illegally” harvest their much needed resources. Let us consider the new identity of the poacher within the idea of Spatial Development Initiatives in South Africa. The enforcement of protected areas fit within SDIs arrangements which identify poverty nodes, or areas of extreme poverty. It has become South African policy to alleviate poverty in these nodes through co-management regimes. However, these initiatives have unfortunately become ‘unfunded mandates’ (Manor, 2000; Cousins and Kepe, 2004), as local administrations lack the necessary infrastructure and capital to monitor newly protected areas. The BLM, K2C BR, and MTPA all alluded to this idea of capacitation. More developed countries ostensibly support neoliberal programs which aid in the development of ecotourism over traditional livelihoods that are thought to be less economically viable and sustainable. Virtual reality manifests itself into reality. In altering the physical landscape to suit a wildlife/ecotourism economy, resiliency has been compromised through the loss of livelihood diversity.

The distinction between decentralization and privatization is fuzzy, especially in the face of governmental institutions that embrace neoliberal development policies. Multilateral agencies and donors increase pressure on governments everywhere to promote foreign investment, privatize service delivery, and thus to ‘outsource development’ in the name of market efficiencies (Kepe et al, 2001; Kepe, 2004). Without the special knowledge and skills required to manage a protected area for international tourists, local communities are initially at a disadvantage, as they must rely on those with

more power and capital. Hence, the relationship begins paternalistically, asymmetrically. South African elites of mixed classes and ethnicities from various geographic regions within the country initially take the high management positions in lodges or as rangers. Locals will have the opportunity to gain employment but they are generally low skilled positions which highlight how co-management regimes can further entrench the working class and class divide.

Co-management partnerships between well-resourced and educated state authorities and the poorly resourced, less educated new land owners signify an unequal beginning. Land claimants, when asked about Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve, responded that they had of never of heard such a thing. This serious lack of understanding, coupled with no knowledge of hegemonic conservation discourses that play a significant role in their lives, is cause for alarm. One must wonder how "communal" the association actually is. This term assumes that the Shangaan that lived in the protected area before lived communally. The idea that the "community" decided to support biodiversity and conservation remains doubtful, as the "community" is comprised of more than what constitutes the CPA. Some non-land claimants in Cunningmore expressed their dissatisfaction with BBR NR, complaining about access to natural resources like fuelwood. When told that they would be able to access the resources as usual, some questioned the practicality of acquiring a ranger to escort them. How much wood can be gathered and how often remains ambiguous, even for land claimants, as no one from the CPA has seen the co-management plan for the reserve. In fact, there are land claimants that do not agree with placing wildlife in an artificially created protected

area. Some favor "industry" and a few expressed (especially the elders) an interest in financial compensation.

Using the term community implies agreement and essentially discounts dissimilar motivations within the "community." Above all, its usage further reifies colonial conceptualizations of the Other, for such conceptualizations conveniently oversimplify the intrinsic heterogeneity of said "community". The conceptualization of "community" is rooted in asymmetries of power, contestation, and Indigenous resistance. Perhaps most important, is who defines the community? Communal ownership is not a given, as it has oftentimes been an idea arising out of struggle and contestation to more than a century of negotiating dominant regimes. Is there a risk of colonial reproduction in assuming that Indigenous people can only "own" land communally?

Individual ownership is for the Westerner, communal for the 'Other'. A co-management structure is designed to suit the more powerful, because only the former colonialist has the power, knowledge, and technology to lead, create, and enforce laws. It further entrenches a system of dependency, whereby the local waits for commands from above.

IX. Conclusion

The Memorandum of Agreement mandates that all land claims involving a protected area shall remain a protected area in perpetuity. Enforcing a specific land use through top-down legal enforcement reeks of a colonial past, a reproduced colonial space. It contradicts the promotion of open participation, as participation begins within the legal, predetermined framework of the government (Stoll-Kleemann and O'Riordan, 2002;

Gbadegesin and Ayileka, 2000). BBR NR at its inception in 1974 never amounted to anything more than an imagined park, or rather a spatial imaginary of the State. The control which the State exerted upon the landscape at this time typified apartheid's aim of amassing and utilizing space, and reflected a policy to further entrench its power and superior, moneyed value systems. The apartheid regime controlled South Africa's space through identifying and enforcing which spaces black South Africans could use. Forced evictions characterized apartheid policies which limited community access to much needed natural resources. The "agreement" made between the DEA and DoA shares commonalities with the former colonial and apartheid regime in that poor, rural communities must adapt to State laws governing land use rights. The communities surrounding BBR NR never had a say as to how the land was going to be used. Much like the Makuleke, they may not live on their former land, but may only co-manage it at the command of the State's consent.

The agreement would appear almost arbitrary if not for its connection to global interests and conservation discourses of environmental crisis. No concrete data were presented to the surrounding communities which have provided justification for an area to be designated for environmental protection. South African policy documents use the environmental degradation narrative to influence local communities to alter land usage, even put fences around it, because just like colonial times, poor blacks that live communally 'do not know or understand best land use practices'. The land must be protected from the poor who don't or can't appreciate the value of "nature."

In recent interviews, locals reported that they would historically hunt "sustainably," not take more than necessary:

> The only survival was eating the meat. It was just for livelihood. Get enough for the family. Locusts. We hunted only for our survival. We would sometimes go for fishing. With us it was not commercial. By nature we were conservationists! Because of them (whites) they were coming with clever minds…with ideas of money. (Interview July 12, CPA)

This interview illuminates local perceptions of the Occident's value system. Later in the interview he admitted to adopting these monetary values:

> They can use us now. Cunningmore will be transformed. Once we settle it, we will have to travel the whole world to bring improvement to our area. We need a way in how to reach that. We are here. Come and see how poor we are. We are not looking for free handouts. We are looking for education, how to get to the natural resources. Let's market ourselves to these organizations. Once it's settled, it will be viable. People have been exploiting us for so long. (Interview July 12, CPA)

Setting aside the same space for non-extractive, neoliberal commercialization that was used to unceremoniously displace, marginalize, and control Indigenous and local communities, counters the very essence of decolonization. Who defines and legitimates the space to be designated a protected area? With support from international donors, NGOs, and Science, the answer remains the State. The idea of BBR NR back in the mid-1970s came straight from a colonial national park regime that claims to no longer

subscribe to the *purist conservation model* but one that promotes a *developmental and people-centered approach* (SANParks, 2012). I would not disagree with this claim, for upon scouring the documents for colonial language, I encountered language which rather encouraged transparency, democratic processes, inclusivity, community involvement, and equitability. In any case, the original transformation from farm to protected area was not supported by the locally dispossessed population, nor were they able to define or determine land use. Resentment of said unceremonious removal coupled with resource dependency and cultural survival (access to ancestral graves) resulted in the destruction of the original fence. What remains is a land reform project of resuscitation, or "revitalization," to protect biodiversity and develop surrounding rural nodes of poverty.

The BBR NR project reflects Western conceptualizations of space, harkening back to Soja's (1971) idea that territories are "commodities" capable of being bought, sold, or exchanged at the market place. Ideas of commodified space fit an old colonial binary whereby Westerners *understand* the value of "nature" in comparison to the Other. Separating nature from society with arbitrary partitions reified notions of nature and national identity derivative of colonial binaries. Though promises have been made allowing monitored access to natural resources found within BBR NR, we can't be certain. Participants pointed out the impracticality of resource extraction and question the distribution of permits and natural resources.

The act of land grabbing for Western monetized standards stands as a spatial legacy of apartheid today. In the past, protected areas involved the large scale displacement of Indigenous communities who suffered without compensation, which is precisely what occurred in BBR NR. They were removed according to the State's conceptualization of

space. Concurrent with such conceptualizations were perceptions of environmental degradation that coincided with economic interests and racist notions of the Other. Herein lies the colonial trinity: superior conceptualizations of space to command and control land use, erroneous discourses of environmental degradation, and racial superiority, or rather Otherness, which justifies an imposition of conflicting values. Communities surrounding BBR NR suffered from such a colonial trinity, and do so today.

Land claimants of BBR NR do not currently endure the brutality that characterized apartheid. They are not being forcefully removed from an area. Nor are they suffering at the hands of an all-white regime demonizing them with a vitriolic, racist discourse. However, their access to natural resources is limited and they've been disallowed from taking part in defining land use according to their values and terms. The discourse today is far more subtle, and the outcomes in terms of land use remain relatively the same. Since 1990 the world has seen a 58% increase in protected areas. Land is grabbed. Land which is grabbed can indeed empower institutions at the local scale, but overall, land grabbing serves to entrench power in the State.

Even though ideas of integrating alternative strategies, i.e. traditional or local knowledge, have been prescribed and written into various documents of importance such as *The Precautionary Principle and Environmental* Governance by IUCN, such knowledge systems have not been summoned (Cooney, 2004). Bridging *de jure* with *de facto,* or fusing worldviews regarding land ownership, does not occur either. The burden of precautionary measures remains with poor communities who must set their immediate needs aside for the future. Their ideas regarding conservation and land use, at least in the case of BBR NR, have not been sought after.

All definitions regarding co-management amount to nothing if land-use decisions aren't first determined by local communities. This is real power, or Power. For conservation to be completely decolonized, the decision to transform the landscape for the purposes of protection and tourism should be made initially by the community. If the community does not decide to develop the landscape to suit the wildlife economy, then alternative plans should be made.

The BLM IDP identifies the "revitalization" of BBR NR as a mode to empower and develop communities. The use of the word revitalization implies that the reserve was actually a reserve in physical form (not merely an imagining), but with respect to two different time periods (1974 and now), such a descriptor proves erroneous, as it amounted to nothing more than a fence corralling imaginary fauna. In 2010 a *WfW* project began to remove invasive species and renovate roads in BBR NR but quickly ended on account that private investors wanted a fence. A BLM official noted this sentiment:

> And now the investor who was going to pick BBR NR had to start with the fencing, the animals, ensuring the proper infrastructure. It didn't have that. Having realized that, we said we have to prioritize the fencing.

The identities of the private investors were not revealed, but what's most significant is that the investment speaks to a neoliberal reform which has become the rule for protected areas. The Makuleke land claim is an excellent example of the concessionary principle that characterizes land reform/co-management cases. One concern with private investment companies is that they are usually comprised of non-local actors that do not necessarily prioritize rural development. The *People and Parks Programme* toolkit

specifically addresses private business partners and their obligation to local livelihoods, but as we have seen already, the State assumes that it knows what's best in terms of land use for local communities. A blind eye can be turned to a perceived lack of democratic or equitable processes if it's for the betterment of the local economy. Other major concerns include revenue sharing and the degree of skills transfer in relation to local empowerment.

In the first meeting that I attended in Marite, the MTPA emphasized that BBR NR is part of a multi-scalar conservation agenda. Indeed, BBR NR sits at the bottom of a global proliferation of protected areas situated in a narrative of ecological crisis. Consequently, the Global South must brace itself for the inevitable effects of climate change. And if rural livelihoods depend on ecosystem resiliency, then the South must aim to create spatial development initiatives and frameworks in preparation for ecological disaster. Typically, the Global South must adapt to policies of the North. These policies are grounded not only in Science, but ideas of "nature," market principles that serve elite classes, and paternalistic colonial notions that the Global South needs its Northern father.

Conservation and control policies reflect free market principles in capitalism. Co-management is no different. The Global North has displaced the environmental consequences of capitalism onto the Global South. Why does the global community use the same free market principles that has wrought catastrophe on the global community? A critical eye needs to be turned on this question, as the environment has not suffered on account of poor Indigenous people, but rather a rapacious, Western, capitalist system beholden to stockholders. Development aid in South Africa, such as money from the UNDP GEF and its World Bank partner, create space for free market principles which

ultimately entrenches dependency on already established business elites. Powerfully entrenched elites, fattened by a colonial, apartheid past, continue to deepen their pockets with this system. Interviews with BLM and K2C BR confirmed local dependency on attracting investment.

Capitalism's dependency on consumption and technologically intensive resource extraction paradoxically encourages new conservation spaces. The creation of new conservation geographies excuses the free market from blame. The spaces set aside for conservation occur more frequently in the Global South and are supported financially by the Global North. The amalgamation of conservation and development with land reform has decreased land accessibility. Land reform, however, is supposed to increase accessibility to resources and so conservation counters this aim.

South African apartheid created spatial inequalities that continue to affect livelihoods and land use stress today. South Africans that were dispossessed of their original lands and placed into areas of very minimal infrastructure depended on limited available resources, the very such dependency that characterizes much of BLM today. Additionally, colonial conceptualizations of space caused much of the poverty we now see in South Africa today. The State recognizes this, in fact seeks to redress this through land reform and co-management, but are they using the wrong set of principles to address this endemic issue? Borrowing solutions born of Western conceptualizations are misguided.

Having visited Cunningmore-A, it's obvious that peri-urban sprawl coupled with high levels of poverty will result in conflict over the resources found in BBR NR. Critical thinking in regards to global conservation mandates remains absent at the national,

provincial, and local levels. Speaking to the latter, critical thought occurs amongst claimants and beneficiaries that question practicality, capacity, and overall governance. However, the middle men and women carrying out the national policies shaped by global mandates, do not. The language written into the documents acknowledge past wrongs, livelihood sustainability, and cultural survival, all of which sound perfectly humanitarian, empathetic, and constructive. Despite the language, integration of an additional protected area in a land mosaic of diverse land uses deserves interrogation.

Protection requires the development of a conservation police state which increases security and runs the risk of conflict between local stakeholders (claimants) and local beneficiaries (non-claimants), especially when the protected area fails to provide promised benefits and access to natural resources. When “poachers” enter the reserve to access much needed resources they will become criminals, which will result in the criminalization of the poor. Additionally, new hierarchies of power emerge, as I’ve already witnessed first-hand. Remember, CPA sees its role as communicator, informing beneficiaries “what is going to be done,” regardless the concerns.

Land tenure continues to be ambiguous, as local communities own the land but essentially lack the power to decide how to use it, and the knowledge to use it in the way (formal market economy) which has been determined for them. Signs of integrating “Indigenous knowledge” simply do not exist, thus reflecting a failure to truly hybridize the conservation process. Co-management supposedly creates a third space whereby we emerge as new selves but up until this point it has yet to occur.

Land reform has been co-opted by the international community’s push to increase protected areas. Wedding these dissimilar concepts does not translate into improved

livelihoods, yet this type of normalized neocolonial development discourse is legitimized by an environmental international community which champions conservation objectives. Questions regarding why the former protected area, now BBR NR, necessitates greater protection than areas adjacent remain. There are small patches of land within BBR NR identified as "vulnerable," but the vulnerability will soon be placed elsewhere. There are simply not enough low hanging fruit, or temporary employment opportunities to sustain local communities. Five years from now there will be additional areas in need of protection and the cyclical stories of degradation will continue onward to perpetuate greater need for biodiversity protection.

Hybridizing knowledge (Western science and local knowledge) is a difficult process and a skill that is still emerging (Reid et al., 2006). The task is particularly difficult in co-management involving Indigenous people whose knowledge may be based on different worldviews (Moller et al., 2004; Berkes, 2008). Ultimately, effective co-management requires flexible, multi-level governance systems designed to enhance institutional interaction and experimentation to generate learning (Folke et al., 2002; Kooiman et al., 2005), but there is little experience on how to accomplish this. These institutional interactions occur within the BBR NR land claim but how this will translate to improved livelihoods and community development remains.

Even if giving consideration to each heterogeneous community, can co-management occur in a top-down approach? A top-down approach involves people from the outside that lack the necessary perspective and understanding that leads to the type of conservation that benefits local livelihoods. An argument can be made, however, that people from the outside (South Africans) are those who were only recently dispossessed

victims themselves. Borrowing from postcolonial theory, I would contend that such arguments account for "internal colonialism," whereby formerly marginalized communities reappropriate the former colonizers approach to interpreting the landscape and carrying out policies. These are *internal outsiders*. Outside outsiders, who live in different countries or on completely different continents, cannot realistically but only "virtually" appreciate how their agendas might affect local communities:

> Perceiving a virtual reality becomes *virtualism* when people take this virtual reality to be not just a parsimonious description of what is really happening, but prescriptive of what the world ought to be; when, that is, they seek to make the world conform to their virtual vision. Virtualism, thus, operates at both the conceptual and practical levels, for it is a practical effort to make the world conform to the structures of the conceptual (Carrier,1998).

Attempts to bridge the conceptual-"real" divide comes with actual life consequences, most of which coerce traditional communities into altering their cultural and socioeconomic livelihoods. In essence, "protected areas necessarily seek to protect nature and biodiversity by abstracting them from their complex social contexts (West, 2006).

In this context, are Indigenous communities neo-colonized if they are part of a co-management agreement led by the State which is bankrolled, in large part, by international and private institutions? What we do know is that Indigenous use of natural resources can no longer be demonized through colonially created binaries (nature-society, Science-traditional knowledge, Occident-Other), and that dissimilar ways of knowing should be incorporated into a third space where "conservationists incorporate other

peoples into their own moral universe and share Indigenous peoples' goals of justice and recognition of human rights" (Alcorn, 1993). Goals of social justice are evident in the documents but effort doesn't mean results.

Co-management through land reform has yet to bring social justice to rural communities, but the question remains as to why it is still viewed as the panacea to end poverty and bring social justice and empowerment. Wedding conservation with development at the interface of land reform muddies agendas and creates an untraceable network of actors which defy intelligible explanation. Coherently cobbling together the relationships and agreements between various sectors and departments at different temporal and spatial scales dizzies the most versed bureaucratic. Yes, meetings and communication increase, sectors create networks that beget corridors that beget projects, but in reality the reconciliation of myriad agendas constitute a bureaucratic maze. The maze, moreover, constitutes full and complete State control over the ways in which resources are realized and accessed.

How local ideas are integrated, if at all, into the management of wildlife should be watched closely, for interviews revealed that the IDP will tell them "what to do," meaning that they are at the whim of decisions made by SANParks and MTPA. Local inhabitants have alluded to the fact that they don't have capital or the knowledge to manage a park, which can be condescendingly seen in the form of a post settlement cartoon. This sentiment reflects not only dependency on the State, but trust in that the protected area needs to be just that, a protected area.

Rather than identifying ecosystems that require protection, and then developing a conservation and development plan for these areas, initiatives perpetuate the unfortunate

myth that protected areas are isolated islands of biodiversity (Kepe et al, 2005). BBR NR represents one piece of a spatial land mosaic found in K2C BR and BLM. It is a buffer zone in a biosphere reserve, but counter intuitively fenced. Questions surround why Joubert farm's designation was a reserve in the first place. Was this area perceived to be environmentally "vulnerable" or was its purpose to serve State power? Are there alternative protection schemes that do not require a fence?

Ecotourism development through land reform and co-management enterprises are usually limited and rarely sufficient to compensate landowners adequately for their sacrifice of other livelihood options such as agriculture and use of natural resources (Cundill et al., 2013; Tumusiime & Vedeld, 2012). Those who typically sacrifice for the greater national or global good are economically disadvantaged and can be found in areas designated as critical biozones, such as K2C BR. The long term economic, environmental and social sustainability of BBR NR remains in question, as asymmetries of power constitute greater control over land transformation. Land is transformed according to the State, but not before receiving conservation mandates from a Global North which perpetuates environmental crisis through media and Science. Funding is dependent on how well national, provincial, and municipal development plans are integrated into international goals of sustainability. Integrating local developmental plans and needs with national and global conservation agendas also remains difficult on account of high levels of poverty, poor education, and lack of infrastructure and capacity. Decentralization within top-down global conservation initiatives contradicts the rhetoric espousing empowerment, as real Power is never ceded. The colonial North continues to drive and shape perceptions of empowerment and warrants a keen and watchful eye.

Language now used in co-management calls for socioeconomic benefits, poverty alleviation, self-determination, devolution, and community development and is generally integrated into a larger 'Master Plan' fixed within spatial and social scales. Even in cases of co-management where hybrid solutions might be a potentiality, co-management conservation "falls short of giving Indigenous people the type of control over land to which they are entitled (and to which they have legal title, which the BBR NR land claimants do not), especially if Western conservationists hold the purse strings" (Igoe, 2004). Ultimately, Western values and spatial conceptualizations evade meaningful 3rd space entanglements with the Other and continue to jeopardize local livelihoods while entrenching dependency on foreign development aid.

X. Recommendations for further research: With special consideration to BBR NR

The growing literature on land reform-to-co-management of natural resource regimes, in general, measure social justice, empowerment, and poverty alleviation through gathering qualitative data methodologies such as interviews, testimony, participatory observation, workshops, and surveys. Anecdotal evidence might be better served if supported with quantifiable data especially as it relates to remittances, pensions, and income change over time. Curtailing unemployment is a major goal of ecotourism development. It will be important to see how revenue is managed and distributed with the surrounding communities and what kind of rural development occurs. What types of investment will BBR NR garner? What will this look like on the landscape? Lodges, casinos, recreational/educational centers? How will benefits be distributed?

Quantifying the number of jobs within BBR NR could provide useful information regarding the amelioration of poverty and accompanying economic benefits. Gathering such data should be used in conjunction with interviews focusing on socioeconomic adaptation and the relevance of social capital in the face of social and environmental disturbances. If protected area enclosures seek to make communities more ecologically and economically resilient, then we will need to investigate the validity of said thesis. In other words, how have lives that were once dependent on the natural resources within the protected areas been affected by exclusion? To what degree have they been excluded?

Beneficiaries and land claimants have been informed that they will have access to natural resources within BBR NR, but is this the case? Ecotourism is only one of many livelihood strategies (Kepe et al, 2005) and government and conservation agencies should aim to provide support that can enhance multiple livelihood strategies, not pigeon-hole them into one (Fabricius and de Wet 1999; Kepe, 2001; Kepe et al, 2005). Though there are promises to accommodate diverse livelihood strategies, will this occur? How will attitudes and perceptions of BBR NR change over time? What will relationships look like between land claimants and non-land claimants? What will relationships be between private partners and the community? What will the new co-management regime mean for women? How will BBR NR affect their livelihood?

Moreover, attention will need to be given to the environmental, social, cultural, and political impacts of removing supposed environmental degradation from the protected area to one that is adjacent. The DoA explicitly expressed plans to create an additional protected area for the rotation and safety of grazing cattle. It will be necessary to follow this up to understand and define the success of the reserve. Furthermore, it will be useful

to measure environmental impacts in other adjacent areas. Discussing perceptions of environmental impacts will prove useful and can be used in conjunction with community mapping activities. The material condition of rural South Africa owes itself to the spatial engineering of apartheid, and so it's necessary to holistically investigate the results of the new land mosaic. It will also be necessary to analyze the environmental impacts of tourism and wildlife in BBR NR, as spatial configurations have been put into place to not only affect livelihoods, but to protect biodiversity. In other words, how might tourism contradict its aims of protecting biodiversity?

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