Game Ranching and Land Reform: Claims for the land exclaim tension

A case study of the Mapungubwe Region

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Abstract

South Africa's game ranching industry is perceived both positively and negatively. Positive perceptions of the industry exist owing to the argument that game ranching carries the prospect of augmenting sustainable conservation. Notwithstanding, negative associations of the industry arise from a growing body of evidence that game ranchers are thwarting the land reform process by fencing off their land to secure game ownership . Such perceptions are embedded within a sense of tension; wherein, if game ranching practices are a form of conservation, then such conservation practices may be contributing to conflict over land ownership and associated land usage. Accordingly, further investigation to ascertain what ranching practices entail and furthermore, what sustainable conservation involves could clarify the tension. A contextual analysis of ranching in the Mapungubwe region was thus sought. Fieldwork involving interviews with available key informants was conducted in the region. It was found, firstly, that a conceptual tension underpins game ranching; secondly, not all ranching can be deemed sustainable conservation and finally, that the sustainability of ranching itself is conditioned upon a range of factors. Tension between game ranching and land reform was discovered; yet such tension could not be attributed to nor felt by all of the key informants interviewed. It was concluded that tension is indeed present, but the tension is multi-dimensional in nature.

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Abbreviations

CBD	The Convention on Biological Diversity
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CITW	Children in the Wilderness
COAL	Coal of Africa Limited
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
GMN	Greater Mapungubwe Network
GMTFCA	Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LED	Local Economic Development
LR	Land Reform
MNP	Mapungubwe National Park
MCADF	Mogalakwena Craft Art Development Foundation
NPO	Non-profit Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Protected Area
PPF	Peace Parks Foundation
PEC	Payments to encourage co-existence with wildlife
PH	Professional Hunter
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RLCC	Regional Land Claims Commission
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANP	South African National Parks
SAPHCOM	South African Professional Hunting Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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"Information is a beacon, a cudgel, an olive branch, a deterrent, depending on who wields it and how" (Levitt and Dubner, 2009).

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.0 Conservation and Culture

To view history as progressive wherein there is constant development toward better modes of life, for both the individual and society, elicits attractive long-term prospects for humanity (Everest, 2002). Appealing for its positivity and idealism, this view, nevertheless, undermines the importance of existing and visible conditions (Everest, 2002). Acknowledging such conditions can illuminate a reality that certain aspects of history are marked by a cyclic progression wherein, these tend to recur, albeit manifesting in different forms and contexts. It is in the context of such acknowledgment that I wish to discuss the history of wildlife conservation. This discussion will proceed in line with Kate Soper's belief that 'Nature is used as a spatial and temporal marker' (Soper, 1995: 187).

Working from the premise that wildlife conservation within Protected Areas (PAs) follows a cyclic progression, it is conceivable that present understandings of and interactions with nature will relate to how it was understood and interacted with in the past. Arguably, practices may not directly mirror former ideologies, yet traces of these are still discernable. Accordingly, PAs can be placed 'back in history' by locating them within 'an historical and political context' (Brooks, 2000: 2). This will foreground how conservation in such areas began. Moreover, it can help orientate the route along which conservation is now being directed.

Jane Carruthers makes a compelling argument on how the meaning of a place can be determined (Carruthers, 2006). By ascribing it to 'cultural construction', she reasons that given a particular time and specific context, it is 'the concerns, aspirations and values of society' which determine the significance of a given place (Carruthers, 2006: 1). Now, with regard to PAs in southern Africa, conservational concerns can be traced back to the mid-19th Century (Adams and McShane, 1996). During this period the region was dominated by

colonial powers and hence, the history of PAs and their associated values can be contextualized in relation to ideologies prevailing at the time.

One such ideology was the sporting value ascribed to wildlife. Colonial hunters were lured by the thrill of hunting Africa's wildlife and the range of trophies to be derived. Notably, however, hunting attractions long-preceded the establishment of PAs here; indeed, such attractions partly necessitated their presence altogether. Between 1800 and 1950, Africa's wildlife was indiscriminately killed by colonial hunters (Flack, 2011). Additional off-take through commercial hunting to meet the demand for ivory, skins, horns and meat resulted in 'excessive and indifferent slaughter' (Flack, 2011: 10-11).

Now, a belief existed that local Africans' hunting methods were cruel and wasteful since hunts were conducted using poison or traps, and purely for obtaining meat and skins (Adams and McShane, 1996; Fabricius *et al.*, 2001). Such approaches were condoned; local hunters were prohibited from hunting whilst their colonial counterparts continued their sport. When concern for diminishing wildlife populations arose in the late 19th Century, conservation efforts followed (Buscher and Dietz, 2005). A preservationist stance was adopted, with local communities disbarred from the areas being set aside (Buscher and Dietz, 2005).[1] As a form of fortress conservation, regulations and penalties were passed to prevent the intrusion of local people by adopting a fences and fines policy (Fabricius *et al.,* 2001; Buscher and Dietz, 2005). Significantly, such approaches had their roots in the Enlightenment doctrine.

Enlightenment influenced colonial ideologies and specifically, Western ideas of what man should be concerned with; aspire to and value (Adams and Hutton, 2007). Drawing upon man's reasoning capabilities; rationality took precedence over aspects such as culture and belief (Ramutsindela, 2004). Many colonialists encountering Africa perceived cultural practices on the continent to be characterised by barbarism and superstition, whilst people here were branded 'backward and primitive' (Adams and McShane, 1996; Carruthers, 2006:

[1] The Preservationist approach stems from fortress-based conservation wherein biodiversity areas are protected using methods that strictly limit human interference, access and usage (Redford *et al.,* 1998; Adams and Hutton, 2007).

6). Notwithstanding the subjectivity inherent in these viewpoints, rationality strongly governed how colonialists interacted with nature. Such interactions produced interrelated, two-fold conceptions of nature which are explained in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0 Colonial conceptions of Nature

Conception	Reason	Source
Pristine Nature	1. Owing to the sparsely settled nature of Africa's landscape 2. Owing to the perception of local people as primitive beings	Carruthers (2006)
Nature as Eden	1. Due to the supposedly untainted and uninhabited aspects of the landscape which conjured paradisiac qualities 2. Due to romanticized connotations of an idyllic and wilderness landscape	Grove (1995) Neumann (1998) Adams and Hutton (2007) Wolmer (2005) Brooks (2000)

Consequently, nature came to be delineated. To preserve its seemingly pristine and Eden-like aspects, boundaries were established and PAs created (Neumann, 1998; Brooks, 2000; Fall, 2005). This occurred despite the fact that communities were living in such areas and deriving resources therein. Their removals were justified in terms of preservationist thought, which, owing to its origin in rationalism, was difficult to challenge (Adams and Hutton, 2007; Carruthers, 2008).

Connotations of Eden carry a restrictive, myopic conception of nature. Significantly, the opposing notion that there are multiple ways of conceiving of nature and interacting with is also relevant. Probing the matter of catering for heterogeneity - or a lack thereof - is important. This is especially so given the departure point that wildlife conservation efforts can be considered cyclical; whereby the following question is raised: are similar restrictions observable today?

1.0.1 Post-colonial constructs: Reconciliation and Reform

During the colonial era, the notion of restriction was physically and ideologically apparent. It was this 'cultural construction' which came to reflect the dominant 'concerns, aspirations and values' across the continent (Carruthers, 2006: 1). The repercussions of such a construction are embedded in Africa's post-colonial development trajectory; a reality that does not preclude South Africa (Ramutsindela, 2003). In addition to a colonial legacy, South Africa is still recovering from restrictions imposed through apartheid's discriminatory policies. Nonetheless, through the concept of 'transformation', heterogeneity is being advocated (Carruthers, 2007: 293). Such an approach is regarded as an active engagement by the South African government to facilitate reconciliation and provide redress for past imbalances (Kepe *et al.*, 2005; Lunstrum, 2010).

South Africa's land reform (LR) policy is directed at assisting historically disadvantaged people reclaim their land rights (Deininger, 1999; Carruthers, 2007). LR aims to provide redress for racially-based land dispossessions and reduce the inequitable distribution of land ownership that resulted from the Natives Land Act of 1913 (RLDR, 2013). Firmly embedded in the government's political, social and economic agenda, the LR initiative comprises of the following: 1) Redistribution 2) Restitution and 3) Land tenure (Ramutsindela, 2003; Kepe *et al.*, 2005). Rural development has been a central focus of the LR initiative since 2009; a strategy which is gaining traction as there is increasing need for strong, holistic social empowerment. Such a strategy is in alignment with global imperatives underpinning successful LR initiatives (Deininger, 1999; Besley and Burgess, 2000).

Table 1.1 Land Reform programmes

Sub-program	Purpose
Redistribution	• By securing ownership rights, it aims to provide landless black people with access to agricultural and residential lands. • Land is acquired through the property market.
Restitution	• Particularly reconciliatory, it addresses matters of exclusion[2] that resulted from past policies. • It aims to settle land claims lodged under the Restitution of Land Rights Act (22of 1994) and provide settlement support.
Land Tenure	• It addresses the issue of disenfranchisement[3], through validation of the forms of land ownership that were established during colonial and apartheid eras.

Sources: Ramutsindela (2003), Kepe *et al.*, (2005), DRDLR (2012)

Now, while land reform is recognized in South Africa's 'Bill of Rights'[4], a mandate for environmental protection is also found here (Kepe *et al.*, 2005; Cadman *et al,* 2010).[5]

[2] Exclusion resulted from forcibly removing people off the land. Such dispossession denied accessibility and resource usage rights (Ramutsindela, 2003).

[3] Disenfranchisement resulted in the occlusion of transparent ownership and accessibility rights.

4 Section 25 entitled 'Property' contains sub-sections (5) (6) and (7) which address the matter of 'equitable' land access, 'comparable redress' and the right to restitution (RSA, 1996:12)

1.0.2 Environmental Protection

Home to three of the world's thirty-four biodiversity hotspots owing to an array of flora and fauna - with certain species classed as threatened and many, endemic - pressure to protect biodiversity in South Africa is tangible (Cousins *et al.*, 2008). Following ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1997, response to such pressure is evident from the passing of a number of environmental policies and an expansion of land area under conservation in South Africa (Cousins *et al.*, 2008; Cadman *et al.*, 2010; CBD, 2013).[6]

Subject to the colonial legacy of PAs and despite substantial evidence to support conservation, pressure to do so is, nevertheless, controversial. Notably, PAs and their growth are marred by a history of 'forced removals and resource dispossession' (Fabricius *et al.*, 2001: 833). Positive reception of PAs, therefore, especially where local people believe they have an equal, if not greater right to the land, is not always guaranteed (Kepe *et al.*, 2005). Attempts to claim such rights has resulted in land reform and conservation efforts coming into conflict since these seek to fulfill both national and international objectives (Kepe *et al.*, 2005; Brooks *et al.*, 2011). To bridge the impasse, sustainability approaches are being advocated. Biodiversity conservation and resource access is thus being sought in a manner that considers a range of ecological, social and economic factors (Ramutsindela, 2003; Robinson, 2011). Incorporating communities living in the vicinity of PAs, whereby such areas can also exist for their benefit is deemed both feasible and progressive (Baker, 1997; Adams and Hutton, 2007, Igoe and Fortwangler, 2007, Cadman *et al.*, 2010: 25).

South Africa's game ranching industry claims to adhere to such forms of environmental protection, whereby securing 'sustainable conservation' is voiced as being the ranchers' 'common goal' (Alberts, 2012: 7).

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5 Section 24 entitled 'Environment' contains the rights to a healthy environment; one that is to be protected and sustainably developed (RSA, 1996:11)

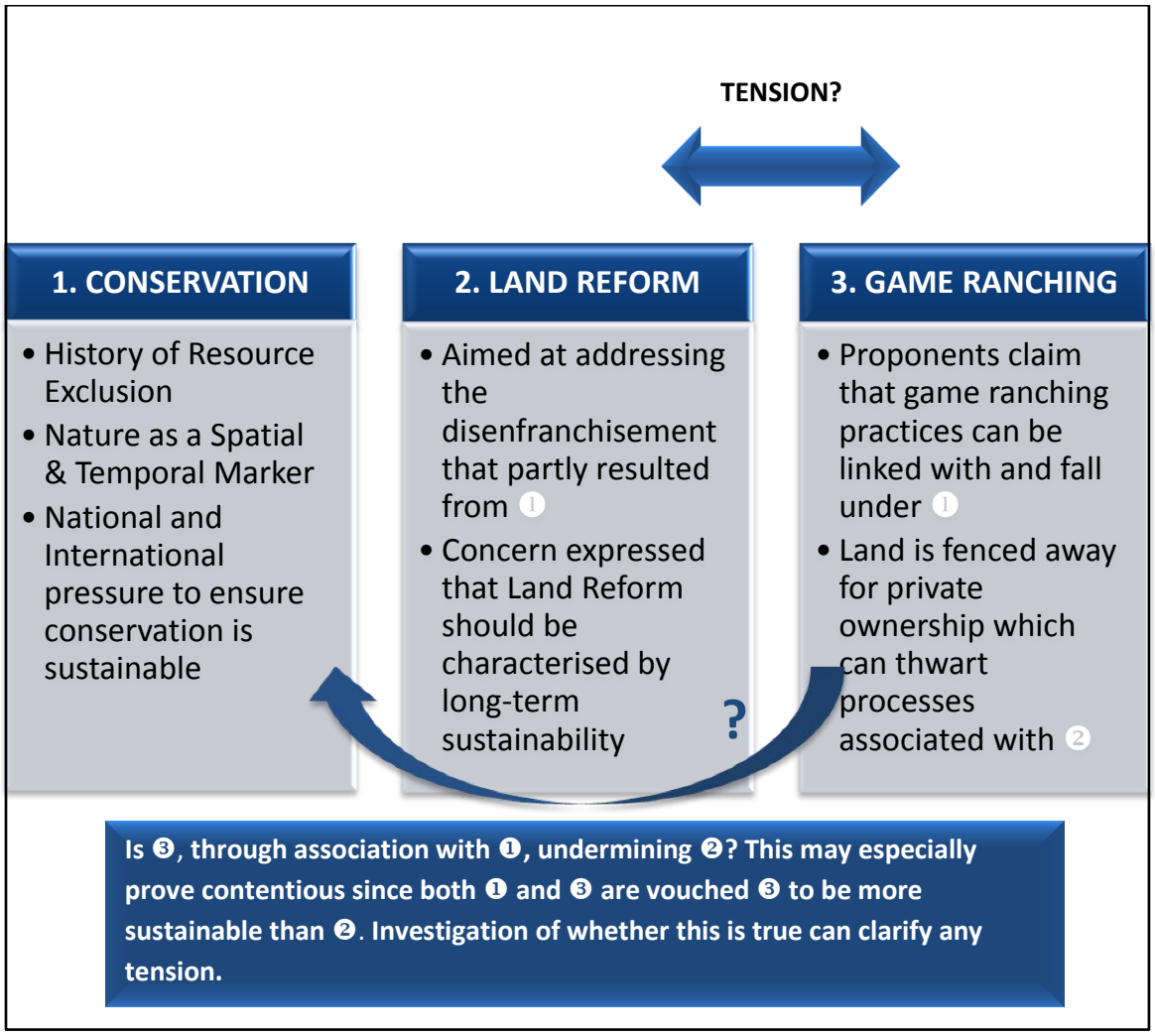
6 Following ratification, national legislation was subsequently enacted, namely; The Biodiversity Act of 2004 which stipulates those conditions needed to satisfy the CBD (Cadman *et al,* 2010: 30).

1.0.3 Game Ranching – A progressive form of conservation?

To credit the game ranching industry with a sustainability mandate, a verification of its commitment to realising ecological, economic and social benefits is necessary. This can be quite topical given that there are contested views of the industry. Such contestations are foregrounded upon questions of its true contribution to wildlife conservation, and the social cost at which it operates in terms of lost land rights and livelihoods in South Africa's post-colonial society (Rodrigues 2004; Carruthers, 2010). For instance, opinion is divided over certain practices; trophy hunting is encouraged on the basis that it is an incentivised form of conservation which generates income not only for the game rancher, but for various conservation efforts where and when he/she chooses to make conscientious contributions. Meanwhile, aversion is expressed toward the same activity on moral and ethical grounds; trophy hunting is deemed anachronistic and contemptible, with ecotourism (e.g. game viewing) argued to be a better means by which to generate conservation funding (Leader-Williams, 2009; Robinson, 2011). Further debate arises from the opportunity costs and benefits involved whereby if game ranches are to be considered as conservation areas, how does this affect local people living in the vicinity of such areas? (Balmford and Whitten, 2003). Investigating whether game ranchers are perpetuating cycles of resource exclusion or desisting from such through various social initiatives will help to probe the industry's claims for sustainability.

When addressing the past and its legacies, the notion of retrospection is implicit, but when acting in the present and moreover, planning for the future; prospection becomes integral. If wildlife conservation is to carry the prospect of progressiveness; such that it exhibits a potential to break an historical cycle, existing conditions in which it operates will require constant reflection. This dissertation aims to both, study such conditions and contribute to discussion on South Africa's journey towards sustainable wildlife conservation.

Figure 1.0 Linking the conservation agenda (1), the need for land reform (2) and the role of game ranching (3).

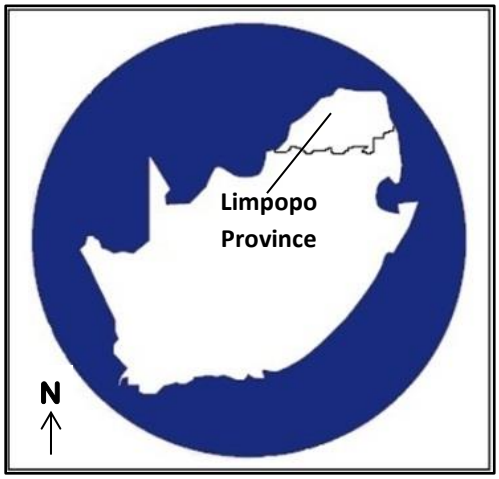


Source: Author

1.1 Case Study: Mapungubwe, Limpopo

The Limpopo province (see Figure 1.1overleaf) is a hub for game ranching with more than 50% of game ranches - estimated at 10,000 in South Africa – found here (Dry, 2013). Mapungubwe National Park (MNP) is located in the northern-most part of the province.

Figure 1.1 Limpopo



Source: Author

With specific reference to this study, the Mapungubwe region is defined as an area that consists of the following:

a) MNP
b) Private game ranches in the vicinity of MNP, Alldays and Musina
c) Private Nature Reserves (Vhembe, Venetia and Limpopo Valley)

The MNP has been awarded 'World heritage' status by UNESCO (see Figure 1.2) owing to its historical importance as a 'cultural landscape' (SANP, 2008: 8; UNESCO, 2013). Importance arises from its pre-colonial development as a thriving kingdom (Ramage *et al.,* 2010). It was home to an array of people who drew 'religious, artistic and cultural associations' from the natural landscape (Carruthers, 2006: 2). These associations, depicted through rock art found in the region; specifically on the Greefswald property, mark the legacy of a range of foragers, herders, farmers, traders and miners who once made up the Mapungubwe community (Carruthers, 2006).

Figure 1.2 MNP's World Heritage Status

Source: Author, 03/03/2013.

The park's core area is 30,000 hectares in size and the surrounding buffer zone is approximately 100,000 hectares (UNESCO, 2013). It is characterised by a patchwork of land uses and ownership patterns. Within the park, citrus farming, livestock rearing as well as hunting occur on private land, whilst conservation is carried out on land owned by South African National Parks (SANP) (SANP, 2008; Ramsay, 2011).

Private game ranches as well the aforementioned nature reserves are located in the buffer zone. Vhembe Game Reserve consists of ten conjoined game ranches where internal fencing has been removed (Elbertse, pers. communication 04/02/2013). It is owned by Leif Rahmqvist, who wishes to have this reserve incorporated into the park, thereby extending the amount of conserved land (Ramsay, 2011).

Venetia Nature Reserve is owned by the De Beers mining group. Venetia diamond mine is found 35km south of the park (SANP, 2008; De Beers, 2013).[7] With an area of 32,000

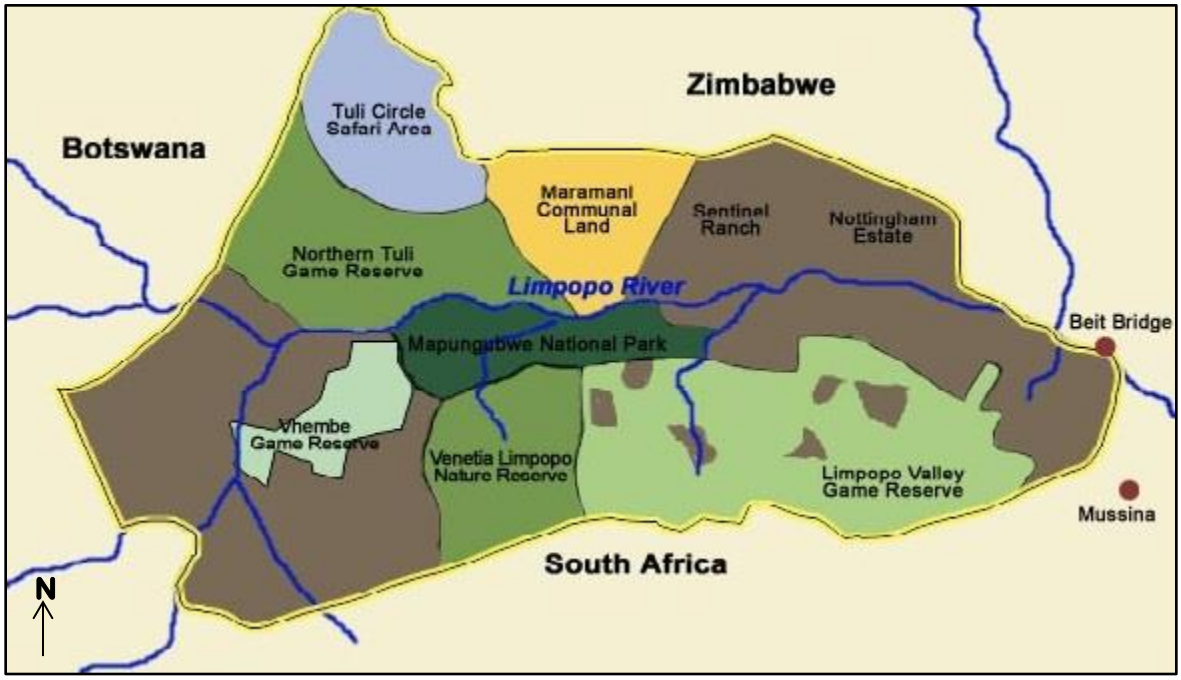
[7] Venetia is an open-pit mine; exploration of the area began in 1969 with the mine officially opened in 1992.

hectares, the reserve is part of MNP and facilitates conservation, research, as well as offers accommodation and wildlife viewing (De Beers, 2013).

The Limpopo Valley Game Reserve, meanwhile, is composed of a number of private game ranches which offer accommodation, wildlife viewing and trophy hunting. The entire Mapungubwe region is encompassed within the 'Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area' (GMTFCA), as depicted in Figure 1.2 overleaf (SANP, 2008).

Together with the cultural landscape, the region holds promise for tourism owing to its wildlife diversity (Carruthers, 2006; Ramage *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, it constitutes a pocket of valuable South African land; prized for its mineral endowment (Carruthers, 2006). An Australian company; Coal of Africa Limited (COAL) has commenced coal extraction at Vele Colliery, seven kilometres from the park's eastern boundary (Peace Parks Foundation, 2010; Ramsay, 2011). This has triggered animosity from certain landowners in the region (Ramsay, 2011). Hence, characteristic of the region are competing land uses and resulting tension.

Figure 1.3 The Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area



Source: SANP (2013)

Tension between the conservation sector and the land reform sector has been observed in this region (Chirikure *et al.,* 2010). This is attributed to the historically-based disenfranchisement and 'forced removal' of communities from MNP (Chirikure *et al.,* 2010: 34; Ramage *et al.,* 2010). A number of claims have been gazetted for land within the region and are alleged to threaten tourism initiatives here (SANP, 2008). A study of the region can, therefore, provide insights into the debate on land use; help to ascertain wherein the value of the land truly lies and finally, explore and verify any claims for sustainable practices and conservation efforts.

1.2 Research Objectives

This dissertation aims to address the contestation with regards to both perspectives of the debate: land reform cannot be ignored as there is great impetus within South African for achieving social justice and equality. Nor can the conservation agenda be taken lightly. By accounting for any tension I aim to fulfil the following:

1. Investigate how the conceptual tension surrounding game ranching as a form of wildlife conservation manifests by obtaining localised data within the Mapungubwe region and soliciting viewpoints from various accredited professionals across South Africa.
2. Present a contextual understanding of game ranching and land reform in Mapungubwe

In so doing, the primary research question will be addressed:

Account for the tension between Game Ranching, as a form of sustainable conservation, and Land reform practices in Mapungubwe, South Africa.

1.3 Rationale for this study

Returning land rights to those dispossessed is deemed a means of 'restoring human dignity' (DRDLR, 2013: 41). It can also be regarded as catalyst for local economic development Marongwe, 2004; Besley and Burgess, 2000). When discussing land reform in South Africa,

access to other key resources harboured by the land becomes equally important. Regarding the Mapungubwe region, wildlife species constitute such a resource.

Matters between those who have not secured their rightful land and the conservation community are becoming increasingly volatile (Marongwe, 2004). A study of such tension will help clarify the conflict. Moreover, it is important to remember that conservation has a social dimension; hence studying game ranching within a context of sustainability and exploring its effect on land reform can help elucidate if all dimensions associated with sustainability are being considered.

CHAPTER TWO – CONSERVATION AND LAND: A FRAMEWORK FOR REFLECTION

2.0 Introduction

This study is anchored on three scholarly insights that have a bearing on the research objectives and are explained below.

1. Nature can be understood in terms of 'spatial' and 'temporal' components, with 'older' and 'newer' constructions of nature being 'related' (Soper, 1995: 187). Such a conception can be used to explore past and present wildlife conservation efforts.

2. The 'significance of a place is culturally constructed' with social 'concerns, aspirations and values' in a given time and certain context influencing the 'imaginative and material values' (Carruthers, 2006: 1). PAs can be categorized as 'places' and Carruthers' (2006, 1) supporting argument that PAs will be imbued with such values proves pertinent to discussion on the Mapungubwe region.

3. Formally a concern of natural scientists and wildlife enthusiasts, 'conservation has moved squarely into the socio-political arena, concerned with human rights, access to natural resources, equity and environmental sustainability' (Kepe *et al.*, 2010: 7) Significantly, LR can also be considered in the context of such a viewpoint.

Given that game ranching is characterized by a conceptual tension, it can prove worthwhile to study it through a temporal lens. Such an approach will establish an understanding of game ranching's original impetus and wherein lie its' current prospects. An assessment can then be made of its contribution to wildlife conservation. Since certain cultural constructs will determine the level of significance attributed to game ranching, discussion on various social 'concerns, aspirations and values' will shed light on the context in which game ranching is both encouraged and discouraged. Finally, with tension evident between the conservation and land reform sectors, exploring whether game ranching in the Mapungubwe

region contributes to this tension can provide insights on game ranching and land reform, especially in terms of environmental sustainability and social inclusivity.

2.1 Conservation Agents

Africa's waning wildlife populations in the late 18th Century elicited concern; particularly for future hunting opportunities and so, a number of scientists sought remedy (Kepe *et al.*, 2010; Buscher and Dietz, 2005). The decline was largely caused by 'unbridled' sport and commercial hunting with certain hunters deemed 'licensed butchers' (Adams and McShane, 1996:30). Notably, in South Africa, other causal factors included drought, disease and the Anglo-Boer wars (Flack, 2011). The favoured conservation approach was fortress-based, with pockets of the land being fenced off to form PAs (Buscher and Dietz, 2005). This relegated local communities that had been living on such land and deriving livelihood and sustenance resources (Adams and Hulme, 2001; Kepe *et al.*, 2010). Access limits were stipulated which effectively allowed sport hunters to continue their activities in these areas, but disbarred all non-white race groups from user-rights (Kepe *et al.*, 2010).

Prevalent at this time was the fencing of private land by landowners to secure legal ownership of wildlife which resulted in further exclusion (Carruthers, 2008). Local communities who attempted to access such land were condoned and deemed "poachers", with penalties incurred for trespass (Adams and McShane, 1996; Buscher and Dietz, 2005; Carruthers, 2008). Such exclusionary policies triggered antagonism towards both landowners and the conservation community, whilst unequal benefits resulting from the creation of PAs fostered negative perceptions of these areas (Fabricius *et al.*, 2001; Kepe *et al.*, 2010).

2.2 'Enlightenment' Constructions and 'Preservationist' Deconstruction

Stemming from Enlightenment ideologies, preservationist approaches delineated nature, with local African communities' methods deemed 'rapacious and unnatural' (Adams and Hutton, 2007: 154; Ramutsindela, 2003). The enlightened colonialist, in his rational reasoning capacities, would thereby disparage traditional systems by which communities valued nature and wildlife. Essentially, PA creation entailed that a physical conquest of

nature occurred, with nature becoming demarcated by spatial boundaries (Brooks, 2000). One can argue, however, that a mental conquest also resulted since local, traditional value systems were eroded away through a flood of colonial ideologies.

Embedded in the colonial perspective was that Africa's nature retained a sense of 'idyllic' wilderness (Wolmer, 2005: 262) (see also Brooks, 2000). Such wilderness, however, was separate from the African communities and their associated cultures; rather, it was to be sought - and further, created - in a romanticised Eden-like landscape, untainted by human culture (Brooks, 2000; Adams and Hutton, 2007). The culture being off-set against nature was not only that of the African communities', however, but the culture stemming from the colonialists' home countries as well. Colonialists felt 'harmony with nature' could be sought in Africa's landscapes - a notion absent in 'the despoiled and domesticated landscapes of metropolitan Europe' (Wolmer, 2005: 261, see also Adams and McShane, 1996). It was this quest for 'virgin land, unsullied by human hands' and industrialization which then led to an association of Africa's wilderness with paradise (Adams and McShane, 1996: xii).

Such an association further effaced local communities that were an intrinsic part of the landscape, together with their cultural practices. Any relationships between these communities and nature were again, unrecognized (Adams and McShane, 1996). Such acts were substantiated by the belief that Africa's wilderness needed defending, 'even against the people who had lived there before the colonialists' advent (Adams and McShane, 1996: xviii).

Hence in this construction of wilderness, nature was contrasted with culture and it was such 'concerns, aspirations and values' which also shaped PAs and determined their significance (Carruthers, 2006: 1, see also Brooks, 2000). Arguably, however, the resulting disenfranchisement rendered these PAs insignificant for many local communities. As Fabricius *et al.*, (2001; 834) note, 'the association of conservation with injustice and suffering, especially because of the forced relocation from traditional land, has had a lasting effect on displaced people'.

2.3 South Africa in Transformation

Transitions to a democracy began in 1994. Following which, a substantial amount of legislation has been directed at reintegrating those disenfranchised by exclusionary policies into 'the mainstream economy through job creation and entrepreneurship' (DEA, 2012: 9). With the need for conservation that included communities living in the vicinity of PAs, reintegration efforts entailed that PAs would be re-embedded in 'the economic and aesthetic life of the local culture' (Adams and McShane, 1996: 174). Sustainable conservation that could contribute to social upliftment and poverty alleviation was thereby advocated (Baker, 1997; Child and Chitsike, 2000)

Additionally, legislation facilitating the return of land rights (see Table 2.0) was enacted to address discriminatory laws of the past (DRDLR, 2012). Avowing to 'confront the terrible legacy of dispossession and disenfranchisement' which had prevailed, the new government brandished the LR programme as an appropriate mechanism. (RSA, 2009: 7). LR was viewed as 'an integral part of the democratization of South Africa' (Lahiff, 2012: 7). An accompanying view - apparent in much of southern Africa - was that LR presented opportunities for rural development that could establish a foundation for various livelihoods (Bernstein, 2000; Marongwe, 2004). This notion is present in South Africa as evinced by the DRDLR Minister, Gugile Nkwinti's comment that 'sensible and sensitive rural development and land reform could be leveraged to greatly improve the circumstances and living conditions of those living with poverty throughout our country' (DRDLR, 2012: 10)

Table 2.0 Land Reform Legislation

Name	Number	Purpose
Restitution of Land Rights Act[8]	22 of 1994	To provide restitution of land rights to those dispossessed of such rights after 19 June 1913
Land Administration Act	2 of 1995	To provide for the delegation of power and administration of land-related matters to the provincial governments

[8] The Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Bill, 2013 has been passed. It provides an amendment to the cut-off date for restitution and stipulates a number of factors which the Rural Land Claims Court must consider prior to authorising restoration (RSA, 2013: 3).

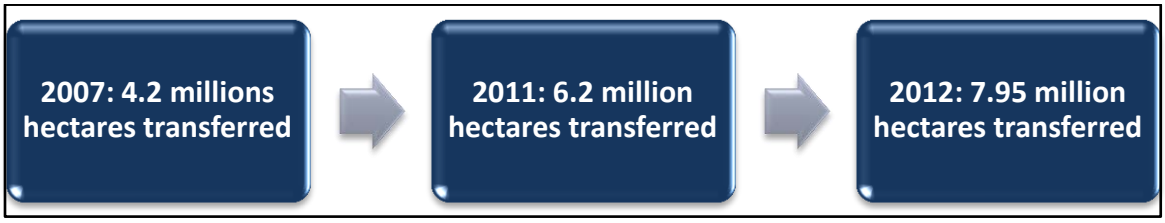
Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act[9]	3 of 1996	To provide secure tenure for labour tenants and people occupying or using land as a result of their association with labour tenants
Communal Property Associations Act	28 of 1996	To enable communities to form communal property associations; enabling them to acquire, hold and manage property as agreed by the community and governed by a written constitution

Source: RLDR, 2012: 32-34.

2.3.1 Land Reform

Land ownership patterns were highly disproportionate following apartheid's end, with 86% of all agricultural land (82 million hectares) under white ownership (Marongwe, 2004; Lahiff, 2012). Accordingly, the government set out to redistribute 30% of this land (24, 6 million hectares) back into 'black hands' by 1999 (Bernstein, 2008: 17). With little progress being made, the deadline has been extended to 2014 (Paton, 2013a).

Figure 2.0 Redistribution Figures



Source: CDE Report (2008: 17), Kleinbooi & Dubb (2013: 1)

Minister Nkwinti admits that progress has 'not yet kept pace with expectations' (DRDLR, 2012: 10). He believes that firstly, original targets were ambitious and secondly, policy-makers assumed that restitution beneficiaries would return to their land, with these settled claims then contributing to the overall amount of land transferred (Paton, 2013a). Instead, many restitution beneficiaries chose financial compensation and so, the percentage of land in 'black hands' has thus failed to increase (Bernstein, 2008: 17; Paton, 2013a). While

[9] Pending parliamentary approval, this Act could be repealed and replaced by the 'Land Tenure Security Bill, 2012'. The Bill takes a broader stance to protecting farm-dwellers by establishing a monitoring system to prevent farm-dweller evictions. (DRDLR, 2013:14).

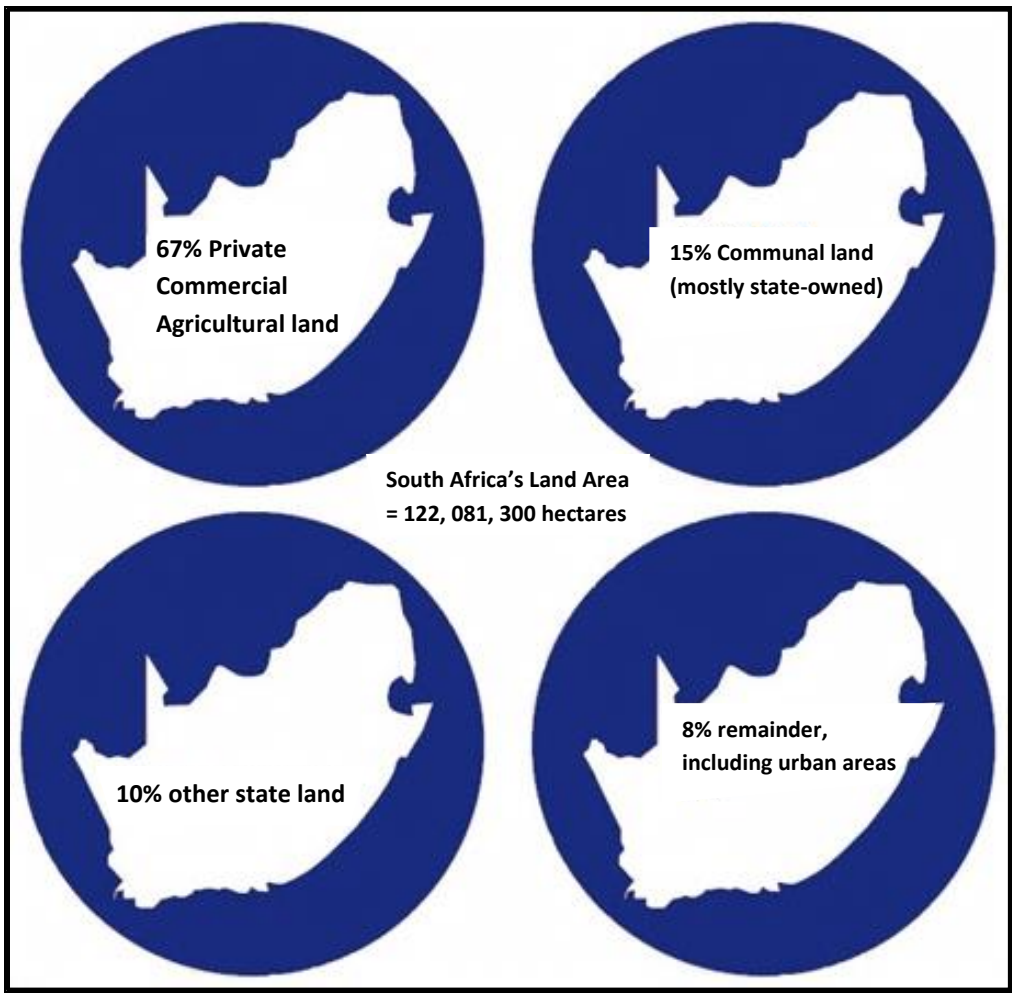
redistribution and restitution are separate LR strategies, both are determined by land availability and are, ultimately, directed at 'agricultural reform' (Lahiff, 2012: 21; Radebe, 2013).

It has been argued that such reform is occurring but independently of the redistribution process whereby 'small numbers of blacks with access to capital are acquiring land through the market' (Walker and Dubb, 2013: 1). These scholars suggest that today, it is class as opposed to race which determines land ownership (Walker and Dubb, 2013). Nonetheless, the DRDLR, dissatisfied with their trajectory, wish to replace the 'willing seller, willing buyer' principle[10] currently underpinning LR's redistribution strategy with the principle 'just and equitable' (Greenberg, 2004; Marongwe, 2004; Paton, 2013a and 2013b). The former principle was adopted to ensure a democratic process occurred whereby radical land-takes were avoided; potential beneficiaries were thus bidding for land being sold on the 'open market, at market prices' (Lahiff, 2005: 1). This approach has been criticized for safeguarding the 'interests of existing landowners' since they are not forced to 'sell against their will', or at an unacceptable price (Lahiff, 2005: 2). The government has therefore been urged to adopt a more 'active' stance as 'an agent of pro-poor land reform' (Lahiff, 2005: 3-4). Presently, the principle 'just and equitable' is being advocated by Mr. Nkwinti to secure land acquisition and encourage transformation (Paton, 2013b).

[10] This principle operates thus: 'the price paid for an expropriated property is determined by referring to the price that would be paid for the property if it were to be exchanged between a willing seller and willing buyer' (Lahiff, 2005:1).

2.3.2 Land Availability

Figure 2.1 Land Distribution & Ownership



Source: Walker and Dubb (2013: 1)

Now, of the 12, 6 million hectares of state land, only 2% is available for redistribution, with 29% categorized as 'SANP; Protected Areas' (Kleinbooi and Dubb, 2013). Currently, 59% of state land is designated as 'communal areas in use' whilst 12% is set aside for national and provincial use (Kleinbooi and Dubb, 2013). Private commercial land, therefore, remains a target for LR. Nonetheless, a belief exists that private landowners are demanding inflated prices for their properties in order to subvert restitution and redistribution (Berstein, 2008; Lahiff, 2012). The private sector discredits such accusations, arguing that failures are instead

attributable to 'inexperienced officials, poor relationships and budget constraints' (CDE, 2008: 17; Lahiff, 2012).

With blame being directed every which way, clarification of wherein lie the challenges and set-backs is needed to fairly address the matter. This is especially true for the Limpopo province where LR has been marked by 'confusion' and 'declining confidence' (Bernstein, 2008: 15). Significantly, the greatest number of land claims has been in this province (Lunstrum, 2010; Lahiff, 2012). Given the call for agrarian policies to be 'attuned to regional specificities and differences', honing in on this province with magnification of the Mapungubwe region specifically, can positively contribute to discussion on LR (Walker and Dubb, 2013: 2).

2.3.3 Land Demand

In terms of land demand, a 2006 survey revealed that 55% of black South Africans do not desire access to rural land (Aliber *et al.,* 2006). Of the 45% wanting land access, 66% of this demand stems from rural areas; with food production cited as the strongest reason (Aliber *et al.,* 2006; Hall and Dubb, 2013).

Indeed, rural communities commonly associate 'poverty reduction and food security' with 'secure land, resource rights and land productivity' (Kameri-Mbote, 2004: 4). Those disputing such a view contend that LR must be positioned in 'the wider context of a rapidly urbanizing South Africa' (Bernstein, 2008: 55). In so doing, it will become clear that 'rural LR is not the answer to large-scale poverty or unemployment' (Lahiff, 2012: 1579). Irrespective of the favoured stance, tenure insecurity adds a controversial dimension to the land debate.

2.3.4 Tenure Insecurity

The Labour Tenants Act (see Table 2.1) aims to secure tenure rights for those farm-dwellers who have 'lived on white-owned farms for generations and supplied labour in return for their right to reside there' (Wisborg *et al.*, 2013: 15). Following its enactment, however, farm-dwellers' jobs and tenure security fell into jeopardy. Rather than protecting farm-dwellers

and decreasing their evictions[11] off the land as was intended, evictions and displacement[12] surged well into the 'first decade of democracy' (Wisborg *et al.,* 2013: 16).

Landowners' were observed to cloak evictions within the context of an agricultural sector undergoing deregulation. Deregulation resulted in increased traders with competing and unstable prices, alongside the removal of tax incentives and subsidies (OECD, 2006; Mabunda, 2011; Lahiff, 2012). Tenants were dismissed on account of the need for 'mechanisation' where certain farms were being consolidated and expanded, or where others down-scaled and so required 'casual labourers' (Wisborg *et al.*, 2013: 16). Additionally, as 'a risk-management strategy', a number of farmers sought 'income diversification' by moving to more productive areas, whilst others converted their agricultural and livestock farms into game ranches and game farms (OECD, 2006: 13). Most conversions resulted in farm-dwellers' dismissals since game ranching and game farming was vouched to be less labour-intensive, with abuse not uncommon during the eviction process (Lahiff, 2008; Ngubane and Brooks, 2013).

2.3.5 Wildlife-based Land Usage (WBLU)

> Following a neo-liberal agenda, the shift to private wildlife management is increasingly aligned with societal challenges to protect biodiversity and carry out fundamental market and land reform (Snijders, 2012: 504).[13]

The end of apartheid not only resulted in deregulation but also, a re-integration of South Africa into the world markets and global village (OECD, 2006; Brooks *et al,* 2010). This bolstered the country's tourism sector; particularly wildlife tourism which had been growing since the 1970s (Carruthers, 2010).

Transitions to WBLU occurred and continue to occur in respect of the following considerations:

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[11] This refers to removal which is against the will of the dweller (Wisborg *et al.,* 2013)

[12] This refers to where the farm-dweller and his/her dependents have willingly left, but threats and violence can, however, cloud a voluntary decision (Wisborg *et al.,* 2013).

[13] 'A process of commodity production, distribution, sale, servicing and consumption' wherein the primary aim is 'to realize more wealth' (Castree, 2010: 1736)

- Less support for agriculture and reduced profits from cattle farming (OECD, 2006; Cousins *et al.*, 2008)
- Unfavourable agricultural conditions due to land degradation and climate change; with southern Africa becoming warmer and subject to water scarcity (ABSA, 2003; Dry, 2013).
- Wildlife deemed 'more efficient producers' in their 'different feeding habits' owing to their ability 'to travel further without losing condition' (Dassman and Mossman, 1960: 17-20) (see also Carruthers, 2008). Wildlife, therefore, are thought to possess a comparative advantage (Barnett and Patterson, 2006).[14]
- The growing risk of agricultural encroachment 'converting natural habitats, destroying biodiversity and compromising ecosystem services' (Chardonnet and Bel, 2011: 19)
- Increased preference for ecotourism that is directed at sustainability and developing a green economy (ABSA, 2003; Dry, 2013)

The 'Game Theft Act' categorized certain wildlife species as 'own-able goods', offsetting extensive game-fencing endeavors across the savanna biome which harboured majority of the country's wildlife (Snijders, 2012: 504).[15] This legislation also facilitated species' marketization whereby landowners could derive monetary benefits. Such marketization surged in the wake of post-apartheid reform and neoliberalism (Snijders, 2012). Assigning economic value to wildlife incentivized landowners to keep wildlife for both non-consumptive (ecotourism) and consumptive (trophy hunting, breeding and venison production) purposes. With nature conservation departments responsible for laying down regulations, monitoring and enforcement specific to their province; the industry began to grow, albeit not in uniformity (Bodasing and Mulliken, 1996).

[14] The ability 'to withstand the climatic conditions prevalent in southern Africa whereby indigenous species can tolerate high temperatures as they naturally evolved in this climate' (Barnett and Patterson, 2006: 1)
[15] The Game Theft Act (105 of 1991) 'regulates the ownership and protection of game' (Van der Linde and Feris, 2010: 21)

Notably, distinction was made between indigenous wildlife and 'game'; wherein game refers to 'ungulates – a broad category of hoofed indigenous mammals' that are most commonly legislated for consumptive use (Carruthers, 2008: 162). Furthermore, differentiation between game ranches and game farms came about. Game ranches are 'large, privately-owned or communal areas, either fenced or unfenced, and extensively managed in order to utilize wildlife through hunting, sales, tourism and other indirect use, generally of ungulate species ' (Du Toit, 2007: 5, see also Carruthers, 2008). Game farms, meanwhile, are associated with the 'concentrated breeding of wildlife species' in 'actively-managed enclosures' with management being of a 'sustained' nature (Barnett, 1997: 5, see also Eltringham, 1994).

This dissertation uses game ranching as opposed to game farming, especially since trophy hunting and ecotourism, as the main income generating activities occurring at ranches, trigger questions on sustainability. Moreover, all the study sites visited during fieldwork were game ranches. Henceforth, game ranches will be referred to as "ranches" and game ranching as "ranching".

Table 2.1 WBLU in South Africa

Statistics	Source
More than 80% Nature Conservation occurs on private land	Van der Merwe *et al.*, 2004
Approximately 1/6th of land area is 'game-fenced'	Snijders, 2012
More than 10 000 ranches; over 50% are located in the Limpopo province	Dry, 2013

However, through WBLU, not only is land being partitioned but the 'designation of rights' is occurring with regard to 'who has a right to enter, enjoy wildlife and kill it' (Adams, 2009: 131). This raises questions of fairness since for many, - especially evicted farm-dwellers - the fences securing wildlife on these properties are, essentially, restricting land access. PA creation during the colonial era proved controversial; in a post-colonial era the creation of

ranches is generating similar contention with the resulting displacements termed an infringement of rights (Cernea, 2006; Lunstrom, 2010).

2.4 Ranching – Biodiversity Conservation in South Africa?

Ranching certainly brings a controversial dimension to the land debate (see section 2.8), but first the conceptual tension of regarding ranching, as a form of sustainable conservation, can be explored.

Worldwide, South Africa possesses the third highest level of biodiversity; much of which is valued for its endemism (DEAT and SANBI, 2009; Cadman *et al.*, 2010). Tasked with protection, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) uses 'the percentage of land under conservation' as a performance indicator (DEA, 2012: 34). To meet conservation targets, a 'National Protected Area Expansion Strategy' was promulgated (DEAT and SANBI, 2008: 6). This strategy aims to develop at least 12% of South Africa's land into 'a network of PAs and conservation areas' (DEAT and SANBI, 2009: vi) As of March 2012, 7.3% had been achieved (DEA, 2012). The Limpopo province specifically, has more than 10% of its total area under protection (DEAT and SANBI, 2008).

Private ranches are not, however, formally designated as PAs in South Africa (Musengezi and Child, 2011).[16] Where private ranches have been granted PA status and the landowner(s) credited for efficient biodiversity management, this has generated dialogue on the need for stewardship programs to be implemented on a national scale (DEAT and SANBI, 2008). The government has indicated that policies are being drafted which will recognize ranches as 'conservation land', allowing for government's PA targets to be met as well (Snijders, 2012: 509). Presently, though, game ranching, wildlife tourism and hunting are considered 'commercial production sectors' that 'hold potential' to contribute to PA expansion (DEAT and SANBI, 2008: 41).

[16] The National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (57 of 2003) defines a 'protected area' (PA) as one of the following types: Special Nature Reserves; National Parks; Nature Reserves; Protected Environments; World Heritage Sites; Marine Protected Areas; Specially Protected Forest Areas; and Mountain catchment areas. (Van der Linde and Feris, 2012: 92).

The Limpopo province, despite holding a mandate to expand 'its PA footprint' is yet to implement a stewardship program (DEAT and SANBI, 2008: 47). Nonetheless, ranchers participating in this study regard themselves as conservation stewards; indeed, manager of the Vhembe Game Reserve was particularly vocal that the reserve attains formal PA status (Elbertse; pers. communication 21/05/2013).

2.5 Ranchers – Conservation Stewards?

South Africa is committed to biodiversity conservation and development that is sustainable; wherein approaches must give heed to as many ecological, economic and social factors as possible (RSA, 1996; Cadman *et al,* 2010; Karanath and Nepal, 2011). Strategies that encourage 'conservation and sustainable use of natural resources alongside economic growth and poverty alleviation' are thus being advocated (DEA, 2012: 56).

Practitioners and advocates of ranching claim that ranching does contribute to sustainable conservation, especially where the main activity, hunting, is ethically conducted (Barnett, 1997; Leader-Williams, 2009; PHASA: 2013). Yet hunting is often thought to be incompatible with conservation as it entails 'the safeguarding of animals for shooting', (Adams, 2009: 135). Regarded as 'anachronistic and morally unacceptable', opposition to hunting manifests at 'different political levels' and on scales ranging from local to national and international (Leader-Williams, 2009: 13) Criticism for the industry is rife but proponents maintain that scientific validity characterizes ranching. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), meanwhile, has endorsed hunting by stating that 'well-managed recreational hunting has a role in the sustainable consumptive use of wildlife populations' (IUCN, 2012: 3).[17]

If ranchers are to be designated as conservation stewards, a better understanding of their practices is required. Moreover, if ranching is to be accredited with a sustainability mandate, holistic investigation into their practices is necessary. As ranching is associated with both

[17] 'Recreational hunting' and 'trophy hunting' are terms used inter-changeably

consumptive and non-consumptive use, seeking answers to the questions laid out in Table 2.2 overleaf begin by addressing the two branches of WBLU.

Table 2.2 Investigating Ranching

Theme	Questions on Ranching
Ecological	How do activities affect a ranch's ecosystem?
Biological	How is off-take of a species determined? Is there consideration for species' demographics and genetics?
Economic	Are ventures lucrative? Who benefits and how? Are there other financial implications?
Social	Are communities living in the vicinity of ranches considered? If so, how? Does it contribute to job creation and poverty alleviation?
Ethical	Is there consideration for animal welfare? Is it well-regulated to avoid misuse?

Source: Leader-Williams (2009)

2.6 Consumptive WBLU

Hunting was regarded as form of entertainment during the colonial era. Trophy hunters are similarly perceived today: engaging in the chase and enjoying the 'sporting contest' which occurs between themselves and their quarry (Roe *et al.*, 2002: v; Rodrigues, 2004; Leader-Williams, 2009). Proponents and practitioners maintain that acquiring the 'trophy' is often less important than participating in the 'actual hunt' (Barnett and Patterson, 2006: iii). In South Africa, biltong hunting and trophy hunting are predominant, with the former

generating, on average, R28,000 per hunter and the latter, R100,000 per hunter (Van der Merwe, 2012). Biltong hunters will take away the animal's meat (venison) whereas trophy hunters seek the animals' horns, antlers, tusks and hide (Festa-Bianchet and Lee, 2009). For both types, the Limpopo Province is cited as the favoured destination (Van der Merwe, 2012).

Arguments in support of hunting:

- It is the most lucrative form of consumptive WBLU (Carruthers, 2008).
- It generates 'livelihood security' in rural areas through employment (Roe *et al.*, 2002: vii). Trackers and skinners especially, can earn 'instantaneous incomes' (Rodrigues, 2004: 2)
- It is a 'high-return, low-impact' form of WBLU (Barnett and Patterson, 2006: 1)
- In comparison to ecotourism, it can occur in less scenic areas (Barnett and Patterson, 2006)
- Simple, 'rustic' forms of accommodation suffice to deliver the desired 'rugged bush' (Barnett and Patterson, 2006: iii)
- When properly managed, species' habitats are conserved (Barnett and Patterson, 2006)
- It generates game meat protein (Lindsey, 2012)

Arguments against hunting:

- Economic benefits do not accrue equitably or where they are most required (Leader-Williams, 2009).
- Regulation and monitoring can be challenging, with potential for the misuse of permits (Bodasing and Mulliken, 1996)
- Legal hunting can serve as 'a smokescreen for corruption and poaching' whereby bribery can result in the targeting of illegal species or quotas being exceeded (Rodrigues, 2004: 7)

- Population numbers and demographics can be misrepresented to secure greater off-take (Rodrigues, 2004)
- Genetic tampering is not uncommon to secure larger trophies (Rodrigues, 2004)
- Predators may be persecuted at the cost of protecting trophy species (Lindsey, 2012)

Proponents maintain that owing to economic multiplier effects, the industry stands to benefit a range of people through employment and income generation (Flack, 2011). Hunting is thus touted for expanding economies of scale through live sales and auctions, game translocation, taxidermy, breeding and venison production (Flack, 2011; Lindsey, 2012). The industry is particularly vocal about the recovery of threatened species and the subsequent growth of animal populations through various breeding initiatives (Baldus, 2003; Flack, 2011). Venison production, meanwhile, is encouraged on account of its health benefits and potential for generating food security (Flack, 2011). It is the organic nature of venison, as lean protein, free of 'growth hormones' which is being especially championed; together with a drive to increase its exportation to foreign markets (Flack, 2011: 38, see also Dry, 2013).

2.7 Non-consumptive WBLU

Another significant target market for ranchers is that of ecotourism which, as a form of non-consumptive WBLU, is encouraged owing to the high revenues it generates. Following re-integration into the world markets, South Africa began offering an array of tourism packages with 'proximity and access' to the country's wildlife and 'the safari experience' being prime attractions (Brooks *et al.*, 2010: 261, see also Rassool and Witz, 1996). Moreover, with a growing global imperative for sustainable development in both policy-making and practice, ecotourism surged in popularity (Binns and Nel, 2002; Coria and Calfucura, 2012).

Through job creation, the tourism industry is viewed as a facilitator of redress in South Africa; whereby providing local communities with employment can secure their development and economic standing whilst augmenting that of the country's (Binns and Nel, 2002). Furthermore, working from the premise that communities living in the vicinity of wildlife areas need incentive to safeguard the environment and further, that conservation

would be futile without their support; the government is in favour of more inclusive forms of conservation (DEAT 2003; Barnett and Patterson, 2006). As such, Kepe *et al.* (2010; 8) argue that 'the efficacy of PAs depends upon the extent to which such areas are socially, economically and ecologically integrated into the surrounding region'.

In terms of accommodation, whilst basic facilities might satisfy the trophy hunter, it is argued that eco-tourists are likely to expect more comfortable accommodation, good meals and entertainment opportunities (Rodrigues, 2004). Compared to consumptive WBLU, this can foster the need for greater employment across the hospitality sector, with the potential for more females to be employed (Spierenburg, pers.comm. 25/05/2012). Moreover, where there are a constant number of eco-tourists, employees stand to benefit year-round in comparison to trophy hunting which is seasonal. Finally, as a non-consumptive form of WBLU, ecotourism ensures that the country's wildlife is intrinsically valued but then left unharmed. It is therefore 'encouraged for the platform it provides to teach mankind to revere wildlife in its original habitat' (Rodrigues, 2004: 13) Non-consumptive WBLU thereby subscribes to a different system of wildlife valuation- one which opposition to the hunting industry strongly aligns itself.

Scholars Barrow and Fabricius (2002), Kiss (2004), Igoe and Fortwrangler (2007), Limbosada (2009), and Coria and Calfucura (2012) have been questioning the impact of CBNRM strategies on communities; with analysis on how such strategies fail to consider that locals may already hold reverence for wildlife and wish to conserve it for their own disparate values. This dissertation is not directed at addressing the benefits and shortcomings of CBNRM strategies, rather it seeks to address the manner in which nature and resources like wildlife have been 'glamourized' and packaged through certain WBLU initiatives, resulting in a 'commodified wilderness' (Brooks *et al.*, 2010: 262).

2.8 WBLU – Commodifying Wilderness

Hurt and Ravn (2000: 295) suggest that 'if local communities and landowners on whose land wildlife feed do not benefit from wildlife, they will not conserve it'. A market-driven,

neoliberal approach is essential, argue Hurt and Ravn, if WBLU is to compete with other land uses and if conservation is to be marked by progression. Cognisant of this reality, many landowners have tapped into a viable market and consequently, contributed to its overall growth. As wildlife and wilderness are inherent in conceptions of Africa, many ranchers in recognizing this, are able to generate revenue and livelihood strategies (Brooks, 2000).

Regardless of whether their engagement is through consumptive or non-consumptive WBLU, one can argue that ranchers are, ultimately, responding to the 'power of incentives' (Levitt and Dubner, 2009: 9). Central to their efforts is to market both Africa's wilderness in terms of rejuvenation; wherein it offers a 'getaway' (Brooks *et al.*, 2010: 261). Hence in recalling Carruthers (2006) notion of how a place's significance is determined, one can argue that it is through cultural constructions of wilderness, as a retreat, which partly prescribe WBLU areas with significance. The fact that such significance can be materially realised speaks to an unavoidable truth about ranches as 'getaways' and 'retreats': underpinned by a neoliberal agenda, these areas function by commodifying nature.

Importantly, however, the notion of wilderness creation as a contested process carries implication for the issue of land access, whereby wilderness visions 'are disrupted by the assertion of other people's identities and histories on the land' (Brooks *et al.*, 2010: 262). These scholars further argue that 'wilderness is signaled by the presence of wildlife and by the absence of people' (Brooks *et al.*, 2010: 271). It is this aspect which positions ranches within the category of 'manufactured wilderness' whilst simultaneously illustrating how nature becomes a 'political category' and further, that present-day wildlife conservation efforts are, in fact, marked by contentious debate (Wolmer, 2005: 260-61). Yet it is also this aspect which pro-ranching literature often neglects; there is considerable discussion on the benefits of WBLU, its' desired trajectory, how it might transform South Africa's conservation agenda and green the economy (Dry, 2013; Lindsey, 2013). Broaching the matter of how such ranches have come about and the accompanying opportunity costs, meanwhile, is less common. For example, is land reform being stymied by the fact that there are ranches on claimed land with the ranch-owners given precedence because they may be

contributing to the conservation agenda? Tenure insecurity adds a controversial dimension to the debate, especially where agricultural farms have been converted to ranches and resulted in the retrenchments and land evictions of those who argue for restoration of their land rights. What is more, if ranching in promoted in terms of sustainability, then are all dimensions of sustainability being fairly considered? It is such questions which link conservation motives, land reform agendas and ranching aspirations together with sensitive complexity.

Hence when considering ranching in light of Soper's view that 'Nature is used as a spatial and temporal marker', the practice takes on a different hue. Such consideration demands investigation of certain existing and visible conditions whereby, are game fences locking away land? Is wildlife conservation characterised by a cyclic progression wherein natural landscapes are, again, being romanticized for their wilderness quality by the ranching industry and in so doing, repeating a cycle of exclusion?

2.9 Mapungubwe's Culture - Present in its Past?

Exclusion is not novel to the Mapungubwe region since the pre-colonial kingdom operated as a class-based society with a distinct hierarchy (Carruthers, 2006). Class division stemmed from the unequal control of resources by those who were well-positioned and dominating. Moreover, displacement was not uncommon in this community since incumbent farmers and miners overrode the presence of the original inhabitants of the landscape: the herders and foragers (Carruthers, 2006). This resulted in the elimination and assimilation of cultures (Carruthers, 2006). Dissolution of the kingdom occurred in 1290AD, inhabitants dispersed and mixed with other communities whilst the Mapungubwe landscape was abandoned (Carruthers, 2006). Presently, notes Carruthers:

> Mapungubwe celebrates an African, but nonetheless alien culture for black and white South Africans, alike. It can be appropriated by a number of groups and interested parties […] and serve as an exemplar landscape for South African reconciliation and nation-building (Carruthers, 2006: 3).

If such cultural constructions are to convey Mapungubwe's present significance as a 'place', then various 'concerns, aspirations and values' which influence the 'imaginative and material values' of Mapungubwe, today, need to be elucidated (Carruthers, 2006:1). Matters of resource access, the competition for land and distribution of wealth permeate dialogue on the region (Lunstrum, 2010). Accordingly, questions of whether WBLU contributes to reconciliation and nation-building efforts or hinders such, are, indeed, pertinent.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Details regarding the methods used to carry out research and the approaches taken during fieldwork are found here.

3.1 Meeting research objectives:

To meet the objectives as laid out in section 1.2, sub-questions were formed and answers sought.

Table 3.0 Research Sub-questions

Research Objective	Sub-question
Objective 1	• Does ranching benefit wildlife and local communities as a form of sustainable conservation? • How do ethical considerations feature in debates on ranching practices? • What are the views of ranchers in the Mapungubwe region?
Objective 2	• Is there any correlation between land claims in the Mapungubwe region and the rise of ranches there? • What are the views of LR officials responsible for processing claims in this region?

3.2 Conducting the Literature Review

The Literature review established theoretical understandings of ranching and LR in South Africa. Knowledge gleaned from this informed later stages such as fieldwork interviews and interactions, as well as data analysis.

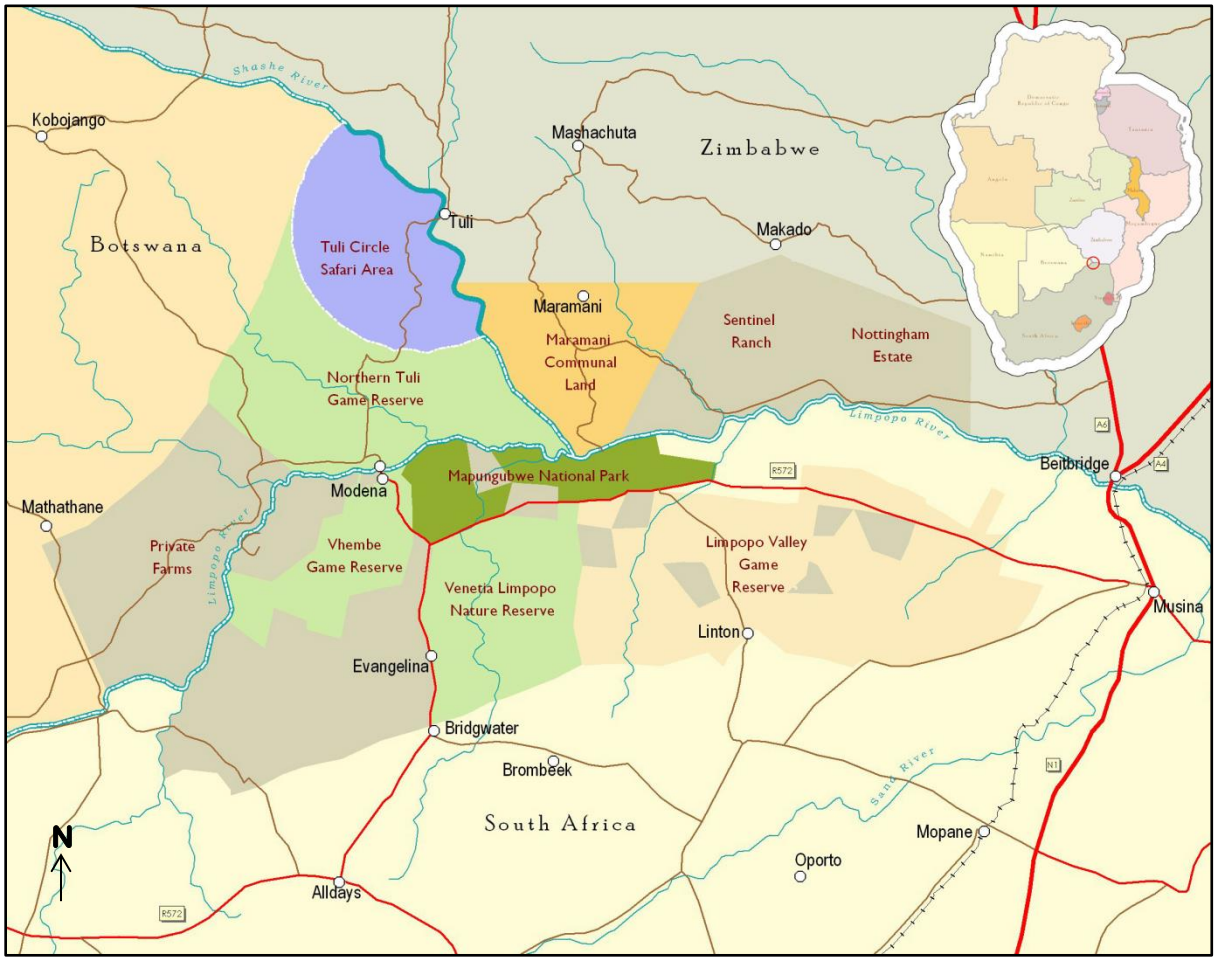
Table 3.1 Literature Review Sources

Academic Sources	Governmental Sources	Media Sources	Game Ranching Media
• Books • Research Papers & Presentations • Conference Proceedings & Presentations • Newsletter Publications	• Legislation • Policy Papers • Statistical Publications • Government websites	• The Mail & Guardian • Farmer's Weekly • Wildlife Ranching South Africa • Africa Geographic • Africa Indaba	• Hunting Organisations' websites • Private Game Ranching websites

3.3 The study site

As previously mentioned, the Mapungubwe region is found in the northern-most part of the Limpopo province. For purposes of this study, it comprises of the following: Mapungubwe National Park (MNP), private ranches and private Nature/Game Reserves (Limpopo Valley, Venetia and Vhembe). Their locations are depicted in Figure 3.0**.** MNP accommodates multiple land usage that includes conservation, citrus farming and livestock rearing (Carruthers, 2006; SANP, 2008).

Figure 3.0 The Mapungubwe region



Source: SANP, 2013

The privately-operated nature reserves, meanwhile, facilitate conservation and research. Different land usage speaks to the issue of competing land uses in the region and resulting tensions. Citrus and livestock farmers were not interviewed, nor personnel from Venetia Nature Reserve; researching if any of their land is under claim, however, formed part of the study.

3.4. Research Methods

3.4.1 Interview Preparation

During the literature review, the conceptual tension surrounding ranching as a form of sustainable conservation was studied. Comprehension of this tension was necessary for ensuring that interview questions would be appropriately designed in a manner that could satisfy the research objectives.

The conceptual tension was then explored during semi-structured interviews with the following informants:

- Ranchers
- SANP officials
- Ecologists
- Alldays veterinarian

A form of qualitative research, semi-structured interviews can corroborate the information emerging from different sources (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This method of data collection allows the information obtained through the literature review to be cross-referenced during the data analysis stage. Additionally, semi-structured interview questions will 'define the line of inquiry', broadly introduce the topic, but remaining open-ended; allowing the researcher to explore the interviewee's 'views, beliefs and attitudes' (Niuwenhuis, 2007: 87). Relevant themes are, however, addressed through a set number of questions (Kvale, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). I chose to separate the interview questions into four categories (as laid out in Table 3.2 overleaf); with each carrying a central theme that can, in turn, help investigate sustainability.

To commence the interviews, basic inquiries were made regarding the background of the interviewees and the ranches. This was done by questioning interviewees on their motivations for ranching and when such practices begun. Information on the properties was also sought by asking for their description in terms of size and terrain. Such questions were directed at gaining a historical understanding of each ranch and securing biographic data. A friendly, conversational tone was thereby established which, in turn, helped determine the

appropriate 'point of departure' to take for the rest of the interview (Maree and van der Westhuizen, 2007: 35).

Table 3.2 Interview Questions: Categorization

Theme	Focus Areas
Biological & Environmental	Game quotas Trophy determination Ecosystem conditions
Ethical	Wildlife valuation 'Protection versus Use' debate Genetic Breeding
Social	Employment Community involvement and support Opportunity costs
South African context	Governmental support Conservation lobbyists' support A tool for 'Greening the Economy' Tension between ranching and other sectors

'Point of departure' is linked to the 'mode of inquiry' wherein it is vital to adopt a demeanour that does not fluster an interviewee (Maree and van der Westhuizen, 2007: 35). Additionally, it is necessary to cater for 'changes of sequence and question forms' during the interviews as certain follow-up questions can arise (Kvale, 2007: 65). This was my experience, wherein a number of interviewees were observed to use discursive styles, with some getting caught up in the excitement of sharing their knowledge and stories.

3.4.2 Fieldwork Research

Fieldwork research was conducted during late February and March 2013. Eight private game ranches were visited in the Mapungubwe region, as well the MNP. Study sites are depicted in Figure 3.1.

The region was visited by travelling via:

- The N1 (Pretoria – Polokwane)
- The R521 (Polokwane – Alldays)
- The R572 (Alldays – MNP)

Listing the routes is important as the R572 from Musina to MNP was flooded; a bridge had been washed away making it impassable at the time. Thus, whilst ten individual ranches formed part of the study, only eight were personally visited. Interviews with the outstanding two ranchers *(Interviewees Fifteen and Sixteen)* were conducted telephonically in March.

It must be noted that there were no communities observed to be living in the vicinity of MNP and along the R572 route between Alldays and MNP. Instead, observed were game-fenced parcels of land. The R521 route from Polokwane to Alldays, meanwhile, was observed to run along a number of agricultural farms interspersed with a few ranches and lodging facilities. It is likely that were such communities around, a number of individuals may have had comments to make regarding land access. Given their lack of visibility, comments on the land debate were thus elicited from the official (Interviewee 17) at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform who is responsible for monitoring claims within the upper reaches of the Limpopo province.

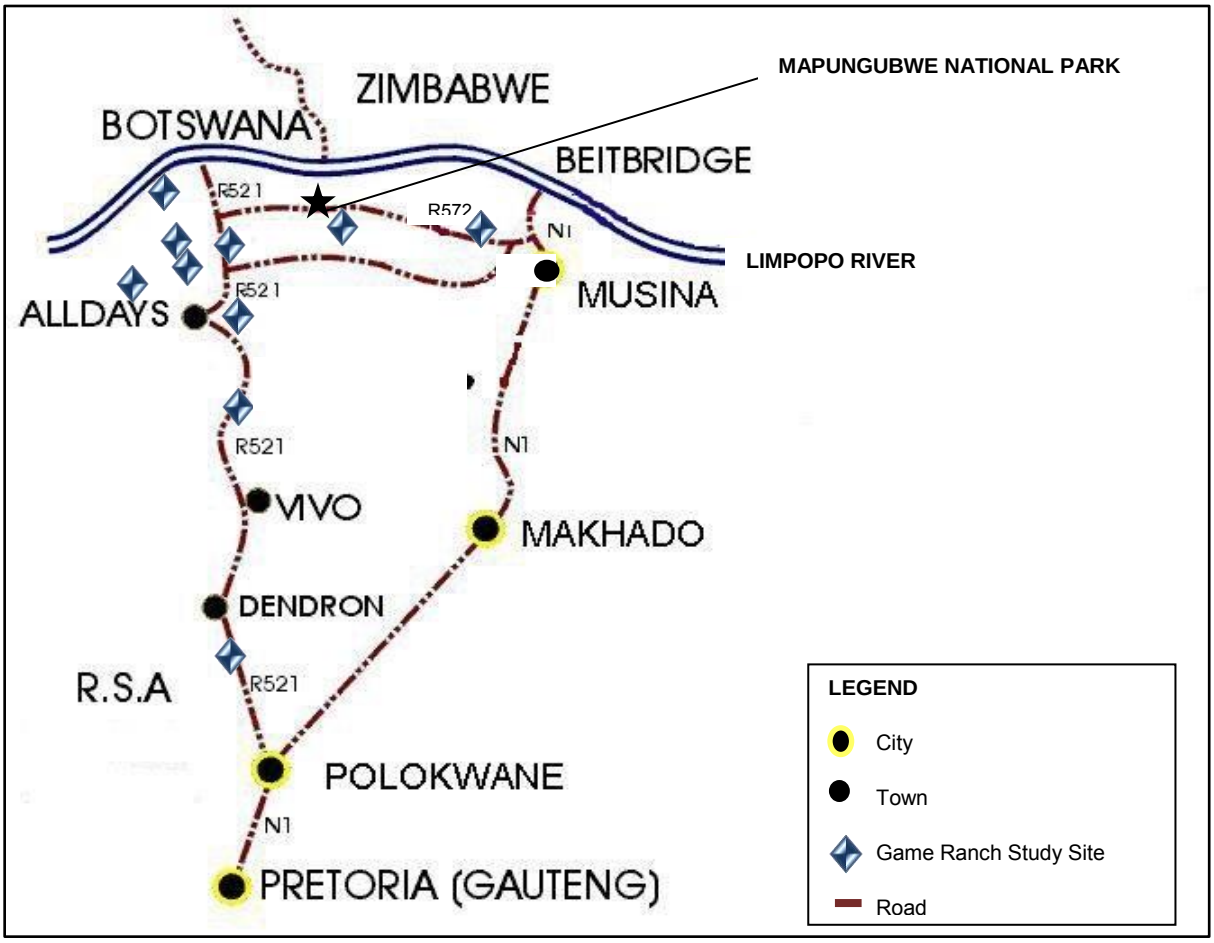
3.4.3 Selection of Study sites and Interviewee Details

Prior to embarking on fieldwork, formal request (via email and telephone) to conduct research at the respective ranches was sought from *Interviewees One, Six, Eight, Nine, Fourteen and Sixteen.* This was possible as contact details were listed on their ranch websites. During fieldwork *Interviewee Six* proved helpful in supplying the contact details of neighbouring ranchers and the Alldays veterinarian, all of whom agreed to participate in the research.

Interviewees Seventeen and *Eighteen* were interviewed telephonically; the former is based in the Mapungubwe region and is affiliated with the ranching industry whilst the latter served as an

informant regarding land claims in the Mapungubwe region. The details of the interviewees can be found in Table 3.3 overleaf.[18]

Figure 3.1 Study Sites



Source: Author

[18] For confidentiality purposes, the name and surnames of the interviewees are not disclosed here. Such details are stored in the Environmental and Geographical Science Department.

Table 3.3 Interviewees' Details

Interview Date	Interviewee	Role	Ranch name	Ranch Type
27.02.2013	*One*	Ranch owner	Wintersveld	Game
28.02.2013	*Two*	Resident Ecologist for Green Dogs Conservation	Corea	Game
01.03 2013	*Three*	Ranch manager	Coventry	Game
02.03.2013	*Four*	Ranch owner	Bavaria	Mixed (Game and Livestock)
02.03.2013	*Five*	Ranch manager	Letitia	Mixed
02.03.2013	*Six*	Ranch owner	Corea	Mixed
02.03.2013	*Seven*	Resident Ecologist for Green Dogs Conservation	Corea	Game
03.03.2013	*Eight*	Ranch owner	Horison	Game
04.03.2013	*Nine*	Ranch manager	Horison	Game
04.03.2013	*Ten*	Conservation Officer at MNP	N/A	N/A
04.03.2013	*Eleven*	Conservation Manager at MNP	N/A	N/A
04.03.2013	*Twelve*	Ranch Manager	Calais	Game
04.03.2013	*Thirteen*	Alldays Veterinarian & game ranch owner	Could not verify	N/A

05.03 2013	*Fourteen*	Ranch owner	Dedimus	Mixed
07.05.2013	*Fifteen*	Ranch owner	Tovey	Mixed
21.05.2013	*Sixteen*	Manager of Vhembe Game Reserve (comprised of ten ranches)	Parma, Pontdrift, Modena, Montreau, Princess Royale, Somerville, Vergenoegd, Onrus, Bultpan, Kruidfontein	Game
09.07.2013	*Seventeen*	DRDLR Official	N/A	N/A
13.07.2013	*Eighteen*	Game Butchery owner	Limpopo Safaris	N/A

3.4.4 Questionnaire

Regarding the conceptual tension, as well as tension between the ranching and LR sector, it was thought that: 1) the literature review would mainly generate theoretical insights and 2) fieldwork research would elicit practical views, primarily from ranchers. Therefore, a questionnaire was designed to 'triangulate the data' and ensure reliability of the information being conveyed (Maree and van der Westhuizen, 2007: 38). It facilitated an alternate means by which to verify emerging information, capture any viewpoints that may not have been considered, as well as incorporate the views of different stakeholders.

Comprised of fifteen questions, it was composed accordingly:

- Questions stemmed from scholarly and/or research opinions and observations.
- Participants could verify or discredit such opinions and observations, with personal substantiations.
- A heterogeneous sample was selected, with participants chosen according to their professions. The aim therein was to obtain diverse, practical insights.
- GoogleDocs™ was used to create the questionnaire.

- To ensure that the most suitable tool was selected, GoogleDocs™ was experimented with and a guideline consulted. This guaranteed an effective command prior to final circulation of the questionnaire.

Advantages of using GoogleDocs™:

1. Accessibility — Using GoogleDocs™ required an operational Google account
2. User-Friendly — Form-based; it could be emailed to the participants or accessed directly through GoogleDocs™
3. Content — Inputting questions was practical with clear editing functions.
4. Response Anonymity — Individual responses were undisclosed to other participants.
5. Analysis — Individual responses could be converted into separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, which proved convenient for data analysis

3.4.5 Questionnaire Participants

Table 3.4 Questionnaire Participants

Participant[19]	**Profession**	**Place**	**Response**
One	Academic Researcher	University of Western Cape, Cape Town	☑
Two	Environmental Journalist	The Mail & Guardian newspaper, Johannesburg	☑
Three	Tourism and Environment Empowerment Services Manager	LEDET, Polokwane	☑

[19] Questionnaire Participants particulars are stored in the Environmental and Geographical Science Department

Four	Environmental Officer	LEDET, Polokwane	×
Five	Communications Coordinator	African Parks NPO, Johannesburg	☑
Six	Game Rancher	Kurumakatiti Reserve, Waterberg, Limpopo	☑
Seven	Game Rancher	Evelyn Game ranch, Musina, Limpopo	☑
Eight	Academic Researcher	University of Cape Town, Cape Town	×
Nine	Academic Researcher	University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch	×
Ten	Wildlife Sanctuary owner	SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary, Limpopo	☑
Eleven	Game Capture Specialist & Environmental consultant	Wild Route Consultants, Pretoria	☑
Twelve	Wildlife Conservation advocate & author	Knysna	☑
Thirteen	Eco-Tourist Lodge Owner	Balerno Lodge, Limpopo	×
Fourteen	Director of Environmental Trade & Protection	LEDET, Polowane	×
Fifteen	Wildlife Sanctuary owner	Care for Wild Africa, Mpumalanga	×

3.4.6 Questionnaire Response Rate

Nine out of Fifteen participants responded, resulting in a response rate of 60%. Follow-up emails were sent to all non-respondents. Participants *Eight* and *Thirteen* were the only candidates to explain their disinclination. The former found the questions to be too narrow and biased, whilst the latter felt the questionnaire to be lengthy and time-consuming.

3.4.7 Mapping

Consultation of maps on the region and their subsequent presentation was aimed at securing a geographical understanding of ranch presence in relation to that land under claim. Mapped overlays of the individual ranches and the location of land claims, together with an extrapolation of the information from the overlays are found in Chapter 4.

Geo-spatial maps of the Limpopo province were procured upon personal visits to the National Geo-Spatial Information Centre at the DRDLR departments in both Pretoria and Cape Town.

Table 3.5 Map Sources

Designation	Source
Limpopo Province	RLDR, SANP
Individual Game Ranches within the Vhembe and Capricorn districts	RLDR, Sinthumela (2012)
Restitution Land Claims within the Vhembe and Capricorn districts	RLDR

Data regarding claims was obtained directly from the Regional Land Claims Commissioner (RLCC) Limpopo, via fax; on 07/05/2013. Interviews were carried out via email and telephone with a DRDLR official (*Interviewee Seventeen*) based at the DRDLR's offices in Polokwane. *Interviewee Seventeen* oversees LR matters occurring within the Vhembe District Municipality of Limpopo. MNP and the individual ranches fall under this municipality (LED, 2013).

3.5 Ethical Importance

As a researcher at the University of Cape Town, I am expected to abide by the 'Standards and Procedures' involving the study of 'Human Subjects' (UCT, 2010: 1). Researchers are

required to complete a form entitled 'Research Ethics: Researcher Statement'. Certain criteria stipulated on this form will ensure that research participants will be 'protected adequately' (UCT, 2010: 1). Abidance with the 'Standards and Procedures', including key measures secured my ethical clearance. Such measures include:

1. Anonymity – Participants are to be granted anonymity whilst shared information is to be kept in a secure manner that does not disclose their respective identities to other participants.
2. Confidentiality and Research Use – All information provided is to be treated with the strictest confidentiality.
3. Right to refuse or withdraw – Participation in the research is voluntary and the right to refuse or withdraw at any stage must be clarified from the onset.

As such, in every instance:

1. Formal permission was obtained and appointments secured before entering the ranches.
2. Notes and photographs were taken upon confirmation of the interviewee's consent.
3. No audio or video recording devices were used.

During fieldwork, 'Informed Consent' forms were issued to the interviewees for their perusal. These forms notified interviewees of the measures taken to secure ethical compliance prior to conducting fieldwork, as well as alerted them to their rights as research participants.

3.6 Limitations

The possibility of limiting factors altering the trajectory of research is commonplace. Research was undertaken bearing such a possibility in mind. The four main challenges experienced are detailed below.

1. Prior to carrying out fieldwork, using random sampling, ranchers in the Mapungubwe region were contacted via email and/or telephone. Two ranchers did not respond

resulting in their ranches proving inaccessible whilst a third rancher agreed to be interviewed but was absent from his ranch during fieldwork. He was subsequently contacted via telephone but he then declined to participate.

2. Inability to travel to two study sites (*Interviewee Fifteen* and Questionnaire *Participant Seven*'s ranches) owing to dangerous road conditions. The province had experienced heavy rains resulting in the R572 being impassable.
3. A slight language barrier was experienced between *Interviewee Five* and myself; I am not conversant in Afrikaans and he could speak very little fluent English. Consequently, during the interview not all of the prepared questions were asked.
4. Securing land claim data from the land claimants themselves proved unfeasible due to poor community visibility.
5. Delays were experienced securing land claim information from the DRDLR in Polokwane.

CHAPTER FOUR – MAPPING AND LAND REFORM

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of land claims in relation to the presence of MNP and individual ranches in the Mapungubwe region. Such an analysis will generate a contextual understanding of the tension in visual form, whereby competition for land can be identified through the overlays of land claims on particular ranches. Research Objective 2, together with its accompanying sub-questions is explored here.

Land ownership data for the Mapungubwe region is also presented here (see Table 4.1). Claims for land made in terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act (22 of 1994) are depicted using colour overlays.

4.1 Land ownership – MNP

Table 4.0 Land ownership in MNP

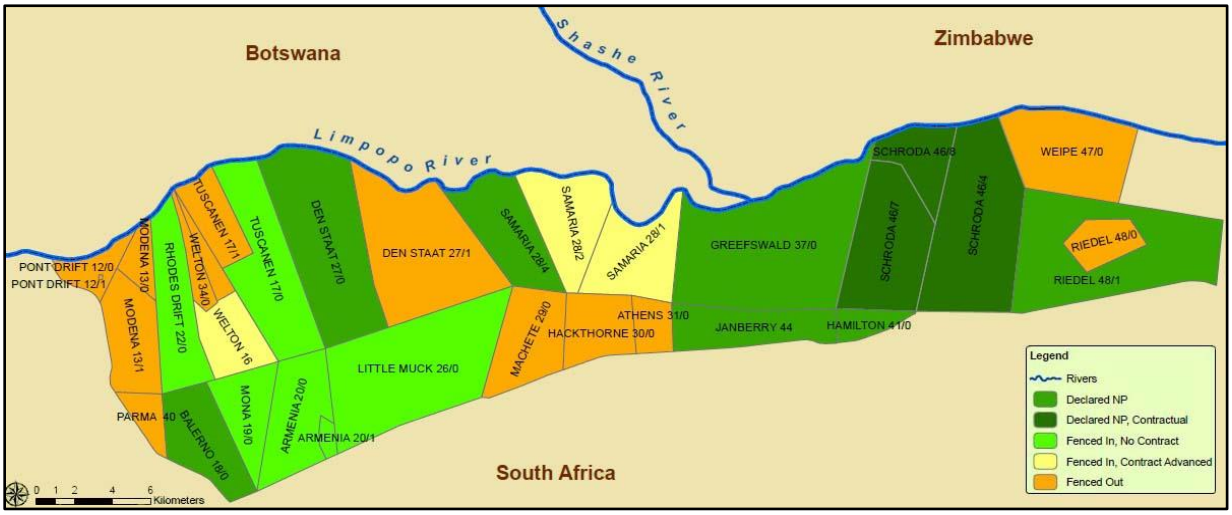
Property	Owner	Status
Pont drift 12/0	Vhembe Game Reserve	Private – No Contract
Pont drift 12/1	Vhembe Game Reserve	Private – No Contract
Modena 13/0	Vhembe Game Reserve	Private – No Contract
Modena 13/1	Vhembe Game Reserve	Private – No Contract
Parma 40	Vhembe Game Reserve	Private – No Contract
Rhodes drift 22/0	Peace Parks Foundation	Fenced in -No Contract
Balerno 18/0	MNP	Declared National Park - Contractual
Welton 34/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Welton 16	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out

Mona 19/0	Friends of Peace Parks	Fenced in - Contractual
Tuscanen 17/0	World Wildlife Fund of South Africa	Fenced in - Contractual
Armenia 20/0	Friends of Peace Parks	Fenced in - Contractual
Armenia 20/1	Friends of Peace Parks	Fenced in - Contractual
Den staat 27/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Little muck 26/0	Friends of Peace Parks	Fenced in - Contractual
Samaria 28/4	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Samaria 28/2	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Samaria 28/1	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Machete 29/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Hackthorne 30/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Athens 31/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Greefswald 37/0	MNP	Declared National Park-Contractual
Janberry 44	MNP	Declared National Park - Contractual
Scrhoda 46/7	De Beers	Declared National Park – Contractual
Schroda 46/4	De Beers	Declared National Park - Contractual
Hamilton 41/0	MNP	Declared National Park - Contractual
Weipe 47/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out
Riedel 48/0	Park Expansion Footprint	Fenced out

Riedel 48/1	MNP	Declared National Park - Contractual

Source: SANP, 2008

Figure 4.0 Mapungubwe National Park



Source: Sinthumela, 2013.

4.2 Restitution Claims in the Mapungubwe Region

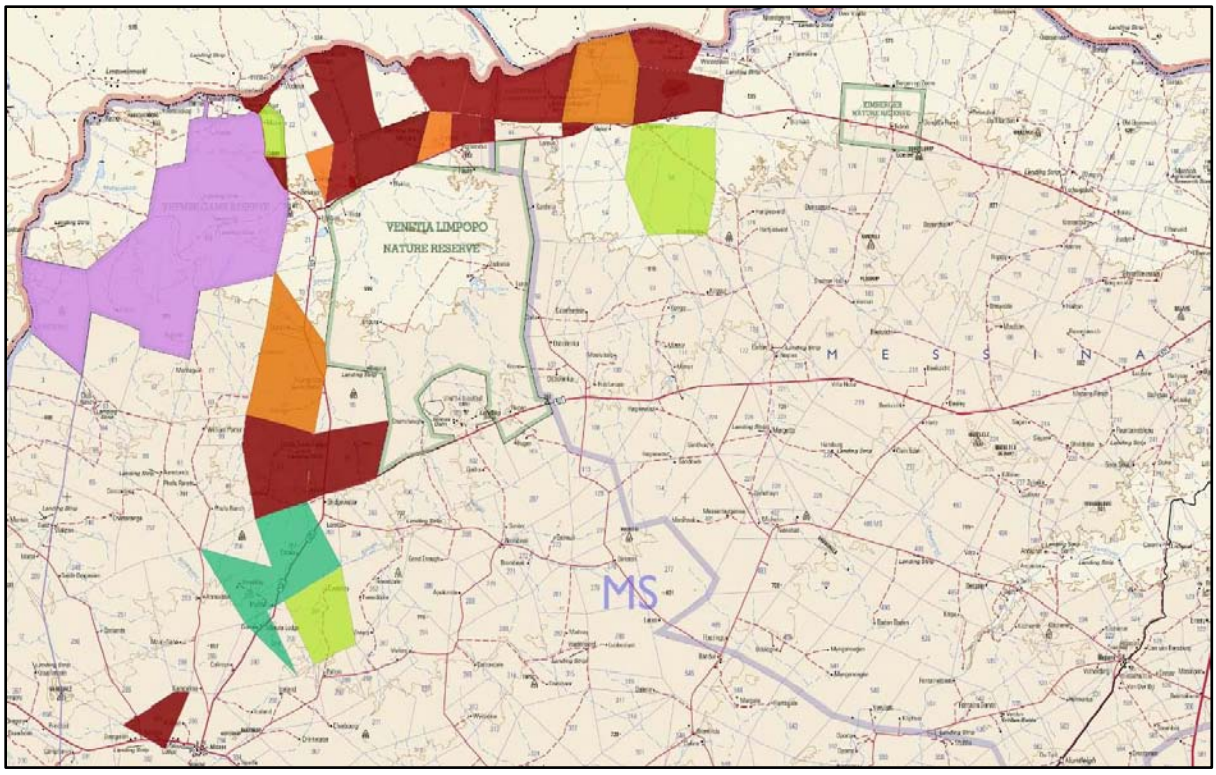
The Limpopo province contains the highest concentration of land claims within South Africa (Lahiff, 2012). Since the commencement of the LR process approximately 4026 land claim cases have been settled, involving approximately twenty-nine different communities (DRDLR, 2013). In terms of process; a claim is lodged and verified and then research is commissioned to assess the validity of the claim, following which it will either be gazetted or dismissed *(Interviewee Seventeen)*. Coloured overlays depicting the nature of various claims within the region are found in Figure 4.1 overleaf.

The DRDLR states that following the restoration of rights and through joint ventures and leases within the ambit of the government's 'Recapitalisation and Development Programme', land is being 'put to productive use' (DRDLR, 2013b: 40). Settled land claims are framed accordingly:

> The restoration of this prime land has not only brought about the reversal of spatial apartheid, but also the reversal of land ownership patterns in Limpopo province whereby black communities now have full title to the subtropical fruit basket, game hunting "mecca" and the future platinum mining capital of the country (DRDLR, 2013b: 40).

Upon inquiring from the DRDLR official (*Interviewee Seventeen)* the reason for their absence, it was learnt that some of the communities had intermingled with other communities who lived in other parts of the province, whilst others had moved to the honey-pot areas of the province; Musina and Polokwane. The lack of community visibility meant that perspectives from land claimants themselves were lacking. This was undeniably a limitation experienced during the research undertaking but one which was worked around by consulting, on a number of occasions, *Interviewee Seventeen* and his office-staff.

Figure 4.1 Restitution claims in the Mapungubwe Region



Source: DRDLR (original map) and Author (overlays)

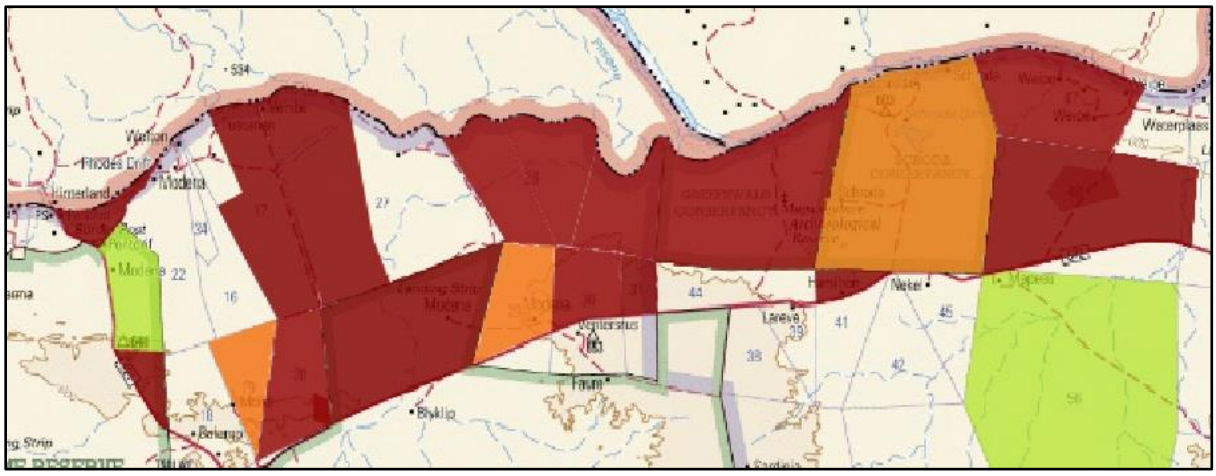
Key:

	Partly-settled claims
	Gazetted claims
	Claims under research
	Dismissed claims
	No information

Inserts of Figure 4.2, together with tabularised data will now follow for further clarification of study sites with regard to their current land claim status.

4.2.1 Restitution Claims within MNP

Figure 4.2 Restitution Claims in MNP



Source: DRDLR (original map) and Author (overlays)

Key:

	Partly-settled claims
	Gazetted claims
	Claims under research

All claims occurring within the park are 'negotiated in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between the DEA and the DRDLR' *(Interviewee Seventeen)*. Details of these claims can be found in Table 4.0. With regards to the claims in the park, *Interviewee Seventeen* stated that 'research has been conducted but the report still needs to be analysed'. Consequently, these claims are yet to be finalised.

Table 4.1 Land claims in MNP

Property	**Status**	**Claimant(s) name**	**Settlement form**
Pont drift 12/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Pont drift 12/1	Partly Settled	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Modena 13/0	Research/Partly Settled	Machete Community Tshivhula Community Babirwa Tribe	Not yet Settled
Modena 13/1	Research/Partly Settled	Machete Community Tshivhula Community Babirwa Tribe	Not yet Settled
Parma 40	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Rhodes drift 22/0	No information	-	Not yet Settled
Balerno 18/0	Research	-	Not yet Settled
Welton 34/0	No information	-	Not yet Settled
Welton 16	Gazetted	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Mona 19/0	Gazetted	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Tuscanen 17/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Armenia 20/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Armenia 20/1	Partly Settled	Machete Community Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Den staat 27/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community	Restoration
Little muck 26/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community	Not yet Settled

		Tshivhula Community	
Samaria 28/4	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Samaria 28/2	Partly Settled	TshivhulaCommunity	Not yet Settled
Samaria 28/1	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Machete 29/0	Gazetted	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Hackthorne 30/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Athens 31/0	Partly Settled	Machete Community Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Greefswald 37/0	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Janberry 44	No information		Not yet Settled
Schoda 46/7	Gazetted	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Hamilton 41/0	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Schroda 46/4	Gazetted	Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Weipe 47/0	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Riedel 48/0	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Riedel 48/1	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled

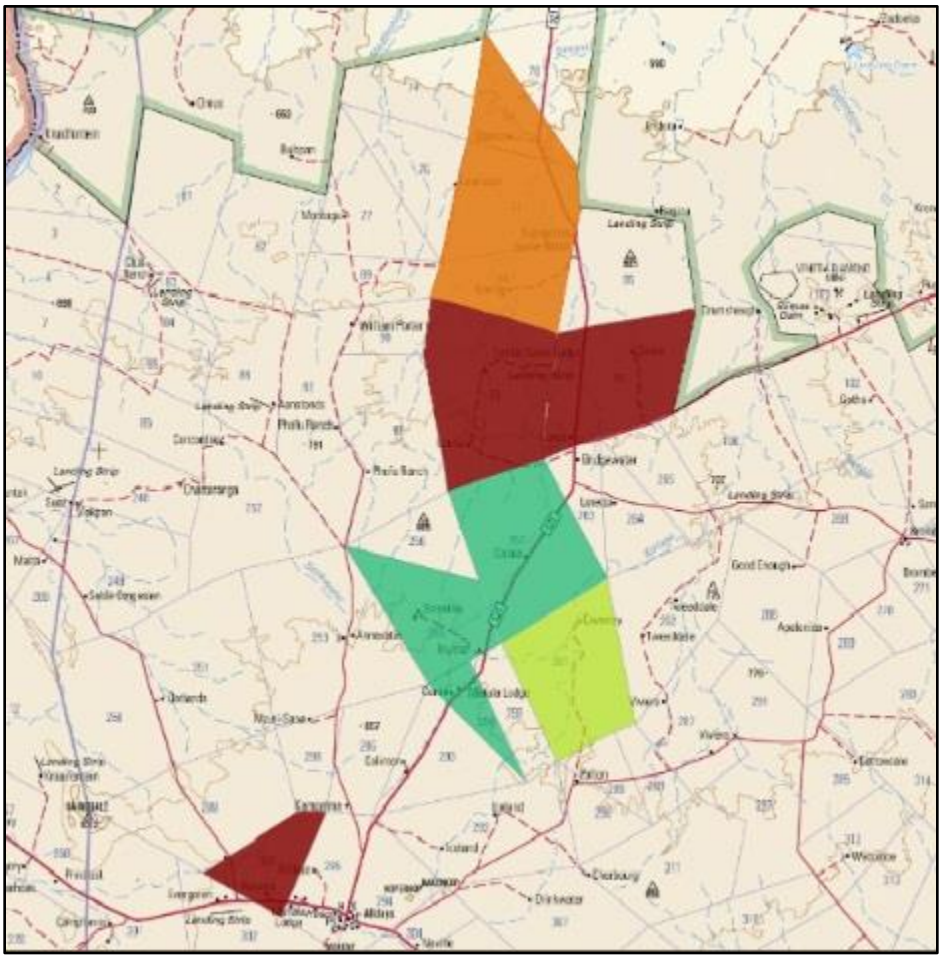
Source: DRDLR, 2013.

4.2.2 Restitution claims on private ranches

Given the view that ranching is essentially fencing land into private hands and thereby, subverting the LR process, further investigation as to why such claims are yet to be settled is necessary. Since an upsurge in ranching is premised to be in reaction to 'new labour and land rights legislation', my investigation of whether there is tension between the conservation and LR sector is, indeed, relevant (Carruthers, 2008; Ngubane and Brooks, 2013: 400). Figure 4.3 (overleaf) evinces the claim status of various ranch study sites.

Interviewee Seventeen stated that the finalisation of claims in the Mapungubwe region is pending due to the reluctance of landowners 'to come to the table' and further, that 'there are overlapping claims'.[20]

Figure 4.3 Restitution claims on ranch study sites



Source: DRDLR (original map) and Author

Key

	Partly-settled claims
	Gazetted claims
	Claims under research
	Dismissed claims

[20] Overlapping claims occur when more than one community lodges a claim for a particular piece of land.

Significantly, whilst *Interviewee Seventeen* stated the overlapping claims were stalling finalisation, claim data from the DRDLR shows that only one of the private ranches, Corea 96/ms, is subject to claim from multiple communities.

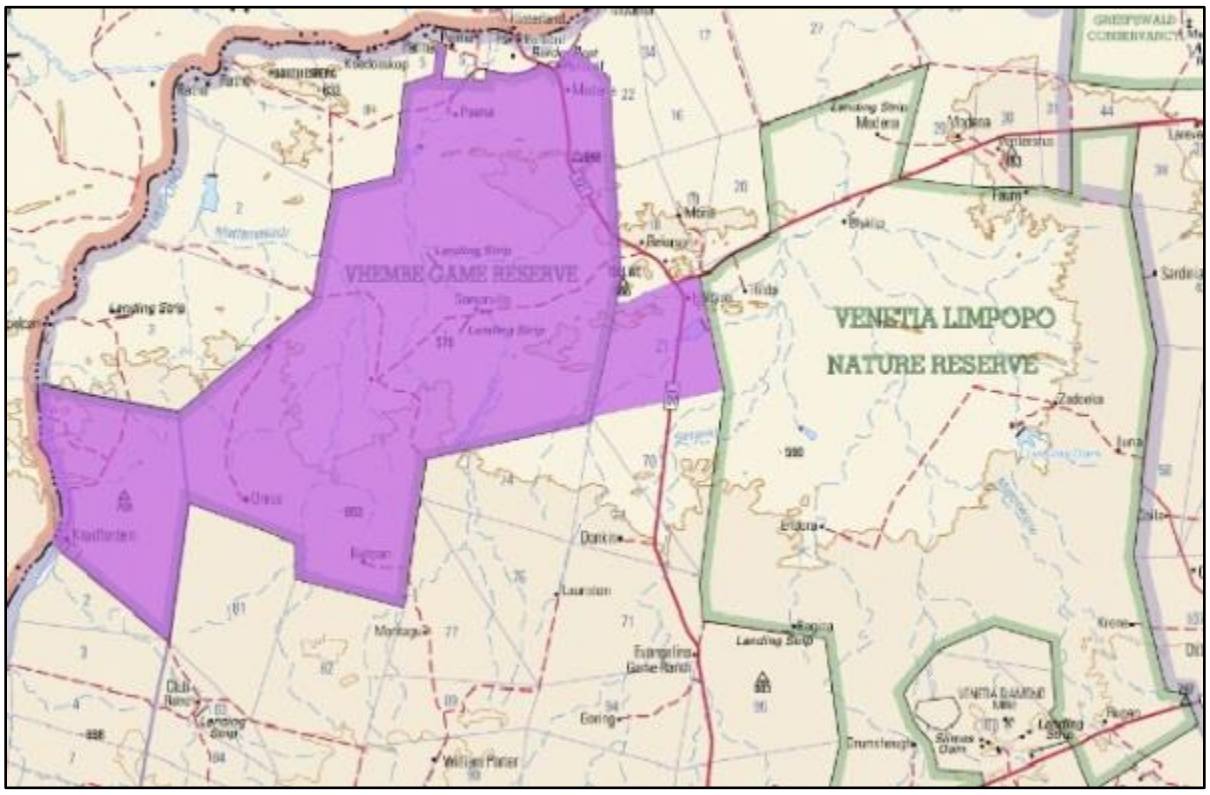
Table 4.2 Claim details

Property	Status	Claimant(s) name	Settlement form
Horison 56/ms	Research	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Evangelina71/ms	Gazetted	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Goring 94/ms	Gazetted	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Letitia 93/ms	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Calais 257/ms	Dismissed	Babirwa Tribe	Dismissed
Coventry 261/ms	Research	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled
Invicta255/ms	Dismissed	Babirwa Tribe	Dismissed
Currie 258/ms	Dismissed	Babirwa Tribe	Dismissed
Corea 96/ms	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community Machete Community	Not yet Settled
Bavaria 300/ms	Partly Settled	Tshivhula Community	Not yet Settled

Source: DRDLR (2013)

Vhembe Game Reserve, as mentioned in section 1.1, is privately owned and consists of ten separate ranches where internal fences have been removed to form an extensive reserve. The owner's goal is to have the entire reserve eventually incorporated into the park to extend the area under conservation. Three of these ranches (Pont drift 12/0 and 12/1, Modena 13/0 and 13/1 and Parma 40) fenced into the MNP are subject to land claim (see Table 4.0). There is no information on the remaining ranches (see Figure 4.4 and Table 4.2).

Figure 4.4 Vhembe Game Reserve



Source: DRDLR (original map) and Author (overlays)

Key

	No information

Table 4.3 Claim details

Property	**Status**
Princess royale 10/ms , Somerville 9/ms Vergenoegd 7/ms , Onrust 80/ms Bultpan 79/ms ,Kruidfontein 1/mr Halycon 21/ms	No Information

4.3 Perceptions of the LR Process

As evinced by the data, certain land used for ranching and agriculture (MNP) in the region is under claim. Since the displacements which occurred were racially-based, LR is underpinned by an inherent tension that renders dialogue on the matter to be sensitive (Deininger, 1999; Kepe *et al.*, 2010). With competing land uses, another layer of tension is added as the DRDLR, through negotiations with current landowners, strives to address claimants' needs. This aspect of competition is particularly felt in Mapungubwe with citrus farming and mining running in tandem with ranching.

Questions on LR elicited mixed responses from various ranchers interviewed. Expressing concern that the 'willing buyer, willing seller' principle could be replaced by expropriation, *Interviewee Fourteen,* (ranch owner) remarked: 'my husband says he'll shoot them, they can't take what is mine'. *Interviewee Four* (rancher) justified his concern by citing an example of where one particular LR initiative in Lephahale resulted in a number of people settling on a property next to a ranch: 'the ranch's value eroded away, the rancher was forced to sell his land at a price less than its worth. If land reform is to occur here, this is my concern'.[21]

Interviewee Sixteen (rancher) feels that 'LR is doomed to fail' since effective planning to guide claimants on sustainable land use is lacking. Nevertheless, he believes that 'polarisation between claimants and landowners must stop. It is unnecessary. We need to co-operate'. *Interviewees Ten* and *Eleven* (MNP's conservation officer and manager) mentioned that Den Staat, a farm subject to restoration and now fenced out of MNP has since degraded. At present, tomato farming occurs there but it is of an irregular nature (*Interviewee Ten,* MNP conservation officer). It is the 'degraded' nature of the property which limits success; water pumps have either been stolen or broken, whilst unregulated hunting also occurs (*Interviewee Eleven,* MNP conservation manager*).* In such an instance, wherein lies the successes, perhaps even initiatives, of the government's aforementioned 'Re-capitalisation and Development' programme that ensure restored land is put to productive use?

[21] Formerly known as Ellisras, Lephahale is a mining town in the north-western part of Limpopo province.

In terms of questionnaire findings, lack of effective guidance after claim settlement is *Participant Three*'s (LEDET official) concern. She believes tension results owing to instances where no 'economic advantage' follows 'but merely a right to own land, resulting in disappointment'. *Participant One*'s (academic researcher) proposed solution to this tension is to 'take unproductive land and make it productive, not the other way around'. It is this concern which brings the DRDLR's framing of land restoration under scrutiny: having full title of the land is not enough to secure productivity and sustainability and as indicated by *Participant Three* (LEDET official), mechanisms to bolster claimants' valuation and management of the land need to be consistent and on-going for effective transformation. This viewpoint was shared by those ranchers (*Interviewees Four, Eight, Nine, Fifteen and Sixteen*) willing to remark on the tension and significantly, these same ranchers saw the sustainability of their practices undermined by LR processes in the area. One could certainly argue, however, that for them it is the economic sustainability which is of greatest importance.

Majority of the participants conditioned the inclusion of claimant communities within the ranching industry on the following:

- Acknowledging that trade-offs are likely (*Participant One,* academic researcher)
- Abandoning conservative opinions of rural communities (*Participant Two,* environmental journalist)
- Providing skill development and market access (*Participant Three,* LEDET official)
- Ensuring economic viability for all parties (*Participant Six,* rancher)
- Conservation-minded and efficient managers (*Participant One,* academic researcher)

Participant Seven, who owns a ranch in the Limpopo Valley Nature Reserve commented:

> Land reform does not necessarily have to impact on good environmental management. Through sufficient support from government and NGO's, land subject to successful land claims can continue to be well managed in accordance with relevant environmental standards.

Whilst encountering challenges is commonplace, *Interviewee Seventeen* (DRDLR official) believes that particular challenges to the Restitution process include the following: higher land prices, community conflicts, objections from the land owners, lack of cooperation from land owners, land claims on communal land, multiple and overlapping claims, protracted negotiations and also, the lack of cooperation from certain claimants. Wynberg and Sowman (2007) and Lahiff (2012: 8-9), meanwhile, allude to other challenges such as the communities' lack of finance and management expertise once land is acquired, the criticism voiced by 'politically conservative landowners' due to claimants consisting of large 'unwieldy and factious' groups, as well as budgetary constraints.

Lahiff (2012: 21) argues further that whilst agriculture can help address rural poverty and inequality, 'this potential, together with agricultural land reform itself' is, nonetheless, limited. Given that 'declining confidence and confusion' characterises LR in Limpopo, Bernstein (2008: 15-16) affirms that a 'silver bullet' solution cannot be successfully used across South Africa; instead, acknowledgement must be made that LR will be governed by local problems and opportunities. Since 'land in itself cannot relieve mass rural poverty', but rather how the land is used, the CDE advocates that whilst there is a need to de-racialise land ownership, it should remain in private ownership (Bernstein, 2008: 50- 51). Regarding the contribution which the ranching industry makes towards rural development in the region, *Interviewee Seventeen* remarked:

> There are only handful of individuals who have been employed on those farms but their salaries are suspected to be very low and I do not think there is any contribution made by the land owners to the community, if it is happening, it's only very few owners doing that.

Nonetheless, the DRDLR cites additional reasons for finalisation delays, specifically; the lack of supporting documents for claim validation and non-documentation to confirm a history of dispossession (DRDLR, 2013b). The latter reason often entails that 'oral evidence' is then relied upon which results in further time delays and objection expressed toward such evidence by current landowners (DRDLR, 2013b: 40). Essentially then, the DRDLR hold themselves partly accountable for the difficulties experienced and yet also highlight that

inconsistent paperwork protracts already difficult negotiations between them and ranchers - ranchers who, in the Mapungubwe region, were observed to certainly hold vested interests. Many of these ranchers *(Interviewees One, Two, Three, Six, Nine and Fifteen*) asserted that their interest in the land not for the purposes of thwarting LR processes but because they recognise that the ranching industry allows them to be earn a living doing what they enjoy in an environment which they love. It can thus be argued whilst they might not all wish to vindictively thwart the process, owing to processes and negotiations which lack transparency and ease, frustrations are felt by both the DRDLR and the ranchers.

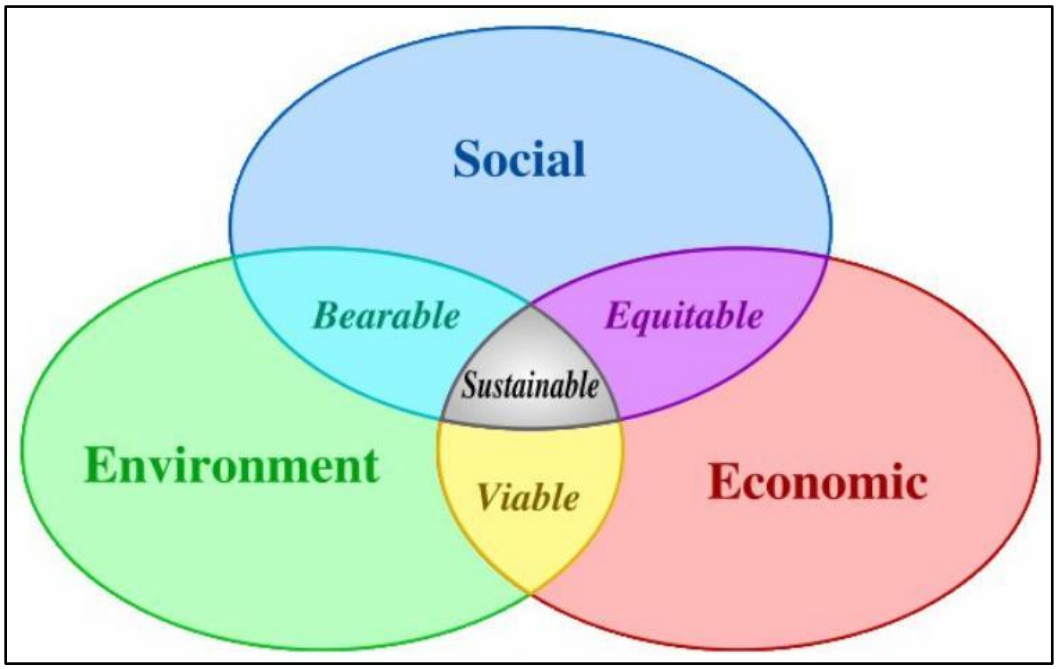
CHAPTER FIVE – GAME RANCHING

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conceptual tension, (Research Objective 1) with substantial reference to its associated sub-questions. Such tension is explored and analysed in relation to fieldwork and questionnaire findings, with reference made to supporting literature. Various factors associated with ranching practices that hold the potential to contribute to conservation are considered.

A model for achieving sustainability can be used to assess if the ranching practices are directed at certain end-points.

Figure 5.0 Model for Sustainability



Source: Dreo, 2013

Given the view that conservation in a 'pristine state' is not feasible in southern Africa since many of the areas in need of protection are also home to poor, rural populations, sustainable

utilization of nature is encouraged (Baker, 1997: 307). As such, WBLU can be studied in relation to Dreo's model with the following questions guiding reflection:

1. In terms of the social and economic dimension, is there an equitable sharing of the benefits between ranchers and the surrounding communities in the vicinity of these ranches? Are there any opportunity costs involved?
2. Regarding the social and environmental dimension, how bearable or conducive is ranching for the environment? Is it a socially accepted in South Africa?
3. Finally, is ranching characterised by viability? Can it grow as an economic venture whilst simultaneously benefitting the environment?

In the research findings and discussion that follows from hereon in, the individual ranchers will be referred to '*Interviewees'* followed by their corresponding number as indicated in Table 3.3. Any other informants will be referred to in accordance with their professions. It is hoped that by specifying their professions, the insights and perspectives delivered will help to, objectively, shape the discussion. Questionnaire Respondents will also be referred in line with their professions/roles.

5.1. Ranching: An Environmental dimension

5.1.1 Legislation and Regulators

Regulations within the Limpopo Environmental Management Act (7 of 2003) guide the province's ranching industry. Categorization of wildlife within this act affords varying tiers of protection.

The LEDET is responsible for issuing the P3 Exemption permit that specifies, inter alia, the region's indigenous wildlife; species that can be utilised for trophy hunting, as well as those which are formally protected and hence, do not qualify for any form of hunting. The permit lists twelve indigenous species which can be regarded as 'assets' owing to their trophy value.

Table 5.0 Trophy species in Limpopo Province

Eland	Gemsbok
Giraffe	Impala
Kudu	Nyala
Ostrich	Red Hartebeest
Waterbuck	Warthog
Wildebeest	Zebra

Source: LEDET (2013) (compiled by von Wielligh, 2006)

It is in the rancher's best interests to mainly keep these game species for hunting since written applications must be submitted to the LEDET for the hunting of any other wildlife (*Interviewee Eight)*. Whilst the ranchers interviewed claimed to comply with these regulations, not all of them owned each of the above-mentioned species. The Act also includes regulations and specifications on the following: hunting techniques, hunting seasons, places and times, guidelines for exportation and importation of trophies and guidelines on sale and disposal.

International hunters exporting their trophies are obligated to provide documentation to the LEDET which confirms their hunt was legal. Documentation includes the hunting permit, written permission from the rancher or a copy of the P3 exemption permit attached with the export application (Barnett and Patterson, 2006).

Entitled landowners in possession of the P3 certificate and whose property fences exceed two meters in height hold year-long hunting rights - they need not approach the LEDET to obtain clearance for each hunt (*Interviewee Six)*.[22] *Interviewee One* stated that LEDET officials could still, nevertheless, conduct checks. Nature Conservation officials based at Langjaan; a State-owned reserve located 30 kilometres out of Alldays, were reported to visit the ranches for inspection (*Interviewees One* and *Four)*. Responsible for monitoring that operations are

[22] These landowners will be in possession of a 'Certificate of Adequate Enclosure' (Snijders, 2012: 512).

complicit with relevant regulations, their visits would often be unannounced. At the ranches studied, seven ranchers are accredited 'Professional Hunters' (PH).[23]

PH certification can aid in ensuring that the animals' welfare is considered during a hunt. The surety of this can be traced back to the requirements for becoming a PH and that expected of the PH once accredited.

Requirements include the following[24]:

1. Training must occur at a SAPHCOM-registered professional hunting school.
2. The course curriculum must be presented to the respective province's Nature Conservation Department for annual approval.
3. Upon course completion, approximately 200 days' field experience is required prior to a licence being issued.
4. PHs must keep registers of all their hunts, detailing the clients' particulars and the species hunted. Signed copies are given to the client and the relevant Nature Conservation officer for record-keeping.

Ranchers can lay down additional rules which apply specifically on their properties. *Interviewee One,* for instance, disallows alcohol consumption the night prior to the hunt and throughout its duration. He believes alcohol increases the chances of the hunt going dangerously awry, whereby the animal can get shot incorrectly. This can cause severe harm and suffering as opposed to the animal dying instantly from a 'clean shot' (*Interviewee One*).

Interviewee Twelve mentioned an incident where drunken biltong hunters, caught up in the revelry of being out in the bush, fired indiscriminately at game. Injuring but not killing any of their targets, they then paid the tracker to not disclose this to *Interviewee Twelve* – an act he felt to be considerably reckless and audacious. He thus has a preference for bow hunters; finding

[23] Interviewees One, Four, Six, Nine, Fifteen and Interviewee Fourteen's husband and son.
[24] Source: Barnett and Patterson (2006: 52-54 and 59)

them to be more responsible since they patiently 'camp out in the hunter's hides' to take their shot (*Interviewee Twelve).*

Ranchers and PHs are expected to play an honest role by following legislated procedure. Yet the pressure placed on them to guarantee 'productive hunting concessions' can dictate that certain approaches and the trophies selected may not always be ethical whereby the principle of 'fair chase' gets neglected (Barnett and Patterson, 2006: iii). *Participant Three* (LEDET official) noted that while 'misuse' is not uncommon, 'if an industry is well-regulated' then misuse 'could be regulated to limit its impact'. She stated further that 'crime is crime and there will always be people that test the law. Good enforcement and a stable system with qualified staff can ensure/enforce discipline'.

Adhering to regulations and keeping in check with the P3 exemption rules was observed to be important to the ranchers interviewed. Managing their ranches in accordance with scientific and legislated principles to ensure operations are marked by long-term thinking and productivity was advocated by them. 'Trophy hunting can and should be well-regulated for conservation to occur' noted *Interviewee Four.*

5.1.2. The Impacts of Climate and Topography on Ranching

The region's terrain consists of sandstone outcrops, mopane woodland, riverine forest and baobab trees (SANP, 2008). It is especially suited to game that survive well on the bushveld of the savannah biome. A semi-arid climate; temperatures can reach as high as 45 degrees with 300 – 600ml of annual rainfall (Gotze *et al,* 2008). Within MNP, water abstraction occurs from the Limpopo and Shashe rivers for citrus farming and livestock as groundwater supplies are considered low (SANP, 2008).

Water provision for game is known to be less demanding as compared with livestock farming (Lindsey, 2012) When rehabilitating their properties, 50% of the ranchers reduced the number of water points present. Drought periods, nevertheless, prove trying with admissions from all ranchers that, during these times, supplementary feeding costs can

undermine the profitability of their operations. *Interviewee Five* explained this in quantitative terms:

> Four out of the twelve years that the ranch has been running, we had to feed the game from April until the end of January. Consider the costs. We use 160 bales of hay per week at R80 per bale. That works out to R12,800 per week.

Besides having to purchase hay, *Interviewee Five* feeds the game lucerne during drought periods; a crop which he plants. *Interviewee Six* relayed how drought can influence management:

> You cannot cater for all the wildlife populations as not all species eat well. A game rancher does what is economically viable for him. It costs me R70 per bale of hay to feed a wildebeest valued at roughly R1200 which amounts to R2100, each month, feeding just that one wildebeest. At the end of the day, management becomes very simple then.

Ranching is often cited as more favourable to livestock farming in terms of profitability. This claim is gaining increased recognition in light of climatic change, wherein, global warming is causing southern Africa to become more arid (Cadman *et al,* 2010). Given the likelihood that wildlife pose a 'reduced risk owing to increased resilience to drought', a number of land-use conversions from agricultural and livestock farming to ranching has occurred (Lindsey, 2012: 39, see also Brooks *et al*., 2011). Consultations with ranchers, however, highlighted that profitability is not always guaranteed during drought periods. Whilst water provision points were reduced on many of the ranches, the general consensus was that feeding costs during such times ran high.

Game species are less reliant on 'primary productivity' and are more suited to the savannah biome since, for many, it marks their natural habitat (Lindsey, 2012: 39). However, departing from the premise that utilising certain species for game ranching will generate more profit than livestock farming can, at times, be ill-founded.

5.1.3 Rehabilitation: Managing 'Wilderness'

Upon procurement, all the ranchers rehabilitated their properties by removing alien vegetation and re-planting indigenous trees and shrubs. Such action, effectively, results in

conservation of the region's vegetation with added potential for sustained indigenous vegetation growth. Certain properties previously housing livestock were lined with internal fences which resulted in noticeable soil erosion. These fences were removed and the erosion problems remedied. *Interviewee Fourteen's* property was a former potato farm with 'poor soil quality' due to the monoculture that prevailed. The owner restored the land by planting around eighty indigenous trees.

Besides ranching, *Interviewee Four* runs a taxidermy on his property and has established his own 'Predator Park' less than 100 kilometres away. Observable was his eagerness for maintaining not only game, but the entire ecosystem on his property. He runs volunteer programmes whereby largely foreign students participate in the management and daily running of the park and parts of the ranch. Since rehabilitating vegetation and attending to soil problems is on-going, volunteers are encouraged to involve themselves in such activities. Such engagement, in his view, generates practical knowledge of how to manage the ranch's ecosystem.

Interviewee three demonstrated a conservation ethic by expressing concern that his employees are familiar with as many types of vegetation as possible so as to ensure only indigenous varieties thrive. He believes that inculcating an informed ecological understanding of the bushveld in his workforce, through continuous mentoring on his part, results in good management and planning.

Overgrazing is known to cause bush encroachment which destroys the condition of the veld and decreases the ranch's economic carrying capacity (Lindsey, 2012). The severity of bush encroachment is purported to be more tangible on cattle farms since cattle are grazers, whereas game species fall into the categories of grazers, browsers and mixed feeders (ABSA, 2003; Oberem, 2012). Overgrazing by game is, nonetheless, not uncommon (ABSA, 2003). Accordingly, a management plan is necessary. A foremost concern is to keep appropriate amounts of game to avoid overstocking and ensure that the ranch's 'grazer unit' is not exceeded (Carruthers, 2008: 168).

Prior to purchasing his game, *Interviewee Eight* background enlisted environmental consultants, *Ekofocus*, to carry out a full assessment of the ranch's carrying capacity and species suitability. Factors addressed included climate, topography, soils and the supporting vegetation. Heeding the advice of the consultants and now twelve years on, he declared that he abides by their recommendations in order to maintain the grazer unit and guarantee long-term sustainability.

Game counts are carried out on all the ranches in order to assess the population numbers of various species prior to determining off-take for the hunting season which runs from March to September. Aside from *Interviewee Fifteen* who prefers aerial counts, ground surveys are conducted. Majority of the ranchers expressed the necessity to be personally involved in the counts since their knowledge of the properties and the game will result in increased thoroughness.

The 'recovery of degraded rangeland' owing to transitions from agricultural and livestock farming to ranching has generated substantial recognition and pride within the ranching industry (Lindsey, 2012: 39, see also Oberem, 2012). Recovery occurs by active restoration or allowing the land to be naturally transformed through plant succession, with changes conveyed in terms of the land having been 'transferred back to nature' (ABSA, 2003: 8). Where ranchers instil in their employees a practical understanding of the ranch's ecosystem, such management is indeed, commendable. A form of education, it generates a sense of responsibility and care for these ecosystems which benefits nature and wildlife. Nonetheless, the economic incentive of doing so should be duly recognised, since ultimately, the ranches are being managed for production purposes.

Now, game species are argued to possess a comparative advantage over livestock owing to their different feeding habits. 'Game use a broader cross-section of vegetation reducing and impeding bush encroachment as a result' (Flack, 2011: 36). *Interviewee One* aligned himself with this argument; stating that since livestock do not possess the free-roaming nature of game, they are less preferable. Game, he stated, display a natural tendency to migrate across the ranch which avoids overgrazing in one particular area. However, *Interviewee Six* believes

that a propensity to frame the matter of overgrazing in terms of livestock versus game is simplistic. He argued that it fails to account for the extent of devastation caused by game, which in their different feeding categories, can cause overgrazing: 'it happens at various levels, right from the top of the tree with the kudu and eland browsing, through to the middle and lower levels with the impala' (*Interviewee Six*).

He believes such a conception belies the range of management factors ranchers must consider to ensure veld productivity.

> [sic] Factors like where are your fences? How big the population is. Have you got specific camps where you allow the animals to graze by attracting them with water-holes and salt licks? (*Interviewee Six*)

He drew further attention to problems associated with overgrazing by commenting on the varying sizes of ranches. With his ranch measuring 2,000has, he rhetorically asked 'is having a water-hole on only one-side of the ranch where the animals have to walk five kilometres all that much?'

Hence, when game need to be enticed across the ranch to avoid overgrazing, the rancher can often intervene but as discernable from the comments above, the efficacy of such interventions is not always, completely, guaranteed.

5.1.4 Game Breeding

Of the ten ranchers, nine were practitioners of natural breeding. Refusal on their part to interfere with breeding processes can be regarded an ethical approach to sustaining animal populations.

When *Interviewee One*'s eland population fell into decline, he intervened. Keen to ensure population numbers should be recovered through natural breeding, the herd was moved to a fenced off portion on the ranch. This allowed for monitoring of breeding patterns and ensured that resident predators were kept at bay.

Interviewee Four did not completely share similar sentiments towards natural breeding; he was the only rancher breeding colour variants, namely; black impala and white lions. Whilst 'a

colour variant is not a new species', the hybrid species will, nevertheless, carry more economic worth than its common counterpart (Bezuindenhout, 2012: 75). Here, the rancher will have directly intervened, making a conscious effort to select animals which possess specific traits and then breed them with similar animals.

Interviewee Seven (resident ecologist) remarked that hybrid species tend to be 'kept in highly secure and electrified complexes', with their owner's justification being that 'hybrids cannot mix with other game'. Observable, was her annoyance that such ranchers avoid 'saying it as it is and paint the image of something else. The real reason they are kept separate and so secure is because of their economic value' (*Interviewee Seven*).

Given that *Interviewee Four* also owns the predator park and taxidermy, and furthermore, was the only rancher travelling to overseas to actively market his game; his economic motive for breeding and keeping hybrid species becomes clear. Noticeable, however, was that his black impala were browsing freely with herds of common impala. Wall-mounts of Kudu at *Interviewee Four's* taxidermy are pictured in Figure 5.1 overleaf.

Taxidermist, Rodney Kretzschmar believes that 'opposition to hybrid breeding is growing' (Kretszchmar, 2012: 74). Meanwhile, Louw Hoffman at Stellenbosch University's Department of Animal Science notes that colour variations make no contribution toward biodiversity. Hoffman (2012: 75) explains that this is because when hybrids are allowed to mix with 'a larger free-living population, their genes simply disappear in the larger gene pool'. Nonetheless, he warns that 'colour genes are usually recessive and bring negative characteristics' (Hoffman, 2012: 75). The black impala, for example, is observed to be more disease-prone than the common impala.

In Hoffman's view, the most vital concern surrounding the issue is the economic implication since considerable investment is made in breeding colour hybrids but hunters are unwilling to pay more for these species. Hoffman (2012: 75) refers to biltong hunters' reluctance to pay more for colour hybrids since 'their carcass or biltong value is seldom different from that of the common type'. There are certain hunters who express a desire for 'unusual trophies' but as Kretzschmar (2012: 75) notes:

> [sic] Very few European hunters are interested in hunting a new colour variant of a known antelope species what they might regard as an artificial or 'instant species'. Most want to hunt the real thing in its natural environment and are against what they see as interference with nature.

Geneticist Carola Rohrich, conversely, believes a trend for hybrids exists. As certain hunters' trophy collections already contain a range of common species, this compels them to then 'pay a fortune' for a rarity (Rohrich, 2012: 18). Yet she is avowedly against this artificial selection since 'continuous selection for such rare traits requires mating individuals which may be related or at least have a similar genetic profile' (Röhrich, 2012: 18).

This increases 'the risk of inherited handicaps' in inbred individuals and where accumulation of handicaps is large, this leads to 'increased susceptibility to disease' (Rohrich, 2012: 18). Her concern is that since this affects the hybrids' ability to adapt, acquire strength and survive in the wild, these individuals will be kept in captivity and only released in time for hunting. She adds that 'artificially produced trophies defeat the essence, the soul and lifeblood of hunting' (Röhrich, 2012: 18). Her sentiments thus echo that of Kretzschmar's (2012 75): 'It can tarnish South Africa's image as an authentic African hunting destination'.

Figure 5.1 Kudu wall-mounts at *Interviewee Four's* Taxidermy

Source: Author, 02/03/2013.

5.1.5 Predators: Problems and Solutions

To ensure sustainability on ranches, consideration must be given to keeping a 'balance between predator and prey' (Bohlmann, 2012: 28). The Mapungubwe region is home to numerous predators such as lion, leopard, cheetah, caracal, wild dog and the brown and spotted hyena. As none of these species fall under the P3 exemption list, written application must be made for their hunting with the exception of the wild dog which holds formal protected status (LEDET, 2006).

In terms of spatial behaviour, these predators have a large rangeland with fences hardly preventing their migration across neighbouring ranches. The predators simply enter and exit through holes made in the fences by warthogs (*Interviewees Three, Six* and *Eight).* Off-take of livestock on the mixed ranches tends to be limited as livestock are kept closer to the ranchers' homes and lodging areas. In general, human activity tends to scare predators away

into quieter, secluded parts of the ranches (*Interviewees One, Five* and *Eight).* Moreover, the 'Livestock Guardians' project run under *Green Dogs Conservation*, contributes to the protection of livestock on mixed ranches in the region. The project is run and jointly managed by *Interviewees Two and Seven* (resident ecologists) at Corea Ranch. Here, dogs with specific character traits and strengths are bred to help protect livestock. *Interviewee Two* commented that the dogs 'are not there to fight off the predators but deter them with presence'.

Figure 5.2 depicts Anatolian puppies being kept in a pen with an injured sheep. A passing jackal caught the attention of one puppy (far left), it stood up, began barking and thus exhibited 'Livestock Guardian potential' (Green Dogs Conservation, 2013)

Figure 5.2 'Livestock Guardian' puppies

Source: Green Dogs Times , 2013: 2.

Interviewee Two (resident ecologist) explained that at night the dogs sleep in sizeable enclosures next to livestock kraals (see Figure 5.3), with their presence and mere barking tending to throw any approaching predators off-course.

Figure 5.3 Livestock Guardians

Source: Author, 28/02/2013.

Overall, this initiative results in less predators being shot and killed by certain ranchers who have stronger incentive to protect the 'goat' and 'gemsbok' in which they will have invested, rather than a 'pesky' predator (*Interviewee Eight).*

In these managed landscapes, consideration of and for predators is essential for maintaining balance within the ecological system (Thorn *et al,* 2013). *Green Dogs* is described as a 'brilliant' initiative that safeguards a number of predators owing to the natural threats they pose (*Interviewee Nine).* The LEDET does issue permits to hunt 'Damage Causing Wild Animals', but *Interviewee Nine* alluded to the 'tedious' procedural aspects involved, which often leads some ranchers and livestock farmers to shoot and then discreetly bury the predators. Accordingly, the 'Livestock Guardian' dogs help to prevent this and maintain predator numbers in the region. A form of management, this project results in a shift from the eradication of predators to indirect control of them.

Interestingly, however, when inquiries regarding predator problems were made, all ranchers expressed general acceptance that predator off-take is 'part of nature' and not substantial, in most instances (*Interviewee Fourteen).*

Green Dogs also contributes to wildlife conservation in the region through survey efforts, whereby selected dogs are specially trained to find the scat of certain species (see Figure 5.4).

> Traditional methods of surveying are very costly, and it is never possible to or desirable to fit radio-collars to all individuals in a population, but by surveying with dogs, it is possible to obtain data on all or almost all individuals. On top of this, a dog survey is fast, very cost effective and vulnerable wildlife is not disturbed (*Interviewee Seven).*

Pending funding, it is with such intent that surveys will be carried out in the GMTFCA area for Wild Dog, Lion, Leopard and Cheetah (Green Dogs Conservation, 2013)

Figure 5.4 The Green Dogs 'surveyors'

Source: Green Dogs Times, 2013: 1-2.

Interviewee Thirteen (veterinarian), noted that 'keeping a balance between predator and prey can be challenging but *Green Dogs Conservation* is doing a good job'.

5.1.6 Mining: A threat?

Mining in the region has elicited mixed reactions as it poses both benefits and threats. Since certain ranchers offer accommodation, contractors working at the mines often stay at their facilities (*Corea, Zelpy, Klein Bolayi)* which generates revenue. Nonetheless, in terms of environmental disturbance, *Interviewees Three, Four, Five, Eight* and *Sixteen* expressed reservation toward ongoing mining activities.

Interviewees Three and Five mentioned that traffic to and from the mines was causing increased wildlife road-kill, with the frequency of these killings being particular concerning. Smaller wildlife species traversing through warthog holes in the fencing were the main victims (*Interviewee Three). Interviewee Three's* concerns were that firstly, many of these were not listed game species but rare wildlife such as aardvark, caracal and pangolin. Secondly, he believes that the likelihood for wildlife road-kill to increase is high since underground mining will commence at Venetia in 2014. Venetia mine is pictured in Figure 5.5 overleaf.

Interviewee Four, meanwhile, currently finds Alldays town to be 'pleasant and safe', but he does not believe this 'sense of security' will remain owing to increased mining activity. He also attributed this to the current growth of Alldays and the pressure for local development. *Interviewee Eight* took the greatest stance against mining. His ranch (*Horison*), located directly opposite MNP, is in close proximity to both Venetia and Vele Colliery. Following COAL's authorisation to commence extraction at Vele colliery, the 'Mapungubwe Action Group' was formed to contest the adequacy of the environmental impact assessments carried out (*Interviewee Eight*). *Interviewee Eight* claimed the following with an observable scoff: 'As vice-chairman of the group, I know that evaluation of their environmental management plan was done by a mining industry consultant and so basically, money talks'.

Whilst mining is not sanctioned in national parks, SANP finds the impacts of such activities on the borders of MNP to be 'far-reaching' and takes the following - arguably, vague - stance: 'Diamond and coal mining need to be interfaced sensibly into the overall landscape mosaic' (SANP, 2008: 19).

Figure 5.5 Venetia in the horizon

Source: Author, 02/03/2013.

Interviewee Fifteen believes mining in the region cannot be stopped owing to the governmental backing. He believes that the mines do 'follow rigid protocols which demand that nature conservation' is practiced.

Interviewee Sixteen, meanwhile, was of the following view:

> It is hard to find compromise when it comes to reconciling mining and other land uses. This matter generates much conflict. There are less intrusive ways to extract natural resources which might be more expensive but remember, mining is short-term. Open-cast coal mining simply destroys the landscape. It is a plain, well-known fact. Leave the coal in the ground and look for long-term uses of resources.

Given Vele colliery's close proximity to the MNP with coal extraction currently underway in an ecologically-sensitive area adjacent to the Limpopo river, UNESCO has deemed the operations to pose 'considerable threat' to the property (UNESCO, 2013).

5.2 Ranching: An Economic Dimension

5.2.1 Weather

Weather systems can determine if ranching will be economically viable (Lindsey, 2012: 38). Located in the hottest part of South Africa, the Mapungubwe region is quite dry with resultant implications for the industry.

Interviewees Five and *Six* highlighted that drought periods undermine profitability since supplementary feeding is needed to sustain game species. Exasperation was apparent in *Interviewee Five's* comment that 'hunting doesn't even begin to cover the costs of feeding game'. Feeding costs also escalate during dry winter months (*Interviewee Twelve*). Despite revenues generated through trophy hunting and the ranchers' wish to have healthy and attractive game; the expenses incurred can drastically affect profitability (*Interviewees Four, Five* and *Six). Interviewee Four* attributed this to annual increases in expenses, while the prices obtained for game remain steady. He then referred to the weather's influence on the intensity of poaching, declaring that increased poaching and snaring occur during winter. The incursions were said to not only cost ranchers in terms of lost species, but from having to repair fences and other damage caused by poachers (*Interviewees Three, Four* and *Six).*

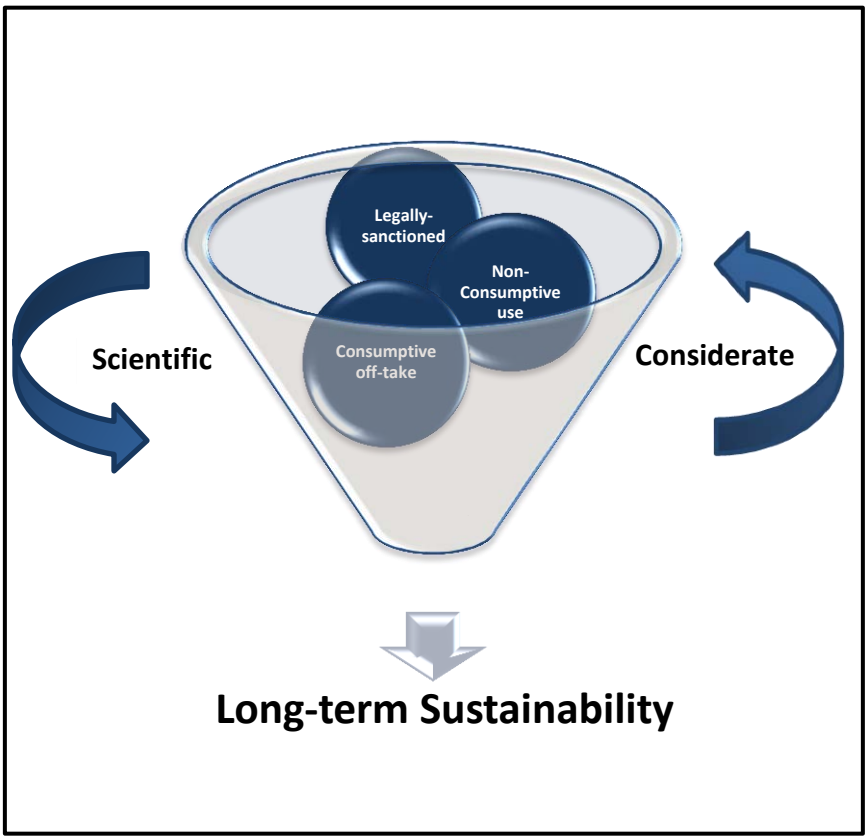
Weather-induced expenses become unavoidable when acknowledging the financial and ethical parameters which govern the welfare and sustenance needs of game. Especially where trophy hunting is the main activity, weak, distressed game can prove unsightly (*Interviewees One, Three* and *Five)*. Wildlife viewing for ecotourism purposes also suffers during dry periods and overall, unhealthy animals detract from the experience which ranchers aim to offer. Supplementary feeding, therefore, becomes essential with ranchers forced to factor this into their financial budgets or increase the number of live sales as timeously as possible.

5.2.2 Illegal Hunting

Poaching and snaring are defined as 'illegal hunting methods' (Balme *et al,* 2012: 12). Reasons for their occurrence and the consequences, while extremely substantial, differ between areas.

Ranchers complained of the cruelty associated with snaring methods and the resulting wastefulness since full utilisation of the animal, once killed, did not occur (*Interviewees One, Three* and *Eight)*. Advocates of ranching and the ranchers themselves describe their utilisation of wildlife to be more effective (Lindsey, 2012; *Interviewees One* and *Five)*. This claim rests on the diversity associated with legally dictated wildlife-based land usage which scholars Barnett and Patterson (2006) identify as holding potential to contribute to long-term sustainability. See Figure 5.6 below.

Figure 5.6 WBLU on Ranches



Source: Barnett and Patterson, 2006: iii.

The various approaches taken by different actors regarding wildlife utilisation are, nevertheless, relative to the valuation systems being applied. *Interviewee Fifteen* justified his use as follows:

> [sic] This I my livelihood, I work to enhance it and I never shoot anything that needs not be shot. There has to be balance, I must think long-term and about the future of my child who inherits this ranch.

Interviewee Seven (resident ecologist) declared that 'at the end of the day everything gets used on our ranch, nothing gets wasted'. Her claim was clarified upon learning that once all the trophy parts had been removed, the meat was eaten by the rancher, the employees and the lodge guests the very night of the hunt. Any excess meat was given to the employees to take home to their families (*Interviewee Six).*

The danger of snaring lies in its effectiveness yet 'unselective' aspect in terms of the gender or species being caught (Balme *et al.*, 2012: 4). Now, while the economic returns from poaching and snaring can be instant and significant, in the long-term, such approaches can be unsustainable (Balme *et al.*, 2012). *Interviewee Three* felt illegal hunters to be selfish in their failures to consider 'tomorrow' and future needs. After observing a steady decline in tortoise numbers on the ranch, his wife addressed the poaching problem through 'her polony project'. The couple discovered that employees were killing the tortoises (for reasons undisclosed) and so she adopted her own form of 'Payments to encourage coexistence with wildlife (PEC)' (Chardonnet and Bel, 2012: 27, see also Balme *et al,* 2012).

PEC aims to reward communities through monetary or non-monetary means for achieving conservation goals. Such initiatives are directed at securing 'effective conservation' by having part of the 'global value of wildlife' benefit and outweigh the costs to those living with or near the wildlife (Balme *et al,* 2012: 11). Zabel and Holm-Muller (2008) pinpoint that these initiatives are characterised by both successes and complications.

The 'Polony project' was not characterised by monetary payment. Rather, for every live tortoise brought to *Interviewee Three's* wife by an employee, a roll of polony was given in return. The project aimed to encourage an incentive for safeguarding the species. Still observable, however, was a decline in numbers. Upon further investigation a loophole was discovered; the same tortoise kept being brought in with the employees maximising on the incentive. Thus, only after integrating a system of identification and marking did population numbers gradually recover.

The project aimed to benefit wildlife and the people responsible for its existence, yet the incident speaks to an unavoidable dynamic which marks ranches as contested spaces. A common view exists that land-usage here benefits only a select few (Carruthers, 2008). Since ranches are mainly found in rural areas where unemployment levels are high, illegal hunting to meet daily needs will, likely, proliferate (Brown, 2007; Balme *et al,* 2012). Limiting social circumstances can pose challenges and whilst such challenges are large, one can argue that 'human ingenuity, when given proper incentives, is bound to be larger'. (Levitt and Dubner, 2009: 11) This was evident from *Interviewee Three's* situation whereby both his wife and the employees used an incentivised approach to address their separate challenges.

The issue of illegal resource extraction thwarting conservation efforts was explored in the questionnaire. *Participant One* (academic researcher) believes such actions are determined by 'the hierarchy of needs' whereby actions will stem from 'poverty' and basic sustenance needs. *Participant Eleven* (game capture specialist), sharing a similar view, stated that 'conservation has no meaning if your stomach is empty. The more poverty, the harder it is to justify and convince people to conserve'.

When considering certain outlying factors, illegal WBLU thereby takes on different facets. Albeit being illicit and unsustainable; such factors need to be dealt with through efforts that both fairly address and curb this trend. If ranching is to prosper, inclusive approaches that sustainably augment the livelihoods of neighbouring rural communities - not simply the employees alone - are essential.

5.2.3 Eco-tourism

Activities and services offered on ranches will vary according to the ideals and intentions of the landowners. The statistics for the activities and services which characterise the study sites are laid out in Figure 5.8 overleaf.[25] Those ranches indicated in Table 5.1 meanwhile, place emphasis on ecotourism owing to their proximity to nodal points.

[25] Many of the ranches cater for both trophy hunting and ecotourism (game viewing) but as the former is the more popular activity, it is mainly trophy hunters that visit these ranches.

Figure 5.7 Ranching Activities and Services

Source: Author, 26/02/2013 - 05/03/2013.

Table 5.1 Eco-tourism oriented Ranches

Ranch Owner	Ranch Name	Nodal Point
Interviewee Four	Bavaria	Alldays
Interviewee Eight	Horison	Mapungubwe National Park
Interviewee Fourteen	Dedimus	Polokwane
Interviewee Fifteen	Tovey	Musina

Interviewee Four aims to deliver a well-rounded experience to all his visitors; be it eco-tourists, hunters or even volunteers. Marketing of his ranch and the hunting activities on offer includes the following:

> We carefully cater for those who simply need a stunning getaway in extreme comfort, but we are so deep in the bush that the stresses of the urban jungle are completely

> forgotten the moment you set foot in Ingogo. From a solid thunk of a bow, to the business-like crack of a rifle, Ingogo will always make its mark with you.[26]

Interviewee Fourteen's ranch, meanwhile, aside from accommodating hunters, hosts small conferences and events whilst a Birding Society from Polokwane regularly book out the lodges.

In terms of promoting the Mapungubwe region as a tourism hotspot, *Interviewees Eight* and *Fifteen,* appeared the most enthusiastic. *Interviewee Eight* feels that as the region is well-known by only a few, tourism is not well-established. Nonetheless, his following statement was 'but the potential for it to be a thriving one certainly exists'. He believes stronger marketing of the GMTFCA could benefit the region and generate increased revenues on the ranches. *Interviewee Fifteen* asserted that government support is needed to catalyse ecotourism or the initiative will be viewed to stem from only the private sector who are, nevertheless, ready to fully support it. He believes that 'at the moment, no one sees the dream. It needs to be visionary; we need to create matches to light the dream. If you start the dream, the rest will follow' (*Interviewee Fifteen).*

Materialisation of his "dream" entails ranchers removing their fences to allow the entire region to be encompassed within a conservancy. Furthermore, to increase cross-boundary tourism, better linkages should be created between South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe through bridges whose names carry connotations of 'reconciliation' (*Interviewee Fifteen*). Large signposts and informative boards could inform visitors that they are within a large conservation area which consists of different zones and buffer areas, and sanctions multiple land-uses (*Interviewee Fifteen).*

However, when reflecting on tourism potential, the diversity of ranching practices in the region must be considered. Indeed, it is in light of the diverse practices, that the 'dream' *Interviewee Fifteen* envisions can be probed. For instance, are individual ranchers willing to drop their fences to become part of a conservancy which is characterised by multiple forms of land usage? *Interviewee Eight* is of the view that 'conservation works especially where one's

[26] Accessed via < http://www.huntingplaces.co.za/ingogo%20safaris.html>

neighbours are doing the same, where they keep the same game and have similar uses of this game'. *Interviewee Six* pointed out that the conservancy concept can combat overgrazing since removing fences increases 'the migratory space for the animals' which helps 'conserve the land better and so a number of farmers have thought about it'.

Interviewee Sixteen, manager of Vhembe Game Reserve, believes the conservancy concept is 'critical' for the region since multiple land usage is feasible; core and peripheral areas can be clearly demarcated to accommodate activities which need not all be characterised by wildlife conservation. In an interview with *Africa Geographic, Interviewee Sixteen* expressed the region's potential to become the 'second Kruger National Park': 'We are probably about 15 years behind them, but the potential is definitely there to create a sustainable public and private partnership conservation area' (Ramsay, 2011: 29).

Importantly, MNP, with its rich history, is foremost a cultural landscape, hence the remark from *Interviewee Eight* that 'Mapungubwe is being marketed as a heritage park and the wildlife is incidental'. Those ranchers aware of this realise the value which their wildlife contributes to the region (*Interviewees Three, Six, Eight, Fifteen* and *Sixteen).* This insight may be linked to the fact that MNP's management body; SANP, are prioritising the educational and interpretive aspects of the park (SANP, 2008). Ranchers with ecotourism activities are, therefore, especially keen to market the region since potential exists to accommodate park visitors, regional visitors' from neighbouring countries, as well as hunting clientele (*Interviewee Eight).*

5.2.4 Venison Production

Accompanying a growing global population is a rise in global food consumption; demand for animal protein, in particular, is projected to rise by more than 50% (Vallat, 2012). In qualitative terms, however, the demand is for more natural products (Dry, 2013).

Venison is promoted as such and the market for it, albeit small in South Africa, is growing (Dry, 2013). The potential which venison holds to contribute to 'food security' is great (Flack, 2011: 37). Advocates of the ranching industry therefore believe a theory needs to be

debunked; this being that WBLU on 'private or communal land threatens food security by replacing livestock or crop production' (Oberam, 2012: 71) (see also du Toit, 2004; Barnett, 1997) .

Interviewee Eighteen (game butchery owner) stated that her main customers are biltong hunters. Significantly, of those ranchers interviewed, she confirmed that only *Interviewee Fifteen* commissions her to prepare his game meat. Majority of the ranchers attested that meat from trophy hunts would be eaten the same day, with portions being shared amongst their employees.

As advocates of venison, *Interviewees Eight* and *Eighteen's* reasoning are as follows:

1. It is free of hormones
2. It is low in saturated fat as game move further and more frequently than livestock
3. It is high in protein compared to other meat sources
4. It has a high content of iron, zinc and vitamin B12

Oberem (2012) substantiates his support for venison production by comparing the manner in which game species are killed to that of livestock (Oberem, 2012). Whilst livestock endure a crowded drive to the abattoir and are forced to suffer 'the smell and noise of the slaughter process', a 'quick and accurate brain shot in the veld seems far more acceptable' (Oberem, 2012: 71).

Presently, of the meat consumed in South Africa during the six month-long hunting season, the ranching industry is estimated to supply 10% through venison production (Oberem, 2012). Despite harbouring more than 50% of South Africa's ranches, the Limpopo province is not, however, in the top tier of exporters (Oberem, 2012).

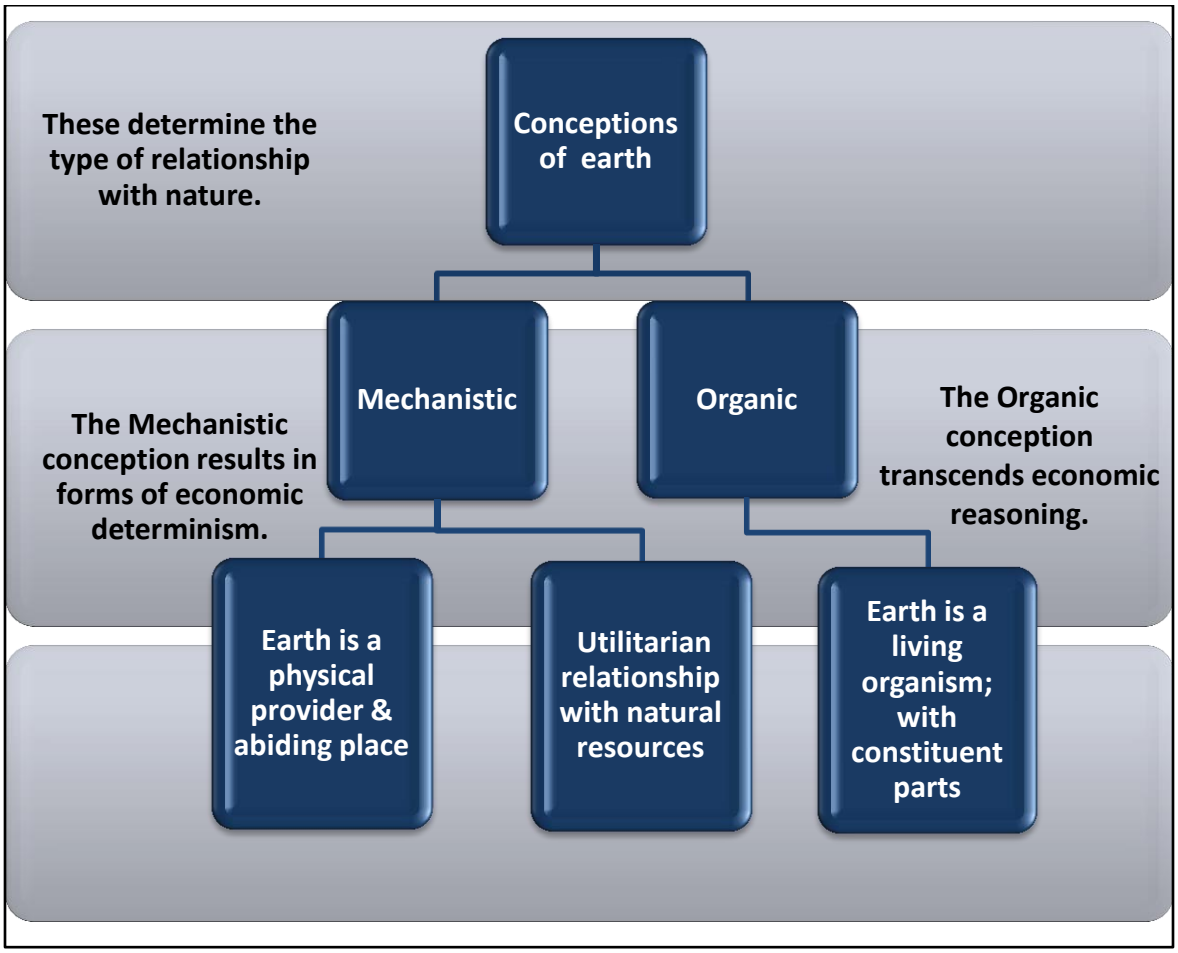
5.2.5 Valuation Systems

'If it pays, it stays' is a maxim used to commonly describe consumptive wildlife WBLU (ABSA, 2003: ii). Seemingly simplistic it, nevertheless, generates discussion on different valuation systems.

Broadly speaking, the 'Environmentalist's Dilemma' (conceptualized in Figure 5.8 overleaf) refers to the social obligation to conserve natural resources for present and future consumption versus the need to save nature from consumption, conserving it, rather, for its own sake (Norton, 2003: 31). In both instances, parameters are fixed with the discourse framed by long-term thinking (Norton, 2003). The main difference is that the former view carries stronger anthropocentric concerns.

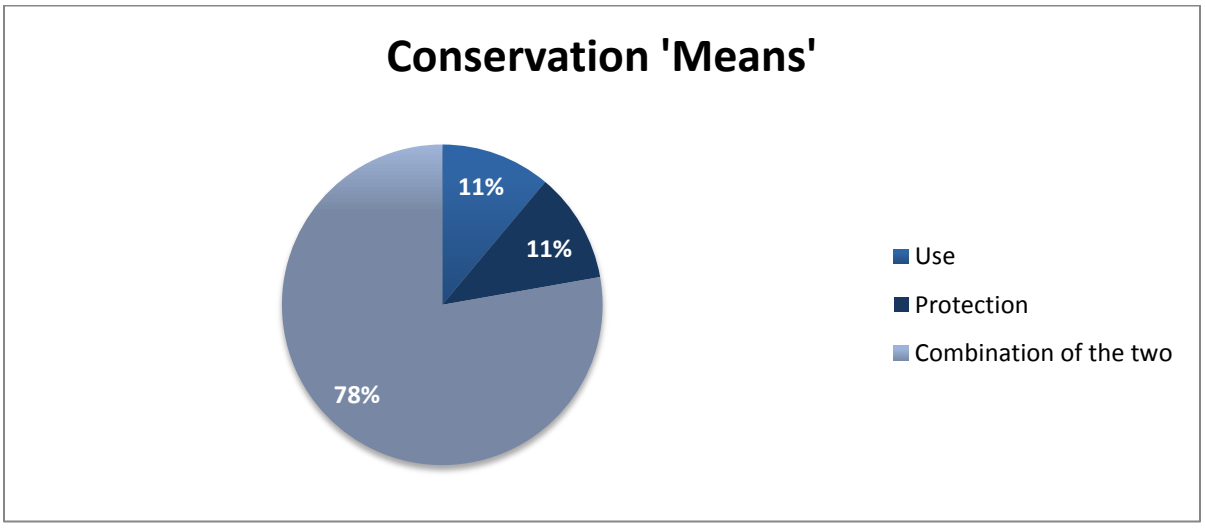
With the mechanistic conception, valuation is connoted in quantitative terms as it is tied to humans' use of nature (Adams and Hutton, 2007). Essentially an anthropocentric approach; wildlife is valued for its 'contributions to human welfare' – whether in the form of enterprising worth or traditional significance (Norton, 2003: 30) An alternative viewpoint; the organic conception, prizes nature for its' intrinsic value. Here, nature and wildlife are deemed protection-worthy, irrespective of their 'contributions to human welfare' (Norton, 2003: 30). When subscribing to this valuation system, wildlife conservation which occurs purely for anthropocentric reasons instead of animal welfare is challenged. The use versus protection debate is inextricably linked to the mechanistic versus organic conception of nature and was explored in the questionnaire, findings are indicated in Figure 5.9 (also overleaf).

Figure 5.8 The Environmentalist's Dilemma



Source: Leopold, 1979 and Norton, 2003: 14-19 and 30.

Figure 5.9 Questionnaire findings on 'Use versus Protection'



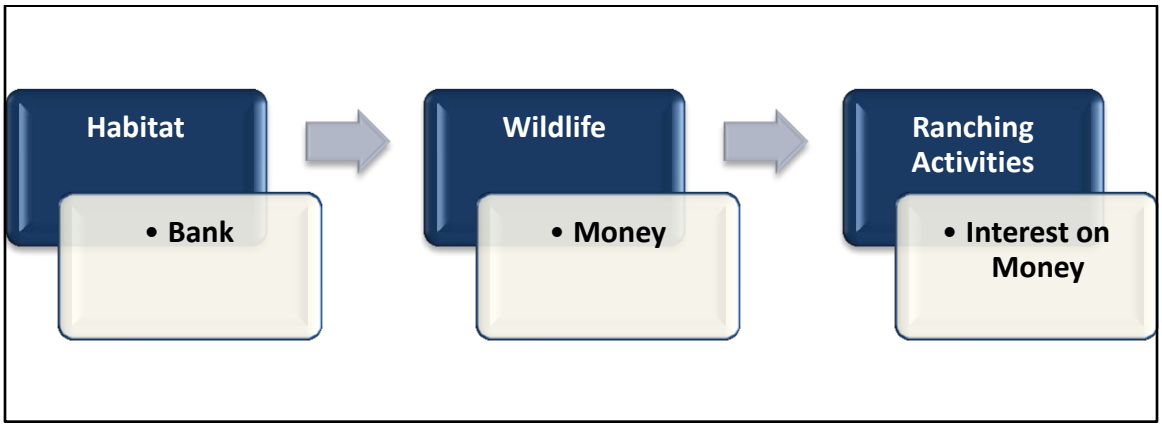
In favour of a combination; both *Participants Three* and *Five* (LEDET official and NPO communications officer) gave their respective conditions that this combination must occur 'in a controlled environment' and be 'managed correctly'. Significantly, economic determinism was apparent in the remarks and opinions of ranchers in the region. *Interviewee Eight,* for instance, commented that 'it's a reality that income has to be made off the game as it costs me around ¼ million (R 250, 000) to maintain this'. A perspective held by *Interviewee Eight* and a number of the ranchers is that the self-sustaining nature of ranching is due to the economic valuation of wildlife which facilitates utilisation thereof. This valuation helps 'to keep things running' (*Interviewee Twelve).*

Interviewee Six meanwhile, remarked that the financial returns of ranching is implicit when considering the need to 'survive and thrive', but ultimately, he ranches for his 'love of the bush'.

Interviewee One also affirmed that he ranches owing to his love for the wild, but it is his 'passion as opposed to profit' which keeps things running. Significantly, he was one along with three others who are deemed 'absentee ranchers' because they are away from the region for much of the year (*Interviewee Six).*

'Proprietorship and price' will govern wildlife conservation on land that is not under official PA status (Child and Chitsike, 2000: 247). The former determines who has access to wildlife whilst the latter determines the type and amount of benefits to be accrued from ownership rights. Hurt and Ravn (2000) frame wildlife conservation objectives not only in terms of price, but profit; arguing that practices must be lucrative in order for humans to co-exist with wildlife. Their analogy is illustrated in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10 The Economics of Ranching



Source: Hurt & Ravn, 2000

Such arguments point to what proponents and practitioners of ranching feel is simply a socio-economic reality, wherein, the provision of incentives for 'sustainable use' is argued as integral to the conservation agenda (Dry, 2013). Child and Chitsike (2000) reinforce this viewpoint by stating that 'unless wildlife is priced, it is difficult to comprehend the significance of conserving it' (Child and Chitsike, 2000: 248).

Proponents of the organic conception will find reason to refute this statement – a finding evinced by the questionnaire. Explored in the questionnaire was the possibility that 'PAs are increasingly becoming 'cash cows' for economic development and service delivery rather than biodiversity protection' (Carruthers, 2007: 9). Contrasting standpoints emerged:

> It would not make economic sense to eliminate your asset base (wildlife, game reserves and game parks) and running this into the ground, as your long-term economic returns would be put into jeopardy. If a PA is a 'cash cow' it would likely be sustainable in the long-term (*Participant Six*).
>
> Here lies the danger of the 'use' argument: when the 'cash cow' dries up, the value of natural resources die. The argument in favour of protecting resources for their biodiversity value, in addition to the value they represent in terms of ecosystem services, would hold more water (*Participant Two*).

Participant Ten (wildlife sanctuary owner), highly critical of the economic incentive underlying consumptive WBLU, believes 'sustainable utilization' is misunderstood:

> It has all become an excuse for blatant exploitation and biodiversity protection no longer matters. In South Africa, outside national parks, landowners protect what they deem important; or what they see as a commodity to generate short-term revenue.

Conversely, *Participant Eleven* (game capture specialist) stated that 'very few PAs actually show a profit; the more you develop them, the less visitors you will attract purely because then you are taking away the very reason people go there'. His comment speaks to the notion of ranches as 'getaways'.

Valuation in terms of proprietorship and price dynamics by *Interviewee Four* was especially noticeable:

> It is a very simple formula at work here. Placing value on the animals' head creates economic value, generating conservation. When the animals' economic value is taken away, the reality is that conservation falls away or goes out the back door.

Encountering similar attitudes has lead Carruthers (2008: 163) to concur with Grossman *et al.* (1999) that regarding ranching, essence is inseparable from functionality:

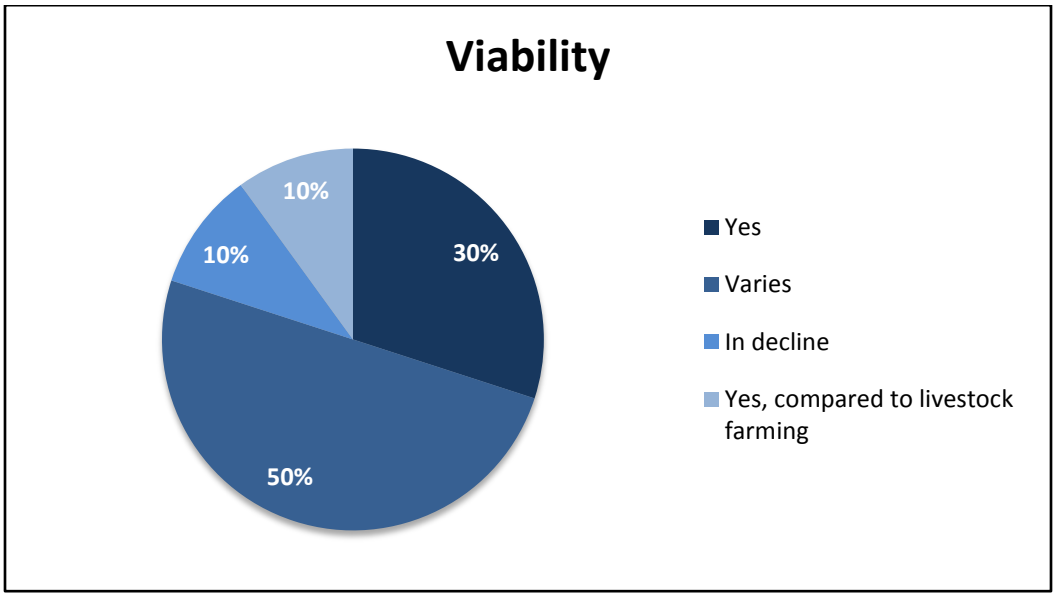
> Game ranching is the commercially-oriented stocking and use of game. It differs from conservation since production-related concerns rather than ecological or biodiversity concerns dominate.

This insight is re-enforced by a comment from WRSA's Managing Director that 'in the final analysis it is a simple matter of economics' (Alberts, 2012: 5).

5.2.6 Viability and Industry Success

Interviewee Sixteen believes the notion that conservation must pay for itself is necessitated by government's lack of adequate funding to facilitate large-scale and long-term conservation projects. To secure the perpetuity of private conservation initiatives, economic returns, in his view, are essential. If ranching in the region is to guarantee this, viability becomes important. The question of whether ranching practices currently results in economic viability was posed to the ranchers; the responses are given in Figure 5.11 overleaf.

Figure 5.11 Assessment of viability at study sites



Numerous reasons were given as to why viability varies; weather and reduced trophy hunting were cited as strong determinants (*Interviewees One, Six, Eight* and *Twelve).* Trophy hunting's profitability can be impacted upon by factors and events occurring outside a country (Barnett and Patterson, 2006). Many trophy hunters visiting South Africa come from the United States and Western Europe; countries which were subject to collapsing financial markets during the 2008 global economic recession (Kock *et al.*, 2012). *Interviewees One* and *Four* attributed the decrease in trophy hunting to this recession whilst *Interviewee Six* stated that those still pursuing the sport would resort to hunting cheaper plains game.

As illustrated by Dreo's sustainability model, the ranching industry's claim towards sustainability - and accompanying success - will not only turn upon practices being 'viable' but 'bearable' and 'equitable' too. Accordingly, where benefits are being accumulated becomes vital to consider.

Ranching which benefits only a select few can instil distaste in many communities. Such distaste can be traced back to the perception of PAs as being reserved for a certain elite during the colonial and apartheid eras. The fences-and-fines approach associated with PAs in

the past can thus be linked to ranching today (Buscher and Dietz, 2005). Yet, arguably, community involvement and their realisation of benefits are essential for fulfilling sustainability's social dimension. *Participant One* (academic researcher) was of the following view regarding this matter: 'I don't think that it is possible to achieve long-term, sustainable conservation in a democratic country without the support of local communities'.

Fairly engaging the community can be highly influential in determining the industry's success. In a region marked by competition from mining and citrus and livestock farming, heed must be taken by the ranching industry. Importance is thus placed on having incentives such as employment, better infrastructure and education directed at local communities who participate in conservation: 'Empowering communities is key to them supporting the PA' (*Participant Five,* NPO communications officer) . Indeed, if the ranchers are aiming for longevity, inclusion of local communities is essential.

5.3. Ranching: The Social Dimension

5.3.1 Labour

The Mapungubwe region is viewed as a key growth point, serving as a 'hub' for the province's development (SANP, 2008: 8). It was in conjunction with the government's 'Expanded Public Works Programme', that MNP's 'Interpretive Centre' was built by a workforce recruited from 'disadvantaged communities' within the park's environs (see Figure 5.12 overleaf) (SANP, 2008: 15-16).

The ranching industry claims to trigger employment owing to the multiplier effect resulting from its associated practices (Flack, 2011). The industry also claims to depend more on skilled labourers since ranchers are keen to equip their staff with expertise that ensures visitors will want to return to their ranches (Bohlmann, 2012; *Interviewee Eight*).

Figure 5.12 Construction workers at MNP

Source: Ramage *et al.*, 2010: 20.

Owner of Vhembe Game Reserve professes the following on the reserve's website:

> At Mapungubwe Game Reserve, we realize our people are our most valuable resource. We are constantly working to improve the living conditions, education, health and welfare of our staff and the surrounding community (Rahmqvist, 2013).[27]

Owing to water scarcity in the region a number of boreholes were created across the property 'to increase supply for both human and wildlife consumption'. (Rahmqvist, 2013) Community support and welfare consideration was not only substantiated in terms of this project but also, when building accommodation:

> I have not engaged any outside "white" building contractors. Instead I have used very skilled working foreman and working teams from our black community. (Rahmqvist, 2013).

With such a large investment in the region, he would do well to invest and support the community. Yet he was not the only one making such a claim, *Interviewees One, Eight, Fourteen* and *Fifteen* claimed to constantly support and train their staff to deliver good visitor

[27] Whilst the reserve is currently known as 'Vhembe Game Reserve', the owner has initiated efforts to rename it 'Mapungubwe Game Reserve'.

experiences. These ranchers all believe that capacity-building would serve to aid them in the long-term. *Interviewee One,* for instance, sent his chef for a six month training course in Johannesburg. *Interviewee Fourteen,* meanwhile, has a job shadowing process in place whereby employees are meant 'to learn from each other'.

Notably, however, employment ranged from four to twelve persons on the ranches; with the exception of those run by *Interviewees Fifteen* and *Sixteen,* where such details remained undisclosed. Particularly, at *Interviewee Fourteen's* ranch, employing only South African citizens and keeping employees from the same family is preferred as this 'establishes a relationship'. When in need of extra help, *Interviewee Fourteen* employs part-time workers from the community near Dendron.

Various activities on the ranches afford different categories of employment; with hunting and breeding, as well as ecotourism and hospitality-related jobs. Significantly, when only hunting is engaged, ranches tend to exhibit 'a net loss in employment' since hunting is seasonal (Spierenburg, pers.comm. 25/05/2012). *Interviewee Six,* who caters mainly for trophy hunting, confirmed this:

> [sic] Every year I recruit the same workers who are happy and economically-able to work the six months of the season and then bugger around for the rest of the year because their tips are so good and because they also just love the thrill of it all so much.

5.3.2 Job Creation

Despite the claims made towards creating employment, job creation at the ranches studied is not extensive since they were not being intensively run. It was observed to be insular at three ranches in particular, with employees either being from the same family or tasked with carrying out multiple roles.

At *Interviewee Six's* ranch, for instance, the goat-herder was also responsible for maintenance and gardening duties around the lodge; the employee responsible for accommodation bookings would oversee *Interviewee Six's* children whilst the employee preparing guests' meals would also assist resident ecologists *Interviewees Two and Seven*.

Fieldwork was carried out at a time that coincided with labour disputes in the agricultural sector; with demands being made across South Africa to increase farm workers' wages. Since *Interviewees One, Six* and *Eight* determined employees' wages in accordance with hospitality sector rates, they deemed the wage hike irrelevant. *Interviewee Three,* however commented on how the wage hike would affect employee dynamics. He was instructed by the ranch-owner that, of the six men making up the labour force, three should be made redundant. He stated that this would not serve the ranch well since, firstly, the current employees had years' worth of vital experience. He commented on the predicaments that these three men could face following redundancy since all were aged but, nevertheless, breadwinners. Moreover, fewer employees could foster increased mechanisation: 'this is not good for the veld as I can't tell a machine to go around the tree, but I can tell a person' (*Interviewee Three).*

Observable from interactions between the ranchers and their employees was a sense of contentment wherein, relationships appeared to be characterised by mutual respect. Where it proved possible to verify if such interactions were genuine, conversations were held with employees at the ranches *Wintersveld, Bavaria, Corea, Mapesu* and *Didemus.* All such conversations solicited comments that employees were being considered, with their and their families' needs being accounted for.

Job creation is a foremost concern in South Africa's rural areas owing to the view that it can develop skill-sets and ensure well-being (DEA, 2012). Within the province's Vhembe district, focus is placed on the 'reduction of unemployment and the promotion of economic growth' (LED, 2013). At present, unemployment in this district stands at 53% whilst the poverty rate is 32% (VDM, 2012). Tourism and agriculture are deemed 'significant' contributors here; with the latter industry contributing 4.4% to South Africa's overall agricultural output (LED, 2013). Tourism holds the potential to be greatly 'enhanced' wherein the aim is to develop 'quality tourism infrastructure' (LED, 2013)[28]. Ranching falls

[28] The 'potential' identified in the LED Report (2013) is subject to verification once the 2014 LED report for the Province is released as it will contain details on whether various deliverables have been fulfilled and if the infrastructure has been enhanced in any way .

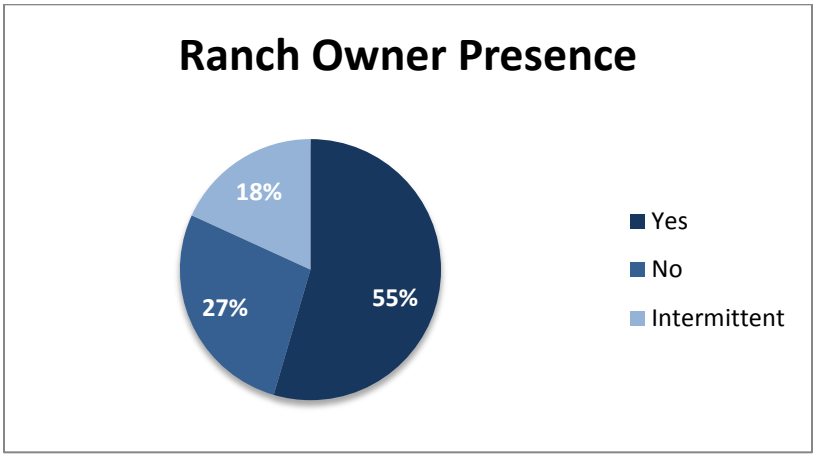
under both the 'agriculture' and 'tourism' sectors and hence, its contributions are considered accordingly (*Participant Three*).

5.3.3 Ranch Owner Presence

Addressing the issue of absentee ranchers can probe claims of sustainably. Figure 5.13 evinces ranch owner presence for the study sites. Often, the image projected of ranchers is that of wealthy businessmen, with a love for the bushveld and the money to fulfil their desires, buying pockets of land to retire to as a getaway (Brooks, 2012).

Interviewee Six expressed dismay towards absentee ranchers who place reliance on the management models suggested by eco-consultants and then 'call the shots from their comfy offices'. He remarked that 'it's not always the best way' as they were not present, on a daily basis, to observe even 'the smallest of changes' that could affect sustainability. *Interviewee Seven* (resident ecologist) believes that ranchers who remain on their properties develop a better understanding of the nature and wildlife found there, as they are immersed in it on a more consistent basis. In her view, such ranchers' efforts are better guided by long-term thinking and attuned knowledge.

Figure 5.13 Ranch Owner presence



Discernible amongst the interviewees were various aspirations for pursuing ranching. *Interviewee One* readily admitted that he ranches as a 'hobby' whilst *Interviewee Fifteen* operates his ranch as a livelihood source.

The ranch managed by *Interviewee Three,* meanwhile, operates in strict accordance with ecological sustainability and a conservational impetus. Here, care is taken towards maintaining the property in a manner that supports wildlife (particularly through breeding initiatives); limits human impact and presence (electricity and telephone poles and cables were placed underground to have the ranch appear as natural as possible), whilst planning for the 'long-term' (*Interviewee Three*). Of significance is that this ranch is owned by an 'absentee rancher' and hence, it can be argued that whilst ranch owner presence is important, effective management plays a crucial part.

5.3.4 Encouraging a 'Sustainability' ethic

The importance of conservation which ranchers ascribe to their activities and instil in employees can be used to measure if goals are directed at sustainability. Moreover, the type of knowledge and extent to which ranchers impart such knowledge can be used to assess their vision for their ranches and the region, as a whole.

Interviewees Six, Eight and *Fifteen* are members of the 'Greater Mapungubwe Network'; a forum consisting of stakeholders with an interest in the Mapungubwe region. This forum facilitates the sharing of research, advice and relevant concerns through periodic meetings and a newsletter which is available to the public. This network aims to raise awareness of the range of conservational and social efforts being made throughout the GMTFCA which include the following:

1. Children in the Wilderness (CITW) programme - directed at facilitating 'sustainable conservation through leadership development of rural children' (GMN, 2013: 7)
2. Community engagement by the Mogalakwena Craft Art Development Foundation (MCADF) - focus placed on skill development through weaving, embroidery, pottery, beading, first aid and computer literacy (GMA, 2013).

3. Wildlife research (Aerial elephant surveys, Road-kill research and mitigation, Green Dogs surveys, Ground Hornbill project)

The *Green Dogs Conservation* initiative based at *Corea* ranch, encourages conservation. Through a newsletter entitled 'The Green Dogs Times', *Interviewees Two* and *Seven* (resident ecologist) are eager to keep stakeholders in the region abreast of their initiatives. Conversations held with both these ecologists revealed their understandings of sustainability and the need for conservation in the region. Regarding the controversial aspect of hunting as a form of conservation, *Interviewee Two* remarked that 'ultimately, the huge demand for hunting keeps the populations sustained; it keeps the animals in the system'.

Keeping 'the animals in the system' is an objective held by *Interviewee Sixteen* and Vhembe Game Reserve's owner. To achieve this, their aim is to have the reserve included within MNP, thereby allowing the property to serve as 'a buffer zone' for wildlife (*Interviewee Sixteen*). This strategy is directed at inclusion wherein, it could allow agriculture to continue within the park whilst simultaneously expanding the area for wildlife to traverse.

Interviewee Sixteen expressed the following view: 'no nature conservation project can survive without some form of development so Mapungubwe, as a conservation area, should pay for itself. There is a need to economically sustain the region and agriculture contributes to this'. Hunting is currently offered at the reserve but the intention is to phase it out as a sport and only resort to it for 'keeping the correct numbers' (*Interviewee Sixteen*). He further remarked that while there is 'a fine balance between nature conservation and sustainability, there just needs to be sensible and realistic guidelines in place and what are appropriate land uses will and can result'.

CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to explore the aspect of tension between the ranching industry and LR by answering the following research question:

Account for the tension between Game Ranching, as a form of sustainable conservation, and Land reform practices in Mapungubwe, South Africa

This chapter contains my conclusions on this study. Based on research findings, these conclusions mark my reflection on the tension, the need for sustainability and the means by which to achieve sustainability through well-managed, ethical and inclusive ranching.

6.1 Primary Conclusions

Regarding Objective 1, a conceptual tension does characterise ranching. Such tension arises from the opposing valuation systems applied to WBLU whereby a view exists that ranching does not contribute to sustainable conservation. An alternate notion that it is a form of sustainable conservation also exists however, with sustainability conditioned upon a range of factors.

Regarding Objective 2, where a contextual understanding of game ranching and land reform was sought, the following was discovered for the Mapungubwe region:

1. Not all interviewees agree on the range of factors governing sustainability, nonetheless, management, long-term thinking, social and institutional support are deemed crucial.
2. Ranching practices are characterized by different forms of WBLU.
3. Not all land claims are being made where ranching occurs, but tension exists where certain landowners are uncooperative during the negotiation process or vociferously expressive of their stance against LR.

4. Internal tension exists within LR itself; ranching is not the sole cause of delays in processing claims. Overlapping claims, budgetary constraints and over-ambitious targets affect claim processing and settlement.
5. Tension towards the mining industry is evident.

Tension is indeed present, but it is of a multi-dimensional nature

6.2 Perceptions of Ranching

> The idea that conservation involves the safeguarding of animals for shooting is potentially repugnant to many (Adams, 2009: 135).

Hunting is gradually gaining acceptance within conservation circles owing to the financial benefits generates for conservation (Adams, 2009). Yet as a form of consumptive WBLU, hunting essentially contributes to conservation through use as opposed to protection. Now, the ranching industry claims to operate within a controlled environment, with both legislation and science guiding operations. Moreover, its potential to 'green' the economy is increasingly being touted (Dry, 2013). To dispel critics, proponents encourage a more holistic understanding of ranching (Oberem, 2012).

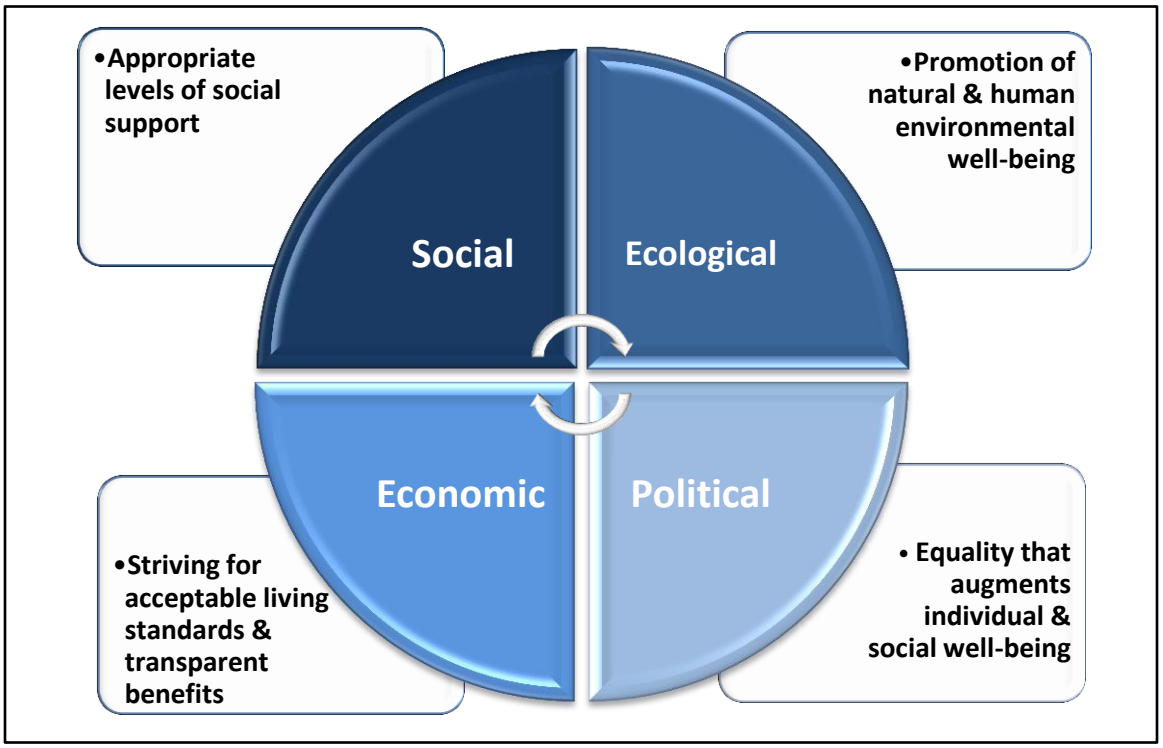
Significantly, a research finding was that nine of the ranchers were in favour of the industry gaining better perception within society, whilst two expressed indifference. Both *Interviewees Eight* and *Nine* voiced concern that there is 'little interest' expressed towards thorough and objective research into ranching practices. *Interviewee Nine* asserted that such an informational gap can 'skew public perceptions'. Additionally, seven out of nine questionnaire participants believe ranchers can contribute to a green economy. Not one to subscribe to this belief, *Participant Eight* (academic researcher) commented on the danger of the perceptions which

the industry encourages: 'the problem is that often in public perception, and maintained by the hunting industry, all use of wildlife is falsely viewed as forms of conservation'.

6.3 A Conservation Culture

Ommer (2007) captures the concept of 'sustainability' whereby a given system can be marked by the conditions shown in Figure 6.0:

Figure 6.0 A Sustainability System



Source: Ommer, 2007: 18.

In comparison to Dreo's sustainability model, a fourth dimension has been added: political consideration. Central to the political dimension is the view that equality carries the prospect of furthering both individual and social well-being. Now, as conservation is both governed and dependent on people, it falls within the ambit of political ecology (Adams and Hutton, 2007; Robinson, 2011). Essentially, political ecology is a field which holds that 'social and

environmental considerations are inextricably linked' – a view that is subscribed to in my conclusions (Adams and Hutton, 2007: 149).

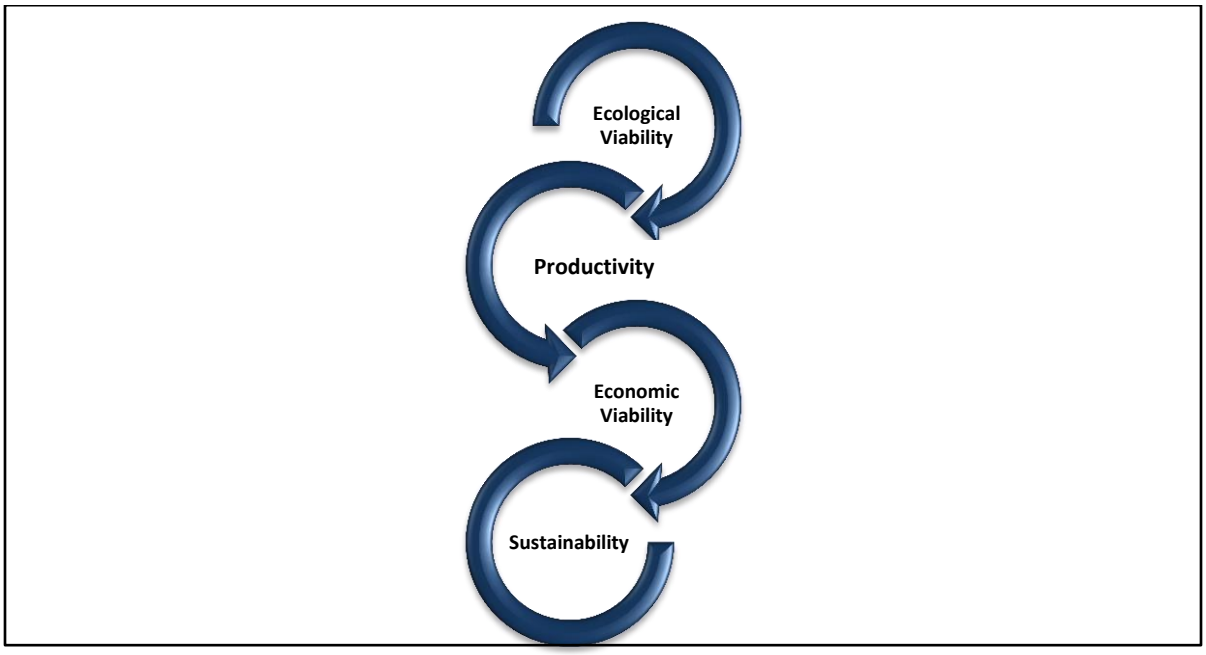
6.3.1 Achieving Environmental Sustainability

A range of factors can determine the environmental sustainability of ranching. Compliance with relevant regulations, facilitating rehabilitation and proactively dealing with predator problems all place ranchers in good stead towards achieving sustainability. Such actions are positively viewed, whereby constant improvements within the industry, in terms of integrity and efficacy, can augment biodiversity conservation and safeguard ecosystems and their inherent processes (Chardonnet and Bel, 2012).

Notably, the reality *Interviewee Four* alludes to that 'once fences are put up, management becomes crucial' is strongly heeded by ranchers in the region. Whilst some manage through careful maintenance of the natural environment (*Interviewees Three* and *Fourteen*), others (*Interviewees Four, Six, Eight* and *Fifteen)* facilitate hunting and live sales to keep game populations in check. As the aim here is to maintain the grazer unit, this has a 'spill-over effect' whereby not only is 'the veld conserved but species such as aardvark and pangolin too' (*Interviewee Three)*.

Controversy surrounding genetic breeding, meanwhile, is tangible for such practices have been vouched to give 'the industry a new life' (Oberem, 2012: 71). Nonetheless, opposition towards the demand for 'unusual trophies' exists (Rodrigues, 2004: 11). Indeed, opposition towards ranching altogether, is prevalent: 'these 'postage stamp' ranches are game-fenced, stocked before each hunting season, re-stocked again and are not ecologically viable wildlife areas' (*Participant Twelve,* wildlife conservation author). Ranchers in the region would likely contend this perspective owing to their promotion of the relationship illustrated in Figure 6.1 overleaf, whereby ecological viability can catalyse practices in a manner that allows productivity and economic viability to translate into sustainability.

Figure 6.1 The Off-shoots of Ecological Viability



Source: Author

6.3.2 Sustaining the Economy

Despite the prevalence of a mechanistic perspective amongst the ranchers interviewed whereby economic reasoning governs management, many do understand the organic conception of nature. Indeed, *Interviewees Three, Five, Eight, Fourteen, Fifteen* and *Sixteen* evinced that aligning oneself with both a mechanistic and organic conception is possible owing to a need for balance. In departing from this understanding they are able to economically benefit and establish a livelihood by conserving the nature which they love.

Interviewee Fifteen, recognised that the 'reality of nature conservation is that money is needed to sustain nature conservation efforts'. Hence 'proprietorship and price' dynamics characterise ranching here with numerous comments on how weather, supplementary feeding, illegal hunting and financial markets affect profitability (Child and Chitsike, 2000). Profitability, in turn, determines viability and this steers discussion towards ecotourism potential and a need for its consequent development, especially as the region falls within the

GMTFCA. Yet given *Interviewee Eight's* comment 'only in certain places does ecotourism pay for wildlife conservation', it is likely that many of these ranchers will practice both consumptive and non-consumptive WBLU.

Viability is further determined by operations being equitable. Although the ranchers attest to engaging communities in the region by employing locals, such empowerment is restricted to a certain few. Community inclusion and engagement is greatest at ranches owned by *Interviewees Four, Eight, Fifteen* and *Sixteen,* who are keen to capacitate their workforce, with the latter two ranchers encouraging skill development in the region as a whole.

Significantly, community empowerment can be mutually beneficial:

> Empowering the previously disadvantaged is vital for them to experience benefits from PAs and also to gain their support in conservation. It requires dedication and willingness to help others, obstacles include money and time (*Participant Five,* NPO communications officer).

Since the aforementioned four ranchers all have respective investments in the region, community engagement on their part can, however, be linked back to an economic imperative. Ultimately, an insight gained is that many of the ranchers prize entrepreneurship above stewardship – whether this is right is debatable, but there must be acknowledgement that owing to the former, the latter becomes possible. As Levitt and Dubner (2009) note, 'Morality, it could be argued, represents the way people would like the world to work whereas economics represents how it actually works' (Levitt and Dubner, 2009: 13).

6.3.3 Securing Social Sustainability

In the Mapungubwe region, efforts are being made to uplift rural communities through certain private initiatives such as the MCADF and by individuals at Vhembe Game Reserve. Amongst these actors there is recognition of communities' role in conservation and the need to maximise various opportunities for the benefit of the region. Such recognition translates into conservation that is 'not only for the sake of wildlife' as *Participant Two* (environmental journalist) notes, but 'also for future sustainability'. Most private ranchers, however, only engage with communities by offering employment that is of a limited nature. Whilst

employees are provided for, especially during hunting seasons when venison is made available to them and their families, the multiple roles held by employees essentially allow the ranchers to benefit from a small and hence, cheap labour force.

Significantly, despite the ranching industry encouraging better-informed understandings of how their practices are a form of conservation, a conceptual tension is, nevertheless, present. Whilst conservation is best achieved through a combination of both use and protection, I believe that conservation which is of a sustainable nature will only result if all dimensions of sustainability are given equal consideration. In the Mapungubwe region, the issue of unresolved land claims undermines the social dimension since ranchers are contributing to delays in the LR process. Admittedly, certain landowners are in favour of co-operation, but others were found to appear more hostile and disobliging. Whilst no direct link can be identified between the increase in ranches here and the land claims being made, it is apparent from the data collected that a number of the ranch study sites are, nevertheless, under claim. Essentially this establishes a correlation between these ranches and the LR process. As noted by Levitt and Dubner (2009), a correlation can simply imply that 'a relationship exists between two factors' (Levitt and Duber, 2009: 10). Here, the sensitivity and volatility of the relationship between the ranching industry and the LR process is discernible: it is one of multi-faceted and diversely-justified tension.

David Mabunda (2011: 43), CEO of SANP, believes that reservation expressed by the DRDLR toward the ranching industry is 'understandable' since 'there are few, if any, black game ranchers'. If ranchers in the Mapungubwe region are intent on achieving sustainability, more inclusive approaches are required since, ultimately, 'a commitment to social justice and human rights is a necessary element in a legitimate social mandate for conservation' (Fortwrangler, 2003: 168).

6.4 Progress, Power and Perpetuation – Altering the Trajectory

Within the Mapungubwe region nature is indeed being 'used as a spatial and temporal marker' whereby game fences signify where conservation occurs (Soper, 1995: 187). These fences, however, also mark where exclusion results whereby certain rightful claimants are

being denied access. This scenario is unfolding due to 'cultural constructions' associated with WBLU on ranches (Carruthers, 2006: 1). Such constructions turn on the 'African wilderness experience' where nature is being marketed as a 'getaway' (Brooks *et al.*, 2010: 261-262).

In the past, 'nature' and wilderness were viewed as 'the antithesis to culture' (Brooks, 2000: 64). Such connotations stemmed from colonial ideologies which romanticized nature as an escape into 'Eden'; away from the European city lifestyle (Adams and McShane: 2006). Similar connotations are present today, with nature offering a retreat and rejuvenation from essentially, any city lifestyle. The neo-liberalization of WBLU has facilitated this and ranchers, in response to market forces, are championing such cultural constructions. Ranching can thus be construed as a form of incentive-based conservation and it is such 'imaginative and material values' which currently characterise the Mapungubwe region (Carruthers, 2006: 1). Wolmer's (2005: 262) insight supports this argument whereby, he states that 'wilderness is not a fixed category standing 'out of time' but a political, aesthetic (and latterly economic) decision about what constitutes an appropriate landscape'.

Given that exclusion is a by-product of such constructions and values, however, is significant. It alludes to the reality that wildlife conservation, specifically, is framed within the context of power; in terms of who controls and accesses the land and its resources. It further signifies that wildlife conservation is not yet marked by progressiveness and rather, is embedded in a cyclic progression. Moreover, it highlights a trend for the ranching industry's power to perpetuate and preserve certain vested interests.

To break such a cycle and create not one but many 'appropriate' landscapes that can be heterogeneously appropriated, inclusion is recommended. Given the linkage between social and environmental dimensions, recognition must be made that conservation will only be marked by progressiveness and sustainability if all the components of a sustainability system are considered as fairly as possible.

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