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Nature conservation in changing socio-political conditions at Londolozi Private Game Reserve

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Faculty of Humanities

University of Cape Town

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Worldwide, nature conservation paradigms have changed markedly since the turn of the 19th century. These changes have affected the way that conservation has been practiced in the eastern lowveld of South Africa. At the same time socio-political conditions in South Africa have also undergone enormous shifts which have affected the distribution of rural people and land use practices in the rural lowveld. This study examines private nature conservation and its relationship to local rural people in the lowveld using Londolozi Private Game Reserve as a case study.

Various methods of data collection were used. These included focus group interviews with local rural people, a survey questionnaire with lodge staff, informal interviews with land owners, and visits to rural homes and schools. In addition the author drew on eight years of work and research experience on private game reserves in and around the study area.

The application of fortress conservation in the lowveld resulted in the removal of black people from Crown and privately owned land, land that they were living on. They were removed to the western borders of the current Sabi Sand Wildtuin (SSW). This complete exclusion of local people from the conservation land in the Kruger National Park (KNP) and SSW remained the status quo until Londolozi, in 1976 and almost at least a decade before the rest of the conservation world began to engage with local black people on its borders. Londolozi paid particular attention to the rural staff working at the lodge.

In the 1990's fortress conservation was replaced with community conservation approaches which sought to use market-based strategies to demonstrate the value of conservation to rural people bordering conservation areas. Londolozi retracted from its essentially bottom-up approach and implemented a number of infrastructural, management devised, top-down community projects in the local areas. It did this through the Conservation Corporation Africa (CC Africa) Rural Investment Fund. These projects, although more obvious to the wider community

outside the reserve, were inefficient and wasted money in some cases. In 2007, Londolozi returned to focussing on individual rural staff members rather than on infrastructural community development projects. The effect has been very positive for the 200 or so rural staff at Londolozi, but the wider community outside the fences sees little benefit or point to this approach. The community lodged a number of land claims on the SSW and Londolozi. The merits of the only gazetted claim on Londolozi would seem to be tenuous at best.

This study argues that the capacity and social cohesion of the communities bordering the SSW are insufficient for a fully community-owned and run ecotourism operation to be feasible. It is argued that the status quo, with regards to Londolozi, while not perfect, is the most sustainable for conservation and the development of rural people in the area. This will remain the case until capacity and clear accountable leadership develops in the communities bordering the SSW.

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List of abbreviations

ANC - African National Congress

CAMPFIRE - Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

CC Africa - Conservation Corporation Africa

CBNRM - Community Based Natural Resource Management

CDF - Community development forum

CPA - Communal Property Association

GoRSA - Government of the Republic of South Africa

GLTP - Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

KNP - Kruger National Park

ICDP - Integrated Conservation and Development Project

CRLR - Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights (Land Claims Commission)

PTO - Permission to occupy document

RDP - Reconstruction and Development Programme

SANParks - South African National Parks Board

SGR - Sabi Game Reserve

SSW - Sabi Sand Wildtuin

TCL - The Transvaal Consolidated Lands and Exploration Company

TFCA - Transfrontier conservation area

WCS - World Conservation Strategy

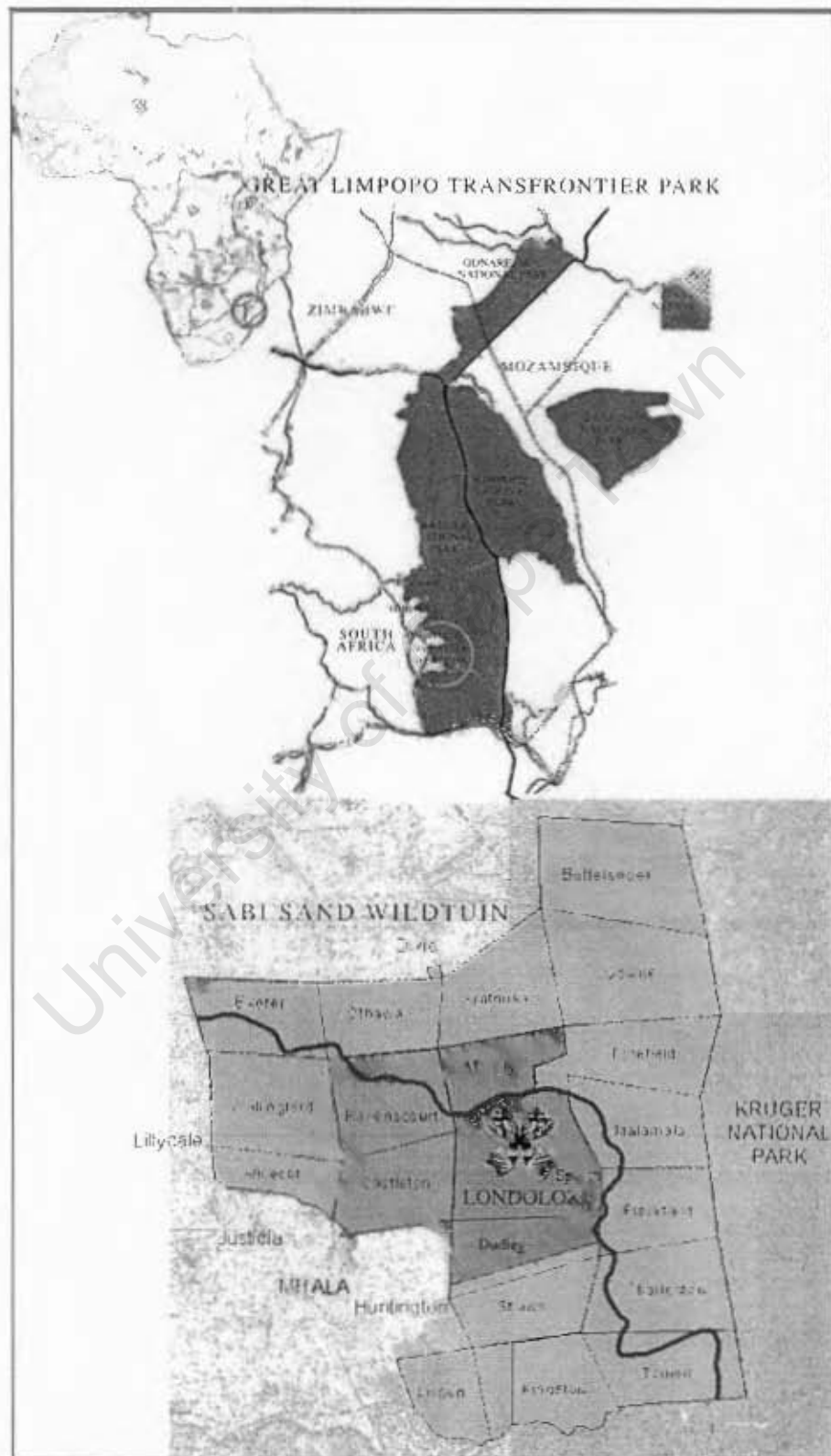
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Chapter 1. Locating Londolozi in wider conservation debates

Since the turn of the 19th century, changes in conservation paradigms, both locally and internationally have affected the way that humans interact with land and wildlife. Initially nature reserves sought to protect animals for sport hunters by excluding certain population groups from land and wildlife (Carruthers 1995). This approach developed into strict preservation without utilisation or disturbance, and saw people as external to nature. The rise of neo-liberalism in the 1970s saw a paradigm shift which commodified nature and asserted that it should pay for itself (Buscher and Webster 2007). Ecotourism became the major vehicle through which this was to be possible (Sims-Castley *et al* 2005). The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an appreciation of the need to include the local people (predominantly non-European) who live around protected areas (Inamdar *et al* 1999, Phuthego and Chanda 2004), hence various local community-based approaches to conservation areas have been and continue to be employed. The scale of these approaches was enlarged in the 1990s through the move towards transfrontier conservation (Warburton-Lee 1999). As this study will show, these changes were accommodated in, and also affected Londolozi and its conservation strategies.

Concurrently, Sparta and Londolozi, which lie on the borders of the Kruger National Park (KNP) (Figure 1), have been privately owned since 1926. Sparta was originally a private hunting farm and remained as such until the early 1970s when it began to develop into one of the world's premier photographic safari destinations. With the rise of neo-liberalism, the business that is Londolozi was born out of the realisation that Sparta could earn a living and in so doing pay for itself and provides income for its owners (Varty 1997).

Figure 1: Map of study area



Londolozi diverged from popular conservation thinking of the time by engaging with local people from the late 1970s (Varty 2008). The community-conservation paradigm was only widely accepted and adopted by conservationists and ecotourism operators in the 1990s (Abakerli 2001, Young *et al* 2001, Brown 2002, Adams *et al* 2004, Turner 2004, Barret and Arcese 2005, Burns and Barrie 2005). Londolozi's community development initiatives have often differed from other popular approaches in that they have more often than not been bottom-up and developed through extensive consultation with staff hailing from local rural areas (Londolozi 2005, Varty 2007).

Changes in Londolozi can also be ascribed to political changes in South Africa. The country had undergone monumental political and economic changes since the turn of the 20th century. The creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 saw the end of property rights for black people in South Africa (Sparks 2003a). In 1948, the apartheid government vigorously implemented the policy of homelandisation which saw the creation of homelands such as Gazankulu on the borders of the KNP (Arnold 2006). This policy resulted in overpopulation of the homeland areas and small scale farmers struggled to subsist on the ecologically marginal land that made up the Bantustans (Arrighi 1971, Morris 1965, King 2007). The homeland development policy also threatened private land that is now the Sabi Sand Wildtuin (SSW) because the government wanted more land in Gazankulu for the settlement of black people (Varty 1997).

Currently, there is a large number of people living in poverty on the borders of the SSW while private land owners are earning a good living from the land in the reserve. The privately owned land in the SSW is very valuable, generating an average of R5000 per hectare per year, while in Gazankulu, just across the fence, 14 years after the advent of democracy, land is still held in trust by the state and cannot be owned privately by the people who live on it and does not generate income (pers. comm. Varty 17/04/2008, Khoza pers. comm. 20/05/2008).

Meanwhile, the South African government has identified tourism as a major potential generator of income for rural people (Mahony and van Zyl 2002).

Ecotourism is an extremely important and lucrative sector of the tourism industry (Spenceley 2006). Ecotourism is relevant to this study because Londolozi lies very much at the forefront of this industry in South Africa. It is an excellent example of a high-end luxury ecotourism business operating in rural South Africa. Like many other such operations, it is a privately owned business and a game reserve which aims to promote biodiversity conservation, sustainability, profit and social responsibility. It has an annual turnover of roughly 60 million rands and is bounded by poor rural people where there is 60 – 70% unemployment rate (Shackleton 2000, Hendry 2004). Its history as a hunting farm and then a pioneering ecotourism venture and consequent interactions with local people hold important lessons for ecotourism operators and government if ecotourism is to benefit people the way that government hopes it will.

An examination of how Londolozi has adapted to the changes in conservation thinking and changing socio-political landscape in South Africa is instructive as it demonstrates the evolution of profitable private ecotourism in the rural lowveld. At the same time it shows the economic, social and developmental effects on local people through the employment of 220 people and thus indirect support of up to 2200 dependants in the former Gazankulu (Londolozi 2005). Over and above employment, all lodges within the SSW have a number of community-development projects where they engage with local people on various levels (Khoza pers. comm. 20/05/2008, Hendry pers. obs. 2000 - 2008). These projects include building classrooms and clinics, funding vegetable gardens and digging boreholes. It is important to look at the effectiveness of these projects from the point of view of the funders and the local people they are supposed to be helping.

Indeed, while the private SSW land owners try to make profits from their lodges, sometimes succeeding and sometimes not, the people living on the borders of the reserve have their own expectations of what the land and ecotourism operations could and should be providing for them. Local people living on the borders of the reserve have instituted various land claims on the farms of the SSW (Hartman 2003). This study refers to these claims in order to reflect on the potential ramifications of

successful land claims on the local ecotourism industry in light of prevailing local socio-political conditions.

From an examination of Londolozi's history, political changes in South Africa, local people, and conservation paradigms, this study argues that the current business practice at Londolozi, although not perfect, may well be the most sustainable for the foreseeable future. It suggests that with current socio-political, economic, land ownership and educational conditions, the existing private ecotourism setup is the most beneficial for the local economy and the conservation of biodiversity in the lowveld.

The remainder of this chapter will outline the aims and research question of the study, the background to the study area, the methodologies used and the structure of the work.

1.1 Aims and purpose of the study

International trends and approaches to nature conservation have undergone marked changes in the last century; from fortress conservation to various community based approaches, to transfrontier conservation strategies. At the same time South Africa has experienced enormous political changes from colonialism, to union, to apartheid, and finally democracy.

Using Londolozi as a case study, the research aim of the thesis is to understand how the approach to nature conservation on private game reserves in South Africa changed in accordance with the progression of local and international conservation trends and domestic political changes; and, in turn, how these changes have affected the articulation between conservation, private nature reserves and development.

Despite radical changes in the political landscape and conservation paradigms, ownership and the dividends derived from private nature reserves such as Londolozi have remained in the hands of private individuals. The study

investigates how Londolozi, as a conservation area and a business, has adapted to both political changes and shifting paradigms in nature conservation since 1926.

1.2 Background to the study

Londolozi Private Game Reserve is situated on the farm Sparta which lies in the middle of the SSW. The SSW borders the southern KNP and there are no fences between the KNP and the SSW. In this sense Londolozi is also now part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) (See Figure 1). Sparta has been owned by the same families since 1926 despite considerable changes in conservation trends and political transformation.

Londolozi, as it exists at present, is an exclusive luxury game lodge. It operates game viewing activities on four neighbouring farms (Dudley, Castleton, Ravenscourt and Marthly). Dudley, Ravenscourt and Castleton are owned by other private land owners and Londolozi pays a traversing fee to the owners of these farms. Sparta is owned jointly by Dave Varty, John Varty (brothers) and Alan Taylor. Marthly is owned jointly by Dave Varty, John Varty and Bruce Watson. The ecotourism business that is Londolozi is owned by Dave Varty, John Varty and Alan Taylor.

The lowveld areas around Londolozi have a turbulent history. Until the middle of the last century it would appear that the area never supported a large sedentary population for any length of time (Hartman 2003, Stevenson-Hamilton 1937). In 1926, Sparta was bought by Charles Varty (grandfather to Dave and John Varty) and Frank Unger (grandfather of Alan Taylor). Since then it has remained in the families' hands although how the farm has been used has changed markedly over the years. Initially, it was a hunting farm used only in the winter by the owners and a few friends. Today, Sparta is home to Londolozi, one of the premier game lodges in the world where people pay in excess of R6000 per person per night primarily to view and photograph the wildlife on offer there. This study investigates the role that changes in conservation paradigms, local politics and economics have played in changing practices and operations at Londolozi.

1.3 Methodology

In addition to the methods outlined below, the author has lived at Londolozi before the commencement of this study in 2007 and during the research period (i.e. 2007-2008) and continued to work in Londolozi after the study. He has occupied senior management positions and has an intimate knowledge of the workings of the operation. He has drawn on this knowledge wherever there is discussion of particular activities at Londolozi. He has also drawn on the five years of experience he gained while working as a senior manager at Ngala Private Game Reserve, also in the lowveld, operated by Conservation Corporation Africa (CC Africa) between 2000 and 2005. This experience at CC Africa afforded him the opportunity to observe their various approaches to community development at more than 30 lodges operated in southern and East Africa. While no formal research evaluations of these approaches were conducted by the author, he did complete other research¹ in the area that allowed him to observe the programmes implemented.

With this experience and the Londolozi Staff Survey (2005 – see below for details), the author has contributed extensively to the design of the community development programmes at Londolozi. The Londolozi Staff Survey (2005) and the recommendations that followed from it formed the basis of Londolozi's current approach to so-called 'community development'. The approach was designed on the basis of three things:

1. A detailed needs analysis of the staff at Londolozi (completed by the author);

¹ The author has completed three, published, research projects in the *Conservation Corporation Africa ecological journal* (2001, 2002, 2004) on topics related to people living on the borders of the greater KNP:

- *An oral history of the Shangane people of the Mpumalanga lowveld*. This project involved interviewing elders in various communities in the Mpumalanga lowveld and recording their versions of the history of the Shangane people (2004).
- *The social history of Ngala Private Game Reserve, part 2*. An investigation of the history of the reserve examining grave sites and areas of cultural significance (2002).
- *The conservation attitudes of the people surrounding the Kruger National Park, South Africa*. Interviews were conducted in various communities bordering the KNP and the general attitudes of people to conservation were investigated (2001).

2. The author's evaluation of various other lodge community development programmes while completing the Londolozi Staff Survey (2005).
3. The author's observation and experience of implementing community development initiatives at other lodges in the area since 2000.

The primary data for this dissertation was collected between February and June of 2008.

1.3.1 Data collection

1.3.1.1 Primary data

1.3.1.1.1 Focus groups

Focus group interviews were chosen as a data gathering technique because they do not discriminate against illiterate people and encourage participation from people who might find it difficult to express themselves in one on one situations (Kitzinger 1995). This was important in the context of this research as a number of the people interviewed were illiterate. This author has also had experience of possible participants feeling uncomfortable in one on one interview situations with an unfamiliar white researcher. In addition focus groups capitalise on communication between participants who comment on each other's ideas. They are useful for examining what and why people think what they do (Kitzinger 1995).

The questions asked were all open ended and intended to inspire discussion and debate around the issues concerned (Appendix 1). It has been suggested that group discussions are most appropriate where there are open ended questions and the researcher wants participants to explore their own priorities in their own vocabularies (Kitzinger 1995).

The sampling method employed was typical case purposive. This method uses one or more typical cases (individuals, families or households) to provide a local profile (Russell 1994). The participants were selected in order to get a wide range of age and gender perspectives. To this end, the author used his network of informants

established during eight years of working in the area, local community development officers and community leaders to find appropriate participants.

Four focus group interviews were conducted with members of the Huntington and Justicia communities which border the SSW (Table 1).

Table 1: List of focus group interviews

	Participants	Number of participants	Date
Focus Group 1	Community elders (all over 75 years old)	4 men, 1 woman	26/02/2008
Focus Group 2	Adults between 30 and 45 years old	5 men, 3 women	10/03/2008
Focus Group 3	School going teenagers	4 girls, 2 boys	12/03/2008
Focus Group 4	Community elders	7 men, 1 woman	12/03/2008

Focus Groups 1, 2 and 3 discussed what the land claims process is; current land claims on the SSW; historical land occupation of the SSW; ecotourism in the SSW and its current effects on local people; expectations of current private ecotourism operators; and desires should the farms in the SSW change community ownership. The meaning of nature conservation and what its purpose is, especially in the context of the SSW, was also discussed (Appendix 1).

Focus Group 4 (12/03/2008) was held with eight elders from Justicia and Huntington that aimed to elicit a history of Shangane/Tsonga occupation of the lowveld from the oral record.

Focus Groups 1 and 4 were conducted by the author and a translator. Focus Groups 2 and 3 were conducted by the author alone. The author speaks Shangane but it was felt that for group discussions in Shangane, a mother-tongue speaker was required.

1.3.1.1.2 Interviews

A number of informal interviews were conducted with land and business owners in the SSW as well as a Londolozi staff member (Table 2). These were done in order to gain an understanding of: their appreciation of the SSW's and Londolozi's history in relation to local people; international conservation trends; political changes and their effect on conservation; land claims; community development approaches; and Londolozi as a business model (See Appendix 2 for interview schedules).

Table 2: List of informal interviews

Name	Role	Subjects discussed	Date
David Varty	Owner Londolozi	-Conservation in the lowveld -Londolozi history -Londolozi community development	14/03/2008, 17/04/2008, 10/05/2008
Alan Taylor	Owner Londolozi	-Conservation and development approaches	15/03/2008
Iain McKenzie	Owner Savanna Game Lodge	-Conservation and development approaches	12/05/2008
Jane Paumgarten (nee McKenzie)	Owner Savanna Game Lodge	-Conservation and development approaches	20/03/2008
Maureen Groch	Teacher Londolozi	-Conservation and development approaches -The Londolozi Learning Centre	18/02/2008 21/05/2008
Lotus Khoza	Community development officer (10 years experience)	-SSW lodge community development projects -Land Claims	20/05/2008

1.3.1.1.3 Community visits

Four villages (Huntington, Justicia, Lillydale and Dixie) bordering the SSW were visited in order to evaluate various community development initiatives instituted by lodges in the SSW. The projects included schools, clinics and vegetable growing projects. These villages were chosen as they are the ones in which the SSW lodges are engaged with community development projects. They are also the villages from which most of the lodge staff in the SSW hail (Table 3). Community leaders from

Huntington, Justicia and Dixie were met to discuss the possibility of setting up community-owned and run businesses.

Table 3: List of community visits

	Village	Contact person	Reason for visit	Date
Community Visit 1	Huntington	Spoek Sithole	-Visit to Community garden -Meeting to investigate possibility of setting up a community gardening project. -Investigation of community boreholes -Visit to Mabarule High School	10/02/2008
Community Visit 2	Justicia	Adolf Morgets	-Visit to lodge funded Madlala High School -Visit to lodge funded community gardens	23/02/2008
Community Visit 3	Justicia	Raymond Khoza	-Visit to Babati Primary School -Meeting with Community development forum (CDF) to discuss community business	24/02/2008
Community Visit 4	Dixie	Elmon Mhlongo	-Meeting with CDF to discuss airport business	15/05/2008
Community Visit 5	Dixie	Richard Siwela	-Investigation of Dixie High School	16/05/2008
Community Visit 6	Lillydale	Lotus Khoza	-Investigation of lodge funded school	20/05/2008

1.3.1.2 Secondary data

1.3.1.2.1 Londolozi Staff Survey 2005

The author completed one on one survey interviews with each member of the Londolozi staff that lives in a rural area (normally bordering the SSW). In total 170 interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted in Shangané or English depending on the respondent's preference. The survey was commissioned by the Londolozi land owners in 2005 in order to gain some insight into the lives of the staff working at Londolozi – their families, education, careers, aspirations, expenses and home environments. It was hoped that an understanding of the above factors

affecting people's lives would aid in the development of meaningful solutions to the challenges faced by the staff living in the rural areas surrounding the SSW.

Various statistical analyses were used in the analysis of the data in the survey including frequency tables, measures of central tendency and chi square cross tabulations. This data was not published formally and was drawn on extensively when examining the conditions that local rural people live under with particular reference to the educational status of the staff and their children.

The survey is very relevant to this study because it provided a general overview of the conservation-development nexus in the study area and the results guided the design and implementation of Londolozi's current development initiatives. In so doing, the survey informed the author's interest in the research question of this study and provided the basis for the issues discussed in the focus groups and informal interviews.

1.3.1.2.2 Household visits

Twenty-five rural staff members' homes were visited by the author. The objective of the visits was twofold. Firstly, an attempt was made to find the greatest challenges faced by the homestead. In this regard, employment, health, housing, family structure and conservation attitudes were investigated. A focus group interview was conducted with as many members of the household as possible. All members were encouraged to contribute to the interview answers. Secondly, the educational and career desires of all dependent offspring over 13 years were investigated in one on one interviews. In addition to the interviews, school workbooks were inspected and the most recent report card from each child was obtained in as many cases as possible. This part of the research enabled an evaluation of the employment potential of the people concerned with particular reference to the high-end lodge industry.

1.3.1.2.3 Literature sources

Various literature sources were consulted in order to gain an understanding of local human history in the eastern South African lowveld with specific reference to the

Shangane people of the Mhala district. Interviews that investigated forced removals from the land, historical land ownership of the study area covering the period in question and historical occupation of the lowveld were supplemented with reviews of the literature concerning these aspects.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a wider international and local background to the history of nature conservation, both private and state sponsored, and its articulation with local people and their development. The focus of the review is on changes in conservation paradigms that have taken place since the turn of the 19th century. It traces changes in conservation paradigms from the worldwide development of fortress conservation, to a more inclusive community-conservation approach and then on to the transfrontier conservation movement and its implications. At the same time it examines national parks, conservation on private land, the rise of market-driven conservation and its major vehicle, ecotourism. The chapter examines the successes and failures of the various approaches as outlined in the available literature.

Chapter 3 moves on from chapter 2 to focus more specifically on the social, political and conservation history of the eastern lowveld of South Africa using the background provided in chapter 2 as the theoretical basis from which to make this examination. It briefly examines settlement in the area from the turn of the 19th century and moves on to events leading to the development of the KNP and the effects that these developments had on local people. The chapter then looks closely at the development of Londolozi from a hunting farm to an internationally renowned ecotourism destination. It examines the relationship that Londolozi developed with the rural people living on its borders and how this relationship has changed over time especially with regard to the provision of development needs to communities. These approaches are cross referenced with the literature review in chapter 2 and the successes and failures are examined.

Chapter 4 builds on the examination of the past and current relationship that private nature reserves, specifically Londolozi, has built with its rural neighbours by examining the history of land tenure in South Africa with specific reference to conservation land in the lowveld. It examines the land restitution process in South Africa and its implications for the conservation and development nexus on private conservation land such as Londolozi and the other SSW properties. Local people's impressions and expectations of the land claims process, conservation and ecotourism are put forward and discussed in the light of what is known about ecotourism in the SSW and the current status of land claims. It looks critically at the realities of balancing unemployment, poverty and biodiversity conservation using ecotourism as the link in the lowveld. It presents the debates around the advantages and disadvantages of businesses such as Londolozi becoming community-owned versus remaining in private hands.

Chapter 5 provides a summary and conclusion to the material in the dissertation. It draws together the socio-political history of conservation in the lowveld; conservation paradigms; ecotourism's relationship with local people and biodiversity conservation; the land claims process; and local people's expectations and desires. In so doing it provides a summary view of how Londolozi has adapted its approach to nature conservation in accordance with the progression of local and international conservation trends and domestic political changes. It then examines the most sustainable way forward for both biodiversity conservation and the development of the local people bordering the SSW.

Chapter 2. An overview of conservation paradigms and practices in nature conservation

This chapter provides a wider international and local background to the history of nature conservation, both private and state sponsored, and its articulation with local people and their development. The focus is on changes in conservation paradigms that have taken place since the turn of the 19th century. It traces these changes from the worldwide development of fortress conservation, to a more inclusive community-conservation approach and then onto the transfrontier conservation movement and its implications. At the same time it examines national parks, private conservation land, the rise of market-driven conservation and its major vehicle, ecotourism. The chapter examines the successes and failures of the various approaches as outlined in the available literature.

Each conservation paradigm is defined and discussed separately and in the order they emerged from the mid 19th century.

2.1 Fortress conservation – the fences and fines approach

Traditionally, conservation has been a response to the loss of habitats and biodiversity. Since the 19th century, it has been effected through the formation of protected areas (Adams *et al* 2004). Concepts of protected areas originated in the United States in the context of rapid urbanisation and frontier development and were based on the preservationist ideology of a negative human society-nature relationship (Aberkali 2001, Nash 1989). The ideology behind South African, and many national parks throughout the world, was that they should be untouched wilderness areas (Carruthers 2006). In reality this was unrealistic because, as with so many African landscapes, so-called wilderness areas have been influenced by humans for millennia (Reader 1997). This perspective of a negative human-nature relationship gave rise to the fortress conservation model.

The 'fortress' or 'fences and fines' approach to conservation in ecologically important areas, forcefully excluded people from the use of natural resources and was the favoured model for over a century (Buscher and Webster 2007, Hutton *et al* 2005, Neumann 1998, Turner 2004). It was maintained in Africa by colonialism,

particularly the Anglophone derivation thereof (Buscher and Webster 2007), and wherever wildlife parks were created a level of coercion of local people was employed and parks thus required an element of quasi-militarism to police effectively (Ellis 1994). Wildlife legislation was often biased towards a western paradigm as it was (and is) based on politics and law and thus only came about with the empire (Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995). The predominance of western perspectives of conservation excluded traditional local knowledge and belief systems associated with coping with the natural world (Beinart 1989, Carruthers 2006). One of the few examples of African people playing a meaningful and leading role in the formation of a national park was in Moremi, Botswana, where local people, white adventurers and colonial officials combined to develop the national park (Boolane 2005).

While state land (such as national parks) is by far the largest contributor to conservation land worldwide, such areas often exist on maps only and are largely administered by under-funded state organisations. These parks have proved the only areas thus far which are capable, albeit in a limited way, of conserving the large contiguous amounts of land required for biodiversity preservation (Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995, van Schaik *et al* 1997). In many developing countries, governments cannot afford to proclaim more land for conservation and private reserves partially fulfil this function (Jones *et al* 2005, Zeller 2005). In 1994, the IUCN made the comment that privately owned parks need to play an increasingly important role in conservation, especially in the tropics, given the increasing demands put on state resources (IUCN 1994).

2.2 Private land and market driven conservation

Private protected areas have existed for centuries in various forms and are presently most developed in countries where private land ownership is possible (Alderman 1994, Mitchell 2005). They fulfil a number of roles similar to those of state parks including ecological and social services and are often precursors to public protection (Langholz and Lassoie 2001).

Langholz and Lassoie (2001) outline three drivers behind private conservation initiatives:

- The failure of governments to provide sufficient quality or quantity of land for biodiversity conservation. This applies in the tropics especially. The deepening debt of developing countries means that less is being spent on conservation.
- Increased public interest in biodiversity conservation especially with regard to the ecological, genetic, social, economic, recreational, aesthetic, scientific and other values to humanity.
- Ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the world's largest industry, namely tourism and provides an economic incentive to conserve.

Worldwide, the 1970's saw the rise of neo-liberalism (Peet 2003). Accordingly, Nash (1979) argued that nature was being actively traded on an import-export basis on an international market, the traded commodity being experience (Nash 1979). This neo-liberal approach turned land, fauna and flora into natural resources and thereby made their right to exist dependant on what the market is willing to pay for them in monetary terms. In other words nature and biodiversity were required to justify their existence through demand (Buscher and Webster 2007). Indeed, the potential profitability of private conservation areas is a major motivating factor in their purchase (Langholz and Lassoie 2001).

However, the privatisation argument of property rights encourages conservation because private property receives maximum legal and political support. This point of view emphasises market solutions to resource management instead of strict preservation (Alderman 1994, Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995). In the development context, communally owned land which is managed to maximise the immediate needs of the community collapses ecologically under pressures exerted by population growth, market penetration, technology change and colonisation (Chicchon 1992). The breakdown of common property systems makes regulating individual use of wildlife very difficult which, in turn, causes open access. A lack of defined property rights results in a lack of incentive to invest in protection and thus

threatens the survival of wildlife - a tragedy of the commons occurs (Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995).

The privatisation argument also has a number of limitations, however. Private reserves suffer a number of shortcomings from an ecological point of view. They are often too small to mitigate fragmentation and contain viable populations of megafauna (Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995, Langholz and Lassoie 2001, Sims-Castley 2002 and Kiss 2004). They can, however, provide seasonal dispersal corridors for species such as elephant when joined to national parks (see Chapter 3).

The neo-liberal approach subjects biodiversity to the vagaries of the market. Any land that is dependent on markets for survival is subject to owners who may disregard the public good. Private land is thus unlikely to be secure enough for the long term conservation of species (Langholz and Lassoie 2001, Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995). The subjection of biodiversity to the whims of the market does not address concerns of community, landscape or ecology nor does it take sufficient cognisance of 'lesser' species that do not have obvious economic benefits (Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995). Indeed leaving the market in control has been shown to result in selective use of certain species to the detriment of biodiversity (Arnold and Perez 2001). Private land that is dependent on tourism for its protection may find its ecological integrity compromised for short term financial gains. In addition, private land is often bordered by poverty-stricken communities in the developing world. It thus faces a constant threat from government resettlement programmes and poaching (Langholz 1996). These threats bring to the fore debates on the articulation between conservation and development.

2.3 The conservation / development nexus

From the mid 1970's, top-down conservation approaches were being critiqued by those who advocated a more inclusionary approach (Buscher and Webster 2007). This change was linked to an increasingly bottom-up international development agenda and acceptance that the pursuit of conservation had been too much driven by northern concepts, donor preoccupations and ignorance of local environmental

knowledge – often at the expense of the those who depend most on the natural resources being conserved (Arnold and Perez 2001, Buscher and Webster 2007, Phuthego and Chanda 2004). Biodiversity underpins the livelihoods of many of the world’s rural poor and indigenous communities (Adams *et al* 2004). In developing countries, for whom the cost of maintaining protected areas is greatest, international and domestic criticism resulted in various approaches to community-based conservation aimed at preserving biodiversity and generating financial and social benefit for poor rural communities (Inamdar *et al* 1999, Mahony and van Zyl 2002, Phuthego and Chanda 2004, Wainwright and Wehrmeyer 2001).

From the early 1990’s, there was general consensus in the literature that fences, fines and coercion reduced support for fortress conservation which has typically had negative effects on poverty through the reduction of access to land use options and increased conflicts over control of natural resources (Abakerli 2001, Adams *et al* 2004, Barret and Arcese 2005, Brown 2002, Burns and Barrie 2005, Turner 2004, Young *et al* 2001). In creating this conflict, conservation has been seen as antagonistic to development and its aims have been undermined (Brown 2002). At the same time human rights activists pressured fortress conservation approaches by questioning the moral basis for expropriation and exclusion in the name of biodiversity (Turner 2004).

Adams *et al* (2004) outline four approaches to the relationship between conservation and development that depend on stakeholder perspectives (government, land owners, business owners, and local people):

1. **Totally different policy realms.** E.g. the strict enforcement of protected areas in developing countries to protect endangered species such as gorillas.
2. **Poverty as a critical constraint on conservation.** E.g. tackling poverty on the borders of reserves in order to persuade local people not to hunt or ‘trespass’.
3. **Conservation should not compromise poverty reduction.** E.g. increasing revenue flows from parks to compensate all stakeholders for opportunity costs.

4. **Poverty reduction depends on living resource conservation.** E.g. the promotion of conservation strategies based on sustainable harvest of wild species in areas that are not necessarily officially protected areas.

The community-based conservation narrative asserts that it is possible to balance the needs of human communities and the integrity of nature (Buscher and Webster 2007). Conservation and development projects aim to promote rural development based on natural resources while fostering conservation awareness (Wainwright and Wehrmeyer 1998). These conservation and development approaches became the 'new orthodoxy' in the 1990's (Hulme *et al* 2001) and brought a number of concepts under the spotlight. Definitions of development, community, territory, locality, conservation and customary law are challenged when they are worked into conservation plans. Such concepts differ according to local context (Brosius *et al* 1998, Leach *et al* 1999).

2.3.1 Development

'Development' is a complex term. It means different things to economists, sociologists and biologists and how it is conceived influences how it is linked to conservation. In the wake of the Bretton Woods conference of 1945, development for the former colonies (developing world) was based on a Keynesian model of industrial capitalism (Peet 2003, Young *et al* 2001). Living standards were to be improved through the consumption of natural resources in order to increase imports and exports (Robinson 1993). The third world was conceived of as backward rather than an integrally dependent part of the global economy (Amin 1994).

The 'Washington Consensus' and the commercialisation of resources came to dominate approaches to international development. Today much of the thinking about aid to developing countries from the capitalist west is conservative and based on the neo-liberal assumption that development constitutes satisfaction derived from consumption and the experience of money through the market (Buscher and Webster 2007, Tabb 2003, Young *et al* 2001).

Intellectuals from the third world, particularly dependency theorists, have argued that the 'catch-up' or 'modernisation' perspective of development, which assumed a standard evolutionary pattern from barbarism to technological and industrial advancement (Rostow 1965, Cardoso and Faletto 1979), has entrenched and maintained third world dependency on the developed world with disastrous consequences for people and the environment (Amin 1994, Cardoso and Faletto 1979). Indeed dependency theory asserts that dependence upon foreign capital, technology, and expertise impedes economic development in developing countries (Cardoso and Faletto 1979, Amin 1996).

Traditional developmentalism has perpetuated inequality through its emphasis on market-orientated, technology-based, resource intensive and undemocratic development structures (Harris *et al* 1994). In contrast, in the third world, locally connected people have traditionally expressed development in terms of non-monetary goods – communal land, dignity, environment, spirituality, and a secure (if modest) living outside of global markets (Maathai 2006, Young 2001 *et al*). Bottom-up approaches, based loosely on dependency theory, emphasised the fulfilment of basic needs, rural-centred growth and environmentally sensitive alternative technologies. These approaches tended to lack a solid and specific theoretical basis (Levin 1994).

2.3.2 Community

In nature conservation the word 'community' is often used to describe the rural people living on the borders of game reserves. It gives the impression of coherence and convenient delineation. In actual fact conservation areas are not socially, ecologically or politically homogenous; nor are they neutral (Brown 2002, Coombes and Hill 2005, Daniels and Basset 2002, Leach *et al* 1999, Levin 1994). Defining where a community begins and ends both temporally and spatially in the rural areas surrounding reserves is not easy. For example, it is often unclear if communities are defined by a legal agreement, their spatial extent, their language, their cultural designation or perhaps the time that they have been resident in a particular area (Brosius *et al* 1998). Many groups of local people, the villages outside the SSW

included (see Chapter 3), are heavily stratified along ethnic, gender, cultural, ideological and racial lines (Levin 1994, Brown 2002, Hartman 2003, Coombes and Hill 2005, Kaschula *et al* 2005). The need to delineate a 'community' at all in conservation and development initiatives comes from the fact that interventions are almost always not locally devised (Leach *et al* 1999).

The stratification of so-called 'communities' brings with it differences in power such that negotiations over natural resources are seldom equal (Leach *et al* 1999). These divisions also impact on the coherence of organisation (Levin 1994). Inequality is further exacerbated by the fact that people targeted in community conservation initiatives are often the most disadvantaged by colonialism (and apartheid in South Africa) and are thus educationally unable to negotiate with partners on an equal basis (see Chapter 3).

2.4 Articulating conservation and development

Conservation and human development have always been linked. History has numerous examples (African and other) of societies failing to conserve the natural resources that sustain them adequately resulting in emigration or extinction (Diamond 2005, Reader 1997). Indeed, the environmental effects of progress or development gave rise to the western concept of conservation (Adams *et al* 2004).

By the 1970's, it was becoming clear that the consequences of the modernisation approach to development were a continuing decline in living standards and rampant environmental degradation, especially in the third world (Robinson 1993). In 1980, the *World Conservation Strategy* (WCS), authored by the World Conservation Union, the United Nations Environmental Programme and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature stated that, the object of development is to provide for social and economic welfare, and the object of conservation is to ensure Earth's capacity to sustain development and to support all life (Robinson 1993). In 1987, the Brundtland Report modified the definition of development and referred to meeting the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future. This definition is exclusively utilitarian and considers only species explicitly

useful to humans (Robinson 1993, Struthsaker 1998). Following the Brundtland Report, the WCS's successor, *Caring for the earth*, promulgated the utopian concept of sustainable development where conservation and development are seen as part of one indispensable process (Robinson 1993).

Conservation and development projects assume a number of guises. Many fall under either Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) or Integrated Conservation and Development Programmes (ICDPs) (Brown 2002).

The CBNRM approach is supposed to be defined by the participation of local people in the conservation of national and trans-national biodiversity through bottom up approaches (Abakerli 2001, Brosius *et al* 1998). It comes from an appreciation of the paradigm shift where people came to be seen as integral parts of natural systems rather than intruders and disturbers of climax, human-free, natural systems (Kaschula *et al* 2005, Leach *et al* 1999, Ranger 1989). In CBNRM, people who use particular natural resources for their survival or are affected by those resources are included in their management and use (Turner 2004). The presence of local ecological expertise forms the basis for CBNRM where local knowledge is used in addition to scientific research and information. In South Africa the approach was embraced with democracy and the failure of top-down conservation approaches in rural areas (Kaschula *et al* 2005).

Market-based approaches to CBNRM have focussed on providing a stream of benefits to the participating community through tourism. Tourism can provide substantial inputs to CBNRM but the setup costs are well beyond the means of most communities (Turner 2004).

ICDPs are defined by people orientated conservation projects around protected areas and aim to promote biodiversity conservation while improving human living standards in order to overcome inequities in developing world conservation (Brown 2002, Mahanty 2002). The approach is predicated on the assumption that improving livelihood activities and incomes will decrease pressure on natural resources and

thus improve conservation initiatives and the attitudes of local people to conservation as a practice (Abott *et al* 2001, Alpert 1996).

There are three broad ways in which ICDPs are implemented (after Abott *et al* 2001):

1. **Compensation.** A development need is provided (school, clinic, road, agricultural scheme, borehole etc.) in exchange for the loss of access to natural resources when a protected area is established. As Leach *et al* (1999) found, direct investments in adult literacy, leadership education, family planning and other such interventions have proven effective at building the social capital needed for natural resource management.
2. **Alternatives.** Development packages can reduce impact from agricultural encroachment or over harvesting. Examples include the provision of new agricultural technology or alternative economic activities (employment).
3. **Enhancement.** Development can focus on increasing the value of the resources in a protected area. For example, through developing ecotourism; developing markets for previously unharvested resources; and improving harvesting or processing (Barret and Arcese 1998, Brown 2002).

ICDPs and CBNRM projects are often attached to ecotourism operations and are thus usually based on capitalist market strategies for success (Turner 2004). The role of ecotourism in linking conservation and development is potentially enormous given its capacity to generate revenue. Kruger (2005) argues that ecotourism incentivises conservation through it being the most profitable land use practice, linking development and conservation through the provision of employment or development projects to the rural people surrounding conservation areas.

2.4.1 Ecotourism

Ecotourism has been defined in various ways. In this study it is defined as: nature travel (for the purposes of viewing and photographing wildlife and their habitats) that encompasses some sort of social upliftment while at the same time excluding hunting (adapted from Kiss 2004).

Ecotourism is the principle revenue source by which private reserves, such as Londolozi, derive profits (Buscher and Webster 2007, Sims-Castley *et al* 2005). It is one way that business interests and biodiversity conservation are linked for mutual benefit (Buscher and Webster 2007, Langholz and Lassoie 2001). In Africa 72 percent of private reserves surveyed by Langholz (1996) indicted that ecotourism was, from a financial point of view, the most profitable land use practice as opposed to other options such as agriculture, logging or cattle ranching. The main source of income on these reserves was photographic safaris. Other sources of income included trophy hunting. The amount of money derivable from ecotourism on high -end private reserves in South Africa is roughly ZAR 2000 per hectare per annum (Sims-Castley *et al* 2005). It is estimated that ecotourism was worth US\$ 514 billion globally in 2003 (www.peopleandplanet.com) and US\$3.6 billion to the SADC region in 2000 (Spenceley 2006).

A number of authors (for example Jones *et al* 2005, Sims-Castley *et al* 2005) make the point that the majority of the world's private conservation land is not dependent on tourist revenue for survival. They point out that large NGOs own huge tracts of land, and given their stated missions to conserve biodiversity, it is highly unlikely that the land use practice in these areas will change. Vast tracts of wilderness have also been bought by concerned and very wealthy individuals, particularly in South America where so called ecological philanthropists have bought more than 800 000ha of land (Zeller 2005).

2.4.2 Success, failures and limitations of community conservation approaches

In summary three contemporary paradigms to conservation have been outlined (Brown 2002):

1. **Classic** - people are a direct threat to biodiversity (the fortress and fines approach).
2. **Populist** - participation and empowerment of local people are the keys to sustainable biodiversity use.

3. **Neo-liberal** – biodiversity can only be conserved through the market. Contemporary conservation thinking increasingly acknowledges human roles in shaping biodiversity and sees the market as the vehicle for biodiversity conservation.

Proponents of the market approach to conservation maintain that market logic creates synergies between conservation and development. This assumption has been challenged in Africa where markets do not function as smoothly as they do in the west. Political volatility, traditions of patronage and accessibility issues mean that a western neo-liberal model is complicated to apply in many parts of rural Africa (Buscher and Webster 2007). In addition the complex interactions of goals, interests, and organisational features of conservation and development projects make implementation exceedingly difficult (Kellert *et al* 2000).

It is not possible to generalise about the success or failure of community-based conservation given the variation of scale and specific geographical, socio-economic, ecological and cultural contexts in which community conservation projects are implemented (Abott *et al* 2001, Adams 2004). That said, however, the ecological and biological sustainability of conservation and development programmes in any guise (ICDP, CBNRM or any other) has yet to be proven (Brown 2002). Indeed Turner (2004) argues that there is a tenuous causal link between community participation and improved ecological outcomes.

The tradeoffs between conservation and development mean that few truly environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable development opportunities exist (Inamdar *et al* 1999). More than 20 projects investigated in Africa, Asia and South America were deemed to have failed to demonstrate measurable success because the linkages between development and conservation were missing or obscure (Brandon and Well 1992, Kremen *et al* 1994, Wainwright and Wehrmeyer 1998). Where success is reported, it is often from the development side with little or nothing measurable demonstrated from the conservation side. In 36 ICPDs reviewed by Kremen *et al* (1994), only five were found to contribute to the short-term conservation of wildlife. Kellert *et al* (2000) reported on CBNRM projects in

Kenya and Nepal. The projects often subverted biodiversity conservation for the sake of development with local people viewing CBNRM as a way of pursuing development goals and not biodiversity conservation.

The basis of CBNRM perpetuates the stereotype of Rousseau's 'noble savage' living in harmony with his environment (Siegfried 2002). This ideology saw societies as functionally integrated with their environment to the extent that society was linked to the environment through homeostatic feedback loops which ensured that natural resource use was sustainable. This harmony and sustainable living existed until disrupted by factors such as population growth (Leach *et al* 1999). That is not to say that indigenous or pre-capitalist societies did not and do not have valuable methods and knowledge for the conservation of the sensitive natural resources over which they have presided for generations (Abakerli 2001, Young *et al* 2001). However, as mentioned, the numerous examples of societal collapse in the face of environmental exploitation effectively argue against such 'harmony' (see Diamond 2005).

For conservation and development to be compatible, i.e. for the utopian concept of sustainable development to ever become a reality requires that renewable resource consumption becomes stationary and that the product of the number of people and the amount which each consumes should not increase (Robinson 1993). Robinson outlines three things that need to occur for this to happen:

1. Technological advance allowing for the planet to support higher numbers of people at a higher quality of life. (Diamond (2005) argues effectively against this scenario).
2. A large reduction in human population.
3. A dramatic consumption reduction in affluent countries, allowing for improvement in the quality of life in poorer countries.

At present this scenario is highly unlikely and has resulted in calls for a 'back to Barriers' approach where regions of unmodified habitat are set aside to protect biodiversity until conservation and development programmes are able to

demonstrate long-term sustainable success in development and biodiversity conservation (Hutton *et al* 2005, Kremen *et al* 1994).

Conservation and development projects proceed from untested biological and economic assumptions, many of which may never hold true (Barret and Arcese 2005, Brown 2002). Indeed they are inherently incompatible concepts (Robinson 1993). The securing of economic benefits to incentivise conservation is the dominant neo-liberal discourse on both conservation and development. However, schemes that depend on generating benefits (cash, employment or meat) to impoverished communities based on managed harvesting or ecotourism run counter to the objectives of delinking rural livelihoods from resource exploitation. They thus cannot be sustainable and must lead to biodiversity loss (Barret and Arcese 2005, Kremen *et al* 1994).

Likewise, there are few studies to show that community ecotourism approaches have been successful from a conservation and development point of view (Kiss 2004). The economic benefits that a community can derive from an ecotourism operation depend on factors such as the nature and degree of community involvement. Despite a commitment to large scale participation by communities, it is more common for brief consultation to be the reality (Turner 2004). Community ecotourism seldom generates significant cash benefits for communities and those that do benefit are normally small groups of politically well-connected people (Levin 1994, Mahony and van Zyl 2002). Projects often suffer from poor management and a lack of accountability which results in the theft of benefits from the projects. These problems often stem from the problems associated with what a community actually consists of (Wainwright and Wehrmeyer 1998, see section 2.3.2).

Joint community-private sector operations may have the greatest potential for providing communities with income and, given the level of education and resultant lack of legal and business acumen in many rural areas, are more likely to succeed than wholly community owned operations (Kiss 2004, Mahony and van Zyl 2002, Salafsky *et al* 2001). The costs of setting up luxury ecotourism ventures are

enormous and well beyond the means of most 'communities' and they thus require very high, usually private, capital inputs. Coupled with these issues is the fact that, in South Africa, land tenure in the old Bantustans has not been addressed by the post-apartheid government. Land is still held in trust by the state and people can thus not own title to land. As in much of rural Africa, capital cannot be raised using land as collateral (Guest 2005). This lack of collateral for funding means that capital must flow from outside (Turner 2004). The result of external capital inflow for the start up and maintenance of ecotourism operations means that ownership of income generating activities normally ends up in the hands of outsiders (Abakerli 2001, Weinberg *et al* 2002).

Tourism is a volatile industry and profits are by no means guaranteed. Indeed, ecotourism suffers from the conflicts associated with market driven conservation described above. Terrorism and political instability are major challenges in the African context (Langholz and Lassoie 2001). In addition, a lack of infrastructure, access difficulties, ineffective marketing and the absence of spectacular or readily visible natural features or flagship species limit the attractiveness of many ecologically important areas for tourists. Examples include the Korup National Park in Cameroon where rampant malaria, inundated roads, and political instability make this place that is home to 400 tree species, forest elephants and large diversity of primates, inaccessible to all but the bravest of travellers. A lack of cash incentive to conserve and declining cocoa prices have resulted in large scale poaching of primates (Alpert 1996). The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) project in Zimbabwe is supposed to receive most of its funding from commercial hunting yet fewer than half of the 23 sites involved have sufficient wildlife to attract this sort of income (Wainwright 1998). At the other end of the scale, Amboseli, in Kenya, is accessible, packed with high-profile game, and situated in a relatively politically stable country. The result is enormous tourism income and a consequent tradition of conservation among local people due to revenue sharing and development initiatives (Alpert 1996).

Weinberg (2002) shows how the increase in ecotourists creates jobs in restaurants, hotels, and other related businesses which lead to improved standards of living; better and more varied services; a conservation ethic and better training. Mass tourism however, has resulted in a loss of local customs and values; environmental impact; ballooning land prices; and increasing social inequality (Abakerli 2001, Kruger 2005, Weinberg *et al* 2002). Natural habitats are manipulated to enhance the tourist experience and in so doing maximise the profits that are derivable from the land. For example water is pumped to attract certain species and bush is cleared to make animals more visible. These practices obviously favour certain species over others but do not necessarily reduce biodiversity (Kiss 2004).

Ecotourism should thus not be seen as a panacea for rural development but it can make a positive contribution to larger programmes. Benefits are slow to materialise and therefore, short-term benefits need to be demonstrable while waiting for the larger development programme to unfold (Mahony and van Zyl 2002). The main benefits accruing to rural people from ecotourism come from employment and the distribution of salaries to an average of eight to ten dependents in the case of Londolozi (see Chapter 3, Kiss 2004).

2.5 Globalisation and transfrontier conservation areas

Transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) refer to conservation areas that cross two or more national boundaries (Duffy 2006, World Bank 1996). In Africa, this means boundaries that were drawn up by colonial powers with no regard for natural or tribal boundaries or history (Amin 1996). The grand plan is eventually to link wildlife areas from the Great Rift Valley to the KNP including lateral corridors into Namibia, Botswana and Angola (Warburton-Lee 1999). They allow for the conservation of a greater number of species within larger geographical areas and promote co-operative wildlife management between nations (Spenceley 2006). They also allow for species to move over larger areas and as such prolong the need for culling species such as elephants by employing metapopulation dynamics (van Aarde 2007). They have the potential to increase tourism revenue which supports conservation management, while providing business and employment

opportunities for poor people in rural settlements surrounding TFCAs (Griffin *et al* 1999).

Related to the TFCA paradigm is the concept of bioregionalism. A bioregion is a geographic region defined by biophysical similarities where people live lifestyles within the environmental limits of their bioregion. There is however recognition that the globalisation of technology makes this difficult as it disrupts potential local balance (Frenkel 1994). Bioregionalism is an ecological movement that seeks to integrate developing communities and ecosystems. It is based largely on the belief that social relations should be governed by local biophysical environment (Frenkel 1994, Sale 2001). It also advocates general apportionment rather than private ownership (Sale 2001). Bioregionalism advocates the definition of social and political organisation of appropriate size for a particular area – a rejection of existing political units such as modern countries, states and nations and their replacement with bioregions (Frenkel 1994).

Bioregionalism asserts the need to live in 'harmony' with nature according to the resources available in a particular 'bioregion'. It uses early indigenous societies as examples of such living and in so doing perpetuates the ill-conceived ideology of the 'noble savage' that has been well argued against (Diamond 2005, Frenkel 1994, Siegfried 2002).

The transfrontier conservation movement followed soon after the general acceptance of community-conservation approaches (Duffy 2006). Globalisation has enabled consideration of the environment in a more globally holistic way (Buscher and Webster 2007, Duffy 2006). The trans-boundary nature of environmental problems means that they have formed an important area of policy that might be termed 'global governance' and since ecosystems cross national boundaries it makes sense that good ecosystem management requires inter-governmental cooperation (Duffy 2006). The Biodiversity Convention issued by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992 (UNCED 1992), represented an attempt to globalise the political agenda through managing the environment as an integrated whole (Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995). Such international

conventions on the use, sale or preservation of certain species could be considered part of global governance or as attempts to curtail sovereign rights over the harvesting of biota and habitats in favour of the commons. Other examples include the International Whaling Convention and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) (Duffy 2006, Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995).

In the makeup of TFCAs there are numerous stakeholders operating at global and local levels (Duffy 2006). The model for TFCAs brings together a mosaic of different land-use practices, land tenure systems and wildlife management regimes which will support conservation and rural economies. Private reserves are supposed to exist contiguously with farms, hunting concessions and communal land (Warburton-Lee 1999). It was envisioned that TFCAs would have self-determination with regard to managing their natural and financial resources (i.e. independently of their national governments) thus reducing the importance of national borders in environmental governance (Buscher and Webster 2007). Indeed, bioregionalism, ecosystem landscape approaches and TFCA management surpass the nation-state as the ultimate organisational unit (Warburton-Lee 1999).

With regard to private reserves, a number of authors have argued that they are unable to make a meaningful contribution to nature conservation because of their small size (Langholz and Lassoie 2001, Naughton-Treves and Sanderson 1995, Sims-Catley 2002). Species such as elephants which used to roam widely throughout the sub-continent in a contiguous population now exist in fragmented populations in formal protected areas. In the case of elephants, these protected areas are unable to cope with their population increases. This problem has been solved in many cases by joining private nature reserves with each other, with national parks and thus creating TFCAs (Sims-Castely *et al* 2005). TFCAs thus act as regional landscape mosaics as opposed to isolated entities which require buy-in from all stakeholders who must accept, for example, locally varying elephant numbers (van Aarde 2007). This may well have an effect on the ability of an area to produce game for tourism

and any overarching TFCA elephant management plan will thus conflict with private business and property interests (See Chapter 4).

Taking a bioregional, TFCA or global view is often a western approach focussed on biodiversity conservation as opposed to a more localised approach favoured by local structures focussed on development. There is conflict between local approaches which focus on relational issues where land is commonage, and western or global imperatives, which focus on scientific or rational approaches where common ownership of land is considered chaotic. The result of these developments for local people has been an increase in meddling from the outside because of a general feeling of moral entitlement to do so (Buscher and Webster 2007, Duffy 2006).

2.6 Conclusion

As illustrated, nature conservation paradigms have changed considerably since the turn of the 19th century. From the fences and fines approach, which sought to conserve only non-human wildlife; to the community-conservation movement which asserted the need for local involvement and devolution of benefits; on to the transfrontier conservation movement which seeks to supplant the nation-state as the ultimate administrator of natural areas and in so doing increase land under wildlife and benefits to local people. At the same time the market has come to play an increasingly important role in ensuring the survival of wildlife areas and in so doing provide for rural people's development.

It is now logical to use the theories, principles and history presented in this chapter to examine the history of nature conservation in the south-eastern lowveld of South Africa. The next chapter will examine how the histories of conservation in the lowveld and Londolozi fit into or differ from the paradigm, political, social and economic shifts outlined above.

Chapter 3. A century in the lowveld – The SSW, Londolozi and changes in conservation

This chapter focuses more specifically on the social, political and conservation history of the eastern lowveld of South Africa using the background provided in Chapter 2 as the theoretical basis from which to make this examination. It briefly examines human settlement in the area from the turn of the 19th century and moves on to events leading to the development of the KNP and the effects that these developments had on local people. The chapter then looks closely at the development of Londolozi from a hunting farm to an internationally renowned ecotourism destination. It examines the relationship that Londolozi developed with the rural people living on its borders and how this relationship has changed over time especially with regard to the provision of development needs to communities. These approaches are cross referenced with the literature review in Chapter 2.

3.1 People and wildlife in the south-eastern lowveld before 1926

In the late 1860s and early 1870s, the farms that constitute the SSW were allocated to white settlers. The farms were purchased for land speculation rather than agriculture or settlement (Varty 1997). Thus at the end of the 19th century all of these farms constituted private land (Hartman 2003). It would appear, from oral and archival evidence, that there were virtually no settled, sedentary communities living in the south-eastern lowveld between the Lebombo and Drakensberg mountains before the turn of the 20th century (Focus Group 12/04/2008, Hendry 2004, Stevenson-Hamilton 1929). Population numbers were kept low by the high incidence of malaria and trypanosomiasis and the consequent effects on human and livestock health (Reader 1997). Stevenson-Hamilton (1926, p. 218) notes that:

The native population, except in the extreme west, was scattered and poverty-stricken, in fact semi-nomadic as their livelihoods had always depended chiefly on game. A series of drought years further reduced the already scanty population of the eastern areas, which sought better-watered country to the westward, or in Portuguese East Africa, across the Lebombo Hills.

Around the turn of the 20th century, four different groups of people moved into the lowveld. The first, known as the Nxumalo (Shangane), arrived as refugees (a few hundred) from Mozambique after their armies were sacked by the Portuguese and their chief deported. They settled in the foothills of the Drakensberg (Stevenson-Hamilton 1929, Focus Group 4 13/03/2008). The Nkuna, originally from Zululand, arrived in the lowveld from Swaziland in the mid-1890's and settled around Pretoriuskop. When the area was declared part of the Sabi Game Reserve (SGR) in 1902, park authorities moved them north and west to the farms west of the present SSW. Part of the Nhlangu tribe (the Mnisi) arrived circa 1894. They settled on the farms to the north-west of the SSW and on farms which would form part of the central KNP. The rest of the Nhlangu people (the Khoza) arrived in the Skukuza and Lower Sabi areas in the late 1890's (Focus Group 4 12/03/2004, Hartman 2003). After the South African War, the Khoza were moved to unoccupied farms north of the Sabi River. These farms are those directly on the western boundaries of the present day SSW (Hartman 2003). These tribal divisions exist to this day. Although most people are now referred to as either Tsonga or Shangane, they do not form a culturally homogenous group (see Chapter 4) (Hendry 2004).

The low number of local pastoral and hunter/ gathering people had little effect on wildlife numbers and it was not till European hunters entered the lowveld with their guns that wildlife numbers started to suffer (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). Indeed, big game hunters from the 19th century described large numbers of game in the lowveld (Pringle 1982). Colonialists introduced a market economy, merchant capital and guns to South Africa which pushed wildlife usage to over-exploitation (Beinart 1989).

English sportsman hunted for sport and considered those who hunted for the sake of trade to be lazy because they were unwilling to engage in wage labour (Beinart 1989, Carruthers 1989, 2006). The Boers hunted for meat and for the sale of pelts, horns and ivory. Local black people hunted for subsistence until the Boers began to employ black hunters to hunt for them in areas where they could not ride on horse-back and where disease was a threat.

The combination of guns and indigenous tracking and hunting skills decimated the large herds of animals found in the lowveld in the early part of the 19th century. In 1855 more than 90 tonnes of ivory were exported from the Transvaal (Pringle 1982, Yates 1935). Towards the end of the 19th century the diminishing wildlife and innovations in natural science resulted in colonial southern African states becoming agents for conservationist interventions (Beinart 1989).

3.2 Fortress conservation in the lowveld

Early conservation legislation promulgated by the British in the Cape Colony was largely ignored because wildlife had an economic value (Pringle 1982). This was complimented by Christian views of the time which advocated the civilisation of nature and did not include beliefs in the inherent power of nature (Carruthers 1995). Indeed Paul Kruger justified the wholesale slaughter of wildlife by arguing that the land needed to be cleared for agriculture so that civilisation could be established (Kruger 1902). Despite this, the lowveld was a breeding ground for South African conservation ideas and was earmarked for conservation, largely because much of the land was considered worthless because of the lack of minerals, the impossibility of farming and the high incidence of disease (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926).

In 1898 the Transvaal government set aside a piece of the eastern Transvaal lowveld bordering the Mozambique border as a 'sanctuary' where the hunting or 'disturbing' of game and birds was forbidden. This was the original SGR (Figure 2) (Stevenson-Hamilton 1929). At the time, game had been so depleted that commercial hunting was no longer viable. There was thus no visible effect on the Transvaal economy (Carruthers 1995). As 'worthless' as the land was considered, it was always assumed that the SGR and its successors would derive an income. Initially the SGR was to achieve this from charging recreational hunters (Pringle 1982). Indeed the lowveld version of fortress conservation aimed to protect only those animals wanted by sport hunters (Varty 2008). So although people were to hunt in the area, the fortress model applied excluded local people's use of the land, fauna and flora. It accepted, in principle, the need for income generating activities such as limited hunting by paying white recreational hunters.

That said, between 1912 and 1916, persistent drought resulted in a large reduction in malaria and African horse-sickness. The Selati railway was completed in 1912 and increased communication to the area. These developments caused a renewed interest, especially from agriculturalists, for the land in the SGR and the Singwetsi Game Reserve which was situated to the north, between the Crocodile and Limpopo Rivers (Pringle 1982, Stevenson-Hamilton 1929).

In 1918 a nationally appointed commission, retreated from the strict fortress application of conservation, against the will of the warden, and recommended that grazing licenses for farmers in the SGR be extended and that affected private land owners be compensated or given alternative land (Game Reserve Commission (GRC) 1918). The commission invoked scientific and aesthetic rationales. It advised that the reserves should not simply be used for preservation but also for conservation where scientists, students and the public might enjoy viewing and studying the fauna of the reserve (Beinart 1989, GRC 1918). It should be noted that the GRC made no mention of local people or their concerns and rights.

The warden and others saw a national park as the only solution to the preservation of fauna and flora. But the mosaic of private and public land made this very difficult (Stevenson Hamilton 1926, Yates 1935). There was also conflict between various government departments over the amount of land to be allocated to the SGR. Land was needed for native settlement, white agriculture and coal prospecting (Varty 1997). The National Parks Act was finally passed in June 1926 and with it the Sabi and Singwitsi Game Reserves (Figure 2) were joined and became the Kruger National Park. The land became a national park rather than a hunting reserve and represented a source of national unity for white South Africans while also forming part of the systematic domination of black South Africans (Carruthers 1989, Yates 1935).

The conservation achievements of the 1920s should not be seen as a moral triumph but rather the realisation by white South Africans that viewing animals in a game reserve constituted a valid and financially viable form of land use where it was previously felt that wildlife could only provide an income through hunting fees.

International and domestic tourists were already a large part of the plan to make the KNP a financially viable entity (Stevenson-Hamilton 1937). Animals were readily viewable for the purposes of photography in 1926 (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). The proclamation of the KNP, did not however resolve the conflicts over private land on its western boundaries.

3.3.1 Private land bordering the KNP

Private land owners, often companies attached to mining houses, found some of their land included in the SGR when it was proclaimed in 1902 and 1903. Stevenson-Hamilton, the warden of the KNP until 1946, convinced a number of these to allow him to administer and police their farms (Carruthers 1995). All the farms in the present SSW fall into this category (Hartman 2003). Private land owners lobbied for a reduction in the size of the SGR, arguing that it was too large and created for sentimental value only. When they had originally signed to have their farms included in the reserve it was on the understanding that they would be able to sell game for hunting once the herds had recovered sufficiently (Carruthers 1989). When this did not occur they became insistent on the excision of their land because the sale or development thereof was impossible (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). The Transvaal Consolidated Lands and Exploration Company (TCL), registered in 1882, was the largest private land owner in the SGR (Fraser 1987). They believed the land, although poor in minerals, was highly suitable for cattle ranching, cotton and subtropical fruits. The TCL moved 800 head of cattle onto the farm Toulon (southeastern SSW) in 1923 as an assertion of the company's rights (Pringle 1982, Varty 1997).

When the Pact government came to power in 1923, the new Minister found suitable land for exchange by the end of 1925 (Carruthers 1995). The government excised the western portion of the SGR between the Olifant's and Crocodile Rivers for exchange with private land owners. In so doing they ensured the SGR became contiguous government land (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). Much of this excised land would become what is now the SSW. Many of the farms in the west of this area were, however, included in a so-called 'Released Area' which the Hertzog government

reserved the right to claim for 'native settlement' (Hartman 2003, Varty 1997). By the time KNP was established, all the farms of the SSW had reverted to full private control (Yates 1935). This development meant that private land owners could sell their farms.

3.3.2 The purchase of Sparta

In 1926, the TCL decided to sell their land in the lowveld because they had failed to make it agriculturally viable (Varty 1997). Charles Varty and Frank Unger were middle-class men from Johannesburg. Sparta became affordable to them because the TCL decided to rid itself of what had become a piece of land from which it could not derive an income. The two men bought just over 4000 hectares of land (the farm Sparta), sight unseen, in the early part of 1926. They saw themselves as pioneers in uncharted wilderness. A 1928 journal entry from Charles Varty's daughter in-law read '...after 4 o'clock another hunt or walk through the bushveld untouched and untrammelled by the feet of man since the beginning of time,' (Varty 1997). This entry, consistent with the general thinking of the time, indicates a lack of acknowledgement for the role that humans had played in the shaping of the ecology of the area and of the fact that humans had been traversing the lowveld for thousands of years (Reader 1997).

In 1933, the Sabi Private Game Scheme was formed by the land owners of the excised farms. This scheme was the precursor to the SSW. In 1948, an informal meeting of land owners of the farms between the Sabi and Sand Rivers changed the name of their association to the Sabi Sand Wildtuin. The SSW was only formally registered as a private nature reserve in 1962. It was after this time that hunting started to decrease on the reserve (Varty 1997).

In 1946, the deaths of Charles Varty and Frank Unger meant that Sparta was divided in two. Boyd Varty, Charles' son inherited one half of the farm and Frank Unger's three daughter's each inherited the other half of Sparta and a half each of the neighbouring farm which Frank Unger had bought. In 1969, Boyd Varty died, leaving his portion of Sparta to his children, John, Dave and Claudia (Varty 2008).

3.4 The effects of early fortress conservation measures on indigenous black people

From the 1860s and 1870s, an elite made up of urbanised land owners emerged and their views began to oppose those of the rural hunters. Recreational hunting became predominant for these people and the issue of poaching became one of political influence. The landowners developed 'proprietary' interests in wildlife and established what would today be known as private game reserves. As local people were barred from moving on private farms, wildlife went from being a communal resource to one reserved for ruling white people (Carruthers 1995).

Conflict between indigenous people and settlers intensified as control over the means of production shifted increasingly towards the settlers (Beinart 1989). In line with the fortress conservation approach, whites justified their conservation actions by holding that Africans were responsible for the large-scale destruction of game, particularly during the summer months. There is little to no evidence for this and it is far more likely that whatever hunting was done by black residents was for subsistence rather than for commercial purposes (other than when employed by white commercial hunters) (Stevenson-Hamilton 1937).

Declaring game reserves and national parks meant that land earmarked for reserves was to be transferred to the state – be it private or communal land. In most cases the government bought land from white land owners but failed to extend the same courtesy to 'compensate' black land owners. Local people were either treated as part of the fauna or removed (Ramutsindela 2003). One of Stevenson-Hamilton's first actions was to remove numerous local black people from the SGR when it was proclaimed. By 1905, however, there were still 3000 or so local residents in the park who paid rent for the privilege (Carruthers 1995). It is not clear how many people were moved from the area but it would appear that by 1903, 2000 to 3000 people had been relocated (Stevenson-Hamilton 1937). North of the Letaba River (in the Singwetsi reserve) there were practically no human inhabitants (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). When this reserve was proclaimed in 1903, Stevenson-Hamilton did not advocate the removal of the local people, because he had come to realise

that they made little difference to the numbers of game and that their labour and rent could be useful (Stevenson-Hamilton 1929).

By 1905, black people were not only denied hunting rights but also denied the right to own property. The ordinance passed (Ordinance 6 of 1905) was the result of a concerted drive from the Transvaal Game Protection Association to exclude blacks from access to wildlife (Carruthers 2006). It might thus be said that subjecting residents of the SGR to strict fortress conservation was not justified from an ecological point of view. Rather, fortress conservation was a convenient excuse to subjugate the local black population, remove the means of production and in so doing compel wage labour.

This was particularly the case after the formation of Union of South African in 1910. The focus shifted to the industrialisation of the country. Both colonial and indigenous systems of resource use were changing in response to the penetration of capital into the interior (Beinart 1989). Mining, secondary industry and large scale commercial farming became priorities. There was thus no place for peasant hunters bent on economic self-sufficiency (Sparks 2003a).

The complete exclusion of black people from hunting, harvesting (especially during droughts) and land ownership in the lowveld meant that local people began to regard game protection as inimical to their interests and livelihoods. They were either removed from the KNP to 'locations' and denied access to subsistence use of the resources they used to access or they lived, unarmed, on the reserve with the constant threat of arrest (Beinart 1989, Burns and Barrie 2005). Black people who were allowed to stay on the SGR (and private farms that would form the SSW) because of the necessary labour they provided (Hartman 2003). Essentially they were denied their traditional way of life but not fully integrated into the western conservation model (Carruthers 1994).

Archival research conducted by Hartman (2003), indicates that a number of black families settled on various farms of the SSW from 1923. From 1936, the Native Trust and Land Act, required that every black man living on private land be registered as

a labour tenant or squatter (Claassens and Cousins 2008). The owners of the SSW farms thus surveyed the black people on their farms and recorded when they had arrived. These black people stayed on the farms paying a rent in cash or three months labour and in return grew crops for subsistence and grazed small numbers of cattle. All other black people not granted squatter or labour tenant status, who settled on the SSW farms after 1913, were required to move either onto farms in the released area or farms outside the reserve.

By 1923, there were approximately 100 families living on the farms that make up the current SSW. In some cases their presence was resented by the land-owners because it was felt that they failed to supply sufficient labour and disturbed game (Hartman 2003). The homesteads were slowly moved off the SSW to occupy the land bought by the state bordering the SSW. There was only one family, that of Winnis Mazelela Mathebula, that remained living on Sparta (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008). Mathebula's children left the reserve to work in the cities and he died on Sparta in 1985. By then, there were no families living independently in the SSW (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008).

Post 1948, the boundaries of the greater KNP became increasingly hemmed in by people because of apartheid forced removal policies, changes in land use, population increase and economic mechanisation (Carruthers 1989). During apartheid, the black people who moved into the lowveld in the early 19th century were formally included into four tribal authorities that corresponded with the four original groups that arrived in the lowveld as described in Section 3.1 (Hartman 2003). Many of the people who lived in the KNP and the SSW have descendants living under one or more of these tribal authorities. It was only when SSW landowners began operating lodges that local people living outside the SSW again became involved with the reserve. This time as members of the workforce at commercial ecotourism concerns (See section 3.5 below).

3.5 The birth of Londolozi

Just after the SSW was registered as a private game reserve in 1962, hunting was severely curtailed. Mala Mala was started as the first photographic safari operation in the SSW (Rattray 1980). When Boyd Varty died in 1969, the Varty family earned no income from Sparta and it was nearly sold by Boyd's widow to defray various costs. With political demands being placed on the land by the government and the increased international push towards ecotourism as a means of making land pay for itself (Buscher and Webster 2007), Boyd Varty, son of the original owner, almost on his death bed, made the statement that hunting must stop and the land must pay for itself. In line with the rise of neo-liberalism (see Chapter 2), he saw ecotourism as the way to make this happen. Hunting, but for food, stopped on Sparta in 1969 (Varty 2008).

In 1973, John Varty, grandson of the original owner, left Johannesburg to start the photographic safari business on Sparta that would become Londolozi. The business struggled for the first two years where the price per night was R3 per person and the total number of people that could be accommodated was ten. By 1975 the business was viable albeit in debt. It had a consistent flow of guests and the Varty's expanded to add another camp (Varty 1997).

By this stage the only local people living on the land were those working for Londolozi. They all had permanent homesteads in the communities on the western and northern borders of the SSW (Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008). As the business grew, increasing numbers of employees were required (Varty 1997). Most staff lived on site at Londolozi and spent roughly 75 percent of their time on the reserve and the rest at home with their families in the villages where they had their homes (Varty pers. comm. 17/04/2008). As is the case now, pre-school aged children and younger stayed on the reserve with their mothers and then moved to live with relatives (normally grandmothers) outside the reserve when they were old enough for primary school (Khoza pers. comm. 20/05/2008).

In 1985 it was decided that Londolozi needed to upgrade the facilities in order to remain competitive with an industry that was growing in popularity and luxury. Tree Camp opened in 1986 and was a leap forward in terms of luxury and sophistication. It meant a lot more money could be charged per night (Varty 1997). In 1990 Londolozi was granted membership of the prestigious *Relais et Chateaux* group (an exclusive club of the world's best hotels), which gave it enormous kudos internationally (Varty 1997). Each expansion meant a greater number of staff were needed. They were all housed on site which removed them from their families for extended periods (Varty pers. comm. 17/04/2008). The number of ecotourism operations in the SSW also increased at this time which therefore expanded the number of people working and living within the reserve (Varty pers. comm. 17/04/2008 and McKenzie pers. comm. 15/05/2008). So while the lodges invested more and more money into the local economy through the provision of salaries, they also created a migrant labour system where employees were spending 75 percent of their time away from their families.

3.6 Londolozi and community-based approaches

In 1979, Dr Ken Tinley, a consulting ecologist, told the Varty's that the survival of game reserves depended on the attitudes of people living in adjacent areas, especially as population pressures increased (Tinley 1979).

Tinley's advice was in line with increasing criticism of top-down conservation practices (see Chapter 2). The 1979 Londolozi mission statement (dated 1979 and currently hanging on a wall in the lodge) read as follows:

We aim to create a model in wise land management by using the many qualities of the natural system and by integrating our visitors with the environment and local people to the benefit of all. Our primary objective is to demonstrate that man and wildlife can interact on a sustainable basis.

Londolozi was therefore implementing what the rest of the conservation world were to accept in the late 1980's. Indeed it took until August 1994 for the National Parks Board to initiate the Social Ecology Unit to direct more of the benefits from

conservation in the country to rural communities (Ramutsindela 2003). Tinley saw poverty as a constraint to conservation and tackling this was seen as a way to persuade local people not to exploit natural resources within reserves, an approach that would later be popularised through CBNRM (see Chapter 2). Tinley's 1979 advice was heeded to a certain extent and Londolozi began to interact much more with the people living on its borders.

A massive bush clearing operation was initiated on Sparta and the wood from this clearing was sold cheaply to the people outside the SSW. Londolozi also helped setup locally owned distribution businesses to sell this wood. In 1985, a drought led to the culling of 3000 impala on Sparta. The meat was sold to local people at 50 cents a shovel load (approximately four kilograms) (Varty 2008). At the same time the KNP was culling more than 500 elephants a year, canning the meat and selling it in urban areas for prices well beyond the means of the rural people of the lowveld. The KNP management actively discouraged the Londolozi approach, arguing that they were creating an unsustainable dependency on wildlife in the rural areas (Varty pers. comm. 10/04/2008).

By the early 1990's the Londolozi mission statement looked very similar to the 1979 version (Varty 1997, p. 166):

We aim to create a model in wise land management using the multi-disciplines of a natural system, integrating international travellers and rural people to their mutual benefit. Our primary objective is to demonstrate that wildlife can be used on a sustainable basis by all.

The approach had, however, changed to identifying, through consultation with the staff, a development need such as education and then trying to provide for this need.

3.6.1 Extension of the Londolozi model – the Conservation Corporation

In 1990 Dave Varty said (Varty 1997, p. 125),

Ecotourism gave us the money to repair the land, care for the wildlife and to provide opportunity for a sustainable economic substructure for rural communities. It is however a

double edged sword. The impact of ecotourism needs to be finely balanced against the integrity of the wilderness.

The language merged with the developing concepts of sustainable development and the developing community-conservation approaches as outlined in Chapter 2. Interestingly it was language that Londolozi had been using since the late 1970's. The business model was a way of showing that conservation did not have to have a negative impact on rural livelihoods, but could actually provide benefits over and above the salaries that people derived.

Londolozi went on to build a clinic, pre-school, church, recreational area and a staff shop (part owned by employees). All of these were built at the lodge, in the staff village, and a programme to involve, socially, all members of staff was implemented (Varty 1997). These 'development' initiatives were designed in consultation with the staff and focussed very much on the individual staff members of Londolozi rather than a 'community' on the borders of the reserve. In addition, Londolozi started and sponsored a debating competition involving 30 schools in the rural areas surrounding the SSW (Varty 2008). The topic for debate was whether land use in the area should incorporate cattle or wildlife. The staff, as they do now, came from various villages on the borders of the SSW and an advantage of the approach adopted by Londolozi was that the problems associated with defining the extent and make-up of communities (see Chapter 2) did not have to be wrestled with.

The model embraced was that espoused and developed by the WCS and the Brundtland Report (Chapter 2). It sought to show that development could be achieved within the conservation context and without threatening the needs of the future. In the case of the SSW, given the nature of the land and the burgeoning size of the tourism industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ecotourism was the most profitable land use practice and thus provided the articulation between conservation and development.

Londolozi embraced the concept of sustainable development but seemed able to do it without the romanticism associated with the 'noble savage'. Ecotourism provided

the basis from which Londolozi was able to do this in the limited geographical area they operate and with the economic imbalances of the local people and private land owners. Using the land and the reserve for the viewing and photographing of its fauna and flora was essentially non-consumptive and thus sustainable. Water for the lodge was drawn from boreholes and some firewood was collected from the bush. These were the only on-site natural resources the lodge used. It provided (through salaries and other development need provision) some form of upliftment or development to the people on the SSW borders. The business model aimed to show that conservation and development could complement each other in a sustainable way indefinitely.

Dave Varty felt that by linking international tourists to wildlife areas, Londolozi had proved that the conservation-development model was economically and environmentally viable. He felt that it had reached maturity and could be expanded to other wildlife areas in Africa (Varty 1997, p. 125):

Regional economies could be stimulated, rural people could find opportunity for equity participation, business partnerships, employment and training, green frontiers could be advanced and the home range of African wildlife extended.

With this in mind Conservation Corporation Africa Pty (Ltd) (CC Africa) was registered in 1990. The idea behind the creation of this company was to export the Londolozi model to other wildlife areas in order to make them profitable and in so doing conserve wild areas and provide livelihoods to local people without having to rely on donations and the consumptive use of wildlife (Varty 1997).

By 2000, CC Africa was operating five properties in South Africa, two in Zimbabwe, four in Tanzania, two in Kenya and one in Namibia (pers. observation) The corporation owned one of the reserves and had management contracts on all of the others. Some of the East African reserves were part community-owned operations, one was a contractual national park in the KNP and some were privately owned operations. CC Africa's community development arm facilitated development

projects in various communities on their borders (Varty 2008 and Hendry pers. observation 2000 - 2008).

CC Africa did not adopt the very much bottom-up approach that Londolozi had used in the past. Instead part of their business was dedicated to rural development which was in line with neo-liberal, 'catch-up thinking' (see Chapter 2). They built classrooms and clinics that they thought would enable people to embrace a technology driven and market-orientated paradigm with regard to their development (Currie 2001, Spenceley 2006). The model was successful in some respects as shown by Currie (2001), where two communities bordering Phinda Resource Reserve showed a positive attitude to the reserve and its management. Phinda had a significantly lower incidence of poaching than the neighbouring Mkuzi Game Reserve which was operated by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (Currie 2001).

In order to examine Londolozi's current approach to social development and compare it with the approaches of the operators of some other lodges, it is instructive to explore the people and villages bordering the SSW.

3.6.2 Community outside Londolozi

By 2000, the population density in the former Gazankulu homeland was 146 people per square kilometre in the eastern sections that border the SSW (Shackleton 2000). There was also a 60 to 70 percent unemployment rate (Hendry 2001, Shackleton 2000). Community visits conducted in 2008 indicate that most homesteads cultivate vegetable gardens in the winter. Electricity is available in most of the villages bordering the SSW but it is not cheap so people use a mixture of electricity and fuel wood for their energy needs (Community visits 1 - 5, 2008).

As mentioned, the conservation and development nexus has brought definitions, of concepts such as 'community' under the spotlight (Chapter 2). The villages in which research for this work was conducted (Huntington, Justicia, Dixie and Lillydale) all have CDFs. Residents are able to say which community they are from, who the elders are and to where the village territories extend. On the surface it would seem that the communities form well-defined social and spatial units (All Focus Groups

and Community Visits, Khoza pers. comm. (20/05/2008). Closer examination shows that they are, in fact, heavily stratified along gender, age and, in some cases, ethnic lines (Focus Groups 1 26/02/2008, 2 10/03/2008, Londolozzi 2005).

In the interviews conducted with Londolozzi staff members (who live in these villages), 51 percent of respondents indicated that they were married. Seventy-three percent of men claimed marriage compared with just 13 percent (eight individuals) of women (Londolozzi 2005). Men who were not married usually indicated a strong desire to marry whereas women who were managing to support their families indicated the opposite. They claimed that the men in their rural areas are seldom prepared to do their own housework, cooking or other work that is traditionally for women. The need for someone to do these jobs for them was often the reason male interviewees gave for finding a wife. The general consensus among women was that men will do little to help around the house and, if unemployed, will simply be a drain on his wife's meagre financial takings. They stated that he will often spend his days drinking or philandering and then demand a meal from his wife in the evening (Londolozzi 2005).

The age stratification is best illustrated by the fact that in the focus group interviews conducted, the younger members felt very frustrated by the fact that the elders were looking after the land claims process (Focus Groups 2, 10/03/2008 and 3, 12/03/2008). The age stratification impacts on the coherence of negotiations with communities often because the younger generations are more educated and thus better equipped to negotiate with businesses but they feel culturally bound to defer to the elders (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008).

Attempts to start in excess of ten community-owned businesses, from the mid 1980's to 2008 (by Londolozzi and this author) in these communities have all been met with failure because CDF members either cannot agree with each other, are never available for meetings at the same time or conflict with tribal authorities (Hendry pers. observation and Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008). There are various community trusts in Huntington, Lillydale and Justicia who have pieces of land and infrastructure that are lying unused because the trustees cannot agree on who

should be reaping the rewards (Hendry pers. observation, Community Visit 6 20/05/2008). In 2008, it was proposed that a business to outsource various services to the lodges in the SSW be started. A trust representing the three villages was to own a large share of the business, be paid a rent for the land and derive dividends from the profits. A large bank loan was secured (R800 000) to start the business. The project folded after four months because the trustees could never all be at a meeting at the same time and each made personal demands for facilitation fees (Hendry pers. obs., Paumgarten pers. comm. 20/03/2008, Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008).

Another example is the development of a chicken farm on the same trust-owned land. There is an enormous market for chicken in the area. This business has failed numerous times. The only way it has ever managed to stay afloat is through constant input from outside donors (two of the trustees who donated the land in the first place). Every time it has failed, it is has done so because no one can track the funds that are made from the business (McKenzie pers. comm. 15/05/2008, Paumgarten pers. comm. 20/03/2008.).

These are the conditions within which any lodge community development initiative must operate. Londolozi's approach to rural development attempts to circumvent the circumstances among communities described above, by focussing on individual staff members.

3.6.3 Londolozi's community development approach in 2008

Londolozi's current approach to community development is novel and unlike any other in the SSW, or indeed in any other ecotourism operation examined. This author surveyed all members of the Londolozi staff. At the time of the survey (second half of 2005) Londolozi was operated by CC Africa. The study was commissioned by Dave Varty and the other land owners of Londolozi just prior to its removal from the CC Africa corporation and subsequent return to operation as a family run business. The survey gave the staff an opportunity to name what they considered to be their greatest needs and priorities. In summary these were

housing, children's education and personal education or skills improvement (Londolozzi 2005).

Housing came up overwhelmingly as the greatest concern for the future. People attached a great deal of self-worth to owning their own houses. The same held true for both men and women. Many of those who see the establishment of a homestead as a priority have started to build little by little. They buy sand and cement monthly to make bricks. When they have enough bricks they hire someone to build a room and then start the process again. Fewer than ten out of 170 individuals claimed that they were satisfied with their homesteads.

It is very difficult for people to borrow money to build homes in the former Bantustans such as Gazankulu because they cannot hold title to land and therefore have no collateral (Guest 2005). In response to this Londolozzi has engaged one of South Africa's major banks and they are working towards solutions that will allow people to borrow funds for building, using provident funds as collateral (Groch pers. comm. 18/02/2008).

Eighty-seven percent of the staff named educational needs as the foremost priority for their children. All people who responded that they wanted their children to go to school were asked what they wanted their children to do after grade 12. Many people made the comment that they wanted their children to be better educated than they were because this would offer greater job opportunities. Very few people had plans for how they were going to send their children to tertiary institutions. Some spoke vaguely about bursaries and others said they would save 'little by little' if they could.

In general, the staff indicated a strong desire to increase their own education levels in order to further their careers. These desires ranged from basic literacy and numeracy to the desire to complete university degrees and diplomas. The lack of numeracy means that people are, in some cases, unable to understand their payslips or bank statements and the result is that they have no way of managing their

personal finances. This is reflected in the way that a number of staff are servicing garnishee orders.

Financial literacy showed up as a major issue for the staff. The majority of people are servicing at least one debt, normally with retail outlets that charge more than 40 percent interest. Many of the debts are over 24 months and people are thus paying enormous amounts of money for household items such as beds, fridges, TVs and music systems (for example R12 000, over two years, for a bed). For most of those servicing instalment debts, their payments constitute the major monthly expense. On average those who have debt are using 19 percent of their monthly income to service their debts with 53 percent being the maximum proportion. These figures are alarming when one considers that the median salary earned is R2250 (Londolozzi 2005).

Once people had given an indication of future aspirations they were asked how they hoped to achieve them. In almost all cases there was no clear plan. Again there were vague mentions of saving 'little by little' and when asked if they had started saving, some had formal savings plans (normally in the form of fixed deposit accounts) and the rest simply saved what they could when they could. This money is usually eaten up by unexpected costs (such as family sickness or funerals) which are constantly incurred (Londolozzi 2005).

The educational needs of the staff have resulted in the Londolozzi Learning Centre (Groch pers. comm. 21/05/2008). The centre is an onsite facility focussed on improving staff skill levels. Staff voluntarily register for courses ranging from basic literacy to undergraduate degrees. All of these are facilitated by a full time teacher who has 30 years of experience. Staff members enrolled in courses pay whatever they are able to and this is determined from an examination of their debts, number of dependents and salaries. At present there are 14 people at the learning centre enrolled in grade 12 or higher education courses. A number of women staff members gather at the centre to learn beading, knitting, sewing and gardening skills. There are also a number of adults engaged in literacy and numeracy training and various accredited computer literacy courses. The learning centre also provides

extra lessons for staff children, especially grade 12s, when their schools are closed for holidays. Also, very importantly, the centre is a site where people can go for counselling on a range of issues including, family planning, debt management and emotional difficulties (Hendry pers. obs. 2008, Groch pers. comm. 21/05/2008)

This current approach has many advantages. As with their initial community development programmes, Londolozi does not have to engage with the vagaries of community politics outside its borders. It simply offers people what they have asked for, namely, education; help with children's education; and housing. They have chosen to focus on their own staff for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Londolozi can monitor progress effectively. At all times they know what progress is being made and exactly where money is being spent. There are very few instances of money being wasted (Groch pers. comm. 21/05/2008, Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008). Visits to various community development projects initiated by CC Africa and other lodges in the SSW indicated some success but also money wastage. The projects are all in communities bordering the SSW. There were new classrooms strewn with litter and broken furniture, defunct vegetable gardens, disused boreholes, rooms full of unused computers at schools, boxes of unopened books, an unused library and various other projects in disrepair (Londolozi 2005, Community Visits 2 23/02/2008, 3 24/03/2008 and 6 20/05/2008). The Londolozi approach means that their projects can be continually monitored. There is never a worry that money is being wasted through lack of monitoring or accountability.

Secondly, the approach is good for business. By increasing the skill levels of the staff, the Londolozi business could potentially become more efficient and profitable. It will also increase the possibility of nurturing potential black management for the lodge (Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008).

Thirdly, the approach allows for tailor making solutions for individuals. The teacher at the Learning Centre indicated that for adults who have little education, the individual approach is necessary because their needs are so specific (Groch, pers. comm. 21/05/2008).

Fourthly, by housing their community development initiatives on site, Londolozi is able to showcase them to guests. Increasingly travellers are showing a preference for destinations that have strong environmental and social ethics (Chidoni *et al* 2008). Guests' firsthand experience of Londolozi community development initiatives is thus an important marketing tool for the lodge and gives it an advantage over competitors (Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008). In addition, guests visiting the learning centre have sponsored training and scholarships for staff members and their children (Groch pers. comm. 18/02/2008).

The owners and the teacher hope that the Learning Centre will help to develop a pool of leaders who will go out and seed excellence and, most importantly, provide leadership in the communities from which they come (Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008 and Groch pers. comm. 18/02/2008). The Learning Centre is a registered training provider and as such is entitled to claim back up to 75 percent of the money spent on training from the government. This means that a greater number of people can be trained at little additional cost to the business (Groch pers. comm. 21/05/2008).

One disadvantage of the approach is that those not employed or related to employees of Londolozi, do not see any benefits from the lodge and thus see it in a negative light. One participant in Focus Group 2 (10/03/2008) discussed the fact that he saw the continued education of lodge staff as a waste because they are already employed. The group agreed that any extra money should be spent on developing the skills of unemployed people bordering the reserve. A participant in Focus Group 3 (12/03/2008) said that the only 'useful' private reserve owner in the SSW is Sir Richard Branson, (owner of Ulusaba Private Game Reserve, situated in the far west of the SSW). He felt this because Branson built a large medical facility just outside the reserve. This clinic is by far the most obvious and expensive single community initiative that has ever been achieved by an SSW land owner (Community Visit 6, 20/05/2008). That said, it remained unused for a number of months because the 'community' felt they had been insufficiently consulted on the project. There was conflict between different villages as each one thought the

hospital should be built in their village. This is despite its very central positioning. Apparently people thought it was going to be government run and therefore free to use. This is not the case. Although relatively inexpensive it is not free and is thus beyond the means of most unemployed people (Khoza pers. comm. 20/05/2008 and Focus Group 2 10/03/2008).

In general, the participants of Focus Groups 2 (10/03/2008) and 3 (12/03/2008) indicated that they felt there are limited benefits from the operations in the SSW. They felt that there is not enough conservation education and not enough consultation with community leaders regarding ways in which the reserves can help people. They indicated that the reserves should be offering training to school leavers in order to upskill them for the ecotourism industry. As mentioned they felt that it was pointless offering employees upskilling workshops because they are already employed.

The current Londolozi approach is still in its infancy and thus a comprehensive examination of the advantages and disadvantages is not possible. The advantages mentioned above are simply those as stated from the business point of view. Whether they will have a sustainable long term benefit on conservation, social equity and the local economy remains to be seen. Further study a few years into the future would be better able to evaluate the effects.

3.6.4 Successes, failures and threats to the Londolozi approach

The business that is Londolozi is not a CBNRM project in that local people have no say in the use or management of the natural resources in the SSW (see Section 2.3.3). It has however engaged with the people living on the western borders of the SSW. Community development in conservation has been based on social responsibility initiatives as described above or attempts to start self-sufficient local businesses. These fall under the ambit of community-based conservation initiatives inasmuch as they are intended to give rural people benefits from conservation and in so doing create an appreciation for the value of conserving biodiversity.

Londolozi shows similarities to a number of ICDP models. It aims to show people living on its borders that biodiversity conservation is the best way to improve livelihoods and to use the land. Like common ICDP models (see Chapter 2 – section 2.3.3), it uses what might be described as the *compensation model* in that it has identified development needs and provided these in the forms described above (Learning Centre etc.) (Leach 1999). It also uses the *enhancement model* where it has increased the value of the natural resources in the reserve through ecotourism (Abott *et al* 2001).

The reactions of local people during interviews indicate that this approach has borne fruit inasmuch as the people living on the borders of the reserve see ecotourism and (thus conservation) as the most profitable way to use the land to effect their own development (Londolozi 2005, all Focus Groups - see Chapter 4). This is consistent with research conducted by this author in 2001 where interviews conducted with 60 people from communities around the greater KNP indicated that people wish to continue using the game reserves for ecotourism (Hendry 2001).

Londolozi (and other SSW lodges) suffer from the same market risks as other ICDP projects. Deriving profits solely from the volatile industry that is tourism is risky (see Chapter 2). Political instability in the country and the region can, and has, caused fluctuations in tourism that Londolozi is powerless to influence. Security issues around the September 11th attacks in 2001 caused substantial fluctuations in tourism to South Africa and Londolozi's business was affected significantly (Spenceley 2006). In the same way high-profile conflict over land claims may inspire fear from travellers as has happened in Zimbabwe. One participant in Focus Group 2 (10/03/2008) said specifically that while he thought the community should have greater control of the land, he and his friends do not want 'another Zimbabwe'.

Studies referred to in Chapter 2 discuss the unproven worth of ICDP programmes to biodiversity conservation (Brown 2002, Kremen *et al* 1994, Wainwright and Wehrmeyer 1998). Assuming that the current land use at Londolozi constitutes biodiversity conservation (and there are no indications to the contrary), then it must be concluded that Londolozi is contributing to conservation and, through

employment and various development programmes is contributing to development as well. Although the nature and degree of both the conservation and development aspects to which Londolozi contributes could be debated.

There are major differences between Londolozi and the failed ICDP programme investigations mentioned in Chapter 2 (Brandon and Well 1992, Kremen *et al* 1994, Wainwright and Wehrmeyer 1998). Firstly, Londolozi is privately and not community owned. While it contributes to the development of rural people, the amount it contributes is entirely at its own discretion. This may change should the resolutions of the land claims result in a change of ownership or some kind of community-private sector ecotourism partnership (see Chapter 4). If Londolozi were community owned it is highly unlikely that there would be a sustainable development and conservation marriage. The stratified nature of the so-called community, the fractured leadership, and the enormous expectations of what ecotourism can provide to poor rural people would almost certainly mean that development would subvert conservation as the major goal. As Turner (2004) suggests, increased community involvement would not necessarily improve ecological outcomes but might, as found by Kellert *et al* (2000) lead to a situation where rural people see increased involvement as a way to pursuing development goals. (See Chapter 4 for Focus Group accounts supporting this).

Secondly, Londolozi uses most of its natural resources in a non-consumptive way. The animals that provide the game viewing (high-profile and general game) and the vegetation that supports them are viewed and photographed. There have been arguments from various corners of the conservation world, notably from the members of the South African National Parks Board (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008), and in line with Kiss (2004 – see Chapter 2), that the pumping of water for game, bush clearing programmes and off-road driving would inevitably result in degradation of the land and a reduction of the biodiversity that sustains the Londolozi business. In 30 years, there has yet to be a study published to corroborate these fears. That said there have also not been extensive biodiversity studies carried out on the reserve but the SSW census reports indicate that mammal numbers do

fluctuate but that there has been a steady increase in all species except zebra and warthog over the last 20 years (SSW 2008).

Considering Robinson's (1993) outline of the conditions for sustainable development, Londolozi, as it stands, does conform to some of these. The use of renewable resources (fauna and flora for wildlife viewing), does not appear to affect animal numbers negatively (SSW 2008). If the tourism industry continues to provide high-paying international travellers to Londolozi then it is likely to be able to sustain the operation that it currently runs, indefinitely. In so doing it will be able to indefinitely support the development of the people that surround the reserve through salaries and the development projects it has initiated.

While this may be true, it does not address issues around operational and land ownership, issues with which people living on the borders of the reserves are struggling. It also does not address issues of how much Londolozi is providing to communities from the profits that it derives and whether or not these could be increased in any way. The latest development in the conservation-development nexus, namely the TFCA movement, has not, as yet, made any observable difference to either biodiversity conservation in the SSW or the people living on its borders (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008).

3.7 Londolozi and the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP)

This section examines the transfrontier conservation movement in southern Africa. It then examines Londolozi's place in the context of the GLTP and how or if the GLTP will affect its operations and relations with local neighbours.

Southern Africa is at the forefront of the TFCA movement. By 2004 there were 15 TFCAs in existence and a further six proposed (Duffy 2006). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) promotes the establishment of TFCAs as a means for interstate co-operation in the management and sustainable use of ecosystems that surpass international borders (Spenceley 2006). As early as 1990, Anton Rupert and others were negotiating to have the KNP linked to the Coutada 16 area in Mozambique (Ellis 1994, Warburton-Lee 1999). The GLTP that joins the KNP in

South Africa to the Limpopo National Park (Coutada 16) in Mozambique and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe was established in 2000. It is over 95 000 square kilometres in extent (Peaceparks.org). Its establishment, despite being a conservation coup, was politically expedient, giving the South African government more complete control of the Mozambique border (Ellis 1994).

From the earliest GLTP negotiations, there were disparities between the three countries' policies, law enforcement techniques, access to finance, approaches to wildlife management, relationships to the rural people living outside the wildlife areas and levels of tourism infrastructure (Spenceley 2006). In South Africa the KNP is easy to access, well stocked and managed, and has a well developed tourism infrastructure both in the park and the private reserves adjoining it (Warburton-Lee 1999). The private reserves, such as the SSW, contain a number of well-established private ecotourism operations, including Londolozi.

In Zimbabwe, the Sengwe Corridor that links the northern KNP with Gonarezhou is community land. There is substantial infighting and suspicion about CBRNM projects and delicate negotiations were ongoing when the park was agreed in principle (Metcalf 1999). In Mozambique, there were people living in Coutada 16 when the GLTP was established in 2001. Both Gonarezhou and the Coutada 16 section draw very little interest from tourists because of the lack of infrastructure, game and accessibility (Spenceley 2006, Warburton-Lee 1999).

The GLTP Joint Management Plan recommends that the park work closely with the tourism industry. It aims for a market-related strategic plan based on tourism activities that should be outsourced to the private sector with preference given to local entrepreneurs (JMB 2002). Following from this, in 2000, the KNP embarked on a commercialisation process where concessions were granted to private companies to operate luxury tourism operations within the park in order to increase net revenue. At the same time the idea was to promote business opportunities for poor local people and entrepreneurs (Spenceley 2006). Seven concessions were granted to private companies with a total black ownership of 53 percent, giving the KNP a minimum of R202 million over 20 years with all assets reverting to the KNP.

Recently, results for the concessionaires have not been particularly positive with most of them incurring much greater setup costs than expected (Spenceley 2006, Anon pers. comm. Wilderness Safaris 23/07/2008).

Londolozi forms part of the GLTP. At this point, the only way that it has affected the business is from a marketing point of view. The fact that Londolozi is part of 3.5 million hectares of contiguous wildlife land is used in marketing literature (www.londolozi.com). That said, informal conversations with Londolozi guests during the course of 2008 indicate that international tourists identify Londolozi as part of the KNP before the GLTP and are often completely unaware of the GLTP's existence. As of 2008, there is no evidence to suggest that animal concentrations have changed as a result of the GLTP's establishment (SSW 2008). While community development projects instituted by the lodges have changed over the years, there is no link to the establishment of the GLTP (Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008 and Khoza pers. comm. 20/05/2008).

The GLTP was mooted as a possible solution to what many consider to be an over population of elephants in the greater KNP (which includes the SSW) (van Aarde 2007). Land owners in the SSW have all agreed as of 2008 to try and limit the numbers of elephant in the reserve to between 500 and 600 (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008). They will achieve this by removing them to other reserves. While the expansion of the KNP into the GLTP may be considered a way to address elephant over population, the landowners of the SSW will continue to pump artificial water points in accordance with their short term business needs (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008). It thus might be predicted that removing the elephants from the area without removing what has attracted them in the first place - water (van Aarde 2007) - will simply mean that the elephants will be replaced from the KNP where there is less water. In summary as it stands the GLTP is unlikely to affect Londolozi except for the marketing kudos it receives from being part of a transfrontier park.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Sparta moved from being a private hunting farm that derived no income in a fenced 60 000 hectare area (the SSW) to a multimillion rand business which forms part of a 3.5 million hectare transfrontier park. The landowners followed rising neo-liberal trends of the 1970's in asserting that their land and its wildlife should pay for itself through the market. Ecotourism was the vehicle they chose to achieve this. In so doing, they were at the forefront of private ecotourism in South Africa. Long before the 1990's, when community-conservation approaches became widely accepted and applied, Londolozi had engaged with the local people of the area. They did this because it made good business sense to help the poor people living on the borders of the SSW, people who could pose a threat to the wildlife of the reserve (Varty, pers. comm. 10/05/2008).

Londolozi has attempted to remain at the cutting-edge of the conservation-development nexus through its consultative projects that have sought to provide development initiatives which circumvent confusing and sometimes damaging local politics. The projects can be monitored closely and benefit the business through marketing spin-offs and increasing staff skill levels.

The next chapter builds on the analysis of the conservation-development nexus. Given the history of dispossession outlined in this chapter, it will look briefly at the history of land tenure in South Africa, the lowveld and the SSW, before moving on to examine, in more detail, local perceptions of conservation, ecotourism and land tenure in the SSW and surrounds.

Chapter 4. Land claims, land reform and private conservation – local perceptions of the future

This chapter builds on the examination of the past and current relationship that private nature reserves, specifically Londolozi, have built with their rural neighbours by examining the history of land tenure in South Africa with specific reference to conservation land in the lowveld. It examines the land restitution process in South Africa and its implications for the conservation and development nexus on private conservation land such as Londolozi and the other SSW lodges. Local people's impressions and expectations of the land claims process, conservation and ecotourism are put forward and discussed in the light of what is known about ecotourism in the SSW and the current status of land claims. It looks critically at the realities of balancing unemployment, poverty and biodiversity conservation using ecotourism as the link. It presents the debates around the advantages and disadvantages of community-owned versus private ecotourism ventures.

4.1 Black people, labour and land – pre 1994

In the late 1840's, Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs for the Natal Colony, instituted a system of black tribal reserves and indirect rule through chieftaincy. This was largely in response to the labour shortage in the colony. He confined 300 000 Natal Zulus into reserves totalling less than one million hectares while the white population of 16 000 people occupied the remaining 4.1 million hectares (Morris 1965). This was the first forced relocation of black people to designated 'reserve' areas in South African history.

It should be remembered that African climates (on just about the entire sub-Saharan continent) have always been unpredictable - fluctuating between extremes of drought and flood and as a result pre-colonial African communities were spread out to cope with the vagaries of the environment (Reader 1997). Subsistence in the native reserve areas quickly became untenable because they were ecologically marginal, became overcrowded, were farmed with obsolete techniques, and prone

to intermittent drought (Arrighi 1971). Occupants of the reserves soon had little option but to seek work for a wage. This basic model would eventually be applied to administer black people throughout South Africa (Sparks 2003a). Removing black people from the land and curtailing their hunting rights increased the labour pool for farms and mines (Arrighi 1971, Ramutsindela 2003).

The Natives Land Act of 1913 prevented blacks from owning land anywhere outside designated reserve areas which constituted about ten percent of the land (Sparks 2003a). The effect of this act and others, such as The Natives Land Trust Act of 1936 (which allocated 13 percent of South Africa to black people), the Group Areas Act of 1950 that allowed large-scale land seizures meant that the only security remaining for black South Africans was removed (Sparks 2003a). Africans had long since lost political security and they now lost economic and ecological security (Arnold and Perez 2006, Arrighi 1971, CRLR 2003b).

Immediately following the 1948 national elections, the National Party government sought to expand the implementation of apartheid and colonial policies to advance a complete separation between the races (Legassick 1984, King 2007). This was done through a variety of legislative measures, including the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 that laid the foundations for the Bantustans. Like Shepstone's Natal reserves a century before, the Bantustans were to be farming communities, providing sustenance and acting as dormitories and retirement homes for black people whose labour was required in white urban or farming areas (Wolpe 1972). The government sought to maintain the system of communal land tenure, traditional chiefs, and the corresponding pre-capitalist relations of production (Burawoy 1976).

Bantu authorities, based on rapidly disintegrating tribal chieftaincies, were bolstered and given limited administrative powers. Political development along western lines was discouraged in favour of tribal systems (Amin 1972, Sparks 2003a). Leadership in the Bantustans was based on complicit traditional chiefs who, fearing the loss of authority, happily cooperated with the apartheid government. They were, in effect, nothing more than stooges (Sparks 2003a, Wolpe 1972) and

through them the institution of chieftainship was discredited in southern Africa (Mafeje 2002). This is a legacy still being dealt with today in the Bantustan areas such as the former Gazankulu (Turner 2004).

4.2 Land reform – post 1994

Land reform is strongly connected to transforming states (Bernstein 1998). In South Africa the legal exclusion of black people from owning land was finally abolished with the 1991 Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act (Williams *et al* 1998). The South African land reform programme embraces land restitution as a result of 'a negotiated political settlement that sought to balance national reconciliation, political and moral demand for land redistribution, protection of private property and the need for economic stability and growth in a global capitalist world' (Ramutsindela 2007, p. 421).

One of the first pieces of post-apartheid legislation that the African National Congress (ANC) government promulgated was the Restitution Act No 22 of 1994. The main aim of this Act was to provide for the restitution of land rights to people dispossessed after 19 June 1913 as a result of racially discriminatory laws or practices (LCC 2003). This date was politically agreed as the cut off date, despite prior dispossessions, raising the ire of land activists (Ramutsindela 2007).

Land reform was expected to bring reconciliation between black and white South Africans and while conservative white farmers objected, 87 percent of South Africans supported the idea (SAHRC 1999, Ramutsindela 2003). The ANC and its socialist partners in the tripartite alliance (the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party) laid out its plans for 'a better life for all' in the hastily constructed and unclear document that was to become the South African Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Sparks 2003b). It drew its policies from the World Bank and thus, ironically, gave ascendance to the market as the major mechanism of land reform in South Africa (Levin 1994, Williams 1998). Indeed, the principle behind the process is the 'restoration of land or the equitable compensation to victims of racially-motivated removals within the

contexts of the constitution and the capitalist market' (Ramutsindela 2007, p. 424). Williams (1998) argues that liberalisation of agricultural markets will allow existing producers, manufacturers, and traders to defend their positions. New entrants such as successful land claimants will generally require large amounts of capital for farming (seeds, fences, equipment etc.) or building lodges (de Wet 1997, Turner 2004).

Amongst other things, the RDP promised to redistribute thirty percent of land between 1994 and 1999 (Sparks 2003b). The White Paper on South African Land Policy aimed to give all people occupying land a legally validated and secure system of land holding (South Africa 1997). In 1995, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) was established with the aim to:

- Provide equitable redress and restoration to victims of land dispossessions, particularly the landless and rural poor;
- Contribute towards equitable redistribution of land in South Africa;
- Promote reconciliation through the restitution process; and
- Facilitate development initiatives by bringing together all relevant stakeholders, especially provincial governments and municipalities (CRLR 2003b).

The Land Claims Court was established in the same year to adjudicate any disputes over land claims (Ramutsindela 2003). One notable piece of legislation passed since 1994 was the Land Rights Amendment Bill that was promulgated in January 2004. It gives the government a constitutionally-sanctioned option to expropriate land in order to resolve land claims that have been delayed by frustratingly long negotiations with white landowners (CRLR 2003a, Ramutsindela 2007).

All land claims had to be lodged by the end of 1998 (CRLR 2003b). In 1997, just prior to this end date, some 102 million hectares of South Africa were white owned and 17 million were black owned. There have been (as yet unheeded) calls to re-open the process for those who did not manage to lodge claims. It is argued that rural areas were disadvantaged by the cut off dates because of their remoteness and

a lack of literacy. People with resources such as literacy, money, transport and political contacts have the ability to continue pressing their claims and raising collateral (de Wet 1997). Indeed the elders in Focus Group 1 (26/02/2008) complained that they could not afford the transport and communication costs of visiting and phoning the land claims commissioner to check up on the progress of claims. The victims of forced removals were expected to adhere to these dates and, in turn, the government was expected to either release some of the 20 percent of South Africa held in trust by the state or buy private land for redistribution (Ramutsindela 2007).

There are three aspects to the South African land reform programme namely, restitution, redistribution and land tenure reform (de Wet 1997). Restitution requires, where feasible, the state to restore people to land from which they were removed or, where this is not feasible, to provide equitable compensation. This compensation could take the form of priority access to government housing and land development programmes or a combination of other measures (Ramutsindela 2003). Because of the problems associated with discredited traditional chiefs (Sparks 2003b), the government has tried to move communal land ownership away from the control of traditional chiefs in favour of communal property associations (CPAs) (Ramutsindela 2003). An example is the restitution of the Zebedelia citrus estate (Limpopo Province) to the Bjatladi community through a CPA. The CPA owns the land and leases it to an operating company. The community (over 400 households) do not live on the land but rather derive an income from working on the farm and leasing it to the operating company (Tilley *et al* 2007).

Redistribution is the provision of land access for the poor who do not qualify for restitution. It is intended to help labour tenants, farm workers and women, through a market-assisted willing-buyer, willing-seller approach where government facilitates land acquisition through land acquisition grants (CRLR 2003b). Redistribution was conceived as a means of freeing productive land for residential and farming purposes. For poor households unable to purchase land on the open market, a grant of R16000 was granted for households earning less than R1500 per

month (Ramutsindela 2003). For example, the Dikgale people of Limpopo have formed a CPA, bought land they were removed from with their grants and now use the land for agriculture. The lack of funding from government or the private sector, and lack of capacity means that the land does not, however, fully support the 65 households involved (Lahiff *et al* 2008). Lahiff *et al* (2008) found similar situations in four redistribution case studies in Limpopo.

Land tenure reform aims to change current arrangements to legal land rights. Indeed, tenure reform aims to harmonise the dual system of land tenure where most whites own land as private property through title deeds and most blacks occupy communally allocated land through permission to occupy (PTO) documents (Ramutsindela 2003). During apartheid, black people had insecure land tenure systems to land whether they were labour tenants, renters, squatters or occupiers of various systems of communally occupied land (de Wett 1997). The land tenure reform process was intended to help farm dwellers without secure land tenure. It has so far been the most difficult to implement and resulted in far less land transfers than the restitution and redistribution processes (Lahiff 2008).

Most claims to land, whether for restitution or redistribution, have been made by so-called communities, normally through CPAs (Williams 1998). The problems associated with communities, as described in Chapters 2 and 3, are applicable here. For the purposes of land restitution in South Africa, the Land Restitution Act (22/1994) defines a community as “any group of persons whose rights in land are derived from shared rules determining access to land held in common by such group,” (GoRSA 1994, p. 1). Plots allocated to individuals are, however, unlikely to be larger than a housing plot and small garden. The advantage of applying for land as a community means that land grants can be joined and thus more land can be acquired (Williams *et al* 1998).

Since its establishment, the CRLR has settled 74 808 out of 79 696 land claims lodged at a cost of R16-billion (BuaNews 2008). The deadline for settling the claims was originally 2005. This was extended to 2008 and has now been extended to 2011 (BuaNews 2008). Most of these claims have been settled with cash payments rather

than restoration and have been in urban areas with rural claims, being more about land settlements, proving much more complicated (CRLR 2003a, Ramutsindela 2007). The original redistribution target of 30 percent was soon dropped as impractical and by 29 October 2008, the government had acknowledged it was unlikely to achieve this even by 2014 (*Mail and Guardian* 2008, Ramutsindela 2003, Williams 1998).

While most of the land claimed is white owned, there are conflicting black land claims where black claimants are claiming land occupied by other black people or where different black communities are claiming the same land (Ramutsindela 2007). On much conservation land, including the SSW, there is a case of the latter (see below). This is likely to polarise rather than reconcile people and cause exclusion on the basis of ethnicity (de Wet 1997, Williams 1998).

4.3 Land reform on conservation land and the SSW

Throughout the former colonies, the creation of conservation areas has meant a loss of land and hunting rights for rural people who were seen as a threat to conservation (Ramutsindela 2003). In apartheid South Africa conservation projects were associated with racist forced removals of communities from their land. A consequent hostility towards conservation areas was created (Burns and Barrie 2005). The South African land reform programme thus applies to much of South Africa's conservation land, including the SSW.

It took until 2002 for the South African government to come up with a common approach to the resolution of land claims on forestry, conservation and mining areas (Ramutsindela 2007). The CRLR established a number of principles with the Departments of Water Affairs and Forestry, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and Public Works and Land Affairs. These were (CRLR 2003b):

- Successful claimants shall own the land in title;
- The claimants shall agree to maintain the current land use (conservation or forestry);

- The title will have a notarial deed which restricts land use to that agreed by the claimants and government;
- The claimants shall become lessors and will enter into agreement with lessees for market-related rentals;
- The claimants shall establish legal entities for land ownership such as CPAs;
- Investors shall be encouraged to allow the claimants to have equitable shares in business ventures on such land; and
- The benefits of the ventures will flow to neighbouring communities.

The South African National Parks (SANParks) viewed the resolution of land claims to the satisfaction of all parties as essential to the success of ecosystem management. However, while land restitution to communities surrounding conservation areas was considered important, the case for conservation was not undermined (Ramutsindela 2003). To this end the government has opposed land claims in the KNP on ecological and financial grounds (CRLR 2003b, Ramutsindela 2007).

The Makuleke land claim is one of South Africa's most high profile land claims in a conservation area (Spenceley 2006). When the Makuleke people were removed from the 24 000ha Pafuri region of the KNP in 1969, the then National Parks Board secretary commented that he thought it was exceptionally unfair. He went on to say that the removal might form the seed for the entire park's destruction (Carruthers 1995). The Makuleke won their land back in a much publicised land claim in 1998. The land is now a contractual national park and as such is still part of the KNP. The Makuleke community, although owning title to the land, may only use it for wildlife related purposes. At present they derive money from the concession by leasing it to two lodge operators (Wilderness Safaris and Matswani Safaris). Both operators paid a fixed initial fee and now pay the community a percentage of gross turnover and a traversing fee for each game drive (Spenceley 2006).

Contractual national parks are seen as a viable option for the settling of land claims in government and conservation circles (Ramutsindela 2007). A one-size-fits-all

4.4.3 Land use

A number of homesteads in the area own cattle which are stocked at over 400% of the recommended stocking rate. Interestingly, herbaceous and woody plant biodiversity does not appear to be affected by these land practices although there is increased bare ground which exposes soil to erosion and must eventually cause biodiversity loss (Harrison and Shackleton 1999, Shackleton 2000). Some communal land is used for planting maize, ground nuts, sweet potatoes and tending mango trees. Most families use the land around their houses to grow vegetables (lettuce, spinach, cabbages, tomatoes, chillies, ground nuts) in the winter time. In summer it is too hot and vegetables tend to wilt (Londolozi 2005, Focus Group 1 26/02/2008, Community Visit 6 20/05/2008).

If it were left to them to decide, the elders said that they would use the land in the KNP and SSW for homesteads, for farming livestock and for planting crops. They would also like to use the land for traditional rituals. They said that the land they live on presently is inadequate because of population growth and that they want to avoid conflict for land. Interestingly, they also said that if they could derive some form of cash income from the land in the game reserves in order to support their families, they would be happy for the KNP and SSW to continue as conservation areas (Focus Group 1 26/02/2008). One man in Focus Group 1 (26/02/2008) said that he believed there was a need to keep half of the reserve for animals and the other half should be used for growing crops which could be sold to derive a cash-based income.

That said, there are large tracts of communal land in Justicia, Huntington and Dixie. This land is used for the growing of crops and grazing cattle (All Community Visits). In Dixie there is little crop planting and the grazing areas are generally degraded with bush encroachment from various *Acacia* and *Strychnos* species (Community Visit 4 15/05/2008). Much of the land in Justicia and Huntington appears to remain productive albeit with reduced grass cover (Community Visit 1 10/02/2008). Given the haphazard way in which the land is used in these three villages, it is quite possible that the existing land could be more productive from a

subsistence point of view. The land around homes is heavily littered with plastic and other rubbish which reduces its productivity. Sheet and gully erosion, caused by a lack of herbaceous cover in *Justicia* and *Huntington* is reducing land productivity. Normally this is not from overgrazing or cropping but rather from badly drained and maintained roads, and a clearing of vegetation for fuel (All Community Visits). Vegetation is, almost without fail, cleared from the ground on the stands around homes. The result is vast swathes of unvegetated land where water run-off causes erosion (All Community Visits, Khoza, pers. comm. 20/05/2008). In Dixie the population is not as high and the land is less undulating. Erosion is consequently less of a problem (Community Visit 5 16/05/2008).

The younger group complained that there is not enough water for them to sustain themselves with subsistence agriculture (Focus Group 2 10/3/2008). Personal observation and conversation with various villagers indicates that water supply is extremely erratic, both from government piped water and boreholes. People also complained that available land was running out because Mozambican immigrants were occupying too much land (Community Visit 6 20/05/2008, Focus Group 4 12/03/2008).

Should the land that Londolozi occupies be won in the land claim, it would be owned communally. All of the problems associated with the definition of the community would apply especially with regard to who would be entitled to the benefits, who would monitor this and who would be accountable. This author has tried to facilitate the setting up of a number of community-owned initiatives, many of which have failed because of issues of patronage with politically connected people in the CDF or tribal authority demanding payments for access to communally owned land. These potential businesses included a vegetable garden for supplying lodges in the SSW and an airstrip to service the lodges in the SSW (including craft shop, refreshment area and fire control). There is no reason to suppose a community-owned ecotourism venture in this area would not suffer from the same issues.

approach to land claims on conservation land is, however, unlikely to succeed given the different strengths and interests among claimants and the national importance of the land under claim (Ramutsindela 2007). For communities there can be complications with contractual national parks. The Makuleke, for example, do not have mineral rights on the land and their attempts to use animals for trophy hunting have met with successful objections from the SANParks (Ramutsindela 2003).

Within the SSW, which forms part of the greater KNP, 14 land claims were lodged on seven SSW farms before the deadline of 1998. All of these operate high-end ecotourism operations (Hartman 2003). The only claim that was gazetted was that lodged by the Mhlanganisweni Community. This claim was gazetted in the Government Gazette Notice 1848 of 11 October 2002. The claim includes all farms in the SSW (including Sparta and Marthly on which Londolozi operates its game viewing activities) (Hartman 2003). The other claims were rejected and it is not known why, as the reasons have not been forthcoming from the land claims commissioner. That said, the commissioner did release a memorandum of acceptance of all the other claims, citing them as being compliant with all requirements for the lodgements of land claims. This memorandum was dated 4 October 2002 (Hartman 2003).

The Mhlanganisweni Community was created as an entity by the people who form the claimant committee sometime during 1997. They are from five different villages and represent the people from four different tribal authorities as per those described in Chapter 3. They represent more than 30 families. Considering the people involved in this particular land claim as a homogenous community is thus absurd (Hartman 2003). It does not conform to the Land Restitution Act's definition as a "group of persons whose rights in land are derived from shared rules determining access to land held in common by such group," (GoRSA 1994). De Wet (1997) argues that, in terms of the act, a group seeking restitution must show group cohesion; that, as a group, they suffered loss; they maintained cohesion in exile; and kept leadership intact and thus require compensation as a group. The

other words, none of the tribes included in the Mhlanganisweni community ever had any official jurisdiction on the farms in the SSW.

4.4 Local perceptions and desires of the people bordering the SSW.

4.4.1 The land claims process

Elders from Justicia and Huntington appeared to have a good general understanding of what the land claims process is. They said that it had been instituted by the ANC government to correct the mistakes of the past by giving black people the chance to claim back 'their places' or recouping some sort of benefit where return to the land is not possible (Focus Group 1 26/02/2008). Younger members of the Justicia community (aged 25 - 35), agreed that the land claims process is a restitution process whereby the original inhabitants of land in the game reserves (SSW or KNP) would be given their land back or compensated monetarily (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008).

There was a lack of clarity from young and old about how the process works. The elders (Focus Group 1 26/02/2008) indicated that there is a village committee handling the process. They were aware that there needs to be evidence in the form of graves and witnesses but were not particularly sure of the progress of the community's claims. They said a committee, known as the Mhlanganisweni Community Committee, regularly gave feedback to those who wanted it.

The younger group (Focus Group 2, 10/03/2008) said that they had little idea how the process works because the community elders were handling it. They expressed a feeling of being hamstrung by the cultural etiquette which required them to wait for the elders to deal with the land claims. They felt that the elders are, in some cases, ill-equipped educationally and in other cases had waning enthusiasm for the process because they do not fully understand it. They also felt that outsiders were coming in and 'pulling the wool over the eyes' of the elders, promising to speed the process along and taking money to do so.

They felt the process was flooded by corruption although they were unable to be specific. They expressed a general mistrust with the so-called 'community leaders' and said that if compensation were given, then individual amounts must go into families' bank accounts because if a lump sum were given, it would be stolen by whoever has access (Focus Group 2, 10/03/2008).

4.4.2 The Cultural attachment to the SSW

The elders said that they have community and family heroes who are buried in the reserve (Focus Group 1, 26/02/2008). They have many legends and stories derived from the reserve and feel this knowledge is eroding due to a lack of access to the SSW. They described how much of their dancing and music mimics animals. Now children rely on television.

They claimed that at least ten families from the area have graves in the SSW and that they knew where all of these graves are. In some cases they gave detailed descriptions of where these could be found. The elders said that the graves were very important to black people during special occasions or during bad times as they aided in communication with the ancestors (Focus Groups 1 26/02/2008). They believe that if the graves are looked after, the ancestors will look after the people. One person said that neglect of the graves has resulted in bad luck and misfortune (Focus Group 4 12/03/2008).

The younger adults said that there are many graves on the reserve. One woman claimed that she and her family struggle greatly to move onto the SSW to perform important rituals at grave sites. The land owners generally only give them half an hour at a time (Focus Groups 2 10/03/2008). All of the younger interviewees felt that they should be allowed to visit graves unhindered, although one man questioned the practicalities of granting free access to the SSW. He also raised concerns about security (Focus Groups 2 10/03/2008 and 3 12/03/2008). A number of community members have shown the author grave sites on the SSW farms neighbouring Sparta.

4.4.4 The purpose of conservation and the SSW

All community members interviewed indicated that conservation in the SSW should be linked directly to the development of the community in terms of jobs, schooling, resource provision and monetary payment (Focus Groups 1 26/02/2008, 2 10/03/2008 and 3 12/03/2008).

When asked what the SSW's function is, the elders said its purpose should be to provide employment for their family members. They complained that people from far away are making money from the reserve (Focus Group 1 26/02/2008). They are correct with regard to the SSW where private landowners, normally not from the area, derive profits from private ecotourism operations. They believe that ordinary poor families are not being catered for.

The younger people felt that the purpose of the reserves was to stop the 'over exploitation of natural resources' (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008). They all agreed that the SSW's main purpose should be to provide lessons to people on how to conserve nature, without which there would be over-exploitation. They then added that another major purpose of game reserves is to attract tourists and in so doing create job opportunities for community members. They indicated a desire to partner with private land owners who have experience running ecotourism operations (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008). Turner (2004) argues that private/ community partnerships are likely to be the most successful (see Chapter 2) but again, as Tuner points out, this generally means investment of external capital and thus externalisation of the profits.

The elders added that they miss being able to access water and fish in the rivers, bush meat, firewood, grazing for their livestock and the quietness of nature. They believe that the lack of access to the land means that younger generations are losing vital knowledge and used the example that children are presently only able to identify impala in books. They felt that conservation land had to provide material benefits such as donations from lodges, meat, wood, medicinal plants and training workshops for school children in the various ecotourism lodge departments (Focus

Group 1 26/02/2008). Indeed, it has been found in some cases that non-cash benefits, such as these, are often effective in encouraging community participation in conservation (Salafsky *et al* 2001).

When asked specifically what the words 'nature conservation' meant to them, the younger group said that they believe the purpose of nature conservation is to preserve 'God's creation', and that white people use conservation purely to make money (Focus Group 3 12/03/2008). One of the men then said that he believed humans and animals were created hand in hand and that to destroy nature was to destroy 'ourselves'. Animals and nature, for him, are a way of forgetting about the stresses of life. He continued with the statement that only people who are uneducated destroy nature in the game reserves (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008).

The younger adults went on to say that conservation is a way of attracting investment into the area (Focus Group 2 26/02/2008). There was no appreciation that this investment would almost always be brought by rich, normally white, non-locals. Nor did they appreciate the contradiction implicit in their assertion that, on the one hand white people only conserve land to make money, and on the other, that they believed the purpose of the SSW was to provide for their development needs.

The school children (Focus Group 3 12/03/2008) agreed that nature conservation should stop people from over-using natural resources. They felt that nature needed to be conserved because it gave people the resources to live with. One child used the example of rivers needing to flow in order for hydroelectric power to be used.

The elders said nature conservation is a place where nature is kept so that it does not disappear or go extinct and that nature should be kept the 'way that it is' in the same way their forefathers kept it for them. They said the concept was not new to them because they only ever used to harvest plants partially. They said they believed their rivers were dry and there was erosion because the ancestors were angry with them. They again reiterated that the purpose of conservation is also to

attract tourists who provide an income to park employees (Focus Group 1 26/02/2008).

In summary there was an appreciation from all community members that wild areas need to be conserved for the sake of conservation. At the same time they all embraced the neo-liberal paradigm that wild areas should pay for themselves and provide an income for human development.

4.4.5 What to do with the land

A number of studies have found that, contrary to popular belief, poverty stricken rural people are often in favour of retaining the conservation areas on whose borders they live (Infield 1988, Hendry 1998, Newmark 1996). Indeed, Kaschula *et al* (2005) found an appreciation amongst informants that fuelwood harvesting needs to be controlled if it is to last into the future and that only certain species should be harvested in times of drought. Kaschula's informants, however, lacked confidence in their ability to manage natural resources, although older informants believed more strongly in the ability of traditional harvesting practices for sustainability. Levin (1994) conducted land reform workshops in a Gazankulu village (Cork) close to the SSW. The participants felt that white people who own land should remain on it, share it with the black people who were forcibly removed from it and share their knowledge of farming. That said community members bordering the central and southern KNP felt the costs they were bearing as a result of living on the borders of a protected area did not make up for benefits. They wanted more money, tourists, employment, and compensation for damages caused by animals (Spenceley 2004).

When asked what they would do with the land in the SSW if it was given to them, the younger adult focus group agreed that for the next ten years it makes no difference what women or young people want, the male elders will be making all of the decisions (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008). One participant said he thought ecotourism was the only way forward but that black management was needed. This view was reflected by all of the younger adult focus group who felt that moving back onto the land would not serve the people best. They all felt businesses arising

from use of the land (as opposed to subsistence farming) were the way forward. As mentioned, one man earnestly said that he did not want to see 'another Zimbabwe' occurring on the productive land of the SSW (Focus Group 2 10/03/2008).

The issue of black management in the lodges is a complex subject to broach. Research has shown that luxury lodges, while providing employment to local people, do not offer many management positions to them, mainly because of low education levels (Turner 2004). Londolozi employs a number of black managers but such capacity is very difficult to find. In general the level of education amongst the local people is very low due to poor schooling. Visits to high schools, examination of school workbooks and examination of school reports has revealed a rather shocking level of general education being imparted to children in rural high schools (Londolozi2005, Community Visits 1 10/02/2008, 2 23/02/2008, 3 24/02/2008, 5 16/05/2008). In the 38 interviews conducted with high school students, only two were conducted in English. The rest were conducted in Shangane because the interviewees were unable to hold even basic conversations in English (Londolozi 2005). All these children are learning subjects such as business economics, agriculture and biology in English. The level of English is so bad that it is difficult to see how even exceptional students are going to be capable of studying at a tertiary level after they have finished school.²

In general the report cards examined indicate a low percentage of children who will be capable of continuing their education at a tertiary level. Of the 20 students in grade ten and above (i.e. those who had chosen their six grade 12 subjects), three were studying maths. Their marks ranged from 17 to 30 percent. One student was taking science and he was achieving a mark of 25%. Of these 20, only one looked as

² Four visits to high schools in Justicia, Huntington and Dixie were conducted. On all occasions there were classes without teachers in them. The teachers were in meetings or attending workshops while their students ran riot. On one occasion the author asked why there were classes without teachers in them and it was explained that the teachers were meeting to sort out the examination timetable. Schools are regularly closed on Fridays if there is a funeral for a teacher at a neighbouring school being held on the following Sunday.

if he might achieve a university exemption. The rest will be fortunate to achieve more than a 40% aggregate. Of the 38 children interviewed the highest aggregate was 57%. There were four children with aggregates higher than 50%, the rest ranged from 24 to 49% (Londolozzi 2005).

Guests at a lodge like Londolozzi are high-paying international tourists who expect a first world service experience. They expect to be hosted by camp managers who are able to tell them about South African wines, discuss topics such as South African and world politics, economic trends and international current affairs. Local people that do achieve the education levels required to engage at this level, generally move to the cities where they are able to earn far more than they can on game reserves (Khoza, pers. comm. 20/05/2008). Camp managers are expected to be able to look after budgets, stock controls etc. In order to bring a locally educated person up to this level requires enormous inputs. Often businesses are not willing to invest this sort of capital when they can hire someone from outside (normally young and white) who they don't have to train. These staff members are often short term appointments who want to spend a year or two in the bush and then return to more lucrative city jobs.

It is difficult to see how the situation will improve in the short term if the guest experience is to retain its current high standards. The lodges that do invest in their staff run the risk of having them poached by other operations or leave to pursue more lucrative careers.

4.5 Conclusion

By 1913, the land restitution cut off date, the people living in the SSW were living as land tenants or squatters on what was deemed private land. In line with the racially-based land policies of the time, they were slowly moved off or moved of their own accord until, by 1985, there were no homesteads in the SSW. Most people moved into parts of Gazankulu close to the western borders of the SSW. While this period falls within the allowable land claim period, the land in the SSW was private and had been since the mid 1880's. It was never part of a recognised tribal area and

was never expropriated from the people living on it. While it may be argued strongly that the land claimants have a powerful moral claim to compensation, they may well not have a legal claim. Only the resolutions of the land claims by the commissioner will resolve this. When this might happen cannot be predicted.

The interviews with community members indicate an appreciation of the value of ecotourism in the SSW. There may, however, be unrealistic expectations regarding the amounts of money that could be derived from ecotourism however. As mentioned, there is evidence that the concessions in the KNP, both those that are community-owned and those that are owned by the SANParks, are not proving profitable to private owners (Spenceley 2006, Anon. pers. comm. Wilderness Safaris 23/07/2008). There is also a clear lack of capacity within the communities bordering the SSW to run luxury high-end lodges for the reasons outlined. There is thus a conflict resulting from local people wanting more involvement, more ownership and more benefit from ecotourism operations, on one hand. On the other hand, the private sector is investing all of the money and the skills, and therefore logically aiming to derive profits (Tuner 2004, Dave Varty pers. comm. 10/05/2008). Until skills in the local areas can be improved and money can be raised by local people, it is difficult to see how the situation could become more profitable for local people.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary and conclusion to the material in this dissertation. It draws together the socio-political history of conservation in the lowveld; conservation paradigms; ecotourism's relationship with local people and biodiversity conservation; the land claims process; and local people's expectations and desires. From these it examines the most sustainable way forward for both biodiversity conservation and the development of the local people bordering the SSW.

As stated in the introduction, using Londolozi as a case study, this thesis aims to understand how the approach to nature conservation on private game reserves in South Africa changed in accordance with the progression of local and international conservation trends and domestic political changes. At the same time it seeks to find the most sustainable future for the conservation-development nexus.

5.1 Londolozi and changing conservation paradigms

Conservation in the lowveld began with the implementation of fortress conservation or 'fences and fines' approach that removed all human settlement and activity from conservation areas. This application of fortress conservation was justified through the assertion that local black people, their cattle, cultivating and hunting practices were reducing game numbers. In actual fact, European commercial hunters, with their firearms and their employed local trackers, had decimated the large herds of game once found in the lowveld. Fortress conservation was thus a way to subjugate the local black population and force them to engage in wage labour on South African mines and farms. The private land in the SSW retained local black residents for the purposes of labour and rent.

This justification of the fortress conservation approach to protected area management remained the status quo until the 1970's when Londolozi, at least a decade before the rest of the conservation world, began to interact with local people outside the reserve in order to persuade them that conservation was, in fact, in their best interests. Londolozi's owners did this because they understood the potential

threat posed to the Londolozi business by poverty stricken people living on the borders of the reserve.

Londolozi's approach did not involve changing land ownership patterns but rather focussed on the provision of development needs that were identified by the rural staff working at the lodge. In the 1990's, the bottom-up approach was replaced by less efficient, more top-down, solutions implemented by CC Africa's rural development arm. The bottom-up and more inwardly focussed approach, which concentrates on individual staff members rather than the 'community', resumed with the return of the business to land owner control. The approach has invested in individuals' advancement through training courses and the employment of a permanent teacher. Londolozi has spent very little on obvious infrastructural projects outside its borders, such as classrooms, clinics and vegetable gardens. While this approach has a hugely positive effect on the rural staff working at Londolozi, it is not seen or appreciated by those not directly involved with Londolozi (see Chapter 4).

The community development initiatives that Londolozi and similar operations have instigated with the people on their borders have had some success in creating an awareness of, and appreciation for conservation. However, as noted by Robinson (1993), such approaches do not delink rural livelihoods from biodiversity conservation; in fact they have achieved quite the opposite. They have created an expectation that game reserves will provide the solution to poverty in the area. In many cases, given the number of people bordering the SSW and the amounts of money derivable from tourism in the SSW, the expectations are unrealistic.

Indeed, operations such as Londolozi and the private reserves in the SSW tend to create inflexible expectations in communities regardless of fluctuations in the tourism market or other factors that may affect the profitability of a tourism operation (Kiss 2004). The expectation that Londolozi or any other private nature reserve might be able to substantially change the lives of all its neighbours is not realistic. It is also ill-defined given the multitude of different expectations people have.

Having the population in question dependent on the biodiversity in the SSW is, in one sense, positive, because it encourages its conservation. On the other hand, the market contradictions described in Chapters 2 and 3 become far more pronounced when the people deriving a living from the business are not just small groups of land owners but large groups of poverty stricken people living in communities where there are deep internal suspicions and high levels of mistrust. The 'community' is unlikely to accept fluctuations in income because of fluctuating tourist trends - fluctuations that are inevitable.

At the moment it appears that the most obvious contribution Londolozi is making to the rural people bordering the SSW is the provision of salaries which are supporting up to 2200 dependents. Commercial farming has failed in the area and there are no mineral prospects. Charging high paying international tourists for the non-consumptive viewing of wildlife (ecotourism) has been by far the most profitable land use practice. While Londolozi could be generating more income for rural people, it would mean a sacrifice of profits for the land and business owners which, in turn, might affect their motivation to continue investing and operating the business.

5.2 Land claims and future ownership

The history of permanent sedentary settlement in the area goes back only as far as the turn of the 19th century. The land that formed the KNP and its predecessors was a mosaic of private and unused crown land. The people removed during the formation of the park were thus, legally and not morally speaking, squatters. These people had been squatters for between 20 to 30 years, on land that had never officially fallen under a tribal authority or chief. While it has been powerfully argued that these people's removal was morally repugnant, it would not appear to have been illegal according to the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 (GoRSA 1994).

That said, the removal of families and their cattle from the land resulted in local people seeing conservation as inimical to their interests. This perception has

changed over time as it has become apparent that ecotourism is a lucrative way to use conservation land. While there is some acknowledgement of the need for conservation for its own sake, the major local viewpoint is that nature conservation should be a means to income generating ecotourism. Local people have embraced the neo-liberal view of conservation and nature.

If Londolozi was to become a community-owned entity, then members of the community, however it would be defined, would surely be able to derive the extra income that is currently accruing to land and business owners. That said, as illustrated, and as the younger focus group acknowledged, the management capacity, knowledge and skills required to run a high-end luxury ecotourism lodge (e.g. Londolozi) do not exist in the communities bordering the SSW at present. In addition, the Mhlanganisweni Communal Property Association has changed leadership three times since its inception in 1998. All of the leaders have been accused by community members of various, unspecified corrupt practices (Focus Groups 1 26/02/2008 and 2 10/03/2008).

It is difficult to see how the leadership of the Mhlanganisweni Community would cope with the complexities of operating and maintaining an ecotourism business such as Londolozi given the following factors:

- the age stratified views and opinions on the SSW;
- the deference given to the elders by the younger, more educated group; and
- the deep internal suspicions.

The levels of coherent, trusted and accountable leadership for the effective management of the business or dispersal of the benefits simply do not exist at present.

It remains to be seen whether private sector/ community joint ventures are sustainable in the long term for all concerned. Where poor communities own conservation projects that are supposed to contribute to their development (CBNRM and ICDP projects), conservation goals are normally subverted by

development goals. In the case of the SSW and its neighbours for example, a drought in the area may result in crop failure or a cattle die-off. The community may then look to the reserve to supply their immediate basic needs. Demands to use the natural resources of the reserve may increase and be granted. It has been shown that, in the development context, communally owned land which is managed to maximise the immediate needs of the community collapses ecologically under pressures exerted by population growth, market penetration, technology change and colonisation (Chicchon 1992).

5.3 Londolozi and transfrontier conservation

It is difficult to see how transfrontier conservation will affect Londolozi and the SSW, regardless of future land ownership. If current land management practices remain as they are, animal numbers and the game viewing experience are unlikely to change. Private land owners and ecotourism operators manage their areas according to immediate business needs i.e. to maximise high-profile game viewing opportunities. They do not operate with the larger ecosystem or bioregion as a framework (Varty pers. comm. 14/03/2008). If the SSW were to change ownership through the land claims process, the new owners, poor rural people, are hardly likely to subvert their own immediate development needs for the biodiversity needs of the bioregion and will most probably also manage their land for short term profit.

As the GLTP becomes better known worldwide, then it may play an increasing role in the marketing of the lodges. This, for the foreseeable future, will be the major role of the GLTP for Londolozi and the other SSW lodges.

5.4 Maintenance of the status quo

Given the above factors it is argued that the current status quo is the most sustainable for conservation and the provision of benefits to the rural local people of the area. The current land owners at Londolozi have access to funding and the expertise required to operate and market a high-end luxury ecotourism destination. With the current status quo, 200 local people have jobs and support an average of eight to ten people each (Londolozi 2005). The various development initiatives

instituted by Londolozi are having a positive effect on the staff taking advantage of them.

A local CPA or trust might be able to gain a greater income from Londolozi if it owned the business and the land but at present they do not have the expertise to operate the lodge from a conservation or tourism point of view. A community-private sector partnership may be possible. Were this to be the case, the 'community' would have to be very clearly defined in terms of leadership and who exactly the shareholders and beneficiaries of the business were to be. Again the levels of trust and cohesion required for this do not exist even amongst the so-called Mhlanganisweni Community who are claiming the land on which Londolozi operates.

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Appendix 1. Focus Group Schedules

Question 1: The land claims process

- 1.1 What does the term 'land claims' mean to you?
- 1.2 What is the purpose of land claims?
- 1.3 Who is responsible for administrating and adjudication the validity of land claims?
- 1.4 How do you claim land if you or your community wants to do so?

Question 2: Current land claims on the SSW

- 2.1 Are you aware of any land claims on land in the SSW or the KNP?
- 2.2 Who is instituting these land claims?
- 2.3 What effect, if any, will a successful land claim on the SSW have on the community?
- 2.4 What would you do with the land in the SSW if you or the community won it?

Question 3: Historical land occupation in the SSW

- 3.1 Where did your family live before they lived here in the communities?
- 3.2 Can you tell me where these settlements were? (If the in the KNP or SSW, on which farms and where?)
- 3.3 What form of evidence is there of your families' residence in the SSW or the KNP?

Question 4: Nature conservation, ecotourism in the SSW and their effects on local people

- 4.1 What is the purpose, if any, of the SSW and the KNP?
- 4.2 What effect, if any, do the lodges in the SSW have on the community?
- 4.3 Is there anything that you want from the lodges in the SSW?
- 4.4 What is your understanding of 'nature conservation'?
- 4.5 What is the purpose, if any, of 'nature conservation'?

Appendix 2. Interview Schedules

Interviewee 1: Dave Varty, co-owner Sparta, Londolozi Game Reserve (14/03/2008, 17/04/2008, 10/05/2008),

- 1.1 Please tell me about conservation in the lowveld since your family bought Sparta in 1926.
- 1.2 Please outline for me the changes in land use practice that have occurred on Sparta from 1926 to now.
- 1.3 What do you think the major influences behind these changes were?
- 1.4 Historically, what effect, if any, do you think Londolozi and the SSW have had local people?
- 1.5 What effect, if any, does Londolozi currently have on local people?
- 1.6 What factors may have influenced the way that Londolozi has interacted with local people?
- 1.7 What effect, if any, has the GLTP had on the game experience at Londolozi?
- 1.8 What effect, if any, has the GLTP had on Londolozi and the SSW's relations with local people?
- 1.9 In the history of Londolozi, *I speak of Africa*, it states that Londolozi changed its approach to local people in the late 1970's. What were these changes?
- 1.10 Why were these changes made?
- 1.11 What were the effects, if any, of the above changes?

Interviewee 2: Allan Taylor, co-owner Sparta, Londolozi Game Reserve (15/03/2008):

- 2.1 Please tell me about conservation in the lowveld since your family bought Sparta in 1926.
- 2.2 Please outline for me the changes in land use practice that have occurred on Sparta from 1926 to now.
- 2.3 What do you think the major influences behind these changes were?
- 2.4 Historically, what effect, if any, do you think Londolozi and the SSW have had local people?

- 2.5 What effect, if any, does Londolozi currently have on local people?
- 2.6 What factors may have influenced the way that Londolozi has interacted with local people?

**Interviewee 3: Iain MacKenzie, co-owner Alicecot, Savannah Game Reserve
(12/05/2008)**

- 3.1 Please tell me about conservation in the lowveld since your family bought Alicecot in 1934.
- 3.2 Please outline for me the changes that have occurred on Sparta since the early days from 1934 to now.
- 3.3 What do you think the major influences behind these changes were?
- 3.4 Historically, what effect, if any, do you think Savanna and the SSW have had local people?
- 3.5 What effect, if any, does Savanna currently have on local people?
- 3.6 What factors may have influenced the way that Savannah has interacted with local people?
- 3.7 Please outline the strategies that you employed when attempting to start the chicken and vegetable farms in Justicia.
- 3.8 Why do you think that these businesses have failed repeatedly?

Interviewee 4: Jane Paumgarten, co-owner Alicecot Savannah Game Reserve(20/03/2008)

- 4.1 Questions as for Interviewee 3

Interviewee 5: Maureen Groch, Teacher at Londolozi (18/02/2008, 21/05/2008)

- 5.1 Please outline Londolozi's current approach to what has been termed 'community development.'
- 5.2 Please describe the activities of the Londolozi Learning Centre.
- 5.3 What, in your opinion, are the advantages and disadvantages of the Londolozi approach?

Interviewee 6: Lotus Khoza, Community development officer (20/05/2008)

- 6.1 What is the effect, if any, of ecotourism in the SSW on the local people bordering the reserve?
- 6.2 Please describe the different approaches of the lodges in the SSW to community development.
- 6.3 What, in your opinion, are the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches?
- 6.4 Who are the people or groups that are engaged with land claims on the SSW?
- 6.5 What do you think the people living on the borders of the SSW would like to do with the land should it be won in a land claim?

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