Landscapes
of Deracialization

Power, Brokerage and Place-Making
on a South African Frontier

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Thesis

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To Pierre

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List of acronyms

ANC   African National Congress
BEE   Black Economic Empowerment
CBNRM   Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CPA   Communal Property Association
CPPP   Community-Public-Private-Partnership
CRLR   Commission on Restitution of Land Rights
CSIR   Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DEAT   Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DLA   Department of Land Affairs
DRC   Dutch Reformed Church
IDP   Integrated Development Planning
LCC   Land Claims Court
LRC   Legal Resources Centre
KDT   Kranspoort Development Trust
NGO   Non-Governmental Organization
RLCC   Regional Land Claims Commission
SAFM   South Africa Farm Management
SP   Strategic Partnership
TAU   Transvaal Agricultural Union
USAID   United States Agency for International Development
VBR   Vhembe Biosphere Reserve
VUKA   VUKA Project Management Services

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Map of research area

Chapter 1

Introduction

Racialized struggles for land permeate the South African social and material landscape. An exceptional measure of state violence and centralized planning during the apartheid era reserved 87 per cent of all land for 'whites' and created a system of ethnic classification based on territorial rights. Past state-led interventions privileged development of urban centres and white-owned commercial farming areas at the expense of the hinterland and former 'homelands' or Bantustan ethnic reserves, where the African population was condemned to land-scarcity, subjected to traditional authorities and became labour migrants to fuel the privileged centres. The particular nature and course of this history of disinheritance has promulgated a view amongst current policy makers and progressive academics of the 'land question' as one of an enduring uneven economic development and graduated citizenship.

In post-apartheid South Africa, an equally concerted effort was required to deracialize labour relations and related paternalism, change land ownership patterns and redress the enduring legacy of insecure communal land tenure arrangements in the former 'homelands'. Far from displaying a concerted response, however, current land and agrarian reform policies appear torn between competing ideologies within the post-apartheid government and changing national policy priorities that oscillate between market-led development and pro-poor strategies. Critical observers have noted the various historical and ideological compromises that have gone into the design of the South African land reform programme. Most notable are the protection of private property rights in terms of the 'willing-buyer-willing-seller' principle and the incapacity of the state to meet its initial target of redistributing 30 per cent of all white-owned farmland to Africans by 1999 (a target that was first reset to 2014, and then again to 2025). Empirically-informed research points to barriers to broad-based beneficiation from land reform programmes due to, amongst others, the lack of state capacity to support re-development of redistributed land according to beneficiary requirements, a bureaucracy with an adherence to business planning that favours rural elites and the revitalization of traditional leaders that act as gatekeepers and resist a comprehensive land tenure reform.

Rather than making a case for or against land reform and a diagnosis of recent state-led interventions, this book explores the emergent properties of competing claims to land. It takes as entry point the post-apartheid programme of land restitution with its focus on providing compensation for Africans who suffered a historical dispossession of land rights. Two cases are discussed in which private property was restored to large groups or 'communities' in the Soutpansberg region of the Limpopo Province. It is argued here that land restitution invites a broad scope of land claims and offers fertile ground for brokers to emerge. Besides the validation procedures of land restitution around the policy

category of 'historically-disadvantaged community', which engenders identity claims and cultural politics by beneficiary groups, a host of non-beneficiary actors also enters the land restitution process as 'development facilitators'. Stakes in land restitution deals are upped when land restitution claims address land that the government deems worth preserving for its importance as a natural heritage site or for being of exceptional value as commercial farms integrated into the regional economy. Land restitution thus implies demands on the state by various constituencies, organizations or groups, invoking different perspectives: land reform as nationalist project aimed at restorative justice versus protection of private land ownership and maintenance of the status quo of current land use.

Both cases discussed in the following chapters, the Kranspoort and Levubu land claims, represent land claims where Community–Public–Private–Partnerships were attempted. In the eyes of government officials, such partnerships would ensure the maintenance of the productive and aesthetic value of the redistributed land and prevent another land reform 'failure'. The partnership models were at some stage considered precedent-setting and replicable, and are arguably microcosms of wider debates about the struggle for the appropriation of rural space in post-apartheid South Africa. It is no surprise that the Levubu Strategic Partnership model, which involved the transfer of ownership of one of Limpopo's pockets of high-value, export-oriented farmland, has attracted the attention of researchers trying to establish to what extent its outcomes reflect a neoliberal orientation in land and agrarian reform (Derman et al. 2010; Fraser 2007a). The Kranspoort settlement is accredited as the first case in land restitution in which the land claims commission – through a ruling by the Land Claims Court – set the condition that an 'adequate measure of planning' would have to take place before land claimants would be allowed to resettle on land that was now considered to be of exceptional nature conservation value.

Throughout the study I argue for seeing land restitution as a process in which different place-making projects simultaneously converge and articulate with each other. I emphasize that land restitution does not unfold in the vertical topography of power and cannot be treated as a discrete programme with clear boundaries in time and space. It follows that the study breaks with current political economic analyses of the 'land question' in the singular. The political economical approach tends to treat land reform as a centrally-administered programme, with an internal grammar where outcomes are seen to unfold along historical class lines, implemented by a state reluctant to address land hunger among the rural poor (cf. O'Laughlin et al. 2013; Ntsebeza and Hall 2007). With a focus on the dominant state orientation in terms of selecting beneficiaries, the reliance on market-led land reform and business models that favour capitalist farming, such analyses argue

for better accommodation of smallholder farmers or petty-commodity producers and farm workers in land reform. In demarcating the 'ideological struggle' underpinning current policy making, Lahiff (2011: 59) argues that outcomes in South African land reform policies can be understood as the competition between 'three main ideological currents'; namely the 'modernist-conservative (supporting the existing structure of large-scale capitalist agriculture and hostile to land reform), neoliberal (in favour of modest restructuring of the agricultural sector via market mechanisms) and radical populist (in favour of the poor, with limited compensation for landowners)'. The assertion of ideological fixities and policy options that are mutually excludable, reflects the way much current research into South African land and agrarian reform address policy makers with a goal of showing the possibility of alternative, more progressive, policy options (cf. Wegerif 2010).

This book argues that a broader and situated notion of the politics of land is called for that includes the symbolic aspects of struggles and cultural politics of land. A key focus is the aim by beneficiaries of land reform and other interested parties to stabilize the state-central idea of 'community' as holders of rights and property and the body to which the responsibility of developing land is transferred. It also invokes power, as expressed through forms of trusteeship, that entails a subtle politics that is not about domination per se but guiding and steering behaviour in ways that make beneficiaries complicit in their own spatial and social disciplining (cf. Li 2007). A conceptual shift is called for to emancipate land reclamation, narrowly defined in terms of struggles between dialogically-opposed agricultural classes over the 'thingness of property', to seeing how it is also expressed through struggles over the 'control over process' and the responsibility to facilitate community-based development after the redistribution of land (cf. Fay and James 2009; von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006).

My focus therefore is on land questions in the plural and their unfolding through different actor projects that temporarily engage and disengage. Although the state in land restitution can certainly be seen as having a presence, it does so in variegated ways that do not imply a coherent regime of intelligibility. Policy might then be treated as a structure of opportunity whereby so-called state-invited spaces accommodate a wider set of *entitlements* for different *people* at different *moments*. Actors buy into formal rules and bureaucratic procedures related to their relative agency, position and reflexivity. Feeding into the fears, hopes and practical aspirations of brokers, the state's presence is felt in episodes and in response to emergent dynamics of situated struggles for land. The case studies presented below pay special attention to key brokers (i.e. traditional leaders, elected community representatives, development planners and white farm managers), the

repertoires they use, their social and cultural backgrounds and what their changing social and political agency teaches us about the unplanned outcomes of land restitution. The production of space by these actors is seen to unfold within a shifting field of power, in which actors may draw on the registers of landed authority and sovereign rule, as well as power-imbued technical interventions aimed at building community capacity and rationalization of land use through spatial and business planning in ways that depoliticize disorienting rural realities, recentralize decision making in multi-stakeholder committees and involve the social production of new scales. In the following sections of this chapter, we will first examine some questions emanating from the study of land restitution as policy and practice. This is followed by a discussion of the key concepts, methodological notes and an outline of the book.

Land Restitution as Cultural Politics

Contemporary land restitution in South Africa represents a compelling entry point for studying place-making as practice and political project. It unfolds in ways that entangle past attachments to land with a progressive orientation to deracializing land relations. It may also be seen to suffer from 'policy overload' and sets of conflicting demands: compensating South Africans for the loss of land, democratizing and modernizing communal tenure, developing beneficiaries into a new class of commercial farmers and combating poverty. It stands alongside the parallel land reform programmes of land tenure reform and land redistribution. Of the three, it presents the most pertinent demand for restorative justice aimed at compensating victims of past land dispossessions for their loss of land rights. Its main promise – feeding into its manifold complications – is 'to make concrete the past, to make visible what had become mere 'history', by reinstating whole social orders from a past era. Restitution represents a poignant prospect: a new set of ownership rights might be installed, predicated upon those which are said to have existed in the past' (Fay and James 2009: 5).

This statement expresses how it projects backward-looking attachments to land – with an associated imaginary of belonging and a *status quo ante* of the pre-dispossession community – into here-and-now realities. Below we will first discuss the symbolic forms of association that the programme has conjured around, on the one hand, 'historically-disadvantaged community' as a category informing policy choices and, on the other, the self-representations of groups of claimants. The discursive production of identity and the practices associated with it raise questions on the structure of opportunity of land as a site for cultural politics that (re)produces 'community' as an object of intervention through bureaucratic procedures and as a social construct and source of boundary making, within

claimant groups and between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. It also ties into the next section where symbolic constructs of community meet demands on new landowners by the state, that focus on productive and economic land use of the redistributed land.

Land restitution policies enabled those individuals and groups having suffered a loss of land rights as a 'result of racially discriminatory laws and practices' after the introduction of the 1913 Natives Land Act, to lodge a claim with the state for adequate compensation. The cut-off date for this lodgement was 31 December 1998, upon which the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, commonly referred to as the Land Claims Commission, accepted a total of 79,696 claims for processing. By 2012 a total of 457 were reported as outstanding and not yet resolved with the Department of Development and Land Reform aiming to resolve this remainder by 2015 (Rural Development and Land Reform 2012). The broad spectrum of land ownership patterns of the past are mirrored in the way the act accommodates 'the interest of a labourer and sharecropper, a customary law interest, the interest of a beneficiary under a trust agreement and beneficial occupation' (Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994), whereby the state has accounted for the fact that most forced removals involved land rights that were not registered. Various options also exist for compensation for this loss that include the redistribution of the actual land rights lost, the granting of alternative land, the provision of development on the current location and a once-off cash payment. Financial compensation has by far proved to be the most preferred option for claimants and the most practical solution for restitution officials, taking into consideration the practical difficulties of acquiring land, which in turn explains that by 2007, approximately 70 per cent of claims were solved in this way (Walker 2008: 22).

A romanticized ideal of communality and rural society which was prevalent among human rights lawyers and land activists in the 1990s at the time of drafting the policy and during the first years of implementation, greatly influenced the land restitution policy (Everingham and Jannecke 2006). In terms of defining historical rights and duties, it held that these were 'derived from shared rules that determine access to land' (ibid: 560). In cases where property was handed over to beneficiary groups, government accommodated various types of group association that included family, tribe and former mission congregation. State efforts after validation of these claims was then concerned with the question of how to create legitimate, democratic and accountable communal landowning institutions to hold and manage the restored land rights. To this end, specific legislation for 'ensuring' transparent and accountable land rights was drafted in the form of the Communal Property Association Act of 1996. According to the act, communities are organized according to their CPA constitutions or Trust Agreements that contain the

rights and obligations of group members and prescribe a 'code of conduct' aligned with principles of inclusive decision making. Vast differences are observable across restitution deals regarding the adoption of these rules and the extent to which restitution officials and civil society actors invest in 'work-shopping' for building community capacity to use these rights in the prescribed ways or to set conditions for land use in the form of land leases and cattle grazing policies. Even when the state appears to withdraw and relieve itself of the responsibility to monitor land rights, constitutional principles may remain. They may constitute a resource for well-positioned community members to push for constitutional obedience in the face of competing demands by other members (Chapter Three). Pressures to be seen as institutionally reliable also resonate with officials' and private investors' perceptions of communities being 'dysfunctional', prone to infighting and unfit to self-manage their resources (cf. Barry 2011).

Unsurprisingly perhaps, claimants have responded to and reshaped the communalist frame in the process of reclaiming their historical land rights. Essentializing constructions of community have thus emerged in ways that have 'drawn on apartheid and colonial categories and discourses on tribe, tradition and custom' (Robins 2003: 266; cf. Van Leynseele and Hebinck 2009; Draper et al. 2008; Robins and van der Waal 2008). The salience of community reflects how the propertied approach to restitution requires neatly bounded categories to which land can be transferred, i.e., a timeless community, retaining a measure of social cohesion despite the ruptures of forced displacement and becoming physically removed from their ancestral land. As legal anthropologists remind us, the implied political and social agency mirrors the reflexive capacity of history-making claimants – or those well-positioned community entrepreneurs with the right navigation skills – to read into the policy landscape and present the 'right version' to the 'right forum' (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006; Berry 1997; Lund 2008).

In this regard, land restitution, in conjunction with other interventions like the decentralization of local government and land tenure reform, provides a structure of opportunity for traditional authorities to re-empower themselves and rearrange the political rights of rural populations (Oomen 2005; see Chapter Five). To those observers adopting a normative approach to these outcomes as a 'compromise to democracy', such cultural politics threaten to widen the gulf between 'subject' and 'citizen' in a process that renders rural dwellers outside of the normal state frameworks (Ntsebeza 2006; Claassens and Cousins 2010; Mamdami 1996). A further travesty of this history-making can be seen in the way in which the search for strong documentary evidence to validate current land restitution claims re-inscribes the same ethnological maps and notions of ethnicity that past

governments used to justify land dispossessions in the first place. In a more constructivist vein we can see how performative politics by community representatives suggests a remarkably open space of restitution in which various elements are reassembled through the leaders' agency. In the case of the renowned Makuleke land restitution deal in South Africa, Robins and van der Waal (2008: 54-55) noted how:

> They [the land restitution claimants] seemed to be a 'model tribe' who, as victims of apartheid's forced removals, opted for the goals of national reconciliation, conservation and sustainable development, thus underwriting what is widely celebrated as the new model for people–nature interaction, namely community-based natural resources management (CBNRM). In addition, the Makuleke case has also been portrayed and celebrated as an exemplar of the possibility of wedding traditional leadership to the principles of constitutional democracy, including gender equity.

The example is extreme in terms of how this performance gained traction and the international acclaim this test case received. It does, however, highlight the directionality of cultural politics towards a pluralist state and how seemingly contrasting ideologies may be recombined.

Whilst such communalist framing may be divisive and seen as a problematic politics that isolates communities from the wider postcolonial societal frameworks of rights or as creating hybrid models that can readily be appropriated by well-positioned leaders, ideals of repatriation and return also entail resilient forms of mobilization. With a focus on de-territorialized production of community, Beyers (2009) discusses the historical 'will to community' among former inhabitants of District Six as a structure of belonging and aspiration that is reinforced and reformed through claims processes. Aspirations of repatriation by themselves are constitutive of community when they are 'mobilised in a *particular direction*, with apparent *collective intent*' (ibid: 145, emphasis in original). The will to community articulates with land restitution processes as a structure of opportunity in a way that implies the reflexivity of social actors but also deeply-felt experiences of rupture and the hope of reconciliation, which means we cannot relegate it merely to a field of strategic performance. Writing on the Cremin land restitution claim by a class of ethnically-mixed African Christians, Walker (2008) similarly notes how the 'community's early history challenges the presumption of timeless, bounded groups rooted on ancestral land since 'time immemorial', which is embedded in the master narrative of land restitution' (ibid.: 80). She goes on to conclude with the words of one claimant who, on winning the land claim, saw it as achieving a measure of restorative justice: 'it does not mean that we are back on our feet, but we are consoled' (ibid.: 103). Reconstitution of community thus represents a space of cultural politics that works to obscure internal social differentiation and also meets with conflicting expectations of what to do when resettlement of the ancestral land actually becomes a reality.

Building on these effects of land restitution around the idea of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991), we can thus conceive of sovereignty in postcolonial societies as always in the process of becoming and being reworked (Hansen and Stepputat 2006). Identities have been shaped through movement, displacement and flux, representing in turn the very de-territorialized nature belonging may assume (Malkki 1997; Pile and Thrift 1995). Importantly, although identification of this sort may be seen to be directed outwardly in articulations that are directed towards the state, it is equally important to stress its production within a 'field of power relations' in relation to other spaces of identity constitution (Ferguson and Gupta 1992) and in its expression as disciplinary power that is directed 'inwards' and seeks to control deviant behaviour in the name of community (Fay and James 2009). This conceptualization leads me to consider 'community' as volatile and unstable and as requiring constant work to stabilize it through the production of difference and equivalence. In the following chapters we will consider how identities are (re)produced in struggles over the control of discourse and which discursive practices or repertoires emerge at critical moments of land reclamation within the context of land restitution and through actors' engagement in wider processes of legitimization.

Managerial Entitlement and the Privatization of the Responsibility for Development

Reversal of property rights as the organizing principle in land restitution and symbolic repatriation as a mobilizing metaphor meet their limits when the opportunity of return actually arises. The intervening years between dispossession and land reclamation may lead to the types of de-territorialized associations discussed above. Yet, the process of re-grounding communities as owners of the land and ensuing interventions for ensuring 'appropriate land use' brings about another shift in claimants' responsibilities, as new property owners, and the demands on them by other interested parties. In highlighting this shifting demand on claimants, it is relevant to note a certain tension between the structures of aspiration formed *in absentia* and the propertied relations people *re-enter* when they regain the land. This bridging between what was referred to earlier as the collective mobilization around past identities and what Beyers (2009: 157) calls the 'practical aspirations of return' is noted as a 'general shift in consciousness'. Whereas for the former 'the general target is 'land' as the spatio-temporal location of that which is lost and is now reclaimed', practical demands are directed towards '[landed] property, as a means of social mobility and personal security, and something with clear boundaries that is possessed and defined against others' (ibid.). The shift entails a renegotiation around how individual rights should be organized and may involve strategies to break with the communal mould. Focusing on the practicalities and impracticalities of actually deciding what to do with the restored land, engenders what du

Toit (1999) – in following Žižek – has called the 'loss of the loss'. That is, the experience that, after having lost the land by dispossession, claimants paradoxically stand to 'lose community' through post-apartheid land reform.

Overcoming such ontological insecurity and what state planners perceive as the risk of fragmented and wasteful land use by socially-differentiated communities, raises the question as to which forms of support the state offers in mediating this process of re-grounding communities. Demands on the state in this area have urged a rethink by policy makers of the mandate of the Land Claims Commission beyond the mere resolution of land rights. For the first five years of land restitution policy, officials worked towards the festive 'settlement agreement' ceremonies and the end point was the restoration of title deed to a newly formed communal property institution or Communal Property Association. To observers, limitations were vested in the legalistic nature of the programme: 'it has been designed as a stand-alone, legally driven programme without linkages to other planning or development processes' (Turner and Ibsen 2000: 12). Redressing this oversight involved practical forms of support through the provision of public goods like education programmes and water supply, economic infrastructure in terms of marketing facilities and irrigation, and access to subsidized credit with which new landowners could start to redevelop private properties according to the needs of large groups of beneficiaries. Budgets for this support, however, were not within the scope of land restitution policy, seeing as how monetary grants attached to land deals were reserved for land use and business planning purposes only.

Following the critique by land-based activists and the signalling of this oversight by restitution officials, the mandate of the Regional Land Claims Commissions (RLCCs) was expanded from 2001 to include so-called 'post-settlement support' for claimants. Newly-formed 'post-settlement and planning departments' within RLCCs took on the role of linking up their beneficiaries to other forms of support lying 'dormant' at provincial and municipal departments, and seeking private-sector support from consultants in land-use planning and hiring farm managers from the ranks of former landowners. Developmentalist orientations at this stage involved the opening up of land restitution processes to wider forms of support and redistributional efforts by the state, aimed at deracializing economic and political life and overcoming the gulf between South Africa's dual economies of white privilege and black underdevelopment. Related policies aimed at minimal water provision, agricultural extension for the 'rural poor' and housing programmes (Seekings and Nattrass 2006).

Such redistributive policies, however, share this development space with an ideal of trusteeship and mentoring in terms of shaping new communal landholders into responsible landowners according to developmentalist values and related notions of productive, environmentally friendly, or otherwise sustainable land usage. In this regard we can speak of a 'shifting articulation of land' from earlier reclamation stages around symbolic belonging, when claimants often saw their livelihoods as modelled around an idealized past, towards post-settlement stages of planned development and the improvement of a 'target group' (van Leynseele and Hebinck 2009). This shift links historical community to a wider public good and highlights the interests guiding societal debates on the directions of rural development and agrarian reform. Conceptually, this connectedness implies the translation of dominant ideas of 'viability' and the 'farm economic unit' that were in part inherited from previous governments and continue to inform the favouring of support for commoditized farming over smallholder alternatives (Cousins and Scoones 2010). Post-settlement interventions have arguably enhanced the space for organized agriculture (unionized commercial farmers) to lobby with government for the 'same-car-different-driver' principle aimed at retaining the current land use with change of ownership (van den Brink et al. 2007).

Relevant here is the way respect for current land use highlights the place-making efforts by private landowners in the period between forced removals of claimants and post-apartheid land reclamation. It foregrounds the materiality and social identification of reclaimed land and the so-called 'sedimented landscapes' (cf. Moore 2005). Labour invested in land improvements creates enduring entitlements and farms under land restitution claims have become integrated into a wider economic landscape. In the intervening years when restitution beneficiaries were absent, ancestral land could change in terms of inscribing land titles, servitudes stipulating the amount of cattle or demarcating the extent of water rights and the overlay of spatial frameworks like nature conservation which set out narrow development trajectories of eco and cultural tourism. Likewise, farms become developed through labour and other anthropogenic factors of a 'second nature' that involve diverting waterways, capitalization and connection to distant markets. Such acts entail erasures and acts of de- or re-politicization, as land is now linked to a wider political economy governed by 'market forces' and a greater public good of productive and environmentalist landscapes. The process of reclamation and return to ancestral land involves the engagement with land from which the claimants were absent. In the intervening years it was shaped by livelihood trajectories that may problematize the process of return or require adaptations to sedimented meanings. Restitution and its policy of property redress does not only face practical obstacles of transfer of property ownership. In bridging the worlds of historical

and current owners, it also provokes the idea of co-evolution or co-production – usually associated with peasant farmers' trajectories – as constellations of the 'natural' and the 'social' that reflect situated, yet dynamic, engagements over time and a strong identification of farmers with the knowledge and modes of production and reproduction they have invested in these soils (Hebinck and Shackleton 2011; van der Ploeg 2008).

The claim to have carved out economic farms where previously there was bush (and 'a few scattered Africans') is a pertinent narrative employed by white farmers across Southern Africa in response to their spatial and cultural disorientation (Hughes 2010). Du Toit's *The Great South African Land Scandal* (2004) – a book which has near-biblical status among conservative Afrikaner farmers I encountered during my fieldwork – unapologetically makes this claim for the Levubu fruit valley: 'The roller-coaster political history of this beautiful part of South Africa does not alter the fact that white commercial farmers have created one of world's most productive agricultural gems' (ibid.: 94). These investments constitute an additional obstacle for the promise of land restitution given the high financial costs on the state in buying this developed land for redistribution and the anticipated political costs of 'failure' should productive lands be restored to groups deemed unfit to manage them (Fraser 2007a; see Chapters Five and Six).

The salience of these forms of counter-narrative in land restitution marks the dual role that officials play in post-settlement deals. Throughout my research, they acknowledged the trade-offs between servicing 'their claimants' as the constitutional duty of restoration and seeking sustainable land deals that are in keeping with policy concerns outside the restitution programme. Where lands claims address valuable land, political considerations by restitution officials are partly 'determined by the government's accountability to particular constituencies', including non-beneficiary groups having an interest in local development, like farm labourers and current landowners (Fay and James 2009: 7). Perhaps it is no surprise that in resolving this dilemma, restitution officials have turned to land-use and business planning and the development of novel business models. A remarkable belief in planned solutions continues to capture officials' imaginations – one that paradoxically owes a lot to the past bureaucratic culture and its strong reliance on expert-led development in agricultural support (cf. Hebinck et al. 2011). This planning orientation in turn feeds into the 'privatization of the responsibility for development' and the state-induced invitation of private sector actors like consultants, farm managers (often exiting private landowners) and potential investors (agribusiness partners), who enter to facilitate rural development. Testimony to the problematization of the proposed joint ventures with agribusiness partners or other 'Community–Public–Private–Partnerships' by officials, we find they attempt to set

fixed time frames on private involvement and mentorship by scrutinising the lease- and share-holding agreements and aiming to ensure that there is a clear exit strategy after skills are adequately transferred to new landowners and the land is adequately recapitalized.

The linkage to a larger public sphere implies that land claims are opened up to new meanings and that repositioning occurs according to the altered arena of developmentalist or productivist planning. A possible conclusion to draw would be to see the re-entry of non-beneficiary groups, especially those groups like former landowners, as a form of neo-paternalism that threatens to challenge the very notion of restitution and consequently represents a 'betrayal' of the earlier ANC promise of a more radical land reform (Hall and Ntsebeza 2007; O' Laughlin et al. 2013). There are indeed fundamental 'strategic questions' that are raised by the emergence of these new partnerships as a renewed form of dispossession after restitution where economic imperatives, aimed at keeping farms functional as integral units of a local export economy, have led to the state's oversight in terms of the disproportionate powers of invited agribusiness to control upstream and downstream industries and organize on-farm labour (Derman et al. 2010). Resonating through these approaches we find a view to reverse historical processes of 'accumulation from above' towards forms of state support and agrarian reform policies that engender an 'accumulation from below' and a 'radical restructuring of agrarian economic space, property regimes and socio-economic relations, premised on the potential for accumulation from below in both agricultural and non-agricultural forms of petty commodity production, and expanded opportunities for 'multiple livelihoods strategies' (Cousins 2007: 240-241). Here, however, I make a somewhat different proposition regarding the shifting ground of land restitution and what can be seen as the struggle over 'managerial space' in such land deals. Many analyses of South African land reform have adopted a political economy framework around the 'land question' that envisions the imposition of neoliberal models at the expense of a trajectory that favours peasant modes of accumulation and smallholder farming ('the forgotten beneficiaries'), and challenges the ideological rationale in agrarian reform that now prevails. In this study, I aim to resituate these struggles in a way that does justice to their contingent nature and the way in which land reform policies produce unintended and uncertain outcomes.

Far from providing a unitary logic or fixed livelihood options, we witness land struggles as unfolding in a certain force field marked by reflexive politics of positioning and repositioning (Nuijten 2005; Li 2007; Long 2001). Central to this book then are the negotiations by rural brokers that revolve around responsibilities acquired through consecutive and interlinked temporal stages of land restitution and the variegated and shifting entitlements it produces.

The complexity of land restitution deals, that may at once reinstate traditional or other hereditary leadership and which links claimants to progressive redistributive policies aimed at deracialization and a bureaucratic orientation towards planned development, provides fertile ground for brokers to emerge (see also James 2011). A gap between resource-poor rural constituencies and access to state programmes is thus implied in which well-positioned actors with particular navigation skills emerge to bridge the gap. When development becomes privatized we may see that strategies around access to such developmental resources resemble processes of brokerage around development aid and the emergence of 'local development brokers' more widely. This 'impl[ies] a transposition of the category of brokerage from the field of politics proper to that of development, in which the mobilization of political resources interferes with strategies aimed at capturing of external aid' (Bierschenk et al. 2002: 11). That is to say, it forces a shift in orientation from the earlier anthropological interest in political brokers as embedded in patron–client relationships and having a vested authority (see Geertz 1960) to a view of brokerage as a more plurivalent, decentred landscape of entitlements marked by a heterogeneous dynamism of accommodation, critical engagement and partial connections (Arce and Long 2000; Mosse and Lewis 2006).

A related point is to see this developmental field as being organized around a depoliticizing 'technology of government' that encourages people to self-organize, take responsibility for their actions as 'free individuals' and follow neoliberal values of competitiveness and efficient management (Ong 2006). The implication of self-government and enrolment through particular schemes of improvement will be discussed below as a form of governing through community and engagement rather than disconnectedness and social exclusion. In land restitution this governing principle is linked to a certain 'privatisation of the responsibility for development' and related community-based resettlement planning, thus producing an intelligible field that orients brokers' strategies but also redraws the boundaries in struggles for appropriation of space (cf. Van Leynseele 2013). The following chapters discuss two cases in which Community–Public–Private–Partnerships were tried. In viewing the aforementioned shift to managerial entitlements, we will address the question around the new positions and emergent assemblages that govern this space in relation to the aforementioned cultural politics and the constitution of symbolic communities. In making this proposition, some conceptual and methodological steps should first be made which will be elaborated upon in the next sections.

Space and Landscape

From the understanding that land restitution is a temporal process in which various pressures and projects converge, I view it as constitutive of contested space. Multiple types of entitlement are produced through engagement with the state, which raises the question as to how to conceive of this space that is remoulded through time, as policy orientations change and as social actors reflexively reposition themselves accordingly. We can thus see locales and places as sites where various intersecting projects and outcomes of agencies operating on different scales come together around an idea of fluid and relational space (cf. Massey 2005). Struggles over the appropriation of space unhinge an essentializing view of place as nested in a singular set of cultural practices or factors of production, and invoke what Foucault (1984: 2) called 'heterogeneous space' that is neither merely 'sacred' or intimate, as phenomenologists would have it, but is also not entirely 'external' and devoid of lived experience. From this de-essentialized and decentred view I argue below for seeing defence of place in post-apartheid South Africa as a struggle for 'opening and closing space' through material and discursive practices which mirror actors' differential experiences of being in place and reflect their responses to changing political conditions.

Space is produced in networks of enablement and constraint and through attempts at stabilizing a certain discourse therein. It is through the production of space that political effects result: 'If space is to be regarded as a medium for action, a resource which actors draw on in their activity and use for their own purpose, it inevitably becomes value-laden rather than value-free and political rather than neutral' (Tilley 1994: 20). Power works through the organization of spaces and forms of persuasion in order to get people to act 'in accordance with certain expectations of what is considered "good and proper"' and involves 'the construction of a script with built-in norms and values, but also legal rules and legislation' (de Haan 2005: 11). It follows that 'order is inscribed through and in space and place' (ibid.). This marks the dialectics between space as a public domain to be governed by a legitimacy-seeking public authority and the people dwelling in these places and making their livelihoods there. The question around the enforceability of such scripts and the presumed rigidity of codification in legal frameworks will be elaborated upon below. The point here is that appropriation or production of space takes place through practices that, on the one hand, attempt to 'close space' by delimiting the sets of options, drawing boundaries between experts or brokers and target populations and rendering its usage codified and in accordance with spatial planning, and, on the other hand, attempt to keep space open as plurivalent, allowing for a diversity of uses and forms of attachment to place. Attempts at closure work through a politics of difference and equivalence that involves the idea of improving certain conditions or rationalizing them, according to idealized representations

of the past, models of progress, spatial planning frameworks and other forms of social and spatial disciplining deemed necessary in the name of a larger public interest.

Building on the premise that land dispossession and land reclamation bridge symbolic and material aspects, we see that the 'power of landscape lies in its being simultaneously a site of economic, social, political and aesthetic value' (Matless cited in Gunner 2005: 282). Defending place and producing space thus involve combined strategies that address the 'thingness of land' associated with property relations and enactments on it through livelihood trajectories as well as symbolic meanings. Both constitute a dynamic sphere of social action and interaction and become entangled in processes of post-apartheid land reclamation. The point of departure then, a theme also explored in political ecology perspectives, is the plurality of contested meanings of socio-spatial relations within communities and as contested between people in place and their engagements with extra-local policy and scientific communities (Neumann 2011). Struggles over representation of landscape inevitably involve power, with social actors drawing on different repertoires, entitlements to place and means to control and appropriate the emergent space. A typical binary drawn on to explain the salience of power and its differential embedding in place, has been that of encultured expressions of place by the embedded community – which is not essential but draws on values and entitlements derived from direct engagement with the surroundings – and the abstract representations by detached expert communities drawing on landscape-level planning technologies (cf. Escobar 2008; Fairhead and Leach 1996; Zimmerer and Bassett 2003). Exclusionary technologies of representation may also implicate local groups (or their representatives) as increasingly refined spatial and development planning frameworks invoke postcolonial 'win-win models' such as trans-frontier conservation, biosphere reserve areas and community-based natural resource management models (Anderson et al.. 2012; Büscher 2010; Zimmerer 2006).

In theorizing the production of difference through struggles for representation, Lefebvre (1991) draws a useful distinction between 'representation of space' and 'representational space'. The former relates to the technologies of visualization and abstractions of expert managers and planners. It explains the networked activities defined within that politicized drawing of maps and disempowering of local people by (re-)categorizing them according to the hierarchical categories of specialized professionals, who apply technical and externalized criteria to the ordering of space. Representational space, contrarily, invokes quite the opposite- the realm of intimate, lived experience - and is thus 'directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic' (ibid.: 41). Ingold (2011: 10) has a similar distinction in mind in contrasting the 'dwelling perspective' of emplaced

humans and the 'specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surroundings' and the 'building perspective' whereby replicable models are produced in a bid to 'transcribe pre-existent, ideal forms onto an initially formless material substrate'. The perspective on space as appropriated by expert planners can, for instance, be illustrated in terms of how colonial and postcolonial conservationists performed erasures of local people and culture by inscribing business models and spatial frameworks onto spaces now imagined as 'empty' and the domain of a 'natural' or pre-modern 'community' (Hughes, 2006). In Chapter Four, I illustrate the politicized nature of such planning processes by showing how the social construction 'bioregion' or 'natural community' implies the agency of rural whites to remould space by rescaling or scale-jumping that draws away from the antagonistic politics of land restitution and its questioning of private property rights.

Maintaining a divide between representational approaches to landscape, as socially constructed through symbolic representation and non-representational approaches to landscape that stress embodied belonging (Crouch 2010), is unproductive in the context of this study. Whilst restitution processes promote expert-led representation and visualization with its focus on planned solutions, we should not ignore the fact that their efforts touch down on landscapes already sedimented with layers of meaning as was mentioned above. Combined with public pressure to maintain the status quo of the 'current use of the land' in ways that link up with ideological debates in agrarian reform, we may witness differing degrees to which former investments in land endure. Different historical livelihood trajectories of former owners mean that the contexts in which claims touch down differ widely in the way they are scripted. That is to say, production and appropriation of space may unfold in areas implying 'open script context' or 'closed script context' marked by more or less rigidity in legal codifications and material imbrications. When viewed as script—shaped through conduits of practices and historical sedimentations of land use, production of space thus foregrounds the 'polysemy of the design', and the extent to which landscape and its architecture can be reshaped (de Haan 2005: 11). We will build further on this distinction and the relative room for remoulding landscapes in comparing two cases: one where the design was open-ended and prone to its opening up to many meanings (Kranspoort) and the other the rehabilitation of the Levubu irrigation scheme that presented a more closed prospect (Tshakhuma).

Important for the prospect of deracialization of land relations then, is how places themselves become hegemonic in their own right, and thus constitutive of space, when they represent the ideal of progress through their very architecture. It is this reversal of space as 'top-down and abstract' and place as 'bottom-up and intimate', that Taylor (1999:

14) envisions when he suggests that 'boundaries can themselves become familiar, become embedded in society and have their own effects on the reproduction of material life. In this way what were spaces are converted into places'. Hegemonic place then functions as a site that expresses the future today, as a place that embodies both representational space and a space of representation. This folding of space and place into the same frame of reference is linked to the aforementioned aspirations of the state to engage in comprehensive reordering of space through planning efforts and business models that marry symbolic claims by communities – validated in earlier stages of reclamation – with the demands of maintaining the 'current use of the land' and pressures by other non-claimant groups to maintain sites of exceptional 'productive' and 'natural' heritage. New forms of brokerage required for reconciling these demands have shifted the field of claims from a seemingly straightforward 'reversal of property rights' to the contested field of power around the ownership over process in what I call 'managerial space'.

Place-making: Towards a Networked Account

In a review of historical geographies of Southern Africa, Lester (2003) maps out a new research agenda that does justice to the historical connectedness of places. In de-essentializing place, he shows how movements of people across territories connect so-called peripheral/underdeveloped and metropolitan spaces. In so doing, he suggests a fluidity and relationality that revisionist and materialist approaches to history have obscured in a near-ideological emphasis on the 'dual economy' of racialized rule (see also Andersson 2002, on the urban–rural divide as social construction). His call, then, is for networked accounts by researchers to 'investigate trans-local, spatially extensive, but specifically directional connections in such a way that they erase the conceptual gulf, or the space in between, the local, the regional and the global, even while they respect the difference situatedness makes' (Lester 2003: 606). Inviting a similar review of environmental history in Zimbabwe, Moore (1998: 382) insists on the importance of 'the complex politics of meaning grounded in rural livelihood struggle' but adds that 'such a perspective needs also to situate environmental politics within increasingly global flows of ideas, images and technologies as well as a regional political economy'. I adhere to this view of struggles for land at South Africa's periphery and frontiers as a history of engagement, which although always power-laden and steeped in unequal geographies of power, produced unlikely associations across the racial bar and the emergence of multiple modernities (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Mbembe and Nuttall 2004; van Onselen 1997).

With a view to understanding relational practices and connectedness as not being engendered through an abstract 'decentred despotism', 'conquest' or 'capitalist logic', I

follow the approach to micro-practices of power as reflected in studies that adopt the Foucauldian governmentality approach to postcolonial struggles for place and territory (Agrawal 2005; Li 2007; Moore 2005). Foucault has famously developed a view of 'government' as targeting the relationships 'between men and things' through an idea of improving the general good of 'the population' (cf. Dean 1999). Analytically relevant here is how governmental technologies are sustained through policy communities seeking to solidify the boundaries between the 'governing' and the 'governed' in particular institutional configurations of power that are no more simply vested in the 'state'. Whereas we may see a dominant expert rationale organized around a discourse of economic progress and related techniques of planning for improvement, much along the lines of regimes of legibility discussed before as representational space, there is also a drive to govern 'economically'— that is to say by ways of self-enrolment and self-identification by the 'governed'.

Through situated studies of government as a decentred process that puts presumed scales into the same frame of analysis, governmentality approaches have thus overcome much of the analytical deficiencies of the vertical topography of power or dialogical encounters that taint much political ecology analysis (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Power is not enacted through enforcement or top-down interventions marking territorial, ethnic and cultural boundaries but rather through a self-governing subject who disciplines. Thus he assumes the desirable 'subject position' that emanates from an engagement between officials, scientists, state beneficiaries, land users, etc. For example, in his study of environmentalism in India, Agrawal (2005) argues that social disciplining does not unfold through enforcement per se. It takes place through the production of environmental subjectivities that encourage new conservation practices that play into their desires, and in ways that tie in with highly localized power configurations. To attain salience, forest management initiatives depend on the consolidation of a multi-sited 'regulatory community', which 'emerge[s] when communities are incorporated more thoroughly into wider circuits of political relationships' (ibid.: 15). Government then appears as fragmented and multi-sited as these circuits promote practices that may be highly localized in acts of cutting trees or may unfold in distant offices of multi-national organizations. In this co-production of meaning across levels, around a more or less stable discourse of 'efficient forest management', different sovereign powers are recognized and competing technologies of rule are produced, which may converge in the same space.

Space as inscribed into physical landscapes through networked place-making is particularly relevant to land restitution as discussed in this book. Transformative agendas of land restitution imply a certain model-building ambition of the state to

reconstitute its beneficiaries as the embodiment of a new class of productive farmers or nature conservationists. Interventions by the state entail spatial and social disciplining aimed at steering the 'difficult' transition of a community from being materially absent from the reclaimed land (and maybe harbouring 'unrealistic expectations' attributed to symbolic attachment) to being responsible owners and users of the restored land. This responsibilization follows an ideal of 'governing through community' (Li 2007) and follows the tried and tested techniques of government in attempts to measure communities, map their priorities in relation to some stated ideal of 'viability' and work-shop community representatives into being more responsible managers and accountable community leaders. Yet, by virtue of land restitution targeting property and reforming previous layers of meaning that have become symbolically and materially sedimented, the structuring logic of the state can never be merely discursive and organized around a coherent 'neo-liberal ideology' or ideal of 'restorative justice'. Rescaling, codification of knowledge and local articulation does not simply revolve around a dominant 'discursive formation' that solidifies from abstract global scales into local institutions. In analyzing land restitution as process, a grounded politics of land is called for that emphasizes the dialectics of the material and symbolical.

Governing through community and property simultaneously presents the particular social configurations of restitution as heterogeneous space. Material imbrications on the landscape matter and foreground the constitutive nature of forms of labour both past and present. In understanding the emergent properties of these 'entangled landscapes', attention focuses on the assemblages that 'span the discursive divides of nature and culture, the human and non-human' (Moore 2005: 25; cf. Raffles 2002). Actors' place-making initiatives are geared towards making connections or relations to other sites and distant policy communities and in the process they marry past and future timelines and entangle different spatialities. This relational view, it follows, problematizes the dichotomy between localized, encultured and emplaced articulations and those coordinated by scientific and policy communities with an interest in development planning. Despite attempting to find a certain 'middle ground', an incongruence remains between groups employing different grammars of the environment. It is in this understanding of space as fluid, power-imbued and by its very nature open that various well-positioned multiple actors are enabled to rework planned outcomes.

This reworking thesis resonates with the idea of South African land restitution as a more or less open 'script' where expert-led developmental planning is the site of contestation over finding a common grammar in a multi-actor policy community that is reconfigured as

it travels along a particular chain of equivalence (Hebinck and Shackleton 2011: 17-20; see also Hebinck 2013). It directs our focus to forms of brokerage and translation in a field in which multiple trajectories of development co-exist and interact in networks of practice and where brokerage works towards trying to stabilize meanings in acts of translation that direct the spaces in which they engage but are also constitutive of actors' identities (Mosse and Lewis 2006). In my politicized view on brokerage, different place-making repertoires are used in response to changing positions and agency in a shifting field of power, in which the will to appropriate space engenders feelings of ontological uncertainty, and may result in the politicization or radicalization of actors and oscillating episodes of engagement and disengagement.

Aim of the Study: Brokerage in Two 'Status Projects' of Land Restitution

Place-making as relational pays heed to the particular moments or opportunities opened up through state interventions. However, in line with was has been argued above, land restitution produces multiple entitlements for different actors and unfolds in a wider field of power that is shaped by overlapping, mutually reinforcing and competing government programmes and pressures exerted through networked or decentred policy communities. We should, therefore, foreground the multiplicity of (more or less) sovereign actors and the related limitation of governmental interventions to meet their intended goals. In this study, the actors vying for the appropriation of space were numerous and presented themselves for consideration in this study. The representatives of the claimant groups and especially the key decision-makers therein were a natural category to include in this study. But following wider processes of land reclamation impinging on the land restitution claims also drew me into – and to some extent led me to enlist in – other place-making sites and initiatives. Besides numerous informal conversations with local landowners more or less engaging with land restitution, the two sites of study included the Vhembe Biosphere Steering Committee members (Chapter Three), key actors in the local white farmers union, the Transvaal Agricultural Union (Transvaal Landbou Unie), and the land-based NGO, Nkuzi Development Association. The prerequisite for selection of the cases was to study sites where land restitution claims involved the transfer of land and where both projects were – to speak in policy terms – in the so-called post-settlement stage of development planning. As the earlier discussion on restitution policy as structure opportunity and restitution process as a laboratory of repertoires also suggests, this implies an expansive gaze that extends beyond the clear-cut boundaries of land restitution as a programme with its stated objectives, intended beneficiaries and failed objectives.

Rapid political transformation works to render actors 'spatially and culturally disoriented' and unhinges taken-for-granted positions (Hughes 2010). This state of ontological insecurity is, however, not from an absent or 'failed' state but one that produces uncertainties and multiple types of entitlement. Brokerage is rife in such settings where there appear to be large gaps between reading into and acting on the state's regime of intelligibility and bridging 'gaps' between local constituencies and a pluralist state (James 2011). In this study brokers can indeed be seen to fill such gaps but in ways that do not only imply 'upward' and 'downward' linkages in forms that work towards the mobilization of state resources. Critical here is how brokers can also connect each other's projects in moments of joint articulation. Engagement as a form of social ordering is thus enacted through contingent social relationships and spatial configurations that are shaped by practice and the risks and benefits of linkages to other actors and legitimating frameworks.

With a focus on practice, place-making is understood in terms of 'networked practices' where a number of social actors across various sites temporarily 'interlock' or may disengage (Long 2001). Temporary assemblages are expressed through an informal network where 'each project is articulated with other actors' projects, interests and perspectives' (ibid.: 61). Social relationships are contingent, and reflexive capacities of actors lead to positions being rearranged (cf. Schatzki 2001). I approach practices of power from a more hegemonic perspective, particularly the way they have been used in a post-structuralist vein, following Gramscian ideas of hegemony and articulation (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). In setting out the contingent nature of domination, we can conceive of hegemony as the 'bid for closure of practices' that will never be complete because the 'social is by its very nature open – the simultaneous operation of diverse mechanisms within any practice, and the fact that any practice is over-determined (simultaneously determined by others), means that outcomes are never entirely predictable, and that resources for resistance are always likely to be generated' (ibid.: 25).

Such a networked approach to practice where social actors may be subjected to multiple technologies of rule at different instances in turn requires a focus on process over instrumental goals. From a sequential perspective of multiple encounters and critical engagement, I follow Nuijten's (2003: 11) focus on 'patterns of action' that are decentred, reflexive but also typically ineffective if viewed from the project goals: 'People often follow fragmented organising strategies, without collective projects ever becoming crystallized. They work with one set of actors and then another, develop strategies and change them in the course of action'. Such arrangements are never stable, even if a lot of effort can be put into acquiring some measure of institutional reliability. Reflexivity in this context

also means attention to social agency that is directed towards the state registers and the presumed idealized subject positions that would make one more visible or bureaucratically legible (Scott 1998). It also means that attempts at what I refer to as 'mining the state' for support can translate into anxieties, fears and downright desperation as projects do not materialize and claimants appear to become ever more 'invisible' (Koster 2012). The proposition leading on from this is that imaginaries of the future play out in the sphere of personal actor projects and also against wider geographies of uncertainty.

In adopting a reading of the opening and closure of space as a deeply politicized process constitutive of more structural inequalities, we may add the idea of the design of scripts as setting up barriers to participation given the depoliticizing effect of technocratization and codified knowledge of skilled intermediaries. As Li (2007: 7) also notes in her study of governmental assemblages in Indonesia, for development trustees, boundary-making is reflected in the way experts define problems in technical terms in order to match their resources and expertise. This in turn inscribes a boundary 'between those who are positioned as trustees, with the capacity to diagnose deficiencies in others, and those who are subject to expert direction' (ibid.). In this book, we witness similar processes of depolitization and difference-production by mentors or trustees such as post-development officials, the Land Court, the meetings of the Biosphere steering committee and encounters between the Tshakhuma community leadership and their business partner. The critical stance adopted here also draws on Büscher's (2010a) discussion of trans-frontier conservation parks in Southern Africa. He remarks that in the translation of postcolonial conservation model, mediation falls to well-situated white conservationists who, in light of wider societal political changes and the 'messy realm of politics', display a 'tendency to focus on discourse, offering a retreat for those who can make a living out of models, frameworks, plans, discussion pieces, maps and so forth' (ibid.: 49). Important here is the reversal of the loss of political agency through modernizing antiquated nature conservation models to meet the demands of the postcolonial state – a state which still harbours a deep distrust of community-led development for fear of 'failure' but at the same time retains 'community' as the object of its intervention.

As mentioned, the scope for re-entering on a ticket of planner/developer depends on the state retaining a strong reliance on planned solutions to resolve the uncertainties that it helps create. The cases selected involved community–public–private–partnerships that involved the interplay between the two 'invited spaces' in land restitution: that of restoration of land rights to communities and the managerial spaces associated with land use and business planning. These spaces are constitutive of and constituted by policy

processes pertaining to decentralisation policies and the market-led orientation towards development. They also represent the interplay between those groups entering as planners or investors and the authorities (re)empowered to manage collective land rights through land restitution's transfer of property rights.

Whereas the study initially focused on analysing competing discourses and narrative devices, the focus shifted through on-going insights that emerged in what Yanow (2009: 34-35) has described as the 'abductive reasoning' of ethnographic fieldwork. As a third strand besides inductive and deductive forms of reasoning, it requires a certain openness to emerging field situations which generate new insights in a puzzle-solving manner. It also means that interpretation and empirical research converge, rendering a certain openness in design desirable, if not necessary. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 28-29) put it, 'in ethnographic research the development of research problems is rarely completed before the research begins; indeed, the collection of primary data often plays a key role in that process of development'. Starting from the assumption that there was a tension between unresolved land restitution claims in the Western Soutpansberg and a recent regional-level Biosphere Reserve proclamation initiative, and that the latter could be seen as a way of trumping individual land claims within its prospective boundaries, I immersed myself by participating in the Biosphere steering committee and started a difficult dialogue between my encounters in the field and my iterative dialogues with theory. This puzzle-solving approach to research (over an extensive period as PhD student), led me to the realization that the focus on discourse and narratives was not adequate for what I was starting to understand. Although it helped to direct my attention to the way certain repertoires have salience in particular settings and link up with wider discourses that could be drawn in from extra-local sites, discourse theories in a relational guise could not adequately account for the material effects of landscape of the sort described above, and how vastly different forms of social identification converged in this landscape to material effect. In drawing on the new insights of spaces of entitlement as loci for relational practices and seeing their enactments on natural and social landscapes, I arrived at the following research questions upon my return from the field:

Main: How are competing place-making strategies of selected brokers negotiated against the backdrop of South Africa's land restitution process and related policies aimed at deraciliazing land ownership and reforming land relations?

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent do place-making strategies draw on discursive practices and what identities are (re)produced in the struggle to control discourse?

2. What new assemblages and strategic relations are we witnessing as a result of brokers' efforts to produce and maintain emergent 'spaces of entitlement'?

3. Which hybrid landscapes emerge through actors' efforts to shape the land restitution process and related policies aimed at de-racializing land ownership and reforming land relations?

Methodology: Ethnographies of Opening and Closing Spaces

For the fieldwork of this research, I spent nineteen months in South Africa between March 2006 and October 2007 and returned for one month in January 2009. I divided my time between two land restitution cases, whilst allowing room for exploring extra-community sites of contestation that affected the Kranspoort and Tshakhuma localities. From the aforementioned process of puzzle-solving and what I later came to regard as 'following the action', I sought out two cases where the privatization of the responsibility for development in land restitution displayed the clearest evidence of dissent and potential for conflicting forms of place-making. My selection was informed by my adoption of the extended case-study method emerging from social anthropology which states that incoherent and discontinuous processes of development are best studied through exceptional situations or 'social dramas' where conflicting norms are at play and whereby validity 'depends not on the typicality or representativeness of the case but upon the cogency of the theoretical reasoning' (Mitchell 1983: 207). This selection implies considerable discretion on behalf of the researcher in deciding which 'context' matters as representative, but analytical rigour in this selection is attained through 'theoretical judgments about causality, necessary connections and abstractions' (Rogers and Vertovec cited in Nuijten 1998: 27). Situational analyses involved participant observation of the informal dimensions of political and social life and efforts at boundary making expressed through networks of practice.

My epistemological stance has a clear affinity with actor-oriented sociological theory. As a methodological approach it emphasizes the dialectics between actors' life-worlds, different types of social actions and the interactional settings or 'interfaces' in which they unfold (Long 2008; Arce and Long 2000; Long 2001; Long and van der Ploeg 1994). It foregrounds processes of interpretation and reflexivity as constitutive of actors' agency

and their positioning vis-à-vis externalized development interventions. It draws on a rich set of metaphors (e.g. 'middle ground', 'multiple modernities', 'knowledge interfaces', 'partial connectedness' and 'cultural repertoires') to express the reworking of development interventions by social or intended beneficiaries of development. The underlying premise involves thinking in terms of discontinuities and seeing outcomes of social ordering processes as creating new development objects. Consequently, Arce and Long (2000: 17) develop an idea of social ordering as 'mutation' and resultant 'mutants' as useful terms that go 'well beyond the focus in discussions of hybridity on issues of mixed cultural ancestry and practice'.

In line with this approach, I argue for an ethnography that is similarly sensitive to the worldviews and categories used by the subjects of the study, and an understanding of brokers' repertoires as being shaped in part through interactions with the state and other external bodies, but also having a significant measure of autonomy or being 'semi-autonomous' (cf. Moore 1978). The particular nature of brokerage as it unfolded in the appropriation of space and emergent landscapes, lead me, however, to nuance the constructivist and post-modernist accents of the actor-oriented approach. Taking into account the importance of the materiality of landscapes, the historical sedimentations and a view of policy as providing structures of opportunity, we should be sensitive to cultural politics formed against the backdrop of and in response to efforts by the state to discipline its population according to ideologies of 'responsible land use' and a particular spatial distribution of land ownership based on a rationale of deracialization. In this regard, the focus on property rights in land restitution curtails volunteerism and limitless social agency of intended beneficiaries. Agents directing their action towards the state may resist the dominant state categories but are at the same time strategizing around the distribution of land rights that require a measure of codification into collective landholding institutions. This property rights frame of reclamation and the ensuing invitation of non-community actors into the 'managerial spaces' thus means that political economic predispositions of actors matter. This is a point which I will also refer to in studying how restitution projects create deliberative settings or contexts like the 'workshop' or 'steering committee meetings' that limit possible pathways of action (see Chapters Three and Four; cf. Hajer 1995).

Adopting a design that followed the actions and the decentred actor projects of brokers required a multi-sited approach to investigating how different repertoires could be maintained across different sites. Investigating brokers or elites implies, on the one hand, immersion in the context of their 'wider ecological, structural and cultural milieus' (Hunter 1993: 38). On the other hand, it requires discerning the relevance of particular

public places and critically probing the claims of brokers to represent the rural constituency. This understanding evolves from the work of social anthropologists like Erving Goffmann (1959), who identified the importance of situated knowledge production by drawing a distinction between 'backstage' and 'front-stage' rural politics. Focusing on actors' deployment of cultural repertoires where 'various cultural elements (value notions, types and fragments of discourses, organisational ideas, symbols and ritualised procedures) are used and recombined in social practice'– often referred to as a form of bricolage (Long 2001: 51) – we should thus also consider the particular actors' social and professional backgrounds. Combining these foci, I adopted a 'mobile ethnography' approach (Marcus 1995). This approach moves beyond anthropology's traditional focus on distinct sites or places and includes as unit of analysis a project, viewed as a process that unfolds in various instances across time and place. As I applied this approach to my research, I engaged in the mapping of histories of brokers' place-making projects and their shifting articulations through time. Mapping consecutive encounters provided an understanding of the production and appropriation of space as unfolding in conjunction with processes of disengagement and engagement with the state at particular historical moments (Moore 2005: 20).

Given the centrality of narratives and discourses in the field, narrative analysis was employed as an instrument to study discursive practices. In a more general sense, the genre of narrative analysis studies the encounter between language and subjective experience, as 'culturally developed ways of organizing experience and knowledge' (Daiute and Lightfoot 2004: x). Here power differentials identified can be seen 'to characterize the values, the practices and control inherent in groups determining who the heroes are, what life should be like and what should be heralded or hidden' (ibid.). I set out to study the more or less collective practices of history making and the multiple omissions involved in these accounts (Berry 1997). The critical analytical premise is that ideas or discourses may travel and be provisionally fixed, but their constitutive moments are in interactional settings and at the interface of different lifeworlds. From this interpretavist perspective, social scientists studying brokerage of ideas and policies in development practice have focused on interactional settings of 'translation' as a situated practice, lending authority to the translator and mobilizing support for their cause (Mosse and Lewis 2006).

Case Study Sites
The research was organized along three major themes that converge in place-making but implied involvement in distinct networks and methods of data collection. The first theme refers to the historical subjectivities and the sedimented landscapes that land restitution touches on. Given that both locales were former mission stations, much archival material

was available on their emergence and contestation. Records were retrieved during a week's stay at the national Church archives of the Dutch Reformed Church in Stellenbosch and during a visit to the National Archives in Pretoria. Recent archival sources like the transcripts from the 1999 Kranspoort Land Claims Court also provided an opportunity to engage with the way in which narratives of loss and redress can be submitted to legal scrutiny. The formal records – however sanitized and legitimating of the colonial project – proved an interesting counter-balance to the contemporary narratives of dispossession and the past state of affairs now being (re)produced in the context of land restitution. They are, however, not only relevant in classic understandings of methodological rigour and triangulation of data sources (Bryman 2008), but we can also attribute documents a particular value that dislocates them as fixed in time and reflective of past events. Owing to the way land restitution requires evidence using maps and other landmarks, we can expect documents to have agentive qualities in their own right (Riles 2006).

The second field of study was the community executive committee meetings where participation in public meetings and informal interviews were the main source of data collection. These committees were formally known as the Tshakhuma Trust and Kranspoort Communal Property Association (CPA) and were the communal property institutions to which the restored land had been transferred. They represent two of the legal options available to restitution claimants according to the CPA Act of 1996. The Trust was a more loosely defined entity presided over by the traditional leadership, whereas the CPA was regarded by many as the more democratic option whose membership responsibilities and decision-making procedures are laid out in a legally-binding CPA constitution. The community meetings simultaneously provided a locus and focus. In the first place, participant observation of the meetings enabled me to study the coordination practices at work. Moreover, they provided an analytical entry for the study of 'the body community' and the micro-politics unfolding therein. Unsurprisingly, the community constitutes a heterogeneous space where entitlements and rights are negotiated across multiple sites ranging from the distant offices in administrative centres to on-farm agricultural activities. Following the community representatives during the field research and the shifting constitution of the group over a longer period allowed me to observe their dualistic positions as defendants of their privilege *vis-à-vis* other beneficiaries and their role as custodians of a community's sovereignty *vis-à-vis* external agencies. It enabled a conceptualization of enterprising actors as having multiple registers of knowledge and diverse cultural repertoires. It also highlighted the manner in which channeling and connectivity with extra-local authorities can be part of an elitist project by powerful individuals.

The third field consisted of the larger geographies of conservation and commercial farming which overlap with the field of community through the co-management structures of the community–public–private–partnerships. At the same time they are also situated outside of these regulatory bodies. To record the production of these geographies I participated in forums like the Vhembe Biosphere Committee and the Transvaal Agricultural Union in which none of the Kranspoort and Tshakhuma community members were actively engaged. Participation in these sites provided insights into the efforts of white landowners to defend their spaces of privilege and their property rights (Chapter Three). By following more closely some of the 'champions' of the new deracialization pathways of conservation and commercial agriculture, I observed their attempts at opening up restitution places to new meanings and restrictions. Their efforts to overlay the mosaic of individual land claims with the global and national interests of nature conservation and commercial farming represent a wider struggle for the South African countryside which undermines the sovereign rights of land restitution beneficiaries. By invoking the management imperatives of 'sustainable development' and related environmentalist and productivist subjectivities these coordination practices represent the most sophisticated forms of racialized territorialization.

Structure of the Book

This thesis is divided into three parts. Chapters Two and Three discuss the Kranspoort land restitution process and Chapters Five and Six discuss Tshakhuma as a site for retribalization. Chapter Four consists of an exploration of a landscape-level nature conservation effort that spans both areas. Chapter Two describes the historical process of self-identification at Kranspoort mission farm. It presents a subject position of African congregant that came into being through engagement with the missionary, white landowners and fellow Africans both at and outside the mission station. The land reclamation process started in 1995 provides an interesting entry point for studying the reconstitution of a dispersed 'community' according to the principles of post-apartheid land restitution. Chapter Three examines more closely the 'shifting articulation' that took placed when the Kranspoort land reclamation moved into the post-settlement stages of land-use planning in which conservationist values resulted in planning for an eco-village settlement. This opening up of Kranspoort to new meanings and development strategies is presented as a tension between collectivized dreams of return and their symbolic associations on the one hand, and a botched planning process on the other, which culminates in the eventual 'decline' of the status project into a situation where support was sought from lower-ranking officials in a process described as 'mining the state'. Chapter Four takes a closer look at a more recent effort of white landowners to have the entire Soutpansberg mountain range proclaimed a UNESCO biosphere site. It ties into the production of the new conservation

status of the Soutpansberg region of which Kranspoort and Tshakhuma are a part. Place-making here reflects landscape-level planning for inclusive development across the racial divide (community-based nature conservation) and acknowledges whites' rights to act as custodians of environmentally-sensitive areas. Chapter Five shifts to Tshakhuma and the history of landed struggles. By engaging with the question of the resurrection of traditional leadership, I argue the multi-facetted nature of micro-practices of power and the particular position of the Madzivhandila Royal family as custodians of the ancestral land. The next chapter builds on Tshakhuma's retribalization process and explores the role of various actors in the experimental Strategic Partnership (SP) used for managing the Levubu irrigation scheme. This partnership is an effort to reconstitute land restitution communities in terms of a new class of commercial farmers who maintain the status quo of this 'hub of commercial farming'. By examining the institutionalization of land rights administration and the management of farms and the benefits accruing from it, I explore whether we are witnessing the emergence of a 'place of exception' that is attaining a hegemonic status as a replicable business model. The seventh and final chapter presents the main findings and offers a reflection on how the research agenda of 'opening and closing spaces' may be taken further.

Chapter 2

'Mother Kranspoort':
Land, Memory and Community

Entering Kranspoort farm, one is confronted with a signpost that ominously reads 'Kranspoort Communal Land – Trespassers will be prosecuted' (see cover page). The signage, printed also in Sesotho, landmarks the recent success of the land restitution claim by Kranspoort's former inhabitants, when it was still a mission station. Between 1999 and 2002 the Kranspoort case was celebrated by land rights activists as an early and much-needed success story of the land restitution programme. For the first time so-called 'informal' or occupational rights to land were accepted as a basis for full restoration of land ownership. Following a ruling by the Land Claims Court, the rights of the Kranspoort community, consisting of an estimated 125 households – including those who were forcibly removed from the mission and their direct descendants – were restored in a lavish land claims settlement celebration that received national media attention.

Parallel to many such historical claims, the hopes of restoration reflected the reconstruction of a community that had existed prior to the forced dispossession of land. Yet, in post-apartheid land reclamation, claimants did not redefine themselves in tribal terms or as former farm labourers. Reclamation conjured up a highly localised notion of 'Mother Kranspoort', which simultaneously invoked a place where the former occupants had thrived in material terms – congregants practised 'advanced farming' on the well-endowed mountain farm – and the cultural and spiritual advancement of its inhabitants, as 'shedding light' on neighbouring African communities. A certain exceptionalism continues to exist, which emphasises the graft and resourcefulness of its place-makers as they carved out a piece of territory amidst the local political economy of white settler expansionism and the consolidation of the so-called ethnic 'homelands' or Bantustans. The years between the forced removals of 1955 to 1964 and the successful land reclamation saw the former congregants being scattered across urban and rural areas as far afield as Johannesburg to the south and Messina to the north. Dispersal, however, reinforced a strong sense of belonging that symbolically equalized the variegated experiences of reconstituting lives. Given the nature of place-based identities, it followed that the land restitution claim presented a clear demand for physical resettlement. That is, to restore a community's sense of loss by going back and rebuilding Kranspoort through communal forms of labour.

The next two chapters explore the resettlement process and some of the difficulties it encountered. The case merits attention, firstly, because it explores the most problematic demand in land reform, namely developing a settlement or village in a remote area that is designated for agriculture and where few services and infrastructures are available. Land resettlement has been, and continues to be, wrought by the most ambitious of state designs for the 'improvement' of its subjects (cf. Moore 2005: 68-69). This applies especially in the

case of Kranspoort, where the footprint of the village was all but erased and planning for resettlement could ambitiously experiment with new and challenging forms. In resettlement, it will be argued, the (welfare) state makes modernist citizenship demands on claimants that revolve around a forward-looking notion of progress. Citizens are disciplined into subjects paying for municipal services and future land-use planning follows due procedures of appropriate business planning in accordance with relevant state service providers (e.g. the municipal Department of Housing and Agriculture). Proper conduct here has to be seen in the light of the threat and danger of more spontaneous and agentive forms of resettlement, typically denigrated as 'squatting'. The extensive planning that went into Kranspoort's resettlement and the way this exposed a problematic marriage between the historicized values of claimants and the future-oriented visions of planners is the subject of the next chapter.

Before considering the sanitizing effects that such mapping exercises may have (where land has scientific qualities that inform 'realistic' goals), we will consider the notion that historical claims to land produce a contested space around the idea of 'historical community'. Importantly, the structure of possibility provided by post-apartheid land restitution policies provoked efforts to stabilize the community and render it legible to the state so that they could enter into the restitution process as beneficiaries. These efforts at stabilization show how claims are attuned to the dominant narrative of current land restitution policy, which hinges on the idea of restorative justice by bestowing property rights onto claimants – or in this particular case, upgrading past beneficial rights to an actualized form of communal ownership. This actualization also brings into focus the fact that current land restitution takes place in a contemporary 'socio-legal context'. Community claimants may experience 'seemingly boundless possibilities for social and political agency' towards restoring a sense of lost community (Fay and James 2009: 5). Yet, at the same time, this geography of hope may meet its limits in later stages of restitution when communal property institutions are set up to manage group rights and the diverse aspirations of return produce new forms of political and social exclusion.

Following insights into land reclamation as invoking struggles to stabilize the notion of community within a field of power, I treat it as both ideational – a discursive construct that allows for diverse experiences – and as an object of development that is prone to designs and actualization by the state and its partners in development. We can approach the production of community as a space into which competing spatial and temporal referents can be inserted. Boundary drawing is, thus, an exercise of power, owing to the successful linkage to policy arenas and state resources and control over discourse. It also

invokes reflexivity and human agency; through engagement in these fields, community entrepreneurs and other brokers wield, and hone, their navigation skills (Long 2001).

In any attempt to reconstruct narratives of place we should thus be sensitive to the strategic openings offered by macro-political reforms. In the processing of any given claim, a range of actors attempt to draw on the potential of new frameworks and vie to control the local articulation of restitution-central concepts like the 'right to land', the 'beneficiary community' or 'equitable redress'. Land claimants may use the 'narrative of dispossession' productively. As Walker (2008) observed from the land claims forms her Regional Land Claims Commission office was receiving, there was a clear convergence between the dominant narrative of land restitution and claimants' accounts. She writes: 'In the domain of the local and the specific, then, the master narrative of the land restitution programme often falters as a guide. But this does not mean that claimants' stories do not engage and enrich that overarching account, or that the national account has not been important in shaping both the presentation and the reception of these claims' (ibid.: 47). A critical aspect of African agency thus entails the claimants 'history-making skills', with an eye to the limits and possibilities afforded within official discourses and the mechanisms of land restitution.

It is in the connected space between the local and the version(s) of rights sanctioned by public authorities that we observe the strategic behaviour of social actors. Articulation, then, is typically not a perfect harmonization of community or well-defined membership but rather a risky quest for some middle ground in a political arena fraught with power relations. I follow Lund's (2008) nuanced understanding of the dialectics between local-specific 'opportunism'– a mobilization of propertied notions by individuals and local groups – and limits to reworking. He (ibid.: 12) writes: 'The challenge is to link small-scale, open-ended transactions and larger processes of increasing exclusivity of rights and intensified competition over jurisdiction controlled by no individual. Watershed events [like land reform] are interesting in this respect, as they shape the general structure of opportunities'. These 'watershed events' are resources for well-positioned actors who read into them and understand the structure of opportunities they afford. They have 'created openings for a rearrangement of political rights and positions' and at the same time represent sites of intense competition (ibid.: 88). Importantly, Lund attaches a notion of 'stickiness' to negotiated settlements. He sees it as a demarcation for later attempts at framing the past and the sets of rights one can infer from a particular reading thereof:

> Once successfully constructed, the past identity, and rights become markers for the future negotiation of society. Such settlements may stick for some time, and the "stickiness" of certain structured situations is related to the institutions involved in the competition. (ibid.: 88-89)

As a methodological note, cognisance must be taken of the time this research started. Upon my arrival, the Kranspoortians had recently won back their ancestral land and its representatives had been rehearsing a relatively stable account of community solidarity for some time. The recent Land Claims Court and subsequent interventions of legal representatives from the Legal Resource Centre (an NGO supporting land claimants) in the community's governance made for a concrete setting in which this memory making was practised. I therefore pay considerable attention to the Land Claims Court and the manner in which the boundaries of membership to 'historical community' were outlined. After the court ruling, the on-going creation of a legal landholding entity, the Communal Property Association, connects Kranspoortians to the political space of modern citizenship. Between 2006 and 2009, I attended several meetings of the CPA Executive Committee in which they struggled to translate notions of 'inclusive membership' into workable solutions. Tensions surfaced and competition over leadership positions intensified every time new intermediaries entered the fray and opened up the political space for negotiation. In this regard, the next chapter will also offer insight into my role as researcher and how my presence polarized existing differences.

Setting the Scene

My first meeting with Kranspoort community representatives took place over the Easter weekend in April 2006. At the request of Mr Serumula, we met at Kranspoort, Limpopo Province. He and his companion, Ms Mabuela, also a member of Kranspoort's Executive Committee, made the six-hour drive from his home in the Mamelodi Township near Pretoria. Both had attended the local Stephanus Hofmeyr School and their families had been forcibly removed from the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) mission in the 1950s and 1960s. The date of our meeting was symbolic. From the early 1980s, at the height of apartheid repression, former mission congregants started organizing Easter celebrations at Kranspoort on Good Friday weekends. Using church networks, the organizing committee had negotiated temporary access with the then caretakers of the farm, the Uniting Reformed Church of Africa. Former congregants fondly remembered these reunions as critical events where symbolic ties to the land were reaffirmed. They also reflect early articulations of repatriation that gained traction when the Kranspoort restitution claim was brought to the Land Claims Court in 1999.

The farm today presents a different image to its past as a mission farm, if it can be called a farm at all. It sits against the foothills of the Soutpansberg mountains (thus named by white settlers after the salt pan in the western extremity) and is nestled between a rugged ridge to the north and large, white-owned properties to the west and south. Its

eastern boundary comprises the Buysdorp settlement – a community of some 15,000 'coloureds' who successfully retained their land ownership during white minority rule (de Jongh 2006). The amenities at Kranspoort, such as the church, school and medical clinic that had once signified its status as a beacon of progress, are dilapidated. The vacant mission village is tentatively bordered by untended mango trees that sit in high grass. Cattle wander through the graveyard and the single irrigated field – once the exclusive preserve of the white missionary – is littered with damaged butternuts pillaged by mountain baboons. Beyond the directly observable changes, the wider Soutpansberg is host to competing ideas of suitable land use. Whilst surrounding private landowners continue to draw on their bore holes for irrigation, a preservation-minded group of local landowners disputes the viability of agriculture and seeks to have the mountain proclaimed as a nature conservation area (see Chapter Three).

On this Good Friday morning, Mr Serumula and Ms Mabuela visit the site as executive members of the Kranspoort Communal Property Association (KCPA). KCPA is the legal body that holds and manages the restored land on behalf of the beneficiary families following the successful land claim. Contrary to the earlier Good Friday celebrations, the two elderly leaders did not arrive in their black and white Sunday clothing that relays their on-going DRC affiliation. They also did not come to pray, chant in choir and weed the ancestral graves in quiet contemplation. Today they have come to inspect the progress on the land and harvest their share of the communal butternut project. After a long absence going back to the forced removals of the 1950s and 1960s, Kranspoort is being remade as a place of communal labour, a site of agricultural production.

Driving up along the access road, I am met by a group of children teasing a home-made football through the soft shoulder that used to be the irrigation furrow. They belong to the five families of farm workers who continued to reside on site as former labour tenants to the Church authorities and white farmers that leased grazing from the Church. Their children make up the numbers of the Stephanus Hoymeyr farm school, whose continued existence maintains the precarious link to the place as centre of education that had provided an entry for the current claimants into white-collared jobs in teaching and administration. The resident families carve out an existence as smallholders and cattle owners (they are also rumoured to sell wood to passers-by from the nearby locations). Despite a court ruling stating that the farm occupants be included as members of the Kranspoort community, their land tenure is vulnerable, pending the implementation of the land resettlement plan and the return of the 'other' Kranspoortians.

I find Chairperson Serumula in a brick shed behind the dormitories built by the Church in the 1980s for hosting prayer camps for poor white children. He steps down from a mound of butternuts he is piling onto a trailer, wipes his forehead and proclaims, 'you see, we are working'. We step outside and admire the newish tractor that the community received from the Department of Agriculture. The butternut initiative he came to oversee is the most recent in a string of community-based agricultural projects that are intended to bankroll the KCPA operations (e.g. travel compensation for executive committee members and administrative costs) and illustrate the community's ability to work collectively. In relaying the limited success of the community projects, the elderly Serumula laments the enterprising baboons, the water shortage and the unfulfilled promise of fencing from one of the white neighbours. He explains that he wants to step down as chairman and pass the baton on to younger community members. As we settle into informal conversation, he and Ms Mabuela divert the topic to better times; the recent Land Claims Court battle in which they were victorious. Lettie Mabuela explains 'it was a time of togetherness' when the original "Children of Kranspoort" took on the DRC in Court and won the day. The court case lent a particular entitlement to leaders like Mabuela and Serumula to represent community affairs with the many brokers that had and would visit the place. It also put them at the forefront as community leaders and discipliners of the rank-and-file community members in ensuring they abide by the new policies the KCPA had drawn up and accepted.

The presence of Mabuela and Serumula on Kranspoort farm on this day was not merely a celebration of the past. Like the fence that revalorized the farm as communal property, their presence is a micro-act of reclamation intended to remind others that the community had returned. Visits like these from urbanized claimants who did not have a home on the farm act as reminders of community ownership and of boundary-drawing of community membership in light of claims to the place by adverse groups popularly noted as 'squatters' or 'thieves'. As shall be elaborated on in the next two chapters, such articulations may entangle distinct temporalities and spatial referents. They go beyond the ideational; they are also material expressions of place-based identity through forms of labour such as the harvesting of crops and clearing of graves.

Place of Exception: The Mission Farm

Historicized meanings related to Kranspoort have involved at least two types of articulation that have gained traction in post-apartheid land reclamation. Firstly, there is the consolidation of property rights that located the community in discrete, cadastral terms. This has greatly facilitated the post-apartheid land reclamation given that the claim did not straddle various properties. Secondly, we find the more abstract but potent construction of a Kranspoort

place-based identity. It can be attributed to the mission efforts to secure title to the land and mission practices which not only 'accumulated in people', but also created what the Land Claims Court later termed as an 'attitude of entitlement' that was unregistered and based on beneficial occupation.

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) missionaries who settled in the Soutpansberg District in the mid-1800s were not welcomed by white settlers. The first missionary (muruthi), Reverend Alexander MacKidd, who was sent out to establish an outpost in 1863, became part of an intense competition for African 'souls' at a fledgling frontier marked by hostile African polities, and the devastating effects of malaria, bovine disease (it was in the tsetse fly zone) and erratic rainfall (Burke 1969; Kirkaldy 2005). Settlers were driven by an appetite for ivory and local salt deposits and at this so-called 'raiding frontier' secured African labour through punitive raids and vulnerable alliances with local strongmen (Elderidge and Morton 1994). Against the backdrop of a rapidly-unfolding spatial enclosure with surveyors shoring up land for officials of the fledgling Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek to sell to or distribute among colonizing 'Burghers', MacKidd purchased Goedgedacht farm from a sympathetic farmer. Getting and retaining a foothold was a delicate matter for the DRC missionaries as the mission got drawn into conflicts between settlers and the BaVenda and Northern Sotho groups. The mission was also under scrutiny of the official Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk) and the white farming community. They regarded the missionary endeavour as hostile to white expansionism and deemed mission stations as lawless refuges harbouring potential and escapee farm labourers (Hofmeyr 1890).

This balancing act was given new impetus with the arrival of Stephanus Hofmeyr in 1865. He replaced MacKidd as missionary and stayed on to his death in 1905. Hofmeyr employed his insight as farmer and moved the Goedgedacht mission to Kranspoort farm in 1890. Hofmeyr and the church authorities' place-making was partly a response to increased pressures from white settlers laying claim to this fertile land – a process that reflected the spatial enclosure of this frontier. The more elevated locality provided better protection from the dreaded malaria and held better agro-ecological traits in terms of water availability and soil fertility, in turn making it possible to accommodate a substantial mission settlement. Kranspoort thus developed into a substantial mission settlement – the northernmost outpost of the DRC – which by 1947 accommodated around 800 inhabitants and provided religious services to hundreds more from the surrounding white-owned farms. Probing exercises and hostile encounters, linking the local political economy to the ideological battles being fought out in South Africa, marked this early constitution of Kranspoort. In this regard, a speech delivered by a white Minister at the centennial

celebrations of the DRC missionary endeavour in 1963 spoke of the Soutpansberg generally, and Kranspoort in particular, as a 'learning school' (Afrikaans: leerskool) that provided valuable lessons in building relations with African chiefs and in church-building in the backyard of the established and state-aligned Reformed Church, which was hostile to efforts to serve the natives and dreaded the competition for white souls (see also Maree 1962).[1]

As successful sites of agricultural production that absorbed hundreds of Africans, mission farms like Kranspoort thwarted apartheid territorialization and the programme of racial segregation that was marked most poignantly with the passing of the 1913 Natives Land Act. Particular to Kranspoort as mission farm was its self-sufficiency; residential Africans attained relative autonomy in terms of self-governance and generally provided for their own subsistence needs. Additionally, they were places where secular tasks like education were performed by the missions in a way that threatened state control over Africans.[2] DRC mission policies actually encouraged such self-sufficiency by linking it to successful conversion: 'education in modern farming techniques and vocational training were seen as important tools in moving converts away from the belief systems of traditional society' (Japha et al. 1993: 11).

Missionary life also provided forms of identification for African Christians that endowed them with a sense of superiority over their 'Heathen' neighbours. Kranspoortians were not necessarily coerced into being Good Christians – although a good measure of disciplining and paternalism certainly prevailed on missions – but equally became self-governing subjects who fully embraced and acted out their new religious ascriptions in religious song, prayer, clothes and adopting other hallmarks of progressive lifestyles. Ethnicity did not feature as a divide determining incorporation (this is evidenced today by the Venda, Shangaan and Sotho surnames on tombstones at the consecrated graveyard), although Sesotho was the mission language of choice. There was also a distinctly material enactment to being a good Christian; to be a good Christian was to keep an orderly homestead and adopt modern farming methods. Consider for one this autobiographical sketch from one of Kranspoort's most famous 'daughters', Mamphela Ramphele, who attended school there:

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[1] Speech by D.P. Smith, 17 May 1963. Centennial celebrations Kranspoort, DIV 39, DRC Archives, Stellenbosch
[2] The Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act 47 of 1953) was passed in order to bring all educational institutions under the ambit of the state.

> Kranspoort had a friendly village atmosphere where personal safety was not at risk. We grew up with a deep sense of physical security…The village in which we lived was well planned with three main streets: Bloed, Mahomed and Church street as well as two semi-developed ones on the outskirts. Each street had an irrigation furrow which was used by residents to water their gardens in turn. There was one tap for the hundred or so households. Refuse removal was the responsibility of individual householders, as was the cleanliness of streets…Kranspoort was a tidy village. Villagers were proud owners of flower and vegetable gardens and numerous fruit trees. Great effort went into maintaining their houses. (Ramphele 1995: 17-23)

Kranspoort's spatial layout mirrors the orderly nature of Christian homesteads and the cultural differentiation according to proximity to church and revelation. The 1,500 ha farm was divided into four main locales. The 'Hofmeyr portion' was reserved for the exclusive use of the missionary and included the prime piece of flat farming land that enjoyed access to the water.

Residing on the core settlement, or 'village' as Ramphele calls it, marked a successful transformation from Heathen to Christian. People taken into the inner circle of the missionary and who came to live under the church council enjoyed material benefits from their fruit production and prospects for church-sponsored education. Many prided themselves on their elevated status derived through association with the symbols and materialities of the religiously-couched condition of development. In comparing Bantu education from the state with the mission variant, one former resident highlighted the benefits of learning practical skills in farming, sewing, brick-making and carpentry as opposed to the theoretical education in the state system that was intended to prepare Africans for obedience and servitude. 'Modern' and marketable crops such as mangoes, oranges and peaches were grown in irrigated home gardens.

Everyday practices at the mission village involved a mix of religious worship and communal forms of farming, with each household having been allocated an arable field, a large irrigated homestead and allowed a fixed amount of cattle. Livelihoods developed akin to what Comaroff and Comaroff (1991: 168) termed 'evangelical economics' and involved the internalization of new (capitalist) modes of production and consumption. It involved a cash-oriented economy whereby the missionary could extract fees for rental of arable fields, for grazing and in the form of Church collections. Income came mainly from the selling of fruits as far afield as Louis Trichardt (now Makhado) and the remittances from the men who had used the particular privileges of the mission to acquire secure jobs as teachers and skilled labourers. By the 1930s a second generation of mission congregants started to emerge that had successfully completed their secondary education and completed the DRC-affiliated Emmarentia Geldenhuys High School and Bethesda teacher Training Colleges. It followed that numerous members of this socially-mobile group pursued

employment in urban centres and would periodically visit their relatives at Kranspoort for Christmas holidays and weddings.

At the fringes of the property, heading up the mountain, sat two minor villages, Patmos and Muse, where people practised their 'traditional' lifestyles and indulged in 'social evils' like beer-drinking, circumcision, rainmaking, beating of drums and polygamy. These areas presented a threat to sustained conversion but also functioned as pools from which the missionary could still hope to entice the children to attend school and become congregants. They also functioned as transitional sites or 'springboards' from which newcomers, of both Sotho and Venda ethnicities, could hope to become gradually incorporated into the mission proper by sending their children to the local school and attending church. Interviews conducted with former residents from all three areas in 2006 and 2007 show that a mix of suspicion and mutual dependency marked the relations between the sites. While the residents of the central village distinguished themselves as the true 'sons and daughters of Kranspoort', and in informal conversation branded the others as mere 'squatters', much interaction took place. Besides the clandestine beer parties – as one Kranspoortian put it 'culture will still have you'– social contracts were also set up whereby mission inhabitants employed their 'Heathen' neighbours to graze the cattle in the mountains beyond the gaze and livestock taxes of the mission. This allowed some Kranspoortians to accumulate considerable wealth given that by the late 1940s the grazing areas south of the settlement had come under pressure from population growth.

The connectedness was further emphasized by the fact that the three African areas were jointly governed by a village council (*kgotla*) that presided over the family affairs of homeowners and acted much like a traditional court in resolving disputes between plot holders. This council held its meetings under the marula tree on Wednesdays, in the central yard where other church events were also hosted. Besides it operated the formal Church Council of 'church elders', which acted as a go-between between the church-goers and the missionary and held administrative tasks like collection of the church fees and taxes, allocation of the arable plots on the mission and overseeing the maintenance of the furrow system. It also presided over disciplinary actions and could organize special hearings where congregants could be fined or expelled for adultery, gambling, beer drinking, missing church and not observing the Sunday rest.

For all residents, the mission provided land-based livelihoods outside the yoke of the then three-month labour tenancy obligations for rural Africans and provided new development trajectories through acquired education and mission-operated teacher

CHAPTER 2

training. Notwithstanding the paternalistic dimensions of Kranspoort's local political economy and the discretionary powers afforded to the missionary, it nonetheless provided a relative haven amidst an increasingly hostile macro-politics. For groups of newcomers buying into church life, a degree of social mobility and economic security was provided through the combination of subsistence farming (whereby the women and elderly stayed on to farm), and off-farm wage employment as teachers in urban areas. Conversely, for the group that made their way to urban areas and had become familiar with stringent government regulations like influx control, residence and job restrictions, life at the mission represented a last place of respectability where some 'stillness of the soul' was possible (Malunga 1986: 35). Cultural politics by Kranspoortians thus ran across symbolic lines that set a notion of Western modernity against a condition of spiritual underdevelopment. Yet, these identities were also demarcated through a distinctive materiality of labour which gave Kranspoort its distinctive appearance and appeal. Forms of 'othering' invoked a particular locality, a place-based identity, whereby community operated as a 'boundary-expressing symbol' (Cohen cited in Jensen 2004: 183).

Forced Removal and the Political Economy of Dispersal

The relative autonomy of the Kranspoortians also caused growing concern from the DRC authorities, which tried to guard against the mission becoming a refuge for marginalized people attracted by the material benefits of conversion. The 1933-1936 drought period greatly swelled the numbers of converts who were welcomed by the missionary authorities, given that the success of a mission was measured in numbers of converts and school-going children (Malunga 1986). Combined with intermittent periods where no white missionary could be found to manage the mission, the influx promoted greater autonomy for the congregants (expressed in a greater public role for the *Kgotla* village council), flexibility in influx of family members and 'illegal' activities like beer brewing and ancestral worship.

Tensions over discipline and sovereignty came to a head with the arrival of the last resident missionary in 1946, van der Merwe. He shared the dismay of surrounding white farmers who saw the problem of Kranspoort as a 'lawless place' to which Africans flocked and where inadequate control was exercised over the movement of people. He tried to redress the ambiguous status by measures such as stricter influx rules, observation of Church attendance, ensuring that congregants performed their 'meneering duties' (compulsory agricultural labour for the missionary) and improving tax collection. Church records indicate that in 1948 the congregation was failing to carry its weight and three-quarters of the mission's budget was still coming from the central Synod authorities.[4]

The critical event the African former residents singled out (also later in the Land Claims Court) as the last drop in the growing tensions between the inhabitants and the missionary and his loyal group, occurred in 1954. Van der Merwe denied permission for burial in the consecrated graveyard of an elderly woman who had 'illegally' joined one of her Kranspoort relatives and died there. This part had been reserved for the residents of the central village proper and the visitor's family had outstanding church duties. The uncompromising stance of the missionary divided the Kranspoort inhabitants into two camps: the 'BaSefasonke' ('We Die Together') and the 'BaPharaoh' (a biblical reference to the Egyptian pharaoh who evicted Moses). Greatly outnumbering the latter group loyal to the missionary, the BaSefasonke appealed to the higher Church authorities to have the missionary removed and regain sovereignty over the territory they had come to regard as their own. Such inter-racial democratic processes were, however, unheard of. Archival records from the DRC give an account of the hearing to settle the dispute: the proceedings, recorded by van der Merwe himself, indicate the so-called troublemakers (oproermakers) were called back into line and told to conform to established rules or face sanctions.[5]

No compromise could be reached at Kranspoort, and the missionary initiated an eviction process that led to the issuing of 'trek passes' (resettlement orders issued by the Native Affairs Department) to the defiant BaSefasonke group. For two years from 1954 to 1956 alleged ringleaders were rounded up by police officials and their dependants intimidated into leaving their homes, often leaving pots boiling and livestock roaming. In a policy brief of the Legal Resource Centre of 2001, Mr Serumula – later to become the community leader in the land restitution claim – recounted the eviction:

> 1955 is when they started to arrest all the Sefazonke people. They said those who did not attend church must leave. Some were arrested and others ran away. By 1956 there were no adult Sefazonke left at Kranspoort. They were scattered from Messina to Johannesburg. My mother had fled to Pretoria when people started getting arrested. Then, in June 1956, he [Vd Merwe] evicted all the children and informed the school principal that if he was still there after midnight he would be arrested. He gave us all transfer letters to other schools. I was 14-years old, in Grade Six. I spent the night looking for mules to transport my sisters to Bochum about 80 or 100 kilometres away. We left at about 2 am, my three sisters, two cousins and me in the cart. It was a Friday night. We reached my uncle's place in the afternoon. We just took what we could carry, leaving all the furniture and my parents' possessions behind. My uncle went back later with a truck to fetch what was left.[6]

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[4] The financial record of Kranspoort Mission (or 'Heffingstaat') of July 1947 to July 1948 indicates that of the total expenses 1650 Pounds, 19 Shilling and 10 d., the greatest portion of income (1072; 0; 4) came from the central Sinod (or 'Sinodiale Sendingskommissie') with the resident congregation contributing 142 Pounds; 4 Shilling and 11d, DRC Archives, Stellenbosch

[5] Record number DIV 39, DRC Archives, Stellenbosch

[6] LRC Annual Report, 1 April 2000-31 March 2001. Cape Town, Legal Resources Centre

Other former residents explained that the violence enacted on them brutally woke them up to the realities of contemporary South Africa and made them realize that their exercise of self-sovereignty at the mission had been exceptional. Unknown to most congregants, significant developments outside the mission were overtaking them as the apartheid government had refined the mechanisms for effecting the racial distribution of land. The 1939 Bantu Trust and Land Act and 1950 Group Areas Act meant that Kranspoort became a 'controlled area', rendering occupation of the farm by people of a different race than the owner illegal – unless employed as farm labourers.

For reasons that remain unclear, the mission society did not take up the issue and request exemption, which would have allowed the mission station to continue. Church records show no debates during this period, although a later discussion document from 1993 alludes to 'difficult deliberations' that took place between the higher Church authorities and the Native Affairs Commission.[7] Illustrative of the DRC position, however, is the witness provided by a prominent leader, Dr Retief, in front of the 1952 Northern Committee for Land Allocation, which was making an inventory of areas to be reserved for 'native occupation':

> You asked what the aim of our missionary work is and it was then stated that Christianisation of our people was our aim. I feel this is the first aim but there is yet another goal and this is the development of an independent Bantu Church that is self-governing, self-reliant and self-expansionist…In due time they must be able to run their own affairs (my translation).[8]

Missionary work by this time was fast becoming morally bankrupt in view of the Afrikaner racial ideology and the DRC had already faced difficulties in finding suitable missionaries to send to Kranspoort as indicated by the periods during which there had been no resident missionary. New territorial demarcations also meant that the water-rich mountain farm was earmarked for irrigated (read: white) farming. Pressures to dispossess the congregants reflected patterns of settler development discernible across Southern Africa: the opening up of new zones of occupation by 'judging their occupants to be without merit and/or by physically removing them' (Hughes 2005: 195). In this case, unprofitable land use and the tenable tenure conspired to render Kranspoort a so-called 'black spot' to be earmarked for removal and eventual absorption into the geography of productive land use (white-owned commercial farming). The fact that the missionary had been

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[7] 'A Short History. Three Farms, Three Stories'. Dutch Reformed Church', Unpublished document, Record number DIV 39, DRC archives, Stellenbosch
[8] Northern Committee for Land Allocation (1952) Transcripts from Testimony, Pretoria: Government Printer, p. 6345

complicit and was instrumental in forcing this case of early dispossession, does however nuance the view that enclosure was by then systematized.

It is interesting to note that Kranspoort was never entirely co-opted into the territoriality that marked its surroundings. Right up to 1997 when the Church finally attempted to sell the farm to white farmers – and was prevented from doing so due to the land claim – it remained under Church control. Whilst its designation as mission station faded, the Church authorities opposed claims on it by the Hofmeyr descendants. Controversially, the church continued to defend the value of Kranspoort as an outpost for religious work amongst Africans and kept the church open by handing the management over to the Uniting Reformed Church (which 'worked Africans') and placing a resident black evangelist on site and a skeleton staff of African farm labourers. Together they kept the school open, maintained the irrigation and fences in a bid to ward off complaints from adjoining farmers who wrote numerous letters of complaint to the church authorities about its mismanagement. This openness – as we shall see in the next chapter – also made it prone to many designs given that it was never consolidated as commercial farmland.

The first wave of dispossession, driven largely by personal grievances, was duly followed by a gradual process of removal of the remaining families that had remained loyal to the missionary. A painful episode in the community's history in light of the later reconciliation between the two factions, relates to how the vacant homes of the exiting 'BaSefasonke' were occupied by some seventy families from the Patmos location. By 1964 only five church-appointed families remained on site.

The Kranspoort community was scattered through the forced removals. The BaSefasonke group was not incorporated into the former rural 'homelands' or 'native reserves' seeing as their marching orders had been issued abruptly. No accommodation was made for relocation in these ethnic reserves and the majority of them made it to the urban centres or so-called townships. The material benefits of the mission crystallized in their privileged positions as schoolteachers, clerks and government officials. This historical 'capital' would later be reflected in their prominent role in successfully reclaiming the Kranspoort farm.

For those affected by the second spate of evictions from 1960 to 1964, the resettlement pattern was different. The Sesotho-speaking BaPharaoh group were classified as ethnic Bavenda by the Native Affairs Department and brought under the jurisdiction of Chief Kutama in the nearby Venda ethnic 'homeland'. Being reconstituted as tribal subjects in a

water-scarce and congested area meant the newcomers lost a substantive portion of the livestock they had accumulated at Kranspoort owing to limitations in the resettlement area. Under the leadership of a Kranspoort schoolteacher, Philip Moshokoa, they were however successful in negotiating their resettlement in 1979 to the Indermark farm in the Sotho-speaking Lebowa homeland, some 80 km from Kranspoort. Here most sizeable portion of the former Kranspoortians (approximately 30 per cent) restyled themselves as a DRC congregation modelled around their former mission lives. Due to the mediation and skilful negotiation of the community leader they were confronted with benefits and hardships as early arrivals at the resettlement area. For one, they had the 'comparative advantage' of receiving some compensation from the Native Affairs Commission for rebuilding their homesteads. The Indermark settlers, however, suffered from the fact that most had lost their flocks of livestock and in the resettlement area were not granted sufficient grazing land. They remain concentrated in the so-called A block of Indermark, an agri-village that now resembles a typical peri-urban location. Their resettlement in a former 'homeland' also meant that consecutive groups were moved into this resettlement area in the 1980s, implying further accommodation of and conflict with newcomers.

Through this history of dispossession, a territorially-fragmented community was formed that followed the two main settlement options then open to Africans under racist territorialization: residence in the urban areas or townships, or rural lives under the former homeland system. A common characteristic was the way they became de-peasantized or de-agrarianized and that the group has had to rely much on its educational training in reconstituting their livelihoods. More surprising, perhaps, is the loyalty the group retains to the Dutch Reformed Church – albeit that they now work under the umbrella of the Uniting Church of Africa (the denomination for Africans exclusively after missionary activities ceased). The scattered pattern of settlement largely follows the trajectory of the two dispossessions. Families that were abruptly removed and had been issued their passes in the first wave, settled in urban areas where they had established networks for family relations, such as Mamelodi, Pretoria and Messina to the north and Turfloop to the west.

Rehearsing Repatriation: The Good Friday Movement

Despite, or perhaps because of, having been displaced as a community according to the contrary spaces of urbanization and homeland consolidation, Kranspoort continued to thrive as a symbolic place of belonging. Divisions that ran across the lines of spatially central Christians and peripheral 'Heathens', and related BaSefasonke and BaPharaoh loyalties were revisited in an effort to reconcile the divided community. In this, Kranspoort's exceptionalism or modernism served well as a base for a new collective identity. Two key

areas of differentiation emerged as central to this symbolical attachment:: the school and associated education, and the orderly homestead. One former resident of the mission farm explained the value of their former place in relation to its modern status: 'Kranspoort farm was very advanced' and 'the Kranspoort people shed light onto their neighbours'. The orderly lanes, rectangular houses and the communal furrow system, that had once provided the basis for land-based livelihoods, also worked well as signifiers of a harmonious ideal of rurality. This remembrance obviously obscured the 'internal divisions' that had marked dispossession, but in light of this reconstitution pre-discursive divides mattered little.

A reunion movement, centred on the spiritual experience of 'Mother Kranspoort', was duly initiated in the late 1970s to reconcile the painful past and community divisions. Its motto was 'Unite and be Strong' and it was initially set up as a Burial Society. Reunion meetings were organized over the Easter Friday weekends on Kranspoort farm with the permission of the church authorities. At these meetings the former congregants appeared in the characteristic black and white church attire and engaged in nostalgic choir singing, cleared their family graves and unveiled new tombstones for their buried relatives at Kranspoort. The organization of the reunion led to the setting up of the so-called branch system, in which the seven areas the former Kranspoortians had moved to were represented. It was a remarkable feat of organization with the various branch structures taking the lead in collecting contributions and organizing busses to ferry the scattered Kranspoortians. At its peak in the mid-1980s, some 200 Kranspoortians took part in these gatherings (Malunga 1986). Although no official correspondence could be found regarding the way access to the land was negotiated with the DRC authorities, Dr Johan Froneman, Director of its Stellenbosch archives, alluded to the fact that it was in the interest of the church to stimulate such endeavours in light of the threat it saw from the so-called 'sectarian' or 'independent' churches like the Zionist Christian Church who were fast gaining ground across South Africa. The possibility of revisiting the place undoubtedly, however, owes to the fact that the church still controlled the land.

An excerpt from a speech by a Kranspoort community leader at one such reunion meeting of the 'Children of Kranspoort' on Easter weekend 1991 shows the group's religious ascriptions:

> People who fled the country 10-30 years ago are being repatriated into South Africa. Through Beit Bridge we are expecting not less than 10,000. The South African Government has pardoned them… The prodigal son was pardoned for his evils; King David was pardoned for robbing Oria of his beautiful wife; A woman who practised adultery was pardoned by Jesus Christ. If people of Kranspoort sinned before God, why can't they be forgiven their sins and immediately be repatriated to their mother land?...One of our aims of coming here is: still to show our dedication to the Church Authority and also our patriotism for Mother Kranspoort.

> The Englishman says: "East West but Home is best". Kranspoort is better than Johannesburg; better than Pretoria; better than Greater Soweto because there are no killings; there are no massacres; there are no robberies; there are no child abuses; and there are no daily incidents at Kranspoort.[9]

It also shows awareness of the changing political tide and realization that repatriation could find a place in post-apartheid restorative justice. This formulation not only invoked the notion of Kranspoort as a safe haven that stood against the gangsterism of urban life. It also invoked histories of past struggles that had unfolded in the Indermark resettlement area. One of the Kranspoort leadership and organizer of several reunions, the afrementioned Philip Moshokoa, became embroiled in a leadership dispute at Indermark with his brother in law – a traditionalist who attempted to mould the place in the likeness of a tribal polity. Mr Moshokoa, who had led the Kranspoortians to Indermark in search of their own slice of territory, had established a loyal following around a newly-built Dutch Reformed Church. His enactment of 'proper government' at Indermark followed Church ideals and disciplining as he tried to instil a disciplinary regime at Indermark that followed Christian values and instituted tentative laws that tried to stop the establishment of beer halls. The conflict drew in the Kranspoortians as exemplary Christians poised to set the example for newcomers.

The similarity with the Kranspoort governmentality is evident; Christian values also encountered the wider political economy and rendered the vision of a 'tidy settlement' problematic. Escalations between Christian and 'Heathen' factions, which would result in the death of Moshokoa amidst witchcraft accusations in 1991, coincided with the substantial, yet temporary, popularity of the Good Friday movement. Indermark now bares few hallmarks that distinguish it from other peri-urban locales in former 'homeland' areas. The bad surroundings with noise pollution from undisciplined youths, an unstructured villagization process as a result of accommodating 'outsiders' and general lack of neighbourliness, render the current residency 'hot'– as one elderly Kranspoortian woman put it. Remnants of Kranspoort are still evident as former residents habitually grow citrus trees in their yards and Kranspoortians – now a minority at Indermark – are still a differentiated, local category of citizen.

Emerging out of these trans-local and coordinated acts of re-articulation through prayer, hymn singing, clearing of graves (and covert ancestral worshipping), Kranspoort was being reshaped as a place of worship and reconciliation. These structuration practices inevitably brought together very heterogeneous experiences reflected in individual experiences and more generally in the geographic organization of the branch system. The Mamelodi branch,

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[9] Speech delivered by M.T.D. Leboho at a reunion function of the Kranspoort children, March 30, 1991, personal archive L. Schnetler, accessed May 2006

for instance, brought their urban grievances like the dreaded pass laws into the making of 'Mother Kranspoort', whereas the rural Indermark group re-contextualized the realities of homeland consolidation and territorial politics.

Actualizing Community: The Land Claims Court

The Good Friday movement fed into the land restitution process that accompanied post-apartheid transformation. The 1994 Restitution of Land Rights Act gives communities the right to reclaim land of which they were dispossessed as a result of segregationist land laws. A land claim was duly lodged on behalf of the Kranspoort community for restoration of their land rights following the establishment of an informal claimant committee in 1997, composed of the same leadership that had organized the reunions. They were adamant in their demand for obtaining full ownership of the land – in a collectivized form – and not opting for alternative compensation like financial compensation also provided for in the restitution act.

In reviewing the reclamation of land rights, we should appreciate that the climate around the turn of the century in terms of what land reform was offering was outright gloomy. A major change in orientation came with the arrival of a new Minister of Land Affairs in 1999, Thoko Didiza, who sought to speed up the pace of land reform. One of the reforms was to no longer automatically refer all claims to the Land Claims Court but rather to follow the so-called administrative route whereby the Regional Restitution authorities were given a mandate to negotiate land deals on behalf of the state (see Walker 2008: 62-69). In this regard, Kranspoort's referral to Court was not procedural but rather based on the fact that there was a dispute over the validity of the claim with the Dutch Reformed Church – the then landowners – which resisted the claims on the basis that no formal, registered land rights had been bestowed onto the former occupants. We should thus appreciate that the case presented an interesting and challenging dossier for the Legal Resource Centre – an NGO offering free legal representation to land claimants – to set a precedent in restoring informal land rights and take on the DRC, which still held large properties across the country but had proven to be most conservative in contributing to post-apartheid land restoration (Weideman 2004: 489-490). The claim also offered a test case that conceived of community outside the problematic associations of 'tribe' and chieftaincy towards the restoration of land rights to a geographically dispersed group.

The hearings of the Land Claims Court stretched over eleven days and revived the focus that had withered somewhat since the last 1996 reunion meeting. The hearings functioned as a mobilization in their own right, with the Kranspoort claimants gathering in

numbers for the first few days of court in Pietersburg. The experience was at once polemic and uniting –'a time when we were strong' as one attendant put it. The court setting redrew the past accommodationist landscape by pitting the Dutch Reformed Church against the claimants, sparked also by relentless cross-examination by the church's advocate and heroic defence by Mr Serumula, who gave oral testimony for three consecutive days. The past existence of a Kranspoort community implied detachment from the church as the benevolent force providing them with a livelihood and giving them temporary occupational rights (as was argued by the Dutch Reformed Church in court). The notion of semi-autonomy became pivotal as the judge ruled that people had enjoyed substantial self-governance (i.e. the afrementioned village council) and usufruct rights to the land, which led to an 'attitude of entitlement' born out of a certain 'reciprocal tolerance' between missionary and inhabitants.[10] The Legal Resource Centre lawyers were somewhat assured in the knowledge that this claim represented a neatly-demarcated claim on a single property – in turn avoiding the messy negotiations that accompany most group claims that straddle various properties – and that Church records unambiguously placed the claimants there. Actually, in consultation with land restitution officials it had dissuaded the claimant committee to join the Seakamela tribal land claim that had also been lodged and overlapped with the Kranspoort and Goedgedacht farms.

The Restitution of Land Rights Act states that a condition for restoration of land to groups is that 'it *is* a community dispossessed of a right to land after 1913 as a result of racially discriminatory laws and practices' (emphasis mine).[11] In court, the Church had fought the notion of a continued existence owing to the fact that the attachment to the land was lost and outside the context of the mission there could be no such thing as a cohesive, Christian-affiliated community. Much emphasis had been placed on the idea that 'without a mission there could be no people', a view which the judges rejected for the reason that it would be 'anomalous' to equate detachment with diaspora and ruled it would be a 'grave injustice if the Restitution Act is to be interpreted so that the tragic consequences of a removal become a reason why a community restitution claim aimed at remedying the removal should fail'.[12] The judges emphasized the importance of the reunion movements in the intervening years – thereby presenting the image of a socially cohesive community that remained so precisely because they rallied around Kranspoort and in the joint belonging found a way of reconciling the BaSefasonke and BaPharaoh factions. In this way, the court erased divisions but also added a more inclusive notion of community

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[10] Land Claims Court (LCC) 26/98, Kranspoort Community in connection with the farm Kraanspoort 48LS, p. 37
[11] Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994)
[12] Land Claims Court (LCC) 26/98, Kranspoort Community in connection with the farm Kraanspoort 48LS, p. 27

the claimants had not foreseen; the five families that resided on the farm but had no demonstrable ties to the historical community would also have to be accepted as community members.

Although the acknowledgement of the past existence of a grounded community (in spatial and temporal terms), fit well with the aims of restorative justice, there remained much work to be done in carving out how this body community could manage its upgraded land rights. A specific piece of legislation exists, the Communal Property Associations Act (CPA) of 1996 to allow communities to own land communally and make decisions pertaining to it collectively. As has been commented elsewhere, we can see this legislation as the embodiment of a 'vision of reform shared by many South African activists', which implies a belief in extending populist and liberal notions of community 'beyond the immediate prospects of restitution, to a future of development and progress, achieved within just and egalitarian social frameworks' (James 2000: 634). Yet in actualizing landholding communities, the legislation also reflects a technocratic and instrumentalist approach to human rights; reforming community according to 'modern' principles of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. Rendering communities governable and representative implies having them commit to a written CPA Constitution. In this document group rights and responsibilities are spelt out, as well as the appropriate format to be followed in order to organize meetings, as well as the election of an Executive Committee that governs on behalf of all members. For example, there are standardized stipulations that Annual General Meetings should be organized with all group members and about procedures for electing new members or dispensing with them. Such meetings also serve as places where collective decisions (forty per cent participation quorum and 75 per cent majority vote), should be made with all members pertaining to leasing, mortgaging or selling off of any portions of the land. Constitutions may differ per community according to the chosen land-use options and the agreed-upon development plans. In the case of Kranspoort, bylaws related to specific grazing policies that were developed with lawyers from the Legal Resource Centre and other limitations regarding the amount of cattle to be introduced, the policy for leasing land and extent of water rights from the Khudetsa stream crossing the land. Contrary to many cases where CPAs have been observed to be left to 'their own devices' after receiving ownership of land (cf. Barry 2011), the Kranspoort Executive Committee would also assume a key role in coordination and acting as a go-between between various prospective investors in Kranspoort and the planning agencies or consultants involved in planning re-development of the farm (see Chapter 3).

Here we are witnessing the merger of two place-making endeavours: a legal geography of the post-apartheid state and a geography of hope expressed through claimants' quasi-religious narratives of repatriation. Whereas the former relies strongly on providing evidence that can hold up in Court according to notions of properties, and involves demands by the state and intermediaries to turn claimants into modern subjects who abide by democratic principles, the latter implies the articulation of a coherent narrative of dispossession and repatriation that serves the purposes of 'winning the land claim'. Needless to say, land reclamation in this guise may provoke essentializing or romantic constructions of community that disguise a more complex reading of past landholding arrangements at the mission, intra-group conflicts over future land use and emergent social exclusions resulting from the formalization of community membership. At the same time, however, the discretionary power of the judges and the legal precedent they set affirmed a more complex reading of the past. Interstitial places like Kranspoort - that sit between known territorialities of tribe and private landownership and whose inhabitants stylized their unique landed struggle through the Good Friday Movement – were incorporated into the larger framework of interpreting 'historical rights to land' and 'beneficiary community'.

Representation

Kranspoort also had its own historicized governance to be enacted; the branch structure that had informed the Good Friday movement. It followed the geographical dispersal of the community. The branch-system holds that each of Kranspoort's locales has one or two representatives in the Executive Committee (Excom). They act as intermediaries and liaisons between the Excom and the wider group of beneficiaries that reside in their locale. According to the Kranspoort CPA (KCPA) records, there are now seven branches, which in practice are not equally active and representative of equal numbers of households. They are not formally recognized in the KCPA as entities in their own right but are seen as intermediary structures communicating decisions from the Executive Committee. A committee formed around a scattered community also had its own organizational difficulties. Holding meetings implied that long distances would have to be covered and it was foreseen that the Executive members would be compensated for their travel expenses from the annual contribution of R 100 (South African Rand) per CPA member. Meetings would also be held according to a more or less rotational scheme across sites, with a later preference for holding meetings at Kranspoort proper once the land was restored. This form of governance pushed claimants into monetized forms of organization, where compensation for time and costs featured strongly in meetings and could result in tensions between branches that were more effective in collecting these funds. It also meant that the community's physical resettlement – where government of Kranspoort could be

centralized – was seen as personal aspiration but also as an act rendering the community governable.

Following the KCPA act, the so-called 'office bearers' of the executive committee were elected in a 2000 general meeting for all members in which the functions of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, vice-secretary, treasurer and vice-treasurer duly fell to elderly members who had attended school at Kranspoort and had been prominent in the Good Friday Movement and Land Claims Court. As one of the leadership explained, the election in which the leadership was chosen followed the contours of existent networks: 'You see, the first committee when it was elected – it was not because of skills and competence – it was about "who do we know". Some of us were elected because we were articulative [articulate], and so on'.[13] This elderly group of claimants 'who knew the place' had successfully defended the imaginary of a reconciled community in Court.

A more flexible category of 'additional members' was created, occupied by representatives of each branch and the member appointed for residing on the farm and keeping the farm school open and doing basic maintenance whilst the planning for resettlement took shape. Lest we believe that these positions are much coveted, we should appreciate the way Frank Mashakgomo was voted into office as Indermark representative. He explained that he had not seen himself as a leader but that he rather owed his election to assisting in filling in the claimant verification lists. Certainly competency as a secondary school teacher weighed in his election but he also saw the job as a burden. It was time consuming, implied a lot of transportation costs and indeed brought with it the complications and risks of conveying the decisions made at steering committee meetings to the rank-and-file members of the branches.[14] Obligations resulting from being asked or appointed paint a more complex picture of community leadership being driven by a sense of moral responsibility – with the precondition of having the time and financial means – rather than aspiring to a position of power, from which one might accrue personal benefits. Besides, the pool of suitable candidates who 'knew the place' and had actively participated in the Good Friday Movement was fast dwindling as key members settled into retirement in their urban locations, or passed away. Of the twelve representatives of the Excom in 2006, all of them save Monyai – the caretaker appointed for looking after the farm – were over sixty years old and had been school-going children at Kranspoort, and held or had held white collar jobs. LRC lawyers that mentored the transition from an informal committee to the CPA, appreciated the extraordinary management capabilities of the Kranspoortians. In a 2010

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[13] Interview F. Mashakgomo, Indermark, 1 October 2007
[14] Ibid.

interview, the LRC lawyer, who had assisted in court and the period following that, highlighted the high measure of management capacity – she was comparing it to other malfunctioning CPAs and related it to the educated status of Kranspoortians:

> The one thing about the Kranspoort CPA is that they are highly functional. They've already amended their constitution a few times. It's kind of interesting because they're such a scattered community. Most communities are moved together after they are evicted. The other interesting point is the fact that you could clearly see in the second, third and fourth generation that their parents had attended the missionary school and they really benefitted from that.[15]

The legal representative in an interview in 2006 had similarly described KCPA as a 'vibrant and effective institution' (Dodson, 2007: 11). The educated status of the leadership was evident in the structured way minutes of the meeting were kept by the members (in English and using its own letterheads) and the adherence to the principles stated in the constitution. During a visit to the secretary, I was able to collect all printed versions of the minutes that the secretary had distributed to the various branches. The extensive folder of KCPA minutes illustrates the 'work-shopping' that was done to communicate principles of democratic governance to the Executive committee. LRC staff participated prominently in the Executive committee meetings in the 2000 to 2002 period, during which time numerous policies and statements were drawn up like those pertaining to the lease of grazing land (whereby community members could get reduced rates), how the branch structure should be accountable to the rank-and-file members, the urgency of making KCPA financially viable and what percentage of members should be present at the general meetings in order to be able to make decisions affecting the collective land rights. Good record keeping was also emphasized given that the notion of accountability and transparency held that members should at all times have the right to get insight into the minutes, documents and reports discussed by the Excom and that the executive leadership should on a yearly basis produce audited statements and an annual operational report to the Director General of Land Affairs.

An excerpt from the committee report of the second Annual General Meeting in 2002 shows that the KCPA leadership was adopting the language of constitutional obedience with a central role for itself in disciplining the beneficiaries:

> The Kranspoort community has on its own resolved to become Communal Property Association. This placed particular imperatives to [on] the members, including compliance with the constitutional provisions. It thus becomes critical that all members and branches have the knowledge of the constitution to help them contribute positively towards the development of the farm. It is only empowered members who can positively and constructively guide the Committee on its operations. The success of the farm is in the hands of its owners as lead [led] by the Committee. The failure of developing a correct vision compactable

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[15] Interview L. du Plessis, 21 January 2010

[compatible] with the Constitution and broader economic and sectoral development will not assist the process of advancing the cause of our future generations.[16]

Entitlement to leadership is equated with those who had invested most in Kranspoort in terms of symbolic belonging, and the historical knowledge they carried with them. Yet, the above statement also draws attention to the idea that Kranspoort had moved on from its historical rootedness and required the development of some kind of collective, future vision that tied in younger generations that had not featured thus far. After all, restorative justice provided the scope for thinking about sustainable communities and inter-generational interests. In this empowerment framework, the community would be aided and strengthened by constitutional pillars that could hold both leadership and members accountable.

Collective Aspirations and Social Differentiations

Setting up stable and accountable institutions for self-governance and the leadership entitlements stemming from it, however, did not assist in clarifying community membership and the rights that could be drawn from it for the rank-and-file members. The list of claimants that had emerged out of the first so-called claimant verification process by land restitution officials (who had actually outsourced the task of filling out forms to branch representatives), contained a list of 125 dispossessed persons or their direct descendants with historical land rights. The list had been contested in court by the DRC lawyer as inaccurate – it allegedly contained names of non-Christians not belonging to the mission and whose presence and forced removal had not been recorded in official records. In the court ruling of 1999 errors were noted by the judge regarding the accuracy of the list but the judge renders these oversights acceptable given that 'despite the diaspora which followed the removals in 1955/1956 and 1964, a substantial number of former residents of Kranspoort and persons associated with them have continued to engage in activities based on their connection with Kranspoort'.[17]

According to the KCPA constitution, the community would have another five years from 2002 to come up with a definite list but by 2009 this was not yet produced. Interestingly, this formalization of membership was now motivated from a need to get a better handle on active and paying members and ensure that the executive committee could remain operational. Community profiles drawn up by project planners in 2003 used a ballpark figure of 600 individuals, and for the cutting of stands, planners arrived at a figure of 192 households in order to accommodate some expansion. For listed and unlisted claimants

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[17] Land Claims Court (LCC) 26/98, Kranspoort Community in connection with the farm Kraanspoort 48LS, p. 25

this open-ended design presented little concern at this stage, given that return for a great part depended on the basic infrastructure that would be available there and how the farm could successfully be re-converted from the wilderness it now was into a serviced village (see Chapter Three). In short, attempts at concretizing the criteria for membership lost out to a future oriented, negotiated view that tied reconstitution of the group to the actual process of resettlement.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that a sense of community volition around the idea of resettlement practice – an act of collective labour – was central to the reconstitution of historical place. It had emerged from the court route and interviews conducted in 2006 and 2007 with over forty members that physical resettlement was an absolute priority. As explained before, the court had endorsed this option and reinforced the idea that compensation for hardship suffered as a result of displacement would be to endow claimants with a right to own the land – to be in place as opposed to quasi-biblical remembrance of place in exile. It was a phenomological shift that required a re-orientation that was tremendously potent in the celebratory atmosphere that followed the successful Court Case and 2002 settlement celebrations, but it also represented a problematic new stage in land restitution. It is in this regard that du Toit (1999) has spoken of the 'loss of the loss' and the painful realization that the concretization of what had narrowly become a symbolic sense of belonging –'Mother Kranspoort'- and the volunteerism of Good Friday celebrations would make place for a more contentious and problematic mobilization of a community with the title deed in hand.

We should consider also the potency and functionality of the 'will to community' as a way to erase differences of variegated groups of claimants and a means to resolve the 'desire to "return" with its practical impossibility' (Beyers 2009: 159). The retreat to the 'will to community' with all its communitarian associations certainly was discernible in many responses to the question as to what the future should look like. Optimism was generated by the willingness, collaborative spirit and knowledge to remake Kranspoort into the autonomous site it had been in the past. In imagining the conversion of this cultural- and human capital, respondents would say, for example: 'we can live there free from interference from outside'. Or they would say 'first the people want to go and stay, then we make a plan' and 'when we are there, ideas will crop up'. It appeared to some that there was solace in the extension of the return to some indeterminate moment of resettlement. Serumula's testimony in court – when asked the question how the redevelopment of Kranspoort could be bankrolled – is indicative of the community's inherent and inherited skills in place-making:

Some will be able to do it themselves. Those who can't, we will come together as a group and approach the government and talk to the authorities. The government of the day is not like the previous government, and just as an example, at my school where I am working now in Mamelodi, we have made a bowl for water and I want to show the people that vegetables develop from the soil, and they are planting there even outside their hut. I am sure that at the end of the year there will be a mark there. So if people at the location are able to do that, we who were born at places like that won't fail to achieve our goal.[18]

Whilst the statement reifies the skills and knowledge of elderly people which can be passed on to future generations, it also betrays an understanding that social differentiation within the group required a more differentiated approach. These divisions, present but not insurmountable in joining the yearly Good Friday Celebrations, were now grossly inflated. They also tied into the new opportunities that could be claimed from a benevolent or fledgling welfare state which had promised so-called RDP housing for the poor. The chairman of the CPA later explained that the dividing line would be according to the state eligibility criteria whereby those earning less than 3,000 Rand per month were expected to stake a claim for subsidized housing.

Aspirations of return drew new contours that roughly followed the political economy of displacement. Not all claimants were convinced that the more affluent urbanized claimants would ever choose retirement in such an isolated and rural location. The CPA secretary recounted these lines in a whispered voice indicating that they were sensitive, political issues within the group that had also been strategically kept quiet to outsiders:

You see where these people are now, Pretoria, Seshego, Turfloop, Messina – many of them are staying at the townships. They are used to township life. And for them to go and stay right there [at Kranspoort] they will need every house to have water, tap water. They are used to toilets in the houses, they are used to electricity. If all this infrastructure is not there, it is going to be difficult for these people. All they can do is to have a plot and send somebody to look after the plot while they stay where they stay. And meanwhile they will be thinking what to do while somebody is just looking after this plot. For instance, if I have a plot there, I will just have a small structure, and have somebody look after my plot and say
"I will pay you this much a month". Certainly he [the occupant] will accept because he will get something every month. But then for me to develop that plot, it is going to take me more than five years. Now you can see that while right now, we are saying we want to go back there, in practical terms if tomorrow DLA [the Department of Land Affairs] says "Kranspoort people here are your plots, you can start moving in tomorrow", people are going to think "can I go?" [laughter]. You see, in the first place, where I am going to have fire? Am I going to collect wood to make fire? Am I going to draw water from the river? How pure is the water? Such types things are going to happen; and at the end they are going to delay the process. And these people, they are not used to using the pit latrine.[19]

The last statement invokes yet another category of Kranspoortian: a poor person – preferably a relative who could be trusted to leave pending the termination of the social contract

[18] Transcriptions LCC 28/96 sessions, held at Randburg on 29 July and on 20 and 21 September 1999, Transcription by True Recall, p. 330
[18] Transcriptions LCC 28/96 sessions, held at Randburg on 29 July and on 20 and 21 September 1999, Transcription by True Recall, p. 330

– who through his dire position is no willing to take up residence there and brave the elements until such time as the place is developed. Egalitarian rights were however observed in a decision by the KCPA that all plot sizes would be equal in size and that a lottery was preferred over allowing people to reconstruct their homes on the exact footprint of their ancestral homes. Some rural claimants aspired to larger plots but as the Indermark representative explained, the executive committee would not ascribe to such a differentiation: 'they say we want to be the same, we do not want to be divided'. From a group focus discussion of nineteen active KCPA members – including most committee members – it however emerged that there was a 'resolution' by the committee that original claimants would be given preference in settlement and that whatever stands would be left after this (out of 192) could be distributed to the wider group, such as second generation descendants and extended family members.

The new imaginary of return was couched in two interlocking logics. The idea of a rights-bearing citizen who could place demands on the state was wedded to a notion of property relations whereby residential plots could be held in secure tenure, where one could enjoy clearly defined boundaries and develop a homestead according to one's individual wealth. One relationship with external parties that underpinned the settlement plans implicated the local Makhado municipality. Volition and the capacity to mobilize community resources was always going to be dependent on the establishment of a settlement and laying out the bulk infrastructure in terms of water, sewage and electricity – something that the community realized it could not muster. In this regard, the resettlement counted on the state's commitment to provide the services and upgrade Kranspoort to a liveable minimum – to accommodate the urban claimants – in order for the community to unfold its vision once resettled. This relationship also invoked a progressive, modernist relationship with the state: as modern property owners and citizens they would reproduce the urban-style agri-villages, and receive and pay for services (see James 2007: 47). It would require skilled negotiations to get Kranspoort prioritized but at the early stages of resettlement this seemed unproblematic, given the vast support and attention Kranspoort had received in the Court and in the settlement celebrations. Despite popular concerns that the Kranspoortians as Sotho-speakers (of which the Indermark group had 'fought' its way out of incorporation in the Venda ethnic homeland) would not be wholeheartedly accepted by a predominantly Venda-speaking municipality, the impression also persisted that since their resettlement was by order of the Land Claims Court – having the status of a Supreme Court – they held some political clout in receiving priority servicing.

Historically-sedimented ideas of land use tied into this vision of settlement. Claimants described the farm as a place of plenty, harbouring good water resources, fertile soil and a place on which to enact an endless amount of projects – some collective and some individual. Unsurprisingly, grazing and irrigated farming were noted as real options, that is to say, pending the idea that fencing could be restored (to keep out what was called at a workshop the 'two- and four-legged baboons'), and start-up capital could be had from the Department of Agriculture. In this desire, they were strengthened by reassurances from the Provincial representative MEC, Mr Motsoaledi, who had also attended the hand-over celebrations in April 2002 and vowed that he would help rebuild Kranspoort as a viable farm, employing modern, mechanized farming techniques. In the next chapter we will see how this support unfolded. For now it suffices to note that this vision of re-making Kranspoort also articulated well with the idea that regardless of other individual projects that could be implemented there (for example, the bottling of mineral water, a workshop for cars, a tuck shop and a taxi business), agricultural projects would have to be developed (Chapter Three).

To the consultant who was contracted by the Department of Land Affairs to draw up the so-called 'Socio-economic profile' of the community in 2003, the openness with which future land use was viewed seemed a problem. In her report she noted how practicalities of return had not been thought through:

> The question on how people plan to make a sustainable living at Kranspoort created some discomfort amongst respondents. Very few of them have given this a serious thought - as if the future will sort itself out. This may be as a result of the long waiting period - that people find it difficult to position themselves in reality - making a living at Kranspoort. It can also be that the respondents are for the larger part pensioners who will be retired at the time of resettlement in which case they only plan to "stay" at Kranspoort. (Gaigher, 2003: 14-15)

The final sentence reiterates that the elderly maintained a view of what in later planning documents would become 'semi-permanent residence'. Put simply, it validated planning for a settlement of affluent pensioners who would not rely on making a living from the land. It should be noted that as a second feature of social planning, the consultant suggests further rounds of 'work-shopping' to arrive at a 'more coherent' vision and indeed a 'realistic' future:

> The Kranspoort community is a diverse group of people with different expectations and needs. Instead of trying to negotiate a means of satisfying all the expectations separately, all the needs and problems are placed on the table and then become common problems and needs. A common vision for all the members is then developed through work-shopping. For example, a common vision could be to establish an environmentally-friendly settlement and to develop sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism and other wealth creating activities in an integrated manner. (ibid.: 20)

This statement sets the scene for the next chapter where the community vision of self-determination and reconstructing a community through a form of reworking and labour, was rendered 'unrealistic'. It lacked the kind of coherence that is called for in light of the current orientation towards planning and securing 'sustainability' by employing consultants to draw up plans and make them operational according to a modernist ideal of integrated planning.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the manifold articulations that went into constructing the place-based identities of Kranspoortians in relation to the wider structures of opportunity. Various 'strategic moments' or 'watershed events' have historically arisen that provided a framework for defining community membership and what constitutes a (communal) right to land. The politics of place-making highlight the construction of a particular social citizenship that operates through the production of difference. The category 'Children of Kranspoort' emerged out of forms of mission rule and self-disciplining that set it apart from historical groups of Africans, such as those working as labourers under paternalist white farmers and those living under tribal rule. Expressions of the 'imagined community' are evident in the way a performative politics was enacted. Unsurprisingly, this articulation functions discursively to obscure or downplay internal group divisions, and attempts to stabilize a notion of community that communicates well with the openings offered by the state and other agencies. We have seen that at Kranspoort pre-dispossession articulations involve a notion of a morally elevated community developed around being disciplined mission Christians, whereas in later years, particularism invoked a greater distance from the Church and a sense of sovereign subjects self-governing, a polity that included the non-Christian villages of Patmos and Muse. A hint of such co-articulation within current institutions is visible in the 1999 endorsement of the Land Claims Court of this vision, contrary to the intuitive idea of communities being located in discrete, geographical places. In accepting the continued existence of community after dispossession (the Good Friday movement as expression of community), it stabilized the historicized narrative of internal reconciliation and particularism. A certain 'stickiness' (Lund 2008) is evident in how the legal geography of land restitution has reinforced territorial autonomy and the capacity to self-govern as key features of Kranspoortians.

In reconciling internal community divisions and differentiated experiences of dispossession – a consequence of the so-called political economy of dispersal – we can see a particular dialectic at work. Here we can appreciate the historical shift from Kranspoort as a site of production – a second economy where labour and identity are intertwined –

towards a more abstract landscape in which Kranspoort functioned as a representational space set against the diversified experiences of displacement (see Chapter One). As has been described in experiences of diaspora and post-apartheid land reclamation in Cape Town's District Six, reconciliation of this diversity may centre on 'the will to community' and the 'collectivizing drive to revive, recover, and regenerate the sense of community, in a way that articulates diverse desires and aspirations' (Beyers 2009: 146). 'Willing' here ties a historical imaginary of place to a future-oriented belief in reconstruction; through collective action the past can be made concrete, materialized. In other words, particular forms of cultural- and social capital are seen as vested in community and feed a belief that community rebuilding involves forms of agency that are, at least partly, independent of outside support. The return to land, and the Kranspoortians' insistence on physical resettlement, expresses this entanglement of past and future. Following this line, it is no surprise that resettlement was perceived as open-ended –'first resettle, and then we see'– and accommodated various options regarding types of housing and future land-based livelihoods. For example, practical aspirations for return differentiated between those affluent, mainly urbanized pensioners who could build their own houses and those who would have to rely on state support for rebuilding their homesteads.

Through the court route and the brokerage of legal representatives of the Legal Resources Centre, another dimension of Kranspoort's particularism emerged. It constructed its leaders as having the essential attributes for the 'proper' running of community affairs and as such posits it against the idea of dysfunctional land restitution communities. In setting up the new Communal Property Association that would manage group rights, legal representatives celebrated the group's leaders as efficient and sensitive to progressive values of governance. It rendered the management of community affairs 'technical' (cf. Li 2007) and worked much in tandem with the performative politics of the group's leadership to depoliticize internal differences. It effectively framed 'community' in functionalist and evolutionary terms – somewhat of a blank canvas – upon which criteria of accountability, inclusiveness and transparency were cast. In this reframing, demands by the state may be forceful, as we have seen in the claimants having to, grudgingly, adopt as members the five resident families that moved onto the land after the forced removal. Critical, however, is how this actualization of community has created a structure of entitlement. It implied that representation fell squarely to a group of elderly claimants who at once met the modernist criteria of being educated and organized in keeping records and were legitimate to other claimants owing to how they had 'struggled for Kranspoort'. We have seen that the right to represent emerged partly by providing community leaders with a platform for exhibiting their knowledge of the dispossession history in court and the acknowledgment of their

role in maintaining community ties and land claims through the Good Friday movement. The election of the group of elderly representatives in 2000 naturally flowed from this entitlement, even though some leaders experienced the responsibility as burdensome, risky and costly. A duality is at work here whereby this group have the historical entitlement to govern but their fitness to govern is also informed by their affluence which enables them to afford the financially-straining task of organizing and attending meetings. Representation as divisive and polarizing will be explored further in the next chapter where we witness the risks associated with being community brokers in a prolonged planning process, with high costs of translating development planner's intentions to the rank-and-file members and disciplining them.

What can be deduced from this case that appears to evoke its exclusive status as precedent-setting from a particular place-based identity that falls mostly outside of land reform's referential frameworks? Its relevance lies in challenging the simplified readings of pre-democracy land politics in post-apartheid land reform as being determined by a legislated, brutal and calculated territorial segregation. This dominant historiography is reflected in land restitution's 'narrative of dispossession' which is remarkably coherent in its conceptualization of a shared 'history of conquest and exploitation that black people have experienced as an undifferentiated group' (Walker 2008: 38; see also Chapter One). The micro-politics and local political economy that existed at Kranspoort and resettlement across South Africa, give rise to a more nuanced reading. Evidently, Kranspoortians suffered the wrath of intolerant missionaries and segregationist land laws that enabled their forced removal. Nevertheless, through the landed struggles of Kranspoortians we see forms of accommodation, botched-up solutions and makeshift alliances that may lead us to see landed struggles unfolding in a field of power in which places are never perfectly territorialized, fixed spatial referents. Not least so in post-apartheid land reclamation, where Kranspoortians negotiated an unlikely full restoration of property rights and with outside assistance set a legal precedent that reinterpreted the legal category of 'beneficiary community'.

Taking this argument a step further, we may see that through these engagements Kranspoortians acquired valuable navigation skills, which have made them particularly skilled as community entrepreneurs. The interstitial places they inhabited and maintained endowed them with social agency and made them well situated to benefit from post-apartheid land reclamation. Problematically perhaps, it also fed an appetite for navigable, open spaces that can be reworked as new openings appear. The next chapter explores in more detail how this openness would in turn be rendered 'unrealistic' and 'dangerous' as

state officials and development planners feared it would lead to the types of uncontrolled settlements witnessed in other restitution 'failures'.

Chapter 3

Between Virtuality and Materiality: Kranspoort's Entangled Landscape
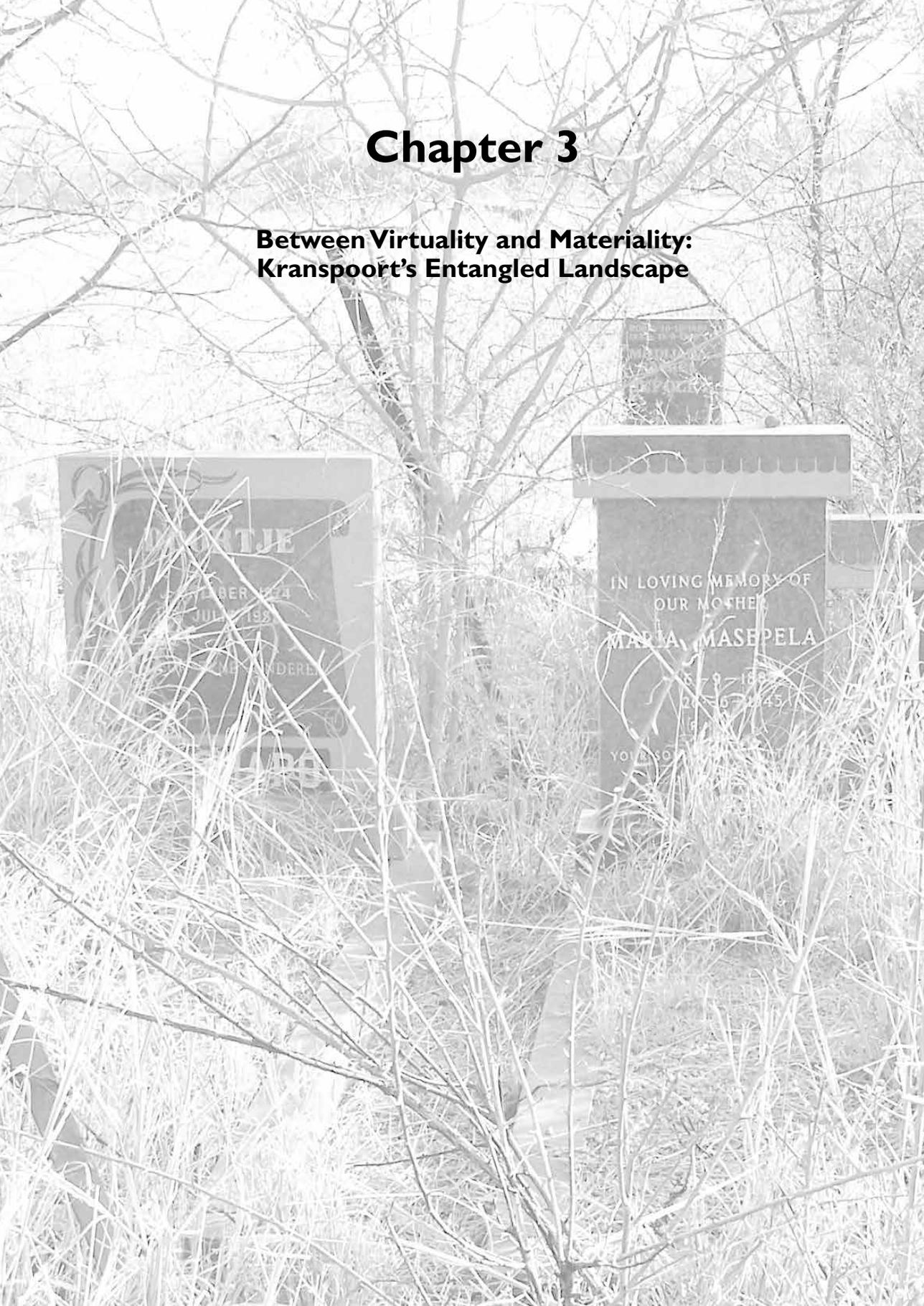
Land claims, as we have seen in the previous chapter, may provoke a revival of community. Theydo so in ways that resonate well with populist ideas of communities as socially coherent and vibrant. The Kranspoort land claim shows that community may equally be an object of desire and an object of development. 'Mother Kranspoort' expresses a place-based identity that sets it apart from the hardship of township life or rural life. We have also seen that in post-apartheid land reclamation, there is a process of actualizing community by setting up a collective property institution (Kranspoort Communal Property Association) to hold and manage land rights after the claimants have been granted full restoration of their historical land rights.

In this chapter, we pick up the land reclamation process at Kranspoort and follow it through a second actualization: planning for resettlement. As has been argued elsewhere, this stage in development is referred to in policy circles as post-settlement and implies a 'shifting articulation of land' whereby symbolic attachment and the claimants' aspirations that flow from 'bringing the past into the present' are compromised by a more or less formal planning process (Van Leynseele and Hebinck 2009). At Kranspoort, an ideal of community volition took hold that envisioned a process of endogenous development best described in terms of 'first we resettle, and then we redevelop'. The ideal is built on a pre-dispossession memory of place, i.e., Kranspoort as a mission farm where one can enjoy 'stillness of the soul', practice agriculture in a more or less collectivized form and where youth can be taught proper values. A certain openness informed the practical aspirations of the diverse group of Kranspoortians due to the diversity of social status and wealth within the group. For instance, the building of homes would be informed by whether or not one was eligible for the state's housing grant (monthly incomes under R 3,000). Likewise, a seemingly vast list of possible projects emerged from informal planning, which foregrounded agriculture as the main activity but also included a range of non-agricultural activities (e.g., setting up a taxi-business, bottling water and tourism). An appeal would be made to South Africa's developmental state in terms of laying down the basic infrastructure for housing and means to farm collectively but beyond this there was a strong belief that projects would unfold after resettlement and when material ties to the land were re-established.

To development planners such open-ended scripts may lack coherence. To invoke Scott's seminal work *Seeing Like a State* (1998), they lack the 'legibility' required to align them to the territorial designs of the bureaucracy. It follows that a complex set of aspirations may be simplified in a way that validates particular aspirations as 'rightful' or 'possible' whilst relegating others to the status of 'unrealistic'. Drawing on studies in political ecology we

can extend the notion of visibility to the work of expert planners and the manner in which they employ visualization technologies that obscure local experiences of place through superimposing landscape planning (a process of upscaling) and linking up particular sites to abstract geographies like those of nature conservation (Zimmerer and Bassett 2003; see Chapter 4). This abstraction by political communities typically is accompanied by an orientation towards a greater public good: that of national interests in maintaining cultural and natural heritage. Of importance here, however, is the politics of scarcity that may accompany this abstraction (see Chapter One). This refers to a more grounded process of defining a particular piece of land as being suited for particular uses based on what the natural resource base is 'capable' of carrying, which is accompanied by scientifically-informed planning documents like Environmental Impact Assessments and other 'feasibility studies'. This rationalization inevitably triggers knowledge encounters, where one can expect to find a distinction being made between lay expectations and experiences – not informed by scientific fact – and the planners' ability to correctly measure and represent scarcity.

Where several studies have earmarked these encounters as taking place between people's lived experiences and their tacit knowledge derived from long-term engagement with the natural resource base versus that of expertly informed scientific knowledge (cf. Vandergeest and Peluso 1995), I will present a case here for seeing this engagement as unfolding within the 'invited spaces' of the state and land restitution in particular (see Baud and Nainan 2008). As we shall see below, the Kranspoort case implies the encounter of two virtual landscapes: 'Mother Kranspoort' as pre-dispossession landscape imagined by the land claimants and a future-oriented view towards preservation of its natural and cultural assets. Both are abstract in the sense that they derive authority not from their material inscription – the second nature – but are rather aspirational and in the process of becoming. Whereas the historicized perspective has been discussed in the previous chapter, here we will discuss in detail how the environmentalist claim on Kranspoort has been taking shape in recent years as an emergent spatiality threatens to trump the agricultural aspirations of the claimants, or at least shape them in a manner so as to be deemed 'sustainable'. This recent articulation draws attention to the way in which, in the so-called intervening years between dispossession and reclamation, new territorial meanings can be enacted on places that neither figure in the memory of claimants nor their future designs.

'Invited spaces' here refers to the linkage with the land restitution programme. The previous chapter explained how the Land Claims Court was instrumental in acknowledging the validity of past 'beneficial rights' to land and, as such, set a precedent in accepting informal or unregistered land rights as sufficiently legitimate to merit the restoration of

full ownership. Although the right to resettle was endorsed, the court created a second precedent. For the first time, restoration would take place on condition that there would be an 'appropriate measure of planning'. It is evident that this stipulation tied in with the wider context marked by anxiety around land restitution failures where claimants had been left to 'their own devices'. It also signified a significant shift in the Department of Land Affairs that came about with the new Minister of Land Affairs in 1999 and increased attention to state mentorship of the so-called 'post-settlement' stages (development support to restitution claimants after land had been restored). Yet as James (2007: 155) has noted, post-settlement has a strong orientation on planned solutions and roping in consultants, investors and planners in a manner that reflects 'a privatisation of the responsibility for development'. Put simply, it relies on a model of Community-Public-Private-Partnership (CPPP) as a way to 'ensure' adequate business- and land-use planning procedures and enable communities to have their projects sponsored by private parties. It is within this context that the Kranspoortians' open-ended designs would be recast into tangible planning objects and that a sustainable resettlement plan was drawn up that would respect the recent allocation of the northern portion of Kranspoort as part of a nature conservation area. The systematic, 'integrated' planning process created a virtual edifice of planning aimed at marrying resettlement of 125 households with environmentally-sensitive land use. Due to its unique characteristics – as cultural and natural heritage site – Kranspoort would become a demonstration village showing that nature conservation in its modern guise could effectively be de-racialized and embraced by land claimants.

Before moving on to this environmental territoriality and how it struggled to gain traction, we should briefly consider the position of the community leadership in this new partnership. This organized and 'functional' CPA, as its legal representative put it, was drawn into a process where leadership would have to defend community demands against a growing group of consultants and investors – who stepped in and out of the CPPP at various moments – as well as temper demands from an increasingly frustrated rank-and-file membership. Planning for resettlement was prolonged and risky. At the time of the fieldwork for this study in 2006 and 2007, they were six years into a planning process that had yielded only partial results. In fact, by 2006 the sustainable settlement plans were approved in a Tribunal Hearing (according to the Development Facilitation Act) but no investor could be found to lay down the infrastructure and bankroll the many business options that had been discussed.

It is in this atmosphere that we can appreciate the way planning processes may have divisive and exclusionary effects. They may exacerbate underlying differences in social

status among claimants and promote conflicting loyalties within beneficiary groups, and between dissidents and protagonists of the plan, who orient themselves on the basis of certain 'landmarks' in the planning stages from which there seems no turning back. Undoing planned resettlement pathways implies a painful rejection of the entire process as invalid, which in turn creates a space of accusations, rumours and damage to reputations for those leaders invested in the planning process. A second dimension, following Nuijten (2003), will be discussed in terms of the relationship to the state and how the developmental state has become a 'hope-generating machine' that seems to inspire multiple solutions and offers new openings to land claimants (see also Van Leynseele 2013). Political representatives and officials from the Department of Agriculture visited Kranspoort bringing a competing vision of large-scale agricultural development that contrasted with the formal planning trajectory and its 'sustainable settlement' ideal. The alternative hinges on the characteristic territorialization that supports the development of land reform beneficiaries into so-called 'emerging farmers' and their lands into commoditized farms. The ideal posits the developmental state as the promoter of mechanized, intensive farming according to dominant ideas of farm viability (Cousins and Scoones 2010) and informed by a discourse in which land access for Africans should create rural employment. In the following section, I will first suggest an analytical framework for Kranspoort's 'entangled landscape' (Moore 2005). The remainder of the chapter discusses different moments of place-making. Attention is paid to the manner in which Kranspoort has been linked to multiple policy spaces by its leadership that actively seeks out linkages to investors, planners, service providers and state officials in a bid to ground their land claim and move from virtuality to materiality. The analysis will shed light on the manner in which the state – far from acting from a dominant unitary logic and promoting a dominant territorialization – provides multiple and contrasting development trajectories for restitution claimants.

Territorialization, Mentorship and Entanglement

Recent research on territorialization and environmentalism has shed light on the way articulations of place tie local groups to supra-local policy communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements (Escobar 2001; Zimmerer and Bassett 2003). These approaches, often brought under the header of political ecology, imply the 'opening up' of the locality towards looking for the linkages between different political and social spaces and geographical sites. The implied co-production of meaning across various actor groups and social sites problematizes readings of the subject as fully enclosed or essentialist and opens up the exciting prospect of a more relational space, which in turn breaks with earlier conceptualizations of cultural landscapes and social relationships as localized and place-bound. Whereas such approaches to territorialization have proved very insightful to

understanding how government is fragmented and may exclude people from landscapes through scientific technologies, they tend to problematically focus on a unitary logic of state or struggles between centralizing (capitalist/environmentalist) forces versus indigenous life-worlds. Social action is then placed within a dual scope of either wholesome endorsement of a dominant discourse (the 'governed' who discipline themselves) or forms of resistance that challenge hegemonic designs.

In this conceptualization of social action it is important to distinguish between abstract articulations by scientific- and policy communities and the more localized forms of place-making. Articulations of the former type can be seen as taking place in what Lefebvre termed 'mental space', which implies the 'logical and formal abstractions' of expert communities projected onto landscapes in attempts to promote certain regimes of management' (Lefebvre 1991: 11). These abstractions can delimit the field of social action in the case when state officials or private consultants attempt to 'rationalize' land-use practices with the use of technologies like bureaucratic procedures, legislation and bioregional planning.

The practical and analytical problem with these attempts at territorializationis located in the idea of 'abstract space' that can be up-scaled and down-scaled according to scientifically-informed interventions and promises of future development. The people engaged in land-based activities and residing in these imagined territories, however, do not 'experience space as abstract…but as located, relative and varied'. Land use planning thus becomes a 'utopian fiction unachievable in practice because of how it ignores and contradicts people's lived social relationships and the histories of their interactions with the land' (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 389). In this chapter, I attempt to break with this dichotomy of centralizing discourse and emplaced, intimate and naturalized community (see chapter two). By opening up the locality to multiple logics of rule and technologies of government, we may witness an 'entangled landscape' and related 'entanglements of time, space, and nature in particular sites' (Raffles 2002: 7). Defence of place is enacted through multiple agencies, which in turn tie in different discourses and operate within different, sometimes overlapping, networks of enablement and constraint. Social action then entails actors' attempts at shaping connections to other sites and invokes the convergence of symbolic and material elements (Moore 2005). The locality thus becomes a theatre where multiple meanings, both past and contemporary, converge and where multiple geographies or territorialities meet in a particular locale. The entanglement thesis follows the aforementioned idea that interdependencies and social agency in shaping place are power-imbued and that control over discourse is a key feature in strategizing. Yet, it also sees the inherently open-ended nature of this contestation and how some articulations

may not gain traction in the sense of becoming materially enacted through forms of labour and land-use activities but rather assert themselves in more abstract or virtual terms.

In analysing the co-existence of multiple spatialities, it is important to see the South African state's implication in actively producing competing forms of post-settlement support. As explained above, it may offer claimants different pathways of development couched in contrasting ideas of sustainable development and linkages to multiple departments that, at best, are not coordinating their interventions and, at worst, are competing over resources and rural spaces. Whilst producing uncertainty, this plurality also opens up room for manoeuvre whereby claimants and other 'stakeholders' may strategically 'shop' across state departments and adjust to situational changes (see Moore 1978). Likewise, the atmosphere of competition and contestation creates fertile ground for rent-seeking behaviour by private investors and other intermediaries seeking material gain or attempting to steer territorialization efforts in accordance with their personal stake in land.

Central to understanding the arena in which this strategizing unfolds, is the trend in recent land restitution deals whereby the state actively promotes a multi-actor coordination structure – Community–Public–Private-Partnerships (CPPP). Land is transferred to communities but for development in the so-called post-settlement stages (after transfer of land), the state greatly relies on a so-called steering committee that may include government departments, private investors, consultants, land activists, service providers and local landowners. These coordination imperatives thus open up a so-called 'managerial space' in which the state and the new actors can place new demands on successful land claimants (see Chapter One). For example, the Communal Property Associations that were initially set up for managing land rights may now be involved in sanctioning decisions made by contracted consultants and monitoring land use practices in ways that conform to principles of planned development. In these spaces, entitlement is broadened from a 'right to compensation for the loss of land rights' (focusing on the beneficiary community and the ways of compensating them) to a more inclusive frame that respects the interests of third parties, who are invited in as mentors for claimant groups to assist them in areas in which the state or the claimants are deemed to lack the resources and/or knowledge. To community beneficiaries, the widening network of relations offers multiple connections, and parallel trajectories of development that may converge in a single land deal.

In this expanded field of power, an area of particular strategic importance is the codification of knowledge and the linking of community aspirations to ideas of what the land can carry (a scientific measurement) and what regional development strategy is preferred

(a political decision). In the case of Kranspoort, there was an exceptional measure of state involvement and mentorship by legal representatives in trying to set up appropriate community institutions for coordination. They typically invoked the belief that communities are vulnerable to becoming dysfunctional, may succumb to infighting and should thus adopt transparent and accountable decision-making procedures (see chapter one). The demand for classification implies codification in terms of a so-called 'legal geography' in accordance with which 'legal categories are used to construct and differentiate material spaces which, in turn, acquire a legal potency that has a direct bearing on those using and traversing such spaces' (Blomley 1994 in Hammar 2007: 246).

The second codification follows the more familiar forms of abstract and normative planning as discussed by political ecologists. Planning for development, here, functions as a boundary object based on a new relationship between humanity and the environment and sanctioned by the development plan that is arrived at through a 'consultative process' with 'the community'. The process of arriving at the plan and adhering to its scripted contours is the stuff of politics. Planning creates objectives that are not necessarily interpreted in the same way by all parties involved, in turn requiring difficult forms of mediation and translation (see Mosse 2004). Social action then unfolds as actors try to accommodate differences in interests, knowledge and access to resources, and there are moments when actors may temporarily disengage only to reappear again at a later stage (Long 2001). In this regard, planning procedures and the relations formed in the process of planning may become structuring. The format of meetings, the scientific language spoken at multi-actor steering committees and the process of becoming tied to, or partly responsible for, a particular solution defines the nature of positions.

Likewise, actors' prolonged engagement in planning may lead to structuring practices in which certain landmark achievements are reached and procedural obstacles are overcome from which there is no return for the interested parties. Spatial and social disciplining may ensue as reputations and other investments are at stake. Below we will discuss the role of the community's executive leadership as a disciplining body that has at its disposal a set of bylaws, the CPA constitution and records of 'community resolutions' (the minutes of meetings) which may be used to drown out dissident voices. Lest we make the mistake of viewing this room for manoeuvre merely in terms of volunteerism and human agency, it should be stressed that the openness and porosity of such networks – and the ease with which community partners can unexpectedly retreat from participation – create accommodating and fear-laden coordination strategies by claimant leaders which are

informed by the anxiety that community projects will be rendered un-implementable without the promised external support.

The Land Claims Court and the 'Current use of the Land'

As explained in the previous chapter, the claimant group of 125 households was acknowledged as a 'community' with a right to resettle at Kranspoort. After the land claim was submitted in 1995 under the Restitution of Land Rights Act, it finally went to the Land Claims Court (LCC) after its validity was disputed by the Dutch Reformed Church (still the nominal owners). Chapter 2 elaborates how this court endorsed a symbolic sense of belonging, which was constructed around the elderly claimants' romanticized vision of 'Mother Kranspoort'. The land claimants and their legal aids from the Legal Resource Centre insisted on being compensated in full: a restoration of ownership to the newly formed community and the right to physically resettle at Kranspoort. Both demands were met by the Land Claims Court. The requirements for restoring the land to the Kranspoortians stipulated that they had to form a community property institution called the Communal Property Association (CPA) to hold the land and manage collective land rights.

The role of the Land Claims Court, however, did not end there. At the time the Kranspoort land claim was disputed in court, new insights had entered the national debate on the restitution of land to communities. Reports of failing land reform initiatives prompted government to adopt spatial planning processes steeped in notions of viability and sustainability.

Nationally, the debate raged over the limited success of land restitution in achieving official targets such as the redistribution of 30 per cent of all agricultural land to non-whites by 2015. The need for speed was accompanied by a drastic reorganization of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) in the 1999 election year. Then Minister of Land Affairs, Derek Hanekom, deemed to be too theoretical and not sufficiently focused on delivery, was replaced and the new Minister, Thoko Didiza, vowed to follow a more pragmatic course. A new so-called administrative route was heralded which gave more powers to the settlement of claims by the nine regional offices of the CRLR, the Regional Land Claims Commissions. The Land Claims Court's role changed in the process: whereas it initially had to assess the validity of all land restitution claims, it now would be the last stop in the event of a claim being disputed by landowners (Walker 2008: 6). Moreover, the mandate of these regional commissions was expanded to include so-called 'post-settlement', that is, the stage after land is transferred. This meant that land restitution officials would play a more active role in ensuring that their clients were not simply 'dumped' on the land but

would be supported and mentored towards sustainable and economically-viable land use (Van Leynseele and Hebinck 2009).

The Kranspoort Land Claims Court hearings mirror the debate on viability and commitment to post-settlement planning stages. Concerns over project viability were duly echoed in the 1999 Kranspoort court ruling. In it, the judges quote a paper by du Toit (1999: 14-15) to explain the contrasting euphoria of winnig a land claim with the realities and practicalities of the post-settlement situation:

> The moment of the realisation of the implications of returning is of course potentially an immensely fruitful one. It can be the moment at which reality, however painful it is, is accepted, and at which a more modest, more grounded process of decision making can start on new terrain…Negotiating this transition requires forms of practice – and forms of support – which have not thus far been made available to claimants or implementers.

Critically, the ruling calls for a 'sense of realism' among claimants, which comes with owning and managing communal resources. The 'grounded process of decision making' implies forms of collaboration and practical work. The transition in turn involves rethinking the communal asset: from embodying symbolic meaning, as a place of belonging (part of claim validation process), towards being a physical resource that has to be worked with labour and local management (part of the post-settlement process).

From the court transcription we can get an impression of how this 'realisation' was played out between the applicant (Kranspoort community), the two judges and the defendants (the Dutch Reformed Church). All three community members called to the witness stand were interrogated by the court on the specifics of their plans should they win the claim and resettle. An instructive passage from one such interrogation highlights the judge's concern with the viability of their future plans in the event that the land is restored. Judge Moloto interrogates one of the claimants, Mr Tau:[2]

> Moloto: If this Court were to say you must get back to your land, what do you as a community propose to do when you get back?

> Tau: I would like to go back to that land to make it more beautiful as we are now educated…We want to develop that place. We want to get the education going and we want to make that place good in tourism. And we want modernize that place. We want to attract people.

> Moloto: I understand that Mr Tau. Those are very beautiful words you are using. Do you have plans that will be put before this court to say this is how we are going to go about promoting education and developing, modernising and encouraging tourism?

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[2] Transcriptions LCC 28/96, held at Randburg on 29 July and on 20 and 21 September 1999, Transcription by True Recall

Tau: Yes, there are many.

Moloto: Many what?

Tau: We will get experienced farmers for guidance. We will also get planners and even there at the mountains we will need architects who can help us. Maybe they can get a mine there at Soutpansberg [mountain]. We can even build schools there for the disabled pupils.

Moloto: Mr Tau, my question initially was: do you already have plans?

Tau: We do have such a thing. Even though it is not with me, but when we are talking about such things we were making some drawings to see what we can do…If we can meet together I just do not know how long can it take us, but we can bring some ideas out together.

The historically-sedimented version of Kranspoort as a place of education, cattle, mangoes and orderly yards was effectively challenged in court, and with it, the popular belief among claimants that they could 'resettle first and then develop' (Chapter Two) was rendered bankrupt. Militating against this was also the fact that in intervening years between forced removal and the court hearings, Kranspoort had attained a new meaning and its status as agricultural land was open to interpretation. Arguing against the resettlement on the basis of the current land use, the Dutch Reformed Church in Court had submitted a document by a local ecologist indicating that the greater area in which Kranspoort falls was part of the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy – an area of approximately 40,000 hectares of privately-owned land administered by its owners. The report also suggested that the northern portion of the farm would be suitable for incorporation in the prospective Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, the application of which was in the process of being approved by UNESCO (Chapter Four). Couched in the language of 'modern conservation' (as the antithesis of the problematic South African 'fortress conservation' demonstrating that 'South Africa ha[d] entered a new socio-political era'), the document refers to the uniqueness of Kranspoort as a site for cultural- and eco-tourism and conjures up the image of a sensitive environment that could not support the resettlement of 125 claimant families.[3]

Invoked as a defence of place and maintenance of the status quo, the progressive language of the ecologist presented an altogether different prospect to the judges. The judges reversed the negativity associated with destructive land uses by rural communities and invoked a dialectic between restorative justice and sustainable development; if it was part of the modern, post-apartheid approach to preservation of cultural- and natural heritage to include communities, then surely the Kranspoort community could be co-opted into becoming active participants in sustainable resettlement. This rearticulation also

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[3] 'The Western Soutpansberg Conservancy: Towards a Proposed Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy', p. 48. Unpublished report compiled by the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy Group, May 1998

reminds us that although Kranspoort farm in the pre-dispossession era was designated for commercial agriculture, it has now become the site of multiple, overlapping spatial frameworks and land uses. This is due to wider developments in the region and also to the fact that Kranspoort itself, in the intervening years between dispossession and reclamation, had been opened up to different uses. For example, in order to make the farm more viable in the early 1970s, a designated management team overseeing its development (consisting of members from the Dutch Reformed Church and its 'African branch' the Uniting Church in Africa) had built dormitories with 160 beds to accommodate white, urban children in so-called youth camps (*jeugkampterrein*). A 1987 assessment of the farm assets by the Church further shows that the then nature conservation department had been researching the possibilities of establishing part of the Soutpansberg as protected area and had indicated that if proclamation were feasible 'it would like to fence the northern portion of the farm (at its expense) and restock it with wildlife that used to be found there (my translation)'.[4] Together with the ecologist's report that stated that all land 1,000 m above sea level was 'environmentally sensitive' and would for its species occurrence and habitat biodiversity be suited for becoming part of the Conservancy, the judges accepted that the Northern portion of the farm was indeed part of a – albeit not yet officially proclaimed– conservation area.

This revalorization of Kranspoort in turn convinced the court that a rigorous planning process was required. It ordered that a 'suitable plan for the commencement of the development and use of the farm' be drawn up by contracted consultants and appointed an assessor to evaluate the development plan. In this the court set yet another precedent. The ruling has since been regarded as ground-breaking in terms of committing the state to post-settlement support and the idea that environmental justice and restorative justice can be married by 'ensuring' that resettled communities are presented with viable and sustainable land deals in accordance with the promise that future generations will also be able to benefit from it (cf. Feris 2008; Dodson 2007). It also challenged the widely-held belief that land reform and nature conservation were rival strategies that could not be wedded (cf. Spierenburg, Steenkamp and Wels 2008).

At the same time the ruling showed evidence of a strong reliance on planning as a way to bridge the seemingly irreconcilable demands of nature conservation and resettlement. Such experimental planning provided focus, cementing the current status quo of the land as conservation area (a public good), and generated the excitement of planning for a new,

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[4] 'Verslag: Agenda Sinodale Komissie – 20 Maart 1987', 'Kranspoortsendingterrein', J.A. Lombard, 24 February 1987, Unpublished report, DRC archives, Stellenbosch

precedent-setting resettlement model. It also meant that Kranspoort would be abstracted away from the scale where property boundaries matter and communities are geographically located in discrete places, to emergent landscapes of conservation. According to this new configuration, neighbouring landowners were automatically implicated as 'interested parties' and 'stakeholders' given that they now shared the same territory.

The court transcripts show how the conservation option had not occurred to Mr Serumula in the witness stand. In following the open-ended script, we see that he was prepared to consider it if passed through the proper community structures. In cross-examination the DRC lawyer had read aloud the scientific report's allusion to the vulnerability of the area and how 'all future uses within the area should be aimed at enhancing the area, so as to improve and extend its attractiveness'. Serumula duly picked up on the latter in elaborating a historicised view of attractiveness: 'You know when we were still at Kranspoort, there were trees there in our yards, that place was beautiful, and even the streets there, and if the map, the aerial map, was taken before the houses were broken, you would have seen it'. When further interrogated around the preparedness to adopt 'these principles mentioned by Professor Dyker [not his real name]', he assertively responded 'You are mentioning those things, those principles, in our absence. If he did it in our presence, we would follow that principles'. The statement betrays the belief that the community was willing to listen to new ideas but that the power to decide on land use was vested in the community.

The Dual strategy and the Emergent Community–Public–Private Partnership

To the sceptical judges, endowing the Kranspoort claimants with a 'sense of realism' involved imposing the conditions of a sustainable development plan. The move implied expert-defined conceptualizations of 'appropriate land use'. The plan would go through two versions, with the first rejected by the court's assessor for being too 'theoretical'. Finally the settlement plan was 'finalised' in 2003 as shall be discussed below. The court also sanctioned coordination activities between the recent Kranspoort Communal Property Association (KCPA) and 'external agencies' such as neighbouring private landowners, consultants hired to develop the plans and miscellaneous government departments. This rationalisation demand thus opened the door to a range of actors and agencies who would attempt to balance the divergent objectives of conservation and re-establishing a settlement.

The introduction of what was called a 'new language of conservation' by the protagonists implied that regulation would have to be internalized by the new landowners (Arce 2003)

and a second round of capacity building and 'work-shopping' would be required to get the community leadership on board. Unsurprisingly, it built on the established Kranspoort Communal Property Association (KCPA), whose leadership had been earmarked as efficient and responsive to the preservation option and 'accountable' decision-making (Chapter Two). Mentorship was modelled around a Community-Public-Private Partnership or steering committee. In setting it up, the lawyers and staff of the Legal Resource Centre (LRC) that had assisted the claimants played a crucial role. Extensive networking unfolded with the idea of committing various stakeholders to the project. The net was cast very widely; at this stage, when planning had not been consolidated, Kranspoort appeared a very porous site for precedent-setting and comprehensive visions. Well-wishing dignitaries visited the settlement celebrations in March 2002 and promised their commitment to this rare case of success. At the forefront stood the provincial MEC, Mr Motsoaledi, who had taken up the baton of land reform and addressed the crowd on this occasion. Although he endorsed a somewhat different vision of development – the route to agricultural intensification and development of 'emergent farmers'– he ensured support from the Municipal Department of Agriculture and prioritized Kranspoort for a so-called 'starter pack' (including a tractor and trailer) to support the community's transformation into productive farmers (see Figure 3.1). Local traditional leaders with overlapping land claims on the territory also visited the celebrations, smoothing over relations that had tensed with the success of Kranspoort's non-tribal land claim. The connectedness at this stage did not extend to the neighbouring landowners. The varied options for community support in recapitalizing the farm and setting up projects were picked up by the LRC community mentors through this transition period.

Figure 3.1 Washing the community tractor prior to a CPA-meeting with government officials

They pushed for pursuing a dual strategy; the emergent developmental state would be called upon to implement the pending settlement plan but the supervisors would also look outside the state for support. In the early stages, the strongest prospect for state support was envisioned in terms of having Kranspoort adopted into the so-called municipal IDP (Integrated Development Planning) for low-cost housing grants. A second possibility regarded the use of the 'Discretionary Grant' from the restitution programme (measured at R 1,440 per beneficiary household) for appointing an on-farm manager whilst the resettlement planning unfolded. A 2001 'status report' by the LRC for the KCPA and other interested parties, however, also suggests exploring private funding options by joining the Conservancy's network. The report states that 'the second path is to work with the Soutpansberg conservancy and Food and Trees for Africa [an NGO with ties to the conservancy] to form a coalition and come up with a holistic concept for the community and help to create an environmental village with emphasis on conservation and tourism'.[5] The latter option would, however, require a set of 'completely new variables' and a professionalization of farm management. Compared with the state route, more rigid demands on community compliance would apply: the observation that 'funding from private organizations requires that a strong committed leadership is in place to implement proposed plans' reflects. At this juncture, that meant that an NGO or a hired project manager committed to working with the community for the next couple of years was necessary if the CPA executives could not successfully take on that role'.[6] LRC staff recommended the privatization route, given that it was foreseen that the municipal IDP process was problematic in terms of limited funding and having Kranspoort prioritized (funding priorities were set once every five years and the upcoming planning was due soon). Early contacts with government officials had not been promising but all possibilities would nonetheless be explored.

November 2001 to April 2002 was a particularly productive period of forming linkages, driven by a foreign intern of the LRC who was managing the coordination between community and prospective investors. She feverishly wrote various applications for support to numerous state Departments with an interest in post-settlement. An overview of these networking efforts (entitled 'Kranspoort Community Funding and Other Assistance Options') lists an impressive array of National, Provincial and Municipal Departments. It includes likely candidates such as the Department of Housing, Public Works, Land Affairs, Labour, Trade and Industry but also Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the Mayor of neighbouring Makhado town and parastatals like the Council for Scientific and Industrial

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[5] 'Kranspoort Settlement Progress Report 1', unpublished report LRC, 6 December 2001, p. 13
[6] Ibid.

Research. Funding requests written in the name of the 'Kranspoort community'contained some standard features invoking the community's commitment and functional status (e.g. 'Now the community is working hard to make their settlement a success through careful planning and productive land use'), an emotive and moral appeal to support restorative justice (e.g. 'Land restitution is one of the most important issues at the forefront of South Africans consciousness today') and its precedent-setting potential (e.g. 'With resources and assistance, we believe that a [replicable] model for successful resettlement can be developed and proven'). It was also a time of unbridled optimism and seemingly endless possibilities. Most indicative perhaps of the optimistic attitude, lack of formal support and apparent boundless appeal of restitution projects, was the adventurous application for R 4 million to the National Lottery Fund, aimed at developing a museum for remembering the mission's cultural heritage.

Whereas these ties to forms of state support were falling on deaf ears, an important private actor to emerge was Etienne (not his real name), a former town planner from Johannesburg, the president of the local Nature Conservancy and owner and proprietor of a wilderness retreat some 20 km from Kranspoort. In the next chapter we will follow his route to becoming a key regional protagonist of community-oriented nature conservation and chairman of the recently established Biosphere Reserve. He brought a network of his own and proposed to apply for USAID (United States Agency for International Development) funding and use the grant for bankrolling a new 'Sustainable Resettlement Plan' and developing a number of so-called 'demonstration projects'. At meetings with the executive committee of KCPA he presented the conditions for grant approval and drew in NGO contacts from his extensive network who could act as consultants in drawing up the plans. Now featuring the name of Etienne and the Soutpansberg Conservancy as co-applicant, this approval was granted, albeit for a lesser sum than initially applied for.

It is interesting to note that the distance from the community these intermediary structures created was strategic in that it aimed to assuage wariness from funders dealing with 'complex communities'. It reflects the extensive experience of the co-applicant who in the capacity of planner and developer had previously won several large tenders for city development. It also informed the creation of a leaner community institution for settlement development. In organograms on subsequent applications and planning documents, a new body community or legal entity appears directly above the KCPA. This so-called 'Kranspoort Development Trust' consists of five community leaders from KCPA and two other members (the town planner and a district municipality representative) and would act as a liaison with external parties with an interest in nature conservation. Setting up this Trust with its own

bank account was a precondition for the USAID to release funds. Although KCPA had its own bank account, it had not managed to produce the statutory bank statements detailing its financial affairs. The new layer also proved a welcome circumvention of lengthy and messy decision-making consistent withthe CPA model's formal procedures. . A second feat was to have Kranspoort nominally join the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy (by then it had ceased to hold joint meetings) and for Kranspoortinas effectively to become the first black landowners in this network of private landowners. In a grant application on behalf of KCPA, the conservancy, however, alluded to a more generic notion of African community. It notes the necessity of modern conservationist designs to be inclusive of 'all stakeholders' and states that 'the Conservancy has therefore taken a policy decision to actively involve the local communities'.[7]

That extensive involvement of surrounding landowners – who may have had reservations regarding the community's resettlement – might be problematic did not occur to the LRC coordinators. The 2001 Progress Report regards them positively and remarks how Etienne is 'very well networked in the area and is interested in gathering together a group of experts (developers, engineers, designers, etc.) to work on this' [the resettlement].[8] When asked about the risks of this mentorship, the then coordinator explained in a 2010 interview that it posed no threat:

> The serious planning process was definitely not done at that stage. It still has not been done in the way that I think post-settlement support and the planning process for settling on the land is supposed to be done. I don't think, there's nothing that has happened up till now, but everyone running around at the meeting, trying to protect their interests, I don't think a lot of that. As long as, it's my important thing, that everyone gets used to the idea that it's the land of Kranspoort community. They will make the decisions. If the service providers and white farmers can come and make input or proposals or whatever, it's fine. Let them do it. But I think more important is that those neighbours of the Kranspoort people get used to the idea that they are not going to tell Kranspoort what to do. They can come and advise but it's up to the Kranspoort community to take that advice.[9]

The quote invokes the conviction that land ownership takes precedence and that process ownership poses no threat since the community would still maintain control over decision-making – a view in keeping with Serumula's assertion in court. Her response actually reverses this danger by stating that such encounters could be seen as 'invited spaces' over which the community has full control and that workshops with surrounding landowners could help to sensitize surrounding landowners, could facilitate acceptance of

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[7] 'Kranspoort Community: Land Restitution, Preservation and Sustenance Project, Response to Request for Demonstration Project Proposals by Republic of South Africa, Department of Enviromental Affairs and Tourism and UA Agency for International Development', unpublished report prepared by the Kranspoort Community in collaboration with the Soutpansberg Conservancy, January 2002, p. 10

[8] Kranspoort Settlement Progress Report 1, unpublished consultancy report, LRC, 6 December 2001

[9] Interview L. du Plessis, 21 Janurary 2010

the fact that the community has come to stay for good. We shall see below that the solidity of the land claim and community assertiveness was seen as something not so secure by the claimant leadership. Its control over the land relied greatly on a more material enactment; having the buildings and crops to prove an actual presence. Before discussing this struggle, attention is first paid to the type of planning that emerged from the new partnership.

Enacting Environmentalism

The partnership with the conservancy was cemented when the USAID grant (US$ 42,000) came through in 2003. It was partly a disappointment, given that the amount of funding limited the scope of ambition. The applicant (initially listed as the 'Kranspoort Community in collaboration with the Soutpansberg Conservancy' but finally as the newly-established 'Kranspoort Development Trust') had submitted a proposal in order to fund the costs for various consultancies (including drawing up the settlement plan and various 'sustainable' community projects); the appointment of an on-site manager to oversee the implementation; and the construction of one ecological house to demonstrate thefuture resettlement in a more tangible way that all claimants could relate to. Now the key deliverable was limited to delivering 'a detailed overall and site development plan'that consisted of four components: an integrated settlement plan to be submitted in terms of the Development Facilitation Act (required for approving the settlement); an environmental scan to assess the possible future land uses (which entitled an 'engineering analysis on the availability, quantity, and quality of water'); a socio-economic profile of the community; and business plans for a number of 'demonstration projects' that were compatible with the plan's overall agro-ecological orientation.[10] The applicants envisioned that the uniqueness of the project could become a model for future land restitution projects and, given its special status, also foster interest from investors or the state.

The development planning 'rationally' follows the given natural resource endowment and the practicalities of delivering basic infrastructural- and household services. The final report brought these consultancies together under the heading 'Sustainable Integrated Development Plan' and was finally delivered in 2005 with a view to having it formally approved in a Tribunal Hearing a year later. It aims to develop an 'eco-village': a concentrated settlement of 192 plots aiming for a minimal ecological footprint and where ecologically-sensitive building techniques and other 'appropriate technologies' would be applied (including wind- and solar energy, biogas and composting toilets). Justifying the redirection of livelihoods away from agricultural aspirations, we find projections like these in the 1998 Conservancy

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[10] USAID grant approved 18 July 2003 (1 year); letter GMAC Grant Agreement 'Land Restitution, Preservation and Sustenance Project' (ref 0051-0403-G-GA20)

document (the one admitted in court) in which it is argued that 'Conservation, together with eco-tourism in the Soutpansberg, can create 0.162 jobs per hectare (ha), while grazing can only provide 0.003 jobs per ha (1 job per 500 ha)'.[11] The final plan defined a number of income-generating community projects that set out to employ 50-70 per cent of the resettlement community, which was now being classified as largely poor (76 per cent earning less than R 4,000).[12] These were in line with a general expectation that community-oriented eco-tourism held great potential for the farm and region (hiking trails would be developed). It also included a range of agro-ecological projects (e.g. medicinal plants, beekeeping, herb farming, foliage production and free-ranging poultry) for which there were no feasibility exemplary of what could be achieved with the right instruction and community commitment. studies and that had not been tried yet on such a scale but which were presented as

In anticipation of the lack of financial support for the non-standard housing project with an 'eclectic' architectural style inspired by traditional African *rondavel* huts, the plan envisioned that homes would be built by the claimants themselves (they would largely draw on local resources) and use communal working parties (see Figure 3.2).[13] It was anticipated (pending additional funding) that next to the new community centre, project funders could erect one dwelling in this style and contracted constructors would then workshop particular community members who in turn would train the rest of the community. The village layout would be circular in order to encourage more social interaction thereby facilitating the rebuilding of the community. With socio-spatial referents of circularity and tribal connotations it differed radically from the tin roofs and grid-like settlement that had marked Christian life at the mission.

Costs could be kept low given that building materials would be sourced largely from the local environment. The demonstration project aimed to make tangible and visible the new model to the resettling community and would act as a replicable model for other local communities who needed reassurance about the feasibility of the plan by seeing one in real-life. Once established, the village could generate income by at tracting visitors and non-resident community members could rent out their homes to eco-

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[11] 'The Western Soutpansberg Conservancy: Towards a Proposed Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy', Reportcompiled by the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy Group and drafted by John Rosmarin, Dr Ian Gaigher and Norbert Hahn, May 1998, p. 50

[12] 'Kranspoort Community: Land Restitution, Preservation and Sustenance Project, Response to Request for Demonstration Project Proposals by Republic of South Africa, Department of Enviromental Affairs and Tourism and UA Agency for International Development', unpublished report prepared by the Kranspoort Community in collaboration with the Southpansberg Conservancy, January 2002, p. 4

[13] Sustainable Integrated Development Plan. Kranspoort Restitution Project: USAID, consultancy report prepared by VUKA Planning Africa Inc., January 2005

tourists. An extract from the 'Socio-economic profile of the Kranspoort community' which was drawn up by a medical sociologist who owned the mountain property upstream from Kranspoort, explains the demonstration principle and the related concept of 'sustainable living':

> People are in favour of the idea of living in an eco-village, or about the advantage of having a cultural village for tourism, but they first want to see what it looks like. It is therefore necessary that a demonstration model be built so that people can then decide for themselves whether they would like to stay in such houses. An eco-village brings with it sustainable living through social cohesion. People need to be informed about the advantages of living in an eco-village: that they will be more healthy because they breathe clean air, drink clean water, eat organic food and live in houses which protect against climatic extremes. At the moment all of these are foreign concepts to the majority of people. (Gaigher 2003: 22-23)

The quote also hints at how the socio-economic profile was biased towards the elderly and the consultant's personal orientation on health care. Although the ninety-two respondents that had been interviewed were mostly elderly claimants, the study extrapolated the number of returnees to 600 people by asking respondents which family members would join them there. The total population with an interest in returning showed a 'youthful profile' with an average of thirty-five years, and 122 returnees being under the age of nineteen. Yet, in capturing their residential preferences, the study presented an idea that most of the returnees, the designated plot-holders, would only reside there on a 'semi-permanent' basis (77 per cent of respondents had indicated this) and rather visit Kranspoort occasionally as sojourners. The conclusion obviously ties in well with the pres-ervationist goal of minimizing environmental impact. It also corresponds with the practical aspirations of the urbanized group of claimants and follows the urban and pensioner bias in the KCPA leadership (Chapter Two).

Other arguments tied in with the delimitation of the scope of settlement and land use. The environmental scoping had shown weak water sources on the farm due to one of the two boreholes having fallen into disrepair. Permission to extract irrigation water from the stream, if done properly, would have to be applied for by the Department of Water Affairs. The planning also solidified servitudes that were attached to the property in the years after the claimants had been removed. Water rights had been altered in these intervening years with Kranspoort now having access to one-third of the flows from the Kutetsha stream. Recent legislation also meant that no more boreholes could be sunk or dams could be erected, a fact that seemed unjust to the former farm manager of Kranspoort given that neighbouring landowners had recently done this in the years after state control was suspended in 1990. Limitations on grazing that had featured in the will of the Hofmeyr missionary of 1906 which had been formalized in a 1985 court ruling following a conflict between the Hofmeyr family estate and the Dutch Reformed Church, were also included

in the planning and the KCPA grazing policy. It held that no more than 100 head of cattle ('large stock units') could graze on the farm at any time, inscribing a stocking rate that relied on past ideas about natural endowment without considering changing and various new possibilities in cattle or range management (cf. Turner 2003). The planning also meant that the Soutpansberg Conservancy and Vhembe Biosphere Reserve became spatially and conceptually integratedeven though the former did not have a formal status as protected and the latter was in the process of application. A boundary now appears on planning documents, reserving the northern portion of the farm for conservation where only eco-tourism activities are allowed to take place.

The consultancy with its measurements of social development and environmental carrying capacity thus emphasized scarcity, which was alien to most elderly claimants who associated Kranspoort with abundance. By rationally following Kranspoort's natural resource endowment in delivering basic infrastructural- and household services to an ageing population, the agricultural aspirations of the community were rendered 'unrealistic'

Figure 3.2 Village outlay with 'Eclectic housing' style from development plan

and scientifically discredited. In this regard, the plan's identification of suitable land use based on the land's 'objective qualities' and carrying capacity, performed two erasures: the practices of planning itself, and the histories of place and the past experiences of actually dwelling in place (see Chapter Two). Planning was also performed in more legalistic terms whereby the plans codified and enacted a set of limitations in the form of bureaucratically-legible maps and land-use plans, a powerful language Hughes (2005) has described in terms of 'cadastral politics'. It was accepted as the formal settlement plan at a 2006 Tribunal Hearing (in terms of the Development Facilitation Act).

The actual management of the farm was to be carried out by professional, contracted parties during a transition period until the community was deemed fit to govern. The USAID grant approval letter referred to the establishment of 'an acceptable and practical institutional structure that the community can implement in order to establish capacity building and competent structure to manage the development over a longer period'.[14] According to the restitution officer acting as the project coordinator in 2007, the acceptance of the plan similarly heralded the 'implementation stage'. What was most needed during this phase was a 'service provider'; someone who could supervise planning and ensure that the responsibilities of the various interested parties did not overlap, and that each kept their promises of delivery.

Effectuating implementation required forms of private funding and state support that had not yet been forthcoming. In this respect, it will become clear that its explicit ambition to be a precedent-setting model, at once an opportunity and constraint, created a virtual edifice of planning.

According to some planning projections its completion required additional support of around R 20 million. Tentative relations and off-the-cuff promises of external assistance would have to be secured and an exceptional measure of political capital drawn upon to have this experimental model bankrolled by an overstretched municipality and district government, which in any event would have to lay down the basic infrastructure and cut the stands. It is in this regard that this researcher often pondered whether the planners themselves were convinced of the viability of the plan. Needless to say, such doubts were vehemently denied. The responsible consultant assured me that he had designed similar eco-village projects in Mpumulanga Province (including Shangana cultural village) for which he had found private financiers to bankroll the eco- and cultural components. From the

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[14] Grant approval letter USAID letter GMAC Grant Agreement 'Land Restitution, Preservation and Sustenance Project' (ref 0051-0403-G-GA20)

perspective of the responsible land restitution official, an adequate measure of landscape-appropriate planning – so often lacking in post-settlement support – had at least taken place which circumvented the danger of the community 'going at it alone'. This condition is captured well in Barry's (2011: 149) assessment of the Elandskloof restitution 'failure' and the importance of careful planning for resettlement to ensure a 'common [community] purpose and commitment'. He lists the need for: 'Steering committees, in depth feasibility studies, land carrying capacity and economic potential, wide ranging consultation, and plans submitted by a number of government agencies to ensure that development plans complied with existing planning laws' (ibid.).

A Knotted Partnership

It would appear from the above that the Kranspoort CPA was powerless and succumbed to cunning white landowners who strategically appropriated the managerial space afforded them by the state and LRC coordinators. This dispossession thesis however proved more complex. The prolonged planning process of five years implicated the community leadership and, to a lesser extent, some of the rank-and-file members. Community buy-into the process of 'sustainable living' would involve more mentorship and interdependence with consultants through 'work-shopping' but there were also moments the community leaders could feel they had ownership over the process. The KCPA minutes of the period 2001-2005 show how its meetings also functioned as a stage for potential investors or developers to present their plans. Not only did this impart a sense of ownership and legitimacy to the planning process, it simultaneously underlined the necessity for sourcing an eternal project manager to coordinate the growing network and assume on-site management in order to make the project an attractive investment opportunity for private funders. Often these visitors were drawn from the network of the conservancy, as was the case with the neighbouring landowner and herb specialist who could be contracted for work-shopping the community. Another consultant, sourced through community ties, presented his credentials for assisting the community in starting a snake farm. The consultants to be hired with the USAID funding also followed suit as three different parties presented their suitability for designing a community-sensitive plan. The procedure strongly resembles the established tendering process whereby the community seemed to replace government officials in selecting the right candidate for the job.

The latter selection process offers insight into the scope of community agency in the emergent partnership. Three bidders emerged as candidates for managing the fund and developing the settlement plan. A BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) candidate was brought forward by the Secretary of the KCPA who stressed compliance with state

procedures in giving preference to African business and sourcing local or provincial businesses. The second candidate was the president of the Conservancy who had worked as a successful town and regional planner and was by then known to the KCPA. Thirdly, there was a reputable planning agency VUKA that had its offices in Pretoria and with which the chairperson of the KCPA maintained contact. Each made their case before the KCPA. The Conservancy chairman was disqualified during internal discussions due to the general unease that was felt as a result of his 'moving too fast' (i.e. not following community protocol) as the chairperson put it. Despite an emotive letter to the secretary in which he discredited the remaining candidate as unprofessional and conspiring against him ('It is clear that they have a hidden agenda to avoid me'), reminded the community that he was the first one to inform them of the grant, and expressed his commitment to the process, he was relegated to fulfilling the role of future 'strategic advisor' through the Development Trust. Ndivho, the BEE candidate with a local office, was deemed to be more suited as actual farm manager in later stages of implementation. In finding the middle ground, the community leadership itself could rehearse its planning skills by organizing the first and hitherto only tourist event to be hosted at Kranspoort: the viewing of the lunar eclipse in December 2002. They were to play no further role after organizing this event.

VUKA emerged as most suitable and, under the terms of the grant, would effectively replace the LRC mentors by fulfilling the functions of 'Financial Management, Procurement, Administrative Assistance, project Planning and management, Fund Sourcing and Proposal Preparations and Community Facilitation'. Some KCPA executives and members believed that this appointment reflected the interests of the urbanized branches from Gauteng province (Johannesburg and Mamelodi) who, through their proximity, could maintain relations and influence outcomes. The chairman, however, preferred to invoke the state's role and felt that restitution officials had pushed this candidate upon them. Irrespective of the accuracy of the opposing views, in the coming years the chairperson would maintain close ties with the VUKA manager, dropping by regularly at the main office for updates. At executive committee meetings he would vehemently defend the plan and would reiterate how the community had reached a 'resolution', consensus on the plan, and that there was no possibility of reversal. Some critical events or benchmarks supported this endorsement and, with the formalization of the plan, an increasing number of policies were drafted that cemented these decisions. The detailed minute-keeping by the leadership further registered these moments, in turn working against potential assaults by dissidents who could be referred to the minutes and the consensual decision-making.

Most notably, there was the timely 2006 Tribunal Hearing at Kranspoort church when the plan for the new settlement was formally approved. It took place in front of a selected committee of government officials who scrutinized the plan, well-wishers from the municipality who typically promised future support, and a lone white farmer protesting on behalf of the down-stream landowner. The hearing intended to have the land designation changed from agricultural use to township development, and nominally paved the way for the demarcation of residential stands and other land zonation. This procedure also circumvented the requirement to conduct an expensive and elaborate Environmental Impact Assessment prior to change of land use. The argument used at the hearing was that of urgency to resettle as the officials of the tribunal agreed with the consultant when the latter stated that the community had suffered enough. In a jubilant atmosphere when the plan met with approval, his assistant concluded afterwards that it had been an 'emotional decision' and not reflective of the usual amount of careful planning. Likewise, an official from the municipal Department of Housing, who was in attendance, later stated that 'they had a nice plan there' but also added that it was not compliant with the government's Housing Code (e.g. planned residential plot sizes were too small). The event was however largely symbolic. It entailed a landmark moment whereby the community's commitment met with approval from the state and from which – in the eyes of most participants – there could be no withdrawal.

The event also heralded more rounds of unsuccessful applications that strained relations in the CPPP. The manner in which communication with the various stakeholders proceeded bears testimony to the antagonism and the openness of the partnership. For example, even after his rejection as project manager, the Conservancy chairman explained in 2007 that the KCPA secretary had recently called him for advice. He insisted that he would come back to assist the community if called upon. Territory also had to be defended against the backdrop of ambiguous responsibilities and overlapping authorities. The task of acquiring funds had fallen to VUKA. Among others, it sent out an application to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism for assistance in terms of its Poverty Relief Programme. The VUKA consultant had later sent an amendment to the proposal with a budget increase of 231 per cent for administration costs, which in turn met with rejection from the state department, stating that such an increase was 'totally unacceptable'. In trying to salvage the situation the Secretary of KCPA, having been kept informed of all submissions, then suggested that VUKA had acted on its own and that proper consultation had not taken place. The consultant responded in no uncertain terms that he had indeed worked through the chairman:

> We would like to point out that the amendment of the Business Plan was consulted, communicated, and discussed with Mr. E. Serumula [the KCPA chairman] with the understanding that he will liaise with the executive members and inform them of the process. We are however surprised to have received the said letter outlining that VUKA has not consulted or agreed with the community of the process to be followed. In view of the above, we request you to rectify the statement and position of Vuka to the Director General [of the Environmental Affairs Department]. In addition, we have a written contract with the KCPA and Trust [the Kranspoort Development Trust] to act in favour and on your behalf, and therefore request all future correspondence to be forwarded to ourselves for scrutiny and approval.[15]

The response illustrates recourse taken in procedural compliance in the face of competing interests. In fact, the community's internal decision-making was fast becoming a site of similar claims to due formal process. The previous chapter indicated that a CPA Constitution had been drawn up and that legal representatives from the Legal Resources Centre had given approval that this community was functional and committed. Disciplining worked through reference to the constitution and other documents. A typical incidence occurred in 2007, the second year of my fieldwork. I had arranged a meeting through the CPA secretary with the intention of getting all 'stakeholders' around the table so as to obtain clarity on the respective roles that seemed to overlap in important areas. The meeting failed spectacularly in its intention due to some key role players, notably from the Regional Land Claims Commission and the consultant, not showing up. Here I and two fellow organizers from Wageningen University were also privy to some of the assertiveness and disciplining a failure to comply with established (albeit non-consensual) rules of community decision-making could elicit.

Most embarrassingly, we had breached 'community policies'. A group around the chairman stated that since it was a community meeting, it was wrong for us to host the meeting, despite our having announced our intentions at an earlier meeting and having the Secretary customarily announce the date and format. The location of the meeting – Kranspoort Church – seemed to make all the difference. As noted by one of the Johannesburg members 'if people were to come in this church they would think that the CPA has been hijacked by foreign people and that we have effectively surrendered our sovereignty'.

After all the visitors (including me) had left the church, it was agreed that we could proceed with our presentations but that the chairman would chair the meeting. More illustrative of constitutional compliance, though, was the thwarting of my attempt to read aloud the apology from the consultant who had emailed his withdrawal the evening before. The message seemed particularly relevant at this junction because the apology seemed to

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15 Letter from VUKA to DEAT entitled 'Poverty Relief Projects: Outstanding Memorandum of Agreement, dated 23 August 2004, material in private possession

reflect the labyrinthine predicament in which they found themselves. It suggested yet more institution building and continued to promote the private funding option:

> Everything pivots around financial resources to enact the settlement process. With regards to the tourism and agriculture development initiatives, it is imperative that the KCPA and KDT [Kranspoort Development Trust] institutional/management arrangements are solid and sound…Once the community can demonstrate their support for conservation and responsible farming (bearing in mind that Kranspoort forms part of the Soutpansberg Biosphere) will it contribute to investors potential. As suggested we need to rather setup a workgroup that can deliberate and incorporate other role players and then present to Exco Member the various alternative routes for gearing financial resources and getting council to rank Kranspoort as priority and allocate funding towards the settlement and economic development thereof. Please tender our apology and advise as to when we can meet with the suggested workgroup.[16]

In trying to read the message out loud, I was cut short by the same Johannesburg member who stated that it would be inappropriate to present their view in their absence and that the consultant should communicate through the proper community channels. It must be noted that by this stage in my presentation I had alluded to a 'silent group of poorer claimants' who were underrepresented in the consultancy and had suggested to me in interviews that they proceed with resettlement of the land prior to municipal approval as a means of mobilising support (an option that municipal officials in informal conversations had also admitted could expedite the process). The presentation met with resistance from the same eloquent speaker who alluded to a decision taken at the last executive committee meeting four months earlier:

> We took a decision that we are not going to rush into settlement if we don't have the ability to develop the land sustainably. The last meeting with Ms Sibanyoni [the responsible project manager from the Regional Land Claims Commission] was the most progressive meeting ever. The government has come up with a new programme, post-settlement support, and what came up from that meeting is that we decided to change the Constitution and get it amended. The meeting also resolved that there would be an evaluation of the farms to get access to [land restitution] funds.[17]

At this earlier meeting the RLCC official had stressed that there was a renewed commitment at the department for post-settlement support. She explained the three grants available to restitution beneficiaries and delivered a presentation (termed 'capacity building') titled 'Understanding your Communal Property Association – Constitution and Roles of Executive Committee Members'. Although recently appointed to the post (and also exiting just six months later), she reinvigorated the process through her passionate appeal (invoking her past as land activist)to follow the constitutional pathway, stick to the approved plan and trust government in facilitating their resettlement. It brought to light that if the government route were to be followed to obtain the newest grant – the sizeable Development Assistance Grant based on 25 per cent of the monetary value of the land

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[16] Email from VUKA consultant to author, Friday 24 August 2007
[17] Kranspoort CPA member, speaking at meeting, Kranspoort, 25 August 2007

CHAPTER 3

– the Community would have to demonstrate compliance with its CPA Constitution. The new orientation towards state support came with a change in the partnership configuration, in which the restitution official assumed the task of project manager. Contrary to private funding options that had introduced the 'leaner' and more flexible Development Trust as intermediary, this reorientation called for a functional and accountable CPA.

Problematic for attracting potential private investors, was the fact that the CPA had formally become unconstitutional. The five-year term of the sitting Executive Committee had expired in 2006. Re-election could not take place on account of a clause that stated that 'At all times 60% of the committee shall be members who live permanently on the land except for the first committee to be elected'.[18] Obviously, the drafter of the constitution had not anticipated the prolonged planning process. An amended Constitution in 2007 was duly presented with the aid of LRC, which had also drafted the first one. The changed clause maintained the 60 per cent but added 'after the community shall have settled on the farm'. The opportunity was also used to make other amendments that seemed to reflect a more equitable representation. It included a committee term of three years (this was a demand from several members who recognized that the chairman had become too old for the job), 50 per cent representation by women and an emphasis on more proportional representation. An argument for proportional representation was made by stating that whereas all the registered branches had hitherto had an equal voice, now a minimum of twenty 'registered members' would be the benchmark to political representation. The latter point in turn reinforced the need to enforce better registration and payment of membership dues, and also feed into internal tensions over the rights of non-active branches.

As pressure mounted on the KCPA Executive Committee to act as an intermediary that had its affairs in order, the importance of constitutional obedience was emphasized. The exiting restitution official had explained that she was willing to initiate various new possibilities and push the Kranspoort cause at the upcoming meeting with her team. She also emphasized that being a reliable – read constitutionally obedient – partner to her was equated with this functionality. Here we witness the awkward fascination of the 'hope generating machine' (Nuijten 2003) with correct procedures and officialdom's recourse to sound institutions even when state support is not forthcoming. The more knotted relationships and abstract promises became, the more the narrative of dysfunctional communities seemed an attractive safety valve for officials to avoid taking responsibility for

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18 Kranspoort Communal Property Association, draft constitution drawn up by LRC

and explaining delays in service delivery. The fact that the educated representatives had an affinity with state procedures (also in their capacity as teachers and government officials) has arguably reinforced this tendency towards compliance and self-reflexivity.

A second aspect of this obedience, concerns the disciplining of more radical elements within the community calling for immediate resettlement. The Executive Committee members were aware of illicit activities (read: non-constitutional) unfolding at Kranspoort. As we shall see below, on-farm cattle exceeded the carrying capacity and parties of paying wood harvesters roamed the conservation zone. These activities provided some benefits and hard-needed cash to bankroll the travel expenses of KCPA members. At the same time, constitutional control offered recourse for a group of absentee landowners. With none of them residing on-farm full-time, contractual agreements and constitutions attained yet more meaning and served as a means of control.

A related effect concerns the manner in which the coordination practices in themselves were exclusionary and divisive. Participation by visitors required that English be spoken. The complexity of plans and the prolonged process with its manifold decisions and landmarks set up barriers to participation for rank-and-file members. Uninformed community members could delay decision-making, if they had the resources to participate in the meetings or be noted as paying, rightful members. The representative from the rural branch of Indermark also referred to the use of English at the multi-stakeholder forums:

> Our main problem is the language that we use. Our people are from the rural areas, they don't know English…People have some views and ideas but they cannot express them. Even myself, I who am not so fluent as somebody else, I can't even express myself in front of those people. Some people are tired, you see, because of the language…I have realised that when we are at home holding a branch meeting with our people here [at Indermark], they can talk and just voice their opinion but when they go there with the other people, they just keep quiet and listen.[19]

Alliances in the 'knotted Community–Public–Private Partnership' and the resulting conservationist approach to resettlement were to a large extent cemented along class or elitist lines. Yet, we cannot cast this articulation merely in terms of raw opportunism, a-priori interests and paternalism. It represented a joint, albeit antagonistic, articulation, which implicated the claimant leadership in its production and maintenance. This is where the metaphor of the knot enters. As the process unfolds community leaders fine-tune navigation skills and a certain legibility (in language, procedure and workshop format) sediments and helps structure relations and interdependencies. Reputations are at stake, leading to recourse to defensive positions and the relative safety of contracts and reference

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[19] Interview F. Mashakgomo, Indermark, 1 October 2007

to 'consensual' community resolutions made earlier and recorded in writing. . At the same time, we can also appreciate that planned development unfolds against the background of highly uncertain outcomes, experimentation and people stepping in and out of the process. It is from this perspective of risk that we can explore how the planning process was selectively appropriated and contradictorily enacted by the very members who also defended it so vehemently.

Grounding the Land Claim: A Competing Spatiality

Absenteeism had featured as a major community concern from the moment the land deal came through. Getting a foothold on the land involved a different type of enactment altogether to the eco-village format of 'semi-permanent' habitation envisioned but could count on the community's commitment to orderly resettlement. From the outset the mentors from the Legal Resources Centre had also endorsed this type of settlement. Minutes from a 2001 meeting of KCPA read that 'The Committee was advised by Louisa [their legal representative] to use the Kranspoort land for whatever they intended as long as it is within the constitutional provisions and further not contradicting the Plan-Practice document [later to be rejected in the second Land Claims Court ruling and replaced by the VUKA consultancy]'.20 In this interim period, it was foreseen that the 'draft grazing policy' and the KCPA constitution with the aforementioned conditions would provide guidance and that she would have to be informed of planned activities. By then reports of theft and vandalism at the farm were also reaching the claimants. These implicated the farm residents who were increasingly seen in a negative light. In this regard, the newly erected signpost at the roadside ('Kranspoort Community Land – Trespassers will be prosecuted') was a reminder that they too were subject to a new authority. It also decided to install its own caretaker, a claimant from the nearby Maebane location, who doubled as schoolteacher.

Alongside the planning trajectory, Kranspoortians enacted their version of de-racialization. They tied assertion of ownership to the need to generate income for KCPA activities and, most notably, the expensive format of meetings (financial statements for 2002, for example, indicate that food and petrol money for attendance of meetings by the Executive Committee was R 28,390 whereas it had been R 7,620 the year before). The first move was to nullify the outstanding grazing leases that they had inherited from the Dutch Reformed Church. In KCPA meetings the lessors were labelled as unreliable and in the spirit of transformation would be replaced by Africans. A preferential rate applied for Kranspoortians. They, however, did not introduce much livestock due to their gradual de-

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20 Minutes Kranspoort CPA meeting, 8 September 2001, personal archive E. Mafona (Secretary KCPA)

agrarianization following displacement (Chapter Two). Most new leases were thus entered into with African livestock keepers with commercial aspirations. Although reports by the caretaker on the grazing were sketchy, he reported that by 2002 some 176 cattle were reintroduced. Visits to the farm in 2006 and 2007 showed that not all on-farm cattle were counted and captured in a lease agreement. For example, a farm resident who resided discretely in the Northwestern corner and had resolved to stay off the community radar by not attending meetings, held another 30 cattle. The difficulty of recording cattle and cashing in on the leases produced considerable tensions between the caretaker and the leadership. Cattle leases however remained the major source of CPA income and were critical to bankrolling the governance from a distance.

Claimants felt the assertion of their presence should also involve the key symbol of Kranspoort as they knew it: as a place of education. The Stephanus Hofmeyr 'farm school' had been kept open in the intervening years as part of the Church strategy to retain its control over the land. Its contested presence relied on servicing the rural African population and had motivated hiring an African teacher and evangelist who lived on site. However, the school was not registered and neighbouring landowners had observed with some concern that the dormitories (once built for white children on veldskool in the 1970s) were now housing some twenty schoolchildren and their parents. By 2006 the school further serviced children from surrounding farms and children of the five families of former farm workers who resided on the land that had been attached to the Kranspoort community following the 1999 Court ruling (see Figure 3.3). Illegality equalled vulnerability and the claimant leadership, some of whom, such as the Secretary who held executive functions in education, applied for formal recognition of the school. This registration came through in 2007 by Government Gazette by which time some thirty-five students were attending school.

A third land-use activity that was swiftly developed also invoked the past and Kranspoort as a mission farm. In responding to the call for developing agricultural projects, the KCPA leadership submitted a request for support from the Department of Agriculture in terms of the Local Economic Development programme. A representative from the provincial government, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, who had also spoken at the 2002 settlement celebrations at Kranspoort, picked up the call. He visited a KCPA meeting later that year where he urged the claimants to develop 'workable' business plans for submission to the Department of Agriculture and discouraged them from taking out loans using the land

Figure 3.3 Schoolchildren with the school principal and farm caretaker, Mr. J. Monyai, at the Stephanus Hofmeyr school

as collateral.[21] As patron and public supporter of land restitution communities across the province he would initiate the route to agricultural modernisation using his political influence. A discretionary grant for land restitution beneficiaries had become available in the form of the aforementioned farming equipment or a so-called 'starter pack' for which Kranspoort was eligible due to the high monetary value of the land.[22] The pack consisted of a tractor, trailer, ploughing disc and a bulldozer for clearing the bush. The move unequivocally links Kranspoortians to what has become the dominant mode of thinking about deracializing agriculture in South Africa. It entailed a vision of stimulating a new class of black commercial farmers alongside the objective of maintaining a viable commercial farming sector. It is also evidence of what Walker (2008: 19) has called the 'misplaced agrarianization' in land restitution and the assumption among policy makers and land activists that sustainable development implies agricultural intensification.

A competing spatiality was introduced in opposition to the environmentally-sensitive planning the Land Claims Court had initiated and the related private funding option. By mid-2002 the community's mentors from the LRC started to withdraw, confident that potential excesses of agricultural activities would be curtailed by a solid institutional framework and

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[21] Minutes KCPA meeting, 3 August 2002, personal archive E. Mafona (Secretary KCPA).
[22] BuaNews, 28 March 2003.

the leadership's commitment to the planned development. One bylaw produced through this collaboration was the idea that collective agricultural projects should be profit-making and 10 per cent of turnover should be paid into the CPA account. Environmental constraints and the impact such a development would have on the proposed eco-village design, were not mentioned. The environmental scoping exercise and settlement planning had also not focused on the capacity and land use options for agricultural projects on any scale, referring only to the 100 cattle limit and highlighting possible agro-ecological projects. As stated above, water sources had dwindled with the loss of a borehole and insecurity regarding irrigation rights. Registration of rainfall at the lower-lying Mara Research station (25 km south-west of Kranspoort) shows an average rainfall of 441 mm per year (measured between 1937 and 2007) with high annual variability. This would suggest unsuitability for dry-land annual crops (the threshold is usually held at 500 mm) but pipes for irrigation were still in place for drawing water from the stream to a flat-lying 4 ha field (van den Broek 2007). Water testing in August 2007 (dry season) by a soil scientist suggests that the stream could support 70,000 L irrigation a day after discounting downstream water rights and domestic use of 60 L a day per resettled household (ibid.: 6). A serious constraint was constituted by the lack of a reservoir – the existent one had also since fallen in disrepair – and wildlife-proof fencing to ward off the band of local baboons. Whatever land-use planning was initiated at this stage fell to the new 'agriculture sub-committee' of KCPA and its own community advisors. Scientific scarcity, whether justified or not, did not feature in the committee's designs. Based on their past experiences and memory, claimants believed that the farm's water supply was 'strong' and that the talk of scarcity was part of a strategy to discourage their resettlement.

With the re-enactment of Kranspoort farm came an equally familiar idea of communal self-help. That is to say, agricultural labour was drawn from the (poorer segment of the) community and these communal projects would pay in kind and by offering training. A group of seven so-called 'volunteers', exclusively middle-aged women and mostly from the rural Indermark location, constituted the first batch of settlers who resided on the farm for a season in 2003. They had come forward showing an interest in farming and were offered courses at local agricultural training colleges in mango and avocado production, vegetable propagation and pig farming. Start-up capital was collected following an open call from the Secretary to the affluent members to invest R 1,000 each; some ten members responded. A handful of small-scale community projects were tried of which the first built on the aging mango trees by producing chutney (atchar). The plough and tractor were used for a plot of irrigated pumpkin and watermelons.

The community volunteers who had been enthusiastic about the prospect of remaking fertile Kranspoort soon ran into difficulties. Besides the regular rumours of theft by the 'squatters', trespassers and baboons, the volunteers felt the brunt of communalism. As two of them explained: they had risked their lives digging furrows and, after sales of the first harvest of butternut, claimed to be paid only two butternuts each and were discharged for being 'lazy'. The projects were running at a loss in the first year and the leadership prioritized the use of CPA funds for their travel expenses over recapitalization of the farm. An impression also took hold that the municipal Department of Agriculture would deliver on its promise to provide wildlife-proof fences around the cleared fields, whilst its officials averted this by claiming that no business plan had been submitted to this end. With the appointment of two additional supervisors from the agricultural sub-committee, the executive committee tried to restore some order to the projects. In typical fashion it drew up a set of 'terms and conditions of their stay', which included the duty to make regular reports. They also did not last the end of the season, alleging that they had been chased off the farm by the caretaker. By the end of 2006 the communal agricultural projects ceased.

A rare claimant with the credentials to farm, who had been mentioned by the chairman in the Land Claims Court and on whom hopes for managing these projects had been pinned, had declined the job. The prospective manager reflected on the lack of skills among the urbanized claimants and feared mismanagement from the poor who would be prepared to farm: 'If you put a man in front of money, he must have money'. Interestingly, he also lamented the lack of hierarchy in the group and that no moral authority existed in the predominantly elderly group. He stated that although he preferred the idea of private forms of experimentation ('if you give a person a place, give it to him so he can try'), he also held an oft-repeated belief that in the transition period to resettlement the best option was to hire a farm manager, preferably an Afrikaner.[27] Such paternalism clearly implied a compromise that was the outcome of the mixed experiences with these early forms of self-reliance. The community volition that had informed earlier confident statements like 'first we settle, then we develop' (Chapter Two) had taken a significant blow.

This material enactment of working the land for the claimants and leadership dignified the reclamation process and represented a shift in approach from the obscurity of boardroom discussions to familiar place-making. In its incomplete form (without a community village on the land) it was, however, strained from the outset due to the difficulty of governing as absentee landowners and controlling the caretaker. As the botched agricultural projects

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[27] Interview J. Mohofe, Kutama, 6 October 2006

show, communal projects also proved to be divisive and exploitative along class lines. A critical reading of the sourcing of labour for the projects can explain it as an enactment of the community's spatial and social dualism. Former homeland residents were drawn on as a surplus labour pool whilst the more 'educated' and urbanized leaders would preside over the political work of lobbying by writing letters and applications to the Department of Agriculture. The costs of these commercial projects were effectively externalized through state-sponsored training programmes that existed for 'poor communities' (Local Economic Development). Lydia and Marishen, two sisters from Indermark who were 'volunteers' in the first agricultural trials, still supported the resettlement but their disillusionment with collective designs convinced them that larger residential stands were desirable as they allowed for more individualized home gardening. By 2006 return seemed less urgent, since the entrepreneurial sisters had since received state support at their current location and had started their own backyard poultry business (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Lydia Moichela and her backyard poultry business at Indermark

Mining the State

New anxieties also took hold as the planning process advanced into the fifth year. Passers-by along the tar road noticed the movement of half-tonne trucks (bakkies) exiting the farm with loads of firewood. Fencing was practically absent as cattle roamed the roadside. A general impression of chaos and Kranspoort as yet another 'failure' took hold. In a 2006 email, anecologist, Conservancy member and local landowner, explained the failure and future in relation to the conservation option he had advanced:

> I do not know what will happen at Kranspoort. As long as they restrict their farming activities to the lower areas (that are fucked up in any case) this could work. I think the major problem is inner conflict and opportunism. If one could sort this out it should be possible to create a livelihood for a number of families. It will require a lot of capital and the development of expertise though, and if this is not handled properly it could develop into a squatter camp.[23]

Linking failure to bad 'community management' similarly featured in the way the municipal Department of Agriculture interpreted the lack of enterprise. Its officials reclaimed the bulldozer and according to the caretaker had approached him warning that the other implements were also up for reclamation. In discussions, anxious Kranspoortians drew a parallel with the recent 'deregistration' campaign that targeted unproductive beneficiaries of the land redistribution programme and whose land and farming implements were reclaimed by the state. Fearing such expropriati on, two claimants noted they would soon pass the critical five-year mark for proving themselves: 'In five years government has the right to do inspections, this is part of state land'. They were keenly aware of the principle that 'We [the state] give you this land, and within five years there must be development; if this is not the case we will take it back'. Denying any immediate risk, the responsible agricultural officer from the Makhado municipality confirmed this was policy but was quick to add that his office would consider supporting the community if sound business plans were submitted. With the official repeatedly referring to the Kranskop land (a farm a few miles down the road from Kranspoort) and pulling from his filing cabinet the Plan-Practice consultancy that had been rejected by the Court in 2001, he noted that the group was no longer very 'active'. This meant that they were not known to him, not having become visible through regular visits to his Makhado office and staying in touch.

Realizing their decent into relative obscurity from a position of high visibility with influential political backers like Motsoaledi by their side, the Kranspoort leadership had started to engage in micro-politics and make direct appeals to various prospective investors. The KCPA developed a strategy that reflected its dispersed nature and the multiple sites to

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[23] E-mail message addressed to author, 13 December 2006

Figure 3.5 Women collecting wood at Kranspoort farm

Figure 3.6 Livestock farmers at Kranspoort talking with author

which the land was tied. The caretaker was tasked with lobbying the Makhado Department of Agriculture. He was known to the above official (who wondered whether he was the chairperson) and could count on an audience during trips to town. The work of pressuring the Regional Land Claims Commission fell to the Secretary who resided close to the Provincial Offices of the Commission and was the contact person for the Land Claims Commission. Relations with the Pretoria consultant from Vuka in turn fell to the chairman who would drive down occasionally to his office to discuss progress. Meetings of the KCPA took the form of respective members reporting back on progress. Letter writing was also a key means to pressurize government to move forward. These letters could take the form of handwritten requests like the one submitted to the Department of Agriculture for obtaining the bulldozer. They could also be directed more generally like a letter from the Turfloop branch in 2006 subtitled 'S.O.S. Outcry' in which the group expressed its dismay at the delay in resettlement and 'being at the mercy of the DLA from Tswane (Pretoria)'.[24] Shortly after the Tribunal Hearing approved the plan in 2006, a request went out to the local Municipality with the KCPA letterhead requesting them to allocate the residential stands.

Shortly after the plan was approved at the Tribunal Hearing it became clear that the private funding route had been closed off even if relations with the Conservancy were still maintained through sporadic phonecalls between the KCPA secretary and the Conservancy's chairman. The fall-back position was to receive support under the provision of services for the rural poor and hope to get the resettlement prioritized in terms of the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) at Municipal level. Yet, as observers of this allocation of responsibility for development of land reform deals to municipal level have noted, land reform projects do not have designated budgets for 'infrastructure development'. A vulnerable point in effectuating these developments thus lies in the coordination of tasks across the various tiers of government. Kranspoort had received a fleeting mention in the 2004 IDP preliminary plans in the consultation stage as part of a Tourism Development Strategy but it did not make it into the IDP proper. Although at the Tribunal Hearing the community's coordinator from the Regional Land Claims Commission had exclaimed confidently that there would be a special fund for restitution projects, and had received a confirming glance from a Department of Housing official, municipal managers could not confirm its existence.

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[24] S.O.S. Outcry. Undated letter from Turfloop Branch of Kranspoort Community to the Regional Land Claims Commission, personal archive E. Mafona (Secretary KCPA)

Still more uncertainty was created when the municipality announced to the leadership in 2007 that the reclaimed land was privately owned and therefore not eligible for any state support. The announcement thwarted the intention of the National Department of Land Affairs in setting up communal property associations and their efforts to 'ensure that communal tenure [the CPA model] received the same legal and infrastructural support as individual tenure' (Everingham and Jannecke 2006: 549; see also Pienaar 2007). The rejection prompted the regional land claims commissioner to write a letter to the municipality reminding officials that the resettlement had been by order of the Land Claims Court and urgently requesting their incorporation in the IDP. Soon thereafter, one of the municipal planners suggested that the route to low-cost or RDP Housing might still be open. However, she also stressed the complexity of the approved settlement plan and that a new one might have to be submitted.[25] For the entire municipal area (estimated at 458,000 in the 2005/2006 IDP) there would only be 1,000 subsidized homes available per year. For Kranspoort to be considered, they would have to work through their Ward Councillor – the lowest-level elected representative – a new entry point that required yet more fine-grained parochial politics for which the absent landowners were ill positioned.

Mining the state was proving arduous. Whilst giving out mixed messages, officials continued to suggest new possibilities and provide new openings. A visit in 2007 to the then so-called project manager from the Regional Land Claims Commission confirmed this. She explained that according to the project cycle of post-settlement planning, the implementation stage had now been reached which previously included tasks such as a needs analysis, funding strategy and the Municipal IDP integration (for cycle see Sustainable Development Consortium 2006: 20). She would act as coordinator pushing government and was now awaiting input from colleagues from the provincial Department of Agriculture on the business plan in order to release the discretionary grant her department was sitting on. In exploring alternatives to RDP housing, we discussed a specific, more tailored type of government funding (PHP) for places of cultural heritage value. Aware of this option, she stated that she would take it on board and discuss it at the next meeting with the Makhado Municipal Council. Having clarified her department's commitment, she promptly turned to the community and suggested they become more pro-active:

> You know why they [Kranspoortians] are not too active: somewhere they rely too much on government officials. If they can appoint a project manager, things will run at a very fast pace. You see, we cannot divide ourselves to be at two places at the same time, now this [the post-settlement division] is a new unit. We never had settlement support in government… If they see I am not doing enough for them, they should put pen and paper together; can report me. You can be quiet and you can do something; and you can be quiet and do nothing.[26]

[25] Interview Charmaine de Waal, Makhado Municipality, 27 October 2006
[26] Interview L. Sibanyoni, Polokwane, 4 September 2007

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The reversal of responsibility seemed to play into the KCPA leadership's responsible nature. Ever reflective and mindful of becoming 'dysfunctional', they adhered to the agreement on constitutional obedience and waited for their constitutional amendments to come through. Opposed to any kind of diversion into different forms of mobilization and initial squatting on the land by some determined members, the chairman lamented the introduction of this course of action. As he explained: 'We are the first claimants who took the correct way; we will be the first to resettle…Our people, some of them are ignorant, they suggested we have squatters, no, we cannot do that, we must follow the court process'.[27] The secretary then gave his take on the option of squatting that had recently been voiced by an ordinary CPA member at a meeting. 'Squatting' demands at meetings, he implied, had become synonymous with the earlier unrealistic demand for return and it was up to community leaders to chastise this call:

> People all that they want is to *say* let's go and stay there. They can go and stay there. But then the next day what will they do? They are going to worry the leaders: 'we want toilets? We want this?' Where am I going to get these things? That is why the government, Department of Land Affairs does not like people to go there before the infrastructure is there. Because the paper people, the media will go there and expose them and government is afraid of it. They [media] will say government has taken people to Kranspoort, they don't have this and this and this. And now government is going to say "Heh! What is happening at Kranspoort?" Now things are going to start [get moving]. Now that is why I went to settlement [Housing Department at Makhado municipality]. The municipality must pay for the services, now they are refusing. They are saying Kranspoort is a private land, we can't put our resources in a private land. If we decide to sell that land, now what? So, those things are still to be debated.

The statement relays the potential of a decline into 'failure', the squatting option as a way of embarrassing government and trying to mobilize it this way. Yet, it is obvious that this approach to settlement would also jeopardize the leadership's position – leading to stronger demands from a needy resident population. It would also compromise any goodwill that had been developed through the prolonged planning process and the contacts that had been built up. Retreat to the strategy suggested by the Housing Department seemed appropriate – he would call the ward councillor he had recently been introduced to in order to 'see what instructions he has'.

During a follow-up visit in early 2009 it transpired that the KCPA constitutional revisions – submitted in September 2007 to the Department of Land Affairs – had not yet been processed and re-elections for the CPA leadership were still pending. By then the plan had gone full circle and after numerous efforts had been undertaken by the consultant and Secretary to have business plans approved, a new round of community consultation was called for. In January 2009 I attended a meeting of the executive KCPA members in which

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[27] Interview E. Mafona, Secretary KCPA, Turfloop, 7 July 2007

the secretary announced: 'I have studied the business plans and there are a lot of good ideas here'. To the representatives of the different branches he handed out the copies of the intended demonstration agro-ecological projects and requested the representatives to discuss them again with the wider claimant group in their respective locations. The meeting was also intended to express the frustration that had built up towards the project manager of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner. In an awkward scene that drew me into the ritualized letter-writing, I was asked or 'tasked' by the Executive Committee to write a 'strong letter of complaint' to the Commissioner himself. I proceeded to do so in one of the RLCC offices with the responsible official casually looking on and making informal comments.

It was perhaps inevitable that delays in service delivery would create tensions among the executive members. Most vulnerable in this regard was the caretaker whose appointment had always been a compromise (some elderly claimants referred to him as a 'mere school-goer' or 'shepherd'), and whose work at the farm was shrouded in secrecy. Indeed, on my visits to the farm he would cordially receive me but was decidedly vague about the planned and actual developments taking place. 'Illegal' activities like wood harvesting were attributed to him not permanently residing on the farm – we would drive up and down from his nearby home – and it was also proving hard to keep track of the number of cattle on the farm. His antagonism towards the elderly leadership also reflected his belief that they continued to support an unworkable settlement plan and that without a resettled population, it was impossible to effectuate proper influx control and convince unwanted visitors that the farm was actually owned by them. Relaying the need for an attitude change and a more realistic plan for Kranspoort, he said that 'what this place needs now is working through farming. The Court Case has past, it is no more time for the old stories. It is time to look at the future'.[28]

Although he attended most KCPA Executive meetings, where he conducted himself humbly and respectfully towards the senior leadership, disciplining him took on the form of demanding better financial management and, for instance, for him to commit himself to registering all cattle owners. Privately, the secretary also explained the compromised power of the Committee; as long as they themselves were rarely on site other than for their meetings, they had no overview of the situation. Continued delays in the resettlement and the fact that responsible members were also failing to make a breakthrough in their respective portfolios further undermined the capacity to meet responsibilities. Against the

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[28] Interview J. Monyai, Kranspoort farm, 7 June 2006

backdrop of dwindling community funds, accusations of incompetence were not effective or desirable. After all, the caretaker was not being paid for his supervisory work. Likewise, the secretary argued that he had sunk a lot of his own funds in running community affairs and making photo-copies and telephone calls to keep the various branches up to date. For a community slipping into forgetfulness and 'failure', accounts of personal sacrifice provided a safeguard to the loyal leadership, setting them apart from the larger group of disinterested claimants and inoculating them against assaults.

Conclusion: Geographies of Fear and Hope

When scholars analyse policy trajectories in land reform they tend to identify either an agrarian path to development or one that focuses on the preservation of nature and cultural heritage. Both imply a different set of relationships to the natural resource base and are typically seen as mutually exclusive trajectories to rural development. This chapter, however, has presented a case in which competing spatialities converged and continue to co-exist in parallel networks of practice. Places like Kranspoort, which are distinctly interstitial and linked to multiple policy spaces, may see the simultaneous enactment of multiple territorial designs. By tying in conflicting policy options, imagined futures, historicized meanings and a certain materiality owing to its natural endowments, we may treat it as a 'nodal point where trans-local influences intermesh with practices and meanings previously sedimented in the local landscape' (Moore 2005: 20).

In this chapter, I discussed the parallel processes of brokerage involved in realizing a conservationist design that included local landowners and the so-called Community–Public–Private Partnerships, and the alternative trajectory of remaking Kranspoort farm and its new owners into a class of commercially-oriented farmers. The former implied a linkage to a new, progressive conservation model which is inclusive of community interests, follows the gentler persuasion format of the workshop and demonstration project, and has a preference for private funding. The latter entailed the route of state support through the Department of Agriculture and the programme of Local Economic Development.

If we consider Kranspoort as an 'invited space', in which the state has introduced many stakeholders to join in planning and development, we observe its exceptional openness and porosity. The fear of 'another failure' and policy makers' scepticism towards the community's ability to self-govern induce the state to impose business- and land-use planning. Planning in their view curbs claimants' 'unrealistic expectations'. Here it promoted a rationale of scientifically-measurable scarcity and 'hard variables' nostalgically-oriented land claimants do not possess. In this regard, we may see an oft-observed process of

codification of knowledge and the types of conditions and limitations that accompany expert-driven planning processes. For example, we saw how state-led rationalization of settlement demands at Kranspoort revived antiquated limits on grazing- and water rights. More controversially perhaps, was the production of a new zoning of its northern portion as core conservation area based on environmental initiatives by the local Conservancy and efforts of local landowners to have the area proclaimed a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (see Chapter Four).

This linkage to spaces of eco-tourism that have a limited track record in the area and to 'modern conservation areas' that have no formal protected status, hints at the way this environmental enactment was decidedly 'mental' (Lefebvre 1991). It produced time through an active erasure; past associations with Kranspoort as mission farm were selectively codified in planning (mission heritage yes, irrigated farming no). A particular discursive feat was to cement the futuristic designs as the 'current use of the land' whilst planners themselves foresaw that more work-shopping and zoning would be needed to enact this vision. Despite being futuristic and ambitious, planning could be legitimated by framing the project as a precedent-setting and replicable model. Particularly attractive were the promises of low-costs for government in providing infrastructure, low environmental impact and better prospects for income generation compared to conventional smallholding agriculture. Problems of building costs were overcome with an ingenious idea of demonstration that tied sensitization to eco-housing ('feeling, touching and seeing') with low-cost communal self-help. If one housing unit could be built by investors then the aspirant returnees could be persuaded to replicate these themselves. Such a model satisfied policy makers who had struggled with the difficulties of resettlement demands in land reform. It also had an intoxicating effect on community leaders who had experienced a lot of exposure and signals of support leading up to the settlement celebrations, and saw the precedent-setting model receiving financial backing from USAID.

Rather than providing clarity in environmental usage and a solid institutional framework for investors to latch onto, however, the planning process proved risky and antagonistic. The porosity of the network around the Community-Public-Private-Partnership implied a continuous coming and going of external parties. Their behaviour turned hope into anxiety as the planning phase stretched out. Initially visits by prospective investors were accompanied by promises of private funding as well as the community's ownership over the development decisions. Meetings of Kranspoort CPA took on the form of a marketplace where visitors pitched their plans and awaited approval from the executive members. Anxiety arose as the eco-village design and non-standard housing failed to encourage private funding and

tensions developed with members of the local Conservancy who sought payment for their consultancy services. Plans were ill considered given the isolated location of the farm and reflected exaggerated optimism about the potential of community-based tourism. It envisioned patronage by foreign tourists with a predilection for an 'authentic African experience', who, according to the development planner, 'want to see the people going about their daily business, farming their fields and getting a feel for the real African life, like seeing the kids with their noses running'.

With planning having ground to a virtual standstill and backers having abandoned the project, the situation could be described as dispossession by other means. Such disownment is reminiscent of environmental crises which are construed in a manner 'whereby development experts and the institutions for which they work claim rights to stewardship over land and resources which they do not own' (Roe quoted in Fairhead 2000: 101). The project's gradual descent into obscurity and the reversal from seeking private funding to a dreary and anxiety-laden process of 'mining the state' for support, also suggests the unloading of an unfundable plan on the community leadership. Indeed, the claimants and the leadership were made to bear the costs and risks of this privatization of development. They were blamed for investors exiting and accused of a 'lack of commitment', 'mismanagement' and even 'in-fighting', fuelling a fear of increased isolation., The Tribunal Hearing's approval of the plan in terms of the Development Facilitation Act and its recognition as the blueprint for future reference merely exacerbated this dire state of affairs.

Problematic for the dispossession thesis, however, is the way the leadership acted as disciplining body defending the plan vis-à-vis the rank-and-file members. The mechanism – or 'technology' as Foucault would have it – employed to this end was 'constitutional obedience' and strict adherence to the many rules and policies that had been drafted with external advisors in the process of setting up the Communal Property Association. Practices followed the desire to remain 'visible' and retain its status as reliable partner in development. The repertoire included keeping records of meetings to landmark collective resolutions, writing letters to third parties requesting updates on promised services, and invoking proper community procedures to silence dissident voices within the community. This repertoire can be ascribed to the leadership's background as teachers, given ceaseless opportunity for rehearsal in the prolonged engagement with the community's partners in development. This mutual constitution is further evidenced by the way in which Land Claims Court procedures assigned authority to the elderly claimants who 'knew the place' and how the socio-economic profiling of the community reduced the group's resettlement

demands to 'semi-permanent habitation', which constructed the claimants as sojourners seeking to reinstate their symbolic attachment to Kranspoort through occasional visits.

The contested nature of environmentalist projects and the ambivalent role of the state in many cases of post-settlement development are also mirrored in the Kranspoort case. Whilst planning for settlement continued, an alternative articulation unfolded that contrasted with the conservationist design. A well-wishing dignitary and provincial representative exercised his influence to support the Kranspoortians with a tractor, plough and bulldozer. In the view of the officials from the Department of Agriculture, bureaucratic legibility did not require complicated forms of translation like those implied in the above planning process. In these quarters, Kranspoort still retained its status as well-endowed farm – a vision that naturally tied in with the claimants' remembrance and their identification with the place. Marking the shift that occurred, the beneficiary community ceased to be construed as elderly, well-to-do pensioners acting out their historical belonging. In its place they were recast as part of the rural poor deserving of a 'one-size-fits-all' programme of agricultural intensification. Further marking the difference to the formal planning is the way this spatiality has brought into focus the agricultural aspirations of the poorer segment of claimants and youth. In attempting to control these claims and curtail the call for a more confrontational 'politics of squatting', the leadership also performed constitutional obedience. Disciplining in this instance meant adherence to the labour and lease agreements and curbing 'illegal' land use activities by non-community members.

The case study describes the various actor projects as being strategically interlocked through discursive and non-discursive practices, thereby bringing about a range of unforeseen consequences that challenged the hegemonic effects of a dominant developmental discourse and associated technologies of rule. Human agency, however, was equally constrained through participation in coordination processes, which implied (self-) disciplining in social and spatial terms. Through procedures and coordination practices, ethnographies of power unfolded that could only ever be resisted partially given the risk of exclusion, dispossession and displacement.

Bearing testimony to the legal codification at the early stages of restitution, I described the prominent role of the Land Claims Court in conceptualizing 'community' and promoting 'appropriate land use', which implied an alignment of a legally-defined group of beneficiaries with expert-driven development trajectories. Contestation of place at Kranspoort was and continues to be located in certain networks of enablement and disempowerment that bring together a range of local and trans-local actors and agencies. These projects are based on highly contingent relations seeing as they are meeting places where differential

CHAPTER 3

interests and views of the future converge. It is in this sense that I treat them as the building blocks of competing spatialities which co-habit the same social space, and inevitably form the basis for renewed attempts at reform.

Returning to the entanglement thesis presented earlier, we should consider the structuring effect of the coordination practices and the slippery nature of connections in the emergent networks. At no stage did the project of resettlement attain a unitary bureaucratic legibility that could direct efforts of brokers and enable more 'efficient' forms of support. Rather than following a centripetal development, where we could expect one of two routes to post-settlement (i.e. agricultural intensification versus eco-sensitive settlement) to become dominant, we observed a centrifugal process that saw both options being explored simultaneously. Although neither option can be seen to have gained traction in ways that allowed them to be 'implemented' and managed, they have nonetheless worked in unison to produce a hybrid landscape that has encouraged particular place-making strategies by the leadership.

Contestation in place-making thus plays out in particular networks of enablement and constraint in which actors may differ in their access to resources, interests and aspirations but in which coordination in its own right becomes constitutive of social relations. This stance resonates in recent writings in the field of development sociology where it is argued that the field of possible social action is delimited by organizing practices. In other words: 'The critical issue here is that '[t]he structuring element is contained in the practices themselves: in the unfolding and, therefore, in that which is unfolded' (van der Ploeg cited in Long 2008: 10). Importantly, this implies that we should view this place-making as a field of contestation in which power was played out, drawing dividing lines between various categories of leaders, members, quasi-members and non-members. We saw how the coordination practices have a bearing on who is able to represent the community and how the format of meetings helped to solidify the leadership positions of a group of urban, white-collar Africans. Their bargaining position was partly due to their command over strategic resources like the English language, proximity to the administrative centres and the financial means to attend and hold meetings. With the planning dragging on and costs of meetings no longer borne from collective means, they could defend their positions as leaders driven by a moral responsibility and drawing on personal funds.

Chapter 4

Environmentalism, Whiteness and Defence of Place in the Soutpansberg
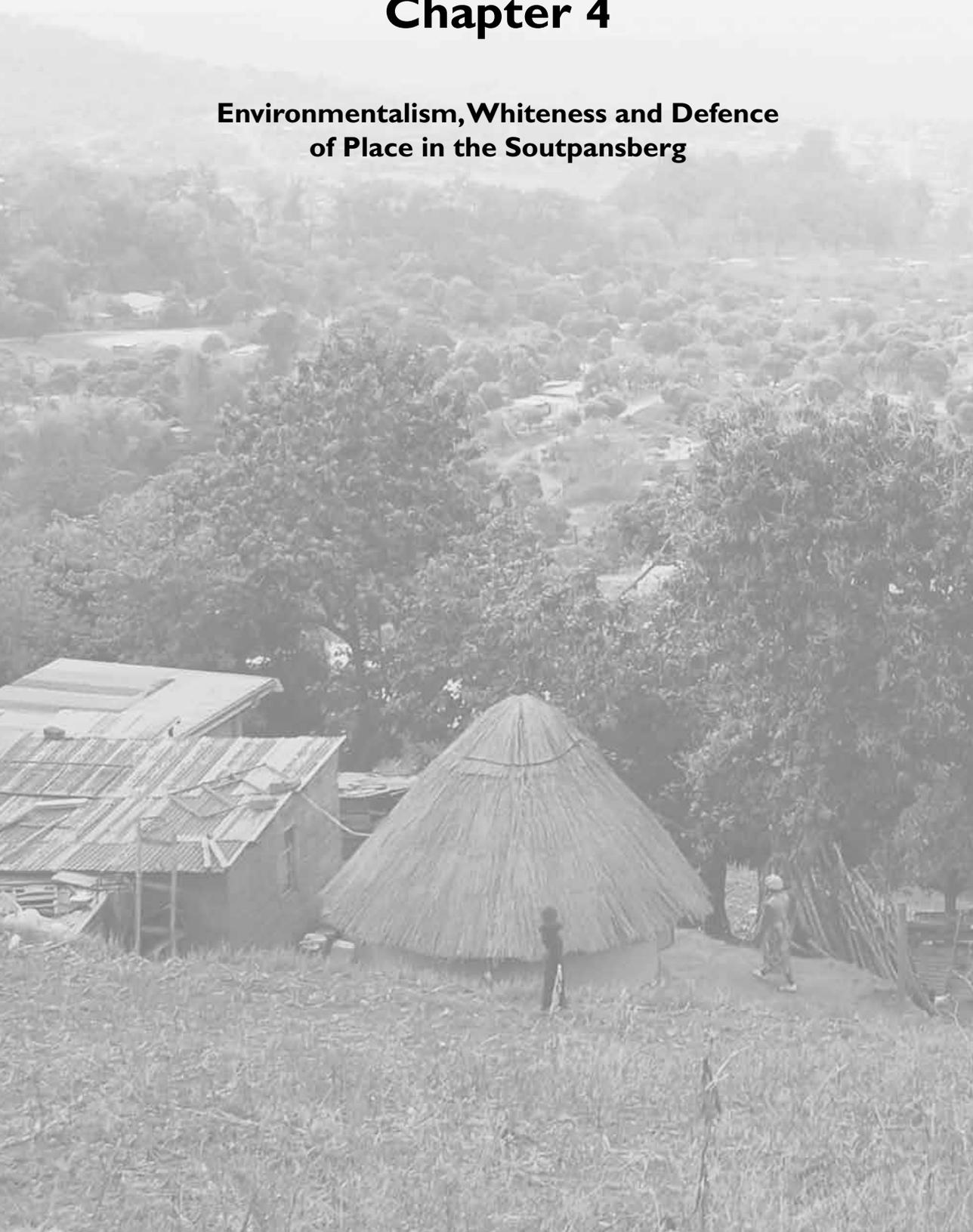
'We see protected areas as providers of benefits beyond boundaries – beyond the boundaries on a map, beyond the boundaries of Nation-States, across societies, genders and generations'.[29]

Southern African natures – imagined and material – have long been a retreat for its white population. From early settlement to colonial territorialities, the conservation ideal has validated settler claims to land and a sense of belonging in an otherwise unforgiving natural environment (Neumann, 1998). As pre-modern spaces devoid of Africans, protected areas and private conservation spots provided an escape from the social realities of a minority position (Hughes, 2010). With the advent of majority rule across the region, this escape to nature is neither comforting, nor constructive. Changes in the political economy, manifested in recent programmes of racial redress and land redistribution, may force whites to start 'directing the imagination away from nature and toward society' (ibid.: 137).

In its most familiar form, bioregionalism pertains to the Trans-frontier Parks and the related linking up of state-owned protected areas across national boundaries. An overriding principle regards the improvement and fostering of fresh connections across human and natural communities. It combines the ecological idea of linking up islands of biodiversity with the developmental notion of redistributing income from protected areas more equitably. Historically excluded Africans are now 'invited' back in to benefit from new conservation areas, albeit under particular contractual agreements that set conditions to their re-entry (Fabricius et al. 2004; West et al. 2006). Although underlying claims of the comparative economic advantage of natural conservation over other land uses are disputed and beneficiation models speculatively invoke future markets of eco-tourism, new partnerships in 'post-colonial conservation' have captured the imagination of the South African state (Ramutsindela 2007).

This boundless nature is also expanding into areas that were formerly uninteresting because they were not aesthetically pleasing according to the proto-colonial image of wilderness (Wolmer 2003). Particular spatial frameworks like UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves are flexible enough to include privately-owned land and the so-called former native reserves or homelands as 'buffer-' or 'transitional areas'. For well-positioned whites seeking the path of engagement, the production of new spatial frameworks and developmental models for these 'neo-natures' entails a new politics of possibility. This production of space hinges on an undefined, not-yet nature and expected income from markets such as eco-tourism and traditional medicine that are not yet established. Power works by virtue of the related

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[29] Sourced from a slide show of a functionary of the Limpopo Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism presented at Vhembe Biosphere Reserve Exposition, Schoemansdal, 30 August 2007

spatial frameworks that obscure local realities of farming and cattle herding and divert away from unwanted spatialities like land reform (see Hughes 2005). Despite, or perhaps because of, its incompleteness and novelty, whites with an interest in post-colonial conservation have shaped and given meaning to interracial platforms. Technocratization and (re-) centralization of rural governance occurs through 'participatory planning', involving small steering committees where representation can be attained by assuming roles as translators of UNESCO's scientific criteria or otherwise channelling external stocks of knowledge or capital (Li 2007).

The production and appropriation of space has often been discussed with reference to environmental agencies' contextualization and re-inscription of globalized environmental discourse into management plans that deal with the 'spatial patterning of human-environment interaction' (Zimmerer 2006: 66). As is argued here, however, conservation initiatives in neo-natures or not-yet natures highlight the critical roles of places and place-making in nature conservation. For these provisional natures that have no formal conservation status and are protected only by the 'soft boundaries' of co-management processes, places act as nodes to demonstrate conservation principles and their economic potential. Space and place appear as mutually constitutive; places act as nodes connecting localities to extra-local space, whereas abstract, environmental space may impact use- and exchange values of white-owned property. In terms of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve discussed below, particular 'demonstration projects' were developed to win over the 'man in the street' (VBR 2007). Such projects include the private property of one landowner who converted part of his land into the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Knowledge and another who developed his mountain farm into a research station and regional think-tank for gathering and managing biophysical data. Such emplaced acts of conservation involve forms of labour intended to transform physical environments by erecting fences, using dwellings for workshops, policing property boundaries and introducing wildlife. This work foregrounds the dynamic interaction between materiality and social meaning and how landscapes may become entangled (Chapter One).

This chapter discusses the recent surge in bioregionalism in South Africa as an arena of cultural politics where whites may appropriate space and reverse the loss of social and political agency. Such conservation efforts have already been shown to have an impact on how individual restitution projects are planned (Chapter Three). Here, we will take a closer look at how the production of these conservation areas implies linkages across a broader and transnational policy community. The process of producing and appropriating space is applied through an extended case study of the brokerage role of a white environmental

broker, who also owns land in the Western Soutpansberg Mountain Range of South Africa's Limpopo Province. We will trace his settlement in the area in 1993 through to his current role as chairperson of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. His struggles to tie his land and livelihood in with the spatial and equity principles of international conservation agencies, land reform, national and provincial conservation legislation and the Integrated Development Plans of the municipality reveal the way various scales and temporalities merge through forms of strategic action. Defence of place and personal space, it follows, combines efforts at materially and symbolically opening up places to new environmental meanings and simultaneously closing them down to alternative meanings and competing land claims. They are also emotive forms of investment. They may develop affections for their projects that owe more to a 'dwelling perspective' (Ingold 2000) than a disinterested position as manager or abstract planner.

White Brokerage and Environmental Politics

Post-colonial, boundless nature conservation promotes new spatial ordering and a range of scales that may encompass home, bioregion, community and nation-state (Hughes 2005). The possibility of imposing new hierarchies and technologies of rule thereon raises the issue of how political and cultural resources are distributed across increasingly trans-local and decentred conservation networks (Lester 2003). Especially where conservation meets sustainable development, and conservation is viewed as a means of cultural reconciliation, we can expect to find complex mechanisms to coordinate differential interests and manage consent (Wolmer 2003). Increasingly, the stability of this networked nature relies on managerial approaches that render all solutions technical, de-politize political processes and justify mediation by specialized brokers to manage all interests at stake (Chapter One). The grammar of neoliberalism thus enters the fray in its political guise as a governmental technology that transfers responsibility to those who are well positioned to coordinate and manage the new conservation space. With the accompanying claim to win-win solutions, which may also expand to entail non-economic gains of fostering a political reconciliation across previously disconnected political and racial groups, it rearranges political agency in a way that creates political spaces outside of the regular societal frameworks of citizenship, social and restorative justice.

In the South African bioregional and trans-frontier approach to conservation, we witness the drive to open up post-colonial nature to foreign tourists and investors through the branding and marketing of 'boundless products', for instance, the Peace Park. Part of this orientation is 'a neoliberal political strategy to make all 'stakeholders' feel as though they gain their 'rightful' place in a conservation development market' (Büscher 2010b: 651). In a

de-politicized, technocratic environment, particular privileges accrue to planners and those who invest in models and develop frameworks for managing spatial and commoditized relations. The managerial entitlement of such brokers owes a lot to the historical culture of the South African bureaucracy that values professionalization in planning and relies strongly on planned solutions (James 2007). Spatial and business planning is often a precondition to dispensing development parcels to state beneficiaries. Instructive in this respect is the formalization of the Makuleke land restitution claim to a portion of the Kruger National Park through a range of contractual agreements and the way in which conservation agencies construed the settlement as a replicable model for community-based conservation (Robins and van der Waal 2008). This planning orientation has coincided with the realization that an overextended state needs to outsource planning to consultants. As such, it has to rely on the Community–Public–Private–Partnership model for channelling investment, and for the distribution of political risk and economic benefits.

This 'privatization of the responsibility for development' entails a structure of opportunity and constraint through which white private landowners engage with the post-apartheid state, their African neighbours and fellow landowners (Chapter One). It enables them to rescale land conflicts by contributing to new spatial frameworks and making new scales that may trump land claims to their landed property. Such engagement, as we shall see in the case of the Biosphere Reserve, jumps scales and recontextualizes debates about rural development. Project Steering Committees or workshops enable whites, together with the state and non-state conservation agencies, to constitute a majority over Africans. Such feats highlight that the contention over white belonging is not restricted to the contestation of property rights in relation to racialized land redistribution policies (cf. Ntsebeza and Hall 2007). It can also be vested in the management spaces where multi-community sharing is negotiated. It points to the manner in which scale-making unhinges the 'thingness' of property and how 'ideas, intellectual contributions, cultural products and processes…can be owned' (James and Fay 2009: 2).

In such inter-racial platforms, agency typically revolves around the control of discourse and the way in which globalized environmental principles can be translated (with the use of scientific knowledge and technologies of visualization) into conservation territories (cf. Zimmerer and Bassett 2003). Spatialized politics may be geared at policing the movement into and out of these territories, whereby bureaucratic consistency is pursued. Most controversial, perhaps, is how these spaces may become (re-)racialized. Ontological difference may be drawn between the approaches of Africans to sensitive environments and institutionalised in racialized and ethnicized domains like Indigenous Knowledge

Systems and traditional medicine. This has also been extended to the ease with which re-invited African communities have been attributed a form of 'natural leadership' that is tribal and expressed in the past territorial ambitions of spatialized race (cf. Moore 2005; Singh and van Houtum 2002). Likewise, this production of racialized space and ontological difference has been related to the production of Edenic wilderness, which continues to be construed in the Western or proto-colonial separation of man and nature (Draper et al. 2004).

My focus on the brokerage of white, private landowners and the contestation of neo-natures, however, cautions against overemphasizing the role of neoliberal discourse in spatial arrangements and viewing Edenic wilderness as the static imaginary around which landscapes are shaped. If we consider the earlier remark that white conservations – awakened to the realities of changing political agency – are ready to turn to their gaze to society and adopt a 'post-wilderness' frame of reference (Hughes 2010), we see their projects as risky business and prone to shifting articulations and contingencies. In the same vein, we are not dealing with bureaucratically-legible or functionalist spaces but risky projects of politically-compromised actors that employ their cultural politics against the backdrop of competing public authorities (state and non-state). In this regard, environmental politics do not necessarily 'gain traction' or result in intended outcomes.

In the conceptualization of opening and closing spaces, where whites act as both landowners and managers of platforms, I also foreground the interconnectedness between materiality and symbolic meaning. It relates to how provisional, not-yet natures may also be construed through labour and the erection of fences, dwellings and other structures with the aim of inscribing new environmental meanings in physical landscapes. In this light, landed properties can act as beacons that point to a desired future, or a tangible model of an incomplete nature. This process of embodiment highlights the aforementioned distinction Lefebvre (1991) draws between 'representation of space' and 'representational space' (Chapter One). The former can be seen in relation to the types of expert-led planning and forms of abstract representations of nature through a scientific grammar producing landscape-level maps and taxonomies of populations of endangered species. It helps explain the networked activities defined within that politicized drawing of maps and disempowering local people by (re-)categorizing them according to the hierarchical categories of conservation agencies. Representational space invokes quite the opposite - the realm of lived, intimate experience:

> Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or square, church graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion and lived situations, and thus immediately implies time. Consequently, it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic (ibid.: 41).

Political ecologists have characterized representational space as sites of resistance of local communities or as spaces defended by local groups that are embedded in place and whose cultural attachment to land represents the interplay of symbolic and material elements (cf. Escobar 2008; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995).

In applying this distinction to place-making of whites in South Africa we are faced with the question how to view their attachments to land. Evidently, they have been constitutive of the materiality of landscapes and contribute to what was defined earlier as the sedimented landscapes of meaning. This situates them as dwellers in landscapes, rather than mere abstract planners and investors, in symbolic ways that do not simply reflect use- or exchange value (Ingold 2011; 2000). At the same time, they may be well-positioned to assume positions as planners and strategic advisors in processes of planning for nature conservation and building the types of win-win models described above. This political economy of positionality is explored below in relation to the work of an exceptional broker seeking to engage the state and contribute to new economic models for cross-racial beneficiation.

Two theses are developed in this case study. Owing to the position of such enterprising whites as private landowners and 'dwellers in place', on the one hand, efforts at constructing new natures may imply efforts at developing their own properties into sites that represent the values and possibilities presented by the futures they draw out. This remark, ties in with the notion that processes of the appropriation of space may extend to the material reworking – in the forms of buildings and land use activities – that highlight how place itself can become hegemonic as a representation of spatiality (see Chapter One). Secondly, with a focus on process and the risky business this place-making implies, we can conceive these actor projects as personal journeys that are emotive and imply moments of spatial and cultural disorientations and related repositioning against the wider geography of uncertainty that includes land restitution. The point here is then not to view these cultural politics as necessarily representing fixed interests (as most analyses invoking the political economy of post-apartheid land reclamation suggest) but rather to approach it as a reflexive process which develops through contingent linkages within networks, against the backdrop of the uncertainties of parallel processes of land reform, actors' repositioning vis-à-vis others, and temporal processes of engagement and disengagement (see Brosius 1999).

CHAPTER 4

The remainder of this chapter explores the environmentalist brokerage by a wealthy white landowner who bought a game farm in the Western Soutpansberg mountain range in the mid 1990s which is now also under a land restitution claim. As a retired town planner from Johannesburg, Etienne Goldmann (not his real name), became the main driving force behind a local wealth-creation model based on preservation of natural and cultural heritage. In an impressive feat of networking between environmental agencies, community leaders and government, he solidified his vision by importing UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme into the area. The international model provided a spatial framework for zonation that was on a massive landscape scale but also promised to maintain open, unfixed boundaries. In its futuristic guise, it was expected that international recognition as a Biosphere would tap into the latent potential of the eco-tourism market.

As a self-styled custodian of African interests he laboured to develop so-called demonstration projects that would illustrate the possibilities of eco-tourism to his African neighbours. This visualisation involved material investments and the creation of the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Knowledge on his land. All the while, he laboured to marry this vision with the pending land restitution claim to his property which threatened to dispossess him of his land. Below we will trace this landowner's struggle to tie in his land and livelihood with spatial productions of international agencies, land reform bodies, Integrated Development Plans of municipalities and various other social productions by the actors he drew into his conservation network or could not wish away. A final note regards the exceptional nature of this case and work of this broker. It means that it is not representative of nature conservation efforts more generally. The aim of the case is, however, to show how the social production of scales and import of extra-local spatial frameworks are illustrative of a landscape of power in the Limpopo Province in which land restitution is but one spatiality. In this regard, the broker studied below operates at a frontier and interstitial space that allows room for enterprising brokers to reshape the field of power and the place of land restitution claims therein.

Building Bridges and Appropriating Platforms: Early Beginnings of a Liberal Landowner

Viewed through the lens of land reform, post-apartheid landscapes represent a mosaic of properties in different stages of contestation. This also applies to the Western Soutpansberg area. By 2000 the Regional Land Claims Commission had published more than ninety per cent of privately owned land for consideration for land restitution. The resolution of these land claims has however been slow and is hampered by overlapping community claims. The area is at once under claim by smaller groups claiming rights to particular land

parcels and part of large territorial claims by traditional leaders who base their entitlements on tribal dominion. Its historical status as an agricultural area is also the subject of intense debate. From the early 1990s a group of seven white landowners organized themselves into the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy. This recent environmental movement has further complicated the resolution of land claims as land redistribution of environmentally-sensitive areas requires a higher degree of land-use planning. It has also opened the scope for white landowners to throw up new obstacles by invoking the public interest in natural and cultural heritage.

Etienne Goldmann entered this reality in 1993 when he bought a mountain farm in the Western Soutpansberg. Having retired as a successful town and regional planner from Johannesburg he purchased the 2,500 ha farm in the full knowledge that there was a land claim on it. He proceeded to develop the land and establish a high-end eco-tourism lodge, mostly targeting foreign tourists. An acknowledgment of the land restitution claimants was evident in the name: he called it: Hamasha (not the real name) Wilderness, after the group claiming historical rights to the land. His investment in the farm betrayed an interest in the local Venda culture; using one of the nationally-acclaimed local artists, he erected a 'traditional village' where tourists could get a taste of mud-hut life among life-size sculptures. In a region known for its conservative white Afrikaner farmers, his arrival certainly heralded the arrival of a more moderate, worldly and liberal white man who could set a new precedent in redefining racialized land relations.

Early encounters seemed to confirm this. Upon his arrival in the Soutpansberg area, he sought contact with the traditional leadership of the neighbouring African rural settlement of Khutama-Sinthumule some fifteen kilometres down the mountain. As a gesture of goodwill he approached the tribal leadership, and made a monetary donation towards establishment of a pre-school or crèche for local children in 1999. It was the start of a long-term relationship with members of the Khutama-Sinthumule Development Forum whose members would later serve on various Development Trusts initiated by Goldmann. One of the members of the traditional leadership described the relationship: Chief (*Khosi*) Khutama was his 'bridge' into the community 'because now Etienne wants to be close to these people'. Etienne also brought a no-nonsense business approach to the upliftment of Africans: 'he is someone who helps people who help themselves'.

Quizzed about the political affiliation of this newcomer, he stated that one only need-edto look at his contacts; they spoke for themselves. He was referring to Thabo Mbeki, the former State President of the country, who had stayed at his eco-lodge in 2003. Such a

networked individual promised the potential of connectedness to the centres of power, all too important for rural communities relying on state support for basic service delivery. The political clout this carried became all too obvious for me when I saw what this visit brought about: the President's signing of the guestbook suggested considerable political leverage. The phrase, 'The story of the Mountain should be told in all its intriguing richness and given the possibility to contribute to a better future for all humanity', was reproduced in the many draft 'discussion documents' and PowerPoint presentations Etienne gave at forums. Such affirmations strengthened a transformative vision that Etienne was bringing to the area and suggested indeed that he was different from the local conservative Afrikaners.

Upon his arrival, he became involved in the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy; an initiative of white private landowners that had been started around 1991 and had since fallen flat. Its early popularity, according to another private landowner on the mountain, was attributable to a misguided belief that somehow a conservation status could protect one's private landownership. Its establishment had also been articulated in the antiquated language of physical boundaries: 'A fence surrounding the whole conservancy will first be erected' and members 'must see to it that a large number of people are not allowed to settle in the area'.[30]

A conservancy with its informal institutional arrangements and self-regulatory practices – a social contract between private landowners that does not have official status in terms of the 1998 Protected Areas Act – appeared futile in the face of recent land restitution cases. As one member explained, referring to the successful Makuleke land restitution claim to a portion of the Kruger National Park: 'if they can win a claim to Kruger, we don't stand a chance here!' The 40,000 ha of private land consolidated in the Conservancy, however, provided a platform that Etienne was eager to mobilize, despite it being constitutionally dysfunctional and its members having lost interest. His entry implied a new lease on life but also a rift with some of the earlier members. The former chairman of the Conservancy, a third generation landowner who also farmed cattle besides running a tourism and hunting lodge, explained the recent rift between the two newcomers who took over the Conservancy, and the established families. In describing the former as 'bunny huggers', he lamented their regimented view of nature conservation that focused on preservation and a puritan view of social-natural interactions (e.g., prohibiting occasional hunting and restricting livestock rearing).

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[30] *Zoutpansberger,* 6 February 1998

Alienation from the white established landowners seemed of limited importance to Etienne Goldmann. He became chairman of the Conservancy and refashioned it in order to reach out to extensions of the government and surrounding African communities. From 1998 it became a forum for launching what Etienne called a 'new language of conservation'. It was presented as a radically different discourse of development that required including African communities in decision-making around their shared resources and finding a means of generating income for Africans from nature conservation and eco-tourism. A discussion document from October 2004 presented to the Limpopo provincial government contains a concise view of a non-racial, pro-community development model the restyled Conservancy stood for:

> This [the richness and heritage of the Soutpansberg people] dates back centuries, yet it could all be lost if a pro-active programme is not actively implemented to conserve this cultural asset. This relates in particular to many of the younger generation who know little of their rich cultural heritage. By combining the people of the Soutpansberg and their culture with the wonderfully bio-diverse environment, we have the makings of a magic formula to promote eco-tourism.

The definition at once invokes the existence of a pre-colonial past and the future of an inter-racial human community. It alludes to the benefits of exposing current Africans – ignorant of their pasts – to the anthropogenic landscapes of their ancestors. In a rhetorical feat, it problematizes current forms of agricultural land use and game farming, and constructs future aspirations in terms of the latent eco-tourism potential.

Emplaced Acts of Preservation: The Hamasha Wilderness Centre for Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Knowledge

Such discursive practices coincided with more emplaced acts aimed at converting the use-value of his property. Transforming the former game farm into a sanctuary for tourists was achieved by reinstating it as a Wilderness sanctuary. The alien blue-gum trees – a remnant of white settler logging – were rooted out, wildlife was reintroduced and fences for grazing camps were removed. Hunting was abolished, hiking trails were developed and the existent bush-camps converted for eco-tourism purposes. Centuries-old hunter-gatherer San cave drawings were rediscovered that had been 'hidden away' in the property's caves. Such a conversion, through physical labour, management and marketing, merited the qualification of the property as a Natural Heritage Site in 1999 in terms of the South African Natural Heritage Site Programme. The Hamasha lodge now entices visitors with the slogan 'Climb above the Clouds, Walk with the Rhino' and offers a hike through 'Tolkien's forest'.

The main overnight camp was built by a renowned Venda wood carver and was duly dubbed the 'Venda Cultural Village'. Its construction brought Goldmann in touch with a

network of local artists and inspired him to develop a second dwelling for another type of visitor: students in traditional arts and crafts. The Hamasha Wilderness Centre for Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Knowledge (CATIK) was erected in 2004. Testimony to Goldmann's growing network, he managed to obtain grants from the Irish government and the South African mining giant De Beers to erect the building and host the first woodcarving workshop for African youngsters. He also enrolled a leading community-conservation non-governmental organisation, Afristar, to draft a host of strategic documents intended to promote the importance of the Centre as a 'demonstration project' to illustrate the value of Indigenous Knowledge in monetary and cultural terms. Over a number of years these documents took on a generic and flexible form; they were adapted to various institutional languages – mirroring a sensitisation to the complex networks in 'modern conservation'– but had the overarching goals of contributing to development of the African communities at the foot of the mountain.

CATIK demonstrated a particular interpretation of indigenous and appropriate technology. The seven income-generating activities illustrated there included wood carving, pottery, drum making, textiles, beadwork, cultural performances and traditional healing. Project planning invoked the urgency of the erosion of this indigenous knowledge and focused on ownership in terms of the protection and registration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems:

> Local communities or individuals do not have the necessary knowledge or the means to safeguard their property in a system, which has its origin in very different cultural values and attitudes. Indigenous and local communities have a stockpile of knowledge about their flora and fauna – their habits, their habitats, their seasonal behaviour – and it is only logical and in consonance with natural justice that they are given a greater say as a matter of right in all matters regarding the study, extraction and commercialization of indigenous knowledge' (CATIK, n.d.: 3).

During fieldwork in 2006 and 2007, I was witness to the functioning of the centre of diffusion. One particular workshop marked its new function as a regional 'think-tank' to preserve indigenous knowledge. Here Etienne took the initiative to bring members of the Khutama traditional leadership into contact with a researcher from the Bio-prospecting unit of the parastatal Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). In his presentation, Dr Marthinus Horak of the Bio-prospecting Unit explained the CSIR model for registering indigenous plants. He had been working on a registrar to map and protect intellectual property rights to traditional medicine of rural communities. The CSIR was critical to the promise of development: they had recently established a candle factory for a natural mosquito repellent of the indigenous 'hoodia' plant. A candle was circulated in the meeting. It gave a hint of the type of things that were possible through a community-public-private-partnership and the commoditization of indigenous knowledge.

In reference to the role of brokers like Etienne, Dr Horak stated that registration could be done in the name of 'all people who associate themselves with Venda culture'. He then turned to Etienne saying, 'this person can be a relative newcomer. The important question being, is he known in this area?'[32] African ownership was vested in the 'natural' traditional leadership in whose name any prospective product would be registered. Chief Khutama was also among one of the five executive members of the Hamasha Venda Arts and Culture Trust. On various occasions during our interactions, I expressed my concern about the prospect of 're-tribalization' and unduly empowering traditional leaders. When I asked Etienne about this issue he responded: 'I somehow feel that Africans have a different view to how we look at the management of a project. In this regard, I refer to the tribal system which in itself is an IKS [Indigenous Knowledge System]. We Westerners do not really understand it. I suspect that we need to not only look at Indigenous Knowledge but at how it is to be managed. This is a subject in itself'.[33] His view was one of learning to manage interracial relationships through such joint projects and finding a 'common language' through developing a common interest. Yet he did not doubt the constitution of rural Africans as tribal subjects, a belief which he felt was reinforced in light of recent legislation – the 2003 Traditional Leadership and Government Framework Act – that enabled municipalities to enter into service agreements with traditional authorities.

'Looking at the Bigger Picture': The Biosphere Reserve Spatial Framework
Whereas the CATIK project appeared to fix local Africans in time and place, the commoditised view to maintaining indigenous cultures commanded a more extensive spatial logic and marketing strategy. By 1999 the Limpopo Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) had started to envision a larger scale of environmental planning that connected some of the province's unique selling points. It faced the problem of an underdeveloped tourism industry, dwarfed by the pulling power of the Kruger National Park to the East. Most of the provincial towns were mere 'stopover' points or watering holes for tourists on the way to the Park. Opportunities were missed by the local eco-tourism lodge-owners like Goldmann. An undated document from the Soutpansberg Conservancy referred to the 'Forgotten Mountain': 'Very few people that cross the Soutpansberg realize they have just seen one of the most unique biological environments in the world. A rough calculation has indicated that the area is more diverse than many of the recognized bio-diverse 'hotspots' in the world!'

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[32] Etienne, speaking at workshop for Kutama-Sinthumule Development Forum, Hamasha wilderness, 26 March 2006
[33] Email message to author, 20 January 2008

In conjunction with DEAT, private landowners developed a vision for the region that would link up the scattered pockets of biodiversity. Termed the 'Golden Horseshoe' it included various conservation hotspots that were 'under the radar' and the not-yet established Soutpansberg Biosphere Reserve (later to be renamed Vhembe BR). Structured around the travelling European tourist with their rental car, the Soutpansberg Mountain featured as the northernmost point of interest (see Figure 4.1). The move coincided with the establishment of future leisure markets of opportunity. A municipal tourism plan promoted the idea of the 'new tourist' as someone who may look beyond the beaten track of the Kruger and who would seek a unique travel experience and travel to 'a region or attraction that is totally undeveloped' (STRISA 2004: 35). But attracting this tourist required a particular formalisation of the area in terms of a biodiversity status that could market the area as an international brand. Against the backdrop of unresolved land claims, the presence of various concentrated African communities and the large stretches of privately-owned game farms, this required a sensitive solution.

UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme appeared to provide a framework for bringing environmental awareness and eco-tourism to local communities. In fact, the General Manager of Tourism, Protected areas and Community Environment Development of the Limpopo Province wrote her Master's thesis on the applicability of the model to the province. By 2004 the province had two established Biospheres (Waterberg and Kruger to Canyons) and she formally backed up an application by members of the Soutpansberg Conservancy. The model implied a new type of landscape-level zonation that linked up protected conservation areas to marginalized communities at its fringes. Planning would be based on a more progressive 'island approach' in conservation that 'entails involving local communities in and around protected areas in all spheres of planning and developing protected areas. As such, it signifies that a much broader approach to the conservation of biodiversity should prevail, including the focus on the landscape scale as a key factor in an overall bioregional approach to land management' (de Klerk 2003: 4).

The model appeared in various planning documents as an innovative approach based on co-management by all users (including landowners), and a model for resolving land conflicts. The landscape scale of planning was an added bonus: it could provide a framework for the various fragmented forms of overlapping plans at municipal, district and provincial levels. According to the then Provincial Coordinator of the Biospheres, the long-term vision was expansive and aimed to 'link biosphere reserves with each other, and with other protected areas, through green corridors and in other ways that enhance biodiversity conservation, and ensure that these links are maintained'.[34]
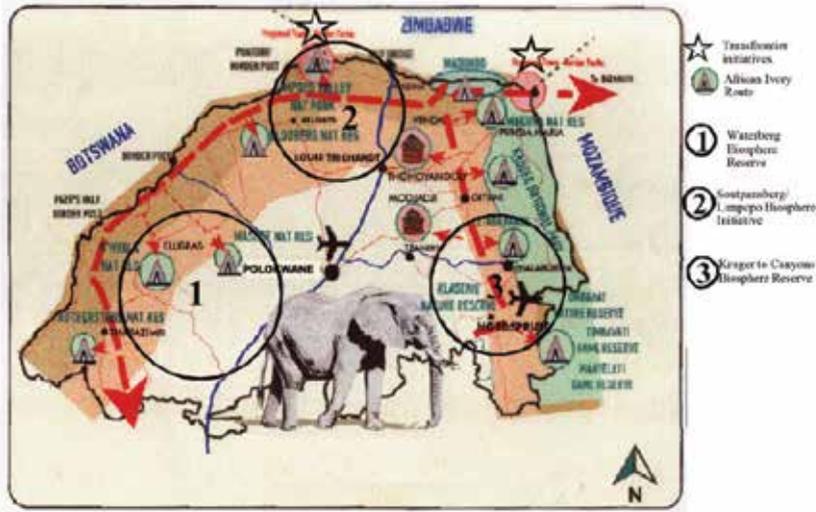
Figure 4.1 Illustration of the Tourism vision ('Golden Horseshoe') of the Limpopo Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Zonation of Biosphere Reserves is organized around three types of land use to which different sets of conditions apply: core conservation areas, buffer areas and transition zones. Core areas are envisioned as environmentally-sensitive areas where only game utilization can take place and low-impact usage such as 'research programmes' (agriculture is not promoted). Buffer areas afford more liberties with eco-tourism establishments and modest housing developments. Transitional zones are usually areas having undergone 'human transformation' through intensive land use such as commercial farming, township development, industrial development and what in the South African context is referred to as 'communal farming'. Given that they are also areas of relatively high population density, they are treated as target areas for environmental education aimed at local communities. The novelty of Biosphere Reserves rests not only in their potentially immense scale – few conditions are set for the outer transition zones – but also in the approach to regulation and enforcement. They are not captured in formal nature conservation regulations due to many land uses being combined within their boundaries.[35]

Rather, policy documents described the Reserve management as a decentralized 'self-regulatory process' governed by 'soft laws', an informal contract vested in a management

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[34] Draft policy document by S. Shaikh, Manager Community Environment Development and Provincial Coordinator for Biospheres, Environmental Affairs entitled, 'Toward a Strategic Planning Framework for the MAB programme in the Province', February 2004, material in private possession

[35] Interview K. Naude, Makhado, 19 May 2011

committee that would be representative and inclusive. Firstly, however private landowners, state officials and community representatives would have to define boundaries. Proponents were adamant that the Biosphere status was not a classic form of protection: it was a social contract between users that could be disbanded and would be valid as long as the social contract between users was valid and workable. In an area marked by hostile policies and ill-communication across the racial divide, it also implied a model for managing relations. A 2004 document authored by Goldmann motivated the choice for the fluid biosphere in the following terms:

> The main reason for choosing the latter route is because a Biosphere Reserve offers more opportunities to the surrounding local communities than a protected area. It is a management tool, which requires all stakeholders to 'sit around a table' and decide on the area's optimum future. It therefore brings to the table a much wider range of energies that can combine to provide a more powerful and sustainable end result.[36]

When I visited the Soutpansberg area in 2005, I found the Interim Biosphere Committee in its second year of meetings. For two years thereafter, I attended the meetings where the draft nomination form was debated. The process would be directed by the Provincial Department but private landowners from the Western Soutpansberg were tasked to 'start with the development of the nomination form document'.[37] Following Biosphere guidelines, the committee was organized around the three main functions of the Biosphere: Logistics, Development and Conservation. Two qualified ecologists chaired the Logistics and Conservation functions and set about pooling all available data on the biodiversity of the area. The draft nomination forms that were discussed at our meetings typically contained extensive listings of Red List data species – local fauna and flora in various stages of extinction – geomorphology and mapping of the ecological land typologies. The Conservation expert was also tasked with making an inventory of unique cultural heritage sites and cultural practices. Etienne Goldmann chaired the Development Task Team and was later appointed as chairman.

Their work fed into a project of unprecedented scale in order to cover the mosaic of pockets of biodiversity hotspots and include the Provincial and National Parks (including Kruger National Park) as 'core conservation' areas. The Vhembe Biosphere Reserve covers an area of 30,700 km2 (3.07 million ha), almost a third of the entire Limpopo province and one-and-a-half times the expanse of the Kruger National Park (see Figure 4.2). Over

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[36] Draft document by J. Goldmann entitled, 'The Potential for Sustainable Biosphere Development in the Limpopo Province. A Way Forward for the Soutpansberg and its People'. Compiled and edited by Etienne Rosmarin from the UNESCO/South African Biosphere Reserve manual as well as valuable input by Annemie de Klerk, 7 September 2004, material in private possession.

[37] Letter from DEAT Vhembe District 'Zoutpansberg Biosphere Initiative Report (March-August 2004)', 13 September 2004. Material in private possession

1.1 million people would fall within its boundaries. The merits of this vastness from a conservationist perspective were seen in terms of the 'corridor' principle: 'The management plan will also focus on the rehabilitation of important natural corridors such as riparian zones' (DEAT 2008: 32). The vastness, however, also mirrored collaboration with local government; it straddled five municipal areas in the hope that 'more state' would imply more capacity to channel funds for 'human development'.
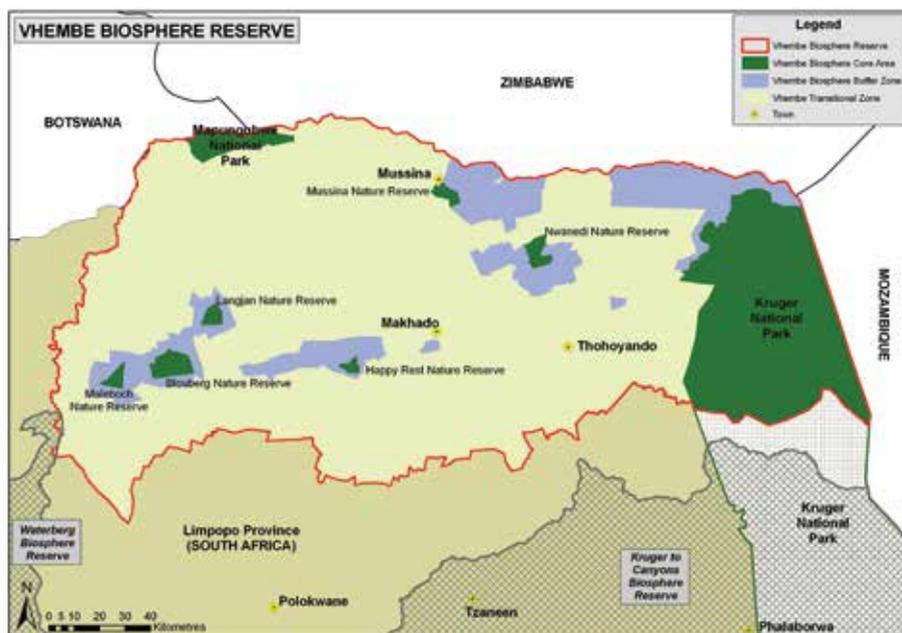
Figure 4.2 Details of the proposed Biosphere Reserve showing existing Core conservation areas and planned buffer and transition zones

White Stewardship in the Biosphere Committee: Stepping In and Mapping Out

By the time of my participation in 2005 the committee had already been solidified. The official number of 'stakeholders' was 15 but meetings were also open to other persons upon invitation (I entered the process as a 'scientific advisor' and later was attached to the Development Function team). Government officials from the District Municipality and the Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs (DEAT) passed the buck to an agency to act as facilitators of the committee meetings. The facilitating agency was responsible for advertising the meetings and ensuring ample government representation across the board. This included officials from the district and local municipality and inevitably meant that government officials constituted a majority at each meeting. It also meant that this group

was very flexible and not well-informed due to following a common practice amongst bureaucrats to share portfolios and send a 'delegate' on their behalf.

DEAT would be responsible for the final submission of the report but relied on the aforementioned Task Teams for drafting the documents. Five traditional leaders represented the vast 'rural population'. To my initial astonishment, no officials from the Department of Land Affairs or the Regional Land Claims Commission attended the meetings. Communication between these provincial state departments would be facilitated by DEAT, which shared offices with them in the provincial capital of Polokwane. Two researchers from the regional University of Venda also occasionally attended but played no prominent role other than being conveyors of information to assist with the compilation of the nomination form. The official relationships between state agencies were supposed to be institutionalized in Memorandums of Understanding, but in practice this was lubricated through informal conversations and letter writing.

The meetings took on an informal form without clear guidelines for minimal attendance, for holding elections or making important decisions. Most indicative of the confusion over responsibilities was perhaps the issue of publicizing the Biosphere concept to the wider communities. At various meetings concerns were raised over the lack of popular buy-in and the need for a more pro-active approach in promoting the Biosphere model. Despite the circulation of various proposals for radio campaigns, poster campaigns and road shows for promoting the Biosphere concept in the 'traditional areas', the broad consultation found no champion as no funds were sourced from the Provincial Poverty Relief Fund to this end .

Likewise, the appointment of a consultant to compile a spatial management plan for the Biosphere reserve was delayed to a later moment when it could be budgeted for by the DEAT department. Decisions over the inclusion or exclusion of particular areas as core or buffer areas were delayed in a similar fashion. The flexible nature of the biosphere process allowed for core areas to be expanded at a later stage when ample data could be found to legitimate their status as biodiversity hotspots. Following UNESCO Man and Biosphere procedures, there would be a two-yearly evaluation where new plans could be submitted for adding new core conservation areas.

Regarding the constitution of the committee representativeness, the relative weight of the private landowners was not problematic to the leading state official. She declared that the 'process' was 'the tool relevant to the situation' and there was an advantage to mobilising 'existent structures' like the Soutpansberg Conservancy.[38] From a state perspective,

the privatization of functions implied that costs could be reduced by using the voluntary services of private landowners. Scientific tasks like the gathering of data on biodiversity to meet requirements of UNESCO proved arduous and were duly outsourced. One particular landowner, also the convener of the Logistics task team and member of the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy, was especially well-positioned to coordinate data collection. After retiring from the local Venda University as a professor in ecology, he had bought the highest peak of the mountain.

His labouring mirrored Goldmann's restoration of a mountain farm to the wilderness but differed in its orientation: it was used to host foreign students from the natural sciences and promote scientific research. As a privately-run research centre it became the source of knowledge production and also a meeting point for a range of local scientists. Their concerted efforts resulted in a workshop in 2005 hosted by the Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism intended to 'synthesize the available information on the bio-diversity in the proposed area and to select hotspots for conservation' and it preliminarily demarcated the core conservation areas that were to be debated in the committee meetings (van der Wiel and Gaigher, 2005).

Having observed the committee meetings and being part of the scientific community that received the draft documents, I approached the ecologist with the question whether he felt that the Biosphere process did not entail a social contract between private landowners and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. He responded in an email:

> I think the basic problem is that the biosphere concept has never been thought through properly. The idea came from the Department of Environmental Affairs and it has been run in a dismal manner by this department throughout the process...It is definitely not a social contract between white landowners and government. In fact, very few white landowners are aware of the process (this came out clearly in the process of obtaining endorsements from landowners in the buffer zones). The only white landowners involved are those like Etienne [Goldmann], Jan, Norbert and myself that have been elected on the Steering Committee. We got involved through our activities around the Soutpansberg Conservancy. The Department [DEAT] and the Steering Committee has gone to great efforts to ensure that this does not become a "white driven" process...It was only after they realized that they could not do it without our help that we were allowed to get involved. What I am trying to emphasize is the fact that this is not a white driven process. Any involvement of whites has been through their expertise. All the basic issues, e.g. the boundaries, the core areas, the name, the logo, etc. were either taken by the department or by the Steering Committee. Although the process was never properly publicized, I get the impression that it is enthusiastically supported by community leaders and black politicians. They also see this as their property.[39]

[38] Personal communication, 26 February 2006
[39] Personal communication, 13 December 2006

His limited role as a scientist implied he anticipated stepping out once the Executive Management Committee had been formed. Such a committee would take on a more formal role and see to implementation of the future management plan. At a February 2007 meeting, as the nomination form neared completion, he reluctantly accepted nomination for a position on the ten-person Executive Committee. He clarified: 'I am just one member of the steering committee. Because of my technical knowledge I have helped compile the application'. The DEAT department seemed equally reluctant to assume the leading role. The chairman of the meeting responded by saying, 'We don't want to see the department continuing like this, we are just here to facilitate, not run, the biosphere'. In a quick election procedure overseen by the chair of the meeting, the ecologist was roped into the new committee. Another two members were nominated in absentia after their names had been called out. After a quick show of hands, Etienne Goldmann was re-elected as the chairperson. The following day, I spoke to Etienne about the future of the biosphere and how it could perhaps develop into a broader and more representative forum. He answered:

> I think so far it's been an enormous success. Yesterday's meeting, to me was a fantastic moment, main reason being that local stakeholders are taking control and management of the system. To me that's the biggest sign of success. The concept of the biosphere is fantastic. I'm totally convinced that it is going to be a big part of the success. There are two parts of the success that didn't come out at yesterday's meeting. Everyone's concerned with the physical declaration of the biosphere. This is, absolutely meaningless… you got true stakeholders in the area, sitting around the table talking the language of the sustainable development, so that's the first thing. The second part, is now what I introduced yesterday, now actually showing delivery-creating partnerships, that's now the bottom line.

The interim biosphere committee that had been formed, set up yet another committee in an already fragmented political landscape. As a shared decision-making platform it held limited prospects for the future but it would fulfil the task of drafting and submitting the nomination form in 2007. In fact, the next step, the formalization of the Steering Committee in a so-called non-profit Section 21 organization, was a stage that Etienne wanted to avoid, claiming he wanted to withdraw from his 'direct involvement' to 'participant' once the structures were in place.

Although Goldmann aspired to have the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy included as a core area, the ecologist dissuaded him from including it as such. The diverse land use in the area did not meet the UNESCO criteria and the task teams had difficulties convincing other private landowners – agriculturalists – to sign for this endorsement as a conservation area. Other local landowners were looking to sell their land to land restitution claimants and feared that the conservation status would present an obstacle to a state purchase. For now, the Conservancy would be included as a 'buffer zone'. Having these private properties protected in future was however under discussion. Biospheres are evaluated in two-yearly

cycles and inclusion of new areas is possible. To safeguard future expansion of the core area, the scientific task team came up with a notion of 'clusters'; zones of expansion were identified around eight of the Provincial Parks. A 2004 paper discussed the adoption of the notion of the cluster around the Western Soutpansberg Conservancy along the following lines:

> We can start with clusters around sensitive conservation hotspots and later expand these areas where necessary. This will facilitate the administrative process and ensure that no part of the mountain is left out in the initial process. Each cluster can have its own steering committee under an umbrella steering committee or facilitation committee. The cluster areas will all form part of a single larger biosphere reserve in the application to UNESCO… New environmental legislation that is in the pipeline will improve the situation but the biggest challenge for this cluster will be to convince UNESCO that privately owned core conservation areas could be viable within our socio-economic setup. The existing Soutpansberg Conservancy could be an important tool in incorporating this region into the biosphere reserve.

The cluster preference found its way into the final nomination form and was built around the Happy Rest Nature Park (see Figure 4.2). This cluster approach enabled local landowners to make their own decisions within the context of a Western Soutpansberg Conservancy rather than face the unreliable politics of working under such a large group of stakeholders. As a form of 'planning-out' it relies on trusted networks that are outside of the messy politics of engaging with the state. At the same time protection for private property owes to particular pieces of land being linked up to the wider collection of places that together make up the Biosphere. Despite a lack of limited protection as buffer areas, the biosphere model did infuse Goldmann's private property with new meaning. The Hamasha Wilderness Centre for Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Knowledge was mentioned as one of the key 'demonstration projects' that could actually demonstrate how a Biosphere Reserve can directly benefit the 'man in the street' (VBR 2007: 117).

Invoking the Biosphere Reserve in Defence of Place

The solidity of the Biosphere as a nature conservation area remains ambiguous. Its proponents were careful not to promote it as a territorialization involving physical boundaries, which would imply excluding Africans from access and environmental rights. In an attempt to allay fears that it would bring about another demarcation that could not be reversed, Etienne Goldmann argued at a 2006 Biosphere Meeting that 'you must not see the nomination as a prescriptive document. Read it as a part of the process'. At various forums, he acted tirelessly as a champion of the community-driven development, arguing its replicability across the region. In one of many discussion documents he noted it as a

[40]'The Potential for Sustainable Biosphere Development in the Limpopo Province. A Way forward for the Soutpansberg and its people'. Discussion Document, 7 September 2004. UNESCO/South African Biosphere manual as well as valuable input by Annemie de Klerk, September 2004, material in private possession

'management tool', which requires all stakeholders to 'sit around a table' and decide on the area's 'optimum future'.40 The model-building ambition underpinning the preservationist approach, however, did not address the issue of land ownership.

All the while, like most local landowners, Goldmann functioned under the yoke of having land restitution claims on his property. Inevitably, the slow pace of land restitution eventually caught up with him and he too was called to the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) in Polokwane to take a stance: was he a willing seller or would he resist the land claim on his property?

As highlighted earlier, Goldmann had bought the mountain farm in the mid-1990s fully aware that it was under a restitution claim. He had always presented himself as a willing participant in favour of land reform as a political necessity. In keeping with his liberal intentions, he renamed the place Hamasha Wilderness after the Hamasha land claimant group. Dialogue was maintained with the claimant representative who would visit the farm occasionally. An enthusiastic reporter visited the farm in 2004 and drew inspiration from his exceptionally cooperative spirit. She writes:

> So at the start of summer Etienne [Goldmann] and Calvin Leshiba took the road less travelled. They're engaging one another outside of the Land Commission channels. Like at this meeting where I sit and listen. The talk is straight-forward. "What do you want? How do we do this?" And because they can talk together, many options are on the table. Calvin likes the idea of sharing his family's old farming traditions at the Indigenous Knowledge Centre being built on the mountain. Etienne likes the idea of maybe inviting the elders of Calvin's family to take part in the recording of ancient history and the preservation of folklore at the Centre. "Maybe", they say, "we can encourage some entrepreneurs to form a logging company to get rid of the remaining blue gums on Hamasha Mountain…there are still many intrusive trees that rob the mountain of water, while communities at the bottom of the mountain are starved for firewood. Maybe, let's talk…

For reasons unknown to me, the relationship turned sour. Etienne the landowner explained that he had received little response on his offer to allow the claimant community to come up the mountain and cut the alien blue gum trees for firewood – a win-win situation. Other than that he offered little explanation as to why the dialogue was continued through the RLCC officials. Approaches by the officials were initially met with a willingness to collaborate. Rather than enter into clear negotiations over property rights, he volunteered his services to contribute to a 'holistic and integrated land tenure and socio-economic solution for the area'. An email from 2006 to a senior planner of the RLCC specifies his possible involvement:

> I confirm our [Western Soutpansberg Conservancy] willingness to assist your Department with negotiations between claimants and landowners with the aim of arriving at a long term holistic and integrated land tenure and socio-economic solution for the area. In particular, we have an excellent working arrangement with the Kutama and Sinthemule Local Communities which are the two major communities in the area. Kgosi [Chief] Kutama has been involved in the process from the outset. As stated to you at the meeting, we are also available to assist with the resettlement of the important Kranspoort Community. As agreed, as a first step, I confirm that you will obtain a list of all the properties on the Western Soutpansberg, i.e., between Makhado and Vivo and in particular those to the west of the Waterpoort that have been gazetted and that are due to be gazetted with the aim of our assisting you in achieving the desired objectives. As stated to you, the proposed Biosphere Reserve has provided us with an opportunity of achieving these objectives. Due to the national and regional importance of conserving the bio-diverse Soutpansberg, the Biosphere process offers the basis of contributing towards a unique socio-economic solution for the economic upliftment of the local communities in the area.

A few weeks later I visited him at Hamasha Wilderness to find him in a gloomy mood. When asked how the land claim on his land was proceeding, he sighed 'I am fighting a losing battle'. He was referring to his being wrongly mistrusted as a local landowner and also betrayed a sense of isolation and urgency in convincing local actors to 'look at the bigger picture'. All along he had pushed for a model of negotiating all the interests in representative forums like the Biosphere that tied in a range of agencies. Now he found the RLCC was adopting an antagonistic stance by appealing to his personal interests as a landowner. In his mind, it was unconstructive to revert to the level of individual properties where negotiations were reduced to him, the land restitution claimants and the RLCC officials.

Goldmann felt rebuffed by the commission officials; that his broad vision had been brushed aside in favour of the restricted vision of resolving local land rights first and then discussing a regional model for development. Yielding a pamphlet of a recent CSIR demonstration project of the Hoodia medicinal plant, he lambasted their 'short-term vision':

> I've written them a very clear e-mail that basically said we're trying to create a broader basis here where partnerships can drive local development. I explained to them I wasn't going to talk to them on my particular land claim problem. I arrived there, I met with seven of the nine members representing Vhembe district. They were very friendly, chatted to me at first. I had my slide projector there, and as I started talking, not halfway through my presentation, they interrupted me, in a very antagonistic, very rude, very intimidating way and said to me: "are you accepting the claim or are you going to oppose it?". My answer was, if the claim is valid I will consider accepting it but I have not yet completed the research in ascertaining that decision, which I'm busy with. But I want to talk about the big picture, "we are not interested in the bigger picture". They got up and walked out.[41]

By then he had started to resist the Hamasha land claim and disputed the legitimacy thereof. Having described the RLCC as 'extremely militant' and conducting poor investigation into the validity of his land claims, he hired two anthropologists to do archival research into the historical land rights of the area. Following archival material, which defines African land rights in terms of the hierarchical Chief–land–people nexus (see James 2007: 202), the

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41 Personal communication, 10 February 2007

researchers rejected the Hamasha group as claimants. In terms of the tribal relations, the Hamasha clan would have to have been 'under' Chief Khutama as a sub-headman. Etienne explained that he would only consider selling his land to Chief Kutama (who also sat on the Hamasha Development Trust) and foresaw staying on as a manager after the transfer:

> Now my personal view, and this is the anthropologists' preliminary finding, is that the rightful claimants are the other ones [Chief Kutama]. When I speak to Khosi Khutama we are at one with everything; there must be ownership, the rightful claimants must be acclaimed. If Hamasha is part of that valid claim so be it. Furthermore, I have considered personally the possibility of accepting that valid claim and then remaining there, that is one of the options discussed elsewhere in the country.

In yet another proposal from Goldmann to the RLCC in 2006 for a demonstration project on a neighbouring white farm, he further defines his prospective role by suggesting selling and then leasing back their property to future, albeit legitimate, land claimants. It reads, 'Notwithstanding the submission that there may not be a valid claim on Hamasha Wilderness, the Goldmann family is willing to consider the inclusion of their property into the project, subject to the Goldmann Family retaining the right to lease and manage the property'. Leases should be considered 'where existing expertise and experience currently exists' in order to facilitate skills transfer until the lease expires.

He also makes the point that lessons from earlier failures in land reform point toward the need to select a 'socially cohesive' and undisputed community partner. His condition for entering into partnership is 'the selection of a single cohesive community', which would help avoid detrimental 'community division' that overlapping land claims could bring about. Without mentioning the legitimate claimants, it is clear he is arguing for the acknowledgement of Chief Kutama's chieftaincy as the rightful party. Dealing with a single traditional leadership would mitigate the problems of 'the inclusion of two groups with disparate interests and leadership structures', which 'has been one of the key factors that led to failure in the settlement agreement on land claimed by the San people in the Kalahari'. By challenging the Hamasha land claim and aligning himself with Chief Kuthama, he gained time and the prospect of staying on as a farm manager until the lease expires.

Facing the prospect of a long-standing confrontation with the RLCC, which would have necessitated his using the anthropologists' findings to dispute the land claim, Goldmann finally achieved what he termed a 'major breakthrough' at the end of 2008. He explained in an email that at last he had a constructive dialogue with RLCC officials whose stance towards his model-building ambition had changed. In November of that year he had invited Commission officials to his farm and put them in touch with seven members of the Biosphere Steering Committee. In his words, the outcome was 'acceptance of the RLCC

of the Biosphere principles and a request for the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to send them details on the implications of the Biosphere Spatial Framework for the resolution of outstanding land claims. Consequently, the Manager of DEAT wrote a brief to the new Land Claims Commissioner of the Limpopo province entitled 'the Significance of the Biodiversity of the Soutpansberg Mountain – a Framework to be Considered in Land Use Options and Land Use Management of the land Claims Processes in the Area'. In it he presents the zonation of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve Application Form – hinging on the notions of core, buffer and transitional zones – as the instructive framework with which to 'evaluate all proposed land use options that emanate from the land claims process'.

Quoting the UNESCO Biosphere Nomination Form, this letter extensively discusses the merits of acknowledging the Soutpansberg Mountain as a hotspot for biodiversity and refers to integral ecological zones like biomes, biotopes and the larger bioregions. The informal nature of the conservation status of the proposed Biosphere Reserve – by then it was not yet proclaimed – is counteracted by the expectation that 'the Soutpansberg mountain will be identified as a core area and must be declared a protected area according to the National Environmental protected Areas Act'. With the acceptance of the nomination form by UNESCO, it was clear that what had been presented as a model revolving around 'soft boundaries', had become a resource for local landowners in their defence of place.

Conclusion: Neo-natures at a Racial frontier

This chapter traced the various stages of an environmentalist project of a private landowner. Although post-apartheid land reform policies threaten to assault the sanctity of private land ownership, enterprising whites may still create new environmental spaces in which they are relevant. Here, a particular type of environmentalism was produced that was speculative and futuristic. It banked on future markets and benefits that local Africans could attain from a commoditization of nature and culture. What I refer to as scale-making, involved a reconstitution of Africans as environmental subjects administered according to the principles of traditional leadership and tribal territory. The establishment of the Centre for Appropriate and Indigenous Knowledge on his private land, unsurprisingly perhaps, contributed to this imaginary. More controversial was its reaffirmation through a land restitution claim where he resolved to have the claim dismissed on the grounds that historical land rights are vested in the Paramount Chieftaincy. By arguing that the Restitution Commission should avoid 'the inclusion of two groups with disparate interests and leadership structures', he elevated local land claims to a sub-regional scale.

CHAPTER 4

Scale-making also entailed the import into the region of an international spatial framework. In collaboration with a willing Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve was established that hinged on a new social contract: the interracial platform of deliberative politics in which whites have a disproportionate voice. This hints at a wider process of a privatization of development that is unfolding in the particular areas of spatial planning and planning for sustainable solutions. Although it is not clear if the new Biosphere will gain traction and have tangible effects in new institutional arrangements, it raises the question whether new racial boundaries may not be erected around seemingly progressive ideas of 'modern conservation'.

A final point refers to the convergence of multiple spatialities and the simultaneous enactment of material investment in land and the abstract production of representational space (Lefebvre, 1991). The environmentalist broker/dreamer of this chapter expressed his brokerage through a type of connectedness; a connectedness to distant policy communities like UNESCO and a connectedness to governance structures like Chief Kutama and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. He also employed scientific experts to draft documents that reinforced his particular approach to sustainable development. These endeavours constructed various spatialities that became increasingly entangled; Hamasha Wilderness as a tourist attraction and reception for dignitaries, the Centre of Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Knowledge as a 'demonstration project' and the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve as a Spatial Planning Framework that could be applied to other spatial planning initiatives. Through brokerage of individuals like Goldmann, scalar hierarchies become dissolved, and may lead us 'to conceive, as so many scholars and especially geographers have advocated that we should, of the global, the general and the universal within the same frame of reference as the local, the specific and the particular' (Lester, 2003: 606). Admittedly, the project was a feat of organization but it became a risky endeavour due to an increasing personal attachment to its realization and a defence of personal reputation this environmentalist project had been invested with.

Chapter 5

**Claiming Ancestral Space through
South Africa's Land Restitution Programme**
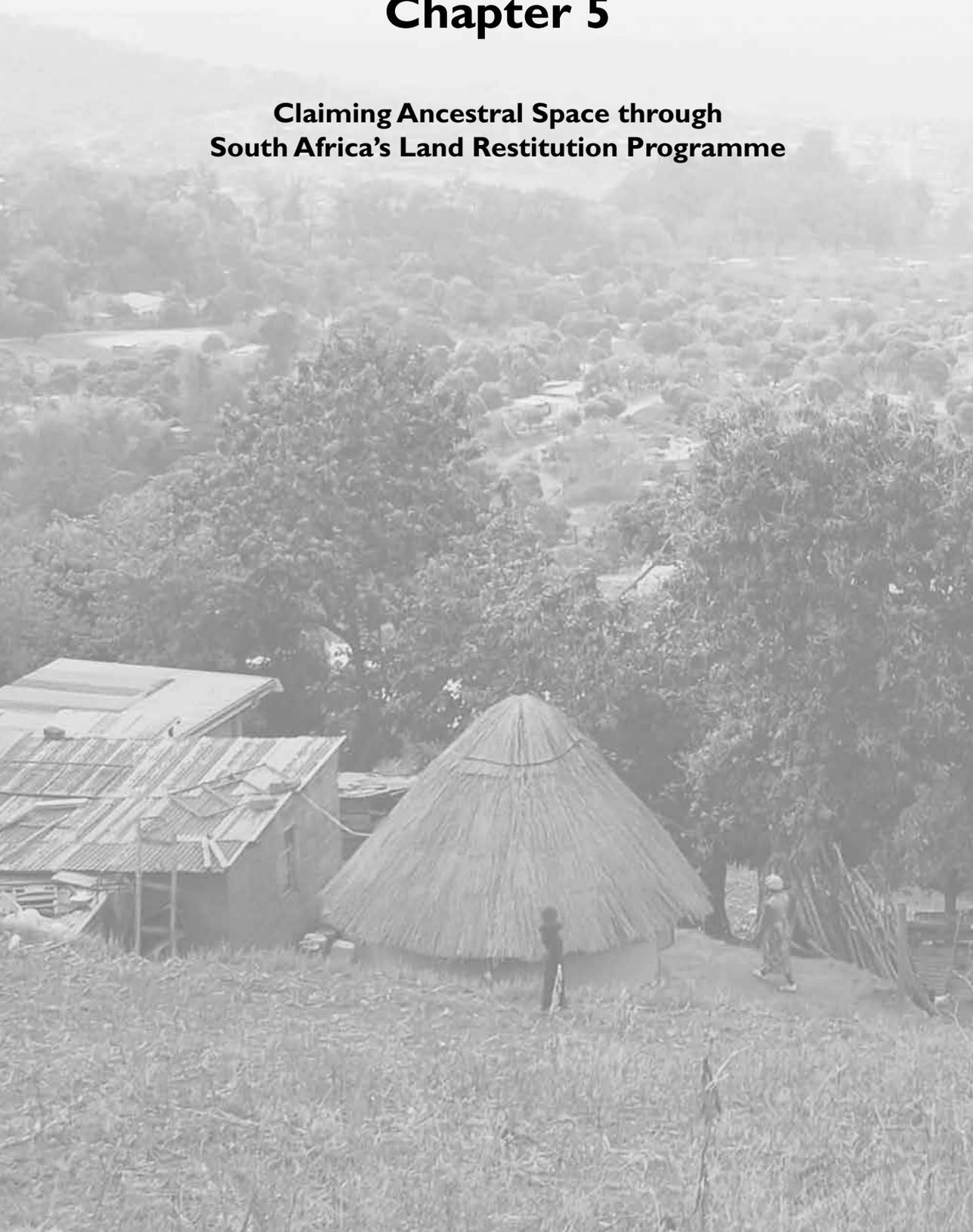
Following the received technologies of communication, I had acquired the telephone number of Chief Madzivhandila's secretary through a land-based NGO in November 2006. My NGO contact alluded to the Tshakhuma community being 'very traditional and having a strong Chief' who had managed to retain his influential position. Upon arriving at the Royal Kraal the next Saturday, I was first met by the Chief's secretary, an unemployed schoolteacher sporting an ANC T-shirt, at the Chief's palace in the centre of the Tshakhuma location. As we waited on the Chief and his trusted headman and cousin, I observed the weathered drum in the corner of the open-plan garage. As legitimating relic that hinted at historical rights and early settlement, the drum seemed to serve as reminder to visitors of the linkage between the Madzivhandila lineage and the epic journey the Vhavenda people had made across the Limpopo River into the Soutpansberg region.

Eventually the Chief and his cousin pulled up in the latter's battered Mercedes Benz and led me into the main house and reception area. Adorning the wall above the Chief's armchair was another relic alluding to a more recent past: a framed picture of the entire cabinet of the former Venda Republic. In the 1970s Chief Madzivhandila had risen to the rank of Minister of Agriculture and later Deputy President as part of the apartheid project of separate development by creating 'self-governing' ethnic 'homelands' or Bantustans. During the turbulent transition to democracy in the late 1980s, Tshakhuma village had lit up amid witchcraft accusations and what became a series of so-called 'ritual killings'. Spurring the discontent was the frustration of the many resident civil servants who feared that they would not be given their remuneration packages for their years of work under the rapidly dissolving Venda Republic. This dissolution also saw the Chief returning to the locale after a long period of absenteeism during which he had installed a caretaker to run community affairs. Upon his return in 1991, networks of influence had to be rebuilt and, most importantly, popular support regained amid the wide-scale call for democracy by the youth or 'civics'. This struggle to reclaim authority would follow that most tried and tested of methods of rural authority: re-affirmation of the chief–land–people nexus. Building on his training as forest warden and what 'natural authority' vested in his office, the Chief had gone out to peg new land himself and started allocating residential plots in an area that he, in his capacity as Minister of Agriculture, had previously vacated of people for the establishment of an irrigated farming scheme. It was the beginning of an impressive comeback by the tribal authorities. Building on the land allocation function, they have now solidified their position as a public authority in the post-apartheid democratic dispensation, alongside the elected ward councillor and the manifold political institutions emerging with this democratisation wave. A revived, confident traditional leadership from 1998 took

the lead in the successful reclamation of almost 544 ha of prime agricultural land in the neighbouring white-owned Levubu irrigation scheme.

As I will discuss below, land restitution claims by community groups have become but an aspect of wider struggles over the position of traditional authorities as public institutions in the post-apartheid dispensation. As some observers have also noted, traditional leaders in contemporary South Africa are increasingly legitimated by national government after a period of unsettlement following the collapse of the former 'homeland' system (Ntsebeza 2006; Oomen 2005). In this regard, recent decentralization policies have also served to empower traditional leaders and continue to affirm their stake beyond the administration of land and resolution of disputes. This existence of a range of policies that legitimate tribal leaders foregrounds the multi-facetted space of rural politics which they seek to appropriate and remould. In the following two chapters we build on the conceptualization of brokerage to explore the emergence of this adaptable leadership. Whereas most observers have noted this development with considerable dismay, owing to the erosion of democratic rights, I attempt below to discuss this resurgence as a feature of South Africa's modernity. This means that it is also part of a turbulent political landscape that requires considerable navigation skills by such leaders and the networks they form. This modality of government implies sovereign rule through the deployment of repertoires that equally appeal to the 'naturalness' of chiefly authority over rural people as well as invoking the 'modern' values of equitable distribution of public goods, commercial farming and the right of their constituencies to be counted as citizens of a redistributive state. It will be argued that Tshakhuma, as an interstitial site as productive farmland chosen by missionaries of the Berliner Mission Society, at the border of both homeland and white-owned commercial farmland, and as a booming peri-urban settlement having the largest fruit market in the surrounding area, presents a history of longstanding engagement with multiple forms of government.

Re-approaching the Chief–land–people Nexus

As Lund (2008) argues, there is no shortage of public authorities in postcolonial Africa waiting dormant to have their claims acknowledged through government policies. Territorial claims by tribal leaders have similarly found their way into land restitution. It is perhaps no surprise that a programme that accommodates 'historical rights to land' would endorse tribal claims. However, several observers have noted with considerable surprise (and unease) that flexibility has extended to not applying democratic conditions to newly formed community property institutions, even when the policy tools are in place in the form of the Communal Property Association Act. Relevant here is that tribalist

claims to authority articulate well with contemporary land restitution policy seeing as they both have as locus of sovereign rule the idea of 'community' (see Chapter One). The acknowledgement of traditional authorities may reinforce claims to a 'nation within a nation' and the consolidation of an ancestral space of sovereign rule falling outside of 'normal' state law – a development that may bear a resemblance to the way colonial states have constituted a 'zone of exception' in which inhabitants of the territory were always outside of the protection of the legal framework of the 'Crown or the republic' (Hansen and Stepputat 2006: 302).

These territorial claims represent outcomes that are in line with a broader retribalization process that is occurring across South Africa. At the heart of the controversy is the continuity implied by what Mamdami (1996) famously described as a form of 'decentralized despotism'– a systematized indirect rule centrally coordinated by the colonial and apartheid governments. A certain South African exceptionalism prevails in the question of native administration due to the existence of a 'bifurcated state' that sought to 'keep in check its most dynamic tendencies' related to rapid industrialisation and the mobility of labour this required on the one hand, and the pinning down of excess 'natives' in homelands where they could be administered cheaply and with economic use of force on the other hand (ibid: 28). A state that was mostly invisible in rural areas per se could however also suddenly pounce on rural people's existence with drastic measures like forced removals from land in terms of 'homeland consolidation' and interventions in the appointment or replacement of traditional leaders. Disciplining acts by native affairs officials and traditional leaders focused largely on the control of movement between urban and rural spaces and ensuring that citizenship rights for Africans would be replaced in favour of rights as duties of tribal subjects, as members of a particular 'ethnic' group. However, as will also be discussed below, policing of the subject-citizen divide was often tangible at the best of times as cosmopolitan ideas of independence and self-government interspersed the native government and migrant workers could exercise considerable influence in their 'native areas'. The form of rule by traditional leaders and expressions of 'bureaucratic chieftaincy' also showed vastly differentiated forms across time and space (Oomen 2005).

Notwithstanding the vast difference in governance styles by traditional leaders, a central tenet of traditional rule in the designated tribal reserves implied control over land administration functions in conjunction with the right to settle disputes and organise initiation schools (ibid: 171). A most problematic legacy of colonial and apartheid rule thus includes the promulgation of the Permission-to-Occupy System (PTO) as the way of administering and allocating land in communal areas. It means that land titling is done in discretionary

ways through communal leaders who issue PTO documents to community members that constitute insecure forms of land tenure. In approaching the resilience of traditional leaders it is then no surprise that much attention has been paid to the mobilisation of traditional leaders to resist contemporary land reforms that aim to democratise land tenure and reinstate state control and monitoring of the allocation of land (Claassens and Cousins 2010). Recent land legislation that is sympathetic to traditional leaders prompts Ntsebeza (2006: 296) to argue how control over land allocation has remained the key technology of rule through which rural populations in South Africa remain in an undemocratic "zone of exception" despite the introduction of democratic decentralisation policies:

> the powers they [traditional authorities] have been given under the Communal Land Rights Act are unprecedented in the sense that traditional councils will not require magistrates and district commissioners to make the final decision in the land allocation process, as has been the practice during the colonial and apartheid periods. The traditional councils, set up in terms of Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act are, as was the case with the apartheid-era Tribal Authorities, dominated by unelected traditional authorities and their appointees and are thus unrepresentative and unaccountable. What this means is that in one respect, namely local government, rural residents enjoy the same rights that are enjoyed by their urban counterparts, in the sense that they elect their councillors. However, on the vital issue of land allocation, rural people become "subjects" in the sense that decisions are taken by traditional councils which are, as indicated, dominated by unelected traditional leaders and their appointees.

This re-centralisation thesis underpins the argument that government has been ambivalent in its policies and has thus left a void in the transformation policies which traditional authorities have pounced on. Representation is deemed problematic due to the way in which post-independence government, or more especially the Department of Land Affairs, has allowed its land reform beneficiaries to decide upon their 'system of land administration' (ibid.: 280). In cases of land restitution where traditional authorities have stepped forward as main land claimants without government seeing the necessity or having the capacity to be compliant with its own aspirations to democratise according to the Bill of Rights (Van Leynseele 2013). Besides the legislative framework and state roles, the particular skills and backgrounds of traditional leaders also play an important role in their ability to maintain authority and influence. In this regard, we may appreciate the particular agency of those traditional leaders like Chief Madzivhandela whose experience as former Minister in the Venda Government provided clear advantages in assuming positions as group representatives and consequent power to redistribute the benefits accrued from redistributed lands (see also Fraser 2007b).

Whereas I ascribe to the centrality of land in the resurgence of the tribal authorities, I highlight two other aspects relevant for the analysis below. Firstly, the assumption that there is a singular logic of state at work is problematic. If indeed there was a vast diversity in traditional leadership skills and government modes, then the question should be raised

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whether we are seeing a singular logic of state or grammar of legibility at work here. In this regard, the opening up of rural spaces by accommodating traditional leaders requires that we draw attention away from the ways in which dominant development discourses or ideologies become enshrined in institutions. As Moore (2005: 24-25) argues in his ethnography of struggles for territory in Zimbabwe, land is contested in ways that undermine 'perspectives on power that underwrite regimes of rule with a coherent logic or unitary rationality'. As argued earlier, land restitution provides multiple entry points for community leaders to stake their claims and derive benefits. Land ownership may feature as critical locus for re-establishing authority in the early stages, but what has been noted as the shifting orientation to the 'post-development settlement' and an orientation for sustainable land use bring different demands by the state. Other roles are assumed by beneficiaries when they enter as partners in joint ventures and in cases where they are not only custodians of land but also a workforce of farm labourers that works on the redistributed land. The sovereign space this opens up in terms of responsibilities to mentor productive land and to be (partly) responsible for a vast labour force is explored further in detail in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that the navigation and appropriation of managerial space by traditional leaders, brings into perspective a modern sovereignty that is not merely determined by the classic notion of tribal dominion and accumulation in people but also brings into focus the sovereign power of (deracializing) market-led development and related privatization of the responsibility for development, as well as the counter-claims by constituencies seeking to protect labour rights and keep farm workers under the ambit of national citizenship frameworks.

It follows that politicking against this background requires skilful negotiations that see traditional leaders having to contest their positions as local development brokers in a changed landscape, marked by more complex interrelations and a post-modern condition of decentred power configurations. As already remarked, certain skills and 'registers of competence' may be more or less inherited from earlier positions and experiences (Bierschenk et al. 2002). These may include particular registers like that of rhetoric, which imply the 'ability to speak the "development language", and the peasant language, and (in the case of the field of rural development), to be an expert in translating from one language to the other' (ibid: 21). To these registers can be added those of having particular organisational skills like coordination and, importantly, the type of staging or providing visitors with a "show window" with which 'to entice the potential donor, and to delight the evaluations expert on his missions' (ibid.: 22). Presenting a particular status project, hosting potential investors at orchestrated meetings or making public claims to being responsible for delivery of developmental services and goods, all comprise parts of a toolkit of the

more adjusted chieftaincy that, simply said, has now to work harder for its place in a development landscape. In the next two chapters we will follow the Tshakhuma Tribal Trust and its subsidiary claimant committee in their performing of a mix of repertoires and adjusting to the changing aid landscape. In understanding the partial victories and risky business of retribalisation, I argue that we must look beyond the dichotomy of 'traditional' versus 'modern' and the implied tensions between a modernization trajectory and power grabbing by traditionalist elements that (re-)instate an exclusionary technology of rule. Following the idea of multiple modernities (Arce and Long 2000; Robins 2003), we may approach emergent properties as unfolding in a context of institutional ambiguity and an arena of contestation where settlements are (re-)negotiated and community brokers apply their self-reflexive capacities to read and respond to state-led interventions.

The Making of a Tribal Polity at a Racial Frontier

The Tshakhuma political landscape is co-habited by a number of public authorities. The Tribal Council as a remnant of the previous Tribal Authorities established under colonial rule and later apartheid governments now holds its office in the same building as the local Department of Home Affairs in a form of amiable co-habitation in which roles are clearly divided but where both parties are locked into a mutual interdependency. This co-habitation marks what the elected Ward councillor explained was typical of the status of the area as "rural". Consultation for prioritisation of development issues should include the Tribal Council but also all the other bodies politic inhabiting the landscape: the SANCOs or local civic associations, the local independent ward committee and the different political parties.[42] Eventually, she explained, improvement schemes like the building of roads and opening of new schools, sponsored by the pending finishing of the tar road and the electricity infrastructure paid for through municipal IDP (Integrated Development Planning) funds, would have to be reverted back to the traditional authorities for approval: 'Then what we come up with the ward committee, we consult the Chief, because this is the Chief 's land, the land is not ours'. Attaining the critical land allocation and administration of the PTO-system was by no means vested in the chiefdom as a given. The return of the Chief and his loyal followers marks a long and ongoing struggle over the right to govern "community" and an increasingly demanding constituency.

The quality of flexible governance and accommodation that marks this return to power has a historical legacy. Tshakhuma was the site of a mission station of the Lutheran Berlin Mission Society that established itself in Vendaland in the then rugged frontier marked

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[42] Interview Mrs. Mufamadi, Tshakhuma, 22 January 2009

by strong polities of chiefs Makhado were established at the piedmont of the Western Soutpansberg range between the Levubu and Nzhelele rivers. Colonisation of this "wild frontier" was as much an act of disciplining the people "under the mission" as setting an example by redeveloping wilderness into agricultural farmland and the mission stations into beacons of agricultural modernisation. This ideal of farming placated a sense of disorientation and promised to bring Europe a bit closer – evidenced at Tshakhuma by the planting of exogenous Casaurinas and cypress trees along orderly lanes – and would remould Africans in the image of productive contributors to an emergent modernity. Missionaries of the Berliner Mission Society brought paternalist ideals of progress to this fertile mountainous region: 'pastoralism and subsistence agriculture were not enough – the land had to be irrigated and worked in similar ways to the emerging capitalist concerns of Natal' (Kirkaldy 2005: 129).

Historical accounts speak of chief Madzivhandila in 1872 approaching the travelling Rev Beuster with a request to bring a mission to his location (Mativha 1985: 48-49). After some years of delay following breakouts of smallpox and 'inter-tribal fighting' Tshakhuma saw its first baptisms taking place in 1877. By its association with a chief having an independent status and not having become embroiled in what became known as the Mpephu wars, and a location on the fringe of the powerful polities to the North, the location prospered in relation to its counterparts. The tangible hold of the Chief on the territory is illustrated by the way the locality of Tshakhuma was surveyed and registered in 1872 in the name of the then de-facto native commissioner and trader Antonio Albasini as the private farm Goedverwachting but was purchased by the mission society in 1880 (see Giesekke 2004). The ambiguity of the Madzivhandila chieftaincy at the interstice of mission and tribal is affirmed in the land committee that visited the Soutpansberg area in preparation of the Crown Land Commission report of 1908.[43] The commission was advising on the boundaries of the so-called 'scheduled areas' (for inclusion in the future 'native reserves') and the 'released areas' (land owned by whites but reserved for incorporation into the scheduled areas) for the pending Natives Land Act of 1913. A survey by a local native commissioner notes the status of the Madzivhandila group as residing on the mission farm and as 'their being considered of minor importance as their names do not appear to have been even mentioned' in previous reports of traditional leaders and their locations.[44] The report further described the resident population of 3,680 people as 'law-abiding' and supplying 'a fair amount of labour'

[43] Pretoria Government Printer T.G. 28/08 Crown Land (Zoutpansberg) Commission, Report presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Excellency the Governor
[44] Report of the Office of the Native Location Commission in Sibabsa on Netseanda, Mgibi and Madzibandela Locations, Pretoria 11 April 1907

to the neighbouring white farms. It also explained the explicit wishes of traditional leader Chimbuene Madzivhandila in terms of that they wanted: to continue paying rent to the mission society and not desiring to be a tribal location.

The above highlights how the Tshakhuma locale was the locus of three competing spatialties: an expansive white framing frontier that bordered Goedverwachting farm; a mission society extracting rent and labour from the loyal Christians; and efforts by the South African Native's Trust to incorporate it into the scheduled areas as location. The competing pressures came to a head in a period when the missionary authorities relaxed their control over the farm and the zeitgeist no longer favoured missionary endeavour and when missionaries came to be seen as problematically competing for state services by providing education for 'natives' (see also Chapter Two). These pressures owed partly to the fact that the area was considered of exceptional agricultural potential by predatory white farmers and that the locality attained a reputation as an education centre after the mission authorities introduced secondary education and set up teacher training schools in the 1940s (Mativha 1985: 226-228). The latter status led to increased state infringements when the local Vendaland College was taken over from the mission and developed by the Education Department of the Republic of South Africa in the early 1960s – a situation that produced ambivalent ownership patterns whereby the institute's buildings were state-owned whereas land ownership was still in the hands of the Mission Society.

By the mid 1960s another political force, arguably a product of the educational possibilities and social mobility Tshakhuma offered, began to exert itself strongly in order to resolve the undefined status of the place. It was a group of migrants that called themselves the Tshakhuma Urban Association or "Khorro", who drew members from the townships at Johannesburg, Pretoria, Boksburg and Krugersdorp. The group was headed by Baldwin Mudau who would later also come to play an important role in the 'homeland' politics as the representative of the Venda Tribal Authorities for the urban areas and later still as leader of the Venda Independent People's Party (VIPP) that emerged as the second party in the Venda Republic elections of 1979. As one of the key members explained, they protested against the Lutheran 'monopoly of religion' and sought to combat the system of mission paternalism that they saw had relegated the Chieftaincy to mere yes-men.[45] The group professed a modernisation of traditional leadership – professing the instalment of more educated and capable Chiefs – and conspired with the Native Affairs Department (NAD) to have the farm bought as a released area. Calls for the expropriation of the church had followed proclamation R. 1864 in the year 1962, which implied that 'the Vhavenda were

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[45] Interview M.W. Madzivhandila, Thohoyandou, 30 April 2007

recognised as constituting, in terms of ethnicity and culture, a separate people with the inalienable right to become self-governing and to determine their own future' (Benso and Institute for Development Studies 1979: 41-42).

In a memorandum to the Berlin Mission Committees the last resident missionary, Giesekke, lamented the persuasive politics of the urban movement in pushing for the sale ('they used the harshest of threats') but also acknowledged the intangibility of the ambiguous status of the area: 'the residents of Tshakhuma had no status; they were neither farm workers nor were they a people ruled by a chief'.[46] The document also explains the mixed messages that he and surrounding white farmers were receiving from national government. Whilst the notice that the NAD would buy up all land up to the Albasini for incorporation in the prospective Venda Republic sent white farmers into a flurry of speculative capitalisation of their farms for increased valuations, the same farmers were promised that Tshakhuma would be consolidated with the neighbouring Levubu irrigation scheme for a tea production scheme on the mountain slopes. The pendulum swung in favour of homeland incorporation as the farm was bought in 1965 from the Mission Society with the accompanying handover of land allocation function to the caretaker headman.

The incorporation heralded the return of the absentee Chief Andries Madzivandhila who, on his own admission, had been enticed to leave his lucrative job as assistant forester at the Department of Forestry (he held a Junior Certificate in Agriculture and Forestry from Fort Cox College) by the promise of supplementary wages from the urban Khorro.[47] His formal appointment as chief or 'Kaptein' followed in 1968 and implied the instalment of the Tshakhuma Tribal Authority in terms of the 1951 Black Authorities Act.[48] The Chief would, however, not remain in Tshakhuma for long; the next year he became councillor in the Executive Council after the federalisation of the Venda Territorial Authority and later made it to Minister of Agriculture after proclamation of the Venda Independent Republic in 1979. In this new role, balancing acts would prove much harder still as he featured as the key person responsible for a number of controversial acts of spatial disciplining. He also found himself in public conflict with Baldwin Mudau and his VIPP party that mobilised popular support at Tshakhuma against the governing Venda Nationalist Party. In fact, a main reason that explained the popularity of the VIPP at Tshakhuma proper was the belief that they could resist the incessant threat of forced removals that faced the residents south

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[46] Document written by D.W. Giesekke to the Berlin Mission Committees with title 'Memorandum in Connection with the Sale of Tshakhuma', 18 December 1964, private archive H. Giesekke

[47] Interview A.M. Madzivhandila, Tshakhuma, 14 February 2007

[48] N1/1/3/12 Appointment of Chief Andries Mavhungu Madzivhandila: Tshakhuma Tribal Authority, bantu Affairs Commissioner Sibasa, 3 September 1968.

of the tar road for the sake of developing a prestigious irrigation project – a plan that implicated the Chief as Minister of Agriculture.[49]

Despite such public confrontations, it appeared that the backstage politics at Tshakhuma presented a more accommodating and deliberative nature. The chief prided himself on retaining close ties with members of the urban movement in a series of "secret consultations". Although a straightforward explanation eludes me, the post-apartheid political dispensation saw the public reconciliation of the two factions. The coordination practices between the modernist VIPP faction and the chieftaincy that were rehearsed through the process of gaining independence from the mission were rekindled against the backdrop of an explosion of civic unrest and labour strikes at Tshakhuma during the turbulent 1989-1994 transition years. Amidst the rise of a plethora of civic associations and a period in which the Chief's position as local leader was very vulnerable, two key figures of the urban movement were later absorbed into the post-apartheid Tribal Council.

Closer Settlement and the Local Political Economy

To better understand the process of 'retribalization' at Tshakhuma it is necessary to investigate the emergence of the traditional leadership through the post-apartheid era and the early stages of staking the restitution claim. As highlighted above, Chief Madzivhandila did not emerge unscathed from the transition period leading up to democratic elections. His comeback proved to be a remarkable feat. At the time of transition, Tshakhuma was known as a hotbed of insurgence, having a strong presence of politicized youths or civics who demanded the disbanding of the homeland system and claimed inclusive citizenship rights. With the demise of the Venda Republic in 1990, violence surged at Tshakhuma. A range of so-called 'ritual murders' marked the settling of old scores and hinted at the emergence of democratic local government. The Chief explained to me that in this climate, he had been called to a local high school stating that he would either 'be carried out in a coffin or be accepted as the Chief once again'. [50] His survival proved as shrewd as it was simple: he listened to the demands of the youth for residential plots in the over-populated location and stated that he was best placed to assist them with building their homesteads. Paradoxically, he promised to open up the same land he had reserved for the Tshakhuma irrigation project as the former Minister of Agriculture. In this fragile period, he reverted to the landed paternalism that typified chiefly rule, cutting stands and allocating residential plots according to the old Permission-to-Occupy communal land system.

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[49] Interview R. Davhula, Tshakhuma, 3 March 2007
[50] Interview A.M. Madzivhandila, Tshakhuma, 3 November 2006

The key to understanding this comeback lies in the local political economy and increased land scarcity and congestion. A field visit conducted by the Surplus People's Project, in order to critically map the effects of forced removals, touched down at Tshakhuma in 1983. Besides reasserting the interstitial status of Tshakhuma as an area in which 'no-one is sure whether they live in Ganzankhulu, Venda or South Africa' the report describes local conditions as being of social and material deprivation:

> In Tshakhuma the people are largely resettled from white farms and areas declared white. Many people are without jobs, and survival depends on buying bananas from farmers and engaging in petty trading. It was mostly women who did this, fieldworkers were told, while men spent most of their time drinking. The nearest labour bureau was at Vuwani to the east, on the road to Klein Letaba, but few jobs were available. People lived by the banana-selling and on what they could grow for themselves: groundnuts, beans and mielies [maize]. Most people had no fields…Lack of land was attributed to the fact that the old system whereby indunas [headmen] allocated land to subjects is now controlled by the new agricultural extension officers. The system is open to bribery (SPP 1983: 165).

The report confirms that local livelihoods had become increasingly interdependent on the surrounding commercial farms. Congestion and land scarcity meant that the working local population was increasingly dependent on integration in the so-called 'frontier commuter system' whereby 'a worker resides in an independent or self-governing state and crosses the frontier of such a state at regular or frequent intervals to work in an area, which for labour purposes falls under the sole jurisdiction of the Government of South Africa' (Nash 1980: 50). Official labour bureaus with satellite 'tribal bureaus' in the various chieftaincies were supposed to mediate this system, which was also deemed favourable to the Venda homeland government and to the slippery migrant labour system, but it appears that by 1979 labour bureaus for the whole of the Venda Republic only accommodated 19,444 workers (an estimated 5,4% of the total population) in sectors like mining, government services, factories and domestic services (Benso and Institute for Development Studies 1979: 85). The commuter system at Tshakhuma rather took on a more informal form, with labourers and informal traders walking by foot to nearby farms or organising transport of second rate fruits for sale in roadside fruit stalls along the tar road between Thohoyandou and Makhado (see also Mudau 1999).

In order to absorb more labour as a fast-expanding settlement, Tshakhuma became the site of agricultural status projects, which the Chief as Minister of Agriculture would also claim credit for. The homeland system of 'separate development' was supported mainly by so-called Development Corporations which were sponsored by development assistance funds from the South African government and the Development Bank of Southern Africa.[51] The Venda Development Corporation (VDC) developed a range of industrial projects aimed at decentring industrialisation and creating a tax base for the fledgling and the

unofficial purpose of curbing uncontrolled labour migrancy. Printing of glossy folders to attract investors, the building of Shayandima industrial site and a new airport were hallmarks of this strategy. For agricultural development, the VDC's branch, AgriVen, was launched in 1982 to develop show case projects that were aimed at providing labour and that followed either the export-oriented, extensive plantation model (e.g. the Tshivhase Tea Estate) or smallholder irrigation projects (e.g. Tshiombo) aimed at fruit production (see Lahiff 2000).

Another such status project was the Barotta fruit farm bordering Tshakhuma to the East. The farm of approximately 367 ha (approximately 215 ha under cultivation) was purchased in the 1970s as a released areas and developed into a government-operated banana plantation. It showcased the newest cultivars and sported a commercial-size packing house, using cooling trucks to bring fresh produce to the Johannesburg market. Contrasting the epoch of its establishment with current policies, a former senior official from AgriVen explained the Barotta development had not been about empowerment but rather about being 'commercially viable' in order to employ large numbers of low-skilled workers.[52] The farm features in a 1986 excerpt of the public speech by Chief Madzivhandila as Minister of Agriculture and Forestry as having annual output in tonnes of banana (from 11 tonnes/ha to 18.7 tonnes/ha) and having a rosy future thanks to the establishment of 'modern irrigation methods' that could '[be applied in] the production of other sub-tropical fruits, such as avocados, litchies, mangos, guavas, pecan nuts as well as macadamia nuts', like in nearby Levubu.[53] Employment figures are sketchy but it appears that around the time the Barotta farm was included in the land restitution deal in 2003, some 200 workers were employed at the farm.54 A former employee of Barotta who started there in 1984 explained that nepotism in applying for work also implicated the headmen and sub-headmen at Tshakhuma who acted as labour brokers and advised AgriVen staff as to who to appoint on the farms – a point that the Chief himself was also eager to corroborate.[55] As we will see in the next chapter, Barotta farm would be included as part of the post-apartheid land restitution deal and provided an opportunity for re-assertion of the traditional leadership to assert its influence as labour brokers and reinvent the traditional labour hiring system. The then absentee Chief, operating from the government centre, readily claimed this success

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[51] For the 1978/1979 fiscal year the statutory development aid support from South Africa comprised 76% of the total revenue of the Venda government (CVR 1979: 100).

[52] Interview with E. Thenga, Shayandima, 2 March 2007.

[53] 'Speech by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Vhafuwi VHO-A.M. Madzivhandila of the Official Opening of the Venda National Show at the Showground, 11 September 1986. Venda Development Corporation Yearbook (1986), pp. 119-120. Walker-Ramus trading Co. Publisher, date published unknown, material in private possession J. Ndou

[54] Interview Mr. Marowe, extension officer at Tshakhuma, 14 November 2006

[55] Interview M. Netshivhodza, Tshakhuma, 21 January 2009.

story in discussions with me. Likewise, he also claimed responsibility as a Minister for having the main agricultural college for Venda established at Tshakhuma, which was suitably named Madzivhandila Agricultural Training College, on the site of the former Vendaland Teachers college. Other developments at Tshakhuma seemed to put this power into perspective. Most controversial and vividly remembered as an act of treason by residents, was the forced removal of some 90 families from the Mulangaphuma village at Tshakhuma in 1971 in the name of 'betterment planning' and creating an environmental buffer along the tar road in order to reduce contamination of what the authorities held to be a catchment area. The buffer zone was intended for dry land plots for maize and groundnuts and aimed to be exemplary as a site of 'best practices', where people would follow culling of livestock and do away with their goats.[56] According to the Chief, the 'authorities' from which he now distanced himself had planned to forcibly relocate these people elsewhere to the Madimbo area. Here too, the Chief argued that a personal intervention, whereby he enticed residents of the mountainous slope to sacrifice half of their plots for the resettlement, had enabled them to stay. In his words, relocation would be 'too painful' and unacceptable and he had reserved as a last resort the possibility to 'take matters straight to parliament' of the Venda Republic where he could stop the forced removal.[57] Evictees were eventually accommodated in a movement that steadily involved 'closer settlement' on the footprint of the former mission village.

A similar controversy came with the development of the Tshakhuma Irrigation Scheme south of the tar road that was started around 1985. Modelled around the tried smallholder irrigation schemes, it would consolidate the tar road as a buffer and replace messy homesteads with well-kept, exemplary farms. The chief made no secret of the fact that he had handpicked "adequate beneficiaries" on the basis of having capital to operate the commercial farms. In explaining this land allocation he invoked his influence and the ongoing threat of forced removal along the roadside: 'I was lucky I was in government office. I said let us do away with the resettlement. Rather, I will give the land to the people who can start orchards. I selected them [based on credit and skills]. I was one of them, I managed 6 hectares and the others 3 hectares each'. He added, 'I did it just to protect that place'.[58] This project was eventually discontinued after razor-wire fences were erected that were repeatedly cut down by local residents. The validity of the Chief's moral claims, to have chosen the lesser of two evils in the face of pending evictions, is difficult to judge on its merits. More certain, however, is that acts of spatial disciplining gave shape to rural politics

[56] Interview J. Ndou, Tshakhuma, 24 October 2006.
[57] Interview A.M. Madzivhandila, Tshakhuma, 14 February 2007
[58] Interview A.M. Madzivhandila, Tshakhuma, 26 January 2009

at Tshakhuma and oscillated then and now around retaining an in-between status between rural and urban designations. It follows that the undoing of the homeland legacy would be about redress of local land rights.

At the most vulnerable period of his reign, just after his return to Tshakhuma and while under investigation for alleged corruption as Deputy President of the Venda Republic, he set out to undo his work. He started actively promoting the resettlement of the buffer zones. It is likely that he had little choice in controlling the resettlement of the Mulangaphuma area – now commonly referred to as 'Diambele' ('Speak for Yourself') – but he did organise the relocation and cutting of stands. Some of his supporters claimed that he had an active role in planning and physical demarcation of residential stands. Interestingly and reminiscent of a tried and tested method, the amount of headmen under him rose and became spread out in a bid for territorial enclosure. From a recorded 5 headmen upon his instalment in 1968 he went to 13 in 2007. One of the former Urban Khorro leaders was also appointed as headman for the rapidly expanding Tshitavadhulu location at the South-Eastern corner of Tshakhuma. This newly-appointed headman was very influential in local politics at the time of my fieldwork at Tshakhuma, proving to be extremely effective in bringing municipal services like electricity and drinking water to the newly erected homes in his area and he had a reputation at public meetings of being confrontational and uncompromising (see Chapter Six). Accumulation in people as a distinct feature of the Chief-Land-People nexus has been restored through a process of gradual urbanisation. Retaining the status as rural area has, however, been very important, given that in this ambiguity the gap appears for traditional leaders to control land and, by association, for a modern state to be seen as benevolent intermediaries of an embryonic developmental South African state.

Whereas urban sites became readily available for community members (this excludes migrant labourers from Mozambique and Zimbabwe), access to agricultural plots is a persistent problem for those seeking land. The prime fields along the side of the dam were controlled by a group of elderly men to whom they had been allocated, due to their proximity to the traditional authorities. Lutheran converts who had been close to the missionary still held plots on what was formerly the extensive farm of the missionary. Farm land is still available on the mountainous slopes in the north but it demands laborious and unpopular forms of farming. One of the elderly claimants farming this peripheral area explained the situation:

> Some stands are kept for the sake of holding onto the land. People will just put up shacks. These shacks compromise the community because our land becomes a hub for foreigners and criminals. If you will say something about this it will seem like you are being political or want to bring somebody down…The farmers are ageing and don't have the power to walk up the mountain. The youth of today is mostly working in town or at the farms or they are studying outside the village.[59]

Her diversified livelihood typified that of the older generation who were partially engaged in rain-fed agriculture and managed to market some of their mangoes and avocados to Tshakhuma's fresh produce market along the tar road. The mainstay of her income was from a state pension grant, with which she also supported three of her grandchildren while their parents held jobs in order to develop their residential plot across the tar road, where services like electricity and water were available. Marking a further disinterest in farming pursuits, the remnant of the Tshakhuma Irrigation Scheme, which is now managed solely by the local extension officer, has only 7 out of its total 13.9 hectares in use by women who mainly grow maize there for household needs. The process of gradual but incomplete urbanisation is illustrated in the following areal pictures spanning the period 1937 to 2004 (Fig. 5.1). The images show the effects of spatial disciplining in distinct periods when the buffer areas north and south of the road were cleared of inhabitants. They also mark the post-apartheid process of spatial and social reconciliation at Tshakhuma between traditional leadership and their constituency.

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[59] Interview J. Mufanadze, Tshakhuma, 14 September 2007.
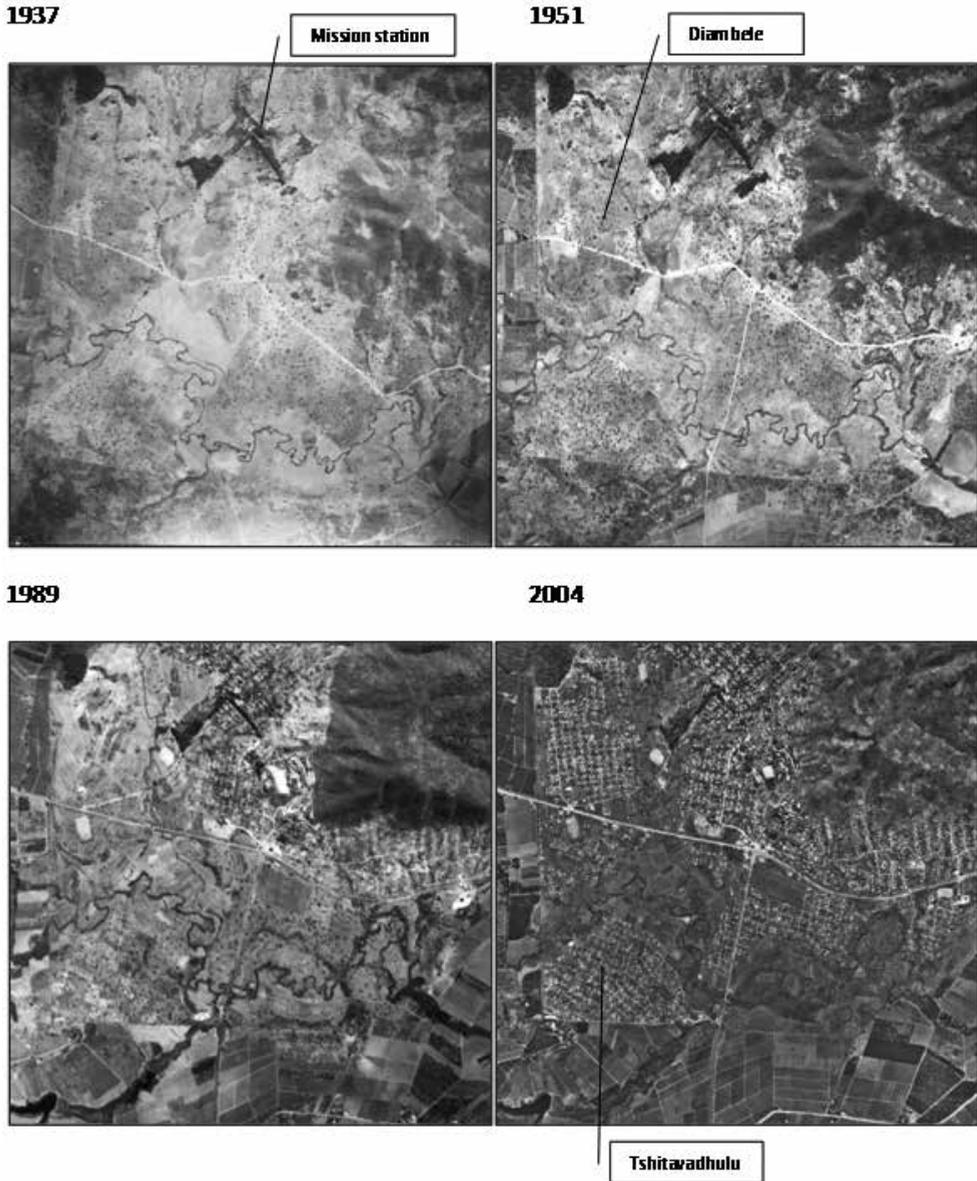
Figure 5.1 Aerial pictures of Tshakhuma location, specified by year.

Land Reclamation and Tribal Reconciliation

Post-apartheid land restitution processes have brought to light the resilience of traditional leaders in a way that similarly involves control over land (see Chapter One). In many cases traditional leaders have successfully manoeuvred themselves into key positions as community leaders by staking a land restitution claim on the grounds of being dispossessed

Figure 5.2 Housing development at Tshitavadhulu

of tribal land (cf. Robins and de Waal, 2008). Critical observers have lamented the fact that land restitution has a limited capacity to bring more distributional equality and social justice to beneficiaries. They claim that on the one hand this has to do with design of the programme: from the outset the Constitution and key legislations have accepted the legitimacy of tribal leaders and community claims to land. Hellum and Derman (2008: 65) relate the legal endorsement to the South African Constitution which 'puts customary law on a par with general law, customary tenure on a par with freehold tenure, and the right to culture on a par with gender equality'. The Land Restitution Act of 1994 consequently acknowledged a 'customary law interest' and opened the door to claims on the basis of tribal jurisdictions that existed prior to forced dispossession. Concomitantly, land restored to communities through restitution has been transferred to so-called Trusts in which traditional leaders act as gatekeepers and rights of the beneficiary group are defined in terms of ancestral lineage and customary practices.

Such policy framing according to traditional rights and entitlements emerged partly because chieftaincies and the Territorial Councils inherited from the apartheid era 'provided bounded and substantial social units rather than the vague-defined, splintered

and overlapping identities generated by family- or clan based claims' (James, 2007: 205). In complex group claims, the state bodies simply appeared not to have the epistemological tools to recast restitution claimants as anything other than tribal subjects. Interestingly, restitution claimants in turn understood the potency of invoking a 'repertoire of customary leadership' (ibid.) or a 'language of custom and tradition' (Robins, 2003) that plays into the land–chief–people assumptions tainting officials' view of rural governance. The fact that land is effectively restored to tribal communities under state legislation relates to beneficiaries' understanding of state procedures and the manifestation of human agency to navigate the social space land restitution opens up to well-positioned actors.

The chief's prominence in the land restitution claim was also partly promoted by the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) that investigates the validity of claims. Following the tried 'technologies of communication', the RLCC invited local traditional leaders with a claim to a workshop in 1997 in which the land restitution policy was outlined and the traditional leaders were encouraged to stake a claim if they felt they had lost a right to land 'as a result of past apartheid policies and acts'. Tshakhuma had suffered such a loss due to expropriations as part of the Entambeni forestry development on its Northern slopes and the establishment of the white-owned Levubu irrigation scheme to the south. An initial claimant committee was formed. It consisted in part of members of the traditional authorities and more progressive civics who were part of the aforementioned urban movement. One of its prominent members, known for his allegiance to Baldwin Mudau and the VIPP party during the former 'homeland' government, explained to me the naturalness with which the Chief became central in the claims process:

> The Trust we have is under the control of the Chief. The advantage is the appointment; members are not to be elected. The Chief has the power to dismiss a person who is a destroyer…Once you start to act funny, people will know how to deal with you…Why not have a Chief to control the people? Why not bring back, like before, he who was in control of everything? Development comes from what was existing…All along there used to be conflict, nation against nation, and after the fight we get together and the Chief takes the seat as usual. After the fight, we cannot all say "let 's cut our own portion of land", no, it cannot be like that.[60]

When the Tshakhuma restitution claim was submitted in 1998 there could be little doubt as to who was going to represent the community. The sole applicant was 'Paramount Chief Andries Madzivhandila', who represented 950 beneficiary households in the land restitution claim. Outwardly the newly formed Community Trust to manage the land rights met the standards set by government regarding gender equity; two women held prominent posts and one of them would act as secretary in public meetings. Besides, some of the representatives were not of 'Royal Blood'– hinting that there would be broad-

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[60] Interview J. Ndou, Tshakhuma, 23 February 2007

Figure 5.3 Hillside farmer at Tshakhuma

based participation. The legal constitution of the Trust hints at the ambiguous position it occupies between 'modern' principles of good governance and customary entitlements. Whilst the community 'values' are stated as being premised on 'equality and advancement of human dignity', 'regular Trust meetings' and 'a high standard of professional ethics', it is exclusionary in its definition of membership: 'those who were born in the two Royal kraals [the Madzivhandila and Dombo lineages], children and descendants in terms of Traditional or Customary Law are members of this community and share holders in the Community Company'.[61]

The two lineages in the document refer to a reconciliation born out of the recent land claim. Initially, the Dombo clan had submitted its own restitution claim as an independent headman and his followers. This group had the weight of archival evidence on its side by featuring on the maps drawn up by the government ethnologist van Warmerlo in the 1930s as a family group under an independent headman that occupied the north-eastern corner of what later became the white-owned Levubu irrigation scheme. This group had been dispersed and moved to a distant area and many reconstructed their lives in urban

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[61] Tshakhuma Community Trust document

areas, such as the townships of Mamelodi and Soweto. The Tshakhuma forced removal on the other hand revealed the pattern of the so-called homeland consolidation, with several hundred families being concentrated in the Tshakhuma location that borders the white farms.

For strategic purposes, the two claims were consolidated as one. Amidst rumours that the Land Claims Commission had lost the original Dombo restitution claim form, the two groups started a process of internal reconciliation to redefine the Tshakhuma Tribal Authority and ensure the claim would be approved through the legal validation procedures. One of the Dombo leaders explained their motivation:

> Whilst my father was alive, as a family head he submitted the application for the Dombo community. We then realised that there was another application form submitted by Chief Andries Madzivhandila, which was in the context of the Tshakhuma community. Our parents knowing that we are of the same Madzivhandila clan, avoided the embarrassment by meeting the Chief and agreeing with him that the land claim will be processed with the ultimate objective of reorientating the land with his chieftaincy and without causing government to go through complicated nitty gritties of how the Madzivhandila family is formatted. The other reason was that the Dombo clan was completely eradicated from the area and only the name of HaDombo was left in the map, not even the graves remain. It [the claim] gave us a platform of finding oneself on both families and giving us a stronger level of approach on traditional and developmental issues. We are now working as the Tshakhuma community as two kraals…Reinstatement of this family is in the process with the state and an application has been submitted to approve our Dombo headman. The claimed land will be known as HaDombo Dandani. [62]

The consolidated claim reinforced old tribal ties by a quasi-scientific process of fact-finding and 'Royal Family' meetings at the Tshakhuma Tribal Office. The history-making implied the rise to prominence of John Dombo as a Trust representative who has a BSc in African history and has acted as the main historical broker in drawing up a genealogy and collecting archival material to back up the formalization of the Dombo-Madzivhandila familial linkages. The reinforcement of the chief–land–people nexus thus revolved around the above reconciliatory practices at the Tshakhuma locality. It would however be linked to other, extra-local social sites where the legitimacy of the Tshakhuma restitution claim was contested.

From the outset of the Levubu land claim there had been disputes over overlapping claims by the seven communities claiming the Levubu farms. The fact that the claims were based on tribal boundaries implied that the struggle would be over historical chiefly jurisdictions and drawing the pre-dispossession map. The Limpopo Regional Land Claims Commission responsible for the validation of the land claims had initially clustered the claims under one name, Ravele, and expected that the communities would resolve their differences

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[62] Interview M. Dombo, Levubu, 24 March 2007

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internally. Reflecting on the conflict this had sparked, a commission official considered the naivety in expecting a negotiated resolution: 'The claimant groups understand that if we go for the traditional boundaries, our land will increase. Claimants will then often claim on their ethnic Venda or Tsonga names. We should not have allowed people to draw their own boundaries. The RLCC should have resolved the boundary issue at Levubu before giving land to the communities. If you leave it too late the stakes are very high'.[63]

When the claim was published in the government gazette in 2001 under the Ravele cluster, it was foreseen that a land-based NGO would sit together with the different groups and mediate a permanent settlement. Sworn statements by elderly claimants were dutifully recorded and joint planning sessions were scheduled with NGO personnel and community leaders in which each community drew up its own tribal boundaries. The possibilities of articulating the tribal land inevitably brought expectations of what restitution could bring and directed the claim away from individual or family claims to claiming a tribal territory based on 'natural boundaries' or 'ethnic group'.

Numerous intra-community negotiations ensued and in 2003 the RLCC eventually tried to formalize the process and get disputing communities to sign settlement documents following their own archival research and in situ inspections with restitution claimants. By then, the main mediator from the commission had been compromised in the eyes of the Tshakhuma trustees. They had been dismayed by how he had 'favoured' the rival Shangaan-speaking group of Shigalo, being of Shangaan decent himself, and had wanted to allow for the acceptance of family restitution claims besides the tribal ones. Negotiations broke down amidst accusations that the RLCC was trying to change the nature of historical land rights. As the secretary of the Trust explained, about the breakdown in the negotiated solution: 'these forums between communities were working at first. The problems came with individuals who stayed under Khosi [Chiefs] but are now claiming as an individual. It would be proper if that person would be brought under Khosi'.[64] She also lamented the lack of consistency and government accountability in terms of the 'human weaknesses' of local-level officials 'who are ready to listen to whatever comes'.

The Tshakhuma Trust thus decided to break off localized negotiations and take the claim higher up. Although the Tshakhuma Trust signed for the receipt of the first or phase one restitution properties at Levubu (totalling 544 ha) in 2006, in turn making the Trust the legal land holding entity and owner of the communal land, it served the RLCC with a

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[63] Interview R. Mulaudzi, Polokwane, 9 May 2007
[64] Interview T. Rabothata, Tshakhuma, 6 November 2006

court interdict to stop all land transfers for phase two pending the 'proper resolution' of the boundary issue. A technique applied here was that the Chief himself did not attend the meeting but had the recently appointed headman of Tshitavadhulu sign the resolution on behalf of the community, in an act that was intended not to make it valid and to allow for re-contesting the restored land at a later stage. The Trust then took on board a Johannesburg lawyer, which their Strategic Partner at Levubu promised to bankroll from farm income, in order to take the boundary issue to the Land Claims Court. This supreme court was set up especially to deal with such disputes and the community's advocate (also a member of the Royal Family), anticipated that it would rule the ownership by 'families' like the Shigalo group unconstitutional given that the land was claimed on the basis of chiefly jurisdiction.[65] At the time of my departure from the Tshakhuma location at the end of 2007, the preparation for the court battle had sparked a frantic quest for supportive archival records. The repertoire of traditional rights thus invoked 'constitutional obedience' on the part of restitution commission officials and threatened to tie in apartheid ethnic territorialization with land reform's attempt at achieving restorative justice.

At the heart of the historical fact-finding was an interpretation of historical rights and who the 'original people' were. The Shigalo group as ethnic Shangaans and late arrivals on the scene in the 1890s, in the eyes of the Tshakhuma group could only ever be recognised as a mere 'family' whose rights depended on allegiance to one of the Venda tribal leaders. After much probing on my side with John Dombo and the advocate from the Madzivhandila royal lineage as regards their historical evidence and progress in fact-finding, a process in which they also tried to enrol me, it appeared that the community researchers had run into a dead end in resolving the status of this other group. The argument line pursued for contesting the procedural inconsistency from the RLCC still provided some openings in terms of verifying the authenticity of the signatures of the original land claims forms, comparing the lists of beneficiaries of the other groups with the former state records of families forcibly removed and holding the RLCC to account for earlier concessions in the boundary dispute they had made at meetings, for which unfortunately there had however not been any minute-keeping from the community side. An interesting artefact symbolising the latter inconsistency was a boundary map for the land claim that the Tshitabadhulu headman had kept from an earlier scoping exercise with the RLCC and that placed the Shigalo group in a dotted area to the South East of Levubu and far from their 'natural boundaries'. Realising my interest in the map, he had what he called 'this weapon' laminated and in consecutive meetings in 2007 it accompanied him on the hat stand of his Mercedes Benz.

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[65] Interview A. Madzivhandila, 1 May 2007

Governing for Community

During my research I started wondering how the group of 995 listed land restitution beneficiaries would stand to benefit from the joint venture on the reclaimed farms described in the next chapter. Eventually, I received a copy of the list of beneficiaries and decided to do a random sample of twelve claimants to see their respective positions on the land claims, what their development priorities were and how they saw beneficiation. The data corroborated the idea that indeed Tshakhuma had become de-agrarianised and there was concern about the loss of jobs if the white farmers all disappeared. Maintaining the status quo in terms of maintaining farm jobs was for all respondents an absolute priority over the prospect of attaining a plot for farming. The survey, however limited, also showed that most were not aware of being on the list and seemed not to find it important to be formally listed. This resonated with a more inclusive view of community held by the tribal trustees and the idea that the 'beneficiary community' could not be restricted to the restitution policies' eligibility criteria of persons 'directly affected' by the loss of land rights or 'direct descendants thereof'.

At public meetings held by the tribal trust no particular exclusivity pertained to the land claim, seeing as it featured prominently alongside other recent achievements the traditional leaders claimed to have brought to Tshakhuma such as the recent tar road, the prospective 68 million Rand investment by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in the development of a tourist and conference facility at Tshakhuma's dam (see Figure 5.4) and minor achievements like recent service delivery in electricity. The spill-over of the land claim into the general basket of community beneficiation coincided with the idea of how to distribute funds. The secretary of the Land Claims Committee sketched the vision of the traditionalists' aspirations for the 'mini-municipality'. When income that was pending from the successful Entambeni forestry land claim and the Levubu farms would finally result – a total income he estimated at 5 million Rand a year – this money would go into new clusters of the tribal Development Trust. The structure had not been finalised but the compulsory clusters or technical committees would fill the 'lower echelons of the pyramid' with the typical education, health, roads, housing, culture etc.[66] I say typical here because the launch of the Tshakhuma Scholar's Guild to which I was invited went through a work-shopping exercise by a local academic of the Venda University who presented a similar institutional framework.

[66] Interview Mr. Maraga, Tshakhuma, 2 March 2007

The vision also represented a mimicking of the municipality that had been forged through close collaboration with locally elected representatives and setting priorities for the local Integrated Development Plans of the Makhado Municipality. The pluralist nature of the Tshakhuma political landscape was emphasized by the elected ANC Ward councillor and lowest level government representative when she explained the political aspirations of the tribal council and its governance practices:

> When it comes to the land claim the Tribal Council are the ones who organize the meetings. I am also a member of the Tribal Council and sit in at their meetings but I am not always invited to the meetings…For managing the income from the Levubu farms, the Chief has already designed structures to redistribute the money like they did with the tourism project at the dam. The Chief has set up many committees meaning that what we do as a ward will be duplication. What the Chief wants is his own cabinet…I will stick with my thing, working the municipality way.[67]

This statement highlights the type of expansionist politics employed at Tshakhuma by the traditional leadership and the way in which contestation over land is closely entangled with a notion of Chiefly sovereignty that expands into the realm of the provision of services in a way that touches on the functions attributed to the state. This was further emphasised by the way the Tribal Council could openly take credit for municipal service delivery, for having approved the planning priorities. Moreover, as the Ward councillor later also affirmed, the communal tenure system often provided the Tribal Trust with the final word. Invoking the prioritisation of a pedestrian bridge across Tshakhuma's tar road in terms of the 2009 IDP, she explained that 'what we come up with as the ward committee, we consult the Chief, because this is the Chief's land, the land is not ours'.[68]

Territorial politics aimed at becoming a visible and progressive development broker extended to the Levubu farms. Although the Land Claims Commission was adamant that all commercial farmland restored to claimant groups would have to remain under agricultural production, the Tribal Trust excised a banana field of three hectares for setting up a health clinic in 2007 (see Figure 5.5). The Trust used their relations with the municipal Department of Health and provided the land for the 4,5 Million Rand tender to build the clinic. The clinic was named the 'HaDombo Clinic'– a concession to his long-lost relatives and a permanent reminder that it was mediated through the tribal council. The Chief also explained this notion of opening the land to a wider beneficiary community in the following terms:

[67] Interview Mrs. Mufamadi, 23 November 2006
[68] Interview Mrs. Mufamadi, 22 January 2009
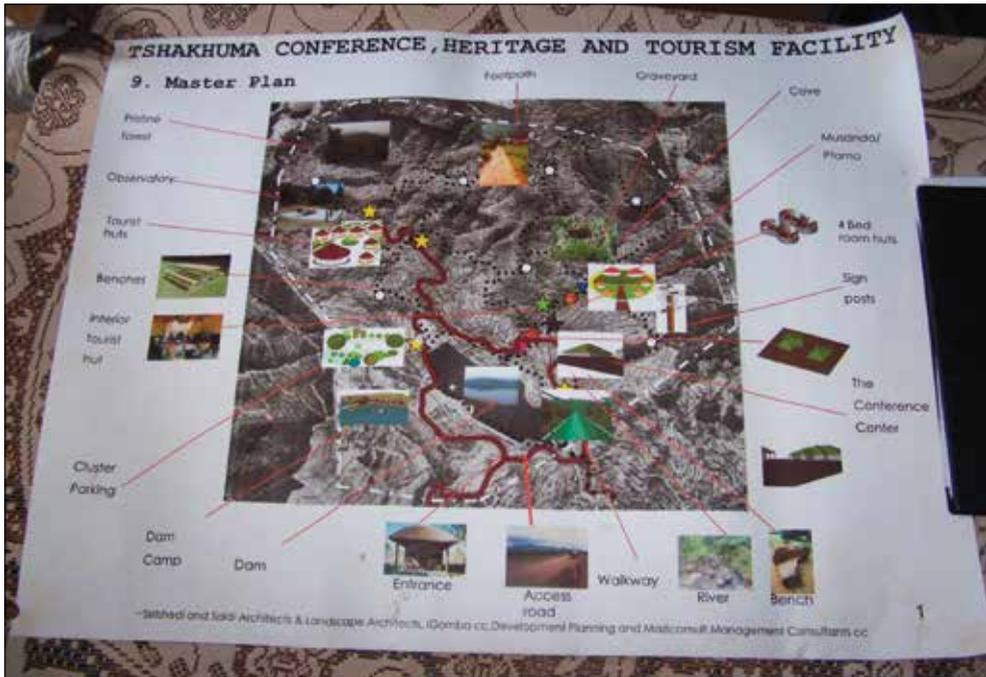
Figure 5.4 'Damview' tourism development plan at Tshakhuma

> The clinic is for all the people who are staying there, they must have the privilege of going there. And the labourers [of the Levubu farms]. They realised now that that land now – because of the land claims – belongs to Chief Madzivhandila and his people – so now whenever they want to do any development there they have to come to us and say we want a better place. We thought that was a convenient place. You see the residential people staying there [at Tshitavadhulu] they are nearer now instead of coming to the clinic at Tshakhuma.[69]

The land restitution deal is thus part of the larger upliftment programme at Tshakhuma in which the redistributive qualities of the tribal office are vested largely in the person of the Chief and his associates. In tandem with the Tshitavadhulu headman they were regarded as shakers and movers who could engage with the governmental techniques. In the words of the observant Lutheran reverend at Tshakhuma: 'they can even write letters and go up to Limpopo government, he will get it. That's why you find Tshakhuma is on the map'.[70] The next chapter builds on this productive form of 'bureaucratic chieftaincy' with its tried techniques and practices of letter-writing, hosting prospective investors and holding development partners accountable. It will further explore the way the presumably productionist ideology of the state in securing the productive use of land through the Strategic Partnership arrangement also became prone to this expansionist drive, not

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[69] Interview A.M. Madzivhandila, Tshakhuma, 26 January 2009
[70] Interview B. P. Ramothwala, Tshakhuma, 27 February 2007

Figure 5.5 Farm inspectors from traditional council visiting Tshakhuma clinic at Levubu

only for control of the land, but also for key redistribution functions. In so doing, the organizing practices of the Community Trust mirror and build on the recent 'success' of re-tribalization at Tshakhuma proper in a process of provincializing sovereignty that marks the ongoing production of multiplicity and related policy dilemmas that follow when traditional authorities are naturalized as governing institutions in rural government.

Conclusion

With my focus on how land reclamation unfolds in specific contexts, we have to also take into account the specificity of the Tshakhuma context and its particular political economy as a frontier squeezed between white farming land, chiefdom and exemplary site of agricultural development according to the homeland farming model. Historical factors and its rapid development into a peri-urban settlement, shaped cultural politics of community and how membership is defined. The secretary of the tribal trust explained to me that the traditional leadership was working towards becoming a 'mini-municipality'– a public authority trying to build a loyal constituency much like government and fulfilling tasks associated with local government like provision of infrastructure, building clinics, dispensing

bursaries to talented students and bringing private tourism investment to the area. These practical aspirations build on an idea of inclusive community membership and also being seen to be institutionally reliable in the eyes of state and other investors. It follows that the association of traditional leadership can be seen as shifting from an authoritarian to a more negotiated form, in which promotion of the (localised) public good becomes the yardstick for measuring the legitimacy of the chieftaincy. We see changes through the loss of political agency of chiefs after the transition in a way that sensitises them more to functioning in a neoliberal mode of governance whereby they face competing authorities. As Claassens (2001: 40) has also noted for the post-apartheid development of the Rakgwadi chieftaincy in the Limpopo Province, enforcement in areas like payment of levies is ever-more problematic without the backing of the former 'coercive state power'. Post-apartheid democratization, however, can open up new possibilities for traditional leadership to assert itself along a broader array of public roles that include control of and over the redistribution of resources and services. The combined effect of Tshakhuma's traditional leaders' emergence, from a period of disorientation and loss of political agency to the re-establishment of authority in a political landscape brimming with political initiative and occupied by multiple political authorities, is critical to understanding the complex backgrounds to political brokerage by traditional leaders and their appointees.

By placing land restitution deals in a wider political landscape of entitlement, we can observe that the state is by no means a unitary social actor. Land restitution is situated in local arenas, where it becomes part of ongoing struggles over control over land and the right to distribute public goods disseminated by the state. Well-positioned community brokers can then strategically invoke multiple repertoires to stake their claims and in the process promote an 'entangled landscape' in which we can no longer speak in terms of the sanctified demarcations between 'traditional' and 'modern', or 'state technologies of rule' and 'chiefly rule'. In terms of analysing (temporary) outcomes, we can observe ongoing processes of negotiation, the circulation of arguments and artefacts, and more or less coordinated attempts at spatial and social disciplining.

The way community representatives participate in multiple sites and through a series of messy coordination attempts, hints at the way community brokers may 'forum shop' across various social sites and bring experiences from previous encounters with the state into the present negotiations. From their particular cultural backgrounds and experiences with the (oftentimes fantastical) working of the intervention agencies, they engage in networked practices which bring about entangled landscapes that not only redefine physical space but give impetus to traditional leadership as a public institution and gatekeeper of rural

development. Land restitution in this case clearly has a limited capacity to radically transform rural governance and democratize local institutions. We should however not necessarily be looking at the failure of this transformative agenda to achieve new social relationships in a process of nation-building and democratization, but examining the social sites within which land restitution is embedded and the capacity of local brokers to link their personal projects to the trajectories advanced by the state or other partners in development. Insights may then suggest a re-approaching of the Chief-Land-People-nexus and presumed continuity towards seeing how traditional leaders act increasingly as development brokers whose authority is not given but follows conjunctural movements according to a changing landscape of power. This argument will be further elaborated in the following chapter. Here we will see how a seemingly narrow economic and welfarist project of developing a viable business model for managing the Levubu farm encounters this emergent chiefly sovereignty and entangles the productionist intentions of the state with chiefly territory.

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Chapter 6

**In Pursuit of Viability: The Making and Unmaking of
a Strategic Partnership Model at Levubu**

'The agreement here is not only for Tshakhuma. It is also for President Mbeki and the Afrikaners. We are busy developing a modus operandus'.[71]

Introduction

A key dilemma for policy makers in land restitution has been the restoration of land that is deemed to be of exceptional productive value. This chapter explores one of the most publicly contested projects in the Limpopo Province concerning the maintenance of what is defined by or defended in some quarters as a 'pocket of excellence'. The area concerned here is the 10,000 ha Levubu privately-owned irrigation scheme, where deciduous fruits, bananas, litchis, avocados and macadamia nuts are grown for domestic and export markets, which is valued for its contribution to national revenues and local employment. This area has been successfully reclaimed by seven 'tribes' who claim restoration on the basis of the land having been a communal area under tribal tenure prior to forced removal in the 1930s. A similarity is discernible with the Kranspoort case from Chapters Two and Three in which land is debated at the interface of its value as a public good, on the one hand, and communal property restored to successful land claimants on the other. Mediating the transfer of land we find a similar reliance by external managers and private parties on maintaining the 'current use of the land'. It marks a new role for the state and intermediary actors in facilitating a gradual and phased process from mentorship to a (future) moment of full ownership when the community is deemed to have the skills and capacity to look after this – in this case agricultural – heritage. In a similar vein, policy agendas are informed by an apprehension of the land beneficiaries' ability to self-manage these sensitive lands and an urge to avoid another embarrassing 'failure' in land redistribution. Maintenance of the 'current use of the land' marked a similar reliance on an experimental partnership model, in which state officials acted as intermediaries attempting to draw in agribusiness investors and 'temporary' farm managers.

Levubu however also presents a distinct managerial logic that follows the approach to market-led commercial farming that is dominant within the Department of Land Affairs and Agriculture and land reform. The approach – to be discussed below in more detail – has been defined by observers as showing a narrow focus on economic growth (James 2010; Ntsebeza and Hall 2007). Viability is maintained according to scaled-up or scaled-down versions of idealized commercial farming and technical ideas of 'economic units' and 'carrying capacities' (Cousins and Scoones 2010: 32). Recent analyses of the strategic partnership or joint venture model equate it with this colonizing, neo-liberal rationale

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[71] Community member speaking at meeting at Tshakhuma Public Hall on 17 October 2006 between the Tshakhuma Land Claims Committee, Regional Land Claims officials and SAFM

(Lahiff et al. 2011; Lahiff 2007a). It follows that the state is implicated in setting up and maintaining institutional frameworks that are deemed to be necessary to productively manage farms.

As I have also argued elsewhere, the approach tends to attribute disproportional agency to officials and the investors or partners 'invited' into the partnership (Van Leynseele 2013). Importantly, what may be missed here are the linkages to the local political economies of rule and how traditional leaders have been instrumental in shaping outcomes (see Fraser 2007a for an exception). Zooming in more closely on the limits and possibilities of the partnership as an 'invited space', brings into focus local political economies marked by close interdependencies between white commercial farmers and surrounding communities who rely, or have relied, on them for wage labour. Although marked by paternalistic relations, we may see that the continued presence of white farmers may not be so controversial to the land claimants who may be in favour of the maintenance of the status quo for the provision of job security. This issue may not be approached so critically. Likewise, we may find the community leadership itself following an ambivalent strategy. Whilst reclaiming their rights with a focus on 'deracialization' and the win-lose politics of redistribution of land it seems to imply, they still cherish mentorship by previous owners with whom they have dealt in the past.

In reviewing the emergence of multi-facetted organization practices at Levubu, this chapter exemplifies the heterogeneous dynamism played out in these so-called 'managerial spaces' of land restitution. Importantly, we will develop an argument for seeing such land deals as gravitating towards an ownership over process and away from the 'thingness of property' (see Chapter One). Disputes over property rights certainly matter in this contested area. Yet, the assertion of the entitlement to manage and defend one position in the partnership now also constitutes a key aspect in the defence of place. Through understanding this 'opening up' of Levubu's space of production, we may appreciate how the viability of land claims to Levubu has become entangled with public debates on the direction of post-settlement support in land restitution.

Levubu may be seen as a place which well-positioned actors endeavour to present as 'exceptional' and 'hegemonic' through its portrayal as representative of a development principle. The Strategic Partnership model embraced here reflects an attempt at grounding and harmonizing competing principles of viable and productive land use, and the idea that African beneficiaries of land restitution can be organized around notions of tribe and custom. Particular characteristics of this place relate to how it is developed as a community

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mega farm – marrying community and commercial farming. The demands of making this area profitable through a process of collectivization of land and related tribalization of land tenure, is discussed in terms of how attempts to regularize regulation and maintain the area as a 'pocket of productive excellence' provoke a new modality of government in which national frameworks of rights may be suspended and place-making reflects the effort to open up this codified and historically-sedimented landscape of production to new activities and moral principles.

Deracialization and the Strategic Partnership Model

Land restitution policies in post-apartheid South Africa started off with a narrow focus on land rights. The underlying principle was that restorative justice was served by restoration of land or other means of once-off compensation. With the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) partly measuring its success in numbers of hectares of land restored and chasing its oft-quoted target of having 30 per cent of all agricultural land redistributed by 2015 from white into black hands, restitution policies had a narrow focus on the restoration of property rights without ample support for claimants after hand-over of land (see Chapter One). Ideas of widespread land hunger among rural communities prompted this focus on land access, even if progress was extremely slow due to the respect for private property (the 'willing-buyer-willing-seller principle') and an aversion to expropriating land (DLA 1997). When land deals did materialize, observers of the programme noted a lack of government support in areas like planning, capitalization of farms and agricultural training for beneficiaries.

A paradigm shift took hold of the national restitution commission around 2000, prompting it to expand the mandates of its RLCC's in two key areas. Land acquisition was expedited by giving the regional authorities a mandate to negotiate directly with landowners and new units were set up to coordinate the so-called post-settlement (after handover of land) support. Securing better outcomes also prompted a rethink as to what sustainable livelihoods should look like. Changes in national agrarian reform agendas arguably travelled from national levels to provincial offices and called for a more business-like approach to development (James 2010). Central tenets of the ideal are a focus on maintaining a viable commercial farming sector and a process of entrepreneurial evolution marked by transitions from 'emergent' to commercial farmer. De-racialization in this context entails a controlled phasing out and replacement of the former farm owner. It follows an essentializing but compelling narrative of South Africa's 'dual economies', which in the words of former President Mbeki were 'structurally disconnected' (Cousins 2007: 220). The first economy is comprised of the modern industrial and agricultural centres and

the second is marked by rural and urban pockets of poverty. Forms of state support are thus directed towards building bridges between these two worlds (ibid.: 221).

The dichotomist nature of this thinking could certainly be applied to the transformation envisioned in the land reclamation project discussed below. Levubu valley as a historically privileged and racialized site of white commercial farming typifies the 'first economy'. Reclamation of this rural space has likewise followed an orientation towards maintaining its productive potential through a phasing out of former owners. The rural claimant communities all reside in the former 'homelands' or ethnic reserves, where they have to a greater or lesser extent become marginalized as farmers or de-peasantized as some would have it (see Bundy 1988), and their areas serve as mere labour pools supplying workers for the privileged farms. Following the transformation thesis discussed above, we also need to appreciate the way difference is produced. Land claimants, for reasons beyond their control, lack the necessary skills, financial means and more generally the human capital to assume management of the viable farms. Likewise, these commercial farming areas attain the status of 'sites of exception', whose value relates to their capacity to produce regional revenues and provide job security to their numerous dependants. State-led transformation is then presented with a political dilemma: how to reform a sociality steeped in paternalism that is nonetheless of exceptional economic value.

In 'resolving' this dilemma, land restitution officials have turned to developing new, experimental business models. Policy makers forward a dominant views of viability and forms of coordination that rely heavily on business and land-use planning as a form of security against 'failures' (Cousins and Scoones 2010). Levubu has seen the development of the so-called Strategic Partnership (SP) model that had been tried earlier but would now be applied on an unprecedented scale. By following the historical logic of tribal boundaries, each land claim now stretches over multiple farms. As shall be discussed below, this territorial logic prompted government to consolidate these farms under a single claim into a single farm economic unit.

The basic principle behind the SP implies that new landholding communities enter into a contractual agreement with a reputable agribusiness partner that manages the redistributed farmland for a fifteen-year period. This contracted party effectively replaces state responsibility for development in key areas of skills transfer and providing capital. A joint venture company or so-called 'Operating Company' is then set up for each claimant group, which is comprised of a Board of Directors comprised of claimants' representatives (in this case traditional leaders) and the agribusiness partners. Safety valves have followed

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the predominant reliance on 'strong' contractual agreements, most notably the 'lease' and 'shareholding agreements' entered into between the state, the agribusiness partner and claimant communities. They spell out mutual responsibilities and rights and aim to protect communities from losing their land (redistributed land is not put down as collateral for loans) and provide legible land deals that allow officials to monitor the partnership. Lease agreements define the terms of land lease whereby a fixed annual percentage of the nominal land value (1.25 per cent) is paid from the Operating Company into the community Trusts or Communal Property Associations (the nominal landowners after land restoration). The percentages in the shareholding agreements have shifted through negotiations but by 2007 agreement was reached that 50 per cent be held by the Trusts or CPAs, 48 per cent by the agribusiness partner and 2 per cent by the farm labourers represented in a 'Workers Trust'. Incentives for the agribusiness partner include a management fee based on turnover and the fact that they control upstream and downstream activities and may, for instance, draw farm inputs and do the processing of produce through their auxiliary businesses not included in the Strategic Partnership. In the light of the aforementioned 'fear of failure' and related political risks, the business model also aims at preserving 'the image of the government – in the eyes of political opponents, potential investors and international commentators – as competent, dependable in fulfilling its promises, and responsible in the use of state resources' (Derman et al. 2006: 8).

Recent analyses of the model describe it as a form of neoliberal development that has been imposed on land claimants by the state in the wake of the adoption of a broader market-oriented approach. As such this 'invited space' can be seen as a model in which the state offloads risks onto private investors and land claimants, with the latter group being particularly vulnerable in contractual negotiations which leave them disempowered as laymen with little to no control over management decisions (Derman et al. 2006; Lahiff 2007a). Questions have been raised regarding the control over strategic areas of production like upstream and downstream markers and the fact that local white farmers have been able to enter into partnerships with claimant communities for indefinite time frames that thwart the transformation agenda – 'same car, same driver', as it were. Another problem is presented through the recentralization of management. Restitution authorities have recognized the claims as tribal and as such have enforced representation by traditional leaders. Combined with the vast scale of farm coordination and management imperatives, a form of elite capture by these traditional leaders can be discerned. This unlikely outcome has prompted one observer of the Levubu SP to view it as a hybrid space, in which political economies of tribal rule awkwardly combine with the imported neoliberal model (Fraser 2007a).

The partnership arguably acts as sovereignty in its own right, creating new, contingent and fluid socialities which reconstitute notions of citizenship and prompt a changing role of the state. The porosity and fluidity of emergent networks challenge the rigidity of the idea of neoliberalism as a universalizing, economic doctrine that has forcefully been imposed. In reversing this idea of a singular neoliberal logic, we may see how the role of state is transformed at different stages of the process and how such spaces are marked by uncertainty and contingent relations. In arguing for such changing roles, I also show that political economy matters in this production of space. It matters in the way in which traditional leaders link the right to government over tribal subjects and land with tribal dominion. It also matters in terms of the way in which strategically positioned white farmers defend their managerial entitlements as custodians of a mode of commercial farming (even if they are now landless). The shift is from property ownership to control over the managerial space. And importantly, it matters in relation to the fact – unpopular in the mainstream critique of neoliberal agrarian policies in South Africa – that ordinary claimants and leaders alike value these production areas in terms of how they have provided jobs. Local political economies, as we shall see, reflect long histories of exchange and interdependency which are problematic when viewed through the lens of racialized paternalism, but whose beneficial aspects are nonetheless valued and maintained. Needless to say, a structural disconnect between these presumed 'dual economies' is hard to maintain. Likewise, the call for a radical reformist agenda, aimed at 'rebuilding the house according to a new set of architectural plans' (Cousins 2007: 221) that allows for a more variegated land use and breaking up of farms into smallholder units, may not be reflective of local interests and development strategies.

A Land Most Valuable

In 2007, the Levubu valley represented a patchwork of farms that were in variable stages of processing in terms of land reclamation. Many white landowners had voluntarily sold their land when first approached by the Limpopo Regional Land Claims Commission. Others held out, resisting selling their land and making it available for restoration to one of the seven communities having a claim on it. They held out for various reasons. Some landowners would advance economic arguments, stating that state-led valuations grossly underestimated the value of their properties or they expressed concern that compensation did not cover all non-movable assets, like warehouses. A minority, but very vocal, group of 'unwilling sellers' invoked more ideological arguments and their responsibilities as custodians of the agricultural land. Most of these presumed hardliners were Afrikaners and members or sympathisers of the Transvaal Agricultural Union (Transvaal Landbou Unie). The latter is the antagonistic farmer's union that has sought public confrontation with

officials and publicized provocative articles and newsflashes decrying the disastrous impact of land reform on national productivity and the presumed racism underpinning policy agendas. They continue to subsist (some even thrive) in increasingly fenced-up pockets in the Levubu area where the menacing signs of the private security (Plaaswag) at the farm gate are interspersed with colourful signs of the two strategic partnership organizations exploiting the reclaimed farms (MAVU and SAFM).

Virtual demarcations overlay these signs in the form of a map that has carved up Levubu along the ownership lines of the seven claimant groups (Ravele, Tshakhuma, Ratombo, Shigalo, Tshivhazwaulu, Masakona and Tshitwani; see Figure 6.1). The map shows the compromise of marrying the pre-dispossession tribal geographies – drawn up through accounts from erstwhile government-employed ethnologists and officials of the Native Affairs Department – and contemporary maps. An ongoing negotiation process (and in some cases dispute) between representatives of the seven groups and land restitution officials has merged low-resolution tribal lines with high-resolution property boundaries. The Tshakhuma claimant committee possessed a map of the area under their claim that followed these contours and in which farms not yet reclaimed were marked in yellow. Properties swapped in earlier negotiations with neighbouring claimant groups because they sat in two tribal polities could be viewed with envy or relief now that their agricultural potential had become clear.
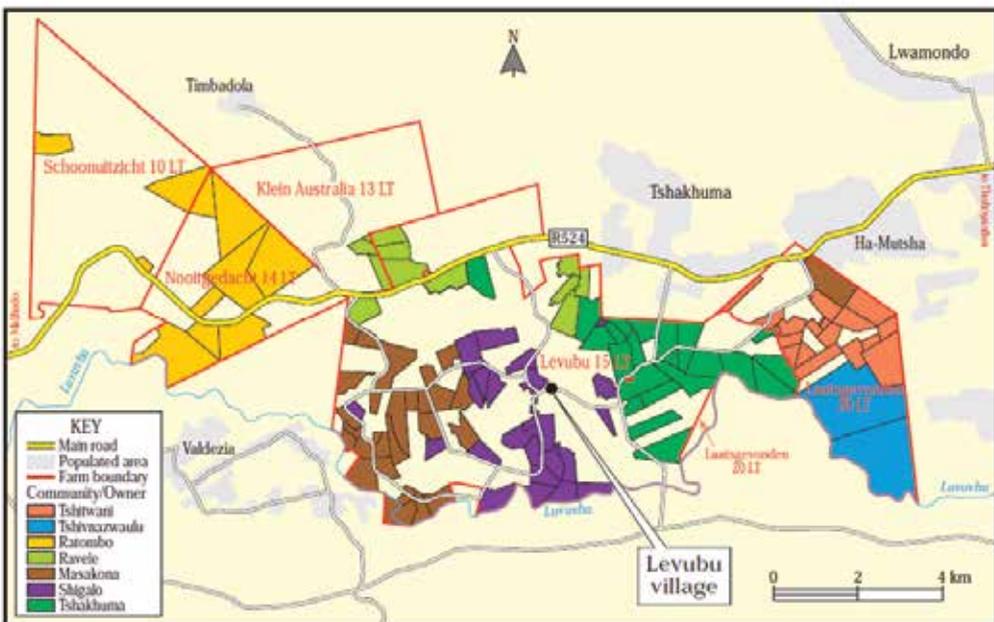

Figure 6.1 Map of the reclaimed Levubu farms by claimant community

A particular truism applies here. It states that we can expect disputes to be more intensive in areas where competition over land increases. Undoubtedly, the valley is exceptional in terms of its agro-ecological conditions and well-developed infrastructure. Rainfall varies between 800 mm and 1,500 mm annually with temperatures ranging from a minimum of 8°C to the high thirties, in turn rendering it one of two suitable production areas for sub-tropical crops, next to the Tzaneen area to the south-east.72 This suitability has inevitably made the valley predatory and subject to racist claims of 'wastefulness' with reference to occupation by African 'squatters' and absentee farmers. An early testimony to this wastage can be found in the diaries of Carl Mauch, a German geologist crossing through the valley in 1871. In appreciating its agricultural potential, he drew a parallel with the Eden-like features of European landscapes of production:

> For the first time I had the opportunity of making a comparison with my pretty home, that is with Neckar Valley. Of course Limvubu [Levubu] is no Neckar, but only a Rems, neither does it have a Brinken, nor are there any meadows and orchards on its banks. All this should be possible if there were a people with a love for order and work living here; and I dare say that here on the Limvubu one big garden could be created within a few years, in which everything from the banana to the potato, from coffee to sugar and oats too, would prosper. Not a foot of the soil ought to be unworked. The traveller cannot but feel sorry to see such a region neglected through inefficiency, or rather through laziness (I can hardly excuse it by ignorance). (Burke 1969: 110).

Periodic and fatal malaria epidemics and a fledgling state with a limited grasp of the so-called 'native question' and distant land speculators, rendered development of the then frontier problematic. Other white claims did however materialize in this period in recognition of its potential and the many Africans that derived a living there. Importantly, on the higher-lying country on the north-eastern slopes of the valley Lutheran missionaries from the Berliner Mission Society set up their outpost at what is now Tshakhuma (see Chapter Five). At the south-western fringe Swiss missionaries established the settlement of Elim to service the Shangaan-speaking groups that arrived in the wake of the population movements in the turbulent years following Zulu expansionism (Kirkaldy 2005). Initiatives for a state-driven spatial enclosure of Levubu valley by 'opening it up for orderly white settlement' only unfolded in the 1930s under the then Union Government. Making Levubu viable logically followed interventions of de- and re-populating it. Around 1935, the Native Affairs Department started serving eviction orders to resident families in order to free up this under-utilized 'area very suitable for [white] settlement'.73 Eviction procedures habitually recorded African residents' names and their assets (unwittingly providing the most solid basis of post-apartheid reclamation in the process), and led to evictees either being relocated

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72 Regional Land Claims Commission, report titled 'Ravele-Levubu Land Claim' presented as discussion document for negotiations between current owners and land claimants, (n.d)
73 'Irrigable Land in the North', Star (newspaper), 23 December 1935

in the so-called scheduled areas (the 'native reserves' or Bantustans) or finding residence in surrounding areas such as the Tshakhuma mission station.

Restocking and recapitalizing the vacated land took a systematic form, with the state facilitating the resettlement of World War Two veterans and other groups of 'poor whites'. As a second generation white farmer explained, whose father was among the first resettled Afrikaners, the state then set up a cooperative structure to select and monitor its emergent farmers.[74] Settlers were 'encouraged' to focus on production of strategic crops – first sugar and later bananas – that were regarded as necessary to providing urban markets and suited to this sub-tropical area. Land titles were given on a provisional basis; when farmers proved to be productive and able to repay loans over a four-year period, they would be handed full ownership. Other forms of support followed such as agricultural training at the Nelspruit college and, in the second half of the 1960s, the construction of the Albasini dam and intricate irrigation system. Later groups of farmers followed in their trails, purchasing properties vacated by the inefficient farmers and even later arrivals that purchased land up until the mid-1990s. With extensive public works done to irrigate the farms by the Department of Land Affairs and credit being made available to farmers at favourable rates through the Land Bank, the valley worked on its status as a 'pocket of excellence'. South Africa's centralized form of corporative agriculture unfolded from the 1970s: an increasingly isolated apartheid government strove for food security and domestic consumption. It organized commercial farming according to the standards and prices set by product-specific marketing boards that bought in bulk from the local corporative. In all, state-led development imposed a new spatial and productive logic; Levubu is characterized by family-size farms between 20 and 40 ha each, with some prominent farmers having consolidated a number of these economic units into larger farms.

Levubu has earned a reputation for being a coherent community of Afrikaner farmers, unswervingly loyal to the project and ideology of apartheid and seeing themselves as the rightful owners and custodians of the productive farmland. The self-image resonates with a view that embodies farmers' qualities as something inherent that is constitutive of a relationship with the land forged over years of developing and labouring it. Private landowners I spoke to could seamlessly merge a cultural belonging with individual merits that found expression in the personal risks, innovation and perseverance required to carve Levubu out of the wilderness. As one of the more moderate voices in the debate about Levubu, the director of the Makhado Chairman's Association and a prominent lawyer, remarked:

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[74] Interview Pierre le Roux, Levubu, 14 March 2006

'the farmer is a special breed of guy. He has guts and a specific type of personality'.[75] He promptly linked personal characteristics to a public service by citing the nominal contribution of white commercial agriculture to the nation: 'they employ 105,000 skilled workers and generate R 4.5 billion in revenue'.[76] The argument invoked the oft-quoted decline in the total number of commercial farmers, from an estimated 100,000 in 1975 (Eci Africa 2006) to 50,000 in 1999, which was attributed to the many new state regulations like water and land taxes, Black Economic Empowerment policies, minimum wages for farm workers, and not least, the insecurity produced by land restitution. In a similar vein, a provincial representative of the Transvaal Agricultural Union spoke of a form of 'economical cleansing' and a state that intentionally taxes white farmers off their farms. The implication to be explored further below is that discussions and disputes about governing Levubu were discursively shifted to the level of public service that government could ill afford to lose.

The national importance of this productive landscape was also deeply ingrained in the local political scene beyond the boundaries of the farms. Levubu had a long history of engaging and sourcing labour from surrounding African communities which varied tremendously according to farmer's preferences and farm size. A typical pattern observed through discussions with farmers was the maintenance of one or two resident foremen and the sourcing of seasonal labour from the surrounding communities. Some larger landowners drew labour from as far afield as Mozambique and accommodated them on-farm. These so-called farm dwellers are underrepresented in this study due to farmers' unwillingness to provide access to them. Another factor weighing in is that farmers who had not sold their properties had moved towards increasing flexibilization of their workforce. Often this was explained with reference to uncertainties they faced due to new minimum wage rules and new Black Economic Empowerment policies (AgriBEE) which they felt discriminated against larger farmers who employ more permanent staff. Sourcing temporary labour from neighbouring communities was also largely informal, on the basis of personal relations and reputations.

The capacity to absorb labour played an important role in the manner in which Levubu was valorized and contested. For one, residents of neighbouring Tshakhuma expressed considerable distress at the prospect of job losses if white farms were to change hands. As mentioned already, Tshakhuma had a particular interest in the maintenance of these farms in order to ensure the provision of quality bananas and avocados to the Tshakhuma Farmers'

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[75] Interview André Naudé, Makhado, 7 September 2006
[76] Ibid.

Market or roadside stalls. A 1999 survey of these market stalls reported that 87 per cent of supplies were drawn from the commercial farms, with individual traders buying at the farm gate (Mudau 1999: 37-38). Figures of seasonal hiring from the whole of Levubu could not be found, but respondents would allude to the beneficial terms of the relationship. Concerns expressed suggested a direct relationship between the removal of white managers and loss of expertise when the community representatives assumed management: 'A lot of people are depending on these farms and they are going to suffer now because of poor management…if they [the Tshakhuma Tribal Trust] were going to take over the management, they should have taken some kids to the Agricultural school'.[77] Here, the speaker is not referring to Tshkahuma's 'Madzivhandila Agricultural College', a remnant of the Chief's influence as Minister of Agriculture in the former Venda 'homeland'. Skills taught at this college were not suited to commercial farming but directed at smallholders or the keeping of garden plots which reflected state policy to revitalize former homeland agriculture. The statement alludes to the gradual process of depeasantization Tshakhuma had undergone and its having become an attractive settlement area for those looking for work on surrounding commercial farms (see Chapter Five).

From the above we can appreciate how the 'rural geography of apartheid' (van den Brink et al. 2007: 161) presents a complex interdependency among the multiplex relationships formed along this settler–homeland frontier. The 'inherent political and social nature of property rights' and the equity concerns informing the restoration of ownership (ibid.: 160) would clearly be too narrow a focus in this context. Besides the fact that Levubu is a site that is valorized in a public debate over its regional and national importance – in ways that may compromise redistributive justice – we must situate the dismantling of the white-owned farms in the context of the exchanges between these supposed first and second economies. Widening the lens to include the sets of relations implicit in this local political economy, we can appreciate how ownership can move beyond its propertied implications to land that can be defended on the basis of the necessity of maintaining white farm managers with the proper skills. As will be discussed below, it also opens up control over labour which has become a core issue in land reclamation.

Willing and Unwilling Sellers

Let us first return to the notion of deracialization in its propertied form and how this process unfolded at Levubu. White farmers there were first served with the notice of a land restitution claim on the entire valley through a Government Gazette notice in 2000. Initially, noted as a single community 'Ravele land claim' only with a vague outline of

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[77] Interview Ralph Davhula, Tshakhuma, 3 March 2007

properties under claim, a second gazetting in 2001 included the other six communities and was more specific about the properties under claim.[78] Landowners did not face immediate threat of eviction or forced sales. On the contrary, following its adherence to the property clause in the National Constitution and the so-called 'willing-buyer-willing-seller' principle of land reform, owners were guaranteed market values based on 'independent' valuators' reports. Further respect for property rights was illustrated by the manner in which provincial officials from the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) organized public meetings during which they informed land owners that they had a right to contest the validity of claims and push for a referral to the Land Claims Court, or alternatively enter into negotiations with them.

Where critical observers have highlighted the problematic social agency this respect for private property bestows on owners (see Derman et. 2010), local landowners certainly did not see it this way. They typically described the restitution process as hostile and as unfolding within a broader framework of 'assault' on commercial farmers. Uncertainties seemed to be piled upon white farms and what was sometimes called government inefficiency at expediting the land claims process could equally be interpreted as arbitrary politics. For example, several landowners recounted how they thought the long wait between the gazetting of the claim and actual negotiations – 2000 to 2003 – was a form of intimidation. Likewise, certain events were recalled to illustrate open hostility such as the suggestion of the regional commissioner, Mokono, at a public meeting that the Australian continent was a good resettlement location. Other accounts of this nature included letters (subtitled 'Your friend in land reform') received from a group from Polokwane offering their services to landowners to negotiate a fair price in record time. Uncertainty marked this period. One female farmer who sat on the fence but resisted stepping into the negotiations explained her plight: 'It was a psychological war. We are not an isolated island, we are group animals. If my neighbour is selling, I am going to think I am making a big mistake and will sell'.[79] The specific circumstances of individual farmers influenced the decision to negotiate a deal or not, such as their indebtedness, having no heirs to the business and their approach to investment in their land despite the land claim on it.

Clearly, a number of white farmers saw land restitution as an opportunity. The fear of more policies like the pending Land Tax and expropriation laws or the inability to remain competitive in the face of a deregulated farming sector, or a combination thereof, led numerous landowners to sell quietly and exchange farming for a plot in or close to town

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78 Government Gazette 11 May 2001, Vol. 431, No. 22270
79 Interview A. Jordaan, Levubu, 8 September 2007.

Talk of these retired 'townsmen' was rife in Levubu, with their flight explained in surprisingly apolitical terms. That is to say, labels like 'lazy' and 'struggling farmers' could apply, but selling as a political statement was subordinated to the business savvy of making a timely exit faced with financial gain.80 Although vehemently denied by some of the willing sellers, research revealed evidence of escalated land valuations subsequent to the land restitution claims on Levubu (Derman et al., 2010). Local landowners and restitution officials alike expressed their surprise at how forthcoming willing sellers were and marvelled at how readily the popular notion of Levubu as a stronghold for conservative white farmers gave way.

Collective responses by white landowners were, however, articulated. Notwithstanding the individual motivations, a rough divide unfolded along the lines of engagement and disengagement. I was party to the former group's strategy, and, to some extent, their acceptance, by becoming a member of the Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) as a researcher for one year and attending some of the local meetings. This unexpected access was made possible by a shift in the organization's strategy around 2003, when their confrontational tactics had scared off less certain unwilling sellers. The TAU vied for a more respectable status and excursions into the national media by its members presented a more objective line of argument that focused on the viability of the commercial farming sector, without entirely relinquishing nationalist claims invoking its status as one of South Africa's official minorities. The Levubu campaign for self-preservation was given a more respectable face when a well-known, former municipal representative of the Democratic Alliance agreed to act as one of the provincial spokespersons for the TAU. By 2006 she had collected a dossier of legal loopholes and kept a close tag on all rulings by the Land Claims Court. These overviews detailed the relevant jurisprudence of legal categories like 'community', 'farm worker', 'occupy' and 'compensation' for future reference. A process of re-education, whereby the TAU provided advice, replaced famers' lack of understanding of these legal constructs. The strategy was based on a belief in the solidity of the rule of law in South Africa. As the representative explained, 'government is constitutionally disobedient…we are now taking over the state function to protect ourselves [as a minority]'.[81] Unconstitutional infringements and violations of property rights included unannounced in-loco farm inspections by officials searching for physical evidence of past African presence. Likewise, TAU employees undertook the painstaking task of mapping all gazetted land claims in the province in the hope that it would enable them to provide swift advice to landowners contacted by the restitution officials to inform them whether the

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[81] Interview M. Helm, Polokwane, 9 October 2006

gazette actually included their property and if there were overlapping restitution claims (a sure reason to revert the claim back to the officials).

This public agenda obscured members' attitudes that were in many cases still unapologetically racist. For one, a must read in these circles was Philip du Toit's *The Great South African Land Scandal*. The book subscribes to a genre of failure-listing of African-run farms – also popular in everyday conversation – and answers the question 'Why not let those who can farm continue to produce the food to feed the millions in Southern Africa?' (du Toit, 2004: iv) with a predictable call to leave valuable pockets like Levubu outside the scope of land reform. Farmers seeking protection from the arbitrary state also subscribed to the ideal of becoming as self-reliant as possible in terms of energy, water and farm security.[82] Some radicals even entertained notions of white enclaves in the valley and mobilising poor whites (so-called *Volksarbeid*) to work on their farms. Lack of protection from an inefficient police force fuelled such visions of territorial sovereignty. Most blatantly public in this regard was the 'Green Light Brigade' farm security group organized by TAU-affiliated farmers. The coordination of private security provided a new rationale for staying in touch by volunteers' reporting in at set times in the evening through use of the intercom radios each member had in their home. Volunteers made up the armed response units and the wives operated the radios. The patrolling of armed men and their interrogation of suspected trespassers openly challenged the state's sovereignty and provided some sense of coordinated place-making, even if some felt that it was a matter of time before the use of green sirens would be outlawed and the next legal skirmish would ensue.

A more constructive collective response to the land claims came from a group organized as the Group of 23 who together owned approximately 9,000 ha. The group called itself a 'loose association of landowners in the Levubu Valley', but in actual fact all had sold, or were in the process of selling, their land. The group tied in more established families, like that of Frans Prinsloo, with more recent arrivals not as implicated in the local political economy. Cautiously embracing the inevitability of, or perhaps even the political need for, land redistribution, this group formed a collective of farmers more or less affiliated with the more progressive AgriSA farmer's union. A growing number of farmers joined the group after 2002 as their demands became better articulated. An overview of the documents they submitted as 'proposals' to the RLCC and the minutes of meetings with the officials shows that for most members (three-quarters) their offer to become managers meant being relieved of their land by selling it to the commission but (phrased in the altruistic

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[82] Interview D. le Roux, Makhado, 23 February 2006

language of arriving at a win-win solution) contributing to the transformation process by staying on as manager/mentors on the properties they knew best. Propertied defence of place relied on guarantees for fair valuations of farm and farm implements included as part of the business. Pending further negotiations, the group had presented a resolution to the RLCC officials at a meeting in 2002 in which the first clause read that the landowners 'do not acknowledge the validity of the land claims to their prospective properties' but were 'prepared to settle any possible land claims on the basis that' there would be a valuation by 'an independent sworn valuator' and two other conditions protecting their interests. These pre-conditions set the terms for 'their best endeavours to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship, with the sole object to ensure the sustainability and economic stability of the properties and the region'.[83] Land sold under these fair principles would then be leased back to the former owners. The vacant farms of departing farmers could be put up for tender and handed over as a concessionaire to expertly selected emergent farmers.

Later proposals gave shape to non-propertied claims or managerial entitlement. They reflected a similar idea of creating a precedent-setting model discussed elsewhere in this book (Chapter Three) but were distinct in their reference to building upon Levubu's sedimented landscape. Detached from (or perhaps relieved from the burden of) property ownership, the majority of farmers would continue to work as they did in the past. One of the group's suggestions noted the rationale in terms of the second nature as construed by them and strengthened through linkages to distant markets:

The subtropical valley of Levubu consists of high potential farmland with more than 400 intensive farm units of an average of 30-40 ha, many of which are accredited and annually re-evaluated for Eurep GAP (European Representatives of Good Agricultural Practices) required for exporting. The agricultural success story of this valley relies heavily on the fact that each of these intensive units is owned and managed by an independent agricultural entrepreneur, many of whom have shares in the adjacent private processing facilities, pack houses and marketing bodies. The expertise and distribution of risk amongst all these entrepreneurs underpins the strength of the economy of the region, their expertise resting upon the trials and errors and accumulated knowledge of four generations.[84]

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[83] 'Resolution by Landowners of Portions Levubu 15LT and All Other Properties Pertaining to Group 23', signed 22 May 2002 at a meeting with members of the Land Claims Commission, material in private possession

[84] 'A Proposal for a Post Settlement Plan for Agriculture in the Levubu Valley', (n.d.) Levubu Farming Enterprises (Pty) Ltd.

According to this script, productive continuity was vested in the family farm as an economic unit. A controversial aspect of the sets of proposals submitted by this group regarded the need to protect their farm workers. An early draft of the proposed models included them as part of the beneficiary group, seeing as the 'uptake of new skills will be fast and efficient with these people' and 'we strongly feel that these people have served us loyalty for many years'.[85] The responsibility of training would be achieved by sending 'learners' to the nearby Madzivhandila college for agricultural training, and in later versions, through 'a professional empowerment agent'. The costs appeared to be not solely financial, as farmers appeared to foresee the difficulties of intensive collaboration with potential farmers outside of their tried networks. One of the groups of more liberal farmers, and a recent arrival to the area in 1993, rather preferred to explain the merits of a training programme in a small business setup; after all, was it not also government's idea to create a new breed of farmers in the likeness of the departing ones?[86]

Consolidating Levubu: Upscaling Production According to Territorial Logic

By the turn of the century, a different logic had taken hold in government circles. Publicly officials were willing to consider all proposals by the willing mentors. Minutes of a June 2001 meeting noted that the RLCC commissioner Mokono read that 'Group 23's proposal will be handed over to judge Dodson (former judge to the RLCC) for scrutiny and to build a legal structure around it'. The commission however faced other, macro-political, dilemmas that linked Levubu's future to the promise of restorative justice. Deracialization, according to the commissioner Mokono, was precisely about dismantling former roles that had typified former master–worker relations and the mutual dependencies it had nurtured. As he explained in 2006, the trajectory suggested by the Group of 23 could not be realized without government support in socially engineering a behavioural change targeted at the farm worker:

> Now all of sudden you say master, you will not be the master only, you are an equal partner. Who for the rest of your life known to be a subject of your workers…You still have a feeling that you have more knowledge, you can tell them. Our responsibility now is to change that sense of understanding. How do you that? Empowering people, take them to school. That's what we're about. And there's a smaller understanding of restitution than the transfer of land. Look at the bigger picture. We are changing power relations on the farm.[87]

Economic arguments interspersed his reasoning. Efficiency in service delivery called for a 'bigger economic unit' that would save on 'procurement, the use of your tractors, your service'

[85] 'Levubu Claim. A Proposal by Group 23', by Frans Prinsloo and Elthea Schlesinger, 2002. Material in private possession.
[86] Interview Elthea Schlessinger, Levubu, 24 February 2006
[87] Interview M. Mokono (land claims commissioner Limpopo RLCC) and B. Shilote, Polokwane, 17 July 2007

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and allow the state to 'cross-subsidise activities'.[88] Bureaucratic concerns also factored in as it would be desirable to engage in collective negotiations with all communities and have them sign the same lease- and shareholding agreements as part of the joint venture. The aforementioned tribal nature of the land restitution claims further underscored this consolidation. In a context of large swaths of land claimed by each community, consolidation also presented a convenient marriage between community ownership and efficient farms that could be aligned with forms of state support. Following the acknowledgment of tribal groups as legitimate claimants in land restitution legislation, seven communities have claimed the entire Levubu area. The first phase of the land restitution process at Levubu was finalized in 2006 with the purchase and transfer of some 5,382 ha of private land to the various communities (Lahiff 2007a: 12). The land was divided among seven claimant communities namely, Ravele, Tshakuma, Ratombo, Shigalo, Tshivhazwaulu, Masakona and Tshitwani with the prospect of further redistribution as more white owners sell their properties. After a second round of purchases, the Tshakhuma Community Trust by early 2009 held an approximate total of 1,383 hectares of Levubu farmland (sixteen properties ranging in size from 367 ha (the former Barotta state farm) and 19 ha family plots).[89] By virtue of the land claims being communal and based on large tribal areas encompassing multiple farms, the logic of the historical farm unit (as developed under apartheid) is now overlaid with a historical map based on the pre-dispossession era.

Government pushed for the Strategic Partnership option to manage the scaled-up community farm unit. Two agribusiness partners' firms survived the initial pool of five bidders through a 2003 tender bid. Both had the required Black Economic Empowerment credentials represented in a Board of Directors of mixed race. South African Farm Management (SAFM) brought in a more distant business partner from the Tzaneen area and Mavu Management Systems brought in more local partners, one of which had been a prominent member of Group 23. A key selection criterion was the ability of the business partner to access capital. As mentioned earlier, claimants would not be expected to carry risks and attain credit by laying their land down as collateral. Further criteria represented a wish list that could be seen in terms of the neoliberal approach associated with the then Mbeki administration. It included an ability to link to markets, mechanisms for achieving economies of scale, building sound institutional arrangements and responsible governance on the farm proper (see also ECI Africa 2006). The state, contrary to the commissioner's confidence in a supportive state, could offer little besides work-based education programmes offered

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[88] Ibid.
[89] 'Proposal to Manage Tshakhuma Community Farms', H. Wolff, 1 November 2009

by a parastatal institution (SETA).[90] The instalment of the Strategic Partnership model involved a considerable amount of state imposition based on previous lessons learnt in land deals involving high-potential agricultural land. In certain circles, the deal was viewed as the privatization of the state's responsibility for development; a transferral of a bunch of conditions instead of a bundle of rights. That is to say, the aforementioned lease- and shareholding agreements reserved all land for commercial farming, and institutionalized a phased transfer in which claimants would have limited managerial authority in the Operating Company and all components of the business had to comply with progressive labour laws, land taxation, etc. Moreover, agreements stated that all the reclaimed land would have to be leased exclusively to the new Operating Company.

Fraser (2007a: 305) highlighted how one particular joint venture arrangement at Zebediela citrus estate had proved to be the best to emerge. This precedent had been set by SAFM but in Levubu a new settlement had to be negotiated. Key nodal areas included the development of a skills-transfer plan and determining what would be a suitable time frame for the land leases to the Operating Company. A certain farming rationale applied to the length of leases and the operational capital to be injected for rehabilitating or maintaining farm productivity. It held that the replanting of tree crops like macadamia and avocado would require a number of years to become profitable as opposed to bananas which could yield quicker results. The condition of individual Levubu farms in terms of viability of existent crops, the condition of fixed structures and infrastructure for the external SAFM partners, was very much an unknown entity, due to the willing sellers' negotiations around higher valuations. Stepping into the partnership arrangement blindly confirmed that the valley's reputation had been successfully articulated.

The selection of the appropriate partners at Tshakhuma remains subject to rumours. Prior to the start of the post-settlement tender bidding process in 1998, the leadership had adopted a resolution that seemed to reflect the aforementioned interdependencies with the white farmers at Levubu. The resolution contains a claim to upgrade the chiefly status to that of independent paramount –'under the power vested in Paramount Chief A.M. Madzivhandila'– along with an acknowledgement of the farmers' contributions. It states: 'The former landowners will continue their occupation as they are providing employment to our citizens and we hope that through agreements the methods of fighting against unemployment will improve. Through agreements between the community and the local farmers, the relationship with the com

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munity fruit market and the stalls owners [at the Tshakhuma intersection] will be supported by the farmers'.[91] Nonetheless, by 2003 the leadership had adopted the Strategic Partnership variant. Whilst some of the community trustees maintained that it had been Dr Motsoaledi (the then provincial head of the agricultural department) who had imposed the deal, threatening that it was this deal or no deal, others preferred a reading that implied social agency of the committee in accepting the partner.

The first and only document cementing the partnership was a 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was formal enough to enable the agribusiness partner to assume the farm management and set up office at Levubu, but was not legally binding to the extent that it covered the foreseen lease- and shareholding agreements. Drafting the precise terms of these agreements involved yet more rounds of negotiation. A land rights-oriented NGO Nkuzi Development Association acted as intermediary, working with the seven communities in order to make the contracts more community-friendly. The goal was to get community input and pass these on to a reputable law firm in Pretoria for finalization. Meetings in 2006 to this end were presided over by two engaged social scientists, who took it upon themselves to point out the loopholes to the claimant groups. To combat landlessness and diversified livelihoods, they suggested, among others, excising the unproductive parts of Levubu for other land uses, such as for residential purposes and smallholder farming.[92] Other potential changes that illustrate activist concerns over the plight of farm dwellers that were not formally organized, concerned a clearer stake for the so-called Workers Trust that would hold a 10 per cent interest in shares (a mark-up from their 2 per cent stake in the earlier MoU from 2005). Consolidating community demands also mirrored the demand of the state to have all seven communities captured in a replicable single share- and lease-holding agreement.

The Tshakhuma Tribal Trust present at the meeting dismissed this bid for bureaucratic legibility by the NGO intermediaries. They decided not to partake in the ensuing negotiations, arguing they would employ their own lawyer to negotiate a tailored settlement. In reflecting on these meetings, the trustee and Tshitavadhulu headman who forcefully spoke at such meetings in lieu of the Chief, explained he would rather follow the tried and malleable script that put the tribal trust central to decision-making: 'let an official from government come and explain, then we will talk'.[93] This break-away attitude contrasted sharply with that

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[91] Resolution from the Tshakhuma claimant committee in 1998. Material in private possession
[92] Meeting at Makhado Public Library on 16 February 2007 between the seven claimant communities and representatives of Nkuzi Development Association on the Terms of the Shareholding and Lease Agreement
[93] Conversation M.W. Madzivhandila, Tshakhuma, 22 February 2007

of the 'model' Ravele community which was organized in the more 'democratic' Communal Property Association. They had taken the lead in representing all claimants and pushed for a formalization of the agreements as a way to protect them. As one of its leadership explained later, problematizing the 'gentleman's agreement': 'We were setting up a business as a gentleman's agreement whereas it should have been guided by the Companies Act and the memorandum. When you forget these rules of proper guidance you are creating a serious loophole'.[94] The competing approaches were also fed by grievances and unresolved disputes between the groups over the entitlement to farms. They also mark a more symbolic dividing line between the different groups, with the more 'traditionalist' Tshakhuma trustees choosing to be more self-reliant and drawing capacity from its own cadres of people deemed to have the political agency and agricultural knowledge to constructively engage their Strategic Partnership.

Prying Open the Partnership

Despite Levubu's status as economic hub, many of the farms under claim have proven to be undercapitalized. A lot of commotion at Levubu has ensued around who is to 'blame' for this state of decay. Exiting landowners typically alluded to the lengthy period between valuation and purchase of their farms (approximately three years for the first 'willing sellers'). This would imply a disincentive to invest in irrigation system maintenance and even application of essential pesticides. Ambiguities in the farm valuations over what constitutes movable and non-movable farm assets further meant that a lot of the farms were stripped of specialist equipment for packing bananas and cracking nuts. The way Levubu was planned from the 1930s onwards presented more endemic problems outside the scope of contemporary policies. As one of the SAFM farm managers stated, the irrigation systems had been 'sucked from the thumb' in a free-for-all environment of little state control, with no proper documentary outlay of the pipes and pumps, which created difficulties in managing water. In fact, visits to the restored farms at Tshakhuma testified to the critical importance of former workers' knowledge of these farms.

At the time of my arrival in the area in 2006, four years into operation, the partnership was strained around the condition of farms and the lack of transparency in information dissemination. Signs of neglect on the farms were evident to passers-by on the tar road, as dried banana leaves overhung fences that once were electrified. The shifting of truckloads of workers from farm to farm in the middle of the working day relayed a sense of ad hoc farm management. Familiar blue tractors bought from the disbanded AgriVen corporation

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[94] Interview B. Ravele, Rotterdam (The Netherlands), 22 October 2010

worked the fields and reports of theft were rife. To those workers of Barotta farm who had become accustomed to orderly and clean rows of bananas, decay was evident in the leaves that were left lying between trees, a practice the farm manager explained as modern mulching techniques. This public embarrassment, combined with the disappointment at not being included in farm decisions, prompted the Tshakhuma Trustees to hold their partners to account by writing a letter of complaint and calling an urgent meeting. On these orchestrated events, the traditional leadership could display its versatility, legitimacy and a dash of showmanship that marked the masterful interplay between the irate Tshitavadhulu headman and the controlled tone of the Chief and the female secretary. The venue was the Tshakhuma Community Hall which housed both the Chief and local civil servants. The hall was filled with local representatives from government, RLCC officials, some eighty rank-and-file members, special delegates like the former AgriVen manager and, of course, the whole Board of Trustees that in its complete form almost filled the entire stage. Government officials from the RLCC and the newly formed Levubu Task Team of the Department of Agriculture sat centre-stage and were allocated slots to explain the problematic situation. The main director of South African Farm Management (SAFM) made a rare attendance with his farm manager but was given seats in the front row facing the elevated stage. Surprisingly, perhaps, they were not confronted or asked to explain their responsibilities in public.

The brunt was born by the RLCC officials. In his characteristically aggressive tone the Tshitavadhulu headman expressed frustration with the long debates about getting the contractual agreements in place, settling the land disputes between the different communities, whilst the farms were receiving scant attention. He stated: 'I am blaming Government. If you don't know you better resign from post. We people from Tshakuma, we don't believe in paper, we believe in practical things. Farming is practical. The Commission has failed. We don't have access to the farms but government says always meetings, meetings and meetings. There are five farms that have gone down the drain'.[95] To regain some control required having 'eyes and ears on the farms'. The decay implicated the powerless Trustees who were accountable to the 'community and Tribal Council'. The Tshitavadhulu headman continued that 'where there is no communication the people can rise against us'.[96]

Interestingly, the meeting introduced a new claim in the person of one of the Dombo clan members whose ancestors had been the family for which there was archival evidence

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[95] M.W. Madzivahndila speaking at community meeting at Tshakhuma Public Hall on 17 October 2006 between the Tshakhuma Land Claims Committee, Regional Land Claims officials and SAFM
[96] Ibid.

of a presence prior to dispossession (see Chapter Five). Yet, this day would not be about the property claim but a claim to a share of the managerial entitlement. In fact, the articulate Dombo clansman – now wheelchair-bound and sporting a near-British accent marking upward social mobility – had served as mess officer in the armed wing of the ANC (Umkhonto weSizwe) in exile and had received training at a Bulgarian agricultural college. Now holding a management position at the Development Bank of South Africa, he symbolized untapped human capital and the fact that expertise at management level was there to be tapped into: 'as a matter of fact our potential is not made use of'. In fact, outside of the meeting an agreement had already been made with the strategic partner to increase community control. The director of SAFM had already conceded to employing three trustees as so-called 'farm inspectors' or community monitors. They owed their expertise to their former employment as agricultural extension officers of the AgriVen development corporation (over which Chief Madzivhandila presided as then Minister of Agriculture). In noting its particular tribalist overtones, we can also appreciate how new registers of knowledge – skills and experience in commercial farming – could be opened.

It is worth briefly touching on the response of the two main officials at this meeting. The delegate from the RLCC claimed he had neither the authority nor the mandate to make any concessions that day. He was referring to the periodic RLCC meetings organized for all claimant groups of Levubu in which updates were given. His general answer served to protect against accusations of incompetency: 'Some of us [at the commission] have come to the realization that it is not an event but a process…We have to act cautiously, with due diligence so we can later be held accountable'. The head of the recently-established Task Team for Levubu from the provincial Department of Agriculture was nevertheless able to make an announcement regarding the latest developments (as a recent entrant, his department also did not have an established procedural footing in the Levubu process). As he explained, the new team had just commissioned a farm inspection of Levubu by its officials. Stocktaking and monitoring represented a tentative re-entry into the process, which followed the aforementioned belief that the state would be accountable and suffer political consequences from a 'collapse of Levubu'. Four years into the partnership the provincial department was now also going to scrutinize the mutual risks in the partnership – which suggests a revision of the terms of the contract – and re-evaluate the role of government in subsidizing and monitoring the process.

The politicized and managerial knowledge uncertainties prompted SAFM to conduct more detailed mapping exercises in 2007 in order to gain a better grasp on the assets and the conditions of trees. In fact, tree counts were conducted and each farm was divided into

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manageable sub-units. Standard forms were to be completed per block by lower-ranking managers that specified the amount of boxes, fertilizer plans, packing and the harvesting figures. Consolidation proved to be a reorganizational nightmare and information gathering a costly task. In filling the knowledge deficit, farm information also proved to be a strategic resource. For example, for the former state farm Barotta most historical records like Environmental Impact Assessments and irrigation outlay had apparently been lost in the turbulent transition period leading up to its dismantling. A semi-retired senior employee of AgriVen, rumoured to have kept these documents and who had also been present at the meeting as an independent party, was duly hired later to conduct farm evaluations by the Department of Agriculture. He acknowledged his advantageous position in knowing the layout of pipes as former inspector and being able to build on a good rapport with Chief Madzivhadila who could also count on him for informal advice to advance the shared interest in making 'Levubu as green as ever'.[97]

The above meeting with the director of SAFM and dignitaries represents a tour de force on the part of the traditional leadership. One trustee who holds a PhD degree and sat on provincial committees for the promotion of the Venda language explained that their holding the state accountable could be taken further: 'If the MEC [provincial representative] does not comply we can still go further to the Minister of Land Affairs. The MEC will not like that as he will be seen to be failing'.[98] Tshakhuma had political clout but over the next year a set of smaller, less-public meetings were to be held to consolidate gains. The above meeting yielded three immediate gains towards enhancing community control. The three community inspectors would hold weekly inspections (with me usually driving them around) in which they would take stock of developments and, if required, report back to the relevant persons verbally and at meetings. These were very civil affairs with the inspectors announcing in advance which farm they would inspect. At some stage in the three to four hour tours they would meet one of the two white farm managers, or their subordinate 'supervisor' Piet Hlungwani (believed to have actually organized all the farming), and informally discuss progress.

A second, symbolically significant gain was the reservation of one farmhouse as an 'office' for the trustees. It provided a foothold on the farm in the spirit of 'now people can see we are actually here' and a site to conduct meetings on the farms, which could be accompanied by a stroll into the neighbouring banana groves. The Chief in informal conversation had explained the importance of this foothold; he explained he would have to be the first

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to open the office, 'I [as the Chief] must first go and see'. He illustrated the plans for territorial expansion by placing his glass on the coffee table in front of him and making circular gestures around it to indicate this base as centre for expansion.[99] In fact, by July 2007 two additional farmhouses had been reserved for the traditional leadership; one for the Chief and one as a gesture to the Dombo clan who would later officially be reconciled with the Madzivhaindila tribal authority. This was in the wake of the Dombo clan's decision to join the ranks of the larger Madzivhandila claim with Dombo as one of their historical headmen (see Chapter Five) rather than pursue a land claim as a family.

A third concession from SAFM to come out of this was the fact that there would now also be weekly update meetings at Appelfontein farm where SAFM had its central office. These were usually chaired by the most senior on-site 'area manager' Gerrie – a local farmer known to the claimants because he had previously acted as general manager at Barotta. These meetings would usually be attended by the three inspectors, with some other trustees occasionally stepping in to push particular issues. They also took on a standard format with agenda points like 'Welcoming', 'Admin', 'HR', 'Labour', 'Infrastructure' and the various crops discussed separately. These formal meetings took on the form of information dissemination from SAFM to community delegates but also provided an opportunity to put forward community demands. For instance, a key source of income that was not captured in the Memorandum of Understanding or the draft lease arrangements was the farmhouses that were rented out and which generated some R 12,000 per month. Probing questions from the community delegates turned into the request to have this income paid directly into the trust account and for it to be excised from the Operational Company.

These meetings also opened up another critical issue: control over the labour force. At one of the Appelfontein meetings in 2007, the Dombo representative had argued that the workers now would need to be informed that the community trust had become part of this land deal. He couched their interest in inclusive terms ('they are stakeholders, it is their money that is being stolen') and requested a meeting in order 'to hear from them what are their complaints'. The exchange however quickly turned to the problem of unreliable workers; the elderly composition of the work force, the high rate of absenteeism and illicit activities such as working under someone else's ID number. Gerrie then proceeded to point out the labour disciplining procedure under the company's quorum system (a minimal amount to be harvested or handled daily). Importantly, he reinforced the role of the tribal authority in improving efficiency: 'that's why the relationship with the Tribal Office must be good: if we

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need another 20 additional workers, these people know the applicants'. There was a key task for the headmen and sub-headmen in selecting labour, since they had performed this task for Barotta farm and were also labour brokers in current public works programmes that also aimed to source labour locally. The rationale for this outsourcing had its roots in the local political economy but it also tied in with the benefits for the wider group of claimants: the right of members of the claimant group to receive priority in filling in vacancies on the farms.

In order to herald the arrival of the chieftaincy as new authority on the Levubu restitution farms, a meeting was promptly called for all workers of Tshakhuma farms. It coincided with the weekly payday and was strategically held at the macadamia packing house at Tshakhuma proper – another remnant of the Chief's influence as former Minister of Agriculture (see Figure 6.2). Here the decidedly restless crowd of some 150 labourers were addressed by the secretary of the land claims committee and one of the farm inspectors. The secretary followed the script suggested by Dombo, assuring the labourers that they could now also address their work grievances to the farm inspectors. Reassuring words were added to the effect that the farms would continue to be operated commercially and that the change of land ownership would not impact their future. This show of presence, however, appeared to arouse more uncertainty among workers than create confidence. Yet more uncertainty for farm workers came after a more worrying intervention that upset the workforce, particularly the Barotta workers. The year SAFM had stepped in to take over Barotta farm (2002) it announced that all contracts would be annulled and workers would have to re-apply for their jobs. The substantial work force of Barotta, many of whom had a long track record, had enjoyed job security under state employment by AgriVen. A key area of dispute was the remuneration package of two weeks' pay for each year of employment for employees being fired or rehired. This was a bill SAFM was unwilling to foot.[100]

According to the local agricultural extension officer at Tshakhuma, who had also closely observed the transition period between 2002 when the former AgriVen agricultural development corporation ceased to be and the 2003 SAFM entry of managers, the restructuring marked a departure with the familiar Department of Agriculture's policy to combat poverty and maximize employment.[101] Retaining these high staff levels on-farm was discussed, with provincial representatives stepping in to guarantee that no jobs would be lost and alternative state employment would be offered. Re-hiring to work for SAFM enabled more stringent quorum policy and a flexibilization of labour with use of more

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[100] Conversation M. Maraga, Tshakhuma, 7 March 2007.
[101] Interview Marowe, Tshakhuma, 12 March 2007.

Figure 6.2 Secretary of Tshakhuma land claims committee addressing farm labourers at Tshakhuma packhouse

temporary employees. Of the total amount of 263 Tshakhuma farm workers employed by SAFM, 129 or 49 per cent were temporary employees. Wages reflected new minimum wage standards (R 45.68 per day for a nine-hour working day) but for the Barotta group, who had enjoyed higher wages and better pension packages, this was a step backward. Eventually, only around thirteen out of an original total of sixty-seven Barotta employees were retained, particularly those with indispensable knowledge of the unmapped irrigation system and those who could pass on this knowledge. It appeared from conversations with former Barotta staff that the terms of the contracts had changed on several occasions and that the Tshitavadhulu headman close to the Chief had not taken their side in the labour dispute and that he had objected strongly to the role some unionized members had played in a 2006 Barotta work boycott. Government clearly had a part in allowing the conflict to escalate and making empty promises of retention or alternative employment as an alleged 300 former employees of the state-operated farms across the former Venda homeland lost their jobs.

This labour conflict highlights some of the costs associated with the transition from statist, homeland farming systems to large-scale 'viable' farming on the mega-farm scale. But

as the above section suggests, we cannot speak of a wholesale privatization of development. Brokerage roles assumed by traditional leaders in the strategic area of labour show a redirection of this strategic function into the hands of another public authority. By the time of my departure after the second year of fieldwork in 2007, there were no jobs to fill. Nonetheless, in anticipation, some headmen at Tshakhuma closely involved in the process had started to use their weekly adjudication meetings to announce that job applications would have to go through them and allegedly drew up lists of suitable candidates.

'We are Simply a SP on our Own'

Despite the above achievements, however, no gains were made in the following year regarding appointment of management functions, save the appointment of one royal family member with a degree in agriculture in the lower-level management position of 'supervisor' at Barotta farm. Interestingly, a second outcry of disappointment in writing – this time not sporting the Tshakhuma Tribal Authority letter head but that of one of a Dombo clan member's engineering company in Polokwane town – listed a set of grievances that included collective and more personal gains that owed to the entrepreneurship of some trustees. The collective obligations the Chief himself could stress at this second 'accountability' meeting involved the verbal promise by the SAFM director of macadamia seedlings to the loyalist farmers occupying the land around Dandani dam at Tshakhuma. Another demand similarly tied into Tshakhuma's local political economy and the greater public interest:

> We agreed on the development of the local market, so as to engage SMME (Small medium enterprises) to buy from us and to enable them to be sustainable. The complaints we have received are many because some of your Managers tell them to come and get for example, Bananas from us as land (farm) beneficiaries. Our understanding was that not withstanding that there are bigger markets to be satisfied with supplies, the local will also be afforded its quota. As of now the locals are accusing us of neglecting them since we became part of the ownership.

Besides the patronage by the traditional authorities to supply fruit to market sellers, more personalized business possibilities were offered by the community partners to the Trust. SAFM had sent two of its African directors to the meeting. Upon hearing the grievance that 'You have not sourced any supplies from us' one of the managers turned to the letter writer: 'I can see he's got a company; he must also not be afraid to advance his company'. The idea is to get on the bigger list: 'We have a list of service providers so if you get on that list we can find you. If we have a database of local people, you will also be forcing SAFM to consider you'. I had already witnessed such entrepreneurial inroads into the partnership on an earlier occasion, four months earlier, in a conversation with the active Tshitavadhulu headman at the petrol station he owned in Thohoyandou. As we were speaking, a fax came through from Gerrie, SAFM's manager of the Tshakhuma farms, that

showed he had made a request to head office for sourcing the company's diesel from the headman who 'is known as a reliable and respectable businessman and also a member of Tshakhuma Trust'.

The presentation of the partnership as porous and open to multiple entries and endless openings became a regularized pattern of exchange. Antagonism persisted within the Trust and could be expressed in excursions into futuristic (and tentative) planning for development by inviting potential investors from the Trustees' networks. The versatile constitution of the Trust meant that it could delegate a broad array of suitable people to these meetings, such as their own advocate (member of the royal family), respected women needed for public meetings with government, the Dombo claimant with management expertise and a regular cast of active Trustees like the farm inspectors who had a general overview of the business and could speak up at meetings. A person of authority next to the Chief, usually the Tshitavadhulu headman or the Dombo representative, would also be present who could make a resolution and speak on behalf of the community. Within such porous boundaries, and the room for manoeuvre it implied, the lack of a firm share- and leasehold agreement at times rather seemed to present an opportunity.

Driven by distrust and self-belief, renegotiations started to extend into revising the terms of the Strategic Partnership. That is to say, new properties being restored to the trust as part of the prolonged negotiations between the RLCC and willing sellers could arguably be excluded from the partnership agreement and the partner's monopoly on all farmland. It had come to the attention of the trustees that SAFM had put all investments on hold ('they are only harvesting') as they awaited a cash injection from the Department of Agriculture for rebuilding farm infrastructure.[102] With a second round of properties to be restored, the possibility of 'going it alone' was discussed at another trust meeting. Hopes of renewal involved the possibility of drawing in the other strategic partner. The Tshitavadhulu headman stated: 'say if eight farms were to be restored as part of phase two, we could take four under own management and bring four under MAVU'.[103] The consideration was not shared despite some confidence that with the newly arrived Dombo they would stand a chance to self-manage the commercial farms. A flustered farm inspector at the meeting sighed: 'we are simply a SP [Strategic Partner] on our own'. Those attending the meeting nonetheless resolved to inform government that now they would rather terminate the partnership and enter into negotiations to find a new partner. Interestingly, at this stage the advocate deemed it appropriate to point out that legally speaking, the Trust would have

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[102] Tshakhuma Land Claims committee meeting, Bonnema Farm, Levubu, 15 June 2007
[103] Ibid.

to be dissolved because it had not met its own constitutional rules of holding an Annual general Meeting with all trustees. The elderly men took it in their stride and went ahead as planned.

Just days later the news broke that MAVU, managing 2,200 ha of land on behalf of three of the claimant communities, had filed for bankruptcy and was pulling out. This fall of the local partner in turn spelt a period of disorder and rumours. With MAVU having followed the tried consolidation model, hundreds of jobs were on the line. Faced with this crisis, claimants turned to the Department of Agriculture. Aware of the vulnerability of the partnerships and the pioneering costs borne by the SPs, the RLCC commissioner soon after alluded to the way that 'If we go out again and put out a tender and invite the world, are we are going to have a queue of people saying we want to be SP? They are not lining up'.[104]

Figure 6.3 Tshakhuma land claims committee hosting potential investors at Tshakhuma pack house (Chief A.M. Madzivhandila on right of picture)

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[104]: Interview M. Mokono (land claims commissioner Limpopo RLCC) and B. Shilote, Polokwane, 17 July 2007

I departed from the field in the midst of the resolution and returned a year later to catch up on developments. By this time their strategic partner, SAFM, had also filed for bankruptcy. Community claimants had entered into what one of the claimants referred to as a 'caretaker agreement'. The former Operating Company 'Exclusive Access' was still being used as the legal vehicle for dealings with the banks and state. Former operational managers had stayed on in the interim and with their 50 per cent share, the Trustees were left with a debt of R 5.7 million, which could be absorbed by the season's takings. Marking the state's reassertion of control, the retained farm manager was negotiating directly with the Department of Agriculture to release the remaining share of their R 15.8 million grant that had finally come through. Release, however, could follow only once the government requirement of an extensive business and feasibility plan had been met, which the caretakers were willing to draft. A fax sent to the headmen expressed in no uncertain terms that they needed to continue working within the existent Operating Company and assume the debts. It also indicated how the return of the state changed the rules of the game:

> Do you accept the new terms of the caretaker until the end of September 2009? – remember that the LDA (Limpopo Department of Agriculture) has the jurisdiction of some of your grant money (R 2,402,000 transferred and available) to assist in the caretaking. If you decide to appoint someone else for the interim, you will have to convince the LDA. The important thing is not to appoint somebody or any company permanently now before the feasibility and funding process are in place.

The Tshitavadhulu headman, who shouted a firm 'NO!' upon hearing it, did not appreciate the ultimatum-like tone of the message. It was decided that no vote would be taken on the issue that day and that the community would pursue other avenues to find a second partner themselves (including a suggestion for posting an advertisement in the *Farmer's Weekly* magazine). Afterwards, a new member of the committee, a relative youngster with business credentials who had been called into the claimant committee to act as head-hunter, explained that convincing such a business partner would require thorough knowledge of the farm, which they did not have:

> I put a list for Mr B. [the current caretaker] to assist in telling us, if it is Barotta, how many hectares of banana are there, how many of avos [avocadoes] and macadamias are there and he should be able to tell us what age of the plant…even if people [potential investors] come and make presentations they still need to go to see the farms. We thought if we cluster these farms they [the Strategic Partner] should be able to assist us in terms of knowing where to put money and not to put money. If you can check the systems that we are using, we don't have farm specific planning in terms of income, input, budgets and everything else
> .

He then said that stock might have been taken but that 'nobody is willing to give it to us'. This preliminary outcome represents a critical situation. It suggests that the partnership was hampered by a failure to transfer skills and white farmers' 'near-monopoly of technical and entrepreneurial agricultural skills' (Fraser 2007b: 841). Indeed, bringing the past into the present – as land restitution does – has to some extent reinvigorated past paternalisms

of white farm management and chiefly rule. A similar effect has been observed in relation to the 'recurring problem of the [SP] model' in that that there has been 'a tendency on the part of community leadership to be co-opted by strategic partners, leaving the majority of community members poorly informed as to the progress of the venture and the benefits to which they are entitled' (Lahiff 2007a: 14). Whether viewed as a form of elite capture or imposition, the assumption exists that there is a stable and historically-determined 'patron-client nexus' (Berman 1998: 333) which is mobilized by new moral and economic institutions for personal gain. In the above, however, I have tried to argue that these sharp lines of dissent and interdependency miss the point. The so-called 'model' has been an object of reworking, partial adoption and renegotiation, leading to unintended consequences where the state re-entered in a coordinating role. Such an approach may lead us to review the imposition thesis and focus on the programmatic limits of the model (as trumping the promise of restorative justice) towards a more networked, conjectural and fluid reading of the partnership as space of entitlement.

Conclusion

Analysing the Strategic Partnership model raises questions about new and old paternalisms. The act of transferring white-owned land into African hands theoretically dismantles one pillar of the apartheid architecture: white control over land administration and the system of racialized private property. The establishment of the Levubu fruit valley as an ideological and economic project arguably presents no clearer South African example of its robustness and forcefulness. Inscribing moral entitlement into a physical landscape of advanced agriculture marks its solidity, and the challenges of including it in a post-apartheid transformation agenda. We saw that its partial dismantling through land restitution claims has triggered consternation and cultural disorientation among white landowners that testifies to the naturalness of this order. Even those 'willing sellers' who surrendered their property and somewhat clumsily and tentatively offered to stay on as farm mentors, presented a problem to land restitution officials who doubted the capacity of this generation of farmers to work on an equal footing with land claimants. Indeed, proposals presented by the so-called Group 23 landowners suggested terms that built on the existent farm relations and aimed to keep the new landowners at a manageable distance.

We saw however that Levubu has retained a historical value which made it problematic to wish away these farmer–mentors altogether. More radical forms of reform like sub-dividing the farms and allowing settlement were inconceivable to government officials. Maintaining the integrity of the valley as an economic hub and 'pocket of excellence' is at the core of the partnership model and its controversies. Former landowners with organized

agriculture to prop them up performed an admirable discursive feat in keeping the uniqueness of the area on the policy agenda. It obscured the manifold challenges individual farmers faced and the widely-held assumption that many farms were undercapitalized and thus overvalued in monetary terms. Dismantling the myth of Levubu through 'thorough' assessments before purchase was not attempted by officials who believed that market values would reflect the conditions of farms. Imperatives to maintain production levels and fast-track African beneficiaries from their 'second economies' into this 'first world' one required new vehicles that awkwardly combined the dismantling of Levubu's second nature and local political economy with the acknowledgment of white patronage in the form of temporary mentorships. In mediating this new partnership solution, bureaucratic rationales of service delivery conjoined with the tribal nature of the land claims to form seven consolidated mega-farms that more or less follow the former territorial boundaries and straddle multiple properties. In managerial terms, the rehabilitation of the former family economic units into up-scaled farms involved unforeseen costs and complications that testify to the way farmers had developed their properties through various experiments and stopgap solutions that ill-matched distant coordination by a managerial team. The costs of infrastructural improvements and the agribusiness partner's appeal to the state to bear the costs of recapitalizing these farms have been at the heart of the controversy of the eventual collapse of both strategic partnerships at Levubu.

Acknowledgment of the tribal claims has implied a second form of paternalism that can be described as the 'patron–client nexus' associated with traditional leadership and its governmental technologies (Berman 1998). This development ties in with a wider critique of the post-apartheid state and its acknowledgment of traditional leaders in land administration and other sets of public services (Claassens and Cousins 2008; Ntzebesa 2005). Indeed, we saw how the Tshakhuma tribal authority has with comparative ease assumed its position as community representative. In trying to consolidate its position in this invited space, it has illustrated its navigation skills as modern brokers who combine traditional repertoires of nested authority with claims that invoke 'modern' managerial skills in farming and the groups' networking capacity to mobilize investors. Viewing the partnership as a problematic blend of whites' ability to claim managerial entitlement and the naturalness of traditional authority, we may indeed be witnessing a 'colonial present' at work (Fraser, 2007b). It is no coincidence that control over labour became a key focus for traditional leaders and that it could be tied in with pre-existing technologies of rule. In viewing the emergent hybrid landscapes between 'tradition' and 'modernity' we should also pay closer attention to the new types of social citizenship that have emerged at the interface of market, state and tribal polity. Levubu has seen the convergence of multiple

technologies of government that together have constituted a site that represents an entangled landscape of meaning tying in past entitlement of tribe, the present of the status quo of the land and the future of management transfer. The awkward up-scaling along the chiefly territory-consolidated commercial farm, as the combined place-making efforts by state, agribusiness and state, constitutes Levubu as a heterogeneous and unwieldy space that opens up the space for well-positioned brokers but also implies risky and contingent processes of mediation.

Chapter 7

**Conclusion:
Entangled Landscapes of Deracialization**
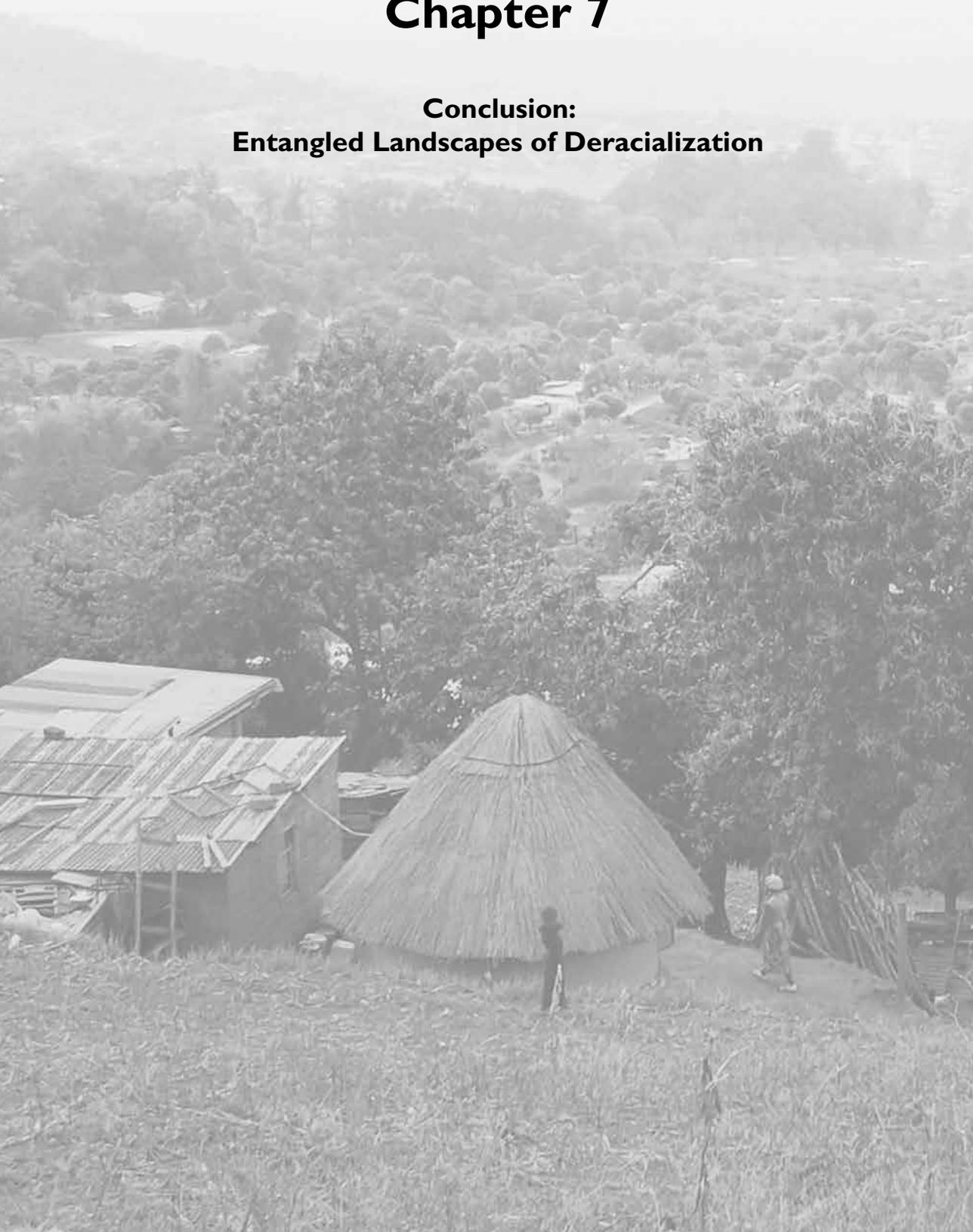
This book has investigated place-making strategies in post-apartheid rural South Africa. Land has featured as an arena for contestation, hope and exclusion. A central aim of this book has been to liberate land from its narrow definition as a productive resource to be owned and redistributed according to notions of property, as a 'thing' in which discrete categories of organizations, communities or stakeholders have a vested interest in its ownership and management. In analysing forms of organization and brokerage, it has focused on the spaces that are produced as a result of interactions between social actors drawing on different knowledges, experiences and entitlements. Building on an inter-relational approach to space, this study foregrounds the co-existence of multiple trajectories in struggles for land and how they converge in particular places or sites through networked practices. Such a view invites analyses of space as fluid and in a constant process of production and dismantling (see Massey 2005). This openness of space and related multiplicity was discussed in relation to possibilities and limitations opened up by the post-apartheid land restitution policies. Building on the ideal of 'bringing the past into the present' they constitute an effort to redesign the apartheid rural geographies of land dispossession, community rupture and rural pauperization as a result of racist land policies. By situating these policies as a recent arrival on a stage crowded by various actors and their competing claims to land, this book has argued for seeing how restitution has provoked a range of unintended outcomes.

Facilitating collaboration across actor groups to find a middle ground is the recent focus of restitution agencies on 'post-settlement development' and the state-led drive to establish new development models (Community–Public–Private–Partnerships) that aim to ensure that restored land does not deteriorate as a result of 'wasteful use' by unprepared and under-resourced beneficiaries of land restitution. This policy orientation in turn translates into the possibility of entering land restitution processes on various tickets, whether it is the legalistic category of 'historical community with a right to redress of land rights' or that of community mentor or trustee installed through state mediation to mentor beneficiaries of land restitution into becoming responsible land users and institutionally reliable landholding entities. Central to relational place-making, is the way in which symbolic and material claims to land become entangled through forms of brokerage. Brokers were seen to emerge against the backdrop of increased uncertainty and a state that offers multiple points of entry for attaining rights to ownership and responsibility for development in terms of what has been discussed as the emergent managerial spaces in land restitution.

The production of space thus involves the use of cultural politics, which entails the defence of place-based identities and non-discursive practices like labouring the land, building furrows and introducing cattle in ways that transform agro-ecological landscapes

and have enduring effects in terms of how these investments may be valued as worth maintaining despite changes in land ownership. Producing time and scale is critical to this moulding, given that well-positioned actors that were invited in to plan for post-settlement development have unhinged the restitution-central concept of 'historical redress' through processes of future-oriented scale-making and trumping community claims to land by invoking a greater public good associated with preserving cultural, natural and productive heritage. The interpretation offered in this book thus differs from approaches to studying the 'land question' and the related emphasis on a centrally-administered programme of land reform with fixed categories and relative positions of South Africa's enduring political economy. It rather discusses struggles over land as a process shaped largely by engagement rather than withdrawal and entrenchment and suggests the relational efforts of brokers do not create stable alliances or enduring forms of elite pacting. Rather, they are approached as part of a situated, contingent and risky politics that produces temporary assemblages and entangles historically-sedimented landscapes with future-oriented visions of a post-racial rural society.

The sections below present the main conclusions that were drawn from the case studies in this book and are organized around the research questions in the Introduction. First, the identity politics and the struggle for control over discourse around the imaginary and beneficiary category of 'historical community' will be discussed. Second, the networked practices across actor groups will be discussed in relation to the emergent assemblages and the new agentive space opened up through planned development. Third, we will address the question of what types of landscapes are emerging through this negotiated place-making and how the empirical insights from this book may help us to re-approach landscapes of deracialization in more dynamic terms of the blending of various spatialities and temporalities. My intended contribution towards a relational approach and the ethnography of opening and closing spaces is laid out in the last section as a closing statement.

CHAPTER 7

Representing Community and Cultural Politics

Old and new entitlements have emerged and blended in contemporary place-making. This section discusses the narrative devices employed by land claimants and how identity politics revolves around the production of a stable notion of community that is directed towards the requirements of land restitution policies and demands by the state and other investors to be seen as institutionally-reliable landholding bodies. As has been shown, South Africa's histories of dispossession and forced displacement bring to light a problematic reading of place as discrete, bounded and geographical. It has become networked and

deterritorialized through multiple actor projects that create linkages to distant sites. Ruptures of this sort have however not erased people from places. Structures of feeling and belonging may persist in the face of diasporas and resettlement, as has been explored in the literature pertaining to 'imagined communities' and the anthropological focus on production of culture as 'complex and contingent results of on-going historical and political processes' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 4). In this study, they were described as process with multiple and shifting articulations leading up to the recent revival of 'community' through engagement with post-apartheid land reform policies and efforts at stabilizing 'community' in later stages of the distribution of collective benefits, responsibilities, rights and acts of spatial disciplining.

Idealized representations of historical communities in place articulate well with a programme of land restitution that aims to compensate groups that 'suffered a historical loss of land rights as a result of apartheid laws and practices'. Attempts at 'grounding community' through a process of restoring ancestral land rights then represent the interplay between the categories of land restitution policies – bounded groups in discrete places to which property can be transferred – and references by restitution claimants to pre-dispossession time and memory. For instance, we witnessed the recent emergence of a unifying 'will to community' in the Kranspoort case study that linked past imaginings of mission life to the structure of opportunity offered by contemporary land restitution. More precisely, the Land Claims Court process and its distinct legal geography, aimed at verifying whether the claimant group was eligible for having their ancestral land restored, nourished the space, producing the notion of 'Mother Kranspoort' and 'Repatriation' and foregrounded the history-making skills of community leaders in providing evidence of past belonging and a continued existence of community despite the group's being scattered.

Cultural politics in such place-making works discursively in producing difference and equivalence. Reinvented or revisited categories of 'tribe', 'mission community' and 'nation' were seen to work in productive ways to two effects that are mutually constitutive. On the one hand, this production works by obscuring internal group heterogeneity in a way that corresponds to the framing of contemporary land questions as communities in 'need of land' and land-hungry Africans. Testimonies of rupture and discontinuity by community claimants work in tandem with the ideal of civil society 'intermediaries' and land restitution agencies' adherence to 'community' as a natural order in rural society. The problematization and challenge of the legitimacy of emergent leaders in the claimant communities – discussed here as elderly, urbanized elites and traditional leaders – then becomes a sphere of 'internal community politics'. In this exclusivity, discretionary or exceptional rule-making and

technologies apply that are largely out of the legal categories of citizenship and frameworks of rights that have emerged or are emerging in post-apartheid South Africa.

Thus, being self-referential presents scope for the production of difference around the notion of group membership and forms of spatial and social disciplining efforts that are directed 'inwardly' to group members and 'outwardly' to non-members. We have however seen important differences in the two case studies as regards the technologies of government employed. The re-tribalization at Tshakhuma saw a network of traditionalists seeking to appropriate spaces of restitution according to their project to consolidate a traditionalist public authority acting as a gatekeeper for all manner of development projects entering the area. Here we saw the continuation of a historically-tainted 'accumulation in people' and the reproduction of the Chief–Land–People nexus associated with the political identities in the former ethnic 'homelands' or Bantustans. Building their claims on a wider front of reclamation that includes the recent decentralization of local government, the group can be said to exasperate the official goal of land restitution to democratize land holding by reasserting the divide between 'ethnic citizenship' and modern citizenship (Claassens and Cousins 2010; Mamdani 1996). That is not to say that the rights and responsibilities coming with this responsibility were always instrumental to or provided capital convertible into material wealth. Indeed, most members of the Community Trust seemed to gain little in material terms from their enrolment. Instead, they seemed to be locked into a speculative manoeuvring, establishing labour-intensive linkages to external actors and initiatives which often did not result in material gain but enhanced their chieftaincy reputation as providers of services and infrastructure in a bid to be seen by their constituency as bringers of public goods and services in ways that reflected the aspiration to become what the secretary of the Tribal Trust called a 'mini-municipality'.

Whereas the above example implies continuity in chiefly rule despite or perhaps because of recent land restitution policies, we have seen a more contingent and discontinuous process of community making at Kranspoort. Here, a clear tension persists between attempts to stabilize community around past mission identities (i.e. 'the sons and daughters of Kranspoort') and the practical aspirations of a dispersed group whose view for the future is distinctly open and has a limited body politics and scripted place-making to build upon. The quasi-religious ideal of repatriation consolidated the authority of the elderly group of Kranspoort claimants. In its actualization – that is to say the re-inscription of symbolic belonging to actual property relations and control over land – the community leadership proved to be particularly vulnerable to the import of new meanings and efforts by non-community brokers to inscribe new values into the social fabric of the community. New

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cultural hybrids emerged driven by efforts to wed repatriation in the image of the mission to an ideal of development based on low-impact, environmentally-sensitive resettlement. The social here presented a distinctly open and indeterminate sphere of a structure of aspiration, discussed in Chapter Two in terms of the 'will to community' (cf. Beyers 2009). Unifying moments around 'winning the land claim' followed a more gradual and painful process of planning for resettlement that revealed deep-seated divisions and exposed the grievances of the more rural contingency of the Kranspoort claimants harbouring different ideas of farm development.

The realization of the 'loss of the loss' as groups started to 'dismantle' when actual return was a real possibility through land restitution (du Toit 1999), suggests that claimants may be unprepared for actual re-territorialization and that land as a form of collective mobilization is in a tense relationship with the actualisation of land reclamation and the rights and duties associated with property ownership. The burdensome and politicized process of post-settlement planning at Kranspoort is also testimony to painful and socially-exclusive forms of spatial disciplining by a community leadership, which was now driven to police the boundaries of community and attempt to draw lines of distinction between the 'original Kranspoortians' and 'others' with limited entitlement to govern. Reiterating the notion of an exclusive domain of community politics, we saw how absentee landowners struggled to maintain a hold on a porous piece of land that was continually transgressed by non-community members and indeed by the agency of the caretaker the leadership had installed on the farm. Importantly, relating back to the state registers in land restitution, we may appreciate how the creation of the so-called Communal Property Association at Kranspoort imbued the community leadership with a set of principles and procedures for decision making and rules for sharing the land. These were instituted by state officials and the community's legal representatives with a view to having a more democratic and representative leadership.

Yet, in their practical unfolding, resolutions and procedures serviced the well-positioned community leaders as they invoked corresponding narratives of 'constitutional obedience' and 'institutional reliability' in ways that, at least temporally, ensured consolidation of the positions of the elderly and educated leadership that had emerged through the earlier stages of land reclamation. Recourse to such seemingly emancipatory discourses by powerful community brokers highlights the limited reach of policy-logical frameworks and how they rather become meaningful through selective and partial appropriation by beneficiaries who, in response to new environmental subjectivities, act as 'regulatory communities' (cf. Agrawal 2005; Chapter One). Intra-group divisions should thus not be seen as resulting only

from some deeper social and political social differentiation among these groups. Although these certainly matter in terms of practical orientations and ideas of land use, they are also produced through the stabilization of discourses and related spatial disciplining that is brought forth and legitimated through interrelations in a networked policy community that includes community brokers, and state and non-state intermediaries and connects various modalities of government.

Laboratories, Partnerships for Development and Entangled Landscapes

Entitlements are not only produced around the idea of a historical community with a right to land. Of increasing importance, and opening up room for an enactment of social agency by culturally and spatially disoriented rural whites, we find possibilities emerging from the appropriation of what I called managerial space. This section sets out to explore the new associations and emergent relations that are produced in struggles over this space. In line with these associations, I then reflect on the types of landscapes we are witnessing as a result of relational place-making among different rural brokers. To mark the emergence of managerial space in land restitution projects, a key focus of this study was on the shifting articulation of land restitution as it moves from the stage of actual land reclamation and the politics around the formation of a 'cohesive community' to the ensuing stage of planning for development. In this latter stage of post-settlement, notions of sustainable and productive land use enter the debate. New scope for asserting political agency is thus opened up, providing an opportunity for rural whites to engage land claimants and the state in less antagonistic ways in the capacity of constructive contributors to novel, and business-minded partnerships.

A certain historical continuity marks planning processes in South Africa. Land restitution, preoccupied with the notion of historical redress of a project of racial segregation, exhibits an extraordinary measure of planning. Planned development has a history in state-led rural development interventions and it is remarkable how scientifically-informed solutions have continued to permeate in agricultural departments post-democratization (cf. Hebinck et al., 2011). We have also seen that adherence to intricate forms of business and land-use planning are born out of a political imperative to avoid 'yet another failure in land reform', a pressure all the more pertinent when redistributed land is valued as having an exceptional value in the eyes of (inter)national constituencies. Planning for rural transformation has however relied on a more actualized governmental technology that departs from a two-pronged rationale that is distinctly neoliberal in its emphasis on competitiveness and efficiency. First, it follows market-led trajectories to group beneficiation through an emphasis on supporting the emergence of a class of commercially-oriented African farmer-entrepreneurs. This

point of a colonizing neoliberal logic has been widely made in relation to the critique of land reform (Hall and Ntsebeza 2007; James 2010; Lahiff 2007b). Secondly, state planners created competition over control over the responsibility to manage development. This was the outcome of inviting business or development partners to assume key development functions in terms of farm management, coordination of planning and the recapitalisation of properties that the state bought for restitution. Thus a new field was opened up which provided scope for rural whites to find (some) ontological security in a retreat to discourse and a task-scape in which they could engage the state as constructive contributors to novel plans, as opposed to the disorienting position they would have occupied as private landowners.

This second dimension regards neoliberalism as a technology of government that incentivizes actors to self-discipline 'according to market principles of discipline, efficiency, and competitiveness' (Ong 2006: 4). It works in ways where sovereign rule is exercised not so much through the 'monopoly to coerce or rule' but the 'monopoly to decide' (ibid: 5). In this regard, we may broaden the analysis to include forms of market-related sovereignty that are more attuned to the idea of engagement and connectedness across actors and a view that shows how production and appropriation of space is as much about the ownership over decision making as process, within particular conduits of exchange and interaction, and less so about the enforceability of contracts, lease agreements and the recourse to defendable citizenship rights. Governmental techniques employed in these forums may see participatory frameworks for planning and profit-sharing being imported in ways that depoliticize, 'render technical' and abstract away from rural realities (Li 2007). In the market place of the steering committee or joint venture company, new boundary making ensues, through the costs of participation (in monetary terms and in terms of the technical language spoken there), and agenda setting, through forms of and in ways that aim to inscribe a clear distinction between those implementing the intervention (the governing) and its targets (the governed).

As indicated in Chapter Four, the 'workshop format' of modern conservation partnerships around UNESCO's Biosphere model and the contractual nature of partnerships between agribusiness and restitution communities move away from the win–lose format of local politics towards deliberative politics where 'all stakeholders' have to be consulted. Power works through the external linkages and discursive practices that link particular places – the unique conservation sites of the Western Soutpansberg – to a larger public good and production of spatial and development frameworks that become hegemonic in their own right, in their material and symbolic values. Relevant here is how

these models may appear to be contingent, risky political projects that fail to meet their own objectives but work towards the promulgation of an idea of development that opens up places to the (more or less imagined) flows of foreign tourists and the mobile skills of white landowners whilst simultaneously creating discrete spaces or enclosures for rural Africans in territories as tribal subjects in natural communities (see also Hughes 2005). The other cases discussed here worked in hegemonic ways by virtue of their being marketed or planned as a 'precedent-setting model'– an ideal to be replicated elsewhere and to inspire new business models for collaboration and profit-sharing across the racial bar. Kranspoort saw the emergence of a new precedent that would re-introduce Africans – successful land claimants – into nature conservation. In anticipation of attracting eco-tourists, planners drew up a multi-functional, historical agri-village that was attractive enough to be rented out to tourists but could also meet the needs of 190 returnee families who would enjoy an occasional retreat on their ancestral farm. The Levubu arrangement built on privileging the 'current use of the land' in terms of intensive commercial agriculture but worked along similar lines of inviting Africans back into the space from which they had been expelled. All three projects worked in ideological ways as representational spaces and demonstration projects that represent the ideal of deracialization today.

We witnessed how the maintenance of the boundaries of the various roles and positions in the so-called Community–Public–Private–Partnerships proved an arduous affair and risky business in economic and political terms. Government proved to be incapable of channelling the types of services and commitments required to sustain the partnerships. Its engagement was marked by periodical engagement and disengagement and responses to shifting relations in the field of power it helped constitute but had no monopoly of control over. State presence, it follows, cannot be understood – as some authors have argued for the case of the strategic partnership at Levubu – as a form of top-down imposition and setting of strict conditions by a state driven by an ideology of neoliberal, market-led development (Derman et al. 2010; Fraser 2007a). The partnership at Levubu eventually saw the agri-business partner withdraw and file for bankruptcy in 2009. Against the conditions of the lease agreement, Tshakhuma community leaders made new inroads into the irrigation scheme, by setting up a clinic there, in ways that enhanced their status as tribal authority. Kranspoort, which obviously presented less of a political imperative on behalf of government to make it a success, presented a more open-ended partnering process altogether. As was argued in Chapter Three, this leads me to conclude that the self-reflexive strategies of the leadership were shaped against the backdrop of a state that does not provide a clear set of rules but rather operates as a 'hope generating machine' (Nuijten 2003). Officials could threaten to withdraw support but were also always prepared to

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initiate new procedures and refer claimants to new sources of state support (see Van Leynseele 2013).

Flawed as they were in design, ideationally, the partnerships models worked well enough to connect divergent projects of community leaders, private investors and officials seeking security in these partnerships. In both cases, they bridged racial divides and fed into aspirations of claimant community leaders. At Tshakhuma, broad-based support for the maintenance of the commercial farms was rooted in a long-term connectedness and interdependency between the farms and location as source of labour supply. The up-scaling of farm production and reorganization of smallish family economic units into one large, consolidated farm of approximately 500 hectares under one joint venture operating company, corresponded with the way the land was reclaimed as tribal territory and now followed the contours of what claimants called the 'natural boundaries' of pre-dispossession time. For Kranspoort, we witnessed that a historicized ideal of the semi-permanent resident and the ideal of renting out homes to tourists over holidays appealed to a certain faction of urbanized claimants. Support by this faction for the formal planning process was sustained amongst the community leadership and seemed to go to absurd lengths in the light of the absence of state support for it. It led me to conclude in Chapter Three that investments into process ownership entangled community supporters ever tighter in these plans, in turn making disengagement and retreat from a commitment to the process ever more difficult. Enduring legacies can thus be understood not only in material ways as land becomes reworked but also in relational terms. These planned trajectories remain relevant through people's association with them, leading in turn to more or less stable spatialities that now co-exist with others to form an even denser landscape of competing claims to land.

To understand the salience of particular business models, the way in which they articulate with meanings and land uses that have already been sedimented in landscapes should also be considered. In this regard, the two cases of land restitution discussed present very different propositions as a result of these past sedimentations and the respective ways in which the groups have related to their ancestral land. We may see Kranspoort as being contested in a 'space of indeterminacy' or one that is decidedly 'open' to multiple technologies of the past and present (cf. de Haan 2005). Owing to the multiple forces acting on it, it has remained weakly classified and 'not yet an object that was assembled into actor-networks' (ibid.: 23). We saw that historical processes of place-making were inscribed ambiguously by virtue of the landowning Dutch Reformed Church not being able to find a clear designation for it between private farm and mission station. Post-

land reform dynamics saw it being incorporated into two competing spatialities of nature conservation and community-based agriculture. Hinging on a sense of repatriation but a vast diversity of practical aspirations of return, the claimant group increasingly faced the risk of increasing its own dispossession or erosion of community volition that had mobilised the claimants in the first place. Despite extraordinary acts of networking and the leadership showing compliance with demands by the state for 'institutional reliability', the farm continues to be negotiated along the lines of this indeterminacy and the political risks it entails. A painful paradox in this regard was the realization by the leadership that after a prolonged struggle to stabilize the idea of community through different forms of social and spatial disciplining that were directed inwardly and outwardly, they were eventually told by municipal authorities that their land was privately owned and not eligible for state support.

Relevant here is the distinct way in which Tshakhuma presents a decidedly more 'closed' proposition. Longstanding relations between Tshakhuma and the neighbouring Levubu irrigation scheme continued to exist due to their connectedness. A gradual process of de-peasantization at Tshakhuma, which also implicated the local Chief as Minister of Agriculture of the Venda homeland government, who initiated closer settlement during apartheid and thereafter promoted rapid urbanization, fed into an interdependency with the white farmers in terms of provision of farm labour. Most evident of the way in which variegated projects interlocked to create a temporal spatiality, was the convergence of chiefly territory, land restitution's focus on communal management and government's political and economic imperatives to maintain the status quo ante in terms of land use, and the entry of an agribusiness partner. Their combined place-making efforts produced a transformation process that consolidated former family-farm economic units into a large-scale farm of some 500 hectares that straddled the economic rationale of management by a joint venture company but abided by the pre-dispossession 'natural boundaries' fought over by the traditionalist community leadership. Further marking the exceptional status of the area, we witnessed the partnership temporarily suspending labour rights and land labourers enduring the consequences of being brought under the authority of the traditional leadership who proceeded to engage in labour disciplining as part of their bid for greater ownership over the process and control over the ancestral land.

The cases show different entangled landscapes that have opened up in land restitution. Indeterminacy and relative determinacy represent metaphors for approaching the fragmented process of deracialization. Whilst I would be cautious to generalize about the representativeness of these cases as indicative of wider state orientations and dominant discourses in agrarian development, a general trend can be discerned of neoliberal

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governmental technologies creating scope for new forms of appropriation of space and enclosures of ordinary Africans in the container of community. Two topics for research were outlined. Firstly, land restitution processes as complex assemblages and related entangled landscapes may produce exceptional places that merit particular attention to the way new social citizenships are produced in 'exceptional spaces' that fall largely outside the realm of the state or along schisms that drive ordinary people further along the divide between 'subject' or 'community member' and citizen. Secondly, we should see these spaces as productive of particular brokers, who emerge at particular intervals and claim 'ownership over the process' and the coordination of post-settlement support and development planning. It marks a new field of research that opens up reclamation to a larger framework of analysis that follows the way in which processes of redistribution of property rights and struggles to appropriate managerial spaces are mutually constitutive and informative of new assemblages. These assemblages, it should be added, defy a dichotomist view of the land question as unfolding between pre-given fixed positions or rural classes but see it rather as unfolding along contingent associations between representatives of communities, white investors and a state that is present in variegated ways and that offers multiple registers for enterprising actors.

Contours of an Ethnography of 'Opening' and 'Closing Spaces'

As explained above, the presence of the state may be a tentative and contradictory one marked by periods where the state is hardly present and by consecutive stages when it seeks to steer outcomes and re-assert itself. The state functions through the production of multiple entitlements, which in turn provide the opportunity to engage land restitution in multiple ways and on the basis of claims that differ in their reference to the constitutional right to historical redress (the rationale of land reform more generally) and other forms of entitlement related more specifically to the aforementioned entitlement to govern and shape the post-settlement space. Such porosity and underlying multiplicity leads to seeing 'what is being constituted' in terms of hybrid and contested landscapes that are shaped through interrelations and in fields of power where multiple actor projects converge (Nuijten 2003). In this regard, they have been discussed here as relative permanencies that are shaped through organizing practices of actors and formative moments when actor projects temporarily interlock and disengage. Importantly, then, we may foreground the cultural and social backgrounds of brokers in place-making and the diversity of styles and repertoires they employ.

In seeking to break with popular understandings of rural transformation in terms of the 'agrarian question' or 'land question', with its assumptions of a-priori positions,

accumulation from above and relative fixities in agrarian relations, I foreground brokerage practices. Importantly, forms of brokerage navigate the gaps between state and non-state development agencies on the one hand and rural constituencies on the other. They create the types of political platforms and launch pads that provoke an appropriation of space, which further enlarges the initial gaps. The phenomenon of brokerage thus entails a process of distancing whereby localities actually become ever more distant and out of reach of the state. Brokerage thus destabilizes, and through reconfiguration processes, typical categories of beneficiaries such as smallholders and indeed local authority become reworked. This has been illustrated in the example of the farm labourers at Levubu becoming to some extent retribalized and oscillating between what can be seen as different patronage systems. A focus on brokerage does not only enable researchers to read into 'social and political recompositions, it is also a material factor that contributes actively to them' (Bierschenk et al. 2002: 37).

In following brokers, I adopted a networked approach to place-making and exploring how differently situated actors operate in parallel, yet mutually constitutive, spaces of deracialization. Critically, this has enabled a more situated focus on the interactions and spaces formed through a joint articulation. Power and exclusion feature in the form of cultural politics – but one that is produced through engagement rather than disengagement. Networked practices as a central concept allow us to conceive of the simultaneous enactment of multiple spatialities and temporalities as converging in the same locale. Putting actors central explains the dynamics of appropriation of space and the possibilities of producing new spatial relations that imply that places become imbued with multiple technologies of governing, in turn creating the types of spaces in which brokers and intermediaries emerge and become increasingly important. I argue for a sensitization to networks of practice, to emphasize the importance of constitutive moments when 'actor projects interlock' but also disengage. Following projects through implied a historicizing account of brokers' place-making acts that followed broadly the oscillations with wider societal and policy-central structures of opportunity. By virtue of its relational nature, networked and coordinated practices between and across actor groups become structuring – ordering takes place within and through practice – and through practice people may enter into multiple discourses (Schatzki et al. 2001).

We may approach these landscapes of deracialization as a locus of action in which past, present and future unfold simultaneously in a set of competing technologies that converge in conduits of practice. Following the understanding that power lies in the fact that landscapes have simultaneous functions and are at once symbolic and material (Fay

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and James 2009; Gunner 2005), we should account for three elements being recombined in this process. Firstly, it draws into the analysis the identity formation processes described above in terms of production of difference and how forms of social disciplining have as locus the 'community' for mobilization by restitution beneficiaries and contained in depoliticizing development planning. Secondly, we have the importance of property as an ordering principle in land restitution around which symbolic communities strategize but also in terms of propertied relations of the past that throw up obstacles to the prospect of land reform. Thirdly, we find the invited spaces discussed along the lines of the state drive for the privatization of development. This study has suggested that these sites are relevant to observe only in relation to the reflexive practices of social actors and their respective powers to appropriate them. It follows that this research calls for an understanding of deracialization as a politics of emergence, a process that cannot be read into by tracing the bureaucratic rationalities and the false distinction between 'state' and 'non-state' spaces. Finally, the call here is for a reflexive, situated anthropology that focuses on landscapes of deracialization as a locus for variegated cultural repertoires of social actors and competing forms of government

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Summary

This thesis deals with the politicized struggles for land in South Africa's Limpopo Province. With land having been an essential part of colonial and apartheid segregation policies and practice – with 87% of land appropriated by whites –, a land reform programme was imperative after the African National Congress came to power in 1994. One of the three branches of the land reform programme, land restitution, is a key focus of this thesis. It is particular in its goal to do justice to victims of past land dispossessions who lost land rights as result of racially-discriminatory laws by compensating them for this past loss of land and livelihoods. Where compensation for lost rights involves the government buying and redistributing land to groups with historical rights to land, such land deals present particular challenges around the ideal of restorative justice and what is means to 'bring the past into the present'.

It is argued here that far from being a clearly defined programme with planned outcomes, land restitution triggers a range of unintended outcomes and becomes but one land claim in a social and physical landscape saturated with meanings and competing claims to land. What is discussed in this thesis as sedimented landscapes of meaning have largely determined the scope and possibilities of future development and a sense of redress amongst the beneficiaries of land restitution. Past structures of authority like traditional leadership have reinvented themselves and continue to prosper due to the possibilities offered by land restitution and the way representation and authority are organised in new communal property institutions or so-called Communal Property Associations. More symbolically, past structures of belonging and imagined livelihoods that land restitution beneficiaries cherished in the intervening years between forced removal from their land and current restoration of land ownership, continue to animate expectations of the future.

Past land use practices by private landowners and existent spatial planning frameworks also inform the scope and breadth of possible outcomes. The selected case study sites in this thesis are sites government deems worth preserving, one for its exceptional aesthetic value as natural and cultural heritage site (Kranspoort), the other for its being high-value commercial, export-oriented farmland (Levubu). Government in conjunction with leaders of land restitution groups and business- and land use planners have entered into more or less formal agreements that aim to secure the pre-restitution use of the land and a gradual transfer of ownership and management tasks to beneficiary communities. Both cases were at some stage considered as precedent setting and replicable Community-Public-Private-Partnerships and business models, which were born out of government fears for 'failure' when privately-owned land is redistributed to large groups or communities.

Planning agencies envisage a rationalization of land use that temper 'unrealistic expectations' of land restitution beneficiaries in accordance with 'modern' values of productive land use and viability. The introduction of such values and related problematization of community-centered notions of property, livelihoods and sovereignty mirrors dominant state orientations in land and agrarian reform policy. Yet, given the range of actors invited into the management of land restitution deals and the state's experimental approach to supporting and facilitating the partnership arrangements, partnerships rather reflect laboratories of experimentation and a fluid 'force field' (Nuijten 2003) in which positions of actors change in response to shifts in relative power and distribution of resources and responsibilities. This observation foregrounds the connectedness of the case study locales to wider translocal policy making communities and the way the governance of land restitution deals entail a negotiated process where multiple and diverse entitlements to land compete with each other.

The book develops a relational approach to place-making. It suggests abandoning the focus on the 'land question' as expression of past and current political economies and the accompanying focus on ideological positions and growing class differentiation in land reform. It analyses the emergent assemblages which result from the interplay of technical, value-laden interventions in spatial and business planning, community-specific ideas of past belonging and historical rights to land and the historical sedimentations associated with past last use by exiting white landowners and related physical properties of the disputed land. Different place-making practices, both symbolic and material, and various governing techniques thus converge into what has been termed as the entangled landscapes of deracialization and in which competing spatialities and temporalities co-exist. An 'ethnography of opening and closing spaces' is suggested here which views place-making and related brokerage processes in terms of interlocking actor projects that may temporarily engage and disengage.

Particular attention is paid to key brokers (e.g. traditional leaders, elected community representatives, contracted consultants and white farm managers), the repertoires they use, their social and cultural backgrounds and to what extent their current social- and political agency provides explanations for the unexpected outcomes of land restitution deals. The appropriation of space by these actors takes place within a shifting field of power in which actors may draw on the registers of landed authority and rights as historically-dispossessed communities deserving compensation or, on the other hand, on the so-called managerial entitlements that result from the privatization of the responsibility of development planning and the state's emphasis on 'careful' planning, gradual transfer of ownership and management

tasks. It follows that practices by these brokers reconfigure and destabilize policy-central categories of beneficiaries like (black) farm labourers, (white) willing sellers and (black) emergent farmers while rendering restitution policies a script that can be reworked and interpreted differently. In analyzing the incomplete nature of this transformation, it is argued that although struggles for land still revolve in part around property and demands from rural constituencies and land claimants to get access to productive land, an important shift is discernible, requiring adequate attention to the responsibility to govern managerial spaces in land restitution. This observation requires increased academic emphasis on how 'process' can be owned and the role and positions of well-situated social actors or brokers. It leads me to argue the importance of studying brokerage as a process and concept for a better understanding of emerging properties of South Africa's landscapes of deracialization.

After a general introduction to the main concepts and the methodological approach in chapter one, chapter two describes the historical process of self-identification at Kranspoort mission farm. It presents the subject position of African congregants that resulted from engagement with the missionaries, white landowners and fellow Africans both at and outside the mission station. The land restitution process which started in 1995 provides an interesting entry point for studying the reconstitution of a dispersed 'community' according to the principles of post-apartheid land restitution. The chapter discusses the political economy of dispersal of the former mission residents and invokes how the strong sense of belonging or 'imagined community' was maintained in absentia from land settlement and the underlying cultural politics of difference and equivalence around the idea of 'Mother Kranspoort'. Chapter three examines the 'shifting articulation' that took place when the Kranspoort land reclamation moved into the post-settlement stages of land-use planning in which conservationist values resulted in planning for an eco-village settlement. This opening up of Kranspoort to new meanings and development strategies is presented as a tension between collectivized dreams of return and their symbolic associations on the one hand, and a botched planning process on the other, culminating in the eventual 'decline' of the status project into a situation where support was sought from lower-ranking officials in a process described as 'mining the state'.

Chapter four takes a closer look at a more recent efforts of white landowners to have the entire Soutpansberg mountain range proclaimed a UNESCO biosphere site. This ties into the new conservation status of the Soutpansberg region of which Kranspoort and Tshakhuma are a part. Place-making here reflects landscape-level planning for inclusive development across the racial divide (community-based nature conservation) and acknowledges whites' rights to act as custodians of environmentally-sensitive areas.

Chapter five shifts to Tshakhuma and the history of landed struggles. By engaging with the question of the resurrection of traditional leadership, I argue the multi-facetted nature of micro-practices of power and the particular position of the Madzivhandila Royal family as custodians of the ancestral land. The next chapter builds on Tshakhuma's retribalization process and explores the role of various actors in the experimental Strategic Partnership (SP) for managing the Levubu irrigation scheme. This partnership is an effort to reconstitute land restitution communities in terms of a new class of black commercial farmers who maintain the status quo of this 'hub of commercial farming'. By examining the institutionalization of land rights administration and the management of farms and benefits accruing from it, I explore whether we are witnessing the emergence of a 'place of exception' that is attaining a hegemonic status as a replicable business model. The seventh and final chapter presents the main findings and offers a reflection on how the research agenda of 'opening and closing spaces' may be taken further.

Samenvatting

Deze dissertatie gaat over gepolitizeerde strijd voor land in de Zuid-Afrikaanse provincie Limpopo. Aangezien land de kern was van het koloniale en apartheidsbeleid van verpaupering en segregatie en van de daarmee gepaard gaande praktijken, waarbij de blanken zich 87% van het land toeëigenden, was landhervorming onontkoombaar nadat het African National Congress in 1994 aan de macht was gekomen. Dit onderzoek concentreert zich op landteruggave (*land restitution*), een van de drie onderdelen van het landhervormingsprogramma. Landteruggave heeft een bijzonder doel: recht doen aan gemeenschappen wier land voorheen gemeenschapsbezit was door deze groepen te compenseren voor het verlies van land en levensonderhoud als gevolg van racistisch landbeleid. Voor zover compensatie aankoop van land betreft door de regering die het vervolgens distribueert aan groepen met historische rechten op het land, brengen landtransacties bijzondere uitdagingen met zich mee ten aanzien van het ideaal van herstellende gerechtigheid en wat bedoeld wordt met 'het verleden in het heden brengen'.

Mijn stelling is dat landteruggave een verre van duidelijk gedefinieerd programma met geplande uitkomsten is. Dit programma en gerelateerde interventies leiden tot een aantal onbedoelde uitkomsten en zijn slechts één van meerdere landclaims in een sociaal en fysiek landschap dat doordrenkt is van verschillende betekenissen van land en van concurrerende landclaims. Hetgeen in deze thesis wordt omschreven als gesedimenteerde betekenislandschappen (*sedimented landscapes*) bepaalt in hoge mate zowel het bereik en de mogelijkheden voor toekomstige ontwikkeling en investeringen in land, als een gevoel van herstel onder de begunstigden van landteruggave. Gezagsstructuren uit het verleden zoals traditioneel leiderschap maken nog steeds opgang tengevolge van de mogelijkheden die landteruggave biedt en de wijze waarop vertegenwoordiging van de gemeenschap en nieuwe communale landinstituties wordt georganiseerd. Op een meer symbolisch vlak wekken ideeën over vroegere structuren van groepstoebehoren en een geïdealiseerde interpretatie van een verloren bestaan, die de begunstigden van landteruggave koesterden gedurende de jaren tussen het gedwongen vertrek van hun land en het huidige herstel van landeigendom, nog steeds verwachtingen voor de toekomst.

Vroegere praktijken van landgebruik door privé eigenaars en bestaande planningskaders beïnvloeden eveneens het bereik en de omvang van mogelijke uitkomsten. De gekozen *case studies* betreffen landgebruik dat de regering wil beschermen, het ene vanwege zijn uitzonderlijke esthetische waarde als natuurlijk en cultureel erfgoed (Kranspoort), het andere omdat het hoogwaardige commerciële, op export gerichte landbouwgrond betreft (Levubu). De regering ging min of meer formele akkoorden aan met leiders van landteruggavegroepen en business- en landgebruikplanners met als doel een geleidelijke

overdracht van eigendom en managementtaken aan de begunstigde gemeenschap te bewerkstelligen. Beide projecten werden op een bepaald moment beschouwd als precedent-scheppende en exemplarische publiek-private gemeenschapsprojecten (Community-Public-Private-Partnerships) en bedrijfsmodellen en kwamen voort uit angst voor 'falen' bij de regering wanneer land wordt herverdeeld onder grote groepen.

In deze projecten gaan planners uit van een rationalisering van landgebruik, die 'onrealistische verwachtingen' bij begunstigden van landteruggaves moet temperen, in overeenkomst met 'moderne' waarden inzake productief en economisch landgebruik. De bijkomende problematisering van lokale noties van eigendom, levensonderhoud en soevereiniteit van begunstigden, weerspiegelt de heersende richtlijnen of discoursen van de staat inzake landhervorming. Gezien de verscheidenheid aan acteurs die uitgenodigd worden om deel te nemen aan het beheer van dergelijke projecten en de experimentele benadering van de staat inzake steun voor deze partnershipconstructies, hebben deze projecten echter meer weg van experimentele laboratoria en een dynamisch 'krachtenveld' (Nuijten 2003) waarin de acteursposities veranderen al naargelang relatieve machtsverschuivingen en de verdeling van middelen en verantwoordelijkheden. Dit gegeven laat de verbondenheid zien tussen deze landhervormingsprojecten en bredere translokale gemeenschappen van beleidsmakers alsmede de wijze waarop de sociale organisatie van landteruggaves een onderhandingsproces weerspiegelt waarbij veelvoudige en diverse aanspraken op land met elkaar concurreren.

Dit boek ontwikkelt een relationale benadering van plaatsmaken (*place-making*) en stelt voor om niet meer te focussen op de 'landkwestie' als uitdrukking van verleden en huidige politieke economieën en de gerelateerde focus op groeiende klasseverschillen rond landhervorming. Het analyseert daarentegen de eigenschappen of assemblages die voortkomen uit het samenspel van technische interventies in ruimtelijke en business planning, ideeën over vroeger toebehoren en historische rechten op land van de begunstigden, en de historische neerslag die geässocieerd wordt met het eerdere landgebruik en daarmee in verband staande fysieke eigenschappen van het land. Verschillende plaatsmaakpraktijken, zowel symbolische als materiële, en diverse bestuurstechnieken komen aldus samen in zogenaamde hybride landschappen (*entangled landscapes*) waarin concurrerende ideeen en uitdrukkingen van tijd en ruimte naast elkaar bestaan. Dit leidt tot een voorstel voor een 'etnografie van openende en sluitende ruimtes' waarin *brokerage*-processen worden gezien als in elkaar grijpende acteursprojecten die tijdelijk ingeschakeld en afgekoppeld kunnen worden.

De analyse wijdt speciale aandacht aan actoren of *brokers* die een bemiddelende rol spelen tussen overheid en begunstigde gemeenschap (bijvoorbeeld traditionele leiders, verkozen gemeenschapsleiders, ingehuurde *brokers* en blanke landbouwmanagers), de door hun gehanteerde *repertoires*, hun sociale en culturele achtergrond en in hoeverre hun huidige posities en manoeuvreerruimte verklaringen aanreikt voor ongeplande uitkomsten van de landhervorming. Deze actoren eigenen zich ruimte toe binnen een verschuivend machtsveld waarbij ze zich enerzijds kunnen beroepen op registers van gezag over land en soeverein bestuur of anderzijds op verantwoordelijkheden als planners en mentoren van begunstigden die de geleidelijke overdracht van eigendom en managementtaken kunnen bewerkstelligen. Hieruit volgt dat de praktijken van deze brokers de categorieën van begunstigden die centraal staan in het huidige beleid, zoals (zwarte) landarbeiders, (blanke) gewillige verkopers van land and (zwarte) opkomende boeren, herschikken en destabiliseren: ze maken het teruggavebeleid tot een script dat herschreven en verschillend geïnterpreteerd kan worden. De analyse van het onvoltooide karakter van de transformatie van landeigendom in de brede zin van het woord en de emergente eigenschappen van landschappen van deracialisatie leidt tot de stelling dat er, ondanks het feit dat landschaarste onder rurale zwarten en de verandering van land eigendom nog altijd zeer actueel zijn, een belangrijke verschuiving te zien is die degelijke aandacht vereist voor de privatisering van het beheer van projecten en de arena van landmanagement (*managerial space*) in landteruggave. Deze waarnemingen tonen de behoefte aan toenemende academische nadruk op hoe 'proces' een vorm van eigendom is en op de rol en positie van goedgeplaatste actoren die de oorspronkelijke doelstellingen van landhervorming – herverdeling van grond – ombuigen en aanwenden naar eigen inzicht en handelingsbekwaamheid. Dit leidt me tot een pleidooi voor het belang van een studie over brokerage als een proces en concept om een beter begrip te krijgen van de veranderdende eigendomsverhoudingen van Zuid-Afrika's landschappen van deracialisatie.

Na een algemene inleiding met de voornaamste concepten en de methodologie in hoofdstuk één, beschrijft hoofdstuk twee het historische proces van zelf-identificatie op de Kranspoort missie van de Nederduits Hervormde Kerk die op bekering en ontwikkeling van de zwarte bevolking gericht was. Inzichten in de vroegere landverhoudingen tonen aan dat missie-bewoners leefden in een dynamische relatie met missionarissen, blanke landeigenaren en andere Afrikanen binnen en buiten de missie, die niet enkel in termen van paternalisme en verlies begrepen dient te worden. Ondanks een gedwongen onteigening van het merendeel van de bewoners en hun diaspora, blijft 'Moeder Kranspoort' een actuele plaats waaraan een sterke verbondenheid blijft bestaan rond een ge-idealiseerd idee van gemeenschap. Een historische beschouwing van meerdere stadia van landreclamatie door

gemeenschapsleiders tot aan het proces van postapartheid landteruggave, verschaft een ingang voor de studie van de heropbouw van een uit elkaar gevallen 'gemeenschap' en welke vormen van culturele politiek bedreven worden voor de handhaving van een min of meer coherente en beleidsrelevante interpretatie van gemeenschap die zich spiegelt naar de criteria voor deelname van het huidige landrestitutiebeleid. Hoofdstuk drie onderzoekt de 'verschuivende articulatie' die plaats vond toen de landeis van Kranspoort in de post-settlement fase kwam van planning van het landgebruik en natuurbehoudswaarden leidden tot een plan voor een eco-dorp. De manier waarop Kranspoort werd blootgesteld aan nieuwe betekenissen van land en ontwikkelingsstrategieën wordt beschreven als spanning tussen collectief geworden dromen van terugkeer en de daarmee gepaard gaande symbolische associaties enerzijds, en het planningsproces anderzijds. Deze spanning culmineerde in een zodanig 'verval' van het statusproject dat men kwam tot wat men noemde 'de staat ontginnen' en een gefragmenteerde en wanhopige zoektocht van gemeenschapsleiders naar financiële steun voor geplande ontwikkeling. Het hoofdstuk ontwikkelt de idee dat planning – hoewel deze virtueel lijkt te blijven en geen enkele invloed lijkt te hebben op het eigenlijke landgebruik in termen van implementatie – desalniettemin een grote rol speelt in huidige uitkomsten. Het punt wordt beargumenteerd dat planningsprocessen die een bepaald beeld projecteren van de behoeftes van de beginstigden en hun verwachtingen, als bijwerking het effect hebben dat ze bepaalde leden in de gemeenschap aan zich binden waardoor het opgeven van een project dat tot falen gedoemd lijkt te zijn politiek onmogelijk wordt.

Hoofdstuk vier gaat dieper in op recentere pogingen van blanke landeigenaren om de hele Soutpansbergketen door de UNESCO te laten uitroepen tot biosfeerreservaat. Dit staat in verband de nieuwe milieubehoudsstatus van de Soutpansbergregio waar Kranspoort en Tshakhuma deel van uitmaken. Plaatsmaken is hier een afspiegeling van planning op landschapsniveau dat doelt op inclusieve ontwikkeling over de raciale grens heen (op gemeenschappen gebaseerd natuurbehoud) en het recht van blanken erkent om op te treden als hoeders van milieugevoelige gebieden. In dit hoofdstuk wordt geargumenteerd dat de introductie van dergelijke ruimtelijke en sociale plannings-modellen – die internationaal worden geroemd vanwege hun flexibiliteit en vertaalbaarheid naar lokale omstandigheden – de ruimte bieden voor kwetsbare blanke landeigenaren om hun positie te versterken. De zogenaamde productie van een nieuwe schaal – het Biosfeer en gerelateerde economische model van ecologisch en cultureel toerisme – door welgestelde en goed-gepositioneerde blanken volgt gangbare praktijken van onteigening van zwarte groepen waarbij technische kennis en de focus op landschapsplanning de besluitnameprocessen van dit initiatief depolitiseren en het vooruitzicht van verdere

landteruggave in dit gebied compliceren door een nieuwe plannings-laag en initiatief in te brengen die bepaalde vormen van agrarisch landgebruik en grootschalige landteruggave aan zwarten problematiseren.

In hoofdstuk vijf gaan we naar Tshakhuma en de geschiedenis van strijd om land. Hier behandel ik de heropkomst van traditioneel leiderschap en toon aan dat lokale machtspraktijken talrijke facetten heben alsmede de bijzondere positie van de Madzivhandila 'koninklijke familie' als hoeders van het voorouderlijk land. Het volgende hoofdstuk behandelt het hertribaliseringsproces van Tshakhuma en verkent de rol van verscheidene acteurs in het experimentele *Strategic Partnership* model dat belast is met het beheer van het Levubu irrigatieproject. Dit model zet zich in om landteruggavegemeenschappen om te vormen naar een nieuwe klasse van zwarte commerciële landbouwers die instaan voor het behoud van de status quo in dit gebied 'bij uitstek geschikt voor commerciële landbouw' en dat een bijdrage levert aan regionale werkgelegenheid en nationale voedselzekerheid. Door middel van onderzoek naar de institutionalisering van landrechtenbeheer en de onderhandelingsprocessen binnen het partnership en tussen het traditioneel leidershap van de gemeenschap en de brede groep begunstigden, ga ik vervolgens in op de vraag of we zich hier soms een hegemonistische 'plaats van uitzondering' zien aftekenen waarbij de nadruk op economisch behoud van het landgebruik maakt dat andere kritische aspecten van deracialisatie zoals het verbeteren van de positie van landarbeiders en de democratisering van besluitvorming in begunstigde gemeenschappen buiten de sfeer van overheidsinmenging blijven. In termen van een landchapsvorming kan men hier spreken van een hybridisering waarbij de commercieel georiënteerde intensieve landbouw – vroeger een privaat familiebedrijf – samensmelt met gemeenschapsbelangen en beheer door een traditioneel leiderschap. Het zevende en laatste hoofdstuk vat de belangrijkste resultaten samen en eindigt met reflecties over hoe een onderzoeks agenda gestoeld op de ethnografie van 'openende en sluitende ruimtes' verder te ontwikkelen.

About the author

Yves Van Leynseele was born in Belgium in 1975 and has spent most of his life living in the Netherlands. Sensitization to African politics were implanted at an early age when he spent three years of early childhood in Maputo, Mozambique from 1981 to 1984 in the midst of a civil war triggered by South African militarism. Interest in the Southern African region was reignited after he started his MSc degree in Rural Development Sociology at the Wageningen University. His thesis research in 2002 and 2003 was done within the specialisation track of Law and Governance and studied land restitution practices in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. He completed his MSc degree with distinction and pursued his interest in politics of land after obtaining the CEPIP-W/CERES PhD grant in 2005.

He currently works as a lecturer at the Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Besides supervision of thesis projects and acting as scientific advisor in the Research Master programme International Development Studies, he teaches and coordinates courses in theories and debates in International Development Studies and research methods in the MSc and Research Master's programme International Development Studies. His research follows an actor-oriented approach with an emphasis on development brokers (state and non-state) and Community-Public-Private-partnerships in agrarian reform and rural transformation. Research interests include place-based development, innovation spaces in smallholder-corporate partnerships, property arrangements and land rights, commoditification of nature/culture and methodological approaches to studying articulation in environmental governance.

Funding

Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Yves-Pierre Benoit van Leynseele
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)
Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS 1=28 hrs
A) Project related competences			
Competing Claims (WOTRO IP Programme) Acoornhoek Workshop	WUR	2006	3
Competing Claims (WOTRO IP Programme) Wageningen	WUR	2007	1,5
Workshop 'Properties of Property' Berlin workshop	Rural Property Network	2005	1,5
B) General research related competences			
Orientation programme	CERES	2005	4,5
Presentation tutorials	CERES	2005	6
Critical Analysis of Political Discourse	Danish Political Science Research School	2005	3
Scenario development, postgraduate course	CT de Wit School, WUR	2007	1.4
Science Next Wave Talent Day	NWO	2005	0,3
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Teaching and Supervising Thesis Students	WUR	2005	1
Techniques for Writing a Scientific Paper	WUR	2005	1,5
'Looking Through the Prism of Land Restitution'	American Anthropological Association, Annual Meeting, Washington DC, USA	2005	2
'New Models of Nature Conservation in Northern South Africa: Spaces for Negotiation or Exclusionary Scripts'	International Sociological Association, Annual Congress, Durban, South Africa	2006	2
'Pro poor or what? Ethnographic explorations of two land restitution cases in rural South Africa'	SANPAD conference 'The Poverty Challenge', Durban South Africa	2007	2
'Contesting ancestral space through South Africa's land restitution programme'	American Anthropological Association, Annual meeting, San Francisco, USA	2008	2
'Between Public and Private: new environmental frontiers in South Africa'	Institute of Social Studies, Conference 'Nature Inc? Questioning the Market Panacea in Environmental Policy and Conservation	2011	2
Co-organisation panel 'New territorialities: entitlements, rule and citizenship'	American Anthropological Association, Annual meeting, San Francisco, USA	2008	1
Organisation Advanced Research Seminar RDS 'Emergent Spaces in Development Sociology'	Rural Development Sociology Group, WUR	2011	1
Total			35,7