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The management of the Matobo Hills in Zimbabwe : perceptions of the indigenous communities on their involvement and use of traditional conservation practices

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1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

In pre-colonial Africa and other parts of the globe, many local indigenous communities inhabited lands, established powerful states and, in some cases, constructed enormous settlements in areas which are now regarded as cultural landscapes. These cultural landscapes ranged from sacred forests, to dry-stone walls, and to historic settlements of symbolic and sacred values, some of which are now designated as National Parks, Transfrontier Conservation Areas, and World Heritage Cultural Landscapes.

In southern Africa, certain well-known cultural landscapes which are also World Heritage Sites include the Mapungubwe and uKhahlamba/ Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa, Tsodilo Hills in Botswana, Chongoni Forest in Malawi, Twyfelfontein in Namibia and the Matobo Hills in Zimbabwe. These cultural landscapes bear evidence of the past and present, and it is the memories of the local indigenous communities and associated histories that define the significance of these areas. The local indigenous communities subsisting in the vicinity of these cultural landscapes regard them as their ancestral homes and are culturally and spiritually attached to them. They also consider them as traditional lands where they can practice farming and perform diverse cultural activities. These cultural landscapes are highly revered for their significance as rainmaking, fertility, and cleansing areas. They are also important as symbols of identity that bond many indigenous African communities together and with their past.

In many parts of Africa, traditional leaders such as clan heads, chiefs, and spirit mediums were the authority and managers of these cultural landscapes. These community leaders were selected through traditional procedures, and communities were involved in determining the authority that leaders were allowed to exercise over their subjects such as keeping peace, settling of disputes, performance of rituals, and protection of the land.

Land was owned and shared communally. Group communities possessed common property rights to the land; however, access rights to the same land were held by different individuals and were transferred from one generation to the next. Decisions about who owned a particular piece of land were made by family heads, and this was guided by traditional practices that considered the needs of various individuals within the community. Today, although land is still under the authority of traditional elders in some African countries, their roles have been, to some extent, redefined to that of the state system (Makuvaza and Makuvaza 2012).

Prior to colonialism, the protection of cultural landscapes were perhaps the result of the accumulation of indigenous knowledge systems that had been practiced by local indigenous communities within these landscapes. Each indigenous community may have formed its own legal system based on traditional customs and practices that were enforced by clan elders, chiefs, and spirit mediums who performed both community and spiritual duties (Musonda 2005; Makuvaza 2007; Mahachi and Kamuhangire 2008). All members of the community may also have possessed traditional knowledge about the conservation of their cultural landscapes, though this may have varied with gender and age as well as with social and economic status. Punishment and penalties for contravention of practices were sanctioned by the traditional courts based on cultural procedures (Chiwaura 2005).

Contrary to general assumptions by a number of Europeans that there was no conservation prior to their appearance in Africa, many cultural landscapes may have been therefore, protected by traditional conservation practices (cf. Joffroy 2005). According to Ndoro (2004, 2005), the fact that Europeans discovered several cultural landscapes intact indicates that a form of conservation could have been practiced, however, many of the traditional conservation practices were not recorded but only observed and practiced by the local indigenous communities.

THE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN COLONIAL AFRICA

The arrival of Europeans on the African continent, and especially in southern Africa, profoundly influenced and transformed the manner in which local indigenous communities were managing and protecting their cultural landscapes. From the beginning of the 19th century, European missionaries and travellers extended their explorations and opened up much of the African continent to the outside world. According to Ellert (1993, 10), the crusading zeal to bring Christianity to the "heathen" was pursued just as vigorously in Africa as it was in Asia and the Americas. Missionaries began to execute active evangelical work, during which time they visited unfamiliar regions and peoples of the continent. They also began to develop mission stations and introduce formal western education to the local African indigenous communities that they visited.

The effects of this missionary work on Africans were such that traditional systems of managing cultural landscapes were condemned through unfamiliar ideas, religious values and morals. Consequently, the work of traditional elders, chiefs, and spirit mediums to protect cultural places began to be perceived as ungodly and associated with the practice of witchcraft. The introduction of Christianity and education, especially in southern Africa, led to the creation of new values which eventually led Africans to despise and abandon their past cultural values (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999). Additionally, in many instances, the missionaries also heralded trade and the building of empires by European states that later conquered much of the entire African continent.
European explorers of Africa not only added considerable geographical knowledge about the continent, they also obtained information about local traditional communities, languages, and cultural and natural histories of the countries in which they sojourned (Ellert 1993). In Europe, reported accounts about the success and fame of missionaries and voyagers assisted in the advancement of the obsession of the Europeans' geographical "discovery" and colonial penetration of the African continent. Consequently, scientific curiosity and missionary spirit were soon subordinated to mercantile considerations such as mining, trading, hunting, and concession seeking. In due course, this resulted in the colonisation of the entire continent during the second half of the 19th century.

In southern Africa, many cultural landscapes were first presented to Europeans as barriers to the movement of farming communities in the early migrations of people in the region. Cultural landscapes of this nature were thus perceived as not suitable for modern human habitation and, as a result, were appropriated and given a new status as national parks or game reserves for the conservation of wildlife and nature. The appropriation of these cultural landscapes was also driven by the notion that these lands were "terra nullius" (vacant lands) as many local indigenous communities were believed to be transitory migrants. These ideas were based on the Bantu migration, a millennia-long series of migrations of speakers of the original proto-Bantu language groups. The migrations were speculated to have begun from west Africa by about 1000 BC and reaching southern Africa in about 300 AD (see Phillipson 1985; Beach 1986; Vansina 1995). However, attempts to trace the exact routes of the Bantu expansion in order to correlate it with archaeological evidence and, more recently, with genetic evidence, have not been conclusive. Thus, many aspects of the expansion remain uncertain or are highly contested (Berniell-Lee et al. 2009). Although the exact routes of Bantu expansion remain contested, archaeological studies have now disproved the preconceived notion of "empty lands" prior to European settlement in southern Africa. It has now been firmly established that the region was occupied for more than 25, 000 years by the hunter-gatherer communities before the arrival of the Bantu people (see, for example, Mitchell 2002, 2013; van Doornum 2008; Lombard 2013).

In the context of Zimbabwe, the occupation of the country by Europeans was, in part, motivated by the economic greed that was based on reports of abundant goldfields in the country. When these reports failed to achieve fruition, the Europeans' dreams of economic opulence were crushed, and they shifted their interests to farming as a substitute

for gold mining (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999). This resulted in the demarcation and appropriation of cultural landscapes that were inhabited by the local indigenous communities.

Europeans also began to initiate the enactment of various pieces of land legislations which subsequently empowered them to evict Africans from their ancestral lands. In Zimbabwe, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Land Husbandry Act of 1951 are the most well known land repressive legislations. The Land Apportionment Act, which implemented provisions in 1931, resulted in the division of land into European Areas, Native Reserves, Native Purchase Areas, and Forest Areas. There was also land that was appropriated as "Unassigned Land" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b). The Land Husbandry Act, on the other hand, was designed to enforce private ownership of land and improve the rural economy in the African reserves that had experienced the pressure of a growing population within these fixed areas. However, its provisions violated local traditional conservation practices. Rather than expanding the size of the reserves, the Act limited cattle grazing in specified areas and provided for the destocking of African herds; allowed officials to dictate patterns of cultivation and crop growing as well as fix dwelling sites on farm land; and also prohibited cultivating or grazing without a permit. Implementation of the Act signified the depletion of highly valued herds, reduction of land under cultivation, and the forced uprooting of families and entire traditional villages (Weitzer 1990; Wels 2003).

When many southern African countries were later colonised, cultural landscapes were subsequently sub-divided into European and African areas based largely on the agricultural potential of the colonised countries. As a result of this subdivision, substantial African populations were forcibly removed from their ancestral homes to make way for establishing European commercial farming areas, forest areas, and national parks. A number of evicted indigenous communities were relocated along the edges of protected areas while others were settled in marginal areas, some of which were a long distance from their original cultural landscapes. In Zimbabwe, as in South Africa (see Meskell 2012, 18), local indigenous communities were relocated to newly established native reserves. The native reserves formed the basis of ethnically-defined administrative units, known then in Zimbabwe as Tribal Trust Lands, and reclassified as Communal Lands after the independence of the country in 1980 (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999).

Government Commissions on natives, forestry and wildlife, monuments and relics, and nature reserves were subsequently established to institute new conservation programmes within southern African cultural landscapes. The eviction of local indigenous communities from their original settlements by the Europeans meant that culture and nature were separated. However, it has been generally agreed upon that these two entities should not have been separated since their interaction provided richness and depth to the narratives of cultural landscapes (see Bender 1999; Layton and Ucko 1999).

Even though Europeans had recognised that many African cultural landscapes had been previously inhabited by the hunter-gatherer communities, they did not recognise the presence and legitimacy of the modern African local indigenous communities that now primarily inhabit these landscapes. In fact, many Europeans had come to believe that Africans did not have any right to the use of these cultural landscapes and that the Africans had no objective views over them (see Ranger 1999; Meskell 2012). As the cultural landscapes were appropriated, European ideas of romantic and natural history traditions were prioritised over the traditional conservation practices of protecting these areas. McGregor (2003) argued that, during the appropriation of these landscapes, cultural meanings were overridden with local indigenous communities often featuring a generic exotic or servile other. Instead, new values such as research and tourism were inscribed on cultural landscapes which then benefited Europeans as they celebrated colonial science and modernity on the African continent (Ranger 1999; McGregor 2003).
Protective legislations based on European concepts of conservation were also introduced to manage cultural landscapes that were now designated as national parks, forests, game and nature reserves. In many cases, boundaries were then demarcated,

and these areas were subsequently fenced to effectively prevent local indigenous communities from entering their cultural landscapes. Between 1961 and 1962 in Tanzania for example, Neville Chittick a British archaeologist and founder of the Antiquities Department, fenced several rock art sites including the Mongomi wa Kolo site in the Kondoa World Heritage Cultural Landscape to prevent local indigenous communities from accessing the sites (Bwasiri 2008) while several cultural sites in the Matobo Hills were fenced as a means of protecting them from vandalism (Makuvaza 2008). Meskell (2012) noted that the fencing and enclosure of Kruger National Park in South Africa, which is now part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, was the defining cause for the desitution of indigenous communities as well as new designations of trespassing, poaching, and criminality that resulted from changes in colonial topographies.

The eviction of Africans from their original settlements meant that they were forced to leave their immovable cultural heritage in areas that were now designated as protected properties (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999). In many instances, these cultural heritage sites were later systematically inventoried and subsequently proclaimed as national monuments. These sites were then subjected to archaeological research programmes during which time local indigenous communities were neither consulted nor asked to participate. The archaeology of Africa, therefore, became a preserve of colonial, military, and missionary officials (Shephered 2006) as, throughout most of the colonial period until after independence, the archaeology of Africa was generally dominated by western ideology (Atalay 2006b). During the colonial period, the management of cultural landscapes was dominated by foreign people. It was only after independence when certain African people began being trained in archaeology that western ideas of managing cultural landscapes began to be challenged.

As a result of the introduction of European conservation and management practices, local indigenous communities realised that they were no longer able to access and use cultural sites as they had before Europeans had settled into these areas. Thus, many local indigenous communities were detached from an important element of their culture as they were moved to new areas with cultural heritage they were not associated with and could not relate to (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999). The combination of an increasing African population along with the allocation of only minimal sections of land in the native reserves created an increasingly acrimonious point of contention in the appropriation of cultural landscapes. In some cases, local indigenous communities contested removal from their traditional cultural landscapes which eventually resulted in warfare in many African countries. As argued by Silverman and Ruggles (2007), these contestations, when unresolved, can lead to resistance, violence and war, and the colonial legacy of evicting Africans from their cultural landscapes is still affecting some local indigenous communities even now.

The introduction of European ideas of conservation approaches for cultural landscapes and sites in Africa have been heavily criticised by many scholars (see, for example, Mumma 2003, 2004; Munjeri 2005). These scholars have described European management approaches as instruments of oppression rather than protection, and they are considered to have suppressed the long established African traditional conservation practices of managing cultural landscapes. In many parts of southern Africa, formal heritage management systems are, therefore, perceived as having failed to protect cultural heritage sites (see, for example, Jopela 2011; Ndlovu 2005).

THE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN INDEPENDENT AFRICA

Since gaining independence, many local indigenous communities expected to be resettled in previously appropriated cultural landscapes. They also anticipated that colonial management systems of cultural landscapes would be abolished while traditional conservation practices were to be reintroduced (Makuvaza and Makuvaza 2012). In many parts of southern Africa, local indigenous communities began to demand that their opinions be addressed regarding their history and management of cultural landscapes as these communities had other

perspectives of their past and also attached different values to their cultural landscapes and sites (Creamer 1990).

Disappointingly, many African communities were not permitted to return to their ancestral homes. The new, autonomous African governments, like their colonial predecessors, began to embrace the modernist doctrines of international conservation which, according to Ranger (1996), in the interest of the "whole community", does not allow local indigenous communities to collect firewood and plants, hunt, or visit holy places within the protected areas. Instead, state laws were consolidated which weakened local traditional management systems, and the powers of traditional authorities were shifted to the state (cf. Kayambazinthu et al. 2003). In fact, many government departments that address cultural heritage continued to implement state conservation practices while several protective legislations have largely remained unrevised to accommodate the rights and interests of local indigenous communities. Those that have been revised appear to be dilatorily accommodating the rights and interests of the local indigenous communities.

Despite these challenges, a number of local indigenous communities continue to regard the cultural landscapes from which they were evicted as their own and persist that the management of the landscapes should involve the communities. They continue to desire access to resources such as timber, thatching grass, water, firewood, charcoal, wild fruits, and medicinal plants. In addition, they would also like to continue farming and grazing their domestic animals in areas they had previously inhabited. In South Africa, for example, local indigenous communities living along the frontier of the Kruger National Park have been exerting new claims of restitution for their loss of this cultural landscape (Meskell 2012).

Given these hopes and claims, disputes have persevered in many parts of southern Africa between local indigenous communities and the state administrators who are managing world heritage cultural landscapes, some even to the extent that the conservation of the landscapes is threatened. Where these disputes occur, state administrators treat local indigenous communities not as legitimate beneficiaries of these areas but, instead, as poachers and criminals. The administrators accuse them of encroaching and threatening the integrity and authenticity of these cultural landscapes and also often regard local indigenous communities as intruders rather than the "original" people who had inhabited and traditionally used these cultural landscapes (Meskell 2012, 21). Consequently, the local indigenous communities perceive state administrators as perpetuating the colonial management styles that prohibit them to access and associate themselves with their lost cultural heritage (Makuvaza and Makuvaza 2012).

Upon attainment of independence, some African governments, especially Zimbabwe, embarked on resettlement programs that were based on a land policy of willing-seller/willing-buyer. However, this policy continued to allow private ownership of previously appropriated cultural landscapes since many Europeans were not willing to sell their land for resettlement programs (Katsamudanga 2003). This has generally failed to address the concerns of many local indigenous communities who had hoped to be reconnected with their ancestral homes. The ongoing land reform program in Zimbabwe that was enacted to address the historical land imbalances between black and white Zimbabweans, however, did not improve the situation as black Zimbabweans were not necessarily resettled back into their original cultural landscapes. This has resulted in the continued alienation of local indigenous communities from their cultural landscapes even several decades following independence (Ndoro and Pwiti 1999; Segobye 2005).

Today, many local indigenous communities also continue to be embroiled in struggles with governments and business corporations in areas where mineral wealth has been discovered in cultural landscapes as this cast the value of cultural landscapes in a different light. Where cultural landscapes had previously been valued for cultural and natural reasons, they have now become vital as mining landscapes and perceived as propelling the development of modern African states. The Kalahari

Game Reserve in Botswana, for example, is now considered more important in terms of economic benefits and development of the country as a result of the mining of kimberlite from that land (Segobye 2006). In a mining venture of uranium in the Kakadu World Heritage Cultural Landscape in Australia, Banergee (2000) has argued that, while the benefits of mining could be quantified in terms of jobs, dollars from export income, percentage of royalty payments, etc., the socio-cultural impacts such as the breakdown of traditional relations, the destruction of sacred sites, and the displacements and disruptions in patterns of local indigenous communities cannot be quantified and measured in economic terms. As further argued by Banergee, the destruction of traditional hunting land, depletion and contamination of freshwater resources, siltation and pollution of rivers, and widespread deforestation also irreversibly affect local indigenous communities. The major concern is that local indigenous communities have no power to stop the mining ventures that are considered to be of "national interest" and, in many instances, are authorised against the desires of the local indigenous communities.

VALUES AND NEW MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

In 1992, the category of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes was adopted by the World Heritage Committee. One of the major considerations by expert groups and the committee was to link nature and culture in the implementation of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This afforded innovative thinking about human beings and their environment and to link culture and nature with a vision of sustainable development (Rössler 2003).
Following this development, there have been arguments and advocacy to consider and recognise local indigenous communities and their traditional conservation practices of managing cultural landscapes when proclaiming the places as World Heritage Sites (see, for example, Sullivan 2004; Ndoro 2005, 2004; Jopela 2011). Sullivan (2004) noted that the world heritage management documents had ignored other social and contemporary values that may be contained within these sites. As she further asserted, even though these values may not be universal in terms of the World Heritage Convention, they may still be of immense importance to the local indigenous communities. Ndoro (2004) also contended that, the moment a place is declared as a World Heritage Site, the interests of the local and traditional communities become irrelevant to its management ethos. He further contended that the international interests expressed by international conventions become paramount. Considering these arguments, it is now generally agreed that local indigenous communities living around world heritage cultural landscapes must be involved in their management, and specified traditional conservation practices must also be regarded in the management systems of these landscapes.

New approaches to proclaim and manage cultural landscapes have subsequently been incorporated into the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. States parties to the Convention are now required to ensure the involvement of a wide variety of stakeholders including local indigenous communities in the identification, nomination, and protection of World Heritage Sites. It is also required to have long-term legislative, regulatory, institutional, and traditional protection as well as management to ensure the safeguarding of these World Heritage Sites. In addition to this, states parties are obligated to adequately demarcate delineated boundaries for the protection of the sites. For properties nominated under the cultural criteria, states parties are further expected to draw boundaries that include all those areas and attributes that are a direct tangible expression of the outstanding universal value of the property (see, for example, UNESCO 2008, Operational Guidelines, Paras. 12, 97 and 100).

As a result of the establishment of the cultural landscapes category by the World Heritage Committee and review of the Operational Guidelines, certain cultural landscapes were successfully proclaimed as world heritage cultural landscapes. The first such properties to be inscribed were Tongariro National Park (1993) in New Zealand and Uluru Kata Tjuta (1994) in Australia. In southern

Africa, a number of these sites include Tsodilo Hills (2001), Mapungubwe (2003), and the Matobo Hills (2003). The proclamation of these and other similar landscapes across the globe as World Heritage Sites signifies that they now embrace outstanding universal values and conditions of integrity and authenticity which must be protected and maintained for future generations. Their proclamation was also in accordance with the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced, and Credible World Heritage List (WHL) that was initiated in 1994 by the World Heritage Committee. The list inadequately balances and continues to be deficient in the types of inscribed properties and in the geographical areas of the world that are represented. The vast majority of these sites are located in developed regions of the world, notably in Europe. Generally, developing countries are, therefore, less well represented on the List (see Breen 2007; Willems and Comer 2011). The move to establish these World Heritage Sites also demonstrated a deviation from previous management approaches where state departments responsible for cultural heritage autonomously administered these sites without contribution from local indigenous communities for their effective management and protection.

The new process of proclaiming and managing World Heritage Sites enforced the necessity of involvement of local indigenous communities because, as noted by Bandarin (2009), it is the daily work of the local indigenous people and the manner in which they live that maintain these sites, often through their own protection measures and not by official legal provisions. Involvement in such endeavours would increase their sense of pride and their understanding of the need for the continued survival of cultural heritage sites (Ndoro 2004; Joffroy 2005). The stipulation for local indigenous communities to be involved in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes has raised hopes that, after decades of alienation from their cultural landscapes, they would eventually be reconnected with their ancestral homes.

Although some communities may have welcomed the chance to participate in the management of these landscapes, the operationalisation of the approach appears to be fraught with dilemmas and uncertainties. In fact, local indigenous communities are now regarded as stakeholders of the world heritage cultural landscapes that they had long regarded as their own. Their interests in the management of these landscapes are now encased within the rubric of stakeholder management and international laws in which issues of ownership and benefits are ambiguous. In southern Africa, as many local indigenous communities may now be discovering, the clarion call to become involved in the management of these landscapes in no way signifies that they now control and benefit from them. Many local indigenous communities are still not able to perform their cultural rituals and traditional practices of management despite encouragement to have their interests considered and represented when managing these world heritage cultural landscapes. However, to the disappointment of several local indigenous communities, they continue to observe powerful government departments and private players including tour operators, research institutions, farmers, and hoteliers benefiting from these cultural landscapes and, especially, from tourism ventures. This has created resentment and has resulted in many southern African world heritage cultural landscapes becoming contested areas (see Segobye 2006; Meskell 2012).

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The underlying issue with the many attempts to consider the use of traditional conservation practices in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes seems to stem from a lack of understanding of the individual practices and the local indigenous communities that should be involved in the management of these landscapes. It appears that the opinions of the local indigenous communities regarding the suggestion to consider traditional conservation practices when managing world heritage cultural landscapes and the need to involve local indigenous people in the management of these areas is also not adequately understood. As a result of this insufficient knowledge, there are wide-ranging assumptions that regard local indigenous communities as homogeneous and consider traditional conservation practices as having

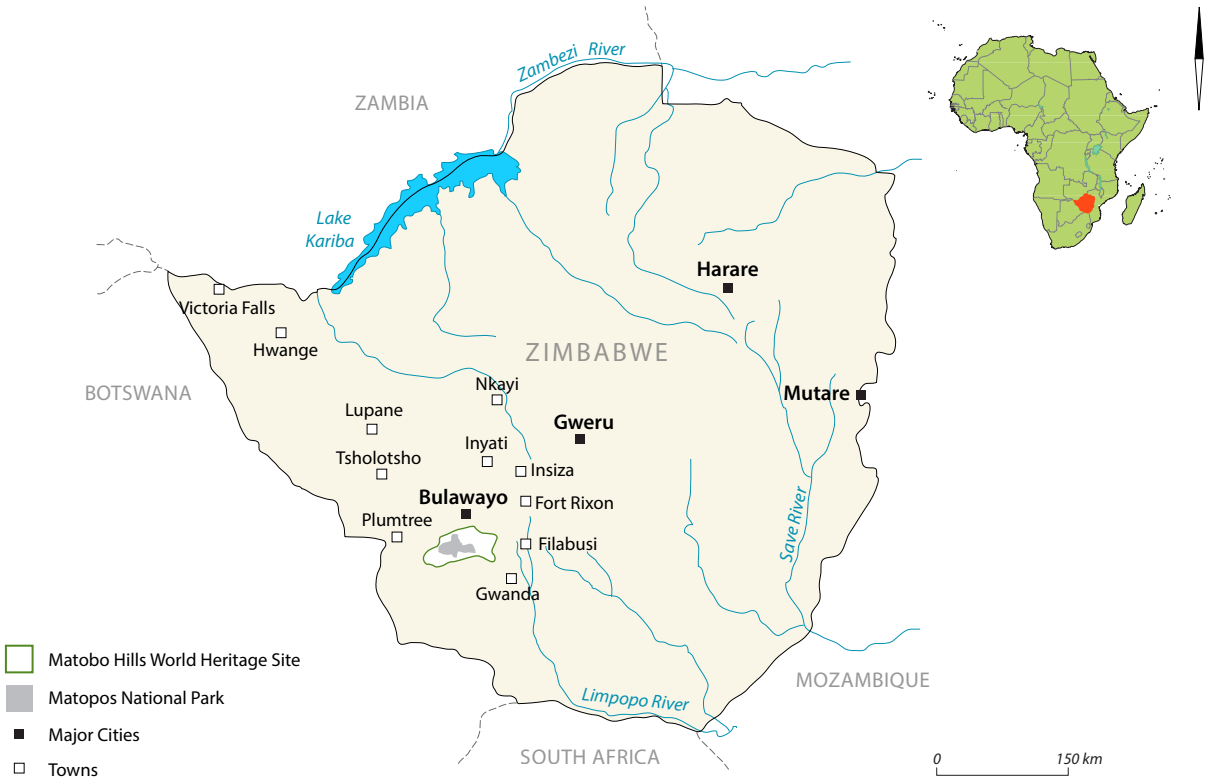

Fig. 1.1 Map of Africa and Zimbabwe showing the location of the Matobo Hills World Heritage Cultural Landscape in Zimbabwe and some of the places mentioned in the study.

always existed and which, if they are considered, can solve some of the management issues with world heritage cultural landscapes. These assumptions, however, do not take into consideration the fact that there are other factors which may deter attempts to incorporate traditional conservation practices into the management ethos of world heritage cultural landscapes. Further, these assumptions do not take into account the fact that, other than the local indigenous communities, there are other interest groups such as the local government, private investors, and individuals who also play diverse roles in the management of these cultural landscapes. As a result of the above assumptions, the extent to which the traditional conservation practices and the involvement of local indigenous communities can play a role in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes in southern Africa has always remained a problematic area.

The main focus of this thesis, therefore, is to examine the existence and use of traditional conservation practices in the Matobo Hills World Heritage Cultural Landscape and explore the extent to which the local indigenous communities can be involved in the management of the area (Fig. 1.1). The Matobo Hills are located approximately 35 kilometres south of the modern city of Bulawayo in the Matabeleland South Province of Zimbabwe. They encompass an area of almost 3100 km² that includes the buffer zone extending between 20º 25′ and 20º 45′ South and 28º 14′ and from 20º 45′ East. The area, which is an extensive granite landscape, extends nearly to the Botswana border in the west while it merges with the Mbalabala granite pluton to the east. Isolated granite outcrops also occur further in the southeast, south, and southwest.

While the aim of this research is broad and provides the study with thematic and theoretical direction, there are three specific objectives that emerge. Although the concept of local indigenous communities is not the individual primary focus of this research, it is, nevertheless, extremely important

to examine it as understanding this issue would assist in understanding the local indigenous peoples and establish how they have become associated with the practice of archaeology and, in particular, the management of cultural landscapes. In this aspect, the first objective of this study is to examine the local indigenous communities that currently exist in the Matobo Hills. During this exploration, the studied local indigenous communities would be useful as informants during data collection to examine if traditional conservation practices really exist and work in the Matobo Hills, which is the second objective of this thesis. Kigongo and Reid (2007) have argued that, although the suggestion that the consideration of traditional conservation practices when managing cultural landscapes might be working elsewhere, this can be misleading and result in flawed management approaches that are guided by nostalgic and stereotyped perceptions about their ability to manage world heritage cultural sites. The argument that traditional conservation practices should be considered for the effective management of world heritage cultural landscapes and that the local indigenous communities should be involved in their management has rarely been, in my opinion, examined from the point of view of the local indigenous communities themselves. Instead, these suggestions have thus far remained very much academic and theoretical. This is quite paradoxical given that it is the initiatives of the local indigenous communities and not of the academics to protect cultural landscapes using traditional conservation practices, yet their views are not well understood. Rather, it is the local context, according to Pikirayi (2014), that should inform the global context and not vice versa. Pikirayi further argued that we should, in the practice of archaeology, consider voices from the periphery or we risk being irrelevant in the communities where we conduct our research. The third objective, therefore, is to determine from the local indigenous communities themselves if suggestions by academics regarding the use of traditional conservation practices and their involvement would help in the effective conservation of world heritage cultural landscapes.

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY

To aggregate the data for this study, I used qualitative research approaches as these have become the key methods in cultural heritage studies in recent years (see Sørensen and Carman 2009). Qualitative research is a method of study employed in many different academic disciplines, traditionally in the social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology. It seeks to understand a specified research problem or topic from the perspective of the local population that is involved. Therefore, the most common sources of data collection are reviewing manuscripts, interviews, observations, and group discussions (Flick 2009; Bhattacherjee 2012).

In accordance with the qualitative approach, I began this research by conducting a desktop survey of literature in the following libraries in Bulawayo: the Natural History Museum Library, Bulawayo City Council Library, the National Free Library, and Dambari Wildlife Trust Library. The Dambari Wildlife Trust is based near Bulawayo and is a non-profit conservation and research organisation that has been active since 1997. Its focus is on the Matobo Hills, the national park, private wildlife and tourism areas, commercial livestock farms, and subsistence agro-pastoralist areas. In the above libraries, I read and utilised a wide variety of secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers, letters, government reports, legislations, and internet websites. The idea was to establish a theoretical basis for the research and to also provide insight into the history of proclamation of the Matobo Hills as a national park. The idea was to also gain insight into the history of land use and past management approaches of the Matobo Hills area.

In addition to reviewing literature in various Bulawayo libraries, I also conducted field work in the Matobo Hills between March and October 2014. In order to reach out to as many areas of the Matobo Hills as possible, I divided the fieldwork into two phases. During the first phase of the fieldwork, which began in April and ended in June, I stayed at the Amagugu International Heritage Center established by Pathisa Nyathi in 2012 (Fig. 1.2).

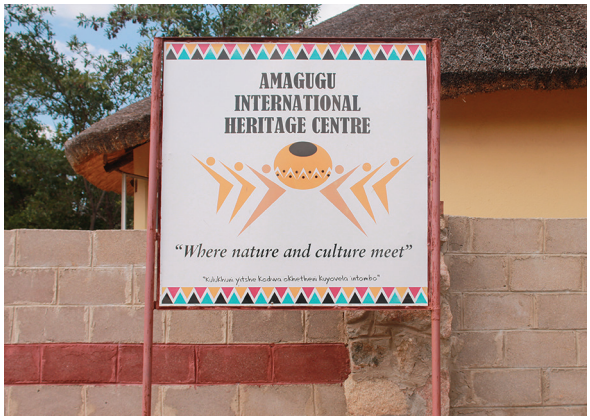

Fig. 1. 2 The Amagugu International Heritage Centre in the Matobo Hills (Photo by Author).

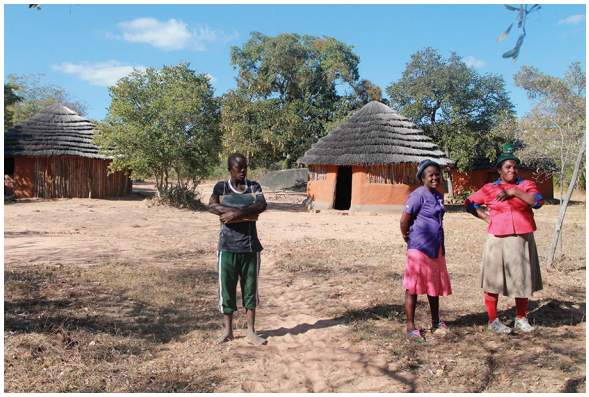

Fig. 1.3 The Cecil John Rhodes Campfire Community Cultural Village Project and Craft Center in the Lushumbe area (Photo by Author).

According to Nyathi, he established the Amagugu International Heritage Center to "revive" and "restore" the cultural heritage practices which he contended had once existed in the cultural landscape prior to the arrival of the Europeans in the area. Nyathi also affirmed that he is fighting the legacy of colonialism through his project which, he argued, is perpetuating the colonial approaches of management in the Matobo Hills (P. Nyathi., pers. comm., March 10, 2014). The Center is located approximately 60 kilometers at Tshapo Business Center near Whitewaters School along the Bulawayo-Maphisa road. My stay at Amagugu, however, afforded me a perfect opportunity to reach a broader area of the central, southern, and western parts of the Matobo Hills to interview ordinary members of the local indigenous communities, traditional chiefs, and traditional religious leaders. The stay also presented me with an opportunity to interview the staff members that Nyathi recruited to help him manage the project. Among the staff members at Amagugu was Misheck Dube who became one of my key informants during my numerous excursions into the various parts of the Hills. Dube was selected to represent the local indigenous communities in the Rhodes Matobo Committee until it was dissolved in 2009. The Rhodes Matobo Committee was established on the instruction of the Cecil John Rhodes' Will of 1902 which directed that his estates in the Matobo Hills and in Nyanga in north eastern Zimbabwe be left to the "People of Rhodesia" (now Zimbabwe) for recreational purposes (Stead 1902). In the Matobo Hills, the Committee plays a supervisory role in the administration of the Matobo National Park. Given his wealth of experience and intimate knowledge of the research area, Dube was a very useful informant during data collection for this research in the Matobo Hills.

While at Amagugu, I also had an opportunity to visit the Cecil John Rhodes Campfire Community Cultural Village Project and Craft Center in Lushumbe, an area which is in the south-central part of the Matobo Hills (Fig. 1.3). According to the members, the aim of the project, which I found to be similar to Nyathi's, is to revive and promote traditional cultural practices in the Matobo Hills. This is because, as the villagers argued, they have observed for a very long time that many cultural practices are disappearing at an extremely rapid rate in the Matobo Hills. The project, which was initially funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was part of helping rural communities around Lushumbe to manage their resources through the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) programme. The programme, which is administered by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), was aimed at alleviating rural poverty by giving rural communities self-government over resources management, especially wildlife (Logan and Moseley 2002). CAMPFIRE was developed primarily around the concept of managing wildlife and wildlife habitat in the communal lands

of Zimbabwe for the benefit of the people living in these areas (Frost and Bond 2007). Revenue generated from safari hunting or from selling wildlife is endowed to the CAMPFIRE programme. The theory behind CAMPFIRE is that communities will positively contribute to environmental conservation if they can exploit these resources on a sustainable basis for their own benefit. The programme is based on creating appropriate institutions under which resources can be legitimately managed and utilised by the resident communities. Profits from the enterprise may be used for communal benefits or distributed to individual households at the discretion of the community (Murindagomo 1990). The cultural village project was to be developed as a popular tourist attraction in the Matobo Hills from which the villagers would survive from tourism without being dependent on the resources of the area. My visit to the Rhodes Campfire Community Cultural Village, however, provided insight into several traditional conservation practices of the Hills through the interviews and in depth discussions with some villagers in Lushumbe.

The second part of the fieldwork, which occurred between August and October 2014, was designed to conduct additional interviews and discussions in the south eastern and the eastern locations of the Matobo Hills. I managed to secure accommodation at Camp Dwala, a safari lodge located in the valley of an escarpment in the Matobo Hills. With the help of Surrender Sibanda, who became my key informant, I was able to conduct interviews and discussions in areas around the Matopo Mission, Ntunjambili Township, Silobi, Dula, and in Gulati communal area. During the entire fieldwork, I also interviewed archaeologists, historians, souvenir sellers, and ecologists working or who have previously worked in the Matobo National Park and business entrepreneurs operating within the world heritage landscape. This facilitated obtaining various perspectives of local indigenous communities and professionals with an interest in the management of the Matobo Hills. The use of the qualitative approach enabled me to obtain data on the knowledge, beliefs, opinions, emotions, behaviours, and experiences of the local indigenous communities in the Matobo Hills particularly concerning traditional conservation practices and the management of the cultural landscape in general. These approaches were also effective in clarifying intangible issues such as their beliefs, norms, politics, and religion whereby these aspects of the study may not have been readily apparent if other research approaches were applied.

SCOPE AND ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, I have discussed that, before colonialism in Africa, local indigenous communities may have used traditional conservation practices to manage their cultural landscapes. I have also discussed that, with the arrival of Europeans, many cultural landscapes were appropriated and given a new status as protected areas for wildlife and nature which resulted in the local indigenous communities and their traditional conservation practices being relegated with the introduction of new management systems. However, with the attainment of independence, many local indigenous communities had hoped to return to their original cultural landscapes. Unfortunately, the new independent African states failed to change the management practices that were established during the colonial era. Thus, the idea to involve local indigenous communities in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes and reintroducing traditional conservation practices has raised new hopes for their involvement, but there are challenges to the full implementation of these objectives.

In the following chapter, I explore the idea of local indigenous communities and attempt to explain why the concept is now associated with the study of indigenous archaeology and, specifically, the management of cultural landscapes. I also demonstrate and argue that, in cultural landscapes, local indigenous communities are not homogenous and have different values and cultural beliefs which they attach to their cultural landscapes. Lastly, I examine the types and nature of indigenous communities that are associated with cultural landscapes.

In chapter 3, I describe the Matobo Hills where this study was specifically carried out. In this chapter, I present the Hills as a unique and distinctly granite area that is interspersed with thickets of vegetation and inhabited by several local indigenous communities. I also describe the different economic pursuits that are practiced in the Matobo Hills and that it is the nature of the Hills which has attracted both humans and animals into the cultural landscape.

In the fourth chapter, I explore the settlement history of the Hills by various indigenous communities. It is illustrated in this chapter that the San people, who had occupied the Hills approximately 12 000 years ago and left behind a succession of rock art and settlement sites were displaced by the farming communities, the Bantu, in the first millennium AD (Walker 1995, 1996). The chapter also explains that the Hills are currently populated by various indigenous communities who now attach diverse values to the cultural landscape.

In chapter 5, I argue that the Matobo Hills appear to have been initially managed by traditional conservation practices before the arrival of the Europeans to the area. I then show how the traditional conservation practices were replaced by the European management approaches which resulted in the establishment of the Matobo National Park, the eviction of the local indigenous communities from various sections of the Hills, and the protection of cultural heritage sites in the area. I argue in this chapter that cultural heritage sites, which were later subjected to archaeological research, created a tourist attraction which emphasised the Matobo Hills as a home of past hunter-gatherer communities and not of the descendant local indigenous communities that had recently been coerced out of the area. I further contend in this chapter that the eviction process resulted in the separation of culture and nature which ultimately created rivalry between the colonial authorities and the local indigenous communities.

In chapter 6, I make an effort to explain the idea of traditional conservation practices. This explanation is closely followed by an investigation of the traditional conservation practices that previously existed or that still survive in the Matobo Hills. I then describe how the local indigenous communities have used or are currently using the traditional conservation practices to manage the world heritage cultural landscape.

The opinion that the traditional conservation practices of the local indigenous communities should be reintroduced or revived in the Matobo Hills and that they should be involved in their management for the effective protection of the World Heritage area is discussed in chapter 7. The discussion is based on the articulation of the local indigenous communities whose voices have usually remained on the periphery when their ancestral lands are proclaimed as World Heritage Sites and when addressing management issues affecting world heritage cultural landscapes such as the Matobo Hills.

Chapter 8 discusses factors that deter the consideration of traditional conservation practices and the involvement of local indigenous communities in the management of the Matobo Hills World Heritage Cultural Landscape. The chapter concludes and discusses what I consider to be important considerations if local indigenous communities and their traditional conservation practices are to be successfully involved in the management of world heritage cultural landscapes.