Liveliness activities that depend on natural resources form a continuum of people-forest interactions. Hence, households’ decisions on land and resource use are influenced by a more complex set of factors which are beyond just a desire for forest products. This study is a meta-synthesis of the socio-economic demographic characteristics of households, and the role of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) production and trade in local livelihoods through building insights from previous studies. The aim was to understand how use of forest resources can effectively contribute to both livelihood enhancement and forest resources conservation.

Introduction
Rural livelihood systems are dynamic, in space and time. A household is a complex set of relationships involving different economic, social, cultural and political networks and entitlements, accessed by different family or household members. Productive bricolage thus offers an approach to examine the roles of NTFPs in rural livelihoods, everyday decisions on natural resource use and forest resource changes in an integrated manner.

Method
This study used a mixed-method systematic approach to combine and synthesise previous studies into a single primary synthesis. A total of 21 Journal article, 15 grey literature publications, seven book chapters and four theses that cover Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts in south-east Lowveld of Zimbabwe were reviewed.

Highlights
• Within the same village, choice of livelihood activity varies with age of household head, education level, household size, ethnicity and gender.
• Livelihood benefits include enhancement of community health, education, income at the household level depending on proximity to National parks and Game ranches.
• Specialisation among livelihood systems reduces pressure on forest resources.
• Crop-cattle based livelihoods depend on forests more than other livelihood systems.
• Rural households are active forest managers who purposively modify the landscape to safeguard the availability of valuable forest resources.
• The social value of forests range from totemism, sacred sites, sacred hills, ceremonial sites, sacred forests to sacred tree species.
• Rural households follow a seasonal and adaptable survival plan in which various activities are combined to produce integrated and flexible livelihood strategies.

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References:

Abstract
Results: NTFPs as a productive bricolage process

Conclusion
Though aggregate contribution of NTFPs to rural households varies amongst different social actors and livelihood systems, NTFPs play a significant role across all livelihood systems. Despite the differences in aggregate contribution across livelihood systems, the contribution incentivizes rural households to actively manage the landscape and to safeguard the availability of valuable forest resources.